

March 4, 2024

Sakura Science Program Headquarters  
Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)

## ***SSC ALUMNI meet PM MODI***

### **JST India Sakura Science Club Alumni Association (ISSCA) 5th Alumni Meeting Alumnus speaks to Prime Minister Modi about his dream of being a bridge between India and Japan.**

On February 17, 2024, young people from India who had previously participated in the Sakura Science Program (SSP) gathered in New Delhi for the 5th ISSCA alumni meeting. The SSP is a program for international youth exchange, and is run by the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST). In addition to the 58 attending Indian alumni, the venue also hosted guests from the Indian Ministry of Education, the Department of Science and Technology, Indian Institutes of Technology, and the Embassy of Japan in India, as well as family members of participants, enabling a total of 87 people to meet under one roof and further their interactions. At the beginning of the meeting, H.E. Mr. NISHIMURA Yasutoshi, the Chairman of the Japan-India Parliamentary Friendship League (JIPFL), sent a video message of congratulations. In addition to recognizing the achievements of ISSCA, he encouraged the members to continue to contribute to exchanges between Japan and India.

Alumni meetings are held in various key countries, and always serve as forums for members to exchange information and take further steps forward. This meeting of Indian alumni was an opportunity for stimulating conversations in an atmosphere of freedom, and for actively reconfirming the bonds with Japan fostered by the participants' experiences in the SSP.



Ashish Kumar Verma explaining his research to Prime Minister Modi

One of the alumni at the meeting, Ashish Kumar Verma (17 years old), participated in the SAKURA SCIENCE High School Program (SSHP) in July 2023 as an Indian high school student representative. (He seized this opportunity through being recommended by MOE and DST after winning the INSPIRE award.) He said that when he visited Kyoto University, he was particularly impressed by the words of Professor Hiroshi Kitagawa of the Graduate School of Science: "Science is not about memorising things, it's an art of trying different things out and understanding to create amazing things."

Ashish explained that in September 2023, after he returned to India, his research on generative AI, upon which he had worked by himself, received acknowledgment and he was given the opportunity to speak directly with Prime Minister Modi. At the time, he excitedly told the Prime Minister both about his experience visiting Japan through the SSHP and about his dream of playing an active role in bringing India and Japan together.

This alumni meeting left a strong sense of great anticipation that the activities of the SSP/SSHP alumni will form a foundation to encourage future brain circulation between India and Japan.



Group photo of the ISSCA 5<sup>th</sup> alumni meeting (New Delhi, February 17, 2024)

### **SAKURA SCIENCE Club (SSC)**

People who come to Japan on Sakura Science Exchange Program will be certified as members of the Sakura Science Club, the alumni association of the Sakura Science Exchange Program.

Sakura Science Club provides members with useful information on the website, and alumni meetings are held in various places so that club members continue to be active as a bridge between Japan and their home country. In addition, members are connected by SNS and interact freely. The club has about 37,000 members and has become a huge network.

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