



DECCAN EDUCATION SOCIETY'S Shri. Navalmal Firodia Law College, Pune

(Permanently Affiliated to Savitribai Phule Pune University ID No. PU/PN/LAW/207/2004)
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Late Shri Gopal Ganesh Agarkar International Inter-Collegiate Oratory Festival

18th Edition | 11th–12th September 2026

DES's Shri. Navalmal Firodia Law College, Pune.

Introduction

The Late Shri Gopal Ganesh Agarkar International Inter-Collegiate Oratory Festival, 18th Edition, was organised by Deccan Education Society's Shri Navalmal Firodia Law College, Pune, through the Mīmāṃsā Debate Forum on 11th and 12th September 2026. The festival marked the continuation of an eighteen-year legacy and represented the expansion of the traditional debate platform into a broader celebration of public speaking, argumentation, parliamentary discourse and diplomacy.

The 2026 edition brought together three distinct competitions under one festival: Debate, Asian Parliamentary Debate and Model United Nations (MUN). The brochure describes the festival as a platform intended to promote advocacy and diplomacy, build constitutional literacy, provide a rigorous judged platform and connect young orators. It also emphasised its trilingual character in English, Hindi and Marathi.

The Inauguration ceremony was held in the historic Fergusson College Campus in Pune. Its academic character was reflected in the choice of contemporary topics involving war and peace, civil liberties, economic development, political accountability, privacy, education, criminal justice, international relations, human rights, climate change and democratic governance.

Background and Significance

The festival is instituted in memory of Shri Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, a prominent reformer and the second principal of Fergusson College. Over the years, the festival has developed into a major inter-collegiate platform for reasoned public discourse. The 18th edition continued this legacy while introducing a three-format structure comprising Debate, Asian Parliamentary Debate and Model United Nations.

The central spirit of the festival was to encourage students to think independently, engage with complex public questions, defend positions with clarity and respond to opposing arguments. Rather than limiting participation to conventional public speaking, the three competitions exposed students to different forms of intellectual engagement: competitive debate, parliamentary advocacy and diplomatic simulation.




PRINCIPAL
Deccan Education Society's
Shri Navalmal Firodia Law College
Pune - 411 004.

Objectives of the Festival

- To promote advocacy, diplomacy and reasoned public discourse.
- To develop constitutional and democratic awareness among young students.
- To provide a rigorous platform for judged public speaking and argumentation.
- To bring together students and young orators from institutions across India and internationally.
- To encourage research and engagement with contemporary legal, political and social issues.
- To develop leadership, teamwork, negotiation and communication skills.
- To encourage multilingual public speaking through English, Hindi and Marathi.
- To provide students with an environment in which academic knowledge could be applied through competitive and experiential formats.

Festival Structure

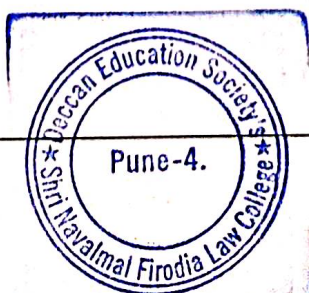
Particular	Details
Festival	Late Shri Gopal Ganesh Agarkar International Inter-Collegiate Oratory Festival
Edition	18th Edition
Dates	11th–12th September 2026
Organising Institution	DES Shri Navalmal Firodia Law College, Pune
Organising Forum	Mīmāṃsā Debate Forum
Competitions	Debate, Asian Parliamentary Debate, Model United Nations
Debate Languages	English, Hindi and Marathi
Venue	DES Shri Navalmal Firodia Law College, Fergusson College Campus, Pune
Eligibility	UG/PG students from recognised universities; participants not older than 25 years

Inaugural Ceremony

The festival formally commenced on 11th September 2026 with registration followed by the inauguration at Fergusson Amphitheatre. The approved programme scheduled the inauguration from 9:30 am to 11:00 am, after which the participants proceeded to the competition venues.

The inaugural programme included an introduction to the festival, lighting of the lamp, the welcome address by the Principal, introduction and felicitation of the chief guests and judges for all three competitions, and the unveiling of the Legal Research Cell's monthly guest cell, 'Drushti Varta'. This was followed by addresses by the chief guests, a vote of thanks and Vande Mataram.

The inaugural session established the intellectual and institutional tone of the festival by bringing together academic leadership, guests, judges, faculty members and student participants before the commencement of the competitions.



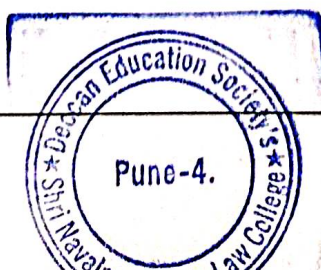


Chief Guests and Addresses

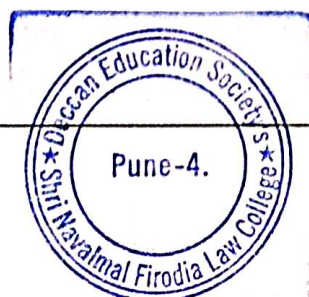
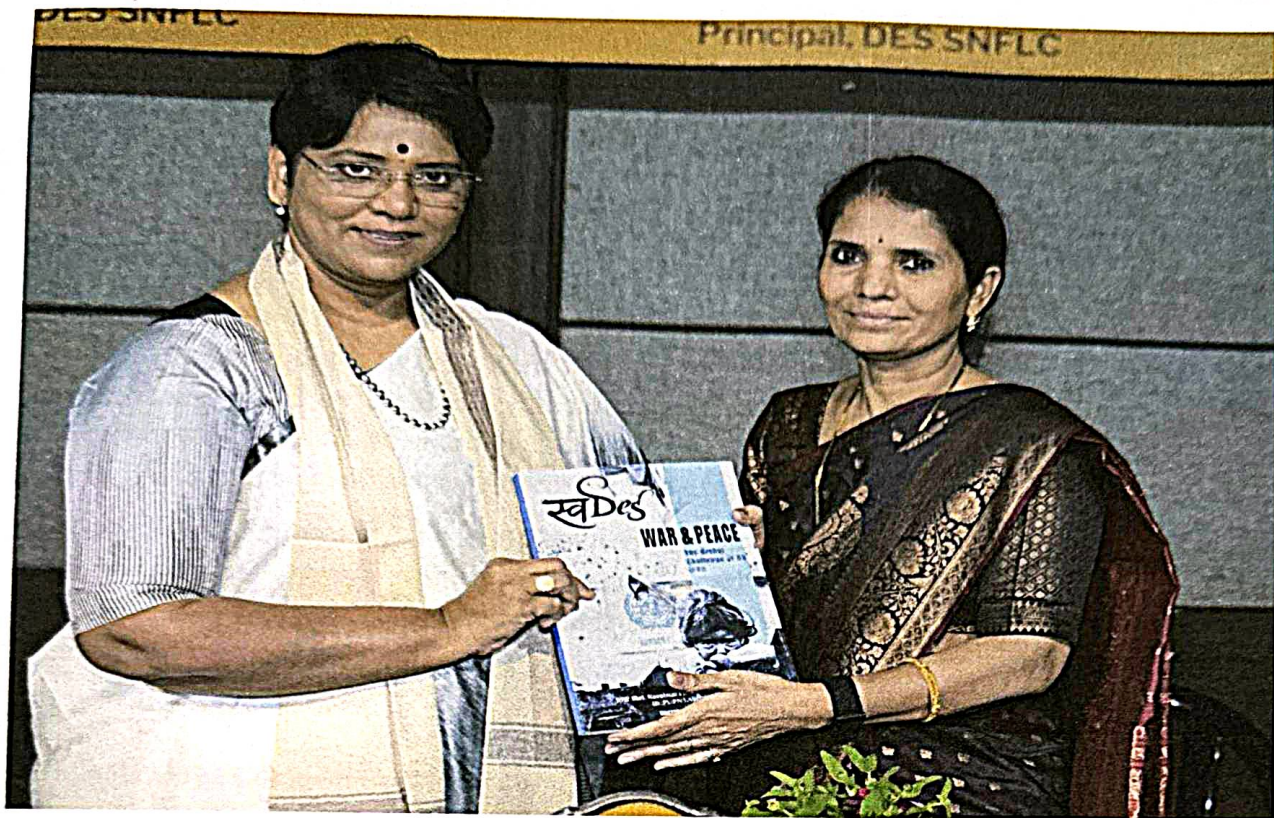
The inaugural ceremony on 11 September 2026 was graced by Shri Anand Patil, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Education, Government of India, and Smt. Anju S. Shende, Principal District and Sessions Judge, Pune, as the chief guests. Their presence added considerable significance to the opening of the 18th edition of the Late Shri Gopal Ganesh Agarkar International Inter-Collegiate Oratory Festival.

Shri Anand Patil addressed the participating students and emphasised the importance of developing strong communication, critical thinking and informed perspectives among young people. His interaction with the participants highlighted the importance of academic engagement, public discourse and the ability of students to articulate their ideas on contemporary issues.

Smt. Anju S. Shende, Principal District and Sessions Judge, Pune, addressed the gathering from the perspective of law, justice and responsible citizenship. Her interaction encouraged students to appreciate the importance of constitutional values, reasoned argument and responsible participation in public life. Her presence also strengthened the connection between legal education, public speaking and democratic discourse.



Both addresses set an appropriate intellectual tone for the festival, which brought together **Debate, Asian Parliamentary Debate and Model United Nations** and required students to demonstrate research, argumentation, negotiation, communication and leadership skills



Day One – Competitions

Following the inauguration, the three competitions commenced. The programme provided for lunch and high tea during the day and a result announcement in the evening. The official schedule records the competition commencement at 11:05 am, lunch at 1:30 pm, high tea at 4:30 pm and result announcement at 6:00 pm on 11th September.

The three competitions ran as distinct formats, each requiring a different style of preparation and performance. The combination created a broad intellectual environment in which participants could engage with domestic politics, constitutional questions, international affairs, social issues and questions of public policy.

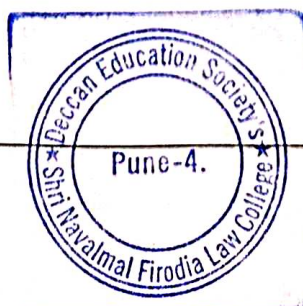
Debate Competition

The Debate competition was conducted in English, Hindi and Marathi. According to the brochure, the competition consisted of preliminary and final rounds, with strict individual/team time limits and no reference material permitted. Participants were assessed on content, logic and evidence; delivery and command of language; audience engagement; and time management and decorum.

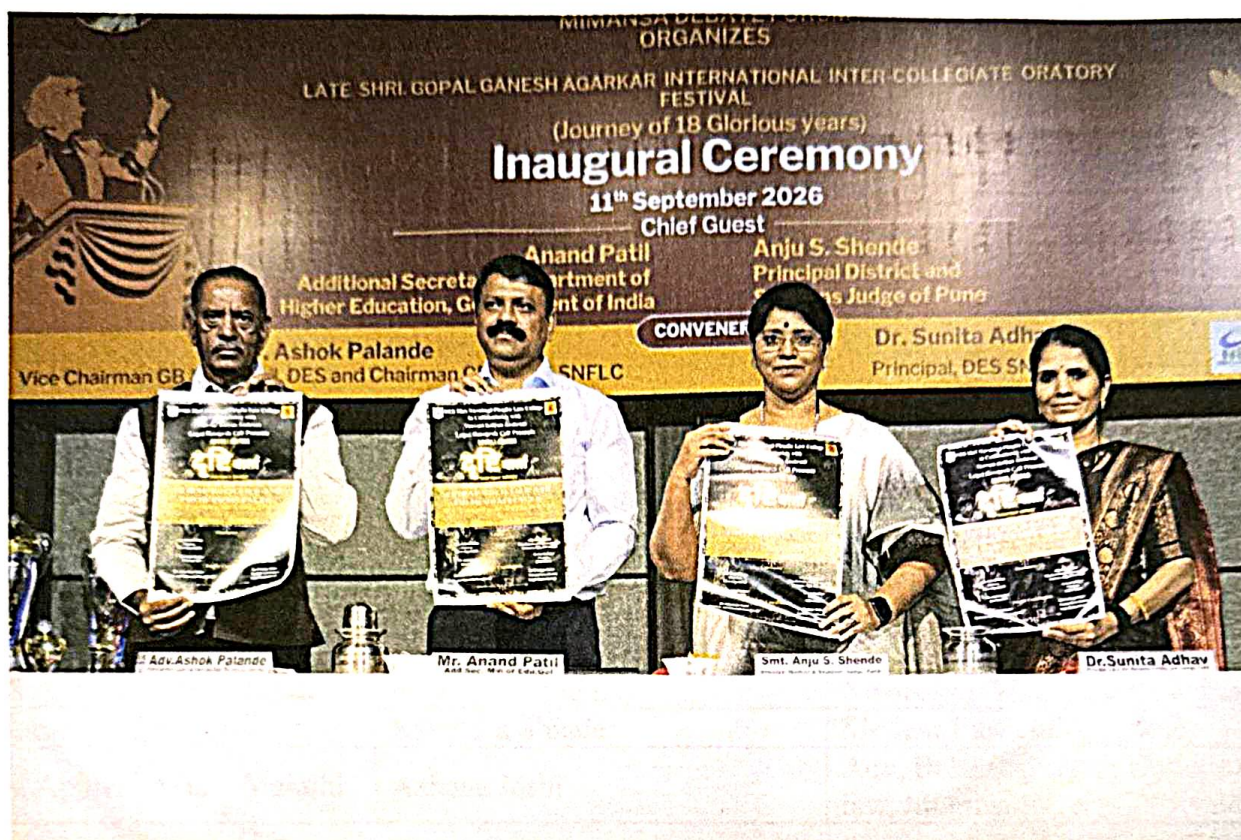
The topics were deliberately diverse. They required participants to consider international conflict, civil liberties, economic growth, political representation, privacy and the relationship between education and social reform. The final-round topic moved from specific policy propositions to a philosophical question about contemporary life.

Highlights of the Competitions -

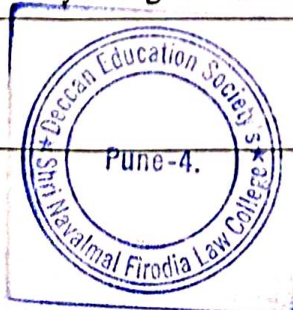
- **120 Registrations:** The festival has received **120 registrations across its three competitions**, reflecting its growing popularity and academic stature among colleges and universities.
- **International Participation:** Teams and participants from **Sri Lanka, Nepal and South Korea** are joining the festival, bringing diverse international perspectives to the platform.
- **National Reach:** The festival continues to expand its presence across India, with participation from **NLU Sikkim**, taking the Agarkar platform to the **North-East of India**, along with institutions such as **Chandigarh University** and several other leading colleges and universities.
- **From Debate Competition to Oratory Festival:** After seventeen editions as the Agarkar Debate Competition, the initiative is evolving into a broader **Oratory Festival**, while retaining the intellectual tradition on which it was built.
- **A Celebration of the Pune Debating Tradition:** The festival is rooted in **Pune's rich culture of debating, public discourse and intellectual exchange**. Pune has historically been a city where ideas have been discussed, challenged and debated with seriousness, and the Agarkar Festival seeks to carry that tradition forward among a new generation.
- **The Agarkar Legacy:** Named after **Gopal Ganesh Agarkar**, the festival reflects his commitment to **reason, rational inquiry, independent thought and social reform**. The competition therefore seeks not merely accomplished speakers, but young people capable of questioning, analysing and thinking independently.
- **More Than a Competition:** The festival provides students with an opportunity to **research deeply, articulate confidently, engage with opposing viewpoints and learn the value of disagreement without disrespect**.



- **A Meeting of Ideas Across Borders:** With participants from different parts of India and international teams from three countries, the festival creates a space where **different cultures, perspectives and intellectual traditions** meet through dialogue.



No.	Debate Topic
1	Do great powers cause more wars than they prevent?
2	This House would prioritise public order over the right to protest.
3	This House believes that economic growth came at the cost of human well-being.
4	Legislators who switch parties should seek a fresh mandate from the electorate.
5	This House believes marriage is a private affair-free from state & societal interference.
6	Are the educational ideas of Shri Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Shri Gopal Ganesh Agarkar and Shri Vaman Shivram Apte more relevant today than ever?
Final	In this modern world, are we 'truly living' or 'merely existing'?



These topics encouraged students to combine political theory, constitutional principles, economics, history, sociology and contemporary affairs. The multilingual structure also made the competition an important platform for expression in three Indian languages.

Debate Results

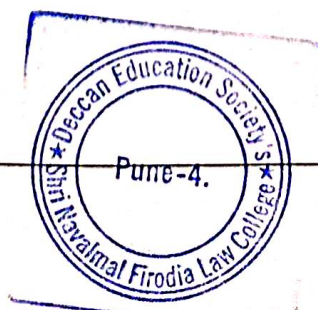
Category	Recipient(s)	Institution
Winner Team	Palak Sikarwar and Harsh Punj	Chandigarh University
Runner-up Team	Sakshi Prajapati and Shivani Nalavde	Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Technological University, Lonere, Raigad
Second Runner-up	Aditi Jadhav and Mohammad Khan	Ness Wadia College of Commerce
Best Speaker – English	Shivani Nalavde	Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Technological University, Lonere, Raigad
Special Appreciation - English	Rishika Purusharthi	Modern Law College, Pune
Best Speaker – Hindi	Diganta Bhattacharya and Sarang Tayde	Chandigarh University and Manikchand Pahade Law College, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar
Special Appreciation – Hindi	Falguni Choudhary	Nowrosjee Wadia College, Pune
Best Speaker – Marathi	Ravindra Shinde	Modern Law college, Pune
Special Appreciation – Marathi	Aahana Joshi	Adv. Balasaheb Apte College of law, Mumbai.

Asian Parliamentary Debate

The Asian Parliamentary Debate was conducted as a structured parliamentary format involving two benches—Government and Opposition—with three speakers on each side. The brochure specified that the speaking order as first Proposition, first Opposition, second Proposition, second Opposition, third Proposition, third Opposition, Opposition Reply and Government Reply.

The competition was adjudicated by a panel of trained judges and assessed on matter, manner and method. Oral adjudication after each round added an important feedback component to the competition and allowed participants to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their performance.

No.	Motion
1	This House believes that retired judges should be barred from being appointed to post-retirement government posts.
2	This House supports the Recognition of Palestine as a Sovereign State by all democracies.



3	This House believes that the criminal justice system should prioritise rehabilitation over retribution, even for violent offenders.
4	This House believes that governments should have the power to suspend internet access during periods of severe civil unrest temporarily.

The motions required participants to engage with judicial independence, international recognition, criminal justice, rehabilitation, civil liberties, technology and the balance between public order and individual freedoms. The format consequently demanded rapid preparation, strategic team coordination, structured case-building and effective rebuttal.

Asian Parliamentary Debate Results

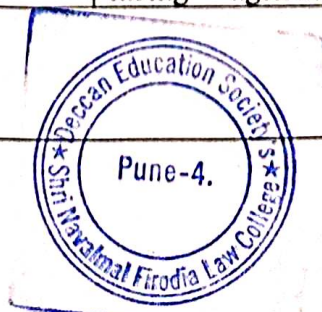
Category	Recipient(s)	Institution
Winner Team	Ashlesha Bhavsar; Ishana Jamwal; Siddharth Mundhada	Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics
Runner-up Team	Raj Joshi; Mansi Kala; Yashwardhan Singh	Modern Law College
Best Speaker	Siddharth Mundhada	Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics
Special Appreciation	Raj Joshi	Modern Law College

Model United Nations

The Model United Nations component introduced students to simulated global and domestic institutional deliberation. MUN identifies research, command of policy and precedent, negotiation, lobbying and bloc formation, and precise and actionable drafting as key components of the MUN experience.

The MUN was organised through three committees: the All India Political Parties Meet (AIPPM), Lok Sabha and the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). Each committee addressed a contemporary issue requiring research, negotiation and policy-oriented discussion.

Committee	Agenda
AIPPM	Deliberation on Strengthening Freedom of Press and Journalism in India with Special Emphasis on Media Accountability, Protection of Journalistic Independence, and the Future of Digital Journalism.
Lok Sabha	Deliberation on Reforming India's Education System with Special Emphasis on Recent Educational Reforms, Educational Inequality and the Future of Learning and Skill Development.
ECOSOC	Ensuring equitable climate adaptation financing for Least Developed and Developing Countries facing agricultural collapse and internal

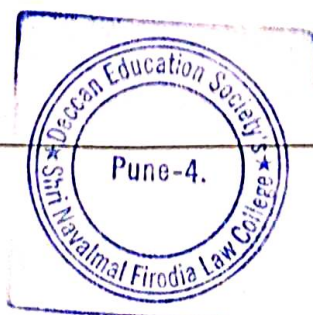


displacement through integration of modern financing instruments.

The Three committees exposed participants to different forms of policy deliberation. AIPPM centred on freedom of the press and media accountability; Lok Sabha addressed education and inequality; and UNHRC examined international refugee law in the context of climate change.

Model United Nations Results

Committee	Award	Recipient	Institution
UNHRC	Best Delegate	Harshpreet Kaura	Vishwakarma Institute of Technology
AIPPM	Best Delegate	Avnee Prasad	Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics
Lok Sabha	Best Parliamentarian	Parth Deshpande	MNLU, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar
UNHRC	High Commendation	Ridhaan Kotwal	Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics
AIPPM	High Commendation	Abhinandan Das	DY Patil International University
Lok Sabha	High Commendation	Nidhi Nankani	Brihan Maharashtra College of Commerce



BEST DELEGATE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

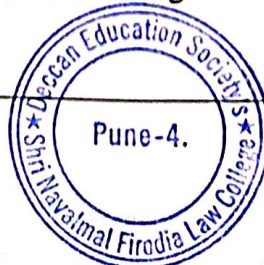


Harshpreet Kaura
VISHWAKARMA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Academic and Intellectual Experience

One of the most significant features of the festival was the range of intellectual skills required across the three formats. The Debate competition focused on argument, rebuttal, evidence and delivery. The Asian Parliamentary Debate introduced a formal parliamentary structure in which participants had to build a coherent case as a team and respond directly to the opposing bench. The MUN required participants to research positions, negotiate with other delegates, form blocs and work towards draft resolutions.

The topics also ensured that participation was intellectually demanding. Questions concerning war and peace required an understanding of international relations; questions concerning protest and public order required constitutional reasoning; questions concerning economic growth and well-being required



engagement with economics and social policy; questions concerning party switching and education required an understanding of democratic institutions and governance.

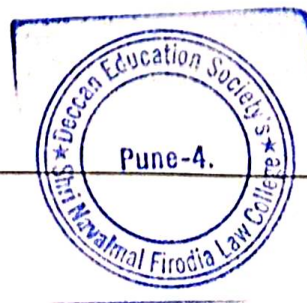
The MUN agendas further expanded the academic scope to press freedom, digital journalism, educational inequality, skill development, climate finance, displacement, international refugee law and human rights. This diversity made the festival a multidisciplinary learning experience.

BEST DELEGATE ALL INDIA POLITICAL PARTIES MEET



Anvee Prasad

GOKHALE INSTITUTE OF POLITICS AND ECONOMICS



WINNER TEAM



**Palak
Sikarwar**

**Harsh
Punj**

WINNER TEAM



**Ashlesha
Bhavsar**

**Ishana
Jamwal**

**Siddharth
Mundhada**

GOKHALE INSTITUTE OF POLITICS AND ECONOMICS



Skills Developed Through the Festival

- Public speaking and persuasive communication.
- Critical thinking and independent reasoning.
- Argument construction and rebuttal.
- Research and use of evidence.
- Parliamentary procedure and structured advocacy.
- Negotiation, diplomacy and consensus-building.
- Teamwork and strategic coordination.
- Policy analysis and contemporary affairs awareness.
- Leadership and decision-making.
- Professional communication and confidence.
- Ability to engage respectfully with opposing viewpoints.
- Time management and performance under pressure.

Day Two – Final Rounds and Valedictory Ceremony

The second day began with breakfast followed by the final rounds. The approved programme records the final round as commencing at 8:45 am and ending at 11:45 am. The valedictory ceremony was scheduled from 12:30 pm to 1:45 pm.

The valedictory programme included introduction and felicitation of the chief guest, felicitation of the final-round Debate judges, an IQAC-linked inauguration of the Samvedan Consultancy Club, the address by the chief guest, declaration of results and prize distribution for MUN, Asian Parliamentary Debate and Debate, followed by the vote of thanks and Vande Mataram.

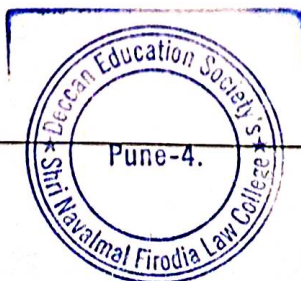
The ceremony provided a formal conclusion to the two-day festival and recognised the academic and competitive achievements of the participants. The presentation of awards across all three competitions ensured that excellence was recognised at team and individual levels.

Valedictory Ceremony and Chief Guest

The **second day, 12 September 2026**, concluded with the valedictory ceremony and prize distribution. The chief guest for the valedictory ceremony was **Adv. S. K. Jain, Practising Advocate**.

Adv. S. K. Jain interacted with the participating students and congratulated them on their performances throughout the two-day festival. He encouraged the students to continue developing their skills in public speaking, argumentation, research and leadership. He also guided the participants on the importance of using their academic knowledge and communication skills effectively in their future professional and public lives.

Adv. S. K. Jain distributed the **trophies, prizes and certificates** to the winners and award recipients across the three competitions. The valedictory ceremony formally recognised the achievements of students in **Debate, Asian Parliamentary Debate and Model United Nations**, bringing the two-day festival to a meaningful conclusion. The programme itself included the chief guest's address, declaration of results and prize distribution.



Participation and Institutional Interaction

The festival created a common platform for students from diverse academic institutions. The results demonstrate participation and achievement by students representing institutions in law, technology, economics, commerce, management and other higher-education domains. This diversity enriched the competitive environment by bringing different academic perspectives into the same discussion.

The festival also enabled interaction between students, faculty members, judges and organisers. Such interaction contributed to peer learning and created opportunities for students to observe different styles of argument, parliamentary strategy and diplomatic negotiation.

Prizes and Recognition

The brochure provided cash prizes along with certificates and trophies. For Debate, prizes were specified for the winner, runner-up and second runner-up, along with separate Best Speaker and Special Appreciation recognitions in English, Hindi and Marathi. APD included winner, runner-up, Best Speaker and Special Appreciation awards, while MUN provided Best Delegate and High Commendation awards in the committees.

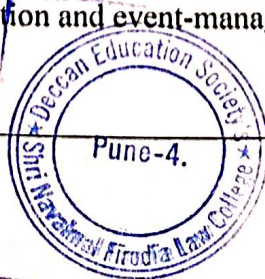
Competition	Award Structure as Published
Debate	Winner ₹15,000; Runner-up ₹10,000; Second Runner-up ₹7,000; language-wise Best Speaker ₹5,000; language-wise Special Appreciation ₹3,000.
Asian Parliamentary Debate	Winner ₹10,000; Runner-up ₹7,000; Best Speaker ₹5,000; Special Appreciation ₹3,000.
Model United Nations	Best Delegate ₹5,000; High Commendation ₹2,000 in the respective committees.

Contribution of Students and Volunteers

The successful organisation of the festival was made possible through the **dedication and sustained efforts of the students and volunteers** of DES Shri Navalmal Firodia Law College. Students worked extensively before and during the festival in areas including registration, participant coordination, venue management, hospitality, competition logistics, communication, timekeeping and overall event management.

The student volunteers worked alongside faculty members and organisers to ensure the smooth conduct of all three competitions. Their teamwork, discipline, coordination and willingness to take responsibility contributed significantly to the successful execution of the two-day festival.

The festival therefore served not only as a competitive platform for visiting participants but also as a valuable **experiential learning opportunity for the student volunteers**, enabling them to develop teamwork, leadership, communication, coordination and event-management skills. This complements



the broader skills identified in the report, including leadership, teamwork, negotiation, professional communication and time management.

This will fit naturally after the “Inaugural Ceremony” section and before “Day One – Competitions,” with the Adv. S. K. Jain section placed later under “Day Two – Final Rounds and Valedictory Ceremony.”

Overall Assessment of the Festival

The 18th edition of the Late Shri Gopal Ganesh Agarkar International Inter-Collegiate Oratory Festival successfully brought together three complementary forms of intellectual and public discourse. The festival moved beyond conventional debate by incorporating parliamentary debate and Model United Nations, thereby providing students with varied opportunities to speak, research, negotiate and lead.

The strength of the festival lay particularly in the quality and diversity of its themes. Participants were asked to engage with questions that have direct relevance to contemporary society and governance, while the final Debate proposition encouraged reflection on the nature of modern life itself. The APD motions brought constitutional, judicial, international and criminal-justice questions into a parliamentary setting. The MUN committees introduced questions of press freedom, education, climate finance, displacement, refugee law and human rights.

The results demonstrate participation from a wide range of institutions, with students receiving recognition for excellence in team debate, parliamentary debate, public speaking and diplomatic simulation. The awards also ensured that achievement was recognised not only through overall team results but through individual performance.

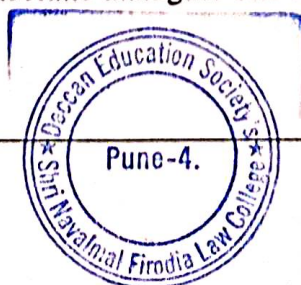
Overall, the festival served as a vibrant academic and co-curricular platform for developing articulate, informed and confident young speakers. It brought together competitive spirit and intellectual engagement while carrying forward the legacy of Gopal Ganesh Agarkar and the tradition of reasoned public discourse.

The Late Shri Gopal Ganesh Agarkar International Inter-Collegiate Oratory Festival, 18th Edition, was a comprehensive two-day celebration of argument, dialogue and public discourse. Through Debate, Asian Parliamentary Debate and Model United Nations, students were given opportunities to engage with difficult contemporary questions and to develop the skills required to articulate, defend and reconsider ideas.

The successful conduct of the three competitions, the range of participating institutions, the structured judging and the recognition of outstanding performances together contributed to a meaningful festival experience. The 18th edition thus continued the festival’s eighteen-year tradition while broadening its academic and competitive scope.

Conclusion

The Late Shri Gopal Ganesh Agarkar International Intercollegiate Oratory Festival – 18th Edition, held on 11th and 12th September 2026, concluded successfully with a celebration of eloquence, critical thinking, informed argumentation and democratic dialogue. The festival marked an important milestone



in the continued legacy of Late Shri Gopal Ganesh Agarkar and his enduring commitment to rational thought, intellectual inquiry and public discourse.

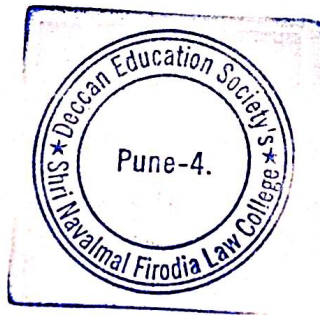
The Model United Nations and parliamentary formats added new dimensions to the festival, encouraging students to understand institutional processes, diplomacy, policy-making and structured deliberation. The debates, meanwhile, fostered the spirit of reasoned disagreement, where participants were encouraged to challenge ideas through arguments rather than personalities. The festival thus became not merely a competition, but a space for intellectual exchange and meaningful interaction among young minds.

As the curtains came down on the 18th edition, the festival reaffirmed that **the power of speech, when guided by reason, knowledge and responsibility, can become a powerful instrument of social and intellectual transformation.** The event leaves behind not only memories of competition and achievement, but also a renewed commitment to nurturing articulate, thoughtful and socially conscious young citizens.

The successful completion of the **Late Shri Gopal Ganesh Agarkar International Intercollegiate Oratory Festival** marks another significant chapter in its continuing legacy. It is hoped that the festival will continue to grow in scale, participation and intellectual richness in the years to come, carrying forward the spirit of **reason, dialogue, fearless expression and enlightened public discourse** that lies at the heart of Agarkar's legacy



Asst. Prof. Saurabh Jadhav
Faculty Coordinator



Asst. Prof. Smita Gaikwad
Faculty Coordinator



Dr. Sunita Adhav

Principal

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