

BITS Pilani hosts 12th World Congress on Regional Science

BY A STAFF REPORTER

reporters@gomantaktimes.com

Panaji: BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa campus hosted and organised the 12th World Congress of the Regional Science Association International in collaboration with Town and Country Planning Department of Goa and the Regional Science Association (RSA), India from May 29 to June 1. The Congress, attended by over 500 delegates from India and abroad, was held for the first time in India at Goa. The objective of the Congress was to provide an encouraging environment for researchers across the globe, to interact and learn from one another, and create a network that will be attractive and inspiring for young students and scholars. It further aimed to strengthen the community of regional scientists and achieve a better understanding of our future needs.

Governor Dr Mridula Sinha inaugurated the Congress in presence of Director of BITS Pilani Goa Campus, Prof G Raghurama, Professors Budy Resosudarmo (President of RSAI), Guest of Honor, Bibek Debroy (Chief Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister of India and Member, NITI Aayog) and the venerable C R Pathak. In his introductory remarks, Dr Debasis Patnaik spoke of the need for integration of disciplines because of regional needs and aspirations after providing a brief outline of the evolutionary progress of the Cosmos and the Humans and the inevitable pitfalls and mistakes that the world is passing through. Prof Sumona Banerjee, President of RSA-India, proposed the vote of thanks at the inaugural function.

The theme of the conference "Spatial Systems: Social Integration, Regional Development and Sustainability" was demonstrably brought to light by eminent speakers like Professors Peter Nijkamp,

Andre Torre, Lee Yeung, Manfred Fisher, Yoshiro Higano, Xie ling, Zeynap Elburz, Paulo Casa-



Governor Dr Mridula Sinha lights the lamp to inaugurate the 12th World Congress of the Regional Science Association International in presence of Director of BITS Pilani Goa Campus, Prof G Raghurama, Professors Budy Resosudarmo (President of RSAI), guest of honour, Bibek Debroy (Chief Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister of India and Member, NITI Aayog) and the venerable C R Pathak.

ca, Janet Kohlhase (USA), Andres Rodriguez Pose (LSE), Satish Kumar, Hiroyuki Shibusawa, and others. The Valedictory Address was delivered by Prof. Amitabh Kundu, Regional Advisor on Poverty-EDID, UN ESCWA, India.

Local convergers of this Congress including the faculty members of BITS Pilani, Goa Campus Dr Debasis Patnaik (Department of Economics) and Dr R P Pradhan (Humanities and Social Sciences) along with Chief Town Planner Dr. S T Puttaraju successfully organized this Congress. The Executive Director of RSAI, Prof. Tomaz Dentinho provided overall guidance to the Organisers.

The sub-themes were aimed at providing a platform for debates

and discussions around the key issues of contemporary regional science and carve out the way to future research agenda. The sub-themes discussed during the course of Congress include: Regional Inequality, Regional and Urban planning, Regional Finance, Innovation, Disaster Management, Governance Issues, Health Issues, Environment and Climate Change, Locational Activity, Growth and Development Issues in Latin America, Africa, Europe, South Asia, Goa, West Bengal and India, Spatial Econometrics, Tourism, Real Estate and Housing, Water Management, Co-operation and Diaspora, Social Integration, Rural Development and Methodological Issues in Re-

gional Sciences. A Special Session on Braille Mapping by NATMO was also held.

Across the world, communities are striving to achieve an ecologically and socially secure future. The intricately linked ideas of sustainability and integration are the key to achieving our development goals.

As regional scientists, common pursuit of a sustainable future may be attained with more efficient understanding of the 'region' as a spatial unit. Keeping this objective in mind, the theme of the 2018 Congress highlights the importance of analyzing spatial systems as not just physical space or social space, but shared space.