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Prof. Isha Jain wins Infosys Prize 2026 for pioneering discoveries in oxygen biology

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Six researchers recognised across life sciences, physical sciences, engineering, economics, mathematics and humanities; each laureate to receive $100,000



Infosys Science Foundation (ISF) has announced Isha Jain, Associate Investigator at the Gladstone Institutes and Assistant Professor in the Department of Biochemistry at the University of California, San Francisco, as the recipient of the Infosys Prize 2026 in Life Sciences, recognising her pioneering discoveries in oxygen biology and their potential to open new therapeutic avenues for mitochondrial diseases and inherited metabolic disorders.

Isha Jain's research has challenged conventional understanding of mitochondrial diseases by demonstrating that tissue damage in certain mitochondrial disorders can arise from excess oxygen rather than energy failure. Translating these fundamental biochemical insights into therapeutic strategies, her work includes developing a small molecule to reduce oxygen levels and exploring vitamin-based treatments for inherited metabolic disorders.

Her research highlights the growing importance of oxygen biology in understanding disease mechanisms and developing new treatment approaches, particularly for disorders where conventional therapeutic strategies have limitations.

Prof. Mriganka Sur, Jury Chair for the Infosys Prize in Life Sciences said “With creativity and insight, Isha Jain's work has revealed oxygen as a powerful lever in health and disease. Her surprising discovery that reduced oxygen levels can be beneficial in mitochondrial disorders has led to fundamental mechanisms of oxygen utilization and potential therapies for these devastating disorders. We look forward to the advances her work will bring for human health.”

The Infosys Prize 2026 recognises six researchers under the age of 40 across Economics, Engineering and Computer Science, Humanities and Social Sciences, Life Sciences, Mathematical Sciences and Physical Sciences. Each award comprises a gold medal, a citation and a prize purse of $100,000 or its equivalent in Indian rupees.

Announcing the winners, Srinath Batni, President, Board of Trustees, Infosys Science Foundation, congratulated the laureates and emphasised the importance of recognising exceptional researchers early in their careers. He noted that such recognition provides encouragement and opportunities for young researchers to pursue bold questions, challenge established thinking and make lasting contributions to their respective fields.

Established in 2009, the Infosys Prize has recognised researchers whose contributions advance knowledge and address important challenges facing India and the world. Since 2024, the Foundation has focused on recognising researchers below the age of 40, underlining the importance of supporting emerging research talent and strengthening India's research ecosystem.

Several previous Infosys Prize laureates have subsequently received major international distinctions, including the Nobel Prize, Fields Medal, Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics and Marconi Prize. The list includes Nobel laureates Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, Fields medallists Manjul Bhargava and Akshay Venkatesh, and Breakthrough Prize recipient Ashoke Sen.

Through its annual awards, the Infosys Science Foundation continues to highlight the role of fundamental research and interdisciplinary innovation in advancing scientific knowledge and creating new possibilities across healthcare, technology, economics and society.