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SURINAME - INDIA RELATIONS AN EMERGING PARTNERSHIP



During her visit to Suriname, President Droupadi Murmu met with President Chandrikapersad Santokhi and visited the Arya Diwakar temple.

Suriname and India, separated by oceans but bound by shared values and aspirations, have forged a robust relationship that transcends geographical boundaries. This enduring bond has been nurtured over decades, rooted in historical connections, cultural affinities, and mutual respect. In recent years, this relationship has evolved into a multifaceted partnership, encompassing trade, diplomacy, culture, and development cooperation.

The historical underpinnings of the Suriname-India relationship date back to the 19th century when indentured labourers from India were brought to Suriname to work on sugarcane plantations. This shared history, though marked by the challenges of indenture, has served as a bedrock for understanding and solidarity between the two nations.

The Indian diaspora in Suriname,

now several generations strong, continues to play a pivotal role in shaping the cultural landscape of the country. Their customs, traditions, and contributions have enriched Surinamese society, creating a vibrant tapestry of cultural diversity. The celebration of festivals such as Diwali, Eid, and Holi serves as a testament to the enduring influence of Indian culture in Suriname.

Diplomatically, Suriname and India have shared mutual support in various international forums. Both nations have collaborated on global issues, including climate change, sustainable development, and counter-terrorism. Additionally, high-level visits and exchanges between leaders of both countries have strengthened bilateral ties.

In recent years, economic ties between Suriname and India have gained momentum. Both countries have recognised the untapped

potential for trade and investment. Indian businesses have shown increasing interest in sectors such as mining, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and information technology. Suriname, on the other hand, offers opportunities in sectors like natural resources, agriculture, and renewable energy.

India has been an active partner in Suriname's development journey, extending technical assistance and grants for projects in areas like healthcare, education, and infrastructure. These collaborative efforts aim to bolster Suriname's economic resilience and promote inclusive growth.

India's rich tradition in education and knowledge-sharing has been a cornerstone of the Suriname-India relationship. Scholarships, training programs, and cultural exchanges have further strengthened



educational ties between the two nations, empowering Surinamese youth with skills and knowledge. As Suriname and India continue to deepen their bilateral relations, there exists a wealth of untapped potential in various sectors. Strengthening trade ties, expanding investment opportunities, and fostering cultural exchanges are just a few avenues that promise mutual benefits. Additionally, joint efforts in areas like climate resilience, technology transfer, and sustainable development hold immense promise for the future.

The Suriname- India relationship stands as a shining example of how shared history and cultural affinities

can lay the foundations for enduring partnerships. As both nations look towards the future, there is boundless potential for further collaboration across various domains. Through sustained diplomatic efforts, economic cooperation, and cultural exchanges, Suriname and India are poised to script a new chapter of shared prosperity and mutual respect.

**Exploring Suriname
A Hidden Gem of South Arica**

Suriname stands as a hidden gem waiting to be discovered by intrepid travellers. This culturally rich and ecologically diverse nation boasts a unique blend of history, biodiversity, and adventure, making it an ideal destination for those seeking an off-the-beaten-path experience. From vibrant cities to pristine rainforests, Suriname's tourism potential is as vast as its untouched landscapes. Suriname's history has various cultures. A former Dutch colony, the influences of the Netherlands are evident in the colonial architecture of Paramaribo, the capital city. The historic inner city of Paramaribo is a UNESCO World Heritage site, where visitors can stroll through cobblestone streets lined with colourful wooden buildings, reflecting a blend of Dutch, English, and Caribbean influences.

The diversity extends beyond the architecture to the people themselves, with a population composed of indigenous peoples, descendants of African slaves, and a significant East Indian and Javanese community. This rich cultural tapestry is evident in Suriname's festivals, music, and cuisine, offering tourists a chance to immerse themselves in a vibrant and unique cultural experience.

Suriname's natural beauty is unparalleled, with over 80% of the country covered by pristine rainforests. The Amazon rainforest

extends into Suriname, providing a habitat for diverse flora and fauna. The Central Suriname Nature Reserve, a UNESCO-listed site, is a haven for nature enthusiasts, offering opportunities for trekking, bird watching, and wildlife photography. The breathtaking Brownsberg Nature Park, with its panoramic views of the Brokopondo Reservoir, is another must-visit destination. Adventure seekers can explore the Upper Suriname River by boat, immersing themselves in the lush greenery while interacting with local Maroon communities, descendants of African slaves who escaped from plantations and established their own societies in the hinterlands.

Suriname's commitment to sustainable tourism is evident in its emphasis on ecotourism. The country's vast and untouched landscapes provide a canvas for activities such as hiking, bird watching, and nature photography. The Raleighvallen Nature Reserve, situated in the heart of the rainforest, is a prime example of Suriname's dedication to preserving its natural heritage.

Turtle nesting sites along the coastal areas, such as Galibi Nature Reserve, offer a unique opportunity to witness the annual ritual of sea turtles laying their eggs. This conservation effort not only contributes to the protection of these endangered species but also provides an unforgettable experience for eco-conscious travelers.

For those seeking an adrenaline rush, Suriname offers a variety of adventure sports. The Upper Suriname River beckons with opportunities for river rafting and kayaking, while the rainforest canopy presents a thrilling backdrop for zip-lining and canopy walks. The diverse landscapes, from mountains to waterfalls, create an ideal setting for outdoor enthusiasts to explore and conquer.

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SURINAME ENJOYS SPECIAL AND CLOSE RELATIONS WITH INDIA

Today is a very special event for the Suriname Embassy, and we are honored that you are here with us this evening. I am overjoyed to see that festivity is in the air.

This is my first Independence Day Celebration as the Ambassador of Suriname to India and I must confess it is somewhat a feeling of great pride when you celebrate your national day while living in another country.

But it is with extra pride when it is celebrated in India. Our Independence Day is on the **25th of November**, but due to several reasons, we have decided to start celebrating this special day (earlier). This year it will be 48 years since Suriname gained its status as an independent nation and became **the Republic of Suriname**. When remembering the Suriname independence, it is important to keep in mind that around 1975, there was never a widely supported independence mass movement. In that period the Netherlands was in the process of renouncing its colonial possessions, and because of that, and for financial reasons, it was happy to consent to Suriname's independence. Since 1970, many people from Suriname were migrating to the Netherlands for the hope of better economic circumstances and higher education possibilities. But as the plans for an independent Suriname became more and more concrete, even more, Surinamese people left the country for the Netherlands. Many Surinamese did not have any trust in an independent state and feared political unrest and a worsening of the economic situation. When we look at the Suriname - India relations at first glance, Suriname and India seem like two very different countries but a close look at our histories reveals that we are much closer than one may initially assume.



*Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi Minister of state for external affairs.
GOI and H E Mr. Arunkoemar Hardien, Ambassador of Suriname to India*

The solidarity between Suriname and India is based on rebuilding economies and social systems after colonial rule. Suriname enjoys special and close relations with India, reinforced by cultural and people-to-people contact bridged by Indian Diaspora's arrival dating back to 150 years. The arrival of Indians in Suriname marks an important milestone in the history of Suriname, establishing a historical connection between the two nations.

President Droupadi Murmu during her state visit to Suriname in June this year, on the occasion of the commemoration of 150 years of the arrival of Indians in Suriname, lauded the Indian diaspora in Suriname as an important pillar of the deepening partnership between India and Suriname.

Bilateral Cooperation:

- Both countries have worked towards strengthening bilateral ties and promoting cooperation in various fields.
- India and Suriname have engaged in diplomatic exchanges, high-level visits, and discussions to enhance collaboration.
- The next Joint Meeting between the Foreign Ministers

is planned in the first week of December

Economic Partnership:

Economic cooperation between Suriname and India has gained momentum in recent years

- Efforts have been made to promote trade and investment through bilateral agreements and business delegations.
- India has extended a line of credit and technical assistance to support infrastructure projects and capacity building in Suriname.
- Minister, once again our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the Government of India for the support received from India for our economic reform program

Development Assistance:

- India is providing development assistance to Suriname, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, information technology, Ayurveda and renewable energy.
- These initiatives aim to support Suriname's socio-economic development and strengthen its institutional capabilities.

People-to-People Exchanges:

- Cultural exchanges, academic scholarships, and training programs have facilitated people-to-people interactions between Suriname and India.
- These exchanges help foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of each other's cultures and traditions.

International Cooperation:

- Suriname and India have also collaborated on international platforms, including the United Nations, to address common challenges and promote shared interests.
- They have supported each other's candidates and positions on various global issues.

COVID-19 Assistance:

- India has extended support to Suriname during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing medical supplies, vaccines, and technical expertise to combat the spread of the virus.
- This cooperation reflects the solidarity and friendship between the two countries in times of crisis.

The Suriname-India bilateral relations are grounded in shared aspirations for development.

Distinguished guests, today, as we gather here to celebrate the Independence Day of our beloved nation, we stand on the threshold of a new era. It is a momentous occasion that calls for reflection on our journey as a nation, our achievements, and the challenges that lie ahead.

Independence Day is not just a date on the calendar; it represents the great spirit of our people and their unyielding commitment to building a better future for generations to come. As we look back at our progress since that historic day, we can take pride in the remarkable strides we have made in various fields. Suriname might be

the smallest and least populated country in South America, but it is also one of the greenest. Considered a global leader in biodiversity conservation, with more than 90 percent of its land surface covered by native forests, the nation's unrivaled natural resources more than make up for its size. Suriname is also a multi-linguistic, multi-cultural, multi-religious, and multi-ethnic mosaic of people from around the world.

While celebrating our successes, we must also acknowledge the challenges that remain. We must continue to work together to ensure that the benefits of progress reach every citizen. Eliminating poverty, bridging socio-economic gaps, ensuring equal opportunities, and safeguarding our environment are tasks that demand our collective dedication.

Towards 2025, Suriname will be marking the 50th anniversary of Independence. The decisions we take today, the foundations we lay today, the projects we undertake today, the social and economic investments we make today whether for the immediate future or for the medium term - will determine where we stand.

The pace of change and development is rapid and appreciable. When we develop strategies, we have to base them on our reality. Suriname is rapidly establishing itself as a prominent player in offshore oil and gas exploration. But offshore Oil and Gas is new for Suriname. Suriname has at least three to four billion barrels of reserves and I would like to welcome Indian businesses, to benefit from our resources and invite them to invest and contribute as contractors and sub-contractors.

Distinguished guests, on this special day, let us reaffirm our commitment to the progress and prosperity of both our countries Suriname and India. Let

us celebrate the diversity that defines us and work hand in hand to build a nation that stands as a shining example of unity, progress, and compassion. Let us pledge to perform our fundamental duty to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavor and achievement.

As we celebrate today, let's promise to uphold the values of peace, equality, and progress. Let us keep promoting a sense of shared responsibility for the welfare of humanity and to sincerely work for peace. Keeping the peace has become more important but also more complex in a world of proliferating conflicts.

As part of our program today, we will be presenting a Bhartnatayam performance with a theme that resonates across borders. A performance seeking harmony and balance a balance between gender, a balance of energies within us, harmony with nature and ultimately peace in the world. Let us move forward with the spirit of harmony and unity to realize the dreams of our nation-builders. Together, we build partnerships for prosperity.

We deeply appreciate you joining us this evening to celebrate our Independence Day. On behalf of the Surinamese Government and People, I offer you our warmth and hospitality, and once again extend my greetings to you.

Please let's enjoy together.

Dankjewel

Thank you Dhanyebaad

(Speech of H. E. Arunkoemar Hardien, Ambassador on the occasion of Independence Day of Republic of Suriname)

7TH COMMEMORATIVE ANNIVERSARY OF BHOJPURI FOLK SONG IN MAURITIUS-GEET GAWAI AT UNESCO

Dr Mrs Sarita Boodhoo
Chairperson Bhojpuri Speaking Union

The seventh Commemorative Anniversary of the Bhojpuri Folk Songs in Mauritius- Geet Gawai's Inscription at UNESCO was held on Friday 1st December in the magnificent spacious auditorium of the Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture (IGCIC) at Phoenix.

On the same occasion, the Bhojpuri Speaking Union which operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage celebrated the tenth anniversary of its setting up and the tenth anniversary of the first Geet Gawai School at Petit Raffray. This all in the context of the 55th Anniversary celebrations of the Independence of Mauritius and the Antarastriya Bhojpuri Mahotsav of April 2024.

Actually, the Bhojpuri Speaking Union was set up as stipulated in an Act of Parliament in May 2011. The Bhojpuri Speaking Union was subsequently amended in Parliament in October 2015. The Bhojpuri Speaking Union Act was gazetted as per Government Gazette of Mauritius No 109 of 31 March 2013.

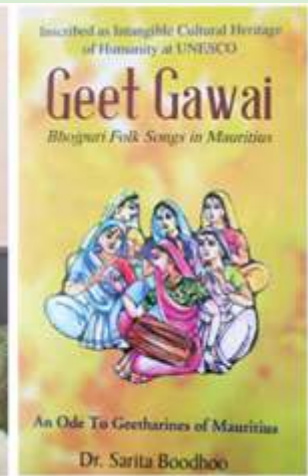
The Ministry of Arts and Culture set up the Board of the Bhojpuri Speaking Union on 6th September 2013. However it was on 3rd of August 2012 that the Chairperson of the Bhojpuri Speaking Union was appointed. (Dr Mrs Sarita Boodhoo)

The main activities of the Bhojpuri Speaking Union are in line with the Mission Statement and the aims, functions and objectives set up in the Bhojpuri Speaking Union Act of Parliament 2011.

The aim of Bhojpuri Speaking Union is to consolidate the tangible and intangible cultural and linguistic heritage, traditions and vibrancy of Bhojpuri language locally and globally.

VISION

To give Bhojpuri a parity of esteem in the comity of languages to facilitate national and global understanding. This is in line with the UNESCO Convention of 2003 and



Proclamation of 2008 as an International Year of Mother Language and as stipulated in the Act of Parliament 2011 of the Republic of Mauritius.

MISSION

To create a platform locally and globally for the promotion and propagation of Bhojpuri as a language, literature, culture and verbal art form and as a vehicle of communication through literacy, cultural, educational and social activities. To accomplish this vision, our mission is to seek the collaboration of partners from national and universal fraternity and the academic world. Therefore partnership of academic, intellectual and other socio-cultural institutions is called for and desirable.

OBJECTIVES

In line with the objectives spelled out in the Bhojpuri Speaking Union Act-2011 which includes inter alia:

- a. To arouse awareness on Bhojpuri language and culture and promote intercultural exchange among the Mauritian nation at large and globally to create harmony in the sharing of our common rich intangible cultural heritage.
- b. To experience the rich traditions of Bhojpuri culture through its cuisine, oral traditions and literature, films, songs and dances and

verbal art.

- c. To encourage literary activities, promote Bhojpuri writings and giving it greater visibility as a literary vehicle. To encourage diasporic exchanges in particular among the youth.

The Bhojpuri Speaking Union ever since it's setting up has undertaken a number of activities to create awareness about the Bhojpuri language and culture. It has promoted intercultural exchange among the Mauritian nation at large as well as globally. This in a bid to create harmony in the sharing of our common rich intangible cultural heritage now safeguarded with the inscription of Bhojpuri Folk Songs in Mauritius- Geet Gawai at UNESCO on December 1st 2016. It was listed on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity at the 11th session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Addis Ababa Ethiopia.

At IGCIC on 1st December 2023

The guests were welcomed in the traditional way with Parchawan (welcome song), *aarti*, flowers, incense and perfume by Mrs. Rita Poonith, Head of Geet Gawai School and the *Guruwaines* and *Geetharines*.

The Guest of Honour, the President of the Republic of Mauritius, HE Mr

Prithvirajsing Roopun and his wife Mrs Sayukta Roopun as well as the Vice President of the Republic HE Hon Marie Cyril Eddy Boissezon were received with all Honour as per the tradition. Was also honoured the 1st Secretary of the Indian High Commission Shri Ranjan Kumar who represented HE Mrs Nandini Singla High Commissioner taken up with the visit of Shri Vinay Prabhakar Sahasrabudde, President of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) who could not make it for the function due to flight delays.

The Bhojpuri Speaking Union solicited the help of several parastatal bodies operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage namely the National Heritage Fund whose President Mr Shivaji Dowlatrao sponsored with the approval of the Board, the Awards and cash prize of Rs1000/ each to 13 meritorious heads of Geet Gawai Schools; the Mauritius Film Development Corporation (MFDC) which provided logistic visual support.

Theme: From Dadi-Nani to Youth and Children

In a bid to safeguard, promote and transmit Geet Gawai and its vehicle Bhojpuri Language, the theme of the commemoration this year was from Dadi-Nani to Youth and Children i.e. from the grandmothers to the younger generation.

The 51 Geet Gawai Schools presented a ballet on the marriage of Ram and Sita through the story of life with various Bhojpuri songs such as *Devi Devta Geet* (offering to gods and goddesses to give their blessings), *Mandar Dholak puja* (worship of the *Dholak*- Cosmic Sound), *Dharti Bandhal Geet* (homage to Mother Earth), *Pinda Paraye* (homage to Ancestors), *Paramparik Jhumar* Performance (traditional *Jumar* circular vigorous dance accompanied by songs by the name *Jhumar*). Thirteen young girls were inducted into the **Geet Gawai** through an on the spot workshop on stage by *Guruwaines*. It was conducted by Mrs Reeta Poonith and her teachers.

Another highlight of the event was a workshop for College going girls and

young professional women on **Geet Gawai** conducted by the dynamic Educator Mrs. Tejshree Beharee herself an Engineer but whose love for dance took her to Bharat Natyam and now she has decided to give a push to the Bhojpuri **Geet Gawai** to inculcate this rich heritage among the younger generation.

The Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture (IGCIC) also augmented the beauty of the programme by the graceful performance of cultural items by its teachers and students.

They gave a Yoga Presentation in vivid dance postures. It should be remembered that Yoga also is an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity inscribed at UNESCO together with **Geet Gawai** on December 1st 2016 at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Yoga item was presented by Ms Sowmya ND and her students. A *kathak* dance was presented by Mrs. Sadhna Negi and students based on a traditional Bhojpuri Folk Song *Kajri "Barsan lagi badariya Jhoum Jhoum key"* of Mrs Malini Awasthi, the internationally known Bhojpuri Folk artist.

There was also a vocal presentation by Mr. Pankaj Nautiyal and students of the Indira Gandhi Center for Indian Culture. The whole event was masterfully conducted by Mrs. Kiran Janke, Researcher and consultant at Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and Ms. Bhavna CalyaChetty, young trainee at the Bhojpuri Speaking Union were the MC who presented the programme with much vivacity and verve.

Musical Instruments that accompany the **Geet Gawai** and registered at the UNESCO are;

Dholak- Wood, Lota and Spoon-Copper, Chimta- Brass, Capsule tops in a wire string (in place of manjira), Lakreetaal-Wood.

The *Geet Gawai* practitioners are enjoined to keep to traditional musical instruments listed above in order to maintain the transmission of the legacy in its authenticity.

1. The **Geet Gawai** was brought to the shores of Mauritius from the vast Bhojpuri belt of Bihar, UP- the Eastern part of India during the **Indentured**

Labour Movement as from **2nd November 1834.**

2. The **Geet Gawai** is a Bhojpuri Musical ensemble sung by women traditionally on wedding occasions and on other joyful occasions. It was considered for generations as part of the backwaters of Mauritian Cultural life.
3. Originally **Geet Gawai** was performed within the intimacy and confines of the home and till recently within women circle only. I have for several decades been helping the **Geetharines** to come forward outside their closed door performance to sing and dance at various public functions as a vivid and living expression of Mauritian Cultural life.

The **Geet Gawai** was an unbelievable wealth of knowledge that was unearthed during the preparations of the inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Mauritius. It was first included in the inventory of 2011 and the Government of Mauritius decided to send the Nomination Dossier of **Geet Gawai** together with the **Sega Tipik** for inscription at UNESCO. I started working on the Dossier officially as a consultant with the University of Mauritius, the Ministry of Arts and Culture(now since 2019 Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage), the National Heritage Fund and other bodies since then until its recognition by UNESCO and I still continue to promote it with the same fervour and dedication.

In this way we have empowered these tradition bearers, given them a meaning in life and an identity and self-esteem. The **Geetharines** have shown considerable resilience. At first, they were considered as the dregs of the dreg. Inferiorised in the Indentured Labour System itself where male labourers were favoured. Secondly, within the family social set up where they were suppressed under patriarchal society, where they were first subjected to the grandfather, father, brothers and later on when married subjected to the same pressure and oppression by the husband and his family. Despite all these hardships and social

repressions, the **Geet Gawai** women have manifested tremendous resistance, buoyancy, perseverance and determination. They have succeeded from generation to generation to keep this rich oral Cultural Heritage alive and intact so that today it is not only the proud heritage of Mauritius but of humanity as a whole.

The setting up of **Geet Gawai Schools** has given visibility and dignity to these women mostly rural, first in their own eyes and in the eyes of their immediate family and in the eyes of the public and the authority.

Now we are transmitting this rich legacy to the younger generation while at the same time protecting the heritage from modernity and over commercialization.

Geet Gawai: The Music That Celebrates Life

The Geet Gawai is a life cycle oral tradition of the Bhojpuri Folk singing sung on auspicious occasions principally on pre-wedding and wedding ceremonies. It is also sung on birth, janeo (thread giving), mundun (tonsure) and other family rejoicings. Today they have come out of the secluded confines of the four walls of the home and are performed on stage at public events. The pre-wedding folk songs are sung in the evening lasting till late in the night warming up till the early next morning.

Togetherness in Melody

There is usually one lead singer, followed in chorus by the group of singers. There is a complicity of shared camaraderie among them, a togetherness in melody as they warm up to their rich repertoire song after song.

The Uniqueness of the Genres

The genres include a multitude of beautiful Bhojpuri folk songs depicting the moods, moments, stories and myths from the hoary past, portraying romance of the coming together of man and woman in the different stages of life. As well as showing the love, affection and auspiciousness that pervades the ceremonies and bind the family together.

The proper Geet Gawai sung at pre-

wedding and wedding occasions starts with invocations such as *sandhyas, devi devta geet, mahadeo, shaadi geet*, followed by *sumirans, mandar puja, dharti bandhal* and so on. Other wedding songs accompany each and every wedding rite and tradition such as *matkor, tilak, chumawal, lawamilai, kanyadan, sindurdan* etc. There are other varieties that accompany festivals such a holi, harvest, drought (*harparawri*) or rainy season or grinding (*jantsar*), or godna (tattooing) etc.

The Climax of the Geet Gawai

Eventually the climax is reached in the singing when the *Geetharines* bring out several lilting Jhumar one after the other from their rich repertoire accompanied by women dancing rhythmically in circular forms to the beat of *dholak, lota, chimta, lakritaal* and clapping of hands. The atmosphere is electrifying. No one can resist but join in when the rhythm peaks. And this goes for the family members and the younger generations who are mesmerized by the fast beat of the music and pulled in by force of the rhythm.

Geet Gawai- World Patrimony of Humanity

Since the setting up of Bhojpuri Speaking Union, **Geet Gawai School** at Petit Raffray in October 2013, the **Geet Gawai** has gathered much momentum and resurgence. At one time, people even stated that **Geet Gawai** "*pe alle mort ca, inne fini*". Not so now. It has found its *lettre de noblesse*, its niche in society. In fact, nowadays, **Geet Gawai** is included in an exclusive little card with wedding invitations for a special family gathering. The demand to learn the proper way of performing and singing the songs on the part of women is so great, that so far the Bhojpuri Speaking Union has set up 51 **Geet Gawai Schools** all over the country with a long waiting list. Which has led the Bhojpuri Speaking Union to target 50 Bhojpuri **Geet Gawai Schools** for the next few years. In fact the aim is to open a Geet Gawai School in every village, subur and town. Together with the Bhojpuri Geet Gawai School it is envisaged to open a *baithka* with each **Geet Gawai School**. As it is, the Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth announced on 2nd November at Aapravasi Ghat that

those teaching Bhojpuri will be remunerated. Bhojpuri therefore has regained its lustre. With each Bhojpuri **Geet Gawai Schools**, the Bhojpuri Speaking Union is proposing to operate a Bhojpuri Learning Class for adults, youth and children.

In fact Bhojpuri has always been a vibrant form of communication and patriotism, leading to the independence of Mauritius. The message of mass mobilization would be done in Bhojpuri from *baithkas* to *baithka*.

Tribute

Gratitude and tribute is paid to the groups of "Geetharines and Guruwaines", tradition bearers who for almost two hundred years since their implantation in Mauritius from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand have from generation to generation learnt the songs orally from their elders, Dadi-Nani as an oral form of Art, sang it continually, making it a spontaneous, melodious, rhythmic and above all soulful medium, that is easily communicable, touching audiences instantly. The Geet Gawai is rooted in the lives of the performers and the Geetharines. It is a sanskar that has come from the Rig Veda 5000 years ago, in oral forms.

Geet Gawai is not a Jalsa

The recognition at UNESCO has demanded great efforts and collaboration of several partners and stakeholders led by State Party Mauritius. In fact, ever since the Convention of UNESCO for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage was set up from 29 September to 17 October 2003 at its 32nd session in Paris, it became a milestone in the evolution of International policies for promoting cultural diversity.

"Because it was the first time that the international community had recognised a need to support the kind of cultural manifestations and expressions that until then had not benefited from such a large legal and programmatic framework." (UNESCO)

With this inscription, Government of Mauritius specially as Member of 24 Intergovernmental Committee of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of

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AN INTERACTION AND WORKSHOP WITH 68TH KIP DELEGATES AT PRAVASI BHAVAN BHARAT

On November 16th, 2023, the Diaspora Research and Resource Centre (DRRC) - Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP) organized an interactive session and workshop for 30 participants from eight countries who were part of the 68th Know India Program (KIP) batch of the event took place at the Pravasi Bhawan and was attended by participants from Malaysia, Fiji, Guyana, Mauritius, Myanmar, South Africa, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Amb. Virendra Gupta, President, ARSP, shared a common belief regarding migration, where people tend to view the relocation of the diaspora to developed countries as driven solely by economic motives. This perception causes lack of emotional detachment of the general public. The prevailing notion that migrants seek opportunities abroad only for financial gain oversimplifies the complex challenges faced by the diaspora during different phases of their migration. Ambassador Gupta of attention to historical context and said that during times when India was considered economically weaker, the diaspora lacked enthusiasm towards their country of origin. It was during this challenging period that ARSP was established, to bridge the perceptual gap between the Indian diaspora and their homeland.

Amb. Gupta also spoke about the visionary approach of Late Shri Baleshwar Ji towards the Indian diaspora. He emphasized the importance of fostering connections beyond economic and political dimensions. The focus expanded to encompass cultural and traditional ties, recognizing the significance of these elements in establishing a holistic and enduring bond between the diaspora and India. Ambassador Gupta's introductory remarks not only outlined the historical and cultural foundations of the Indian diaspora but also emphasized the pivotal role of ARSP in rectifying misperceptions and promoting a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of migration and

its impact on the diaspora's relationship with their homeland.

H.E. Dr. Roger Gopaul - High Commissioner, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, delivered a keynote address on the importance of preserving Indian culture. He shared his own experiences from school, where he encountered people who had wrong perceptions about Indian culture and tradition. Dr. Gopaul remembered Swami Vivekananda's 1897 speech which inspired him to stand proudly with our tradition and culture. He encouraged the delegates to be proud of their traditions, culture, and language. He took examples from religious and spiritual landmarks to explain different aspects of Indian civilization and advised the KIP participants to take this opportunity seriously and learn about India's rich culture and history. Dr. Gopaul urged KIP participants to use this chance to preserve their cultural identity and traditions with pride when they return home.

Mr. Amizal Fadzil Rajali, the Deputy High Commissioner of Malaysia, underscored the significance of the Know India Programme (KIP) in enhancing the exposure and knowledge of the youth regarding India. He emphasized the unpredictable nature of today's interconnected world, stressing the importance of understanding different cultures through regular interactions, as one never knows when assistance may be required. Mr. Rajali also touched upon Deepawali, a notable festival in Malaysia, highlighting the enduring cultural similarities between India and Malaysia over the centuries. He briefly outlined the bilateral relations between the two nations and advocated for increase in Malaysian participation in the KIP delegation.



Honorable guests are addressing the 68th KIP delegates at Pravasi Bhawan

Mr. Jaysen K. Ramasamy, First Secretary of the Mauritius High Commission in New Delhi, delivered his remarks on India's successful presidency of G20. During the G20 summit in Delhi, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi invited Mauritius to participate in the meeting. He highlighted Mauritius' commitment to the concept of 'One earth one family, one future' and expressed gratitude for the invitation to participate in the summit.

Mr. Nilesh Roneel Kumar, who serves as the Counselor at High Commission of Republic of Fiji, encouraged participants of the KIP (Know India Program) to view this platform as a starting point for establishing connections with diaspora youth. He emphasized the significance of utilizing this opportunity to engage with and build connections in India. Mr. Kumar urged participants to actively promote awareness of the program, aiming to extend its benefits to a larger number of diaspora youth. Additionally, he underscored the dynamic relationship between India and Fiji.

Ms. Koentala Hardwarsingh, a diplomate of Republic of Suriname embassy encouraged the participants to learn about the Indian developmental processes and the opportunities and challenges they present. She also suggested that the KIP participants use this platform as a foundation to connect with diaspora youth, as people-to-people connections are crucial for successful

bilateral relations between countries. KIP is a great opportunity for engagement and connection with India.

Mr. Amardeep Barnwal, the Under Secretary of OIA-II in the MEA, gave a brief introduction to the Know India Programme (KIP) and its purpose. He also mentioned the continuous development and increase in the number of participants from different diaspora countries. He stated that the KIP is still in the experimental phase, and that they are working to make it a more inclusive, participatory, and knowledge-based programme.

Prof. Gopal Arora, Secretary of ARSP, delivered a presentation using a PowerPoint slideshow. He provided an in-depth overview of ARSP and DRRC and explained their connections with the diaspora over the past six decades. He also spoke about the various events that have been organized by DRRC and ARSP related to diaspora issues. Moreover, he informed the participants about a short-term course on the Indian diaspora that DRRC has launched in collaboration with several academic institutions. Professor Arora expressed his appreciation for the commendable efforts of ARSP and DRRC.

Ms. Komal Chhikara, is an Assistant Professor at the University of Delhi, led a workshop on 'Indian Festivals and Traditions.' During the workshop, she talked about the various festivals celebrated across India. To help illustrate her points, she used colorful

PowerPoint slides that showcased the diversity of Indian festivals. After her informative presentation, she engaged the participants in a fun activity. She created a set of twenty questions based on what she had just shared, and she used a Google questionnaire for the participants to answer. The participants submitted their answers online. To reward the participants for their efforts, she gave away prizes. The prizes included books, pens, and mementos. The winners were determined based on the accuracy and speed of their responses to the questions. It was a lively and engaging way to learn about Indian festivals and traditions, and everyone had a chance to win something special.

Overall during the session, heads of mission along with honorable diplomatic representatives briefed the participants on the strengths of Indian culture, language, economy, higher education, and technology. They emphasized the importance of the KIP program and encouraged the participants to learn about the Indian developmental processes, including the significant opportunities and challenges that come with it.

In the interaction session with KIP delegates, Professor Gopal Arora, Secretary of ARSP, encouraged the delegates to discuss their experiences with others. In the lively discussion, participants shared their perspectives on India, drawing from their diverse connections. The delegates were notably impressed during their visit, not only for the opportunity to reconnect with their



cultural roots but also to witness India's advancements in socioeconomic, technology, and IT domains. They expressed a sense of pride in India's achievements, particularly in economic growth, higher education, and technology. Additionally, the delegates discussed the delightful aspects of Indian cuisine, emphasizing that they were departing with cherished experiences and memories.

In the end, **Shri Narayan Kumar**, Hon. Director of ARSP, in his concluding remarks and expression of gratitude, recognized the significant contributions of the Indian diaspora across the globe. Additionally, he emphasized the crucial role that youth plays as a foundation in any society, highlighting the diaspora youth's significant impact in inspiring India's reputation globally. The event concluded with a vote of thanks and the issuance of certificates to the KIP batch, acknowledging their enthusiastic involvement.

Continued from the Page 7

UNESCO, is bound to safeguard the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills associated with Bhojpuri and Bhojpuri Folk Songs. There are periodic reportings carried on by the State Parties and submitted to UNESCO to evaluate what the government has done to promote, preserve and transmit the listed elements. With reference to Article 11 of the 2003 Convention, the Government of Mauritius has the obligation to take the necessary measure to ensure the safeguarding of **Geet Gawai** and its vehicle Bhojpuri seriously as well as other Cultural Heritage on its territory and

see to it that Bhojpuri is taught as a language in both formal and nonformal Education.

It is worth noting that Mauritius became one of the very first signatories of the Convention 2003 since its ratification coming into force on 20 April 2006. To date 172 countries out of 195 Member States of UNESCO have ratified the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which is more than 4/5 of all Nations. This large concern by Member States for Intangible Cultural Heritage on their territories is revealing of their deep interest in the subject.

Following the ratification, UNESCO organised an international workshop in Mauritius in April 2003 on the conduct of inventories and identification of elements worth forming part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. It was an unbelievable wealth of knowledge that was unearthed. The Geet Gawai element was first included in the inventory in 2011 and updated continuously in the following years. It is remarkable that in tiny Mauritius there are some 120 elements that have been catalogued. Geet Gawai forms part of this inventory since then.

LAUNCHING OF THE BOOK “MAHACHALANE” (GREAT MOVEMENT)

Mahachalane -(The Great Movement)- a work in Kannada language on the history, culture, customs, rituals and struggle of the Banjara tribe authored by D. Rama Naik was launched at a glittering function on November 5, 2023 at the KAS Officers Association Auditorium in Bangalore. The event was organised by International Banjara Roma Association, Bangalore.

Speaking after releasing the book, well known scholar Prof. Hampa Nagarajaiah declared that the book is a magnum opus on the travails and tribulations of the Banjara tribe which survived and progressed against all odds unleashed by the State and society alike through centuries. Comparing the adventures of explorer Columbus who discovered new lands with his voyages, he said that the book is the culmination of author Rama Naik's travels to various parts of the globe and research. He lauded that the book gives a cross section view of the Banjara and the Roma diaspora and spreads light on the origin, history and the epic struggle of the tribe. Appreciating the production values of the book, he pointed out the unique narration of the book which assimilates personal experiences with the historical facts to make an excellent reading. The book, complete with text and photographs make it a must read to any reader whether he is familiar with the tribe or not, he affirmed.

Speaking on the content of the book, Dr. K Y Narayanaswamy, well known author and playwright said that the work is a rare example of presenting history from a subaltern perspective. Here the author himself narrates the history of his community which belongs to a low ranking in a social, political, or other hierarchy and he conforms to the idea that the authentic history of a marginalised community should be told from its lowest echelons.

Analysing the text Dr. Narayanaswamy stated that as the history of all civilizations is the saga of great movements, the book “Mahachalane” as the name implies, chronicles the movements of the Banjara and the Romas through the historical times. In his insightful remarks he said that the book points out the historical injustices meted out to the community by the State and society at different points of time, without resorting to rhetoric or bitterness. However the author is of

the opinion that education and asserting one's roots alone emancipates the community.

The book which is literally a riot of colour, information and insights suggests that a sense of pride and perseverance help the community to brave the hardships to create a niche for itself, Dr Narayanaswamy explained.

Speaking on the occasion as one of the chief guests, Sri A C Lakshmana, former Forest secretary showered encomiums on the efforts of Rama Naik said the book is a great tribute to the leaders who helped to keep the tribe from falling apart and appreciated that the sense of preserving the language and culture by the Banjaras has set a benchmark for others to emulate. He admired the dedication of Rama Naik for the upliftment of the society many a time ignoring his personal works and the community will be ever grateful for his endeavours. The book is a great work of his creative efforts and would remain as a milestone in the history of Banjaras, he said.

Another chief guest, Sri. Prakash Rathod, MLC and former chief whip in the Karnataka Legislative council, speaking on the occasion remembered how Rama Naik inspired him to join politics and take up community development work. He stated that the book gives an integrated picture of the community and should be read by all. He also opined that efforts are needed to reach the book to every corner of the State.

Rama Naik, author of the book, explained the circumstances under which he undertook this venture and his efforts to collect the information to compile this volume. He shared a few of interesting experiences and said that he is always very proud of his Banjara origin and his travels, interaction with community people around India and across the globe further strengthened his convictions.

Earlier in his keynote address Dr. K. Puttaswamy, writer, explained the circumstances under which Rama Naik resolved to take up research and writing. Rama Naik who was all along working for the upliftment of marginalised sections of the society in general, and Banjaras in particular, had decided, soon after his retirement from service, to dedicate in

the work of organising his community and initiated various movements establishing institutions such as National Banjara Professors Association, Banjara Doctors



◀ Rama Naik
Author

Seva Association etc., His interest in Romas, whose origin is linked to Banjaras, took him to various parts of the world. Armed with information, interactions and experience he decided to compile the history, culture, language of Banjaras, their socio-political, educational and economic standing. Dr Puttaswamy explained that the author had published his compilations in English (Titled PROUD TO BE A BANJARA) which was released in Turkey and its Hindi version (Banjaron ki Raah) in Ahmedabad by Jnanapeeth awardee Gujarati writer Prof. Raghuvir Chowdhury.

The Kannada version is not an exact translation of earlier work but a more comprehensively revised and edited work incorporating more information and insights, Dr Puttaswamy asserted. In her presidential remarks Dr. B T Lalitha Naik, renowned writer, former minister and activist felt the need of writing authentic history which will help to understand the real society and its roots. She complimented that “Mahachalane” is one such attempt to understand the veritable history of Banjaras. Only such works and their reading would enhance one's sensibilities to understand the society better, she asserted. Dr. Lalitha Naik also gave a call to young writers and research scholars to explore the historical and cultural ethos of Banjara community which offers exciting scope for such studies.

The program was well attended by the elders of the society, officers, activists, social workers, retired officers, friends and family members who came from many districts of Karnataka exclusively for this event.

In the beginning acclaimed Banjara singer Sri R.B. Naik and his associates entertained the audience with their soulful, melodious Banjara songs. Dr. Harish Naik, senior KAS officer welcomed the guests and the gathering. Dr Ravi Janapada anchored the program. ■

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER S JAISHANKAR HIGHLIGHTS TRUST AS PILLAR FOR INDO-PACIFIC STABILITY AT AUSTRALIA-INDIA LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE

In a virtual address at the sixth edition of the Australia-India Leadership Dialogue (AILD) on Friday, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar emphasized the pivotal role of trust, or "Bharosa," in fostering cooperation between like-minded partners, particularly India and Australia. The minister highlighted that this trust is a driving force in securing a free, open, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region alongside a rules-based international order.

Addressing the attendees, Mr. Jaishankar noted that the AILD aptly coined the theme 'Bridges of Bharosa (trust),' emphasizing the importance of trust in the relationship between the two nations. Against the backdrop of China's growing assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region, he underscored the significance of trust among democratic nations.

The minister pointed out that India and Australia, as strong democracies and dynamic economies in the Indo-Pacific, can make a substantial difference through cooperation on a practical, progressive, and sustainable agenda. He highlighted

the achievements in the bilateral relationship in 2023, terming it a defining year for the 'dosti' (friendship) between the two nations.

Mr. Jaishankar acknowledged the numerous firsts, including the First Annual Leaders Summit, high-level visits, the entry into force of the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA), and the establishment of a Little India in Sydney. He expressed satisfaction with the strong bipartisan support for India-Australia relations in both countries.

The minister outlined the extensive bilateral frameworks and collaborations, ranging from defence and security to trade and economic cooperation, science and technology, education, and people-to-people ties. He emphasized the success of the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP), which was announced in June 2020.



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar speaks at the Australia-India Leadership Dialogue 2023, via video conference

Touching upon the theme of 'Skill for Success,' Mr. Jaishankar highlighted the potential for India's skilled workforce to contribute to addressing Australia's needs and shortages. He encouraged discussions on further integrating economies, businesses, and creating new supply chains.

The minister commended the AILD for establishing itself as a key Track 1.5 engagement and praised the contemporary and outcome-oriented themes chosen for this year's dialogue. He expressed optimism about the potential for increased collaboration and success in the India-Australia partnership. ■

DIPLOMATIC POSTINGS

Shri Saurabh Kumar (IFS:1989), presently Secretary in the Ministry, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Belgium**. He will also be accredited as Ambassador of India to the European Union.

Shri Dinkar Asthana, (IFS:1990), presently Ambassador of India to the Republic of Senegal, has been concurrently accredited as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Guinea-Bissau**.

Shri Upender Singh Rawat (IFS:1998), presently High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Uganda, has been concurrently accredited as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Burundi**, with residence in Kampala.

Shri Anil Kumar Rai (IFS:2001), presently Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, has been

appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**.

Shri Robert Shetkintong (IFS:2001), presently Ambassador of India to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has been appointed as the **next High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Mozambique**.

Dr. Amit S. Telang (IFS:2005), presently High Commissioner of India to the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, has been concurrently accredited to the following, with residence in Georgetown, as the **next:**

a) High Commissioner of India to the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis.

b) Ambassador of India to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

c) High Commissioner of India to Antigua & Barbuda. ■

GARBA OF GUJARAT' DECLARED AS AN INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE by UNESCO

A proud moment for India's cultural heritage, the traditional dance form 'Garba of Gujarat' has been officially inscribed in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity by UNESCO. This significant recognition took place during the 18th meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage from December 5th to 9th 2023, in Kasane, Botswana.

Garba of Gujarat marks the 15th ICH element from India to join this prestigious list, highlighting its pivotal role as a unifying force that fosters social and gender inclusivity. Rooted in ritualistic and devotional practices, Garba engages individuals from diverse backgrounds, making it a vibrant living tradition that continues to bring communities together.

The Ministry of Culture, Government of India, played a crucial role in this achievement, emphasizing its commitment to safeguarding, promoting, and preserving the country's intangible cultural heritage. Union Minister of Culture, Tourism & Development of North Eastern Region, Shri G. Kishan Reddy, expressed his pride in the government's efforts, stating that this recognition testifies to the tireless endeavors under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. In a statement, Prime Minister Narendra Modi remarked that the

global acknowledgment of Garba showcases the beauty of Indian culture to the world. He emphasized Garba as a celebration of life, unity, and deep-rooted traditions, expressing that this honor inspires the nation to preserve and promote its heritage for future generations.

The Evaluation Body of the 2003 Convention praised India for an outstanding dossier with comprehensive supporting material and for nominating an element that champions unity in diversity, cultivating social equality among varied communities. This recognition by UNESCO is expected to significantly elevate Garba's global visibility and authentic essence.

To celebrate this remarkable achievement, a troupe of eight dancers from the Indian Council for Cultural Relations showcased the Garba dance form at the meeting venue. Meanwhile, across Gujarat, the Government is organizing curated 'Garba' events in various districts, symbolizing the cultural richness and diversity of the state.

The Listing mechanism under the UNESCO 2003 Convention aims to enhance the visibility of intangible cultural heritage, fostering



awareness of its significance and promoting dialogue that respects cultural diversity. India's election to the 24-Member Inter-governmental Committee (IGC) of the ICH 2003 Convention in 2022 for a tenure of four years underscores the nation's commitment to the safeguarding and promotion of its cultural heritage.

Joining India on the IGC this year were Angola, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Czechia, Ethiopia, Germany, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam.

The global recognition of Garba by UNESCO is not only a moment of pride for India but also a testament to the country's rich cultural tapestry, serving as an inspiration to preserve and celebrate its diverse heritage on the world stage. ■

Days to Remember

in January, 2024

January 01 : New Year Begins

January 04 : Myanmar- Independence Day

January 11 : Amavasya ●

January 12 : National Youth Day-Swami Vivekanand Jayanti

January 13 : Lohri

January 15 : Makar Sankranti + Pongal

January 15 : Army Day

January 23 : Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose

January 25 : Purnima □

January 25 : National Tourism Day

January 26 : Republic Day of India

January 26 : Australia- Australia Day

SAUDI ARABIA: IN A FIRST, INDIAN EMBASSY HOSTS ALL-SANSKRIT EVENT TO PROMOTE LANGUAGE

In a groundbreaking initiative, the Embassy of India in Riyadh organized the first-ever event conducted entirely in Sanskrit, titled "Samskritotsava," recognizing the efforts of the Indian community in Saudi Arabia to preserve the ancient language. The event, was a distinctive part of the "Pravasi Parichay" initiative.

The Indian Embassy in Saudi Arabia highlighted the significance of "Samskritotsava" as a unique celebration of Sanskrit Day, aimed at promoting the importance and learning of the Sanskrit language. Ambassador Suhel Ajaz Khan, during his opening remarks, emphasized the cultural and spiritual importance of Sanskrit, referring to it as a language that embodies India's ancient wisdom, civilization, history, and traditions.

This historic event marks the first time any Indian Mission worldwide has conducted an entire program in Sanskrit, showcasing a commitment

to fostering awareness and appreciation for the language. Ambassador Khan expressed hope that "Samskritotsava" would serve as inspiration for individuals to engage in learning and practicing Sanskrit.

The program featured various performances by the Indian community in Saudi Arabia, including Abhinaya Gheetam, Gana Geetam, Subhashita Natakam, Prachanna Vesham, all presented exclusively in Sanskrit. The event aimed to not only celebrate the language but also demonstrate its versatility in diverse artistic expressions.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a vocal advocate for the preservation of ancient Indian languages, lauded the initiative, stating that Sanskrit is not only the language of traditions but also the language of "progress and identity." During an address at Tulsi



Children are participating in the Sanskrit conference by performing.

Peeth in Madhya Pradesh on October 27, PM Modi highlighted Sanskrit's resilience, noting that while many languages have come and gone over the centuries, Sanskrit has remained integral to Indian culture without losing its essence.

The "Samskritotsava" event, organized in association with Samskrita Bharati, stands as a testament to India's dedication to preserving its linguistic heritage and promoting cultural exchange globally.

KAUAI MANDIR DRAWS ATTENTION TO GLOBAL DEVOTEES



A statue of Lord Muruga, the Hindu god of war, son of Shiva and brother of Ganesha, sits in the middle of a meditation space under a banyan tree at the Kauai Hindu Monastery on July 13, 2023, in Kapaa, Hawaii

In a stunning convergence of ancient tradition and the lush tropical beauty of Hawaii's Kauai Island, the Iraivan Temple has emerged as a testament to unwavering spiritual devotion. This unique Hindu temple, distinguished as the only all-granite, hand-carved sanctuary in the Western hemisphere, stands as a remarkable architectural and cultural landmark.

Construction of the Iraivan Temple began in 1990, a labor of love guided by the mystical vision of its founder, Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami. The temple's genesis was inspired by a divine revelation that revealed Lord Shiva's presence at the chosen site. What followed was a dedicated effort, with every inch of the temple meticulously crafted by hand, devoid of modern power tools or electricity.

Despite Hindus constituting less than 1% of Hawaii's population, the Iraivan Temple has transcended regional boundaries to become a global pilgrimage site and a sanctuary for spiritual seekers. Its allure extends far beyond the island, drawing devotees and curious minds alike from around the world.

The name "Iraivan" holds profound significance, translating to "he who is worshipped" in Tamil, echoing the deep roots of the temple in South

Indian tradition. The architectural marvel pays homage to the Chola Dynasty, showcasing intricate designs and cultural nuances that transport visitors to a different era.

Central to the temple's sanctity is a mesmerizing 700-pound quartz crystal shivalingam, symbolizing Lord Shiva. This sacred artifact is not just a piece of art but a focal point for devotion, radiating a palpable spiritual energy that resonates with all who enter the temple.

The Iraivan Temple stands not just as a place of worship but as a living testament to the enduring power of spiritual vision and human dedication. As it continues to attract global attention, this remarkable fusion of tradition and tropical beauty promises to be a source of inspiration for generations to come.

अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद एवं वैश्विक हिन्दी परिवार के संयुक्त तत्वावधान में वातायन की 20वीं वर्षगांठ



अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद एवं वैश्विक हिन्दी परिवार के संयुक्त तत्वावधान में वातायन की 20वीं वर्षगांठ एवं भारोपीय हिन्दी समारोह, लंदन के आयोजन की उपलब्धियों पर विचार करने के लिए एक संगोष्ठी का आयोजन 09 नवम्बर, 2023 को प्रवासी भवन में किया गया।

कार्यक्रम के आरंभ में भारोपीय हिन्दी समारोह में प्रत्यक्ष एवं परोक्ष रूप से सहयोग देने वाले विशिष्ट लोगों का अभिनन्दन किया गया। दिव्या माथुर (वातायन, यूके के प्रतिनिधि) ने अपने वक्तव्य में भारोपीय हिन्दी समारोह के सफल आयोजन एवं उसके विश्वव्यापी प्रभाव को रेखांकित किया।

हिन्दी की सुप्रसिद्ध कवित्री प्रोफेसर अनामिका ने भारोपीय हिन्दी समारोह में दिए गए सुझावों एवं प्रश्नों को आने वाले समारोह और भी सफलता के साथ लगातार इसका आयोजन हो इस संदर्भ में अपनी बात रखी।

रमेश गुप्त जी ने कहा कि यह महोत्सव हमारे अपेक्षा से कहीं ज्यादा बड़े स्तर पर हुआ, मैं मानता हूँ कि कोई भी आयोजन बड़ा उसके परिसर से नहीं बल्कि बड़ा लोगों से होता है, एवं आयोजन की सफलता उसके साहित्यिक एवं भाषायीक विचारों से होता है और जब उपलब्धता की बात होती है तो एक पौधे से अनेक पौधों का विकास हो। भारोपीय हिन्दी महोत्सव के समापन के साथ सही मायनों में काम अब शुरू हुआ है।

इन्दिरा गांधी राष्ट्रीय कला केंद्र के सदस्य सचिव डॉ. सचिदानन्द जोशी ने कहा कि भारोपीय हिन्दी महोत्सव बहुत ही सफल कार्यक्रम रहा। आगे भी हमें एक सिपाही की तरह कंधे से कंधा जोड़कर काम करने की जरूरत है। गैर सरकारी तौर पर यह कार्यक्रम अपने आप में एक मिसाल है। इस सम्मेलन में हमने जो भी रेजोलुशन पास किया है उस पर क्रियानवायन करने के लिए कार्य योजना

बनाने के साथ उस पर सुचारु रूप से काम करने की जरूरत है।

प्रोफेसर रेखा सेठी ने कहा कि मैं पिछले कई वर्षों से शैक्षणिक संस्थाओं से जुड़ी रही हूँ, और मैं इस प्रकार के कई आयोजनों में भाग ले चुकी हूँ पर यह आयोजन बहुत खास था। इस कार्यक्रम में यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ लंदन, यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ सिंगापुर, ड्यूक यूनिवर्सिटी इत्यादि विश्वविद्यालयों के कई महत्वपूर्ण लोगों ने भागीदारी की जिसमें हिन्दी शिक्षा एवं शिक्षण की प्रणालियों को लेकर एक सकारात्मक चर्चा हुई। जिसके महत्वपूर्ण बिन्दु है 'भाषा को एक कौशल' की तरह सिखाया जा सकता है। यह सम्मेलन सिर्फ भाषा व साहित्य की ही नहीं संस्कृतियों का भी आदान-प्रदान पर लंबी बात-चित हुई।

रवीन्द्रनाथ टैगोर विश्वविद्यालय और सी. वी. रमन विश्वविद्यालय के कुलाधिपति श्री संतोष चौबे ने कहा कि भारोपीय हिन्दी सम्मेलन एक ऐसा प्रयास था जो संसार के हिन्दी प्रेमियों को पास लाया। उन्होंने कहा कि मैं कई वर्षों से हिन्दी भाषा के विस्तार की बात सुनता आया हूँ पर यह ज्यादातर साहित्य की ओर चल जाता है, इस सम्मेलन में मुझे पहली बार महसूस हुआ कि भाषा शिक्षण के कार्य को हम साहित्य से इतर कौशल की तरह देखा जाना चाहिए। श्री चौबे ने कैम्ब्रिज विश्वविद्यालय एवं ब्रिटिश कौंसिल के शिक्षण पैटर्न का उदाहरण देते हुए बताया कि वे एक हिन्दी शिक्षण को लेकर कोर्स बना रहे हैं और जल्दी ही सबसे साझा करेंगे। इसके साथ उन्होंने अनुवाद पर जोर देते हुए कहा कि अनुवाद को बड़े पैमाने पर बढ़ावा देने की जरूरत है।

अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद के अध्यक्ष पूर्व राजदूत वीरेंद्र गुप्ता ने अपने अध्यक्षीय भाषण में कहा कि अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद के लिए यह गौरव की बात है कि हम आपके

कार्यक्रम से जुड़ पाए। अगर हमें भारतीय संस्कृति को बढ़ाना है तो उसके लिए भाषा एक सशक्त माध्यम है। अगर हमें भारत की छवि दुनियाँ में बदलनी है तो बगैर हिन्दी के यह संभव नहीं है।

अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद के मानद निदेशक नारायण कुमार ने प्रवासी भवन का शिलान्यास प्रधानमंत्री श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी जी ने किया, इसका उद्घाटन मंत्रीशर के तत्कालीन राष्ट्रपति श्री अनिरुद्ध जगनाथ ने किया। इसके साथ ही यहाँ हमारे वाटिका में वृक्षारोपण के लिए भूटान के नरेश स्वयं आए। उन्होंने कहा कि लंदन में हिन्दी सम्मेलन इस बात का प्रतीक है कि एक अंग्रेजी की भूमि पर हिन्दी का एक भव्य एवं सफल आयोजन किया। मुझे आशा ही नहीं पूर्ण विश्वास है कि हिन्दी की वैश्विक प्रचार-प्रसार में इस सम्मेलन की भूमिका महत्वपूर्ण होगी और भविष्य के लिए दिशा निर्देश करेगी।

वैश्विक हिन्दी परिवार के अध्यक्ष अनिल जोशी ने हिन्दी व क्षेत्रीय भाषा के सहभागीय विकास पर जोर देते हुए कहा कि क्षेत्रीय भाषा हिन्दी से अलग नहीं है, बल्कि हिन्दी में और नए-नए शब्दों को जोड़ने का काम करती है। हमें हिन्दी एवं क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं के विकास के लिए काम करेंगे तभी हिन्दी का विकास भी संभव होगा। उन्होंने कहा भारोपीय हिन्दी सम्मेलन का आयोजन करने कि हमने एक महत्वपूर्ण पड़ाव पार कर लिया है और दूसरा महत्वपूर्ण पड़ाव भोपाल में हो रहे विश्व रंग सम्मेलन है।

उन्होंने सुझाव दिया कि हिन्दी के लिए एक सचिवालय की स्थापना की जरूरत है, हम इसके लिए वर्षों से कार्यरत हैं। मेरा विचार है कि परिषद में एक हिन्दी एवं भारतीय भाषाओं का केंद्र होना चाहिए। इसके साथ ही उन्होंने भारोपीय हिन्दी सम्मेलन में प्रत्यक्ष एवं परोक्ष रूप से सम्मिलित हुए सभी संस्थाओं, लेखकों एवं विद्वानों को धन्यवाद ज्ञापन किया।

देव दीपावली देखने के लिए 70 देशों के राजदूत और 150 विदेशी डेलीगेट्स बनारस पहुंचे

देव दीपावली पर 8 से 10 लाख पर्यटक काशी पहुंचे. इस बार देव दीपावली देखने के लिए 70 देशों के राजदूत और 150 विदेशी डेलीगेट्स बनारस पहुंचे. उन सभी ने मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथ के नेतृत्व में देव दीपावली देखी.

UP के वाराणसी में देव दीपावली का भव्य कार्यक्रम हुआ. उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार ने इस कार्यक्रम को भव्य बनाने के लिए 12 लाख दीपों से घाटों को रोशन किया. इनमें एक लाख दीप गाय के गोबर के बने हुए थे. साफ-सफाई करके तिरंगा स्पायरल लाइटिंग से शहर व घाट सजाए गए.

सुरक्षा के भी कड़े इंतजाम किए गए. इस बार देव दीपावली देखने के लिए 70 देशों के राजदूत और 150 डेलीगेट्स बनारस पहुंचे. उन सभी ने मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथ के नेतृत्व में देव दीपावली देखी. यूपी सीएम योगी आदित्यनाथ ने नमो घाट पर देव दीपावली पर पहला दीपक जलाकर कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत की.

इस बार देव दीपावली पर 70 से ज्यादा देशों के राजदूत और राजनयिक वाराणसी आए. इस यात्रा का आयोजन विदेश मंत्रालय ने किया. मेहमानों ने कार्तिक पूर्णिमा के अवसर पर मिट्टी के दीये जलाते हुए दिखे और ऐतिहासिक शहर वाराणसी में गंगा आरती और देव दीपावली भी देखी.

विदेशी मेहमानों के आकर्षण का केंद्र बन रहा वाराणसी

इससे पहले वाराणसी में G20 की अध्यक्षता के दौरान एक अहम बैठक भी आयोजित हुई थी. जिसमें G20 विकास मंत्रियों की बैठक और G20 संस्कृति मंत्रियों की बैठक हुई थी. वाराणसी ने SCO की कई बैठकों की मेजबानी भी की है. इस वर्ष भारत की अध्यक्षता के दौरान वाराणसी को पहले एससीओ सांस्कृतिक शहर के रूप में नामित किया गया था. इस महीने की शुरुआत में, विदेश मंत्रालय ने दिवाली की पूर्व संध्या पर आयोजित दीपोत्सव के अवसर पर 50 देशों के राजदूतों और राजनयिकों की अयोध्या यात्रा का आयोजन किया था.

गंगा पार रेत पर भी रोशन हुए दीपक

उत्तरवाहिनी गंगा के तट पर 85 घाटों की श्रृंखला पर इस साल योगी सरकार की ओर से 12 लाख और जन सहभागिता से मिलकर कुल लगभग 21 लाख से अधिक दीप काशीवासी घाटों, कुंडों, तालाबों और सरोवरों पर जलाए गए. गंगा पार रेत पर भी दीपक रोशन हुए. काशी के घाटों की इस अदभुत दृश्य को देखने देश-विदेश से पर्यटक काशी आते हैं. काशी विश्वनाथ धाम के लोकार्पण के बाद पर्यटकों की रिकॉर्ड में बढ़ोतरी हुई है. देव दीपावली पर



वाराणसी में भव्य तरीके से मनाई गई देव दीपावली

होटल, गेस्ट हाउस, नाव, बजड़ा, बोट व क्रूज लगभग पहले से बुक और फुल हो गए थे. योगी सरकार ने चैत सिंह घाट पर लेजर शो कराया. काशी के घाटों के किनारे सदियों से खड़ी ऐतिहासिक इमारतों पर धर्म की कहानी लेजर शो के माध्यम से जीवंत होती दिखी. पर्यटकों ने गंगा पार रेत पर महादेव शिव के भजनों के साथ क्रैकर्स शो का भी आनंद लिया. श्रीकाशी विश्वनाथ मंदिर को विशाखापट्टनम के एक भक्त द्वारा 11 टन फूलों से सजाया गया. गंगा द्वार पर लेजर शो के माध्यम से श्री काशी विश्वनाथ धाम पर आधारित काशी का महत्व और कॉरिडोर के निर्माण संबंधित जानकारी लेजर शो के माध्यम से दिखाई दिखाई गयी।

US में सनातन धर्म के प्रचार-प्रसार के लिए करने जा रहे हैं 32 करोड़ का दान

भारतीय मूल के एक अमेरिकी डॉक्टर ने अमेरिका में हिंदू धर्म को लेकर जागरूकता फैलाने और इसका प्रचार प्रसार करने के लिए 40 लाख डॉलर (32 करोड़) देने का ऐलान किया है. उन्होंने कहा कि हिंदू सिर्फ एक धर्म ही नहीं, बल्कि जीवन पद्धति है. भारतीय मूल के डॉक्टर मिहिर मेघानी ने दो दशक (20 साल) पहले अपने तीन दोस्त असीम शुक्ला, सुहाग शुक्ला और निखिल जोशी के साथ मिलकर सितंबर 2003 में हिंदू अमेरिकन फाउंडेशन (HAF) की स्थापना की थी.

भारतीय मूल के अमेरिकी डॉक्टर मिहिर मेघानी ने इस महीने की शुरुआत में वार्षिक सिलिकॉन वैली समारोह में अगले आठ सालों में हिंदू हित के लिए 15 लाख डॉलर (12 करोड़ 50 लाख) देने का ऐलान किया था. इसके साथ ही हिंदू हित के उद्देश्य से वो अगले दो दशक में 40 लाख डॉलर (32 करोड़) दान करेंगे.

डॉ मेघानी के परिवार का हाल

डॉ मेघानी ने PTI को दिए एक इंटरव्यू में बताया कि मेरी पत्नी तन्वी और मैंने अब तक हिंदू अमेरिकन फाउंडेशन को 15 लाख डॉलर (12 करोड़ 50 लाख) का योगदान दिया है. हमने पिछले 15 सालों में अन्य हिंदू और भारतीय संगठनों को इस उद्देश्यों के लिए दस लाख डॉलर से भी अधिक का योगदान दिया है. अगले आठ सालों में हम भारत समर्थक और हिंदू संगठनों को 15 लाख डॉलर देने का संकल्प ले रहे हैं. उन्होंने कहा कि मेरी कोई स्टार्टअप कंपनी नहीं है.

मेरा कोई साइड बिजनेस नहीं है. मैं वेतन पर एक डॉक्टर हूँ. मेरी पत्नी एक फिटनेस ट्रेनर और ज्वेलरी डिजाइनर हैं. हम हर साल लाखों डॉलर नहीं कमा रहे हैं. हमारे पास शेयर के विकल्प नहीं है.



हिंदू धर्म को लेकर डॉ मेघानी की राय

डॉ मेघानी ने कहा कि हम ऐसा इसलिए कर रहे हैं क्योंकि यह हमारा धर्म है, यह हमारा कर्तव्य है. उन्होंने कहा, जो हिंदू भारत से आ रहे हैं, वे यह नहीं समझते कि उनकी एक हिंदू पहचान और एक भारतीय राष्ट्रीय पहचान है. हमें इसके बारे में बात करने की जरूरत है. हमें हिंदुओं की भारतीय या भारतीय पहचान में मजबूत करने की आवश्यकता है.

स्वराज और गिरमिट-मुंशी रहमान खान



मुंशी रहमान खान (सूरीनाम के राष्ट्रकवि)
(1874-1972)

कुंडलियाँ

नौरोजी, मिस्टर गोखले, गंगाधर आजाद ।
मोतीलाल, पति, मालवी इनकी रही मर्याद ॥
इनकी रही मर्याद बीज इनहीं कर बोयो ।
भारत लह्यो स्वराज नाम गिरमिट का खोयो ॥
कहें रहमान कार्य शूरन के कीन्ह साज बिनु फौजी ।
मुहम्मद, शौकत अली, अरु चंद्रबोस, नौरोजी ॥

हौरा पहले से रह्यो हुइहै हिंद स्वराज ।
यदि स्वराज के कारने जूझे बहु सिरताज ॥
जूझे बहु सिरताज राज हित प्राण गँवाए ।
गांधी, नेहरू सब की आश पुराए ॥
कहें रहमान रहे गुण आगर नहिं माँगे इन कौरा ।
बिनु हिंसा बिनु खून के राज लीन्ह बिनु हौरा ॥

दोहा

सागर श्रुति रसचंद्र की वर्ष इस्वी आज ।
मास सिद्धि तिथि पंद्रहवीं पायो हिंद स्वराज ॥
गांधी, नेहरू, अद्भुत कीन्हों काम ।
सारे जग डंका बज्यो अमर कीन्ह निज नाम ॥
अमर कीन्ह निज नाम राज भारत कर लीन्हों ।
उड़यो पताका सहस वर्ष पर घर घर उत्सव कीन्हों ॥
कहें रहमान प्रतापी सज्जन करें कार्य सत साधी ।
पायो राज स्वराज अब नेहरू, गांधी ॥

मुंशी रहमान खान सूरीनाम के पहले हिन्दी साहित्यकार माने जाते हैं। सूरीनाम में उन्हें राष्ट्रकवि के रूप में मान्यता मिली हुई है। मुंशी रहमान खान का जन्म हमीरपुर जिले के बिंवार थाना में आने वाले भरखरी गाँव में सन् 1874 ई. को हुआ था। मैट्रिक तक की पढ़ाई पूरी करने के बाद वे एक सरकारी स्कूल में शिक्षक नियुक्त हो गए थे। बचपन से ही जिज्ञासु और कलाप्रेमी मुंशी रहमान खान को रामलीलाओं से बड़ा लगाव था। संभवतः इसी कारण वे अध्यापन-कार्य से बचने वाले समय का सदुपयोग रामलीला आदि देखने में किया करते थे।

मुंशी रहमान खान रामलीला देखने के लिए कानपुर पहुँच गए। कानपुर में उनकी मुलाकात उन दलालों से हुई, जो कानपुर और बुंदेलखंड के आसपास के इलाकों से किसानों-कामगारों को दूसरे ब्रिटिश उपनिवेशों में कामगार मजदूर के तौर पर ठग फूसलाकर ले जाते थे। सन् 1898 ई. में 24 वर्ष की आयु में मुंशी रहमान खान को गिरमितिया मजदूर के तौर पर कानपुर से कलकत्ता, और फिर सूरीनाम के लिए जहाज से रवाना किया गया, यह यात्रा बहुत कष्टदायक होती थी। अपने सहयात्रियों को संबल-साहस देने के लिए मुंशी रहमान खान ने रामायण का पाठ करना शुरू कर दिया। वे नियमित रूप से ऐसा करते, और मानस को सुनकर गिरमितिया मजदूरों को संकट से जूझने की नई ताकत मिलती थी और इसी कारण सूरीनाम पहुंचने पर मुंशी रहमान खान को कथावाचक की उपाधि से विभूषित किया गया। इस दौरान उनकी लेखनी भी नहीं रुकी। उनकी पुस्तकें दोहा शिक्षावली, ज्ञान प्रकाश और जीवन प्रकाश भी प्रकाशित हुईं। मुंशी रहमान खान ने सूरीनाम में पाँच वर्षों तक गिरमितिया मजदूर के रूप में काम किया, बाद में उनकी लोकप्रियता और उनकी काबिलियत को देखते हुए अंग्रेज अधिकारियों ने उन्हें मजदूरों के एक समूह का सरदार बना दिया। मुंशी रहमान खान अपने बारे में परिचय देते हुए अपनी कृति-ज्ञान प्रकाश में लिखते हैं-

कमिश्नरी इलाहाबाद में जिला हमीरपुर नाम ।
बिंवार थाना है, मेरा मुकाम भरखरी ग्राम ॥
सिद्ध निद्धि वसु भूमि की वर्ष ईस्वी पाय ।
मास शत्रु तिथि तेरहवीं डच-गैयाना आय ॥
गिरमिट काटी पाँच वर्ष की, कोठी रूस्तम लोस्त ।
सर्दार रहेउँ वहाँ बीस वर्ष लों, लीचे मनयर होर्सत ॥
अग्नि व्योम इक खंड भुई ईस्वी आय ।
मास वर्ग तिथि तेरहवीं गिरमिट बीती भाय ॥
खेत का नंबर चार है, देइक फेल्त मम ग्राम ।
सुरिनाम देश में वास है, रहमानखान निज नाम ॥

मुंशी रहमान खान अपने वतन से हजारों किलोमीटर दूर रहकर भी उन्हें अपने वतन के प्रति बहुत अधिक लगाव था। वे भारत देश को आजाद देखना चाहते थे। मुंशी रहमान की कविताओं में देश के स्वाधीनता संग्राम के स्वतंत्रता सेनानियों की प्रति अगाध आस्था और सम्मान दिखाई देता था। मुंशी रहमान खान भले ही सूरीनाम की आजादी नहीं देख पाए हों, किंतु उनके प्रयास निरर्थक नहीं गए। सूरीनाम की धरती पर अपने कदम रखने के बाद से ही उन्होंने सदैव लोगों को जोड़ने का, एकजुट होने का संदेश दिया, जिसने सदैव नीति-नैतिकता की शिक्षा दी, पढ़ने-लिखने के लिए प्रेरित किया, और फिर दुनिया में बदलते हालात के अनुरूप बदलते हुए सूरीनाम की आजादी की अलख जगाई, उसके प्रति कृतज्ञ राष्ट्र की आस्थाएँ आज भी देखी जा सकती हैं।