

DIASPORA SAMVAD

डायस्पोरा संवाद

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नव वर्ष की हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं

On the occasion of Birth centenary of Late Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad pays high tribute to him by reproducing his inaugural speech at PIO conference organised by ARSP on 12 & 13 February, 2000.

PIO, OUR GLOBAL LINK

— Atal Bihari Vajpayee



"I am happy to be present at this conference on the Contribution of Persons of Indian Origin. I heartily congratulate the Antar-Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad for organizing it.

This is perhaps the first conference of the PIO to be held in the new century. The credit for this goes to Shri Baleshwar Agrawal and his associates.

Persons of Indian Origin live in almost every country of the world. They have made their mark in an increasing number of professions and occupations. Wherever they are, they have earned a good name for themselves and for their mother country—India—with their hard work, talent and, of course, their loyalty to the country that they are citizens of.

The story of the journey of our people to all parts of the world is an amazing one. It is a story of great courage and character. It tells the tale:

Of indentured labourers from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh taken to various British colonies all over the world;

Of Gujarati traders who sailed to various parts of Africa;

Of Sikh farmers who went to the United States and Canada nearly a hundred years back;

Of Tamil workers and entrepreneurs who went to Singapore and Malaysia; and

Of Sindhi businessmen who went to Thailand and Hong Kong.

It is also the story of bright, young Indian engineers, doctors, and other professionals who went to the United States and the United Kingdom in the 60s, 70s and 80s. They were followed in the 90s by software programmers, many of whom have now become world-beating businessmen.

Wherever they have gone, Indians have always enriched and fertilized their country of adoption. They have contributed to the economic prosperity and cultural heritage of their host countries.

“I am told that there are about forty countries in the world, in each of which the Indian population exceeds fifty thousand. There are many more countries where the Indian population may be less, but their presence is no less noteworthy.

Perhaps there is no other nation in the world that has such a widely dispersed diaspora. This is a matter of pride for all of us—for Indians as well as PIO.

This outstanding contribution of PIO is due to India’s strong culture and traditions. Our civilization is founded on the principle of ‘*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*’—the entire world is one family.

Wherever our sisters and brothers have gone, they have preserved the essential family and social values in their own communities, and also spread them in the larger community that they are part of.

Friends, if we look back, there are various forces of history that prompted our people to leave India and settle abroad. This kind of trans-national movement of people will only accelerate in the increasingly inter-dependent and inter-connected world of the 21st century.

The expansion of the Indian diaspora in the new century and the new millennium, however, will follow a very different trajectory. In the past, people left India out of distress or some economic compulsion, because ours was then a country under colonial subjugation. This will no longer be the case in the future.

India is now not only a free country, but is marching ahead confidently to occupy its rightful place in the comity of developed nations of the world. Never again will any Indian have to leave our shores for distant alien lands out of want and deprivation. Rather, as is already happening, it will be because of the legendary knowledge and talent of Indians that they will go in increasing numbers to work and to live in foreign lands.

We are seeing yet another difference. In the past, many of the Indians who went abroad had to work in the lower rungs of the economic ladder in their host countries. Now, they are rapidly climbing up the value chain. It is a matter of pride that many Indians are now heading large banks, airlines, consultancy firms and, of course, information technology companies abroad.

Persons of Indian origin are among the richest in many countries. I am sure that this phenomenon will only gain momentum in the coming years.

As the PIO and NRIs become more and more prosperous, they are looking to India as an attractive place for investment and doing business. I assure you that the Government will facilitate this process in every possible way.

Friends, now the time has come when your economic strength and professional achievements should begin to be matched by your voice and influence in politics, culture, and the social life of your adopted countries. You should also participate responsibly and effectively in your country's political life by supporting every worthwhile political cause. It is a matter of happiness that many persons of Indian are beginning to play leading roles in governments and political parties abroad. This process, however, is so far slow and needs be accelerated.

The Government sees the PIO not just as investors, but also as our links with the rest of the world. We would like you to play role of our unofficial ambassadors by communicating the reality of a new and resurgent India to the political cultural, business, and intellectual establishments in your host countries.

Whenever the need and the occasion arise, we would like you to strongly articulate India's case to the various constituencies in your adopted countries. I am happy that this is what you indeed did during the Kargil war and more recently, during the hijack crisis.

I would urge you to do this on a more sustained basis over issues such as India's stand on Kashmir, our strong secular tradition and state-sponsored terrorism, which has actually become a menace to global peace and security.

Today's India is a self confident India marching ahead to economic prosperity and social justice and equality. Today's India is ready to play its part in shaping a new and equitable international order. While we will not brook interference in our internal affairs or allow others to meddle in our bilateral relations or problems, we are ready to engage with any country in a cooperative framework.

Friends, let me conclude by stating once again that India is proud of your achievements. More and more Indians-both in India and abroad - are succeeding. In the new century that has just begun.

Let us together resolve to make India succeed.

Thankyou.

Report of 84th Know India Programme (KIP)



Diaspora Research and Resource Centre (DRRC)-Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP) hosted the 84th batch of Know India Program (KIP), a flagship initiative of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to connect with the Indian Diaspora across the globe, on 12 December 2025 at Pravasi Bhawan, New Delhi. This batch brought together 39 delegates from 17 countries: Australia, Fiji, France (including Reunion Island), Germany, Guyana, Israel, Kenya, Mauritius, Myanmar, New Zealand, Portugal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States of America. After a formal welcome of the delegates, Mr. Navnit Kumar, Senior Research Fellow at DRRC-ARSP, introduced the esteemed guests from ARSP and DRRC to the delegates. He presented all the milestones achieved by the DRRC-ARSP in the recent past. Prof. Gopal Arora, Secretary, ARSP, presented introductory and welcome remarks. He discussed his academic journey while engaging with the delegates. He also narrated the historical events that eventually led to the foundation of the ARSP. He pointed out the role of Rt. Hon. Simbhoonath Capildeo in maintaining the cultural ties of the newly independent Girmitiya Countries with India. Prof. Dr. Shashibala, Dean, K.M. Munshi Centre for Indology, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in New Delhi, in a very brief span of time, touched upon so many things; Yoga, Ayurveda, traditions and rituals. She tried to give an insight and scientific basis of the rituals and traditions while differentiating them from alleged superstitions. The core message was that we must remain connected with our roots because we have solutions to all of the contemporary and modern problems of the world. The workshop, titled 'Discover Bharat: A Visual Feast', was conducted by Dr. Astha Agarwal. This was purely an activity-based moment. The delegates were divided into teams, and a quiz was conducted. This activity helped delegates identify culturally significant personalities, monuments, and listen to songs on the film soundtrack and recognise songs. The winning team was also awarded. The quiz fostered teamwork and knowledge-sharing, and left a lasting impression on the participants.

The second session of the event was started by the address of Amb. Sushil Singhal, Sr. Vice President, ARSP. He conveyed his message to the delegates by saying, "You are not here as tourists. You are here as young ambassadors of the global Indian family. And over the coming days, you will see, hear, question, and experience India in a way that no book, no video, and no classroom can teach." H. E. Ms. Pradeepa Mahishini Colonne, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in India, appreciated the role of DRRC-ARSP in connecting with the global Indian Diaspora, resonating it with India's profound philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. She highlighted India's diversity, its development and increasing potential. She talked about India-Sri Lanka's ancient cultural and economic ties that are presently, ever-emerging. H.E. Mr. Jagannath Sami, High Commissioner of the Republic of Fiji, New Delhi, talked about the shared vision and mission of India and Fiji. He explained the shrewdness of the Britishers in calling the 'Girmit people' as 'Indentured Labourers' or 'a party to some agreement', in which all the terms were already decided by them only. He remembered Mahatma Gandhi and Totaram Sanadhya and their contributions in connecting with Fiji. Totaram Sanadhya was the first person to organise the first Raamleela on the banks of the river Rewa to

inspire people. This was followed by an interactive session, in which participants provided their views about India based on their various attachments. The participants were quite impressed with their visit, not only to reconnect with their ancestral land but also to witness what India had achieved in various spheres of socio-economic and technological development. They said that they felt very proud of the management of a complex and pluralistic democracy by the Government of India and expressed their rich experience and lessons learnt during this visit.

Concluding remark and Vote of Thanks were presented by Shri Narayan Kumar, Hony. Director, ARSP. He gave lots of importance to Hindi as a language of exchange or communication. He appreciated the delegates having a keen sense to understand all the Hindi songs and movies. He talked about the Fijian Constitution to recognise Hindi as one of the official languages. He emphasised the Sri Lankan Universities who are teaching Hindi at the highest level, though Indian Tamilian opposition Parties are protesting against Hindi. He mentioned UNESCO's act of recognising Diwali as Intangible Cultural Heritage. The program was ended with distribution of certificates to the delegates of KIP for their active participation.

PM MODI LAUDS INDIAN DIASPORA IN DUBAI FOR PRESERVING KANNADA LANGUAGE AND CULTURE



Indian Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** publicly praised the efforts of the *Indian diaspora community in Dubai* for their work in promoting the **Kannada language and cultural heritage** among children living abroad. Speaking on his monthly radio programme *Mann Ki Baat* on **December 28, 2025**, Modi highlighted a community-run **Kannada school in Dubai** where children are taught *reading, writing and speaking the language*, reinforcing their connection to roots and identity even while living overseas. The school currently has around **1,000 students enrolled**, reflecting strong participation from families eager to keep their mother tongue alive among the younger generation. Modi described the initiative as “**Kannada language, our pride**,” underscoring how overseas Indian communities play an active role in preserving linguistic and cultural traditions far from their homeland. His remarks in *Mann Ki Baat* — the final episode of 2025 — not only recognised the diaspora's achievements but also encouraged similar efforts worldwide to maintain heritage languages amidst globalisation and technological influences. The focus on diaspora support for cultural continuity aligns with India's broader engagement with its global communities, which number over 34 million people worldwide, and contribute significantly to cultural diplomacy, remittances, and people-to-people ties across continents. The Dubai Kannada school's success story exemplifies how diasporic initiatives can foster *pride in regional languages*, bridge generational gaps and maintain cultural continuity, even outside India's geographical borders.

Modi's acknowledgement serves as an endorsement of grassroots community action, highlighting how **language preservation is viewed as integral to cultural identity and national pride** among Indian communities abroad. By showcasing this effort on a national platform, the prime minister also highlighted that maintaining cultural practices, including language education, is a shared responsibility that extends beyond India's borders, helping diaspora communities stay connected to their heritage in meaningful ways.

EAM JAISHANKAR MEETS SRI LANKA'S INDIAN-ORIGIN TAMIL LEADERS DURING COLOMBO VISIT



External Affairs Minister **S. Jaishankar** met with *leaders and members of the Indian-origin Tamil community* in **Colombo, Sri Lanka**, as part of his official visit, underscoring India's engagement with Sri Lanka's Tamil population and broader post-crisis assistance efforts. The meeting, held on **December 23, 2025**, brought together community representatives and political figures to discuss the impact of **Cyclone Ditwah** and India's proposed support for reconstruction and rehabilitation in affected Tamil areas. During the interaction, Jaishankar highlighted India's

reconstruction package, a USD 450 million aid commitment to help Sri Lanka recover from the cyclone's devastation, and reiterated India's pledges under its *Operation Sagar Bandhu* initiative. He also listened to community assessments of the cyclone's damage, signalling India's responsiveness to Tamil concerns and its emphasis on inclusive recovery. The engagement took place amid India's larger diplomatic push in Colombo — including meetings with Sri Lankan political leaders and discussions on expanding bilateral cooperation — and reflects India's "Neighbourhood First" policy in practice. Jaishankar's discussions with Tamil representatives also align with longstanding Indian interests in protecting the welfare of Indian-origin communities in Sri Lanka, particularly in the **Northern and Eastern Provinces** where many Tamils reside. The meeting's timing, shortly after a natural disaster that significantly impacted infrastructure, housing, and livelihoods, reinforced New Delhi's commitment to assisting Sri Lanka holistically. The Tamil community's participation highlighted their role as important stakeholders in Sri Lanka's socio-economic recovery and India-Sri Lanka relations. Jaishankar's visit and his engagement with the Indian-origin Tamil leaders underline India's effort to balance state-to-state diplomacy with people-to-people outreach, especially in contexts where historical ties and ethnic identities are deeply interwoven with bilateral affairs.

TAMIL LANGUAGE GAINS OFFICIAL SUPPORT IN FIJI AMID CULTURAL REVIVAL BACKED BY INDIA AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The **Tamil language** has received renewed recognition and support in **Fiji**, marking a significant milestone for the **Indian-origin Tamil community** and wider cultural preservation efforts in the Pacific island nation. The **High Commission of India in Suva** celebrated this development on social media, describing it as a "*historic day for the Tamil language in Fiji.*" This reflects ongoing collaborative work involving the Indian diplomatic mission, the **Fiji Ministry of Education** and diaspora organisations to institutionalise Tamil language education and cultural heritage programmes. Fiji has a long history of Indian migration dating back to the late 19th century, and Tamil, one of the oldest living languages, has been spoken by descendants of South Indian indentured labourers for generations. Efforts to preserve and revitalise the language have recently gained momentum through initiatives such as Tamil language teaching programmes in **Sangam schools** across the country, where trained teachers from India conduct classes for students and community members. This initiative, backed by India's diplomatic mission and the **Then India Sanmarga Ikya (TISI) Sangam Fiji**, aims to reconnect younger generations with their ancestral linguistic and cultural roots. The rising interest in Tamil instruction is part of a broader cultural revival spearheaded by TISI Sangam, which was established in 1926 to serve the South Indian community's educational and cultural needs. The language programmes are a key pillar of the organisation's centennial celebrations and reflect a shared commitment to heritage preservation as Fiji Indian communities adapt across generations. India's role, through diplomatic, cultural and educational support, underscores the importance attached to diaspora engagement and **people-to-people ties** between India and Fiji, particularly through language and heritage promotion.

This development complements wider bilateral cooperation, including cultural events and educational exchanges, strengthening the cultural bond between the two nations while offering Fiji's Indian-origin communities a platform to sustain and celebrate their linguistic identity.

AMBASSADOR SRIPRIYA RANGANATHAN ASSUMED CHARGE AS SECRETARY (CPV & OIA)



Ambassador Sripriya Ranganathan 1994 batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) recently appointed Secretary (CPV & OIA) in the Ministry of External Affairs is known for her extensive experience in India and abroad. Her overseas postings include serving as India's Ambassador to South Korea and Deputy Chief of Mission at the Indian Embassy in Washington, D.C., where she also acted as Chargé d'Affaires during critical phases of bilateral ties. At MEA headquarters, she has overseen key divisions including Administration and policy planning. In

her new role, Ranganathan will lead the ministry's citizen-centric consular services, passport and visa policies, and engagement with the Indian diaspora worldwide—a portfolio crucial for protecting Indian nationals abroad and strengthening India's global outreach. Her appointment underscores the government's continued emphasis on efficient consular support and enhanced diaspora relations in a globalised world. On her appointment, she said, "As I take over as Secretary (CPV & OIA) in the Ministry of External Affairs, I look forward to working closely under the leadership of the Hon'ble External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar on this wide-ranging and important portfolio. I am focused on further streamlining consular services, deepening our engagement with the Indian diaspora, and ensuring a responsive, people-centric approach across our PSKs in India and our Missions and Posts abroad. Once again, it is a privilege to serve the nation and the Indian people alongside colleagues and partners".

AMBASSADOR CHANDRADATH SINGH, HIGH COMMISSIONER OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO PRESENTED CREDENTIALS TO THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA



Ambassador Chandradath Singh, High Commissioner of Trinidad and Tobago presented his credentials to The President of India, Mahamahim Smt. Droupadi Murmu.

Amb. Chandradath Singh's diplomatic career spans more than four decades with senior postings across Asia and beyond, including Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the People's Republic of China with multi-country accreditation and a prior tenure as High Commissioner to India with regional accreditations. His overseas service also includes roles as Consul General in Miami, First Secretary in Canada and Second Secretary in the United Kingdom, complemented by leadership positions within the Ministry such as Chief of Protocol, Director of Consular Affairs, Director of Information, Culture and Conference Services, Head of Chancery and Acting High Commissioner in India.

Amb. Singh combines his diplomatic experience with public-sector project work, notably as Senior Special Projects Coordinator for the City of Lauderhill and Broward County where he contributed to the construction and ICC accreditation of the USA's first international cricket stadium. He is a Commonwealth Scholar with a B.A. Hons in History and has postgraduate training in International Relations and specialised courses in international law, diplomacy and negotiation from institutions in Trinidad and Tobago, Canada, India and the United States ; he has also served as Trinidad and Tobago's UNESCO Board Representative and held membership roles in several diplomatic, cultural and trade organisations.

INDIAN-ORIGIN RESEARCHERS POWER A BREAKTHROUGH WITH AMERICA'S FIRST MONOLITHIC 3D AI CHIP



Indian-origin engineers **Subhasish Mitra** (Stanford University) and **Tathagata Srimani** (Carnegie Mellon University) have co-led a major breakthrough in semiconductor hardware by developing *America's first monolithic 3D AI chip*, fabricated in a U.S. commercial foundry, a landmark in AI hardware innovation. Traditional chips are predominantly 2D, with memory and logic spread flat on a single layer.

As AI workloads grow larger and more complex, this design faces a “**memory wall**”, bottlenecks created by slow data movement between memory and compute units. The new *monolithic 3D architecture* overcomes this limitation by **stacking layers of memory and computation vertically** and tightly interconnecting them through ultra-dense vertical wiring, enabling faster data transfer and reduced energy consumption. Unlike previous 3D chip efforts that bonded separate chips together, this design builds each layer *sequentially in one continuous process*, enabling denser interlayer connectivity and far better performance.

Early hardware testing revealed that the prototype outperforms comparable flat chips by about **four-fold**, while simulations of taller designs with more layers suggest **up to 12× gains** on real AI tasks. More strikingly, researchers argue that with further scaling, energy efficiency could improve by **100× to 1,000×**, a crucial metric for future AI systems that demand both speed and low power use. A key aspect of this breakthrough is *manufacturing in a U.S. foundry*, specifically with SkyWater Technology, the largest purely U.S.-based semiconductor fabrication partner. This not only demonstrates that monolithic 3D designs can be commercially produced at scale but also bolsters domestic chip capability at a time when advanced semiconductor supply chains are seen as strategic national assets. Experts believe monolithic 3D chips could be foundational for **next-generation AI hardware**, offering a practical path beyond the physical limits of 2D chips. The project illustrates how foundational academic research, supported by industry partnerships, can reshape the trajectory of computing hardware, positioning the U.S. at the forefront of future AI processor design.

PRANITA VENKATESH, FIJIAN NATIONAL OF INDIAN-ORIGIN BECOMES SAN CARLOS' YOUNGEST MAYOR



Pranita Venkatesh, a Fijian-American psychologist of Indian descent, has made history by being sworn in as the **youngest mayor of San Carlos, California**, marking a significant milestone in the political rise of Indian-Americans in the United States. On **December 8, 2025**, Venkatesh was unanimously elected by the San Carlos City Council to serve as the city's mayor, a role she assumed following her initial election to the

council in **2022** with support from the **San Mateo Democratic Party**. San Carlos, located in San Mateo County near Silicon Valley and home to about 28,000 residents, is known as the “City of Good Life.” Born in **Fiji to Indian parents**, Venkatesh moved to the United States with her family at the age of four and grew up primarily in California. She holds a bachelor's degree from **Notre Dame de Namur University**

and a **master's in early childhood and clinical psychology**. Before entering politics, she worked as a child psychologist in **East Palo Alto** and held a corporate position as a buyer at Macy's. Additionally, she is the director of **Paragon Montessori**, a preschool in San Carlos, reflecting her long-standing commitment to education and community services. Prior to serving on the city council, Venkatesh contributed to local governance through a three-year tenure on the **Economic Development Advisory Commission**, where she worked on initiatives to foster economic growth and support small businesses. As mayor, Venkatesh has expressed a clear agenda focused on addressing key community priorities such as **public safety, childcare, economic stability, infrastructure development, and affordable housing**. Community leaders and advocacy groups have warmly welcomed her leadership, viewing it as a reflection of San Carlos' increasing **diversity and civic engagement**. Venkatesh's achievement comes amid a broader trend of Indian-American political representation gaining visibility at various levels of U.S. government, underscoring the growing influence of the diaspora in shaping local and national leadership.

JAYSHREE ULLAL NOW RICHEST SELF-MADE WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR



Jayshree Ullal, the Indian-origin tech leader and **President & CEO of Arista Networks**, has emerged as **the richest self-made Indian-origin woman entrepreneur in 2025**, topping the *Hurun India Rich List 2025* with an estimated wealth of approximately **₹50,170 crore (about \$5.7 billion)** — surpassing the fortunes of global tech giants such as **Microsoft's Satya Nadella and Google's Sundar Pichai**. Born in **London** and

raised in **New Delhi**, Ullal moved to the United States for higher education, earning a **Bachelor's in Electrical Engineering** from San Francisco State University and a **Master's in Engineering Management** from Santa Clara University. She began her career with leading tech firms such as **Advanced Micro Devices (AMD), Fairchild Semiconductor, and Cisco Systems** before joining Arista Networks in **2008**, where she has since steered the company's rapid growth and global prominence in cloud networking and data-centre infrastructure. Under Ullal's leadership, Arista Networks has recorded strong revenue growth, posting around **\$7 billion in 2024**, with a notable annual growth rate, reflecting the company's crucial role in supporting cloud and AI-driven networking needs. Her personal wealth is largely derived from her significant equity stake in Arista, along with diversified holdings, making her wealth outperform that of other well-known Indian-origin CEOs. The Hurun India Rich List 2025, which ranks India's wealth creators and entrepreneurs, highlights not only Ullal's financial success but also the rising influence of women leaders in sectors traditionally dominated by men, especially in high technology and enterprise infrastructure. Her achievement showcases how deep technical expertise and sustained leadership can elevate professional managers to the highest echelons of global wealth creation, inspiring a new generation of Indian-origin professionals and women executives worldwide. In addition to her role at Arista, Ullal also serves on the board of cloud computing firm **Snowflake**, further cementing her influence in cutting-edge tech industries.

PADMAJA PATEL APPOINTED TO TEXAS NUTRITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Indian-origin physician **Dr. Padmaja Patel** has been appointed by **Texas Governor Greg Abbott** to serve on the **Texas Nutrition Advisory Committee**, a key state panel that advises on diet, nutrition and public health policies aimed at preventing and managing chronic diseases. Her term on the committee runs through **September 1, 2029**, reflecting a multi-year commitment to shaping nutrition strategy in one of the U.S.'s largest states. Patel is a Midland-based physician with a strong background in

lifestyle medicine and public health, fields focused on using diet, exercise, and other non-pharmaceutical approaches to prevent and treat chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity. She trained

in India, earning her medical degree from the **Medical College of Baroda**, and completed further medical training in the United States, where she has built a distinguished professional career. Currently, Dr. Patel serves as **Chief Medical Officer at Nudj Health** and is **President of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine**, a professional organization that champions evidence-based approaches to improving long-term health through lifestyle changes. She also plays leadership roles in regional health initiatives such as the **Midland Quality Alliance** and **Healthy City Midland**, and holds memberships with several prominent medical bodies including the **Texas Medical Association** and the **American Medical Association**.

INDIA-NEW ZEALAND FREE TRADE AGREEMENT TO CREATE BIG OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGH-SKILLED INDIAN PROFESSIONALS



A newly concluded **India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** is set to unlock significant professional and economic opportunities for Indian and Indian-origin skilled workers and the broader diaspora, following the end of negotiations and pending domestic approvals for implementation next year. The agreement is part of a broader effort by both nations to deepen economic ties and expand trade, services, investment and mobility links. Under the pact, **services and mobility provisions** specifically aim to benefit high-skilled Indian professionals in sectors like **information technology, engineering, healthcare, education, design and manufacturing** by making it easier to work, live and contribute to New Zealand's economy. A key feature is the creation of a **Temporary Employment Entry Visa** pathway permitting up to **5,000 Indian professionals** to work and stay in New Zealand for up to three years, alongside additional skilled work visas in critical fields. The FTA also **expands student mobility and post-study work rights**, with longer stays after graduation for STEM and doctoral students, helping young Indians gain global exposure and career development. These mobility enhancements reflect a shift toward closer talent integration as the two economies seek complementary skills and innovation. Beyond employment pathways, the trade deal will bring **tariff-free access and expanded market space** for Indian services and goods, while New Zealand commits to enhanced investment flows, including a **USD 20 billion investment pledge over the next 15 years** that can fuel business expansion and bilateral collaboration. Members of the Indian diaspora in **Auckland and other cities** have welcomed the pact as timely, especially for professionals in technology and services, noting that clearer regulatory frameworks and improved cross-border collaboration can help startups, consultants and creative industries operate across both markets more easily.

VFS GLOBAL AND INDIAN CONSULATE OPEN NEW LOS ANGELES CONSULAR CENTRE TO BOOST SERVICES FOR INDIAN DIASPORA IN THE U.S.

In a major expansion of consular support for the Indian diaspora in the United States, the **Consulate General of India in Los Angeles** has inaugurated a new **Indian Consular Application Centre (ICAC)** operated by **VFS Global (Visa Facilitation Services Global)**, significantly enhancing access to essential consular services for Indian citizens and their families in Southern California. The centre officially became operational on **December 15, 2025** and joins a network that now includes **17 centres across the U.S.**, aimed at making services more efficient and convenient for the estimated **5.3 million-strong Indian community** living in the country. The Los Angeles centre provides a wide range of services previously limited to consulate visits or centres further afield, including **passport issuance and renewals, visa processing, Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) applications, renunciation of Indian citizenship,**

police clearance certificates, Global Entry Programme services, and various attestations and miscellaneous consular functions. By consolidating these services under one roof, the facility is designed to reduce wait times, decrease administrative backlogs, and offer a more streamlined experience for applicants. This development forms part of a broader initiative by the **Indian government in partnership with VFS Global**, the exclusive outsourcing partner for consular service delivery in the U.S., to expand capacity and accessibility for Indian nationals abroad. Earlier in **2025**, eight new consular centres were launched in cities such as Boston, Columbus, Dallas and San Jose, bringing the U.S. total to 16, even before the Los Angeles centre was added. Leadership at VFS Global highlighted that the Los Angeles location was chosen due to its large Indian diaspora presence and strategic importance, and that enhancements such as integrated return courier services, on-site support for photographs and form filling, and extended operating hours, including Saturdays, are expected to further improve user convenience.



INDIA LAUNCHES ‘ONE STOP CENTRE FOR WOMEN’ IN CANADA TO SUPPORT INDIAN WOMEN IN DISTRESS

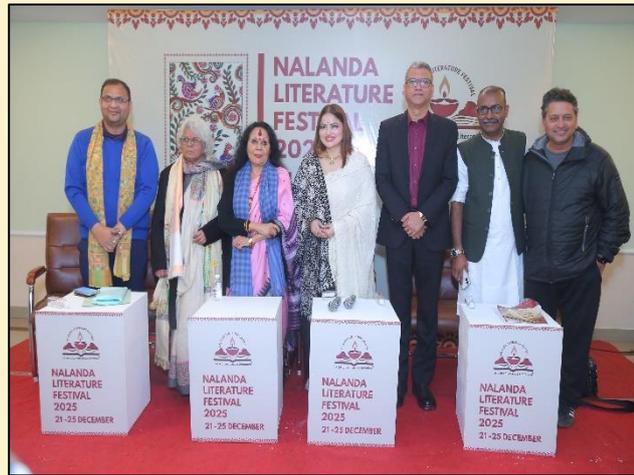
The **Consulate General of India in Toronto, Canada**, has **officially launched a dedicated “One Stop Centre for Women” (OSCW)** to provide critical support and assistance to *Indian women living in Canada* who face distress, abuse, domestic violence, exploitation, family-related issues or legal challenges. The centre became operational in **late December 2025** and is designed to offer a **co-ordinated, beneficiary-centred service** drawing together counselling, psychosocial support, legal guidance and connections to relevant community resources.

Operating from within the Indian mission in Toronto, the OSCW is part of India’s broader global efforts to support women of Indian origin, including *both permanent residents and temporary residents such as students, workers and visitors*. The centre provides a **24×7 helpline**, immediate counselling and links to local services that can assist with legal advice and psychosocial support, thereby functioning as a **comprehensive support hub** for women navigating distressing circumstances far from home. According to the Indian Acting Consul General in Toronto, the OSCW also aims to **bridge communication between Canadian and Indian authorities**, helping women access the full range of available legal, financial and emotional assistance. While numerous Canadian organisations already provide support to women in crisis, cultural or social barriers can sometimes impede access, a gap the One Stop Centre seeks to address. The initiative has already seen early engagement from Indian women in Canada, with several seeking support through the centre within the first days of its launch. Services are delivered **within the framework of Canadian law**, and the centre also helps connect women with local community and social services that are equipped to respond to their needs. This launch reflects India’s evolving **diaspora outreach efforts** and intensifying focus on safeguarding women’s welfare abroad, providing a *dedicated, culturally attuned* resource to assist Indian women in vulnerable situations far from their home country.

NALANDA LITERATURE FESTIVAL 2025 CONCLUDES WITH A VIBRANT CELEBRATION OF CULTURE, IDEAS AND HERITAGE

The **Nalanda Literature Festival 2025**, held from **December 21–25, 2025** at the **Rajgir Convention Centre in Bihar**, concluded successfully as a rich and dynamic celebration of *literary heritage, cultural dialogue, linguistic diversity and intellectual exchange*. The inaugural edition of the festival positioned itself as a tribute to **Nalanda’s ancient legacy as a global centre of learning**, drawing authors, scholars, poets, artists and thinkers from across India and beyond.

Over five days, the festival featured a **diverse programme of panel discussions, thematic conversations, interactive sessions and cultural performances** that explored the intersections of language, history, identity and creativity. Sessions ranged from discussions on **regional languages and oral traditions** to reflections on **historical narratives**, philosophical thought and the role of literature in shaping contemporary society. Notable sessions highlighted how *regional tongues safeguard cultural roots* and examined the continuing global relevance of India's rich literary traditions. The festival also



incorporated elements of *well-being and cultural reflection* with yoga and meditation sessions, emphasising a holistic approach to literary engagement. Speakers and participants included established writers, scholars and cultural commentators who engaged audiences in thoughtful dialogue on topics such as *women's voices in literature*, the evolving role of storytelling, and the preservation of linguistic diversity. Organisers underscored the festival's mission to foster *inclusive literary exchange*, creating a space where **classical and contemporary narratives coexist**, and where emerging voices find platform alongside established figures. Rooted in the spirit of collaboration and exchange, the Nalanda Literature Festival aimed not only to celebrate India's literary richness but also to connect communities through shared stories, ideas and cultural expression, reinforcing travel between tradition and modernity. By the closing day, the festival had left a resounding impression as a *cultural landmark for Bihar* and a promising new fixture in India's thriving literary festival landscape, one that honours heritage while embracing the evolving future of literary arts and dialogue.



The discussions witnessed the participation of several distinguished personalities, including Prof. Siddharth Singh, Vice Chancellor, Nava Nalanda Mahavihara (NNM); Ganga Kumar, Festival Director, Nalanda Literature Festival; D. Aaliya, Chairperson, Nalanda Literature Festival; Dr. Karan Singh, Former Minister of Education of India ; Dr. Sonal Mansingh, Festival Chairperson; Dr. Pankaj K. P. Shreyaskar, author, columnist and poet, and Festival Advisor; Pankaj Dubey, author and Festival Curator; Charles Thomson, Anchor of the event; Sanjay Kumar, civil servant and social activist; and Dr. Sarita Boodhoo, social activist, writer and journalist, along with members of the media and the cultural community.

तृतीय अंतरराष्ट्रीय भारतीय भाषा सम्मेलन



अंतरराष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद्, वैश्विक हिंदी परिवार, इंदिरा गांधी राष्ट्रीय कला केंद्र और भारतीय भाषा विभाग, दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय के संयुक्त तत्वाधान में दिनांक 9 से 11 जनवरी 2026 को तीसरे अंतरराष्ट्रीय भारतीय भाषाओं सम्मेलन के उद्घाटन सत्र को संबोधित करते हुए भारत के उपराष्ट्रपति महामहिम श्री सी. पी. राधाकृष्णन ने कहा कि देश की अनेक भाषाएँ न तो भारत को विभाजित कर पाईं और न ही कभी विभाजित कर सकती हैं, बल्कि वे हमारी साझा सभ्यतागत भावना, संस्कृति और 'धर्म' को संरक्षित करने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाती रही हैं। उपराष्ट्रपति ने यह भी बताया कि संविधान द्वारा मान्यता प्राप्त भाषाओं का समावेश — विशेष रूप से संविधान के आठवीं अनुसूची में भाषाओं की व्यावहारिक उपस्थिति — यह दर्शाती है कि राष्ट्रीय एकता का आधार एकरूपता नहीं, बल्कि आपसी सम्मान और भाषाई विविधता है। उन्होंने कहा कि जब हर नागरिक अपनी मातृभाषा में बोलता है, तब ही लोकतंत्र फल-फूल सकता है। उन्होंने संसद में अपने पहले सत्र की याद साझा करते हुए कहा कि कई सांसद अपनी मातृभाषा में बोल रहे थे, जो भाषाई सम्मान और समावेशी लोकतंत्र की दिशा में सकारात्मक संकेत है। उन्होंने यह भी उल्लेख किया कि संविधान की प्रतिलिपि अब संथाली भाषा में भी उपलब्ध कराई गई है, जो भाषाई दृष्टि से एक बड़ा कदम है। उपराष्ट्रपति जी ने यह भी बताया कि दुनिया भर में कई भाषाएँ समाप्त हो रही हैं, इसलिए तकनीक, डिजिटल आर्काइव और AI आधारित अनुवाद उपकरणों को भाषा संरक्षण के लिए अपनाने की आवश्यकता है ताकि भारतीय भाषाएँ आने वाली पीढ़ियों तक जीवित और प्रासंगिक बनी रहें। इस सम्मेलन के उद्घाटन सत्र की अध्यक्षता इंदिरा गांधी राष्ट्रीय कला केंद्र के अध्यक्ष श्री रामबहादुर राय ने की और विशिष्ट अतिथि भारत सरकार के पूर्व शिक्षा मंत्री श्री रमेश पोखरियाल थे | जापान के सुप्रसिद्ध प्रोफेसर तोमियो मिजोकामी मुख्या वक्ता थे | उद्घाटन सत्र में स्वागत भाषण अंतरराष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद् के महासचिव श्री श्याम परांडे ने दिया और सत्र का संचालन वैश्विक हिंदी परिवार के श्री अनिल जोशी ने किया | इस सम्मलेन में भारत के अतिरिक्त 25 देशों के लगभग 40 प्रतिनिधियों ने भाग लिया |

(सम्मलेन का विस्तृत समाचार अगले अंक में दिया जाएगा)

कोलंबो में द्वितीय भारत - श्रीलंका हिंदी सम्मेलन का आयोजन



12 जनवरी 2026 को स्वामी विवेकानंद भारतीय सांस्कृतिक केंद्र, मे भारतीय उच्चायोग, कोलंबो द्वारा विश्व हिंदी दिवस के उपलक्ष्य में एक भव्य और ऐतिहासिक समारोह आयोजित किया गया। इस अवसर पर भारत के माननीय उच्चायुक्त श्री संतोष झा तथा श्रीलंका की शिक्षा एवं उच्च शिक्षा की उप मंत्री डॉ. मधुर सेनेविरत्न के करकमलों से द्वितीय भारत-श्रीलंका हिंदी सम्मेलन का उद्घाटन किया | इस अंतरराष्ट्रीय सम्मेलन में भारत और श्रीलंका से आए 400 से अधिक हिंदी विद्वान, शिक्षक एवं विद्यार्थी सहभागी बने। यह आयोजन दोनों देशों के बीच

भाषा, संस्कृति और साहित्य की मैत्री का एक प्रेरणादायी उदाहरण रहा। इस अवसर पर श्रीलंका के उन वरिष्ठ हिंदी विद्वानों को सम्मानित किया गया, जिन्होंने दशकों से श्रीलंका में हिंदी के प्रचार-प्रसार के लिए अपना जीवन समर्पित किया है। कार्यक्रम में कई महत्वपूर्ण प्रकाशनों का भी लोकार्पण हुआ, जिनमें 'श्रीलंका हिंदी समाचार', रबिन्द्रनाथ टैगोर विश्वविद्यालय द्वारा संपादित 'श्रीलंका की चयनित रचनाएँ' तथा 'विश्व रंग - श्रीलंका' पर आधारित दो विशेष पत्रिकाएँ प्रमुख रहीं। विश्व हिंदी दिवस के उपलक्ष्य में आयोजित विभिन्न प्रतियोगिताओं के विजेताओं को प्रमाण-पत्र एवं उपहार प्रदान किए गए। साथ ही केंद्रीय हिंदी संस्थान की परीक्षाओं में उत्तीर्ण विद्यार्थियों को प्रमाण-पत्र और पुस्तकें भी भेंट की गईं। एक विशेष उपलब्धि के रूप में, विश्व रंग 2025 के अंतर्गत पहली बार श्रीलंका ने प्रत्यक्ष रूप से हिंदी ओलंपियाड में भाग लिया और तृतीय स्थान प्राप्त किया। इस अवसर पर श्रीलंका के विजेता को रबिन्द्रनाथ टैगोर विश्वविद्यालय द्वारा भेजा गया प्रमाण-पत्र और सम्मान प्रदान किया गया। सम्मेलन के अंतर्गत तीन महत्वपूर्ण शैक्षणिक सत्र आयोजित किए गए - श्रीलंका में हिंदी, कविता सत्र और मुक्त सत्र जिनमें बड़ी संख्या में श्रीलंकाई हिंदी विद्वानों ने भाग लिया। कार्यक्रम को और भी रंगीन बनाने के लिए भारतीय नृत्य एवं संगीत प्रस्तुतियाँ तथा श्रीलंका के हिंदी गीत एवं फिल्म प्रेमियों के संघ द्वारा प्रस्तुत पुराने हिंदी गीतों का विशेष कार्यक्रम सभी के लिए अत्यंत भावनात्मक और आनंददायक रहा। इस भव्य कार्यक्रम का संयोजन और मंच संचालन स्वामी विवेकानंद सांस्कृतिक केंद्र श्रीलंका की हिंदी प्राध्यपिका सुश्री अतिला कोतलावल (Athila Kothalawala) ने किया।

संयुक्त राष्ट्र (UN) के महासचिव ने 2026 का नव वर्ष संदेश पहली बार हिंदी में भी जारी किया



संयुक्त राष्ट्र (UN) महासचिव एंतोनियो गुतेरश ने 2026 का नव वर्ष संदेश हिंदी भी में जारी किया। यह संयुक्त राष्ट्र में हिंदी की पहुँच बढ़ाने के भारत के प्रयासों में एक महत्वपूर्ण उपलब्धि है। हिंदी पाठ और हिंदी उपशीर्षकों वाले वीडियो के साथ, श्री गुतेरश ने अराजकता और अनिश्चितता से घिरे विश्व के बारे में कड़ी चेतावनी दी। उन्होंने वैश्विक नेताओं से सैन्य खर्च से ध्यान हटाकर विकास सहायता पर केंद्रित करने का आग्रह किया, यह तर्क देते हुए कि सच्ची सुरक्षा

युद्धों को वित्तपोषित करने के बजाय गरीबी से लड़ने में निहित है। पहली बार हिंदी में संदेश जारी करके, संयुक्त राष्ट्र ने मानव एकता के प्रति अपनी प्रतिबद्धता को रेखांकित किया और अंतरराष्ट्रीय समुदाय से आगामी वर्ष में शांति और वैश्विक विकास को प्राथमिकता देने का आह्वान किया। इस संबंध में यह भी उल्लेखनीय है की संयुक्त राष्ट्र (UN) ने अपनी बहुभाषिक नीति के अंतर्गत कुछ महत्वपूर्ण कार्यों के लिए हिंदी को भी शामिल किया है।

हिंदी राइटर्स गिल्ड कनाडा द्वारा विश्व हिंदी दिवस 2026 का भव्य आयोजन



हिंदी राइटर्स गिल्ड कनाडा ने टोरंटो स्थित भारतीय महावाणिज्य दूतावास तथा वैश्विक हिंदी परिवार के सहयोग से शनिवार, 10 जनवरी 2026 को ब्रैम्पटन स्थित त्रिवेणी मंदिर में विश्व हिंदी दिवस 2026 का भव्य और व्यापक स्तर पर आयोजन सफलतापूर्वक संपन्न किया। इस कार्यक्रम में 350 से अधिक समुदायिक सदस्यों ने उत्साहपूर्वक भाग लिया। प्रतियोगिता के अंतर्गत कुल 129 प्रतिभागियों ने हिस्सा लिया, जिनमें से 110 प्रतिभागी पुरस्कार वितरण समारोह में प्रत्यक्ष रूप से उपस्थित रहे। यह कार्यक्रम ग्रेटर टोरंटो क्षेत्र के सबसे अधिक सहभागिता वाले हिंदी-भाषा सांस्कृतिक आयोजनों में से एक रहा। आयोजन का प्रमुख आकर्षण हिंदी पाठ एवं सृजनात्मक अभिव्यक्ति प्रतियोगिता रही। इस कार्यक्रम से पूर्व विविध प्रस्तुतियों के माध्यम से प्रारंभिक गतिविधियाँ आयोजित की गईं। चार से तीस वर्ष आयु वर्ग के बच्चों, किशोरों और युवाओं ने कविता पाठ, लघुकथा तथा साहित्यिक अंशों के वाचन के माध्यम से अपनी भाषा दक्षता, प्रस्तुति कौशल, सृजनशीलता और आत्मविश्वास का प्रदर्शन किया। यह स्पष्ट रूप से परिलक्षित हुआ कि कार्यक्रम का उद्देश्य केवल भाषायी दक्षता को प्रोत्साहित करना ही नहीं, बल्कि कनाडा जैसे बहुसांस्कृतिक समाज में हिंदी के माध्यम से सांस्कृतिक गर्व, मौलिकता और सौहार्दपूर्ण अभिव्यक्ति को सुदृढ़ करना भी है। भारतीय महावाणिज्य दूतावास द्वारा प्रथम, द्वितीय और तृतीय पुरस्कार प्रदान किए गए। प्रतिभागी बच्चों को प्रमाण-पत्र और स्मृति-चिह्न देकर सम्मानित किया गया। इस अवसर पर समावेशन, प्रोत्साहन और सहयोग की भावना को विशेष रूप से रेखांकित किया गया। कार्यक्रम में हिंदी साहित्यकारों द्वारा निर्णायक के रूप में सहभागिता की गई, जिससे प्रतियोगिताओं का मूल्यांकन व्यापक और निष्पक्ष दृष्टिकोण से सुनिश्चित हुआ। आयोजन की पारदर्शिता, विश्वसनीयता तथा उच्च साहित्यिक मानकों की प्रशंसा प्रतिभागियों और अभिभावकों द्वारा की गई। कार्यक्रम के समापन पर यह संकल्प लिया गया कि हिंदी भाषा, साहित्य और संस्कृति के संरक्षण एवं संवर्धन के लिए सामूहिक प्रयास निरंतर जारी रहेंगे।

मनुमुक्त 'मानव' ट्रस्ट द्वारा विश्व हिंदी दिवस समारोह का आयोजन छह महाद्वीपों और दस देशों के विद्वानों ने की सहभागिता



मनुमुक्त 'मानव' मेमोरियल ट्रस्ट द्वारा विश्व हिंदी दिवस के सुअवसर पर भव्य वर्चुअल समारोह का आयोजन किया गया, जिसमें छह महाद्वीपों और भारत, नेपाल, आस्ट्रेलिया, सिंगापुर, कतर, घाना, बुल्गारिया, स्वीडन, ट्रिनिडाड और अमेरिका सहित दस देशों के डेढ़ दर्जन साहित्यकारों और विद्वानों ने सहभागिता की। रवींद्रनाथ टैगोर विश्वविद्यालय, भोपाल (मध्यप्रदेश) में अंतरराष्ट्रीय हिंदी-केंद्र के निदेशक डॉ. जवाहर कर्णावट की अध्यक्षता में आयोजित इस समारोह में अंतरराष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद्, नई दिल्ली के मानद निदेशक नारायण कुमार मुख्य अतिथि थे, वहीं केंद्रीय त्रिभुवन विश्वविद्यालय, काठमांडू (नेपाल) में

हिंदी-विभाग की प्रोफेसर एवं अध्यक्ष डॉ. श्वेता दीप्ति विशिष्ट अतिथि और विश्व बैंक, वाशिंगटन डीसी (अमेरिका) की वरिष्ठ अर्थशास्त्री डॉ. एस. अनुकृति स्वागताध्यक्ष के रूप में उपस्थित रहीं। उद्योग विस्तार अधिकारी डॉ. सुनील भारद्वाज द्वारा प्रस्तुत प्रार्थना-गीत के उपरांत ट्रस्टी डॉ. कांता भारती के प्रेरक सान्निध्य और डॉ. पंकज गौड़ के कुशल संचालन में संपन्न हुए इस समारोह के प्रारंभ में चीफ ट्रस्टी डॉ. रामनिवास 'मानव' ने विषय-प्रवर्तन करते हुए हिंदी के वैश्विक विस्तार को अपने एक दोहे के माध्यम से इस प्रकार रेखांकित किया चीन, रूस, ब्रिटेन तक, सात समुंदर पार। पूरी दुनिया में हुआ, हिंदी का विस्तार। अपने उद्घाटन भाषण में मुख्य अतिथि नारायण कुमार ने हिंदी को संपर्क और सद्भाव की भाषा बताते हुए कहा कि पूरे विश्व में फैले भारतीयों के कारण हिंदी अब विश्व-भाषा बन चुकी है। विशिष्ट अतिथि डॉ. श्वेता दीप्ति ने हिंदी को रोजगार से जोड़ने की वकालत की, वहीं डॉ. जवाहर कर्णावट ने अध्यक्षीय वक्तव्य में हिंदी के विकास में प्रवासी भारतीयों की भूमिका को महत्वपूर्ण बताया। केंद्रीय हिंदी निदेशालय, नई दिल्ली के सहायक निदेशक द्रव्य डॉ. नूतन पांडेय और डॉ. दीपक पांडेय ने प्रवासी भारतीयों को भारत का सांस्कृतिक दूत बताते हुए कहा कि विदेशों में हिंदी भाषा और भारतीय संस्कृति के प्रचार-प्रसार में उनका विशिष्ट योगदान रहा है। उल्लेखनीय है कि लगभग अढ़ाई घंटों तक चले इस महत्वपूर्ण कार्यक्रम में सिडनी (ऑस्ट्रेलिया) के प्रगीत कुँअर और डॉ. भावना कुँअर, सिंगापुर सिटी (सिंगापुर) की आराधना झा श्रीवास्तव, दोहा (कतर) के डॉ. वैजनाथ शर्मा, अकरा (घाना) की मीनाक्षी सौरभ, सोफिया (बुल्गारिया) की डॉ. मोना कौशिक, स्टॉकहोम (स्वीडन) के सुरेश पांडे, पोर्ट ऑफ स्पेन (ट्रिनिडाड) की आशा मोर तथा भारत से विजयकुमार मिर्चे (महासमुंद्र), डॉ. सत्यवान सौरभ (हिसार), डॉ. मुकुट अग्रवाल (रेवाड़ी) एवं डॉ. रामनिवास 'मानव', डॉ. जितेंद्र भारद्वाज और डॉ. पंकज गौड़ (नारनौल) आदि कवियों ने काव्य-पाठ द्वारा कार्यक्रम को नई ऊँचाई प्रदान की, जिसे देश-विदेश के श्रोताओं की भरपूर सराहना मिली।

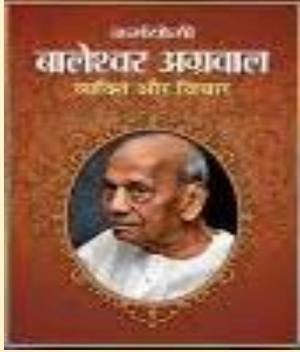
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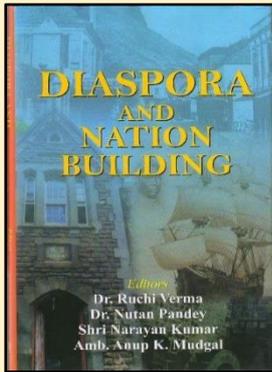
भारतीय सांस्कृतिक संबंध परिषद (ICCR) ने विश्व हिंदी दिवस 2026 (10 जनवरी) के अवसर पर दुनिया भर के अपने दूतावासों और सांस्कृतिक केंद्रों के माध्यम से विभिन्न कार्यक्रमों और उत्सवों का आयोजन किया, जिसमें हिंदी भाषा के वैश्विक महत्व और डिजिटल युग में उसकी भूमिका पर जोर दिया गया, जैसे कि जापान के टोक्यो में प्रोफेसर तोमियो मिजोकामी ने हिंदी को संयुक्त राष्ट्र की आधिकारिक भाषा बनाने की क्षमता पर बात की और बाली में प्रदर्शनी व सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम हुए, जिससे हिंदी के प्रचार-प्रसार में मदद मिली। आज हिंदी दुनिया की तीसरी सबसे अधिक बोली जाने वाली भाषा है। लंदन, मैनचेस्टर, ह्यूस्टन, ऑकलैंड, ओस्लो जैसे शहरों में भी निबंध प्रतियोगिता, कविता पाठ और सांस्कृतिक प्रस्तुतियाँ हुईं।

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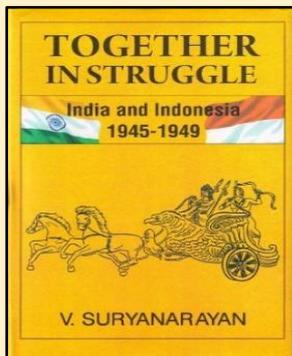
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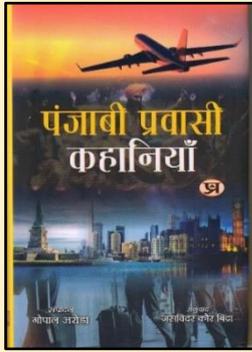


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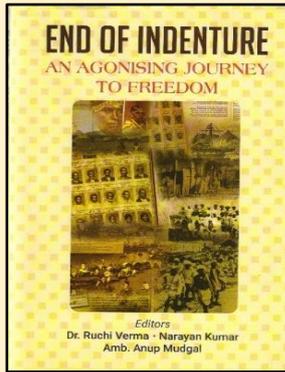


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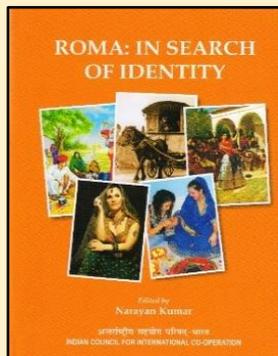
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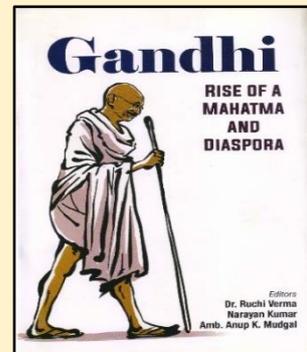


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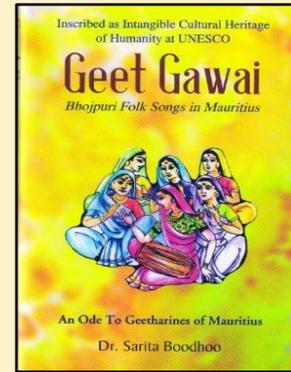


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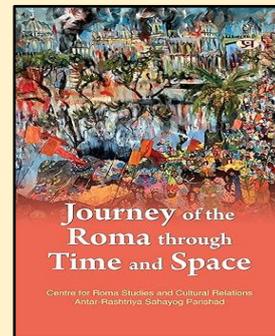
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