

# DIASPORA SAMVAD

## डायस्पोरा संवाद

DIASPORA RESEARCH AND RESOURCE CENTRE (DRRC)  
ANTAR RASHTRIYA SAHAYOG PARISHAD-BHARAT

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### PM MODI PRESENTED A COPY OF RUSSIAN TRANSLATION OF BHAGAVAD GITA TO PRESIDENT PUTIN



Russian President Vladimir Putin paid a state visit to New Delhi on 4-5 December to preside over the 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit at the invitation of Narendra Modi. This summit marked a significant milestone: 2025 also completes 25 years since the initiation of the formal “Strategic Partnership” between the two nations in 2000. The summit was designed not only to review decades-long cooperation but to chart a renewed, expanded roadmap across multiple sectors: trade, defence, energy, technology, culture and people-to-people exchanges.

During the summit, India and Russia sealed a comprehensive package of 16 agreements/MoUs spanning defence, trade and economy, healthcare, media, academia, culture and more. Most notably, the two countries formalised the Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Support Agreement (RELOS), which allows Russian and Indian armed forces, including naval vessels and aircraft, reciprocal access to each other’s military bases/ports/airfields for resupply, repairs, refuelling and maintenance. Russia reaffirmed its commitment to ensure uninterrupted supply of fuel (oil, gas) to India, a key element of the energy cooperation given global volatility and Western sanctions. In a symbolic act underscoring the cultural and civilizational dimension of India-Russia ties, PM Modi presented to President Putin a Russian-language edition of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita during the visit. The move was explicitly described by the Indian side as an attempt to share India’s spiritual and cultural heritage with a global audience. The gift also included Assam black tea, Kashmiri saffron, a silver tea-set, and other artisanal items, collectively symbolising India’s cultural richness, craftsmanship and longstanding people-to-people bonds. The gesture served multiple purposes: it reaffirmed India’s soft-power through its civilizational heritage; it acted as a message of shared cultural respect; and it complemented the hard-power/trade agenda with a humanistic dimension, reinforcing that bilateral ties rest on more than just strategic interest. PM Modi and President Putin issued a joint statement reaffirming their countries’ commitment to a “Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership,” and declaring that even amid global geopolitical turbulence and external pressure, the India-Russia relationship remains “resilient to external pressure.” Central to the communiqué was the adoption

of a long-term economic cooperation framework, the Programme for the Development of Strategic Areas of Indian-Russian Economic Cooperation till 2030 (“Programme 2030”), which seeks to broaden and deepen bilateral engagement and push bilateral trade to USD 100 billion by 2030, from about USD 68.7 billion in FY 2024–25. The joint statement underscored cooperation in traditional sectors such as oil and petrochemicals, refining, LNG/LPG infrastructure, oilfield services, nuclear energy, and emerging areas including critical minerals, technology, and high-tech manufacturing. Another important declaration was the plan to enhance bilateral settlements using national currencies and digital payment systems, an effort aimed at insulating trade from currency and sanction-related volatility. On global issues, both leaders voiced support for a multipolar world order and emphasized cooperative approaches to ensure peace and stability, underscoring that their bilateral cooperation is rooted not just in narrow transactional interest but in long-term strategic vision. This summit carries deep significance on multiple levels, Strategic Continuity Amid Global Uncertainty, Diversification and Economic Rebalancing, Defence Cooperation in the New Era, Energy Security & Strategic Autonomy, Soft-Power and Cultural Diplomacy. The 2025 summit has laid out an ambitious, multi-sectoral roadmap. The combination of hard-power (defence logistics agreements, energy supply assurances), economic ambition (trade roadmap, FTA efforts), and soft-power gestures (Bhagavad Gita in Russian, cultural gifts) demonstrates a holistic vision. In a rapidly shifting global order, defined by geopolitical competition, economic uncertainty, and evolving strategic alignments, this visit underscored both India’s and Russia’s intent to preserve and modernise a partnership rooted in mutual respect, shared strategic interest, and civilisational bonds.

**Cheremin Sergey, Russia’s Minister for External Economic and International Relations, was presented Russian translation of Yoga-Vasishtha**

While PM Modi gifted the revered Gita to the visiting Russian leader, another spiritual exchange took place as well in New Delhi, giving a boost to the Indo-Russian cultural ties. Cheremin Sergey, Russia’s Minister for External Economic and International Relations, was presented with a newly published Russian translation of the ancient Indian Sanskrit classic, Yoga-Vasishtha. Yoga-Vasishtha has been translated into the Russian language jointly by the Rishi Vasishtha Institute, Moscow, and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, New Delhi. Dr. Shashi Bala, Dean of the Centre of Indology at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, and Olga Vlasenko, Dean of the Rishi Vasishtha Institute, led the joint project.



*Photo : Dr. Shashi Bala, Dean of the Centre of Indology at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan was presented Russian translation of Yoga-Vasishtha to Cheremin Sergey, Russia’s Minister for External Economic and International Relations*

Not long ago, the fourth volume of Yoga Vasishtha was also launched at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, New Delhi, as part of the ongoing multi-volume project. Yoga-Vasishtha, attributed to Sage Vasishtha, is considered one of the country’s most profound philosophical texts. It is a compilation of a spiritual discourse from Sage Vashishtha to Prince Rama. One can find answers to universal questions of human existence in the text, while also receiving guidance on overcoming sorrow, ego, fear, and dissatisfaction through self-knowledge and inner clarity. Scholars believe the Russian translation of Yoga-Vasishtha will provide inspiration to future generations of Russian readers, encouraging deeper reflection on universal consciousness and shared human values.

## ARSP-DRRC HOSTED DELEGATES OF 83RD BATCH OF KIP



Diaspora Research and Resource Centre (DRRC)-Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP) hosted the 83rd batch of Know India Program (KIP), a flagship initiative of Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to connect with the Indian Diaspora across the globe, on 27 November, 2025 at Pravasi Bhawan, New Delhi. This batch brought together 40 delegates from 14 countries: Fiji, France (including Reunion Island), Guyana, Israel, Italy, Mauritius, Myanmar, Netherland, Panama, Paraguay, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, and United State of America.

After formal welcoming of the delegates, Dr. Markandey Rai, Chairman, Foreign Affairs Committee, ARSP, delivered the Introductory remark. He appreciated every stakeholder involved in organizing the KIP, including ARSP, and underlined the experiences of the delegates. He also highlighted the responsibilities of all to make India 'Viksit Bharat' till 2047.

The first session of the event was the workshops Presented by Ms. Priyanka Sharma, Senior manager, Global Partnership, Sewa International, and Dr. Astha Agarwal, Assistant Professor, University of Delhi. The first workshop, titled 'Heritage, Influence, and Global Leadership', was presented by Ms. Priyanka Sharma, in which she threw light on the importance of the diaspora. She talked about India's rich cultural heritage and its soft power through an interactive session. She asked a number of questions related to her theme, in which the delegates participated via poll. The winner was awarded with a gift. The second 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 listening to songs on the film soundtrack and recognition of songs. The winning team was also awarded. The quiz fostered teamwork, knowledge-sharing, and left a lasting impression on the participants.

The second session of the event was started by the address of Dr. Sarita Boodhoo, GOSK, Pravasi Bhartiya Samaan Awardee, and consultant, Girmitiya Indian Diaspora, writer, journalist & social activist. She extended her Pravasi Bhartiya Samman award (PBSA) to all the delegates of 83<sup>rd</sup> batch of KIP. Inspired from Modi's words (from his visit to Mauritius in March, 2025), she asks the participants to accept the regional way of living (*Jis desh me jao, waha ke ban jao*) without forgetting one's root. She remembered 191 years of journey of Mauricians and requested the delegates to look and be inspired from the permanent exhibition of ARSP in the conference room. She explained the historical importance of Aapravasi Ghat, Le Morne Landscape, and Geet Gawai songs. She gave keen attention to the celebration of 'Departure Day' by the government of India,

for the very first time, on 15 sept 2025. She also appreciated the role of ARSP in pressing forward this matter.

H.E. Mr. Jagannath Sami, High Commissioner of the Republic of Fiji, New Delhi, started with giving emphasis on his name and the names like Raam, Lakshman etc. of the people of Fiji to establish a deeper connection to their roots i.e. India. He explained the shrewdness of Britishers in calling the 'Girmit people' as an 'Indentured Laborer' 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 Fiji with their motherland, India. Totaram Sanadhya was the first person to organize the first Raamleela on the banks of river Rewa to inspire people.

H.E. Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj, High Commissioner of the republic of Guyana, appreciated the diversity of India and its achievements since independence. He talked about Highbury monuments and threw light on cultural similarity between India and Guyana. He recalled people of Indian origin who have occupied the higher political and judicial services including Cheddi Jagan. He emphasized on the fact that if India prosper, its soft power grows, and more and more Guyanese will feel proud on their Indian roots.

Ms. Sunaina Mohan, Second Secretary, Embassy of the Republic of Suriname, remembers her own journey as a delegate of KIP batch to inspire the current batch. She gave much attention to Hindi as a binding force and pride of Indian roots. She told about the six cultural aspects that have been preserved by the Suriname; *the Bhasha, the Bhesha, the Bhajan, the Bhojan, the Bhootkaal, and the Bhawana* (i.e. the Language, Appearance, Devotional songs, Food, History, and the Feelings). She highlighted the growth of Suriname and that of the Hindustani people as a backbone of Suriname's economy.

Shri R. D. Gupta, Senior member of ARSP, citing many examples, talked about the growth of India. He also gave four sources of happiness, namely, live in a joint family, live in nature, less or no dependence on others for survival, and live a simple life.

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. While remembering Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Manilal, Lady Narayani, and Totaram Sanadhya, he emphasized on the importance of remembering our history. He declared the entire batch of 83<sup>rd</sup> KIP as 'oversees members of ARSP' and invited their inputs for 'Diaspora Samvad'. He highlighted the foundational objectives of ARSP and DRRC. He also paid tribute to Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the then Prime Minister of India, and Anirudh Jagannath, the then Prime Minister of Mauritius for their valuable contribution in making ARSP, a reality. The program was ended with distribution of certificates to the delegates of KIP for their active participation.

## INDO-SURINAME BILATERAL RELATIONS: A LIVING BRIDGE OF HISTORY, CULTURE AND COOPERATION

✍ NAVNIT KUMAR  
RESEARCH FELLOW, DRRC



Suriname is a small, culturally diverse country on the northeastern coast of South America, bordered by the Atlantic Ocean, Guyana, Brazil, and French Guiana. Known for its rich rainforests and colonial history, it is home to one of the largest populations of people of Indian origin in the Caribbean and South America.

November 25, 2025 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> Independence Day of Suriname.



*Photo : 1975–2025: 50 Years of Independence of Suriname at the Atrium City Hall.*

The bilateral relationship between India and Suriname is one of the most culturally rich and historically rooted partnerships in the world. Anchored in a shared heritage of over 150 years, stemming from the arrival of Indian indentured labourers in Suriname in the 19th century, this relationship has evolved into a dynamic engagement in diplomacy, development, culture, and people-to-people exchange.

The Indo-Suriname connection began on 5 June 1873, when the first ship *Lalla Rookh* arrived in Suriname carrying Indian indentured labourers majorly from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Over the next four decades, thousands of Indians migrated, eventually forming a vibrant community that today constitutes a significant share of Suriname's population. Today, nearly 27–30% of Suriname's population is of Indian origin, a demographic bridge that no other bilateral relationship enjoys at such depth.

Scholars have noted that the Surinamese-Indian community retained linguistic and ritual practices from the Gangetic plains, creating a distinct Indo-Caribbean civilizational identity. This shared heritage continues to be central to diplomatic relations. Walk through Paramaribo and one can easily hear Bhojpuri phrases in the market, taste Indian-inspired cuisine, and see temples echoing traditions from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. This isn't nostalgia, it is living heritage. This emotional connection continues to set India-Suriname relations apart from almost any other international partnership.

Cultural diplomacy forms the strongest social pillar of the relationship. The Indian diaspora, descendants of the original girmityas, preserves Bhojpuri, Hindi vocabulary, Vedic rituals, and Indian festivals. India supports cultural institutions, language promotion, and performing arts exchanges, reinforcing long-term people-to-people ties. No bilateral relationship in the Caribbean mirrors the emotional closeness of Indians and Surinamese of Indian descent. Formal diplomatic ties have steadily expanded since Suriname's independence in 1975. Since then, India and Suriname enjoy warm diplomatic ties reinforced by high-level visits, cooperation agreements, and shared membership in various international forums. Both countries maintain embassies, facilitating strong

political dialogue and coordination on global issues such as climate justice, sustainable development, equitable global governance and South-South cooperation. Suriname's carbon-negative status and India's green-energy leadership make them natural allies in the climate arena. The two countries also coordinate positions in multilateral forums.

India's respect for Suriname's unique heritage, coupled with Suriname's appreciation for India's global leadership, creates a relationship marked by mutual trust. On the other hand, Suriname's support for India's global positions in multilateral forums reflects converging interests in sustainable development and South-South cooperation. State visits and virtual summits in recent years have further strengthened governmental cooperation, particularly in capacity-building, digital governance, and energy security. This cultural continuum is not merely symbolic; it ensures that diplomatic goodwill between the two countries is always rooted in people's hearts. India's partnership model is demand-driven, emphasizing local priorities and long-term sustainability. Economic ties between India and Suriname have been expanding steadily. India's development assistance isn't just about numbers, it includes lines of credit, grants, and technical assistance, and support to Suriname in key sectors such as: Agriculture, Solar Energy, Healthcare, Skill Development etc. This also includes Scholarships and training through the *Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)* programme.

While bilateral trade remains modest, its potential is substantial. India exports pharmaceuticals, machinery, textiles, vehicles, and food products, while Suriname offers opportunities in timber, gold, oil, and agricultural commodities. A bilateral trade corridor built on MSME collaboration could significantly enhance economic engagement. There is growing interest in forging partnerships in sectors such as: Ayurveda and wellness tourism, IT services and digital infrastructure, Mining technology, Fisheries and aquaculture. Culture is at the heart of Indo-Suriname relations. The Indian-origin community in Suriname has preserved its traditions remarkably, contributing significantly to Suriname's national identity. Festivals such as Diwali, Holi (Phagwa), Navratri, and Eid are celebrated widely, symbolizing a pluralistic heritage. India supports this cultural continuum through: ICCR-supported cultural troupes and performing arts exchanges, Hindi language promotion, Collaboration in yoga, Ayurveda, and spiritual traditions, Establishment of cultural centres, and academic partnerships. The diaspora serves as a powerful bridge, enriching both societies while fostering goodwill and understanding.

In recent years, cooperation has deepened in emerging sectors:

- **Digital Governance:** - India has shared expertise in digital public infrastructure, e-governance, fintech solutions, and IT capacity-building, areas important for Suriname's modernization efforts.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** - Suriname, one of the world's few carbon-negative countries, collaborates closely with India on forest conservation, climate resilience, and renewable energy technologies.
- **Education & Youth Exchange:** - Scholarships, student exchange programmes, and academic collaborations continue to empower Surinamese youth with opportunities to study in India and contribute to bilateral growth.

These domains align with both countries' developmental trajectories and the global shift toward sustainability and knowledge-based economies. The Indo-Suriname partnership is ripe with potential. Opportunities lie in: Boosting trade through preferential agreements and business delegations, enhancing connectivity through direct air links in the long term, expanding cooperation in Ayurveda, wellness tourism, Hindu cultural studies, and creative industries, Strengthening public health systems and pharmaceutical collaboration, Promoting joint ventures in agriculture, aquaculture, and food security. As both countries aim to navigate global challenges, there is clear scope for deeper collaboration rooted in mutual benefit. It has to note here is that

Indo-Suriname relations are strategically significant for several reasons: Shared democratic values and multicultural societies, complementary strengths in agriculture, energy, and digital innovation, a deeply committed diaspora that sustains bilateral warmth, alignment in global forums especially on climate and equitable development, and a partnership that stands as a model for Indo-Caribbean relations. While the relationship is strong, it can be further expanded. Key opportunities include: Direct air connectivity or regional hubs, more structured B2B platforms for trade, collaboration in gemstone, timber, and horticulture sectors, joint cultural productions, films, and heritage documentation, and investment partnerships for Suriname's energy and gold sectors. Also, mutual awareness and private-sector engagement remain areas requiring renewed focus. Indo-Suriname bilateral relations are an exceptional blend of history, emotion, and strategic cooperation. What began as a story of migration has transformed into an enduring partnership between two nations united by shared heritage and modern aspirations. With robust diplomatic ties, growing economic engagement, and an ever-deepening cultural bond, the India-Suriname relationship stands as a model of how historical connections can blossom into forward-looking, mutually enriching cooperation. As India emerges as a leading global economy and Suriname steps confidently into a future shaped by sustainability and multicultural harmony, the two nations stand poised to deepen their partnership. Their bond, emotional, historical, and strategic, promises a future of shared growth, mutual respect, and enduring friendship.

### Suriname towards 50 years of Independence: Launch of a special logo and theme



To symbolize this significant occasion, a special 50th Independence logo has been launched, embodying the spirit of reflection, growth, and national pride.

#### Meaning of Colors

- **Green:** Refers to Suriname as an HFLD country (High Forest, Low Deforestation), one of the most forest-rich nations in the world.
- **Yellow:** Represents gold, minerals, and the wealth of our soil. It also refers to the celebration of 50 years of 'Srefidensi' (Independence).
- **Black:** Symbolizes oil and the fertile land that forms the foundation for agricultural development.
- **Red:** Represents the unifying blood and shared passion of all population groups to advance Suriname.

#### Meaning of Numbers and Symbols

- **5:** The number 5 and the circle of stars: Depict 50 years of independence.
- **Yellow stars:** Symbolize unity and sustainable growth. The green stripe in the circle refers to green development.
- **Fist:** Expresses strength, unity in diversity, and social upliftment.
- **Years:** Remind us of the historical milestones and 50 years of political independence of Suriname.
- **Ten stars:** Represent the ten districts, each with its own identity, culture, natural wealth, and economic potential.
- **Flag:** The national flag of Suriname as a proud symbol of independence and solidarity.

## PRIME MINISTER MODI ENGAGES WITH THE INDIAN DIASPORA IN SOUTH AFRICA ON THE SIDELINES OF THE G20 SUMMIT



Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**, attending the **20th G20 Leaders' Summit in Johannesburg**, received a warm and vibrant reception from the **Indian diaspora** in South Africa, underscoring the deep cultural and people-to-people ties between India and the host nation. Upon arrival, he was greeted with traditional folk dances and colourful performances representing Indian states, reflecting the diaspora's rich heritage and connection with their roots. Modi described the welcome as “deeply touching” and lauded the community for preserving and promoting Indian culture abroad, including devotional performances and spirited greetings.

On the sidelines of the summit, PM Modi held a **fruitful interaction with Indian-origin tech entrepreneurs and community leaders**, urging them to **deepen their engagement with India** across sectors such as FinTech, education, healthcare and more. He called the Indian diaspora “a living bridge” between the two countries and encouraged efforts to popularise Indian practices like Yoga and Ayurveda in South Africa. Modi also interacted with winners of the *Bharat Ko Janiye* quiz, emphasising the importance of connecting diaspora youth with India's history and culture. These engagements highlighted both cultural solidarity and economic collaboration, strengthening bilateral goodwill as world leaders gather to address global priorities at the G20 Summit.

## EAM JAISHANKAR OPENED TWO NEW CONSULATES GENERAL IN RUSSIA



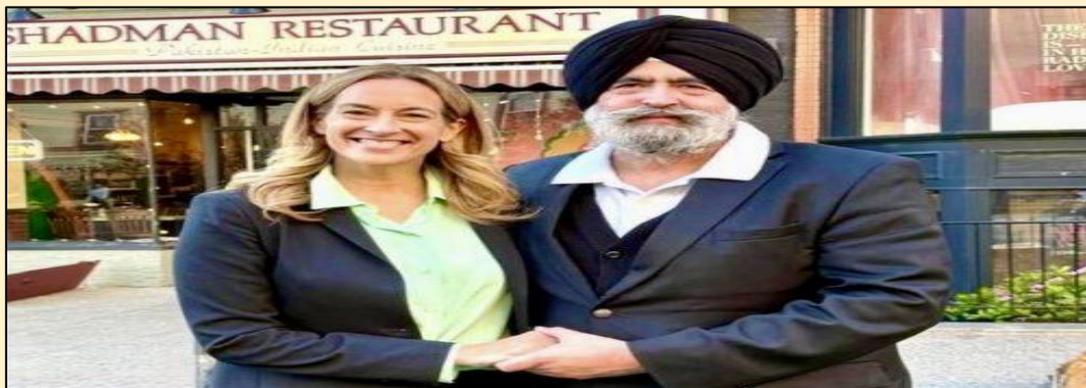
*Photo: EAM S Jaishankar pays floral tribute to Mahatma Gandhi in Moscow*

External Affairs Minister **Dr. S. Jaishankar** recently concluded a significant visit to **Russia**, where he engaged with the Indian community and inaugurated two new **Indian Consulates General** in **Yekaterinburg** and **Kazan**, marking an expansion of India's diplomatic footprint in the country. The openings were described by Jaishankar as “an important day” in India-Russia relations and signal a **new**

**phase of cooperation and engagement** between the two longstanding partners. Jaishankar highlighted the strategic importance of both cities. Yekaterinburg, often referred to as Russia’s “**third capital**”, is a key industrial hub and gateway to Siberia, offering opportunities in heavy engineering, metallurgy, defence manufacturing and technology collaboration. Kazan, a multicultural centre and one of Russia’s most visited cities, stands out for its strengths in oil refining, pharmaceuticals, automobiles and cultural exchange potential.

The establishment of the consulates is expected to **benefit Indian students, businesses and the diaspora**, with over 30,000 Indians residing across Russia, including thousands in the jurisdictions of the new missions. These diplomatic posts are aimed at facilitating trade, tourism, economic, scientific, cultural and academic ties, and helping realise the goal of increasing bilateral trade to USD 100 billion by 2030. Jaishankar’s interactions with the Indian diaspora underscored India’s commitment to strengthening people-to-people connections while deepening strategic and economic cooperation amid evolving global dynamics.

### **JASPREET SINGH NAMED TO NEW JERSEY TRANSITION ADVISORY COUNCIL**



*Photo: Jaspreet Singh with NJ Governor-elect Mikie Sherrill*

Jaspreet Singh, a New Jersey-based Indian American attorney, has been appointed to Governor-elect Mikie Sherrill’s Transition Advisory Council to help “chart a bold course for New Jersey’s future.” He is the only Sikh and the first Punjabi immigrant named to Sherrill’s “ambitious and collaborative initiative to chart a bold course for New Jersey’s future and ensure the Governor-elect’s commitment to hit the ground running on Day One priorities,” the transition team announced. Singh has been named a member of an Interdisciplinary Advisory Task Force that will bring together voices from across New Jersey — representing labor, business, veterans, the environment, healthcare, education, and more. This diverse group will provide input to the Governor-elect and ten Action Teams to be led by New Jersey and national experts, it said. They include members with diverse and distinguished experience and were developed with input from experts in the state and across the country.

The Action Teams will consider all of the feedback and provide recommendations to Sherrill on enacting her agenda, with a focus on how we can all come together as New Jerseyans to lower costs and tackle the challenges and opportunities ahead of us, the team stated. Singh, who migrated to the United States decades ago, has built a long career in immigration law and is well known within New Jersey’s Punjabi and Sikh communities. Singh who studied law at Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU), a public university in Amritsar, Punjab, previously donated Rs 30 million to establish the Guru Nanak Chair at the university. “His inclusion is a strong recognition of his

professional expertise, public service and community leadership in the United States,” said GNDU Vice-Chancellor Prof Karamjeet Singh, who had conferred upon him the title of Professor of Eminence. New Jersey, he said, is home to some of the world’s most respected academic and research institutions, including the Ivy League Princeton University, historically associated with Albert Einstein. “The appointment of a GNDU alumnus to such an important policy body underscores the global impact and excellence of our graduates. This is a proud moment for GNDU and for Punjab,” Karamjeet Singh said. “The selection of our alumnus, Attorney Jaspreet Singh, as the only Sikh in New Jersey’s incoming administration reflects the university’s expanding global footprint and its ability to nurture leaders who excel internationally with integrity and vision,” he added.

### DEEPAVALI ADDED TO UNESCO’S INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE LIST

Deepavali, the festival of lights, has been inscribed on UNESCO’s List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, announced at the 20th UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee session at New Delhi’s Red Fort from December 8-13, 2025. It is the **16th Indian element** on this list. The inscription was adopted in the presence of delegates from 194 Member States, international experts, and representatives of UNESCO’s global network. The Festival of Lights is a living tradition carried forward by communities, continuously recreated across generations, supporting social cohesion and contributing to development.



PM Narendra Modi welcomed UNESCO’s recognition of Deepavali, stating that Deepavali is deeply linked to India’s culture and ethos, and represents the very soul of our civilisation. To include an element on UNESCO’s Representative List of ICH, states must submit a nomination dossier for evaluation. Each country can nominate one element every two years. India nominated the ‘Deepavali’ Festival for the 2024–25 cycle.

Deepavali, for India, is far more than an annual festival; it is a living tradition woven into the emotional and cultural fabric of millions. Every year, as lamps begin to glow across cities, villages, and distant diasporic homes, Deepavali rekindles a familiar sense of joy, renewal, and connection. It invites people to pause, remember, and come together to remind the world why this festival rightfully deserves a place among humanity’s treasured cultural traditions.

## Popular Legends of Deepavali

- In the Ramayana, it signifies the return of Lord Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana to Ayodhya after 14 years of exile and their victory over Ravana, celebrated with lamps lighting their path. In the Mahabharata, it marks the return of the Pandavas after their exile.
- Naraka Chaturdashi recalls Lord Krishna's victory over Narakasura, symbolising the end of evil.
- Goddess Lakshmi is believed to visit illuminated homes on Deepavali night.
- Lord Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankar, attained Nirvana on Deepavali at Pavapuri. His disciples, in tears, begged him not to leave. Mahavira urged them to light the lamp within and conquer darkness. Jain devotees celebrate this festival with enthusiasm as Nirvana Day.
- According to Hindu mythology, the demon Tripurasura, sons of Tarakasura, gained a boon that they could only be killed by a single arrow. They wreaked havoc until Lord Shiva, as Tripurantaka, destroyed them with one arrow. This victory is commemorated as Deepavali or Dev Deepavali, with devotees bathing in the Ganges, lighting diyas, and offering prayers to Lord Shiva.
- King Bali's Return: In Maharashtra, Deepavali marks the visit of King Bali, symbolising justice and generosity.
- Kali Puja: In Bengal, Odisha and Assam, Deepavali coincides with the worship of Goddess Kali for protection and inner strength.
- Govardhan/Annakut: Some regions commemorate Krishna lifting the Govardhan Hill, a reminder of humility and gratitude.

The inscription of Deepavali on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List is a tribute to the millions who celebrate it with devotion, to the artisans who keep its traditions alive, and to the timeless principles it represents. It tells the world that India's cultural heritage is not merely remembered, it is lived, loved, and passed forward.

## CANADA RELAXED CITIZENSHIP LAWS: BENEFITTING INDIANS

Canada has officially brought into force major changes to its citizenship laws under Bill C-3, a move that marks one of the most significant reforms to its Citizenship Act in years and is poised to benefit thousands of Indian-origin families worldwide. The legislation, which received royal assent recently and came into effect on December 15, 2025, modernises how citizenship is conferred by descent, addressing long-standing gaps that had left many eligible individuals without citizenship despite clear lineage.

Previously, Canada's so-called "first-generation limit" meant that Canadian citizens born abroad could only pass citizenship to the first generation born outside the country. This rule created a population of so-called "Lost Canadians", people who believed they were entitled to citizenship but were excluded due to outdated provisions. Bill C-3 eliminates this restriction retroactively, allowing children born or adopted abroad to Canadian parents (even if those parents were themselves born overseas) to obtain citizenship, provided they meet new criteria. For those born before December 15, the law grants automatic citizenship to individuals who would have qualified under modernised rules, offering closure and legal recognition to many with Indian heritage. For children born on or after that date, citizenship can be passed on if the parent demonstrates a "substantial connection" to Canada, typically defined as at least three years of cumulative physical presence in the country prior to the child's birth or adoption. This reform is especially meaningful for Indians and Indian-origin families living abroad — including those in India and other countries — who may now secure or restore Canadian citizenship rights for their children. As a result, new generations will have access to the broad rights of Canadian citizens, such as voting, easier travel and the ability to sponsor family members, strengthening family unity and global mobility.

## TANZANIA CELEBRATES 150TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF TRIBAL ICON BHAGWAN BIRSA MUNDA



The Indian community in Tanzania joined diplomats, tribal enthusiasts, and local cultural organisations on **11 November 2025** to mark the **150th birth anniversary of Dharti Aaba Bhagwan Birsa Munda**, the revered Indian tribal freedom fighter whose struggle and legacy have become symbols of indigenous pride and cultural resilience. The event, organised by the **Embassy of India in Tanzania**, formed part of the **global Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh** — a year-long

commemoration of Birsa Munda’s life and ideals that runs from November 2024 to November 2025 and culminates with wide observances across India and abroad.

Bhagwan **Birsa Munda**, born on **15 November 1875** in present-day Jharkhand, India, led the powerful **Ulgulan Movement** against British colonial exploitation and fought for tribal rights, land autonomy, and cultural dignity. Known affectionately as “*Dharti Aaba*” (Father of the Earth), his rebellion has been celebrated as a cornerstone in the struggle for justice and indigenous self-determination.

The **Tanzania programme** brought together Indian expatriates, Tanzanian friends of India, cultural performers, and representatives of local tribal heritage organisations. Ambassadorial remarks emphasised Birsa Munda’s universal message of defending community rights, protecting natural environments, and upholding the dignity of indigenous cultures. Delegates laid floral tributes beside a specially curated portrait of Birsa Munda, recited his famous calls for freedom, and highlighted the relevance of his teachings in today’s world.

In remarks shared via official posts from the **Indian diplomatic mission**, organisers noted that the event was part of celebrations commemorating Birsa Munda’s enduring legacy, highlighting his role not only as a national hero in India but as an inspiration for indigenous and marginalised communities globally.

Across **India and abroad**, Nov 2025 has been a month of solemn and vibrant remembrance. On **15 November**, India observed **Janjatiya Gaurav Divas (Tribal Pride Day)** to pay tribute to his contributions as part of nationwide celebrations. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, President Droupadi Murmu, and other dignitaries paid homage at various official events, underscoring Birsa Munda’s role in uniting diverse tribal cultures and championing rights against domination and discrimination.

The Tanzania celebration also included cultural performances featuring tribal music and dance, educational presentations on Birsa Munda’s life and struggle, and community dialogue on sustaining indigenous heritage in an increasingly interconnected world. The event concluded with a shared pledge to continue promoting cultural diversity, community empowerment, and historical awareness among youth and future generations.

## PRESIDENT MURMU ACCEPTS CREDENTIALS OF MAURITIUS HIGH COMMISSIONER SHEILABAI BAPPOO



The President of India, Droupadi Murmu accepted credentials by the Sheilabai Bappoo, High Commissioner of Mauritius at a ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on November 25, 2025.

**Sheilabai Bappoo GOSK** is a Mauritius politician and diplomat. She served as Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions in Mauritius from 2005 to 2010. She also held the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Protection and Family Planning from 1983 to 1995 and from 2010 to 2011.

## टोक्यो, जापान से प्रकाशित पत्रिका 'हिंदी की गूंज' का पंचम वार्षिकोत्सव समारोह



दिनांक 07.12.2025 को नई दिल्ली के राजघाट स्थित गांधी दर्शन के बी एन पाण्डेय सभागार में टोक्यो, जापान से प्रकाशित अंतर्राष्ट्रीय पत्रिका 'हिंदी की गूंज' के पंचम वार्षिकोत्सव समारोह के अंतर्गत "पुस्तक लोकार्पण एवं सम्मान समारोह" का भव्य आयोजन किया गया। कार्यक्रम के प्रथम सत्र की अध्यक्षता का दायित्व वरिष्ठ प्रवासी साहित्यकार डॉ दिव्या माथुर ने किया तथा वरिष्ठ साहित्यकार एवं ज्योतिषाचार्य डॉ अनीता कपूर मुख्य अतिथि रहीं। विशिष्ट अतिथियों की श्रेणी में अंतरराष्ट्रीय प्रख्यात समाजसेवी श्री इंद्रजीत शर्मा, वरिष्ठ साहित्यकार डॉ दुर्गा सिन्हा, प्रसिद्ध कश्मीरी साहित्यकार डॉ मुक्ता शर्मा, टू मीडिया के सर्वेसर्वा श्री ओमप्रकाश प्रजापति तथा हिंदी की गूंज की संस्थापिका एवं संपादक डॉ रमा पूर्णिमा शर्मा मंचासीन रहे तथा कार्यभार का संचालन कवयित्री श्रीमती सोनिया अक्स 'सोनम' ने किया।



अतिथियों का स्वागत करते हुए हिंदी की गूंज पत्रिका की संपादिका डॉ रमा पूर्णिमा शर्मा ने अपने व्यक्तिगत जीवन के जुड़े कुछ अनकहे-अनसुने-अनछूए पहलुओं से श्रोताओं को अवगत कराया | उन्होंने कहा कि जापान में अनेक चुनितियों का सामना करते हुए किस प्रकार हिंदी के प्रचार का काम शुरू किया जिसके परिणाम स्वरूप सर्वप्रथम अंतरराष्ट्रीय त्रैमासिक ई-पत्रिका 'हिंदी की गूंज' का प्रारूप आप सभी के समक्ष आया | आज यही पत्रिका प्रत्यक्ष स्वरूप में आप सभी के बीच उपस्थित है। इसको यह नवीन और वास्तविक आवरण प्रदान करने में संस्था की टीम निरंतरता के साथ संलग्न रहती है। ईश्वर का प्रतिफल है कि आज हम इसी पत्रिका का पंचम वार्षिकोत्सव समारोह आयोजित कर पाने में सक्षम हुए हैं। अगले चरण में वात्सल्य संस्था के छात्र-छात्राओं ने 'ब्लैक चेक' शीर्षक से कलात्मक शैली में अपनी नाट्य प्रस्तुति के द्वारा सभागार में उपस्थित जनसमुदाय को भाव-विभोर किया | डॉ दुर्गा सिन्हा द्वारा इस भव्य आयोजन के प्रति कृतज्ञता व्यक्त करते हुए शुभकामनाओं सहित घनाक्षरी की प्रस्तुति के साथ अपनी वाणी को विराम दिया। डॉ अनीता कपूर ने अंतरराष्ट्रीय पटल पर हिन्दी को सम्मानित स्तर पर प्रतिस्थापित करने के लिए डॉ रमा की प्रशंसा के साथ उनके कार्य-कलापों को भी दृष्टिगोचर किया। श्री इंद्रजीत शर्मा, जो 'हिंदी की गूंज' के संरक्षक भी हैं, अपने उदबोधन में अवगत कराया कि प्रवासी साहित्यकार संपूर्ण विश्व में किस प्रकार अपने-अपने तरीकों से हिन्दी की पताका को ऊंचाईयों

तक पहुंचाने में संलग्न हैं, श्री ओमप्रकाश प्रजापति ने समयावधि को ध्यान में रखते हुए अपने संक्षिप्त उदगारों के माध्यम से हिन्दी को यथोचित स्थान ग्रहण कराने के लिए इन आयोजनों की सराहना करते हुए अपने समर्पित मनोभावों को व्यक्त किया। डॉ मुक्ता शर्मा ने इस आयोजन की भूरि-भूरि प्रशंसा करते हुए कहा कि इस आयोजन से जुड़ना सौभाग्य है। उन्होंने कश्मीर से विगत विस्थापन की व्यक्तिगत और पारिवारिक परिस्थितियों के प्रकरणों पर अपने उदगार व्यक्त किया |

श्री कुमार सुबोध ने अपनी नवीनतम कृति 'रिपोर्टाज' पर संक्षेप में उसके संग्रहण और संकलन की प्रक्रिया के माध्यम से अवगत कराया कि यह पुस्तक सवा साल की साहित्यिक, सांस्कृतिक और सामाजिक परिवेश में आयोजित हुई | गतिविधियों पर संकलित दस्तावेज है, जिसका अध्ययन करके आप घर बैठे उनके संबंध में जानकारी प्राप्त कर सकते हैं। अध्यक्ष डॉ दिव्या माथुर ने अपने अतिसंक्षिप्त उदबोधन में सभी को अपनी शुभकामनाएं प्रेषित करने के साथ डॉ रमा की कर्मठता को नमन करते हुए उनकी कार्यशैली को एक सराहनीय कदम बताते हुए अपना स्थान ग्रहण किया। इसी के साथ प्रथम सत्र का सत्रावसान हुआ।



द्वितीय चरण की अध्यक्षता वरिष्ठ साहित्यकार श्रीमती प्रमिला भारती ने किया। मुख्य अतिथि वरिष्ठ समाजसेवी, साहित्यकार एवं ग्वालियर गोपाल किरन समाजसेवी संस्था के अध्यक्ष श्री श्रीप्रकाश सिंह निमराजे रहे। 'हिंदी की गूँज' से जुड़े नवीन सदस्यों एवं विभिन्न पुस्तकों के लेखक एवं लेखिकाओं को भी इसी विधिपूर्वक मंच पर आमंत्रित करके सम्मानित किया गया। साथ ही, बाल चित्रकारों एवं बाल रचयिताओं को इसी प्रक्रिया के अनुसार सम्मानित किया गया। डॉ संजय शुक्ल ने अपनी प्रशंसनीय शब्दावली में शुभकामनाएं प्रेषित करने के साथ डॉ रमा से अपने साक्षात्कार के प्रकरणों पर विचार व्यक्त किए और अपनी एक उत्कृष्ट रचना के काव्यपाठ किया | श्री गीतेश्वर बाबू 'घायल', श्रीमती जूलियन तक्षशिला, श्री श्रीप्रकाश नीमराजे तथा श्रीमती ऋतु नयन पाण्डेय ने अपने संक्षिप्त उदगारों को प्रकट किया | अपने अध्यक्षीय वक्तव्य में श्रीमती प्रमिला भारती ने डॉ रमा पूर्णिमा शर्मा को समर्पित अपनी एक नवीन रचना के काव्यपाठ से श्रोता-दीर्घा में उपस्थित जनसमुदाय को मंत्रमुग्ध कर दिया। इस कार्यक्रम के दौरान विभिन्न लेखकों एवं लेखिकाओं द्वारा रचित, संकलित और संपादित 18 पुस्तकों का भव्य लोकार्पण किया गया, जिनमें विशेषतः डॉ रमा पूर्णिमा शर्मा की पांच नवीनतम कृति – "गूँज रही हिंदी, हिंदी की गूँज के दिये, शिंतो – जापान का सनातन धर्म, दालान की धूप, मेरा भारत महान और जंगल में मंगल", कुमार सुबोध की 'रिपोर्टाज', ज्योत्स्ना गर्ग की 'अतीत के झरोखों से', सरोज आहूजा की 'दोष किसका', नीलम मेहता की 'नीलम के हाइकू', सुनीता अग्रवाल की 'मन की गली' इत्यादि प्रमुख हैं और डॉ रमा पूर्णिमा शर्मा की संवर्धित अंतर्राष्ट्रीय त्रैमासिक पत्रिका 'हिंदी की गूँज' के दो नवीन अंकों का भी विधिवत लोकार्पण किया गया। इस सत्र के सत्रावसान के साथ-साथ डॉ रमा पूर्णिमा शर्मा ने कार्यक्रम में देश-विदेश के विभिन्न शहरों तथा क्षेत्रों से पधारे सभी विद्वत्तजनों एवं आगंतुकों के प्रति कृतज्ञता व्यक्त करते हुए धन्यवाद और आभार प्रकट किया |

## सुप्रसिद्ध कथाकार दिव्या माथुर के कहानी-संग्रह “मायाजाल” पर पुस्तक-परिचर्चा का आयोजन



कस्तूरी द्वारा आयोजित साहित्यिक शृंखला “किताबें बोलती हैं : सौ लेखक, सौ रचना” के अंतर्गत 6 दिसंबर 2025 को साहित्य अकादमी सभागार, नई दिल्ली में सुप्रसिद्ध कथाकार दिव्या माथुर के कहानी-संग्रह “मायाजाल” पर पुस्तक-परिचर्चा का आयोजन किया गया। यह संग्रह प्रभात प्रकाशन से प्रकाशित हुआ है। कार्यक्रम की अध्यक्षता वरिष्ठ कथाकार उदय प्रकाश जी ने की। मुख्य अतिथि के रूप में कवि एवं आलोचक अनामिका जी उपस्थित रहीं। वक्ताओं में शिक्षाविद किरण नंदा कथाकार अंजू वेद तथा शिक्षाविद गीता पाण्डेय सम्मिलित हुईं। कार्यक्रम का संचालन विशाल

पाण्डेय ने किया। गीता पाण्डेय, अंजू वेद, और किरण नंदा ने पुस्तक का आलोचनात्मक विश्लेषण प्रस्तुत किया। मुख्य अतिथि अनामिका जी ने कथाओं की मार्मिक प्रकृति पर बात करते हुए अज्ञेय और राहुल सांकृत्यायन के संदर्भों का उल्लेख किया। उन्होंने मृत्युबोध की सूक्ष्म अनुभूति पर चर्चा करते हुए कहा कि ये कहानियाँ जीवन की सीधी, स्पष्ट और अनावृत्त धारा की तरह प्रवाहित होती हैं। उनके अनुसार, स्त्री-मुक्ति का मार्ग उसे पुरुष-प्रधान अवधारणाओं से परे एक स्वतंत्र चेतना प्रदान करता है, जहाँ पूर्वग्रहों के विरुद्ध संघर्ष ही उसके अस्तित्व की वास्तविक पहचान रचता है। अध्यक्षीय उद्बोधन में उदय प्रकाश जी ने कहा कि दिव्या माथुर की कहानियाँ अपनी सीधी और सहज भाषा के कारण विशेष रूप से प्रभावशाली बनती हैं। उन्होंने यह भी कहा कि इन कथाओं में पितृसत्ता का प्रश्न बिना किसी पक्ष-पक्षधरता के सादगी से प्रस्तुत हुआ है। साथ ही, कथाओं में पूर्वानुमान की उपस्थिति इन्हें और अधिक अर्थपूर्ण बनाती है। उनके अनुसार, लेखिका किसी एक दृष्टिकोण का समर्थन नहीं करतीं, बल्कि कहानी को निष्पक्षता से सामने लाती हैं। इस अवसर पर प्रसिद्ध कथाकार, आलोचक, संपादक, वक्ता, शोधार्थी और विद्यार्थी बड़ी संख्या में उपस्थित रहे। यह आयोजन न केवल साहित्यिक विमर्श का मंच बना, बल्कि कहानी और जीवन के पारस्परिक संबंधों को समझने का एक सुंदर अवसर भी सिद्ध हुआ।

## ✨ विश्व रंग 2025 ✨

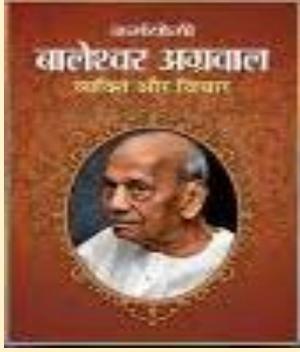


श्रीलंका और मुंबई में विश्व रंग के आरंभ के पश्चात भोपाल में 27 से 30 नवंबर तक विश्व रंग 2025 के भव्य आयोजन में 41 देशों से आए प्रतिभागियों के सत्रों का संयोजन-समन्वय विश्व रंग के निदेशक श्री संतोष चौबे जी के मार्गदर्शन में संपन्न हुआ। भारत सहित 41 देशों के लगभग 500 से अधिक शिक्षाविद, लेखक, भाषाविद, कलाकार, नाट्यविद, संगीतज्ञ, चित्रकार, संस्कृति कर्मी, लोक कला विशेषज्ञ आदि की इस आयोजन में सहभागिता रही। उद्घाटन समारोह में मध्य प्रदेश के राज्यपाल महामहिम श्री मंगू भाई पटेल ने डॉक्टर जवाहर कर्नावट के संपादन में प्रकाशित विश्व में हिंदी (70 देशों में हिंदी की स्थिति) के नवीन संस्करण का लोकार्पण किया।

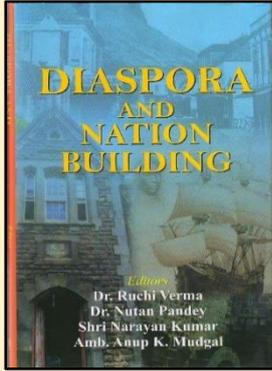
समापन समारोह में मॉरीशस के पूर्व राष्ट्रपति महामहिम श्री पृथ्वीराज सिंह रूपन, भारत के पूर्व शिक्षा मंत्री श्री रमेश पोखरियाल 'निशंक' के मुख्य आतिथ्य में विश्व हिंदी ओलंपियाड के पुरस्कार वितरण किया गया। मध्यप्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री श्री मोहन यादव भी विशेष रूप से विश्व रंग में उपस्थित रहें। इस आयोजन में प्रवासी साहित्य भाषा प्रौद्योगिकी, देवनागरी लिपि, कथेतर सहित प्रवासी कविता एवं गद्य पाठ के आठ सत्रों में देश-विदेश के विद्वानों ने भाग लिया।

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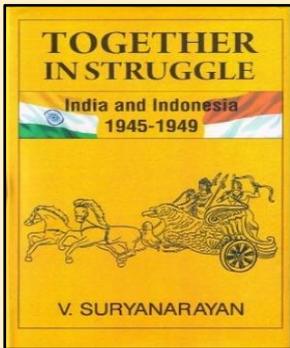
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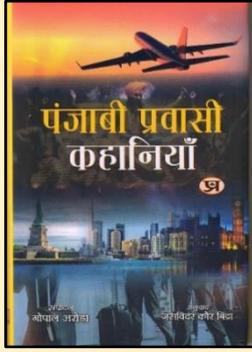
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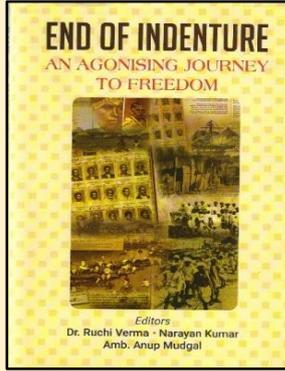
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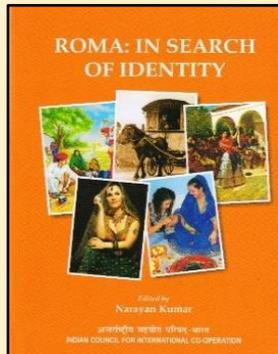
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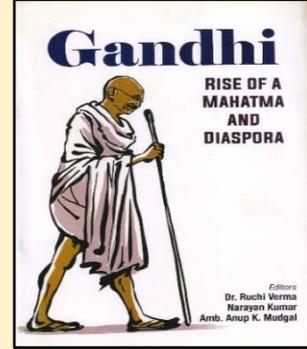
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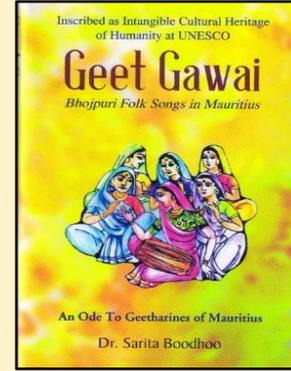
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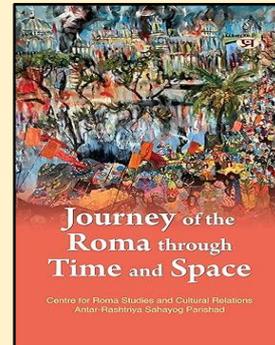
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