

DIASPORA SAMVAAD

डायस्पोरा संवाद

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

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PRESIDENT OF INDIA AWARDED PRAVASI BHARTIYA SAMMAN TO DISTINGUISHED PEOPLE OF INDIAN ORIGIN



Her Excellency Smt. Droupadi Murmu, President of India

President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu congratulated Her Excellency Christine Kangaloo, President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, on being conferred with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman 2025. She said Excellency, your outstanding contributions in leading your nation with a special focus on women and the Indian diaspora, has set a high benchmark on the world stage. This is a reflection of the deep ties of friendship and cooperation between our two countries, as much as it is a testament of the shared values that bind us across borders. The Indian Diaspora represents the best of our country. You, the sons and daughters of Bharat, have carried with you not just the knowledge and skills acquired in this sacred land, but also the values and ethos that have been the foundation of our civilization for millennia. Whether in the fields of technology, medicine, arts, or entrepreneurship, the Indian Diaspora has made a mark that the world acknowledges and respects.



Her Excellency Christine Kangaloo, President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

We honour those amongst you who have distinguished themselves through exemplary achievements. It is my privilege to confer on them the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, as India's token of recognition of their extraordinary contributions. My heartfelt congratulations to all the awardees. Your success stories are not just a matter of pride for India, but they also inspire millions across the world to strive for excellence.



Dr. Boodhoo Sarita (Mauritius, community service)



Ajay Rane (Australia) for his community service



Marielena Joan Fernandes (Austria, education)



Philomena Mohini (Barbados, medical science)



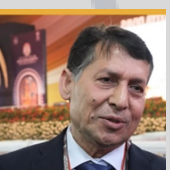
Ann Harris (Fiji, community service)



Saraswati Vidya Niketan (Guyana, community service)



Lekh Juneja (Japan, science and technology)



Prem Kumar (Kyrgyz Republic, medical science)



Soukthavy Chowdhury (Laos, business)



Krishna Savjani (Malawi, business)



Tan Subramaniam K.V. Sathasivam (Malaysia, politics)



Abhaya Kumar (Moldova, business)



Ram Niwas (Myanmar, education)



Jaggannath Shekhar Asthana (Romania, business)



Hindustani Samaj (Russia, community service)



Sudha Rani Gupta (Russia, education)



Syed Khurshed (Saudi Arabia, medical science)



Anwar Atul Temurnikar (Singapore, education)



Robert Masih Nahar (Spain, community service)



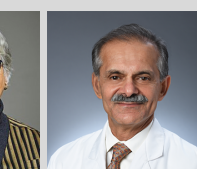
Kaushik Laxmidas Ramaiya (Tanzania, medicine)



Ramakrishn an Sivaswamy Iyer (UAE, business)



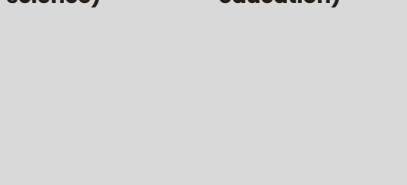
Bonthala Subbaiah Setty Ramesh Babu (Uganda, community service)



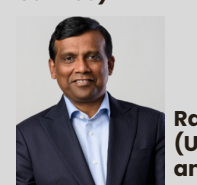
Usha Kumari Prashar (UK, politics)



Sharad Lakhnarpal (USA, medicine)



Ravi Kumar S (USA, business, IT and consulting)



Ravi Kumar S (USA, business, IT and consulting)

INDIAN DIASPORA CELEBRATES 76TH REPUBLIC DAY WITH ENTHUSIASM



High Commission of India in the UK celebrated India's 76th Republic Day, in London, January 26, 2025.

India's 76th Republic Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm both at home and abroad, with leaders worldwide extending their warm greetings and emphasizing the strengthening of bilateral relations. Indian missions globally hosted vibrant events, with the diaspora donning traditional attire and gathering to honor the occasion as the national tri-color was proudly unfurled.

Maldives President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu shared heartfelt wishes to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, praising the strong India-Maldives relationship. He committed to strengthening the partnership to tackle shared challenges. Nepal's Prime Minister, KP Sharma Oli, also sent his wishes, hoping for the continued flourishing of democracy and unity between the neighboring nations.

Bhutan's Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay expressed admiration for India's achievements, while Singapore's leaders, President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, reaffirmed the deep ties between the two countries, looking forward to even stronger cooperation. Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong reiterated Australia's commitment to collaborating with India.

Other leaders, including U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio highlighted the enduring India-US relationship, particularly in space research and the Quad initiative for a prosperous Indo-Pacific.

Celebrations took place across the globe, with Indian missions in countries like China, Sri Lanka, Singapore, and Israel marking the occasion with patriotic ceremonies and cultural performances. In Sri Lanka, Indian High Commissioner Dr. Satyanjal Pandey honored Indian soldiers at the IPKF Memorial. Indian diaspora in Israel and other nations also took part in these celebrations, contributing to strengthening bilateral ties.

India's Republic Day celebrations, marked by vibrant festivities and diplomatic cooperation, underscored the country's global presence and unity.

CHINESE PERFORMERS BRING INDIAN EPIC RAMAYANA TO LIFE IN HISTORIC PERFORMANCE



A photo of "Adi Kavya – The First Poem," a dance drama based on the Indian epic Ramayana performance

In a mesmerising cultural events a troupe of Chinese dancers performed "Adi Kavya – The First Poem," a dance drama based on the Indian epic Ramayana, on January 30. Directed by renowned Chinese Bharatanatyam exponent Jin Shanshan, the production featured around 80 local performers, many of whom learned the ancient South Indian dance form specifically for this performance. This marked the first time a Ramayana-based dance drama was staged on such a large scale in China.

The performance, supported by the Indian Embassy in Beijing, drew an esteemed audience, including Chinese Vice Minister Sun Haiyan, CIDCA head Luo Zhaohuai, Indian Ambassador Pradeep Rawat, and other officials. Ambassador Rawat highlighted the significance of the event, noting that it was the first time the Ramayana was brought to life in China on such a grand scale. He praised the diverse cast, ranging from ages five to 80, many of whom were performing on a large stage for the first time.

The dance drama was inspired by Prof Ji Xianlin's Chinese translation of the Ramayana and served as a testament to the growing cultural ties between India and China. The performers, initially strangers, bonded over two months of rigorous practice, forming a close-knit community united by their passion for Indian culture.

The event preceded Foreign Secretary-level talks aimed at normalizing bilateral ties, with Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri leading the Indian delegation. It also followed a November symposium organized by the Indian Embassy, where Chinese scholars explored the Ramayana's influence on Chinese literature and art.

Indian classical dance forms like Bharatanatyam and Kathak have gained popularity in China over the years, with many Chinese artists dedicating themselves to mastering these traditions. Last August, 13-year-old Lei Muzi became the first Chinese dancer to hold her Bharatanatyam "Arangetram" (graduation ceremony) in China, trained entirely by Jin Shanshan.

January 25 performance underscored the enduring cultural connections between India and China, showcasing the Ramayana's timeless appeal and its ability to bridge diverse traditions.

INDIAN DIASPORA DRIVES GROWTH

Author
Swati Prasad

Record remittances from a high-earning migrant population are boosting India's economy

The India Diaspora is the biggest in the modern world. And while those 18 million or so individuals may be viewed as a lamentable talent drain, in a country with a population that currently numbers nearly 1.5 billion – half of whom are under the age of 30 – there is less to fear than most. What's more, Indian migrants do a great deal to enhance India's economy by annually remitting vast quantities of capital.

India was once again the world's remittance champion in 2024, with an estimated capital inflow of US\$129bn, far outstripping Mexico (US\$68bn), China (US\$48bn), the Philippines (US\$40bn) and Pakistan (US\$33bn). Remittances are such a bountiful source of external financing for India that they now exceed capital inflows from foreign direct investment (FDI) and official development assistance combined.

Bumped up by the post-pandemic bounce-back in overseas jobs markets, high-earning Indians are investing in India's stock markets, where handsome returns are drawing in further investment from that same diaspora. The resulting surge of remittance funds is helping fuel India's impressive economic development.

A key remittance driver is the search for higher returns.

Who they are

India divides its diaspora into three categories: non-resident Indians (NRIs), persons of Indian origin (PIOs) and overseas citizens of India (OCIs). Whereas an NRI is an Indian passport holder who ordinarily resides outside India, a PIO currently holds another country's citizenship but used to be an Indian national (or whose ancestors were); an OCI is similar to a PIO but with more privileges, such as a lifelong visa, quicker immigration services and the right to become an Indian citizen.

Certainly, NRIs and PIOs both remit money to help their families back home or to build a retirement pot for themselves in India with the ultimate intention of moving back to the country. But those aren't the only reasons. A key driver of remittances is the search for higher returns on investments.

'All investments in India have the potential to fetch high returns'

India is one of the few major economies that continues to enjoy robust growth – the country's Sensex benchmark stock market index has risen steadily from 49,509 in March 2021 to 78,148 in January 2025.

Aniruddha Sengupta, founder of personal investment manager Arthashastra Finsec Providers, says: 'All investments in India – whether in the capital market, unlisted equities, business ventures such as angel investments and informal private equity – have the potential to fetch high returns.' He adds that real estate investments in tier 2 and 3 cities (ie those with a population between 20,000 and 100,000) are also delivering high returns.

Big contribution

It is the enthusiastic response of the diaspora to India's roaring economy that makes their contribution so important. Between April and September 2024, for example, the inflow of money into NRI deposit schemes almost doubled to US\$10bn.

And India, in turn, cultivates that inward investment from the diaspora through an enabling tax treatment, which includes a number of double-taxation avoidance treaties. All NRIs/PIOs need to do to start making investments in India is apply for a permanent account number (PAN) and open a non-residential external (NRE) bank account, which converts the funds transferred to it into the Indian rupees required to buy shares in Indian businesses.

Remittances account for a fifth of Kerala's GDP. NRIs/PIOs are taxed at the same rates as resident Indians on their Indian investments, with tax deducted at source when investments are redeemed. In most cases, NRIs/PIOs have to file tax returns in India and claim tax credits while filing tax returns in their country of residence. Most banks in India have a separate NRI services division to address the specific needs of NRIs/PIOs.

Of course, when making investments in India, NRIs/PIOs need to factor in currency devaluation. Today, the rupee trades at around 85 to the dollar; 10 years back, it was INR61 to the dollar. A weaker rupee impacts NRI/PIO investments, but it has not yet been a major deterrent.

GDP pillar

The economic consequences of remittances are a boon for India. In the southern state of Kerala, for example, remittances rose to US\$25bn in 2023, a rise of 155% over 2018, and accounting for a fifth of the state's GDP of around US\$123bn in 2022/23.

In 2025, World Bank economists expect those remittances to continue to increase 'because of enormous migration pressures driven by demographic trends, income gaps and climate change'. That can only be good news for the Indian economy.

Swati Prasad – a business journalist based in New Delhi, India

(Courtesy – Accounting and Business, January 2025 issue)

FOREIGN DEVOTEES EMBRACE THE MAHAKUMBH SPIRIT



Foreign devotees at Mahakumbh

As the Kumbh Mela continues to draw people from across the globe, its growing international popularity is undeniable. In an era where globalization and the internet have bridged cultures, the spiritual significance of this vast gathering has captured the attention of many foreign visitors. Whether through social media, travel documentaries, or shared personal experiences, the Kumbh has emerged as a beacon for those seeking a deeper spiritual connection.

This year, the Mahakumbh in Prayagraj, India, has attracted a diverse group of international devotees eager to immerse themselves in the sacred waters of the Ganges. Among them is Tallulah, a 25-year-old from Britain, who has come to witness this world-renowned event. "I'm here to stay for over 15 days. Back home, the Hindu community is aware of the Kumbh, but many Brits don't know about its grandeur," she shared. Visitors like Tallulah are drawn to the Kumbh for spiritual teachings, the energy of the gathering, and the opportunity to bathe in the Ganga.

For others, attending the Kumbh is a lifelong dream. Karen Neumann, 58, from the USA, has been yearning to be part of the event since the 1990s, after seeing a brochure in a bookstore. "It said, 'Come bathe in Mother Ganga,' and I told myself I'd go there one day. Now, 30 years later, that dream is coming true," she said.

Rohan James Maclaren from Australia has spent five weeks at the Kumbh, where he serves at the Parmarth Niketan Ashram, offering medical camps and social initiatives. "The Kumbh is the spiritual capital of the world," he said, emphasizing the profound impact of the gathering.

For spiritual leaders like Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, the Kumbh represents something beyond an event—it embodies the soul of India. "It's a timeless opportunity to connect with the sacred," she said, reflecting on her years of attending the Kumbh. For devotees from around the world, the Kumbh is a transformative experience that transcends borders, cultures, and time.

Indian diaspora provides a key link between India and Saudi Arabia, says former Minister of External Affairs of India



Former Indian Foreign Minister and president of the India Islamic Cultural Center Salman Khurshid (4R), AIMIM Bihar president Akhtarul Iman (3R) in Riyadh during an interaction with the Indian diaspora.

Salman Khurshid, the President of the India Islamic Cultural Center (IICC) and former Indian foreign minister emphasized the significant role that Indians living and working in Saudi Arabia play in fostering strong relations between the two nations. Khurshid, who was elected president of the IICC in August 2024, made these comments during a visit to Riyadh on February 07, 2025.

Khurshid highlighted his team's ongoing efforts to bring reforms and improvements to the cultural center, aiming to enhance the services and support provided to Indians both within India and abroad. He stressed the importance of the IICC as a platform to connect people and promote Indian culture globally.

"I am here to engage with the Indian community and discuss their experiences in the Kingdom," Khurshid stated. He also noted that many community members were eager to learn about recent developments in India.

The IICC, which was founded with the vision of promoting religious understanding and national integration, has always been a bridge between the people of India and other nations. Khurshid mentioned plans to establish IICC branches across India and in various countries, including Saudi Arabia, to decentralize and democratize the organization.

Khurshid's visit reaffirmed the strong bond between the Indian community in Saudi Arabia and their home country, underscoring the importance of unity and cultural exchange.

INDIAN DIASPORA SHOULD BE SEEN AS 'BRAIN BANK' RATHER THAN BRAIN DRAIN

In an exclusive interview with Outlook Business, CEA V Anantha Nageswaran, who presented his third economic survey last week, talks about flow of talent and capital, among other things



V Anantha Nageswaran, chief economic advisor (CEA) to the Government of India.

There is ample talent for both India's domestic growth and global participation, and the Indian diaspora should be seen as a "brain bank", instead as a brain drain, according to V Anantha Nageswaran, chief economic advisor (CEA) to the Government of India.

"Capital and talent naturally flow where opportunities arise, a pattern seen across centuries. Rather than viewing it as a concern, it should be welcomed for the perspectives and expertise it brings back," said Nageswaran, who presented his third Economic Survey on 31 January.

Q - When you say India has a shot at shaping a new world order, does it mean that it is also essential that India should start focusing on preserving its capital? Previously you talked about the need to bring back the startups that flip their headquarters to abroad.

A - Many businesses that once relocated for tax purposes have now moved back. We noted this trend in the January 2023 Economic Survey, and today it is no longer a major concern as we have seen reverse migration of businesses happening towards India.

Regarding the global economic order, long-standing assumptions—such as free trade, unrestricted capital flows, and the absence of industrial policy—are making way for more pragmatic, context-driven approaches in developed economies. Previously, when such policies were followed (or not), India's economic size and influence were relatively smaller.

Now, with developed nations shifting away from their earlier stance and India's economic strength growing, the country has a chance to shape global policy narratives—not just for itself but also for the broader developing world. However, India's unique position, with its scale, democratic framework, and federal structure, makes this task more complex. The country must carve out a policy path suited to its distinct needs.

Q - With technology advancing rapidly in both the West and the East, countries have adopted different models—America attracts global talent, while China has focused on bringing its own talent back. Given the significant number of Indians working in the US and Europe, should India create an environment that actively attracts them back?

A - I agree, and I think we are doing that. We should see them as a "brain bank" rather than a brain drain. This shift is happening both through policy initiatives and their natural cultural and professional ties to India. Many collaborations are happening, including the semiconductor mission. And the fact that mobile phone electronics has moved to India, in certain ways, the diaspora has contributed to some of these developments. So, it is not as if it has not yet started in India. It has been happening and will continue to happen.

Q - There are countries which do not have abundant talent to expand their high-tech sectors and are constantly looking for Indian talent to fill their holes. Should not that be a worry?

A - I do not think it is a win-lose situation. It can be a win-win. Given India's demographic strength, there is ample talent for both domestic growth and global participation. The diaspora serves as a "brain bank," as I said, fostering knowledge exchange. Capital and talent naturally flow where opportunities arise, a pattern seen across centuries. Rather than viewing it as a concern, it should be welcomed for the perspectives and expertise it brings back. At the same time, India has enough homegrown talent to drive its own progress.

Q - You have talked about India Inc's low and concentrated R&D spend, and also about the medium-term implications of the hiring and compensation practices with relation to profitability post Covid. Do you think the desire for stable business models has increased?

A - It is difficult to provide causal explanations off the cuff, as multiple factors could contribute to such phenomena. Reducing a complex issue to a simple explanation would not be accurate. One possible factor could be the lack of necessity for long-term thinking in a country where demand remains consistently high due to its large size.

However, to be globally competitive—especially with security considerations becoming more relevant—domestic resilience must be developed. This changing context calls for strengthening domestic R&D, viewing it as an investment rather than expenditure. Additionally, the Indian academic environment has the potential to contribute much more than it has so far.

Q - So, if the government doesn't nudge, how can we expect the realisation to come to the private sector?

A - A few days ago, there was a detailed media report on how some American businesses have shifted focus away from innovation, prioritising quarterly earnings instead. There are many successful companies that allocate up to 5 per cent of their sales to R&D.

It is all about the horizon over which you seek to maximise your returns. This issue is not unique to India; globally, corporate leadership often operates on shorter cycles, while R&D payoffs take much longer. Bridging this gap requires a combination of visionary thinking, strategic board-level decisions, and a long-term approach to R&D investment.

Q - There is also a suggestion to increase collaboration between government, industry and academia. What are the current quality of life challenges that can be addressed through their collaboration?

A - Naturally, industry challenges become research questions for academia. While problem-solving research is essential, we also need blue-sky thinking—innovation driven purely by human creativity, without an immediate practical application. Both are necessary. Original research pushes boundaries, while applied research addresses pressing issues like nutrition, pollution, groundwater recharge, urban waste management, land fertility, and air quality—such as the stubble burning problem affecting Delhi's air in November and December. Collaboration is required in these areas.

Q - Another theme of the Survey was deregulation. This is exactly the concern startup founders raise while exploring new markets and innovations. Do you propose deregulation to drive innovation in the country?

A - Innovation is driven by various factors, including academia, R&D, access to advanced equipment and chemicals, and the movement of trained scientific personnel across borders. Regulations influence both innovation and business operations. In India—at both the state and union levels—significant progress has been made, but given the country's scale, there is still much to be done.

Some sectors have advanced, while others have received less attention due to various reasons. The focus is on identifying these gaps and bringing them into policy discussions, which is precisely what the Economic Survey seeks to achieve.

Q - Do you not think a change in the mindset of the states is also required?

A - In December, as widely reported, the Honourable Prime Minister convened a conference with the Chief Secretaries of all states, personally attending the proceedings for two days. This platform facilitated extensive information sharing, allowing states to observe how regions like the South, West, and parts of the North attract businesses and foster a business-friendly environment.

The Economic Survey highlights that the Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP) strongly correlates with higher levels of industrial activity—demonstrating that states actively implementing BRAP see tangible economic benefits. Such evidence serves as an incentive for states to enhance their own business ecosystems.

In an exclusive interview with Outlook Business, the Indian government's top economist talked about the flow of talent and capital, private sector's reluctance towards increasing spending on research and development (R&D), and the role of academia and deregulation in driving innovation in the country.

(Courtesy: Outlook Business - Parth Sing, February 07, 2025)

MADHYA PRADESH CM MOHAN YADAV MEETS INDIAN DIASPORA IN KOBE, INVITES THEM TO GLOBAL INVESTORS SUMMIT



Madhya Pradesh CM Mohan Yadav meets Indian diaspora in Kobe, Tokyo - Japan

On the third day of his visit to Japan, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav reached Kobe, Tokyo on January 30 where he met with the local Indian diaspora. During the meeting, he extended an invitation to them for the upcoming Global Investors Summit (GIS), which will take place on February 24-25 in Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh.

The GIS aims to showcase the state's investment climate and industrial infrastructure, offering a platform for potential collaborations.

CM Yadav expressed pride in the progress of Indians in Japan, acknowledging their contributions to both business and cultural representation. "Under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, India has become a global investment hub. I am proud that Madhya Pradesh is offering attractive policies for investors," he said.

Highlighting the state's diverse potential, CM Yadav noted Madhya Pradesh's rich resources, from diamonds and gold to iron and aluminum. He also emphasized opportunities in sectors like tourism, education, IT, and space technology.

CM Yadav invited Japanese investors to explore not only investment avenues but also the state's rich wildlife and tourism offerings. He concluded by stressing the importance of creating employment opportunities for India's youth through increased investments.

INDIAN AMERICAN MUSICIAN AND ENTREPRENEUR CHANDRIKA TANDON WINS GRAMMY



Indian-American vocalist and entrepreneur Chandrika Tandon

Indian-American vocalist and entrepreneur Chandrika Tandon has won the Grammy Award for her album Triveni in the 'Best New Age, Ambient or Chant Album' category. The 67th Annual Grammy Awards, hosted by the Recording Academy, took place on Sunday at the Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles on 03 February 2025.

Tandon, who is also a global business leader and the older sister of former PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi, won the prestigious award alongside South African flautist Wouter Kellerman and Japanese cellist Eru Matsumoto. In her acceptance speech, she expressed, "Music is love, music is light, and music is laughter. Let's all be surrounded by love, light, and laughter. Thank you for the music."

This is Tandon's first Grammy win, following a nomination in 2009 for Soul Call. She reflected on the win, saying, "It feels amazing," in an interview backstage after the ceremony.

Triveni, released on August 30, 2024, explores themes of healing resonance through its seven tracks, blending Vedic chants with flute and cello. The album, representing diverse cultures, celebrates unity, mindfulness, and self-discovery. Other nominees in the category included Ricky Kej, Anoushka Shankar, and Ryuichi Sakamoto.

ARSP HOSTS HIGH-LEVEL DELEGATION FROM THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH & SPORTS, GOVERNMENT OF MALAYSIA



Right to left: Shri Sanjay Bhalla, Shri Shyam Parande, Amb. Sushil Kumar Singhal, Mr. Dato' Ts. Dr. Nagulendran Kangayatkarasu, Mr. Ariff Azwan Bin Alis, Shri Pramod Sharma

Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP), in collaboration with Yuvasatta (Youth for Peace), hosted a distinguished delegation from the Ministry of Youth & Sports, Government of Malaysia, on January 31st, 2025, at Pravasi Bhawan, New Delhi. The delegation was led by notable figures such as Dato' Ts. Dr. Nagulendran Kangayatkarasu, Secretary General, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Malaysia; Mr. Ariff Azwan Bin Alis @ Alias, Senior Assistant Secretary, International Relations Division, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Malaysia; and Mr. Jadzreill Bin Jaafar, Executive Program, Program Department, International Youth Centre, Kuala Lumpur (IYC), Malaysia. The event, which focused on strengthening ties between India and Malaysia in the domains of youth engagement, cultural exchange, and sports, was marked by insightful addresses, dynamic discussions, and the reaffirmation of shared goals between the two nations.

The event commenced with Shri Shyam Parande, Secretary General of ARSP, welcoming the Malaysian delegation and providing an overview of ARSP's extensive history. He emphasized ARSP's over five-decade-long efforts to bridge connections with the Indian diaspora, particularly those who migrated a century ago.

Shri Parande also highlighted ARSP's ongoing work in supporting diaspora students in India and fostering socio-cultural ties with various international communities. Notably, he also discussed the organization's efforts to preserve the heritage of the Roma community and emphasized ARSP's significant role in organizing key international conferences, including the PIO Parliamentarians Conference in 2018. Shri Parande expressed gratitude to the Malaysian delegation and extended a heartfelt hope for continued collaboration between the two nations.

Shri Sanjay Bhalla, Vice President of ARSP, presented a comprehensive overview of ARSP's journey, its dedication to community empowerment, and its work with various diaspora communities, particularly focusing on the DRRC and CRSCR. He underscored the guiding motto of ARSP, "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (The World Is One Family), emphasizing the organization's commitment to fostering global connections rooted in shared humanity.

Shri Pramod Sharma, Founder of Yuvasatta (Youth for Peace), delivered insightful introductory remarks, emphasizing the importance of youth engagement in building a peaceful and united world. He highlighted the organization's mission to empower young people to actively participate in social change and create a positive impact. Shri Sharma's words set the tone for meaningful discussions and collaboration among all present.

Dato' Ts. Dr. Nagulendran Kangayatkarasu, Secretary General of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Malaysia, delivered a thought-provoking speech on the long-standing cultural and historical ties between India and Malaysia. He highlighted the role of the Indian diaspora in Malaysia, which, although comprising only 8-10% of the population, plays a vital role in shaping Malaysia's social and cultural fabric.

Dr. Kangayatkarasu also reflected on the deep cultural influence of India in Malaysia, tracing its roots back to the Chola dynasty and the ongoing importance of preserving India's heritage through cultural practices, including the more than 24,000 Hindu temples in Malaysia.

He addressed the pressing challenges faced by today's youth, such as cyberbullying and mental health issues, and advocated for greater collaboration between India and Malaysia to tackle these concerns. Furthermore, he outlined Malaysia's plans for 2026 as Visit Malaysia Year, and noted Malaysia's ASEAN chairmanship in 2025, which will bring several cultural and entrepreneurship programs to further strengthen India-Malaysia ties.

Mr. Ariff Azwan Bin Alis, Senior Assistant Secretary of the International Relations Division, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Malaysia, conveyed his gratitude for the opportunity to engage with ARSP and other organizations such as USPAC and IOCS. He emphasized the importance of building on future collaborations and strengthening the relationship between the Ministry and various Indian stakeholders for mutual growth and prosperity.

Mr. Jadzreill Bin Jaafar, Executive Program at the International Youth Centre, Kuala Lumpur (IYC), shared insights into the role of IYC under Malaysia's Ministry of Defence for Asia. He spoke about the center's focus on leadership training, international engagement, and community initiatives aimed at empowering youth. Mr. Jaafar emphasized the commitment of the IYC to innovation in youth development, and the importance of continued collaboration for sustainable, impactful programs.

In an inspiring move for regional sports cooperation, Shri Rahul Swami, CEO of the Paralympic Committee of India, proposed the creation of a Regional Para Athletics Championship combining South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia. While global events like the World Championships and Grand Prix exist, Swami emphasized the need for a regional competition to foster collaboration and elevate the region's influence in Para sports, currently dominated by Europe and America. He urged the support of organizations like ARSP and the government to develop this initiative and provide camps and administrative leadership opportunities for regional nations.

During the interaction sessions, members of the ARSP and other participants actively contributed their thoughts, questions, and suggestions. These sessions provided a platform for meaningful discussions, allowing attendees to share their insights on various topics related to youth empowerment, cultural exchange, and international collaboration. Notably, a representative from Goyanka International School joined the session, offering a unique perspective from the academic community. Their participation not only enriched the conversation but also strengthened the connections between educational institutions and youth-focused organizations. This collaborative environment emphasized the importance of inclusive dialogue and cross-sector engagement for fostering positive societal change.

The event concluded with remarks by chair Ambassador Sushil Kumar Singhal, Senior Vice President of ARSP. He expressed appreciation to all participants for their valuable contributions to the discussions and initiatives, particularly emphasizing the importance of strengthening cultural, youth, and sports relations between India and Malaysia. Ambassador Singhal reaffirmed the commitment to continued collaboration and growth, encouraging all parties to work together towards achieving the shared goals outlined in the meeting.

With a renewed sense of partnership and cooperation, the event proved to be a significant step towards furthering India-Malaysia relations, particularly in the spheres of youth empowerment, cultural exchange, and sports development. The discussions also laid a solid foundation for future endeavors to address shared challenges and create lasting bonds between the two nations.

REPORT ON THE 81ST BATCH OF KNOW INDIA PROGRAM (KIP)



Diplomats from various embassies are listing the experiences of the delegates attending the 81st KIP

Antar Rashtriya Sahyog Parishad (ARSP) had the opportunity of hosting the delegates of the 81st batch of the Know India Program (KIP) organized by the Ministry of External Affairs on 20th January 2025. The KIP batch comprised 38 youth of Indian origin (PIO) from 13 different countries. The delegates were welcomed with a traditional Angvastram, a gesture signifying the warmth, hospitality, and rich cultural heritage of India.

The event commenced with an opening remark by Prof. Gopal Arora, Secretary of ARSP, who introduced the organization's journey and its key milestones through PPT. The PPT traced ARSP's significant history, including its inauguration by former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and visits

from distinguished figures such as the Prime Minister of Mauritius, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and the King of Bhutan.

Shri Narayan Kumar, Convener of the Diaspora Research and Resource Centre, addressed the delegates, sharing insights into the organization's initiatives and its ongoing contributions to fostering global ties through its cultural programs and research activities.

Shri Shyam Parande, Secretary General of ARSP, gave an inspiring presentation on the humanitarian efforts being carried out by SEWA International, encouraging the youth to engage in social welfare activities and contribute to building their respective nations.

Ms. Komal Chikkara, a faculty member at the University of Delhi, captivated the delegates with her fascinating stories about the Kumbh Mela, the largest religious gathering in the world, currently taking place in Prayagraj. Ms. Aastha Agarwal, a researcher, joined Ms. Komal in leading a lively and interactive activity titled "Discover Bharat." This activity, a visual quiz, helped delegates identify culturally significant personalities, monuments, and artworks of India. The quiz fostered teamwork knowledge-sharing and left a lasting impression on the participants.

The second session of the event was chaired by Amb. Sushil Singhal, Senior Vice President of ARSP, and was attended by several esteemed diplomats, including the High Commissioners of various countries:

H.E. Shri Jagannath Sami, High Commissioner of the Republic of Fiji, spoke about the historical struggles of Indian indentured laborers in Fiji, drawing attention to influential figures like Totaram Sanadhya, Dr. Manilal, and Mahatma Gandhi. He emphasized the vital role of youth in community-building and urged delegates to return from India enriched and motivated to contribute positively to their communities.

H.E. Dr. Anil Sooklal, High Commissioner of the Republic of South Africa, reflected on the significant influence of the Indian Diaspora, with over 35 million people worldwide. He shared his own journey and discussed the importance of embracing one's heritage while also recognizing India's growth.

He encouraged the delegates to act as ambassadors to further strengthen the ties between India and their respective countries.

H.E. Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj, High Commissioner of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, highlighted the strong historical connection between India and Guyana, emphasizing the role of Indian indentured immigrants in the country's development. He honored figures like Chedi Jagan and Mahatma Gandhi, whose efforts shaped the independence movements of both nations. He encouraged the diaspora youth to take pride in India's culture and contribute to their countries' growth.

Mrs. Adithya Ilajo, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of the Union of Myanmar, spoke about the cultural, historical, and religious ties between Myanmar and India. She acknowledged the importance of the Know India Program in fostering mutual understanding and urged the participants to take their newfound knowledge back home to inspire others and strengthen political collaboration.

Mrs. Sharifah Ezneeda Wafa, Deputy High Commissioner of Malaysia, discussed Malaysia's deep cultural ties with India, which date back to the 1400s. She spoke about the rich diversity in Malaysia and encouraged youth to explore India's history while embracing unity in diversity.

Ms. Sunaina P.R. Mohan, Second Secretary at the Embassy of the Republic of Suriname, reflects on her transformative journey as a product of the Know India Program (KIP).

She shares the story of a group from Suriname, including herself, who traveled to India to reconnect with their roots. She emphasizes the importance of embracing one's heritage, highlighting cultural ties that unite people, such as language, clothing, music, food, history, and values. She encourages the audience to take pride in their identity, make a difference, and work together to contribute to the world.

Ms. Nirosha K. Herath, Counselor at the High Commission of Sri Lanka, also contributed to the discussions, reinforcing the deep-rooted cultural connections between India and their respective nations. Ms. Herath, in particular, emphasized the importance of strengthening the bonds of cooperation in tourism, trade, and people-to-people exchanges between Sri Lanka and India.

The delegates shared their personal experiences of India, highlighting their diverse connections. They were impressed by their visit, not only for the opportunity to reconnect with their cultural roots but also to witness India's advancements in Ayurveda, Yoga, architecture, music, film, and information technology. Certificates were distributed to all participants, and awards were presented to the winning team and the best performers in the "Discover Bharat" quiz. Overall, the event was a memorable celebration of India's rich cultural heritage, the significant role of the Indian diaspora, and the shared commitment to fostering global connections.

Concluding remarks and a vote of thanks were delivered by Amb. Sushil Singhal, Senior Vice President of ARSP. In conclusion, the event was a resounding success, advancing the objectives of the Know India Program by inspiring the next generation of young leaders to build stronger connections between India and their respective countries.



हिंदी

महाकुंभ का वैभव देख अभिभूत हुए भूटान नरेश
जिग्मे खेसर नामग्याल वांगचुक



भूटान के राजा जिग्मे खेसर नामग्याल वांगचुक एवं पुत्तर प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथ गंगा आरती करते हुए

भूटान के राजा जिग्मे खेसर नामग्याल वांगचुक ने 3 फरवरी को उत्तर प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथ के साथ प्रयागराज स्थित त्रिवेणी संगम में पवित्र डुबकी लगाई। यह अवसर सदी के सबसे बड़े आयोजन महाकुंभ 2025 के संदर्भ में था, जिसमें दुनिया भर के श्रद्धालु स्नान के लिए उमड़ रहे हैं।

भूटान नरेश सोमवार को ही थिम्फू से लखनऊ पहुंचे थे, जहां मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथ ने उनका स्वागत किया। इसके बाद, मंगलवार को दोनों नेता संगम पहुंचे और धार्मिक रीति-रिवाजों के तहत स्नान और पूजा अर्चना की। संगम में आस्था की डुबकी लगाने के बाद, राजा जिग्मे खेसर नामग्याल वांगचुक और मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथ ने अक्षय वट और बड़े हनुमान मंदिर में भी दर्शन किए।

इसके बाद, दोनों नेताओं ने महाकुंभ के डिजिटल स्वरूप को देखने के लिए डिजिटल महाकुंभ अनुभूति केंद्र का दौरा किया। इस यात्रा के दौरान भूटान नरेश का यह कदम भारत-भूटान के मित्रता और सांस्कृतिक संबंधों को और मजबूत करने की दिशा में महत्वपूर्ण साबित होगा।

महाकुंभ नगर में भूटान नरेश की आध्यात्मिक यात्रा के दौरान प्रदेश के कैबिनेट मंत्री स्वतंत्रदेव सिंह, नंद गोपाल गुप्ता 'नंदी', विष्णुस्वामी संप्रदाय के महंत जगद्गुरु संतोष दास (सतुआ बाबा) और अन्य गणमान्य व्यक्ति मौजूद रहे।

भारत-इंडोनेशिया के संबंध साझा संस्कृति और इतिहास पर आधारित: मोदी

प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने 8 फरवरी को कहा कि भारत और इंडोनेशिया के रिश्ते केवल भू-राजनीतिक नहीं, बल्कि यह दोनों देशों के साझा इतिहास और संस्कृति पर आधारित हैं। यह साझेदारी विविधता में एकता की परंपरा का प्रतीक है।

मोदी ने वीडियो कांफ्रेंसिंग के माध्यम से इंडोनेशिया के जकार्ता में श्री सनातन धर्म आलयम के महा कुंभ-अभिषेकम को संबोधित करते हुए यह टिप्पणी की। उन्होंने कहा, "यह मेरा सौभाग्य है कि मैं जकार्ता में मुरुगन मंदिर के महा कुंभ-अभिषेक का हिस्सा बन रहा हूँ।



प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी एवं इंडोनेशिया के राष्ट्रपति प्रबोवो सुबियांटो

भले ही मैं जकार्ता से सैकड़ों किलोमीटर दूर हूँ, लेकिन मेरा दिल इस आयोजन के साथ उतना ही जुड़ा हुआ है, जितना भारत-इंडोनेशिया के रिश्ते। मैं इस अवसर पर वहां के सभी लोगों को शुभकामनाएं देता हूँ।"

प्रधानमंत्री ने यह भी कहा कि कुछ दिन पहले राष्ट्रपति प्रबोवो सुबियांटो भारत से 140 करोड़ भारतीयों का प्यार लेकर गए थे और उन्हें विश्वास है कि राष्ट्रपति प्रबोवो के माध्यम से इंडोनेशिया में भारतीयों की शुभकामनाओं का अहसास हो रहा होगा।

"भारत और इंडोनेशिया के रिश्ते केवल भू-राजनीतिक नहीं हैं, बल्कि ये हजारों वर्षों की साझी संस्कृति और इतिहास से जुड़े हैं। हमारा संबंध विज्ञान, विश्वास, आध्यात्मिकता, भगवान मुरुगन, भगवान श्रीराम और भगवान बुद्ध से भी जुड़ा है।" प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा।

उन्होंने उदाहरण देते हुए कहा, "भारत से इंडोनेशिया जाने वाला हर व्यक्ति प्रम्बानन मंदिर में हाथ जोड़कर वही आध्यात्मिक अनुभूति महसूस करता है जैसी काशी या केदार में होती है। जब हम काकाविन और सेरात रामायण सुनते हैं, तो हमें वाल्मीकि रामायण और रामचरित मानस की याद आती है।"

प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने बोरोबुदुर स्तूप का उल्लेख करते हुए कहा कि वहां भगवान बुद्ध की वही शिक्षाएं मिलती हैं, जो भारत के सारनाथ और बोधगया में मिलती हैं। ओडिशा राज्य में बाली यात्रा का उत्सव आज भी मनाया जाता है, जो प्राचीन समुद्री यात्राओं और भारत-इंडोनेशिया के सांस्कृतिक संबंधों का प्रतीक है।

प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा कि भारत और इंडोनेशिया के रिश्ते मजबूत तारों से जुड़े हुए हैं और दोनों देशों ने साझा विरासत के संरक्षण के लिए कई कदम उठाए हैं। "हमने प्रम्बानन मंदिर के संरक्षण पर सहमति बनाई है और बोरोबुदुर बौद्ध मंदिर के लिए अपनी प्रतिबद्धता व्यक्त की है।"

मोदी ने यह भी कहा कि विविधता की स्वीकृति ही वह कारण है जिससे भारत और इंडोनेशिया में विभिन्न धर्मों के लोग सौहार्द्रपूर्ण ढंग से रहते हैं। "हमारी सांस्कृतिक धरोहर और साझा मूल्य दोनों देशों के रिश्तों को और प्रगाढ़ बना रहे हैं," उन्होंने कहा।

अंत में प्रधानमंत्री ने उम्मीद जताई कि अतीत की साझी धरोहर दोनों देशों को एक स्वर्णिम भविष्य की ओर अग्रसर करेगी और साथ मिलकर राष्ट्रपति प्रबोवो के नेतृत्व में इन रिश्तों को और मजबूत किया जाएगा।

दक्षिणी गोलार्ध का सबसे बड़ा हिंदू मंदिर दक्षिण अफ्रीका में खुला, समुदाय में उमंग



दक्षिण अफ्रीका की राजधानी जोहान्सबर्ग में दक्षिणी गोलार्ध के सबसे बड़े हिंदू मंदिर और सांस्कृतिक परिसर का भव्य उद्घाटन समारोह आयोजित किया गया। यह मंदिर दक्षिण अफ्रीका में हिंदू समुदाय के लिए एक महत्वपूर्ण मील का पत्थर माना जा रहा है।

हालाँकि, दक्षिण अफ्रीका में हिंदू धर्म मानने वालों की संख्या दो प्रतिशत से भी कम है, फिर भी यहाँ के हिंदू धर्म के प्रति गहरी आस्था रखते हैं। इसका प्रतीक इस मंदिर के उद्घाटन समारोह में देखा गया, जहाँ रविवार को सूर्योदय से पहले ही श्रद्धालु अभिषेक अनुष्ठान में भाग लेने के लिए पहुंच चुके थे। इस अनुष्ठान का नेतृत्व भारत से आए बोचासनवासी अक्षर पुरुषोत्तम स्वामीनारायण संस्था (BAPS) के 92 वर्षीय आध्यात्मिक नेता महंत स्वामी महाराज ने किया।

BAPS के प्रवक्ता हेमंग देसाई ने बताया कि इस मंदिर का उद्देश्य "अंतर-सांस्कृतिक और अंतर-धार्मिक संवाद और आदान-प्रदान" का एक केंद्र बनना है। उन्होंने कहा, "यह स्थल प्रार्थना के लिए एक स्थान है, जो समाजिक सभा और संचार से कहीं अधिक है।"

BAPS ने इस मंदिर को "दक्षिणी गोलार्ध में सबसे बड़ा हिंदू सांस्कृतिक परिसर" के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया, जिसे एक सांस्कृतिक और धार्मिक केंद्र के तौर पर विकसित किया गया है। उद्घाटन से एक दिन पहले शनिवार को जोहान्सबर्ग में एक भव्य नगर यात्रा जुलूस भी निकाला गया, जिसमें भक्ति संगीत, मार्चिंग बैंड और नर्तकियों ने भाग लिया।

देसाई ने कहा कि मंदिर को जोहान्सबर्ग में स्थापित करने का निर्णय यहाँ पहले से मौजूद बड़ी संख्या में हिंदू अनुयायियों और देश के विभिन्न हिस्सों से आने वाले प्रवासी हिंदुओं को ध्यान में रखते हुए लिया गया। धार्मिक महत्व के अलावा, यह स्थल कला, नृत्य, भाषा और आस्था पर पाठ्यक्रम भी प्रदान करेगा, जो दक्षिण अफ्रीकी हिंदू समुदाय द्वारा बोली जाने वाली विभिन्न भाषाओं को पूरा करेगा। इसके साथ ही, BAPS मंदिर अपने धर्मार्थ कार्यों को भी जारी रखेगा।

संगम में बौद्ध और सनातन धर्म की एकता का ऐतिहासिक दृश्य: पहली बार दुनिया भर के भंते लामा के साथ बौद्ध भिक्षुओं ने लगाई डुबकी



पहली बार दुनिया भर के भंते, लामा और बौद्ध भिक्षुओं ने एक साथ त्रिवेणी संगम में डुबकी लगाई और सनातन और बौद्ध धर्म की एकता का संदेश दिया। संगम का किनारा "बुद्धं शरणं गच्छामि, धम्मं शरणं गच्छामि, संघ शरणं गच्छामि" के जयघोष से गूँज उठा।

इस ऐतिहासिक अवसर पर पांच सौ से अधिक बौद्ध धर्मावलंबियों ने संगम तट पर डुबकी लगाई और भगवान बुद्ध की करुणा के साथ सम्राट अशोक के अमर रहने के नारे लगाए। बौद्ध भिक्षुओं ने आरएसएस के अखिल भारतीय कार्यकारिणी के सदस्य इंद्रेश कुमार की उपस्थिति में सनातन और बौद्ध धर्म की एकता का संकल्प लिया।

निर्वासित तिब्बत सरकार के रक्षामंत्री गैरी डोलमाहम ने कहा कि प्रयागराज की पावन धरती पर आरएसएस के मार्गदर्शन में बौद्ध और सनातनी एक साथ कदम से कदम मिलाकर चल रहे हैं।

म्यांमार के भदंत नाग वंशा ने कहा कि यह उनका पहला महाकुंभ है और वे विश्व शांति के लिए कार्य कर रहे हैं।

अंतरराष्ट्रीय बौद्ध शोध संस्थान के भदंत शील रतन ने कहा कि हम सभी एक हैं, एक थे, और एक रहेंगे। आरएसएस के इंद्रेश कुमार ने कहा कि कुंभ से सनातन और बौद्ध मत के समन्वय की धारा को हम आगे बढ़ाएंगे, क्योंकि सनातन ही बुद्ध है और बुद्ध शाश्वत और सत्य है।

इस अवसर पर अरुण सिंह बौद्ध, भंते बुद्ध प्रिय विश्व, भंते राजकुमार, भंते अश्वजीत, भिक्षु सुमेन्ता, भंते अनुरुद्ध, भंते संघप्रिय, भंते बोधि रक्षित, भंते धम्म दीप, भंते बोधि रतन और भंते संघ रतन ने संगम में डुबकी लगाई।



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