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Press Release

70th Foundation Day of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) is celebrating its 70th Foundation Day on 9 April. However, the grand celebrations planned earlier are now postponed by a year in the wake of Covid-19.

2. “ICCR is all about cultivating an enlightened understanding of Indian culture and when the entire Global community is facing an unprecedented challenge, feeling lonely and disconnected, the message of Indian philosophy i.e. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam or the world is a family has become more relevant than anytime in the past. Even in this lockdown situation, ICCR is conducting e-tutorials in Yoga, classical dances and even Hindi and Sanskrit. We are working with a ‘show must go on spirit’. A Global Art Competition on the theme of facing the challenge of Covid-19 unitedly has already been announced and through many such programmes we will rise to the occasion”, ICCR President Dr Vinay Sahasrabuddhe said in his Message on this occasion.

3. ICCR was founded in 1950 by India's first Education Minister, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, with the objective of fostering and strengthening cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and the world, and to promote cultural exchanges with other countries and people.

4. During the last seven decades, the functioning of ICCR as an institution has acquired newer dimensions towards promotion of India's cultural heritage and has emerged as the ‘soft power’ arm of the Ministry of External Affairs through an array of well-designed and targeted programmes.

5. A wide-range of ICCR's cultural, academic and intellectual exchanges and promotion of India's culture abroad encompass various outreach activities through its 39 cultural centres abroad and 19 Regional Offices within India, including Indian art, history, oral traditions, dance, music, yoga, languages, food, festivals and contemporary issues.

6. Major programmes under the ambit of ICCR being conducted for the larger objective of creating an enlightened understanding of Indian culture amongst the global community, could be broadly categorised as follows:

- I. Promotion of Indian art forms by sponsoring visits of Indian cultural delegations abroad and holding Festivals of India abroad;
- II. Hosting foreign cultural troupes and international Cultural Festivals in India;
- III. Exhibitions of art and Craft in India and abroad;
- IV. Gifting Busts and Statues of India's iconic figures abroad;
- V. Executing scholarship schemes for international students;
- VI. Fellowship programmes, establishing Indian Chairs in foreign institutions/universities;
- VII. Inviting distinguished and academic visitors from abroad to give them a glimpse of India;
- VIII. Awards programme (alumni, Indology and Sanskrit);
- IX. Promotion of understanding of Indian languages, especially Hindi and Sanskrit and also Indian literature, abroad;
- X. Promotion of Yoga and celebration of International Day of Yoga abroad;
- XI. Conducting Annual Lecture Series (Deen Dayal Upadhaya Memorial Oration to mark the World Culture Day on [May 21](#))

7. Over the years, through this cross fertilization of ideas, ideals and cultures, ICCR has taken our millennia old civilizational and cultural values to the world and has fostered the goal of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam- the world as a family. The strong cadre of ICCR alumni, who are infused with the same spirit of enlightened globalization has been instrumental in spreading ICCR's message. The council now annually offers about 4,000 scholarships for Undergraduate, Postgraduate, M. Phil./Ph.D and Post-Doctoral Fellowships in various Indian Universities/Institutes.

8. The quest for knowledge has always been fundamental to Indian Culture and Civilisation. Since time immemorial, India has attracted knowledge-seekers and inquisitive minds from all over the world. India

continues to be a centre for learning and promotes academic exchanges through Conferences, seminars, Chairs of Indian Studies and the activities of Alumni of Indian institutions.

9. ICCR has contributed immensely to spread of Indian culture worldwide and seven decades of its existence is a matter of pride and joy. Due to the ongoing COVID19 pandemic that we face, ICCR will mark this occasion of its Foundation Day on 9th April by undertaking various online activities in India and abroad. Essay Competitions for international students and Indian diaspora will be held in India and all over the world. A blog space of ICCR students studying in India will be launched and Indian Missions abroad are celebrating the day in their respective countries of accreditation in a befitting manner.

10. The first Latin American Centre of ICCR, called Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC) was opened in Sao Paulo in May 2011. SVCC, is at the heart of the cultural life of São Paulo and offers a wide and interesting array of cultural activities and performances to its patrons. The Centre has a well stocked Library and Resource Centre housing an interesting collection of books on Indian history, spirituality, Yoga, polity, economy, art and culture. The centre's facilities are open to all persons interested in learning about India and preserving, promoting and enriching Indian culture, values and heritage. An India based teacher offers free Yoga, Hindi, Sanskrit and Meditation classes at the centre. On an average 150- 200 people visit the centre everyday either for these classes or other activities. All the activities promoted are of socio-cultural character such as lectures and workshops on India related subjects such as Yoga, Meditation, Gandhian philosophy, Ayurveda, Indian traditions, spirituality, culture, history, architecture, India tourism promotion, peace culture, etc. All major National days and Indian festivals are celebrated at the centre. 12- 15 such cultural activities are held at the centre on a monthly basis. The Centre places special emphasis on working with local cultural organizations and Universities promoting Indian culture. SVCC, also hosts leading leading artistes and cultural troupes from India. The centre has had the honour to host come acclaimed artists like violin Maestro Dr. L. Subramaniam, reputed Bollywood singer Mrs. Kavita Krishnamurthy and the well-known Contemporary dancer Astad Deboo. The centre strives not just to promote India's rich cultural heritage but also to build stronger ties between India and Brazil.