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THE CONSULAR CHRONICLES





Hon. Consular Corps
Diplomatique-India

FICAC 4TH SOUTHEAST EUROPE REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The World Federation of Consuls (FICAC) is pleased to invite you to the 4th South-East Europe (SEE) Conference, taking place June 19-21, 2025, in Athens, Greece. Join us for insightful presentations, strategic networking opportunities, and cultural experiences showcasing Greek hospitality. Registration information and venue details at <https://easyconferences.eu/see-ficac2025/registration/>.





EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

Greetings

Welcome to this edition of Consular Chronicles, Each issue serves as a platform to spotlight the activities of the Honorary Consuls across the nation.

This edition brings together notable events - The Melting Pot - a Fund Raising event , The Consular Day 2025 , News from FICAC and Women International Diplomatic Committee . Our Special Guest is his H.E The Ambassador of Uruguay , the Hawelis of Uttar Pradesh feature under Heritage of India .

Through the stories and reflections within these pages, we celebrate the quiet but vital impact of consular work around the globe.

Thank you for your continued engagement and support. We look forward to your feedback and contributions as we continue chronicling the diverse journeys of our community.

Surbhi Sharma

Editor

Consular Chronicles

Honorary Consul of Spain

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS



Hon. Mr. Sahil Vazirally

Honorary Consul of Romania



Hon. Mr. Malaiappan Nagaligam

Honorary Consul of Republic of Mauritius



Hon. Mr. Kumaran Sitaraman

Honorary Consul of Iceland



Hon. Dr. Chitwan Malhotra

Honorary Consul of Zimbabwe



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HCCD - INDIA

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



K L Ganju, o.c.v.c. (cdr.)
Consul General (Hy.)
Advisor to the Foreign Minister
Union of the Comoros
President – HCCD – India

It gives me immense pleasure to inform all my Hon'ble colleagues that with the support of all the chapters and the Board, the "Consular Day" programme was very successfully organized in New Delhi on 21st March, 2025. The programme was held at Hotel ITC Maurya, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi. Excellency Ms. Meenakshi Lekhi, former Minister of State of External Affairs and Culture, Govt. of India was invited as Chief Guest. Excellency, Mr. V.S. Sahney, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) and Ms. Shahnaz Hussain, a renowned international personality were invited as Guest of Honour. The Chief Guest emphasized on the crucial role being played by Hony. Consuls in the present-day diplomacy. The same views were also echoed by Excellency Mr. V.S. Sahney. Both of them praised the Hony. Consuls for promoting people to people contact and also keeping the interest of both the countries in mind while discharging their duties.

During the programme Vivek Burman (Dabur) Peace prize, Dr. Bhai Mohan Singh trophy, Consul of the Year Trophy and Medal of Honour were awarded to deserving NGOs and Hon'ble members. All these trophies, citations and medals were presented by the Chief Guest and Guest of Honours.

I am also very pleased to inform, Ambassadors, High Commissioners and diplomats from number of Embassies and High Commissions participated in the programme. Apart from diplomats, more than 30 Ambassadors, High Commissioners were present. It also gives me pleasure that this year high ranking officials from the Ministry of External Affairs also participated. In total more than 225 guests were entertained which included who's who of Delhi also.

This year the HCCD – India also recognized the services of Hon'ble Mr. Vivek Burman, Hony. Consul General of Nicaragua and President (Emeritus). He was presented with the "LIFE TIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD"

The programme ended with dinner which was enjoyed by each and everyone.

God bless you all!!



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HCCD-INDIA CONSULAR DAY 2025

Consular Day Celebrations took place in New Delhi on 21st March to honour the role consuls play in strengthening and fostering cultural and economic relationships between nations.

The gathering brought together a number of Ambassadors, Honorary Consuls and Officials. The President of HCCD- India addressed the gathering and emphasised the importance of Honorary Consuls in enhancing bilateral and economic relations between their home and host countries.

The chief Guest for the event was H.E Ms Meenskshi Lekhi, former Minister of State for External Affairs and the Guests of Honour were H.E Mr.Vikramjit Singh Sahaney, Member of Parliament Raja Sabha and the renowned Shahnaz Hussain - Founder, Chairperson and Managing Director of the Shahnaz Hussain Group.

The evening also recognised several Honorary Consuls for their contributions towards building Global partnerships.

Lifetime Achievement

Mr.Vivek Burman - HC of Nicaragua, New Delhi

Bhai Mohan Singh Award

Mr Jagdip Singh - HC of Korea, North India

Ms Surbhi Sharma - HC of Spain, Bengaluru

Consul of the year

Mr.Vikram Vishwanath- HC of Peru, Bengaluru

Mr.Madhusudan Agarwal-HC of Uganda,Mumbai

Medal of Honour

Mr. Deepak Jain - HC of Tuvalu, New Delhi

Mr.Kumar Seetharaman -HC of Iceland, Chennai

Mr.Pravin Goenka - HC of Estonia, Bengaluru

Mr.Vagish Dixit - HC of Austria, Hyderabad

Mr.Vishal Megta - HC of Djibouti, Mumbai

Capt.Somesh Batra - HC of Portugal, Mumbai





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AROUND THE NATION

MUMBAI



Ms. Manisha Patankar Mhaiskar, Additional Chief Secretary and Chief Protocol Officer in the General Administration Department, Dr. Vijay Kalantri, President- All India Association of Industries (AIAI), Chairman- MVIRDC WTC, Mumbai and Mr. Mahendra K. Sanghi, Honorary Consul of Kazakhstan in Mumbai.



Dr. Vijay Kalantri, President, AIAI and Chairman, MVIRDC WTC Mumbai, met with Ms. Monita Carolissen, Consulate General of the Republic of South Africa, to discuss trade, business, and tourism opportunities between India and South Africa.



Mr. Mahendra K. Sanghi, Honorary Consul of Kazakhstan in Mumbai, Dr. Vijay Kalantri, President- All India Association of Industries (AIAI), Chairman- MVIRDC WTC, Mumbai, Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Eknath Shinde, Adv. Rahul Narvekar, Hon'ble Speaker of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly and Mr. Mangal Prabhat Lodha, Ministry of Tourism and of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (Maharashtra).



Dr. Vijay Kalantri, President, All India Association of Industries (AIAI) and Chairman, WTC Mumbai and Mr. Ramavtar Goenka - Honorary Consul for the Republic of Kenya with H. E. AMB. Peter Maina Munyiri, OGW, Kenya High Commission in India.



Dr. Vijay Kalantri, President, AIAI and Chairman, WTC met Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra H.E. C.P. Radhakrishnan along with Captain Somesh Batra, Vice Chairman, WTC Mumbai



Dr. Vijay Kalantri, President, All India Association of Industries (AIAI) and Chairman, WTC Mumbai with Mr. Davoud Razaee Eskandari, Consulate General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Mumbai.



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Dr. Vijay Kalantri, President- All India Association of Industries (AIAI), Chairman- MVIRDC WTC, Mumbai, H. E. Mr. Aliksandr Matsukou, Consulate General of the Republic of Belarus in Mumbai and Mr. Tolhah Ubaidi, Consul (Economic Affairs) Republic of Indonesia



Dr. Vijay Kalantri, President- All India Association of Industries (AIAI), Chairman- MVIRDC WTC, Mumbai with Mr. Abdulla Azizov Chairman (First Deputy Minister)



Dr. Vijay Kalantri, President- All India Association of Industries (AIAI), Chairman- MVIRDC WTC, Mumbai with H. E. Mr. Kobbi Shoshani, Consul General of Israel to the Mumbai



H. E. Mr. Satinder Pal Singh Ahuja, Honorary Consulate of Georgia in Mumbai, Dr. Vijay Kalantri, President- All India Association of Industries (AIAI), Chairman- MVIRDC WTC, Mumbai, Mr. Iqbal Singh Chahal, Additional Chief Secretary (MCGM) and Mr. Mahendra K. Sanghi, Honorary Consul of Kazakhstan in Mumbai.



Mr. Anurag Thakur - Union Minister for I&B and Youth Affairs & Sports, Gol, Mr. Umesh Mehra, Indian film Director, Minister of Information and Broadcasting Uzbekistan with Dr. Vijay Kalantri, President - AIAI and Chairman - MVIRDC WTC Mumbai.



Mr. Mahendra Sanghi with Hon'ble Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Industry & Supply



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Mr. Mahendra Sanghi and Mr. Vijay Kalantri along with Government Officers



Mr. & Mrs. Harjinder Kang, British Deputy High Commissioner in Mumbai



Russian Consul General In Mumbai



Ms. Supriya Sule And Ms. Shaina Nc



Mr. Milind Deora and Mr. Shrikant Shinde



Mr. Mahendra Sanghi with Shri Eknath Shinde, Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra



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AROUND THE NATION

CHENNAI

The past few months have been a vibrant journey of unity, friendship, and service . Under the inspiring leadership of Honorary Consul Capt. Ramaswamy, HCCD has further deepened its bonds, celebrating both professional camaraderie and personal connections.

New Leadership Team

- HC Capt. Ramaswamy – President
- HC Sanjay Madhavan – Vice President
- HC Sessa Sai – Secretary General (Second Term)
- HC Kumar Sitaraman – Treasurer (Second Term)

Major Highlights

- Festival Celebration at ITC Grand Chola: A grand festive evening with nearly 65 members and guests, radiating the spirit of joy and togetherness.
- No Agenda Dinner on February 12th at The Park: An informal and delightful gathering of 45 members, fostering deeper friendships beyond official duties.

Honours and Achievements

- A proud moment for HCCD as five Honorary Consuls traveled to Delhi for the HCCD Consular Day Celebrations where HC Kumar Sitaraman was awarded the prestigious Medal of Honour, recognizing his outstanding contributions.

Exclusive Gatherings

- Special evenings were graciously hosted by:
- President Capt. Ramaswamy
- Past President HC Santha Kumar
- HC Suraj
- HC Shiv Kumar Eashwaran
- HC Rajeev Macheri
- HC Sunil Reddy

Ongoing Activities

- Monthly Governing Council Meetings, hosted by various Consuls, have kept the momentum of engagement alive, ensuring continuous dialogue and collaboration.

HCCD continues to be a shining example of vibrant diplomacy, unity, and cherished friendships — truly embodying the spirit of a dynamic diplomatic family in Chennai.





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BANGALORE



Her Excellency Ms. Baiba Braže, Honorable Foreign Affairs Minister, Republic of Latvia visited the Karnataka Governor Honorable Shri Ram Lal Gehlot at the Raj Bhavan during her official visit to Bengaluru. The delegations included H.E. Mr. Juris Bone, Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia to India, Mr. Marks Deitons, First Secretary to the Latvian Embassy, Mr. K P Balasubramaniam, Hon. Consul of Latvia to Karnataka



Mr. K P Balasubramaniam, Hon. Consul of Latvia to Karnataka, Her Excellency Ms. Baiba Braže, Honorable Foreign Affairs Minister, Republic of Latvia, Mr. Suresh Vaswani, Hon. Consul for Luxembourg in Bengaluru & H.E. Mr. Juris Bone, Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia to India



The Ambassador of Colombia, H.E. Mr. Victor Hugo Echeverri Jaramillo, and Mrs. Patricia Lopez Jaramillo along with Mrs. Nahid Vazirally and Mr. Arif Vazirally Honorary Consul of Colombia



The Ministry of Tourism, Government of Karnataka has accepted the proposal by the Government of Siem Reap, Cambodia to establish a 'Sister City' relationship between Bangalore and Siem Reap.



Global Yoga Summit in Bangalore which was supported by the Ministry of AYUSH, Government of Karnataka. Honorary Consuls of Cambodia, Latvia, Vietnam and Czech Republic at the Inauguration



Dinner hosted by Honorary Consul of Cambodia



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Dinner hosted by Honorary Consul of Cambodia



Meeting with Commissioner of Police, Bengaluru



The Melting Pot – Charity event – Funds donated to Parihar and Satyarthi Foundation





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HCCD CONSULAR DAY 2025 – NEW DELHI



Dinner hosted by Honorary Consul of Grand Duchy of Luxembourg



Reception hosted in Honour of H.E Ambassador Marje Luup of Estonia



St. Patrick's Day Celebrations





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HYDERABAD



After her distinguished tenure as Consul General in Chennai, Ms. Michaela Küchler assumed the prestigious role of Secretary General of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) in February 2025.

We were honored to host a farewell for Ms. Küchler in Hyderabad among the Government officials, Business people and German companies to express our gratitude and best wishes as she embarks on this new chapter.



Welcome to Dr. Kathrin Misera-Lang

New Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Chennai



FlixBus India Celebrates 1-Year Anniversary with Launch of First Electric Bus Route Hyderabad FlixBus India marked its one-year



anniversary with the flag-off of its first electric bus route in India on The event was graced by Shri Ponnam Prabhakar, Hon'ble Minister of Transport and BC Welfare, Government of Telangana, along with Honorary

Consul Ms. Amita Desai.





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Miltenyi Biotec Launches India's First Centre of Excellence in Hyderabad Date: Miltenyi Biotec, a global leader in cell and gene therapy solutions, inaugurated India's first-ever dedicated Centre of Excellence – the Miltenyi Innovation and Technology Centre (MITC) – in Hyderabad The inauguration was graced by:



Mr. Jayesh Ranjan, Special Chief Secretary (ITE&C Industries), Government of Telangana

H.E. Dr. Kathrin Misera-Lang, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Chennai

H.E. Ms. Amita Desai, Honorary Consul

Launch of the Heidelberg-Hyderabad Hub in Advanced Chemical Education (H3ACE)' – in Hyderabad! The launch event was graced by the presence of: H.E. Dr. Kathrin Misera-Lang, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Chennai .Ms. Amita Desai, Honorary Consul This collaboration marks a significant step forward in strengthening academic exchange and research in the field of chemical sciences between India and Germany.



German University Delegation Visits Hyderabad A distinguished delegation of 20 rectors and vice-chancellors from leading German universities visited India to strengthen academic ties and explore future collaborations. They received a warm welcome at IIIT Hyderabad and IIT Hyderabad, where they had the opportunity to explore state-of-the-art facilities, including the innovative Smart City Lab. The visit is organized by the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), which proudly celebrates 65 years of its presence in India this year. Present at the occasion were: H.E. Dr. Kathrin Misera-Lang, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Chennai H.E. Ms. Amita Desai, Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany in Hyderabad.





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THE MELTING POT 2025 (TMP)

A signature event of our Diplomatic Community !!

TMP is a cultural charity fundraising event where the Consulates & Honorary Consulates of different countries in Bengaluru showcased their traditions, customs and culture, through cuisine, costume and music and contributed to a noble cause.

Cultural performances, a live band, and an open bar were other highlights of the event that helped to raise funds for selected worthy causes.

This very popular event gave the various participating Consulates of different countries a great opportunity to present their traditional food, drinks and specialties and introduce visitors to their rich heritage. In addition, this event creates a great spirit of bonhomie, bringing together the expatriate and local communities for a worthwhile charitable cause, while celebrating culture, cuisine and tradition.

Hopefully this could be our Diplomatic Community's CSR initiative nationwide

TMP was partnered by the Leela Palace Hotel Chain as part of their CSR initiative and the entire cuisine was curated and served by them. The very special menu covered a dish each from over 22 nations .

Since it would not be possible to have a dish from every country that is represented in Bangalore, the event also hosted a Fashion Show showcasing costumes of many countries that were not represented through cuisine. The entire cost for the Choreography , Models , light and sound were sponsored by a few of the Honorary Consuls and the costumes by the Honorary Consuls of the participating Countries. The Liquor was sponsored by Diaego and the Wine was sponsored by 5 different Consulates. The evening also included a Lucky draw with some very exciting prizes donated by the Maini Foundation , C K Krishna Chetty , Estee Lauder and Jo Malone and our most grateful thanks to each and every one of the sponsors and donors who contributed to make the show a grand success.

The entire amount received from Donors was given away to the Satyarthi Movement for Global Compassion and Parihar.

There were nearly 200 guests at the event consisting of Diplomats, Honorary Consuls, Bureaucrats, Industrialists, Businessmen and leading socialites of the city.





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FICAC Eurasian Conference in Astana, Kazakhstan



The 2024 FICAC Eurasian Regional Conference in Astana, Kazakhstan brought together consuls, dignitaries, and thought leaders from around the world to foster international cooperation and strengthen cross-border relationships. The event featured official visits, training sessions, and cultural immersions, showcasing the growing relevance of diplomacy in addressing global challenges.

Official Visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The FICAC delegation, led by President Hon. Nikolaos Margaropoulos, was received by H.E. Mr. Murat Nurtleu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan. During this meeting, both Hon. Margaropoulos and Hon. Denis Van den Weghe, Chairman of the Society of Honorary Consuls in Kazakhstan, delivered speeches highlighting the shared vision between FICAC and Kazakhstan, focusing on building global partnerships to address international challenges.

Agreement with Nazarbayev University

In a move that demonstrated FICAC's commitment to global cooperation beyond traditional diplomacy, the delegation proceeded to Nazarbayev University to sign a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This agreement, signed by Hon. Nikolaos K. Margaropoulos and University President Mr. Waqar Ahmad, symbolizes a groundbreaking partnership aimed at fostering long-term collaboration between FICAC and the academic community. The MoU focuses on promoting education, research, and knowledge exchange with a particular emphasis on environmental sustainability and sustainable development.

By tapping into Nazarbayev University's academic expertise, FICAC aims to contribute to the global conversation on addressing climate change, reducing socio-economic disparities, and promoting innovative solutions for sustainable development. This collaboration envisions a future where academic institutions and diplomatic bodies work hand-in-hand to solve some of the world's most complex problems.





Conference Highlights

The 2024 Eurasian Regional Conference officially commenced at the Sheraton Astana Hotel, setting the stage for impactful dialogue and international collaboration. The event began with opening speeches from H.E. Alibek Kuantayrov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, FICAC President Hon. Nikolaos K. Margaropoulos, and Hon. Denis Van den Weghe, Chairman of the Society of Honorary Consuls in Kazakhstan. Their words underscored the significance of this gathering, a testament to the growing importance of honorary consuls in fostering diplomatic and economic ties worldwide.

In his address, Hon. Margaropoulos expressed heartfelt appreciation for the presence of Kazakhstan's top officials, noting how their involvement reaffirmed the importance of FICAC's mission. He emphasized the crucial role honorary consuls play in addressing global challenges such as climate change, economic inequality, and political instability; he highlighted that through dedication and coordinated diplomatic efforts, honorary consuls are uniquely positioned to spearhead collective solutions to these complex issues, driving positive change on a global scale.



The conference highlighted Kazakhstan's emergence as a compelling investment destination with strategic advantages across multiple sectors. Presentations showcased how the country leverages its youthful population, abundant natural resources, and technological integration to position itself as an attractive hub for foreign investment. Speakers discussed Kazakhstan's traditional strengths in mining and agriculture, while emphasizing its active development in fintech, Islamic finance, green technologies, and tourism. The government's commitment to

sustainable development and education featured prominently in discussions, underscoring Kazakhstan's appeal to international investors seeking long-term opportunities in the region.

The conference also emphasized Kazakhstan's clear commitment to fostering a robust business environment through sustainable partnerships rather than short-term gains. Presenters highlighted the country's diverse financial market offerings that adhere to international standards, with its presence on the Anti-Money Laundering whitelist adding credibility. Discussions covered support mechanisms for small and medium-sized enterprises that are creating a resilient economic fabric, while sessions on international collaborations—particularly in



legal frameworks and infrastructure development—demonstrated how Kazakhstan is streamlining processes for foreign investors. Conference participants learned about initiatives addressing regulatory and immigration challenges, illustrating Kazakhstan's ongoing efforts to create a more accessible environment for global businesses looking to establish a presence in this dynamic Central Asian nation.



Memorandum of Understanding with the Chamber of International Commerce

FICAC and the Chamber of International Commerce of Kazakhstan signed an MoU to foster collaboration on private sector programs, promote key business activities, and share successful case studies from global initiatives. The agreement also outlines plans for joint events, institutional visits, and information exchange through publications.

The 2nd FICAC Energy Diplomacy Forum

The 2nd FICAC Energy Diplomacy Forum, organized by the World Federation of Consuls in collaboration with the International Hellenic University, served as a significant platform for global discourse on the future of energy, with particular emphasis on energy transition and its geopolitical implications. This comprehensive event brought together an impressive array of influential figures from across the energy landscape, including Mrs. Clara Poletti, Commissioner of the Italian Regulatory Authority for Energy and Chair of the Board of Regulators of the European Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators; Mr. Rasmi Hamzeh, CEO of Jordan Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Fund; and several distinguished academics and policy experts such as Theodore Panagos and Komninos Komnios from the International Hellenic University. The forum also benefited from diplomatic perspectives through contributions from Mr. Zhambulat Sarsenov, Honorary Consul of Hungary in Kazakhstan and Vice President of WPC Energy, and H.E. Marco Alberti, Ambassador of Italy to Kazakhstan, whose background in utilities and international affairs brought valuable insights on energy transition and climate change. Under the skilled moderation of Mr. Loukas Katsonis, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Institute in Greece, the discussions delved deeply into the evolving energy sector, highlighting sustainable practices and emphasizing the critical need for cross-sector collaboration. The forum ultimately succeeded in creating a dynamic knowledge-sharing environment where participants could exchange ideas and strategies for navigating the changing energy landscape while promoting both sustainability and strengthened international cooperation in the face of global energy challenges.

Tree-Planting Ceremony for Peace

The FICAC delegation participated in a symbolic Tree-Planting Ceremony at Astana's Botanical Garden. Led by FICAC President Hon. Nikolaos Margaropoulos and Hon. Denis Van den Weghe, the ceremony represented a commitment to sustainability and international cooperation. The "Tree of Life and Peace" was planted as a lasting symbol of diplomatic relationships, with a commemorative plaque unveiled to mark the occasion. During the ceremony, President Margaropoulos emphasized how diplomacy, like a tree, requires patience and dedication to grow into something strong and resilient. The tree stands as a beacon for future generations, encouraging continued work toward building a greener, more peaceful world.





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FICAC Champions Women in Diplomacy at the 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69)

The World Federation of Consuls (FICAC) is pleased to announce its successful participation in the 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) through two significant events in March 2025.

FICAC, under the leadership of President Hon. Nikolaos Margaropoulos, demonstrated its commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment in diplomacy through:

- A high-profile Side Event held in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of Honduras at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on March 11, 2025
- A virtual Parallel Event organized jointly with the US Consular Corps College on March 20, 2025

These events brought together distinguished diplomatic voices to address critical issues facing women in diplomacy, particularly significant as we mark the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration.

President Margaropoulos reaffirmed FICAC's dedication: "It is FICAC's credo to encourage and promote equality and to foster the collaborative endeavors of women and men in diplomacy to enable a better world."

The events featured notable contributions from H.E. Ambassador Mary Elizabeth Flores Flake, Honduras Permanent Representative to the UN, and presentations from FICAC's ECOSOC and Women in Diplomacy Committees addressing women's roles across politics, law, economics, digital technologies, climate action, healthcare, and cultural spheres.

FICAC remains committed to amplifying women's voices in international diplomacy and building a more equitable diplomatic community worldwide.





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WIDC LEADS THE WAY IN WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: A GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR EQUALITY



Nathalie Mimoun

Chairperson WIDC
Honorary Consul of
France in Israel

by the Chairperson of the Women's International Diplomatic Committee (WIDC)

As Chairperson of the Women's International Diplomatic Committee (WIDC), I am proud to lead a global initiative dedicated to empowering women and advancing gender equality.

Our mission is clear: to ensure that every woman and girl has the opportunity to thrive, no matter where they are in the world. Through advocacy, education, cultural

engagement, and direct action, WIDC is driving meaningful and lasting change.

High-Level Dialogues and Global Engagement

WIDC has established itself as a platform for impactful, high-level discussions. We organize webinars and forums that bring together global leaders, including Nobel Laureates, ministers, and presidents.

Through partnerships with the Ministers of Tourism from Honduras and Ghana, and the President of the Republic of Croatia, we seek to inspire cross-border cooperation and drive forward creative, impactful responses to the pressing challenges faced by women today.



One of our flagship initiatives, the Energy Diplomacy Forum, addresses energy transition and security, highlighting the vital role women play in shaping sustainable futures. Our leadership in the global webinar Globalizing Compassion & Justice for Children, led by Nobel Peace Laureate Mr. Kailash Satyarthi, further reflects our deep commitment to advocating for the rights of both women and children.

Art and Culture as Tools for Change

WIDC recognizes the transformative power of art. Through events such as the art auction at the Pera Museum in Istanbul, we merge culture with advocacy, supporting women's and girls' education while celebrating female creativity. These cultural events are more than exhibitions—they are platforms for healing, expression, and social progress.



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Another significant initiative is the Soul Colors project, a creative workshop tailored for at-risk youth. This program provides a safe and nurturing environment where participants can express their emotions through art, facilitating self-discovery and personal growth.



We are currently working on a new publication, *From the Shadow to the Light*, an art book aimed at supporting vulnerable children. This initiative leverages the healing power of art to raise awareness and provide support for those affected by trauma and marginalization.



Vulnerable children face countless barriers, regardless of background. Through art, WIDC helps them step out of the shadows and into the light—empowered, supported, and ready to thrive.

This upcoming book reflects both personal and societal transformation. It envisions a

world where once-forgotten children are seen, heard, and supported, in line with the priorities emphasized at CSW69, including sustainable infrastructure and social support systems.



Publications with Purpose



Awareness is a cornerstone of WIDC's mission. Our publication *Blooming Flowers* is a poignant compilation of testimonies from survivors of sexual abuse. It stands as both a powerful call for reform and a tool for education and prevention.





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Support and Shelter for Women

Beyond advocacy, WIDC supports women directly through shelter programs, psychological counseling, and vocational training. These services help survivors of trauma rebuild their lives, fostering resilience and self-reliance.

Empowerment Programs for Children

WIDC recognizes that fostering leadership, self-expression, and confidence in the younger generation is crucial for advancing gender equality. Our empowerment programs for children are designed to nurture these qualities. A prominent example is the International Cyber, AI, and Diplomacy Marathon 2023, held at Tel Aviv University. This event brought together youth, diplomats, and experts to discuss global collaboration on technology and diplomacy, emphasizing the pivotal role of young women in driving change.



Health Independence

WIDC is deeply committed to enhancing women's roles in global health decision-making. Under the leadership of Professor Surgeon Raja Aghzadi, we have championed health diplomacy, cancer



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awareness, and improved access to care for women through key interventions at international forums—including the United Nations, as well as in Cyprus, Istanbul, and Honduras. By promoting women's health independence, WIDC ensures that women are not only active participants in health decisions but also have the resources and knowledge to take control of their well-being.

Honoring the Past, Shaping the Future

To commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, we released The Philatelic Journey—a tribute to the women who fought for equality, represented through stamps. This symbolic collection honors their contributions and continues the dialogue on gender rights through a unique and creative lens.



Representing at the United Nations

For the second time, WIDC proudly participated in the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the United Nations, hosting a panel on women in diplomacy and leadership. The event reaffirmed our commitment to the Beijing 2030 Action Plan, keeping the momentum of the Beijing Conference alive and relevant.

WIDC's work is grounded in the belief that the journey toward gender equality is not just a women's issue—it's a human one. Real change requires unity, advocacy, and action from all corners of society. As Louisa May Alcott said, "I am not afraid of storms, for I am learning how to sail my ship."

At WIDC, we continue to sail forward—undaunted, determined, and inspired by the women and children we serve.

We will go on. And we will go far—together, for a better world.

HERITAGE OF INDIA

The Dreamlands of Uttar Pradesh by Chandra Vijay Singh

India realizes the importance of its architectural heritage and the need to preserve it for coming generations.

Many such forts and palaces are inherited, where the owners have, in droves, converted many into hotels, museums and delayed their crumbling into a heap of rubble. This has also given huge impetus to the tourism industry in some rather remote places.



Rajasthan took the lead and leads in "Heritage" Tourism- from which the owners have managed transition from a feudal order to sharp businessmen. The ripple effect benefits local markets, the tour operators, guides and so many more. That's Rajasthan , the pioneer . You also have Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh – with an unimaginable potential waiting to be tapped. Unfortunately, the wetter condition, and the fact that most of their buildings are of brick and mortar -make them more susceptible to deterioration.

Most states have extravagant , beautiful pre- colonial and colonial buildings that many a country would love to have had- lying neglected and forlorn.



My father was a General and grandfather an I.C.S. officer of the 1894 batch. My father was G.O.C. (U.P Area) in 1949-50. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. Pandit Pant was like an unofficial guardian to the only child of his friend – the late Raja of Sahaspur- Bilari who died at an early age in a car crash.

And he saw this opportunity for his friend's child. He arranged their marriage, even did the "Kanyadaan" and the result was my birth a few months later - and an heir to what was then an Estate comprising almost 500 villages - numerous houses and two places in the districts of Moradabad and Badaun.

In the meanwhile, my mother was drawn into politics and became a Minister which kept her in Lucknow. So, the responsibility to sort the depleting heritage fell on my young and inexperienced shoulders.

In the civil lines area of Moradabad stood our old colonial palace, where we stayed. Build in 1909, it was used as a guest house by the family. During the second World War, the British requisitioned it to house Italian P.O. W's. Funds for its upkeep were sanctioned by the court of Wards- and they were parsimonious in doing so.



My son - then working in NDTV office in Mumbai- suggested we open a "Home-Stay". It was renamed "NIVAH" and restoration started in right earnest. Two years later it was open to receive guests. Surprisingly most of the clients are from the West who visit Moradabad for work connected with its thriving brass industry. One heritage building saved and serving a useful purpose.



About 15 miles on the Aligarh road stood our old palace. That building was a pretty one. It would be a shame to see it reduced to rubble. I speak to my

daughter married to a hotelier in Jodhpur - who agreed to help in its restoration. The restoration started in 2019 and is still underway. We hope this too stands as a showcase of U.P's heritage and provides the many avenues to the local populace that tourism invariably opens to. From dreams of representing India in capitals has been a huge contrast, satisfying one nevertheless.





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A SPECIAL GUEST



**H.E. MR. ALBERTO A
GUANI**
Ambassador of Uruguay

In his interview, H.E. MR. ALBERTO A. GUANI, Ambassador of Uruguay to India highlighted the designation of Mr. Sanjiv Shanmugam as Honorary Consul in Bangalore.

He stated that Uruguay does not distinguish between national and foreign investments, but seek to attract Indian enterprises to look at Uruguay as a hub to expand to the rest of South America. He also added India-Uruguayan bilateral relations stretch back over 7 decades, with diplomatic relations being established in 1948.

How do you look back on these relations?

Over the past 75 years, Uruguay has witnessed numerous developments in their bilateral relationship. In 1968, Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, made a historic visit to Uruguay. In the following years, two Vice Presidents of Uruguay also visited India, reinforcing the friendly ties between our nations. I am convinced that in the political approach we can do much more in terms of progress and try to explore the possibility for a new visit of a Prime Minister of India after 56 years. I am sure that while we have had friendly relations all this time together, there are many other engagements that we can assure between both countries. Uruguay's economy has exhibited resilience in the face of global uncertainties, making it an attractive destination for investment.

What are some of the key sectors where the Uruguayan government seeks to attract investment?

First, Uruguay is predominantly interested in developing a closer relationship with Bangalore and the state of Karnataka.

Uruguay stands as one of the most egalitarian societies in the world, and I am sure that because of these characteristics, it is considered one of the happiest countries in Latin America, ranking 18th worldwide. Investments, must ensure that priority to innovation and labour force is given an important place.

As you know, Uruguay does not distinguish between national and foreign investments, and we seek to attract Indian enterprises to look at Uruguay as a hub to expand to the rest of South America. Uruguay successfully boasts of 100% renewable electricity generation.

In light of the same and the Indian government's push for renewable energy, do you see any possible collaboration in the renewable energy sector in the world?

Yes. This is a very dynamic sector where Uruguay holds the second place in the world, after Denmark, in applying renewable energy. I understand that in Green Hydrogen, we could have an interesting collaboration partnership. This means that there is a particular interest by the Government to take care of less favored sectors of the population and at the same time give them better standards of living.

How do you see this growing sports partnership between the two countries?

Indian footballer Bijay Chhetri recently joined the Uruguayan football club Colon FC, becoming the first Indian to do so.



I see a great future in this area, as you know football is the main sport in Uruguay, and the fact of having an Indian footballer among us opens doors for future collaboration in this matter. Uruguay is one of the most prestigious football countries in the world, and in 2030 we will celebrate the bicentennial of the first world FIFA World Cup that took place in Montevideo.

Are there any developments with regard to the opening up of an Indian Embassy in Uruguay?

I will give you a correction: India has no General Consulate in Montevideo, and we have been waiting a long time for an Embassy to be opened in my country.

India is represented in Uruguay through its Embassy in Buenos Aires in Argentina; it also has a consulate general in Montevideo.

Basically, there are many issues that would put our relationship in a more reciprocal manner if India finally decides to have a permanent Ambassador in Montevideo. For me, this is a crucial issue that unfortunately has been on standby for such a long time.

This booming wine industry begets a question: Are there any bilateral plans for investments in the wine industry here in India?

Uruguayan wines are today primarily in the profile of what the consumers seek today. We plan to have our wines better known, and we are looking to find a responsible representative to help us introduce our quality wines here in India.

What are the contributing factors behind Uruguayan society's happiness?

Many do not know that Uruguay was the first social welfare state. After ten years, Uruguay participated again in the World Values Study during 2022, and was ranked as the "happiest" country in Latin America and 18th worldwide.

What are some of the key places that visitors must explore while visiting Uruguay?

Uruguay, as a progressive, stable, safe and culturally sophisticated nation, offers visitors a lifetime of experience.

Obtaining a visa for travelling to Uruguay is not a complicated process. One has to submit their request, and could expect an answer within 20 days for the issuance of visa. The country can be explored and enjoyed, especially during the months of October until April. The country is blessed with fantastic beaches, no pollution, fresh fruit, forests and the only Buddhist temple in South America.

With the growing Indo-Uruguayan relationship, what are the visa and connectivity protocols for the Indians seeking to visit Uruguay for business or for a holiday?

I would suggest you visit our website www.embassyofuruguayinindia.in and check all the different proposals that we have for the future visit both for business as well as for a holiday to Uruguay.

Would you like to give any message to our readers?

Yes, I would encourage them to find out and explore more about Uruguay; I'm sure that it would be a very rewarding experience, and most probably, once you know us better, you will certainly want to go back.

ART - AN EXPERIENCE



Burma: horsemen play polo as courtiers pay homage to the king, c. 1800-99, Gouache painting, Image courtesy of Wellcome Collection, London

From Ancient Iran to Modern India: How Polo Travelled the World

Krittika Kumari

Thundering hooves, riders swinging their mallets, loud cheers from the stand: the polo game is in full swing!

Polo has a long history. In South Asia, the ancient Meitei treatise, Kangjeiroi, dates the game to around 1400 BCE at the court of Ningthou Kangba, who ruled the ancient state of Kangleipak in present-day Manipur. In ancient Iran, an equestrian game akin to present-day polo was played as early as 600 BCE. In China, the game was played in the 7th century under the Tang dynasty. Traditionally, two teams with sixteen horseback players on each side used sticks bearing crescent tips to hit the ball into the goal of the opposing team.

Since then, versions of polo have been played in various parts of the world — in China, Tibet, Myanmar, and more recently, in southern Africa and America. In the Indian subcontinent it was played in the Gilgit-Baltistan region, Ladakh and Manipur; in Turco-Afghan and Mughal north India, in Rajput-ruled western India and in the Deccan.



Polo Game, Safavid, Ink and pigments on buff and rose-tinted laid paper, Image courtesy of The Walters Museum, Maryland

Modern-day polo, with its very British associations, finds roots in the northeastern state of Manipur in India. In early modern Manipur, sagol kangjei, or horse hockey, was a popular royal pastime amongst Manipuri and Burmese royalty. Illustrated Burmese manuscripts, or parabaiks, from the nineteenth century depict the game being played as part of important royal ceremonies and festivals. The paintings portray men on horses, mallets in hands, with members of the royal family watching the game. When Burma invaded Manipur in the nineteenth century, courtiers and locals fled to neighbouring territories in what is today Assam, where they continued to play the game.



"Siyavush Plays Polo before Afrasiyab", Folio 180v from the Shahnama (Book of Kings) of Shah Tahmasp, c. 1525–30, Iran, Opaque watercolour, ink, silver, and gold on paper, Image courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Three Polo Players, c. early 17th century, Rajasthan, India, Ink and opaque watercolour on paper, Image courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

It was there, around the mid-nineteenth century, that British tea planters and army officials took notice of it. The game was called polo, believed to derive from the Tibetan phulu, or 'ball'. In the next few decades, multiple polo clubs were set up by British officials in Assam, Bengal, and elsewhere — the first was in fact formed in Calcutta

between 1861–62 by two British army officials, Joseph Sherer and Robert Steward. The British originally played on small ponies, at a slow pace, with teams of eight players. As tournaments became more frequent, the game evolved to be played on larger horses. Polo reached Malta in 1868 and England in 1869, where it was adapted and modified into the four-player version that we know today. The Indian Polo Association was formed in 1892, and international rules and regulations were consolidated for the game after the First World War.

Equestrian sport had already been an important part of gentlemanly conduct amongst British officers in the nineteenth century, and this hard-paced, dangerous and expensive game became an integral pastime in India. It helped regulate physical fitness and allowed junior recruits to mingle with their more experienced seniors. After the First World War, polo symbolised a new era of British aristocratic and chivalric values. Today, the game is played in over seventy countries worldwide.



The Game of Dakui, or "Polo.", c. 1890s, Japan, Published in The Mikado's Empire by William Elliot Griffis (New York: Harper & Brothers), Image credit: The Library of Congress, Washington DC, Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

This story originally appeared on the [MAP Academy](https://www.mapacademy.com/), an online platform encouraging greater engagement with South Asia's art and cultural histories.



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SAVE THE DATE! 14TH WORLD CONGRESS OF CONSULS 2025

The World Federation of Consuls (FICAC) cordially invites you to attend our upcoming General Assembly taking place October 29 - November 1, 2025, in Marrakech. Join consular representatives and diplomatic officials from around the world for this important gathering featuring official proceedings, networking opportunities, and special workshops. Formal invitation with venue details and registration information to follow.



