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THE CONSULAR CHRONICLES



Hon. Consular Corps
Diplomatique-India

NEWSLETTER





EDITOR'S NOTE

I do hope that you enjoyed the first issue and look forward to your feedback, suggestions which will help us to improve. This issue covers information on the World Federation of Consuls-FICAC and the Nation in Focus is 'UNION OF THE COMOROS' and our Special Feature is on the Gorilla of Rwanda.

Best wishes,
Suresh Vaswani
Vice President-HCCD-India
Hon. Consul of Benin

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FICAC: Introduction, history, goals and status

BENGALURU: Dr. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw honoured by the French Republic

MUMBAI: Get-together with CCAM, HCCD India Board Meeting, 26/11 event and Christmas Carol Singing

CHENNAI: Christmas Brunch hosted by The Consulate of El Salvador, Chennai and Embassy of El Salvador, New Delhi

COUNTRY IN FOCUS: Union of the Comoros

SPECIAL FEATURE: Gorillas in the forests of Rwanda

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

10th
February
2017

HCCD-INDIA
Consular Day & New Year
New Delhi

19th
February
2017

MUMBAI CHAPTER
Terry Fox Run
Mumbai

26th
March
2017

MUMBAI CHAPTER
The Oberoi Melting Pot (TOMP)
Mumbai



FICAC IS THERE TO SERVE CONSULS ALL OVER THE WORLD

- To get to know one another
- To meet together
- To exchange views
- To act together

FICAC was established in Copenhagen in October 1982. It was born of the necessity to bring together Consular Associations or Corps from all over the world and to share experience, and co-ordinate efforts to enhance the status and effectiveness of the Consul, the oldest institution serving International bilateral relations.

FICAC is a global network of Consular Associations created to support and improve the status, legitimacy and effectiveness of consular officers in all receiving states.

FICAC's aims are to promote and strengthen mutual understanding between Honorary Consuls and Career Consuls worldwide; develop a framework and basis for exchange of current information, ideas and suggestions regarding matters related to the office of Honorary Consuls and Career Consuls; promote at national level and international for a better understanding of duties and responsibilities, rights and privileges of Honorary Consuls and Career Consuls.

New Member Associations will always be welcome. FICAC enjoys the status of a United Nations NGO (Ecosoc Observer Status) since 1993. FICAC has been accredited by the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States on March 13th, 2002 as a Civil Society. HCCD-India is a Member of the World Federation of Consuls and our Secretary General Hon'ble Mr.K.L.Ganju is a Member of the Executive Committee in the World Federation.



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Dr. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw receives Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur at New Delhi.

BENGALURU

Dr. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, Honorary Consul for Republic of Ireland was appointed 'Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur' (Knight of the National Order of the French Legion of Honour) for her contribution to biosciences and research.

"It's a big honour and recognition for me. For a country like France to give me this honour, is something which I am deeply humbled by," Dr. Shaw told The Hindu.
"They have honoured me for my contribution to biotechnology, research and innovation, a recognition I owe to my team at Biocon," she added.

Chevalier l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur, created in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte, is the highest civilian award of the French Republic for outstanding contribution in diverse fields bestowed on citizens of the world. The award is conferred by the President of the French Republic.

BENGALURU CHAPTER HOST COCKTAIL DINNER IN HONOUR OF HIGH COMMISSIONER OF CYPRUS



The High Commissioner of Cyprus, Mr. Demetrios A Theophylactou visited Bengaluru and a Cocktail reception was held in his Honor.

The gathering included Consuls, Honorary Consuls, I G and Commissioner of Police, Office Bearers of the Chamber of Commerce and other V.I.P's.



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Mr.Gul Kripalani
Sr.Vice President HCCD-India
Honorary Consul General of Iceland

MUMBAI

Greetings to you from HCCD Mumbai!

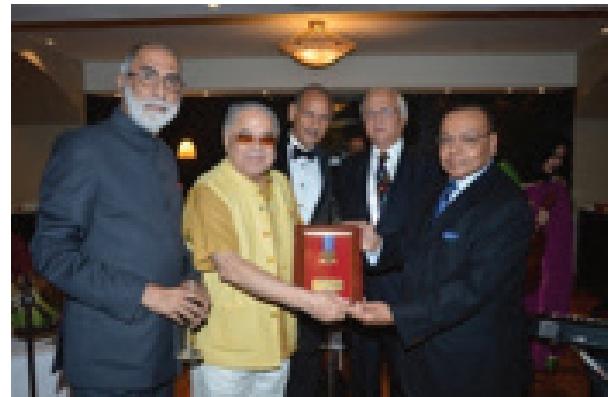
We, Honorary Consul Generals based in Mumbai, are working together as a group for the benefit of the countries that we represent as well as the State of Maharashtra. The main strength of HCCD Mumbai is that not only do we work for the Diplomatic Community, but we also like to give back to society what society has given to us and in doing so, we are major supporters of CSR.

ON 19TH AUGUST 2016, HCCD MUMBAI HELD THEIR AGM.

This was followed by a get together with the Career Consul Generals Mumbai (CCAM).where the Addl. Chief of Protocol-Maharashtra, Mr. Sumit Mullick addressed the gathering.

We were also privileged to have Mr. Sanjay Verma, Chief of Protocol, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, address the HCCD and CCAM members. This was followed by an interactive Q & A session

Avanti Nagral, a young 19 year old girl studying at Harvard University, regaled all present with her beautiful, melodious voice.



HCCD INDIA BOARD MEETING IN MUMBAI 24TH SEPTEMBER 2016.

After our meeting, Indo fusion violinist and vocalist Sunita Bhuyan recipient of the Priyadarshini Award for excellence enthralled all present with a superb performance.



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26/11 EVENT AT THE GATEWAY OF INDIA:

Every year, HCCD Mumbai organizes a commemorative event at the Gateway of India on 26th November. We have been having this event at the Gateway of India from where we send a message of peace to the entire world. This is a solemn event to pay tribute to all those who lost their lives in these dastardly acts of terrorism those days in 2008.

This event is normally held with the cooperation of Rotary District 3141 and the Career Diplomats.

We had the Union Minister, Mr. Piyush Goyal, as our Chief Guest, along with Mrs. Amruta Fadnavis, wife of our Chief Minister as our Guests of Honour.

This year, we also supported one Wing Commander Paramvir Singh, who requested us to include him as a part of our team, as he also wished, in his own way, to spread the message of peace and goodwill to the world. He holds the world record of the longest swim of over 400 kms. He wanted to spread the message of peace by beating his own record and swimming a distance of over 1000 kms to Mangalore.

His feat has made it to the World Records in Open Water Swimming namely 'Longest Distance Open Water Swim by a team of six. The Swimming Federation of India, which governs the sport in India, has already declared the above two World Records.

CHRISTMAS CAROL SINGING EVENT AT ALL SAINTS' CHURCH IN MUMBAI ON 3RD DECEMBER 2016.

Once again as in the past, during the season of peace and goodwill, we organized this event on 3rd December, where both HCCD and CCAM members participated.

The world's newest country—where 3 million face starvation. South Sudan declared independence from Sudan on July 9, 2011, after a bloody civil war with Sudan's ethnically Arab north that had lasted decades.



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National Day celebration conducted by Mr. Shivakumar Eshwaran,
Hon. Consul of Armenia, on 21st October, 2016 at Chennai.



CHENNAI

The Republic of El Salvador, a small but vibrant Central American Country, houses its prestigious Consulate in Chennai. The Consulate of El Salvador in Chennai along with Embassy of El Salvador in New Delhi hosted a Christmas brunch on the 18th of December 2016 at The Feathers Hotel, Mt. Poonamalle High Road, Manapakkam, Chennai.

The Honorary Consul Dr. Yashwanth Kumar Venkataraman hosted a brunch for the city's elite at the plush hotel. The turnout was a mix of achievers, activists, entrepreneurs' high-net-worth business honchos and entertainers. Dr. Yashwanth looked every bit the perfect host and ensured everyone had a good time.

SOUTHERN MOST POINT OF INDIA

Indira Point is the name of the southern most point of Republic of India. It is situated on Great Nicobar Island in the Nicobar Islands, which are located in the eastern Indian Ocean at 6°45'10"N and 93°49'36"E. This is not on the Indian mainland, but within the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

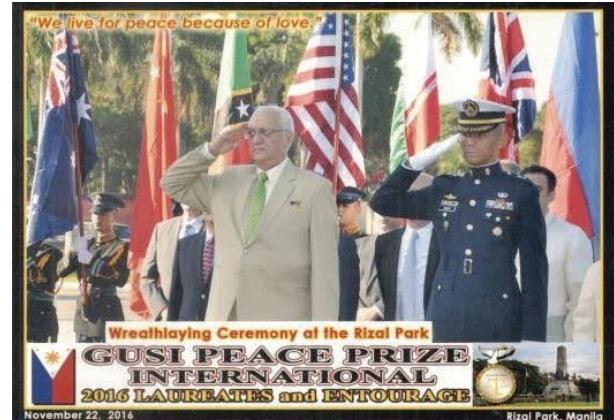
DELHI

NEWS

Hon'ble Mr. K.L. Ganju, o.c.v.c. (cdr.) apart from receiving many Awards, was decorated by the Republic of the Union of the Comoros with the highest award of the country given to a foreigner. He was decorated with the 'Order of the Green Crescent of Comoros' and raised to the grade of 'Commander'. Recently, in the month of November, 2017 Hon'ble Mr. K.L. Ganju, o.c.v.c. (cdr.) was selected as an international laureate and awarded Gusi Peace Prize 2016 in Manila, Philippines. He was also accorded Guard of Honour by the Philippines army and he also laid wreath at the Martyr's monument at Rizal Park, Manila, Philippines. This was a historical moment for Hon'ble Mr. K.L. Ganju.



Hon'ble Mr. K.L. Ganju



Mr. K.L. Ganju, o.c.v.c., (cdr.), Counsul General (Hy.), Union of the Comoros saluting the Guard of Honour presented to him by the Military during the wreath laying ceremony held at Rizal Park, Manila (Martyr's Monument) on 22nd November, 2016. The Guard of Honour was presented with a 21 gun salute. This is a lifetime experience which can never be forgotten.



Mr. K.L. Ganju, o.c.v.c., (cdr.), Counsul General (Hy.), Union of the Comoros receives the Gusi Peace Prize in Manila on 23rd of November, 2016. On the stage are Hon'ble Mr. Aykut Eken, President, World Federation of Counsuls and High Commissions, Ambassadors and other VIPs from Philippines.



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Mr. K.L. Ganju, o.c.v.c. (cdr.)
Hon. Consul General
Union of Comoros in India

COMOROS AT A GLANCE

Comoros is an archipelago consisting of following four islands:

1. NGAZIDJA
2. ANJOUAN
3. MWALI
4. MAYOTTE

It is believed that the word Comoros is derived from the Arabic word "Qamar" which means moon in Arabic.

This is a small country in the South West Indian ocean with Madagascar on one side, and East African States like Tanzania, Mozambique on the other. Its population, which is overwhelmingly Islamic, is around 750 thousand. Historically, Comoros attracted migrants from Africa, the Persian Gulf, Madagascar, Indonesia, etc. The population of Comoros is therefore of diverse stock, and this probably accounts for the highly tolerant spirit of the Comorians. Comoros began attracting attention from the British and the French during the 19th century owing to its strategic location. Until the opening of the Suez Canal, Comoros used to be an important refueling and provisioning station for ships sailing from Europe to the Indian Ocean.

During the 19th century, in the tussle for supremacy between the French and the British in Africa and Asia, the French won in Comoros through generous payments and playing one faction against the other. It was in 1886 that Comoros became a French protectorate by an agreement signed between Said Ali bin Said Omar, the last Sultan of Grand Comore (the largest island in Comoros), and the French government. The French rule continued until modern times. In the recent past, however, Comoros also has had some association with the British. During the Second World War, for a period of four years from 25th September, 1942 to 13th October, 1946, it was under British occupation.

Subsequently, Comoros attained independence through a unilateral proclamation of independence on 6th July, 1975. Notably, it was not preceded by any violent agitation against France as was witnessed in some former French colonies like Algeria. However, Mayotte, the easternmost of the four islands of Comoros remained a French protectorate. The residents of this small island had also subsequently shown their preference to be under the French rule in two referendums in 1974 and 1976.

As is to be expected, like other Francophone countries, French is the official language of Comoros. It is widely understood and English is hardly spoken there. Comoros has a democratic government with elections held every five years. The constituent islands of Comoros enjoy considerable autonomy and are headed by an elected Governor.

Unfortunately, not many people from India have ever visited Comoros; this is why it is not generally known that Comoros is a country with great scenic beauty and hence ideal for tourism. The long, pristine beaches and surrounding seas provide an excellent opportunity for various water sports showcasing the amazing pristine beauty of Comoros. It attracts a large number of tourists especially from Europe. The country has excellent connectivity by air and one can travel there from various locations such as Dubai, Madagascar, Kenya, Yemen, etc. It has a tropical climate similar to that in Mumbai or Chennai, and receives heavy showers during the rainy season.



As far as agriculture is concerned, it mainly produces vanilla, cloves and a flower called Ylang-ylang from which perfume is extracted. It is one of the largest producers of vanilla and the second largest producers of cloves in the world; notably, India happens to be a major importer of Comorian cloves. However, with the focus on cash crops like cloves, vanilla and Ylang-ylang, there has not been adequate cultivation of food grains, vegetables, etc. This is why Comoros is required to import most of its requirements of cereals, meat, vegetables, etc.

In the short history of Comoros, the period of last 10-15 years can indeed be counted as a golden period. There has been political stability all along. Turning now to the foreign relations of Comoros: Comoros has resident missions from a few countries that include China, France, Saudi Arabia, Iran, etc. Similarly, Comoros has resident missions only in some selected countries such as the U.S.A., France, Belgium, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, Libya, Madagascar, Senegal, South Africa, etc. Comoros is a member of the United Nations, the African Union, the Arab League, the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), etc.

A distinctive and laudable feature of the foreign relations of Comoros must be mentioned here. Comoros has no unresolved issues, whether relating to maritime boundary or any other matter, with other African states.

Turning now to the interaction between India and Comoros: I would not be exaggerating if I were to say that Indo-Comorian relations were almost non-existent earlier. Historically, there were no contacts between Comoros and India, and the same situation continued after Comoros attained independence in the year 1975. No students from Comoros came to India, nor had it occurred to anyone there that India could be an excellent destination for advanced medical treatment. Comoros was not on the radar of India at all, and by and large, nobody in India (except the personnel of Africa Division in the M.E.A.) had even heard of it. Hardly anybody from India ever went to Comoros, and it was not on even the radar of travel agents. Similarly, India was totally unknown in Comoros; for Comorians, it was some country far away and remote and they had nothing to do with it. Being a French speaking country, an almost insurmountable barrier existed in the way of people-to-people contacts between the two countries.

Comoros never had a resident Indian Embassy and our embassy in Madagascar looked after it. The Indian Ambassador in Madagascar used to visit Comoros once in six months or so and stay there for a couple of days. Thus, contacts at the diplomatic level were most sporadic. I was appointed to be the Consul General (Hon.) in India for this country; and it was my job to foster the relationship between these two countries and to acquaint them with each other. This would have been a formidable task even for a seasoned diplomat, and I was a total stranger to the field of diplomacy. However, due to many lucky factors and cooperation of my friends, especially in the Ministry of External Affairs, Delhi, during the last 10 years, much has changed as far as Indo-Comorian relations are concerned. India and Comoros have become close and there is no more discord between them politically. In fact, they have been actively cooperating to mutual benefit. There has been a significant growth of cooperation in various sectors between them. No doubt the credit for this has to go to the political stability enjoyed by Comoros during the last decade, and to the enlightened policies followed by its Government. In the following chapters I have described how India and Comoros have moved closer to each other in the last decade.

VATICAN CITY

The full name of the country is the State of Vatican City, and it is the spiritual and governing center of the Roman Catholic Church. Vatican City has its own pharmacy, post office, telephone system and media outlets. The population is 1,000 (2015 est). The Vatican is an absolute monarchy. Full legislative, judicial and executive authority resides with the Pope.



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GORILLAS IN THE FORESTS OF RWANDA

The population of Gorillas has been shrinking gradually in African forests; and if at all they are to be found, their existence is in the forests of Rwanda. As per the recent census, Rwanda has 304 gorillas, representing 35% of the entire world's population. The Government of Rwanda has taken up the task of protecting the Gorillas very seriously. They have started a programme known as "KWITA IZINA" in local language (Gorilla Naming Ceremony) in the year 2005. The Gorilla naming ceremony is done with international collaboration by inviting the Prime Ministers, Presidents of different countries, Hollywood actors, VVIP's from all over the world every year. More than 200 Gorillas have been

named so far. The newly named babies bring the total number of the gorillas named to 283 since 2005. Various cultural events, activities, workshops, seminars and rally on awareness of Gorillas are carried out during the Gorilla Naming Ceremony celebrations.

Giving accreditation to Gorilla as National animal, putting the naming ceremony of Gorillas on the International platform was done with a concern on environmental protection; the intention is also to promote international trade. Gorillas have been the major cause in contributing significant amount to the economic advancement of Rwanda. A large number of foreign tourists arrive here to see the gorillas. After the commencement of the naming ceremony this proportion has grown in the past five years.