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THE CONSULAR CHRONICLES



*Get well
real soon..*





Hon. Consular Corps
Diplomatique-India



EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

I hope that you and your families are staying healthy and safe.

It has been a challenging year and the pandemic is definitely one for the history books. Honorary Consuls all over the country have been active in assisting their nationals and also to many others in their respective cities.

While there have hardly been any events, HCCD- India held its Consular Day at New Delhi and FICAC held its Summit 2021 virtually. We bring you some excerpts from these events and a few other interesting facts from India and around the World and we do hope that you enjoy reading this issue.

As we travel the road ahead, I would say that there is light at the end of the tunnel. Resilience comes from enduring challenges and we will surely overcome these.

Everyone from the Consular Chronicles wishes you and your loved ones good health and strength in the days ahead.

As always, looking forward to your comments and suggestions.

Stay Safe - Stay Well

Surbhi Sharma

Editor

Consular Chronicles

Honorary Consul of Spain



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WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

KOLKATA



Mr. Sitaram Sharma
Honorary Consul of Belarus

MUMBAI



Mr. Sushil Kumar Jiwarajka
Honorary Consul of Greece

CHENNAI



Mr. KRISHNA N PIMPLE
Honorary Consul of Tanzania



Mr. Kumaran Sitaraman
Honorary Consul of Iceland



Mr. S N Srikanth
Honorary Consul of Fiji



Mr. Ramkumar Varadarajan
Honorary Consul of Mexico



Mr. Gopal Srinivasan
Honorary Consul of Netherland



Dr. G S K Velu
Honorary Consul of Estonia



Mr. M Ct. P Chidambaram
Honorary Consul of Finland



Hon. Mr. Antony Lobo
Honorary Consul of Spain



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WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

CHENNAI



Prof. J Ranganathan
Honorary Consul of Myanmar



Mr. Arun Vasu
Honorary Consul of Sweden



Mr. AR RM Arun
Honorary Consul of Czech Republic



Mr. Vijay Sankar
Honorary Consul of Denmark

HYDERABAD



Mr. Toghrille Hassan
Honorary Consul of Russian Federation



Mr. G V Prasad
Honorary Consul of Belgium



Mr. Vagish Dixi
Honorary Consul of Austria



Dr. Nawab Mir Nasir Ali Khan
Honorary Consul of Kazakhstan

BANGALORE



Mr. Suresh Vaswani
Honorary Consul of Luxembourg



Mr. Sanjay Soni
Honorary Consul of Kingdom of Bahrain



Mr. Raghu C Rajappa
Honorary Consul of Poland



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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

Since the day we celebrated our Consular Day – New Year i.e. on 6th March, 2020 the situation in the country because of Covid – 19 became very difficult. Lockdowns were imposed and no activities were allowed for nearly two and a half months. However, after the lockdown in 2020 was over HCCD- India conducted two Board meetings (virtually), one on 7th July, 2020 and the other on 16th December, 2020. Very important matters were discussed including awarding of “Vivek Burman (Dabur) Peace Prize” and other trophies. The preparation for selecting NGO who may be awarded “Vivek Burman (Dabur) Peace Prize” was entrusted to the President who in his wisdom constituted a 7 members committee which included Sr. Vice President (Mumbai), Vice Presidents (Bangaluru, Chennai, Delhi), Secretary General and

Treasurer. The President would act as Chairman of the Committee. The preparations for the Consular Day and awarding of medals etc. started and finally the date of the event was fixed as 31st March, 2021. In the meantime, awardees were selected in consultation with the members of the selection committee.

You all will be pleased to learn that on this occasion the new edition of the who's who was also launched. Unfortunately, copies could not be sent to all the Hon'ble members because since mid April, 2021 there is a lockdown in Delhi and all offices are closed. Hopefully, immediately after the lockdown is lifted the copies will be dispatched.

SECRETARY GENERAL'S MESSAGE



Purushottam Bhaggeria
Hony. Consul of Maldives
Secretary General, HCCD- India
Director, World Federation of
Consuls (FICA)

In addition to the activities of HCCD – India, I as Director on the Board of World Federation of Consuls (FICAC) attended 3 virtual Board meetings during the last one year. As already informed about the postponement of the World Congress of the World Federation of Consuls from 2021 to 2022. As and when the final dates will be decided each one of you will be informed accordingly. The activities of HCCD – India has been explained by our Hon'ble President therefore, I need not elaborate on that any further. Hopefully, we will fix up a Board meeting of HCCD – India (virtually) immediately after the situation becomes normal.

Because of the situation in Delhi copies of the who's who could not be sent to our Hon'ble members yet. We are making all arrangements to send the copies of who's who shortly.



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MY ENCOUNTER WITH COVID – 19

By K. L. Ganju,

I was one person in my family who was very particular in observing all the protocols of Covid – 19. I was very particular taking precautions viz-a-viz putting on mask, maintaining distance, etc. etc. But unfortunately, on 19th April, 2021 I felt temperature and sore throat which I took lightly. However, the next day the problem increased and I discussed my problem with my wife Dr. (Mrs.) G. K. Ganju. She could smell something wrong and started the medication on 21st without waiting for the result of RT-PCR test. On 24th I was diagnosed as Covid – 19 positive but because of the early medication things did not deteriorate. I was being looked after by the doctors in the family including my sister, my brother-in-law and others. They were also consulting the specialist doctors and were acting accordingly. My medication continued for almost 15 days. However, may I inform you all that there were critical moments when things were getting worst, oxygen level was dropping but was maintained by oxygen concentrator and physical exercises. I was not shifted to hospital as my bedroom was converted into hospital bed. All necessary medications were provided. My daughters and other family members kept my moral high so that I don't lose hope. In the process my wife also contracted with Covid – 19.

After the experience, I can very firmly say that it was only with the blessings of the Almighty and good wishes of my relatives and friends from all around the world, I could fight this deadly disease. Today I am clinically 98% ok but physically 85% ok. With your blessings I hope to be fit and fine in next two weeks. My wife has also recovered with the grace of God.

Lessons Learnt:

This pandemic is going to be there for some more time therefore it is the duty of each one of us to adhere to the Covid protocols sincerely. Whenever it is necessary to go out you must double mask, avoid large gathering and avoid parties etc. etc. This is the need of the hour therefore you must protect yourself and others from this disease. More importantly it is necessary to get vaccinated at the earliest. Vaccination is very necessary to be safe.

In the end I place on record my sincere gratitude to my wife, my sister, my two daughters and others who managed my illness. I also thank all my friends from all around the world who gave me courage to keep my morals high to get out of this problem. It seems that God requires me to be on this planet for some time. God is Great.

God bless you all,
Take care
Be safe



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AROUND THE NATION

CHENNAI

Mr. Krishna N. Pimple was commissioned as the Honorary Consul of the United Republic of Tanzania in Chennai with the Consular Jurisdiction of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala.

Minister of Industries, Tamil Nadu, Thiru M. C. Sampath graced the occasion as the Chief Guest The Consular General of the United States of America H. E. Ms. Judith Ravil.



Honorary Consuls of various nations, Dr Bernard Kibesse. Dy Governor, Bank of Tanzania, CII, IACC attended the function of the Tanzanian Consulate in Chennai. Mr. Krishna N. Pimple is the Founder Chairman of CISB Group.





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AROUND THE NATION

BENGALURU

Welcoming H.E Mohammed Ahamed Awaleh,
Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and
Water Resources, Republic of Djibouti



Tea Meeting with Ambassador Parthasarthy -
Former Ambassador of India to South Korea





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Government of Karnataka invited all Honorary Consuls for a meeting to discuss opportunities of Investment in Karnataka.





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PARAGUAY NATIONAL DAY



The 210th Independence Day of Paraguay was celebrated on 14th May and here is what the Honorary Consuls of Paraguay in India had to say.



**Meiyappan
Balasubramanian,**
*Honorary Consul of Paraguay
in Chennai*

I am glad to represent the Paraguay consulate in Chennai during the 210th Independence Day today. I am glad to state that during the pandemic time our ambassador personally flew to Hyderabad to oversee that the shipment of over one lakh doses of Covaxin donated by the Indian government reach Paraguay safely.

Paraguay is the best place to establish business because of its political stability, kind people and geographical location. It is an agricultural platform for the world. It has abundant natural resources with 95% of the territory suitable for food production. And it has a young, efficient, motivated cost competitive workforce with 70% of its population under the age of 35.

Art, culture and entertainment are given importance. It is a leader in production of Stevia, soya bean, wheat and corn. And it's the largest exporter of power and meat. India, after its Vice President's visit to Paraguay, is planning to open an embassy in Asuncion to mark six decades of ties between the country and Paraguay.

GROWTH-RICHNESS-OPPORTUNITY is the success mantra of Paraguay.



Vandana Kanoria,
*Honorary Consul of Paraguay
in Mumbai*

This year is Paraguay's 210th Independence Day. A day of pride, of reflecting on the past, and looking forward to a bright and prosperous future. With the efforts of His Excellency Ambassador Fleming Duarte, the relations between India and Paraguay are going from strength to strength. The medical assistance provided by India during the pandemic, the deepening of bilateral relations in areas of mutual interest, the plans to open a new resident Embassy in Asunción, all go a long way in strengthening the decades long association between the two countries. The Embassy and Honorary Consulates will continue to work to grow and enhance cooperation between the two countries in areas of trade and commerce, culture and education. The world and our countries are going through very tragic times. But with hope, determination and cooperation we will emerge stronger and more committed to growth and development of all.



Yash Poddar,
*Honorary Consul of Paraguay
in Kolkata*

On the momentous occasion of Paraguay's 210th Independence Day today, I take great pleasure to note that India is planning to open a new resident Embassy in Asunción. It is with deep pride that I assert the goodwill between the two states, following the timely medical assistance sent by India, which has demonstrated its commitment in strengthening its six-decade-long relationship with Paraguay. The Embassy and its stakeholders in India will continue to work to further improve bilateral relations in all areas of mutual interest between the two partner countries. Through such initiatives taken together, we are certain that both nations will emerge stronger from this global pandemic.



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HCCD-INDIA CONSULAR DAY

The Consular day was celebrated on 31st March 2021.

The Deputy Chief Minister of Govt. of NCT of Delhi was invited as Chief Guest.



Apart from this, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, High Commissioners, Ambassadors, Hony. Consuls, Govt. of India officials and who's who of Delhi were invited. The event was covered by the media including HT city – Hindustan Times. The awardees were as follows:



Vivek Burman (Dabur) Peace Prize

Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation, headed by **Mr. Kailash Satyarthi**, Nobel Peace Laureate.



Sun Foundation, headed by **Hon'ble Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney**, Padma Shri, Honorary Consul General of South Africa.



Bhai Mohan Singh Trophy

Hon'ble Mr. Ashish Saraf, Hony. Consul of Bahamas and Treasurer HCCD – India.



Consul of the Year Trophy

Hon'ble Ms. Surbhi Sharma, Hony. Consul of Kingdom of Spain in Bengaluru and Director of HCCD – India, Editor: The Consular Chronicles.





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In addition to the above one Medal of Honour was awarded to H.E. Mr. Upendra Tripathi, IAS (Retd.) who had retired as Director General of International Solar Alliance. This treaty based organisation was established and this is the first international organisation which is headquartered in India. He was the founding Director General of this prestigious organisation which played a crucial role in promoting solar energy all around the world under his leadership. He has also been designated as Hony. Director General (Emeritus) by the International Solar Alliance.





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NATION IN FOCUS - COLOMBIA



Mr. Arif Vazirally
Honorary Consul of Colombia

Colombia is a country with almost 51 million inhabitants, and it is a multi-ethnic and cultural country, home to 115 indigenous peoples, Afro-descendant communities, and gypsy. The official language is Spanish, but it also has 68 native languages.

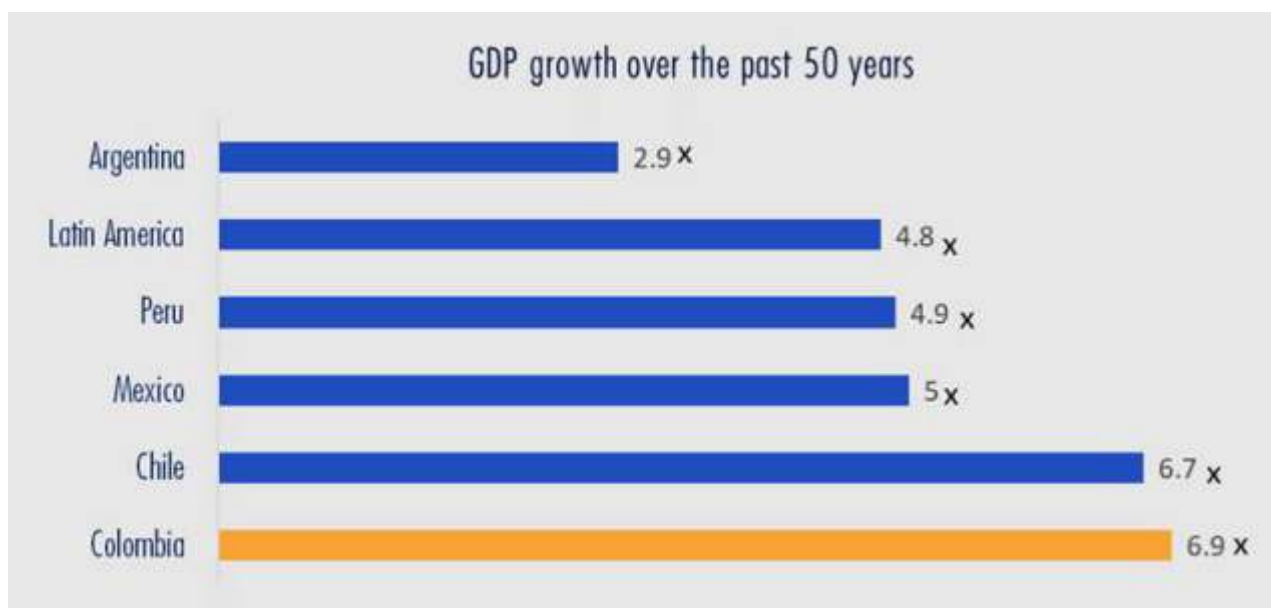
Colombia is also one of the most biodiverse countries in the world. Colombia is the first in species of palms, orchids, birds, amphibians, biodiversity

per square kilometre, production of coffee and bamboo in America. The country is the largest exporter of Arabica coffee in Latin America.

It is estimated that Colombia is the country with the most biodiversity per square kilometre. Colombia is the only country in South America, and one of the 21 countries in the world, that has access to two oceans and has one of the greatest river resources in Latin America and the Caribbean. Colombia has 91 types of ecosystems, the National System of Protected Areas is made up of 1,343 areas, equivalent to 15.2% of the national territory.



Prior to the pandemic, Colombia already stood out for its sustained economic growth. Over the past 50 years Colombia has increased its GDP 6.9 times.



Colombian economy is projected to grow 4.6% - 4.9% in 2021 according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, respectively. According to the IMF, in 2021 the inflation rate will be 2.4%.



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Tourism

In 2020, Colombia received almost 1.4 million of visitors, despite the pandemic restrictions. Colombia is a topographically diverse country and just like its geography, its people are varied and charming. Colombians will always greet you with a smile on their face, are more than willing to help out anyone who might need it and will no doubt share with you that joy they carry within them, making you feel right at home in the most welcoming place on Earth.



You can explore much more of the country through the webpage <https://welcoming-country.colombia.co/en/foreign>

Reasons to invest in Colombia

Colombia has proven record of sound macroeconomic policies. Colombia has a portfolio of 17 free trade agreements, 11 double taxation agreements, 18 agreements on reciprocal promotion and protection of investment, that means that Colombia has access to 60 countries and more than 1.5 billion consumers through its network of trade agreements.



- Colombia has a strategic location in the centre of the Americas, which provide unique opportunities for investment and market access.
- Colombia's vibrant economy and resilient private sector offer many choices to stablish strategic alliances.
- Colombia has reduced administrative obstacles for investment and created incentives as mega investments, non-conventional sources of Energy-energy efficiency, incentives for research, technological development and innovation, among others.

FOREIGN POLICY

The foreign policy of the Government of President Iván Duque Márquez seeks to adapt to the needs of Colombia and to global challenges, a nation in constant change, a world in continuous dynamism. Colombia seeks to be a cultural, educational and tourist reference, as well as in terms of sustainability, entrepreneurship, science, technology and innovation.





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The Political Consultation Mechanism was established in 1995, the last meeting being in March 2017 in New Delhi. The IX Meeting of Bilateral Political Consultations took place on May 7, 2021, under virtual modality.

The priority for Colombia is to deepen the rapprochement between our countries and enjoy greater interlocution at the commercial, political, and cultural level, promoting cooperation and the exchange of good practices in the face of common challenges.

Despite the geographical distance, Colombia and India share common challenges, for which India has found affordable, effective, and efficient solutions. Both Governments are working tighter with a view to share good in various areas, such as the exploration and use of space for peaceful purposes, agriculture, the pharmaceutical sector, scientific dissemination, and telemedicine, among others.

In November 2018, the Indian Space Development Organization (ISRO) successfully launched the Colombian Air Force satellite FACSAT 1.

On April 15, 2020, the first meeting was held between the Ministry of Science and Technology of Colombia and the Department of Science and Technology of India, with a view to carrying out joint activities on biotechnology, climate change and renewable energies.

Within the framework of the India Technical and Economic Cooperation Program (ITEC), the Government of India offers short courses for Colombians in various areas. For example, this initiative has sponsored the training of rural women in solar energy generation and sustainable practices. Between 2018-2020, the Government of India has delivered, with the collaboration of Colombia's ICETEX, 78 scholarships.





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As main axes of foreign policy:

- Lead a new border policy that encourages the comprehensive and differentiated development of the Colombian border regions. A statute was created temporary protection for Venezuelan migrants (ETPV) that will allow to identify the population migrant and grant temporary protection permits, which will be valid for 10 years. This strategy turns out to be a pioneering act in the way of managing migration during the current situation.
- Responsible and sustainable participation in international scenarios in defence of international security and stability and favouring their commitment to representative democracy and the rule of law.
- Lead a national strategy that allows consolidating the supply and demand for international cooperation based on foreign policy objectives and the National Development Plan. As an achievement, stands out the development of a commercial agenda with Asia countries in investment promotion, knowledge transfer and technology.
- Strengthening and promotion of national interests through diversified bilateral relations both in geographical and thematic issues.



India – Colombia relationship

India and Colombia established diplomatic relations on January 19, 1959, turning 62 in 2021. Colombia opened its Embassy in New Delhi in 1972 and the Republic of India in the city of Bogotá in 1973.

Both nations enjoy a growing and friendly bilateral relationship based on shared democratic values and goals and significant coincidences at the multilateral level.





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NEWS FROM FICAC WORLD FEDERATION OF HONORARY CONSULS

Activities during the period 10/2020 - 04/2021

During this unfortunate pandemic period, FICAC is doing its best to stay in touch with all FICAC Members through direct email contacts and thanks to virtual events.

The Secretariat General and the Office of the President are taking care of the follow-up of the questions raised by members, when the FICAC Central and Regional Committees are remaining active.

Virtual Events

Zoom Meetings of the FICAC Board of Directors



Zoom Meeting with the FICAC Committees



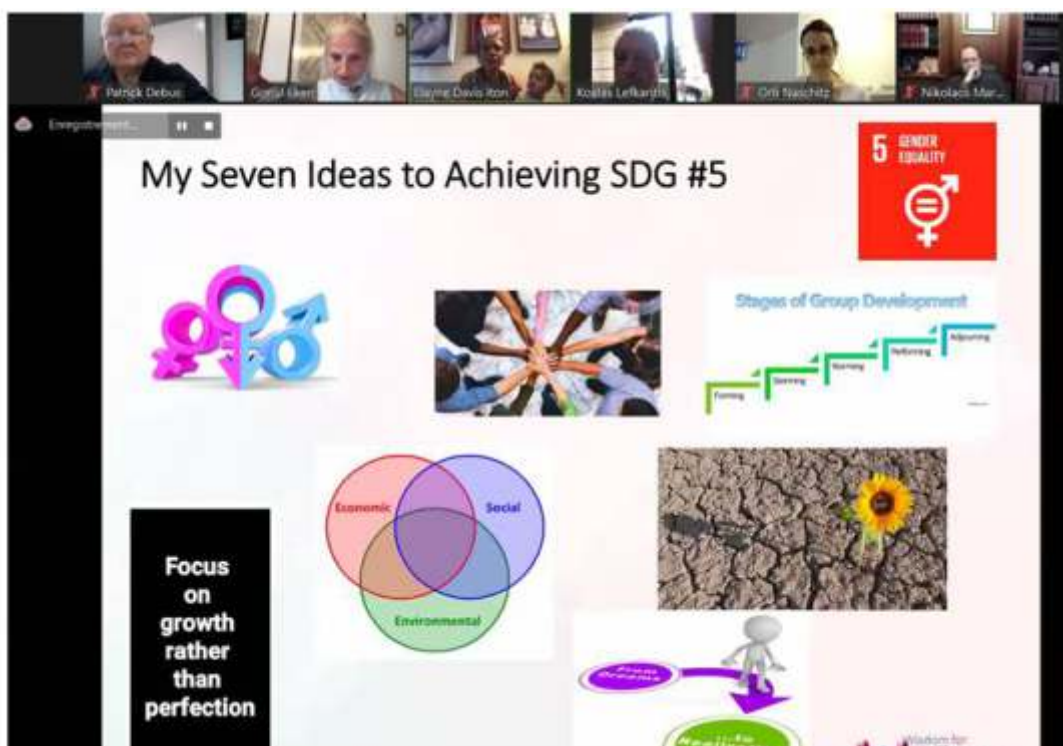


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Zoom Meeting with the Advisors to the President of FICAC



Zoom meeting of the FICAC Women In Diplomacy Committee:
a project dedicated to gender equality in diplomacy is in progress





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1st FICAC Summit with H.E. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović,
Former-President of the Republic of Croatia

<https://mailchi.mp/ficacworld/ficac-2021-summit-20210422-8470646?e=6d5d9f7efc>

H.E. Kolinda Grabar Kitarović, the first female President of the Republic of Croatia, the first Croatian female Minister of Foreign Relations and European Integration, the first Croatian female Ambassador to the USA, the NATO Deputy Secretary & the highly ranked woman at the NATO hierarchy, shared her experiences on "The role of women in Diplomacy and in high responsibility positions" with the World Federation of Consuls (FICAC) and the Istanbul Consular Corps (ICC) under the presidency of Honorable Aykut Eken (FICAC) and Dr Ivana Zerec, Croatian CG in Istanbul and the ICC President 🇹🇷🇷🇪
#womenleaders #diversity



A FICAC YouTube Chain has been launched with several videos



Various

- The FICAC Consular and Privileges Protection Committee has circulated a Survey: conclusions will be shared with all FICAC Members in due course.
- The FICAC Legal Committee has issued a memo regarding "Politically Exposed Person" issue, a concern raised by several consular associations.



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Royal Heritage of India - Udaipur

Discovering its Drive for Excellence

As the Himalayan mountains sweeping across Asia define India, it is the sprawling spread of the state of Rajasthan which defines Incredible India. The Himalayan ranges are ancient, with towering peaks and sublime temple-towns; similarly in Rajasthan, the oldest temples, forts and palaces, deserts and forests, cities and towns await visitors. One such treasure-house is the city of Udaipur, in the region of Mewar, a heritage-city which is barely 450-years old. The Aravalli hills surrounding the famous lakes of Udaipur are millions of years old in comparison. Visitors who throng to the city are mesmerized by the picturesque City Palace built along Lake Pichola by the Maharanas of Mewar who left Chittorgarh and built this 'city of peace', named Udaipur after its founder Maharana Udai Singh II. The City Palace is distinguished by its turrets and towers, crescent-shaped palaces overlooking the scenic lake, on one side, and the city of Udaipur on the other. Some have said Udaipur is the Venice of the East; others have been quick to remark 'Venice is the Udaipur of the West'!

The City Palace Museum of Udaipur is the heart of the city. Today the Museum is spread over the Mardana Mahal (Palace for the Royal Men) and the Zenana Mahal (Palace for the Royal Ladies) with the iconic palace grounds, the Manek Chowk, gracing the entry to the Museum. The Museum houses some of the finest galleries: the world's first silver museum at Amar Mahal titled 'Splendour of Silver: Reflecting the finest of Silversmithy'; 'Symphony of Mewar: A Royal Collection of Musical Instruments' and 'The Mewar Regalia' dedicated to Textiles and Costumes. These permanent galleries are housed in The Zenana Mahal of The City Palace Museum where visitors are able to grasp the width and depth of the rich history of Mewar through these priceless, unique artefacts.



The Manek Chowk



The sculpture gallery is titled 'Divine Gesture: The Magnificence of Mewar Spirituality'; it is an extraordinary collection of sculptures which have been exhibited and detailed for the visitors. In fact the sculptures are fascinating and unique, having been exhibited at prestigious exhibitions in Paris a few years ago. The Museum's collection of rare photographs and paintings are the rated among the finest collections not just in Asia but across the world. The Maharana of Mewar Charitable Foundation manages the Museum, ensuring that its modernization and revitalization are second to none. The Foundation takes pride in sharing its 'living heritage' with both global and Indian audiences.

Mr Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar, the young and dynamic Trustee of the Foundation is justifiably proud of its achievements. He said, "Yes, it is a delight to be sharing these treasures with visitors. Udaipur has today come to represent excellence: that is message I would like to give. It is not just in managing museums and collections, but in education, performing arts, fine arts and sports. We are continuing to contribute in very many ways to the development of our youth and our nation. There is the perceptible drive for excellence which makes us apart."

Mr Lakshyaraj should know best: he has been closely associated with the management of Maharana Mewar Public School, established by his illustrious grandfather His late Highness Maharana Bhagwat Singh. Today the School is not just one of the best in the city but is laying equal emphasis on art, music and dance, along with academics, to create generations of happy young scholars. Mr Lakshyaraj has been a cricket administrator with the Rajasthan Cricket Association for several years; for young sportspersons, he is an approachable patron willing to go that extra mile to see them get the best-in-class training and exposure at the global level. He loves to inspire the youth around him to "grow through life, and not just go through it."



Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar

Since 2019, Mr Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar has been bestowed with four Guinness World Records: In January 2021, for 'donation of most personal hygiene products in one hour'; In January 2020 for the unique "Go Green" initiative called "Vriksh Hi Jeevan Abhiyaan" when thousands of school students, Indian Army personnel and citizens participated and 4035 saplings were potted in less than 60 seconds; In 2019 for collecting over 20 tonne of stationery items for students within 24 hours; In 2018-19 for the global public campaign called 'Vastradaan' when 3,29,250 clothes were collected for the underprivileged. He said, "I dedicate the 4th Guinness World Record to my fellow citizens in Udaipur who have shown remarkable



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courage in the face of adversity through the pandemic. Let's stay safe and healthy." As one of the Covid warriors, Mr Lakshyaraj was felicitated by H.E the Governor of Maharashtra at the Raj Bhawan in Mumbai in November 2020; in January 2021, H.E the Governor of Rajasthan felicitated Mr Lakshyaraj for the philanthropic works undertaken and the four Guinness World Records bestowed.

At an international convention of the CII-Family Business Network India Chapter in Goa in October 2013, the 'next generation' delegates were taken by surprise as their speaker, the dapper Mr Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar, made a passionate plea to "think out of the box, and in fact, break the box itself!" With the NextGen applause ringing in his ears, he also made it clear, "I will discharge all my familial and social responsibilities, just as my illustrious forefathers - the Maharanas of Mewar - have been doing over the last 1500 years, but I don't want to be caught in pre-conceived categories." He is a trained hospitality professional, with a degree under his belt from Blue Mountains Hospitality School. He is utilizing every opportunity to redefine luxury in the environs of the HRH Group of Hotels, Udaipur.

"We are India's single largest chain of heritage palace-hotels under private ownership, thanks to the vision and commitment of my grandfather - His late Highness Maharana Bhagwat Singh Mewar - and my father, Shriji Arvind Singh Mewar. When we renovated Jagmandir Island Palace into Asia's most exclusive heritage venue, we ensured that we did not lose its soul," he said. Luxury lies not just in objects d'art, Belgian mirrors, rare paintings and period furniture, it lies in traditions and protocols; it lies in warmth and a genuine human touch. "I want our generation to experience luxury in the Indian context and discover excellence which is the 'soul' of luxury," said Mr Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar, as the sun left behind a celebratory blaze of unbelievable colours in the Udaipur sky. Indeed, an excellent setting.



Exterior, Jagmandir Island Palace



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SPECIAL FEATURE - RESPONSIBLE TOURISM IN MOROCCO



H. E. Mr. Mohamed Maliki,
Ambassador of
His Majesty the King of
Morocco to the Republic of India

In 2019, the Kingdom of Morocco was on the top list of visited African countries by receiving more than 12.5 million tourists out of a total of around 37 million exploring Africa that year. Therefore, it has become a national objective for Morocco to develop ecological and responsible tourism in a sustainable way especially that the country aims to raise to the top 20 of the world's leading tourist destinations in the next few years.

The Kingdom enjoys a multitude of varied landscapes, ranging from beaches, mountains, desert to major urban centres. It is a country mesmerizingly combines this diversity with a real ecological responsibility, making it among the leading countries in the world in terms of sustainable tourism.

Strongly believing in responsible tourism, Morocco has shown determination to promote a tourism "respectful of Man and environment"; a tourism which values cultural heritage, identity and intangible nature of the different regions of this North African Kingdom; a tourism that combines wealth, heritage and values.

Indeed, Morocco, this Nation of more than twelve centuries tangible and intangible cultural heritage, nation combine sustainability, authenticity, luxury and comfort in welcoming each tourist. It also develops environment friendly regional poles that are based on the enhancement of cultural heritage, natural spaces, sports activities and well-being.





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Many Moroccan sustainable tourism initiatives have been recognised internationally and rewarded by the Government for their environmental responsibility. To support this dynamic, Morocco has initiated “labels” of encouragement such as the "Green Key" label awarded to hotels and the “Blue Flag” awarded to clean and environment friendly beaches.

All these initiatives have enabled Morocco to be recognised as a champion leader at the international level in terms of environmental responsibility. Indeed, since its ratification of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1997, Morocco was the first African country to host in 2001 the 7th Conference of the Parties Summit in Marrakech (COP- 7). Furthermore, Morocco was given the honour for the 2nd time to host the COP-22, in 2016.

In the same vein, Morocco, as a responsible country enjoying the trust of the international community, has been elected, with a large and comfortable majority, to host the 24th session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in October 2021 in Marrakech. It will be a great occasion for the Kingdom to learn from / share experiences while being given a good platform to promote further a responsible, sustainable and environment friendly tourism.





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SPECIAL GUEST - Bright Prospects for Vietnam-India Bonds



H. E. Mr. Pham Sanh Chau
Ambassador of Vietnam
to India

Interactions between Vietnam and Karnataka are expected to expand quickly in coming years. In April 2021, the Government of Vietnam appointed Mr Nama Subbiah Setty Srinivasa Murthy as an Honorary Consul of Vietnam in Bengaluru. This introduction of the post gives way to greater exchange between Vietnam and Karnataka, one of most dynamic states in India.

Three sectors will benefit the development. First, information technology is the most promising area where the silicon valley of India has advantages and the digital needs in Vietnam are growing. Second, pharmaceutical industry in Karnataka will enjoy greater inroad into the Vietnamese market. Third, tourism will thrive and attractions in Vietnam will become more popular tourist destinations for many Indians. Vietnam's hospitality industry is growing fast.

Generally, Vietnam is reaching out to Indian localities to thicken the business ties. Other honorary consul candidates are also proposed in the Kolkata, West Bengal, and Chandigarh, the capital of Punjab and Haryana. It is strongly believed that these appointments will serve as a catalyst for stronger economic and cultural exchanges between the provinces of the two countries.

These engagements are underpinned by the booming relations between Vietnam and India in the decades to come. Two countries are standing at the center of restructuring of the global supply chains. With the population of 1.3 billion people, India has all potentials to be a world manufacturer which can prosper on the economy of scale. Vietnam has performed well recently due to the introduction of a range of drastic reforms which have made it more competitive in the global markets.

The post-pandemic period will engineer greater interests on both sides to deepening their relations. The resumption of direct flights will usher in new chapter for the interactions with greater flow of travelers and stronger exchange of goods and services. More and more Vietnamese enterprises are exploring the possibilities to invest in India to tap in its huge human resources.

The convergence of strategic and substantive interests has been built upon strong historical and culture bonds, which lays a solid foundation for long-term partnership. The trace of Indian civilization in Vietnam dates back 2000 years with the rise of the ancient Champa Kingdom, which dominated the central part of Vietnam for almost nine centuries.

The archeologists found out that the Hinduism-influenced Cham people were seafarers who had not only traverse across the maritime domain to the east of Vietnam, but also dominated the trade in spices and silk between China, India, Indonesia, and Persia.

Such a relationship was disrupted by the arrival of Western colonialism and rediscovered in the modern time with the bonds between two countries' founding leaders, Ho Chi Minh and Jawaharlal Nehru. Ho Chi Minh made a visit to India in February 1958 where he was welcomed by Jawaharlal Nehru as "a great revolutionary and an almost legendary hero".

Fast forward, the two countries established a strategic partnership in 2006 and upgraded it the comprehensive strategic partnership in 2016. Cooperation has been expanded in the fields of defense and security, politics and diplomacy, economy trade and investment, energy and development, culture, tourism, and people-to-people exchange.

In 2021, the two countries will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. True friends are there in Vietnam-India ties. Late Prime Minister of Vietnam Pham Van Dong regarded Indo-Vietnam relations as the blue sky without a single cloud. Vietnam supports the greater role of India in regional affairs for the sake of regional peace, stability, and prosperity. It is widely believed in Vietnam that India will serve as an important pillar of the regional security architecture.

It is time for us to capitalize on excellent political relations between India and Vietnam to foster practical cooperation and bring up opportunities for entrepreneurs in two countries to meet up and pair up. After all, business must start locally, and I do hope that Karnataka will become one of the most important gateways for trade and investment flow between Vietnam and India.



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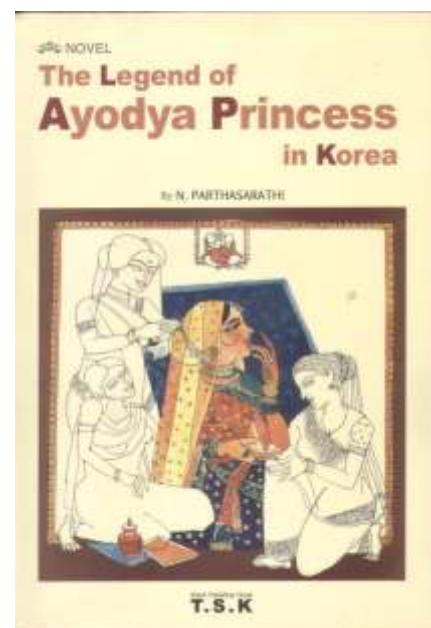
Amb. N. Parthasarathi,
B.E (Mech), MBA(Marketing)
Indian Foreign Service (Retd)

Promoting Trust and creating win-win opportunities – Most important responsibilities

It is always a privilege to serve as an Ambassador or as a Diplomat/Consular officer in any Country. Among the numerous priorities and responsibilities that an ambassador/diplomat has, an important objective is obviously to promote friendly relations between his own country and the country of his posting. It is also an essential responsibility of the Honorary Consul to promote friendly relations between his motherland and the country he represents.

An enterprising Ambassador/Consular officer can play a crucial role in elevating the quality of such relations, to a different level, to ensure far-reaching impact on bilateral relations. This may not happen by discharging their normal responsibilities that include protecting and promoting the country's national interests, bilateral political and economic cooperation, trade and investment promotion, extending consular facilities, cultural interaction and press & media liaison. He/she needs to keep looking for any special opportunity during the tenure to create a win-win situation for both countries and promote trust and goodwill amongst the people to greater heights. Following is a narration of one such opportunity that was exploited:

During October 2004, H.E Roh Moo-hyun, President of the Republic of Korea paid a State visit to India and President Dr. APJ Kalam hosted a banquet in his honour. During the interactions, I heard President Roh mentioning that Indians and Koreans are cousins because two thousand years ago, India had given her daughter in marriage to a Korean King. As we had never heard of such a story in India, my curiosity was aroused. Although, I started looking for evidence, I had to get busy with various other pressing issues in the Ministry. A few months later, I was appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Korea. Was it just a coincidence? That made me start researching in to the ancient links between India and Korea. Prior to leaving for Seoul, when I visited the Hyundai factory in Perumbudur, near Chennai and interacted with Korean families, I was surprised to observe that their children also addressed their parents "Appa" and "Amma" as we do in South India. I learnt there were more than five hundred words that were common between Tamil and Korean. This inspired me to explore the links further.



Samguk Yusa, an ancient Korean chronicle written in the 13th Century is a collection of histories, anecdotes and memorabilia covering Korea's three Kingdoms--Silla, Paekche and Koguryo. According to a short reference in this chronicle, in 48 AD, Princess Huh Hwang –ok, a princess from Ayuthia travelled to Korea by ship to fulfill the dream of her parents and married King Kim Suro, who had descended from heaven and started the Karak Dynasty.



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Even today, millions of Koreans believe that they are descendents of Queen Huh and King Kim Suro. Such clans include the Gimhae Kims, Huhs and the Incheon Lee clans. Soon after, I assumed my responsibilities as the Ambassador in Seoul, I got an invitation from the Mayor of Gimhae requesting me to participate in the festivities to commemorate the holy union of Queen Huh Hwang-ok with Kim Suro. On arrival, myself and my wife were dressed up as the King and the Queen and we had a great time enjoying the festivities.

However, to our dismay, I found out that although many were aware of the legend of a princess Huh Hwang-ok coming from Ayuthia and contributing to the prosperity of the Gaya kingdom, they had no details as to where Ayuthia was? They had no information on the importance of Ayodhya in India nor were they aware of any details about her family from India.

My voyage of discovery, helped in identifying various pieces of puzzle that could reinforce the legend. It was a daunting task but each time a new piece of evidence was located, it only inspired me to look for more. More importantly, I had to find a graceful and suitable Indian name "Sri Ratna/Suri Ratna" for the princess and reconstruct her Royal family befitting her divine life. Description of her ancient Gurukula system of education was equally important as a background to her sagacity and character. With the description of how she and the King Kim Suro fell in love without even seeing each other, the way she could safely travel to Korea in a ship guided by a Crane and turtles and many other aspects of her life helped the legend to take shape that one can believe.

President APJ Kalam, who paid a State visit to the Republic of Korea in February 2006, was aware of my efforts to write the novel and in his banquet speech alluded to it by saying "Excellency, the chronicle of friendly contacts between India and Korea, two old civilisations of Asia, date back to ancient times. Our interactions begin with the arrival of the princess of Ayodhya to Korea in the first century AD". He continued to encourage me to complete the novel and publish it early, urging that it will significantly transform our relationship with Korea to one of trust and close friendship.

I did complete the novel and it was first published as "Silk Empress" in Korean language and then as "The Legend Of Ayodhya Princess in Korea" in English. The National Book Trust of India commissioned an artist and published it as a children's book "Sri Ratna- Kim Suro".

The "Silk Empress" contributed to building greater bilateral trust and friendship that helped significant increase in trade and investment. India began the work of tracing its "shared heritage" with Korea using the legendary Queen Suriratna, as a pivot. During Prime Minister Narendra

Modi's visit to Seoul in May, 2015, it was announced that India and Korea will strengthen their historic connection by enhancing linkages of Korean people with Ayodhya. A decision was also taken to upgrade the monument for Queen Suriratna, in Ayodhya as a joint project between the two countries. The first lady of Korea Kim Jung-sook visited Ayodhya in India in November 2018 to lay the foundation for a memorial to commemorate the legendary princess from Ayodhya. Commemorative postage stamps on Princess Suriratna (Queen Huh Hwang-ok) were issued by India in 2019.





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The legend of Ayodhya princess continues to play an important role in India's relationship with the Republic of Korea.

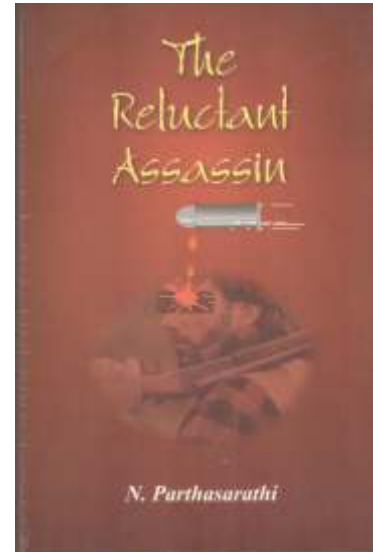
India's Ambassador to S. Korea (2005 and 2008), N. Parthasarathi, first heard the story when President Roh Moo-hyun visited India in 2004. This led to extensive research and a voyage of discovery, which he distilled into the novel Silk Empress/ The Legend of Ayodhya Princess in Korea."

That led to my conceptualising a grand memorial in Ayodhya and sanctioning almost Rs 5 crore [50 million] for it in my capacity as the Secretary of India's Ministry of Tourism.

Parvez Dewan, Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India.

http://indpaedia.com/ind/index.php/The_Karak_clan_of_Queen_Hwang-ok/_Suri_Ratna

Ambassador N. Parthasarathi had earlier utilized the opportunity of publishing his novel "The Reluctant Assassin" set in Pakistan after his tenure there. He has now completed his latest novel "Suspended Lives" set in the United States of America.



Amb. N Parthasarathi is a veteran diplomat with more than three decades of service in the Indian Foreign service. From September 2005 to September 2008, he served as Ambassador of India to the Republic of South Korea.

Mr. Parthasarathi joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1981 and has served as a diplomat in countries throughout the world including in Pakistan, Belgium and United Kingdom, Syria and many counties in Africa. He retired from the Foreign Service at the end of October 2014 and has moved back to Bangalore, his home town. Currently he is the CEO of the Karnataka State Cricket Association. Earlier, after his retirement from the Foreign Service, he served as the Secretary General / CEO of the Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce & Industry, Bengaluru. He continues to remain busy with mentoring many start-ups and advising organizations/Universities on many issues of business interest. He writes regularly on International relations in Indian print media and participates in discussions on TV channels. He has participated in many international conferences on geo-strategic security and defense issues.

Mr. Parthasarathi graduated as a Mechanical Engineer in 1974 from Mysore University and served as an Executive Engineer with a major PSU in Bangalore till 1980. During this period, he also earned an MBA degree (International Marketing) and a Post Graduate Diploma (Industrial Management) from Bangalore University in India.

Mr. Parthasarathi's hobbies include writing, spirituality, mentoring youth, golf and bridge. He has published two books: (i) 'The Reluctant Assassin', a fictional thriller, published in Delhi, in January 2005; (ii) "The Legend of Ayodhya Princess in Korea", a fictional novel linking the ancient history of India and Korea. The latter was translated in the Korean language as 'Bi Dan Hwang Hoo' (Silk Empress) and published in Seoul in June 2007 and later The National book Trust of India published a children's book "Sriratna-Kim Suro" based on this novel. He has just completed his latest novel "Suspended Lives".





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THE WORLD IS ONE

The second wave of COVID 19 raged across India with devastating results. Many allies and friendly nations stepped up to support. The world reached out and the Images tell the story.



Oxygen Concentrators from Malta



Medical equipment from Egypt



Oxygen Concentrators from Poland



Oxygen Concentrators from Canada



Medicines from UAE



Oxygen Concentrators & Cylinders from Spain



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Portugal and EU stand with India in the Battle with COVID



Medical equipment donated by Grand Duchy of Luxembourg



Emergency medical supplies from Kuwait



Medical oxygen plant donated by France



Oxygen Concentrators from Korea



Oxygen Concentrators from UK



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02 Generators & Concentrators From Israel



Oxygen Concentrators & Cylinders from Thailand



Oxygen Concentrators from Ireland



Oxygen production plant from Italy



From Korean People



Oxygen Concentrators from Czech Republic



STAY SAFE - STAY WELL