



Indian Diaspora Council

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Shared heritage, aspirations and interests

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Congratulations to Chandrikapersad Santokhi as Suriname's New President

The **Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC)** joins with its global membership and affiliates in congratulating **Chandrikapersad Santokhi** who was elected Suriname's new President. "Chan" Santokhi is a Surinamese politician and former chief of police. After winning the 2020 elections, Santokhi was the sole nomination for President of Suriname. On 13 July, Santokhi was elected President by acclamation in an uncontested election. He was inaugurated on 16 July, 2020, along with Ronnie Brunswijk as Vice President.



Chan" Santokhi, President and Ronnie Brunswijk, Vice President



Map of Suriname

“South American country Suriname brought an end to dictatorial rule by electing a new President Chan Santokhi, an Indian-origin former police chief, who won a landslide victory in the election that took place in May this year”, the *New York Times* reported.

The 61-year old Santoki is from the Progressive Reform Party which won 20 of the 51 seats in the National Assembly, enough to form a coalition government with the General Liberation and Development Party, which is led by Ronnie Brunswijk, who will serve as vice president, *BBC* reported. According to the *New York Times* report, Suriname, a former Dutch colony, is on the brink of bankruptcy and major economic crisis during Bouterse's rule. Suriname's relations with the Netherlands, its former colonial ruler and its primary trade partner, worsened under Bouterse's rule.

At his inauguration, President Santokhi, remarked that, “*While the situation was very difficult, we are going to solve the crisis. I have no doubt about that. I believe in the resilience of our people. I believe in the willingness to make sacrifices. We will solve it if we work together. But as difficult as it will be, we are going to rebuild the country, because this is our Suriname*”.

Suriname gained its independence from The Netherlands in 1975. The population is approx. 575,000 with Dutch as the official language and Hindi taught in schools. Various distinguishable ethnic groups include: 27.4% Persons of Indian origin (Hindustanis); 21.7% Maroon-Bushinengue; 15.7% Creole-Mulatto; 13.7% Javanese; 13.4% Other Mixed; 3.8% Indigenous Amerindian; 1.5% Chinese; 1% Europeans; 1.8% Others.

IDC is pleased to acknowledge that Santokhi's election as President of Suriname is historic and significant among the most outstanding achievements of people of Indian origin globally.

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Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC), established in 1997, is an international non-profit organization with global affiliates and membership in 21 countries with the objective to embrace, engage and enhance the shared heritage, aspirations and interests of persons of Indian origin with optimum inclusivity.