

The High Commission of India & SVCC in Georgetown marked 152nd birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and 117th birth anniversary of Lal Bahadur Sastri

PRESS RELEASE

2nd October 2021

The High Commission of India and Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC) in Georgetown marked the 152nd birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and the 117th birth anniversary of Lal Bahadur Sastri by organizing an event at the Gandhi Statue in Promenade Gardens, Georgetown on 2nd October 2021. Last year, the Government of India had concluded a two-year long celebration of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma from October 2018 to October 2020.

H. E. Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Justice Yonette Cummings-Edwards, Chancellor of the Judiciary, Hon. Hugh Todd, Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation, Hon. Dr. Ashni K. Singh, Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Hon. Robeson Benn, Minister of Home Affairs, Hon. Dr. Vindhya Persaud, Minister of Human Services and Social Security and His Worship Pandit Ubraj Naraine, Mayor of Georgetown graced the occasion with their presence and offered their homage to Mahatma Gandhiji. The dignitaries offered floral tributes at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi. Members of the Diplomatic Community also attended the programme. Various cultural performances of music, dance, drama and Yoga added colour to the event.

The event included a short poetic tribute to Gandhi by Master Athrav Kotehal Gowdara and a speech tribute by Master Samanyu Kotehal Gowdara highlighting Gandhi's importance and life lessons. A special jazz tribute was paid by the High Commission of India family children which was widely appreciated.

Welcoming the dignitaries, High Commissioner of India, H.E. Dr. K.J. Srinivasa, said that Mahatma Gandhi is an international name and his principles and philosophy are well-known across the world. High Commissioner added that Gandhiji made India known world over and Indians carried Gandhiji's name wherever they went spreading his message of peace and non-violence as he became a symbol and national pride of India and Indians. Emphasizing the relevance of Gandhiji, his principles and philosophy even in the present day, Dr. Srinivasa said that Gandhiji's philosophy attracted large number of followers internationally, including great leaders and statesmen like Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, etc. The impact and fame of Gandhi beyond India are reflected in the International Day of Nonviolence which is celebrated worldwide on his birthday. Professor Tota Mangar and Dr Yesu Persaud also paid rich tributes to Mahatma Gandhi with special emphasis on Gandhian influence and relevance to Guyana.

Speaking on the occasion, H. E. Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana commended the presence and presentations by the young children which showed the interest of the newer generations in Gandhi. President Ali reiterated the relevance of Gandhi even in the current time and life in Guyana. He emphasized that Gandhi's principles reflect equality of movement and access which makes it more essential for Guyanese to approach COVID-19 vaccines with a wider perspective. The President commended Prime Minister of India Hon'ble Mr. Narendra Modi and said that Prime Minister Modi indeed had a global outlook on the COVID-19 pandemic and assisted the countries across the globe, particularly the Caribbean countries with access to their first doses of vaccine which was part of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy to share.

On the occasion, commemorative postage stamps on Mahatma Gandhi by the Guyana Post Office Corporation were also released by H. E. Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Hon. Hugh Todd, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Post Master General, the High Commissioner of India and Spouse of High Commissioner Mrs Ashwini Gowdara.

Today, the High Commission also paid tributes to another great freedom fighter and statesman, the second Prime Minister of India Lal Bahadur Shastri on his birth anniversary. Noted by many to be a soft-spoken and humble, Lal Bahadur Shastri was an important figure during the freedom struggle and became Prime Minister in 1964 post Jawaharlal Nehru's demise. He was also a man of vision who led the country towards progress. India remembers 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan', the slogan of Lal Bahadur Shastri which is etched in everyones minds as it captures the true spirit of India.





