



Indian Diaspora Council

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Shared heritage, aspirations and interests

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Press Statement

Commemoration of Indian Arrival Day 2017 in Guyana

The Indian Diaspora Council (IDC) joins with its global affiliates and membership to pay honored tribute and express its gratitude to those who made the first journey as indentured laborers from India arriving in Highbury in Guyana on 5th May, 1838 aboard the *Hesperus* and *Whitby*.

We are always reminded of their pioneering spirit, determination, persistence and endurance under extremely harsh conditions. While survival must have been the primary concern, they strived and persevered to maintain their sense of origin, traditions and culture. Their children, grandchildren and following generations will always take pride in this unique accomplishment, recognizing and appreciating the sacrifices and achievements made on their behalf. We also recognize the invaluable contributions they have made to the diverse culture and economic development of Guyana.

IDC president Ashook Ramsaran who was born in Guyana stated: “We pay homage and commemorate an historic event which took place 179 years ago and recognize the journeys, hardships, travails and perseverance of a people – while looking at today and tomorrow which can take lessons from that history of journeys not so long ago. While acknowledging that past, we can triumph by taking bold steps same as those who came to Guyana and other lands with just a promise, with lots of hope and determination.

“Our ancestors came here partially by choice, many forced but resolved and persevered under very difficult and harrowing conditions. That shared experience, that saga of shared history, fostered an unusual kindred spirit of resolve, togetherness and kinship – a triumph over obstacles and difficulties with dreams and aspirations of a destiny intertwined by history and fate”.

We extend Indian Diaspora Council’s congratulations to the Government and people of Guyana on the commemoration of this 160th anniversary of that historic day. We also extend our continued best wishes to all the descendants of those early pioneers for peaceful and prosperous co-existence both in Guyana and other lands where they have subsequently settled.

We continue to encourage and support active promotion of the rich and enduring Indian traditions which served their forefathers so well. We also wish to remind all the descendants of those early pioneers to recognize and reach out to others of Indian origin whose forebears also embarked on similar journeys.

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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.