High Commission of India
Mbabane

PRESS RELEASE

Inscription of Indian Festival "Deepavali" to UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

Deepavali, India's cherished Festival of Lights, has officially been inscribed on UNESCO's "Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity". The decision was announced during the 20th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage currently being held at the Red Fort in New Delhi from 8–13 December 2025.

UNESCO's evaluation process is rigorous, focusing on authenticity, safeguarding measures, and community participation. With this recognition, Deepavali becomes the 16th Indian tradition to join UNESCO's prestigious list, alongside celebrated practices such as Yoga, Vedic chanting, Ramlila, Durga Puja of Kolkata, Garba dance of Gujarat, and the Kumbh Mela.

Deepavali's inscription highlights its universal values of hope, renewal, and unity, as well as its role in fostering community bonds through rituals, prayers, fireworks, and the sharing of sweets. Celebrated across India and in many countries worldwide, the festival symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil.

An event to commemorate this milestone was organized at the High Commission of India. The Chancery was decorated with festival lights. To signify the essence of Deepavali, which is victory of good over evil, light over darkness, a lamp was lighted by High Commissioner H.E. Mr. N. Ram Prasad along with National Project Officer Ms. Mandisa Zwane, Ms. Sithabile Mlipha, Dr. Bethusile Mahlalela from UNESCO, & Dr. Swapnika from the Indian Diaspora. Ms. Zwane conveyed her wishes to India on the inscription of Deepavali. Thereafter, High Commissioner talked about the festival of Deepavali celebrated in different parts of the country. A short movie on Deepavali was also played during this event.

India now carries the responsibility of promoting Deepavali traditions in ways that respect cultural diversity, protect from over-commercialization and ensure that the traditions are passed-on to the future generations.

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