

**Embassy of India
Kathmandu**

Press Release

India-Nepal Cultural Festival Celebrates Shared Culture and Heritage

The Embassy of India in Nepal, in collaboration with Lumbini Development Trust and Lumbini Buddhist University organized the inaugural India-Nepal Cultural Festival in Lumbini on 8 December 2023.

2. The festival showcased the rich cultural heritage and traditions of India and Nepal, with a focus on Buddhism. The festival featured Sand Mandala Drawing Art Exhibition prepared by monk artists from Hemis Monastery in Ladakh, India, photo exhibition based on the photographs of renowned photographer Benoy Behl, a Street Food Festival featuring Indian and Nepali cuisines, and a cultural programme.

3. The festival was jointly inaugurated by Ambassador of India to Nepal Mr. Naveen Srivastava, Hon'ble Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal Mr. Sudan Kirati, and Hon'ble Chief Minister of Lumbini Province Mr. Dilli Bahadur Chaudhary.

4. The inauguration ceremony also included opening of a photo exhibition, which featured collection of stunning photographs of Buddhist heritage sites. The exhibition provided a comprehensive perspective of the monuments and art heritage of Buddhism, from the earliest times to the present day.

5. Later, Ambassador Srivastava, Hon'ble Minister Kirati, and Hon'ble Chief Minister Chaudhary jointly inaugurated the sand mandala drawing art exhibition. Sand mandala drawing is a traditional Buddhist art form that involves creating intricate designs using coloured sand. The exhibition showcased the skill and craftsmanship of the monk artists from Hemis Monastery, Ladakh, India.

6. The evening of December 8 was marked by a vibrant cultural programme featuring performances by artists from India and Nepal. The audience was enthralled by the Cham Dance performed by artists from Thiksey Monastery,

Leh, India, Bharatnatyam put together by Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre of the Embassy, Tharu Dance by local artists from Lumbini and Sitar recital by Sukarma Band of Nepal.

7. The Cultural program was followed by the Street Food Festival at Lumbini World Peace and Harmony Visitor Center. The festival showcased the rich variety of Indian and Nepali cuisine, including Pakora, Tharu style Taruwa, Sabudana Wada, Newari style lentils Bara, Jalebi, and many more delicacies.

8. As a part of this Festival, an Academic Seminar titled “Exploring Impact of Buddhist Teachings on Community Development and Global Well-being” was also organized at Lumbini Buddhist University on the morning of 8th December 2023. Eminent Buddhist scholars from India and Nepal participated in the seminar and shared their insights on the relevance of Buddhist teachings in the modern world.

9. It was decided that such Festival will now be organized annually in Lumbini and should help bringing together people from India and Nepal to celebrate shared heritage, traditions and culture. The festival also highlighted the strong cultural and historical ties between the two countries.

10. The sand mandala art exhibition and the photo exhibition continue to be open to visitors on the second day of festival on 9 December 2023.

Kathmandu
8th December 2023
