



Indian Council for Cultural Relations

Press Release

Book Release Ceremony

EAM Jaishankar Released 'Connecting through Culture: An Overview of India's Soft Power Strengths'

An anthology of essays on various aspects of India's soft power strengths was released on Wednesday, July 13, 2022 at Sushma Swaraj Bhavan in Chanakyapuri, titled 'Connecting through Culture: An Overview of India's Soft Power Strengths'. This is first of its kind book which is a joint project of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA). Hon'ble Minister for External Affairs, Shri S. Jaishankar was the Chief Guest and Hon'ble Governor of Kerala, Shri Arif Mohammed Khan was the Guest of Honour for the ceremony.

Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, President ICCR and Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary of the IGNCA have jointly edited this book which contains contributions from 23 eminent personalities. From Indian Epics to Ayurveda and from Indian Dance to Indian Cuisines, this anthology covers a wide range of issues including Indian Democracy and Indian diaspora as ingredients of India's soft power. An independent section in this anthology is devoted to Universal Heroes of India which includes Gautam Buddha, Sri Guru Nanak, Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi.

The book release event commenced with the singing of the National Anthem and followed by Ganesh Vandana. Opening remarks were given by the Founder and Publisher of Wisdom Tree, Shri Shobit Arya. Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, President, ICCR said in his remarks that this was a small attempt in the form of an anthropology that will help put a full stop to the habit of portraying a distorted idea of India, mostly a product of lack of understanding. The co-editor of the book, Dr. Sachidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, IGNCA spoke about the content of the book and introduced each of the contributors.

The Chief Guest for the occasion Hon'ble External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar released the book and referred to the book as being all about soft power and a notable contribution in understanding India. In his keynote address, he emphasised on the importance of soft power and where it fits in the larger scheme of things in respect of India. He said that the larger message of the book is acceptance and likeability. He added that, in the last 25 years India has a larger presence in the world; we are more relevant to the world now.

Speaking on the occasion, Hon'ble Governor of Kerala, Shri Arif Mohammed Khan said that the concept of soft power is not new to India; rather it is deeply rooted in Indian civilization and cultural ethos. He said that acceptance not tolerance and diversity along with unity have inherently been adopted by India since the very beginning. In his words he emphasised that India will remain India as long as our thrust will be on the soft power, to promote the recognition of knowledge and wisdom. He also added in his remarks that our freedom movement itself is a great example; possibly the only freedom movement in the world where only soft power was employed to throw away the colonial power.

At the close of the event, Director General ICCR, Shri Kumar Tuhin, proposed the vote of thanks. He thanked the Chief Guest for gracing the occasion and for imparting valuable insights on the soft power's impact in global settings and in the implementation of diplomacy. He also thanked Hon'ble Governor of Kerala for his wise remarks about what India is about and what foundational virtues of our nation are. The event witnessed the participation of members from the Diplomatic corps, eminent artists, academicians, students, media personalities and other dignitaries.

22/07/2022, New Delhi