

CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI MAHARAJ: PIONEERING SPIRITUAL DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

Reflecting upon the historical and socio-cultural significance of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's unique contribution, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations organized a special lecture by Prof. Raghuvendra Tanwar, Chairman, Indian Council of Historical Research on 6th June 2023 to celebrate the 349th anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's Coronation Day.



President, ICCR, Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe's inaugural address emphasized the foundational understanding of India that Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj built upon, described as "spiritual democracy." This term denotes Maharaj's belief in combining spirituality, culture, and democracy as the guiding principles for the nation. During his lecture, Prof. Raghuvendra Tanwar said, *"Indian freedom struggle ...the story which remained unreported.. is that it was actually a cultural and spiritual revolutionary movement; The cultural & the spiritual inspiration to the freedom movement has actually been contributed by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj"*. He further highlighted how Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj brought culture and spiritualism into the realm of politics.

The 37 Indian Cultural Centres of ICCR attended this session virtually and also organized events in their respective centres abroad. For instance, in Tajikistan, the Indian Cultural Centre organized a cultural evening wherein Ms Parvina Mahamadiyor sang famous Marathi songs. Similarly in Mexico, a Kathak and Sitar-Tabla recital performance highlighted Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's contribution. As for Nepal, a 2-day photo exhibition on Forts of India & Nepal was organized. As a part of the 349th Coronation Day celebration of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, several centres abroad organized lectures on his life & narrated some of his stories of valour.

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