

# Indian Council for Cultural Relations

## Press Release

### 10th India-International Dance & Music Festival held at DDA's Baansera

As the heart of India's capital beats beneath the crisp winter sky, Delhi hosted a cultural extravaganza like no other. Amidst the lush serenity of Baansera Park, where the Yamuna whispers stories of time, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) organized the 10th Edition of the India-International Dance & Music Festival—ICCR's International Cultural Mahakumbh, in collaboration with DDA.

In a landmark collaboration, ICCR joined hands with Delhi Development Authority (DDA) for the first time, creating an artistic confluence that unites the rich traditions of diverse nations through the universal language of dance and music.

This grand celebration reaffirms Delhi's stature as India's cultural and diplomatic hub, embodying the philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam—the world is one family. This grand gathering aspires to foster mutual respect among civilizations and nurture artistic collaborations that transcend borders, binding hearts through the universal language of art.

Gracing this prestigious event as chief guests were Hon'ble External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena and Ambassadors of Rwanda, Russia, and Mongolia, distinguished representatives from participating nations.

With its historic grandeur and cosmopolitan spirit, Delhi provides the perfect stage for this global symphony of artistic expression. The festival showcased an extraordinary blend of international and local talent, culminating in a specially choreographed performance featuring artists from Russia, Mongolia, Rwanda, and India.

Renowned choreographer Ms. Rani Khanam masterfully designed this production, harmonizing the dynamic energy of international performers with the elegance of Indian artists.

With Yamuna as a silent witness and Delhi as its vibrant stage, this festival stands as a testament to ICCR's unwavering commitment to fostering global unity through the performing arts. As melodies soar and rhythmic footwork narrates untold stories, this gala left an enduring imprint on the city's artistic landscape.

The DDA has spearheaded significant initiatives to restore and revitalize the Yamuna River floodplains, implementing multiple projects along both banks—including the transformation of Baansera. Once an inaccessible wasteland in the heart of the city, Baansera was marred by neglect, rampant dumping of construction debris and garbage, and encroachment by slums and unauthorized activities. Today, it has been reimagined as a stunning green oasis offering panoramic views of the river and city, exemplifying how urban development can harmoniously integrate with nature to create vibrant community spaces.

In addition to Baansera, another urban oasis known as Asita—another name for the Yamuna—has emerged as an ecological reserve within the cityscape. Once plagued by encroachments, unauthorized farming, and settlements, Asita now provides refuge to over 190 species of resident

and migratory birds. With more than 31,000 trees and millions of riverine grasses, it supports a thriving and diverse avian habitat.

To rekindle the cultural bond between the community and the river, Vasudev Ghat has been developed along the western bank of the Yamuna. This site now serves as a vibrant hub for community engagement and spiritual connection. Twice weekly, the Yamuna Aarti is performed—a sacred ritual featuring prayers, chants, and the lighting of lamps to honor the river. This initiative not only revives traditional cultural practices but also deepens the appreciation of the Yamuna as a vital element of the city's heritage and identity.

Another major upcoming project on the western bank, referred to as Vatika, spans over 100 hectares and presents an excellent opportunity to create a refreshing green oasis within the densely urban fabric of Old Delhi's Chandni Chowk.

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