



Indian Council for Cultural Relations

Press Release

9th April 2025

ICCR's Glorious 75 Years: Bridging Cultures, Nurturing Scholars, and Fostering Global Bonds

New Delhi, 9th April 2025 – In the hallways of Azad Bhawan, where the past converses with the present, where cultures intertwine, and where the essence of India's artistic spirit finds resonance across the world, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) stands on the threshold of a historic milestone—75 glorious years of cultural diplomacy, scholarly exchanges, and artistic collaboration.

Marking this momentous occasion, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar graced the celebrations as the Chief Guest, joined by several diplomats, MEA officials, eminent artists, ICCR scholars, media personalities, and esteemed representatives from leading institutions, reaffirming India's unwavering commitment to strengthening the cultural bridges that connect nations and generations.

The celebration featured a captivating instrumental performance by *Stree Shakti*, led by Padma Shri Anuradha Pal — the world's first all-female Indian classical band — which mesmerised the audience with its powerful rhythms and harmonious compositions. Adding to the cultural vibrancy, a dynamic folk dance was presented by the cultural troupe from Vietnam's Dong Nai College of Arts, reflecting the enduring friendship between India and Vietnam. Further showcasing the global resonance of Indian culture, 38 foreign scholars from 14 countries, currently in India on ICCR scholarships, performed a classical dance under the segment *Srijan*, choreographed by renowned artist Ms. Vidha Lal.

Director General of ICCR, Mrs. K. Nandini Singla, unveiled a series of high-impact initiatives. Among the many illustrious announcements, '**ICCR Ki Khoj**' emerged as a beacon for creative minds—a platform where artists and cultural practitioners converge, where artistic expression finds new frontiers. Alongside this, the **Padma Awardee Series** paid homage to the masters of Indian art—those whose rhythms, brushstrokes, and poetic verses have shaped the nation's cultural consciousness, illuminating the world stage with their brilliance.

Recognizing the role of the digital era in promoting cultural heritage, ICCR introduced two prestigious awards. The **ICCR Yuva Mitra Prize** celebrates individuals and cultural promoters who actively champion Indian heritage on global platforms through digital and social media. Similarly, the **ICCR Kala Saadhak Prize** honors scholars dedicated to sharing India's artistic traditions, including dance, music, literature, philosophy, etc., on an international stage.

Even as modernity reshapes the world, the echoes of India's folk traditions remain timeless. To ensure these voices are heard beyond borders, ICCR, in collaboration with 25 state governments, announced the empanelment of three folk artist groups per state, offering them a global stage to share their music, dance, and stories. Each performance will not just be an act—it will be a pulse of India's living heritage, a song carried by the winds to distant lands.

And what is culture without its flavours? The ICCR Annapurna Certificate recognized international culinary artists who brought the richness of Indian cuisine to global palates. The **2024 awardees** were felicitated for their contributions to enhancing the global appreciation of Indian flavours.

Against this backdrop of heritage and harmony, Director General ICCR, Mrs. K. Nandini Singla, along with Dr. S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs of India, visited the exhibition titled “Padachinnh,” showcasing the evolution of ICCR over the past 75 years.

As ICCR completed its 75th year, this was more than a celebration—it was a reaffirmation of a journey that began with a vision and continues with boundless passion. From the rhythms of folk traditions to the innovations of digital diplomacy, from the wisdom of scholars to the artistry of culinary ambassadors, the story of ICCR is one of connection, continuity, and cultural resurgence.