

CSIR Weekly Briefing: Cultural Connect

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Virtual Madhubani Painting Workshop — Turkmenistan



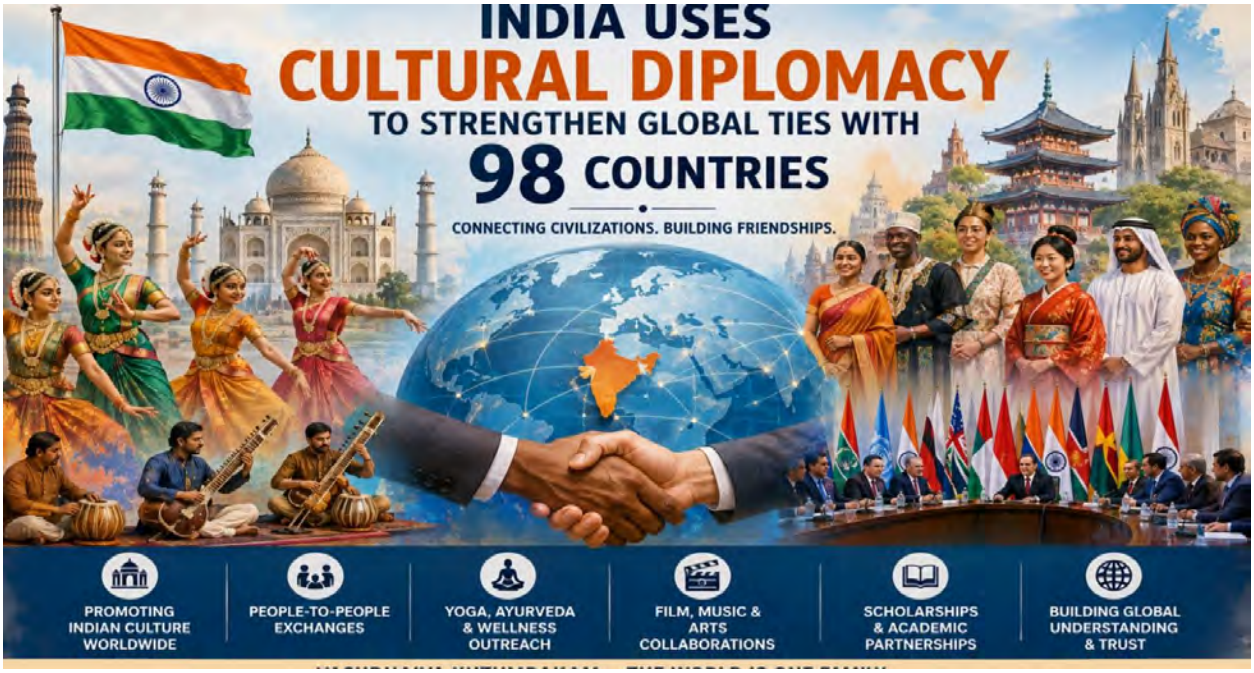
Videsh Mantralaya (Ministry of External Affairs, GoI) through the Bharatiya Dootavas (Embassy of India) in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, organised a Virtual Workshop on Madhubani Painting beginning on 9th August 2026. The initiative formed part of the Mission's cultural activities associated with the 80th Independence Day celebrations. The Embassy's official website specifically listed the Madhubani workshop among its August 2026 activities. Madhubani painting, traditionally associated with the Mithila region, represents an important dimension of Bharat's folk and community-based artistic heritage. Its characteristic motifs, narrative themes, geometric forms and relationship with ritual and social life have made it an important expression of regional cultural identity. The virtual format also expanded the geographical reach of the initiative. Instead of depending on a physical cultural centre or travelling exhibition, the Embassy was able to create a digital cultural space linking Turkmenistan with Bharat. The Ashgabat Embassy had also publicised other cultural activities connected with the Independence Day period, including the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign and the Bharat Ko Janiye Quiz. The Madhubani workshop therefore formed part of a wider programme of cultural engagement rather

than functioning as an isolated activity.The event is particularly relevant because it illustrates the movement from cultural presentation towards cultural participation. Participants were invited to learn an Bharatiya artistic tradition, creating a more interactive form of cultural relationship.

Source: Bharatiya Dootavas (Embassy of India), Ashgabat.

Embassy of India, Ashgabat — Official Website

National Framework for Cultural Outreach



One of the most significant policy developments during the period was the statement issued by *Sanskriti Mantralaya* (Ministry of Culture, GoI) regarding the formulation of a national framework for cultural diplomacy and international cultural engagement. In a written reply in the Lok Sabha on 10th August 2026, Union Minister for Culture and Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat stated that Bharat's international cultural relations were promoted through the Global Engagement Scheme (GES). The Global Engagement Scheme functions as an umbrella mechanism for international cultural engagement. According to the Ministry, it seeks to promote Bharat's civilisational heritage, cultural diversity and contemporary creative traditions through

structured bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Its activities include cultural exchanges, heritage conservation, documentation, capacity building and engagement with international cultural organisations.

The framework consists of four major components: the International Cultural Exchange Programme (ICEP), Project Mausam, Brihattar Bharat, and the scheme for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and diverse cultural traditions of Bharat. Through ICEP, the Ministry supports Festivals of Bharat abroad, cultural exchanges, deputation of artists and cultural troupes, Cultural Exchange Programmes, memoranda of understanding and other bilateral cultural cooperation mechanisms.Project Mausam is particularly relevant from a geographical perspective because it examines the historical maritime cultural landscape of the *Hind Mahasagar* and the relationships created through monsoon-linked trade, movement and cultural exchange. Brihattar Bharat, meanwhile, highlights historical and civilisational connections extending beyond contemporary territorial boundaries. The policy therefore brings together heritage, contemporary creativity, maritime history, traditional knowledge and international cultural cooperation under a common framework.

Source: Sanskriti Mantralaya (Ministry of Culture), Government of Bharat; PIB.
PIB — Formulation of National Framework for Cultural Diplomacy

Viksit Bharat and Madhubani Art — Mali



The Bharatiya Dootavas (Embassy of India, GoI) in Bamako, under the broader coordination of Videsh Mantralaya (Ministry of External Affairs, GoI), incorporated Viksit Bharat and online Madhubani painting workshops into its Independence Day cultural programme in Mali on 11th August 2026. The activity involved Malian artists and members of the Bhartiya community, creating a participatory platform around Bharatiya folk art.The initiative became particularly significant because the paintings created through these workshops were subsequently displayed during the Embassy's 80th Independence Day celebration. The participation of Malian artists added an important dimension to the initiative. Cultural outreach becomes more meaningful when it facilitates interaction between the cultural traditions of the sending and receiving societies. In this case, Madhubani painting provided a medium through which Malian participants could engage directly with a regional artistic tradition of Bharat.The programme also

brought together several layers of cultural connection: Bharatiya folk art, Malian artistic participation, the Bhartiya diaspora, Independence Day celebrations and the Viksit Bharat narrative. The Embassy's Independence Day programme included cultural performances by children from the Bhartiya community and members of the Bharat–Mali Friendship Association. An exhibition on the history and significance of Vande Mataram was also organised. Participants of the *Bharat Ko Janiye* Quiz and the Madhubani and Viksit Bharat painting workshops were felicitated. The initiative demonstrates that cultural outreach can operate through co-creation rather than one-way cultural transmission. Instead of simply showing Madhubani paintings to a foreign audience, the initiative encouraged participants to create artworks themselves. This creates a more intimate relationship with Bharatiya cultural traditions.

Source: Bharatiya Dootavas (Embassy of India), Bamako.

Embassy of India, Bamako — Official Press Release

Gond Art Workshop — Germany



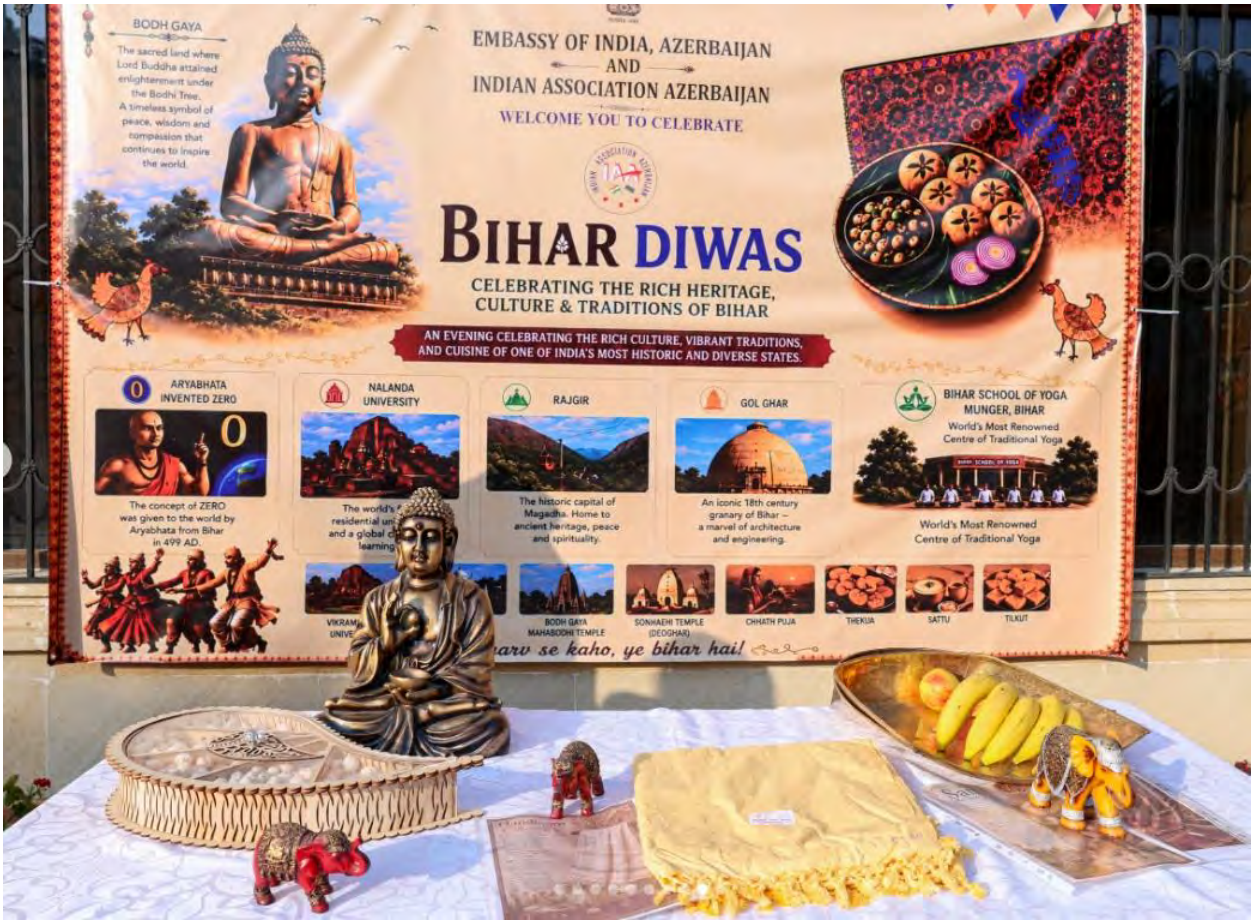
The *Bharatiya Sanskritik Sambandh Parishad* (Indian Council for Cultural Relations—ICCR), in collaboration with the *Bharatiya Dootavas* (Embassy of India), Berlin, promoted a hands-on virtual workshop on Gond Art for members of the Bhartiya community and friends of Bharat in Germany. The workshop was scheduled for 12th August 2026 as part of the cultural activities associated with the 80th Independence Day celebrations. Gond art is an important artistic tradition associated with the Gond communities of central Bharat. Its use of distinctive lines, patterns, natural forms and narrative imagery makes it an important example of the country's

diverse tribal artistic heritage. Participants were invited not simply to observe a presentation on Gond art but to engage with the artistic practice themselves. The use of digital technology was another important feature. A virtual workshop allows people located in different parts of Germany to participate without the logistical requirements associated with a physical exhibition or cultural troupe. This makes digital cultural engagement particularly useful for diaspora communities and friends of Bharat.The initiative also fits within a broader pattern visible during the 8th–15th August period, when Bharatiya missions abroad promoted regional, folk and traditional artistic forms. Madhubani in Turkmenistan and Mali and Gond art in Germany collectively demonstrate an effort to present the diversity of Bharatiya artistic traditions.

Source: *Bharatiya Sanskritik Sambandh Parishad* (ICCR) and *Bharatiya Dootavas* (Embassy of India), Berlin.

Embassy/ICCR workshop announcement

Bihar Diwas — Baku, Azerbaijan



The Bharatiya Dootavas (Embassy of India) in Baku, under *Videsh Mantralaya* (Ministry of External Affairs), organised Bihar Diwas in Azerbaijan on 13 August 2026. The *Bharatiya Dootavas* (Embassy of India in Azerbaijan) organised a grand Bihar Diwas celebration on 13th August 2026 in Baku, receiving an overwhelming response from diplomats, government representatives, business leaders, media, influencers, the Bhartiya diaspora and Azerbaijani citizens.Ambassador Abhay Kumar highlighted Bihar's rich civilizational legacy, including Nalanda, Bodh Gaya, Buddhism and Jainism, and its association with eminent personalities such as Aryabhata, Chanakya, Emperor Ashoka and Dr. Rajendra Prasad.The evening featured a vibrant fashion show by Azerbaijani and Bhartiya participants in traditional Bihari attire, an authentic Bihari cuisine showcase prepared by chefs from Bharat, and displays of Makhana, Bhagalpuri Silk, Madhubani prints and Dal Chadar. Music and dance performances inspired by Bihar further enlivened the celebration.The event also showcased Bihar's tourism potential and

cultural diversity, with guests expressing keen interest in visiting destinations such as Nalanda. The celebration reinforced the Embassy's efforts to promote Bharat's diverse heritage and strengthen people-to-people ties between Bharat and Azerbaijan.

Source: Bharatiya Dootavas (Embassy of India), Baku.

Official Bihar Diwas Press Release — Embassy of India, Baku

National Day Reception — Santiago, Chile



The Bharatiya Dootavas (Embassy of India, GoI) in Santiago, under *Videsh Mantralaya* (Ministry of External Affairs, GoI), hosted a National Day Reception on 14th August 2026 to mark Bharat's forthcoming 80th Independence Day. The reception was attended by former Chilean President Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle and Chilean Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Patricio Torres. The PDI Band performed the national anthems of Bharat and Chile. The

performance of the national anthems created a ceremonial cultural space connecting the two countries, while additional artistic and intellectual components expanded the event beyond a conventional diplomatic reception.One of the cultural highlights was a dance presentation to Vande Mataram, marking 150 years of Bharat's National Song. The performance connected a national symbol with the broader cultural history of Bharat and presented it to a Chilean audience in an international setting.

Another significant component was the exhibition titled "From Shunya to Ananta: The Bhartiya Civilisation's Contribution to Mathematics." The exhibition highlighted Bharat's intellectual heritage, particularly its contribution to mathematical thought and the concept of zero. Ambassador Abhilasha Joshi explained aspects of this heritage to Undersecretary Patricio Torres. The event also included an economic dimension. A video highlighted the presence of Bharatiya companies in Chile, while Mahindra Group showcased its vehicles. This combination of cultural heritage and contemporary economic engagement demonstrated the multidimensional character of Bharat–Chile relations.

Source: Bharatiya Dootavas (Embassy of India), Santiago.
Embassy of India, Santiago — National Day Reception

Bharat Film Festival — Ashgabat



The Bharatiya Dootavas (Embassy of India) in Ashgabat, under Videsh Mantralaya (Ministry of External Affairs), organised an Bhartiya Film Festival in Ashgabat from 14th to 16th August 2026. The event was officially listed by the Embassy among its August activities and press releases.The timing of the festival was significant because it coincided with Bharat's 80th Independence Day celebrations. Cinema provided an opportunity to communicate aspects of Bharatiya society, culture, values and contemporary life to audiences in Turkmenistan through an accessible popular medium.

The Ashgabat festival also formed part of a broader pattern of cultural programming by the Embassy during the Independence Day period. The Mission simultaneously promoted the Virtual Madhubani Painting Workshop, the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign, the Bharat Ko Janiye Quiz and other cultural activities.The inclusion of cinema alongside folk art and national-cultural

programmes demonstrates the breadth of Bharat's Cultural Outreach in Turkmenistan. The strategy was not restricted to one particular image of Bharatiya culture but incorporated different cultural forms and generations.

Source: Bharatiya Dootavas (Embassy of India), Ashgabat.

Embassy of India, Ashgabat — Indian Film Festival, 14–16 August 2026

80th Independence Day — Zagreb, Croatia



The *Bharatiya Dootavas* (Embassy of India, GoI) in Zagreb, under Videsh Mantralaya (Ministry of External Affairs, GoI), celebrated Bharat's 80th Independence Day on 15th August 2026 with a programme combining national ceremony, classical dance, competitions and diaspora participation. The event began with the joint singing of Vande Mataram, followed by flag hoisting and the national anthem. The cultural programme subsequently featured Odissi, presenting one of Bharat's major classical dance traditions to the Croatian audience. The programme concluded with a special presentation of Bharatanatyam, including a performance of *Dashavatara* by members of Mohanji. Through these performances, classical Bhartiya dance became a central medium for presenting Bharatiya mythology, aesthetics, rhythm and storytelling.

The event also incorporated several participatory initiatives. Members of the Bhartiya diaspora and friends of Bharat were recognised for their involvement in the Viksit Bharat 2047 Painting Competition, Bharat Through My Lens Photography Competition, My Bharat, My Story Competition and the special Independence Day edition of the Bharat Ko Janiye Quiz. This combination of dance, visual arts, photography, storytelling and knowledge-based participation made the Zagreb programme an example of multi-layered Cultural Outreach.Odissi and Bharatanatyam communicated cultural traditions through embodied performance, allowing audiences to experience rather than simply read about Bharatiya heritage.

Source: Bharatiya Dootavas (Embassy of India), Zagreb.
Official 80th Independence Day Report — Embassy of India, Zagreb

Bharatanatyam and Kathak in Georgia — Local Participation



The 80th Independence Day programme at the *Bharatiya Dootavas* (Embassy of India), Tbilisi, on 15th August 2026 included performances of Bharatanatyam by Georgian dancer Kristina Kapanadze and Kathak by Bharatiya performer Mahika Srinivas. Approximately 150 members of the Bhartiya community, Bhartiya students and friends of Bharat participated in the celebration. The participation of a Georgian dancer in Bharatanatyam was particularly significant from the perspective of Cultural Connect because it demonstrated cultural engagement beyond the conventional model of one-way presentation. Bharatanatyam is one of Bharat's major classical dance traditions, historically associated with Tamil cultural heritage and characterised by codified movement, gesture, rhythm and narrative expression. Its performance by a Georgian practitioner created an interesting cultural encounter between South Asian classical aesthetics

and Georgian cultural participation.The programme also included Kathak, another major Bharatiya classical dance form, performed by Mahika Srinivas. Presenting Bharatanatyam and Kathak together allowed the audience to encounter two distinct traditions within Bharat's classical dance landscape.The Embassy also felicitated winners of the special edition of the Bharat Ko Janiye Quiz and the "India Through Georgian Eyes" competition. These initiatives expanded the programme beyond performance to include knowledge exchange and local visual interpretation of Bharat. The "India Through Georgian Eyes" competition is especially relevant because it reverses the direction of cultural representation. Instead of only asking Georgian audiences to view Bharat through official Bharatiya representations, the competition encouraged Georgian participants to present their own understandings of Bharat.

Source: Bharatiya Dootavas (Embassy of India), Tbilisi.

Official Independence Day Report — Embassy of India, Tbilisi

Suryapath Tiranga — Global Cultural and National Outreach



Sanskriti Mantralaya (Ministry of Culture, GoI) introduced Suryapath Tiranga as a major global initiative associated with the Har Ghar Tiranga 2026 campaign. On 15th August 2026, the Tricolour was ceremonially hoisted across Bharat Missions and Posts around the world in sequence, following the movement of the rising sun from east to west. The relay began in Suva, Fiji, at 1:30 AM IST and eventually reached San Francisco at 8:30 PM IST. According to the Ministry of Culture, the initiative connected 54 missions and posts across countries and continents. This transformed the national flag into a symbolic object travelling across geographical and temporal boundaries. The symbolism of the rising sun was particularly important. Rather than treating the national celebration as a single geographically bounded ceremony, Suryapath Tiranga represented the 80th Independence Day as a global cultural moment unfolding across time zones.The initiative also included cultural performances and community activities at various missions. PTI described the relay as a chain of ceremonies spanning more than 19 hours and connecting the Pacific, Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. It transformed a national symbol the Tiranga into the central cultural medium of a worldwide event.The initiative was consequently significant for understanding how Bharat is experimenting with transnational cultural connectivity, diaspora participation and digitally coordinated diplomacy.

Sources: Sanskriti Mantralaya (Ministry of Culture), PIB; PTI.

PIB — Suryapath Tiranga Global Relay

PTI report on Suryapath Tiranga

Prepared by - Pragya, Anubha, Triloki