

CSIR Weekly Briefing: Cultural Connect

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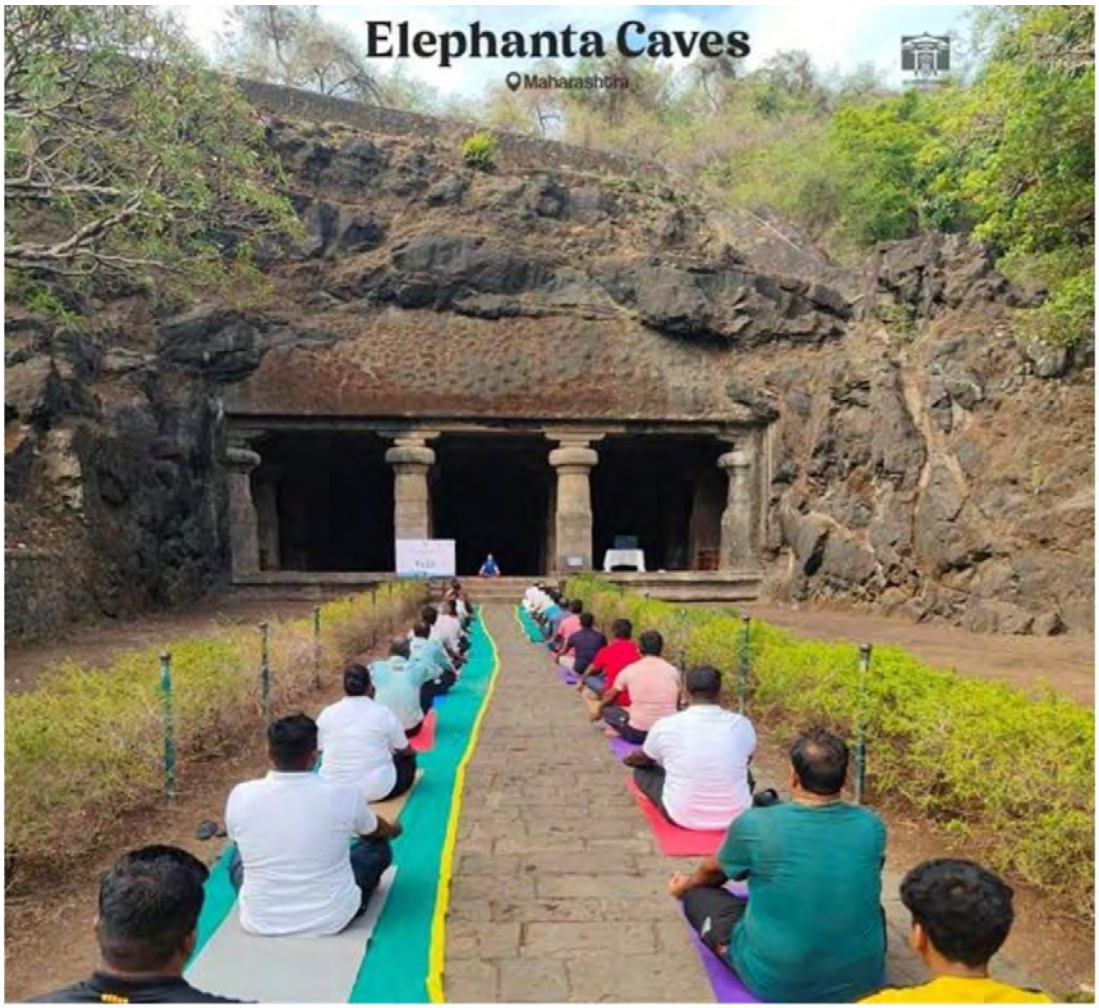
11th International Day of Yoga: A Global Movement for Healthy Ageing and Holistic Wellness


Elephanta Caves
Maharashtra



On 21st June 2026, the 11th iteration of the International Day of Yoga (IDY) was observed with unprecedented global participation, cementing its status as one of the world's most expansive participatory wellness movements. Driven by this year's central theme, 'Yoga for Healthy Ageing' (स्वस्थ आयु के लिए योग), the observance transitioned from a single day celebratory event to a profound advocacy for lifelong preventive healthcare. In Bharat, the primary national celebration was anchored in Kolkata, where thousands convened at dawn to perform the Common Yoga Protocol (CYP). The carefully structured 45 minute sequence was designed to be universally accessible, emphasizing mindful breathing, foundational postures, and meditation.

The *Bhartiya Videsh Mantralaya* (Ministry of External Affairs, GoI)and the *Bhartiya Sanskritik Sambandh Parishad* (Indian Council for Cultural Relations, ICCR) orchestrated a synchronized diplomatic effort, utilizing historically and culturally significant global landmarks to host parallel sessions. Indian diplomatic missions across continents from the serene landscapes of Europe to dynamic urban centers in the Americas facilitated community gatherings that highlighted Yoga not merely as physical exertion, but as an ancient, civilizational science of mind-body equilibrium. The 2026 initiative prominently featured the integration of the 'Yoga 365' campaign, which encourages individuals to weave yogic practices into their daily routines, supported by digital outreach and institutional participation. Specialized Yoga Protocols for Non Communicable Diseases, developed in collaboration with global health organizations, were introduced to target demographic specific challenges such as diabetes and hypertension. This monumental diplomatic and cultural exercise successfully reinforced the universality of Bharat's traditional knowledge systems, positioning them as essential, practical solutions for contemporary global public health challenges and fostering an enduring, shared vision of international well being.
Source: *Ayush Mantralay* (Ministry of Ayush, GoI)
https://ayush.gov.in/idy-2026-global-observance/

'Bharat Innovates' Cultural and Technological Pavilion at VivaTech, Paris



On 18th June 2026, the 'Bharat Innovates' pavilion at the VivaTech Summit in Paris emerged as a spectacular convergence of deep rooted cultural heritage and cutting edge digital transformation. This signature event, a cornerstone of the Bharat- France Year of Innovation, was meticulously designed to present Bharat not just as an emerging technological powerhouse, but as a civilization where ancient ingenuity informs modern enterprise. The pavilion featured interactive digital exhibits that mapped traditional Bhartiya knowledge systems ranging from classical metallurgy and sustainable architectural principles to ancient maritime navigation onto contemporary startup solutions and Venture Capital investments.

European delegates, international investors, and technology enthusiasts were provided with an immersive experience that challenged the conventional dichotomy between heritage preservation and technological advancement. By utilizing advanced augmented reality (AR) and artificial intelligence (AI), the pavilion narrated the evolution of Bharat's intellectual traditions, demonstrating how historical problem solving techniques are currently inspiring sustainable agricultural tech, green energy startups, and digital public infrastructure. This strategic

deployment of cultural diplomacy within a premier European technology forum successfully catalyzed new partnerships across the French and broader European technology ecosystems, reaffirming Bharat's narrative as a leading voice of the Global South where cultural depth acts as a catalyst for global innovation and entrepreneurship.

The engagement underscored the *BharatiyaVidesh Mantralaya's* (Ministry of External Affairs, GoI) strategic focus on ensuring that the diaspora remains intellectually and emotionally tethered to their civilizational roots while actively participating in the socio economic advancement of their host nations. The cultural presentations were not merely decorative, they were designed to reflect the dynamic evolution of Bhartiya arts in the global arena. By formally recognizing the community's contributions to building robust bilateral ties between Bharat and France, the event solidified the diaspora's status as a critical stakeholder in advancing Bharat's cultural resurgence, demonstrating how shared cultural identity can be effectively leveraged to sustain international goodwill and foster deep, long term geopolitical and economic partnerships.

Source: *Bhartiya Dootavas* (Embassy of India), Paris

https://www.eoiparis.gov.in/bharat-innovates-vivatech-2026/

Inauguration of the 'Shared Heritage' Exhibition in Bratislava, Slovakia

The 'Shared Heritage' exhibition, inaugurated in Bratislava, Slovakia, on June 16, 2026, represents a significant milestone in the diplomatic and cultural relations between Bharat and the Slovak Republic.

Curated through a collaborative partnership between the Slovak Ministry of Culture and *the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Kala Kendra* (Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, IGNCA), the exhibition is designed to transcend contemporary geopolitical discourse. By focusing on the 'shared' aspects of humanistic inquiry, the curation highlights how traditional Bhartiya philosophies, particularly the metaphysical insights of the Upanishads and classical Sanskrit literature, profoundly influenced Central European literary and philosophical movements during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The exhibition space features an extensive collection of rare archival documents, historical textiles, and early photographic records that trace the legacy of Indological studies within Slovak and broader European academic institutions. A core component of the exhibition is the use of interactive digital kiosks, which provide visitors with an opportunity to explore the fascinating linguistic parallels between Sanskrit and various European languages. These displays foster an environment that is both educational and deeply engaging, making complex academic history accessible to the general public.

The 'Shared Heritage' exhibition serves as a powerful instrument of cultural diplomacy. By foregrounding these historical intellectual exchanges, the exhibition invites both nations to reflect on their enduring humane values. For Bharat, this initiative is part of a broader strategy to leverage cultural depth as a catalyst for strengthening international partnerships. The exhibition not only honors the past but also sets a robust cultural foundation for future collaborations in trade, investment, and technology between New Delhi and Bratislava. As visitors navigate through the displays of ancient manuscripts and colonial-era accounts, they are encouraged to recognize the common threads of human history that unite distant civilizations. The inaugural event successfully emphasized that mutual respect and deep historical understanding are essential components of a modern, forward-looking bilateral relationship, ensuring that the ties between the two countries remain vibrant and meaningful for years to come.

Source: *Bharatiya Dootavas*(Embassy of India), Bratislava
https://www.eobratislava.gov.in/shared-heritage-exhibition-2026/

Bhartiya Classical Odishi Dance Tour Commencement in Seoul, South Korea

On 17th June 2026, a highly anticipated cultural tour featuring a premier Odishi dance ensemble commenced in Seoul, South Korea, representing a significant stride in Bharat's cultural diplomacy within East Asia. Supported by the *Bhartiya Sanskritik Sambandh Parishad*(Indian Council for Cultural Relations ,ICCR) and the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre in Seoul, the performance series was designed to introduce South Korean audiences to the lyrical grace, intricate mudras (hand gestures), and profound spiritual storytelling inherent in Odishi. Rooted in the temple traditions of eastern parts of Bharat, the dance form's fluid movements and emotive expressions (Abhinaya) were carefully contextualized for the international audience through pre-performance bilingual workshops.

The performances formed part of Bharat's broader efforts to strengthen cultural ties with South Korea under the framework of the Bharat–Republic of Korea Special Strategic Partnership. During the Seoul tour, accomplished Odishi dancers presented a repertoire that included traditional invocatory pieces, devotional compositions dedicated to Lord Jagannath and Lord Krishna, as well as choreographies based on the 'Gita Govinda'of the 12th-century poet Jayadeva. The performances highlighted the dance form's unique combination of rhythm, spirituality, and dramatic expression.

The inauguration in Seoul attracted a diverse audience comprising diplomats, Korean government officials, members of the diplomatic corps, scholars of Bhartiya studies, artists, students, and enthusiasts of world cultures. Before the performances, speakers emphasized the historical cultural links between Bharat and Korea, recalling the legend of Princess Heo Hwang-ok, believed in Korean tradition to have travelled from the ancient Bhartiya kingdom of Ayodhya to Korea nearly two millennia ago. Such shared historical narratives continue to provide a strong cultural foundation for bilateral relations.

Beyond stage performances, the tour also featured interactive workshops, lecture demonstrations, and educational sessions at universities and cultural institutions. Korean students and performing artists were introduced to the fundamentals of Odishi, including its distinctive tribhangi posture, mudras (hand gestures), rhythmic patterns, facial expressions, and philosophical foundations rooted in the 'Natya Shastra'. These interactions encouraged artistic collaboration and fostered a deeper appreciation of Bharat's intangible cultural heritage.

By utilizing high caliber classical arts as a medium of engagement, the initiative successfully fostered a nuanced appreciation of Bharat's aesthetic heritage, reinforcing the nation's cultural outreach and promoting sustained, cross cultural artistic dialogue in the *Hind-prashant mahasagar* (Indo-pacific ocean)region.

Source:*Bhartiya Sanskritik Sambandh Parishad* (Indian Council for Cultural Relations, ICCR)
https://iccr.gov.in/Odishi-tour-seoul-2026/

'Ayurveda and Modern Lifestyle' International Symposium in Melbourne, Australia



The intersection of ancient holistic healthcare and contemporary medical science was the focal point of the 'Ayurveda and Modern Lifestyle' International Symposium, convened in Melbourne, Australia, on 18th June 2026. Facilitated by the Ministry of Ayush in coordination with prominent Australian medical research institutes, the symposium aimed to demystify traditional Bhartiya medicine and establish its rigorous, evidence based applicability in treating modern lifestyle induced ailments. The multi day event gathered leading Ayurvedic practitioners,

Western medical professionals, nutritionists, and public health policymakers to engage in structured, empirical dialogues regarding integrative health strategies.

The symposium featured comprehensive presentations on the pharmacodynamics of traditional medicinal herbs, the physiological benefits of personalized Ayurvedic dietary protocols, and the efficacy of traditional therapeutic modalities in managing chronic stress and metabolic disorders. By framing Ayurveda not as an alternative, but as a complementary and highly systematic medical science, the event successfully bridged the gap between traditional wisdom and modern clinical validation. This strategic health diplomacy initiative educated the Australian public and medical community on the preventive and holistic nature of Bhartiya wellness systems. The resulting collaborative research agreements and cross institutional frameworks established during the symposium underscore Bharat's growing influence in the global discourse on holistic health, promoting a culturally integrated approach to global well being.
Source:Mahavanijya Dootavas Bharat(Consulate General of India), Melbourne
https://www.cgimelbourne.gov.in/ayurveda-symposium-2026/

Bhartiya Mango Promotion and Trade Event in Brussels, Belgium



Leveraging the universal appeal of its rich agricultural heritage, the *Bhartiya Dootavas*(Embassy of India)in Brussels hosted a sophisticated 'Culinary Diplomacy' event focused on the promotion of premium Bhartiya mangoes on 19th June 2026. Organized in synergy with the *Krishi aur Prasanskarit Khadya Utpad Niryaat Vikas Pradhikaran*(Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority ,APEDA), the event was strategically designed to expand the footprint of Bharat's high value horticultural products within the European Union market. The showcase presented an exclusive selection of geographically indicated (GI) mango varieties, educating European distributors, high end retail chains, and culinary experts on the distinct flavor profiles, rigorous quality control, and historical cultivation methods associated with each variety.

The promotion transcended standard trade exhibitions by embedding the agricultural products within the broader context of Bhartiya culture and heritage. Curated tasting sessions were accompanied by presentations detailing the socio economic impact of mango cultivation on rural farming communities in Bharat, highlighting sustainable agricultural practices and precision logistics. This multidimensional approach effectively positioned the Bhartiya mango not merely as a seasonal commodity, but as an ambassador of the nation's rich biodiversity and agricultural excellence. The initiative successfully catalyzed new commercial dialogues with European supply chains, demonstrating how targeted cultural and culinary outreach can open new export markets, enhance international trade relations, and elevate the global profile of Bharat's agricultural sector.

Source: *Bhartiya Dootavas* (Embassy of India), Brussels
https://www.indianembassybrussels.gov.in/mango-promotion-2026/

Cultural Engagement in Helsingborg, Sweden

On 20th June 2026, the *Bhartiya Dootavas* (Embassy of India) in Stockholm reinforced its commitment to overseas citizens by organizing a comprehensive 'Living Bridge' consular and cultural camp in Helsingborg, Sweden. This intensive outreach program was designed to seamlessly integrate essential consular service delivery with proactive cultural engagement, ensuring that the Bhartiya diaspora remains a vibrant, connected, and supported community within the European landscape. The event provided a platform for the community to engage directly with diplomatic representatives, resolving administrative matters while simultaneously participating in discussions regarding cultural preservation and youth engagement.

A central component of the Helsingborg camp was the facilitation of structured dialogues between local diaspora associations and the Embassy regarding upcoming bilateral cultural

initiatives. Participants deliberated on strategies to sustain traditional linguistic practices, classical arts, and festive celebrations among the younger, second generation demographic, ensuring the unbroken transmission of cultural heritage. The Embassy emphasized the diaspora's critical role as intrinsic ambassadors of Bharat's cultural outreach , noting that their active preservation of cultural identity significantly enhances the socio-cultural fabric of Sweden. By institutionalizing this support, the *Bhartiya Videsh Mantralaya* (Ministry of External Affairs)successfully reinforced the emotional and cultural ties that bind the diaspora to their ancestral homeland, transforming routine consular outreach into a dynamic exercise in community empowerment and cultural continuity.

Source: *Bhartiya Dootavas* (Embassy of India), Stockholm

https://www.indembassysweden.gov.in/helsingborg-consular-camp-2026/

Launch of the Ambubachi Mela Cultural Documentation Project in Guwahati, Assam



Coinciding with the commencement of the annual Ambubachi Mela around 22nd June 2026, the *Sanskriti Mantralay(*Ministry of Culture), in collaboration with regional academic institutions, launched an unprecedented Cultural Documentation Project at the historic Kamakhya Temple in Guwahati, Assam. Recognizing the Mela as a profound manifestation of Bharat’s Tantric traditions and local spiritual heritage, this initiative was instituted to systematically archive the

oral histories, unique ritualistic practices, and the socio-cultural dynamics of the millions of pilgrims who converge for the festival. The project represents a critical shift towards the rigorous, academic preservation of intangible cultural heritage that has historically relied solely on generational transmission.The festival was observed from June 22 to June 26, drawing lakhs of devotees, ascetics, and spiritual seekers from across the globe to the Nilachal Hills. Often referred to as the 'Mahakumbh of the East' or the 'Mahakumbh of Tantra,' the Mela is a unique celebration that honors the annual menstrual cycle of the presiding deity, Goddess Kamakhya.

The festival carries deep symbolic significance, celebrating the creative and nurturing power of the Divine Goddess. According to tradition, the temple sanctum remains closed for three days starting from the night of June 22nd in 2026 as the Goddess undergoes her cycle, a period of seclusion that mirrors the traditional seclusion observed by women in many cultures. During these three days, all regular temple activities, agricultural work, and domestic chores like cooking or reading holy scriptures are suspended in the surrounding region. This cessation of activity is a mark of respect for the Goddess's period of rest and fertility.
The Ambubachi Mela is also a focal point for Bharat's Tantric tradition. During this four-day window, Tantric practitioners, 'Aghoras', 'Baul' minstrels, and various ascetics emerge from seclusion to perform complex rites and display their spiritual practices. While often shrouded in mystery, the festival provides a platform that transcends social barriers, welcoming everyone from families and intellectuals to those seeking deeper spiritual self-awareness.
Teams of ethnographers, cultural anthropologists, and audio visual technicians were deployed across the temple precincts to conduct comprehensive interviews with traditional custodians, ascetic practitioners, and local artisans. The documentation focused on capturing the intricate nuances of Vedic and Tantric chanting, the specificities of communal rituals, and the deep seated reverence for the divine feminine that defines the festival. By compiling this extensive digital archive, the government is ensuring that the profound philosophical and spiritual underpinnings of the Ambubachi Mela are preserved against the erosive forces of modernization. This initiative not only honors the immense diversity of Bharat's worship landscape but also provides an invaluable, accessible resource for future global research into local spiritual systems and cultural anthropology.
Source: Sanskriti Mantralay (Ministry of Culture), GoI
https://culture.gov.in/ambubachi-mela-documentation-2026/

'Hindi Mein Boliye!' Linguistic and Folk Music Workshop in Vienna, Austria

Expanding its innovative linguistic outreach, the 'Hindi Mein Boliye!' initiative conducted a highly successful, immersive workshop in Vienna, Austria, on 22nd June 2026. Organized by the *Bhartiya Dootavas* (Embassy of India), this program diverged significantly from conventional language pedagogy by utilizing the rich, emotive landscape of Bhartiya folk music as the primary vehicle for teaching Hindi to the local Austrian community. The workshop was designed to dismantle linguistic barriers by immersing participants in the rhythmic and melodic traditions of Bharat, creating an engaging, culturally resonant educational environment that appealed to both linguists and music enthusiasts alike.

During the session, Austrian participants were guided through the lyrical analysis of traditional folk songs spanning various regions of Bharat. By deciphering the poetry and cultural context embedded within the music, learners practiced pronunciation, expanded their vocabulary, and absorbed complex grammatical structures in a highly intuitive and enjoyable manner. This methodology ensured that the acquisition of the Hindi language was deeply intertwined with an understanding of Bhartiya social values, agrarian traditions, and festive ethos. The Vienna workshop stands as a testament to the efficacy of creative cultural diplomacy, transforming the study of Hindi into a dynamic bridge for intercultural empathy and sustained intellectual engagement between European citizens and the civilizational heritage of Bharat.
Source: *Bhartiya Dootavas* (Embassy of India), Vienna
https://www.eoivienna.gov.in/hindi-mein-boliye-2026/

IGNCA Seminar on Digital Archiving of Oral Traditions in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

On 23rd June 2026, the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Kala Kendra (Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, IGNCA) convened a high-level national seminar in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, explicitly focused on the 'Digital Archiving of Oral Traditions and Folklore.' This critical academic assembly brought together leading archivists, technologists, linguists, and cultural historians to address the urgent necessity of standardizing digital preservation protocols for Bharat's vast, yet highly vulnerable, intangible heritage.

As the twin forces of rapid globalization and accelerated urbanization continue to reshape the demographic landscape across civilizational Bharat, the seminar underscored the pressing need to transition oral histories, indigenous dialects, and performative storytelling from localized, human memory into permanent, universally accessible digital repositories. Unwritten traditions,

which have been passed down unbroken for millennia, now face an unprecedented risk of extinction as younger generations migrate to urban centers.

The comprehensive discussions during the seminar delved deeply into the intersection of advanced data science and cultural preservation. Experts examined modern best practices for intricate metadata tagging, the utilization of artificial intelligence and machine learning in phonetic transcription, and the creation of highly interoperable open-access platforms that can be utilized by researchers worldwide. A major focal point was the complex challenge of accurately capturing the subtle nuances, tones, and cultural contexts of unwritten languages and folk narratives before they are irrevocably lost with the passing of elder generations.
The seminar placed significant emphasis on the ethical dimensions of the archiving process. Panelists argued that digital preservation must go beyond mere documentation, it must actively involve and directly benefit the local and rural communities who are the original, rightful custodians of this ancient knowledge. Establishing ethical frameworks for data ownership, ensuring cultural sensitivity in public displays, and making sure that these communities have ongoing access to their digitized heritage were highlighted as non-negotiable standards for modern archival projects.

By working to establish robust, globally aligned standards for digital archiving, the IGNCA is playing a pivotal role in securing Bharat's diverse narrative history for future generations. This dedicated institutional endeavor ensures that the nation's multifaceted cultural identity remains a dynamic, living resource rather than a static relic of the past. The protocols discussed at the Bhopal seminar are expected to form the foundation of upcoming national archiving policies, significantly enhancing the capacity for cross-institutional research and strengthening the core pillars of heritage-based public education across Bharat.
Source:the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Kala Kendra (Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, IGNCA)
https://ignca.gov.in/digital-archiving-seminar-bhopal-2026/

Bronze Statue of Maharishi Sushruta Unveiled at the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh



In a landmark recognition of Bharat's ancient medical heritage, a 90-kilogram bronze statue of Maharishi Sushruta universally revered as the 'Father of Surgery'was permanently unveiled on

19th June 2026 at the prestigious Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (RCSEd) in Scotland. This historic installation at one of the world's oldest surgical institutions serves as a profound global acknowledgment of Bharat’s enduring contributions to the evolution of medical science and surgical innovation.

The initiative to honor the ancient sage on this international platform was spearheaded by Professor Chandra V. N. Cheruvu, an eminent United Kingdom-based surgeon originally from Andhra Pradesh, with support from the Cheruvu Family Foundation. The magnificent statue was meticulously crafted by the highly respected master sculptor Raghavanantham Sthapathi and his dedicated team of artisans in Swamimalai, located in the Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu. Employing the centuries-old traditional lost-wax casting technique, the sculptors preserved the ancient bronze-casting craftsmanship of the region, ensuring that the statue reflects both medical historical significance and the pinnacle of Bhartiya artistic excellence.
The formal unveiling ceremony was led by Siddharth Malik, the Bhartiya*Mahavanijaya Doot* (Consul General of India) in Edinburgh, alongside Professor Clare McNaught, President of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, and other distinguished council members, academics, and international medical professionals. Strategically placed near the staircase leading to the Playfair Hall, the statue now occupies a prominent position where future generations of surgeons will pass as they receive their medical degrees, creating a symbolic and lasting connection between ancient Bhartiya surgical traditions and modern medical education.

Maharishi Sushruta, believed to have lived around 600 BCE, is immortalized through his seminal Sanskrit treatise, the'Sushruta Samhita'. The text exhaustively documents hundreds of complex surgical procedures, innovative medical instruments, and early techniques for reconstructive and plastic surgery that continue to influence contemporary medical practices. To complement the installation, the ceremony also marked the official release of the'Compendium of Sushruta'. This comprehensive scholarly publication features in-depth contributions from 40 global medical experts across 36 chapters, meticulously detailing Sushruta’s timeless innovations in surgery, anatomy, and patient care.
This installation transcends a simple tribute,it represents a significant milestone in cultural diplomacy and the global reclamation of Bharat's scientific heritage. By successfully securing a permanent place for Maharishi Sushruta at a premier Western medical institution, the initiative not only honors the roots of global healthcare but also inspires a renewed, cross-cultural appreciation for the civilizational intellect that emerged from ancient Bharat.

Source:Bhartiya Mahavanijya Dootavas (Consulate General of India), Edinburgh

https://www.cgiedinburgh.gov.in/section/news/consul-general-unveiled-the-bronze-sculpture-of-sage-sushruta-revered-as-the-father-of-surgery-at-the-royal-college-of-surgeons-of-edinburgh/

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