

Ministry of Culture convenes consultations on multinational nomination of Chhath Mahaparva to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List

Posted On: 16 SEP 2025 4:53PM by PIB Delhi

The Ministry of Culture organized a meeting at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi, with senior diplomatic representatives of the United Arab Emirates, Suriname, and the Netherlands to seek their cooperation for the multinational nomination of *Chhath Mahaparva* for inscription on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity under the 2003 Convention. The meeting was chaired by Shri Vivek Aggarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Culture, and attended by officials from the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of External Affairs, Sangeet Natak Akademi, and IGNCA.



The representatives welcomed the initiative, acknowledging the festival's importance among the Indian Diaspora in their countries and assured support for the nomination. Later in the evening, Secretary (Culture) also held a virtual interaction with Indian Ambassadors and High Commissioners to Mauritius, Fiji, Suriname, UAE, and the Netherlands, who expressed full cooperation in identifying communities and facilitating data for the nomination process.



Chhath Mahaparva, dedicated to the Sun God and Goddess Chhathi Maiya, is one of India's oldest festivals, celebrated widely in Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and across Diaspora communities in Mauritius, Fiji, Suriname, UAE, and the Netherlands. Known for its ecological and egalitarian ethos, the festival promotes reverence for nature, sustainability, inclusivity, and community spirit. Participation transcends caste, creed, and religion, with rituals emphasizing simplicity, devotion, and self-discipline.



The proposed multinational nomination of *Chhath Mahaparva* holds immense significance for India. Its recognition by UNESCO would showcase India's living cultural traditions and universal values on the global stage while strengthening cultural pride among diaspora communities worldwide. It reflects India's leadership in promoting shared heritage and international cultural cooperation under the UNESCO framework. It will also enhance India's soft power by deepening goodwill with partner nations and reaffirming India's role as a custodian of living traditions. Most importantly, such recognition will ensure systematic documentation, transmission, and preservation of this age-old festival, safeguarding its practices for future generations.



With 15 elements already inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List, India is among the leading countries in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. The multinational nomination of *Chhath Mahaparva* for the 2026–27 cycle is another milestone in India's cultural diplomacy and commitment to safeguarding living traditions.

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(Release ID: 2167207)