



India Hosts UNESCO's 20th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in New Delhi

Prime Minister's message applauded UNESCO's efforts in safeguarding intangible heritages

India Reaffirms Commitment to Safeguarding Living Traditions: Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat

The week-long session of UNESCO's 20th Intergovernmental Committee concludes on 13 December 2025

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20th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage begins at Red Fort, New Delhi. Union Minister of External Affairs Shri S Jaishankar, Union Minister of Culture and Tourism, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Chief Minister of Delhi Smt Rekha Gupta were present in this historic event. Senior dignitaries including Dr. Khaled El-Enany, Director General, UNESCO; and Ambassador Vishal V. Sharma, Permanent Representative of India to UNESCO were present on the occasion.

Shri Vivek Aggarwal, secretary, Ministry of Culture read the message from the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at the event. The Prime Minister's message applauded UNESCO's efforts and reaffirmed India's readiness to work with global partners to strengthen safeguarding measures.

The Prime Minister reiterated in his message that India is proud to have several elements inscribed on UNESCO's Lists. We are equally proud of our linguistic diversity, rich literature and countless traditions flourishing in our villages, towns and communities, each with its own story, history and unique contribution to humanity.

Addressing the gathering, the Union Minister Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat highlighted that heritage goes beyond monuments and manuscripts, and lives in languages, music, festivals, rituals, crafts and oral traditions. He noted that India's civilisational ethos of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam – the world is one family" continues to guide its cultural policy and international cooperation.

The Minister underscored that today India has 15 elements inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, reflecting the country's vibrant and diverse living traditions. Globally, UNESCO's ICH lists include 788 elements from 150 countries, indicating the scale and urgency of strengthening safeguarding measures.

The Minister emphasised that communities are the true custodians of cultural heritage. He highlighted India's initiatives in craft revival, community archiving, master-apprentice training models, and market-linked livelihood support for artisans. He called for greater involvement of youth through school curricula, vocational training, cultural fellowships and digital platforms, ensuring continuity of traditions for future generations.

The Union Minister expressed confidence that the 20th Session of the Committee would strengthen global cooperation and lead to practical, community-led safeguarding measures. He welcomed all delegates to India and reaffirmed the country's dedication to protecting and promoting intangible cultural heritage worldwide.

Following the inaugural ceremony, delegates witnessed a series of Indian art performances, showcasing classical, folk and contemporary traditions. The presentations reflected the cultural vibrancy and diversity that form the essence of India's living heritage.

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