

Sacred Relics of Lord Buddha's Chief Disciples Enshrined in Mongolia

Exhibition "Vessels of Light" Opens at Gandantegchenling Monastery

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In a significant milestone in India-Mongolia cultural and spiritual relations, the Holy Relics of Arhat Sariputra and Arhat Mahamoggallana, the two chief disciples of Lord Buddha, were ceremonially enshrined at the Gandantegchenling Monastery in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on the occasion of Buddha Purnima (Vesak Day) 2026.



The sacred relics, brought from India for a ten-day exposition from 31st May to 10th June 2026, were received with deep reverence by thousands of devotees and members of the Sangha. The exposition was inaugurated in the presence of Hon'ble Governor of Assam Shri Lakshman Prasad Acharya, Ambassador of India to Mongolia H.E. Mr Atul Malhari Gotsurve, senior dignitaries of the Government of Mongolia, eminent Buddhist leaders, representatives of the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), Mahabodhi Society of Sri Lanka and distinguished guests from across the Buddhist world.

The exposition was announced by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi during the State Visit of the President of Mongolia, H.E. Mr Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh, to India in October 2025. The initiative reflects the deep spiritual and civilisational bonds shared by India and Mongolia, rooted in the teachings of Lord Buddha.

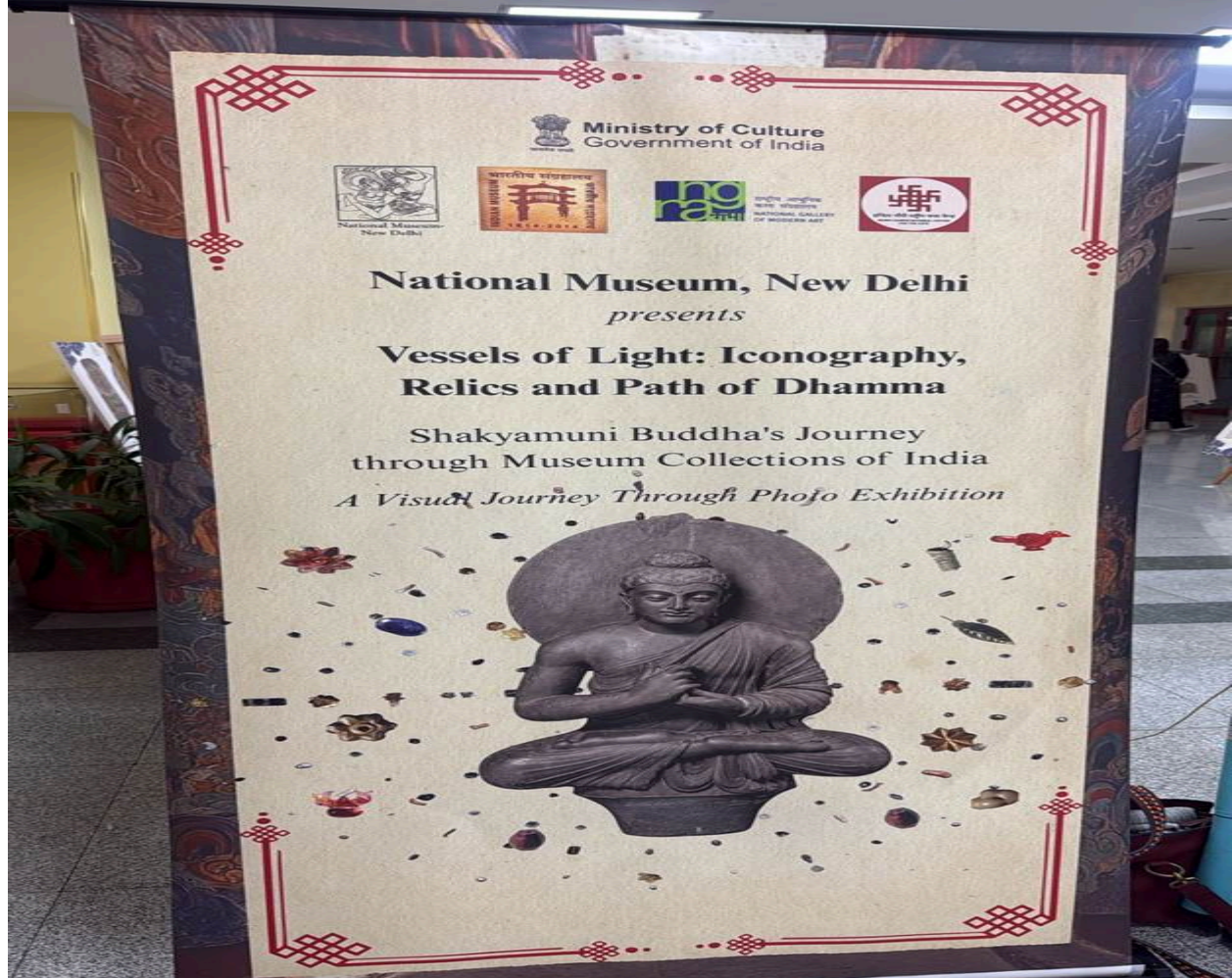


Addressing the gathering, Governor of Assam Shri Lakshman Prasad Acharya described the occasion as a historic moment and stated that the sacred relics embody the living light of enlightenment, carrying a universal message of peace, compassion and harmony. He noted that the relics of Arhat Sariputra and Arhat Mahamoggallana, preserved for centuries in the sacred stupas of Sanchi, are among India's most treasured civilisational inheritances. He emphasized that their exposition in Mongolia is a profound gesture of trust, reverence and friendship between the two nations.

Referring to the enduring India-Mongolia partnership, the Governor recalled Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's observation that India and Mongolia are "spiritual neighbours" connected through Buddhism for centuries. He highlighted that the exposition comes at a significant time as the two countries celebrate 70 years of diplomatic relations and 10 years of Strategic Partnership.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador of India to Mongolia H.E. Mr Atul Malhari Gotsurve highlighted the enduring relevance of Lord Buddha's teachings of peace, harmony, social justice and rational thought. He noted that India and Mongolia, as Strategic Partners and spiritual siblings, continue to deepen cooperation in preserving and promoting Buddhist heritage through initiatives such as gifting of sacred Kanjur manuscripts, the Global Buddhist Summit, the Asian Buddhist Summit, digitisation of Buddhist manuscripts and academic collaboration between Nalanda University and Gandantegchenling Monastery.

The Ambassador underlined that the relics of Arhat Sariputra and Arhat Mahamoggallana have previously travelled abroad only once, to Thailand in 2024, making the exposition in Mongolia a particularly significant occasion. He also noted that the relics, accorded the status of a Head of State in terms of protocol and security, arrived in Mongolia aboard a special Indian Air Force IL-76 (Gajraj) aircraft.



A special exhibition titled “Vessels of Light: Iconography, Relics and Path of Dhamma – Shakyamuni Buddha’s Journey through Museum Collections of India” was also inaugurated on the premises of Gandantegchenling Monastery. Curated by the National Museum, New Delhi, the exhibition presents a rich visual narrative of the life, teachings and artistic representations of Lord Buddha through select treasures from India's museum collections. The exhibition highlights India’s rich Buddhist heritage and its continuing relevance in contemporary times.

The exhibition and exposition have been organised through the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, the National Museum, New Delhi, the Government of Madhya Pradesh, the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), the Mahabodhi Society of Sri Lanka and Gandantegchenling Monastery, with the support of the Governments of India and Mongolia.

The sacred relics will remain on public display for veneration by devotees from across Mongolia until 10 June 2026. The exposition is expected to witness the participation of thousands of Buddhist followers and visitors, further strengthening the centuries-old spiritual bond between India and Mongolia and reaffirming the shared Buddhist heritage that continues to connect the peoples of the two countries.

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