

FORMULATION OF NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

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The Ministry of Culture promotes India's cultural relations with other countries through the Global Engagement Scheme (GES), an umbrella scheme aimed at strengthening India's international cultural engagement and cultural diplomacy. The Scheme seeks to promote India's civilizational heritage, cultural diversity and contemporary creative traditions through structured bilateral and multilateral cooperation. It supports cultural exchanges, heritage conservation, documentation, capacity building and engagement with international cultural organizations.

The Global Engagement Scheme comprises four components, namely the International Cultural Exchange Programme (ICEP), Project Mausam, Brihattar Bharat and the Scheme for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India. Under the International Cultural Exchange Programme (ICEP), the Ministry undertakes Festivals of India, cultural exchanges, deputation of artists and cultural troupes, and implements Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEPs), Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and other bilateral cultural cooperation mechanisms. The Ministry currently has valid Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEPs) with 98 countries, providing an institutional framework for cooperation in the fields of culture, museums, heritage, performing arts and other related sectors. The Scheme also facilitates India's participation in multilateral cultural forums, including BRICS, G20, SCO and BIMSTEC.

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of External Affairs, complements these initiatives by promoting India's cultural heritage and strengthening people-to-people contacts through its network of Indian Cultural Centres and cultural programmes abroad. ICCR actively projects India's diverse culture in foreign countries by facilitating artistic exchanges through the organisation of flagship international cultural festivals in India, where foreign artists are invited to perform. It also organises visual arts exhibitions, hosts Art Residencies to showcase India's rich civilizational heritage, and commemorates national and international occasions in foreign countries, including the International Day of Yoga.

This information was given by Union Minister for Culture and Tourism Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in a written reply in Lok Sabha today

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