

BRICS Theatre Festival 2026 Commences Today at National School of Drama in New Delhi

Union Minister of Culture and Tourism Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat
Graces the Event as the Chief Guest in the presence of Shri Vivek
Aggarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Culture

Festival Brings Together Diverse Theatrical Traditions from Nine BRICS
Member and Partner Countries

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The BRICS Theatre Festival 2026, themed 'Shared Stories, Shared Futures', commenced today at the National School of Drama (NSD) in New Delhi. The three-day festival celebrates the diverse theatrical traditions, contemporary performance practices and shared cultural values of BRICS countries. Organised by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, under India's BRICS Presidency 2026, the festival will run from 12 to 14 October 2026, bringing together theatre practitioners, scholars, students and cultural representatives from nine BRICS member and partner countries.



Following the successful conclusion of the BRICS Summit in New Delhi, the festival marks another significant cultural engagement under India's BRICS Presidency. The participating countries are India, Thailand, Indonesia, Russia, Iran, Vietnam, South Africa, Kazakhstan and Ethiopia. The festival provides a platform for artistic and cultural exchange through the shared language of theatre.

The opening ceremony was graced by Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister of Culture and Tourism, Government of India, as the Chief Guest. The ceremony was attended by Shri Vivek Aggarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Government of India; Shri Sudhakar Dalela, Secretary (Economic Relations), Ministry of External Affairs, and India's BRICS Sherpa for 2026; and Shri Chittaranjan Tripathy, Director, National School of Drama. Their Excellencies, Ambassadors and Heads of Mission from the participating countries were also present at the inaugural ceremony.



Speaking on the occasion, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister of Culture and Tourism, said: "We meet today at a moment of considerable consequence for the international community. At a time when nations are increasingly compelled to navigate competing interests, spaces for mutual understanding and constructive dialogue become more precious than ever before."

"While diplomacy enables nations to negotiate and economic cooperation helps them prosper, culture enables societies to understand one another. It creates connections that transcend political boundaries. Even when our histories, languages and traditions differ, it is this conviction that gives the BRICS Theatre Festival significance beyond the performing arts," the Union Minister added.

The inaugural day featured the play *Samudra Manthan*, written by Shri Asif Ali, with design, direction and music by Shri Chittaranjan Tripathy, Director, NSD. The play was staged at the Abhimanch Auditorium on the NSD premises.



The festival's performances will be staged at venues across New Delhi, including the National School of Drama's Abhimanch and Sammukh auditoriums, Kamani Auditorium, LTG Auditorium and Meghdoot Theatre. Tickets for the performances will be available through BookMyShow at ₹200 per ticket, offering audiences an opportunity to experience an international showcase of theatre and performance.

The festival features national theatre schools and leading theatre institutions from participating countries. Russia is represented by two theatre groups. India will present two theatre productions, while the participating countries will showcase works reflecting their diverse languages, cultural perspectives, theatrical traditions and contemporary creative expressions. The curated programme spans a wide spectrum of theatrical forms, including classical, contemporary and experimental theatre.

India has assumed the BRICS Presidency for 2026 under the theme 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability', with a people-centric approach to strengthening cooperation among BRICS nations. Under this Presidency, the BRICS Culture Track prioritises collaboration in cultural and creative industries, the protection of cultural heritage, and the role of culture in climate resilience and sustainable development. The Theatre Festival complements these priorities by fostering artistic exchange, cultural dialogue and people-to-people connections through live performance.

To encourage artistic engagement and professional exchange, interactive workshops and discussion sessions will be organised on the mornings following performances, involving directors, cast members and crew. Covering artistic vision, performance traditions, acting

methodologies and stagecraft, these sessions will feature discussions, audience interaction and collaborative exercises to promote intercultural learning, knowledge-sharing and long-term collaboration. Through diverse stories and performance traditions, the festival seeks to celebrate distinct cultural identities while strengthening mutual understanding and cooperation among BRICS nations.



The National School of Drama (NSD), an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, serves as the nodal agency for organising the BRICS Theatre Festival 2026. By bringing together theatre institutions and practitioners from participating countries, NSD supports the festival's objective of encouraging artistic exchange and strengthening international cultural engagement.

The BRICS Theatre Festival 2026 serves not only as a showcase of theatrical excellence but also as a platform for cultural dialogue, professional exchange and people-to-people engagement, aligned with the broader objectives of BRICS cooperation. Through theatre, the festival brings together stories, artists and audiences across borders, strengthening cultural understanding and creating opportunities for continued collaboration.

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