

ICCS NEWS BULLETIN

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NEW PREMISES OF ICCS OFFICE IS INAUGURATED

New Office will give new Wings to ICCS

– Ma. Dattatreya Hoshole, Sarkaryvah, RSS



The inauguration of the central office of International Centre for Cultural Studies ICCS was done with Ganesh Pooja in the fifth floor of the new building of Keshav Kunj at Jhandewala, New Delhi today 23 January, 2025. The inauguration was graced by Ma. Dattatreya Hosabale ji, Sarkaryvah of RSS and a number of other dignitaries from academia and social organizations. Ma. Sarkaryvah ji in his address to the gathering after the pooja said that the activities of ICCS have increased manifold in the recent past and the new office will accelerate its growth and motivate other people to associate themselves with ICCS. The pooja was conducted on the premises of both ICCS and Shri Vishwa Niketan. ICCS will now be operating full fledgedly from the new premises at fifth floor, Keshav Kunj, Jhandewala, New Delhi.

The International Centre for Cultural Studies (ICCS) has experienced significant growth and expansion in the year 2024-25. ICCS has broadened its presence by

establishing new chapters across Bharat. Previously limited to Nagpur (Headquarters) and Pune, ICCS now has 14 active chapters, with six more in development. This expansion marks a substantial increase in ICCS's reach and influence.

ICCS has also embarked on establishing a Museum and Library dedicated to ancient traditions at its new office premises. These initiatives underscore ICCS's commitment to preserving and promoting cultural heritage.

In addition to expanding its physical presence, ICCS has forged partnerships with many universities to offer short-term courses on the ancient traditions of the world. These courses, developed by ICCS-affiliated scholars and experts, aim to provide in-depth knowledge of global ancient traditions and foster study and research and increase the awareness and of ancient traditions, ICCS scholars have designed nine short-term courses, with five universities expressing interest in offering them to their students.

STRENGTHENING CULTURAL AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT: ICCS CHINTAN BAITHAK, DELHI



The **International Centre for Cultural Studies (ICCS)** plays a pivotal role in fostering cultural diplomacy and academic collaboration. As part of its ongoing initiatives, the **ICCS-Karyakarta Baithak** was held in Delhi on **21st August 2024** at the **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)**. The meeting brought together scholars, cultural activists, and policymakers to deliberate on strategies for strengthening India's global cultural outreach. The meeting, graced by the presence of Mananiya Suresh Soni ji, commenced with the lighting of a lamp, followed by an introductory note by Shri Ravi Shankar ji. In this Chintan Baithak, 45 delegates from seven chapters have been participated.

Dr. Shashibala, President of ICCS Bharat, extended a warm welcome to delegates from around the world and emphasized the importance of initiating long-term and short-term certificate courses and establishing ICCS corners in reputed universities to strengthen the organization's activities. She also stressed the need for developing a sustainable fundraising scheme to ensure the uninterrupted

continuation of ICCS initiatives. She highlighted several instances where ICCS can play a crucial role in promoting cultural exchange and preservation. Dr. Shashibala emphasized the need for tailored plans and projects for different societies and countries, recognizing the diversity of social systems and cultural heritage.

Shri Shyam Parande Ji elaborated on the aims and objectives of ICCS, highlighting the three vertical sections of its work: patronage of ancient traditions, reviving and celebrating the footprints of ancestors as global entrepreneurs and cultural ambassadors, and Buddha Jagat. He traced the origins of ICCS back to the Virat Hindu Sammelan in Durban in 1995, where discussions with African delegates about preserving their cultural traditions led to the conceptualization of ICCS.

Through a PPT presentation, Shri Shyam Parande ji outlined the vision and mission of ICCS, emphasizing the need for revitalization of diverse ancient traditions and cultures, fostering stronger relationships between them, creating opportunities for elders to exchange



wisdom, networking with like-minded leaders, spreading awareness related to ancestral indigenous wisdom, and encouraging younger generations to engage in rejuvenating and promoting these traditions.

Shri Amarjeeva Ji, Secretary ICCS, reported on the activities in South East Asian countries, including the introduction of Sanskrit in schools and Ayurveda in the university syllabus in Bali, translation of Indian scriptures into Bhasha Indonesia, and the promotion of yoga and meditation practices. ICCS has also been active in Cambodia since 2008, with the Ramayana translated into the local language. In Vietnam, an MoU has been signed for the digitalization of old manuscripts, and a temple is under construction in Ninglu province. Additionally, an MoU has been signed in Thailand for the establishment of a Centre for Bharat Studies, and a magazine titled 'India Calling' is being published.

The meeting also included presentations by all the chapters of ICCS. The chapter coordinators give a brief

outline of their activities and future plans.

The Karyakarta Baithak also included discussions on methods of strengthening ICCS, networking of institutions, committees and teams, certificate courses and publications, contacts, and other important aspects of the organization's functioning. Shri Sandeep Kavishwar, Org. Secy, ICCS, emphasized the importance of focusing on Sanatan Footprints, Buddhist Culture, and Pre-Abrahamic cultures, while also respecting and encouraging diverse traditions.

The meeting concluded with remarks by Mananiya Suresh ji Soni, who provided valuable insights on the organization's work and the importance of developing its own methodology of studies (Adhyayan), rooted in the Bharatiya approach to diversity and oneness. He emphasized the need to go beyond superficial studies and delve deeper into understanding the psychology and traditions of different communities, while also focusing on the economic status of indigenous cultures.

TRIBUTE TO LATE CHANDAN LAL JI: A SESSION ON INDIA'S CIVILIZATION, NATIONALISM, AND GLOBAL UNITY

The 11th Chamanlal Ji Memorial Lecture took place at Speaker Hall, Constitution Club, New Delhi, on 26th March 2024. The event honored Chandan Lal Ji's legacy, bringing together dignitaries and scholars to discuss India's civilization, nationalism, and global unity. The session began with the lighting of the lamp, followed by Amar Jeevaji Shinde Ji, who expressed gratitude and introduced the lecture dedicated to Chandan Lal Ji, a lifelong Pracharak in the Sangh."

Shashi Balaji Ji highlighted the core objective of ICCS to promote the revitalization, conservation, and global dissemination of diverse cultures. In her speech, she emphasized the importance of India's ancient culture and its role in fostering nationalism and national unity. Shri Ravi Kumar Iyer Ji shared his thoughts, memories, and insights about the late Chandan Lal Ji. Shri Iyer Ji shared his experiences of working closely with Chandan Lal Ji, describing him as a humble and dedicated individual who played an instrumental role in connecting India's roots with the rest of the world through the Sangh.

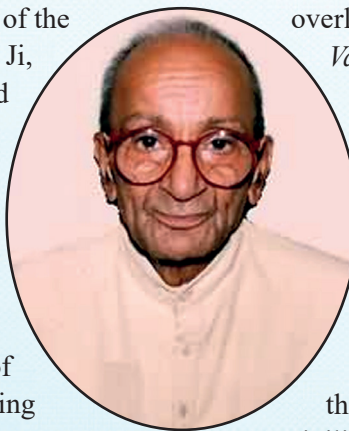
Following this, Shri Guru Murthy Ji addressed the

gathering, delivering an insightful speech on the suppression of civilizations during the world wars and the relevance of understanding contemporary issues in the present context. He pointed out that India, once ignored, is now a nation the world cannot afford to overlook. He also discussed the concept of *Vasudev Kutumbakam* — the philosophy that views the world as one family — and emphasized the need to focus on cultural revival as a means of global harmony.

Guru Murthy Ji also recalled Swami Vivekananda's profound words: "*If you want to know the ancient past of civilization and a nation, you must look at the broken monuments.*" He highlighted that understanding India's past, including its civilization, is key to understanding its present and future role in the world.

Dr. Manohar Shinde Ji spoke about his experiences with Chandan Lal Ji, recalling his simple, loving nature and his deep commitment to the Sangh's work.

The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Shyam Pandey Ji, who expressed heartfelt gratitude to all the dignitaries and guests present.



SHOWCASING THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES OF THE WORLD



ICCS participated in Lok Manthan, Hyderabad held on 21-24 November, 2024 by inviting three delegations of ancient traditions of the world. 1. Four delegates from Romuva Community of Lithuania, 2. Three delegates from Sons of Sun, Armenia and 3.



Three delegates from Yezidis, Armenia. These three groups presented their rituals of Fire Worship and Sun Worship. They also made presentations about their communities and the challenges they are facing currently in the seminar.

DR. YASHWANT PATHAK'S TOUR IN INDIA – A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Bridging Worlds: Scholarly Journeys and Pravash of Dr. Yashwant Pathak in Bharat

Dr. Yashwant Pathak, Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs at the University of South Florida, and founder member of ICCS, recently completed a tour across Bharat, engaging in a series of lectures and discussions. His itinerary included visits to Delhi, Nagpur, Bhagyanagar, Bangalore, Karnavati, Bhubaneswar, and Dibrugarh, culminating at the Research Institute of World's Ancient Traditions, Culture, and Heritage (RIWATCH).

In Nagpur, from December 1-7, Dr. Pathak focused on domestic programs and academic discussions, delivering lectures at Kavi Kulguru Kalidas Sanskrit

University and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar University. His talks centered on the global significance of nurturing cultural roots and exploring collaborations between the Bharatn Council for Cultural Studies (ICCS) and various universities. Discussions also explored the application of Ayurveda in modern contexts.

His engagements in Bangalore included lectures at prominent institutions, promoting the integration of ancient Bharatn wisdom with modern technology. He introduced the ICCS, aiming to foster collaborations with local intellectuals and proposed a new research methodology for ancient traditions, advocating for the incorporation of oral traditions and traditional concepts of Nyaya and Vaisheshika in research.



In Karnavati, his lectures at the Bharatiya Knowledge Systems Conference emphasized the role of Bharatiya traditions in addressing contemporary challenges and building a sustainable future through ancient ecological practices. His programs at the ICCS chapter focused on cultural preservation and the dissemination of traditional knowledge.

In Bhubaneswar, his lectures at Utkal University highlighted the importance of understanding cross-

cultural issues and promoting academic and cultural exchange programs. He also proposed establishing a Jagannath University in the USA for the promotion of Jagannath culture and philosophy.

His visit to Dibrugarh University underscored the importance of nanotechnology in modern science, focusing on its applications in healthcare, energy, and environmental sciences, and encouraging the university to establish interdisciplinary research initiatives.

EARTH'S HEARTBEAT, SHARED WISDOM AND GLOBAL CONNECT AT MAHAKUMBH

On February 16th, 2025, ICCS Bharat participated in the KIVA Mahakumbh Mela event held at Prayagraj Sector 18, a day dedicated to the convergence of global spirituality and traditional knowledge. The event commenced with ICCS members witnessing the profound KIVA Ceremony at Paramartha Niketan Ashram in Sector 24, a ritual rooted in the vision of medicine man Reymundo Tigre Perez, emphasizing the unity of humanity and reverence for Mother Earth.

The KIVA concept, signifying “the world united in one prayer,” is a movement dedicated to preserving global traditions and spirituality, fostering intercultural exchange and peace. Originating from Perez’s vision, it aims to connect humanity with Mother Earth, strengthening the planet’s geomagnetic network and

promoting healing. The KIVA ritual, performed in a circular excavation open to the heavens, involved elders and priestesses from various cultures, including





Columbia, Mexico, and South Africa, who offered prayers and performed traditional ceremonies accompanied by drums and flutes.

In the evening session, ICCS members from Northeast India actively participated alongside other elders, offering salutations to nature and seeking blessings from the elements. This engagement highlighted the interconnectedness of all participants and their shared reverence for the Earth. Following the KIVA ceremony, a seminar was held focusing on shared sustainable prosperity through traditional knowledge, featuring speakers from diverse backgrounds.

The seminar included Shyam ji Parande, Shri Balam Phangcho, Shri Prakash Uike, Smt. Maya Murtem, and Mrs. Angela Gangmei, each sharing insights on preserving natural resources and the integral role of nature in their daily lives. Speakers emphasized the unity of humanity, highlighting the shared elements of life, such as air and water, and the importance of fostering love and connection among all beings. The seminar concluded with a shared commitment to collaborate in preserving ancient traditions and cultures, with Paramartha Niketan expressing a keen interest in partnering with ICCS for this noble cause.

PUNE CHAPTER

The Pune chapter organizes monthly webinars on ancient traditions and cultures across the globe. A list of webinars organized is as follows:

Date	Speaker	Topic
06.08.2024	Major Surendra Mathur	Romuva Tradition of Lithuania
10.10.2024	Prof. Yashwant Pathak	Know our ICCs and Global Civilizations
21.11.2024	Dr. Ram Ji Vaidya (Special Lecture)	Balancing Traditions and Cultures with Modernity in Europe
05.12.2024	Mr. Maling Gombu	Buddhist Philosophy, Traditions, and Culture
16.01.2025	Adriana Salzar	Cultural Traditions of Colombia: Art Forms, Dance, Music, and Folklore

Fire is the Symbol of Harmony in Colombia

In a lecture on Kagava Tradition of Colombia, Ms. Adriana Salazar said that In Northern Colombia Kagava Tradition is alive. Kagava is an indigenous tribe. They have their Elder who is guiding the community. They are living in the high hilly parts of the country and still don't have any connection with the outer world.



Kagava's uses their ancestral calendar and performs their day to day activities as per the same. They believe in Cosmic energy and have faith in it. They dance to welcome the Summer, Rain, harvest and they show gratitude towards the entire Earth. They respect the Fire and it is continuously on. They never turn off the Fire as a symbol of the Harmony of the World. Kagava's believe in the power of the Universe and their connection with the Universal power.

JAIPUR CHAPTER

The Jaipur chapter organizes monthly webinars on ancient traditions and cultures across the globe. A list of webinars organized is as follows:

Date	Lecture Topic	Speaker	Key Highlights
15th Sept 2024	Ubuntu: Essence of Africa's Conviction	Ms. Deepti Kataria	Explored African traditions, oral history, Ubuntu philosophy, and India-Africa cultural parallels.
15th Oct 2024	Cultural Wonders of Japan	Prof. Nabin Panda	Indo-Japan relations, religious influences, Nobel Prize legacy, and cultural heritage.
15th Nov 2024	India-Armenia Ancient Relations	Naira Mkrtychyan	3,000 years of Indo-Armenian history, linguistic connections, and cultural exchanges.
30th Nov 2024	Lithuanian Culture: Traditions & Folklore	Gailė Vanagienė	Winter festivals, Indo-Lithuanian cultural links, and Romuva- Hinduism similarities.
17th Feb 2025	Slavic Folk Cosmology & Indo- European Mythology	Mikolaj Jarmakowski	Indo-Slavic linguistic ties, mythological connections, and Iranian influences on Slavic traditions.

Introduction to Slavic Folk Cosmology in the Context of Indo-European Mythological Studies

The Department of English, University of Rajasthan, on 17 February 2025, in collaboration with the International Centre for Cultural Studies, Bharat, Jaipur Chapter, organized a scholarly lecture on "Introduction to Slavic Folk Cosmology in the Context of Indo-European Mythological Studies". The speaker was Mr. Mikolaj

Jarmakowski, a cultural anthropologist and Slavic philologist from the University of Gdańsk, Poland. Prof. Deepa SP Mathur, Head, Dept. of English, welcome the guest speaker with a shawl, Srifal and a wreath of flowers. Dr. Arun Singh, (General Secretary, ICCS Jaipur Chapter) introduced the speaker to the audience.

Mr. Jarmakowski provided a comparative analysis of Slavic and ancient Vedic traditions, emphasizing their common mythological structures and religious symbolism. He discussed significant archaeological findings from Scythia that illustrate the cultural exchanges between Slavic and Indo-Iranian groups. The migration patterns of Slavic tribes between the 7th and 9th centuries were also explored, with a focus on their interactions with various European and Asian communities. Additionally, he examined the linguistic and cultural links between Slavs and Indo-Europeans, shedding light on shared etymological roots and mythological narratives.

The session concluded with a discussion on the concept of divine gift in Slavic traditions, which is viewed as a sacred interaction with the divine. This belief, according to Jarmakowski, resonates with Indo-European religious



traditions, reinforcing the deep cultural and spiritual connections among these civilizations. Throughout the lecture, the speaker underscored the necessity of interdisciplinary research in uncovering historical linkages and fostering a deeper understanding of Indo-European cultural heritage.

Talk on Lithuanian Traditions and Folklore in Winter Festivals



International Centre for Cultural Studies, Bharat, Jaipur Chapter organized a lecture in association with Department of English University of Rajasthan Jaipur on 30 Nov. 2024. Ms. Gaile Vanagiene, an ethnologist and Romuva priestess delivered the lecture.

Shri Ravi Shankar Ji, research officer in ICCS Bharat, provided a concise overview of the ICCS and its founding members. He discussed the ancient rituals and cultural traditions of India and the world. He emphasised that spirituality unites a community, whereas invasive religions divide. He made an official announcement of the committee of ICCS Jaipur chapter.

In her talk Gailė Vanagienė stated that Lithuania has managed to retain authentic customs and traditions that often connect clearly with paganism. Many ancient customs are fused with Christian principles and revolve around the cycle of farm work holidays related to the seasons. She talked about various winter festivals and songs related to

their celebration. The major winter festivals are:

- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Eve miracles
- Christmas Eve night
- First day of Christmas (25th December)

The first day of Christmas is considered the most scared and, therefore, all unnecessary work is avoided. Only food prepared days in advance is eaten. Much of the morning is spent at home singing Christmas hymns and carols. As the day progresses neighbors start to visit each other and exchange Christmas greetings.

Lithuania and India share some similarities in their festivals and celebrations, including national holidays. Both countries celebrate national holidays with parades, cultural events, and the singing of national anthems.

The Romuva religion shares some similarities with Hinduism. Romuva and Hindu groups have also come together to share prayers and participate in dialogue.

Concluding her lecture, she sang a song about the winter festival. The session concluded with an open discussion on the topic, with intriguing queries and responses. Dr. Arun Singh, convenor of this program and secretary of ICCS Jaipur chapter, delivered his formal vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to the guest speaker, the audience and the organising team of students for making the program a success. About 50 people belonging to various professions attended this programme.

NAGPUR CHAPTER

Living Heritage: The Timeless Traditions of Armenia

A new committee for the Nagpur chapter has been constituted in the presence of Sh. Ram Vaidya ji, Sh. Shyam Parande ji and Sh. Sandeep Kavishwar ji. Ram Vaidya ji addressed the occasion and discussed the idea and working of ICCS. Since ICCS had been founded in Nagpur itself, new committee has greater responsibilities to take the work of ICCS ahead.

Nagpur chapter has organized an webinar on Living Heritage: The Timeless Traditions of Armenia. An Armenian scholar Naira Mkrtychyn delivered the talk. Few salient points of her talk is as follows:

1. Armenia is an ancient civilisation like India- around 6000 years old; Armenian language and Sanskrit belong to same family of languages in Europe.
2. Armenia- India relations- traditionally friendly
3. Christian country since 310 AD, but earlier – many Gods worshipped in Armenia- close in symbolism to Hindu Gods: Ar-ARA-ARAMAZD; Golden Anahit (Mother-Goddess); Temple of Sun God Miher (celebrate pre-Christian festivals)- God of Justice and Areg(ak)- the eye of Sun
4. Appearance of Christianity- consequence- conversion; change in names of God; change in festivals
5. Pre-Christian Symbols in ancient Armenia: Sun worshipped and celebrated- from rock carvings; Swastika converted into symbol of eternity; Hexagram
6. Holy Mount of Ararat: Mount Ararat is a biblical mountain that is traditionally considered the resting place of Noah's Ark- now captured by Turkey.
7. How Christianity affected Armenian Festivals- changed name and significance- associated with Christianity
 - Navasard- New Year- August 11- related to harvest season- dedicated to mother Goddess Anahit
 - Vardavar- festival of Goddess of love and beauty- Astghik- July- Huge statue in Pre-Christian times



- Terendez- Come before God; God be with You- February 13- for newlywed couples
8. Salt and bread- symbol of abundance and good luck- Armenian ritual- Salt container in shape of Goddess Anahit (symbol of fertility)- salt and bread offered as token of hospitality.
 9. Salt used to protect from evil eye- same as in India- burn salt- when it turns black, throw it.; egg in water kept under bed- egg colour tells about extent of negative energy.
 10. Magic rituals – not everyone could practice
 11. Institute of manuscripts- about healing rituals can be found- burning bay leaves
 12. Amulets- various forms and shapes- containing papers with prayers
 13. Predicting future- coffee reading; new year predictions- prediction through water, wax, etc.

BILASPUR CHAPTER

Various Events organized by ICCS Bilaspur Chapter

S no.	Event	Speaker	Date, Time and Venue
	Launching of ICCS Bilaspur Chapter	Sri Kavishwar Ji	4 th December 2024 Conference Hall, International Guest House GGV
Webinar			
	Living Heritage :The timeless Traditions of Armenia	Naira Mkrtchyan Historian-orientalist, Diplomat, Writer	13 th December 2024 07:00pm Onwards Organized through Zoom meeting
	Children of Sun-Yezidi	Khdr Hajoyan, Yezidi Leader	27 th Jan 2025 07:30pm Organized through Zoom meeting
Monthly Seminar			
	Maori Traditions and its relevance in 21 st century	Prof Seema Rai, Dean School Of Life Sciences, GGV	27 th December 2024 Time: 04:00pm Smart Class Room, Dept of Political Science, Dean SoSS GGV
	Culture In Contact :The Shang Tradition Of China	Prof RamaKrushna Pradhan, Head, Dept of Political Science, Dean SoSS GGV	28 th February 2025 Time: 04:00pm Smart Class Room, Dept of Political Science, Dean SoSS GGV



Seminar on Maori Traditions and its relevance in 21st century
 Speaker - Prof Seema Rai, Dean School Of Life Sciences, GGV,
 Date, Time and Venue-27th December 2024 Time: 04:00pm Smart Class Room,
 Dept of Political Science, Dean SoSS GGV

MUMBAI CHAPTER

Insightful Session on Romania's Rich Heritage

On Saturday, 15th February 2025, a session on “Glimpse of Romanian Culture and Tradition” was organized at the University of Mumbai in the Centre for Extra-Mural Studies. The session was conducted by Dr. Neeta M. Khandpekar, who provided valuable insights into Romania’s rich heritage, traditions, and cultural influences. A total of five participants, including three male volunteers—Ayush Agrawal, Harsh Kasture, and Harsh Solanki—and two female volunteers—Saniya Memon and Huda Shaikh, actively engaged in the discussion. Attendees explored various aspects of Romanian customs, art, and history, gaining a deeper understanding of its cultural significance. The session also included an interactive Q&A segment, where participants clarified their doubts and shared their thoughts. The engaging discussions made the session informative and insightful. The event concluded on a positive note, leaving participants with a newfound appreciation for Romania’s diverse culture.



Strengthening Japan-India Cultural Bridge

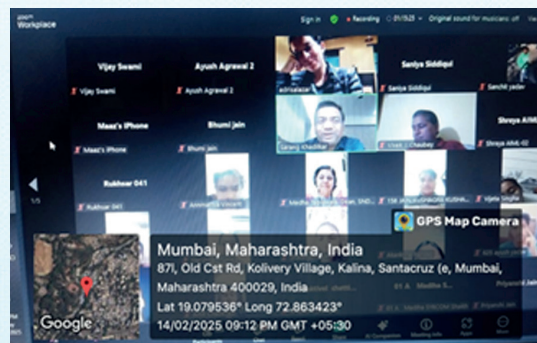


On Friday, 10th January 2025, an online session titled Cultural Bridge Between Japan & India was conducted via Zoom Meeting. It was organized by ICCS Mumbai in collaboration with the Centre for Extra-Mural Studies, University of Mumbai. The session featured Dr. Shashibala Ji, President of ICCS Bharat and a renowned Indologist, as the resource person. A total of 66 participants attended the session, which focused on the deep-rooted cultural and historical connections between India and Japan. Dr. Shashibala Ji shared valuable insights on how both nations have influenced each other through religion, art, philosophy, and traditions over the centuries. She highlighted

key aspects of cultural exchange, including Buddhist connections and historical interactions. The session provided an enriching learning experience for the attendees, fostering a better understanding of Indo-Japanese relations.

Echoes of the Past : Mamus and the Historical Identity of Colombia

On Friday, 14th February 2025, the International Centre for Cultural Studies (ICCS), Mumbai Centre organized an online session on “History of Colombia and Role of Mamus (Shamans) in Preserving Cultural Traditions of Colombia” via Zoom Meeting. The session was conducted by Ms. Adriana Salzar, who shared valuable insights into Colombia’s history and the crucial role of Mamus (Shamans) in preserving its cultural traditions. With 107 participants, the session explored indigenous practices, rituals, and their influence on Colombian heritage. Ms. Salzar elaborated on how shamans safeguard ancestral knowledge and maintain spiritual connections within their communities. Attendees actively engaged in discussions, deepening their understanding of Colombia’s rich cultural legacy. The session concluded with an interactive Q&A, allowing participants to gain further clarity on the topic. This insightful session helped raise awareness about Colombian traditions and the importance of cultural preservation in today’s world.



SURAT CHAPTER

Together in Tradition: A Global Cultural Dialogue



Veer Narmad South Gujarat University hosted “Together in Tradition: A Global Cultural Dialogue” to foster cross-cultural understanding. The event featured students, academicians, and cultural enthusiasts engaging in meaningful discussions on global traditions and values.

Dr. Sunil S. and Mr. Gautam Gamit welcomed Bobby C Kabomo, a Master’s student in Journalism and Mass Communication at VNSGU, originally from Botswana. Bobby’s presentation provided deep insights into Botswana’s cultural heritage through five key themes:

KEY THEMES

1. Rock Art – Botswana’s Tsodilo Hills, a UNESCO site, showcases 20,000-year-old carvings depicting hunting and rituals of the San people.



2. Traditional Dress – Leteisi (German print fabric) is worn during festivals and ceremonies, symbolizing unity and cultural pride.
3. Dance – Energetic dances like tsutsube play a key role in storytelling and preserving communal traditions.
4. Cuisine – Staples like bogobe (sorghum porridge) and vetkoek (fried dough) highlight the simplicity and communal nature of Botswanan food culture.
5. Language – Setswana, the primary language, unites people and preserves oral traditions and folklore.

An engaging discussion followed, drawing parallels between Indian and Botswanan cultures, focusing on dance, attire, and communal traditions.

BHUBNESHWAR, ODISSA CHAPTER

Interconnecting Ancient Maritime Trade and Culture Between Kalinga and Bali, Indonesia

LECTURE BY PROF. SUBASH CHANDRA DASH

Topic: “Interconnecting Ancient Maritime Trade and Culture Between Kalinga and Bali, Indonesia” Prof. Dash, an eminent scholar in Sanskrit, Indian Philosophy, and Manuscriptology, explored the ancient maritime and cultural connections between Odisha and Bali, Indonesia. His presentation highlighted the deep historical and intercultural ties between these regions.

KEY RESOLUTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The ICCS-Bhubaneswar Chapter was officially

declared by Dr. Satpathy, with members expressing their commitment to academic and cultural initiatives.

- Formation of an Academic Advisory Board with six members to oversee research and documentation on indigenous traditions and cultural interconnections.
- Proposal for a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ICCS-Bhubaneswar and Utkal University to introduce a certificate course on Jagannath Culture and Philosophy and promote



academic collaborations.

- Agreement to conduct monthly webinars, public lectures, and cultural studies programs to enhance knowledge dissemination.

The meeting successfully fostered dialogue on Odisha's cultural legacy and its global connections. The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Chinmayee Satpathy, reaffirming ICCS-Bhubaneswar's commitment to further academic and cultural engagement.

GUWAHATI CHAPTER

Talk on Ubuntu Culture

The International Center for Cultural Studies, Bharat, in collaboration with Cotton University, Guwahati, organized a webinar on 27 December 2024 titled "Ubuntu Culture." The event aimed to explore the essence of Ubuntu, a philosophy rooted in African traditions that emphasizes interconnectedness, compassion, and shared humanity.

The lecture was delivered by Deepti Kataria, Secretary of the Africa Study Center, President of the Indian Community in Egypt, an author, speaker, engineer, and Vedant student. The session was coordinated and guided by Dr. Akunthita Borthakur, Head of the Department of History, Cotton University.

Ms. Kataria illustrated the interconnectedness of nature, drawing parallels between Ubuntu and ancient Indian thought. She elaborated on the concept of "Dharm", focusing on its correct pronunciation and deeper philosophical meaning. Through anecdotes and thought-provoking insights, she highlighted how Ubuntu promotes harmony and a sense of belonging in communities.

Dr. Gargee Sharma, Guest Faculty, Department of History, Cotton University, delivered the vote of thanks, appreciating the speaker's valuable insights and the participants' active engagement.

Lithuanian Culture: Traditions, Folklore, and Festivals

The International Centre for Cultural Studies, Bharat, in collaboration with Cotton University, Guwahati, hosted a webinar on October 5th, 2024, titled Lithuanian Culture: Traditions, Folklore, and Festivals. The event featured Ms. Gailė Vanagienė from Klaipėda University, Vilnius, Lithuania, as the keynote speaker, with Dr. Akunthita Borthakur, Head of the Department of History at Cotton University, serving as the coordinator. Professor Amarjiva Lochan, Secretary, Dean DU and GS of ICCS Bharat welcomed and introduced the speaker with a mention of her profession and works.

Ms. Vanagienė began the webinar by emphasizing that to truly understand Lithuanian culture and traditions, especially the symbolism within songs and rituals, it is essential to recognize the cultural layers present. Lithuanian culture consists of ancient, pre-Christian elements that later merged with Christian influences. She discussed Kūčios ir Kalėdos, the celebration of the winter solstice and the rebirth of the sun, marking the beginning of the world's rebirth. She recited a traditional Christmas canto that reflects Lithuania's deep connection to nature and the cosmic order.

The speaker explained that traditional Lithuanian culture is closely connected to the cycles of nature, with holidays reflecting the changing seasons. These calendar holidays help individuals navigate through different stages of life, symbolizing the passage from birth to maturity and eventually to death.

DELHI CHAPTER



Sun Worshippers of Armenia and Indian Relation

On November 27, 2024, a distinguished lecture on *Sun Worshippers of Armenia* was organized at Ramjas College, University of Delhi. This event was designed to explore the ancient traditions and religious practices associated with sun worship, particularly in Armenian culture.

- Mrs. Naira Makrtchyan (Armenia) – Guest Speaker
- Mr. Agrishtri Shamriyan– Priest of Sun Temple, Garni
- Mr. Khdr Hajobayan – Representative from the Yazidi Tradition

The lecture provided a deep insight into the historical and cultural significance of sun worship among Armenian communities, as well as its influence on various traditions, including the Yazidi faith. The event was well-received by attendees, who engaged in meaningful discussions on ancient spiritual practices and their relevance in the modern world.

Exploring Ancient Traditions and Cultures of the World

A significant academic event took place between January 8 and 12, 2025, with the visit of Prof. Yashavant Pathak, an eminent scholar known for his research on ancient cultures, traditions, and decolonial thought. During his visit, he delivered two important lectures, each covering different aspects of cultural and intellectual history.

The first lecture was held at Sharda University, Noida, on January 8, 2025. The topic, *Exploring Ancient Traditions and Cultures of the World*, focused on various civilizations' historical, philosophical, and cultural contributions. Prof. Pathak emphasized the importance of preserving ancient knowledge systems and their role in shaping contemporary societies.

Lecture on Decolonizing Indian Minds

A lecture by Prof. Pathak took place at Ramjas College, University of Delhi, on January 11, 2025. The topic, *Decolonizing Indian Minds*, focused on the enduring impact of colonial rule on Indian education, culture, and identity. Prof. Pathak elaborated on the importance of reclaiming indigenous knowledge systems and fostering an intellectual framework rooted in Indian traditions. This session was specifically organized for faculty members of Delhi University, ensuring an engaging academic discourse on the subject. Attendees actively participated in discussions on how to challenge colonial narratives and incorporate indigenous perspectives into mainstream education.

RAIPUR CHAPTER

Bridge of the Culture and Humanity

The first seminar was organised by the Raipur chapter of the International Center for Cultural Studies (ICCS) at Pandit Ravishankar Shukla University, on 3rd January 2025. The Objective of the program was to encourage in-depth study of the indigenous cultures of the world and their promotion.

Mr. Ashish Singh Patel, greeted the respected speakers and participants. He initiated with the objective of the seminar and told that ICCS Established in 1997 in Nagpur, ICCS is an international institute with

active participation from more than 40 countries. This initiative is led by India. The aim of the institute is to preserve the heritage, traditions and ideologies of the different culture and present them at the global level.

The keynote speaker of the seminar Prof. L. S. Gajpal from Pt Ravishankar Shukla University, presented on the unique features of the Tibetan culture. He said that the tradition of the Tibet make an invaluable contribution to world culture. Professors, PhD scholars and B.Ed



students of the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Raipur and Pt Ravishankar Shukla University also

participated in this event.

Bridge of the Culture and Humanity, this seminar showed that indigenous cultures, once neglected, are now becoming part of the global dialogue. This event will serve as a source of inspiration for more such discussions in the future.

During the program, Mr Rajeev Sharma, representative of vanvasi kalyan Ashram, highlighted the activities and future plans of ICCS. He said that the aim of the organisation is not only to preserve culture but also to ensure their relevance in the modern contexts.

This program is not only an effort to strengthen Indian traditions at the global level, but also gives the message of understating and respecting the diversity of the world.

RIWATCH

Dr. Yashwant Pathak Visited RIWATCH on 23rd December 2024. Dr Pathak graced the Silver Jubilee function of Indigenous Faith and Cultural Society of Arunachal Pradesh (IFCSAP) as Guest of Honour where huge gathering of 10000 people from all the tribal communities of Arunachal Pradesh gathered, Shri Pema Khandu Honorable Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, and other dignitaries also spoke on the occasion. The vibrant speech by Dr Pathak was appreciated by all where he narrated the efforts of ICCS to protect and promote the indigenous faith and cultures of the world. **Shri Pema Khandu declared that RIWATCH will be elevated to a Research University in the state.**

Key Highlights of the Visit:

- RIWATCH Museum:** Dr. Pathak appreciated the museum's preservation efforts of Arunachal Pradesh's Idu Mishmi community and suggested using digital tools to enhance engagement and document oral traditions.
- Herbal Garden:** He admired the collection of medicinal plants and encouraged research on local herbs for potential use in modern medicine. He proposed awareness campaigns for the local community.
- Arogya Panchakarma Therapy Centre:** Dr. Pathak was impressed by the center's Panchakarma therapies and recommended integrating local herbs



and Ayurvedic diagnostic tools to enhance offerings.

4. **Documentation Centre:** Dr. Pathak emphasized expanding archives, digitizing manuscripts, and ensuring accessibility for research.

Conclusion & Recommendations: Dr. Pathak's visit was instrumental in shaping RIWATCH's future direction, focusing on modern technology integration, research expansion, collaborations, and financial sustainability.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Day of Perkūnas Celebrated with Joy – In Lithuania

February 2nd is The Day of Perkūnas (Thunder God) in Lithuania. The ancient Baltic religious community Romuva invites to celebrate The Day of Perkūnas together every year. The Romuva vaidilos (the priests) and the Romuva ritual group "Kūlgrinda" perform the rituals in honour of Thunder God Perkūnas. Fire ceremonies are performed in honour of the god, candles brought by the people are blessed, and songs for Thunder God and bee songs are sung.

During the celebrations participants are blessed with a special Thunder God's candle, according to the ancient custom.

By this time, the sun's height above the horizon has risen to the point where it no longer sends cold winter light to earth, but gently warming rays. The prison of winter is now slowly beginning to disintegrate, and the earth, shackled by the rigours of winter, is becoming more and more bitter. Thaws are more frequent. Special candles blessed on this day can help prevent the destructive powers of thunder in summer.

It is believed that these candles can protect homes from lightning, fields from ice, and people from thunderstorms and disease. The candle was lit and placed in the window when the storm clouds rolled in and the thunder began to rumble.

When people started to build the house, they would hide a piece of the candle in the crown of the first wreath.

These special candles were also lit near the dying



person and the coffin of the deceased. They are meant to protect the soul of the deceased and to light the way to another world. In general, the candle has become a symbol of human life, the protection of the soul and the spirit in ceremonies and beliefs. In the old stories, when a person visits God, he sees many burning candles, the length of which corresponds to the length of the person's remaining life... Candles, like stars, accompany us from birth to death."

ICCS INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CULTURAL STUDIES **ICCS Europe Conference**
-Connected through tradition

Scan me to register!!!

The ICCS hosts its first European Conference, "Connected Through Tradition," celebrating European indigenous traditions. This event fosters collaboration, wisdom-sharing, and global advocacy for our shared heritage.

Date: 11th- 13th April 2025
Time(arrival): 11th April 2pm
Time(Departure): 13th April 2pm

Add.: Yoga Vidya- Yogaweg 7,
32805 Horn-Bad Meinberg, Germany

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