

## Cultural Calendar - October 2016

# 2

Sunday  
4.00pm

### Gandhi Jayanti

Commemorating the Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi

Lecture - "Gandhi's Buddhism: A critical analysis"  
by Dr. K. P. Shankaran, Professor of Philosophy and an eminent educationist from India.

and

### Bhajans

by The Faculty and the students of the Visual Arts & Design and Performing Arts Unit, University of Kelaniya

Organized in association with Sri Lanka India Society

Venue: ICC auditorium

### Garba and Dandiya Night

Organized by the Hindi Teachers and students of the Centre  
Venue: ICC auditorium

# 5

Wednesday  
6.00pm

### Authored By - A Creative Writing Workshop

by Aparna Raman, Founder of Timbuktoo Young Authors Publishing, Bangalore.

Organisation & coordination in Sri Lanka  
by Artika Bakshi, Co-founder of The Good Book Corner.

Admission by prior registration.

Contact Artika Bakshi on 0777405205.

Venue: ICC Auditorium

# 8 & 9

Saturday & Sunday  
10.00am - 1.00pm  
3.00pm - 6.00pm

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### Friday Matinee

Drishyam (Hindi)

Director: Nishikant Kamat (Duration: 2 hrs 43 mins)

Cast: Ajay Devgan, Tabu, Shriya Saran, Shita Dutta

Venue: ICC auditorium

# 14

Friday  
3.00pm

# 17

Monday  
6.00pm

### Bharatha Natyam recital

by Seejith Krishna & Anjana Anandh from India

Venue: ICC auditorium

### Hindustani Vocal Recital

Dr. Wijeyadasa Bandara

(Phd. In music from Indira Kala Sangeet Vishwavidyalaya, India)

Venue: ICC auditorium

# 21

Friday  
6.00pm

# 26

Wednesday  
6.00pm

### Nav Pratibha - 2016

Annual Cultural Day of the Performing Arts students of the Indian Cultural Centre

Venue: Bishops College Auditorium

No.11, Perehera Mw., Colombo 03

### "Deepa Deepam"

An evening of Bharathanatyam  
to celebrate Diwali- the Festival of lights

Traditional and folk dances will be performed by the students of Shivananthi Haridharshan, Vasugy Jegatheeswaran, Nirmala John, Geethanjali Sudharshan, Shanthi Ganesharaja and Moksha Samarasooriya.

organized in collaboration with Media Mantra

Venue: ICC Auditorium

# 28

Friday  
6.00pm

Programmes subject to change

Admission to all programmes are on first come first serve basis. Except 8th and 9th

All are cordially invited

UNIE ARTS, 2330195



Indian Council for Cultural Relations  
भारतीय सांस्कृतिक संबंध परिषद

# Sanskarika

Newsletter of the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo

October 2016



Happy Diwali

# Cultural Tapestry

## DIWALI CELEBRATIONS AROUND INDIA

The ancient festival of Diwali has been celebrated for ages in India and annual celebrations are still held each year all over the country with great flourish, enthusiasm and gaiety. Traditionally believed to be a Hindu festival of wealth and prosperity, it is amazing to see how Diwali has become an occasion for all Indians irrespective of their status and castes.



**North India :** According to the great Hindu epic 'Ramayana', Diwali is believed to be the time when Lord Rama defeated and killed the King Ravana and after passing a period of fourteen years in exile returned to his capital Ayodhya (in the Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh) on a new moon day of the Kartik season with wife Sita and brother Lakshman. This homecoming of Lord Rama was celebrated with lights, fireworks, bursting of crackers and merriment. The Diwali night, is a night of fireworks with sparklers and crackers of all types burnt throughout the night. The idols of Goddess Lakshmi, the symbol of wealth and prosperity and Lord Ganesh, the elephant-headed god, the symbol of auspiciousness and wisdom, are worshipped in most Hindu homes on this day. Most of the temples dedicated to the worship of Lord Rama or Krishna celebrate Diwali with great piety and eagerness.

**Eastern India :** In the eastern region of the country, Diwali is celebrated with great fanfare. In Orissa, oil lamps, candles and lanterns are lit and placed in rows around individual homes. Crackers are burst, sparklers lighted and gifts and sweetmeats distributed by people across the state.



The celebration here is almost like anywhere in India save for one ritual that calls upon the spirits of the family's forefathers. A primitive custom in this festival includes burning of jute stems to light up the dark path that the spirits of the ancestors supposedly take to go back to heaven.

In West Bengal, the deity celebrated on this occasion is the fierce Goddess Kali. "Kali Puja" or the worship of Goddess Kali is what makes the celebration in this part of India a unique one. In Kolkata, the capital of the state, as well as in all the other parts of West Bengal, the nights of "Kali Puja" are marked by high festivities that consists of activities similar to other regions like bursting crackers, holding dazzling fireworks display, lighting rows of candles and diya around individual homes, painting colorful patterns at the doorstep, dressing up in new apparels and paying a visit to friends and relatives. Across the state, makeshift structures called pandals, made of articles as bamboos and cloth, are erected that house idols of Goddess Kali for the two days of celebration. The actual worship of the deity is, however, done only for one night during this festival. It is also believed that it is the night of the 'Pitripurush' (ancestors) and lamps are lit on long poles to guide their souls on this night. But the practice is more common in rural areas of Bengal than in cities like Kolkata.



**Western India:** In the western states of India, Diwali is a four-day festival, the preparations for which begin at least 15 days in advance. On the night preceding Diwali, Gujaratis start celebrations by creating designs depicting images associated to the festival like deities, sun and flowers from natural powder colors (called "Rangoli") in their verandas. Images of small footprints are also drawn over individual doorsteps which is supposed to be a way of inviting Goddess Lakshmi to the house.

On the first day, Narakchaturdashi, fruits are smashed and crackers burst to symbolize the killing of the evil demon Narakasur. On Lakshmi Pujan, the second and most important day of Diwali, Hindu homes all over the western region of India worship the idols of Lord Ganesh (deity of auspiciousness and wisdom) and Goddess Lakshmi (deity of wealth and prosperity) or symbols of them like currency notes and gold. The third day, Padawa, is considered to be one of the most auspicious days of the year in states like Maharashtra, and is held to be propitious for beginning any important task. This is the day for shopping, lighting diya (earthen lamps) and performing tilak ceremony. In Gujarat, this is the New Year day when people visit each other to wish a new beginning. Bhau Beej is the last day of the festival that signifies sibling bonding and the celebrations during

this day is quite akin to Rakhi, another great Indian festival standing for the brother-sister relationship. Unlike Raksha Bandhan however, which is a day dedicated to brothers, Bhau Beej is dedicated to sisters.

In Maharashtra, Diwali is celebrated over a span of four days. The first day, Vasubaras, is celebrated by performing an Aarti (prayer with songs) of the cow and its calf- which represents the love between a mother and her baby. The next day is Dhanatrayodashi or Dhanteras, a special day for tradesmen and business people for new account books are opened by them after a worship of Lord Ganesh and Goddess Lakshmi. On the third day, Narakchaturdashi, people get up before sunrise and take a bathe after rubbing scented oil on their body.

After this, the entire family visits a temple and offers prayers to their God. Following this, everyone feasts on Faral, a special Diwali preparation consisting of delicious sweets such as "karanj" and "ladoo" as well as some spicy eatables like "chakli" and "sev". The fourth day is Lakshmi puja day, a new moon day, the dark night of which is illuminated by lamps and fireworks. In every household, an idol of Goddess Lakshmi and items of wealth like currency and jewellery are worshipped. Friends, neighbours and relatives are invited over and celebrations are in full swing.



**Southern India:** In Southern India, Diwali is celebrated in the Tamil month of aipasi (thula month) 'naraka chaturdasi' thithi, preceding amavasai. Naraka chaturdashi is the main day of the Diwali celebrations in this area. The preparations begin the day before, when the oven is cleaned, smeared with lime, religious symbols drawn on it and then filled with water for the next day's oil bath. Individual homes are washed and decorated with kolam designs. Firecrackers and new apparels are kept on a plate to be used on the following day. On the morning of Naraka chaturdashi, the actual celebrations begin with an early morning oil bathe before sunrise. Afterwards, sweets are eaten and new clothes worn.

A unique Diwali custom in Tamil Nadu is the once-in-a-lifetime event, Thalai Deepavali, when newly weds spend their first diwali after marriage in the bride's parental home. The newly married couple, after taking blessings from the elders, burst the first crackers of the day and thereafter pay a visit to the temple, get gifts of clothes and jewellery, savor the sweets reserved for them and receive blessings of elders for a happy married life. In this joyful occasion the groom's parents and relatives also come down to join in the celebrations.