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**South Korea, Australia, Mauritius and Myanmar among countries to hold the next round of Festivals of India abroad**

**Modern themes like Digital India find favour along with traditional themes, art and culture**

The Union Ministry of Culture has set the ball rolling for holding the next round of Festivals of India abroad during the period 2015-16. The Secretary, Culture, Shri Ravindra Singh today held a video conference with Ambassadors/High Commissioners of South Korea, Australia, Mauritius and Myanmar in this regard. Similar festivals have already been organized successfully in various countries like Malaysia, China, Indonesia, South Africa and Japan among others.

Discussing the details with the Ambassadors and High Commissioners, the Secretary pointed out that these festivals can be used to showcase Indian art, culture, life and achievements. The Ambassadors and High Commissioners favoured the idea of projecting the face of modern India by showcasing the rise of Digital India and other modern technological developments in the field of space. They were also of the opinion of showcasing the journey of Indian civilization from 5000 years ago to the modern India.

Shri Ravindra Singh shared the experience of the festivals held in other countries recently like South Africa and China and various themes of these festivals like Buddhism, Yoga, exhibitions on cricket etc. He also asked these countries to collaborate among themselves and schedule the activities in such a way that the artistic performances and exhibitions being run in a particular country can be presented in the neighboring countries too.

The events and theme of a Festival is decided by each country. Ambassador to South Korea was in favour of Festival theme based on Buddhism since it has a large Buddhist population. Ambassador to Myanmar emphasised that the Yoga and Ayurveda can be of special interest in Myanmar. Representative of Indian High Commission in Australia

favoured the theme based on Tribal Art. The ambassadors were of the opinion that the states should also be involved actively in these festivals.

The Secretary emphasized that social media should be utilized to the maximum extent possible.

Senior officials of the Ministry of Culture and representatives from National Museum, National Council of Science Museums, NGMA and other organizations involved in these festivals were also present during the Video Conference.

NB/NK/PS