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FAX MESSAGE

To: Foreign New Delhi
From: Indembassy Hanoi

- Rpt: (i) Secretary (Culture), M/o Culture, New Delhi
(ii) DG (ICCR), ICCR, New Delhi
(iii) JS (EA), MEA, New Delhi
(iv) JS (South), MEA, New Delhi
(v) JS (ASEAN ML), MEA, New Delhi
(iv) JS (Culture), M/o Culture, New Delhi
- Rpt: (i) HOMs in ASEAN countries, Beijing, Tokyo and Seoul
(ii) CG, Ho Chi Minh City

Secretary (East) from Ambassador

FESTIVAL OF INDIA IN VIETNAM, 5-15 MARCH 2014

As mentioned in our Weekly Report last week, the Festival of India in Vietnam was formally inaugurated at the prestigious Opera House in Hanoi on 5th March 2014 with a Reception (for over 300 persons) followed by a stunning classical dance recital Nrityarupa, by Sangeet Natak Academi. The event was attended by over 600 guests. Important dignitaries from the Vietnamese side included. Nguyen Thien Nhan, Politburo Member and Chairman of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, Vuong Duy Bien, Vice Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism and five other Vice Ministers, 31 Ambassadors from the diplomatic corps and senior representatives from national and international organisations / agencies. Shri Ravindra Singh, Secretary (Culture) led the Indian delegation for the Festival.

2. The Festival is being held in three cities in Vietnam – Hanoi, Danang and Ho Chi Minh City. Apart from the classical dance performance, other components of the Festival include the Buddhist Festival, the Food Festival, Rajasthani Folk Dance performance, Yoga and Mehendi. The formal inaugural of the Food Festival took place in Hanoi at Sheraton Hotel on 6th March, the same day when the Buddhist Exhibition Dharam Darshan was inaugurated in Ho Chi Minh City. The formal inauguration of the Buddhist Festival was held the next day in Ho Chi Minh City.

3. By all accounts, the Festival has been a resounding success, extremely well received by those who attended and certainly, way beyond our expectations. So far, the Buddhist Festival promises to be the most popular segment of the

entire Festival, although the packed attendance to the classical dance recital on all four consecutive days in Hanoi, as well as a full house at the Food Festival has been heart-warming too. I understand from our CG in Ho Chi Minh City that both the Buddhist Exhibition and the Buddhist Festival, attracted large crowds, that thronged to see the sacred Lama Dance and chanting and seek "blessings" from the Indian monks. This once again reconfirms the importance of Buddhism to leverage greater cultural and people – to – to people contacts in Vietnam. Additional elements like Mehendi and Yoga demonstrations have been equally popular and well received, particularly among the youth at two universities in Hanoi. There has been extensive media coverage of all events held so far, describing each in superlative terms. Such coverage is rare and unprecedented. A full compilation of this press coverage is being sent separately.

4. The next few days will help us assess better the full impact of the Festival events. A detailed report of the Festival will be sent once the Festival concludes on 15th March.

Warm regards,



(Preeti Saran)
Ambassador