



Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

Press Release

What : Holi Mahotsav – The Colour of Friendship and Harmony

When : Two day festival on 1 April (10:30am – 8pm) & 2 April, 2006 (11am-6pm)

Where : Tumbalong Park, Darling Harbour – Street Procession on 1 April to start from Archibald Fountain, Hyde Park North at 10.30am

Cost : Free to general public

As part of the Harmony Day celebrations in Australia, **Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia (The Institute for Indian Arts, Culture and Education)** in partnership with **India Tourism Sydney** and **Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority** are celebrating its fourth annual “**Holi Mahotsav**” – one of the most vibrant, colourful and exciting festivals of India. This year this unique festival is planned in a grander fashion spread over two days. **Entry is free.**

Morris Iemma, Premier of NSW is supportive of the Event “The Holi Mahotsav Festival brings Australians of many cultures together in a high-spirited event that highlights, once again, the value of cultural exchange as a medium to promote communication and harmony. I commend Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan for extending the hand of peace and friendship, while also providing Sydneysiders with an opportunity to experience the broad range of Indian culture and spirituality.

The Festival will begin on Saturday morning with a large street procession from Hyde Park North through Sydney CBD and via Sydney Town Hall and culminating in to Tumbalong Park, Darling Harbour. The Procession will include **Rath Yatra (hand pulled Chariot)** courtesy of **ISKCON SYDNEY** and **Incredible India** float among other community floats. This will be followed by day long dance and music performances until 7pm. Following the cultural performances will be the sacred **Holi Cultural Bonfire** on Saturday 1 April between 7pm-8pm. The Holi Fire is believed to drive away evil from society.

Peter Debnam, NSW Liberal leader is equally supportive “The Indian community has a long and proud history in this country. The contribution of Indian Australians to our society cannot be underestimated and Holi Mahotsav is a wonderful celebration of the values Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan holds close, namely love and harmony.

For **Sujan R Chinoy, Consul General of India**, Holi holds special significance “Holi is one of India’s best known festivals, steeped in its ancient legends and cultural ethos. The revelry that marks the event symbolises the triumph of good over evil. In addition to the parade, dance, music and cultural performances, participants will have the opportunity to savour Indian culinary delights. The joint presence of the Indian community and other communities together as Australians will continue to strengthen multiculturalism and harmony”

The colour powder throwing sessions will be held in a designated area through out the day on Sunday of the festival starting at 11am and finishing at 6pm. The dance and music performances will continue throughout the second day as well.

Stepan Kerkyasharian, Chair of the Community Relations Commission For a multicultural NSW is a long term supporter of Holi “Holi Mahotsav is relatively new to Sydney but already it has become a fascinating and fun-filled event in the centre of the city that exposes the people of Sydney, and passing tourists alike, to an ancient popular festival. The unique celebration of Holi which features



Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

the joyful and somewhat coloured dyes brings something new to our cultural scene and more and more people of Sydney can taste the world's great cultures without leaving home.

Holi Mahotsav features Sydney's finest vegetarian food stalls and merchandise stalls on both the days of the festival. Traditional Indian wear and jewellery will be on display and sale.

The spirit of the festival is a symbolic commemoration of cultural harmony to shed inhibitions and caste differences by extending a hand of peace and throwing brightly coloured powder (Gulal for some) and water over each other in a designated area thus spreading the message of Love and harmony.

Last year over 41,000 people attended Holi Mahotsav. It was a pleasure to see such a mix of cultures coming together under one banner to experience the happiness and depth of traditional Vedic Indian culture. Major sponsor for the Event is India Tourism and partners include the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, Iskcon Sydney with Rath Yatra, SBS Radio and Television, NAB, Qantas, the Community Relations Commission and the Australia India Business Council.

Bhavan Australia will announce three winners of **Youth Awards** at Holi Mahotsav recognising young persons (16 – 30yrs) who have made significant contribution to the society during calendar year 2005. Bhavan Australia also has a series of events for **Seniors week**.

High Commissioner of India Mr P.P. Shukla remains a strong supporter "Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan has been playing a leading role in bring the Indian Community together through the celebration of various festivals and organisation of other events. Holi is an important festival in India and is an occasion for promotion, social interaction and harmony."

For details and press kits please contact Gambhir Watts, President on (02) 9267 0953 or 0413 880 881 or email president@bhavanaustralia.org. For info please visit www.bhavanaustralia.org

