

# Embassy of India Muscat

## Press Release

### FESTIVAL OF INDIA IN OMAN CONCLUDES WITH INDIAN FOOD FESTIVAL AT GRAND HYATT (15-19 MARCH 2017)



The much-awaited Indian Food Festival in Oman was inaugurated on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017 evening at Grand Hyatt in a ceremony full of Indian instrumental music, classical and folk dance, ghazals and Bollywood songs. His Excellency Salim bin Mohammed bin Said Al Mahrooqi, Under Secretary for Heritage, Ministry of Heritage and Culture of Oman, was the Chief Guest. The Opening ceremony was also attended by HE Nasser Mohammed Khaleefa Al Busaidi, Chief of Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, HE Sheikh Hilal Marhoon Salem Al Ma'amari, Chief of West Asia Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and HE Saif Mohammed Al Ruzaiqi, Adviser Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Over 300 prominent Omanis, including businesspersons and officials, Ambassadors, members of diplomatic corps, expatriates and members of Indian community were present at the opening ceremony. The Indian Food Festival at Grand Hyatt will conclude on 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2017.



The Indian Food Festival at Grand Hyatt is the ultimate event under the Festival of India. Given the historical contacts between India and Oman, leading to intermingling of various cultural, including culinary, traditions of the two countries and presence of hundreds of Indian restaurants, in Muscat and other cities of Oman,

both the people of Oman and the expatriate community in Oman are familiar with various facets of Indian cuisine. The purpose of organising the Indian Food Festival in Muscat is, therefore, to delight the people of Muscat with some lesser-known culinary traditions of India like Kashmiri, Bengali, Rajasthani, Gujarati cuisines. Thus, Indian Food Festival in Muscat provides food connoisseurs with an opportunity to enjoy those Indian cuisines which are not readily available in Muscat.



With the inauguration of Indian Food festival, the first-ever Festival of India in Oman, which commenced four months ago, has concluded. It may be noted that the Festival of India in Oman was inaugurated by Honourable Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs, HE Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, on 15th November 2016, with a scintillating presentation of Indian ballet dance by Hritaal Dance Troupe at Al-Bustan Palace Amphitheatre, Muscat. Hritaal troupe had also performed in Salalah, Sur and Suhar. Thereafter, as part of the Festival of India, an Indian Calligraphy Exhibition was organised in Promenade of Oman Avenues Mall, Muscat. The Exhibition, which was inaugurated on 21st November 2016, showcased India's Islamic calligraphy traditions and highlighted its contribution to development of the composite and diverse culture of India. The Calligraphy Exhibition will be again on display at the gallery of Omani Society of Fine Arts for a week from 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017.



The Calligraphy Exhibition was followed by presentation, under the Festival of India, of a bouquet of semi-classical, Sufi, folk and Bollywood music, songs and dances, brought to Oman by Dr. Soma Gosh and her troupe, who performed not only in Muscat at Al-Bustan Palace Amphitheatre but also in Salalah, Sur and Suhar. It was followed by mesmerising performances presented last month by a folk dance troupe

from the Jammu and Kashmir State of India. They had performed not only in Muscat but also in Salalah, Sohar and Sur.

The first-ever Festival of India in Oman was held by Ministry of Culture of the Government of India and was organised by the Embassy of India, in Muscat, which received full support of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Culture and Heritage of Oman. Various events held under the Festival of India were enthusiastically received by the people of Oman, who attended them in large numbers. The Indian community in Oman also supported and participated in various events organised as part of the Festival of India not only in Muscat but also in Salalah, Sohar and Sur.

As is well known, the relations between India and Oman are historical and are traced back to over 5000 years. They have been characterized by regular cultural as well as trade exchanges. Since establishment of diplomatic ties in 1955, the historical relations have evolved into a strategic partnership, based on mutual trust and understanding. Since the people of Oman are familiar with many facets of Indian culture, under the Festival of India, some lesser known facets of Indian culture were presented with a view to highlight the diversity of Indian culture as manifested in its numerous art, music, dance, culinary and costume traditions. The first-ever Festival of India in Oman will be long remembered as an important milestone in development of friendly relations between the two countries. It has strengthened the bonds of friendship between the peoples of India and Oman. It has also contributed in creating more awareness in Oman about the diverse and unique culture of India.

**Muscat, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017**