



प्रधान मंत्री

Prime Minister

MESSAGE

I congratulate the National School of Drama for organizing the 13<sup>th</sup> 'Bharat Rang Mahotsav'. This festival of national theatre is one of Asia's largest festivals dedicated to theatre and has now become an important event on the cultural calendar of the country.

The festival is a forum for dialogue and creative exchange, through performance and interactions. It is unique in seeking to facilitate cross-language and cross-cultural interaction by using sub-titling screens. The theatre of different languages/regions that was hitherto difficult to follow will now be available, through translation, to wider audiences.

In recent years, the Ministry of Culture has taken several important steps and has initiated several new schemes, to rejuvenate theatre and the performing arts.

There has been an exponential increase in both the number of beneficiaries and the amount of financial assistance being awarded to groups engaged in theatre, dance and music. I am told that nearly 4500 artistes are being provided annual salary assistance by the Ministry of Culture. In the last year, over 700 organizations and individuals have received assistance to stage new productions. The amounts paid as 'pensions' to senior creative cultural personalities in indigent circumstances have also been doubled. I am informed that over 2600 such artistes are being provided assistance by the Ministry of Culture.

The Ministry of Culture has introduced the Cultural Functions Grant Scheme, which has filled in a long felt gap, by providing multipurpose assistance to cultural bodies for conducting seminars, symposia, festivals, exhibitions, cultural performances and research projects. In its first year, the scheme has been able to assist more than 400 not-for-profit organizations.

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The number of annual Fellowships awarded by the Ministry to outstanding artistes for encouraging research in the field of culture has been increased from 250 to 400.

The Ministry of Culture has introduced the 'Tagore National Fellowship for Cultural Research Scheme' to persuade iconic academics, scholars and researchers to devote 2 years of their time to produce works for public knowledge, from the huge untapped resources of our cultural institutions. The first 13 Tagore National Fellows have already been selected this year.

We are working to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> year of Rabindranath Tagore's birth in a befitting manner. Our planned activities include a scheme for the total renovation and expansion of the Rabindra Auditoria that were set up in the 1960s and 1970s, many of which need strong support. The new Tagore Commemoration Grant Scheme will support new projects and encourage artistes to create newer expressions, based on Tagore's works.

Resuscitation of theatre activity urgently requires functional spaces that can double up as both rehearsal and performing spaces. A year ago, I had spoken about the need for 'Studio Theatres' or small and more intimate performing spaces as a long-felt need of the theatre community.

We have addressed this need with all seriousness, and I am happy to announce the 'Studio Theatre Scheme'. Under this scheme, the Ministry of Culture will provide generous support to theatre groups to address the problem of non-availability of performing spaces. This will give a much needed helping hand to our artistes and allow them to concentrate on creative expression. The details of the scheme would be spelt out by the Ministry of Culture on its website.

I wish the Bharat Rang Mahotsav and its participants and all of you present here the very best for the New Year.

  
(Manmohan Singh)

New Delhi  
5 January, 2011