

## Preview of painting exhibition at Indian Culture Centre in Kabul

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Separately, at the invitation of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Kabul University, she participated in a seminar on the contemporary art scene in Baroda, an important art centre in India (and from where the artist hails), with demonstration of her unique technique of reverse painting on glass and acrylic sheet.

Gangopadhyay has held a large number of exhibitions throughout India, both in solo and group shows. She is also a visiting art scholar at a number of art institutions. She says that she still harbours her early fascination for Chagall. Evidently, her paintings reflect the same passion for colours as he had.

The Indian Embassy hopes that the new culture centre will become a vibrant hub for all communities with diverse cultural background to come together in a mutual spirit of bonding through various cultural activities.

This is in furtherance of its firm belief that culture has the enormous power to build bridges between the people of the different



**Ambassador Sood addressing the gathering at the opening of the exhibition. On the left is Catherine Mbengue, Representative, UNICEF Afghanistan and on the right is Sumati Gangopadhyay, painter.**

countries, to create understanding and to forge familiarisation with the socio-cultural customs, values and way of life.

The gathering at the Indian Embassy on July 17 was effusive in its praise for the

Indian Embassy initiative. Afghan Deputy Culture Minister, Omar S. Sultan, in his address, noted the vibrancy of the bilateral cultural activities, remarking that the present event was yet another step forward in exposing the local artists in Afghanistan to the diversity of art movements prevalent outside the country, which would contribute to their empowerment.

As the evening drew on and the guests appreciated the colourful paintings and partook of the Indian snacks at the Indian Culture Centre, Gangopadhyay expressed her sense of satisfaction at the response received from people present, representing a large cross-section of society covering government officials, members of parliament, diplomats, business community, artists, media and Indian community members. In an on-the-spot interview with Voice of America, her spontaneity oozed out, "My paintings give a sense of fulfilment to my inner spaces, make me complete as a person. The Indian Culture Centre setting today was perfect in affecting the inner and outer harmony beautifully." ■

## Education experts from India visit Afghanistan

An Indian education team visited Kabul from July 17 to 22, 2007, as a follow-up to the Agreed Minutes on the Joint Working Group meeting on the bilateral Memorandum of Understanding on Education.

The team from the National Council for Educational Research & Training (NCERT), New Delhi, was represented by Anil Sethi, Reader, Department of Education in Art & Aesthetics (New Delhi), Sunil Kumar, Reader, Department of Education in Art and Aesthetics, Asfa Yasin, Reader, Pandit Sunderlala Sharma, Central Institute of Vocational Education, Bhopal, I.B. Chugtai, Reader, Regional Institute of Education, Ajmer and N.K. Gupta, Reader, Department of Educational Research and Policy Perspectives, New Delhi. The objective was to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Education for curriculum development in all subjects, including co-curricular areas of visual and performing arts as well as for teacher education and training for primary and secondary education. The delega-

tion members also considered technical resource support for teacher training colleges in Afghanistan involving teacher education curriculum, methodologies and training modules.

The team had intensive interactions with counterpart nodal points in the areas of their specialization.

Site visits to some vocational training institutes and teachers training colleges were also arranged, which provided valuable first-hand knowledge on the functioning of these institutions and the constraints experienced by them.

Based on the discussions and site visits, a plan of action for future co-operation was formulated, to cover the critical areas of curriculum development, teachers training, vocational as well as distance education.

The visit was part of the on-going assistance programme of the Indian Government for the restructuring of the education sector in Afghanistan.

India's major projects in the education field have been the annual award of 500

ICCR long-term scholarships for undergraduate and postgraduate courses in universities throughout India; reconstruction of the Habibia High School in Kabul; training of teachers; gifting of 30,000 desk-cum-benches for schools in Nangarhar provinces; deputation of English language teachers; provision of Sanskrit faculty at the Kabul University; proposed twinning arrangements between higher education universities and institutions between the two countries; collaboration in national adult literacy programme; as well as the constructions of schools in various provinces under the Small Development Projects Scheme.

India remains totally committed to the revival of the crippled education sector in Afghanistan, which is strategic to the socio-economic development of any country.

With the formulation of the action plan for future co-operation, Afghanistan will, no doubt, be witnessing visits by many more education delegations from India in the coming future. ■