



Indian Council for Cultural Relations
www.iccr.org
Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre
High Commission of India, Colombo

Sanskarikā

Newsletter of the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre

SEPTEMBER 2024



“Books are the means by which we build bridges between cultures.”

- Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

HAPPY TEACHERS DAY

5TH SEPTEMBER 2024

EVENTS CALENDAR – SEPTEMBER 2024

TUE - MON	3^{to} 9	10TH INTERNATIONAL JAFFNA CINEMA FESTIVAL 2024 For further details: www.jaffnaicf.lk
THU	5 7:00 am	ONLINE YOGA SESSION YOGA FOR TEACHERS by Dr.Ajay Kumbhar, Yoga Expert from India
TUE	10 3:30 pm	Masterpieces in the Making: An Art & Sculpture Workshop with Renowned Indian Artists and Sculptors Venue: SVCC Auditorium
WED	11	Book Launch “TEA STAINED LINES” in collaboration with Pen Sri Lanka Venue: SVCC Auditorium
FRI	13	HINDI DIWAS CELEBRATIONS
THU	15 7:00 am	ONLINE YOGA SESSION YOGSADHNA OF PRATYAHAR: CONTROLLING SENSES by Dr.Ajay Kumbhar, Yoga Expert from India

WED	18 6:00 pm	“STHRI” by Divya Jagadeesh and disciples Lasya Kalabhavanam – School of Bharatha Natyam Venue: SVCC Auditorium
MON	23 3:00 pm	Difference Between Western and Eastern Theatrical Singing Lecture cum Demo by Mr Kithsirimevan Jayasena , Artist , Actor, Dramatist ,and Music Composer Venue: SVCC Auditorium
WED	25 6:00 pm	Katcheri Mela -4 Bharatha Natyam Recital Shruthi Gopinath, Disciple of ‘ Kalasuri’ Thivya Sujen, Abhinayakshetra School of Dance Venue: SVCC Auditorium
FRI	27 6:00 pm	Vocal Recital by Dr. Wijeyadasa Bandara Venue: SVCC Auditorium

We Conduct **CLASSES** on
**Bharatha Natyam, Kathak, Sitar, Violin,
 Tabla, Carnatic Vocal, Hindustani Vocal,
 Yoga and Hindi**

for more information Contact us on
+94 11 2684698 or iccrcolombo3@gmail.com

Free Events. All are cordially invited.



Commemorating 78th
Independence Day of India



BHARAT – SRI LANKA Maitri Week

12 – 18 August 2024



Organised by
**Swami Vivekananda
Cultural Centre**
High Commission of India,
Colombo

Collaborators



Supportors



1st Day – 12th August, 2024

The Bharat-Sri Lanka Maitri Week commenced on 12th August, 2024. "Bharat Kosh", a repository of Indic-knowledge, was inaugurated by High Commissioner of India HE Santosh Jha at the Colombo Public Library. The Bharat Kosh at the centurion old Colombo Public Library showcases a curated selection of books on India and written by the Indian authors, comprising artifacts, and cultural treasures that celebrate India's diverse heritage and reflects the deep historical and cultural ties between India and Sri Lanka. The inauguration of Bharat Khosh marks the commencement of the Bharat Sri Lanka Maitri Week 2024, a week-long celebration highlighting the vibrant cultural and artistic exchanges between India and Sri Lanka. This curated selection of books by Indian authors, alongside cultural artifacts, celebrates India's rich heritage and the deep historical ties between India and Sri Lanka were donated to the centurion old Colombo Public Library. After the ribbon-cutting ceremony, the High Commissioner visited the library and he was introduced to different sections by the Chief Librarian of the Colombo Public Library, members of the Library Association of Sri Lanka, and other distinguished guests, before touring the special collection area of the library.



The inaugural day also featured the first event of the Bharat- Sri Lanka Maitri Week at the University of Colombo. An event on the Industry-Policy and Intellectual Dialogue on India Sri Lanka Relations and Sustainable Tourism was organized by the Sustainable Tourism Unit and Department of International Relations of the

University in collaboration with SVCC. The Vice-Chancellor Professor H. D. Karunaratne graced as the Chief Guest and spoke about age-old relations of both the nations and educational exchange. This event included a panel discussion on sustainable tourism practices, with remarks by the Director of the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC) Prof. Ankuran Dutta, the Head of Sustainable Tourism Prof. DAC Suranga Silva, Head of the Department of International Relations, Deputy Director General of Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority and experts from the industry. An exhibition titled "India Reimagined," showcasing various facets of India, was also displayed.



2nd Day - 13th August, 2024

On 13th August, the second day of the Bharat Week, the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka hosted a panel discussion on India-Sri Lanka Cultural Relations and Shared Buddhist Heritage. The Vice Chancellor Ven. Prof. Neluwe Sumanawansa Nayaka Thero, the Dean and Heads of Departments of Sanskrit and Language skills spoke about cultural heritage of India and Sri Lanka. The Director of SVCC participated in this discussion, which, along with an accompanying exhibition, explored the deep-rooted connections between the two nations through their shared Buddhist heritage, highlighting the importance of cultural diplomacy in strengthening bilateral relations.



3rd Day - 14th August, 2024

The third day, 14th August, was held at the University of Visual & Performing Arts (UVPA), featuring continued cultural celebrations and a Bihu dance workshop conducted by Indian artists sponsored by ICCR for UVPA students. Inaugurated by the Vice Chancellor of UVPA Prof. Rohana Nethsinghe, these events symbolized the collaborative efforts to enhance cultural exchange and foster a deeper appreciation of India's cultural heritage among Sri Lankan students.



Later on the day, an exhibition on Partition Horrors Remembrance Day was inaugurated by the Deputy High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka Dr. Satyanjal Pandey at Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre. He paid homage to all those who sacrificed their lives & suffered the horrors of the partition in 1947. We honour the resilience of those who were uprooted from their homes.



4th Day - 15th August, 2024

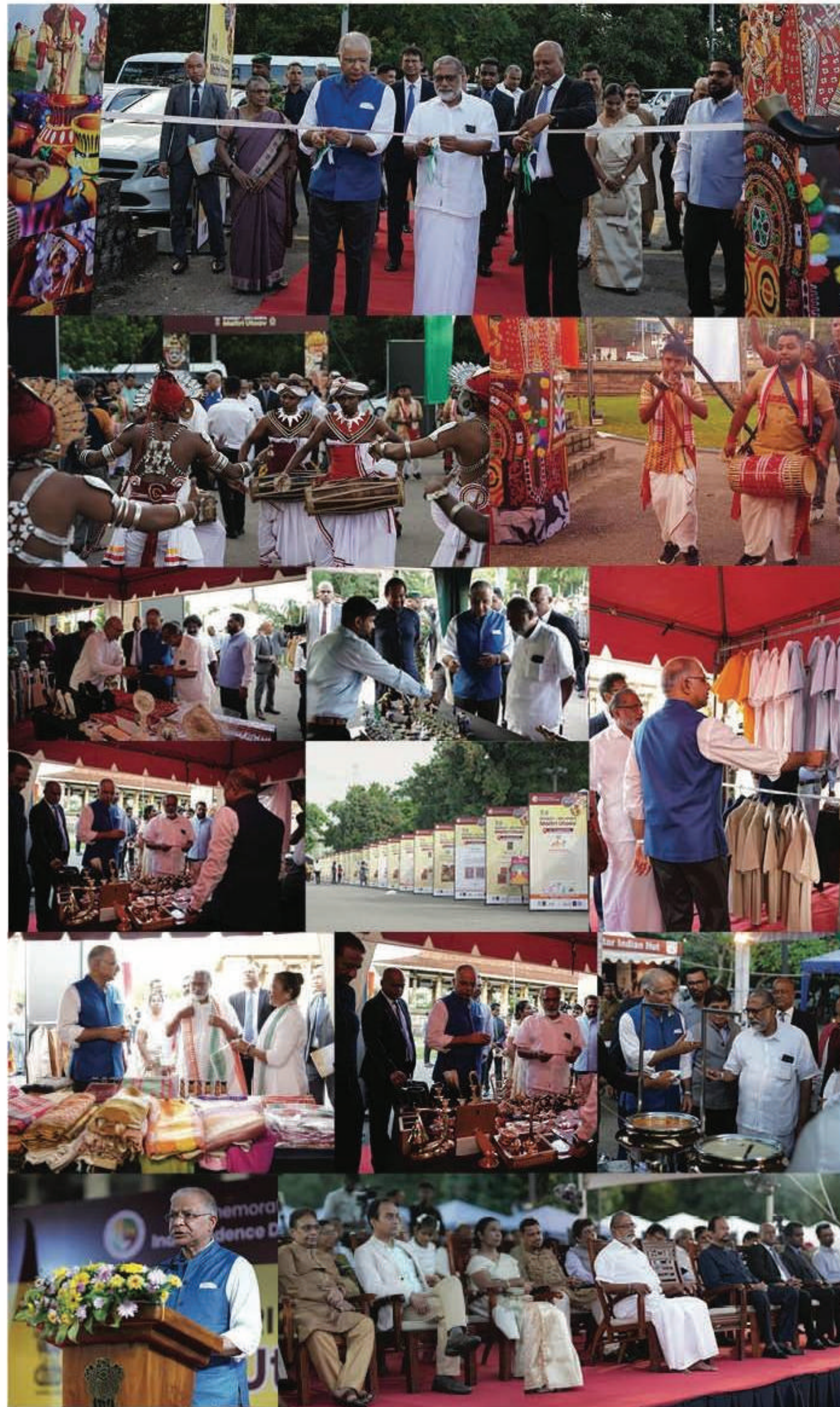
On August 15th, 2024, the flag hoisting ceremony at India House, Colombo had a special feature of Bihu dance performance by the visiting Indian Council For Cultural Relations troupe from Assam, India. The 78th Independence Day of India was also celebrated with great reverence at the Parama Dhamma Chethiya Maha Pirivena in Rathmalana, a



prestigious Buddhist monastic institution in Sri Lanka with a rich history spanning 183 years. Ven. Dr. Maitipe Wimalasara Maha Thera, the Chief Incumbent of the Pirivena, delivered a poignant address, highlighting the ancient and enduring relationship between India and Sri Lanka. The Director Professor Ankuran Dutta launched a Hindi course at the institute and a captivating Bihu was performed during the event.



On 15th August, in celebration of India's 78th Independence Day, the Bharat Sri Lanka Maitri Utsav 2024 hosted a Folk Festival of India, which was inaugurated by His Excellency Shri Santosh Jha and the Honorable Vidura Wickremanayake, Minister of Buddhasasana, Religious, and Cultural Affairs, Sri Lanka. The guests were welcomed by drummers from India and drummers and dancers from Sri Lanka, creating a vibrant start to the festivities. Special invitees toured stalls featuring artisans from Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, and Sri Lanka's National Crafts Council.





The Bharat-Sri Lanka Maitri Utsav 2024 featured an impressive array of traditional crafts and artisanal products from various regions of India and Sri Lanka. Andhra Pradesh was represented by its exquisite Narsapur Crochet Lace, a delicate and intricate craft that has been passed down through generations, known for its fine artistry and detailed patterns. The region also showcased Pen Kalamkari, a traditional hand-painted textile craft that uses natural dyes and intricate designs to depict mythological scenes and folklore. Additionally, a variety of other handicrafts from Andhra Pradesh were on display, highlighting the rich cultural heritage of the region.

Uttar Pradesh presented a diverse range of crafts, including the Horne & Bone Craft, which involves the creation of finely detailed decorative items and jewelry using horn and bone

materials. The state also featured its renowned Durrie weaving, known for producing beautifully patterned rugs and carpets that combine traditional techniques with contemporary designs. Shazar Stone Craft, another highlight from Uttar Pradesh, showcased the art of creating intricate inlay work using shazar stones, often used in jewelry and ornamental pieces. The display also included Gulabi Meenakari, a unique form of enamel work characterized by its pink hue, commonly used in creating jewelry and decorative items. Additionally, traditional sarees and other ethnic attire from Assam were displayed, reflecting the region's vibrant textile traditions.



From Sri Lanka, the exhibition included a variety of handcrafted items, such as leather products, which demonstrated the country's expertise in producing high-quality goods. The display also featured Sri Lanka's famous gemstones, known worldwide for their brilliance and variety, as well as batik, a traditional method of dyeing fabric to create intricate designs and patterns. A wide array of handmade decorative products was also showcased, highlighting the creativity and craftsmanship of Sri Lankan artisans.

The food stalls at the Bharat-Sri Lanka Maitri Utsav 2024 were a celebration of the rich culinary

traditions of both India and Sri Lanka. On the Indian side, visitors savored a variety of dishes, from the to the crispy dosas and tangy chaats. Sweets like gulab jamun and jalebi added a delightful sweetness to the offerings. The Sri Lankan stalls were equally enticing, featuring classic dishes and the popular street food, offering a perfect blend of flavors from both cultures.

The program began with the felicitation of the Hon'ble Minister Vidura Wickremanayake by the High Commissioner, followed by speeches that highlighted the significance of the cultural ties between India and Sri Lanka.

The Folk Festival of India evening of the Bharat-Sri Lanka Maitri Utsav 2024 began with a vibrant Bihu dance performance by Ranjit Gogoi and his team. Bihu, an indigenous folk dance from Assam, is



closely associated with the Bihu festival, which is a significant celebration in Assamese culture. Hundreds of members of the Indian diaspora attended and participated in the Folk Festival of India programme. The event was also supported by Sri Lanka-India Society, Colombo Indians, Indian CEO Forum, Indian Cultural Association and Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO).

Following the Bihu performance, the audience was treated to a unique presentation by the Arakavila Dance and Theater Foundation, which showcased a synergy of Sri Lankan hill country dance, low country dance, and folk-dance traditions. This choreography blended several distinct dance forms, including the graceful Folk Dance, which reflects the beauty of

Sri Lankan village life, and "Thelme" Dance, a key ritualistic dance of the "Devol Maduwa", performed as part of "Shantikarma", or healing ceremonies, in the lowlands. The performance also included the "Nagaraksha" and "Pandam Paaliya" dances, which are integral to the low country dance tradition and are characterized by the use of fearsome masks and the dramatic use of fire torches, creating an atmosphere of awe and mystique.

The evening continued with a skit performed by the Indian Cultural Association, which narrated the story of the Indian National Flag, adopted on 22 July 1947. The skit delved into India's pre-British history, the struggles during British rule, and how communities united under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi to fight colonialism. The narrative also explored the

symbolism of the colors of the Indian National Flag, offering insights into the values and ideals they represent.

Next, the students from St. Paul's Girls' School, Milagiriya, performed the Garba dance, a traditional folk dance from Gujarat that was recently inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list. Garba is a joyous and rhythmic dance traditionally performed during the nine-night Hindu festival of Navaratri, where dancers move in concentric circles around a lamp or an image of the Goddess Durga, symbolizing the cycle of life and the victory of good over evil.

The cultural showcase continued with a Thiruvathirakali performance by Ms. Divya and her disciples. Thiruvathirakali is a unique group dance from Kerala, typically performed by women

during the Onam festival and on Thiruvathira day in the month of Dhanumasam.

Adding to the evening's rhythm was a traditional Assamese drum performance by Ranjit Gogoi. The Bihu Dhol, a vital part of Assamese culture, is a barrel-shaped drum carved from a single piece of wood and is central to the Bihu festival celebrations. The powerful beats of the Dhol filled the venue, showcasing the deep cultural significance of this musical instrument in Assamese traditions.

The event also featured folk dances from Tamil Nadu, performed by the disciples of Dr. Subhashini Pathmanathan, a Bharatanatyam teacher at the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre. The students presented dances set to Bharathiyyar compositions, which celebrate the





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simplicity and vibrancy of village life, particularly in the context of Navaneethakrishnan's work.

The disciples of Dr. Sadara Pieris, a Kathak teacher at the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre, then performed a variety of Indian folk dances. The Santhal dance, one of the best-known tribal dances from West Bengal and Jharkhand, was highlighted for its vibrancy and joyous spirit. The Kummi dance, popular in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, was also featured, demonstrating the rhythmic clapping and simple movements that characterize this traditional South Indian women's dance.

The next segment showcased more folk dances from Tamil Nadu, performed by the disciples of Guru Smt. Vasugy Jegatheeswaran, another Bharatanatyam teacher at the Centre. The performance included a festival dance, a combination of Karaham, Oyilaatam, and Kummi. Karagam, a folk dance from Tamil Nadu, was performed with grace, while Oyilattam, a beautiful dance originating from Madurai, captivated the audience with its elegance. The performance concluded with Kolaatam, a chorus dance performed with sticks, adding a rhythmic and dynamic element to the evening.

The cultural program continued with a Malayalam folk dance performance by Ms. Divya and her disciples. The dance highlighted various traditional forms from Kerala, such as Thirayattam, Padayani, and Kaikottikali, each known for its soulful rhythms and energetic movements. These dances are integral to Kerala's cultural heritage, often performed during festivals and community celebrations.

One of the final performances of the evening was a Rajasthani dance by students from the University of Visual & Performing Arts. Rajasthan's folk dances are known for their vibrant energy and colorful costumes, and this performance was no exception. The students showcased one of the state's many traditional dance forms, which are deeply rooted in the region's cultural history and are performed on special occasions and festivals.

The evening culminated with a Lezim dance, performed for the first time in Sri Lanka by the Indian diaspora and students from the University of Visual & Performing Arts. Lezim is a popular folk dance from Maharashtra, characterized by energetic movements and the rhythmic jingling of cymbals held in the dancers' hands. Traditionally performed during festivals and cultural events, Lezim embodies the rich cultural heritage of Maharashtra and provided a fitting finale to the day's cultural celebrations.

