Indian embassy brings country’s culture, cuisine to Jordan, marking independence day

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Indians, Jordanians and other visitors sample cuisine offered at a ceremony held on Saturday by the Indian embassy in Amman to mark the country’s independence anniversary (Photo courtesy of Indian embassy)

AMMAN — India House in Amman on Saturday celebrated the country’s 69th independence day with several cultural festivities, treating the guests to a short journey into India and its rich culture.

The festivities included the flag-hoisting ceremony at the ambassador’s residence in the morning and several performances — most of them in the evening — showcasing Bollywood dances.

As guests arrived, old Indian patriotic songs were playing and some guests were singing along with them.

Marking the beginning of the celebrations, India’s Ambassador to Jordan Anil Trigunayat unfurled the tri-colour and welcomed the guests.

Indian children performed a Bollywood dance at the ceremony, to warm applause.

Shalini Chodankar, who attended the ceremony, commended their performance.

“The celebration is really good this year with the children’s dance,” she said, adding that she was happy to be in Jordan and commended the Kingdom’s achievements.

Other foreign guests expressed their admiration of the bright colours of Indian clothes.

“I really love their colours,” a Filipino woman married to an Indian commented as she sought shade from the sun’s blazing rays.

The morning ceremony was also a chance to have a serving of fine and spicy Indian cuisine, with many dishes and assortments to choose from.

Other Bollywood dance performances that were scheduled for the evening celebration at Al Hussein Cultural Centre seek to further foster Indo-Jordanian relations, especially as most of the performers are Jordanians, Manu Jayaehandran, Jordan India Friendship Society General Secretary, told The Jordan Times.

“We taught them,” Jayaehandran said.

He explained that JIFS initially asked for volunteers who could learn and perform Bollywood dances.

The society received a good number of volunteers, but eventually chose six to be trained — five women and one man, he said.

“This is called real friendship… all on voluntary basis,” Jayaehandran said, pointing out that this is an effort that will enrich cultural exchange.

Moreover, the Jordanian Sama Troupe was scheduled to play Indian music at the ceremony, in addition to a band from the Jordan-based Indian Classic Fashion Apparel Industry Company, he said.

On more than one occasion this year, the ambassador said he proposes to “bring India to Jordan”, through at least one cultural activity every month.

In an interview with The Jordan Times, Trigunayat said India last week gave Jordan $0.5 million, which is the second tranche of India’s humanitarian assistance to the Kingdom to deal with the needs arising from the repercussions of the crisis in Syria.

The funds were pledged by India at the donors conference in Kuwait in January 2014.

“This one is the first direct cash grant at the bilateral level,” the ambassador noted.

Trigunayat underscored the meeting of the ninth session of the India-Jordan Joint Trade and Economic Committee that was held in Amman earlier this year to discuss ways to boost cooperation, investments and bilateral trade.

He reiterated that India hopes to reach a target of $5 billion in bilateral trade by 2025, adding that the joint trade volume reached $2 billion in 2014.

“We are keeping a realistic growth target, but strive to exceed it,” the diplomat said, noting that several high-level interactions and visits are planned for this year.

Moreover, the first Indo-Jordan Forum is scheduled to be held in November, where CEOs from the two countries and others will be meeting to identify projects and business opportunities that they can utilise, he added.

India’s investment volume in Jordan currently stands at $1.5 billion, with around 10,000 Indians living in the country, mainly outside Amman, where they work at the Qualifying Industrial Zones, according to the ambassador.

With regards to academic cooperation, he said the University of Jordan and Delhi University are finalising a memorandum of understanding that will lead to a great deal of collaboration.

He added that several other cultural activities will be held this year to foster people-to-people relations.

- See more at: http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/indian-embassy-brings-country%E2%80%99s-culture-cuisine-jordan-marking-independence-day#sthash.PMjKJwf1.dpuf