

## News from Edinburgh

### Scotland-Kolkata Connection programme successfully concluded



Consul S.N. Srinivasan presenting a coffee table book to the Hon'ble Minister Ann McKeen.

The Scotland-Kolkata Connection programme 2009 reached a successful end on February 11. The major events of the programme included the Kolkata Book Fair which had Scotland as the theme country, seminars, book

releases, collaborative efforts between museums, screening of films, collaboration between the national libraries, the Burns Supper and the visit of Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

The Under Secretary of State for Scotland, Ann McKeen MP, visited Kolkata from February 5 to 8 for the event. She also called on the Mayor of Kolkata. Shortly before her departure, Consul S.N. Srinivasan had a meeting with the Hon'ble Minister. Considering the extent of participation, the programme was a major development for the contemporary relations between India and Scotland.

### Edinburgh Vedic Society celebrates Vasant Panchami



Edinburgh University Chaplain Di Williams, Consul P.C. Biswas, Dr Shrobona Bhattacharya, and other members of the Vedic Society.

The Edinburgh University Vedic Society celebrated the Festival of Arts, Vasant Panchami for the first time at the University on February 2. The

programme was attended by a large number of students and staff. The evening was enchanting with performances of classical and contemporary dance, music, song as well as puppetry by the local Indian and Scottish talents. The Vedic Society founded in January 2008 has been continuously facilitat-

ing a number of cultural, social and spiritual programmes with the objective of enhancing and preserving the glorious heritage of Vedic India.

### Edinburgh Napier University to open liaison office in India

The Edinburgh Napier University is in an advanced stage of opening a liaison office in Hyderabad, India. The basic intention is to popularise the courses offered by the University and attract more Indian students. The University has already appointed Ashwini Kumar as the director of the liaison office. Prof Jack Worden, Principal International College and Dean of International Strategy and Operations of the University together with Kumar called on the Acting Consul-General S.N. Srinivasan. While welcoming the proposed opening of the liaison office, the Acting Consul-



Acting Consul-General S.N. Srinivasan with Prof. Jack Worden and Ashwini Kumar.

General suggested that the varsity may consider more substantive cooperation with India in terms of joint research activities and exchange programme for professors and students.

### Festival of Rajasthani cuisine launched

The Suruchi restaurant in Edinburgh launched a festival to celebrate the delicious cuisines from Rajasthan on 23 February. A select gathering of about 50 people mostly from the Scottish community was present on the occasion. The



Anuj Kapilashrami performing during the Rajasthani food festival in Edinburgh on Feb 23

programme included a slide show on Rajasthan, a puppet show and Rajasthani folk dances. Speaking on the occasion, Acting Consul-General S.N.

Srinivasan highlighted the vibrant, colourful and exotic nature of the state of Rajasthan, which offered a variety of tourist interests as well as delectable cuisines considered most royal and majestic by

the connoisseurs of food. The restaurant had laid out an elaborate buffet of Rajasthani dishes including specialities like *dal-bati* and *churma*.

## News from Belfast

### Belfast varsity to honour Dr Kalam

Distinguished former Indian President Dr A. P. J. Abdul Kalam will be awarded an honorary degree by the Queen's University Belfast later this year. Dr Kalam, who served as President of India from 2002 to 2007, will receive a doctorate for outstanding public service. He is a distinguished engineer and is considered a progressive mentor, innovator and visionary in India, believing in the power of science to resolve society's problems.

Popularly known as the 'People's President', Dr Kalam has educated and inspired others as a scientist, teacher, researcher, statesman and poet.

Queen's University is Northern Ireland's oldest and most widely

respected university. It has particularly close links with similar institutions in India including the Bengal Science and Engineering University, near Kolkata.

The Bengal University recently conferred an honorary doctorate on Prof Peter Gregson, the President and Vice Chancellor of Queen's University. Scientists from Queen's and the Indian Institute of Immunology are also working together on projects to combat cancer. In addition, Queen's is setting up a Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies that will promote and facilitate further research and other relationships. The centre is being encouraged by Lord Diljit Rana, Honorary Consul for India in Northern Ireland.

### Holi celebrations in Northern Ireland



Colourful dance routines from India at the Holi Festival being celebrated in Belfast in March.

The Festival of Colours 'Holi', one of the most colourful and vibrant festivals of India, is going to be celebrated for the first time in Belfast in March. The celebrations would be held in St George's Market, Belfast, one of the city's

most popular commercial centres, on March 15 — two days before the traditional Saint Patrick's Day celebrations.

The event is being organised by ArtsEkta (the first minority ethnic arts organisation in Northern Ireland). This one-day unique event will give the citizens of Belfast a colourful cultural experience.

ArtsEkta's Nisha Tandon says: "Holi signifies the spirit of brotherhood and unity. It treats everyone equally, wherein all the people drenched in different colours, lose their identity to become one."

The Holi celebration will provide family entertainment, inclusiveness, awareness of cultural diversity in the local community and mutual understanding.

## News from Birmingham

### Ravidass Jayanti celebrated in Birmingham

Shri Guru Ravidass Cultural Association (Birmingham) celebrated the 632nd birth anniversary of Guru Ravidass at the Shri Guru Ravidass Bhavan, Birmingham on February 15 with their day-long *kirtans* (chanting of religious hymns), cultural programmes, speeches by religious and political leaders and *langar* (feast). The Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Chaudhry Abdul Rabhid and the Member of Parliament, Khalid Mahmood addressed the devotees on the occasion.

### Charity dinner by Buwan Kothi Trust

M/s Buwan Kothi International Trust held a gala charity dinner at the Town Hall Leamington Spa, on February 22. The Buwan Kothi International Trust, among other charity activities, runs a primary school for 200 students at Village Buwan Kothi in Haryana. The Mayor of Leamington Spa, Kailash Chander and the Mayoress, the Member of Parliament James Plaskitt, local Councillors and the Trust's Mentor Councillor Mota Singh, former Mayor of Leamington Spa, addressed the gathering.