

Academic Seminar on Culture and Historical Links in Udayana University, Bali

To mark the 20th anniversary of ASEAN India Dialogue Partnership, an academic seminar titled “India-Indonesia-Shared History & Culture and opportunities for deepening ‘people-to-people contact’ was organised jointly by Consulate General of India, Bali, and Udayana University, Bali on 30 October 2012 in Udayana University in Bali.

In a well attended seminar, eminent speakers from various organisations/Institutes in Bali addressed the gathering on varied topics such as cultural relations of India & Indonesia, common threads of traditions between Indian and Indonesia, the relationship of India-Balinese Hindus, development of Hinduism in Bali, comparison of dances from Bali and Southern India, strategic agenda for cooperation between India and Indonesia and collective memories of relations between India and Indonesia.

In his opening remarks the Rector of Udayana University, Mr. Made Bakta, welcomed the participants to the seminar and hoped the deliberations would lead to more insight and understanding between two countries who share historical and cultural links. He said his university was looking forward to strengthen educational opportunities with Indian universities especially in the field of science and technology. The university plans to establish a Center for Indian studies next year which will facilitate visit by Indian scholars.

Speaking on the topic of collective memories of relations between India and Indonesia, Prof Dr. Phil I Ketut Ardhana said the Indian influence on Indonesia was now mainly in the areas of social and cultural matters and the challenge now is to see how these influences are reinforced in strengthening the ties between the two countries.

Mr Ketut Putra Erawan, Executive Director, Institute for Peace and Democracy spoke on the topic of strategic agenda for cooperation between India and Indonesia. He said India and Indonesia are now emerging giants that world cannot ignore. The challenge for these countries is to find ways and means to eradicate poverty and realize equitable distribution of fruits of development amongst its people.

Prof Dr. I. Made Titib, Rector of Institute Hindu Dharma Negeri and Prof. Dr. I.B. Gunadha, Head of Post Graduate Program UNHI spoke on the relationship

of India and the Balinese Hindus and how hinduism had developed and evolved in Bali over the centuries.

Ms. Aparajita Sarma, Performer and Dance Teacher at the Indian Cultural Center, Bali, gave a demonstration on the comparison of dances from Bali and Southern India.

Ambassador Gurjit Singh, who was the key note speaker, said that India and Indonesia share historical and civilisation ties which was so well established and the challenge now is how to modernise the age old relationship. He said both India and Indonesia have a young population and therefore it was imperative to enhance people to people connectivity through academic exchanges, scholarships, twinning of university programmes He said there was a need to engage each other directly rather than through third sources and the cross fertilisation of ideas generated through these exchanges could reinvigorate the relationship to a new level. He said the Embassy would play the role of facilitator in establishing 'people to people' connectivity through seminars, academic exchanges, exchange of scholarships, twinning arrangements between universities of both countries and establishing India corners in Universities in Indonesia. He also indicated that the Embassy would endeavour to hold the India-Bali Sangam cultural festival on an annual basis which will go a long way to reinforce the existing cultural links.

Mr. Zahur Zaidi, Director, Jawaharlal Nehru Culture Centre, made a presentation and highlighted the common threads of traditions found in India and Indonesia such as historical epics like Ramanaya and Mahabharata, religion, historical monuments, usage of sanskrit words in Bahasa language, food, textiles and Bollywood.

Since the arrival of INS Sudarshini which is presently docked at Port Benoa in Bali, a number of high profile events in Bali have been held which will culminate with holding of India-Bali sangam in Bali, a cultural extravaganza featuring Indian films, live demonstration of Indian cuisine, textiles, and cultural performances.

