

**Remarks by Amb. Abhishek Singh, High Commissioner of India to
Nigeria on Dandiya Nite 2026 on 18 Oct 2026**

Shri Ramesh Gadge , President of the Indian Cultural Association, Abuja
Trustees and members of the Indian Women Empowerment Association (also
known as IWEA)

Members of the diplomatic corps, Excellencies

Members of Indian High Commission Friends of India and most importantly

My dear Members of the Indian community

Good Evening.

What a joyful sight!

The Chancery today is not just the office of the High Commission, it is a mini
Gujarat, mini Bengal, India with all its diversity- alive with colors, dhol beats
and the spirit of Navratri.

First, my heartfelt congratulations to the Indian Cultural Association of Abuja
and IWEA for organizing this beautiful Dandiya Nite together.

Navratri is more than a festival. It is a celebration of Shakti - of strength,
resilience and creation. It is the nine nights when we worship the divine and
we celebrate the victory of good over evil.

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Therefore, I am especially happy that this year Dandiya is being organized jointly with IWEA - our Indian Women Empowerment Association. You have shown that culture and empowerment go together. When our women lead our cultural celebrations, they lead our community. **I am so glad that my spouse Meghna Singh is galvanizing the Indian women community across Nigeria as their Patron.** Of course, all IWAs across Nigeria have my full support as both your High Commissioner and Chief Patron.

Excellencies, Friends,

You know, Dandiya has a beautiful philosophy. Two sticks strike each other to create rhythm - just like India and Nigeria. Two different beats, but when they come together, they create music. And if I may say so, that rhythm is our Indian diaspora in Nigeria. You are over Sixty thousand- doctors, teachers, engineers, businessmen, workers - who have been in Nigeria for sometimes over four generations, contributing to Nigeria's economy with over 30 billion US dollars of investments and making Nigeria your Karma Bhoomi while keeping India in your heart as your motherland. You are our most effective cultural ambassadors. When I say this, I mean every word of it.

When you celebrate Dandiya here, when you organize International Yoga Day, when you teach Hindi or celebrate Diwali with your Nigerian colleagues - you are doing what no Embassy can do alone. You are practicing cultural diplomacy in its purest form - people-to-people, heart-to-heart. The High Commission is proud of you, and India recognizes your role as a living bridge between our two great nations- India and Nigeria.

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Excellencies

Garba which is also important part of the celebrations tonight is from the state of Gujarat. It is a traditional and devotional Indian folk dance inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Friends

I am told there will be over 100 families here tonight. This is the strength of our community in Abuja. You have kept our culture alive 6000 km away from home. For your children, this Chancery ground today is their first classroom of Indian culture.

I once again thank President, ICA and IWEA Trustees and their entire teams for their hard work. I also thank all our members of the Indian community - you have always supported our community initiatives.

Finally, three small requests:

Firstly, let this energy continue - not just for tonight, but in service to community and charity, which ICA and IWEA have been doing so wonderfully.

Secondly, bring our Nigerian friends to our festivals. Let them also dance Garba with us. That is the true spirit of **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam- the world is one family**.

And thirdly, dance your heart out tonight! The floor is yours. I once again wish all of you a very Happy and blessed Navratri.

Long live the friendship between the Republic of India and the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
