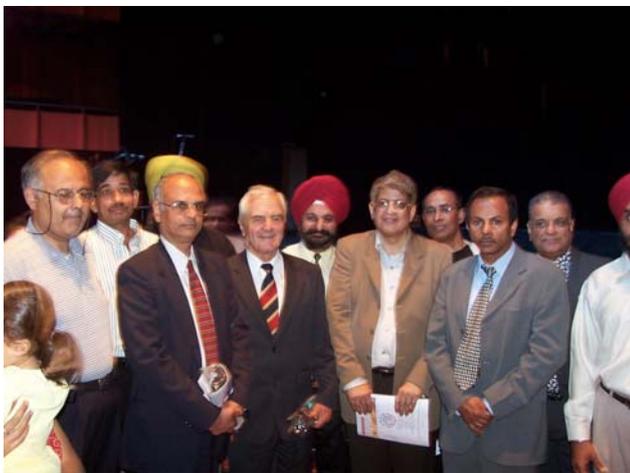




The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia in cooperation with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (Ministry of External Affairs, India), The High Commission of India for Australia and The Consulate General of India, Sydney hosted a unique festival of vibrant folk dances from the heart of Punjab India, including those from pre-partition regions, at Hills Centre of Performing Arts on Sunday 7 November 2004. The festival of culture, music and dances performed by the world renowned *Rangla Punjab* (Colourful Punjab) was proclaimed as a great delight to the senses. The music and dance concert with over 14 artists from the folk cultures around the various country regions of Punjab in fact celebrated the spirit of multiculturalism and the vibrancy of the Indian community in Australia.



The festival was opened by lighting the lamp jointly by the entire troupe of the visiting artists and the invited dignitaries like Hon. Alan Cadman, Federal MP for Mitchell, Ms Sonya Philip, Mayor of Baulkham Hills Council, Hon. M Ganapathi, Consul General of India, Sydney, Sr. Harmohan Walia, prominent Sikh leader, Mr Akbar Aziz, representing the Chair of the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW, Mr. Gambhir Watts, President of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia and other directors of the Bhavan Australia. The group leader of Rangla Punjab presented mementos from Punjab to the invited dignitaries. The VIP dignitaries overjoyed by the performances of the Rangla Punjab artists patted the whole group and each of the artists during the break and again at the end. The event ended with the dignitaries, the Bhavan directors and some of the public members joining the artists on the stage in dancing with them

Some of the Sikh community leaders hosted a special party for the artists the next day at Maya Sweet Centre, Surry Hills.

Rangla Punjab performed some items out of their treasure of Punjab culture at the Olympic Park Tennis Centre for the Gujarati Diwali Mela on 6 November 2004 in front of nearly 2000 people.

Bhavan Australia, the High Commission of India and the Consulate General of India Sydney are hosting similar festival at Monash University, Melbourne on 10 November 2004 and an abridged version at the Federal Parliament on 13 November 2004.

Rangla Punjab, earlier on this leg of their Asia Pacific Tour performed in Wellington and Auckland in New Zealand and Suva and Nadi in Fiji.

