

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **The Bust of “Gurudev’ Tagore of India adorns Jongno District in Seoul**

Even years before Korea was to throw off the yoke of foreign occupation, a literary genius and a champion of human freedom and dignity, Rabindranath Tagore from India, prophesied in his famous poem ‘The Lamp of the East’ written in 1929 that it would not be long before Korea rises again like a Star among the comity of nations. As India celebrates 2011 as the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of this great poet, the Republic of Korea partakes in India’s joy by installing his bronze bust in Daehangro, the cultural heart of Seoul. The approximately four feet high metal masterpiece, exquisitely carved by the renowned master sculptor from India, Gautam Pal, has been gifted to Korea by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Government of India, and the people of India.

In a serene and impressive ceremony, the Hon’ble Speaker of the Lok Sabha (the Lower House of the Parliament) of India, the largest Democracy of the world, H.E. Mrs. Meira Kumar, unveiled the beautiful statue today, jointly with H.E. Mr. Park Hee Tae, the Hon’ble Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea. Mr. K. Rahman Khan, Hon’ble Vice Chairman of Rajya Sabha (Upper House of India’s Parliament), Mr. Mo Chul Min, First Vice Minister of Culture, Tourism and Sports, Government of Korea, Mr. Kim Young Jong, Mayor of the Jongno District and H.E. Mr. Skand R. Tayal, Ambassador of India to the Republic of Korea also graced the occasion. Mrs. Kim Yang Shik, the President of the Tagore Society in Korea, who was honored with the title of ‘Padmashree’ by the Government of India in 2002 for her devotion and commitment to the ideals of Tagore, paid a literary tribute to Tagore, the first Asian to win the Nobel Prize in 1913 for his lyrical and poetic work ‘Gitanjali’ or ‘The Song Offering’.

The Hon’ble Speaker of India conveyed Government of India’s appreciation to the President of RoK, H.E. Mr. Lee Myung-bak and the

Government of the Republic of Korea for their friendly gesture of offering to place this bronze sculptural monument in the thriving metropolis of Seoul, as a mark of respect to the memory of Tagore, and also in recognition of the deepening and expanding Strategic Partnership between India and Korea.

India greatly admires the extraordinary strides made by the Republic of Korea in both economic and political spheres, and renews its solidarity with Korea in her endeavours towards realizing Tagore's vision and prophecy. Surely, the memory of 'Gurudev' or the 'Revered Master' as Tagore used to be fondly addressed by no less a figure than Mahatma Gandhi himself, now encapsulated in stone and metal in Korea, will become a permanent symbol of Tagore's love and admiration for Korea and the people of Korea, and will be a constant reminder to the passersby of India-Korea Friendship.

***LAMP OF THE EAST***

***"In the golden age of Asia  
Korea was one of its lamp bearers,  
And that lamp is waiting  
To be lighted once again  
For the illumination of the East."***

Tagore (1929)

**Embassy of India**

**Seoul**

**18 May 2011**