



**CONSULAT GÉNÉRAL
DE FRANCE À PONDICHÉRY
ET CHENNAI**

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*

Chennai, 13 July, 2023

Press Release

Mrs. Lise Talbot Barré, Consul General of France in Pondicherry and Chennai, is pleased to announce the organization of celebrations on the occasion of the National Day of the French Republic on 14th July 2023 in the Union Territory of Pondicherry and the celebration in Chennai on 15th July 2023.

France and India are each other's long-standing strategic partners in the Indo-Pacific. This year it is taking place in an exceptional context, as it marks the 25th anniversary of this strategic partnership between France and India. The relationship between the two countries has never been so dynamic and developed. Fruitful cooperation is developing in every sector of our societies' activities, from defence and security to space research, economic and trade relations, education, culture, scientific research and sport.

India as guest of Honour on 14 July 2023 in Paris, France:

India will be the guest of honour on 14 July in Paris and the President of the French Republic, Mr. Emmanuel Macron, will welcome the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi, on an official visit. More than 240 Indian soldiers, from land army, navy and air forces of India, in particular from the Punjab Regiment, one of the oldest and most prestigious in the Indian Army, will march along the Champs Elysée alongside the French armies in the traditional 14 July military parade to show the exceptional brotherhood between our 2 armies and to honour the memory of the Indian soldiers who fought in the First World War, 74,000 of whom lost their lives. In addition, three Indian Rafale aircraft will take part in the flypast, in a formation with a French Rafale.

This historic visit will enable us to strengthen France and India's strategic partnership. It will set the course for our shared ambitions in all areas up to 2047, the year that will mark 100 years of Indian independence and 100 years of diplomatic relations between our two countries. It will deliver common initiatives in order to respond to the key challenges of our time, including security and defense, climate change and biodiversity, culture and mobility.

Mr. Narendra Modi will be the second Indian Prime Minister to participate as a guest of honour at 14 July (after Manmohan Singh in 2009). Mr. Narendra Modi's invitation to 14 July follows a series of high-level exchanges and visits in recent years: the President of the Republic made a State visit to India in 2018, while Prime Minister Modi visited France in 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2022. He was the first foreign leader to visit the President of the Republic after his re-election in May 2022. The two leaders have also met for bilateral talks on the sidelines of all recent major multilateral events (including the G20 summit in Bali and the G7 summit in Hiroshima).

France established diplomatic relations with India as soon as it gained independence on 15 August 1947. The history of these relations is marked by the great consistency and quality of the political dialogue and the relationship is also characterised by solidarity and mutual support, whether in the face of terrorism, or in the face of crises, but also on our respective priorities and during the pandemic.

National Day of the French Republic on 14th July 2023 in the UT of Pondicherry and in Chennai on 15th July 2023:

To celebrate the Franco-Indian friendship and this 25th anniversary of the strategic partnership, the Consulate General of France in Pondicherry and Chennai has organised the below programs in Puducherry, in Karikal and in Chennai.

The Consul General of France in Pondicherry and Chennai Mrs. Lise Talbot Barré, will also be presenting the awards of **Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres** to 2 exceptional musicians who have been instrumental in connecting France and India through their music for Chennai on this special occasion. Mrs. Lise Talbot Barré will also be presenting the award of **Chevalier des Palmes académiques** to 1 outstanding teacher and coordinator for French language with the Ministry of Education of the Territory of Pondicherry for his contribution for promotion of French language, art and culture in Pondicherry.

On Thursday 13 July, starting at 6 p.m., a torchlight procession will take place along Pondicherry's seafront promenade, in front of the Statue de Duplex.

This night march commemorates one of the major events of the French Revolution, the storming of the Bastille (prison). This symbolic event recalls the day when the people of France joined together to form a nation, overcoming the social barriers of the time to revolt against the absolute monarchy in power. This republican march will be an opportunity to celebrate Franco-Indian friendship.

On Friday 14 July, wreaths will be laid at 8.30am at the Pondicherry War Memorial and at 10.30am at the Karikal War Memorial. The War Memorials will remain open to families for one hour after the official ceremonies for private wreath-laying.

At 8.30 pm, the traditional 14 July fireworks display will take place on the seafront in front of the Consulate.

Chevalier des Palmes académiques & Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres:

Chevalier des Palmes académiques will be awarded to **Dr. George Rajan, Coordinator for French with the Ministry of Education of the Territory of Pondicherry** and has been teaching mathematics in French in government schools in the Union Territory of Pondicherry for 15 years. In addition, he has worked to promote teaching in French in many seminars and has presented many publications. He will be presented with his medal in Pondicherry on 14th July 2023.

As the coordinator for French with the Government of the Union Territory of Pondicherry and is also responsible for the teaching of the French language in all the educational establishments of the Territory, and is the interlocutor between the French International School of Pondicherry (LFIP) and the local Ministry of Education, hence, has been a driving force in the promotion of French language and culture since the beginning of his career.

Given his duties and his participation in the seminars mentioned above, Dr. Rajan has shown continuous involvement in the service of the French language and the teaching of French in Pondicherry. He has also shown a real commitment to the promotion of women's rights, which echoes France's international strategy for equality between women and men. The French Government has constantly been recognising the contribution of French teachers abroad and he is definitely one such notable teacher.

Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres will be awarded to **Padma Shri awardee, Sangita Kalanidhi Aruna Sairam**, the Indian classical vocalist and carnatic music singer and **Mr. Shashank Subramanyam, flutist**, who specializes in Indian classical music will both be awarded Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in the National Day celebration that will be hosted in Chennai.

Padma Shri awardee, Sangita Kalanidhi Ms. Aruna Sairam, represents one of South India's richest lineages of Carnatic classical music having studied Music first from her Mother Rajalakshmi Sethuraman and later from the legendary T.Brinda, the sixth generation Master of a long lineage of Women Singers who adorned the kingdom of Tanjore. Aruna is acclaimed as one of the most illustrious voices of South Indian Music, while also acknowledged as a composer, collaborator, mentor, humanitarian, and speaker.

Ms. Sairam has had numerous collaborations with French artists. In 1997, she collaborated with director Dominique Pompougnac for his musical play *The Blue Baby*, based on the story of Krishna and went on their tour for 40 performances throughout France. In 1990s she collaborated with a Dominique Vellard, founder of the Ensemble Gilles Binchois and the Thoronet Music Festival to perform in numerous concerts, a unique collaboration between European music and Indian Carnatic music.

She has performed at the BBC Proms at London's Royal Albert Hall. As the first South Indian classical vocalist in the Proms' then-116-year history in 2011. Sairam has also performed at New York's Carnegie Hall, Paris's Théâtre de la Ville and Morocco's Fes Festival of World Sacred Music.

Ms. Aruna works towards the musical education of underprivileged students, and has contributed proceeds from her concerts to causes of great importance. A philanthropist at heart, she has collected funds for Cancer Hospitals and to provide Medical Facilities in remote villages of Tamil Nadu, all through her performances.

Mr. Shashank Subramanyam considered a child prodigy and the youngest recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi's senior award by Govt of India, started performing at the age of 6. He also has a Grammy nomination for the CD album with Guitarist John McLaughlin to add to his glory.

Shashank has performed and taught at prestigious institutions in India and over 50 countries around the world. He has also been committed to education throughout his career: he has organized more than 1,000 concerts for Indian students throughout the country.

The international recognition acquired by Mr. Subramanyam, as well as his numerous travels, allowing him to collaborate with other artists of his stature, such as guitarists John Jes McLaughlin and Paco De Lucia. This notably earned him a nomination for the 2009 Grammys. Awards for his album co-produced with John McLaughlin.

His first concert in France took place in 1997, in the auditorium of the headquarters of (the Organization of United Nations for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) in Paris. From the 2000s, from then concerts multiplied: in Rennes, Vannes, Bourge, Toulouse, Marseille, Avignon, Grenoble, Lyon, etc. He notably performed at the Guimet Museum in 2003 and 2014, at the City Theater in 2004, 2011 and 2015, at the Cité de la Musique in 2009, at the spiritual and religious music festival in Strasbourg in 2012 or even in the abbey of Conques-en-Rouergue in 2019.

Photos of the award ceremony will be shared to the media.

For more information, please contact

Ms. Viji (Vijayasaraswathi S)

Press and Protocol Officer | Administrative Manager,

Bureau of France in Chennai

Tel: +91 95855 34174; Email: vijayasaraswathi.s@diplomatie.gouv.fr