Bali Jatra UK 2024: A Historic First Celebrating Odisha's Maritime Heritage in the United Kingdom

Thursday 5 December, 2024

London, 30th November 2024 – The historic Bali Jatra festival, commemorating Odisha's ancient maritime legacy, was celebrated for the first time in the UK at Townley Grammar School, Bexley. Hosted by the Odisha Society of United Kingdom (OSUK), the event brought together over 500 attendees, including dignitaries, cultural icons, and community leaders from the UK and India. Supported by Shree Jagannath Developer, Odisha Tourism and Roptia, the event showcased the vibrant cultural heritage of Odisha to a wide audience

Symbolic Inauguration:

The ceremonial Boita Bandana, inaugurated by Dr. Bhargava Vasudevan, Deputy Lieutenant of Gravesham, and Manoj Panda from the Indian High Commission, celebrated Odisha's ancient trade with Southeast Asia. The floating of miniature boats with lighted lamps symbolized a tribute to Odisha's maritime history.

Cultural Extravaganza:

The festivities began with the Indian and British national anthems, followed by Odisha's state anthem, *Bande Utkala Janani*, sung by Odia diaspora women and directed by singer Sonali Pattnaik. A mesmerizing *Mangala Charana*
performance by Odissi maestro Aviroop Sengupta and his student Adwiti Tripathy Pattnayak set the tone for the event. Yoga guru Sitanshu Sahu led a session promoting mental well-being, captivating the audience.

Mrs. Sweta Mohanty, OSUK spokesperson, highlighted Odisha's pivotal maritime history and its contemporary relevance, including India's concerted effort to propel its maritime resurgence and the stitched ship project. Director Partha Sarathi Panda emphasized the event's mission to showcase Odisha's rich heritage globally and foster international cultural and trade ties.

Dr. Bibhuti Bhusan Pattnayak, OSUK's Organizing Secretary, expressed immense pride in the event, stating, "Bali Jatra UK is a testament to the indomitable spirit of the Odia diaspora. It embodies our heritage and values while spreading the message of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'—the world is one family. This event was made possible by the dedication of our members, sponsors, and supporters, uniting us to celebrate Odisha's legacy and strengthen cultural bonds."

Global Appreciation and Endorsement:

This noble initiative has received widespread praise from various quarters. Smt. Zubin Irani, former Member of Parliament, commended the Odisha Society of United Kingdom for bringing the state's rich heritage to a foreign land, a monumental effort in itself. Jay Panda, Member of Parliament and National Vice President of BJP, expressed his delight at the initiative, stating that it would bridge the UK and Odisha in a meaningful way. In a letter of appreciation, the Honourable Chief Minister of Odisha noted, "Bali Jatra in London will reinvigorate the glorious history and heritage of Odisha on the international stage, drawing attention to Odisha from global traders and investors." A similar letter of appreciation was also received from the Deputy Chief Minister, Smt. Pravati Parida.

The cherry on the cake was a letter from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, congratulating the efforts of the Odisha Society of United Kingdom. They highlighted the initiative as a significant step towards the "Living Bridge" that connects both countries and their people.

Royal and parliamentary dignitaries graced the event, including The Mayor of Bexley, Cllr Sue Gower MBE JP; Mr. David Easton JP DL, Deputy Lieutenant of Bexley; and Dr. Bhargava Vasudevan FRCSEd, Deputy Lieutenant of Gravesham. Mr. Easton delivered a message on behalf of the Royal Representative, commending the community's efforts. Dr. Vasudevan also praised the Odisha Society of United Kingdom for organizing such a remarkable event, which successfully brought together the Indian community. Other prominent members present included Manoj Panda, representative from the Indian High Commission; Rag Sandhu, a respected Councillor in Kent; and Jordan Meade, Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health.

Media:









Related Sectors:

Charities & non-profits :: Entertainment & Arts :: Travel & Tourism ::

Related Keywords:

Bali Jatra UK 2024 :: Odisha's Maritime Legacy :: OSUK :: Odisha Tourism :: Roptia :: Sabyasachi Mishra :: Archita Sahu :: Mayor Of Bexley :: Cllr Sue Gower MBE JP ::

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Star-Studded Affair:

The presence of Ollywood superstars Sabyasachi Mishra and Archita Sahu added glamour to the event. Dressed in traditional Sambalpuri attire, they participated in a cultural parade, performed folk dances, and showcased Odisha's handloom heritage in a fashion show. Bollywood singer Asit Tripathy enthralled the audience with a mix of Bollywood and Sambalpuri songs, while London-based Odissi dancer Monideepa Seal dedicated her performance to mental health awareness.

Awards and Recognitions:

The event featured the presentation of several prestigious awards, celebrating exceptional contributions across various fields. The **Distinguished Overseas Citizen Award 2024** was presented to Rag Sandhu, with Sitansu Sahu as a finalist. Jordan Meade received the **Excellence in Social Service Award 2024**, with Sushmita Rajhansha as a finalist. The **Outstanding Community Impact Award 2024** was awarded to Orpington Kanda Parivar, with Jagannath Society of Bath, UTSAB, Desi Trendy Sangathan, and Marathi Mandal Kent as finalists. Dr. Kanhu Charan Pattnayak was honoured with the **Climate Change Leadership Award 2024**, and the **Digital Pioneer Award 2024** was presented to Roptia. **The Women Entrepreneur Leadership Award 2024** recognized Jeeta Mona, Gayatri Panda, and Sonali Panda for their outstanding contributions, while the **Social Impact Culinary Award 2024** was awarded to Debasmita Mohapatra. Upasana Padhi received **the Home-Based Entrepreneur Award 2024**. In the youth category, Adwiti Tripathy Pattnayak was named the winner of the **Inspiring Young Talent Award 2024**, with Sandeep Tripathy Pattnayak, Anaya Shimpi, and Arya Priya Dey as finalists. The Social Media Influencer Award 2024 celebrated the contributions of TV Presenter Aradhana, Rohit Srivastav, and eOdisha.

These awards highlighted the exceptional talent, dedication, and community spirit showcased during the event.

A Successful Milestone:

Bali Jatra UK 2024 was a resounding success, leaving attendees inspired by Odisha's vibrant culture and maritime legacy. OSUK's efforts in organizing the event within three months received widespread appreciation, exemplifying their commitment to celebrating and promoting Odisha's heritage on a global platform. Bali Jatra UK 2024 not only celebrated Odisha's rich heritage but also raised funds for two noble causes: the Maritime Volunteer Service (Lower Thames Unit) and Dibyajivan, supporting Odisha's battle against cancer. This gesture highlighted the event's commitment to giving back and making a positive impact on the community.

For more details, visit [OSUK's website] (https://osuk.org.uk) or follow them on social media.

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