

Diwali at Fed Square: More song and dance this year

ARE YOU A DANCER? DO YOU WANT THOUSANDS TO WATCH YOU PERFORM? THEN TAKE YOUR FIRST STEP WITH **CELEBRATE INDIA'S DANCE FOR DIWALI COMPETITION**

OUR REPORTER

First came the song, and now comes the dance. Hot on the heels of the successful Celebrate India Inc's "Sing for Diwali"—the Australia-wide competition to get music lovers with a flair for song to compete for a chance to perform live in front of thousands of people—comes 'Dance for Diwali', a similar competition for those who like to move and groove.

President of Celebrate India Inc Arun Sharma believes that singing and dancing is the essence of 'colourful Indian culture' and it has to be part of the organisation's Diwali-related activities every year.

While 'Sing for Diwali' concluded on 4 September where winners will perform at Fed Square on 22 October as part of the organisation's Diwali Finale, Dance for Diwali is just getting warmed up. Dance for Diwali too is Australia-wide, to be held between 5 September and 18 September, where participants need to send a one-minute video of their dance performance with completing a sentence, "I like Diwali because....." to the number provided. These videos will be uploaded on Celebrate India's Facebook.

The entries, says Sharma, will be judged by an independent panel and two finalists (solo and group categories) will be selected to perform at Fed Square on 22 October during the Diwali festivities. The group or solo performances with the most likes will also get an opportunity to perform as well on the big stage.

"Dance for Diwali is a great way to reach out to the young and broaden our reach to other communities," says Sharma as he underlines the relevance of introducing exciting new competitions in Victorian Diwali's annual calendar every year.



Celebrate India Inc each year stages Australia's largest and most colourful Diwali celebrations in the heart of Melbourne's CBD.

Celebrate India initiates new projects to engage with different sections of the community every year. "We do this with a specific purpose. We want to spread Indian cultural awareness in Australia," adds Sharma. "Diwali is not just about a day's activity. We want to stretch it over a period of time so that we can reach more people in Victoria and spread our message of multiculturalism to the whole of Australia."

Celebrate India's Diwali Celebrations will start from 17 October with the celebrations culminating at Fed Square on 22 October. "We are delighted to have Air India as a sponsor for Dance for Diwali," says Sharma. "Our community seems to have immense talent. Our purpose behind this is to bring people together, encourage them to join in the fun, take an initiative to put their inhibitions behind and to provide a platform for the new talent to come forward," adds Sharma.

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■ ARUN SHARMA PRESIDENT—CELEBRATE INDIA

Melbourne Bengali Association to host annual Durgotsov in October

OUR REPORTER

Melbourne Bengali Association (MELBA) is celebrating its biggest yearly event, the "Annual Durgotsov" on 8 and 9 October at Mossfiel Primary School, Langridge Drive, Hoppers Crossing.

Being a multi-cultural, multi-religious society, festivals in India occupy an important place in the cultural mosaic of the country, bringing utmost joy and happiness to all. They also imbibe noble values of peace and harmony, human compassion and dignity, universal brotherhood along with self-less



service to society.

Durga puja is a very important place Hindu festival as Goddess Durga is an embodiment and personification of all virtues, intelligence, power and mercy and epitomises the victory of good over evil. It's a matter of pride that MELBA has been celebrating Durga Puja every year showcasing traditional music and dance performed by local members. There is also a three-course dinner served at 9pm.

MELBA is also celebrating Kali Pujo on the eve of Diwali, 29 October, as well as Saraswati Pujo (Goddess of education and knowledge) in February 2017.