



Indian Diaspora Council

Shared heritage, aspirations and interests

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Post Office Box 650523 New York 11365 USA

30th May, 2017 (EST-USA)

Hon. Dr. Ralph E. Gonsalves
Prime Minister
St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Kingston, St. Vincent

Re: Commemoration of Indian Arrival Day in St Vincent & Grenadines

Your Excellency:

The Indian Diaspora Council (IDC) joins with its global affiliates and membership in paying honored tribute and express its gratitude to those who made the first journey as indentured laborers from India arriving in St. Vincent on 1st June, 1861 aboard the Travancore. We acknowledge with gratitude and pride the recognition and declaration of June 1 as Indian Arrival Day by the Government of St. Vincent & the Grenadines.

We are always reminded of their pioneering spirit, determination, persistence and endurance under extremely harsh conditions. While survival must have been the primary concern, they strived and persevered to maintain their sense of origin, traditions and culture. Their children, grandchildren and following generations will always take pride in this unique accomplishment, recognizing and appreciating the sacrifices and achievements made on their behalf. We also recognize the invaluable contributions, despite the comparatively small numbers, they have made to the diverse culture and economic development of St. Vincent & the Grenadines.

We pay homage and commemorate an historic event which took place 156 years ago and recognize the journeys, hardships, travails and perseverance of a people – while looking at today and tomorrow which can take lessons from that history of journeys not so long ago. While acknowledging that past, we can triumph by taking bold steps same as those who came to St. Vincent & the Grenadines and other lands with just a promise, with lots of hope and determination. They came to St. Vincent & the Grenadines partially by choice, many forced but resolved and persevered under very difficult and harrowing conditions. That shared experience, that saga of shared history, fostered a unique kindred spirit of resolve, togetherness and kinship – a triumph over obstacles and difficulties with dreams and aspirations of a destiny intertwined by history and fate”.

We extend Indian Diaspora Council’s congratulations to the Government and people of St. Vincent & the Grenadines on the commemoration of this 156th anniversary of that historic day. We also extend our continued best wishes to all the descendants of those early pioneers for peaceful and prosperous co-existence both in St. Vincent & the Grenadines and other lands where they have subsequently settled.

We continue to encourage and support active promotion of the rich and enduring Indian traditions which served their forefathers so well. We also wish to remind all the descendants of those early pioneers to recognize and reach out to others of Indian origin whose forebears also embarked on similar journeys.

Respectfully,

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cc: Dr. Arnold Thomas, Indian Diaspora Council Country Coordinator, St. Vincent & the Grenadines