



Indian Diaspora Council

Indian Diaspora Council
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31st March 2026 (EST-USA)

PRESS RELEASE

IDC MOURNS THE PASSING OF FORMER SURINAME PRESIDENT CHANDRIKAPERSAD SANTOKHI



The **Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC)** joins in solidarity with our global network, organizations, and friends globally in mourning the passing of former Surinamese President **Chandrikapersad Santokhi**, who passed away at the age of 67 years on 30th March 2026 in Paramaribo, Suriname. He was chairman of Suriname's Progressive Reform Party.

A former minister of justice and police from 2005 to 2010, Santokhi (known as *Chan*) served as Suriname's ninth president from 2020 to 2025. After winning the 2020 elections, Santokhi was the sole presidential nominee in Suriname. On 13th July, 2020, Santokhi was elected president by acclamation in an uncontested election. He was inaugurated on 16th July, 2020.

Santokhi was the Chief Guest of the Government of India at the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention held in Indore in January 2023 and was honored with the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award.

Suriname President **Jennifer Geerlings-Simons** confirmed Santokhi's death in a statement on social media, writing that "his years of service in various public functions will be remembered."

Indian Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** also expressed profound grief, describing Santokhi's death as an "irreparable loss" to Suriname and the global Indian diaspora. Modi reflected on their meetings and commended Santokhi's commitment to strengthening India-Suriname relations, as well as, his deep appreciation for Indian culture.

Albert Ramdin, former Foreign Minister of Suriname and current Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS): "I have worked very closely with President Chan Santokhi. He was determined from the beginning to put Suriname on the right foot again, and his instructions to me as Foreign Minister were to put Suriname again on the map as a respectable State. He did well for the people of Suriname under difficult circumstances."

Kriesnadath Nandoe, former Ambassador of Suriname to the United Nations (UN): "So sad - only 67 years old. A couple of weeks ago, we had a very constructive conversation about the next election. I lost a good friend, and Suriname lost a son".

Ashook Ramsaran, President of Indian Diaspora Council: "We met for the first time in 2007 when I accompanied Indian Minister of Overseas Affairs (MOIA) Hon. Vayalar Ravi during Indian Arrival Day celebrations. I admired Santokhi's skill and tenacity in a country with a diverse population and history of political turbulence".

Suriname gained its independence from the Netherlands in 1975. The population is approx. 575,000 with Dutch as the official language and Hindi taught in schools. Various distinguishable ethnic groups include:

27.4% Persons of Indian origin (Hindustanis); 21.7% Maroon (Bushinengue); 15.7% Creole (Mulatto); 13.7% Javanese; 13.4% Other Mixed; 3.8% Indigenous Amerindian; 1.5% Chinese; 1% Europeans; 1.8% Others.

Santokhi was a widely respected leader whose service strengthened Suriname's global standing and left a lasting impact on both his nation and the Indian diaspora.-Dr. Nicole Bissessar, Director of Community Cultural Affairs, IDC

For more information contact: Ashook Ramsaran at AshookRamsaran@gmail.com Mobile (USA) +1 917 519 5783

Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC), established in 1997, is an international non-profit organization with global affiliates and membership in 21 countries with the objective to embrace, engage, and enhance the shared heritage, aspirations, and interests of persons of Indian origin with optimum inclusivity.