

Remarks by Ambassador, H.E. Mr Anshuman Gaur, at ISKON Diwali Celebrations

8th October 2025, Budapest

Mr. Miklós Soltész, State Secretary for Church Affairs

His Holiness Sivarama Swami, Spiritual Leader of ISKCON Hungary

Radha Krishna Das, Chairman of ISKCON Hungary

Mr. József Attila Móring, Government Commissioner for the Development of the South Transdanubian Region

Mr. Gábor Galik, Deputy State Secretary for Legal Affairs

Namaskar, Jó estét kívánok, Hare Krishna and a very happy Diwali to all of you.

It is a great pleasure to join you this evening for the annual Diwali Dinner, an event so beautifully organized by ISKCON Hungary.

To Swamiji and all the dedicated volunteers, I extend my deepest gratitude for consistently creating this radiant bridge between our cultures. The work you do, especially through initiatives like Food for Life, exemplifies the true spirit of compassion and selfless service that lies at the heart of our ancient traditions.

Friends, festivals and celebrations are not just holidays in India; they are the very soul and rhythm of our cultural life. They serve as annual reminders of the eternal principles that bind our diverse nation together. Of all these festivals, Diwali, the festival of lights, holds a uniquely profound, sentimental, and unifying significance. It is not merely the commencement of a new financial year or a time for new clothes and gifts. At its core, Diwali is a powerful and universal concept: the triumph of **Jyoti** (Light) over **Tamas** (Darkness), of knowledge over ignorance, of hope over despair. It is a moment for introspection, for spiritually cleansing our inner selves, and for welcoming abundance, both material and spiritual, into our lives.

For the Vaishnava tradition, which ISKCON so diligently preserves and propagates, the celebration of Dipavali is steeped in extraordinary spiritual history. We light these beautiful *diyas* to commemorate the joyous homecoming of Lord Rama to Ayodhya after his victory over the forces of darkness and his long exile. Yet, this season, the auspicious month of *Kārttika*, also holds another profound association with the divine pastimes of Lord Krishna, when he slayed the demon Narakasura, liberating thousands. It is also the month dedicated to Lord Damodara, celebrating the unconditional love of Mother Yashoda for the Supreme Lord. Whether we look to the Rama *Leela* or the Krishna *Leela*, the central message remains the same: the promise that righteousness will always prevail, and that even in the darkest night, we can invite the light of divinity into our hearts.

This shared cultural reverence for light and knowledge forms the bedrock of the excellent bilateral relationship between India and Hungary. Our ties are not just bound by diplomatic agreements or increasing bilateral trade—which, I must note, is robust—but by genuine, enduring people-to-people connections. Hungarians, with their profound interest in Indian philosophy, Yoga, and spiritual traditions, have long shown a unique warmth and appreciation for our ancient culture.

Today, this cultural engagement is vibrant. The Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre in Budapest serves as a dynamic hub for showcasing India's rich heritage, from classical dance and music to the wisdom of Ayurveda. The cultural exchange program we share ensures that the best of Indian and Hungarian artistry finds expression in each other's countries. Indeed, India is proud to be seen as a country whose cultural and spiritual traditions are deeply attractive to ordinary Hungarians, fostering a bridge of mutual understanding that spans continents.

And what a beautiful expression of this bridge we witness tonight, here in the heart of Budapest. To host a Diwali celebration of this scale, far from the shores of India, is more than just a party; it is an act of cultural diplomacy. It demonstrates how successfully the Indian culture has woven itself into the rich tapestry of Hungarian society, enriching it while preserving its own identity.

As we light the lamps tonight, let us not only celebrate the light of Diwali but also the light of the shared friendship between India and Hungary—a friendship built on respect, history, and a shared pursuit of knowledge.

May this festival bring immense joy, health, and prosperity to you, your families, and the beautiful land of Hungary.

Subh Diwali!