

PRESS RELEASE

On 20 October 2018, Hon'ble Vice President visited the Jain Temple in Wilrijk, Antwerp where he addressed the Indian community. The event was also attended by the Governor of Antwerp Ms. Cathy Berx. The event was organized by the members of the Indian Association in Belgium and the Jain Culture Centre.

The event began with a Kathakali performance by Margi Kathakali Group from Trivandrum which presented "Geetopadeshm", a performance based on the Bhagavad Gita.

Hon'ble Vice President began his address by mentioning the contributions and sacrifices made by Indian soldiers who fought alongside their Belgian counterparts during the First World War. He praised the Indian community and their contributions to the continued success of Belgium as the hub of global diamond trade and towards the prosperity of the Belgian economy. The Indian Diaspora in Antwerp mostly came from Palanpur in Gujarat - contributes to 80% of the Belgium's global diamond trade.

In his speech to the community, Hon'ble Vice President also talked about the ASEM Conference and his call on His Majesty the King of the Belgians. He also thanked the Government of Belgium for the support extended to India in the UN and other international organizations. He thanked the Government of Belgium, for its support in organizing the 4th International Day of Yoga this year and for celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Hon'ble Vice President also briefed the community on the transformational changes in India under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi. He talked about India's inherent advantages include its expanding workforce and consumer market, rapid urbanization, growing education and skill capabilities, stronger technology adaptation, and potential for driving exports through greater local manufacturing.

He spoke at length on India's flagship programs in the areas of manufacturing, digitization, skills, financial inclusion, urbanization, startups, infrastructure, clean energy and transportation has unleashed a new momentum which is driving organic growth in the country. He also

talked about India's fight against climate change, terrorism and efforts taken against economic offenders and to tackle corruption and black money.

After the community event, Hon'ble Vice President visited the Offices of the Governor of Belgium to pay floral homage to the bust of Mahatma Gandhi.