YEAR OF INDIA @ BROWN UNIVERSITY – 2009-2010

Year-End Report – June 2010

In 2009-10, Brown featured an exciting program of major public lectures, cultural events, academic conferences, multimedia, and other explorations of India and its dramatic rise on the world stage. The Year of India advanced understanding of India's people, culture, economy, and politics – and their growing impact around the world.

Building from its base at the Watson Institute for International Studies, the Year of India engaged students and faculty across campus, and alumni and other friends of Brown across the world. Some 70 film screenings, research presentations, panel discussions, artistic performances, student productions, and lectures regularly filled Brown auditoriums. The Year of India also extended far beyond these halls, most notably during Brown University President Ruth J. Simmons’ visit to Delhi and Mumbai.

The program has served as a catalyst for the future, deepening India’s enduring presence at Brown – and Brown’s in India – through increased scholarship and collaboration. New partnerships and programs include a Brown Advisory Council on India, an expanded agreement with St. Stephen’s College in Delhi, a memorandum of understanding with the Confederation of Indian Industry, a doctoral program on inequality in the Global South, and another in Sanskrit. More announcements are still to come.

Selected Year of India highlights follow and multimedia reports are available at www.brown.edu/india.

HIGHLIGHTS

Brown Confers Honorary Degree on Thapar at 2010 Commencement Ceremonies
5/30/10: Renowned historian Romila Thapar received an honorary degree from Brown at the University’s commencement exercises. President Simmons, who presented Thapar’s degree, said that “in uncovering India’s rich early past, she has articulated the case for tolerance and humanity by exposing the uses and abuses of history.”

Minister Delivers Keynote on Muslims in Emerging India at Democracy Conference
5/8/10: At an international conference on “Six Decades of Indian Democracy,” India’s Minister for Minority Affairs Salman Khurshid called for leadership development among India’s Muslims and increased Muslim representation at the highest levels of government. The conference gathered over 30 leading scholars to reflect on Indian democracy since 1947. Indian Express Editor-in-Chief Shekhar Gupta spoke on “India’s Democracy and the Media.” Earlier in the spring, a joint Watson Institute/Observer Research Foundation conference featured a lecture by former Indian cabinet minister Mani Shankar Aiyar, on the essential role of local government in India.

World Music Star Zakir Hussain Draws Crowds
5/4/10: Legendary percussionist Zakir Hussain performed a live concert at Brown, accompanied by master violinist Ganesh Rajagopalan. Their performance, interspersed with conversation, engaged everyone from long-time fans to those with little prior exposure to Indian music.

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New Achievements in Sanskrit Studies at Brown
4/12/10: Brown recently hosted an international conference on the Mahābhārata to explore new understandings of the epic’s philosophical ideas and arguments. Next year, the University, which has engaged in the study and teaching of Sanskrit for over a century, will begin offering a PhD in Sanskrit Language and Literature in the Classics Department.

Simmons Visits India to Strengthen University Ties
4/5/10: A delegation led by President Simmons strengthened the University's ties with India during a recent visit to Delhi and Mumbai. The President convened the inaugural meeting of Brown’s Advisory Council on India, renewed existing partnerships, and developed new collaborations.

Indian IT Pioneer Cites Technology’s Power for Global Change in Ogden Memorial Lecture
3/1/10: Just as India's brand of technological innovation has elevated the country's international status, improved millions of Indians' livelihoods, and changed the world's way of doing business, so it is a force for addressing pressing global problems, according to Infosys founder N.R. Narayana Murthy. This summer, Infosys is hosting a Brown undergraduate intern as part of Brown’s Commerce, Organization, and Entrepreneurship Internship in India Program.

Rushdie Speaks on Literature, Politics, and Freedom of Speech
2/16/10: World-renowned author Salman Rushdie discussed his own development as an artist, the relationship between literature and politics, and the importance of free speech. Previously, the “New Indian Writing: The Rising Generation” literary festival featured authors Jhumpa Lahiri, Rana Dasgupta, and Suketu Mehta.

M.F. Husain Exhibition: A Global Palette on Display
2/5/10: The work of Indian painter M.F. Husain exemplifies India's fusion of diverse cultural influences, said Cogut Center for the Humanities Director Michael Steinberg at the opening reception of M.F. Husain: Early Masterpieces, 1950s-70s. One of the most recognized figures in Indian art, the 94-year-old Husain has been instrumental in the rise of modernism in India and the introduction of contemporary Indian art onto an international stage.

In Today's World, What Would Gandhi Do?
11/15/09: Public intellectual and grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, Rajmohan Gandhi, gave a lecture drawing on parallels between his grandfather and Martin Luther King Jr. to illustrate how today's conflicts could be addressed by nonviolent means.

NSF Grant for Doctoral Program on Inequality Will Enhance the Study of India at Brown
10/19/09: A prestigious award from the US National Science Foundation to build a doctoral program focused on inequality in developing countries will advance the study of India at Brown. The program at the Watson Institute will study four countries in the midst of rapid change – Brazil, China, India, and South Africa – working with such partners as the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in New Delhi.

Film Premiere Sets Stage for Year of India
10/1/09: The world premiere of Songs of a Sorrowful Man, a documentary co-directed by Brown Anthropology Professor Lina Fruzzetti, launched the Year of India. Showcasing the life and work of Dukhusyam Chitrakar, a renowned artist and Sufi mystic in West Bengal, the film is at once definitively Bengali and globally relevant. Throughout the year, the Brown Faculty India Presentations series highlighted faculty work on India and brought together scholars working across a variety disciplines.

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