

## Aamir Khan's films, Goan feni to delight South Africans

Indian music, dance, food and more will be on offer in South Africa as part of the 'Shared Histories Festival' beginning next month that hopes to reach out not only to the diaspora but also to others.

The band Indian Ocean, a performance by violin virtuoso L. Subramaniam, a retrospective of Aamir Khan's films and a Goan food festival will delight India enthusiasts in South Africa as part of the six-week long event.

The festival, celebrating India's special relationship with South Africa, was first introduced last year and was linked to the Johannesburg Arts Festival.

'It has also been absolutely amazing to see the support from local art and culture organisations and individuals as the festival more than doubles its activities and takes it across the country,' Indian Consul General Navdeep Suri told IANS.

While the Johannesburg link will continue this year, events are also to be staged in Durban, where the majority of South Africa's 1.2 million citizens of Indian origin live, as well as in Cape Town to a limited extent.

Suri, who spearheaded the concept last year, said the focus was not on taking Indian arts and culture to only the diaspora but also to other South Africans who are taking to it in a big way as Bollywood strikes a chord and Indian cuisine finds favour.

Leading corporates from both sides of the Indian Ocean have lent support to the festival, with the Tata Group, which has developed a strong presence in South Africa since the advent of democracy in 1994, as the headline sponsor.

Many South Africans will get their first whiff of feni, Goa's favoured drink, as the Goan Food Festival kicks off Aug 23 at the renowned restaurant Beverley Hills on the Durban coastline and then continues at the equally renowned Le Canard here in September.

Bollywood fans will get a double treat - a musical titled 'Bollywood Love Story' directed by Sanjoy Roy and choreographed by Gilles Chuen; while the Numetro cinema chain will show a dozen films starring Aamir Khan at its theatres across the country, from his debut in 'Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak' to his latest, the award-winning 'Taare Zameen Par'.

Dance enthusiasts will be able to revel in the steps of the Aditi Mangaldas Dance Company's 'Uncharted Seas', as well 'Gayatri', a performance by the Janak Khendry Dance Company of Canada in collaboration with the Canada Council for the Arts.

'Words on Water' will see a score of South African and Indian writers engaging in conversation, led by local Nobel laureate Nadine Gordimer.

L. Subramaniam will perform with the Durban Philharmonic Orchestra in the 'Concert for Freedom' to mark Gandhi Jayanti Oct 2.

A different kind of music will be heard when the group Indian Ocean stages a concert in the

sprawling African township of Soweto, as part of attempts to take the fast evolving Indian culture to different communities.

There will also be exhibitions of art, textiles and photographs and a 'Doing Business with India Conference' that will run in tandem with the festival, to be hosted from Aug 23 to Oct 5.

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