Statue of Mahatma Gandhi Unveiled in Madrid

A statue of Mahatma Gandhi was unveiled in Madrid by Her Majesty Queen Sofia of Spain on 2nd October 2013. The ceremony was attended by the Spanish Minister of Defence, H.E. Mr. Pedro Morenés Eulate; Minister of Industry, Energy and Tourism, H.E. Mr. José Manuel Soria López; the Mayor of Madrid, Ms Ana Botella and around 30 Heads of Mission in Spain. There was also a marked presence of about 350 guests which included members of the Indian community, important Spanish dignitaries, special invitees and friends of India.

The ceremony began with a short speech by the Ambassador Shri Sunil Lal. The Ambassador expressed his gratitude towards Her Majesty the Queen; the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism; the Madrid City Council, Spain –India Council Foundation and towards all who had made the special event possible. The Ambassador reminded that 2nd October, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi is also celebrated as International Day of Non-Violence by the United Nations. He said that by honouring Mahatma Gandhi, Spain had honoured India. He highlighted the eternal value of the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and their importance in the present difficult times.

The Ambassador then requested the Mayor of Madrid to accept the statue as donation from India to the city of Madrid. The Mayor, Ms Ana Botella expressed her gratitude and accepted the donation. Her Majesty the Queen of Spain then unveiled the statue to a prolonged and enthusiastic applause from all those present. After the unveiling, the Queen went round the statue and read the inscriptions on the four sides of its pedestal. The inscriptions include biographical information on Mahatma Gandhi, information on the philosophy espoused by him and some of his important quotes. The Queen then interacted with the Heads of Mission present for the event, officers and members of the Indian Embassy and other guests.

At different points of the ceremony, devotional hymns dear to Mahatma Gandhi viz, ‘Vaishnav jan to teene kahiye je’ and ‘Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram’ were sung by students of the ‘Condesa Eylo Alfonso’ choir of Valladolid under the guidance of Casa de la India.

The bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Dandi pose sculpted by Shri Ram V. Sutar, weighing nearly 360 kilograms has been requisitioned by the Indian Council of Cultural
Relations (ICCR). The pedestal has been installed by the Spain-India Council Foundation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain. Located at a prime location, the statue stands on the Joan Miró Square on the important Madrid busy way of Paseo de la Castellana – just beside the ‘Palacio de Congresos de Madrid’ and opposite the Santiago Bernabeu Football Stadium.

Photo Gallery:

H.M the Queen of Spain unveiling the statue of Mahatma Gandhi

From L to R: The Mayor of Madrid, Ms Ana Botella; The Spanish Minister of Industry, Energy and Tourism, H.E Mr. José Manuel Soria López; H.M Queen Sofia of Spain; The Spanish Minister of Defence, H.E Mr. Pedro Morenés Eulate; Ambassador of India, Mr Sunil Lal; Ms Gitanjali Lal
The Statue of Mahatma Gandhi

H.M the Queen of Spain with students of the ‘Condesa Eylo Alfonso’ choir of Valladolid
H.M the Queen of Spain with officers and members of the Indian Embassy