

High Commission of India

Belize

Press Release

**Unveiling of the Mahatma Gandhi Statue at the Belmopan campus, University of Belize by Hon'ble
Prime Minister of Belize, H.E. Mr. John Briceño**

Belmopan, 10 January, 2025

The first ever statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Belize, was unveiled at the Belmopan Campus of the University of Belize on Friday, 10 January, 2025. The ceremony was graced by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Belize, H.E. Mr. John Briceño, alongside esteemed dignitaries, faculty, students, and members of the Indian community. The lifelike statue of Mahatma Gandhi was donated by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR).

2. Prime Minister Briceño unveiled the statue and thanked India for the gift and the continued friendship between the two countries. While lauding the statue, he drew parallels between the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi and those of George Price, the Father of the Nation of Belize. He noted that both leaders championed the causes of justice, equality, and national unity through peaceful means. He said that the statue stands as a testament to their enduring legacies and the values that continue to guide Belize.

3. High Commissioner Dr. Pankaj Sharma, in his remarks, highlighted the close ties between India and Belize, emphasizing that the installation of Mahatma Gandhi's statue marks another chapter in this enduring friendship. He thanked the Government of Belize and the University of Belize for providing a home to Mahatma's statue which symbolizes the shared values of peace, education, and non-violence that both India and Belize hold dear.

4. Dr. Vincent Palacio, President of the University of Belize, expressed gratitude to the Government of India for the generous donation. He stated that the statue will serve as a constant reminder to their

students and faculty of the universal principles of truth and non-violence advocated by Mahatma Gandhi. He also announced that in recognition of these significant events, the park area within the University where the statue is installed has been named as 'Peace Park.' This space is intended to serve as a place for reflection and inspiration, fostering a spirit of peace and unity among all who visit.

5. Following the unveiling, Prime Minister Briceño planted a sapling of Peepal (*Ficus religiosa*) tree near the statute of Mahatma Gandhi, as part of the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign, an initiative launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on World Environment Day, encouraging individuals to plant trees in honor of their mothers, thereby promoting environmental conservation and sustainability.

6. The University of Belize is also home to the India Belize Centre of Engineering, established by the Government of India under the Development Cooperation Programme with Belize and is soon to be upgraded to a CARICOM Technical Development Centre for capacity buiding for the whole region.



