



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## *News Release*

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### **Mahatma Gandhi's grandson puts India in fresh perspective**

Mahatma Gandhi's grandson, the distinguished scholar and statesman, Gopalkrishna Gandhi, will be a keynote speaker at a week-long celebration of Asian life and culture which begins on Monday.

Mr Gandhi's talk is one of the highlights as the University of Edinburgh holds its first India and South Asia Week which runs until Sunday 5 October.

His India Day lecture, *India Yesterday, India Today* will be held on Thursday, Mahatma Gandhi's birthday.

Mr Gandhi has held a number of senior posts including High Commissioner of India to South Africa; Director of Nehru Centre, London, and Governor of West Bengal.

The week of celebrations begins on Monday in George Square Theatre. The opening event is a vibrant dance and music performance by the Edinburgh Bhangra Crew and a Qawwali group led by the renowned singer Farooq Khan.

Other events include an exhibition of photos by one of Scotland's leading multicultural documentary and travel photographers, Hermann Rodrigues. His *Broom Scots* photo exhibition celebrates the integration into wider society of Asian ethnic groups who have migrated to Scotland.

The University of Edinburgh's Centre for Research Collections will also display some of its rare manuscripts from the Indian subcontinent.

On Tuesday evening a student-led open mike event will take place featuring the musical and poetic talents of Edinburgh's students

On Wednesday evening Lord Meghnad Desai MP, recipient of the Padma Bhushan, the third highest civilian award in the Republic of India, will deliver a lecture. His talk *India in South Asia: the unfinished agenda*, will take place in the Business School Auditorium.

Edinburgh's annual Namaste party, named after a common form of South Asian greeting, will be held on Thursday in the Playfair Library, Old College. It will provide an opportunity for new students from India and South Asia to meet fellow students and staff.

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A Bollywood night takes place Friday and the week's celebrations conclude with the Muslim festival, Bakri-Eid, the following day.

Events are organised by the Centre for South Asian Studies, the India Institute, the South Asian Students Association and the University's International Office.

Looking forward to his talk, Mr Gopalkrishna Gandhi said: "India being not just a nation but a civilisation, India Day has to be about more than a country and its people. And its celebration has to be about more than a paean to its glory. It has to be a searching of India's soul to see why its yesterdays, flawed as they are, seem to have a moral dimension that today is looking for."

More information on India and South Asia Week can be found at [www.indiasouthasiaweek.weebly.com](http://www.indiasouthasiaweek.weebly.com)

Tickets for the Dance and Music Performance at George Square Theatre on Monday can be booked at <http://tinyurl.com/EUSASAQawwali>

The Lord Meghnad Desai Lecture at the Business School on Tuesday is un-ticketed

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