

INTERNATIONAL

Obama celebrates Diwali, lights first-ever diya in Oval Office



WASHINGTON:, OCTOBER 31, 2016 09:35 IST

UPDATED: DECEMBER 02, 2016 12:39 IST

"This year, I was honoured to kindle the first-ever diya in the Oval Office — a lamp that symbolises how darkness will always be overcome by light. It is a tradition that I hope future Presidents will continue," Mr. Obama said on the White House Facebook page.

US President Barack Obama has celebrated Diwali by lighting the first-ever diya in the Oval Office of the White House and hoped that his successors would continue the tradition.

Mr. Obama, who was the first president to celebrate Diwali personally at the White House in 2009, talked about this momentous occasion in a Facebook post soon after he kindled the diya in his Oval Office with some Indian-Americans working in his administration.

"I was proud to be the first President to host a Diwali celebration at the White House in 2009, and Michelle and I will never forget how the **people** of India welcomed us with open arms and hearts and danced with us in Mumbai on Diwali," Mr. Obama said.

Facebook page, which became viral on the social media.

By late night it was liked by more than 1.5 lakh people and shared more than 33,000 times.

“On behalf of the entire Obama family, I wish you and your loved ones peace and happiness on this Diwali,” Mr. Obama said.

“To all who are celebrating the festival of lights across America and around the world, happy Diwali. As Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists light the diya, share in prayers, decorate their homes, and open their doors to host and feast with loved ones, we recognise that this holiday rejoices in the triumph of good over evil and knowledge over ignorance,” said the U.S. President.

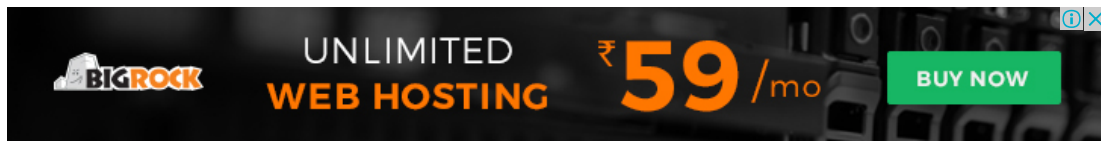
“It also speaks to a broader truth about our shared American experience. It’s a reminder of what’s possible when we see beyond the differences that too often divide us. It’s a reflection of the hopes and dreams that bind us together,” he said.

Mr. Obama said that it is a time to renew collective obligation to deepen those bonds, to stand in each other’s shoes and see the world through each other’s eyes, and to embrace each other as brothers and sisters — and as fellow Americans.

Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, who has a large fan following in the Indian-American community greeted Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains across the world on the occasion of Diwali.

“On Sunday, nearly a billion Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists around the world — including more than two million Americans — will celebrate Diwali, the festival of lights.

For members of these faiths, lighting the lamp (the diya) is a reminder that light prevails over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, and good over evil,” Ms. Clinton said.



The advertisement features the BigRock logo on the left, followed by the text "UNLIMITED WEB HOSTING" in white and orange. To the right, the price "₹ 59 / mo" is displayed in large orange font. A green "BUY NOW" button is positioned on the far right. The background is dark with a faint image of a keyboard.

Printable version | Oct 18, 2017 9:17:50 PM | <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/Obama-celebrates-Diwali-lights-first-ever-diya-in-Oval-Office/article16086058.ece>

© The Hindu