



**MINISTRY: FINANCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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PRESS RELEASE

Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan was awarded the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman award by the government of India on Saturday, 9 January 2010 in New Delhi. The President of India, Pratibha Patil conferred the prestigious award to 14 distinguished members of the Indian diaspora for their achievements in life and contribution to civil society, government, business, sciences, various professions and philanthropic causes.

In the past few years the government of India has recognised other South Africans such as Ahmed Kathrada, Fatima Meer, Billy Nair among others, for their contribution to the liberation of South Africa and to the building of a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist society.

In his acceptance speech, Minister Gordhan said, "it is a remarkable coincidence that today, January 9, is the day when Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa in 1915, to lead the struggle against British colonial rule for independence and peace in this country. President Nelson Mandela said of the Mahatma; 'India is Gandhi's country of birth; South Africa his country of adoption. He was both an Indian and a South African citizen.'"

2010 also marks 150 years since the first Indians arrived in South Africa on November 16, 1860. It is also 20 years since Nelson Mandela was released from prison to become the first President of a democratic South Africa. “This year we will celebrate, with all South Africans, the achievements and contributions of South Africans of Indian origin to the development and democratisation of SA. We will celebrate the fact that in 150 years, we have overcome our past as cutters of cane, artisans and small business owners with no democratic rights to become full citizens of a democratic SA largely through the efforts of Mr Mandela and the African National Congress,” Minister Gordhan said in his address.

The full text of the acceptance speech of the Minister is on www.treasury.gov.za.

For more information contact Thoraya Pandy on 082 416 8416.

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