



## Embassy of India Tunis, Tunisia

### PRESS RELEASE

#### *An introduction to Kathakali performed in Tunis*

An elegant performance of *Kathakali*, explaining its origin, its base and demonstrating the beauty of the dance itself, was given by Ms. Maha Gaida in Tunis on Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2014 at the Institut Superieur d'Art Dramatique (ISAD) in Tunis. Ambassador Mrs. Nagma M. Mallick was guest of honour at the event at which she, in her remarks, highlighted the history and the popularity of this dance form in India and in the world. Mr. Mahmoud El Mejri, Director of the Institut, welcomed Ambassador and other guests on the occasion.

Ms. Maha Gaida is a young Tunisian dancer, who studied Kathakali at the celebrated Kathakali Institute, Kerala Kalamandalam. She had pursued her studies on a scholarship of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). Since her return to Tunis, Maha has played an important role in popularizing this dance form in Tunisia and in incorporating elements of this dance form into the repertoire of Tunisian theatre.

In her performance, Maha first demonstrated the '*navarasas*' or nine classical expressions of dance, '*hasta mudras*' or hand gestures. Assuming the form of a playful maiden and then of a graceful elephant; she also acted the part of a sportive gazelle at one moment and a warrior at the next. Maha completed the performance by performing a small vignette from the Indian epic '*Mahabharata*'. Members of the diplomatic and the artistic communities of Tunis and performers and students of the Institut formed the audience. The beauty and grace of the Kerala dance form came alive for one evening in Tunis.

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24<sup>th</sup> June, 2014  
Tunis





