

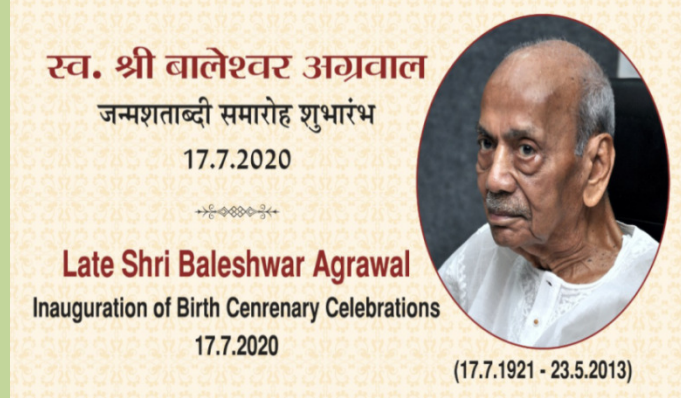
ANTAR RASHTRIYA SAHAYOG PARISHAD BULLETIN

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July & August, 2020

Shri Baleshwar Agrawal Birth Centenary Program

Dr Ruchi Verma



Antar-Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP) organized a programme on 17 July, 2020 in collaboration with Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) and Hindusthan Samachar News Agency to commemorate the birth centenary of the Visionary Thinker and an Expert on Diaspora issues, Shri Baleshwar Agrawal. ARSP has planned a yearlong celebration accommodating many diaspora people and several countries to celebrate Shri Baleshwar Agrawal birth centenary. The commemoration starts with the series of these two webinars.

On this occasion, several dignitaries from India and abroad were present to pay their homage to this great personality. Hon'ble Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Hon'ble Shri V. Muraleedharan, Minister of State for External Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs, H. E. Major General V. Namgyel, Ambassador of Bhutan to India, Shri R. K. Sinha, Chairman, Hindusthan Samachar News Agency, Shri Ashok Tandon, Member, Prasar Bharati, Amb. Shashank, Former Indian Foreign Secretary, Shri Ram Bahadur Rai, President, IGNCA, Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, IGNCA, along with several members of ARSP paid their tribute.

Hon'ble Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Railways and Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC, MP, Former President & Prime Minister of Mauritius, due to their inability to attend the session sent their video message remembering Shri Baleshwar Agrawal.

The sessions were moderated by Shri Shyam Parande, Secretary General, ARSP. He remembered Shri Baleshwar Agrawal as the main motivational figure. Baleshwar Ji was an alumni of Banaras Hindu University and he opted to work for National rejuvenation through different social organizations instead of pursuing a career in Engineering. He was also associated with the Hindusthan Samachar News Agency as Managing Editor for several years. Through Antar-Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (Bharat), he worked passionately in reaching out to Indian diaspora across the world. He played a pioneering role in providing the Indian diaspora a platform to reconnect with their country of origin.

Amb. Virendra Gupta, President, ARSP while welcoming the dignitaries and participants stated that it was largely in recognition of Baleshwar Ji's efforts to expand linkage and outreach with the Indian Diaspora that the Government of India initiated the celebration of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas with large diaspora gatherings. He acknowledged that Shri Baleshwar Agrawal ji was passionately committed to diaspora issues. ARSP's motto "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" which means cordiality, fraternity and understanding among people around the world, was the embodiment of his life. Amb. Gupta highlighted that while commemorating the centenary, ARSP would like to re-commit ourselves to carry forward this legacy and strengthen linkage with the Indian diaspora and share empathy in their time of difficulty.

Amb. Shashank, Former Foreign Secretary, remembered Shri Baleshwar ji as an institutional builder who has established people to people connection, who has joined Bharatvanshis to Bharat. Through organizing Parliamentarian conferences, he has established connection between the government and the diaspora. He suggested that the 19 chapters of ARSP should establish connection with other chapters of the diaspora organizations worldwide at the non-governmental organization levels.

Hon'ble Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, paid his tribute to Shri Baleshwar Agrawal ji remembering him as a great institution in himself. Shri Baleshwar ji established Antar-Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad to connect Indian diaspora with their mother country and their fellow countrymen. India's great culture, tradition was propagated worldwide by him. Without political influences, he gave new heights to the ARSP. Pravasi Bhawan was all his efforts. He has also given new direction to the Hindi news and editions as the Managing Editor of Hindusthan Samachar News Agency for several years. We will always be grateful towards him and his efforts.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Former President & Prime Minister of Mauritius remembered him as a down to earth person. He said Mauritius was like a second home for Shri Baleshwar ji. He has joined Indian people of Mauritius to India and Indians. He was a very versatile person. We will always remember him.

Hon'ble Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Railways, shared his personal experiences with Shri Baleshwar Agrawal ji. He stated that Shri Baleshwar ji has submitted all his life for social cause. He was humble, humorous person who was totally dedicated towards his work. He has joined people of Indian origin with their roots especially the youth. His life would always be an inspiration to work with compassion and dedication.

Hon'ble Shri V. Muraleedharan, Minister of State for External Affairs, remembered him as a great visionary and Humanitarian who works at the grass root levels. He stated that Shri Baleshwar Agrawal ji's name has become synonym with Pravasi Bhartiya. It is because of his tireless efforts, government recognized diaspora and join Bharat with Bharatvanshis. His ideas were way ahead of time. Today, 30 million strong diaspora is an asset for both the host and the home country. He further stated that vision of Shri Baleshwar Agrawal ji will guide us in further enhancing the image of relationship between India and diaspora.

H. E. Major General V. Namgyel, Ambassador of Bhutan to India said that he was a driving inspiration towards India-Bhutan relations. In keeping with the view, several ARSP delegations have visited Bhutan and in similar way, whenever King of Bhutan visited Delhi, visit to ARSP was always included in the programme. Good will and friendship towards Bhutan was clearly evident in his approach. Apart from his achievable as the Secretary General of ARSP, he will also be remembered as a force behind strengthening the ties between India and Bhutan.

Many dignified personalities from abroad also shared their personal experiences with Shri Baleshwar Agrawal ji and paid their tribute. H.E. (Smt.) Usha Canabady, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Mauritius, Professor Ved P. Nanda, University of Denver Sturm College of Law, USA, Shri Muljibhai Pindolia, Founder President of Hindu Council

of Africa, Kenya, Shri Chandresh Sharma, Former Minister, Trinidad & Tobago, Shri P. P. Devaraj, Former Minister of State, Sri Lanka and many more were present on this occasion. They stated that Shri Baleshwar Agrawal ji sacrificed his life for his dream of diaspora. He was the pioneer who understood the strength of Indian diaspora and brought them to the fold of the country. He was the bridge who brought together all children of India together and maintain linkages between them.

Indian Opinion

(Continued from the Previous Issue)



✍ M K Gandhi

I propose to acquaint the reader with all the weapons, internal as well as external, employed in the Satyagraha struggle and now therefore proceed to introduce to him *Indian Opinion*, a weekly journal which is published in South Africa to this very day. The credit for starting the first Indian-owned printing press in South Africa is due to a Gujarati gentleman, Shri Madanjit Vyavaharik.

After he had conducted the press for a few years in the midst of difficulties, he thought of bringing out a newspaper too. He consulted the late Shri Mansukhlal Nazar and myself. The paper was issued from Durban. Shri Mansukhlal Nazar volunteered to act as unpaid editor. From the very first the paper was conducted at a loss. At last we decided to purchase a farm, to settle all the workers, who must constitute themselves into a sort of commonwealth, upon it and publish the paper from the farm. The farm selected for the purpose is situated on a beautiful hill thirteen miles from Durban. The nearest railway station is at a distance of three miles from the farm and is called Phoenix. The paper was and is called *Indian Opinion*. It was formerly published in English, Gujarati, Hindi and Tamil. But the Hindi and Tamil sections were eventually discontinued, as the burden they imposed upon us seemed to be excessive, we could not find Tamil and Hindi writers willing to settle upon the farm and could not exercise a check upon them. The paper was thus being published in English and Gujarati when the Satyagraha struggle commenced. Among the settlers on the farm were Gujaratis, North Indians and Tamilians as well as Englishmen.

After the premature death of Mansukhlal Nazar, his place as editor was taken by an English friend, Herbert Kitchin. Then the post of editor was long filled by Mr. Henry S. L. Polak and during our incarceration the late Rev. Joseph Doke also acted as editor. Through the medium of this paper we could very well disseminate the news of the week among the community. The English section kept those Indians informed about the movement who did not know Gujarati, and for Englishmen in India, England and South Africa, *Indian Opinion* served the purpose of a weekly newsletter. I believe that a struggle which chiefly relies upon internal strength can be carried on without a newspaper, but it is also my experience that we could not perhaps have educated the local Indian community, nor kept Indians all over the world in touch with the course of events in South Africa in any other way, with the same ease and success as through *Indian Opinion*, which therefore was certainly a most useful and potent weapon in our struggle.

As the community was transformed in course of and as a result of the struggle, so was *Indian Opinion*. In the beginning we used to accept advertisements for it, and also execute job work in the printing press. I observed that some of our best men had to be spared for this kind of work. If we

did receive advertisements for publication, there was constant difficulty in deciding which to accept and which to refuse. Again one would be inclined to refuse an objectionable advertisement, and yet be constrained to accept it, say because the advertiser was a leading member of the community and might take it ill if his advertisement was rejected. Some of the good workers had to be set apart for canvassing and realizing outstandings from advertisers, not to speak of the flattery which advertisers claimed as their due. Moreover, the view commended itself, that if the paper was conducted not because it yielded profit but purely with a view to service, the service should not be imposed upon the community by force but should be rendered only if the community wished.

And the clearest proof of such wish would be forthcoming if they became subscribers in sufficiently large numbers to make the paper self-supporting. Finally it seemed that it was in every way better for all concerned that we should approach the generality of the community and explain to them the duty of keeping their newspaper going rather than set about to induce a few traders to place their advertisements with us in the name of service. On all these grounds we stopped advertisements in the paper with the gratifying result that those who were at first engrossed in the advertisement department could now devote their labours to improving the paper. The community realized at once their proprietorship of *Indian Opinion* and their consequent responsibility for maintaining it. The workers were relieved of all anxiety in that respect. Their only care now was to put their best work into the paper so long as the community wanted it, and they were not only not ashamed of requesting any Indian to subscribe to *Indian Opinion*, but thought it even their duty to do so. A change came over the internal strength and the character of the paper, and it became a force to reckon with. The number of subscribers which generally ranged between twelve and fifteen hundred increased day by day. The rates of subscription had to be raised and yet when the struggle was at its height, there were as many as 3,500 subscribers. The number of Indians who could read *Indian Opinion* in South Africa was at the outside 20,000, and therefore a circulation of over three thousand copies may be held to be quite satisfactory.

The community had made the paper their own to such an extent, that if copies did not reach Johannesburg at the expected time, I would be flooded with complaints. The paper generally reached Johannesburg on Sunday morning. I know of a many, whose first occupation after they received the paper would be to read the Gujarati section through from beginning to end. One of the company would read it, and the rest would surround him to listen.

Not all who wanted to read the paper could afford to subscribe to it by themselves and some of them would therefore club together for the purpose. Just as we stopped advertisements in the paper, we ceased to take job work in the press, and for nearly the same reasons. Compositors had now some time to spare, which was utilized in the publication of books. As here too there was no intention of reaping profits and as the books were printed only to help the struggle forward, they commanded good sales. Thus both the paper and the press made their contribution to the struggle, and as Satyagraha gradually took root in the community, there was clearly visible a corresponding moral amelioration of the paper as well as of the press from the standpoint of Satyagraha.

(To be Continued)

Covid-19: Impact on Roma Community

Centre for Roma Studies & Cultural Relations (CRSCR)-ARSP hosted a Virtual International Conference on COVID 19 and Its Impact on Roma Community on 20 June, 2020. The webinar was attended by a number of International and Indian scholars, community representatives, diplomats, social workers, activists, professors and students. In his introductory remarks, Amb. Rajesh Sachdeva, Chairman CRSCR briefly spoke about the worst health and socio-economic crises faced by the entire human population on account of COVID 19 pandemic. He added that Roma Community, which was one of the marginalized communities of Europe, has been hard hit by this

pandemic as they generally stayed in densely populated areas with wide spread poverty. The objective of webinar was to understand sufferings and challenges faced by Roma community during these difficult times under different parameters - health, employment, socio-economic, education, housing, discrimination, humanitarian aid and governmental support etc.

In his welcome address, Sh. Shyam Parande, Secretary General- ARSP, while referring to corona virus, said that the human society was passing through challenging situations which have adversely impacted the daily life of Roma community in different countries. He also said that pre-existing problems of the community were further aggravated because of lock-down, social distancing and other restrictions imposed by authorities to fight this pandemic.

Amb. Virendra Gupta, President of ARSP remarked that our heart goes out for our Diaspora globally, who was facing serious problems in this tumultuous time. In this context, he spoke of India's emotional attachment with Roma Community and our concern for them. He added that Covid 19 has been impacting everybody, but minority and marginalized communities like Roma were bearing the worst brunt of this unprecedented crisis.

Inaugural address was delivered by President of ICCR, Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe. He stated that Roma Community world over has been facing crisis of identity and their identity needs to be protected. For the Society, he preferred the theory of Salad Bowl as against theory of Melting Pot, wherein smaller groups retain their individual identity while being part of a large group. Dr. Sahasrabuddhe articulated its importance at present times when conflict on the basis of race and ethnicity was common occurrence which was dividing human society. Therefore, the world needs to adopt the principle of "Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti" meaning- the ultimate truth is only one and that wise men approach it in diverse ways, in order to deal with such conflicting issues effectively. He said that the impact of Covid-19 on psychology and socio-psychological aspect was far more severe than on health. Like Indians, Roma community was known for their nature-worshiping tradition which provides the unique source of strength to face this unprecedented crisis. He further added that Roma community has confidence and strength emanating from their commitment and resoluteness to cope with the difficult challenges and move forward.

Mr. Nicolas Jimenez Gonzalez, Spanish Sociologist, stated that Romani People in Spain were especially vulnerable to COVID-19 both on health and in socio-economic situation. Discrimination in form of antigypsyism, social segregation especially in housing, economic precariousness and lack of basic services were chronic conditions suffered by Romani families. He further said that the political measures, which have been taken because of COVID-19 pandemic, have led to an unprecedented freezing of Roma's economic life. In Spain, most of Roma people earn their livelihood by vending in street markets which have been closed. The second source of income was music, but political restrictions owing to Covid-19 have had the consequences of the closure of all kind of places such as theaters, restaurants, festivals etc where Romani artists used to perform.

Ms. Fatmira Dajlani, CEO, Roma Gate for Integration, Albania, spoke on the discrimination meted out to Roma community by local population, which was making the situation more difficult and worse in this tough time. Roma Community in Albania was not getting any support from the Government for dealing with crises caused by Corona virus. She further added that Covid -19 badly affected the education of Romani children, because most of them do not have phones and computers at home to study online.

Ms. Enerida Isuf, Federation of Roma Association, Barcelona, Spain, stated that Roma community was one of the most vulnerable and affected group of Covid-19. She said that Covid-19 has shown the existence of anti-Roma system including administrative structure and its failure in implementation of policies for inclusion of Romani people. Half of the Romani children do not have access to modern technology and appliances needed for digital learning. Covid-19 also highlighted the violation of most basic human rights of Roma community like rights to food and

houses. Romani families live in extremely deplorable housing conditions. She further spoke about the persistent and historical discrimination against Roma.

Ms. Emanuela Di Gombar, Consultant for integration work, Documentation and Culture Center of German Sinti and Roma in Heidelberg, Germany, spoke about the social assistance in form financial help by the Government to minorities including Roma & Sinti. The German Government was providing financial aid for every small company, every self-employed or freelancer no matter whether they are Roma-Sinti or Germans. The Government also ensured that every child including Roma-Sinti was provided with financial aid of 300 Euros without deduction of the social assistance. Aftermath of “Black Lives Matter” Movement, the Government removed the word -Race from its constitution as Race per se was discriminatory.

Prof. Dr. Hristo Kyuchukov, Professor at University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland, remarked that Covid-19 offered an opportunity to Roma community to get together and help each other. Roma from Western Europe in Germany, Spain, The Netherlands and others were offering financial support to the Roma of Eastern European countries especially Bulgaria, Slovakia, Serbia and others. He cited few examples of aggressive and racist approach against Roma in Europe. However, in most cases no corrective action was taken by governmental authorities to stop the stigmatization of the community. He pointed out the dirty role of Media in portraying Roma in negative light and reporting that the Romani lifestyle was the cause of spread of virus. He further added that police brutality in form of attacking Romani settlements was normal phenomena in some parts of Europe in this crisis time.

Mr. Orhan Galjus, President, Eurasian Rromani Academic Network, The Netherlands, pointed out that the European Commission and Parliament again failed to protect basic rights of Roma community in Europe on Covid-19 time. He said that almost 80 percent of Romani people live in overcrowded houses which run short of drinkable and running water and sewage systems were broken and dilapidated. The Covid-19 pandemic uncloaked deep-rooted and long-standing discrimination against Roma and their stigmatization in Europe.

The Webinar ended with Question & Answer Session that saw some valuable remarks made by some participants. Prof. Gopal Arora, while agreeing to general deprivation and discrimination of Roma, suggested the need for highlighting bright spots also. He requested Roma participants to promote Yoga and Ayurvedic formulation endorsed by AYUSH Ministry, Government of India to enhance immunity to fight COVID 19. Zalina Dabla, Social Activist, Estonia, remarked that the situation of Roma all over the world was same. She commended action of the Estonian government to created the council for Roma Integration on the recommendation of EU Council. Amb. Anup Mudgal suggested the need to explore ways to engage with Roma Youth. While summing up discussions, Amb. Sachdeva thanked the participants for sharing very useful thoughts and experiences. He assured that CRSCR would work on some of the suggestions in cooperation with Roma Organizations/ Institutions/Scholars.

Irfaan Ali is the new President of Guyana

After five months of impasse and a series of court cases, Mohamed Irfaan Ali (40) of People’s Progressive Party of Guyana took the oath as the 9th Executive President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, on 3 August 2020. The day coincided with the Rakshabandhan day in India- a festival of love and brotherhood. The Guyana Election Commission notified the results of the General and Regional elections on 2nd August.

Others who took oath alongwith Irfaan Ali included Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo as the Vice President, Brigadier Rt. Mark Phillips as the Prime Minister, Mohabir Anil Nandlall as the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs and Gail Teixeira as Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance.

Amidst mounting International pressure and adverse court orders, outgoing President David Granger had hardly any choice left. In a face saving statement on Aug 02, 2020, Granger stated that the APNU+AFC Coalition respected the lawful consequences of the 'declaration' as announced by the Chairman of the Elections Commission.

It should also be noted that Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad- Bharat (ARSP), in their role as a vigilant civil society organization, raised its voice for upholding the democratic practices and standing with the Indian Diaspora. ARSP had issued two statements on Guyana impasse and kept on following with Ministry of External Affairs. A delegation of ARSP had met the External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar on 19 March 2020 in the Parliament House to discuss the Guyana issue. The first MEA statement on Guyana had come the same evening.

Another statement from MEA had come on 25 July 2020 saying that *“India has been closely following developments of the General and Regional Elections held on 2 March 2020. It has been more than four months since the elections in Guyana and the results are still awaited. As a time tested friend of Guyana, India looks forward to the the early conclusion of the electoral process in the interest of democracy in Guyana. India further that the outcome of the election is respected by all parties”*

ARSP President Amb. Virendra Gupta had also written a column on Guyana impasse.

Guyana developments represent the victory of democratic forces and the realization of the genuine and just aspirations of the people of Indian origin in that country. ARSP expresses congratulations and best wishes to the elected government in Guyana.

Interface of Roma Community with Mainstream Societies in 20th & 21st Century

✍ Md. Zameer Anwar

Centre for Roma Studies and Cultural Relations (Antar-Rasthtriya Sahayog Parishad) organized a virtual International Roma Conference on Interface of Roma Community with Mainstream Societies in 20th & 21st Century on 5th August, 2020. The webinar was graced by the participation of International Roma scholars and activists including Prof. Marcel Courthiade, Mr. Jorge Bernal, Prof. Dr. Marianna Smirnova Seslavinskaya, Mr. Orhan Galjus, Mr. Marian Mandache, Ms. Mojgan Zargar, Prof. Hristo Kyuchukov, Mr. Zoran Dimov, Mr. Laszlo Fejos along with Indian Roma experts like Dr. Punita Singh, Dr. Vijendra Sharma, Mr. Virendra Rishi, Dr. Shashi Bala, Dr. Shyam Singh Shashi, etc. The major focus of the deliberation was on integration policies of the different countries and present socio-economic situation of the community.

Amb. Rajesh Sachdeva, Chairperson-CRSCR, in his opening remarks referred to prejudices, discrimination and persecution faced by Roma community over many centuries. He added that they continue to face some form of discrimination in areas such as housing, education, health care and employment despite European Union initiated measures for the inclusion of Roma community. Md. Zameer Anwar, Senior Research Associate, introduced International Romani scholars who presented their research papers and he touched upon the essence and imperatives of organizing this webinar.

Delivering his welcome address, Amb. Virendra Gupta, President, ARSP, reiterated that the emotional dimension was conspicuous when we look at attachment of Roma with India. He talked about linguistic connection, parities of cultural practices, traditions and rituals besides genetic evidences which substantiated the origin of Roma in India. He also pointed out that Roma community suffered the worst kind of persecution, discrimination and oppression.

Dr. Dnyaneshwar Manohar Mulay, Member, National Human Rights Commission, in his Inaugural Address, said that in International Roma Conference and Cultural Festival, organized by Antar- Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP) in association with Indian Council for Cultural

Relations (ICCR) in 2016, then External Affairs Minister, Late Smt. Sushma Swaraj said that the Government of India should consider Roma community as a part of extended Indian Diaspora. He further added that India as a country must take larger ownership and a large number of people-to-people partnership would have to be built particularly in the field of education, economic opportunities as well as cultural exchange including preservation of language, culture and other social practices. He quoted President of Czech Republic, Vaclav Havel "How we look at the issues of Roma Community will determine the quality of our country and our democracy".

Prof. Dr. Marcel Courthiade, International Rromani Union (Commissioner for language and Linguistic Justice) INALCO (Rromani section – South Asia and Himalaya Dpt.) said that at the time of Roma's arrival in Europe, its inhabitants were locked in their rigid vision of the world. Europeans were not able to acquaint themselves with a new culture and their lack of open-mindedness led them to a false perception of the Roma and they did not understand the alternative culture conveyed by these newcomers. Almost all scholars in the past concentrated on the misdeeds of a minority of Roma and they embedded their accusations into the fake cliché of nomadic way of life and lack of religion, while creating a fabricated wrong image of the Roma, a detrimental stereotype which is still prevailing and very active today. They turned a dignified diaspora into a marginalized social group, allegedly generating problems.

Mr. Jorge Bernal, President, Identified Cultural Romani of Argentina, AICRA, Human Rights Activist, Argentina, said that Roma community was facing discrimination, prejudice, hatred and violence in their daily life in Argentina. Romani people are preserving their cultural identity including uses of language and wearing the traditional dresses especially by Romani women. He implied that Roma population in Argentina is about 300,000, who belong to the following Romani groups: Greek, Moldavian and Russian Kalderash, some Lovari families and some Chilean Xoraxane families.

Prof. Dr. Marianna Smirnova Seslavinskaya, Research Scholar, Russia, talked about ethnic discrimination and forceful inclusion and integration of Roma community in the democratic societies. She said, the successful Romani persons or families might be excluded from their own traditional Romani societies as well as hide their ethnic identity from surrounding non Roma population mainly because of the offence against the Romani traditions. She opined that Roma are mostly demonstrated in a negative manner and their social marginalization is highlighted, though Roma have changed their traditional occupations and uplifted their social status.

Mr. Marian Mandache, Executive Director, Romani CRISS, Lawyer, Romania, said that Roma have one of the strongest national identities in the world, but have been facing pervasive discrimination all over the world especially in Europe. Discrimination was in fact widespread. He further added that all of human rights were routinely and constantly violated against Roma. Roma faced probably one of the worst treatments which humankind has encountered in the any nation on the face of earth. Roma were persecuted extensively and exterminated in many ways, however, we not only survived but also were able to preserve our culture and language in the most part. During the current pandemic, Roma were stigmatized for the spread of the COVID 19 disease.

Ms. Mojgan Zargar, Cultural Activist and Writer, Iran, pointed out that the social and economic situations of Roma in Iran were very different from those of Roma in most countries of the world. The authorities did not neglect or avoid Roma community in Iran as there was no discrimination or racism. Roma community has been provided with lands for settlement.

Prof. Hristo Kyuchukov, University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland talked about the assimilatory Policies towards Roma in the communist time - the case of Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia. He said that 95 percent of Roma population in Czech Republic was killed in World War 2. Men and women were forced to do such works which were not appropriate to the community and objectionable in their culture. He also pointed out that Romani women were

sterilized without their consent and knowledge in Czechoslovakia even though there was no law for sterilization against Roma. There was prevalent negative attitude towards Romani language that was forbidden from use in school, media and so on and so forth in Czech Republic.

Dr. Punita Singh, Visiting faculty, Ashoka University, India, said that about 10 million Roma in Europe face prejudice, intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion in their daily lives. They were marginalized and live in very poor socio-economic conditions. She talked about national integration policies for the integration of Roma to improve the condition of Roma especially focused on Education, Employment, Healthcare and Housing, which were laid down by European Union in 2010-11.

The Webinar ended with observations made by Mr. Zoran Divom, President, International Romani Union (IRU) and Pandit Veerendra Rishi, followed by Question & Answer Session that saw some pertinent and significant remarks made by Zoran Dimov, who said that it was imperative to prepare the new strategy to teach Romani history, language, traditions and culture to Roma children. Dr Shashi Bala suggested undertaking projects related to Roma in Western and Eastern Europe pertaining to their contribution to steel industries and their migration to the countries where at present they were residing or living.

Prof Gopal Arora summed up the conference and pointed out that Centre for Roma Studies and Cultural Relations was the first institutional arrangement, partly funded by Indian Council for Cultural Relations. He stated that the centre was engaged in sensitizing about the concerns and status of Roma in India. He further added that there were schemes and funds dedicated to Roma in Europe but the outcome of the schemes were not so effective to bridge the gaps.

Keith Rowley retains power as PNM wins Trinidad & Tobago Elections

In a closely contested General Election held on 10th August 2020, PNM returned to power in Trinidad & Tobago with a 22-19 margin over UNC led by Kamla Persad Bissessar. Unlike Guyana which saw a delay of five months in declaration of results, the preliminary results in Trinidad & Tobago came within a few hours.

PNM got 322,250 votes against 309,188 votes for UNC. The total votes polled this time (658,297) were lower than votes polled in 2015 (734,792) and 2010 (722,322).

PNM contested all the 41 seats and UNC contested 39 seats leaving the 2 seats of Tobago island. Recount was requested by UNC in 5 marginal constituencies which was agreed by the Elections and Boundaries Commission. That did not change the results though.

Trinidad & Tobago with a population of about 1.3 million has small constituencies. The polling ranged from lowest of 10,480 votes to highest of 18702 votes in different constituencies. The voting in 2020 was largely along racial lines.

PM Rowley took oath of office on 19 August 2020.

SINGAPORE

PIO Becomes Singapore's first leader of opposition

Singapore's Indian-origin leader Pritam Singh scripted history on Monday when the city-state's parliament conferred the duties and privileges to him as the country's first leader of the opposition. Singh's Workers' Party won 10 seats out of the 93 it contested in the July polls, making it the biggest opposition presence in Singapore's parliamentary history.

Addressing the parliament, Singh underlined the need to focus on foreigners and their living conditions. "Their presence gives Singapore a vitality that keeps us economically relevant and

provides jobs to Singaporeans.” Singh took the seat directly opposite PM Lee Hsien Loong in the chamber. He will be given the right to ask the lead question to ministers.

GUYANA

Paediatrician Dr Seepersaud Chatterdeo passes away

Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony expressed sympathy to the family, friends, colleagues and patients of Dr. Seepersaud Chatterdeo who passed away early morning on 30 August 2020.

A release from Dr Anthony said that Dr. Chatterdeo was one of Guyana’s prominent paediatricians and once headed the Paediatrics Department of the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation. He was Guyana’s most respected paediatrician and a dear teacher to several medical students and medical interns. Dr. Chatterdeo also contributed immensely to the continuing medical education program for practicing physicians in Guyana.

Attorney General Anil Nandlall, expressing grief in his post on his Facebook page, recollected that Dr. Chatterdeo was always quiet, reserved and studious. He later pursued studies in medicine and became one of Guyana’s leading pediatrician and delivered top quality medical services to Guyana’s most valuable asset- their children.

Attorney Sase Gunraj in a tribute posted on Facebook expressed grief on his sad untimely demise and remembered his great services and many qualities he possessed including that he had a love for older Bollywood music. Guyana has lost a competent patriot.

Suriname President Chandrikapersad Santokhi took the oath in Sanskrit



Chandrikapersad “Chan” Santokhi

Chandrikapersad “Chan” Santokhi (born 3 February 1959) a Surinamese politician and former Chief of Police who has become 9th and current President of Suriname. After winning the 2020 elections, Santokhi was the sole nomination for President of Suriname. On the 13th of July, Santokhi was elected President by acclamation in an uncontested election. He was inaugurated on the 16th of July.

Suriname’s newly-elected President Chandrikapersad Santokhi took the oath in Sanskrit while holding Vedas in his hand during the inauguration ceremony on July 16. While taking the oath, Santokhi repeated the Sanskrit verses chanted by the priest. The South American nation elected Santokhi as the new President, replacing former military strongman Desi Bouterse.

Santokhi, a former Chief of Police grew up in the countryside as the youngest in a family of nine children. He studied at the Police Academy of the Netherlands in Apeldoorn for four years and returned to Suriname in September 1982 to work for the police. In 1991, Santokhi was appointed Chief Commissioner of Police.

President Santokhi during his oath ceremony said while the situation was very difficult, he was convinced that they were going to solve the crisis. “I have no doubt about that. I believe in the resilience of our people. I believe in the willingness to make sacrifices. We will solve it if we work together,” he concluded. Santokhi’s Progressive Reform party won 20 seats in the May 25 elections,



Ronnie Brunswijk

enough to form a coalition government with the General Liberation and Development Party (Abop) of Ronnie Brunswijk, who will be vice-president. Notably, Suriname is a former Dutch colony where people of Indian descent make up the largest ethnic group comprising 27.4 per cent of the population of 587,000.

Addressing his monthly Mann Ki Baat programme, the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi also congratulated the newly elected president. “India has a very close relationship with ‘Suriname’. More than a hundred years ago, people from India went there, and made it their home. Today, the fourth or fifth generation is there. Today in Suriname more than one-fourth of the people are of Indian origin. Do you know? ‘Sarnami’ one of the common languages there is a dialect of Bhojpuri. We Indians feel very proud of these cultural relations,” he said. Indian social media was also excited to see a foreign leader taking oath in Sanskrit and congratulated him.

Indian-American Scientist Dr Sethuraman Panchanathan appointed as the Director of the National Science Foundation



The US Senate has confirmed Indian-American Scientist Dr Sethuraman Panchanathan as the Director of the National Science Foundation (NSF), a top American body supporting fundamental research in non-medical fields of science and engineering.

Mr Panchanathan, 58, from the Arizona State University, would head the NSF. Known as “Panch” among his friends and family, he is considered as a transformational leader whose human-centered efforts have led to positive changes on a global scale. He would replace France Cordova and join office in July. He is the second Indian-American ever to be nominated to the prestigious science position with the first being Dr Subra Suresh who served from October 2010 to March 2013. “He has a universal support with Republicans and Democrats. A unanimous approved confirmation in the Senate... this shows a great guy for the job. The Indiaspora community is so proud that someone like him is representing not just us but the greater community,” Indiaspora founder and eminent venture capitalist MR Rangaswami said. Mr Panchanathan, who has been an active member of Indiaspora, is the right person for the job especially at a time when the country is facing challenges from China, Rangaswami said, adding that the NSF needs to play an even more critical role as “we move ahead”.

Mr Panchanathan is the Vice President for Strategic Initiatives of the National Academy of Inventors (NAI). He was Chair of the Council on Research of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities and Co-Chair of the Extreme Innovation Taskforce of the Global Federation of Competitiveness Councils. He was appointed as Senior Advisor for Science and Technology by Arizona Governor Doug Ducey in 2018.

A Fellow of the NAI, American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Canadian Academy of Engineering, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, and the Society of Optical Engineering, he earned a bachelor’s degree in Physics from the University of Madras in 1981 and in Electronics and Communication Engineering from the Indian Institute of Science in 1984. He then earned his master’s degree in Electrical Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology in 1986 and a PhD in Electrical and Computer Engineering from University of Ottawa in 1989.

Indian-American Soil Scientist Rattan Lal Gets 2020 World Food Prize



Dr. Rattan Lal, 75, was named as the 2020 World Food Prize Laureate for developing and mainstreaming a soil-centric approach to increasing food production that conserves natural resources and mitigates climate change. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo lauded his research in soil science, said he is helping millions of small farmers around the world with his work on increasing food production and recycling of nutrients.

A native of India and citizen of the United States, Dr Lal has in his career of over 50 years and across four continents promoted innovative soil-saving techniques that benefited the livelihoods of more than 500 million smallholder farmers, improved the food and nutritional security of more than two billion people and saved hundreds of millions of hectares of natural tropical ecosystems, the World Food Prize organisation said.

Describing his “unbound joy and excitement” on receiving the 2020 World Food Prize, Mr Lal said the “urgent task of feeding humanity is not fulfilled until each and every person has access to an adequate amount of nutritious food grown on a healthy soil and in a clean environment.”

Mr Lal serves as Distinguished University Professor of Soil Science and founding Director of the Carbon Management and Sequestration Center at the Ohio State University (OSU). In 2007, he was among those recognised with a Nobel Peace Prize Certificate for his contributions to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports, when the IPCC was named co-recipient of the Nobel Prize.

World Food Prize Foundation President Barbara Stinson described Dr Lal as a “trailblazer in soil science” with a “prodigious” passion for research that improves soil health, enhances agricultural production, improves the nutritional quality of food, restores the environment and mitigates climate change. Dr Lal’s pioneering research on the restoration of soil health in Africa, Asia and Latin America led to revelations that impacted agricultural yields, natural resource conservation and climate change mitigation. The agricultural practices Lal advocated are now at the heart of efforts to improve agriculture systems in the tropics and globally.

Two Indian-Americans honorees of “2020 Great Immigrants” Awards



Siddhartha Mukherjee and Raj Chetty

Two renowned Indian-Americans who have contributed towards the efforts in mitigating the COVID-19 health crisis are among the 38 immigrants honoured by a prestigious American foundation ahead of US Independence Day commemoration this year.

Pulitzer Prize-winning author and oncologist Siddhartha Mukherjee, and Professor of Economics at Harvard University Raj Chetty have been named by the Carnegie Corporation of New York as “2020 Great Immigrants” honorees.

Born in New Delhi, Mr Mukherjee is a noted biologist, oncologist and the author of several acclaimed books, including the Pulitzer Prize-winning “The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer”. In 2014, Mr Mukherjee was also awarded the Padma Shri, one of India’s highest civilian honours. In May, he was selected by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo to serve on a 15-member Blue-Ribbon Commission focusing on improving telehealth and broadband access in response to the COVID-19 health crisis.

Raj Chetty, who was born in New Delhi, has been one of the youngest professors to be granted tenure in Harvard’s history. In addition to his position as the William A. Ackman Professor of Economics at Harvard University, Chetty directs Opportunity Insights, a research lab that aims to identify barriers to economic and social mobility and develop scalable policy solutions to overcome them. He helped launch a resource to monitor the real-time economic impact of COVID-19 on people, businesses and communities across the United States. This tool enables policy makers to make evidence-based decisions that balance vital public health priorities with the economic needs of their communities.

Overall, the “2020 Great Immigrants” represent 35 countries of origin and a wide range of contributions to American life, from human rights and computer science to art, business, education, health care, journalism, music, politics, religion, research, and sports.

Indian-Origin Nurse conferred President’s Award for COVID Services in Singapore

A 59-year-old Indian-origin nurse in Singapore has been conferred with the President’s Award for Nurses for serving on the frontline during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kala Narayanasamy was among the five nurses given the award. Each recipient was awarded a trophy, a certificate signed by President Halimah Yacob and SGD 10,000 (USD 7,228).

Ms Narayanasamy, who is the Deputy Director of Nursing at Woodlands Health Campus, was awarded for using infection control practices, which she learned during the 2003 severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak, in the current pandemic. She tapped on this experience to introduce workflows and standard operating procedures to convert wards at the Yishun Community Hospital to care for COVID-19 patients.

She has been involved with the modernisation of nursing in Singapore, with her past projects including the implementation of a self-checkout inventory management vending machine to track the usage of items. Ms. Narayanasamy is currently involved with the planning for the Woodlands Health Campus, scheduled to open in 2022, drawing on almost 40 years of experience to lead the development of nursing services for the division of medicine at the campus.

Noting her previous role as a clinical nurse educator, Ms Narayanasamy said she is passionate about grooming the next generation of nurses.

The President's Award for Nurses recognises nurses who have shown sustained outstanding performance and contributions to patient care delivery, education, research and administration.

“Indians” – the largest diaspora granted Australian citizenship in 2019-20

More than 38,000 Indians became Australian citizens in 2019-2020, a 60 per cent increase from the previous year and the largest diaspora group to be granted the country's citizenship. Out of the over 200,000 people who became Australian citizens in 2019-2020, 38,209 were Indians, the highest number on record, followed by 25,011 Britishers, 14,764 Chinese and 8821 Pakistanis.

Australia's Acting Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs Alan Tudge said citizenship was an important part of Australia's success as a socially cohesive, multicultural nation.

In the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis, the Australian government started online ceremonies which saw over 60,000 people being conferred the citizenship. The Department of Home Affairs is resuming citizenship interviews and testing in line with COVID-19 health advice while a small number of appointments for tests and interviews have begun in Perth and Sydney.

As per the Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2016 census, 619,164 people in Australia declared that they were of ethnic Indian ancestry. This comprises 2.8 per cent of the Australian population. Among those, 592,000 were born in India.

Rajapaksa brothers' massive win in Sri Lanka's election 2020

The leader of Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) Mahinda Rajapaksa was sworn in as the 13th Prime Minister of Sri Lanka before President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. The Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) has recorded a massive victory with 145 seats, just five seats short of a two-thirds majority, in the parliamentary elections. Its main opponent, the SJB, obtained 54 seats. A party representing ethnic minority Tamils won 10 seats, and 16 others were split among 12 small parties. The swearing in ceremony took place at the historic Kelani Raja Maha Viharaya on 9 August, 2020.

Elected to the post for the fourth time, Mr. Rajapaksa served two terms as the Executive President of the country from 2005 to 2015. Completing five decades in active politics, Mr. Rajapaksa entered the Parliament in 1970 and he played a pivotal role as a Cabinet Minister during 1995-2004 period.

First elected as the Prime Minister in 2004, Mr. Rajapaksa was sworn in as the Prime Minister for the second time on October 26, 2018. The third time he was sworn in as the Prime Minister was on November 21, 2019. During his 10-year tenure as the Executive President Mr. Rajapaksa was able to eradicate the 3-decade old terrorism from the country and to accelerate country's economic development.

Contesting from Kurunegala district in the recently concluded Parliamentary Election Mr. Rajapaksa received a record-breaking 527,364 Preferential Votes, the highest number of votes a candidate ever received. Mr. Rajapaksa will go down in history as the first ever Sri Lankan to become Prime Minister for four times after serving two terms as the Executive President.

Maha Sangha chanted Seth Pirith and invoked blessings on the new Premier. Later, the President and Prime Minister engaged in religious observances at the Viharaya. At the conclusion of the ceremony both President and Prime Minister greeted the public gathered at the venue.

Maha Sangha and other religious leaders, Governors, Secretary to the President, members of the diplomatic corps, newly elected members of Parliament of SLPP and other Parliamentarians who extend their support to the new government and family members were also present on the occasion.

Iran's Supreme leader launches twitter handle in Hindi signaling outreach

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei in a significant move launched his twitter handle in Hindi in what can enable wider outreach with India as the two countries safeguard to maintain their strategic partnership notwithstanding sanctions.

Currently the Supreme Leader tweets in Farsi, Arabic, Urdu, French, Spanish, Russian and English. While Iran has recently signed a mega deal with China, Tehran and Delhi continue to cooperate in strategically located Chabahar Port and are trying to expedite conclusion of Preferential Trade Agreement to enhance business ties. The Chabahar Port built with India's assistance has recently witnessed cargo movement to South Asia and Southeast Asia notwithstanding slowdown in the global trade due to Covid.

The first shipment of Iran's aquatic products has been sent to Thailand via Chabahar Port recently. A shipment of non-edible fishes was also sent to the Indian port of Mundra via Chabahar. Another shipment of Afghanistan's transit goods has been shipped to India through Shahid Beheshti terminal. In 2016, Iran, India, and Afghanistan decided to jointly establish a trade route for land-locked Afghanistan and Central Asian countries. India had also sent consignments of wheat to Afghanistan through Chabahar Port in the past. In February 2019, the Afghanistan-Iran-India trade corridor through Chabahar Port was officially inaugurated. Iran is also key to INSTC shortest route from India to Russia via multi-modal transport.

This came amid firefighting by India and Iran over Delhi's participation in the proposed Chabahar-Zahedan railway project. India's problem with Iran has been its insistence to give Chabahar-Zahedan railway contract to Khatam al-Anbiya, a Revolutionary Guard entity, which is under US secondary sanctions. However, both sides remain committed to the Chabahar Port project. (Courtesy: Economic Times)

Kamala Harris as Vice President Candidate: an unprecedented move

US presumptive Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden's selection of Senator Kamala Harris gives him a running mate who can appeal to African American voters who are core to Biden's base of support and serve as a fierce critic of President Donald Trump's record in office.

Indeed, Biden's selection of Harris is unprecedented and a high-risk moment for his campaign both in that Harris is a woman, and she is Black. It is only the third time in US history a woman has been selected as a vice presidential candidate, and the first time a Black person has been selected for that role.

The choice of a running mate is one of the first big decisions that the public gets to see a presidential candidate make. Sometimes, candidates make mistakes. John McCain took a political risk in 2008 picking Sarah Palin, who proved to be a controversial campaigner, and Walter Mondale in 1984 chose Geraldine Ferraro. In both cases, the selections were surprises that did not play well with voters.

Harris is 55, and has demonstrated a legal mind in her questioning of Trump administration witnesses appearing before Senate committees, notably Attorney General William Barr whom she grilled about whether Trump had asked him to pursue political prosecutions as the nation's top law enforcement official.

China Occupying Land In 7 Border Districts, Says Nepal Survey Department: Report

China's expansionist designs is going on unchecked in Nepal as it is slowly and gradually encroaching Nepali land at multiple locations with the tacit support of the present dispensation headed by Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli.

According to a report by the Survey Department of Agriculture Ministry of Nepal, China has illegally occupied Nepal's land in several places spreading over seven bordering districts. The report stated Beijing is fast moving forward and further pushing Nepali boundaries by encroaching more and more landmass.

It is important to note that the data is being under-reported and the actual scenario could be worse as the Nepali Communist Party (NCP) is trying to shield the expansionist agenda of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). It is believed that China has made inroads into several other areas of Nepal, occupied land, and slowly progressing within the country. Prime Minister KP Oli government has preferred to keep mum over the "illegal occupation" of the village by China under fears of displeasing the CCP.

The Nepali, districts which are victims of China's land-grabbing plan including Dolakha, Gorkha, Darchula, Humla, Sindhupalchowk, Sankhuwasabha and Rasuwa. According to the surveying and mapping department of Nepal, China has pushed the international boundary 1,500 meters towards Nepal in Dolakha. It has pushed the boundary pillar Number 57 in the Korlang area in Dolakha, which was previously located at top of Korlang.

The pillar has been an issue of confrontation between the two countries and China pressurised the Nepali government not to sign the fourth protocol on resolving and managing border disputes between the two countries as China wanted to maintain the status quo and further transgress the boundary arrangements.

The surveying and mapping department has also reported that China has occupied Nepali villages in Gorkha and Darchula districts. Similar to Dolakha, China has relocated Boundary Pillar Numbers 35, 37 and 38 in Gorkha district and Boundary Pillar Number 62 in Nampa Bhanjyang in Solukhumbu. The first three pillars were located in Gorkha's Rui village and areas of Tom River. Though Nepal's official map shows the village as a part of Nepali territory and citizens of the village have been paying taxes to Nepal government, China had occupied the region and merged it with the Tibet Autonomous Region of China in 2017.

Similarly, the Human Rights Commission has reported that a portion of the Jiujiu Village of Darchula has also been occupied by China. Numerous houses that used to be a part of Nepal have been now taken over by China and assimilated into the Chinese territory. Besides the reports of land grabbing by the two Nepali agencies, the Ministry of Agriculture also recently came up with a report highlighting multiple cases of land grabbing by China.

The Ministry reported about China's occupation of Nepali land in at least 11 places falling under four Nepali districts. Most of the areas occupied in these districts are catchment areas of rivers, including areas of Bhagdare river in Humla, Karnali river, Sanjen river, and Lemde river in Rasuwa; Bhurjug river, Kharane river, and Jambu river in Sindhupalchowk, Bhotekoshi river and Samjug river in Sankhuwasabha; Kamkhola river and Arun river.

Nepal has refrained itself from going ahead with the border talks with China since 2005 as the Nepali government does not want to offend China by reclaiming Nepali land and at the same time dodge criticism at the domestic front for losing territory to China. The Nepali government has also suspended the 2012 border talks to save itself from getting into an indecisive situation. In June, members of the opposition Nepali Congress moved a resolution in the House of Representatives, the lower house of the Nepalese Parliament, asking the Oli Government to restore the country's territory, which had been encroached upon by China.

The Nepali Congress lawmakers alleged that China had encroached 64 hectares of land in Dolakha, Humla, Sindhupalchowk, Sankhuwasabha, Gorkha and Rasuwa districts of the country.

They alleged that few of the total 98 boundary pillars along the 1414.88 km long border between Nepal and China had gone missing while several others had been shifted inside the territory of Nepal. In recent times, the Nepali Communist Party has been acting like a puppet of the Chinese Communist Party, which has kept dominating the decision-making process in Nepal.

The entire world has witnessed the developments wherein the Chinese Ambassador to Nepal has been acting as a mediator and sorting out between Oli and Prachanda factions of the NCP and she played a crucial role in saving Oli government. The friendship and assistance of China to Nepal is a part of the colonial design to "further the expansionist agenda by China".

Business magnate Toolsie Persaud passes away -remembered as pioneer industrialist

Timber and hardware businessman Toolsie Persaud died on 21st August, 2020. He was remembered as a pioneer and industrialist whose massive contribution aided in the development of Guyana.

The Crabwood Creek, Corentyne-born Persaud and Chairman of Toolsie Persaud Limited, who was 93, was cremated on 22nd August, 2020.. His family said his passing was sudden although he had being unwell for several months.

Former President Donald Ramotar expressed sympathy to Persaud's immediate family and remembered the businessman as a man of action who made tremendous contributions to the business sector.

Diplomatic Postings

Shri Vijay Khanduja, presently Director in the Ministry of External Affairs, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Zimbabwe**.

Shri Rakesh Kumar Arora (YOA: 2003), presently Counsellor in Embassy of India, Brussels, has been appointed as the **next High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Sierra Leone**.

Shri Santosh Jha (IFS:1993), Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Belgium, has been **concurrently accredited as the Ambassador of India to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, with residence in Brussels**.

Shri Indra Mani Pandey (IFS: 1990), presently Additional Secretary in the Ministry, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador/Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva**.

Shri Hemant Harishchandra Kotalwar (IFS: 1996), presently Joint Secretary on deputation to NSCS, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Czech Republic**.

Dr. Vidhu P. Nair (IFS:2002), presently Director in the Ministry of External Affairs, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to Turkmenistan**.

Shri Jawed Ashraf (IFS:1991), presently Ambassador of India to France, has been concurrently accredited as the **next Ambassador of India to the Principality of Monaco, with residence in Paris**.

Shri Anjani Kumar (IFS:2003), presently Ambassador of India to the Republic of Mali, has been concurrently accredited as the **next Ambassador of India to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, with residence in Bamako**.

Shri Jaideep Mazumdar (IFS:1989), presently Ambassador of India to Austria, has been concurrently accredited as the next Ambassador of India to Montenegro, with residence in Vienna.

Shri Vikram Kumar Doraiswami (IFS:1992), presently Additional Secretary in the Ministry, has been appointed as the **next High Commissioner of India to the People's Republic of Bangladesh**.

Shri Manish Prabhat (IFS: 1996), presently Joint Secretary in the Ministry, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Uzbekistan**.

Shri Ram Karan Verma (YOA : 2007), presently Director in the Ministry, has been appointed as **the next Ambassador of India to the Democratic Republic of Congo**.

Shri Rahul Shrivastava (IFS:1999), presently Ambassador of India to Romania, has been concurrently accredited as **the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Moldova, with residence in Bucharest**.

Shri Virander Kumar Paul (IFS:1991), presently Additional Secretary in the Ministry, has been appointed as the **next High Commissioner of India to Kenya**.

Shri Rudrendra Tandon (IFS:1994), presently Ambassador of India to ASEAN, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**.

Bhutan News

His Majesty The King Tours Central, Eastern and Southern parts of Bhutan



His Majesty The King was on a Royal Tour of the central, eastern, and southern parts of Bhutan to inspect the impact and works related to COVID-19. The Prime Minister and the National Council Chairperson accompanied His Majesty.

On 6th July 2020, His Majesty visited the Bumthang Wobthang Agriculture project in Tang. The project, an initiative of the Opposition Leader, was financed by the Prime Minister's office and has engaged retired agricultural officers, gewog, MOAF, and the local community to produce organic vegetables. After the visit, His Majesty granted Tokha to the people of Tang and granted Audience to Class 10 and 12 students of Jakar Central School. Schools have reopened for class 10 and 12 students since 1st July.

His Majesty also visited a new carpentry workshop which uses Swiss technology, in Batpalathang.



On 5 July, His Majesty granted an Audience to the Bumthang COVID task force, which offered updates on the economic impact of COVID in Bumthang.

His Majesty also offered prayers at Kurje and Jambay Lhakhang, as well as at the Nimlalong Pangtey Gonpa in Chumey. After visiting Bumthang, His Majesty visited the eastern dzongkhags of Mongar, Lhuentse, Tashiyangtse, and Tashigang before returning to Thimphu on 15 July 2020. Besides meeting COVID-19 task force teams, His Majesty met with farmers, shopkeepers, and other members of the community to find out how the pandemic has impacted the livelihoods of the people.

His Majesty also visited the Gyalsung training centre construction site at Bongderma, a pilot hydroponic farm at ARDC Wengkhari, the Bhutan Agro processing plant at Lingmithang, Koufuku Dairy Plant at Chenari, and the Tashigang Hospital.

Accompanied by His Royal Highness the Gyaltshab, the Prime Minister, and National Council Chairperson, His Majesty also visited the Gyalpoizhing College of Information and Technology and Sherubtse College, as well as central schools in these dzongkhags.

His Majesty Confers *Drakpoi Khorlo* and National Order of Merit



His Majesty The King conferred the Drakpoi Khorlo Medal to Chuma Kinzang Dorji of the Royal Bhutan Army, and the National Order of Merit (Silver) to Anjan Rai and Tashi Wangchuk, both of whom are excavator operators.

The Drakpoi Khorlo medal is awarded to military personnel and recognises heroism and bravery in service of the Tsawa Sum. Chuma Kinzang Dorji, along with 4 of his fellow soldiers, helped rescue 5 people who were stranded in the flash flood of Mao Chhu on the night of the 21st of July. He was the only member of the rescue team who survived.

His Majesty granted Audience to the families of the four deceased soldiers, at the RBA Wing IX in Pelrithang yesterday. The families received the Drakpoi Khorlo Medal on behalf of the deceased. His Majesty conferred the medals posthumously to Peljab Ugyen, Gopa Pema Wangdi, Chuma Dup Tshering, and Chuma Tandin Dorji for their extraordinary courage and their supreme sacrifice in the line of duty. In Gelephu, His Majesty granted an audience to all excavator operators involved in the rescue operations on 21st and 22nd of July, and thanked them for their service.

The recipients of the National Order of Merit, Anjan Rai was part of the operation to rescue five people from the Mao Chhu Water Treatment Plant, and Tashi Wangchuk helped in the rescue of four forestry officials and the caretaker of Mao Chhu Water Treatment Plant. Both individuals displayed great courage, and played an important part in saving the lives of the people who were rescued.

The National Order of Merit recognises outstanding civilian contributions to the Tsawa Sum.

Days to Remember in August, 2020

August 01	:	Switzerland National day
August 03	:	Purnima : Raksha Bandhan
August 06	:	Jamaica : Independence Day
August 08	:	'Quit India' Day
August 09	:	Singapore : National Day
August 12	:	Shrikrishna Janmastami
August 12	:	International Youth Day

August 15	:	India : Independence Day
August 17	:	Indonesia : Independence Day
August 19	:	Amavasya
August 19	:	World Humanitarian Day
August 19	:	Afghanistan : Independence Day
August 20	:	Hungary : National Day
August 24	:	Ukraine : Independence Day
August 31	:	Kyrgyzstan : Independence Day
August 31	:	Malaysia : National Day
August 31	:	Trinidad & Tobago : Independence Day

Days to Remember in September, 2020

September 01 : Purnima

September 01	:	Uzbekistan : Independence Day
September 02	:	Vietnam : National Day
September 04	:	Canonisation Ceremony of Mother Teresa in Vatican City
September 05	:	Teachers Day (Birthday of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, former President of India)

September 08	:	International : Literacy Day
September 09	:	Tajikistan : National Day
September 14	:	Hindi Divas
September 15	:	International Day of Democracy

September 16: Amavasya

September 16	:	Mexico : Independence Day
September 23	:	Saudi Arabia : National Day
September 27	:	World Tourism Day

दलाई लामा: संघर्ष की दुनिया में करुणा के अन्वेषी

✍ गिरीश्वर मिश्र
शिक्षाविद



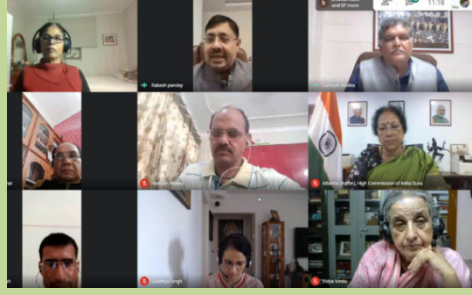
तिब्बत के पूर्वोत्तर हिस्से में आज से 85 साल पहले जन्में बौद्ध धर्मगुरु और आध्यात्मिक व्यक्तित्व के धनी दलाई लामा ने जीवन का अधिकांश समय भारत में शरणार्थी के रूप में बिताया है। वे पंद्रह वर्ष की आयु में चैदहवें

दलाई लामा के पद पर विधिवत अभिषिक्त होकर गेलग संप्रदाय के शासन के सर्वोच्च बने थे। चीन द्वारा तिब्बत पर कब्जा करने के बाद सबकुछ छोड़ उन्हें भारत में शरण लेनी पड़ी। तबसे आजतक निजी जीवन और दुनिया में उन्होंने न जाने कितने उतार चढ़ाव देखे।

चीन की विस्तारवादी क्रूरता के चलते ल्हासा के पोटाला महल से विस्थापित होकर उन्होंने भारत में रहते हुए तिब्बत के अस्तित्व की लड़ाई लड़ी, विश्व में खूब भ्रमण किया और बड़े राजनेताओं, धर्मगुरुओं, विद्वानों और आमजनों सबके संपर्क में आते रहे। उन्होंने एक बौद्ध चिंतक और मानवता के सेवक के रूप में अपना महत्वपूर्ण स्थान बनाया है। वे मानते हैं कि दुनिया में बड़े परिवर्तन आए हैं, गरीबी दूर हुई है, शिक्षा और स्वास्थ्य की सुविधाएं भी बढ़ी हैं, मानव अधिकार, स्वतंत्रता और लोकतंत्र के विचार सुदृढ़ हुए हैं। कई सकारात्मक परिवर्तन हुए हैं परंतु मानवता के दुख और पीड़ा के कई नए आयाम भी उभरे हैं, जहां अमीर देशों में लोग उपभोग-प्रधान जीवनशैली अपना रहे हैं तो करोड़ों लोग मूलभूत आवश्यकताएं भी पूरी नहीं कर पा रहे हैं। सशक्त संघर्ष अभी भी जारी है। पर्यावरण की समस्याओं और रोजी-रोटी के मसलों से लोग जूझ रहे हैं। असमानता, भ्रष्टाचार और अन्याय अभी भी बड़े मुद्दे बने हुए हैं। यह हाल न सिर्फ विकासशील देशों में है बल्कि विकसित देशों में भी है। घरेलू हिंसा और शराबखोरी, पारिवारिक बिखराव खूब बढ़ रहा है। दलाई लामा इन सबसे चिंतित हैं क्योंकि इन सबके साथ मनुष्य के आचरण से इस पृथ्वी को ही खतरा बढ़ रहा है। दलाई लामा के अनुसार हमारे सोचने के तरीके और आचरण में कुछ खोटा आ चुकी है। बाह्य, भौतिक जीवन की ओर तो ध्यान जा रहा है, पर नैतिक और आंतरिक मूल्यों की हम उपेक्षा कर रहे हैं। इनमें सबसे महत्वपूर्ण है करुणा।

मानव स्वभाव और नैतिकता की तलाश करते हुए दलाई लामा एक सार्वभौम दायित्व का विचार रखते हैं क्योंकि सभी मनुष्य खुशहाली और आनंद की कामना करते हैं। सुख की चाह और दुख को दूर करना सामान्य इच्छा है तभी अधिक सहिष्णुता और दूसरों की स्वीकृति हो सकेगी। इसके लिए मानव-जीवन में पारस्परिक सहयोग अनिवार्य है। जो भी जिन भूमिकाओं में हैं उन भूमिकाओं और दायित्वों के बीच पारस्परिक निर्भरता और पारस्परिक सहयोग अनिवार्य है। बिना सहयोग के कोई समाज चल नहीं सकता, दलाई लामा करुणा के भाव को मानव स्वभाव का अभिन्न अंग मानते हैं और इसे सहयोग की आधारशिला के रूप में देखते हैं। माता-पिता और शिशु के बीच का संबंध स्वाभाविक रूप से भावनात्मक होता है। इस तरह करुणा का भाव मानव जीवन की एक नैसर्गिक स्थिति है तथापि इसको विकसित करने की जरूरत है। बच्चों के लिए नैतिक शिक्षा अनिवार्य रूप से रखनी चाहिए। तभी वे बड़े होकर समाज और समग्र मानवता को योगदान दे सकेंगे। करुणा और परोपकार के गुण विकसित करके ही मनुष्यता की रक्षा हो सकेगी। भावनाएं मानव स्वभाव के लिए आधार का काम करती हैं। उनके बिना एक व्यक्ति के रूप में सुख या संतुष्टि बेमानी हो जाती है। सभी व्यवसाय अंततः मानव सेवा के लिए ही होते हैं, भाव ही मूल मानवीय गुण है। धर्म विशेष की बाध्यताओं से दूर व्यापक करुणा का भाव सबके लिए समान रूप से लागू होता है। यह वैश्विक नैतिकता का एक सबल और 'सेक्यूलर' आधार है। दलाई लामा के अनुसार यह ऐसा आंतरिक मूल्य है जो आपसी सौहार्द का आधार बन सकता है और शांति तथा सुख की राह बना सकता है। विगत वर्षों में दलाई लामा ने विश्व के विभिन्न वैज्ञानिकों के साथ नमन, स्वास्थ्य तथा संवेगों को लेकर गहन विचार-विमर्श किया है। धर्मशाला में इस तरह के अनेक संवाद आयोजित हुए हैं जिनसे पूर्व और पश्चिम के बीच विचार-विमर्श के दौर चलते रहे हैं। करुणा और शांति के इस प्रवक्ता को शत् शत् नमन! उनका आध्यात्मिक आलोक मानवता के लिए मार्गदर्शन में सहायक बना रहे।

गिरमिटिया संसार: भारतीय संस्कृति का विस्तार- फीजी के विशेष संदर्भ में विषय पर संगोष्ठी संपन्न



स्वामी विवेकानंद सांस्कृतिक केंद्र, भारत का उच्चायोग, सूवा और हिंदी पत्रिका प्रवासी संसार के संयुक्त तत्वावधान में एक अंतरराष्ट्रीय वेब संगोष्ठी का आयोजन किया गया। इस वेब संगोष्ठी का विषय था 'गिरमिटिया संसार: भारतीय संस्कृति का विस्तार- फीजी के विशेष संदर्भ में'। इस संगोष्ठी में भारत और फीजी के अतिरिक्त ऑस्ट्रेलिया एवं न्यूजीलैंड जैसे अन्य प्रशांत देशों के कई विद्वानों ने भाग लिया। मुख्य अतिथि थे भारत में फीजी के उच्चायुक्त महामहिम योगेश पुंजा। फीजी में भारत की उच्चायुक्त श्रीमती पद्मजा ने संगोष्ठी की अध्यक्षता की। प्रवासी संसार के संपादक राकेश पांडेय ने इस संगोष्ठी का संचालन किया। फीजी में भारतीय उच्चायोग के स्वामी विवेकानंद सांस्कृतिक केंद्र के निदेशक संतोष कुमार मिश्र ने विद्वानों का स्वागत किया। संगोष्ठी के बीज वक्ता थे फीजी सरकार के पूर्व मंत्री, वरिष्ठ लेखक व गिरमिट और गाँधी साहित्य के विद्वान सतेंद्र नंदन, जो ऑस्ट्रेलिया के कैन्बेरा से इस कार्यक्रम से जुड़े। न्यूजीलैंड से हिंदी शिक्षक एवं 'विश्व हिंदी सम्मान' से सम्मानित सुनीता नारायण, फीजी के भूतपूर्व सांसद, शिक्षाविद और लेखक डॉ ब्रिज लाल और फीजी आर्यसमाज के संरक्षक पंडित भुवन दत्त, अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद् के निदेशक नारायण कुमार और वरिष्ठ लेखक-साहित्यकार विमलेश कांति वर्मा अन्य प्रमुख वक्ता थे।

वक्ताओं ने एक मत से भारत की सांस्कृतिक चेतना से जुड़े ग्रंथों की गिरमिटिया देशों में लोकप्रियता और वहां प्रचलित हिंदी भाषा के स्वरूप का उल्लेख करते हुए यह कहा कि तमाम बोलियों के बावजूद हमारा हिंदी से कोई भेद नहीं है। रामायण, महाभारत, श्रीमद्भागवत, गीता और विभिन्न तीज त्योहार पूरी ठसक से कायम हैं। लगभग सभी की इस बात पर सहमति थी कि गिरमिटिया देशों में हिंदी और भारतीय संस्कृति के प्रचार-प्रसार के लिए एक निश्चित रणनीति बनाये जाने की आवश्यकता है। डेढ़ घंटे के लिए निर्धारित यह संगोष्ठी लगभग तीन घंटे चली, जिसमें विश्व भर से सैकड़ों की संख्या में जुड़े। दर्शक, श्रोताओं के बीच फीजी में शिक्षा मंत्रालय में वरिष्ठ अधिकारी रमेश चंद, सूरीनाम में स्वामी विवेकानंद सांस्कृतिक केंद्र के निदेशक शरद कुमार, प्रसिद्ध भारतीय नृत्यांगना बहनें नलिनी और कमलिनी, फीजी में हिंदी की शिक्षिका मनीषा रामरखा, भारतीय विदेश मंत्रालय में उप सचिव (हिंदी) हरिकेश मीणा, भारतीय उच्चायोग सूवा के सुकांता चरण साहू, सिंगापूर से हिंदी विद्वान संध्या सिंह, लोकगायिका विद्या विन्दु सिंह, लोकगायिका कुसुम वर्मा, वरिष्ठ पत्रकार इंदु पाण्डेय, न्यूजीलैंड से रोहित कुमार हैप्पी, दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय से गोपाल अरोड़ा व अनेक विश्वविद्यालयों के प्रोफेसर व शोधार्थी आदि शामिल थे।

आबूधाबी काव्यात्मक संध्या



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