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बालेश्वर अग्रवाल जन्मशताब्दी के अवसर पर

BALESHWAR AGRAWAL: A FRIEND OF THE INDIAN DIASPORA

✍ Mahendra P. Chaudhry

Here in Fiji, Baleshwarji is fondly remembered by many as a friend who has shown deep concern for the civil and political rights of Fiji's Indian community. His association with Fiji goes back to the year 1987, following the first military coup that deposed the Fiji Labour Party/National Federation Party Coalition government led by Prime Minister Dr. Timoci Bavadra.

Launched under the banner of indigenous rights, the coup makers blamed Fiji's Indian community for the defeat of the government led by an indigenous chief since independence in 1970.

The period immediately following the coup saw unprecedented acts of violence against Indians both by the security forces and the extremist elements in the indigenous community.

It was during this period of extreme hostility and uncertainty that Baleshwar Agrawal visited Fiji to meet the leaders of the Indian community to ascertain the facts for himself.

He was deeply moved by what he saw. Not wasting any time in getting the

message across to the Government of India and demanding that it speaks out in the international fora drawing attention to the injustices and atrocities committed against the Indians by the military government.

Baleshwarji remained a forceful critic of the violation of human rights of Fiji's Indian community, in particular the racial discrimination practices they were subjected to in the fields of education, employment and the affirmative action programs of the State. He wrote about this in his publications while lobbying New Delhi to increase the number of tertiary education scholarships for students from Fiji.

He made a number of visits to Fiji between 1987 and 1997 to assist our campaign for a just constitution and equal citizenship rights for the local Indian community.

There is little doubt that his high standing among influential leaders in New Delhi prompted the Government of India to raise these issues at meetings of the Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) and in the United Nations General

Assembly.

With the promulgation of the 1997 Constitution, regarded as a fair national charter which respected the rights of all Fiji citizens, Baleshwarji must have been satisfied that his personal efforts and that of the organization he headed (ARSP) in taking up the issue of Indians here, had not been in vain.

But that was short lived as another coup, staged in May 2000, again in the name of indigenous rights, deposed the People's Coalition government headed by me as Prime Minister. The government had been elected by an overwhelming majority in May 1999 and had a two-thirds majority of indigenous Fijians in the Cabinet.

It was clear now that vested interests, including some Indian businessmen, had played a key role in this coup as well as that of 1987. These interests represented defeated politicians, corrupt businessmen and some high chiefs who feared exposure at the hands of a government committed to weed out corruption.

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What followed was another period of mayhem against the Indians. Burning, looting, beatings and rape continued for eight weeks while the security forces showed little resolve to bring matters under control.

Baleshwarji was shattered and launched another campaign within India to draw attention to the plight of Indians in Fiji. When I visited India in August 2000—a month after my release as a hostage in parliament—Baleshwarji was in Delhi to meet me.

He organized a meeting of the ARSP executives, inviting many influential persons to lend support to the cause of Indians in Fiji.

During my visits to India in the recent years, mainly to attend the *Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas*, Baleshwarji was always there to organize discussions, sessions on Fiji, inviting me to speak on the situation of Indians here. His interest in Fiji had not waned despite his advanced age.

I have experienced his concern for the welfare of the Indian Diaspora and his

fervent wish that our people, wherever they may be, should be encouraged to uphold their cultural heritage.

He himself remained a strong advocate and practitioner of spiritual and cultural values—qualities that endeared him among many in the Diaspora. He devoted whole of his life to the service of his nation and his brethren, without seeking anything in return.

He will always be remembered for his valuable contribution to the welfare of the Indian Diaspora. ■

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Prof. Shashibala Honoured with Mongolian State Award

Prof. Shashibala, Joint Secretary ARSP, and Dean, Bhavan's KM Munshi Centre for Indology is honoured by the President of Mongolia HE Mr. Khaltmaagiin Battulga conferring the most prestigious and highly distinguished Mongolian State Award – **The Order of**



the Polar Star. It was signed by him on 25th December 2020, celebrating the 65 years of establishment of Diplomatic relations between India and Mongolia. The award was presented to her by the Ambassador of Mongolia in India HE Mr. G Ganbold and the Decree was announced by the Minister Counsellor Mr. Chanrav Burenbayar. Shashibala is bestowed this honor for her contribution in the field of culture especially for initiating the presentation of Kanjur by the Govt. of India to the monasteries in Mongolia who have lost their sacred literature.

The other project acknowledged by Mongolia is publication of the Catalogue of Tanjur which was waiting since 1975. It was made by Prof. Rinchen supported by Dr. Raghuvira. These two compendia- Kanjur and Tanjur are the sacred gems of Mongolia. They contain over 4366 Sanskrit texts translated into Mongol. Hundreds of them are lost in India forever. They can be recovered by retranslating them. HH Shri Shri Ravi Shankar, Prof. Lokesh Chandra and Ven Kushok Balukala are among the earlier recipients of the award. ■

SHRADHANJALI SABHA IN MEMORY OF HIS EXCELLENCY SIR ANEROOD JUGNAUTH

Former President & Prime Minister, Republic of Mauritius

Dr. Ruchi Verma

With the passing away of Sir Anerood Jugnauth on 3 June 2021, people of India particularly, the large membership of Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad have lost a dear friend, a valued mentor and a wise counsel. Sir Anerood Jugnauth's association with the ARSP was almost as old as the history of the organisation. He honoured the organisation by personally inaugurating its current headquarter Pravasi Bhawan, 50-Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. As a mark of respect to beloved Sir Anerood Jugnauth, ARSP organised a virtual Shradhanjali Sabha (condolence meeting) on Friday, 25 June 2021.

Several dignitaries from Mauritius and India joined the event to pay their tributes to the departed leader and the ceremony was attended by several ARSP members along with many national and international delegates.

The event began with a short audio-visual clip highlighting the life and achievements of Sir Jugnauth. A descendant of an Indentured family from India, he had a humble beginning but rose to become one of the tallest leaders, closely identified with the



liberation and subsequent nation building. He was widely respected for his commitment, integrity and governance skills. He was the one who steered the island nation of Mauritius through an unprecedented economic growth and development bringing in global standards of good governance. Today, Mauritius enjoys the status of a high middle income country with civic and administrative standards comparable to the best in the region for which Sir Jugnauth deserves much of the credit.

Sir Jugnauth was a real star amongst the senior global leaders of Indian

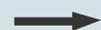
origin. In recognition of his faith in the time tested Indian cultural and societal values and their practices, Sir Jugnauth was awarded the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman at the very first Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in the year 2003 by former PM Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He was also amongst the very few foreign leaders to have been conferred the highest civilian award Padma Vibhushan for the year 2020.

Sir Jugnauth was a true friend of India and guided Indo-Mauritian

bilateral relations to a truly strategic partnership rooted in extraordinary mutual trust and convergence of a rule based world view.

Shri Mukesh Aggarwal, Vice President, ARSP initiated the meeting and welcomed the dignitaries. He also recalled his personal interactions with Sir Jugnauth.

Amb. Virendra Gupta, President, ARSP thanked all the guests for joining this shradhanjali sabha. He stated that Sir Jugnauth was a towering personality of Mauritius, apart from steering the country's



growth and development, had also made significant contribution to the building up of bilateral relations between India and Mauritius. He pointed out that we would also remember Sir Jugnauth as a leading personality in the Indian diaspora, who inspired people not only in Mauritius but around the world, particularly where there is a large concentration of Indian origin people, to take charge of their destiny and take active part in politics. Sir Jugnauth role in empowerment of the diaspora communities was perhaps unmatched, he added.

H.E. Mr. Alan Ganoo, Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Mauritius expressed his heartfelt thanks to ARSP for organizing this ceremony. He mentioned that with his able leadership had guided Mauritius in dire times. He laid the foundation of industrialization in Mauritius. He had also devoted his life to promotion of people to people ties with India and paid special attention to promoting Indian culture in Mauritius. Mr. Ganoo remarked that friendship between India and Mauritius will continue to be driven on the path laid by him and in that context drew attention to several developmental projects undertaken in Mauritius with India's assistance.

Shri V Muraleedharan, Hon'ble Minister of State of External Affairs, acknowledged Sir Jugnauth as a visionary global leader. He was amongst the important builders of Modern Mauritius and the architect of Mauritian economic miracle. The commendable socio-economic development of Mauritius under his leadership would remain an

inspiration. He was a true and exemplary friend of India who nurtured and shaped the special Indo-Mauritian relations. As a mark of respect to Sir Jugnauth a day of Mourning was declared by Government of India on June 5, 2021. As a very first Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awardee and a distinguished Padma Vibhushan awardee he made India proud. His passing away was not only a loss to Mauritius but of India and the entire world.

Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Hon'ble Union Minister of State (Independent charge) for Labour and Employment, recalled Sir Jugnauth as a very humble and cordial personality. He referred to his personal interaction with him during Pravasi Bhawan inauguration in 2009 and noted that he was very impressed with his simplicity and genuine affection for India. Shri Gangwar enunciated him as an icon whose life was worth following.

H.E. Mrs. S. B. Hanoomanjee, High Commissioner of the Republic of Mauritius narrated her personal experiences with Sir Jugnauth, who would always remain a source of inspiration to her. She mentioned that she has witnessed the transformation of Mauritius under his leadership. He was the main source of development of Mauritius and the credit for emergence of cyber city, ports etc. goes to him.

Mr. Premchand Boojhawon, President, Human Service Trust, Mauritius highlighted the strong relations between their organization and Sir Jugnauth. He stated that Sir Jugnauth was the prime face of many activities of Human Service Trust. He

also mentioned that a women's home was built in Human Service Trust in 1991 which was named Lady Sarojini Jugnauth women's home after his wife name.

Mr. Medha Gunputh, Senior Chief Executive, PMO Mauritius remembered Sir Jugnauth as a very affectionate and down to earth person. He was a man of charity and supported several NGO's. He was a true believer of brotherhood.

Amb. Anup Mudgal, Chairperson, Diaspora Research and Resource Centre in ARSP and former High Commissioner to Mauritius recalled Sir Jugnauth as an extraordinary person, a man of few words but extremely trustworthy. He would always be remembered for his contribution to the nation building process in Mauritius and for crafting close bilateral ties with India.

The meeting was concluded with a vote of thanks by **Shri Shyam Parande**, Secretary General, ARSP, who recalled the close personal friendship between Sir Jugnauth and Shri Baleshwar Agrawal, the founding Secretary General of ARSP. Shri Parande mentioned that in order to pay its tribute to Sir Jugnauth, ARSP had taken two decisions – (i) to request the Government of India to issue a postal stamp in his name to further strengthen the cordial relations between India and Mauritius and, (ii) to request New Delhi Municipal Corporation to name one of the streets in the city in the memory of Sir Jugnauth. The shradhanjali sabha was widely covered by the print and electronic media in Mauritius. ■

GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF THE FIRST WORLD ROMANI CONGRESS

Taking into the account the paramount importance of World Roma Day, Centre for Roma Studies and Cultural Relations -ARSP celebrated the Golden Jubilee year of the First World Romani Congress and organized a Virtual International Roma Conference on the theme of "The Situation of Roma and The Role of International Romani Organizations" on 15th April, 2021. The conference was attended by Mr. Cemal BEKLE, Member of Turkish Parliament, Mr. Veljko Kajtazi, Member of Croatian Parliament, Mr. Orhan Galjus, President, Eurasian Academic Network, Amsterdam, Dr. Mila Dragovic, Member of PLIDAM, INALCO, Paris, Mr. Marko D. Knudsen, Chairman, Educational Association of the Roma in Hamburg, Germany and Ms. Gilda Horvath, Member, Project Manager, European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC), Austria, Mr. Gruia Bumbu, General Secretary, International Romani Union, Romania, Dr. Neziri Nedzmedin, France, Dr. Alexandru Zamfir, Romania, Shri Shyam Parande, Secretary General- ARSP Dr. Shyam Singh Shashi, Anthropologist, Author, Poet, Amb. Virendra Gupta, President, ARSP, Amb. Rajesh Sachdeva, Chairperson, CRSCR, Zameer Anwar, Senior Research Associate, CRSCR, Prof. Raj Kumar Bhatia, Shri Tarun Vijay, besides other foreign and Indian dignitaries.

Amb. Rajesh Sachdeva in the opening remarks, said the first world Roma congress is a milestone event which brought Romani people from world over and offered the way to move forward together. The first Roma congress passed some important resolutions that gave Roma some certain identities and helped in establishing the linkage between India

and Roma.

In the introductory remarks, Zameer Anwar said, The First Romani Congress -1971 in Orpington in south-east London was a watershed in the history of political movement and transnational unity of the Roma Community. It triggered move of the emancipatory activities including fight for equality and social justice as well as the preservation of language and cultural identity. Shri Shyam Parande in the welcome address stated that the First World Roma Day galvanized Roma community and instilled confidence in them. The First World Romani Congress unified Roma across the world to voice out their problems. Shri Parande further said, CRSCR-ARSP AND India stand with Roma shoulder to shoulder and support their causes.

Mr. Orhan Galjus informed, Roma Day has been decided as a National Holiday in Turkey, and however there is dehumanization of Roma in Europe even after 50 year of the First World Roma Congress. He said, there should be in-depth relationship between Roma and India from people to people and culture to culture. We Roma have to maximize our fight for coexistence and equality, hence expecting better political action from India. Mr. Cemal BEKLE in his inaugural remarks stated that the decree issued by Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan paved the path for Turkey to formally mark International Roma Day. Mr BEKLE explained the five elements such as education, housing, employment, discrimination and poverty which plague the community. He said, we are finding the solutions through initiating various projects and making Romani people qualified for reaping the benefits out of such projects.

Mr. Veljko Kajtazi delivered Guest of Honor address and spoke about the situation of Roma in Croatia is pretty similar to that of other countries in Europe, despite Roma have been recognized as a national minority by the constitution of Croatia. He talked about the prospective conference that is to be held in collaboration with ARSP and ICCR in Croatia in the month of April, 2022. Dr. Marko D. Knudsen touched upon the history of World Romani Congress and pointed out that we Roma are ignorant about our history and we don't know anything about ourselves, as a result we do not have positive identity. Roma Civil rights movement and nation building began since 1971 but its outcome is only Roma anthem and Romani flag. He further said India is the only country that will be able to raise our issues and problems in European Union and it is the obligation of India to ask about the human and civil rights of Romani people in Europe. Dr. Mila Dragovic delivered the speech on the visit of the First Prime Minister of India, Pdt. Jawahar Lal Nehru to Belgrade in 1961. How that visit made Indian origin of Roma popular. Ms. Gilda Horvath spoke about future global vision of Romani people as the problems like poverty, racism, unemployment, lack of political participation are not just Roma's problems but global challenges which we must fight together. She said Roma are the most resilient people all around the world. It is well established fact that Roma have been persecuted in many countries but that teach us how to survive in spite of various kind of crises. We-the Roma want to connect with and look to India for support as India is definitely one of the most powerful economic forces of the future.



ARSP GURGAON CHAPTER HELD WEBINAR ON Global Socio Economic Impact of Covid 19

The webinar was held with the following subject. The Meeting was started By Smt. Ruchira Jain with invoking the blessings of Ganesh ji. And then we requested to all to keep one minute silence for those we lost our near and dear one in Corona. Then the welcome address was done by Gurgaon Chapter President Shri Avinash Mannan ji. Our chief Guest for the day was honourable Shri Rajkumar Bhatiaji address the gathering few minute and then our honourable President Amb Virendra Gupta ji addresses and gave his blessings.

There were Three expertise speakers on the panel. The first speakers Dr Rajeev Nayan was introduced by ARSP Gurgaon team member Major Atul Devji.

1-Dr Rajeev Nayan ji a senior research associate at Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis. He Specialises in international Relations and security issues.

The second speaker was Dr Kanhaiya Abuja ji he was introduced by Shri P.N.Mishraji president of Indoor Chapter.

Dr Kanhaiya Abuja ji is a professor of economics at Devi Ahilya University, Indoor. He enlighten us about the webinar subject.

Then Smt.Ruchira Jain called to Shashi Balaji,Joint Secretary, ARSP Dean,Bhavans KM Munshi Centre for Indology, to introduced 3rd speaker Shri DrVishal Tripathi ji. Vishal Tripathi ji BAMS(Gold Medlist)MD Ayurvedic Medicine, IMS BHU

Varanasi gave us knowledge how Ayurveda helpfull to treat Covid19 or how can you save yourself from beaing affected.

Then there was Q&A round was taken care by Gurgaon Chapter team member Kamal Kaushik ji.Few questions were answers by speakers asked by participants. And then our Chairperson of ARSP Chaper Shri TN Malhotra ji address few minute and then meeting was ended with Vote of Thanks by Gurgaon Secretary General Smt Ruchira jain by thanking and gratitude to each and every one for giving their valuable time. Special thanks to Shri TN Malhotra ji for giving his help and support to organise this webinar.

Meeting ended slowly with Shanti path by Dolly Mannan and Ruchira Jain. ■

INDIAN DIASPORA IN AFRICA CAN HELP BRIDGE INDO-AFRICAN TIES

India must channelise the large Indian diaspora in Africa to recast its ties with the continent amid a belligerent China, which has not only increased its grip over the continent for commercial reasons but has also expanded its activities in the Indian Ocean with an aim to becoming a maritime power.

Africa is home to three million people of Indian origin.

"New Delhi enjoys a natural advantage because of the people of Indian origin in East Africa. Without delay, the (Narendra) Modi government must take stock of the move and ensure that lost ground is made up," an analyst, who did not wish to be identified, told India Narrative.

"New Delhi enjoys a natural advantage because of the people of Indian origin in East Africa. Without delay, the (Narendra) Modi government must take stock of the move and ensure that lost ground is made up," the analyst said. India's ties with Tanzania had got a boost after the visit of former President Jakaya

Kikwete in 2015. Kikwete visited New Delhi for five days in June 2015. However, engagements between the two countries have been slow since then.

Tanzania, which opened a consulate in Hyderabad last month, has a sizable natural gas deposits in the Indian Ocean, which India has considered its backyard. "It is estimated that the country has over 46.5 trillion cubic feet of proven natural gas reserves," the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses in a report noted.

It also said in the report published earlier that India and Tanzania have a common interest in maritime security. "Looking at the wide range of threats in the maritime sphere such as sea piracy, armed robbery, narcotics trafficking, terrorism, India, has declared maritime security as top priority. Similarly there is no doubt that maritime security is an issue of concern for Tanzania," it said. So recently, when Tanzania announced that it will revive a \$10 billion port project in the town of Bagamoyo on the Indian Ocean

regions (IOR) eyebrows were raised. Reason? China is the main project investor.

A Nikkei Asia report said that the move has led to speculations over whether China is looking to establish an additional dual-use foothold on the East African coast.

Meanwhile, external affairs minister S Jaishankar's recent visit to Kenya, which shares its borders with Tanzania, underscored the importance India is now attaching to Africa though the intensity of engagement between India and the African countries has slowed down due to the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic.

"Africa's large Indian population has merged with the society there and New Delhi must cash in on this aspect. It must take them into account to further expand its relations with the African nations. All channels of communications need to be opened up. Using the diaspora is one which can be effectively used," an analyst told India Narrative. ■

INDIAN ENTREPRENEUR APPOINTED AS VISITING PROFESSOR AT UK UNIVERSITY

Manoj Ladwa, founder of India-focused media organisation India Inc. Group, an Indian-origin entrepreneur was appointed as a visiting professor at Birmingham City University (BCU).

Birmingham City University (BCU) has conferred a Visiting Professorship to an Indian-origin entrepreneur in recognition of his expertise spanning media, business, charity and politics in both the UK and India.

BCU said the new role will see Professor Ladwa lead masterclasses

for the university's students and use his expertise in media and journalism to develop new ideas, practices and collaborations with the university's academics.

"Manoj Ladwa's experience and expertise has seen him found and develop the India Inc. Group, which has become a major resource in both journalism and policy," said Professor Alison Honour, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean for Birmingham City University's Faculty of Arts, Design and Media.

Ladwa, who was also a member of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's electoral media campaign team, is known for highlighting the role of the British Indian diaspora in driving collaborations between the two nations. "I am honoured to have been given the opportunity to contribute to the excellent work being done by BIME [Birmingham Institute of Media and English] and Birmingham City University in media and communications and in its efforts to build strong ties with India and Indian enterprise," said Ladwa. ■

INDIAN-ORIGIN SCIENTIST SPOTS GENES THAT FIGHT COVID



A team of US scientists, led by an Indian-origin researcher, has identified a set of human genes that fight SARS-CoV-2 infection, the virus that causes Covid-19. According to Sumit K. Chanda, professor and director of the Immunity and Pathogenesis Programme at Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute, the scientists have gained new insights into how the virus exploits the human cells it invades.

"We are still searching for its Achilles' Heel so that we can develop optimal antivirals," Chanda said in a paper published in the journal *Molecular*

Cell. Knowing which genes help control viral infection can greatly assist researchers' understanding of factors that affect disease severity and also suggest possible therapeutic options.

The genes in question are related to interferons, the body's frontline virus fighters.

Soon after the start of the pandemic, clinicians found that a weak interferon response to SARS-CoV-2 infection resulted in some of the more severe cases of Covid-19.

This knowledge led Chanda and his collaborators to search for the human genes that are triggered by interferons, known as interferon-stimulated genes (ISGs), which act to limit SARS-CoV-2 infection. "We found that 65 ISGs controlled SARS-CoV-2 infection, including some that inhibited the virus' ability to enter cells, some that suppressed manufacture of

the RNA that is the virus's lifeblood, and a cluster of genes that inhibited assembly of the virus," Chanda explained. "What was also of great interest was the fact that some of the ISGs exhibited control across unrelated viruses, such as seasonal u, West Nile and HIV, which leads to AIDS". The team also identified eight ISGs that inhibited both SARS-CoV-1 and CoV-2 replication in the subcellular compartment responsible for protein packaging, suggesting this vulnerable site could be exploited to clear viral infection.

"This is important information, but we still need to learn more about the biology of the virus and investigate if genetic variability within these ISGs correlates with Covid-19 severity," said Laura Martin-Sancho, a senior postdoctoral associate in the Chanda lab. As a next step, the researchers will look at the biology of SARS-CoV-2 variants that continue to evolve and threaten vaccine efficacy. ■

INDIAN AMERICAN PROFESSOR DURBA MITRA RECIPIENT OF WALTER CHANNING CABOT FELLOWSHIP



Harvard recently announced that 11 of its faculty members, including Indian American Durba Mitra, were recipients of a 2021 Walter Channing Cabot Fellowship.

The faculty members earned the fellowship honor for their achievements in "literature, history or

art, as such terms may be liberally interpreted."

Mitra is the Carol K. Pforzheimer assistant professor at the Radcliffe Institute and assistant professor of studies of women, gender and sexuality. She was chosen for the work, "Indian Sex Life: Sexuality and the Colonial Origins of Modern Social Thought."

Mitra works at the intersection of feminist and queer studies. Her research and teaching focus on the history of sexuality, the history of science and epistemology, and gender and feminist thought in South Asia and the colonial and postcolonial world.

Mitra's book demonstrates how ideas of deviant female sexuality became

foundational to modern social thought. Her current book project explores the history of Third World feminist theory and South-South solidarity movements.

She is a recipient of the 2019 Roslyn Abramson Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching at Harvard, which recognizes teachers for "excellence and sensitivity in teaching undergraduates," and the 2020 Star Family Prize for Excellence in Faculty Advising.

Mitra is a faculty associate of the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs and is a member of the Asia Center Council and Steering Committee at the Mittal South Asia Institute at Harvard.

SIRISHA BANDLA BECOMES THIRD INDIAN-ORIGIN WOMAN TO FLY INTO SPACE

Joining the distinguished club of Indian-origin women astronauts, Kalpana Chawla and Sunita Williams, Indian-American aeronautical engineer Sirisha Bandla on Sunday became the third Indian-origin woman to fly into space.

Bandla, who is the Vice President of Government Affairs at Virgin Galactic, joined British Billionaire and Virgin Group Founder Richard Branson and five others on board Virgin Galactic's Space Ship Two Unity to make a journey to the edge of space from New Mexico.

Virgin Galactic's VSS Unity, as the



spaceplane is named, took off for the 1.5-hour mission above New Mexico following a 90-minute delay due to bad weather. "I am so incredibly honoured to be a part of the amazing crew of #Unity22, and to be a part of a

company whose mission is to make space available to all." "When I first heard that I was getting this opportunity, I was speechless," Bandla said in a video by Virgin Galactic welcoming her and two other expert crew members Colin Bennett, and Beth Moses joining on the Unity22 test flight.

The US Embassy in India congratulated Bandla on the feat. "Congratulations to #IndianAmerican astronaut @SirishaBandla on becoming the third Indian-origin woman after Kalpana Chawla and Sunita Williams to fly into space. You are an inspiration to all, Sirisha! #WomeninSTEM," it said in a tweet.

DRRC REPRESENTED AT GERMAN - INDIAN BUSINESS TALK

German-Indian Business Summit the way forward. Amb. Mutzelburg diaspora youth is best equipped in (GIBS) and Consulate General of outlined the optimism in the India explaining the Indian business vision India-Hamburg and Frankfurt German relationship and refer to the and the ground situation to the organized a conference on “German- joint statement of the last India-EU business communities of the country Indian Business Leaders Talk” on 27 Summit held on 8 May, 2021. Both of their adoption. Similarly, they can May, 2021 through virtual channels. these speakers underline the needs explain the needs and requirements of The key participants were Mr. Bernd for innovative approach for expanding the business communities of the Mutzelburg, Former Ambassador of India-German relationship into new country of their adoption for carrying Germany to India, Mr Gurjit Singh, sectors especially joint ventures and out necessary arrangements for Former Ambassador of India to project investments. creating a conducive environment for Germany, Mr. Anup Mudgal, Former medium and large scale investments. High Commissioner of India to Amb. Mudgal, Chairperson, Diaspora He also called upon the Indian origin Mauritius and CG Munich, Mr. John H Research and Resource Centre young professionals and Ruolngul, CGI-Hamburg, Dr. Shazia (DRRC) gave a talk on Diaspora youth businessmen in Germany to bring Wulbers and Dr. Rajesh Mishra, GIBS. and India's global economic relations. business proposals and any concerns Both Amb. Singh and Amb. business relationship the most to the attention of DRRC with the Mutzelburg primarily spoke about important factor remains trust in the promise that these proposals and India-German economic relationship. policies, business practices and concerns would be raised with Amb. Singh spoke about the protection under law and in this appropriate authorities. The primary potentials and challenges in the regard, he emphasized the role which emphasis of his presentation was on relationship by listing and spelling out the diaspora youth could play. Indian the possibilities of technological exchanges, joint ventures and MSME. ■

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF 'SERVING HUMANITY, PROTECTING LIVES, PROMOTING PEACE'

A major international conference was University and IMS Ghaziabad. making the future system more organized on 1 June, 2021. There Amb. Mudgal presided over the resilient and sustainable. His focus were two major components of this thematic session. The focus of his was on to expand this framework to conference: a thematic session on the presentation was on involvement of the entire India. Indian innovators theme “Serving Humanity, Protecting integration of people in finding post should share their experience and Lives, Promoting Peace” and an covid solutions in the entire societal knowledge with the diaspora in other innovation forum steered by IIMR ecosystem. Solutions will be found countries and there should be an University. It was jointly organized by through innovative thinking in all attempt to link Indian innovators with Commonwealth Thought Leaders, fields, for repairing the damage and diaspora youth. ■

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

– ITS AFFLICTION ON ROMA IN EUROPE

-Md. Zameer Anwar

The outbreak of Corona Virus has extended the long-drawn-out social exclusion, aggravated the poverty and heightened the discrimination against the most disadvantaged but the largest ethnic minority of Europe, Romani people. They are facing a much higher risk of death from COVID-19, their situation has been exacerbated by extreme racism and inadequate health measures as Roma lack health insurance coverage. The testing for COVID-19 is conditioned on health insurance coverage in several countries like Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Spain. The mortality from COVID-19 among Serbian Roma is reported to be as high as 26 per cent.

In Greece, more than 50,000 Romani people out of 230,000 (EU estimates) — most of them do not have a social security number, therefore they do not have access to the public health system and cannot be vaccinated. Many of Roma in almost every member states of Europe are uncounted or undocumented on account of racism, segregation, discrimination, physical violence, negative representation, stigmatization they have suffered for centuries. Digital ignorance and illiteracy are another problem slowing down vaccination within Roma communities. They do not always have devices with internet connection in camps and settlements which are in remote and isolated locations. However, there are no reliable statistics on the number of COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations and deaths among Roma community

either at the EU level or from individual member states.

Conforming to the personal hygiene recommendations is also questionable. Forty per cent of Roma have no sanitary facilities in their dwellings. In some of the member states of European Union, up to 80 per cent of Roma live in cramped, overcrowded settlements and neighborhoods, which makes physical distancing almost impossible. Europe being the richest continent on earth, where 80 percent of Roma live below their countries' threshold, and 30 percent live in housing without tap water, and every third Romani child lives in a household where someone went to bed hungry at least once in a day (the report by Open Society Foundation).

The socio-economic contingency caused by the pandemic is more severely affecting Roma, contributing to further inequalities. For instance, digital education or online remote learning is will-o'-the-wisp for downtrodden Romani children, lacking desktops, android mobile sets, internet connection or sometimes even electricity. Many Roma living in segregated settlements find themselves cut off from the source of income and (formal or informal) economic activity, leading to spiraling unemployment and poverty.

The political measures, taken by the Governments owing to COVID-19 pandemic, have led to an unprecedented freezing of Roma's economic life. Most of them in several

European countries eke out their livelihood by collecting junk, recyclables and plastic or vending in street markets, which have been closed. They are unable to deliver services in local markets or small enterprises and not able to carry out the seasonal or temporary works because of lockdown. The second source of their income is music, as the consequences that led to the closure of all kind of places such as theaters, restaurants, festivals and so on where Romani artists used to perform. According to report by European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture, it is estimated that 70 percent of Roma who earn a living from the arts and culture industries are not able to cover their basic necessities.

Covid-19 has exposed the anti-Roma system including administrative structure and failure in the implementation of policies for social inclusion of Romani people. The violation of most basic human rights of Romani people like rights to food, education and housing is the order of the day. At several towns and villages in various European countries, Roma have been considered to be virus carriers, despite that the Governments are phlegmatic in clamping down on the stigmatization of the community. The reported cases of scapegoating the Roma and ethnicization of the Coronavirus crisis across Europe are even more disturbing.

Some of the governments have resorted to over-policing or



disproportionate use of force. The police checkpoints were set up for monitoring the movement of Roma in several Roma's settlements. Even some municipalities in Bulgaria used drones for monitoring and control of Roma's movement. The police brutality in form of attacking Romani settlements is normal phenomena in Europe in this crisis time. There is a recent incident of police brutality in Czech Republic where a Romani man Stanislav Tomas died after police knelt on his neck for more than six minutes.

The shortage of food compelled the most vulnerable Roma to break the quarantine that endangers their access to social aid and exposes them to police abuse, particularly in Bulgaria and Romania. They are completely excluded from the mainstream coronavirus-response related to social protection. Without an income or social support, thousands are left without the means to purchase food. World Bank data show that food security remains a concern for the poorest Romani households since the outbreak of the pandemic.

With no savings to compensate the loss of income, spawned by pandemic, many Roma have been rendered unemployed and bankrupt that forced them into deeper poverty. Most of the Roma are informal workers and emigrants, so not covered by social welfare and are not eligible for unemployment benefits. None of the European Union countries are taking any concrete measure to support Romani workers in precarious situations or those who worked in the informal economy.

The pandemic crisis gave the opportunity to Roma to get united and help one another. A number of initiatives, taken by Romani NGOs, organizations and individuals, provided crucial support to families in need much sooner than states did. Roma from Western European countries in Germany, Spain, The Netherlands and others are offering financial support to the Roma of Eastern European countries especially Bulgaria, Slovakia, Romania, Serbia and etc.

Prior to COVID-19 crisis, Roma were shoved to the margins of society and vulnerable position because of inter-generational poverty, but now they experience further acute deprivation, discrimination, harassment and vulnerability. Racial discrimination has long afflicted Roma communities throughout Europe, now the pandemic has brought about new cases of racial prejudice against them. Some Romani organizations and countries have taken notice of the perils of the Roma and are working to assuage the impact of COVID-19 on the Roma.

Nonetheless, many relevant actors need to commit to further action. Governments must address more directly the discrimination, health issues and worst economic conditions of Romani people. There must be a concentrated effort to provide Roma in the EU with adequate health care, as well as humanitarian aid and economic support for those working outside of the traditional workspace.

CHINA FAILED TO DESTROY INSTITUTION OF DALAI LAMA, SAY THINK TANK EXPERTS

A New Delhi-based think tank Law and Society Alliance organised a webinar on ongoing issues concerning Tibet and China's attempts to destroy the institution of the Dalai Lama. During a panel discussion on Saturday, experts talked about Communist China and its Failure to Destroy the Institution of the Dalai Lama: Lessons for the Future.

Speaking at the event, Thinlay Chukki, Special Appointee for Human Rights at the Tibet Bureau (Geneva), stated that the newly formed People's

Republic of China took over Tibet as a part of its expansionist agenda in the 1950s. Since then, China has constantly been trying to destroy the institution of the Dalai Lama. China has consistently deployed an oppressive policy of Sinicization of Buddhism. They have attempted to destroy the identity of Tibetans and tried to convert it into a Chinese identity, Chukki said.

Another speaker Tencho Gyatso, Interim Vice President and International Director of Outreach of

Washington DC-based International Campaign for Tibet, stressing how deep is the connection between the Tibetan people and the Dalai Lama.

She further explained, Despite the Chinese government's best efforts, the bond between the Tibetan people and the Dalai Lama has grown stronger. The young Tibetan monks that have been forced to grow up under the oppressive Chinese regime and have never even seen the Dalai Lama, their allegiance and spiritual connection to him are unbelievable.

His Majesty Tours High-Risk Areas Along Eastern and Southern Border

His Majesty The King arrived in Thimphu on 18th June 2021, after concluding a tour of the high risk areas along the eastern and southern border, and entered quarantine as per COVID protocol. His Majesty was accompanied by His Royal Highness Gyaltshab Jigme Dorji and the Prime Minister, Lyonchen DASHO Lotay Tshering. His Majesty was in Phuentsholing since June 15, and visited Samtse on 17th June 2021.



Besides granting Audiences to the Southern COVID-19 Task Force

Phuentsholing and the Samtse Covid-19 Task force, His Majesty also granted an Audience to Desuups who were participating in an ICT course as part of the Desuung Skilling Programme in Samtse. The Desuung Skilling Programme was initiated to equip youth with useful skills and

give them an opportunity to serve in National Service projects during the Pandemic.

While in the East, His Majesty trekked along the eastern border from Merak to Jomotshangkha, and then travelled to Samdrup Jongkhar. In Samdrup Jongkhar, His Majesty visited the Desuung National Service water project, where 60 Desuups were working with the Skilling Thromde and RBA personnel to build water supply infrastructure for the town. The project is expected to benefit over 1,500 residents.

Her Majesty The Gyaltshab Graced an Event to Commemorate the World Environment Day

Her Majesty The Gyaltshab graced an event to commemorate World Environment Day, which is observed globally on June 5 every year.



Her Majesty launched 4 significant National Actions for the environment: Bhutan's Second Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs); Third National Communication (TNC) of Bhutan to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); Low Emission Development Strategies (LEDS) for Food Security, Human Settlement, Surface Transport and Industries, and the upgraded national Clearing House

Mechanism (CHM) under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

This year, the theme for the global World Environment Day is "Ecosystem Restoration".

In keeping with COVID-19 protocol, the small number of attendees at the

event included the Chair of the National Environment Commission (NEC), officials from relevant sectors and the NEC Secretariat.

The officials representing various agencies working with the environment thanked Her Majesty for granting continued support and guidance to our national conservation efforts as the Royal Patron for the environment, and offered birthday wishes.

World Environment Day is observed all over the country by offices, schools, institutions, and the private sector.

HEALTH MINISTER DECHEN WANGMO ELECTED AS THE PRESIDENT OF WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

Bhutan assumed the presidency of the World Health Assembly for the first time. Nominated as the president of the 74th World Health Assembly, Health Minister Dechen Wangmo was officially elected as the president of the World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland on 24th May 2021. The World Health Assembly is the highest decision-making body of the World Health Organisation (WHO) where delegates from 194 countries attend the assembly every year to discuss the Organisation's priorities and policies. Bhutan became a member of the WHO in 1982.

Delivering her presidential address at the session, Lyonpo emphasised multi-lateral cooperation and global vaccine solidarity in the fight against the COVID-19.

“The pandemic can only be controlled when everyone is vaccinated. It means that equitable access to vaccines and a comprehensive global vaccine drive is the only way forward to contain this pandemic. It is time now for the global community to come together as one to ensure that every country in the world gets sufficient doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to vaccinate every eligible citizen. We



must remember that only solidarity and science, and not solitude will get us out of this pandemic,” said Lyonpo. While this year’s World Health Assembly was supposed to be held virtually, in light of the current COVID-19 situation, Health Minister Dechen Wangmo was invited to chair the assembly in person as president. A four-member delegation led by Lyonpo attended the session. Health Minister was nominated as president of the 74th World Health Assembly by member states of WHO’s Southeast Asia region last year. Lyonpo will hold the office of the president for a year. Besides chairing and science, and not solitude will get the assembly, Lyonpo met with the leaders of the relevant international organisations.

At the assembly, new health goals and strategies are set, and tasks are assigned to reach those goals. Delegations consider and guide policies and courses of action, which are then coordinated by the Secretariat.

The week-long assembly discussed over 70 health issues and reports on COVID-19 response and preparedness across the world. ■

DAYS TO REMEMBER

in August, 2021

August 01 : Switzerland National Day
 August 06 : Jamaica : Independence Day
 August 08 : **Amavasya** ●
 August 08 : 'Quit India' Day
 August 09 : Singapore : National Day
 August 12 : International Youth Day
 August 15 : India : Independence Day
 August 17 : Indonesia : Independence Day

August 19 : Afghanistan : Independence Day
 August 20 : Hungary : National Day
 August 22 : **Purnima** ● Raksha Bandhan
 August 24 : Ukraine : Independence Day
 August 30 : Shrikrishna Janmastami
 August 31 : Kyrgyzstan : Independence Day
 August 31 : Malaysia : National Day
 August 31 : Trinidad & Tobago : Independence Day

DIPLOMATIC POSTINGS

Shri L. Prashant Pise (IFS:1995), presently Deputy Director General, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Iraq.**

Shri R. Chandramouli (YOA:2007), presently Counsellor in the High Commission of India to the United Republic of Tanzania, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Djibouti.**

Shri Ashok Kumar (IFS:1998), presently Ambassador of India to the Republic of Djibouti, has been appointed as the **next High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Zambia.**

Shri Ngulkham Jathom Gangte (IFS:1994), presently High Commissioner of India to Zambia, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Tunisia.**

Dr. S. Janakiraman (IFS:2002), presently Joint Secretary in the Ministry, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Cuba.**

Shri S. Inbasekar (IFS:2004), presently Director in the Ministry, has been appointed as the **next High Commissioner of India to the Independent State of Papua New Guinea.**

Shri Sanjiv Kohli (IFS: 1988), presently High Commissioner of India to the United Republic of Tanzania, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Serbia.**

Shri B. Shyam (IFS:2000), presently Consul General, Consulate General of India, Osaka-Kobe has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Iceland.**

Shri Vishnu Kumar Sharma (YOA:2007), presently Director in the Ministry has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of South Sudan.**

Shri Subrata Bhattacharjee (IFS:1989), presently Ambassador of India to the Republic of Serbia, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Chile.**

Shri Pradip Kumar Yadav (YOA:2007), presently Director in the Ministry has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Liberia.**

Shri Alok Ranjan Jha (IFS:2002), presently Joint Secretary in the Ministry, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Belarus.**

Shri Mridul Kumar (IFS:1992), presently High Commissioner of India to Malaysia, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to Mexico.**

Shri S. Balachandran (YOA: 2005), presently Consul General of India in Jaffna, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Suriname.**

Shri Ram Karan Verma (YOA:2007), presently Ambassador of India to the Democratic Republic of Congo, has been concurrently accredited as the **next Ambassador of India to the Central African Republic, with residence in Kinshasa.**

JAISHANKAR MEETS INDIAN COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN GEORGIA

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who is on a twoday visit to Georgia on 10 July, 2021 met representatives of the Indian community from the country's Tsnori, Khaketi. "As I begin the day, nice to meet Indian Community representatives from Tsnori, Khaketi. Their hard work in the agriculture sector has earned a good name, enterprising Indians is our global bridge," Jaishankar tweeted.

The foreign affairs minister had arrived in the country on 9 July, 2021 on a two-day visit on the invitation of his Georgian counterpart David Zalkaliani. The EAM handed over to his Georgian counterpart, a holy relic of Ketevan the Martyr, a 17th-century queen of Kakheti region revered as a saint by the Georgian orthodox



church, that was found in India. After the handing over of the relic placed inside an ornate wooden box a religious ceremony was held attended by Patriarch Ilia II, the spiritual leader of the Georgian orthodox church, and Georgia's Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili. "Warmly welcomed in Tbilisi by FM David Zalkaliani. blessed to hand over the holy relics of St. Queen Ketevan to the people of Georgia.

Georgia. An emotional moment" Jaishankar said.

Zalkaliani said that Jaishankar's visit will play a huge role in strengthening ties and taking relations of both countries to a completely new level. Considering the persistent request from the Georgian side for the permanent transfer of the Holy Relics and also taking into account the historical, religious and spiritual sentiments that are attached to the St. Queen Ketevan by the Georgian people, the Government of India decided to gift one part of the Holy Relics to the Government and people of Georgia. Officials said this will strengthen the bonds of friendship and understanding between India and Georgia.

मॉरीशस के तुलसी

एक शाम : श्री अरुणजी के नाम

6 जुलाई को प्रसि) रामकथा मर्मज्ञ, लेखक, पत्रकार, मॉरीशस के तुलसी श्री राजेंद्र अरुणजी के आकस्मिक अवसान से आहत उनके विश्व भर के मित्रों, प्रशंसकों, साहित्यकारों, पत्रकारों और अनुयायियों द्वारा उन्हें स्मरण करने के लिए अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद, रामायण सेंटर, मॉरीशस तथा रामायण केंद्र, भारत के तत्त्वावधान में आयोजित श्री राजेंद्र अरुण के प्रति श्रद्धांजलि कार्यक्रम आयोजित किया गया। पं. राजेंद्र अरुण मूलतः पत्रकार थे और इलाहाबाद विश्वविद्यालय में पढ़ाई के साथ-साथ संघकार्य करते हुए वह 'पाञ्चजन्य' और 'आज' जैसे समाचार-पत्रों में नियमित लिखने लगे थे। सन् 1973 में वे मॉरीशस गए और वहाँ के तत्कालीन प्रधानमंत्री सर शिवसागर रामगुलाम के हिंदी पत्र 'जनता' के संपादक बने। वहाँ रहते हुए उन्होंने 'यू. एन. आई.' और 'हिन्दुस्थान समाचार' जैसी न्यूज एजेंसियों के संवाददाता के रूप में काम किया। सन् 1983 से पं. अरुण श्रीरामकाज के लिए समर्पित हो गए। उन्होंने अपनी एक विशिष्टशैली में रामायण के व्यावहारिक आदर्शों को जन-जन तक पहुँचाने का संकल्प लिया। वे रेडियो, टेलीविजन तथा रामकथा के माध्यम से इस कार्य को निष्पादित करते रहे और इसलिए वे 'मॉरीशस के तुलसी' के रूप में जाने गए। वे भारत और मॉरीशस के सांस्कृतिक संबंधों की एक धुरी थे। उन्होंने रामायण के पात्रों पर अनेक पुस्तकें लिखीं, जो खूब लोकप्रिय हुईं और उन्होंने अपना एक पाठक संसार विकसित किया।



(27.7.1945-21.6.2021)

और मजबूती व मधुरता प्रदान की है। श्री अरुणजी का ऐसे अचानक जाना बहुत ही दुःखदायी और दारुण है। ज्ञातव्य है कि अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद के महासचिव स्व. श्री बालेश्वर अग्रवालजी से अरुणजी का बहुत निकट और आत्मीय परिचय था और अरुणजी अपनी भारत-यात्रा में हमेशा बालेश्वरजी से मिलकर उनसे आशीर्वाद और प्रेरणा लेते थे।

अरुणजी की सभी पुस्तकों के प्रकाशन गृह प्रभात प्रकाशन, दिल्ली तथा रामायण केंद्र, भारत के महासचिव श्री प्रभात कुमार ने कहा कि उन्हें यह किंचित भी आभास नहीं था कि श्री राजेंद्र अरुणजी इस प्रकार अकस्मात् हमारे बीच नहीं रहेंगे। वे न केवल एक श्रेष्ठ पत्रकार, साहित्यकार, विचारक, लेखक तथा सफल प्रबंधक थे, बल्कि वे एक बहुत ही संवेदनशील व्यक्ति और समर्पित रामभक्त थे, जिन्होंने रामायण की आधुनिक युग-बोध के अनुसार व्याख्या करके उसे विश्वपटल पर एक नई दृष्टि से स्थापित किया। उनके दिवंगत होने से न केवल मॉरीशस, बल्कि भारत और समस्त विश्व के रामकथा-प्रेमियों को भी क्षति हुई है, जिसकी भरपाई बहुत ही मुश्किल है।

अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद के अध्यक्ष श्री वीरेंद्र गुप्ता ने अरुणजी का पुण्य स्मरण करते हुए कहा कि रामकथा और रामायण विश्व के अनेक भारतवंशी बहुल देशों के साथ भारत के संबंधों को और अधिक दृढ़ बनाने में सहायक रही है तथा श्री राजेंद्र अरुण ने रामकथा के अपने मौलिक चिंतन एवं व्याख्या से उसे

अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संबंधों को सांस्कृतिक भावभूमि पर प्रतिष्ठित करने के लिए श्री अरुणजी सदैव एक दीप-स्तंभ की तरह हम सबको आलोकित करते रहेंगे। मॉरीशस में श्रीराम मंदिर के निर्माण में अपनी अनूठी शैली में सुंदरकांड की प्रस्तुति देनेवाले और उसमें श्री राजेंद्रजी का सहयोग करनेवाले श्री अजय याज्ञनिक ने श्री राजेंद्र अरुण द्वारा रचित गीत 'आओ मिलकर साथ चलें हम रामायण पथ च्यारा है' की सुंदर प्रस्तुति करके श्री अरुणजी को अपनी श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित की।

राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ के सरसंघचालक मान. डॉ. मोहनराव भागवत ने अपने श्रद्धांजलि संदेश में लिखा-वर्षों से मेरा राजेंद्र अरुणजी से परिचय रहा है। संघ की योजना से दो बार मॉरीशस की यात्रा में उनसे लंबी भेंट व वार्ता हुई थी। दूसरी बार मैं मॉरीशस में आप लोगों के निवास स्थान पर भी आकर गया हूँ। स्व. राजेंद्रजी भी उनकी भारत यात्रा के प्रसंग पर तीन-चार बार मुझे आकर मिले थे। उनसे संवाद का प्रसंग हर बार मन में आनंद की अनुभूति छोड़ जाता था। श्रीराम उनके श्रद्धा के

विषय थे। श्रीराम कथा पर उनके लिखे ग्रंथ मैंने पढ़े हैं। उनके उस आनंदमय, सुखद संवाद को अब हम लोग अनुभव नहीं कर सकेंगे। हम सभी स्वयंसेवक बंधु इस दुःखद प्रसंग में आपके सहसंवेदी हैं। स्व. राजेंद्रजी की पवित्र स्मृति में मैं अपनी व्यक्तिगत तथा राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ की ओर से श्रद्धांजलि अर्पण करता हूँ।

पूर्व केंद्रीय संस्कृति एवं पर्यटन मंत्री डॉ. महेश शर्मा ने अरुणजी को स्मरण करते हुए कहा कि संस्कृति, संस्कृति के रूप में मॉरीशस प्रवास के दौरान अरुणजी की निमति 'रामायण सेंटर' जाने का सौभाग्य मिला और उनकी अदम्य इच्छाशक्ति और अद्भुत जिजीविषा से मैं अभिभूत हो गया, जिसके बल पर वे मॉरीशस में ऐसे दिव्य संस्थान की रचना कर सके।

ज्येष्ठ पत्रकार एवं विचारक श्री रामबहादुर राय ने अपने पत्रकार मित्र श्री राजेंद्र अरुणजी को याद करते हुए कहा कि वे एक कुशल पत्रकार और सिद्धहस्त लेखक थे। श्री राय ने श्री अरुणजी के कई संस्मरण भी सुनाए और विनम्र श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित की।

मॉरीशस के पूर्व उप-प्रधानमंत्री श्री अनिल बेचू ने अपने वक्तव्य में श्री अरुणजी को 'मॉरीशस का तुलसी' बताया। उन्होंने कहा कि श्री अरुणजी के कारण ही मॉरीशस के हर हिंदू के घर में राम पुनः स्थापित हो गए। मॉरीशस का रामायण सेंटर और उसके प्रांगण में विशाल श्रीराम मंदिर अरुणजी की रामभक्ति का जीवंत स्मारक है। मॉरीशस की जनता उन्हें सदैव याद रखेगी।

कार्यक्रम को आगे बढ़ाते हुए श्री अरुणजी के अभिन्न मित्र और भारत में उनके आवासीय पते के रूप में जाने जानेवाले श्री यादवेंद्र दत्त बनकटाजी ने अपनी स्मृतियों को ताजा करते हुए कहा कि श्री अरुणजी का अकस्मात् गोलोकवास उन्हें बहुत दुःख दे गया है। अरुणजी बहुत ही बेफिक्र किस्म के व्यक्ति थे, किंतु उनके व्यक्तित्व का स्मरण और जिक्र करना मुझे बहुत ही असहज करता है। अतः कुछ न कहना और केवल उनकी स्मृति को सँजो करके रखना ही मेरी भावांजलि है।

रामायण केंद्र, भारत के अध्यक्ष श्री वीरेंद्र याज्ञिक ने कहा कि रामायण केंद्र, भारत के माध्यम से श्रीराम सांस्कृति और परंपरा का प्रचार-प्रसार ही श्री अरुणजी के प्रति सच्ची श्रद्धांजलि होगी, क्योंकि उनका संपूर्ण जीवन रामजी को ही समुपत था।

राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ के विश्व विभाग से जुड़े ज्येष्ठ स्वयंसेवक एवं प्रचारक श्री शंकर तत्त्वादीजी

ने अपनी शब्दांजलि देते हुए कहा कि मॉरीशस में राजेंद्र अरुणजी का घर संघ का कार्यालय था। मॉरीशस यात्रा पर गए रा.स्व. संघ के कोई भी ज्येष्ठ कार्यकर्ता या स्वयंसेवक ऐसे नहीं होंगे, जिन्होंने श्री अरुण के आतिथ्य का लाभ न लिया हो। पूर्व सरसंघचालक मा. रज्जू भैयाजी से लेकर वर्तमान प.पू. सरसंघचालक श्री मोहनजी ने श्री अरुणजी के आतिथ्य का आनंद लिया था। श्री तत्त्वादीजी ने कहा कि अरुणजी ने एक समर्पित स्वयंसेवक के रूप में मॉरीशस में भारत की सांस्कृतिक तथा समृद्ध सनातन परंपरा को रामायण और रामकथा के माध्यम से स्थापित करने में अपना पूरा जीवन अर्पित कर दिया।

उत्तर प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथजी ने कहा कि मेरी विगत मॉरीशस यात्रा के दौरान पं. राजेंद्र अरुणजी से मुलाकात हुई थी और मुझे मॉरीशस के रामायण सेंटर में भी जाने का अवसर मिला था। पं. राजेंद्र अरुणजी से रामायण सेंटर के बारे में विस्तृत जानकारी प्राप्त हुई थी। रामायण को रेडियो के माध्यम से मॉरीशस में घर-घर तक पहुंचाने में पं. राजेंद्र अरुणजी का बहुत बड़ा योगदान है। वे रामायण सेंटर के लिए समर्पित थे।

मॉरीशस के ही श्री प्रेमचंद बुझावन ने श्री राजेंद्र गुरुजी को अपनी भावांजलि अर्पित करते हुए कहा कि गुरुजी अलौकिक पुरुष थे। उन्होंने मॉरीशस के जन-जन में अपनी अद्भुत वक्तव्य शैली से रामभक्ति का संचार किया और भारत-मॉरीशस के संबंधों में अध्याय जोड़ते हुए श्री हनुमंत शक्ति से राम मंदिर का निर्माण किया।

प्रसिद्ध समालोचक डॉ. कमल किशोर गोयनकाजी ने कहा कि श्री अरुणजी अपने जीवन के उत्तरार्ध में पूरी तरह से राममय ही हो गए थे। उन्होंने कहा कि जिस प्रकार उन्नीसवीं शताब्दी में मॉरीशस में भारतीय प्रवासियों ने अपने शोषण और यंत्रणा के जीवन में रामचरितमानस के माध्यम से स्वयं को जीवंत बनाए रखा और राम को हृदय में बसाए रखा, वही राम की मूर्ति अब अरुणजी ने मॉरीशस के रामायण सेंटर के राम मंदिर में स्थापित करके वे अनंत की यात्रा पर निकल गए।

श्री भागवत परिवार, मुंबई के अध्यक्ष श्री एस.पी. गोयल ने श्री अरुणजी का स्मरण करते हुए कहा कि गुरुजी के प्रथम दर्शन ने ही उनको उनका भक्त बना दिया। उनकी अद्भुत वक्तव्य शैली का ही परिणाम था कि मुंबई में 2010 में आयोजित श्री रामकथा पंचामृतम् अभूतपूर्व रूप से सफल हुई थी।

भारत सरकार के शिक्षा मंत्री श्री रमेश पोखरियाल 'निशंक' जी ने कहा कि 'भारत के सांस्कृतिक दूत' के नाम से प्रसिद्ध पुण्यस्मृति और संपूर्ण विश्व में रामायण का प्रचार-प्रसार करनेवाले रामायण केंद्र मॉरीशस के अध्यक्ष पंडित राजेंद्र अरुणजी की पुण्यस्मृति पर मैं उन्हें अपनी हार्दिक श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित करता हूँ।

पत्रकारिता, लेखन और कथावाचन जैसी विधाओं से उन्होंने अपने ज्ञान, भाषा सौष्ठव और कौशल के द्वारा सिर्फ भारत और मॉरीशस ही नहीं, अपितु संपूर्ण विश्व में लोकप्रियता हासिल की। पंडित राजेंद्र अरुण जी मेरे काफी निकट एवं अभिन्न रहे हैं। मैं उनकी स्मृति को नमन करता हूँ और उन्हें अपनी हार्दिक श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित करता हूँ।

जबलपुर के रामभक्त डॉ. अखिलेश गुमाश्ताजी ने अरुणजी को अपने श्रद्धा-सुमन अर्पित करते हुए कहा कि वे एक रामकथा के अद्वितीय व्याख्याता थे और रामायण सम्मेलन में उनके वक्तव्य श्रोताओं को मंत्रमुग्ध कर देते थे।

मॉरीशस में राम मंदिर के निर्माण में अपना सक्रिय योगदान देनेवाले सी.ए. श्री योगेश अग्रवाल ने श्री राजेंद्र अरुणजी को देवीय गुणों से संपन्न व्यक्ति बताया। उन्होंने कहा कि राम मंदिर का निर्माण मॉरीशस के इतिहास की अलौकिक घटना है।

केंद्रीय हिंदी संस्थान के उपाध्यक्ष श्री अनिल जोशीजी ने भी श्री अरुणजी के विशाल व्यक्तित्व का स्मरण किया और उन्हें समर्पित रामभक्त तथा राष्ट्रभक्त बताया।

श्री अरुणजी के रचनाकर्म और व्यक्तित्व पर शोध करवानेवाली डॉ. चंपा श्रीवास्तव ने भी अरुणजी को याद करते हुए कहा कि अब हम अरुणजी को उनकी कृतियों में देखेंगे और उनका सामीप्य प्राप्त करेंगे।

अरुणजी की पोती कु. एवा आद्या अरुण ने भी अपने दादाजी को याद किया और उन्हें एक महान् व्यक्ति के रूप में निरूपित करते हुए प्रणाम किया।

श्री अरुणजी के ज्येष्ठ पुत्र श्री अनुराग अरुण ने अपनी श्रद्धांजलि देते हुए कहा कि यह उनका सौभाग्य है कि वे अरुणजी के पुत्र हैं। वे बहुत ज्ञानी थे और उनकी कृपा का प्रसाद ही है कि वे विज्ञानी बन पाए।

अंत में अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद् के महासचिव के श्री श्याम परांडेजी ने अपनी श्रद्धांजलि वक्तव्य में श्री अरुणजी को महान् रामभक्त और भारत की संस्कृति का राजदूत बताया। उन्होंने कहा कि श्री अरुणजी ने न केवल मॉरीशस में, बल्कि अनेक देशों - अमेरिका, कनाडा, लंदन, त्रिनिदाद, फीजी, ब्रिटिश गुयाना आदि में भी अपने कथा-प्रवचनों तथा आलेखों से भारतवंशियों में जागरण का काम किया और माँ भारती की सेवा की। ऐसे सपूत को प्रणामांजलि प्रदान कर वे स्वयं को धन्य समझते हैं। अंत में शांति-पाठ से इस श्रद्धांजलि सभा का विसर्जन हुआ।

स्मृति-सभा में अरुणजी की सहधूमणी डॉ. विनोद बाला अरुण, अनुज पुत्र श्री अभिषेक अरुण, अरुणजी के युवाकाल के परम मित्र श्री चंद्रभूषण पांडेय, श्री रवींद्र त्रिपाठी, डॉ. गोपी तथा विश्व के अनेक देशों से उनके प्रशंसक, मित्र आभासी माध्यम से जुड़े।

Obituary



Dr. Dauji Gupta (1940-2021)- a freedom fighter, mayor, poet and writer, and a senior member of ARSP drew his last breath on 2nd May, 2021.

We at ARSP extend our wholehearted condolences and deepest sympathies to his family, relatives and friends. We pray to God to let the departed soul Rest in Peace.



It is grieved to learn that one of the senior and active members of ARSP, Dr. Surendar Nath Gupta (1946-2021) passed away on 31st May, 2021. He

was a well known educationist and professor at various universities of Libya, Fiji, Yemen, etc. On behalf of the ARSP, we wish to extend our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to his family, relatives and friends.



Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP) is saddened by the death of Shri Radha Kant Bharti (1939-2021) on 14 May, 2021, who was writer,

journalist and Sociologist, was actively associated with ARSP. We at ARSP extend our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to his family, relatives and friends.