

ANTAR RASHTRIYA SAHAYOG PARISHAD BULLETIN

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श्री बालेश्वर अग्रवाल जन्मशताब्दी के अवसर पर

NURTURING THE ROOTS

✍ Subha Singh



It was a blisteringly hot and humid day in 1987 when three men walked on the dusty kuccha road in search of a remote village in Bihar. The three men were—Harish Boodhoo, former deputy Prime Minister of Mauritius, Balleshwar Agrawal, secretary general of the newly formed Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad and R.K. Sinha. Their mission was to locate the small village in Hazaribagh district (now in Jharkhand) from where Harish Boodhoo's grandfather had gone to Mauritius almost a hundred years ago.

Harish Boodhoo knew very little about his grandfather's origins except the name of his village and district. Balleshwarji took up the task of

locating the village and taking the Mauritian leader to his ancestral home. After making inquiries about the village among friends and colleagues, Balleshwarji accompanied Harish Boodhoo to Patna and then by car to Hazaribagh. The village was an hour's drive from Hazaribagh, but when the party reached the village, the mukhiya told them that there was no one of the kurmi caste in the village. Some kurmi families had left the village some decades ago and had gone to live in Simatali village, a few miles away.

There was no pucca road to Simatali and Harish Boodhoo, Balleshwarji and R.K. Sinha began walking along the dirt path to the village. When they reached Simatali, they were accosted by a group of suspicious men, who took them to be government officials come to collect dues for something or the other. It took all of Balleshwarji's considerable persuasive skills to convince the villagers that Harish Boodhoo was the grandson of a Simatali family, and whose grandfather had gone away to Mauritius. As the villagers talked among themselves, one villager

recalled that his dadaji's brother had gone away to pardesh; and so Harish Boodhoo could meet some relatives.

Balleshwarji told me this story when I was planning to write a book on overseas Indians trying to trace their roots in India. He chuckled as he related the quizzical response of the Simatali villagers at the name Boodhoo till Harish Boodhoo explained that his grandfather was kidnapped when he was ten years old and was crying so much that he could not tell his name. So the recruiters had named him Boodhoo or fool and that name stuck to him through his life.

Balleshwarji worked tirelessly to develop wider contacts within the diasporic communities and link them with India. He was exceedingly generous with his resources to anyone who showed an interest in the Indian Diaspora. He would ring up and discuss any article I wrote about overseas Indians, saying that very few people wrote on the subject. He was a fount of information on the diaspora and was ever willing to share his knowledge. He encouraged

me when I was writing my second book, Overseas Indians: The Global Family, asking about the progress I had made whenever I met him.

I met Baleshwarji for the first time in 1978 about the time plans were being discussed to set up an organisation for engaging with overseas Indians. I had just returned to India after four years in Fiji Islands, where I had worked as Lecturer at the Fiji School of Medicine. I was looking for a change in career and had begun contributing occasional articles to newspapers and magazines. My

father, late Shri Bhagwan Singh introduced me to Baleshwarji, describing him in glowing terms as senior journalist who had headed the Hindusthan Samachar, the news agency that was closed down during the Emergency.

My father had been India's first High Commissioner to Fiji, and had a deep interest in people of Indian origin living abroad in different countries. There were lifelong connections with Fiji since my great-grandparents had gone to Fiji as 'girmityas' and twenty years later returned to their village near Agra, Uttar Pradesh. On his return to India on retirement, he involved himself in bringing together a group of people and setting up an organisation to establish links with Mother India's children abroad.

Baleshwarji became the organising spirit and the Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad was formed with late Shri Dharma Vira, former Governor of West Bengal as its President. Later my father remained its president for ten years and many of the executive committee meetings were held at his house in Vasant Vihar. Whenever I met Baleshwarji at the executive committee meetings, he urged me to write on the diaspora sometimes. But in those days, my own focus lay in writing on politics and international relations.

Baleshwarji worked to promote good neighbourly relations, especially with Nepal and Bhutan. He had an abiding interest in Nepal; in its politics and the lives of its people. His interest and knowledge about Nepal grew from

the time he was based in Patna for Hindusthan Samachar, which he later headed as Managing Editor. His memory for political developments in Nepal, right from the 1950s when the first movement for democratic reforms gathered steam to contemporary developments was phenomenal. For years he brought out a newsletter, which later went online, giving the news from Nepal at a time when national and international news media did not pay much attention to developments in Nepal.

Recognition of Baleshwarji's selfless involvement and knowledge of diaspora affairs came when he was appointed a member of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora. Baleshwarji made insightful contribution to the committee's findings and recommendations that later formed key inputs in the Government of India's diaspora policy.

Baleshwarji was indefatigable in his pursuit of engaging and remaining connected with the Indian overseas communities. He was an institution builder who made ARSP into a dynamic organization. He was affable by nature and could relate to people of all walks of life. I received from Baleshwarji encouragement, guidance and abundant affection. For people of Indian descent who came in touch with him, he was a revered figure who understood their emotional connection with India. Baleshwarji will remain an inspiration to all those who cherish the same objectives. ■

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DIASPORA AND HINDI HERITAGE

Dr Ruchi Verma
Research Fellow
DRRC-ARSP

Diaspora Research and Resource Centre (DRRC) – Antar-Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP), along with Central University of Gujarat (CUG), Gandhinagar and Central Hindi Institute (CHI), Agra organised a virtual conference on 'Diaspora and Hindi Heritage' on 14 January, 2022 to mark the week of Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas (PBD) and World Hindi Day. Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas is celebrated on 9 January in recognition of the growing importance, Government of India attaches to its diaspora and for expanding its engagement with them. The Indian diaspora creates good will for India everywhere in the world. There is also a strong connect between diaspora and propagation of Hindi abroad. Indian languages are the essential means of preservation of Indian cultural heritage abroad. This defines the theme of the conference.

Shri V. Muraleedharan, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs, Government of India was the Chief Guest. Heads of Mission of Girmitya countries especially H.E. Mr Kamlesh Shashi Prakash, Republic of Fiji; H.E. Mr Charrandass Persaud, Cooperative Republic of Guyana; H.E. Dr Roger Gopaul, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago; Ms Ria A. Sital, Charge d' Affaires, Republic of Suriname also graced the occasion. Along with the members of ARSP, CUG and CHI, there were many fold attendees. ARSP was represented by Amb. Virendra Gupta, President; Shri Shyam Parande, Secretary General; Amb. Anup Mudgal, Chairperson, DRRC; Shri Narayan Kumar, Hon. Director and Mr Amit Gupta, Joint Secretary, ARSP. Central University of Gujarat was represented by Prof. Rama Shanker Dubey, Vice Chancellor and Prof. Atanu Mohapatra, Chairperson, Centre for Diaspora Studies, CUG and from Central Hindi Institute Shri Anil Joshi, Vice President and Prof. Beena Sharma, Director attended the event. Conference was moderated by Prof. Gopal Arora, Secretary, ARSP. It was a record attendance and the number

exceeded the capacity of the platform.

Heads of Mission representing most of the indentured route countries shared their emotional connect with their Hindi roots. They reminded that the Indian diaspora were the ambassadors of Indian languages, culture and heritage. The success of the Indian diaspora is directly linked to the success and prosperity of India. They mentioned, 'that even after so many generations, the Hindi language is still alive amongst the People of Indian Origin (PIO) communities'. Most speakers suggested that greater efforts need to be made for preservation and promotion of Indian languages, culture, Hindi education, music, art, yoga especially in the Girmitya countries. High Commissioner of Fiji announced that Fiji would host the next World Hindi Conference in September 2022 and invited ARSP and its partner organisations to join this celebration.

Shri V. Muraleedharan, Hon'ble Minister in his inaugural address congratulated DRRC- ARSP for organizing this conference. He also recognised and appreciated that DRRC-ARSP have now involved the reputed Indian Universities for academic research into diaspora matters. He gave his compliments for the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ARSP and CUG. Hon'ble Minister also released two important books produced by DRRC-ARSP, one on End of Indenture: An Agonizing Journey to Freedom and another on Gandhi: Rise of Mahatma and Diaspora. He complimented DRRC-ARSP for their efforts to mainstream serious academic research into diaspora matters.

Hon'ble Minister mentioned that history of Indian diaspora dates back to several centuries and today, we have over 30 million strong PIO communities spread over 100 countries. They are amongst the most successful diaspora in terms of

adaptation, education, innovation, technology, culturally and of late even politically. In many countries, some of the top government, business and education positions are occupied by members of the Indian diaspora. We in India feel very proud of their success and the diaspora in turn also feel very proud of the exceptional success story of post- independent India.

The Hon'ble Minister also mentioned that his ministry maintains regular interaction with diaspora through the PBD process. There are specialised programmes for Girmitya countries, the important ones for the youth include- the Know India Programme and scholarships for diaspora youth. He encouraged the diaspora to deepen their engagement with their roots in India through the various online programs, including the flagship programme 'The Rishta Portal'. He also informed that there are some important programmes available in Hindi on the United Nations social media platform.

Prof Rama Shanker Dubey, Vice Chancellor of CUG complimented DRRC and CUG for signing the MoU for serious academic research on diaspora. He mentioned that the Indian diaspora was the major force behind the usage of Hindi in the countries of their adoption and due to their efforts now in more than 131 institutions across the world, Hindi is taught. He also appreciated that the New Education Policy of India would offer greater scope for using Indian languages at all the stages from school to higher education including technical education.

Towards the end, there was a cultural presentation by the students of CHI. Participants from Uzbekistan, Armenia, Turkey, Nigeria, Bulgaria, China, Sri Lanka performed several Hindi and Sanskrit based cultural activities.

Other speakers also extensively spoke about the role of diaspora in the preservation and promotion of Indian languages abroad as also the

measures that need to be taken for strengthening these efforts.

Following important suggestions emerged at the conference:

” There is a need for greater and more tangible support for institutions engaged in promoting Indian culture overseas.

” The facilities for learning Hindi abroad should be further expanded and strengthened by way

of deploying teachers and better learning material.

” The programmes and initiatives for promoting awareness about Indian culture abroad need to be qualitatively upgraded.

” Further expansion of youth diaspora outreach by enhancing initiatives like Know India Programme, Know Your Roots and scholarships for higher education.

” Facilitation and access for PIO students at Indian institutions of higher education. They need to be treated at par with their Indian counterpart.

Programme ended with a vote of thanks.

** The full recording of the event is available at the link given below: https://youtu.be/_V_402iJWag

PROBLEMS OF THE POSITIVE SOCIAL DYNAMIC OF ROMANI SOCIETIES



Dr. Marianna Smirnova-Seslavinskaya
(Russia, Bulgaria)

This Article, pertaining to Roma's social progress in macro-societies as personal inclusion, is based on our field work and communication with Roma in the countries of the former USSR and of Eastern Europe from the 1990s to the present.

Individual and family inclusion

Roma positive social dynamic is mainly presented and studied as an inclusion in the macro-societies. That supposes the positive social movement of separate persons or families. There are different consequences in this process for members of compact Romani settlements and for local Romani communities, as well. Thus, a successful person or family might be excluded from their own traditional Romani society, because of the offence against Romani traditions.

For example, a Romani family has a successful business thanks to the good education of its young members or its wide business ties. Romani traditions require that the members of the same territorial or kinship community share their financial success with other members. This sharing can have real forms of financial support. But often this tradition may destroy family business, and the successful family might be forced to go away from their own community or weaken their traditional ties within it. So, it starts losing its traditional

values based on collectivist principles to the more individualistic ones. Different members of the same Romani society, who become much more socially successful than other ones, weaken their ties within the traditional society. These families are included in different sectors of state or private economies and the social life of the macro-society, which often leads to their ethnic mimicry because of their fear (real or imaginary) of ethnic discrimination. Many well-educated Roma with a high social status try to hide their ethnic origin from surrounding non-Roma people. They don't speak Romani between themselves in the presence of their colleagues, partners or clients and don't demonstrate any other signs of Romani culture. And they leave locations identified as Romani by the non-Roma. Often people work for a very long time beside Roma without finding out about their real ethnicity. It is typical for Roma working in such state institutions as the police, scientific organizations, governmental services, hospitals, etc. And often Roma can't hide their ethnicity because of the features of their appearance. Only scholars of Romani studies, artists and NGO activists of Roma origin never hide their ethnicity, because it more likely raises their professional rating.

At the same time, less successful Romani people continue earning money using traditional Romani ways

and often living in traditional Romani locations where they continue using collectivist principles which help them to survive together.

The departure from Romani society and mimicry leading to the assimilation of successful families contribute to keeping the image of Roma as a socially unsuccessful and marginalized people.

Group's Positive Social Dynamic

The group social dynamic of Roma is mostly considered in its negative aspects: as their social marginalization, mass loss of the group occupational and business niches, etc. We can only rarely find out the type of positive social dynamic when the whole Romani group changes its occupation and social status to a higher one. Usually it is this leads to changes in its cultural features, especially, to the collective refusal of the everyday usage of ethnic dress, to a higher educational level and usage of the behavioural models of its surroundings. In the eyes of the non-Roma this group obtains a higher social status. This universal social and cultural phenomenon has its own particularities in India, where it is called sanskritization. We call this Group re-integration because social changes leading to the higher social level affect all members of the same group with the preservation of its social borders.

An example is presented by one group of Roma Kaldarash who are traditional craftsmen – coppersmiths, one of the best-known Romani communities all over the world. They preserve very well important features of their Romani culture: strong ethnic ties, strict social norms, rules restricting women's behavior, early women marriage and women's traditional dress, and somewhere even their traditional occupation.

Niamtsuroni is the community of Bulgarian Kaldarash of five or six hundred people. They remained coppersmiths until the crash of the socialism in Bulgaria in the 1990s. At that time of social and economic revolution new business and market niches opened. So, families of Niamtsuroni used this opportunity to start building and renovation businesses. Some of them have organized small companies. Their wives and daughters, who carried heavy sacks with metal utensils and were barely literate until recent time, now finish financial colleges to manage businesses of their husbands and fathers. Less successful members of Niamtsuroni started specializing in building

professions and work now for their relatives or other companies.

This new social level, everyday contact with clients, partners, employers or hired workers from the surrounding population, required a new public image of Niamtsuroni, and especially of their women, which in many situations is connected with the hiding of their ethnic origin. 50 and 60-year-old women who wore full traditional costume 30 years ago, now wear modern dresses and suits and trendy hairstyles, and 40-year-old women even wear pants, which is absolutely impossible among traditional Kaldarash.

These changes reached by Niamtsuroni during the period of only one generation are colossal, taking into account that Roma Kaldarash are considered as the least adaptive Romani groups. However, this progress was made by Niamtsuroni themselves, without any external care or benefits given by the government.

Another impressive example is presented by Macedonian Roma, who took advantage of the social

changes of the same period. They achieved the proclamation of the Roma as one of the main ethnic minorities in Macedonia. Thanks to the obtained autonomy they elected a Roma mayor in the biggest compact Romani settlement in Europe, Shuto Orizari, with tens of thousands of people and without any infrastructure. With their Romani mayor they took only two years to transform it into a modern settlement.

Our observations of different groups of Roma show that group positive social dynamic is closely related to the opportunities and prospects that the economies and social space provide. This explains why these changes are associated with the time of social revolutions, when new windows of opportunity open up. The answer to the question, "What do Roma really need for their positive social changes?" is "Autonomy". It is required by many Romani societies in different countries, especially in Eastern Europe, where there are big Romani compact settlements. Because Roma, as each other people, have their own responsibility for their communities. ■

Form IV (See Rule-8)

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I, Keshav G. Parande, on behalf of the Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad, declare, that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

sd/-

March 10, 2022

(Keshav G. Parande)

Dialogue with Know India Programme (KIP) Alumni

Diaspora Research and Resource Centre (DRRC), Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP), New Delhi has started a fortnightly virtual programme, 'Dialogue with Diaspora' in which, important members of Indian diaspora from different countries and relevant Indian experts are invited to share their ideas and experiences for deepening their engagement with India and for networking with global PIOs.

The character, capacity and needs of diaspora evolve with each generation and this process has accelerated in the digital technology era. The interests, needs and expectations of the youth are changing fast and policy adaptations and engagement tools need to keep pace. Keeping this in view, DRRC has organised a Dialogue with the Know India Programme Alumni on 5 March 2022 to understand and discuss how her or his participation in the KIP programme has been beneficial personally, professionally and culturally as also their suggestions for further improvement.

Dr. K J Srinivasa, Indian High Commissioner to Guyana was the Guest of Honour at this event. Dr Srinivasa praised the long history of girmitiyas and contribution of Indian diaspora in indentured route countries. He particularly appreciated the contribution of Indian diaspora especially the youth in Guyana in building bridges between India and Guyana. He mentioned that the youth are the main pillar of strength in establishing people to people contacts and connect. He also urged the youth of Indian diaspora to participate with great zeal in the events organised by missions under 75th Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav. He also recalled the prominent diaspora initiatives of Government of India and their importance in strengthening the diaspora's connect with India.

Participants from the following Indentured Route Countries participated: Ms. Devashee Hursahye, Mauritius, Mr. Chiranjiv Mahesh Kumar Aungnoo, Mauritius,

Ms. Upaasna Sewbaran, Suriname, Ms. Sheroma Boeddha, Suriname, Ms. Neelam Sudha Matadin, Suriname, Ms. Tasha Persad, Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Nicholas Homdath Kanhai, Trinidad and Tobago, Ms. Sasha Maharaj, Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Deodat Persaud, Guyana, Ms. Indrawattie Natram, Guyana, Ms. Caerish Bhim, South Africa, Ms. Naïla Razahoseni, Reunion Island.

Know India Programme (KIP) of the Ministry of External Affairs is a three-week orientation programme for diaspora youth conducted with a view to promote awareness on different facets of life in India and the progress made by the country in various fields e.g. economic, industrial, education, science and technology, communication and information technology, culture. KIP provides a unique forum for students and young professionals of Indian origin to visit India, share their views, expectations and experiences and to develop closer bonds with the contemporary India. The programme has been in existence since 2003.

Amb. Virendra Gupta, President, Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad mentioned that connecting with youth is very important. We are living in a revolutionary age so keeping pace with youths thinking is essential. How members of youth diaspora look at India is crucial for establishing contacts with them. He mentioned that there should be facilitation and access for PIO students at Indian institutions of higher education. They need to be treated at par with their Indian counterpart.

The participants shared their fascinating stories and experiences of their visit to India as KIP participant. They all acclaimed that India is on the path of development and their perception about India has changed after their visit. The diaspora youth has recognised the rise in India's global prestige, which also has a positive bearing on their performance and standing in their adopted countries and societies.

They hope for more frequent visits to India with opportunities of interaction with the local Indian communities.

Following suggestions emerged at the session:

- Establishment of a structured KIP alumni organization in each country which then be linked with each other globally. Example of such a group formed by KIP alumni in Trinidad and Tobago has been highlighted. It was agreed that DRRC would set up a digital platform for this purpose.
- KIP alumni should be involved proactively by Indian Missions in their cultural projects and activities.
- Some of the alumni share their initiatives for positive perception of Indian Tourism, higher educational institutions of India through digital exhibitions and they were requested to share their work with DRRC so that a digital link could be provided on its website. Other KIP Alumni could be encouraged to replicate such initiatives.
- KIP participants should be given an opportunity to interact with locals and be allowed to organise a mini fair kind of event in which KIP participants will showcase the culture of their own respective country.

Amb. Anup Mudgal advised the participants to mail their ideas to DRRC so that they could be shared with relevant stakeholders for further follow up. The participants praised this dialogue with diaspora initiative and suggested to have more such sessions. Shri Amit Gupta Joint Secretary Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad conducted and coordinated the programme.

** The full recording of the event is available at the link given below: <https://youtube.com/watch?v=SPTQxsm-GDk&feature=share>

UKRAINE CRISIS-Desi Nonprofits Step Up to Help Students



The conflict in Ukraine has created a humanitarian crisis with thousands trying to flee a war zone and brought attention to the vast numbers of Indian students that were living and studying in Ukraine, bringing the conflict home to India and its diaspora in a very personal way. Even as the Indian government launched Operation Ganga to rescue and bring back the 15000 Indian students fleeing the crossfire, volunteers from global Dharmic organizations like Sewa International, ISKCON, BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, and others have stepped in to provide assistance to those stranded in multiple countries and cities.

Over the past several days, more than 250 Sewa volunteers across Europe have coordinated relief efforts in eighteen Ukrainian cities. Within 24 hours of the news breaking, Sewa Europe volunteers had created helplines to capture any requests across Ukraine, tracking each and every ask for help from start to finish. In addition, the volunteers are currently managing 300 WhatsApp groups, categorized by city and region, to connect people in need to resources and information. This extensive communication system being managed by Sewa volunteers has connected 18 cities/region throughout Ukraine. As of last week, Sewa International volunteers in Europe had helped more than 3,200 individuals to cross the Ukraine border, with plans to help another 3,600 people who had registered for evacuation through a helpline.

In its latest update, Sewa also shared that on Tuesday, March 8, it played a key role in evacuating an additional 467 African students, from Nigeria,

Namibia, Zambia, and South Africa, who were stuck in Sumy, the northern region of Ukraine bordering Russia. This effort from Sewa volunteers was in response to a request by Shina Alege, the Nigerian Ambassador to Ukraine.

This news of helping across nationalities, borders, and race is especially heartwarming

in light of the dismaying displays of racism seen against students from India and Africa as they sought to flee the conflict zone and cross the Ukrainian border for safety.

The Ukraine-Russia conflict exemplifies the crucial role of volunteer relief agencies in helping individuals caught up in the chaos of being refugees in an unfamiliar land, hampered by language, weather, nationality, lack of awareness of local rules, resources, and more.

“As news of the conflict broke, many of our Sewa volunteers in Ukraine opened their restaurants, their homes, and their businesses to anyone in need by providing free meals and temporary shelter to people in transit to border points—all in the very first few days of the invasion. Even more of our volunteers traveled from neighboring European countries, i.e. Germany, Finland, Norway, etc., to serve in the relief efforts”, said Rakhi Israni, Sewa International National Spokesperson and Bay Area resident. “As a Sewa International volunteer, I know that it is in our nature to help anyone in need, but as I see the scale and speed of our relief efforts taking place in Ukraine by Sewa, HSS, and other organizations, I understand the meaning of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbukam'. The volunteers and community truly exemplify how the whole world is one family.”

With a worldwide network of over 3,850 centers the international volunteers of the BAPS Pariwar swung into action to support emergency relief efforts on the ground, soon after the crisis in

Ukraine began. Driven by the spirit of service and Dharma, some volunteers from the U.S. and other parts of the world have even flown into the countries surrounding Ukraine to help with incoming refugees. BAPS has set up mobile field kitchens in Polish cities like Rzeszów, serving over 1,000 hot vegetarian meals daily. Given the highly diverse dietary requirements of the refugees who have fled, the availability of vegetarian food is a small but important way to help.

Sewa International units in Ukraine, Finland, Poland, Romania, Hungary, and Denmark are working closely with Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) volunteers, fielding calls from stranded students and others seeking help and directing them to a volunteer who lives close to them for further assistance. According to the organization, more than 35 Sewa volunteers are working on the ground in Ukraine, with an increase in call volume as the war intensifies. “After a student from India was killed in shelling in Kharkiv, the second-largest city in Ukraine and an epicenter of the current war, there has been a heightened fear among students. Due to the danger posed by the war to civilian lives in the city, helping people leave Kharkiv has been our top priority. In nearly 80 percent of the situations, we have been able to help the caller when they call the Sewa help number for the first time,” said Heramb Kulkarni, a Sewa volunteer from Finland.

According to its Ministry of Civil Aviation, as of March 8, India has brought back home nearly 18000 of its citizens from Ukraine onboard special flights. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, over 660,000 people, mostly women, and children have left Ukraine within five days of the beginning of the war. Those still stranded in Ukraine are facing multiple challenges, including threats to their lives, non-cooperation from local officials, not being allowed to cross the Ukrainian border, lack of food, and money. We hope for a speedy restoration of calm in the region so that the human toll is not further amplified.

INDIAN-ORIGIN SHEFALI RAZDAN NOMINATE AS US ENVOY TO NETHERLANDS



US President Joe Biden has nominated an Indian-origin political activist Shefali Razdan Duggal as his envoy to the

Netherlands. Along with several other administrative as well as diplomatic positions, the White House made this announcement. Duggal has served as the National Co-Chair of Women for Joe Biden, and as a Deputy National Finance Chair at the Democratic National Committee, reported the White House.

According to the White House, Duggal, a mother of two, is an experienced political activist, a

women's rights advocate, and a human rights campaigner. She is also a former Presidential Appointee to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Council. Shefali Razdan continues to serve as the Western Regional Advisor.

The Biden-nominated political analyst is a San Francisco Committee member of Human Rights Watch and a member of the Wake Forest University Leadership and Character Council. She has also served on the National Board of Directors for Emily's List.

Back in the Barack Obama era, Shefali Razdan Duggal was active in the 2008 Presidential campaign. She was also associated with Hillary

Clinton's Presidential campaign, and was a member of Clinton's campaign's Northern California Steering Committee and the Women for Hillary Committee.

Shefali Razdan has studied Mass Communication at Miami University and has also received an MA in Political Communication from New York University.

She has also received several civic awards, including being recognized with the Western Regional Leadership Award by the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, as a Community Hero by the California State Assembly. She has also received an award as one of the Most Powerful Women in California by the National Diversity Council. ■

BIDEN PICKS PIO AS ENVOY TO MOROCCO



US President Joe Biden has announced his intent to nominate Indian-origin diplomat Puneet Talwar as the country's ambassador to Morocco, the second such nomination of an Indian-American.

Talwar, who is currently a Senior Advisor at the State Department, has held senior national security and foreign policy positions in the State Department, the White House and the Senate.

He previously served as the Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director at the National Security Council, and as a Senior Professional Staff Member at the Committee on Foreign Relations in the United States Senate. ■

DAYS TO REMEMBER

in April, 2022

April 01 : **Amavasya** ●

April 02 : International Children's Book Day

April 06 : International Day of sport for
Development & Peace

April 08 : International Roma Day

April 10 : Ram Navami

April 13 : Baisakhi

April 14 : Dr. Ambedkar Jayanti

April 16 : **Purnima** ■

April 22 : Mother Earth Day

April 23 : World Books & Copyright Day

April 26 : Tanzania- Union Day

April 27 : South Africa : Freedom Day

April 30 : **Amavasya** ●

JAPAN-INDIA SUMMIT FOR THE PARTNERSHIP FOR A PEACEFUL, STABLE AND PROSPEROUS POST-COVID WORLD



Prime Minister of Japan H.E. Mr. Kishida Fumio made an official visit to India, as his first bilateral visit, from 19 to 20 March 2022 for the 14th Japan-India Annual Summit with H.E. Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India. The Prime Ministers recognized that the Summit was taking place at a significant time as the two countries were celebrating the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations and India was celebrating the 75th anniversary of its independence. They reviewed the developments since the last Annual Summit and discussed wide ranging areas of cooperation.

Japan will invest 5 trillion yen or Rs 3.2 lakh crores in India over the next five years, PM Modi. The Prime

Minister made the statement while addressing a joint press conference with his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida in New Delhi. The two leaders also held bilateral talks at Hyderabad House in New Delhi during the India-Japan Annual Summit. Japan's investment target in India follows investment promotion partnership of 2014.

"The world is still grappling with Covid-19 pandemic and its side effects. There are still obstacles in the process of global economic recovery. Geo-political events are also presenting new challenges," PM Modi said at the press conference. The prime minister emphasised that deepening the India-Japan partnership will encourage peace, prosperity and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and also at global level.

India and Japan inked six agreements following talks between PM Modi and PM Fumio Kishida. The two countries also announced clean

energy partnership following talks between PM Modi and PM Kishida.

PM Modi said, "India and Japan understand the importance of a secure, trusted, predictable and stable energy supply."

Apart from discussing ways to boost economic and cultural ties between the two countries, the two world leaders discussed other global issues, including the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Referring to Russian attacks on Ukraine, Japanese PM Kishida said, "Unilateral attempts to change the status quo using force should not be allowed."

"Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a very serious incident which has shaken the roots of international rules and world order," the Japanese PM said, adding, "We should be committed to stopping any kind of unilateral changes by use of force."

Japanese PM Kishida, accompanied by a high-level delegation, arrived in Delhi on his first visit to India as the head of the Japanese government.

10 FOREIGNERS AMONG PADMA AWARDEES



Rutger Kortenhorst

Among the six awardees for Padma Sri, three are Sanskrit scholars from Poland, Ireland and Thailand. Out of 153 national civilian awards announced, 10 went to foreigners, including five of Indian-origin.

While there was no foreigner in the Padma Vibhushan, four foreigners, all of them of Indian-origin, were



Amb. Maria Christopher Byrski

awarded the Padma Bhushan. There were six foreigners in the third category of Padma Sri awards, including a former Ambassador of Poland to India.

While Satya Narayana Nadella, Sundararajan Pichai and Madhur Jaffery are the well-known Americans of Indian origin who were awarded



Chirapat Prapandavidya

the second highest Padma Bhushan, a fourth Indian Sanjaya Rajaram, though not as well known and who passed away last year, made more concrete contribution to the country's farm sector.

Sanjaya Rajaram was a Mexican scientist who won the 2014 World Food Prize for developing 480 wheat varieties that have been released in

51 countries. This innovation led to an increase in global wheat production by over 20 crore tons. The Government had recognised his contribution earlier as well by awarding him the Padma Shri.

Among the six awardees for Padma Sri, three are Sanskrit scholars from Poland, Ireland and Thailand. One of the winners, Sanskrit scholar from Ireland Rutger Kortenhorst was

mentioned by PM Modi in his 'Mann ki baat' programme last year. The other two are Chirapat Prapandavidya from Thailand and former Ambassador of Poland to India (1993-96) Amb. Maria Christopher Byrski who is a diplomat, Indologist and Sanskrit scholar.

Tatiana Lvovna Shaumyan from Russia has been awarded the Padma Sri for her work on India during her long innings at the Center of Indian

Studies in the Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow. Prokar Dasgupta from the UK has been awarded the Padma Sri for his expertise in robotic surgery.

A surprise winner among these people of letters is hotel entrepreneur Ryuko Hira from Japan whose birth name was Kamlesh Punjabi. The owner of several hotel chains, he has been awarded for facilitating Japanese investments to India. ■

Microsoft to invest Rs 15,000 crore in Hyderabad Data Centre

IT and Industries Minister KT Rama Rao announced that Microsoft would be investing Rs 15,000 crore over the next 15 years in Hyderabad to set up its largest Data Centre in the country.

Making the announcement in the presence of Union Minister of State for IT, Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Principal Secretary for ITE&C Jayesh Ranjan, Microsoft Executive Vice-President Jean-Phillippe Courtois and Microsoft India President Anant Maheshwari, Mr Rao also encouraged Microsoft to collaborate

with the State government for implementation of 'Mana Ooru Mana Badi' programme as well as in the project to create 'State's digital health profile.' He has pointed out how Microsoft and the government were already working in key sectors like health, education, agriculture and transportation, and have already entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to reinforce government's capabilities for delivering citizens' services, which was in line with the state's 2nd ICT

Policy.

He reminded that the India Development Centre of Microsoft at Gachibowli in 2018 was its largest campus outside the US and noted that the number of employees at Microsoft's three campuses in Hyderabad has gone up from 3,000 in 2014 to 9,000. He also disclosed that Microsoft has contributed \$1 million during the pandemic for Covid relief and other activities as part of its corporate social responsibility. ■

Indian Government looks to advance CEPA with Bangladesh

Indian government wanted to move forward with a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with Bangladesh and called for greater cooperation between the countries in areas such as defence and pharmaceuticals production. In FY21, trade with Bangladesh accounted for about 3.3 per cent of exports at \$9.7 billion and 0.3 per cent of imports at \$1.3 billion.

"We need to give more impetus to joint production of defence equipment. The time has come to take it to the next level," Mr Piyush Goyal, Commerce & Industry Minister said at a virtual India-Bangladesh

stakeholder's meet. In 2019, India had announced a \$500 million line of credit to Bangladesh for defence related procurement.

"We look to advance a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with Bangladesh in the days to come," Goyal said. India is currently in the process of negotiating free trade agreements with the UK, EU, Australia, Canada and Israel and has recently concluded an FTA with the UAE. He added the two countries should look at a joint development program for vaccines and other

medicines and become the "pharmacy of the world." He suggested increased cooperation in defence and pharmaceuticals production as two of four focus areas to strengthen economic ties between the two countries. The Minister also suggested building uninterrupted resilient supply chains and exploring potential areas of investments like textile, jute products, leather and footwear as two other focus areas. He added the total of \$8 billion extended to Bangladesh, through three lines of credit, was the largest concessional credit given by India to any single country. ■

DELHI-BORN NISHANT BATRA SETTING UP FIRST 4G NETWORK ON MOON FOR NASA



If records are anything to go by, this one is surely special as it culminates in setting up of the first 4G network on the moon, and establishing the first extraterrestrial cellular mobility that could one day be extended further to connect future robotic and human missions in space.

Nishant Batra, Delhi born, now based in Espoo (Finland), is the global head of strategy and technology at the Euro 22-billion Nokia, with responsibility for also leading the

technology architecture and research at Bell Labs.

NASA, which is eyeing a human landing on the moon by 2024 as a follow-up to the historic 1969 moon-landing mission led by Neil Armstrong, wants to use the Nokia-established network to help provide critical communications capabilities for tasks astronauts will need to carry out, like remote control of lunar rovers, real-time navigation and high-definition video streaming.

The idea of a cellular network is integral to the Artemis plan which looks at conducting long-term work in space and carry out tasks that support life away from Earth.

Batra — whose teams are also engaged in doing cutting-edge

research works in the area of 6G technologies — says that the lunar network may be a reality during this year itself. “The aim is to get this done over the coming months... (But) since it is a NASA project, I can't give you the exact date of launch. But it's a matter of just a few months, not years.”

Regarding the materials, Batra says that while the standard electronics are the same as those used on the earth, the construction of the base station is different. And while the lunar mission is the immediate challenge, Batra's teams are also working on new-age technologies, including those related to 6G and the immersive and highly-responsive virtual digital world, commonly referred to as Metaverse. ■

SINGAPORE MUSEUM REVISES display of A COLLECTION of Sikh ART



Singapore's Sikh community and the Asian Civilizations Museum (ACM) have unveiled a refreshed display of Sikh art, representative of the people originating from pre-partitioned India and stories of their faith. The display includes a 19th Century painting of the ninth Sikh Guru Teg Bahadur, whose 400th birth anniversary was

celebrated last year, reported the Friday weekly *Tabla!* Visitors at the ACM will also be enchanted by a silver ornament which was used to hang over Guru Granth Sahib - the Sikh holy scripture - as well as a magnificent quoit (Chakkar in Punjabi), a Sikh weapon that was used only for ceremonies.

The permanent showcase is a result of the ACM's collaboration since 2018 with the Sikh community of about 13,000 here. The displays were unveiled last Tuesday. This latest collaboration between ACM and diverse multi-cultural and multi-ethnic communities is testament of the Sikh community's significance in the larger

social fabric of Singapore, according to the tabloid reporting on developments in the Indian communities in Singapore. Meanwhile, Minister of Culture, Community and Youth Edwin Tong attended the launch of the 24-episode docu-series "Allegory, A Tapestry of Guru Nanak's Travels" by Singaporean film directors Amardeep Singh and Vininder Kaur.

The docu-series chronicles the vast expanse of the places visited by Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru and founder of the religion, during his lifetime over 550 years ago. It includes sites in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka and Tibet. ■

INDIAN ECONOMIST JAYATI GHOSH NAMED BY UN TO HIGH-LEVEL ADVISORY BOARD ON MULTILATERALISM



Indian development economist Jayati Ghosh has been appointed by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to a new high-level advisory board on effective multilateralism. Ghosh, 66, is a Professor at the University of

Massachusetts Amherst. She was previously professor of economics and chairperson of the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University. She is also a member of the UN's high-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs.

UN chief Guterres announced the establishment of the Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism to be co-chaired by former Liberian president and Nobel Laureate Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and former Swedish prime minister Stefan Lofven.

Ghosh has been named to the 12-member board, which will be supported in its work by the Centre for Policy Research of the United Nations University in close coordination with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

In January 2021, Ghosh was appointed by Guterres, along with 19 other thinkers and personalities from around the world, to a high-level advisory board to provide recommendations for the UN Secretary-General to respond to current and future socio-economic challenges in the post-Covid world. ■

PHAGWAH 2022 IN GUYANA – HOLI FESTIVAL IN GUYANA IN CARIBBEAN

Holi or Phagwa is known as the Festival of Colors and is one of India's and Guyana's grandest and most popular celebrations. This colorful festival is celebrated in many cities and rural areas throughout India, so there are plenty of opportunities for fun and excitement. Over the years, Holi has become an important festival in many regions wherever Indian Diaspora were either taken as indentured labourers during colonial era, or where they emigrated on their own and are now present in large numbers such as in South America, North America, Africa, Europe, Latin America, and parts of Asia such as Fiji and Mauritius. Holi, also called Vasant Utsav, falls on the Pratipada during the dark half (Krishna Paksha) of the Chaitra Month as per Hindu calendar. Holi 2022 was celebrated on March 18th and Holika Dahan on the 17th. The Holi festival traditionally



celebrates the victory of good over evil. It is associated with many legends, including the story of Holika. It celebrates the destruction of Holika—the sister of Hiranyakashipu, both with gifted boons. The bonfire signifies the fire in which Holika (Hiranyakashipu's sister) was burnt while trying to eliminate Prahlad. This celebration also warns about the misuse of power, belief in the Lord, having faith and trust.

Phagwah is the famous Holi Festival in Guyana. In 2022, Phagwah was observed on March 17 and March 18 in Guyana in Caribbean. The

Phagwah celebrations in Guyana are observed mainly under the guidance of Guyana Hindu Dharmic Sabha. Numerous activities are organized during the period. Rama Krishna Dharmic Sabha Mandir in Barr Street Kitty, Georgetown, hosts annual evening of Holi melodies – Holi Sangam (a week earlier).

Annual Phagwah Mela and Bazaar is held a week earlier before the Phagwah day. Chowtaal Sammelan, an initiative of the Guyana Hindu Dharmic Sabha, is also being held in the Sabha's Praants countrywide. Chowtaal gols or groups from Mandirs in each region converge at the various venues to share in spirited singing reflective of the festival. There will also be beautiful Phagwah melodies and pulsating tassa drumming. ■

बालेश्वर अग्रवाल विशेषांक एवं प्रवासी लेखकों की पुस्तकों का लोकार्पण



बालेश्वर अग्रवाल जन्म शताब्दी समारोह के अवसर पर अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद और केन्द्रीय हिन्दी संस्थान, शिक्षा मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार के संयुक्त तत्वावधान में भारत की विदेश एवं संस्कृति राज्यमंत्री श्रीमती मीनाश्री लेखी ने संस्थान की त्रैमासिक पत्रिका प्रवासी जगत का बालेश्वर अग्रवाल विशेषांक एवं प्रवासी हिन्दी साहित्यकार सत्येंद्र श्रीवास्तव की समग्र कविताएं—संपादक पद्मेश गुप्त (लंदन, यूके), कोरोना चिल्ला (कहानी संग्रह) दिव्या माथुर (लंदन, यूके), सपनों का आकाश (पद्य संकलन), संभावनाओं की (धरती गद्य संकलन)—संपादक : डॉ. शैलजा सक्सेना और सुमन कुमार घई (कैनेडा) न्यूजीलैंड की हिन्दी यात्रा, प्रशांत की लोक कथाएं—रोहित कुमार 'हैप्पी' (न्यूजीलैंड), यथार्थ की परछाई (कहानी संग्रह)—कहानीकार : वीणा सिन्हा (नेपाल) नामक पुस्तकों का लोकार्पण करते हुए कहा कि यह प्रसन्नता का विषय है कि केन्द्रीय हिन्दी संस्थान ने स्व. बालेश्वर अग्रवाल की स्मृतियों को संसार भर के प्रवासी भारतीयों के बीच जीवित रखने के लिए अपनी पत्रिका का विशेषांक निकाला है। बालेश्वर जी भारतीय संस्कृति और भाषाओं के उत्थान के लिए आजीवन काम करते रहे। उन्होंने प्रवासी भारतीयों और भारत के बीच स्नेह तथा सद्भाव बढ़ाने के लिये अनथक प्रयास किये। बालेश्वर जी गिरमिटिया देशों में रहने वाले भारतवंशियों के लिए भी जीवनपर्यंत काम करते रहे। हिन्दुस्थान समाचार के प्रबंध निदेशक प्रदान सम्पादक के रूप में उन्होंने भारत की भाषायी पत्राकारिता को एक नई ऊंचाई प्रदान किया। बनारस हिन्दू विश्वविद्यालय से इंजीनियरिंग की डिग्री प्राप्त करने में उन्होंने जो ज्ञान अर्जित किया था उसी के फलस्वरूप हिन्दुस्थान समाचार के लिए सर्वप्रथम टेलीप्रिंटर बनवाई।

आज जिन हिन्दी साहित्यकारों की पुस्तकों का लोकार्पण हुआ है उन्हें मैं हार्दिक बधाई देती हूँ क्योंकि भारत से बहुत दूर रहकर भी उन्होंने हिन्दी भाषा और भारतीय संस्कृति को न सिर्फ सुरक्षित रखा है बल्कि उसको विकसित भी किया है।

इस अवसर पर हिन्दी शिक्षण मंडल के उपाध्यक्ष श्री अनिल जोशी ने कहा कि हिन्दी शिक्षण के प्रचार-प्रसार के लिए प्रसि स्वतंत्रता सेनानी मोटूरी सत्यनारायण जी ने केन्द्रीय हिन्दी संस्थान की स्थापना की थी। लेकिन अब यह संस्था विदेशों में भी हिन्दी के प्रचार-प्रसार के लिए प्रयास कर रही है। विदेशों में हिन्दी प्रकाशन की सुविधा उपलब्ध नहीं है। इसे ध्यान में रखते हुए केन्द्रीय हिन्दी संस्थान ने इस दिशा में एक महत्वपूर्ण कदम उठाते हुए गत वर्ष पुस्तक प्रकाशन सहयोग योजना प्रारंभ की। आज का यह समारोह उसी का परिणाम है। श्री जोशी ने कहा कि फीजी में अगला विश्व हिन्दी सम्मेलन आयोजित करने का प्रस्ताव है जैसा कि हम सभी जानते हैं कि फीजी एक ऐसा देश है जहां हिन्दी को आधिकारिक भाषा के रूप में स्वीकृति मिली है। हम मंत्री जी से अनुरोध करते हैं कि विश्व हिन्दी सम्मेलन अत्यंत गरिमापूर्वक आयोजित किया जाए और उसमें हम लोग हर संभव सहयोग देने के लिए तत्पर हैं।

इस अवसर पर स्व. बालेश्वर अग्रवाल के शताब्दी समारोह की रूपरेखा प्रस्तुत करते हुए अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद के मानद निदेशक नारायण कुमार ने कहा कि बालेश्वर अग्रवाल जी ने हिन्दुस्थान समाचार के प्रबंध निदेशक और प्रधान सम्पादक के रूप में अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद के महासचिव के रूप में हिन्दी भाषा और भारतीय संस्कृति को विराट एवं

विस्तृत आयाम प्रदान किया। इस कार्य में उन्होंने राजनीतिक दलों या विचारों की संकीर्ण मान्यताओं को त्याग कर



सभी वर्गों और बुद्धिजीवियों का सहयोग प्राप्त करने का प्रयास किया। वे भारत के पड़ोसी एवं गिरमिटिया देशों के साथ राजनयिक एवं सांस्कृतिक संबंधों को मजबूत बनाने के लिए निरंतर प्रयत्नशील रहे।

अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद के महासचिव श्री श्याम परांडे ने बालेश्वर अग्रवाल की पत्रकारिता और प्रवासी भारतीयों के लिए किये गये कार्यों का उल्लेख करते हुए कहा कि जब सरकार और समाज द्वारा विदेश गये अपने भारतीय लोगों को परदेसी समझा जाने लगा था तो बालेश्वर जी ने उनका संबंध भारत से जोड़ने का अभियान प्रारम्भ किया और विदेशों में भारतीय संस्कृति धर्म, भाषा एवं जीवन पद्धति के प्रचार-प्रसार के लिए वे अनवरत कार्य करते रहे।

कार्यक्रम की अध्यक्षता कर रहे अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद अध्यक्ष और पूर्व राजदूत वीरेंद्र गुप्ता ने कहा कि भारतीय डायस्पोरा के लिए बालेश्वर जी ने अदभुत कार्य किया है। उन्होंने बालेश्वर जी को याद करते हुए कहा कि बालेश्वर जी कहा करते थे कि अगर भारत को जिंदा रखना है तो भारतीय संस्कृति और भारतीय भाषाओं को जिंदा रखना होगा। यही वजह है कि वह अपने हर काम में हिन्दी और भारतीय संस्कृति को बड़ा महत्व देते थे। प्रवासी भारतीयों को एकसूत्र में जोड़ने में उन्होंने महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई।

उनके कार्यों को हम निरंतर आगे बढ़ा रहे हैं और भविष्य में भी बढ़ाते रहेंगे सच पूछिए

तो यही बालेश्वर अग्रवाल के प्रति हमारी सच्ची श्रदांजलि होगी।

नेपाल के त्रिभुवन विश्व विद्यालय में हिन्दी विभागाध्यक्ष प्रो. वीणा सिन्हा ने विदेश राज्यमंत्री द्वारा अपनी पुस्तक 'यथार्थ की परछाई' के लोकार्पण के लिए उनके प्रति आभार प्रकट करते हुए कहा कि मैं भारत की बेटी और नेपाल की बहू हूँ। इसलिए दोनों देशों के बीच सामाजिक एवं

सांस्कृतिक संबंधों को सुदृढ़ बनाने के लिए निरंतर प्रयत्नशील हूँ। उन्होंने नेपाल में हिन्दी के अध्ययन-अध्यापन के प्रति वहां की सरकार की उदासीनता पर दुख प्रकट करते हुए कहा कि नेपाली जनसमुदाय हिन्दी से प्रेम करती है और हिन्दी का प्रयोग करती है। भारत सरकार अगर सहयोग दे तो वहां हम हिन्दी को और अधिक सम्मान दिला सकते हैं।

इस कार्यक्रम का कुशल संचालन करते हुए अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद के सचिव प्रो. गोपाल अरोड़ा ने बालेश्वर अग्रवाल के जीवन और विचार पर प्रकाश डालते हुए कहा कि वे कालजयी व्यक्ति थे और उन्होंने प्रवासी भारतीयों के बीच भारत की महिमा और गरिमा बढ़ाने के लिए आजीवन समर्पण भाव से काम किया। गिरमिटिया संसार उन्हें भारत का सांस्कृतिक राजदूत मानता था।

प्रवासी महाकवि गुलाब खंडेलवाल की जयंती मनाई गई



हिन्दी साहित्य के छायावादी युग के सुप्रसिद्ध महाकवि और अमेरिका के वरिष्ठ साहित्यकार स्वर्गीय महाकवि गुलाब खंडेलवाल साहित्यवाचस्पति का 98 वाँ जन्म

दिन 26 फरवरी 2022 को मनाया गया।

इसका आयोजन उनके परिवारजन ने क्लीवलैंड, अमेरिका में किया। इसका सीधा प्रसारण यूट्यूब पर किया गया, जिसमें अमेरिका और भारत के अनेक साहित्यकार जुड़े रहे।

महाकवि गुलाब खंडेलवाल ने अनेक महाकाव्य, खंडकाव्य, गीत, दोहा और गजल संग्रह प्रकाशित हो चुके हैं। उनके साहित्य पर सात पीएच. डी हो चुकी हैं। वे अमेरिका के सुविख्यात साहित्यकार थे।

इस अवसर पर उनके गीतों, गजलों और भक्ति-गीतों को संगीतबद्ध किया गया और अनेक गायक-गायिकाओं ने मधुर स्वर में प्रस्तुत किया। उनके परिवार के सदस्यों ने भी उनकी रचनाओं का सस्वर पाठ किया। श्री विश्वनाथ नारायण और सुश्री विभा के गीतों ने सबका मन मोह लिया। महाकवि गुलाब खंडेलवाल जी की पुत्रवधू डॉ. शोभा खंडेलवाल ने समारोह का कुशल संचालन किया।

मेडिकल की पढ़ाई भारतीय भाषाओं में कराने पर विचार

इंजीनियरिंग की पढ़ाई क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं में शुरू किए जाने के बाद अब मेडिकल की पढ़ाई भी अंग्रेजी के साथ-साथ क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं में शुरू करने पर विचार किया जा रहा है। राष्ट्रीय चिकित्सा आयोग (एनएमसी) की हाल में हुई बैठक में इस पर चर्चा हुई है। इस बैठक में तैयार चर्चा का मसौदा विभिन्न पक्षों की राय जानने के लिए जारी किया गया है।

एनएमसी के गठन से पहले जब एमसीआई अस्तित्व में थी, तब उसने हिंदी में मेडिकल

कोर्स शुरू करने के अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी विश्वविद्यालय के प्रस्ताव को खारिज कर दिया था। मगर, अब इस मुद्दे पर नए सिरे से बदले स्वरूप में कवायद शुरू होती दिखाई दे रही है।

सूत्रों के अनुसार, चर्चा के मसौदे में कहा गया है कि चिकित्सा शिक्षा को दो भाषाओं में शुरू करने का नया प्रस्ताव बैठक में आया है। इसका मतलब यह है कि अंग्रेजी के साथ-साथ एक स्थानीय भाषा में भी मेडिकल की पढ़ाई शुरू की जाए। यह देश

के अलग-अलग हिस्सों में अलग-अलग हो सकती है। मसलन, ओडिशा में अंग्रेजी के साथ उड़िया, उत्तर प्रदेश में अंग्रेजी के साथ हिंदी और तमिलनाडु में अंग्रेजी के साथ तमिल भाषा हो सकती है। इससे राज्य स्तर पर छात्रों को चिकित्सा शिक्षा के अध्ययन में सुविधा होगी, क्योंकि यह देखा गया है कि ग्रामीण परिवेश से आने वाले छात्रों को शुरुआती दौर में चिकित्सा शिक्षा की पूर्णतः अंग्रेजी में पढ़ाई करने में कठिनाई आती है। इस कदम से क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं को भी प्रोत्साहन मिलेगा।

अबू धाबी में कोर्ट की तीसरी आधिकारिक भाषा बनी हिंदी

हिंदी को लेकर अबू धाबी ने ऐतिहासिक फैसला किया है। उसने हिंदी को अरबी और अंग्रेजी के बाद अपनी अदालतों में तीसरी आधिकारिक भाषा के रूप में शामिल किया है। न्याय तक पहुंच बढ़ाने के मकसद से यह अहम फैसला किया गया है।

अबू धाबी न्याय विभाग (एडीजेडी) ने कहा कि उसने श्रम से जुड़े मामलों में कोर्ट की कार्यवाहियों के लिए अरबी और अंग्रेजी के साथ हिंदी भाषा को भी शामिल कर लिया है। इससे अदालतों के समक्ष दावों के बयान के लिए एक से अधिक भाषा का विकल्प मिल सकेगा। इसका मकसद हिंदी भाषी लोगों को मुकदमों की प्रक्रिया, उनके अधिकारों और कर्तव्यों के बारे में सीखने में मदद करना है। साथ ही एडीजेडी की वेबसाइट के जरिए पंजीयन प्रक्रिया को भी आसान बनाने में मदद मिलेगी। आधिकारिक आंकड़ों के मुताबिक, संयुक्त अरब अमीरात की कुल आबादी में करीब दो तिहाई विदेश प्रवासी हैं। संयुक्त अरब अमीरात में भारतीय लोगों की आबादी 26 लाख है जो देश की कुल आबादी का 30 फीसदी है और यह देश का सबसे बड़ा प्रवासी समुदाय है। एडीजेडी के अवर सचिव युसुफ सईद अल अब्री ने कहा कि इसका मकसद न्यायिक सेवाओं को बढ़ावा देना है।

एकांतवास में जिंदगी नामक पुस्तक का लोकार्पण



वरिष्ठ साहित्यकार श्री अशोक लव के लघुकथा संग्रह एकांतवास में जिंदगी का लोकार्पण अंतर्राष्ट्रीय हिंदी समिति, अमेरिका की वरिष्ठ ट्रस्ट, प्रबंध संपादक और पूर्व अध्यक्ष श्रीमती सुशीला मोहनका ने क्लीवलैंड (ओहायो, अमेरिका) में किया। इस अवसर पर श्री अशोक लव के उपन्यास शिखरों से आगे के भोजपुरी और डोगरी की अनुवादित कृतियों शिखरन से आगे तथा शिखरें शा अगुँ का लोकार्पण डॉ. शोभा खंडेलवाल (अध्यक्ष हिंदी साहित्य समिति, नार्थ ईस्ट ओहायो, अमेरिका) तथा डॉ. आनंद खंडेलवाल ने किया।

इस अवसर पर श्री अशोक लव ने संग्रह की लघुकथाओं के विषय में बताया कि ये

2020-21 में लिखी गई हैं। उस समय पूरा विश्व कोविड से ग्रस्त और त्रस्त था। भारत में महीनों तक लॉकडाउन रहे। उस काल-खंड में लोगों की मानसिकता, मृत्यु का भय, व्यवस्था की अव्यवस्था और परिचितों-संबंधियों के निधन आदि स्थितियों को विभिन्न पात्रों के माध्यम से चित्रित किया है।

डॉ.शोभा और डॉ. आनंद खंडेलवाल ओहायो के सुपरिचित चिकित्सक हैं। डॉ. शोभा खंडेलवाल ने कहा कि हमने उन स्थितियों में कार्य किया है। साहित्यकार उन स्थितियों को अपने साहित्य में उतार देता है। डॉ. आनंद खंडेलवाल ने कहा कि श्री अशोक लव ने इन लघुकथाओं के माध्यम से ऐतिहासिक कार्य किया है क्योंकि हममें से किसी ने ऐसी स्थितियों का सामना नहीं किया था। साहित्य हमारा इतिहास बन जाता है।

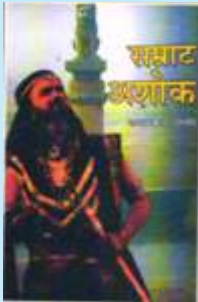
श्रीमती सुशीला मोहनका ने कहा कि श्री अशोक लव अंतर्राष्ट्रीय हिंदी समिति के दिल्ली शाखा के अध्यक्ष हैं। मैंने अपनी भारत यात्रा के मध्य उनकी साहित्यिक सक्रियता को निकट से देखा है। उनके लघुकथा-संग्रह का लोकार्पण करते हुए

हमें सुखद लग रहा है। अपनी अमेरिका यात्रा में वे भारत से एकांतवास में जिंदगी संग लेकर आए और मुझे लोकार्पण का अवसर प्रदान किया, यह मेरा सौभाग्य है। उन्होंने जो आदर दिया है, मैं उससे अभिभूत हूँ। श्री अशोक लव जी को बधाई!

श्री अशोक लव ने शिखरों से आगे उपन्यास के अनुवादकों के विषय में बताया कि श्री यशपाल निर्मल हिंदी-डोगरी के वरिष्ठ साहित्यकार हैं। उन्होंने इसका डोगरी में अनुवाद शिखरें शा अगुँ किया है। श्री केशव मोहन पांडेय हिंदी और भोजपुरी के सुप्रसिद्ध साहित्यकार हैं। उन्होंने इसका भोजपुरी में अनुवाद शिखरन से आगे किया है। दोनों स्वयं श्रेष्ठ साहित्यकार हैं। इन कृतियों को पढ़ते समय लगता है कि ये मूल रचनाएँ हैं। डॉ. शोभा खंडेलवाल ने शिखरन से आगे के कुछ अंशों का पाठ भी किया।

श्रीमती नरेशबाला लव ने डॉ.शोभा खंडेलवाल को श्री अशोक लव द्वारा लिखित पुस्तक द श्रीमद्भगवद गीता जीवन दिशा भेंट की। श्रीमती पारुल और पुनीत सब्बरवाल ने धन्यवाद ज्ञापन किया।

हिन्दी के सुप्रसिद्ध नाटककार पद्मश्री दया प्रकाश सिन्हा साहित्य अकादमी पुरस्कार से सम्मानित



अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद के वरिष्ठ आजीवन सदस्य तथा हिन्दी के सुप्रसिद्ध नाटककार पद्मश्री दया प्रकाश सिन्हा को 11 मार्च, 2022 को कमान्नी सभागार में साहित्य अकादमी के अध्यक्ष श्री चंद्रशेखर



उल्लेखनीय सेवा प्रदान की है। अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद के सांस्कृतिक कार्य की स्थायी समिति के अध्यक्ष के रूप में भी उनकी भूमिका महत्वपूर्ण रही है।

अशोक, हास्य एकांकी, इतिहास, मन के भंवर, मेरे भाई मेरे दोस्त विशेष रूप से उल्लेखनीय है। श्री सिन्हा ने अनेक पुरस्कार और सम्मान प्राप्त किए हैं, जिनमें कुछ प्रमुख हैं-संगीत नाटक अकादमी पुरस्कार, लोहिया साहित्य सम्मान, सरदार वल्लभ भाई पटेल पुरस्कार आदि। उनको भारत सरकार ने पद्मश्री से सम्मानित किया है।

कंबार ने उनके पुस्तक कालजयी हिन्दी नाटक 'सम्राट अशोक के लिए' साहित्य अकादमी पुरस्कार-2021 से सम्मानित किया। इस समारोह के मुख्य अतिथि थे प्रसिद्ध मराठी लेखक, कवि एवं आलोचक श्री भालचंद्र नेमाडे। श्री दया प्रकाश सिन्हा ने भारतीय भाषा एवं संस्कृति के उत्थान के लिए अनेक महत्वपूर्ण कार्य किए हैं। भारतीय सांस्कृतिक केन्द्र फिजी के निदेशक, दिल्ली साहित्य कला परिषद के निदेशक तथा उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार में सचिव संस्कृति (के रूप में) उन्होंने

दया प्रकाश सिन्हा लब्धप्रतिष्ठ, नाटककार, लेखक और निर्देशक हैं। उनका जन्म 02 मई, 1935 को उत्तर प्रदेश के एटा जिले के कासगंज में हुआ। दया प्रकाश सिन्हा ने इलाहाबाद विश्वविद्यालय से प्राचीन भारतीय इतिहास में स्नातकोत्तर उपाधि प्राप्त की। वे 1952 में प्रांतीय सिविल सेवा में शामिल हुए तथा 1993 में भारतीय प्रशासनिक सेवा अधिकारी के पद से सेवानिवृत्त हुए। उनकी प्रकाशित कृतियों में-सादर, आपका, दुश्मन, सीढ़ियां, सम्राट

सम्राट अशोक दया प्रकाश सिन्हा कृत उत्कृष्ट एवं शानदार नाटक है। यह नाटक समकालीनता, दर्शन, प्रकथनीय इतिहास तथा लोक अनुभवों का मिश्रण कुशलता से प्रस्तुत करता है, तथा मंचन की दृष्टि से पूर्ण अनुकूल है। अपने कथानक, संरचना एवं भविष्य वचनीयता के संदर्भ में, नाटक इतिहास और समकालीनता की उत्कृष्ट समझ तथा नाटककार की मानवीय विश्वदृष्टि को स्थापित करता है। सम्राट अशोक कृति हिंदी में लिखित भारतीय नाटक को महत्वपूर्ण योगदान मानी गई है।



भारतीय स्वाधीनता के अमृत महोत्सव के अवसर पर विशेष

सुभद्रा कुमारी चौहान (16 अगस्त 1904-15 फरवरी 1948) हिन्दी की सुप्रसिद्ध कवयित्री और लेखिका थीं। झाँसी की रानी (कविता) उनकी प्रसिद्ध कविता है। वे राष्ट्रीय चेतना की एक सजग कवयित्री रही हैं। स्वाधीनता संग्राम में अनेक बार जेल यातनाएँ सहने के पश्चात अपनी अनुभूतियों को कहानी में भी व्यक्त किया। उनका जन्म नागपंचमी के दिन इलाहाबाद के निकट निहालपुर नामक गांव में हुआ था। उनकी रचनाएँ राष्ट्रियता की भावना से परिपूर्ण हैं। 1921 में गांधी जी के असहयोग आंदोलन में भाग लेने वाली वह प्रथम महिला थीं। वे दो बार जेल भी गई थीं। वे रचनाकार होने के साथ-साथ स्वाधीनता संग्राम की सेनानी भी थीं। स्वाधीनता आंदोलन में उनके कविता के जरिए नेतृत्व को भी रेखांकित करती है। भारतीय डाकतार विभाग ने 6 अगस्त 1976 को सुभद्रा कुमारी चौहान के सम्मान में 25 पैसे का एक डाक-टिकट जारी किया है।

भारतीय तटरक्षक सेना ने 28 अप्रैल 2006 को सुभद्राकुमारी चौहान की राष्ट्र प्रेम की भावना को सम्मानित करने के लिए नए नियुक्त एक तटरक्षक जहाज़ को सुभद्रा कुमारी चौहान का नाम दिया है।

वीरों का कैसा हो वसंत

आ रही हिमालय से पुकार
है उदधि गरजता बार बार
प्राची पश्चिम भू नभ अपार
सब पूछ रहें हैं दिग-दिगन्त
वीरों का कैसा हो वसंत

फूली सरसों ने दिया रंग
मधु लेकर आ पहुंचा अंग
वधु वसुधा पुलकित अंग अंग
है वीर देश में किन्तु कंत
वीरों का कैसा हो वसंत

भर रही कोकिला इधर तान
मारु बाजे पर उधर गान
है रंग और रण का विधान
मिलने को आए आदि अंत
वीरों का कैसा हो वसंत



भूषण अथवा कवि चंद नहीं
बिजली भर दे वह छन्द नहीं
है कलम बंधी स्वच्छंद नहीं
फिर हमें बताए कौन हन्त
वीरों का कैसा हो वसंत

गलबाहें हों या कृपाण
चलचितवन हो या धनुषबाण
हो रसविलास या दलितत्राणय
अब यही समस्या है दुरंत
वीरों का कैसा हो वसंत

कह दे अतीत अब मौन त्याग
लंके तुझमें क्यों लगी आग
ऐ कुरुक्षेत्र अब जाग जाग
बतला अपने अनुभव अनंत
वीरों का कैसा हो वसंत

हल्दीघाटी के शिला खण्ड
ऐ दुर्ग सिंहगढ़ के प्रचंड
राणा ताना का कर घमंडय
दो जगा आज स्मृतियां ज्वलंत
वीरों का कैसा हो वसंत