

# ANTAR RASHTRIYA SAHAYOG PARISHAD BULLETIN

Monthly Newsletter of Indian Council for International Co-operation

Vol. 34 No. 11

NOVEMBER, 2021

(16 Pages including Cover)

श्री बालेश्वर अग्रवाल जन्मशताब्दी के अवसर पर

## Shri Baleshwar Agrawal and Indian Diaspora

*O.P. Goel*

*Diplomat & Former Secretary - ARSP*

My first meeting with Baleshwarji was not in India but in Mauritius when I was posted there as a First Secretary in the Indian High Commission from 1984 to 1987. Baleshwarji was a frequent visitor to Mauritius and he was not only fully familiar with the political and social situation in Mauritius but he also knew almost everyone who mattered there. During the visit of President Zail Singh to Mauritius in October 1984, Baleshwarji brought to Mauritius a large non-official goodwill delegation of prominent Indians drawn from different walks of life. This delegation was warmly received by the local authorities and socio-cultural organizations. The Indian High Commission, in spite of preoccupations with the presidential visit, attached liaison officers with the delegation for logistic assistance.

Whenever Baleshwarji visited Mauritius, he invariably called on the Indian High Commissioner to share his discussions with important people in govt. and private circles. Most of the times, I met him along with High Commissioner Prem Singh and his successor Shri K.K. Bhargava. I was immensely impressed with his analytical skill and keen observation. His paramount interest always used to be to impress upon all concerned the need of India paying special attention to the requirements and expectations of the people and Govt. of Mauritius from India. He strongly felt that by doing so we should be safeguarding and promoting the interests of the People of Indian



Origin (PIOs) who constituted majority of the population of Mauritius and played a major role in formation of governments of the country, most of which have been headed by persons of Indian origin. Many times, based on his inputs, the Indian High Commission used to convey and recommend his suggestions to the Ministry of External Affairs of the Govt. of India and many of these were favourably responded. Thus, even without holding any official position, Baleshwarji could fulfill his objective of connecting India with PIOs more and more. Later on I learnt that Baleshwarji was undertaking similar initiatives with other countries such as Fiji, Suriname, Trinidad and Guyana where PIOs were settled in large numbers.

Baleshwarji had an illustrious career of over 60 years of active selfless social service during which, inter alia, he played a pioneering role in

promoting Hindi news service in India, he was founding member of Agroha Vikas Trust and played an active role in various socio-cultural organizations. However, after 1978 when he founded the Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP), his major pre-occupation was to achieve greater connectivity of the Indian Diaspora with their motherland.

Over 20 million strong Indian Diaspora is spread over 110 countries all over the world. We usually classify them in two categories, viz. PIOs and NRIs. After abolition of slavery in 1833-34, a need arose in the colonies of Britain for cheap migrant labour. Due to economic compulsions at home and a hope for better future abroad, a large number of workers migrated from India to work in sugar plantations and other fields from around 1850 onwards to Fiji, Mauritius and Trinidad and Tobago. Earlier French authorities had also recruited significant number of Indian workers from areas under their occupation in India for migrating them to the islands under their possession such as Reunion and Guadeloupe. Dutch had taken Indian workers to Suriname. The percentage of Indian Diaspora to the local population in these areas is quite high. It is around 50% in Fiji, 70% in Mauritius, 40% in Trinidad and Tobago, 30% in Reunion and 35% in Suriname. Migration of Indian workers, traders and merchants, under similar circumstances, took place to South Africa and other British-occupied

countries of Africa during the same period. By dint of their hard work and sincerity to the countries of their adoption, the people of Indian origin achieved prominent economic status and political eminence but lost their parental connections with India. These people come in the category of PIOs.

There was another stream of Indian immigrants from 2nd half of 20th century onwards. Qualified professionals and skilled people started migrating to developed countries in Europe and America. Their proficiency in English language naturally made them more comfortable and desirable in English-speaking countries. In due course of time, they established them well in the countries of their adoption and

today their average per capita income is higher than that of the local people. Another stream of Indian migrants was of skilled and semi-skilled workers to West Asian and Gulf countries as a massive need for workers arose in these countries to undertake commercial and construction activities after the oil boom of 1970s. They are a major source of foreign exchange remittances to India. The Indian origin people of these two categories are conveniently known as NRIs and most of them are either Indian nationals or are qualified to receive Overseas Indian Citizenship status which is being liberally granted by the Indian Govt. now.

For a long time, India was reluctant in engaging actively with the Indian Diaspora mainly for two reasons: firstly we were rather too involved in our own domestic issues; secondly it was felt that by becoming too open in our engagements with the overseas Indians, we might hamper the process of their assimilation in the countries of their adoption. However, in late 1970s India's interest in its children settled abroad increased. In 1977, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the then Minister of External Affairs, organized a seminar at the India International Centre in New Delhi to consider the prevailing status and problems of the Indian communities living overseas. In June 1977, Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee had gone to London to attend Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting as Foreign Minister of India along with Shri Morarji Desai, the then Prime Minister. In an emotional speech at the Albert Hall in London, the opening sentence of his speech made a remarkable impact. He said in Hindi. *भारत माता की कोख से जन्मे, किंतु भारत माता की गोद से हजारों मील दूर अपने अपने भाग्य को आजमाने के लिए आये हुए बहनों और भाइयों,* "The moment he uttered these words, there was a thunderous applause from the crowd. Since I was working in the Indian High Commission, I was present at that meeting. In my diplomatic career, I could never hear such applause for an Indian leader abroad.

In 1978, some eminent persons joined Baleshwarji to found the Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad with

Vasudhaiva Kutumbukam as its logo. The ARSP started working as an important pressure group to highlight the issues concerning the Indian Diaspora through seminars, publications and conferences. The issues of augmenting linkages of PIOs and NRIs with the countries of their origin, particularly the demands of dual nationality and voting rights for the Indians abroad started coming up more and more.

Having served for about eight years in Mauritius and Reunion Island, I had a great deal of interest in the Indian Diaspora. When I was Consul-General of India in Reunion, I wanted to invite Baleshwarji to visit Reunion but the visit could not materialize. On my retirement from the Indian Foreign Service, I called on Baleshwarji in early 1998. After a very warm meeting with him, I became a life member of the ARSP and have been an active member of the organization since then. With the passage of time, he made me a member of the Managing Committee, later Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee and subsequently Secretary of the ARSP. It was always a pleasure to work under his guidance and stewardship and with the team of volunteers prepared by him, whose common features were punctuality, discipline, dedication and selflessness. We all worked as members of a big family with Baleshwarji as head of the family.

Although since its inception in 1978, the ARSP crossed several milestones, I recall the following four major events in which all of us really worked hard:

(1) In Nov. 1998, an International Conference of Parliamentarians of Indian Origin was organized in New Delhi. The conference was an occasion for a very useful interaction among legislators of Indian origin and was a good success. In fact, as far as I know, this was the first conference of this kind held in India.

(2) Another international conference was held in Jan. 2000 to discuss the contribution made by the PIOs to the countries of their adoption. Prominent speakers from

## A.R.S.P. Bulletin

A NEWS & VIEWS MONTHLY  
Published Since 1987

### EDITOR

Keshav G. Parande  
(M): 98113 92777

### PRINTER

#### Avon Printers

D-6, Ranjit Nagar Comm. Complex,  
New Delhi-110008  
(M): 93123 05230  
E-mail: a1printers@gmail.com

### PUBLISHER

Keshav G. Parande  
Pravasi Bhawan  
50, Deendayal Upadhyay Marg,  
New Delhi-110002  
(M): 98113 92777

### CONTACT

Phone (O) : 011 - 2323 4432

### E-MAIL

arspindia@gmail.com

### WEBSITE

www.arspindia.org

### PRICE

Rs. 5/- per copy  
Rs. 500/- for Life



different countries participated in the discussions.

(3) The third international conference was the convention of Global Organisation of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) held in Jan. 2001. It was inaugurated by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the then Prime Minister of India and was attended by over 300 delegates from different countries.

(4) The fourth important event was the second conference of parliamentarians of Indian origin organized in Jan. 2003 and inaugurated by the then Vice-President of India, Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat. It was attended by 58 parliamentarians. One of the recommendations of this conference was that seats should be reserved for PIO representatives in the Indian Parliament.

Earlier another important thing had happened. The Government of India realized that it was necessary to study the status, characteristics, requirements and expectations from India of the overseas Indians and also to study their role in the economic, technological and social development of India. On 18.8.2000, the government set up a High Level Committee on Indian Diaspora. Baleswarji was appointed as one of the members of this committee. The other members were Dr. L.M. Singhvi (Chairman), Shri R.L. Bhatia (M.P.), Shri J.R. Hiremath (I.F.S. Retd.) and Shri J.C. Sharma (Additional Secretary in M.E.A. as member secretary). After a detailed study, the committee submitted its report on 19.12.2001 and several of its recommendations were accepted by the Govt. of India. Celebration of Pravasi Bhartiya Divas in January every year and giving away of Pravasi

Bhartiya Samman Awards were among the recommendations accepted by the government. Subsequently, the Govt. of India set up a separate Ministry for Indians Overseas. Thus, what was started by Baleswarji as a humble movement for the cause of Indian Diaspora became in due course of time a major concern of the Govt. of India. The government recognized the role of ARSP and allotted land for its own building. With Baleswarji's untiring efforts and support of well-wishers for the noble cause, a beautiful building at the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg rightfully known as Pravasi Bhawan is now the Headquarters of ARSP. The well deserved tribute to Baleswarji will be to make this building as a centre of activities concerning the Indian Diaspora. The team of energetic volunteers prepared by him will certainly achieve this objective. ■

## Diwali Night Jointly Hosted by 5 Girmitya Countries in India



Diwali, which is commonly known as the Festival of Lights signifies the victory of good over evil, of light over darkness and of knowledge over ignorance. Diwali is celebrated all over India marking the Return of Lord Rama after 14 years in exile and after having defeated the demon king Ravana. Today Diwali is celebrated in many parts of the world and the message of peace and of the triumph of good over evil resonates around the globe.

It was something extraordinary in India when 5 countries got together and jointly organized a Diwali night on the evening of 30 October 2021. Head of the missions of the 5 countries which included Fiji, Guyana, Mauritius, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago organized this event at the residence of the High Commissioner of the

Cooperative Republic of Guyana.

As part of the event, there were food and cultural displays, live songs and dance performances from the five countries. There was also a special act of staging a live Ram Leela performance which stunned the over 280 attendees. Everyone was astonished to find Indian culture and traditions alive and well in these countries despite the fact that the Girmityas had gone to these countries well over hundred forty years ago. Interestingly, all five nations enjoy Deepawali as a national holiday signifying the recognition and contribution of the



descendants of Girmityas in all the five countries.

All five heads of the missions addressed the audience about the event and also shed light on how significant this event is in their respective countries. They also

screened videos to demonstrate various cultural activities that happens in their respective countries during the time of this festival and offered Diwali greetings from their leaders and capitals.

The Chief Guest for the event, Honourable Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi, Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture inaugurated the event. Hon. Lekhi tweeted that she was delighted to attend the Deepawali event jointly organized by the 5 resident missions and further went to write that the event was a testimony that Indian festivals are celebrated with equal enthusiasm and devotion in many countries across the world.

Present at this event were the members of the diplomatic corps, government officials, civil society organizations, media agencies and friends of the 5 missions who were the hosts of this event.

Those who had attended the event gave an overwhelming response of this event as they not only enjoyed the entertainment part but also the food that were prepared by the 5 hosting diplomatic missions. ■

## REMEMBERING THE CULTURAL MEMORIES OF INDIAN INDENTURED LABOUR

Gathari Girmitya Research Foundation in Collaboration with Indian Council for International Cooperation (Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad) has successfully organized a cultural performance and discussion titled '*Remembering the Cultural Memories of Indian Indentured Labour*' on 31st October 2021 through online mode. This event 'Remembering the Cultural Memories of Indian Indentured Labour' has been organized to remember the cultural legacy of Indian Indentured labour and reviving the intangible cultural heritage of the Indian Immigrants. There was a special cultural performance by the Hindi Parishad Northern Branch Labasa, Fiji Islands on the *Birha, Bidesiya, Sohar and Aallah*.

There was a brief introduction and welcome address by Dr. Sushma Pandey, Research Associate, Tribal Research Institute Ranchi and one of the founding members of the Gathari Girmitya Research Foundation.

Dr. Neha Singh, Assistant Professor, Manipal University Jaipur, Member of Indian Ocean Committee, Indentured Labour Route Project and one of the Founding members of the Gathari Girmitya Research Foundation (GGRF) introduced her organization and its objective. She discussed that GGRF intends to promote research on the history of girmitya migration and their cultural expression. It endeavors to understand the cultural memory of migration through their living traditions. Gathari represents the cultural baggage of the girmitya community that talks about their tangible and intangible cultural heritage such as kabir poems, folk stories, folk drama, songs, rituals, culinary practices, rites of passage, and religious affiliation. She said her organization aim is to document their tangible and intangible cultural heritage that talks about the saga of migration, the memory of pain, recreation of homeland, oral tradition, and cultural identity. She further welcomed the dignitaries present.

Dr. Kamini Choudhary, independent researcher and member of GGRF formally introduced and invited the

esteemed guests and speakers to address the audience.

Amb. (Retd.) Shri Anup Mudgal, Chair, Diaspora Research and Resource Centre, spoke on the importance of remembering the roots of the Indian indentured labour diaspora and their achievements. He emphasized on 'if we will lose our language then we will lose our culture' and pointed the important fact way they have managed to preserve their cultural heritage and language in the diaspora. He stressed on the need to reach out to the ordinary diaspora to have better understanding of their culture and the need for such tangible research.

Amb. (Retd) Shri Virendra Gupta, Former diplomat, and President, ARSP, addressed the need to remember the heritage of the indentured labour diaspora. He emphasized the importance of culture in keeping them together and therefore, the sense of pride with which they preserve their traditions. He also spoke about the changing image of brand India and the disappointment the diaspora often feels when they come to India and see the lack of cultural preservation.

Shri Anil Joshi, Vice President, Central Hindi Education Board, Ministry of Education, Government of India delivered his special remarks on the importance of oral tradition. He stressed on the importance of arts like folk songs and performances in the preservation and continuation of culture in diaspora. He also emphasized the need to preserve and promote them to one and all.

Dr. Sushma Pandey welcomed and introduced the performers from Fiji. Many performers from the Hindi Parishad Northern Branch Labasa, Fiji Islands sang the *Birha, Bidesiya, Sohar and Aallah* very beautifully despite the constraints of lockdown in Fiji. Their performances show their strong cultural connect with the homeland and preservation of homeland culture in the diaspora in Fiji.

After the performance by them there was also a performance by a folk singer in India, Shri Shankar dada, who sang the *Sohar and Mangal Geet* in Awadhi. The two performances

show the cultural connection between the two places. After the performances invited dignitaries gave their remarks and addressed the gathering.

Mr. Nilesh Kumar, Counsellor, Fiji High Commission, spoke about how the Indian diaspora in Fiji have preserved the culture of their ancestors. He lauded the efforts by the GGRF and stressed on the importance of such interactions between Indian and its diaspora.

Dr. Kamal Kishore Mishra, scholar of Oriental epigraphy, manuscriptology and Assistant Professor of Sanskrit, University of Calcutta, highlighted the power and importance of cultural diplomacy. He also stressed on the need for ground research in Kolkata on the migration of indentured labour. Prof. Girishwar Mishra, Former V.C., MGAHV, Wardha, spoke about the importance of studying and preserving oral tradition and the contribution of the diaspora in preservation of such practices far away from the homeland.

Shri Rakesh Pandey, Editor, *Pravasi Sansar*, also appreciated the efforts of the GGRF and the performers. He spoke about the need for better research in this field and the hope for such research from the GGRF.

Shri Narayan Kumar, Honorary Director, Linguist and Cultural Activist, ARSP praised the efforts of Gathari Girmitya Research Foundation and stressed the need for working together in the future to develop good research projects on different facets of *girmitya diaspora*.

Dr. Jai Narayan, Investigator, Grade-I, Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India proposed the vote of thanks on behalf of Gathari Girmitya Research Foundation and ARSP to those who have directly and indirectly contributed to this cultural meet.

The Cultural performance led to a robust discussion. The words of the guests stressed the importance of continuing such interaction, the need for study of the ordinary diaspora, the need for better and comprehensive research and a hope for a cooperative work from all to better study the Indian diaspora in Fiji and other Indenture Indian Diaspora.



# **“LEVERAGING THE SOFT POWER OF INDIA”**

## **Goodwill through Craft, Cuisine & Creativity**

An international conference on “Leveraging the Soft Power of India: Goodwill through Craft, Cuisine and Creativity”, was organized on 16 October 2021 jointly by Overseas Indian Affairs Division (OIA), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) in partnership with Diaspora Research and Resource Centre (DRRC), Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP), New Delhi.

The objective of the conference was to access growing importance of diaspora's contribution to soft power projection and for suggesting further measures for making this valuable asset more effective. Indian cultural features are strongly embedded world over be it philosophy, languages, performing arts, or cuisine. Cultural propagation and promotion abroad has always been a key priority of the government, though, much of the cultural penetration on the ground has actually been achieved because of the activities and efforts of the strong diaspora.

India has traditionally been a pivot of soft power exercise for promoting global peace and progress, and the diaspora has played that role to its true meaning. Indian diaspora represents valuable bridges of goodwill for strengthening the Indian connect with the world, as full partners in the process of growth and development for wider wellbeing and prosperity.

As could be recalled, on 9 December 2020, MEA, ICCR and DRRC-ARSP had jointly organised a very successful overarching conference on “Role of Diaspora in Promotion of Indian Culture Abroad” in the run up to the 16 PBD. The participants found this exercise extremely rewarding and desired this practice of direct consultations to be more regular. Keeping this in view, this next phase of interaction was organised by plunging to the sub thematic levels so that the various aspects of cultural engagement could be addressed with a greater focus and specialisation. This conference accordingly deliberated on craft, cuisine and creativity.

Indian cuisine, with the passage of time, has emerged amongst the most popular globally, credit of which goes majorly to the diaspora. Many Indian chefs stand tall amongst the global celebrity club. Indian craft is also evolving as a growing new sector especially in fashion design, ethnic craft and painting, resulting in the emergence of some reputed Indian craft centres in several diaspora countries. Ironically, these segments have suffered serious covid disruptions because of prolonged, repeated and widespread lockdowns and other restrictions. Objective of this conference was also to understand the magnitude and depth of these setbacks and jointly explore the mitigating measures.

For accommodating the different time zones, there were two separate

segments- one for the eastern region (Africa, Asia and The Pacific) and another for the western region (Gulf, Europe, Americas and The Caribbean). The experts on the themes represented a mix of diaspora and few counterpart Indian experts. These experts were identified through extensive consultations with Indian diaspora organisations abroad, concerned missions and posts.

The inaugural session of the eastern segment was chaired by Shri Sanjay Bhattacharyya, Secretary, CPV, OIA. This segment was addressed by Hon'ble Minister of State Shri V. Muraleedharan, Ms Rosy Akbar, Hon'ble Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Government of Fiji, Dr Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, President, ICCR, and Shri Shyam Parande, Secretary General, ARSP.

The speakers at the western segment were the same except Dr Vindhya Vasini Persaud, Hon'ble Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Government of Cooperative Republic of Guyana in place of Hon'ble Ms Rosy Akbar, and Amb. Virendra Gupta, President, ARSP in place of Shri Shyam Parande.

The technical session for the eastern segment was chaired by Amb. Anup Mudgal, Chairperson, DRRC and the experts were- Ms. Kshipra Shukla, Chairman, Uttar Pradesh Institute of Design and Research, India, Mrs. Mala Ramyeed, Former Head of

Rabindra Nath Tagore Institute, Mauritius, Ms. Asha Maharaj, Renowned Chef and Food Columnist, South Africa, Mrs. Prabha Ravi, Art Practitioner and Administrator, New Zealand. Mr Peter Kuruvita, Chef from Australia could not join because of connectivity problem.

The technical session for the western segment was chaired by Shri Dinesh K Patnaik, Director General, ICCR and the experts were- Mr Vikas Khanna, Indian American Chef, Filmmaker and Author, USA, Ms Usha Bora, CEO and Founder of Jamini, France, Mr. Ashok Kalra, Hotelier and Advisor to Indian Business Network, Kuwait, Ms. Anjana Das-Hasper, Textile Designer, Germany, Ms. Shefali Adhikari, Artistic Director/ TV Host/ Director- Culture and Programs - Indo Canadian Community, Canada, Mr. Nirav K Patel, Businessman and Youth Community Leader, USA, Ms. Rama Vaidyanathan, Bharatanatyam Artist, Directors, Ganesha Natyalaya, India.

Both the segments had discussion and Q &A components followed by summing up and vote of thanks by Prof. Gopal Arora, Secretary, ARSP and Shri Narayan Kumar, Hon. Director, ARSP respectively.

The experts of both the segments brought up some interesting facts and recommendations for further strengthening their role in leveraging the Indian soft power through various aspects of Indian culture.

Some of the important outcomes are listed below:

**(I). Soft Power also needs to be a Smart Power**

Soft is always smart. Smart is

creative and creativity is rooted in pluralistic expression of society. Indian capacity in dealing, accepting and celebrating the diversity is at the roots of this creativity. Adaptability of Indian culture is an essential part of its creativity. This need to be further nurtured and strengthens.

**(ii). Integration of technology for magnifying the effects of creativity in Soft power exercise**

Technology can be seen as a force multiplier for creativity. Technology incorporates multiple sources of information, data and history generating more creative outcomes. Further work need to be done to identify and using appropriate technology for helping these creative fields.

**(iii). Craft, Creativity and Livelihood**

While the core objective always remains artistic, such endeavours should also provide incentive by way of economic benefits. Creativity should also promote livelihood through professional interlinking with the markets.

**(iv). Institutional Support**

Concerned Ministries and trade promotion bodies do have schemes for capacity building and marketing of craft and art forms. However, the participants felt that there was a greater need for better propagation and effective implementation of the schemes.

**(v). High Impact Cultural Programmes**

There is a need for greater institutional support for organizing high impact cultural programs like Festivals of India. Though small level cultural activities abound, there reach is limited. The proposed large scale

cultural programmes could enhance wider visibility and attract greater attention.

**(vi). Cultural Ambassadors**

There are Indian cultural centres acting as channels for promoting cultural outreach in most major countries abroad. There was a suggestion to identify a few well known art personalities to be appointed as good will cultural ambassadors.

**(vii). Engaging the Youth**

Youth should be involved in the consultations for identifying the most effective tools of cultural engagement. There is a need for regular refining of the scholarship schemes for better understanding of the needs of the diaspora. Involvement of the best known Indian institutions for assigning the diaspora youth under cultural scholarship schemes needs to be encouraged.

**(viii).** There are a number of institution to institution arrangements for cultural propagation and promotion. These arrangements need to be more effective and supported by predictable resources.

It was agreed that such conferences should be organized more regularly, as there is still a need and potential for greater synergy between all players, especially the government initiatives and the diaspora efforts in further strengthening the role of diaspora in cultural promotion, more so in the creative areas.

It was also decided that the detailed papers of the experts and conference proceedings will be edited and compiled into a publication.



# Dialogue with Diaspora : Session on New Zealand

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 are invited to share their ideas and experiences for deepening their engagement with India and for networking with global PIOs.

As part of this series, a session on New Zealand was organised on Saturday, 30 October 2021. Mr Venkat Raman, Editor, Indian Newslink and Ms Prabha Ravi, well known Bharatanatyam exponent from New Zealand joined in the discussion. The programme was moderated by Amb. Anup Mudgal, Chairperson, DRRC. Shri Shyam Parande, Secretary General, ARSP gave the introductory remarks and Prof Gopal Arora, Secretary, ARSP was the discussant.

Both the experts shared their experiences in New Zealand as members of the Indian diaspora and opportunities New Zealand offers to the diasporic communities. In the course of discussion, however, it was highlighted that Indian diaspora also offers a lot to New Zealand. According to a recent report by Waitakere Indian Association (WIA), with around 2, 40,000 members, the Indian community constitutes nearly 5 percent of the New Zealand population and contributes close to NZ dollars 10 billion to the country's economy. The value of the Indian community in New Zealand arises from a number of important factors

including the relatively youthfulness, hard working nature, inclination for higher education and skills, and finally for their values of democracy and liberal open mindedness.

According to the available records, Indian migration to New Zealand can be traced back to 1769, though, there are indications of much earlier contacts between New Zealand and the Indian travelers. In fact, they have found a temple bell belonging to the Tamil tradition of a much earlier era. The earliest significant Indian immigration was accounted for by the Gujarati traders. Currently, the Indian population is more mixed from various regions of India. Professionally, they are mostly engaged in retail, health care and other professional services, although Indians are widely known for their expertise in information technology.

According to Mr Raman, modern Indian diasporic community is getting associated with New Zealand in all major aspects-political, educational, cultural and social, and the community is doing very well in all these areas.

By and large, the Indian community has been welcomed by the local population. Both communities join in celebrating each other's festivals. It is interesting to note that Diwali has become a signature event in New Zealand and is widely celebrated with the participation of the local communities, so much so that Diwali celebration is a regular celebration at the New Zealand Parliament for over a decade.

In their India strategy paper 2025, the

New Zealand government has also identified several areas of convergence with India including the regional peace and stability. They have identified India as a priority partner for investments and joint ventures in the areas of mutual strength. India is one of the important sources of international students in New Zealand.

Success also comes with a price where the other communities see this as a competition. In some pockets, there are indications that the local Maori community fears that success and expansion of immigrant communities including PIOs could come at their expense. This feeling needs to be addressed with maturity and sense of commitment.

According to Ms Ravi, at large Indian festivals like Diwali, most constituents of the Indian communities come together in celebration; however, the day-to-day emergence of an integrated Indian personality among the PIOs is still a work in progress.

As a prognosis of the Indian communities' position in New Zealand in the medium to long run, Ms Ravi emphasized that she sees a successful, better integrated and much valued Indian community. However, better integration with local and other ethnic and migrant communities would be the key.

## ARSP DEHRADUN CHAPTER VISIT : UTTARKASHI, GANGOTRI & VILLAGE-CHAUMPA

In the month of October 2021, due to easing of restriction on travelling a tour of four days from 16-19 October 2021 was planned in the Garhwal hills of Uttarakhand covering NIM (Nehru Institute of Mountaineering), Uttarkashi, Gangotri, Harsil and Village-Chumpa, District-Tehri Garhwal. The tour commenced at 8:30 a.m. on 16th October 2021 from Dehradun. Group reached NIM, Uttarkashi around 4:00 pm. Members were conducted inside the campus of NIM covering museum and other places of tourist interest. On 17th October 2021 the group proceeded to Gangotri Dham followed by visit to 'Tapovanam Hiranyagarbha' Art Gallery of Swami Sundera Nand Ji and had lunch in the Ashram. ARSP, Bharat, Dehradun, memento (Wall Clock having Dehradun Clocktower with ARSP, Bharat, Dehradun and October 2021 printed in dial) was presented to Ashram. On the way back, tea break at Harsil. In the evening night stay at NIM. ARSP, Bharat, Dehradun, memento was presented to Col Amit Bisht, Principal of NIM as a token of appreciation and hospitality.

On 18th October 2021 the group proceeded to Village-Chaump, District-Tehri Garhwal, the ancestral village of Shri S.S. Kothiyal, IG (Retd) with lunch at Khadi, small town, at the residence of Smt. Shalini Kothiyal, Member ARSP Bharat, Dehradun Chapter. The group also celebrated birthday of Smt. Madhu Berry, Vice President, ARSP Bharat, Dehradun Chapter at Khadi. After lunch, the

group proceeded to Chaump, 8 kms. from Khadi town, for night stay. Chaump is an ancestral village of Shri S.S. Kothiyal, IG (Retd), President of ARSP Bharat, Dehradun Chapter, located at the height of 4100 feet in District-Tehri Garhwal.

During night, camp fire show was organized in which village people and the members of ARSP participated with great enthusiasm. Game of firework, in which a few thin wooden sticks of cheer-pine tied together (भैलू) are burnt on both end and whirled in the air was enjoyed by members specially ladies participating in it. The members also tasted local Garhwali cuisine and dinner with villagers.

In the morning of 18 October 2021, after offering ROAT (रोट) to Nagraja Temple and Maa Santoshi Devi, variety of local activities were planned for the members like churning of curd and grinding of pulses on the stone hand mill (जांदरू), crushing of paddy in small mortar (ओखली) made of stone with wooden pestle (गिंजालू) having an iron ring on one of the edges. Many members had a first time experience of tough village life in mountains.

There after a meeting was held to consider further activities of the chapter during 2020-22 and also organised tours programmes. Members suggested to organised goodwill visit to countries such as Mauritius, Guyana, Nepal etc. In this

meeting memento's was presented to all the families of ARSP, who had participated in the tour, followed by a complementary gift of Shivling and Trishul made from the stone and iron of Kedarnath by Col Ajay Kothiyal, KC, SC, VSM, Retd.

The meeting concluded with a thanks giving speech by Shri DN Chandola, Vice President, Uttarakhand Chapter. Shri DN Chandola thanked Shri SS Kothiyal, IG (Retd), President, Dehradun Chapter for organizing an excellent tour and complementary excellent arrangements of board and lodging, at Gangotri, Uttarkashi and in his ancestral-village Chaump. He also thanked Col Ajay Kothiyal for the gifts and Smt. Shalini Kothiyal for her hospitality by providing lunch at her residence. The credit for the success of the tour goes to all members of Group and Coordinator, Shri Adesh Kumar Shukla, Joint Secretary, ARSP Bharat, Dehradun Chapter with full support of Shri Rajiv Berry, President, Uttarakhand Chapter for coordinating all details.

The meeting concluded with the permission of the chair by thanking all the participants by Capt. Sudhanshu Kukreti, Retd, Secretary ARSP Bharat, Dehradun Chapter.

Journey was comfortable and enjoyable by hired bus started from Dehradun on 16 October, 2021 and terminated on the evening of 19 October 2021

## India says Indo-Pacific is important for globalization

Addressing the Third Edition of the Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue, Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said that as globalisation advances and becomes more diversified, there will only be a greater appreciation of the inter-dependence and broader footprints that the Indo-Pacific expresses. He said "given this direction, denying the Indo-Pacific is tantamount to denying globalisation". The external affairs minister said that the Indo-Pacific is a "fact of life" and the question of convergence is, therefore, more of perception than of



reality. Dr. Jaishankar further said "even those who ostensibly have reservations behave and operate in a manner that validates the Indo-Pacific. And that validation, as you all know, is in its very seamlessness and

interpenetration. In truth, everybody is aware that there is a fusion of theatres that were unnaturally separated earlier. The politics of the day apparently creates some reluctance in admitting to that". In his remarks at the third Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) organised by the National Maritime Foundation, he also mentioned divergences of views on the Indo-Pacific. With China flexing its muscle in the region, several countries around the world have come out with vision documents and strategies to ensure a free and inclusive Indo-Pacific.



## INDIAN AMERICAN LAWMAKERS TO INTRODUCE bill TO MAKE Diwali federal holiday in US

Congressman Carolyn Maloney will introduce a bill in US Congress, which aims to establish Diwali as a federal holiday in the United States.

White House officials & US lawmakers celebrated Diwali with the Indian diaspora in Capitol Hill. The event was hosted by Indiaspora along with top Indian Americans in the Biden administration. It included Vice Admiral Surgeon General Vivek Murthy and Senior Advisor and Staff Secretary Neera Tanden. The Democrat Congressman from New York will be joined by members of the India Caucus including

Congressman Ro Khanna, Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi and other advocates to introduce her legislation at the Hill.

Representing the Indian American community members, Sanjeev Joshipura, Executive Director, Indiaspora will also join the congresswoman who has been a long supporter of the Indian diaspora. If the bill gets approval, the holiday would be observed in federal institutions, with significant populations that celebrate Diwali and honour the cultural heritage of millions of Indian Americans who

celebrate the holiday in the United States.

Congressman Maloney in the past has successfully worked with advocates across the country and led efforts in Congress urging the US Postal Service to approve and issue a commemorative stamp honouring Diwali, which has been in circulation since 2016. Maloney relentlessly fought for this cause as she felt that "a relatively small action would hold great meaning for millions of people."

## Papal visit likely AFTER 1999 as Pope ACCEPTS PM's INVITE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Pope Francis at the Vatican on 30 October 2021 where PM Modi invited the head of the Roman Catholic Church to visit India and the two leaders discussed the future of a post-Covid world and climate change among other issues at a meeting.

Reports from Rome said the Pope accepted the invitation and if he does travel to India, it will mark the first papal visit after 1999 when the late Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the PM.

The Indian Prime Minister Modi is attending G20 summit of major world economies being held in Rome. Analysts suggest PM Modi's invitation is significant because of concerns about an increase in discrimination and violence against religious minorities in India, including Christians.

In a statement, the foreign ministry said that during the meeting, the two leaders discussed the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences for

people across the world. They also discussed the challenge posed by climate change. Prime Minister briefed the Pope about the ambitious initiatives taken by India in combating climate change as well as India's success in administering one billion Covid-19 vaccination doses. PM Modi was accompanied to the Vatican by National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and external affairs minister S Jaishankar.

## GUYANA will SEE world's SECOND HIGHEST REAL GDP GROWTH IN 2021 AT 20.4% – IMF

Guyana is set to experience the world's second highest Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in 2021, according to statistics published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Guyana, a small English-speaking new oil-producing nation of about 750,000 people on the northern shoulder of South America, will be second to Libya which will grow by 123.2%. Guyana is followed by Maldives at 18.9% and Aruba 12.8%. The IMF said in its World Economic

Outlook Report for October 2021 that Guyana is also projected to have a Real GDP growth of 48.7% in 2022 and 32.1% in 2023. The country's astronomical growth is believed to be due mainly to its booming new oil industry which is currently producing about 120,000 barrels of oil per day utilizing the Liza Destiny FPSO offshore on the Stabroek Block. A further boost to the economy will come with an additional 220,000 barrels of oil per day expected in 2022 from the newly arrived Liza Unity

FPSO; and a further 220,000 barrels per day in 2023 or 2024 from the now-under-construction Liza Prosperity FPSO. Guyana is also seeing a massive wave of international investments in oil industry support services and is still considered one of the hottest oil exploration spots on the planet, as a consortium of ExxonMobil-Hess-CNOOC has discovered approximately 10 billion barrels of light sweet crude oil offshore since 2015.

## REMEMBERING KALASINGAS of Kenya

**DEDICATED TO KENYA'S JAMHURIDAY (REPUBLIC DAY) ON THE 12 DECEMBER 2021**

*- Markandey Rai*

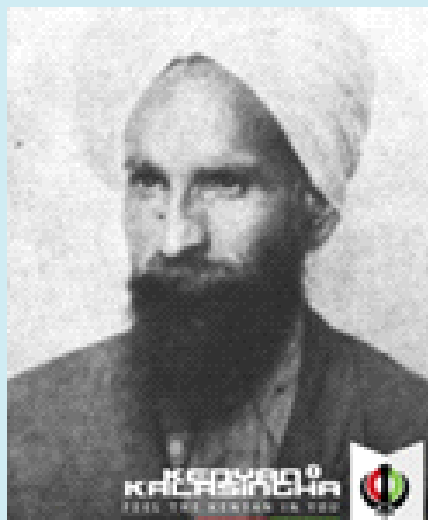
*Chairman, Foreign Affairs committee of ARSP*

Kenya became a republic on 12 December 1964, one year and six months after gaining internal self-rule on 1 June 1963 from the United Kingdom. The majority of Asians (Indian) are Hindu. The leading caste-based subgroups within Kenyan Hinduism include Lohanas, Lohars, Rajput, Patels and Mehtas, among others. Their largest concentration is in Nairobi, where mandirs can be found in most neighborhoods.

Kenyans of Indian decent have recently acquired recognition as the 44th tribe in the country. Recognizing the community's sense of civic duty and their contribution to the socio-political advancement of Kenya, the President of Kenya acknowledged that the Kenyan Asian's contribution to Kenya has its roots at the dawn of our Nation.

The presence of the Indian diaspora in Kenya can be traced back to the 17th century. With British colonial rule being established in India, and then later in East Africa, the migration of Indians to Kenya received a newfound impetus. Consequently, the community was intricately involved in the nationalist uprising in Kenya and made several robust contributions in ensuring the country's independence. Despite their long history of presence in the country and their involvement in the socio-economic and political life of the country, Indians in Kenya have suffered from certain invisibility in the political and historical discourse of the nation.

In a report published by the New York Times, Shakeel Shabbir, the first Member of Parliament in Kenya of Asian origin, says Indians in Kenya have for long enjoyed economic successes, but many feel excluded from the country's political and social fabric. Supporting the movement demanding tribe status, Shabbir



noted that while there is nothing concrete to be gained from becoming the 44th tribe since the community in Kenya is in any case economically well off, the recognition would give the Indian diaspora a sense of shared identity with the Kenyans.

Historian Sana Aiyar in her work on the Indian diaspora in Kenya notes that by the time Kenya became an independent nation, 2 per cent of the country's population was composed of Indians who were part of the retail, wholesale and manufacturing sectors and provided skilled labor. Further, she notes that 30 per cent of Nairobi's population was Indian. However, the strongly visible presence of Indians in Kenya is complicated by the racial and economic position of the community in the country. Immigrants to the East African republic from India, particularly from Gujarat, had started coming in since the 17th century. The advent of colonial rule expanded business opportunities for Indians from other parts of the subcontinent as well. For instance, a large number of Punjabis provided labor for constructing the railways. Further, Indians were also required to serve in the British Army in East Africa. While several Indians came back after the termination of their contracts, several stayed on there

working as masons, mechanics and carpenters.

By the early 20th century, a fresh inflow of Indians made their way into Kenya who emerged as the petty bourgeois class, serving semi-skilled labor to Europeans, Indians and Africans. Colonial administration in Kenya, like in India, was based on categorization along racial, religious and ethnic lines. Consequently, a racial pyramid like structure evolved in the administrative set up, with Europeans right on the top with exclusive access to the fertile highlands, Indians in the middle, working as traders and Africans forming the bottommost rung. As noted by Aiyar, Africans were expected to fulfill dual roles. On the one hand they had to make European farms profitable and on the other hand, they were expected to cultivate their own lands and sell the surplus to the shops run by Indians.

By the mid twentieth century, when anti-colonial movements took roots in India, the same ideologies of freedom and equality were carried by the immigrants to Kenya. Thereafter, Indians in Kenya started agitating for racial equality. The intermingling of Indian and African nationalist politics has been the subject of research for several historians. An interesting aspect of the relation between the two colonized communities however, is that while on one hand the two could relate to each other in terms of the shared dream of independence, on another hand there is sufficient evidence of conflict between the two communities on account of the racial hierarchy that existed. As a result, despite the contribution made by the Indian diaspora to Kenyan demands for independence, the community had continued to be relatively invisible in the official historical records of Kenya.

For the longest time, Sikhs in East



Africa, particularly in Kenya have been referred to as 'Kalasingas'. The origin of this name lies in the inspiring tale of a noble, adventurous man who arrived in Kenya in 1896. The origins of the Sikh community in EA can be traced back to the late 1890's when they were commissioned by the British to work on the railway. Among the first members of the community to arrive in the country was a young, adventurous 16 year old known as Kala Singh and it is by his name that the entire Sikh community have come to be known until this day.

Kala Singh arrived in Kenya in 1896 from Patiala in Punjab, history books and records describe him as a sturdy, adventurous, outgoing but most of all kind hearted man and it is this trait for which he is best remembered. A few years after his arrival, along with his close friend Munishram they established a company known as 'Munshiram Kalasingh & Co' on River Road. They mainly dealt in selling steel bars and hardware. Their business was probably one of the very first to be started in Nairobi which by then only comprised of railway

offices and quarters.

With the establishment of their new business, Kala Singh became engaged in wide -spread business activities, which would require him to venture deep into the interior parts of the country, which were then largely unexplored. His adventures brought him in touch with various communities particularly the Masai whose territory many had feared to venture into. His interactions with the different communities opened up trade and also provided a way for other traders to better understand the communities of Kenya.

Perhaps one of the most important things he is remembered for is his selfless nature. He is said to always have carried life saving drugs with him whenever he went out on an excursion. The drugs, which were used to fight malaria and other tropical diseases, would be distributed freely to the affected folks who had no access to medical facilities. That is why he was so

respected. His noble and generous gestures went on to represent the values of the entire Sikh community. Through his influence and his distinctive head turban, Africans began to refer to Sikhs as "Kalasingas".

Munshiram Kalasingh & Co grew steadily over the years and soon they were able to establish a second construction / hardware shop in Eldoret. Years later Kala Singh parted company with Munshiram and the business name was changed to Munshiram & Co.; eventually he went back to India and he died there.

It is evident from this story that to be nothing but yourself in a world that offers more pain than it does joy, is enough to go a long way. As in the case of Mr. Singh his name went on to define generations and generations of people and will continue to do so for more years to come. Because, while a good deed can go a long way, a good heart lives on forever.



## DIPLOMATIC POSTINGS

**Shri Muktesh Kumar Pardeshi** (IFS:1991), presently High Commissioner of India to New Zealand, has been concurrently accredited as the **next High Commissioner of India to the Cook Islands with residence in Wellington.**

**Shri Ajaneesh Kumar** (IFS: 1996), presently High Commissioner of India to Brunei Darussalam, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Estonia.**

**Shri Sanjay Bhattacharyya** (IFS: 1987), presently Secretary in the Ministry, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to Switzerland.**

**Shri Partha Satpathy** (IFS: 1990), presently Ambassador of India to Ukraine, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Hungary.**

**Shri Dinesh K. Patnaik** (IFS: 1990),

presently Director General, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Spain.**

**Shri Pavan Kapoor** (IFS: 1990), presently Ambassador of India to United Arab Emirates, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Russian Federation.**

**Shri Sunjay Sudhir** (IFS: 1993), has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the United Arab Emirates.**

**Shri Alok Amitabh Dimri** (IFS: 1998), presently Ambassador of India to the Kyrgyz Republic, has been appointed as the **next High Commissioner of India to Brunei Darussalam.**

**Ms. Nagma Mohamed Mallick** (IFS:1991), presently Ambassador of India to the Republic of Poland, has been concurrently accredited as the

**next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Lithuania with residence in Warsaw.**

**Shri Ngulkhram Jathom Gangte** (IFS:1994), presently Ambassador of India to the Republic of Tunisia, has been concurrently accredited as the **next Ambassador of India to the State of Libya with residence in Tunis.**

**Shri S. Balachandran** (YOA:2005), presently Ambassador of India to the Republic of Suriname, has been concurrently accredited as the **next High Commissioner of India to St. Vincent and the Grenadines with residence in Paramaribo.**

**Shri Ramu Abbagani** (IFS : 2001), presently Joint Secretary in the Ministry, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Dominican Republic.**

# His Majesty The King GRANTS DASAIN Tika

His Majesty granted Dasain Tika to representatives of the Hindu community of Gelephu at the Shivalaya Mandir in Gelephu on 15 October 2021.

Dasain Tika granted by elders and parents convey special blessings and protection. Dasain marks the victory of the Dharma King Rama, who was an emanation of Vishnu, over the demon Ravana- a victory of good over evil. Dasain tika from His Majesty carries special significance as His Majesty is regarded as an emanation of Vishnu for those celebrating Dasain.



While in Gelephu, His Majesty granted Audiences to the 46th Batch De-suups training at training centres in Pelrithang and Jigmeling, and visited the Gyalsung Training Site being developed in Tareythang. His Majesty also visited the De-suung

Audience to the Gelephu COVID-19 Task Force. His Majesty was accompanied by the Minister for Economic Affairs.

Skillling Program for Culinary Arts in Serzhong. The De-suups who began their training in August this year, received the opportunity to serve His Majesty during the visit.

His Majesty concluded the day with an

## DAYS TO REMEMBER

in December, 2021

December 01 : Romania - National Day

December 01 : World AIDS Day

December 02 : International Day of Abolition of Slavery

December 02 : LAOS - National Day

December 02 : United Arab Emirates -National Day

December 03 : Amavasya ●

December 04 : Indian Navy Day

December 10 : Human Rights Day

December 12 : Kenya - National Day

December 18 : Purnima ●

December 18 : Qatar - National Day

December 22 : National Mathematics Day



## His Majesty The King RETURNS TO Thimphu AFTER VISITING SOUTHERN BHUTAN



*His Majesty The King with De-suups of the Lhamoyzingkha National Service Water Project at their campsite. The Water Project campsites and some De-Suung Skilling Project centres are built by teams of Desuups known as Alpha-teams, who have completed numerous successive such projects since last year. This especially beautiful campsite was adorned by the artwork of Dendup Tshering, one of the De-suups working on the Water Project.*

His Majesty The King arrived in Thimphu after a Royal Tour of the South, and entered quarantine. During the tour, His Majesty visited Gelephu, Samtse, Lhamoyzhingkha and Phuentsholing, while also stopping at Tencholing and Tsirang to meet De-suups and Dzongkhag civil servants.

While in Samtse from October 15, His Majesty granted Audiences to the De-suups training in the 46th Batch De-suung Training Programme in Tendruk, and the De-suups working at the Lingtey Irrigation Scheme (National Service Water Project) in Sangngachoeling, and visited the Gyalsung site under development in Jamtsholing.

His Majesty also granted Audiences to the faculty and staff of Samtse College of Education and the Samtse

Covid-19 Task Force and civil service sector heads.

On 19th October, His Majesty visited Lhamoyzingkha from Phuentsholing, and granted Audiences to the Drungkhag Covid Task Force and civil service sector heads, and De-suups working at the Lhamoyzingkha National Service Water Project.

In Phuentsholing, His Majesty granted Audiences to the Southern Covid Task Force, the faculty of RIGSS, and the staff of the Anti-Corruption Commission who are in Phuentsholing.

His Majesty also visited the College of Science and Technology in Rinchending and granted an Audience to the faculty there.

## HER MAJESTY THE GYALTSUEN GRACED THE SALHANG TENDREL CEREMONY OF THE PEMA CENTER



Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen graced the Salhang Tendrel ceremony for The Pema Center- a hospital for mental health and wellbeing within the JDWNRH complex on 3rd November 2021.

A Royal Initiative of Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen, The Pema Center will be a

60-bedded hospital inclusive of outpatient consultation and counselling, emergency services, treatment and procedure rooms, pharmacy, and inpatient wards.

Addressing the ceremony, Her

Majesty The Gyaltsuen said that laying the foundation of the Pema Center was to put forth a commitment to build a robust and supportive health care service in the country. Her Majesty stressed on the need to address the gap between the number of people who need mental health

care and those who receive it, as well the stigma associated with mental health conditions, which causes hesitation in reaching out for timely support.

Her Majesty said that mental health will be given the National priority that it deserves.

Also speaking at the event, the health minister, Dasho Dechen Wangmo thanked Her Majesty for this royal initiative for mental well-being in Bhutan. Her Majesty's stewardship of the overarching strategy for mental health and well-being of the people of Bhutan came at a time when such guidance and direction was needed more than ever before, Lyonpo said.



## सकारात्मक सोच और रचनात्मक दृष्टि के धनी सोमदत्त बखोरी

कहते हैं जब भाषा रग-रग में दौड़ने लगती है तो नाटक निकलता है। मॉरीशस की धरती पर रहते हुए सोमदत्त बखोरी जी ने विविध विषयों पर हिंदी में नाटक लिखकर न सिर्फ लोगों को हिंदी से जोड़ा बल्कि हिंदी भाषा को भी समृद्ध किया है। 01 नवम्बर 1920 को जन्में बखोरी जी के 100 साल होने पर वैश्विक स्तर पर नाटक प्रतियोगिता का आयोजन कर हम हिंदी के इस अग्रदूत को उनकी पसंदीदा विधा में याद करते हुए लोगों को प्रेरित तो करेंगे ही हिंदी को भी गौरवान्वित कर सकते हैं।

उक्त बातें केंद्रीय हिंदी शिक्षण मंडल के उपाध्यक्ष अनिल शर्मा जोशी ने सोमदत्त बखोरी जन्मसती आरंभ होने पर आयोजित वेब संगोष्ठी के दौरान कही। बखोरी जी के व्यक्तित्व एवं कृतित्व पर चर्चा करते हुए श्री जोशी ने कहा कि मॉरीशस की जमीं पर आज हिंदी, कविता, कहानी, नाटक, उपन्यास, संस्मरण, यात्रा वृत्तांत आदि की जो हरी-भरी साहित्यिक फसल लहलहा रही है। उसका श्रेय सोमदत्त बखोरी जी को जाता है। भाषा के लिहाज से लगभग बंजर मॉरीशस की भूमि पर बखोरी जी ने हिंदी का बिरवा (बीज) रोपा और 'दस पढ़ो-एक लिखो' का अलख जगाकर लोगों को हिंदी के लिए उत्साहित किया। उनके श्रम साध्य समर्पण का ही नतीजा है कि लोग मिलते गए और मॉरीशस में हिंदी कारवा आगे बढ़ता गया। श्री जोशी ने बताया की महाभारत के 18 पर्वों के तर्ज पर बखोरी जी ने मॉरीशस में हिंदी परिषद की 18 इकाईयों को गठन कर उसका सफल संचालन किया।

श्री जोशी ने कहा कि भाषा की दृष्टि से भारत और मॉरीशस के संबंध पहले से ही बहुत सरल और सहज रहे हैं। लेकिन दुनिया के अन्य हिस्सों में ऐसा नहीं था। इधर-उधर बिखरे हिंदी भाषा-भाषी लोगों में सामन्जस्य का अभाव था। बखोरी जी ने इस दिशा में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई तथा दुनिया के स्तर पर लोगों को जोड़ने के विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन की राह आसान की। बखोरी जी ने मॉरीशस के पूर्व राष्ट्रपति शिव सागर राम गुलाम के साथ मिलकर हिंदी के विकास के लिए जो काम किया है वह मिल का पत्थर है। श्री जोशी ने पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी की मॉरीशस यात्रा का संस्मरण सुनाते हुए कहा कि मॉरीशस में हिंदी पर चल रहे काम को देखकर वाजपेयी जी चकित हो गए थे। वाजपेयी को जो पुस्तकें पढ़ने के लिए दी गई थी उनमें बहुतायत कहानियां मॉरीशस हिंदी परिवार की थी। श्री जोशी ने बखोरी को मॉरीशस में हिंदी का स्तंभ बताते हुए उनके



जन्म शताब्दी वर्ष के दौरान विभिन्न कार्यक्रम आयोजित करने के लिए हिंदी प्रेमियों का आह्वान भी किया।

केंद्रीय हिंदी संस्थान तथा विश्व हिंदी सचिवालय के तत्वावधान में वैश्विक हिंदी परिवार की ओर से आयोजित सप्ताहिक वेब गोष्ठी के दौरान मॉरीशस के प्रख्यात साहित्यकार सोमदत्त बखोरी जी के व्यक्तित्व एवं कृतित्व पर चर्चा हुई। कार्यक्रम के संयोजक जवाहर कर्नावट ने विषय परिवर्तन किया तथा हैदराबाद के क्षेत्रीय निदेशक गंगाधर वानाडे ने अतिथियों का स्वागत किया। केंद्रीय हिंदी निदेशालय की सहायक निदेशक नूतन पांडेय ने कार्यक्रम का संचालन किया।

कार्यक्रम के दौरान मुख्य वक्ता के तौर पर बोलते हुए नारायण कुमार ने कहा कि बखोरी जी सकारात्मक सोच और रचनात्मक दृष्टि के धनी व्यक्ति थे। हिंदी को दुनिया के कोने-कोने तक पहुंचाने के लिए उन्होंने विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन के आयोजन की जोरदार वकालत की तथा इसके लिए कई एक प्रारूप और दिशा निर्देश तैयार किए। बखोरी जी बिस्ले साहित्यकार थे जिन्होंने हिंदी में लिखा तथा अपने लिखे का अंग्रेजी और फ्रेंच में अनुवाद भी किया। उन्होंने बताया कि बखोरी जी हिंदी की उस महत्वपूर्ण समिति के भी सदस्य थे जिसमें हजारी प्रसाद द्विवेदी, विद्यानिवास मिश्र, गंगाशरण सिंह और केंद्रीय हिंदी संस्थान के नानगप्पा शामिल थे। मॉरीशस के वरिष्ठ साहित्यकार रामदेव धुरंदर ने बखोरी जी को याद करते हुए कहा कि हिंदी के प्रति समर्पण सर्वोपरि था। बखोरी जी मॉरीशस में घूम-घूम कर लोगों को लिखने की प्रेरणा देते थे। गांधी जी के साथ वैचारिक मेल रखते हुए वे हिंदी के विस्तार में जुटे थे जब गांधी की हत्या हुई उस समय मॉरीशस में केवल पांच मोटरकार थी। बखोरी जी ने घूम-घूम कर इसकी सूचना लोगों तक पहुंचाई। उनके कामों को देखकर यही लगता है कि वे केवल हिंदी के लिए ही बने थे।

इस क्रम में भारतीय उच्चायोग मॉरीशस की द्वितीय सचिव सुनीता पडुजा ने भारत सरकार द्वारा बखोरी जी को विश्व हिंदी सम्मान से सम्मानित किए जाने का जिक्र करते हुए

उनकी रचनाओं पर प्रकाश डाला शब्द जाल में फंसकर जीवन का दर्शन भूलने और लड़ते-लड़ते खुद को बर्बाद न करने विषयक कविता को उद्धृत करते हुए कहा कि उनका लेखन आगे बढ़ने का लेखन था जो भावी पीढ़ी को रास्ता दिखाता है। इंदिरा गांधी भारतीय सांस्कृतिक केंद्र मॉरीशस के निदेशक पद्मश्री बलवंत ठाकुर ने बखोरी जी के नाटकों की चर्चा की उन्होंने यह भी कहा कि जन्म शताब्दी वर्ष के दौरान केंद्र बखोरी जी के 11 नाटकों में से किसी एक का मंचन कर उन्हें याद करेगा। मालूम हो कि पांडव वनवास बखोरी जी का पहला नाटक है जिसे स्कूली शिक्षा के पाठ्यक्रम में शामिल किया गया है। बात को आगे बढ़ाते हुए विश्व हिंदी सचिवालय की उपमहासचिव माधुरी रामधारी ने बखोरी जी के साहित्यिक अवदान की चर्चा की। उन्होंने कहा कि बखोरी जी सिद्धहस्ता कलमकार थे जिनका हिंदी के साथ-साथ अंग्रेजी और फ्रेंच भाषा पर भी अधिकार था।

सोमदत्त बखोरी जी के पुत्र एवं मॉरीशस के वरिष्ठ पत्रकार संजय बखोरी ने पिता को याद करते हुए आकाश पुरुष की संज्ञा दी। पेशे से वकील संजय बखोरी ने पिता के कामों की चर्चा करते हुए हिंदी के प्रति उनके समर्पण को याद किया उन्होंने बताया कि बखोरी जी का काम गीता के सूत्रवाक्य कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन से प्रेरित था। उनकी कविता गंगा की पुकार उनके हृदय से निकली हुई कविता थी। भारत के बड़े-बड़े राजनैतिक, साहित्यिक, सामाजिक लोगों से उनका मिलना जुलना था। पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री मोरारजी देसाई ने उन्हें सम्मानित किया था। पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी उनसे मिलने घर आये थे तथा वाजपेयी जी ने अपनी चर्चित कविता लिफाफा का पाठ भी किया था।

मालूम हो कि हाल ही में सोमदत्त बखोरी जी की धर्म पत्नी चद्राणी बखोरी का भी देहावसान हुआ है। कार्यक्रम के दौरान सहभागियों ने उन्हें भी भावभीनी श्रद्धांजलि दी तथा उन्हें नेक महिला बताते हुए बखोरी जी का प्रेरणास्रोत बताया। इस दौरान जर्मनी में रहकर हिंदी सेवा में लगे इंदु प्रकाश पांडेय के निधन पर भी शोक व्यक्त किया गया।

कार्यक्रम में केंद्रीय हिंदी संस्थान की निदेशक बीना शर्मा वरिष्ठ पत्रकार राहुल देव, वी. जगन्नाथन, मोहन बहुगुणा, जयशंकर यादव, राजेश कुमार आदि लोग शामिल हुए। कार्यक्रम के अंत में सुशील धानुष ने सभी सहभागियों का धन्यवाद ज्ञापन किया।

## स्टैनफोर्ड यूनिवर्सिटी की लिस्ट में बीएचयू के वैज्ञानिक, छात्र और शिक्षक

लोगों की मानें तो वाराणसी समेत बीएचयू के लिए गर्व का विषय है कि विश्वविद्यालय के 39 वैज्ञानिकों ने विश्व के शीर्ष दो फीसदी वैज्ञानिकों की सूची में जगह बनाई है। स्टैनफोर्ड विश्वविद्यालय प्रतिवर्ष दुनिया के शीर्ष दो फीसदी वैज्ञानिकों की सूची जारी करता है। विश्वविद्यालय के विभिन्न

विभागों के इन वैज्ञानिकों ने अपने बेमिसाल कार्य और अथक परिश्रम के बाद कीर्तिमान स्थापित किया है। लोगों की मानें तो बीएचयू के लिए सम्मान की बात है। यदि निरंतर शोध की गुणवत्ता में कार्य प्रगति होती रही तो भविष्य में विश्व के शीर्ष 500 शैक्षणिक संस्थानों में बीएचयू अपनी जगह बनाने में भी सफल

हो जाएगा। बीएचयू के रिकॉर्ड से विश्वविद्यालय के छात्रों में खुशी की लहर दौड़ पड़ी है। बीएचयू के कार्यवाहक कुलपति प्रो. वीके शुक्ला ने भी इसके लिए पूरे विश्व विद्यालय को बधाई दी है।

## नीदरलैंड्स में हिंदी पखवाड़े के तहत काव्यगोष्ठी का आयोजन

भारतीय दूतावास के सांस्कृतिक केंद्र गाँधी केंद्र भारतीय सांस्कृतिक संबंध परिषद द्वारा भारत के अमृत महोत्सव-75 के तत्वावधान में हिंदी पखवाड़े के दौरान हिंदी सरनामी कवि सम्मेलन आयोजित किया गया। सम्मेलन की अध्यक्षता नीदरलैंड्स में भारत के राजदूत प्रदीप कुमार रावत जी ने की। केंद्र के प्रभारी निदेशक शिव मोहन सिंह द्वारा सभी रचनाकारों एवं साहित्यानुरागियों का हार्दिक स्वागत किया गया और आयोजन की भूमिका और तत्पश्चात उद्देशिका रेखांकित की गई।

कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत युवा कवि सुशांत जैन ने अपनी विचारोत्तेजक कविता के पाठ से किया और इसके बाद उन्होंने एक गजल भी पेश की। उनके बाद कवि विश्वास दुबे ने अपनी रचनाओं का पाठ किया। अब बारी आई साहित्यकार, संगीतकार डॉ. सोनी वर्मा की जिन्होंने भगवान कृष्ण पर केंद्रित महाभारत के संदर्भ में एक वीर रस की रचना— हे पार्थ ! उठो अब याद करो को प्रस्तुत किया और उसके बाद एक भोजपुरी लोकगीत द्वारा प्रवासियों के भारत में छूटे परिवार के दर्द को अपनी स्वर लहरियों में सजा पूरे आयोजन को एक अलग स्तर पर ले जाती दिखीं।

इसके बाद सरनामी समुदाय से उर्सला जरबंजर ने मंच संभाला। आरंभ एक हिंदी कविता से जो बहुत ही भावुक कर गई और उसके बाद उन्होंने कुछ



लोकप्रिय हिंदी गीतों को सरनामी बोली में परिवर्धित कर पूरे सभागार को विस्मृत कर दिया। हर कोई उनके इस बिंदास अंदाज से अभिभूत दिखा। उसके बाद आमंत्रण मिला हेग निवासी मराठी कवयित्री एडवोकेट प्रनीता देशपांडे जी जिन्होंने अपनी सरस, सहज और मनमोहक प्रस्तुति के जरिए हमारे देश हमारी संस्कृति का एक चित्र सा खींच दिया। देश प्रेम से लबालब उनकी सरल रचना बरबस ही हर दिल को छू गई।

सरनामी समुदाय के चहेते रचनाकार, गीतकार और संगीतकार राजमोहन ने गिटार पर अपनी लोकप्रिय एल्बम से कुछ गीत प्रस्तुत किए। कार्यक्रम में आगे आमंत्रित किए गए एम्स्टर्डम से पधारे सरनामी कवि जिमी कृष्ण जी, जिन्होंने सरनामी संस्कृति से जुड़े गीत को हारमोनियम पर प्रस्तुत किया। प्रस्तुति का एक-एक शब्द किसी दर्द के सैलाब में सराबोर हो सदियों की कहानी बयां करता दिखा।

राबिन जी ने सरनामी कविता को जिस क्रांतिकारी अंदाज में शोषण के दर्द की गहन अनुभूति के साथ एक विस्मयकारी अंदाज में प्रस्तुत किया उससे समूचा

सभागार ही अचानक अपनी धमनियों में रक्त के तीव्र प्रवाह को अनुभव करने लगा। उनकी कविताएं डेढ़ सौ साल पहले सूरीनाम पहुंचे भारतवंशियों के शोषण के दमन चक्र के इर्द गिर्द ही घूमती रहीं। हम अकेला नहीं इस जहल में दिल में प्यार सुलगे है साथी जैसे एक से बढ़कर एक उनकी रचना का एक-एक शब्द मन मस्तिष्क को झकझोरता रहा।

उनके बाद अंतिम रचनाकार के रूप में मंच पर साहित्य शिखर आसीना प्रोफेसर डॉ. पुष्पिता अवस्थी को आमंत्रित किया गया। साहित्य की एक सम्मानित और लंबी पारी खेलने की चमक उनके चेहरे पर मानो चस्पा थी। सभागार का तिनका – तिनका उनके शब्द सुनने की प्रतीक्षा में दिखा। पृथ्वी मां और पर्वत पर उनका कविताई अंदाज अद्वितीय था। एक-एक शब्द जैसे आत्मा के प्रकाश से प्रकाशित था। कितनी ही बार संवेदना उस चरम पर पहुंची कि हर आंख नम हो गई। प्रकृति के कण-कण से बात करती उनकी रचना पल-पल प्रकृति का रूप धरती रही और सम्मोहित करती रही। समय की सीमा कब पार हुई पता ही न चला। कार्यक्रम का सफल संचालन युवा भारतीय क्लासिकल नृत्यांगना एवम शिक्षिका सौम्या शुक्ला द्वारा बेहद खूबसूरती से किया गया। यह अपने आप में एक ऐतिहासिक आयोजन था जिसमें कविताओं की प्रवाहमयी धारा बही।



## भारतीय स्वाधीनता के अमृत महोत्सव के अवसर पर विशेष

कवि माखनलाल चतुर्वेदी का जन्म 4 अप्रैल, 1889 ई. में मध्य प्रदेश के होशंगाबाद जिले में बावाई नामक स्थान पर हुआ था। चतुर्वेदी जी की प्रारंभिक शिक्षा बावाई गाँव में हुई तथा प्रारंभिक शिक्षा प्राप्त करने के बाद उन्होंने संस्कृत, बांग्ला, गुजराती अथवा अंग्रेजी आदि भाषाओं का ज्ञान घर पर ही प्राप्त किया था। इनकी काव्य रचनाएं राष्ट्रीय भावनाओं पर आधारित हैं। जिनमें त्याग, बलिदान, कर्तव्य की भावना, समर्पण के भाव आदि विद्यमान हैं। इनकी कविताये उन देश प्रेमियों को प्रभावित करती हैं जो आज भी अपने भारत देश से बहुत प्रेम करते हैं तथा इनकी रचनाएं देशवासियों को जागरूक करने के लिए बहुत सहायक सिद्ध हुई। कवि माखनलाल चतुर्वेदी जी का 30 जनवरी 1938 ई. को निधन हो गया था।

कवि माखनलाल चतुर्वेदी जी भारत के महान राष्ट्र कवियों में से एक हैं, जो अपना सर्वस्व त्यागकर भारत देश का उत्थान करने के लिए आगे बढ़े। राष्ट्रीय भावनाओं से परिपूर्ण होने के कारण इन्हें हिंदी साहित्य में भारतीय आत्मा के नाम से भी जाना जाता है। इन्होंने असहयोग आन्दोलन और भारत छोड़ो आन्दोलन जैसी कई गतिविधियों में भी भाग लिया था। ये त्याग और बलिदान पर विश्वास रखने वाले पहले एक ऐसे व्यक्ति थे जिन्होंने अपनी कविताओं में भी त्याग और बलिदान का उपदेश दिया है।

### पुष्प की अभिलाषा



चाह नहीं, मैं सुरबाला के  
गहनों में गूँथा जाऊँ,  
चाह नहीं प्रेमी—माला में बिंध  
प्यारी को ललचाऊँ,  
चाह नहीं सम्राटों के शव पर  
हे हरि डाला जाऊँ,  
चाह नहीं देवों के सिर पर  
चढ़ूँ भाग्य पर इठलाऊँ,  
मुझे तोड़ लेना बनमाली,  
उस पथ पर देना तुम फेंक!  
मातृभूमि पर शीश—चढ़ाने,  
जिस पथ पर जावें वीर अनेक!



कविताओं के माध्यम से उन्होंने गुलाम भारत को झकझोरा और ब्रिटिश सरकार के विरुद्ध आवाज बुलंद की। उन्हीं दिनों माखनलाल ने गणेशशंकर विद्यार्थी के साथ मैथिलीशरण गुप्त और महात्मा गांधी से मुलाकात की। माखनलाल चतुर्वेदी ने महात्मा गांधी द्वारा आहूत असहयोग आंदोलन में गिरफ्तारी दी थी वे सविनय अवज्ञा आंदोलन में भी गिरफ्तार हुए।

### पुष्प की अभिलाषा कविता का सारांश

वैसे तो माखनलाल चतुर्वेदी जी ने कई ऐसी रचना की जो आज के समय में भी बहुत प्रसिद्ध हैं और जिन्हें आज के कवि भी अपनी कविताओं में इस्तेमाल करते हैं लेकिन यह एक ऐसी कविता है जिसे पूरे भारत वर्ष के लोगो ने सराहा पुष्प की अभिलाषा कविता उनकी अब तक की सबसे प्रसिद्ध रचना थी। इस कविता की रचना के पीछे उनका एक मूल कारण था, जब हमारे भारत देश के स्वतंत्रता सेनानी अंग्रेजों से भारत की आजादी के लिए लड़ाई कर रहे थे तब उनको और भारत की जनता को लड़ाई में सहयोग देने के प्रोत्साहन के लिए इस कविता की रचना की थी।

### पुष्प की अभिलाषा कविता का अर्थ

कवि के व्यक्तित्व को बहुत सीमा तक उसके द्वारा लिखे काव्य से समझा जा सकता है। माखनलाल चतुर्वेदी की लिखी इन पंक्तियों से यह जाना जा सकता है कि वह 'पुष्प की अभिलाषा' के माध्यम से अपने अंतर्स की बात कह रहे हैं। इस कविता द्वारा माखनलाल जी ने यह बताने की कोशिश की है कि जब कभी माली अपने बगीचे से फूल तोड़ने जाता है तो जब माली फूल से पूछता है कि तुम कहाँ जाना चाहते हो? माला बनना चाहते हो या भगवान के चरणों में चढ़ाया जाना चाहते हो तो इस पर फूल कहता है मेरी इच्छा ये नहीं कि मैं किसी सुंदर स्त्री के बालों का गजरा बनूँ मुझे चाह नहीं कि मैं दो प्रेमियों के लिए माला बनूँ मुझे ये भी चाह नहीं कि किसी राजा के शव पे मुझे चढ़ाया जाये मुझे चाह नहीं कि मुझे भगवान पर चढ़ाया जाये और मैं अपने आपको भाग्यशाली मानूँ हे बनमाली तुम मुझे तोड़कर उस राह में फेंक देना जहाँ शूरवीर मातृभूमि की रक्षा के लिए अपना शीश चढ़ाने जा रहे हों। मैं उन शूरवीरों के पैरों तले आकर खुद पर गर्व महसूस करूँगा।