

# ANTAR RASHTRIYA SAHA YOG PARISHAD BULLETIN

Monthly Newsletter of Indian Council for International Co-operation

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(16 Pages including Cover)

## Anti-Asiatic Legislation in the Transvaal

(Continued from the Previous issue)



When the deputation was on its way to England, I happened to talk about the anti-Asiatic legislation in the Transvaal with the Englishman who had settled in South Africa, and when I informed him of the object of our visit to England, he exclaimed, 'I see you are going to London in order to get rid of the dog's collar.' He thus compared the Transvaal permit to dog's collar, but I did not quite understand then, and cannot exactly tell while recording that incident even now, whether he thus intended to express his contempt for the Indians and joy at their humiliation, or whether he only meant to show his strong feeling in the matter. According to the golden rule that a person's words must not be interpreted so as to do him an injustice, I take it that the gentleman used this graphic language only in order to evince his strong feeling. However that may be, the Transvaal Government on the side was preparing to throw the dog's collar on the Indians necks, while on the other side the Indians were getting ready to put up a fight against the wicked policy of that Government and were concerting measures calculated to strengthen them in their resolution never to wear that collar. Of course, we were writing letters to friends in

England as well as in India and trying thus to keep them in touch with the situation from day to day. But a Satyagraha struggle depends but little upon help from outside, and it is only internal remedies that are effective. The leaders' time therefore was chiefly taken up with the endeavors to keep all the elements of the community up to the mark.

One important question before us was what agency we should use for carrying on the struggle. The Transvaal British Indian Association had a large membership. Satyagraha had not yet seen the light of the day when it was established. The Association had resisted in the past, and must resist in the future, not one obnoxious law, but quite a host of them. Besides organizing resistance to obnoxious legislation, it had many other functions of a political and social nature to perform. Again, all the members of the Association were not pledged to resist the Black Act through Satyagraha. At the same time, we must take account of external risks to which the Association would be exposed in the event of its being identified with the Satyagraha struggle. What if the Transvaal Government declared the struggle to be seditious and all institutions carrying it on as illegal bodies? What would, in such a case, be the position of members who were not Satyagrahis? And what about the funds which were contributed at a time when Satyagraha was not so much as thought of? All these were weighty considerations. Lastly, the

Satyagrahis were strongly of opinion that they not only must not entertain any ill-will against those who did not join the struggle whether for want of faith, for weakness or any other reason whatever, but must maintain their present friendly relations with them unimpaired and even work side by side with them in all other movements except the Satyagraha struggle.



M K Gandhi

For all these reasons the community came to the conclusion that the Satyagraha struggle should not be carried on through any of the existing organizations. They might render all help in their power and resist the Black Act in every way open to them except that of Satyagraha, for which a new body named the 'Passive Resistance Association' was started by the Satyagrahis. The reader will see from this English name that the word Satyagraha had not yet been invented when this new Association came into being. Time fully justified the wisdom of constituting a fresh body for the work, and the Satyagraha movement might perhaps have suffered a setback if any of the existing organizations had been mixed up with it. Numerous members joined this new Association, and the community furnished its funds too with a lavish hand.





My experience has taught me that no movement even stops or languishes for want of funds. This does not mean that any temporal movement can go on without money, but it does mean that wherever it has good men and true at its helm, it is bound to attract to itself the requisite funds. On the other hand, I have also observed that a movement takes its downward course from the time that it is afflicted with a plethora of funds. When therefore a public institution is managed from the interest of investments, I dare not call it a sin but I do say that it is a highly improper procedure. The public should be the bank for all public institutions, which should not last a day longer than the public wish. An institution run with the interest of accumulated capital ceases to be

amenable to public opinion and becomes autocratic and self-righteous. This is not the place to dwell upon the corruption of many a social and religious institutions managed with permanent funds. The phenomenon is so common that he who runs may read it.

But we must return to our narrative. Lawyers and English-educated persons do not by any means enjoy a monopoly of hair spitting. I saw that even the uneducated Indians in South Africa were quite capable of drawing minute distinctions and making fine arguments. Some argued that the pledge taken in the Old Empire Theatre had been fulfilled as the old Ordinance was disallowed, and those who had weakened since then took shelter under this plea. The argument was not quite devoid of force, yet it could not impress those whose resistance was not to the law as law but to the vicious principle underlying it. All the same it was found necessary to re-administer the oath of resistance for safety's sake just to reinforce the awakening of the community and to probe the extent of its weakness if any. Meetings therefore were held in every place, where the situation was explained, the oath was administered afresh and the spirit of the community was found to be as high as ever.

Meanwhile the fateful month of July was gradually drawing to an end, and on the last day of that month we had resolved to call a mass meeting of the Indians at Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal. Delegates from other places besides were also invited to attend. The meeting was held in the open on the grounds of the Pretoria mosque. After the inauguration of Satyagraha our meetings were so largely attended that no building could accommodate them. The entire Indian population in the Transvaal did not exceed 13,000 souls, of whom over 10,000 lived in Johannesburg and Pretoria. An attendance at public meetings of two thousand from an aggregate population of ten thousand would be considered large and satisfactory in any part of the world. A

movement of mass Satyagraha is impossible on any other condition. Where the struggle is wholly dependent upon internal strength, it cannot go on at all without mass discipline. The workers therefore did not consider such large attendance as anything surprising. From the very first they had decided to hold public meetings only in the open so that expense was nearly avoided and none had to go back from the place of meeting disappointed for want of accommodation. All these meetings, again, were mostly very quiet. The audiences heard everything attentively. If those who were far away from the platform could not hear a speaker, they would ask him to speak louder. The reader scarcely needs to be told that there were no chairs at these meetings. Everyone sat on the ground. There was a very small platform designed to accommodate the chairman, the speaker and a couple of friends, and a small table and a few chairs or stools were placed upon it.

Mr. Yusuf Ismail Mian, acting chairman of the British Indian Association, presided over this meeting. As the time for issuing permits under the Black Act was drawing nearer, the Indians were naturally anxious in spite of all their enthusiasm; but no less anxious than they were General Botha and General Smuts, all the night of the Transvaal Government at their back notwithstanding. No one would like to bend a whole community to his will by sheer force. General Botha therefore had sent Mr. William Hosken to this meeting to admonish us. The reader has already made this gentleman's acquaintance in a previous chapter. The meeting received him warmly, and he said, "You know I am your friend. I need scarcely say that my feelings in this matter are with you. If at all I could, I would gladly make your opponents accede to your demands. But you need hardly to be told about the general hostility of the Transvaal Europeans to your community. I am here at General Botha's instance. He

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Keshav G. Parande  
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Keshav G. Parande  
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### CONTACT

Phone (O) : 011 - 2323 4432

### E-MAIL

arspindia@gmail.com  
arspind@bol.net.in

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→ had asked me to be bearer of his message to this meeting. He entertains a feeling of respect for you and understands your sentiments, but he says, "he is helpless. All the Europeans in the Transvaal unanimously ask for such law, and he himself is convinced of the necessity for it. The Indians know fully well how powerful is the Transvaal Government. The law has again been endorsed by the Imperial Government. The Indians have done all they could and have acquitted themselves like men. But now that their opposition has failed, and the law has been passed, the community must prove their loyalty and love of peace by submitting to it. General Smuts will carefully look into any representations you make suggesting minor changes in the regulations framed in virtue of the Registration Act.' My own advice to you also is, that you should comply with the General's message. I know that the Transvaal Government is firm regarding this law. To resist it will be to dash your head against a wall. I wish that your community may not be ruined in fruitless opposition or invite needless suffering on their heads." I translated the speech to the meeting word by word, and further put them on their guard on my own behalf. Mr. Hosken retired amidst cheers.

It was now time for the Indian speakers to address the meeting. One of these speakers was the late Ahmad Muhammad Kachhalia, the hero, not to this chapter alone, but of the present volume. I knew him only as a client and as interpreter. He had never before now taken a leading part in public work. He had a working knowledge of English, which he had so far improved by practice that when he took his friends to English lawyers, he acted as interpreter himself. But interpretership was not a profession with him; he worked as interpreter only as a friend. He at first used to hawk piece goods, and then to trade on a small scale in partnership with his brother. He was a Surti Meman and enjoyed great reputation in his class. His knowledge of Gujarati was also

limited but in this too he had greatly advanced, being schooled by experience. He had such sharp intelligence that he very easily grasped anything that was put to him. He solved legal difficulties with such facility as often astonished me. He would not hesitate to argue law even with lawyers, and very often his arguments were worthy of consideration for them.

I have never, whether in South Africa or in India, come across a man who could surpass Mr. Kachhalia in courage and steadfastness. He sacrificed his all for the community's sake. He was always a man of his word. He was a strict orthodox Musalman, being one of the trustees of the Surti Meman mosque. But at the same time, he looked upon Hindus and Musalmans with an equal eye. I do not remember that he ever fanatically or improperly sided with Musalmans as against Hindus. Perfectly fearless and impartial as he was, he never hesitated to point out their faults to Hindus as well as Musalmans whenever he found it necessary. His simplicity and humility were worthy of imitation. My close contact with him for years leads me to hold firmly to the opinion that a community can rarely boast of having in their midst a man of the stamp of Mr. Kachhalia.

Mr. Kachhalia was one of the speakers at the meeting. He made a very short speech. He said: "Every Indian knows what the Black Act is and what it implies. I have heard Mr. Hosken attentively, and so have you. His speech has only confirmed me in my resolution. We know how powerful the Transvaal Government is. But it cannot do anything more than enact such a law. It will cast us into prison, confiscate our property, deport us or hand us. All this we will bear cheerfully, but we cannot simply put up with this law." I observed that while saying this, Mr. Kachhalia was being deeply moved. His face reddened, the veins on his neck and on the head were swollen with the blood coursing rapidly through them, his body was shaking,

and moving the fingers of his right hand upon his throat, he thundered forth: "I swear in the name of God that I will be hanged but I will not submit to this law, and I hope that everyone present will do likewise." So saying he took his seat. As he moved his fingers on his throat, some of those seated on the platform smiled, and I remember that I joined them in their smile. I was rather doubtful whether Kachhalia Sheth would be able fully to translate his brave words into action. I am ashamed of this doubt now, and every time I think of it. Kachhalia always remained to the fore among the many Indians who literally observed their pledge in that great struggle without a moment's flinching.

The meeting cheered him as he spoke. Others then knew him very much better than I did, as many of them were personally familiar with this obscure hero. They knew that Kachhalia only says what he means and means what he says. There were other spirited speeches too. But I have singled out Kachhalia Sheth's for mention, as it proved to be a prophecy of his subsequent career. Not everyone of the spirited speakers stood the final test. This great man died in 1918, four years after the struggle was over, serving the community till the last.

I will close this chapter with a reminiscence of Kachhalia Sheth which may not find a place elsewhere. The reader later on will hear of Tolstoy Farm where lived a number of Satyagrahi families. The Sheth sent his ten or twelve-year-old son Ali to be educated there as an example to others and in order that the boy might be brought up a life of simplicity and service. It was due to the example he thus set that other Musalmans likewise sent their boys to the Farm. Ali was a modest, bright, truthful and straightforward boy. God took him unto Himself before his father. If it had been given to him to live, I doubt not he would have turned out to be the worthy son of an excellent father.

*(To be Continued)*



# GUYANA ELECTIONS: RECOUNT BEGINS AFTER INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE

ARSP Joins International Community and Calls for Credible Procedure

✍ Prof. Gopal Arora



**Bharrat Jagdeo, General Secretary,  
People's Progressive Party**

Guyana is passing through political crisis amidst allegations of rigging of the general elections held on 2 March 2020. After persistent pressure and statements from Foreign governments and international observer bodies over irregularities in the counting and tabulation process, the Guyana election commission (GECOM) began total recount of the ballots under supervision of a high level team from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

The genesis of the current political crises can be traced to the no-confidence motion brought by the Bharrat Jagdeo led opposition party PPP against the ruling alliance in December 2018. President, Granger led coalition government lost the no-confidence motion by a thin 33-32 vote but it refused to resign stating that the motion was not passed by the requisite majority. The consequent legal battle ultimately landed in the

Caribbean Court of Justice, based in Trinidad & Tobago, which ruled in June 2019 that the no-confidence motion was validly passed. The court also ruled, as unconstitutional, the appointment of chairman of Guyana election commission (GECOM) by President Grengar.

Following the orders of the court a new chairperson of GECOM, Justice Claudette Singh, was appointed. The general elections were held much later on 2nd March 2020 after revision of electoral rolls. The Granger government continued in power for more than 14 months after losing the no-confidence vote, an extra ordinary long period for a care taker government! After the elections on 2nd March, the process of counting and tabulation of votes began. Guyana has 10 regions. The Demerara-Mahaica region called region 4 is the largest with over 40% electorates.



**President David Granger**

population of 786,000 of which about 38% are of Indo Guyanese origin.

It may be noted here that the polling booths in Guyana are sparsely distributed owing to its large geographical area. Election is conducted through paper ballots and the counting process starts immediately after the polling in the presence of representatives of political parties and observers.

The result of each polling booth is recorded and countersigned by the representatives and the returning officer in a statement called statement of polls (SOP). All the statements of polls of a particular region are then verified and tabulated in the presence of international observers and representatives of the political parties.

The results of 9 regions were tabulated and finalised which showed Indo Guyanese dominated Bharrat Jagdeo led PPP leading by 52000 votes. Trouble started when the



**Map of Guyana**

Guyana, officially called Co-operative Republic of Guyana, is the only English speaking country in South America. Spread over a large area of 215,000 km<sup>2</sup>, it has a relatively small



Returning Officer of the largest region 4, proceeded to declare the result without verifying the numbers with the Statement of Polls as mandated by

president sworn in on the basis of those results will not be considered legitimate". The US State Department also issues a statement that

CARICOM. The High level team is chaired by the former Attorney-General and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Dominica Ms Francine Baron, and comprise former Minister of Finance of Grenada Mr Anthony Boatswain; Senior Lecturer in the Department of Government of UWI Ms Cynthia Barrow-Giles; Chief Electoral Officer of Barbados Ms Angela Taylor; and Chief Elections Officer of Trinidad and Tobago Ms Fern Narcis-Scope.



*CARICOM High Level Team to supervise recount*

law. These unverified results showed that the ruling party was leading in region 4 by over 56000 votes which gave it an overall lead. The opposition alleged that the vote count of ruling party was inflated and the opposition party had actually won the elections by 17000 votes.

The PPP approached Supreme Court of Judicature in Guyana alleging fraud in counting and tabulation of votes of region 4. The Court passed an injunction restraining the GECOM from declaring final results and ordered that counting and tabulation be done in accordance with law. The impasse continued as the International observers were not allowed in the hall. There was also an attempt to revoke the accreditation of observers. Many international observer bodies threatened to boycott.

The developments evoked condemnations and strong statements from institutions like the Commonwealth Observer Mission, EU, UN, CARICOM, Organisation of American States, Carter Centre etc. The Governments of the USA, Canada, Britain and all EU members, stated through a joint statement by their embassies in Georgetown that "A

"Democratic nations can't ignore this blatant disregard for rule of law" in Guyana. Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad-Bharat (Indian Council for International Cooperation) also issued a statement urging that transparent and credible process be followed to complete the electoral process. The text of the statement is reproduced separately.

In gross violation of court order, the Returning Officer declared the result of region 4 on the basis of allegedly fake SOPs which showed inflated number of votes for the ruling party. The opposition party claimed that the duly signed copies of the SOPs, available in their possession, showed a different picture in which the ruling party has lost the election.

To resolve the impasse, President Granger communicated with CARICOM Chairman, Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados through teleconference, asserting that the GECOM is the constitutional body to complete the election process. CARICOM Chairman Mia Mottley, in a statement clarified that both President Granger and opposition leader Bharrat Jagdeo agreed to a total recount of all the 10 regions under the supervision of high level team of

## **NOTE ON RECENT OIL DISCOVERIES IN GUYANA**

The recent elections have become very crucial for both the ruling ANPU-AFC alliance as well as the Bharrat Jagdeo led opposition party PPP as Guyana is set to benefit from a huge economic windfall owing to discovery of huge oil reserves with the potential to achieve an annual GDP growth rate in the range of 80% over next decade.

Guyana caught attention of the world in May 2015 when ExxonMobil, a US based multinational giant in the field of oil and gas, announced the discovery of high-quality, oil-bearing reservoirs in Guyana. ExxonMobil reported that new discoveries contain estimated resources exceeding 4 billion barrels of oil equivalent, potentially producing 750,000 barrels per day by 2025.

For a country of less than a million people, the find changes everything. Within a decade Guyana could be completely transformed by the find going from unpaved roads and sporadic power to being a developed nation. □



## ARSP JOINS INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN CONDEMNING ATTEMPT TO RIGGING IN GUYANA ELECTIONS

Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad-Bharat (Indian Council for international Cooperation) expresses deep concern regarding recent electoral developments in Guyana and joins governments across the world as well as international organizations/observers to urge that the electoral process follows 'all transparent and credible procedures'. We call upon the Government of Guyana to fully ensure that all due processes are followed to ensure free and fair elections in a transparent manner.

Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP) notes in this connection that the international observer missions from the Commonwealth, the Organization of American States, the European Union, and the Carter Center have called for the transparent tabulation of results for Region 4 be resumed in order to proceed to the announcement of electoral region results. It further notes that Guyana's Supreme Court has already passed an injunction against GECOM

restraining it from declaring the final results without following the due legal process.

The present Government of Guyana was defeated in a 'No Confidence Motion' in December 2018 but refused to resign. The Caribbean Court of Justice, in June 2019, upheld the validity of 'No Confidence Motion' against the government. Subsequently, a new Chairperson of Guyana Election Commission (GECOM) was appointed but elections were conducted much later, in March 2020, after revision the electoral rolls.

The whole sequence of events wherein a caretaker government continued in power for more than 14 months and the Returning officer attempting to declare unverified results in violation of the due legal process has raised serious doubts on the credibility of the electoral process.

There have been reports that accreditations of international

observers were sought to be revoked and that they were asked to leave the premises where the tabulation of votes was taking place for the most populous region 4. ARSP takes note of the statement by Chairman of the Commonwealth Observer Group Mr. Owen Arthur, former Prime Minister of Barbados, urging the Guyana Election Commission and all parties involved to ensure that the process properly follows the legal steps dictated by the laws of Guyana and is in line with country's international commitments.

ARSP has historically maintained close connections with Guyana due to the presence of large Indian Diaspora in the country. It attaches great importance to holding free and fair elections in the best democratic traditions and also to the safety and security of all Guyanese including the People of Indian Origin. □

11 March 2020

## UK GOVT. APPROVED APPEAL AGAINST CLOSURE OF AMBEDKAR HOUSE

A museum dedicated to Bhimrao Ambedkar situated at the north London house where he lived as a student from 1921 to 1922 has been saved after the UK government approved an appeal by the Maharashtra government against its closure.



Communities secretary Robert Jenrick allowed the appeal and tweeted: "I was pleased to grant planning permission for a museum in London to Dr Ambedkar - one of the founding fathers of modern India and an important figure to many British-Indians. I wish the museum every success."

PM Narendra Modi visited the house in 2015. It includes a gallery showing

pictures of Ambedkar and related documents, a reading room where visitors can see and read Ambedkar's literary works and a bedroom thought to have been used by him. There is a statue of Ambedkar in the garden.

While allowing the appeal, Jenrick wrote that Ambedkar was "a major figure in Indian and British history" and the museum would provide cultural benefits and enhance tourism."

By granting retrospective planning permission, the museum - bought by the Maharashtra state government in September 2015 at a cost of Rs 31 crore - will remain at its current site at 10 King Henry's Road. It is the only museum dedicated to an Indian figure in London.

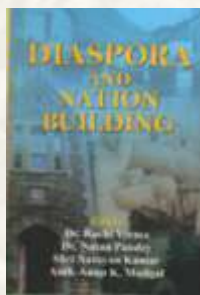
Jenrick, who is the secretary of state for housing, communities and local government, also quashed the enforcement notice ordering the museum's closure issued on November 16, 2018, for breach of planning control after the Maharashtra government converted two flats into a museum without the required planning permission. □



## ARSP's Publication Released in Central University of Gujarat

ARSP publication 'Diaspora and Nation Building' was formally released during the inaugural session of two-day International Conference organized by Centre for Diaspora Studies in the Central University of Gujarat. ARSP secretary Shri Gopal Arora gave brief details of the publication which contains the proceedings of the International Conference on 'Contribution of Diaspora in Nation Building'. The conference was organized jointly by Antar-Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP), Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (AGTF) and Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI) in Mauritius during 5-6 July 2018 and was followed by one day workshop on 7 July 2018 in Reunion Island. Shri Gopal Arora apprised the participants about the activities of ARSP, Diaspora Research and Resource Centre (DRRC) and Centre for Roma Studies and Cultural Relations (CRSCR).

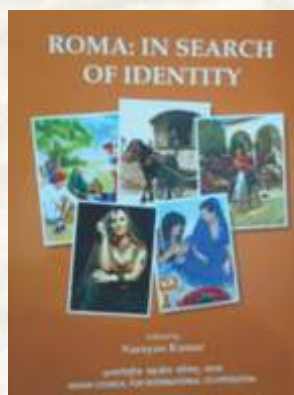
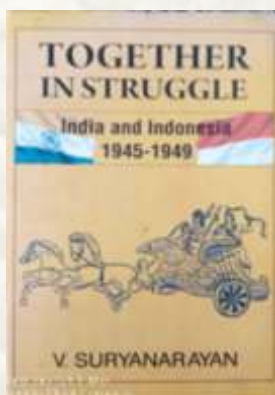
H.E. Mr. Yogesh Punja, High Commissioner of Fiji to India; Prof. Rama Shanker Dubey, Vice Chancellor, Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar; Prof. Yossi Shain, renowned Diaspora Scholar, Georgetown University, USA and Tel



*L to R : Dr. Rajneesh Kumar Gupta, Prof. Ajay Dubey, H.E. Yogesh Punja, Vice Chancellor, Prof. Rama Shanker Dubey, Shri Gopal Arora, Prof. Yossi Shain & Dr. Atanu Mohapatra*

Aviv University, Israel; Prof. Ajay Dubey, Chairperson, Centre for African Studies, School of International Studies, JNU; Dr. Atanu Mohapatra, Chairperson, Centre for Diaspora Studies, Central University of Gujarat; Dr. Rajneesh Kumar Gupta Assistant Professor, Centre for Diaspora Studies, Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar were present on the stage with Shri Gopal Arora. □

### ARSP's OTHER PUBLICATIONS



### 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, 2020

(Keshav G. Parande)



## DIRECT FLIGHTS BETWEEN MYANMAR AND LUMBINI TO BEGIN IN MAY

To boost tourism with Myanmar, Nepal has announced that direct charter flights connecting Lumbini with Mandalay and Yangon will begin in May. The move is part of the "Visit Nepal 2020" campaign to boost tourism to the Himalayan country.



"A charter flight, flying from Mandalay and Yangon international airports, will be able to fly to the new Gautama Buddha International Airport at Lumbini in May, as soon as the airport is operating."

Lumbini, a major Buddhist pilgrimage site, is revered by Myanmar's Buddhists as the birthplace in 563 BCE of Prince Siddhartha Gautama, who achieved enlightenment about 35 years later and became Buddha, the founder of Buddhism.

emperor Ashoka, who erected one of his commemorative pillars there. The site is now being developed as a Buddhist pilgrimage centre, where the archaeological remains associated with the birth of the Lord Buddha form a central feature.

The ambassador said "The new flight route will become a part of celebrations of the 60-year anniversary of our relationship with Myanmar, too. The direct flight route will save time for travellers and we hope there will be more Burmese and Nepali travellers on this route."

Among the pilgrims was the Indian

The Nepalese ambassador to Myanmar Bhim K. Udas, at an event to promote tourism to Nepal held in Mandalay on 22 February 2020, said

Myanmar Vice Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Tin Lattsaid, "Direct flights to Lumbini will save travellers' time and boost tourism to both Myanmar and Nepal. We will begin with charter flights and, after agreements and arrangements are made with the Ministry of Transport and Communications, scheduled flights will follow, hopefully."

## UTKARSH AMBUDKAR, THE INDIAN-AMERICAN, HOGGED LIMELIGHT AT OSCARS 2020

Parasite, the first Non-English film had won prestigious Oscar award for the year 2020, however director of the film Bong Joon Ho from South Korea was not the only Asian to hog limelight at the Oscar night. The night also belonged to Indian-American singer-actor Utkarsh Ambudkar who performed a rap that impressed the audience at the half time of the show piece. The rap gave nods to winners of the night.



philosophical: 'Keep an open mind. I am sure you will find there is plenty of light here for all of us to shine'.

Utkarsh, 36, is son of Suresh Ambudkar and Indu Ambudkar, who had migrated from India to the United States in the 1980s. Both of them are research biochemists at the

National Institute of Health in Baltimore. Despite being part of the showbiz, reports suggested he never considered changing his Indian name to cater to unfamiliar audiences. □

According to the Nepal Embassy, around 500,000 to 600,000 Myanmar Buddhist pilgrims visited Nepal- especially Lumbini, Kathmandu and Pokhara-via India in 2019. According to figures from the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, about 1,000 to 3,000 Nepali tourists visit Myanmar each year.

Currently, there are no direct flights from Myanmar to Nepal. Travellers must transit in Bangkok, Thailand, or in Gaya, New Delhi or Kolkata in India. □

He won a huge round of applause for his conclusion that sounded a bit

## PERSON OF INDIAN-ORIGIN, SUELLA BRAVERMAN APPOINTED AS UK'S ATTORNEY GENERAL

Person of Indian-origin, Sue-Ellen Cassiana "Suella" Braverman, was sworn in as the UK's new Attorney General in British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's reshuffled Cabinet at a ceremony at the Royal Courts of Justice in London on 25 February 2020. The 39-year-old minister, whose maiden name is Suella Fernandes, was born in London to migrant parents from Kenya and Mauritius with roots in Goa and South India. She studied law at Queen's College, University of Cambridge, and went on to complete a Master's in law from the University of Paris. She specialised in public law



and judicial review and is the first female Attorney General to be appointed by a Conservative Party government.

Ms. Braverman's role will involve overseeing the work of the law officers' departments, which include the independent prosecuting authorities, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Serious Fraud Office. She has been MP for Fareham in South-East England since 2015, and has been a vocal supporter of Brexit and has previously served as a minister in the erstwhile Department for Exiting the European Union. As a former member of the Attorney General's panel of treasury counsel, she has defended the UK Home Office in immigration cases in the past. □

## VIVEKANANDA YOGA UNIVERSITY IN LOS ANGELES TO START POST-GRADUATE YOGA COURSE

The Vivekananda Yoga University (VAYU) set up its initial campus in Los Angeles (USA) with a budget of USD 5 million as the world's first yoga university outside India.



The university has now announced the launch of its post-graduate course in the US, along with research into the ancient Indian practice, with admissions beginning in April. Sree Srenath, a professor from Case Western Reserve University, has named its President

and Indian yoga guru HR Narendra as its Chairman. The Master's

programme will roll out from August 2020 under his leadership. VAYU will facilitate collaborative research, credit transfers and joint programmes with multiple premier universities across the world in the field of yoga.

The university was created to help thousands of yoga teachers in the US whose yoga education was limited to 200 or 500 hours of certificate programmes so far. □

## FIRST-EVER KHALSA UNIVERSITY OUTSIDE INDIA TO BE SET UP IN USA

The United States will soon be the host nation of the first Khalsa University campus outside India. A group of NRIs have donated nearly 125 acres in Bellingham, Washington state, and are working to start teaching proposed courses in about a year or so. The work began in August 2019. The university is planning to offer courses in engineering, medicine, law, languages,



accountancy etc besides gurbani research, Sikh history and gurmat sangeet.

Professor Gurnam Singh, former head of the Gurmat Sangeet department of Punjabi University, Patiala, is also involved in the project and stated that classes have started at a temporary campus using digitised material from Punjabi University. □



## Majority of 13.6 Million NRIs Live in Middle East: MEA

There are over 13.6 million Indian nationals living abroad, according to data tabled by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs in Lok Sabha this year, with the highest concentration of NRIs in the Middle East. Citing RBI data, the ministry said that during 2018-2019, USD 76.4 billion was received as remittances from Indians abroad, the

most that any nation's diaspora had sent back. During 2019-2020 (April-September), USD 41.9 billion was received.

The highest number of Indians abroad are living in the United Arab Emirates, where the 3.42 million Indians comprise about one-fourth of all

Indians abroad. The UAE is followed by Saudi Arabia (2,594,947), US (1,280,000), Kuwait (1,029,861), Oman (779,351), Qatar (756,062), Nepal (500,000), UK (351,000), Singapore (350,000) and Bahrain (323,292). □

## Relief for OCI Cardholders as Indian Government Extends Renewal Deadline Till June 2020

Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) cardholders who are either below 20 years or above 50 years of age and have renewed their passports without updating their cards are eligible to travel to India on the strength of the document till June 30, 2020, subject to them carrying both the old and new passports along with the OCI card, stated an official Indian Home Ministry notification issued on 17th December 2019.

The move, welcomed by Indian-Americans, comes after a large number of OCI cardholders in the last few months complained that they were being subject to harassment by both immigration authorities and airline officials in implementing a little-known provision of the OCI, which was not being enforced so far.

The Foreigners Division of the Home Ministry issued an office memorandum directing relevant

government agencies and airlines that OCI card holders not aged between 20 and 50 years who have renewed their passport can travel to India as long as they also display their old cancelled passport in their possession.

The notification asserted that the instructions regarding re-issuance of the OCI card on renewal of passport or on attaining the specified age is a requirement expected to be timely complied by OCI cardholders. □

## Indonesia's First Hindu State University Instituted



In a historic move, Indonesia's first Hindu state university has been instituted. President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo has issued a presidential regulation (Perpres) turning the Hindu Dharma State Institute (IHDN) in Denpasar, Bali into the country's first Hindu state university. Though Indonesia is a Muslim country, Bali has a majority Hindu population. The Presidential regulation states that the

new university, named I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa State Hindu University (UHN), would administer Hindu higher education programs as well as other types of higher education programs to support Hindu higher education programs. The change in status has been declared through a Perpres and is just awaiting the handover from the central government. □

## First Gandhi Convention Centre in Niger



External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and President of Niger Mahamadou Issoufou on 21st January jointly inaugurated the first convention centre established in Africa by India to honour the memory of Mahatma Gandhi whose 150th Birth Anniversary was observed last year. The convention centre has been designed as a spacious, modern and eco-friendly facility, including a 2,000 capacity Plenary Hall, to witness high-level and wide-ranging participation from African Union member states and other high-level conventions. Dr. Jaishankar, the first Indian Foreign Minister to visit the West African country, met PM Brigi Rafini and discussed bilateral ties. □

## INDIAN-AMERICAN DOCTOR GIVEN WHITE HOUSE HONOUR

New York-based Indian-American interventional gastroenterologist, Amit Sachdev, who is focused on developing novel approaches to fight obesity, transforming healthcare delivery, and is passionate about healthcare innovation, is among an exclusive group of 15 people appointed to the prestigious 2019-2020 Class of White House Fellows, the White House said on October 29th 2019. Sachdev has been placed at the Department of Health and Human Services, the White House said. Amit has led large-scale social media campaigns, and he has won numerous awards for his community outreach initiatives and research



accomplishment, evidence of leadership skills, the potential for further growth, and a commitment to service. Those selected, spend a year working as full-time, paid fellows to senior White House Staff, Cabinet Secretaries, and other top-ranking government officials.

presented both nationally and internationally. He has worked in diverse clinical settings, including Bellevue, Kings County, and Los Angeles County hospitals. In addition, he has clinical experience at leading academic centers, including the New York University, Columbia University-New York Presbyterian, Harvard University, and several veterans' hospitals.

"At the Rockefeller University, Amit had the privilege of studying cell signalling with Dr Gunter Blobel, winner of the Nobel Prize in Medicine. He is committed to serving the underserved and has volunteered in many international settings, including missions in Tanzania and India," the White House said. □

The programme select fellows based on a record of professional

Sachdev's work has been published in peer-reviewed literature and

## INDO-AMERICAN SUHAS SUBRAMANYAM INTO VIRGINIA STATE LEGISLATURE

Suhas Subramanyam was officially sworn in as the first Indo-American to the Virginia state Legislature on 8th January. He took oath on Bhagvad Geeta.



Usha Reddi was chosen as the new mayor of Manhattan, Kansas on 7th January. Reddi, who served as pro tem mayor before being selected as mayor and also served as the mayor of Manhattan in 2016 and 2017. □

## BAPS HINDU MANDIR ABU DHABI NOT TO USE STEEL, IRON

The first Hindu temple coming up in Abu Dhabi will not use steel or ferrous materials, it was revealed during the first fly ash concrete pouring for its raft foundation on 13th February. A large contingent of expatriates from Indian diaspora gathered at the site of the Mandir to witness the major construction milestone.



Describing it as UAE's largest single pouring of fly ash concrete in 3000 cubic meters, Ashok Kotecha, spokesperson of the temple committee said: "Usually, [building]

foundations have a mix of concrete and steel. However, as per traditional temple architecture in India, no steel

or iron reinforcements will be used. Throughout the [whole structure of the] temple, the architecture is like several pieces of jigsaw put together without any steel or ferrous materials." Dr. Omar Al Muthanna, chief executive officer, CDA, Dubai, the religious observer from the government, said: "Religion is a key factor to feel at home. We want you to feel completely at home and this is our commitment to you." □



## BHUTAN CELEBRATED HIS MAJESTY THE KING'S 40TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY ON 21 FEBRUARY 2020

Amid cheers and laughter, students from schools in the capital put up performances that touched hearts and resonated love for His Majesty The King as His Majesty turned 40 years on 21 February 2020. Chief Guest at the celebration, Prime Minister Dr Lotay Tshering said that 2020 is a historic year for Bhutan. As the numbers would have it, it is the year His Majesty turns 40, a step into a new decade. Bhutan rejoiced the day a visionary King came into our lives, four decades ago.

The year is also about preparations for Gyalsung, a noble initiative that



emanated from His Majesty's prayers for the people of Bhutan.

The nation is in anticipation of the arrival of Royal baby ever since His Majesty's announcement at the 112th National Day. So, 2020 is going to be all the more special.

Taking inspiration from His Majesty and re-dedicating to work towards His Majesty's aspirations for the country, the Prime Minister announced several programs in the areas of economy, education, health and technology. The programs will be launched over the period of one year.

At an individual level, Prime Minister said one can choose to plant a tree and care for it, adopt a stray dog or commit to manage waste in your neighborhood. Personal commitment such as this, he said, would be the best gift for His Majesty. □

## THEIR MAJESTIES GRACED THE CONSECRATION OF DRUK WANGDITSE LHAKHANG

His Majesty The King, His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, Their Majesties the Gyaliums, His Royal Highness The Gyalsey and members of the Royal Family graced the Consecration of the Druk Wangditse Lhakhang on 5 February 2020. The Prime Minister and government officials also attended the ceremony, along with the people involved in the renovation works.

The *rabney* for the renovated Lhakhang was performed on January 24, with the prayers culminating today, coinciding with the Birth Anniversary of His Royal Highness The Gyalsey. The *sertog* was installed on January 21.

Druk Wangditse Lhakhang is said to have been built in 1715, to serve as the seat of the 8th Druk Desi. It is among the oldest temples in Thimphu, and an important national heritage site. The Lhakhang suffered extensive damage due to the September 2011 earthquake.

Renovation works commenced in 2013, implemented by the division for conservation of heritage sites of the ministry of home and cultural affairs,



with the Royal support and guidance of Her Majesty Gyalum Tshering Yangdoen Wangchuck.

The renovation work was based on drawings of the Lhakhang by Samuel Davis, who visited Bhutan in 1783, and archaeological findings, to determine the size and style of the original, larger structure which had later been made smaller.

Renovation works included enlarging the Lhakhang, adding a *shakhor*, and cleaning and restoring the main Buddha statue, *Choeten Deshegyed*, and wall paintings. The Lhakhang is dedicated to His Majesty The King. □

## SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL, MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PAID A TWO-DAYS' VISIT TO BHUTAN

H.E Mr. Piyush Goyal, Minister for Railways, Commerce and Industry, Government of India returned to New Delhi after a two-day visit from 28th February 2020 and was seen off today at Paro airport by H.E Lyonpo Lknath Sharma, Minister for Economic Affairs. The Indian Minister was in the country at the invitation by his counterpart for the Bhutan-India Start-Up Summit that took place on 29th February 2020 and was a huge success providing



opportunities for Bhutanese start-ups and entrepreneurs. He was accompanied by a 13-member high-profile business delegation led by the Chairman of Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) - Mr. Vikram Kirloskar. The CII delegation of senior executives was one of its largest for an overseas visit.

The two Ministers met on a one to one session on 28th February to discuss a

range of trade related issues. The meeting between the Ministers was highly successful with both sides reconfirming commitment to building strong economic ties. The meeting also agreed to designate and notify new entry and exit points at Jogighopa, Pandu and Agartala to facilitate trade between Bhutan and Bangladesh besides expediting the signing of the MoU between the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India and Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority to facilitate the export of agricultural produce between the two countries. Supporting Bhutanese agriculture

produce and cottage and small industries' products by linking to large retail chains in India was another initiative. The meeting also discussed the establishment of railway links for which an officer from Indian railways is visiting the proposed site currently.

The delegation from India also committed to long term engagement with Bhutan, and interacted with the private sector and start-ups in Bhutan over their two days' stay. The issues faced by Bhutanese exporters and manufacturers was also discussed and arrangement made for speedy assistance to resolve those issues. Befitting the Bhutan-India Start-up

Summit, the business delegation included Mr. Ritesh Agrawal, Founder and CEO of OYO and at 26 years old the world's youngest billionaire.

During the meeting, H.E. Mr. Piyush Goyal assured the Royal Government of the commitment of the Government of India towards Bhutan's development and facilitation of trade between the two countries. His government announced number of assistance and support for start-ups and entrepreneurs including capacity building and training in packaging which is still a challenge for our entrepreneurs. □

### PICTURE STORIES:



9 February 2020: His Majesty The King granted audience to the participants of the 37th Batch DeSuung Training Programme. 126 men and women took part in the training programme, which was especially intended for teachers. The training commenced on 20th January and concluded on 8th February. 4,457 Bhutanese have trained as DeSuups so far since the programme was initiated in 2011. □



24 February 2020: His Majesty The King celebrated Losar with people from various walks of life at the Simtokha Dzong on 24th February 2020. The Prime Minister and representatives of the government, civil service, Zhung Dratshang, armed forces, entrepreneurs, media, and other groups, offered Tashi Lekdhar and prayers at the Kuenrey of the Simtokha Dzong. □

## DAYS TO REMEMBER

in April, 2020

**April 02 : Ram Navami**

**April 02 : International Children's Book Day**

(This day is the birthday of Hans Christian Anderson who is the author of many famous children's stories. Children are inspired to pick up a book and start reading. The aim is to increase children's access to books.)

**April 06 : International Day of sport for Development & 'Peace**

(Sport builds up healthy body and mind. It brings people closer together, erase cultural, linguistic and geographic barriers and promote personal integrity, fair play and honorable competition.)

**April 06 : W.H.O. - World Health Day**

(Each year, a theme is selected for the World Health day that highlights an important area of public health concern in the world. In 2017 the theme is Depression.)

**April 08 : Purnima** ●

**April 08 : International Roma Day**

(The International Roma Day is a day to celebrate Romani Culture and raise awareness of the issues Romani people are facing. The day was officially declared in 1990 in Serock in the honour of the first major international meeting of Romani representatives in Chelsfield, London in April 1971.)

**April 13 : Baisakhi**

**April 14 : Dr. Ambedkar Jayanti**

**April 21 : United Kingdom : Her Majesty the Queen's Official Birthday**

**April 22 : Amavasya** ●

**April 22 : Mother Earth Day**

(Earth and its ecosystems provide life and sustenance to everything. This day aims to raise awareness that we have a responsibility to promote harmony with nature.)

**April 23 : World Books & Copyright Day**

(This day which happens to be the birthday of William Shakespeare, is celebrated as a world-wide tribute to books and authors to encourage everyone to discover the pleasure of reading.)

**April 26 : Tanzania- Union Day**

**April 26 : World Intellectual Property Day**

(The term 'intellectual property' refers to the right of creative people to 'own' whatever they produce, such as literary or artistic works, short stories, novels, films which others should not copy. Intellectual property rights of others should be respected and not violated.)

**April 27 : South Africa : Freedom Day**

**April 28 : Day of Safety**

(The purpose of observing this day is to promote the prevention of accidents and diseases related to the workplace.)

**April 30 : Netherlands : Queen's Birthday**



## राजकुमार शुक्ल : जिन्होंने गांधी और भारत का परिचय एक-दूसरे से कराया

✍ चंदन शर्मा

महात्मा गांधी भारत की आजादी के लिये चली लड़ाई के सबसे बड़े नायक हैं, यह कहने वाली बात नहीं। लेकिन यहीं गांधी जब 21 सालों तक दक्षिण अफ्रीका रहकर 1915 में देश लौटे तो भारत के बारे में ज्यादा कुछ न जानते थे। जितना जानते थे, वह सतही और किताबी था। ऐसे में उनके राजनीतिक गुरु गोपालकृष्ण गोखले ने सलाह दी कि वे कम से कम एक बार पूरे देश का भ्रमण करें। उन्होंने ऐसा ही किया। इसके बाद भी वे तय न कर सके कि उनकी आगे की राजनीतिक और सामाजिक गतिविधियां कैसे आगे बढ़ेंगी।



राजकुमार शुक्ल

इसके कारण हजारों किसानों को कष्ट भोगना पड़ता है, इसकी भी मुझे कोई जानकारी न थी।' उन्होंने आगे लिखा है, 'राजकुमार शुक्ल नाम के चंपारण के एक किसान ने वहां मेरा पीछा पकड़ा। वकील बाबू (ब्रजकिशोर प्रसाद, बिहार के उस समय के नामी वकील और जयप्रकाश नारायण के ससुर) आपको सब हाल बतायेंगे, कहकर वे मेरा पीछा करते जाते और मुझे अपने यहां आने का निमंत्रण देते जाते।'

लेकिन महात्मा गांधी ने राजकुमार शुक्ल से कहा कि फिलहाल वे उनका पीछा करना छोड़ दें। इस अधिवेशन में ब्रजकिशोर प्रसाद ने चंपारण की दुर्दशा पर अपनी बात रखी, जिसके बाद कांग्रेस ने एक प्रस्ताव पारित कर दिया। इसके बाद भी राजकुमार शुक्ल संतुष्ट न हुए। वे गांधीजी को चंपारण लिव ले जाने की जिद ठाने रहे। इस पर गांधी ने अनमने भाव से कह दिया, 'अपने भ्रमण में चंपारण को भी शामिल कर लूंगा और एक-दो दिन वहां ठहरकर अपनी नजरों से वहां का हाल देख भी लूंगा। बिना देखे इस विषय पर मैं कोई राय नहीं दे सकता।'

इसके बाद गांधी जी कानपुर चले गए, लेकिन शुक्ल जी ने वहां भी उनका पीछा नहीं छोड़ा। वहां उन्होंने कहा, 'यहां से चंपारण बहुत नजदीक है। एक दिन दे दीजिए।' इस पर गांधी ने कहा, 'अभी मुझे माफ कीजिए, लेकिन मैं वहां आने का वचन देता हूँ।' गांधी जी लिखते हैं कि ऐसा कहकर उन्होंने बंधा हुआ महसूस किया।

इसके बाद भी इस जिद्दी किसान ने उनका पीछा नहीं छोड़ा। वे अहमदाबाद में उनके आश्रम तक पहुंच गए और जाने की तारीख तय करने की जिद की। ऐसे में गांधी से रहा न गया। उन्होंने कहा कि वे सात अप्रैल को कलकत्ता जा रहे हैं। उन्होंने राजकुमार शुक्ल से कहा कि वहां आकर उन्हें लिव जाएं। राजकुमार शुक्ल ने 07 अप्रैल, 1917 को गांधीजी के कलकत्ता पहुंचने से पहले ही वहां डेरा डाल दिया था। इस पर गांधी जी ने लिखा, 'इस अनपढ़ लेकिन निश्चयी किसान ने मुझे जीत लिया।'

### गांधीजी की पहली पटना यात्रा और चंपारण आंदोलन

चंपारण बिहार के पश्चिमोत्तर इलाके में आता है। इसकी सीमाएं नेपाल से सटती हैं। यहां पर उस

समय अंग्रेजों ने व्यवस्था कर रखी थी कि हर बीघे में तीन कट्टे जमीन पर नील की खेती किसानों को करनी ही होगी। पूरे देश में बंगाल के अलावा यहीं पर नील की खेती होती थी। इसके किसानों को इस बेवजह की मेहनत के बदले में कुछ भी नहीं मिलता था। उस पर उन पर 42 तरह के अजीब से कर डाले गए थे। राजकुमार शुक्ल इलाके के एक समृद्ध किसान थे। उन्होंने शोषण की इस व्यवस्था का पुरजोर विरोध किया, जिसके एवज में उन्हें कई बार अंग्रेजों के कोड़े खाने और प्रताड़ना का शिकार होना पड़ा। जब उनके काफी प्रयास करने के बाद भी कुछ न हुआ तो उन्होंने बाल गंगाधर तिलक को बुलाने के लिए कांग्रेस के लखनऊ कांग्रेस में जाने का फैसला लिया। लेकिन वहां जाने पर उन्हें गांधी जी को जोड़ने का सुझाव मिला और वे उनके पीछे लग गए।

अंततः गांधी जी माने और 10 अप्रैल को दोनों जन कलकत्ता से पटना पहुंचे। वे लिखते हैं, 'रास्तों में ही मुझे समझ में आ गया था कि ये जनाब बड़े सरल इंसान हैं और आगे का रास्ता मुझे अपने तरीके से तय करना होगा।' पटना के बाद अगले दिन वे दोनों मुजफ्फरपुर पहुंचे। वहां पर अहले सुबह उनका स्वागत मुजफ्फरपुर विश्वविद्यालय के प्रोफेसर और बाद में कांग्रेस के अध्यक्ष बने जेबी कृपलानी और उनके छात्रों ने किया। शुक्लजी ने यहां गांधी जी को छोड़कर चंपारण का रूख किया, ताकि उनके वहां जाने से पहले सारी तैयारियां पूरी की जा सकें। मुजफ्फरपुर में ही गांधी से राजेन्द्र प्रसाद की पहली मुलाकात हुई। यहीं पर उन्होंने राज्य के कई बड़े वकीलों और सामाजिक कार्यकर्ताओं के सहयोग से आगे की रणनीति तय की।

इसके बाद कमिश्नर की अनुमति न मिलने पर भी महात्मा गांधी ने 15 अप्रैल को चंपारण की धरती पर अपना पहला कदम रखा। यहां उन्हें राजकुमार शुक्ल जैसे कई किसानों का भरपूर सहयोग मिला। पीड़ित किसानों के बयानों को कलमबद्ध किया गया। बिना कांग्रेस का प्रत्यक्ष साथ लिए हुए यह लड़ाई अहिंसक तरीके से लड़ी गई। इसकी वहां के अखबारों में भरपूर चर्चा हुई, जिससे आंदोलन को जनता का खूब साथ मिला। इसका परिणाम यह हुआ कि अंग्रेजी सरकार को झुकना पड़ा। इस तरह यहां पिछले 135 सालों से चली आ रही नील की खेती धीरे-धीरे बंद हो गई। साथ ही नीलहे किसानों का शोषण भी हमेशा के लिए खत्म हो गया।

चंपारण किसान आंदोलन देश की आजादी के संघर्ष का मजबूत प्रतीक बन गया था और इस पूरे आंदोलन के पीछे एक पतला-दुबला किसान था, जिसकी जिद ने गांधीजी को चंपारण आने के लिए मजबूर कर दिया था। हालांकि राजकुमार शुक्ल को भारत के राजनीति इतिहास में वह जगह नहीं मिल सकी, जो मिलनी चाहिए थी। □

(सत्याग्रह डॉ. कॉम से साभार)

ऐसी ही मनोस्थिति में उन्होंने दिसंबर 1916 में कांग्रेस के लखनऊ अधिवेशन में भाग लिया। इसी आयोजन में उनकी मुलाकात एक ऐसे शख्स से हुई, जिसने उनकी राजनीति की दिशा बदलकर रख दी। इस सीधे-सादे लेकिन जिद्दी शख्स ने उन्हें अपने इलाके के किसानों की पीड़ा और अंग्रेजों द्वारा उनके शोषण की दास्तान बताई और उनसे इसे दूर करने का आग्रह किया।

गांधी पहली मुलाकात में इस शख्स से प्रभावित नहीं हुए थे और यही वजह थी कि उन्होंने उसे टाल दिया। लेकिन इस कम-पढ़े लिखे और जिद्दी किसान ने उनसे बार-बार मिलकर उन्हें अपना आग्रह मानने को बाध्य कर दिया। परिणाम यह हुआ कि चार महीने बाद ही चंपारण के किसानों को जबरदस्ती नील की खेती करने से हमेशा के लिए मुक्ति मिल गई। गांधी को इतनी जल्दी सफलता का भरोसा न था। इस तरह गांधी का बिहार और चंपारण से नाता हमेशा-हमेशा के लिए जुड़ गया। उन्हें चंपारण लाने वाले इस शख्स का नाम था-राजकुमार शुक्ल।

चंपारण का किसान आंदोलन अप्रैल 1917 में हुआ था। गांधी ने दक्षिण अफ्रीका में सत्याग्रह और अहिंसा के अपने आजमाए हुए अस्त्र का भारत में पहला प्रयोग चंपारण की धरती पर ही किया। यहीं उन्होंने यह भी तय किया वे आगे से केवल एक कपड़े पर ही गुजर-बसर करेंगे। इसी आंदोलन के बाद उन्हें 'महात्मा' की उपाधि से विभूषित किया गया। देश को राजेन्द्र प्रसाद, आचार्य कृपलानी, मजहरूल हक, ब्रजकिशोर प्रसाद जैसी महान विभूतियां भी इसी आंदोलन से मिलीं। इन तथ्यों से समझा जा सकता है कि चंपारण आंदोलन देश के राजनीतिक इतिहास में कितना महत्वपूर्ण है। इस आंदोलन से ही देश को नया नेता और नई तरह की राजनीति मिलने का भरोसा पैदा हुआ।

लेकिन राजकुमार शुक्ल और उनकी जिद न होती तो चंपारण आंदोलन से गांधी का जुड़ाव शायद ही संभव हो पाता। अपनी आत्मकथा 'सत्य के प्रयोग' के पांचवें भाग के बारहवें अध्याय 'नील का दाग' में गांधी लिखते हैं, 'लखनऊ कांग्रेस में जाने से पहले तक मैं चंपारण का नाम तक न जानता था। नील की खेती होती है, इसका तो ख्याल भी न के बराबर था।

## हिंदी दुनिया में तीसरी सबसे ज्यादा बोली जाने वाली भाषा हैं

वर्ल्ड लैंग्वेज डाटाबेस के 22वें संस्करण इथोनोलॉज में दुनियाभर की 20 सबसे ज्यादा बोली जाने वाली भाषाओं में 6 भारतीय भाषाएं हैं जिनमें हिंदी तीसरे स्थान पर है। वर्ल्ड लैंग्वेज डाटाबेस के 22वें संस्करण इथोनोलॉज में बताया गया है कि दुनियाभर की 20 सबसे ज्यादा बोली जाने वाली भाषाओं में 6 भारतीय भाषाएं हैं जिनमें हिंदी तीसरे स्थान पर है। इथोनोलॉज के मुताबिक दुनियाभर में 61.5 करोड़ लोग हिंदी भाषा का इस्तेमाल करते हैं।

इथोनोलॉज के मुताबिक दुनियाभर में सबसे ज्यादा बोली जाने वाली भाषाओं में पहला स्थान अंग्रेजी का है और पूरी दुनिया में 113.2 करोड़ लोग इस भाषा का इस्तेमाल करते हैं। इसके अलावा दूसरे स्थान पर चीन में बोली जाने वाली मंडारिन भाषा है जिसे 111.7 करोड़ लोग बोलते हैं। चौथे नंबर पर 53.4 करोड़ लोगों के साथ स्पेनिस और पांचवें नंबर पर 28 करोड़ लोगों के साथ फ्रेंच भाषा है।

वैसे दुनिया की 20 सबसे ज्यादा बोली जाने वाली भाषाओं की बात करें तो उनमें 6 भारतीय भाषाएं हैं।

इनमें हिंदी के बाद बंगाली भाषा का स्थान है जो इस सूची में 26.5 करोड़ लोगों के साथ सातवें स्थान पर है। 17 करोड़ लोगों के साथ 11वें नंबर पर उर्दू का स्थान है। 9.5 करोड़ लोगों के साथ 15वें स्थान पर मराठी, 9.3 करोड़ के साथ 16वें नंबर पर तेलगू और 8.1 करोड़ लोगों के साथ 19वें स्थान पर तमिल भाषा आती है।

परन्तु यदि हिन्दी क्षेत्र की अन्य बोलियों को शामिल कर गणना की जाये तो हिन्दी बोलने वालों की संख्या संसार में सर्वाधिक है। □

## त्रिनिदाद और टोबैगो में विश्व हिन्दी दिवस का आयोजन

भारतीय उच्चायोग पोर्ट ऑफ स्पेन त्रिनिदाद में 18 जनवरी, 2020 को सार्दन एकेडमी फॉर परफॉर्मिंग आर्ट्स (SAPA) सन फरनांडो के सभागार में विश्व हिन्दी दिवस आयोजित किया गया। यह आयोजन भारतीय उच्चायोग ने महात्मा गांधी सांस्कृतिक सहयोग संगठन और त्रिनिदाद और टोबैगो के हिन्दी निधि न्यास के सहयोग से आयोजित किया, जिसमें वहां के हिन्दी छात्रों, शिक्षकों, पत्रकारों, सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक एवं धार्मिक संगठनों के प्रतिनिधियों ने हिस्सा लिया। त्रिनिदाद और टोबैगो के पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री श्री वासुदेव पांडे इस समारोह के मुख्य अतिथि थे। उन्होंने अपने व्याख्यान में कहा कि औपनिवेशिक षड़यंत्र के कारण हमारे देश में हिन्दी की स्थिति निरंतर



कमजोर होती गई। हमें अपनी पहचान बनाये रखने और अपनी संस्कृति की सुरक्षा के लिए इस देश में हिन्दी को पुनः प्रचलन में लाना आवश्यक है। त्रिनिदाद और टोबैगो की हिन्दी निधि के अध्यक्ष श्री चनका सीताराम ने कहा कि हिन्दी का प्रयोग और प्रचार संसार भर में तेजी से बढ़ रहा है। हम भी इस दिशा में प्रयत्न कर रहे हैं लेकिन इसमें और अधिक

तेजी लाने की आवश्यकता है।

इस आयोजन में COP नेता श्रीमती कैरोलीन शिवप्रसाद बचन और सन फरनांडो के डिप्टी मेयर डॉ. फेरी हसन भी उपस्थित थे। चूंकि प्रथम विश्व हिन्दी सम्मेलन नागपुर में 10 जनवरी, 1975 को हुआ था, इसलिए भारत सरकार ने इसी तारीख को विश्व हिन्दी दिवस के रूप में आयोजित करने का निर्णय लिया। भारतीय उच्चायोग त्रिनिदाद विगत अनेक वर्षों से हर वर्ष जनवरी मास में सुविधानुसार किसी तारीख को विश्व हिन्दी दिवस आयोजित करता है। उच्चायोग त्रिनिदाद में हिन्दी शिक्षण और हिन्दी के संवर्धन के लिए निरंतर प्रयास कर रहा है। □

## ब्रिटिश वीजा और

### स्वास्थ्य अधिकार महंगा हुआ

भारत सहित अन्य देशों के लिए लंबे समय का ब्रिटिश वीजा महंगा हो जाएगा। ब्रिटेन में भारतीय मूल के ऋषि सुनक द्वारा पेश किए वित्त बजट में इन देशों के प्रवासियों पर लगाए जाने वाले अनिवार्य हेल्थ टैक्स में भारी बढ़ोतरी का प्रस्ताव है। सुनक ने घोषणा की है कि प्रवासी स्वास्थ्य अधिभार को 400 पाउंड से बढ़ाकर 624 पाउंड (58,699.25 रुपये) किया जाएगा। गौरतलब है कि ब्रिटेन में जन्में सुनक को हाल ही में वित्त मंत्री का कार्यभार सौंपा गया है। वित्त मंत्री ने हाउस ऑफ कॉमंस में अपने बजट भाषण के दौरान कहा, प्रवासियों को राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य योजना से फायदा मिलता है। हम सभी चाहते हैं कि उन्हें यह लाभ मिले, लेकिन उन्हें इसके लिए कुछ शुल्क भी देना चाहिए। उन्होंने कहा, इसके लिए टैक्स में बढ़ोतरी की जा रही है। इसलिए जैसा कि हमने अपने घोषणापत्र में वादा किया था, हम प्रवासी हेल्थ टैक्स को बढ़ाकर 624 पाउंड कर रहे हैं। इसमें बच्चों के लिए घटी दरों का प्रावधान है। नई व्यवस्था के तहत 18 साल से कम उम्र के बच्चों के लिए घटी हुई दर से 470 (44,165.47 रुपये) पाउंड देने होंगे, जबकि विदेशी छात्रों के लिए टैक्स 300 पाउंड से बढ़ाकर 470 पाउंड कर दिया गया है। □

## प्रो. रामजी सिंह और डॉ. दया प्रकाश

### सिन्हा को पद्मश्री सम्मान



प्रो. रामजी सिंह

‘पद्मश्री सम्मान’ से नवाजे गए पूर्व सांसद प्रो. रामजी सिंह का जन्म 1927 में मुंगेर जिले के जमालपुर थाना के इंदुख गांव में हुआ है। वह तिलकामाझी भागलपुर विश्वविद्यालय में दर्शनशास्त्र के प्रोफेसर रहे हैं। बाद में वह राजस्थान स्थित जैन विश्व भारती विश्वविद्यालय के कुलपति बने। वह देश के बड़े गांधीवादी हैं। उन्होंने हिन्दी और अंग्रेजी में करीब 60 से अधिक पुस्तकें लिखी हैं तथा जैनज्म में पीएचडी के अलावा गांधी विचार और हिन्दुइज्म में डी. लिट की उपाधि प्राप्त की। डॉ. रामजी सिंह अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद द्वारा सत्याग्रह मंडप, गांधी स्मृति दर्शन राजघाट में गांधीजी की 150वीं जयन्ती पर 17 एवं 18 सितम्बर, 2019 को आयोजित अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सम्मेलन के मुख्य अतिथि थे।



डॉ. दया प्रकाश सिन्हा

अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद के आजीवन सदस्य और हिन्दी के सुप्रसिद्ध नाटककार एवं रंगकर्मी श्री दया प्रकाश सिन्हा को 2020 के गणतंत्र दिवस के अवसर पर पद्मश्री सम्मान प्रदान करने की घोषणा की गई है। उन्हें भारत के राष्ट्रपति द्वारा यह सम्मान प्रदान किया जायेगा। डॉ. दया प्रकाश सिन्हा भारतीय प्रशासनिक सेवा के वरिष्ठ अधिकारी रहे हैं उन्होंने दिल्ली प्रशासन और उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार में संस्कृति विभाग के सचिव का भी दायित्व निभाया है। श्री सिन्हा ने भारत और विदेशों में हिन्दी भाषा और भारतीय संस्कृति के प्रचार-प्रसार में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई है। भारतीय सांस्कृतिक केन्द्र सूवा (फिजी) में निदेशक तथा भारतीय सांस्कृतिक संबंध परिषद के उपाध्यक्ष भी रह चुके हैं। प्रो. रामजी सिंह और डॉ. दया प्रकाश सिन्हा दोनों को हमारी हार्दिक बधाई। □



## गांधी जिन्दा हैं

गांधी जी की 150वीं जयंती के अवसर पर पूरा विश्व उन्हें स्मरण कर रहा है। भारत सरकार द्वारा प्रगति मैदान, नई दिल्ली में आयोजित विश्व पुस्तक मेले में प्रवासी संसार पत्रिका ने 'गांधी जिन्दा हैं' विषय पर एक संगोष्ठी का आयोजन किया। जिसमें सरकारी तथा सामाजिक स्तर पर वर्तमान समय में गांधी जी के सिद्धांतों की प्रासंगिकता पर गहन विमर्श हुआ। संगोष्ठी के विद्वान वक्ताओं ने कहा कि 'दैनिक रूप से गांधी जी भले ही विद्यमान नहीं हो, पर वैचारिक रूप से वे आज भी जिन्दा हैं। इस चर्चा में मुख्य अतिथि फीजी के हाई कमिश्नर महामहिम श्री योगेश पुंजा जी थे। परिचर्चा में वरिष्ठ पत्रकार श्री अरविंद मोहन, श्री राहुल देव, श्री शोश नारायण सिंह, अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद के महासचिव श्री श्याम परांडे तथा मानद निदेशक श्री नारायण कुमार ने गांधी जी के जीवन के विभिन्न पक्षों तथा सत्य, अहिंसा और सदाचार के माध्यम से शांतिपूर्ण क्रांति करने की उनकी प्रासंगिकता और जीवन्तता पर अपने महत्वपूर्ण विचार व्यक्त किए।



राकेश पांडेय, नारायण कुमार, अरविंद मोहन, श्याम परांडे, फीजी के हाई कमिश्नर महामहिम श्री योगेश पुंजा, राहुल देव व शोश नारायण सिंह

नागरी लिपि परिषद के महासचिव श्री हरि सिंह पाल ने आकाशवाणी से जुड़े हुए गांधीजी के संस्मरणों को बताया। इसी प्रकार दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय के डा. हरीश अरोड़ा ने भी गांधीजी की प्रासंगिकता पर प्रकाश डाला। कार्यक्रम का संचालन परिचर्चा के संयोजक व प्रवासी समाचार पत्रिका के संपादक डॉ राकेश पांडेय ने किया। मुख्य अतिथि श्री योगेश पुंजा ने फीजी के संदर्भ में तोताराम सनाढ्य का उल्लेख

करते हुए गांधी जी के योगदान को याद किया। वरिष्ठ पत्रकार एवं गांधीवादी विचारक अरविंद मोहन ने कहा कि वह चाहते हैं कि गांधी प्रासंगिक ना रहे लेकिन ऐसा हो नहीं पा रहा है। श्री श्याम परांडे ने गांधी के विराट व्यक्तित्व पर प्रकाश डाला और वर्तमान संदर्भों में उनकी प्रासंगिकता को रेखांकित किया। श्री राहुल देव व श्री शोश नारायण सिंह ने गांधी जी के अद्भुत व्यक्तित्व पर अपनी बात कही और गांधी कैसे जिन्दा है यह बताया। कार्यक्रम के आरंभ में 'गांधी जिन्दा हैं' का विषय प्रवर्तन करते हुए श्री नारायण कुमार जी ने विस्तार से गांधी जी से देश-विदेश से जुड़े हुए अनेक प्रसंगों को साझा किया और गांधीजी के विश्वव्यापी स्वरूप और आम जनमानस पर उनके प्रभाव को उजागर किया। श्रोताओं में भी देश के अनेक जाने-माने विद्वत्तजनों ने अपनी उपस्थिति दर्ज की। गांधीजी को लेकर इस प्रकार की संगोष्ठियों का भविष्य में भी आयोजन होता रहेगा, इस संकल्प के साथ यह कार्यक्रम समाप्त हुआ। □

## सिंगापुर में विश्व हिन्दी दिवस का आयोजन

सिंगापुर की स्वैच्छिक संस्थाओं द्वारा भारतीय उच्चायोग के सहयोग से सिंगापुर संगम के तत्वाधान में विश्व हिन्दी दिवस का आयोजन किया गया। आयोजन में भारतीय उच्चायोग सिंगापुर के प्रति विशेष आभार प्रकट किया जिनके कारण यह आयोजन संभव हो सका। उप उच्चायुक्त श्री निनाद देशपांडे जी की उपस्थिति और पुरस्कार वितरण किया गया जिनसे सिर्फ हम साथियों का उत्साह बढ़ाया बल्कि हिन्दी सीखने वाले छात्रों का उत्साह बढ़ा।

इस कार्यक्रम में हिन्दी के विश्वभर में फैले भिन्न रूपों को दिखाने की हमारी कोशिश सफल रही। जब 7-8 साल के छोटे छात्रों से लेकर हमारे बुजुर्गों



तक में हिन्दी मंच पर सक्रिय भागीदारी का जोश दिखा। नुककड़ नाटक का सार्वजनिक स्थल पर सिंगापुर में प्रदर्शन बहुत सराहा गया। छात्रों ने तो अगली बार उनसे नुककड़ नाटक करवाने की माँग भी रख दी। बता मेरे यार सुदामा रे गीत को जिस हरियाणवी अंदाज में नन्हें मुन्नों ने गाया उसकी

काफी प्रशंसा की गई। नर-नारी दोनों का रूप धारी कन्याएँ जब पलक झपकते लड़का बन जाती तो जो रोमांच पैदा हो रहा था। पन्ना धाय एक वीर गाथा में हर छात्र का अभिनय सराहनीय रहा। कितनी ही जगह दर्शकों की आँखों से आँसू छलक आए। दर्शकों की मुग्धता देखते बन रही थी। बोलीवुड के बिना हिन्दी भाषा का विदेशों में इतना अधिक प्रसार न हुआ होता तो उसके सुरीले गीतों को भूलने का तो सवाल ही नहीं था। कविता रस के बिना भी हिन्दी नीरस न हो इसका भी खयाल रखा गया। विश्वविद्यालय के अहिन्दी भाषी छात्रों ने न सिर्फ भारत के संविधान की याद दिलाई बल्कि बरसों पहले पढ़ी कहानी काबुलीवाले को पुनः स्मृतियों में ला खड़ा किया। □

## महात्मा गांधी के मार्ग पर : गांधी स्मृति एवं दर्शन समिति की पहल

महात्मा गांधी की 150 वीं जन्म जयन्ती पर समिति ने देश और दुनिया में समाज के विभिन्न वर्गों के पास महात्मा गांधी के सन्देशों को प्रसारित करने के लिए एक पहल 'महात्मा गांधी के मार्ग पर' का आरम्भ किया गया है। इसके तहत समिति ने भारत स्थित विदेशी दूतावासों और उच्चायोग में सम्पर्क करना शुरू किया है। इस संदर्भ में, समिति द्वारा गांधी स्मृति में भारत में स्थित बोलिविया दूतावास के सहयोग से एक सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम 'शान्ति के लिए संगीत' का आयोजन किया गया। इस कार्यक्रम में भारत में बोलिविया के राजदूत श्री जुआन कोर्टेज

रोजस, समिति के कार्यसमिति सदस्य श्री लक्ष्मीदास, निदेशक श्री दीपकर श्री ज्ञान, बोलिविया के पूर्व मंत्री श्री रिकार्डो काल्ला के अतिरिक्त मैडम जैनी कार्डेनस बोलिविया के अपने संगीत गुप 'कैपीहुआरस' के साथ सम्मिलित हुई और उन्होंने बोलिवियाई संगीत की प्रस्तुति दी। कार्यक्रम में गौड़ इंटरनेशनल स्कूल और ब्लू बैल्स स्कूल गुरुग्राम ने भी भाग लिया।

दूसरी पहल ग्वाटेमाला के दूतावास के साथ गांधी स्मृति में आयोजित की गई। इस कार्यक्रम में

भारतीय विद्या भवन के मेहता विद्यालय के विद्यार्थियों सहित करीब 100 प्रतिभागियों ने भाग लिया। इस अवसर पर भारत में ग्वाटेमाला के राजदूत श्री गिबोन्नी रेने कास्टिलो, फर्स्ट सेक्रेटरी श्री इस्माइलिन थॉमस डेनियल गोम्स और भारतीय विद्या भवन के मेहता स्कूल की प्राचार्या डॉ. अंजू टंडन व ग्वाटेमाला के राजदूत की पत्नी मैडम लेसली कास्टिलो भी उपस्थित थीं। इस मौके पर प्रतिभागियों के साथ संवाद भी किया गया। □