

# ANTAR RASHTRIYA SAHAYOG PARISHAD BULLETIN

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## INDIA-ASEAN SUMMIT: ROADMAP TO NEW REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR ASIA



*Prime Minister Narendra Modi (centre) poses for a group photo with Asean leaders at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.*

India hosted the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit in New Delhi on 25th January, 2018 under the theme of "Shared Values and Common Destiny with the steadfast resolve to reinforce ties with the ASEAN member nations, accentuating three Cs - connectivity, commerce and culture. The delegation of leaders from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) included Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Brunei. The summit saw the commemorative

stamp to mark the 25 years of Indo-ASEAN strong ties. This partnership might have grown just 25 years old, but, India's ties with Southeast Asia go back to two millennia. Anchored in peace, trust, friendship, cooperation, culture, religion, art, commerce, language and literature, such ageless bond is now present in every fabric of the exquisite diversity of India and Southeast Asia.

The ASEAN-India summit is reckoned to be a counter-weight to Chinese aggression and military assertiveness, triggering insecurities

among its Asian neighbours. The matter of utmost worry is the maritime boundary disputes between China

### Think it Over

*The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence.*

*-Rabindranath Tagore*

and many ASEAN countries, and claiming almost all of the resource-laden South China Sea.

Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi remarked, the summit is a historic milestone in a phenomenal voyage that has led India and ASEAN to reinforcing partnership of great promise for their 1.9 billion people. He expressed "India shares ASEAN's vision for peace and prosperity through a rules-based order for the oceans and seas. Respect for international law is critical for this". He further added "strength and resilience" of the India-ASEAN partnership comes "not just from arithmetic of numbers, but also from the underpinnings of the relationship".

Since 2014, PM Modi has lent immense importance to ameliorate "Look East" policy to "Act East" policy for deepening cultural bonds and enhancing diplomatic, strategic and economic cooperation, besides contriving the contours of stable and steady balance of power in Asia.

Minister of External Affairs of India, Smt. Sushma Sawaraj articulated "Buddhism and Ramayana are the two building blocks that conjugate India to ASEAN. There civilizational ties exist between India and ASEAN Countries". She also noted that India has a great number of diaspora in the region which connects the past and future of their relations.

India and ASEAN are of paramount significance in designing a new regional strategy in the wider Indo-Pacific. The two are vital to the formulation of new 'rules of the game' in Asia, at a time when the US-China rivalry is growing and USA is assuming the uncertain role and phlegmatic stand in the region. India possesses ample potential in political and security affairs to offset China's aggressive power for ASEAN, since ASEAN member states show their anxiety about China on the strategic level. What they are seeking is not confrontation but a balance.

India's trade and investment relation with South-East Asian countries have gone up several folds and it has targeted \$200 billion bilaterally with ASEAN Member States by 2022. More than 20 percent of India's outbound investments goes to ASEAN and is seventh largest trading partner of ASEAN.

Over 6 million Indian diaspora in the ASEAN regions—ingrained in diversity and embedded in dynamism — makes an incredible human bond between us. Sprawling network of connectivity has cemented proximity and it has placed India among the fastest growing destination of tourism in Southeast Asia. So, it is imperative

for India to expeditiously enhance the under-utilised forms of the physical, digital and transport connectivity. Southeast Asia and ASEAN countries, being our neighbours by land and sea, have been a cornerstone of the Act East Policy thereby India has to intensify the construction of highways deep into continental Southeast Asia with the utmost priority and exigency.

The upshot of the summit is the Delhi Declaration that underlines the prerequisite for effective implementation of Declaration on the strengthening of ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership for mutual benefit covering a wide gamut of geopolitics, security, soci-cultural cooperation, economics and development. Other important concerns of India were to combat terrorism through multilateral channels as well as to maintain and promote peace, stability, maritime safety and security, freedom of navigation and overflight in the region.

In the declaration, the both sides acceded to "accelerate efforts toward the speedy conclusion of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement". That will bolster India in improving the stakes in ASEAN economies and regional supply-chain networks.

The Delhi declaration has pledged for consolidating counterterrorism ties between India and ASEAN, touching upon controlling the misuse of the internet and the social media, foiling terrorism financing, terrorist recruitment, and a slew of other issues. It has also laid stress on the need of combating cross-border terrorism and depriving terrorists of safe haven and sanctuaries. The Delhi declaration laid out 30 platforms for cooperation, entailing an annual ASEAN-India Leaders' Summit and Seven Ministerial level Dialogues, the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting, and ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC), etc. □

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### EDITOR

**Keshav G. Parande**

(M): 98113 92777

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D-6, Ranjit Nagar Comm. Complex,  
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(M): 93123 05230  
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### PUBLISHER

**Keshav G. Parande**

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

### CONTACT

Phone (O) : 011 - 2323 4432  
Fax: 011 - 2323 2751

### E-MAIL

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

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# REVISITING ASEAN-INDIA RELATIONS

✍ - Suyash Desai

This year, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and India are celebrating 25 years of dialogue, 15 years of summit level meetings, and five years of strategic partnership. India's relationship with ASEAN has improved to the extent that the regional grouping is now the anchor of India's Act East policy. Today, India has 30 sectoral dialogue mechanisms and seven ministerial level interactions with ASEAN, in fields such as external affairs, defense, connectivity, commerce, telecommunications, agriculture, energy, environmental issues, and tourism. India also shares strong bilateral relations with each of the 10 ASEAN member countries.

But the relationship between ASEAN and India has not always been close. India throughout the Cold War was not in favor of involvement in regional organizations, preferring to focus on active participation in global organizations. Apart from this, the geopolitics of the Cold War placed ASEAN and India in opposing ideological blocs. The formation of ASEAN itself was viewed by India as a U.S. measure to contain communism, which was on the rise due to the spillover from the Vietnam War. A series of Indian moves created fissures in the already tense ASEAN-India relationship: India's friendship treaty with the Soviet Union in 1971, its stance on the Vietnam War, its recognition of Hang Samrin's regime in Kampuchea (Cambodia), its selective silence on the Soviet's invasion in Afghanistan and vehement criticism of the American presence in Diego Garcia, India's Peaceful Nuclear Explosion of 1974 and its military (especially naval) modernization in the 1980s.

ASEAN and India did converge on the issue of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and India had modest bilateral relations with a selected few ASEAN countries in the economic sphere. But throughout the Cold War, ASEAN-India relations were

dominated by tensions and mutual suspicion on both sides. The story of ASEAN-India relations throughout the Cold War can be appropriately summarized as missed opportunities due to political mistrust, economic inconsequentiality, and occasional military threats.

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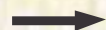
However, changes in the structural factors—like the fall of the Soviet Union, the rise of the parallel forces of globalizations and regionalization, the rise of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Asian Financial Crisis, and the 9/11 attacks—changed India's perception regarding the value of regional organizations. Worsening security conditions and isolation at the international level, alongside the rising balance of payment crisis which India faced in 1991, compelled New Delhi to move from its recalcitrant approach to active engagement with regional organizations.

Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's visit to select Southeast Asian countries marked the beginning of India's Look East policy, with the ASEAN at the center. In 1992, India became a dialogue partner across limited sectors in ASEAN; it achieved the status of full dialogue partnership in 1995. The next year, India was given the opportunity to appear in the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) and became a full member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Membership in ARF gave India the chance to share a high table with big powers like the United States, China, and Russia, alongside ASEAN, on security issues in the Indo-Pacific region. Since then, ASEAN-India relations have continued to mature, apart from the brief period of 1997-2001, when events like India's nuclear tests and the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 saw a marginal dip in engagement. Today the ASEAN and India annual summit is in its 15th year. ASEAN and India celebrated a

“commemorative summit” in 2012 where relations were upgraded to a strategic partnership.

Issues concerning economics, security, and connectivity have always been at the center of ASEAN-India relations. In the year 2016-17, ASEAN accounted for around 10.4 percent of India's exports and 10.6 percent of India's imports. Over the past 20 years, ASEAN's portion of India's total exports and imports is around 9.22 percent and 8.93 percent, respectively, which is a considerable chunk. India signed a free trade agreement in goods in 2009 and an FTA in services and investments in 2014 with ASEAN. Apart from this, India has a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement with various countries of the ASEAN region. This has resulted in concessional trade and a rise in investments; around 10 percent of the total FDI equity inflows to India comes from the ASEAN region.

On the security issues, inclusion in ARF was a major positive for India, which missed out on a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Over recent years, ASEAN and India have seen their interests converge on the issue of nontraditional security in the IOR. Countries of the IOR have repeatedly suffered due to the rise in piracy, illegal migration, and trafficking of drugs, arms, and human on the trans-national level, as well as maritime terrorism. ARF allows India to discuss these issues, which are of immediate concern and can be only resolved on a multilateral level. India has also scored several diplomatic successes at ARF, including maintaining ties after its nuclear test of 1998, isolating Pakistan during the Kargil War, and lobbying against Pakistan's entry in the forum till 2002. Apart from the ARF, the ASEAN PMC and the ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) provide a platform for India and ASEAN to deliberate on the security issues concerning this region. Measures like



the signing of a "Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism," maritime exercises with the navies of ASEAN countries, information-sharing initiatives, and defense agreements with individual ASEAN countries have added a new dimension to ASEAN-India relations.

Connectivity is another important issue of convergence between ASEAN and India, with India working toward formalizing its transit agreements and establishing better connectivity infrastructure with this region through land, water, and air. Relations have also visibly developed in other areas like education, tourism, academic, cultural, social, and scientific cooperation. The "ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress, and Shared Prosperity" in 2004 and

the "Plan of Action" in 2012 highlighted the growing confluence in various areas between ASEAN and India.

Today, three-and-a-half-years into his term, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has already visited eight out of ten ASEAN countries and gives prime importance to the ASEAN-India summit. This reflects the strategic importance of this region in India's foreign policy approach. The upgrade from the Look East to Act East policy with the ASEAN at the core was among the earliest initiatives of the Modi government.

The rise of China has compelled India to put forth its best efforts to engage with ASEAN as a regional grouping. The ASEAN countries have always looked to India for balancing against

China, but India has consistently disappointed them. For India to be a regional power as it claims to be, continuing to enhance its relations with ASEAN in all spheres must be a priority. In this age of multilateral alignment, the geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific region will either be defined by India's engagement and cooperation with ASEAN and the like minded countries, or by a rising China's expansive unilateralism in the Indo-Pacific region.

Suyash Desai is a PhD Scholar in the Center for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament (CIPOD), Jawaharlal Nehru University. □

*(Courtesy-November 18, 2017-The Diplomat-Know the Asia Pacific)*

## R-day OUTREACH MARKS FRESH START IN INDIA'S ASEAN TIES

For the first time ever, as many as 10 heads of state and government participated in the Republic Day parade as chief guests, marking, a new beginning in India's ties with Asean, which acts as the fulcrum of India's act-east policy.



The parade comprised two tableaux by the ministry of external affairs showcasing India's shared heritage, including its ancient cultural and maritime trade links with Asean. There was the strong maritime connect displayed in the form of boats depicting Odisha's festival Bali Jatra and also educational links in the facade of one of the tableaux showing Nalanda University. The other tableau depicted Bodh Gaya's Mahabodhi Temple to highlight India's Buddhism connect with nations in Southeast Asia. This was the first time that MEA presented a tableau. □

### JAPAN FOREIGN MINISTER JOINS R-DAY EVENT

In a special and "unprecedented" gesture, Japan's foreign minister Taro Kono attended Indian embassy's Republic Day celebrations in Tokyo. Japan is for India the most important country in facilitating its Act East Policy.

In fact, Japan was the only country invited last month for the first ever India-Asean connectivity summit here in the run up to the just concluded Commemorative Summit.

Speaking on India's RDay, Kono emphasised that Japan and India

were strategic partners that shared values such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Kono described India as one of the most important partners for promoting Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy. He added that 2017 had witnessed many positive developments in the bilateral relationship.

Sujan Chinoy, Kono warmly recalled the close relationship between the two countries as personally experienced by him when he visited India last year. □

## RAMAYANA—A CULTURAL BRIDGE BETWEEN INDIA AND ASEAN COUNTRIES

We in India are celebrating 25 years of Indo-ASEAN relations but they go deep down the historical lane of two millennia. Among other cultural aspects permeation of the epic stories Ramayana and Mahabharata in the lives of millions of men and women in ASEAN countries plays a key role in building cultural bridges of everlasting friendship. Ramayana does not belong to India only because over the centuries it has become the lyric of Asia and our common cultural heritage. Indonesia had celebrated the first Ramayana Festival in 1971.

Ramayana itself speaks about Bali and Java islands. But the history of its first reaching the ASEAN countries is shrouded in mystery in spite of its widespread popularity, publication of various versions created by these countries over the past centuries, discovery of a large number of panels based on the stories of Ramayana decorating the walls of temples instilling moral and social values in the minds of the people or for celebrating certain occasions.

Ramayana is adopted in a number of spheres of society as a source of leading an ideal life. It is not just a book of beautiful poetry, it is a Dharma Shastra expounding lofty ethical ideal. Episodes taken from them are played in the forms of shadow plays and dance dramas in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Burma. Ramayana ballets in these countries are mesmerizing. The artists become one with the characters playing their roles. They feel sad for the agony of Devi Sita and find it difficult to act as Lord Rama because of their feelings honoring him as a lord. Most of the artists in Indonesia are Muslims but they find a great joy in performing it because it is their own culture.

All over ASEAN countries there are many versions of Ramayana. Kumaradasa composed Janaki-harana in Srilanka in 7th century CE; the Malaysians call it Hikayet Seri Rama; when was it adopted in Cambodia is not known but they call it

Ramakerti; in Phillipines it is popular as Maharadia Lawana. Indonesia had several Ramayana texts composed by the Indonesians themselves. The best known is Ramayana Kakawin written in 8th century which is compared to Bhattikavya. Its author seems to be a genius trans-creating the story in an amazingly simple structure and limpid flow of words. They also wrote Kakavin Janaki and Ravana-vadha etc. The earliest engraved Ramayana can be seen on the walls of a 9th century Shiva temple - Prambanan. The best performance that I have seen is at the court yard of this temple where more than a hundred dance together with thrilling movements. There are some variations as well in the story like when Devi Sita enters fire to prove her sanctity, the God of Fire appears and bows to her saying - it is not an ordeal for her but by her entry into fire Agni Deva itself is purified. The scene is really moving when hundreds of dancers come to the stage with fluttering garments where audience can feel the flames of fire full of sadnenss.

Ramayana has a very strong influence on the Thai way of life, from Royalty to commoners. All the kings of the Chakri Dynasty are given the title of "Rama" because Rama was an incarnation of Vishnu - the sustainer of the world. The former King Bhumipol Adulyadej, ruled as Rama 9th. People of all classes and education levels know the stories from their childhood. King Rama 2nd translated the Indian version of Ramayana into Thai and it is included in school and university curricula. It has become part of Thai literature and has been adapted to suit Thai culture. Ramayana story has been painted on the walls of the Royal temple. Statues of enormous Asuras stand around the temple with their clubs to protect the place. Beautiful pictures of the main characters can be often seen printed on a variety of objects like skirts and shirts. Dolls representing these characters are quite popular with the tourists. Two of their cities are Ayuttya and Lobpuri from Ayodhya and Lavapuri.

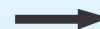
Hindu religion and culture was practiced during the Khmer Empire in Cambodia. Indian immigrants may be traders, mainly from South India going to Indo-China before 3rd Century B.C. might have carried it with them. It is mentioned in Cambodian Sanskrit inscriptions that copies of Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas and Manusmriti were brought by the Cambodians for recitation in temples.



 - Prof. Shashibala

When and how Ramayana occupied a place of pride in Myanmar's heart is a topic for academic debate. But the oral tradition of the Rama story can be traced as far back as the reign of King Anawrahta (A.D.1044-77), the founder of the first Myanmar Empire. In later periods there are ample archaeological, historical and literary evidence to show that Ramayana entered into Myanmar culture at an early date. At old Bagan is a Vishnu Temple known as Nat Hlaung Kyaung which is adorned with some stone figures of Rama and Parasu Rama. The Rama story is depicted in the Jataka series of terra-cotta plaques on the panels of Petcick Pagoda in Bagan.

In a stone inscription in the Mon language, King Kyanzittha (A.D.1084-1113 ) of Bagan dynasty proclaimed that in his previous existence he was a close relative of Rama of Ayodhya. Rama has been continuously present in the cultures of the post-Bagan periods. In all media of visual arts and all forms of literary art, Ramayana was the favourite theme. Contacts with neighbouring countries with Hindu cultural influence such as Linzin (Laos), Zimme (Chiengmei), Ayuthia (Thailand) and Malayu (Malasia) further contributed to the development of Ramayana as the popular theme in Myanmar performing arts.



In spite of the mod and pop cultures through entertainment media, Ramayana remains to stay. New generations adopt Ramayana as the theme of their artistic creations and means of expressing their inner feelings. One modern novelist pen-named Chit Oo Nyo of Myanmar wrote a fiction entitled Achit Shone Thama, Dasagiri (Ravan the Loser of Love) based on Ramayana. With the same

-title a pop song appeared and it was first sung by a note vocalist Accordion Ohn Kyaw and later by a pop-star Hlwan Moe. It is still the favourite of the young. There are yet other novels, short stories and songs with the trappings of Ramayana.

Looking at the scale of insightful bearing of Ramayana on the lives of the people of ASEAN countries it

comes to my mind extemporaneously-

यावत् स्थास्यन्ति गिरयः सरितश्च महीतले/  
तावत् रामायणी कथा लोकेषु प्रचरिष्यति//

Meaning - the story of Ramayana will remain popular in the world as far as there are mountains and rivers on the earth. □

## PM NARENDRA Modi OFFERING PRAYERS AT SHIVA TEMPLE IN MUSCAT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Oman offered prayers at the 125-year-old Shiva Temple in Muscat's Matrah area, one of the oldest in the region.

"Feeling extremely blessed to pray at the Shiva temple in Muscat," he tweeted.

The temple was constructed 125 years ago by the merchant community from Gujarat and was subsequently renovated in 1999.

It has three deities—Shri Adi Motishwar Mahadev, Shri Motishwar Mahadev and Shri Hanumanji. During auspicious days more than 15,000 devotees visit the temple for prayers.

The PM also visited the iconic Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, the main mosque of Oman. It was inaugurated in 2001.

PM Modi said his visit to Oman and talks with the oil-rich Gulf nation's top leadership will impart a "substantial momentum" to all spheres of bilateral ties.

Shri Modi added "this visit has helped in building upon the centuries-old ties between our enterprising people, and will impart a substantial momentum to our relations in all spheres, including trade and investment relations."

He also expressed gratitude to the Sultan and the people of Oman for the tremendous support, goodwill and affection.



PM Modi, held talks with Sultan Qaboos on a wide range of issues.

He said that India and Oman have thriving links rooted in centuries-old people-to-people exchanges. India and Oman signed eight agreements, including pacts on cooperation in the field of defence, health and tourism. □

## PM INAUGURATES FIRST TEMPLE PROJECT IN ABU DHABI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his recent visit, officially launched the foundation stone-laying ceremony for the first Hindu temple in the capital of the UAE, home to over three million people of Indian origin.

He thanked Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on behalf of 125 crore Indians for the construction of the grand temple. "I believe this temple will not be only unique in terms of architecture and splendour, but will also give a message of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (world is one family) to people across the world," he said.

This is the first stone temple to be built in Abu Dhabi off Dubai-Abu Dhabi highway and will come up on 55,000 square metres of land.

The temple will be hand-carved by Indian temple artisans and assembled in the UAE. It will be completed by 2020, and open to people of all religious backgrounds/faiths. □



## PROFESSOR VED NANDA AMONG 85 PEOPLE HONOURED WITH PADMA AWARD

Bharatiya American Ved Prakash Nanda is among 85 people to be honored with one of Bharat's highest civilian honors, the Padma Award, which recognizes distinguished service. Nanda, a professor at the University of Denver since 1965, is a legal scholar and expert in international law. He is the founding director and director emeritus of the International Legal Studies Program; director of the Ved Nanda Center for International and Comparative Law; and was previously a United States Delegate to the World Federation of the United Nations. Prof. Nanda is



*Ved Prakash Nanda*

also America zone sanghachalak for Hindu swayamsevak Sangh.

A total of 85 people have been selected for Padma awards this year, including three Padma Vibhushan, nine Padma Bhushan, and 73 Padma Shri awards. Fourteen awardees are women, and 16 are foreigners or non-resident Bharatiyas. Three people have been honored posthumously.

Prof. Ved Nanda has also been honoured with Bharatvanshi Gaurav Samman by Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Nyas. □

## PADMA AWARDS FOR 16 NRI, PIO, OCI

Sixteen persons under the category of foreigners, NRI, PIO and OCI were among 85 individuals announced the winners of the Padma awards.

Prominent among them were Alexander Mikhailovich Kadakin, former Russian ambassador to India, Sanduk Ruit, an eye surgeon from Nepal and Prof. Tomio Mizokami from Japan a great hindi scholar and linguist. Former Head of the Department of Hindi Osaka University of foreign studies. Did his Doctor of Philosophy University of Delhi and also M.A in Hindi form university of delhi.

Kadakin, who was the Russian Ambassador to India from 2009 until his death in 2017, was given Padma Bhushan. Ved Prakash Nanda OCI (overseas citizenship of India), USA has also been awarded the Padma Bhushan.

The Padma Shri recipients include Jose Ma Joey, the Philippines, Ramli Bin Ibrahim, Malaysia, Bounlap Keokangna, Laos, Tommy Koh, Singapore, Hun Many Cambodia, Nouf Marwaai, Saudi Arabia.

On the Occasion of 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Indo-ASEAN Relations 10 Nationals of Asian Countries have been selected for Padma Award by the President :

1 **Malai Haji Abdullah Bin Malai Haji Othman** (Padma Shri) for Social Work from Brunei Darussalam. He is Founder of the Society for the Management of Autism Related issues in Training, Education and Resources in Brunei - 50 children from the centre visited INS Shakti when it berthed in Muara port in Darussalam.

2 **Hun Many** (Padma Shri) for Public Affairs from Cambodia. Hun Many Cambodia's Youngest Parliamentarian and President of Union of Youth Federations of Cambodia - part of the First ASEAN-India Youth Summit.

3 **I Nyoman Nuarta** (Padma Shri) for Art from Indonesia. I Nyoman Nuarta is an Indonesian sculptor known for works like Garuda Wisnu Kencana Statue (devoted to Vishnu) - one of the pioneers of the New Art Movement in Indonesia.

4 **Bounlap Keokangna** (Padma Shri) for Social Service from Laos. Bounlap Keokangna is a Conservationist who played an important role in the restoration of the Shiva Temple of Bhadreshwara at the Vat Phou World Heritage site in Laos - the Vat Phou restoration project has been one of the symbols of India-Laos Cooperation.

5 **Datuk Ramli Bin Ibrahim** (Padma Shri) for Art from Malaysia. Ibrahim is a Malaysian classical Odissi Dancer and Trainer of 40 years - runs an Odissi production called Ganjam based on Tridhara which is a combination of Tribal, Folk and Classical styles.

6 **Dr. Thant Myint-U** (Padma Shri) for Public Affairs from Myanmar. Dr. Myint-U is a Historian and Author who previously served in the UN - former Adviser to the Myanmar President and founder of Yangon Heritage Trust which works for conservation of historic buildings in Yangon.

7 **Jose Ma Joey Concepcion III** (Padma Shri) for Trade and Industry from Philippines. Joes Ma Joey is CEO and President of RFM Corp in Philippines - appointed Presidential Consultant for Entrepreneurship PCE, has mentored young under privileged entrepreneurs.

8 **Tommy Koh** (Padma Shri) for Public Affairs form Singapore. Tommy Koh is Ambassador-at-large at Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs - he has been one of the strongest supporters of closer Singapore-India ties.

9 **Somdet Phra Ariya Wongsa Khottayan** (Padma Shri) for Archaeology form Thailand. Khottayan is 20<sup>th</sup> Patriarch of Thailand - he got his Masters degree in History

and Archaeology from Banaras Hindu University.

10 **Nguyen Tien Thien** (Padma Shri) for Vietnam-India freindship from

Vietnam. Nguyen is the Secretary General of National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha - Vice-Chairman of the Vietnam-India Friendship Association, he brings large groups of Vietnamese

Buddhist pilgrims to India and educates them about historical and civilisational linkages between the 2 countries. □

## FOREIGN HINDI SCHOLARS TO BE HONORED WITH PADMASHRI

Prof Emeritus **Tomio Mizokami** from Osaka University, Japan, had graduated from the Department of Indian Studies, Osaka University of



*Tomio Mizokami (Japan)*

Foreign Studies, in 1965. Then he studied at Allahabad (Hindi) and Vishva Bharati (Bengali) from 1965 to 1968. He was appointed as research assistant at the Hindi Department of the Osaka University of Foreign Studies in 1968. He did his PhD from the Department of Modern Indian Languages, University of Delhi, in 1972.

He has been serving as the Professor Emeritus of the Osaka University of

Foreign Studies since 2007. He has several Punjabi publications to his name. He received World Hindi Award in 1999 and Dr George Grieson award for outstanding works in Hindi literature from Kendriya Hindi Sansthan Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) in 2001.

**Padma Shri to be conferred on Prof. Habibullo Rajabov of Tajikistan**

Government of India has conferred Padma Shri award for 2018

on Prof. *Prof. Habibullo Rajabov (Tajikistan)*



Rajabov, a renowned Hindi Scholar and Indologist from Tajikistan.

Prof. Rajabov is currently Professor of Hindi at the Central and South Asian Department, Institute of Languages, Literature, Oriental Studies and Writing Heritage, Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan. He has studied Indian languages, literature and history for more than 50 years. Professor Rajabov has written fourteen books and published over 200 articles on Indian philology. His works are well recognized in cultural and literary circles. He has translated several works of famous Indian writers into Tajik language. Professor Rajabov has made immense contribution to promotion of cultural relations between India and Tajikistan. He is the first Tajik national to receive prestigious Padma Shri award from India.



**Alexander Kadakin**

Alexander Mikhailovich Kadakin (Russian: 22 July 1949 - 26 January 2017) was a Russian diplomat and the Russian Ambassador to India from 2009 until his death in 2017. He had earlier served as the ambassador to India between 1999 and 2004. He is noted Indophile. He died from heart failure while in service in New Delhi in 2017.



**Nouf Marwaai**

Nouf Marwaai is a first certified Yoga instructor in Saudi Arabia. She is the founder of the Arab Yoga Foundation in Saudi Arabia. She was instrumental in making Yoga legal and get official recognition in Saudi Arabia. She was awarded India's fourth highest civilian award the Padma Shri in 2018.



**Sanduk Ruit**

Dr. Sanduk Ruit (Nepali ) is an eye surgeon from Nepal who has restored the sight of over 100,000 people across Africa and Asia using small-incision cataract surgery. He is also one of the founders of the Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology. □



## YOGA Big HIT IN NIGERIA

An Indo-Naija Yoga Fest has just been concluded in Nigeria. At the event in Lagos, people practised yoga with great enthusiasm.

Nigerians are experiencing the immediate psychological effects of yoga: decreasing anxiety and increased feelings of emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. The local population is taking up yoga also as a form of mind-body exercise. It's a widespread therapy used to maintain wellness and alleviate a range of health problems and ailments.

Yoga demonstrations had started at the event with the lighting of ceremonial lamps and prayer for the world's health and prosperity.

Participants of a yoga competition held at the venue were judged by the



way of their performance to reach the final stage of asana, perfect postures, exhibition of methods, the time for which one stayed in a given asana and the contestant's return to the original posture.

Awards were presented to outstanding yoga enthusiasts and

committed members of the Afro-Asian Development Community as well as sponsors of the event. There were bouncing castles, food games for children and adults that graced the occasion.

President of the Afro-Asian Community Initiative for Development and Indo-Naija Yoga Fest Sanjayvipul Srivastava stated this at the 2017 Indo-Naija Yoga Festival which took place at the Indian Embassy in Lagos with about 400 Nigerians along with 15 other nationalities living in the city including diplomats of various countries. The fest was attended by counsellor in Lagos Rakesh Sharma. He said that modern science had started accepting yoga and even the United Nations had started observing 21st June as the International Yoga Day. □

## TWO INDIAN-ORIGIN MPs PROMOTED IN THERESA MAY'S GOVERNMENT

Two 37-year-old Indian Origin MPs have moved from the backbenches to junior ministerial positions in Theresa May's government reshuffle. Suella Fernandes and Rishi Sunak are the same age and were both elected in 2015.



*Suella Fernandes and Rishi Sunak*

Ex-barrister Fernandes has been made parliamentary under-secretary of state at the Department

for Exiting the European Union (DExEU) led by Brexit negotiator David Davis. The new role is a step

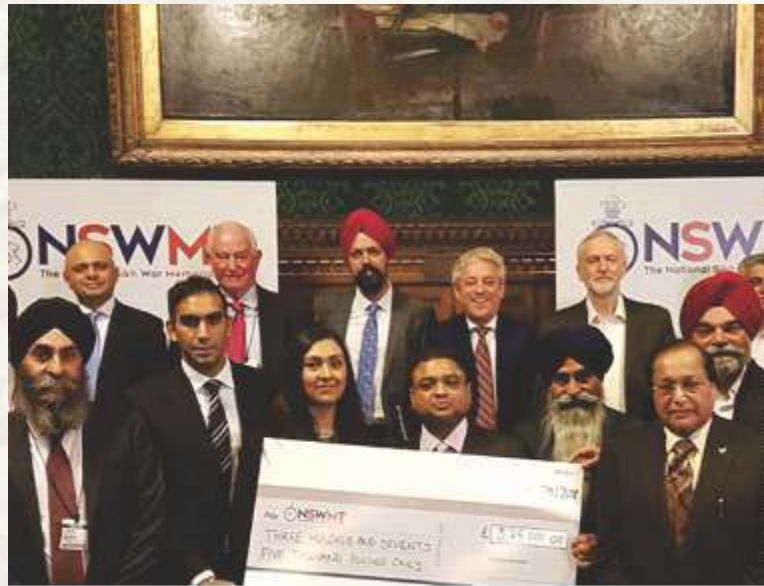
up from her previous low-ranking position of parliamentary private secretary to HM treasury ministers.

Another Brexiteer and hedge fund millionaire, Sunak, the son-in-law of Infosys co-founder and billionaire N R Narayana Murthy, has been appointed

parliamentary under-secretary of state at the new ministry of housing. □

## Sikh Soldiers TO GET NEW WAR MEMORIAL IN LONDON

The UK government has agreed to support and fund a national memorial to honour the sacrifices and contribution of Sikh soldiers who fought for Britain and its allies during the two World Wars. More than 83,000 turbaned Sikh soldiers gave their lives and more than 100,000 were injured during the wars. "We are indebted to all those servicemen who volunteered to serve and fought to defend the freedoms we enjoy today," said UK communities secretary Sajid Javid here on Tuesday as he announced government backing for the new memorial in London. "A Sikh war memorial in our nation's capital will honour their sacrifice and ensure that this part of our shared history is never forgotten. So, I'm delighted to get behind this campaign and ensure its success," he said.



The campaign for a new Sikh war memorial was led by Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi, Britain's first turbaned Sikh MP, who now has the support of the UK's Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to help set up a Working Group to find a suitable location. Once an appropriate site has been identified and detailed plans agreed, the ministry has agreed to provide funding towards the project.

"Given that the Sikh community, which is very proud of its military traditions, there has been a demand for more than a decade for a Sikh memorial in a prime central location in London," Dhesi said. Britain owes a huge debt to the Sikh service men and women who fought alongside British troops in the First and Second World Wars," added London Mayor Sadiq Khan. □

## INDIAN-AMERICANS Hold Rally To Support Merit-Based Immigration

Hundreds of highly skilled Indian workers across the United States - caught in long, agonising wait for Green Cards - held a rally in front of the White House in support of President Donald Trump's plan for a merit-based immigration system.

Flying to the US capital from as far as California, Texas and Chicago and driving several hundred miles from places like Florida, New York and Massachusetts, they urged Trump to end the per country limit on legal permanent residency so as to eliminate the massive Green Card backlog of highly skilled Indians.



Giving Green Cards to thousands of professionals from India would help them realise their full potential and boost country's growth and prosperity, he said. □



President Trump last week used his first State of the Union address to push for the merit-based immigration system that admits skilled people, a proposal that could benefit technology professionals from countries like India. □

## DAYS TO REMEMBER

IN MARCH, 2018

**March 03 : Bulgaria - National Day**

**March 03 : World Wildlife Day**

(The well-being of human race is tied up in many ways-ecological, genetic, social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural and recreational and aesthetic- to the well-being of animals and plants.)

The United Nations General Assembly honoured wild animals plants particularly endangered and protected species, by designating March 3 as World Wildlife Day.)

**March 06 : Ghana-National Day**

**March 08 : International Women's day**

(This day is celebrated as a tribute to the strength and love, that a woman stands for, and the respect, love and appreciation that are rightfully due to her.)

**March 12 : Mauritius - Republic Day**

**March 14 : Sant Tukaram Jayanti**

**March 15 : Shivaji Jayanti**

**March 17 : Amavasya**

**March 17 : Ireland - St. Patrick's Day**

**March 18 : International Nuclear Ban Day**

(This day is celebrated on the birth anniversary of Dr. Nagendra Singh (I.C.S.) Who was born on March 18, 1914 at Dungarpur, Rajasthan. A high legal luminary he was Principal Secretary to the President of India and later Chief Justice of the International Court of Justice at Hague. He was a crusador for Nuclear ban in the World. This

day is celebrated to remind the world the International nuclear ban is absolutely necessary to save the earth and its inhabitants.)

**March 20 : Tunisia - Independence Day**

**March 21 : Namibia - Independence Day**

**March 21 : International Day of Forests & Trees**

(This day provides an occasion to raise awareness about the importance of all types of forests and trees outside forests. There is no a single tree in the world which is nor of any use to human beings.)

**March 22 : World Water Day**

(Water is very essential for human and animal life as well as for agricultural products. It is one gift of nature which is irreplaceable. Yet we use water carelessly. Our sources of fresh water are limited. We must act fast to save our water resources.)

**March 23 : Pakistan - National Day**

**March 23 : World Meteorological Day**

(The science of studying and forecasting weather is called meteorology. Weather plays an important part in our everyday lives. Farmers determine when to harvest the crops. Pilots and sailors watch weather while flying or sailing. The food we eat and the clothes we wear depend on the weather. This day is used for creating awareness.)

**March 26 : Bangladesh - National Day**

**March 31 : Purnima**

### DIPLOMATIC POSTINGS

**Shri Ashok Das** (IFS: 1987), presently Additional Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Federative Republic of Brazil.**



*Ashok Das*

**Shri Pradeep Kumar Rawat**, (IFS: 1990), presently Ambassador of India to Jakarta, has been **concurrently**



*Pradeep Kumar Rawat*

accredited as the **next Ambassador of India to Timor-Leste, with residence in Jakarta.**

**Shri Tsewang Namgyal**, (IFS: 1992), presently Ambassador of India to Cuba has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Poland.**



*Tsewang Namgyal*

**Shri Rajesh Agarwal**, presently Counsellor, High Commission of

India, Port Moresby has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Niger.**



*Rajesh Agarwal*

**Shri Srikumar Menon**, presently Ambassador of India to South Sudan has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Angola.**



*Srikumar Menon*

## JOINT LAUNCH OF LOGO TO COMMEMORATE THE GOLDEN JUBILEE OF DIPLOMATIC TIES BETWEEN BHUTAN AND INDIA



The year 2018 marks the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between Bhutan and India. To formally launch the historic occasion, Lyonpo Damcho Dorji, Foreign Minister of Bhutan and Smt. Sushma Swaraj, External Affairs Minister of India, jointly unveiled the logo for the Golden Jubilee Celebrations in Thimphu and New Delhi through video conference on 12 January 2018.

Lyonpo Damcho Dorji in his remarks said that Bhutan - India relations have been shaped as much by history, culture and geopolitical realities as also by the wise and visionary leadership of the two countries and the belief of their peoples in a shared destiny. He said that while formal diplomatic relations between our two countries was established on 8 January 1968, the history of Bhutan and India's friendly and cordial relations stretches back time immemorial.

Lyonpo said that the golden jubilee is an opportunity to celebrate the unique story of a mutually beneficial partnership and friendship, pay homage to the founding fathers who made tremendous contributions through their tireless efforts to the growth and diversification of the relationship.

He said, "While it is an occasion to reflect on the meaningful collaboration in all spheres of socio-economic cooperation and underscore the

extraordinary achievements of the past 50 years, we also look ahead to a new chapter in our growing relations."

Lyonpo said that, the two countries will meet common challenges and harness emerging opportunities under the dynamic leadership of the two friendly nations.

Lyonpo also added that the golden jubilee of our formal diplomatic relations is an opportunity to showcase to the world the successful relationship between the two neighbours and how two vastly asymmetrical countries can co-exist and prosper.

In her remarks, Smt. Sushma Swaraj said that India-Bhutan relations is built on shared values and priorities, utmost trust and understanding, mutual respect and sensitivity to each other's interests. Smt. Sushma Swaraj fondly recalled the vision, wisdom and foresight of political leadership in India and Their Majesties the revered Kings of Bhutan who laid the strong foundations for this special and unique relationship. She also quoted the famous phrase of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, "Bharat is for Bhutan, and, Bhutan is for Bharat".

The celebrations of the Golden Jubilee will be a year-long event, exceptionally meaningful for the governments and peoples of our two countries. A string of cultural events, shows, exhibitions, business seminars, commemorative events

and inauguration of large infrastructure projects in Bhutan have planned to commemorate the historic occasion in a befitting manner.

### INDIAN COMMUNITY CELEBRATES 69th REPUBLIC DAY



*Gyalpoi Zimpon* (Royal Chamberlain) Ugyen K Namgyel, senior Bhutanese officials, and the Indian community celebrated the 69th Republic Day at the Embassy of India at Hejo, Thimphu on 26 January 2018.

Indian Ambassador Jaideep Sarkar read out the President of India's address.

The speech highlighted India's efforts towards independence and the important aspects of nation-building process such as equality, education, eradication of poverty, disciplined and morally upright institutions and co-existence among and with the citizens and other countries.

India became a republic on 26 January 1950. □

## रामदेव धुरंधर को साल 2017 का श्रीलाल शुक्ल इफ्को साहित्य सम्मान



मॉरीशस के वरिष्ठ कथाकार रामदेव धुरंधर को 2017 का श्रीलाल शुक्ल स्मृति इफ्को साहित्य सम्मान प्रदान किया गया। दिल्ली में आयोजित कार्यक्रम में जाने-माने साहित्यकार गिरिराज किशोर ने उन्हें श्रीलाल शुक्ल स्मृति इफ्का साहित्य सम्मान के तहत 11 लाख रुपये का चेक, शॉल और एक प्रशस्ति पत्र देकर सम्मानित किया। इस मौके पर इफ्का के प्रबंध निदेशक डॉ. उदय शंकर अवस्थी ने कहा कि आज साहित्यकार कलाकार और किसान देश के नक्शे में हाशिए पर बैठा दिए गए हैं। वस्तुतः किसी भी देश के विकास में उनकी भूमिका महत्वपूर्ण होती है। साहित्यकार और कलाकार जहां लोगों को बौद्धिक ऊर्जा प्रदान करते हैं वहीं किसानों के अथक परिश्रम से देश के लोगों को भोजन के लिए अन्न प्राप्त होता है। यही कारण है कि मूर्धन्य कथाशिल्पी श्रीलाल शुक्ल की स्मृति में साल 2011 से ही ये सम्मान हर साल किसी ऐसे हिन्दी लेखक को दिया जाता है जिसकी रचनाओं में ग्रामीण और कृषि जीवन से जुड़ी समस्याओं, आकांक्षाओं और संघर्षों का चित्रण हो। श्री देवी

प्रसाद त्रिपाठी की अध्यक्षता वाली चयन समिति ने श्री धुरंधर का चयन उनकी साहित्य-साधना और व्यापक साहित्यिक अवदान को ध्यान में रखकर किया है। चयन समिति में वरिष्ठ आलोचक श्री नित्यानंद तिवारी और श्री मुरली मनोहर प्रसाद सिंह के अतिरिक्त वरिष्ठ कथाकार श्रीमती चंद्रकांता और वरिष्ठ कवि डॉ. दिनेश कुमार शुक्ल शामिल थे।

सम्मान समिति के अध्यक्ष और राज्यसभा के सदस्य श्री देवी प्रसाद त्रिपाठी ने कहा कि श्री रामदेव धुरंधर मॉरीशस के अग्रगण्य साहित्यकार हैं। इन्होंने किसान मजदूरों के रूप में भारत से मॉरीशस आये अपने पूर्वजों की संघर्षमय जीवन-यात्रा का चित्रण अत्यंत साहसिक एवं साहित्यिक रूप में किया है। इस अवसर पर मॉरीशस उच्चायोग में प्रथम सचिव श्री वी. चिट्टू ने भारत और मॉरीशस के बीच के प्रगाढ़ एवं पारंपरिक संबंधों का उल्लेख करते हुए कहा कि श्री रामदेव धुरंधर को श्रीलाल शुक्ल सम्मान प्रदान करना मॉरीशस के लिए गौरव की बात है। प्रख्यात

साहित्यकार श्री गिरिराज किशोर ने संसार भर में फैले गिरमिटिया मजदूरों को यातना और यंत्रणा से मुक्त कराने में महात्मा गांधी की ऐतिहासिक भूमिका पर प्रकाश डाला तथा कहा कि रामदेव धुरंधर मॉरीशस के ही नहीं बल्कि हिन्दी साहित्य के वरिष्ठ साहित्यकारों में एक हैं। उन्हें सम्मानित कर हम खुद सम्मानित हो रहे हैं।

मॉरीशस के साहित्यकार और इस सम्मान के उत्सव-पुरुष रामदेव धुरंधर ने श्रीलाल शुक्ल के प्रति श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित करते हुए कहा कि इफ्को द्वारा दिये जाने वाले इस सम्मान से मॉरीशस में ही नहीं बल्कि संसार भर में हिन्दी के रचनात्मक लेखकों को प्रोत्साहन मिलेगा। मुझे तो ऐसा प्रतीत हो रहा है कि इस सम्मान के द्वारा मेरे पूर्वज शुभकामना और शुभाषीषा दे रहे हैं। इस समारोह का सफर और सुंदर समायोजन हिन्दी की सुप्रसिद्ध कवियत्री और कथाकार अलका सिन्हा ने किया। □

## अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय गिरमिटिया सांस्कृतिक महोत्सव



में काम करते थे। उन्होंने अपने पसीने से इन देशों को धनधान्य से सम्पन्न कर दिया तथा भारतीय भाषा, परंपरा, साहित्य और संस्कृति को सुरक्षित रखा। आज हम उन्हीं गिरमिटिया देशों में से फीजी और त्रिनिडाड एवं टोबैगो के कलाकारों के कार्यक्रम प्रस्तुत करने जा रहे हैं जिससे इन देशों में भारतीय संगीत परंपरा का आपको परिचय मिलेगा।

फीजी के कलाकारों ने रामलीला के कुछ अंश का मंचन किया और प्राचीन भारतीय शैली में चौपाल एवं समूहगीत सुनाये। त्रिनिडाड के कलाकारों ने गीत, भजन और वहां प्रचलित चटनी संगीत प्रस्तुत किये। सभागार में बड़ी संख्या में उपस्थित दर्शकों ने अत्यंत उत्साह और उल्लास के साथ करतलध्वनि से इन कार्यक्रमों का स्वागत किया। □

अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद और भारतीय सांस्कृतिक संबंध परिषद के संयुक्त तत्वाधान में राजधानी के कमानी ऑडिटोरियम में 07 फरवरी, 2018 को अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय गिरमिटिया सांस्कृतिक महोत्सव का शुभारम्भ परिषद के अध्यक्ष पूर्व राजदूत श्री विरेन्द्र गुप्ता, भारतीय सांस्कृतिक संबंध परिषद के महानिदेशक श्रीमती रीवा गांगुली तथा भारत में त्रिनिडाड के उच्चायुक्त महामहिम देव प्रसाद ने भारतीय परंपरा के अनुसार दीपप्रज्वलित करके किया। इस अवसर पर परिषद के अध्यक्ष श्री विरेन्द्र गुप्ता ने कलाकारों और सभाकक्ष में पधारे गणमान्य अतिथियों का स्वागत करते हुए कहा कि गिरमिटिया देशों में भारतीय श्रमिक बहुत ही प्रतिकूल और दर्दनाक परिस्थितियों में गन्ने के खेतों



## त्रिनिडाड के कलाकारों का अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद, आगरा में सम्मान

अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद की आगरा शाखा और रेस्पेक्ट ऐज इंटरनेशनल ने संयुक्त रूप से फतेहाबाद रोड स्थित एक होटल में त्रिनिडाड से आये गिरमिटिया सांस्कृतिक समारोह में भाग लेने दिल्ली आए प्रवासी भारतीय कलाकारों के स्वागत में एक कार्यक्रम आयोजित किया। हाल ही में इन कलाकारों द्वारा दिल्ली-जयपुर सहित कई शहरों में संगीत के कार्यक्रम प्रस्तुत किये गये। अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद की आगरा शाखा के पदाधिकारी गिरीश गुप्ता ने बताया कि हमारी संस्था लगभग पिछले 50 वर्षों से काम कर रही है और हम त्रिनिडाड में बसे भारतीय मूल के कलाकारों का सम्मान करके हार्दिक प्रसन्नता का अनुभव करते हैं क्योंकि उन लोगों ने त्रिनिडाड में भारतीय संस्कृति को जीवित रखा है। त्रिनिडाड के सांस्कृतिक प्रतिनिधिमंडल के ध्रुव राज ने संस्था के पदाधिकारियों को इस स्वागत-सम्मान के लिए धन्यवाद दिया। त्रिनिडाड की आबादी लगभग 13 लाख है और उसमें लगभग 4 लाख भारतीय मूल के व्यक्ति रहते हैं। जो भारत के प्रति अत्यधिक

सम्मान और सदभाव रखते हैं। इस मौके पर प्रकाश चंद गुप्ता, प्रेम चंद गुप्ता, डॉ. हरीश डॉ. गिरीश गुप्ता, अशोक, रमाशंकर, श्रीवास्तव आदि मौजूद रहे। □



## दूर से आए, हमारे गीत हमें ही सुनाए



प्रसाद के गीतों की प्रस्तुतियां हुईं, जिनमें प्रमुख हैं—कुछ लेना न देना मगन रहना..., सैंया दिल में आना रे. ...., बनारस राजा जैहों..., आज आयो रे नन्द लाल...। कार्यक्रम का संचालन जीतेश श्रीवास्तव ने किया। दर्शकों ने त्रिनिडाड के कलाकारों की संगीत प्रस्तुतियों को बहुत पसंद किया। अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद लखनऊ शाखा के अध्यक्ष श्री दाऊजी गुप्ता ने कहा कि त्रिनिडाड सहित अन्य गिरमिटिया देशों में भारतवंशी हमारी भाषा, परम्परा, संगीत और संस्कृति को बहुत लगन से संजोकर रखे हुए हैं। □



भारतीय सांस्कृतिक संबंध परिषद के आमंत्रण पर अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय गिरमिटिया सांस्कृतिक उत्सव के अंतर्गत त्रिनिडाड एवं टोबैगो के कलाकारों ने लखनऊ के गोमती नगर स्थित बौद्ध संस्थान में आयोजित समारोह में कई गीतों की प्रस्तुतियां दीं, जिनमें भक्ति रचनाएं, फिल्मी गीत एवं लोकगीत शामिल थे।

समारोह में दुबराज प्रसाद, चटनी क्वीन माला समारु, सुनील सीचरन, बिन्द्रा धर्म बचान, रवि

## हिंदी का पहला रोमा यायावरी उपन्यास लोकार्पित

रोमा-विशेषज्ञ तथा अनेक पुस्तकों के लेखक डॉ. श्याम सिंह शशि ने अपनी पहली औपन्यासिक कृति 'रोमा पुत्री के नाम' (आत्माख्यान यायावरी उपन्यास) का लोकार्पण करते हुए कहा कि इस कृति की नायिका भारतवंशी कलाकार है जिसके पूर्वज रोमा एक हजार वर्ष पूर्व अपना देश छोड़कर चले गए थे। वे वर्षों यूरोपीय देशों में विचरते रहे। हिटलर ने हॉलोकास्ट में अनेक रोमा व यहूदियों को जिंदा जला दिया था। लेखक के रोमा-विषयक अंग्रेजी-हिंदी ग्रंथों के प्रकाशन के बाद, उनकी विश्व-यात्राओं पर आधारित हिंदी का यह पहला उपन्यास है। एक रोमा चित्रकार की रहस्यमयी तूलिका से अवतरित हॉलोकास्ट, रहस्य-रोमांच तथा राधा-कृष्ण के चित्र भी। और एक लेखक की कलम से बतियाती उसकी यायावरी आत्मकथा का नवीनतम परिदृश्य।



यायावरी उपन्यास के प्रकाशक किताबघर प्रकाशन (आर्य प्रकाशन मंडल) द्वारा प्रगति मैदान में 13 जनवरी को आयोजित उक्त

सारस्वत समारोह में प्रोफेसर दिनेश चमोला, श्री सत्यव्रत, डॉ. सुशील सिद्धार्थ, रणविजय राव, श्रीमती अलका सिन्हा आदि ने समकालीन साहित्य पर अपने विचार प्रकट किए। इस अवसर पर अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सांस्कृतिक विश्वविद्यालय, इंदिरा गांधी राष्ट्रीय मुक्त विश्वविद्यालय तथा अनेक शिक्षाविद् व शोधार्थी उपस्थित थे। □

## विदेशी कलाकारों ने रामायण के मंचन से मनमोहा



मर्यादा पुरुषोत्तम राम और हनुमान के चरित्र सिर्फ हिन्दुस्तानियों के दिलों में ही नहीं, बल्कि सरहदों के पार भी राज करते हैं। कमानी ऑडिटोरियम में मंगलवार को सिंगापुर के अप्सरा आर्ट्स समूह के कलाकारों ने अंजनि सुत हनुमान की प्रस्तुति में रामायण के तमाम किरदारों को जीवंत कर दिया। तमिल, संस्कृत और हिंदी भाषा के जरिए गीत-संगीत और नृत्य के जरिए हनुमान के चरित्र को विदेशी कलाकारों ने प्रस्तुत किया। एशियान देशों के रामायण फेस्टिवल आयोजन का मंगलवार को तीसरा दिन था। दर्शकों से खचाखच भरे



भी रामायण के तमाम दृश्यों का जीवंत मंचन किया गया।

कार्यक्रम के अंत में वियतनाम से आए चाम ट्रेडिशनल आर्ट ग्रुप ने प्रस्तुति दी। यहां आए कलाकारों का मानना है कि लोगों में शक्ति भरने वाले भगवान श्रीराम के चित्रण से उन्हें अलग तरह की अनुभूति प्राप्त होती है। □



बुधवार को आयोजन का अंतिम दिन है। यहां थाईलैंड, म्यांमार, लाओ, मलेशिया, इंडोनेशियों, बुनेई, सिंगापुर, कंबोडिया व वियतनाम देशों के कलाकार आए हैं मंच पर सीता हरण के बाद माँ सीता से मिलने पहुंचे वीर हनुमान का नृत्य शैलीके जरिए दृश्य चित्र अदभुत था। इसके बाद रावण और उसके असुर दलों के साथ



सभागार में हर कोई टकटकी लगाकर कलाकारों की हर भावभंगिमा देख रहा था। भारतीय कला संबंध परिषद की ओर से आयोजित समारोह में एशियान देशों के कलाकार रामायण प्रस्तुति दे रहे हैं।

नृत्य-संगीत के जरिए मल्ल युद्ध के मंचन पर पूरा सभागार तालियों से गूंज उठा। इसके बाद कंबोडिया संस्कृति और ललित कला मंत्रालय की ओर से आए कलाकारों ने रेमके रामायण का चित्रण किया। इसमें

