

ANTAR RASHTRIYA SAHAYOG PARISHAD BULLETIN

Monthly Newsletter of Indian Council for International Co-operation

Vol. 31 No. 5

MAY, 2018

(16 Pages including Cover)

THE GREATNESS OF INDIAN CIVILIZATION: ITS SPIRITUAL & RELIGIOUS HARMONY AND BROTHERHOOD



His Holiness The Dalai Lama blessing the audience during special lecture

H.H. The Dalai Lama delivered a special Lecture on the 'Role of Culture & Ethics in promoting Global Peace & Harmony'. The program was organized by Antar-Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad in collaboration with Nehru Memorial Museum & Library on 22nd April, 2018 at Teen Murti Bhawan, New Delhi, and said that the greatness of Indian civilization is its spiritual harmony and brotherhood and it has produced the greatest philosophers, thinkers and preachers who gave rise to the Nalanda tradition of Buddhism based

on reason and logical conclusion. His Holiness stated that a vast amount of Tibetan Buddhism came from the teaching and traditions of Nalanda that is known for Buddhist Sites, Monuments and University which attracted students and teachers from across Indian subcontinent, China, Central Asia, and Tibet, were the most significant Buddhist centers for learning in ancient and medieval India. Terming war, terrorism and religious violence a product of materialism, the spiritual leader expressed his sadness over the violence against Rohingya

Think it Over

Freedom of speech and thought matters, especially when it is speech and thought with which we disagree. The moment the majority decides to destroy people for engaging in thought it dislike, thought crime becomes a reality.

BEN SHAPIRO

Muslim in Myanmar. The Rohingya, who had lived for centuries in the Buddhist-majority country, are one the most persecuted people in the world. Myanmar had denied them citizenship since 1982, effectively rendering them stateless.

His Holiness expressed concern over global warming, explaining that the amount of snowfall in Dharamshala, the seat of the Tibetan government in exile, has reduced worryingly over the year because Global warming that has made life difficult for many people. The weather pattern is changing, so is the depletion of water level, people are



From (L to R) Vijay Kranti, Shakti Sinha, H.H. The Dalai Lama addressing the audience, Amb. Virendra Gupta and Shyam Parande

facing problem of water shortage in Africa.

His Holiness talked about the revival of Indian tradition that is very relevant in today's world. World needs a concept of Ahimsa, Karuna and secular values which are indispensable. He said, India has the potential to fuse ancient India's tradition of Karuna, Ahimsa, secular with the existing modern education. He pointed out that the time has come for serious discussion and how to introduce these ancient knowledge and wisdom in Indian educational field. Now it was high time to think seriously and make some practical

proposal for introducing and implementing of the thousand years old India's tradition of practice of 'Kshamta' and 'Vipassana' in order to tackle our emotion. His Holiness affirmed that his new commitment is to the revival of this ancient Indian knowledge and combine the modern India with the ancient India, because the modern education is very important, but that is about material values and things, where as ancient Indian knowledge deals with mind and emotion.

H.H. The Dalai Lama further asserted that we are not seeking independence



Distinguished audience listening to the special lecture by H.H. The Dalai Lama

A.R.S.P. BULLETIN

A NEWS & VIEWS MONTHLY
Published Since 1987

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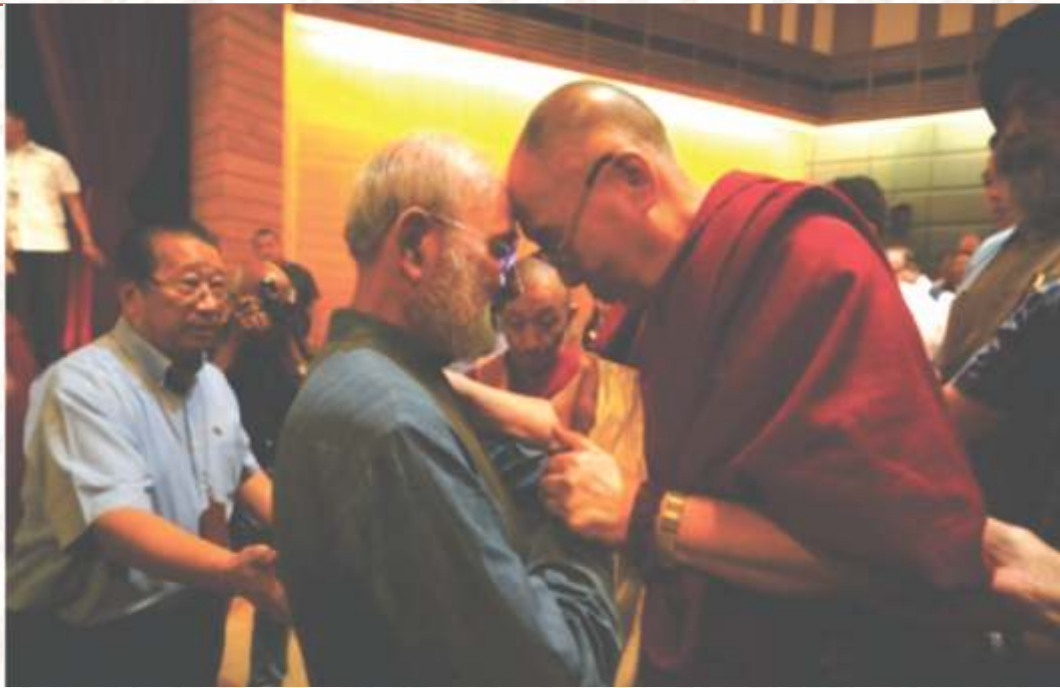
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PRICE

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

of Tibet. According to history, during 7th, 8th, and 9 century, China, Tibet and Mongol were three equal and powerful empires and independent countries. One Chinese scholar told me that from Tang to Manchu Dynasty, no Chinese literature and historical records have ever mentioned that Tibet is a part of China. The Tibetan Spiritual Leader added, the linguistically, geographically and in all aspects, Tibet is a separate country. But we are now in the 21st century, citing an example



H.H. The Dalai Lama and Ex. President of ARSP, Amb. Lakhanlal Mehrotra, Former Secretary, MEA

of arch enmity between France and Germany during 1st and 2nd world war, he said that it is the common interests which bound them and led to the creation of a union of Europe. So long Chinese constitution recognises Tibetan Autonomous Region, Tibetan Autonomous District and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture as Tibetan areas, with the assurance of equal right to preserve our own culture and language then we can remain within People's Republic of China. We can benefit from China's economy and remaining with People's Republic of China, "I think" we can play certainly an effective role in building "Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai" relation.

Welcoming H.H. The Dalai Lama and distinguished guests, Amb. Virendra Gupta, President of ARSP said, we live in troubled times, characterized more by strife, dominance and exploitation, than peace and harmony and understanding and it is not just the individual who shows these straits, but also nations which are trying to dominate, bully, threaten other nations, and trying to indulge in aggressive behavior. In such times, His Holiness is one of the most

calming voices. He is one of the inspirational figures of our times. His Holiness has spread the message of love, compassion, harmony, tolerance, reconciliation, forgiveness, and non-violence. This is, indeed, the eternal message given by great men and our religious figures, which in essence impels us to become a good human being. Amb. Gupta further said what strikes him most about His Holiness is that he is not a dreamer, but realist and a very practical person, very much like the great Mahatma Gandhi who showed our world a way out to solve our differences through peaceful means, by dialogue, education and knowledge.

Shri Shakti Sinha, the Director of NMML, said we are grateful for the fact that His Holiness has promoted the idea of ethics, behavior, and culture, the mind in life and how empathy and compassion are something which can be developed in human beings through the process of meditation.

That it is not pre-ordained, but we are in a position to change our own minds. Shri Sinha pointed out that we had lost the great works of ancient India,

especially the works done in the monastic universities panning from Takshila to Vikramshila, Nalanda to Dantpuri, and many others which were destroyed and burnt. But fortunately, we are blessed to have in our midst the presence of the reincarnation of the BodhiSatva, Avalokiteshvara - the Buddha of compassion.

Shri Shyam Parande, the Secretary General of ARSP, extended his ardent thanks to His Holiness for his blessings and guidance. He spoke, in the midst of the stormy modernization and the winds of globalization, culture and tradition are being the casualty, thereupon your guidance for us this morning will go a long way because this will create harmony between the time tested tradition and the modernization, that you talked about.

Shri Vijay Kranti, being the moderator of the special lecture, said it is because of the leadership of His Holiness, his wisdom, his far-sightedness, and his people's faith in him that India has evolved into the largest reservoir of Tibetan culture over these sixty years of exile of His Holiness. □

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON ROLE OF DIASPORA IN NATION BUILDING AT MAURITIUS (5TH-6TH JULY, 2018)



✍ *Amb. Anup Mudgal*

ARSP will organise a two-day International Conference in Mauritius on 5th-6th July, 2018 on the topic: "Role of Diaspora in Nation Building" in partnership with the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (AGTF) and Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI) from Mauritius. The conference is being organised in continuation of the ARSP's year-long commemoration of the centenary of the abolition of the Indentured system and as a part of the celebrations to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Mauritian independence. The conference would discuss the role of diaspora in nation building, providing a comprehensive perspective from their history to the contemporary developments in political, economic and sociocultural fields as also their future vision. Besides the formal opening and closing sessions, there will be five technical sessions to develop various themes. We expect senior level participation from Mauritius and other countries of the so called 'Indentured Route' and India. This conference will be followed by a day-long round table in Reunion Island on 7 July to discuss diaspora issues there and for exploring closer interaction with the diaspora organisations. The proceedings of the conference will be captured in a special publication which would be submitted to all the stakeholders for follow up.

The Concept

India has historically been a major destination and source of human migration. This two-way movement of people has been going on right from the ancient times taking Indian culture and values to far off places on one hand and on the other converting India into a unique land of continuity with change. Over the many centuries, the Indian emigrants made their adopted countries their home. Coming from a land of historic and natural diversity was a major advantage for the Indian

emigrants' capacity to adapt and accommodate, which has been widely appreciated and valued world-wide.

Today, there are over thirty million members of Indian diaspora settled in over hundred countries. Given their hardworking nature and liberal values of democracy, open-mindedness, tolerance, accommodation and affinity for peace, they have not only assimilated as inseparable members of their adopted societies but have excelled in fields of education, technology and business.

In many countries, the diaspora is making valuable contributions to the development process. They are widely respected as drivers of cutting edge technology, skills and more recently as prominent investors and generators of wealth, prosperity and jobs. In recognition of their all round and constructive contributions to their adopted countries, the diaspora members have also been expanding their footprint into the field of local politics. In a recent conference of diaspora Parliamentarians organised by the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi, over 140 PIO Parliamentarians and Mayors attended from 23 countries.

The diaspora is also making important contribution to the development in India by way of remittances, technology transfer and skills. They are also an important bridge connecting India with their adopted countries thereby strengthening global trust and goodwill for India.

India has long realised the importance of diaspora and has set in motion several initiatives for their closer engagement with its own developmental process. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) has created an important highest level platform for developing new ideas and initiatives as also for addressing the challenges faced by the diaspora.

An important and special constituent of the Indian diaspora has been the countries of the so called Indentured Route, where millions of Indian workers were taken by the colonial powers under the Indentured system for addressing labour shortages in their plantations following the abolition of slavery. Over two million Indian workers were taken to far off lands in Africa (Mauritius, South Africa), the Caribbean (Trinidad and Tobago, Surinam, Guyana) and Pacific (Fiji).

In many of these lands, the descendants of the Indentured Indian workers constituted a significant majority and played an important role not only in the liberation movements of these countries but subsequent nation building process. Besides occupying important political and constitutional positions, they have made immense contribution to the overall socioeconomic development of their respective countries. They have also played a significant role in the preservation of their Indian cultural values and active contacts with their roots. All these countries and societies have a special place in India's outreach for diaspora, including development partnership.

Antar Rashtrya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP) Indian-Council for International Cooperation, a Delhi based non-profit, apolitical organisation has been working for close to half a century for promoting diaspora relations and track-2 dialogue with neighbouring countries for promotion of global peace and brotherhood in the spirit of traditional Indian world view of 'VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM' which means the World is a Family'.

ARSP carries out its work through conferences on relevant themes, exchange of scholars, research and documentation, cultural and educational exchanges, cooperation with similar organisations abroad,

track-2 events for promoting better bilateral and regional relationship, and supporting various Diaspora schemes of the government of India. ARSP also had the unique privilege of hosting a special session with the PIO Parliamentarians who attended the first such official conference in New Delhi in January this year. ARSP is currently in the process of setting up a Diaspora Documentation and Research Centre with the support of Government of India and proposes to carry out documentation and research to cover both historical and contemporary diaspora issues in collaboration with similar organisations in India and abroad.

ARSP has a long history of working very closely with the countries of the so called "Indentured Route" and organised year long activities to commemorate the centenary of the abolition of the Indentured system during 2017-18. In continuation of this initiative and to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Independence of

Mauritius, the ARSP with the support of Ministry of External Affairs, proposes to organise an international seminar on the "ROLE OF DIASPORA IN NATION BUILDING" with special emphasis on the Indentured Route countries in Mauritius on 5-6 July, 2018, followed by a day long round table in Reunion Island on 7 July.

Led by its President Amb Virendra Gupta, ARSP would take a strong 12-15 member delegation from India, comprising academics, experts and former civil servants who have worked on Diaspora matters. ARSP would also wish to invite similar participants from other Indentured Route countries for this seminar. The participating scholars and experts would extensively deliberate on the contributions of diaspora in all aspects nation building from their respective independence struggles to the contemporary developments in political, economic, socio-cultural and technological fields as also their vision for future. ARSP also proposes to

capture the proceedings of the seminar in form a special publication.

The formal opening session on 5 July morning is expected to be addressed by senior leaders to set the stage for subsequent deliberations at the technical sessions, and the closing/valedictory session in the afternoon of 6 July will sum up the discussions and try to spell out the outcomes. There will be three technical sessions on 5 July and two on 6 July and they would be devoted to discussion on the contributions of diaspora in the areas of: i) independence movements and political developments- setting the stage and practices of modern democracy ; ii) establishment and growth of democratic institutions; iii) economic development and modernization ; iv) socio-cultural development including technology and higher education and v) diaspora and nation building- Mauritius, a case study. □

DIPLOMATIC POSTINGS

Shri Krishan Kumar (IFS: 1984), presently Ambassador of India to the Czech Republic, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Norway.**



Krishan Kumar

Ms. Sangeeta Bahadur (IFS:1987), currently Additional Secretary in Ministry of External Affairs, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Belarus.**



Ms. Sangeeta Bahadur

M s . S r i p r i y a Ranganathan (IFS: 1994), presently Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Korea.**



Sripriya Ranganathan

Ms. Narinder Chauhan (IFS: 1985), presently Ambassador of India to the Republic of Serbia, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Czech Republic.**



Ms. Narinder Chauhan

S h r i S a n j a y B h a t t a c h a r y a (IFS:1987), presently Ambassador of India to the Arab Republic of Egypt has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Turkey.**



Sanjay Bhattacharya

Shri Atul M. Gotsurve (IFS: 2004), currently Director in the Ministry of External Affairs, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.**



Atul M. Gotsurve

S h r i R a h u l Kulshreshth (IFS : 1985), presently Ambassador of India to the Republic of Turkey, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Arab Republic of Egypt.**



Rahul Kulshreshth

S h r i S u b r a t a Bhattacharjee (IFS: 1989), currently Joint Secretary in Ministry of External Affairs, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Serbia.**



Subrata Bhattacharjee

Shri Rajiv Kumar Nagpal, presently Ambassador of India to Iceland, has been appointed as the **next Ambassador of India to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.** □



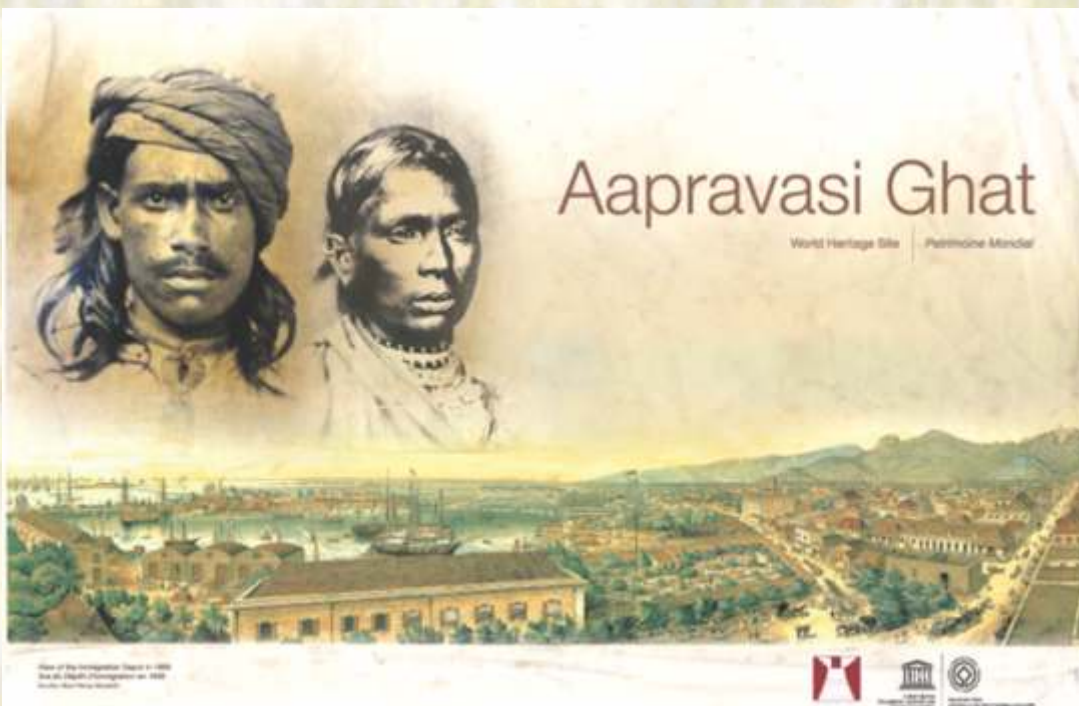
Rajiv Kumar Nagpal

The End of Indentureship in Mauritius

✍ Sada Reddi & Anwar Janoo

Besides the pressure from Indian nationalists, economic and social changes on the ground were also driving towards abolition, particularly in the case of Mauritius.

A number of countries and organisations have been commemorating the centennial of the abolition of the Indian indenture system which came to an end on 10 March 1917. Events and conferences have been organized in India, Fiji, Trinidad and in other countries as well. In Mauritius, two international conferences are scheduled in August and September this year.



It was in March 1917 that recruitment of indentured labour became illegal under the Defence of India Act 1915. Historians have usually highlighted the role of the Indian nationalists in the abolition of indentureship and sometimes indicated the practical reasons behind the decision. While the contribution of Indian nationalists is widely acknowledged, other contributing factors have not been given their due importance. This brief article is an exploratory one, and a summary of an ongoing research into the socio-economic factors which resulted in the ending of Indian immigration in Mauritius.

Nationalist pressure in favour of the abolition of indentured labour can be traced back to the early efforts of Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Mahatma

Gandhi to expose the plight of Indians in South Africa as a major issue of imperial politics. In his first letter to Gokhale, at the beginning of the century, Gandhi wrote: "The question affects not only South Africans but Indians in all parts of the world outside India." In 1901, at the Calcutta Congress, Gandhi succeeded in passing a resolution on the plight of British Indians in South Africa in the Subjects Committee and at the plenary session of the Calcutta Congress.

From that time onwards, the Indian National Congress passed yearly resolutions denouncing the policies of Imperial governments in South Africa but little action followed. In 1910, Gokhale presented a resolution in the Imperial legislative Council to ban emigration to South Africa. Six years

later, on 20 March 1916, Madan Mohan Malaviya moved a resolution in the Legislative Council for abolishing indentureship and recruitment of indentured labour became illegal only in March 1917 under the Defence of India Act.

Although Indian nationalists like Gokhale, Gandhi, Malaviya, Manilal Doctor, Charles Freer Andrews and a number of other nationalists and Indian organisations played a crucial role in bringing about abolition, there were a number of socio-economic factors operating both in India and in the colonies which were also important and needed to be taken into consideration. In the case of Mauritius and in other colonies, these factors operated at different periods and shaped the push-and-pull factors in both India and Mauritius.

ARRIVAL OF MALE INDIAN IMMIGRANTS

1834-1844	64941	1878-1888	13455
1844-1855	95805	1889-1899	9376
1856-1866	74990	1900-1910	10954
1867-1877	26679	1911-1921	
1834-1877	262,415	1878-1921	33,785

If we divide the period on indentureship in Mauritius into three periods—1834-1877, 1878-1900 and 1900-1925—it is evident that the number of Indian immigrants who came to Mauritius after 1878 was on the decline.

The fall in the number of immigrants coming to the island can be explained by certain factors in India. Mauritius had to compete with other colonies for labour. For example, Madras immigrants preferred to go to South Africa, Malaysia and Ceylon rather than Mauritius. Similarly, many immigrants from Bihar not only went to the Caribbean but preferred Fiji to Mauritius. The findings of the 1872 Royal Commission of Inquiry on immigrants in Mauritius damaged the reputation of Mauritius as a destination for indentured labour with the effect that Mauritius became less attractive to potential immigrants.

A second factor, which reduced demand for labour in Mauritius, was the financial difficulties of the sugar industry from the 1860s.

By 1860, the sugar industry had completed its first phase of development. Low sugar prices, competition from beetroot and the abolition of sugar duties in Britain forced the reorganization of the sugar industry for it to remain competitive. The planters reduced the demand for labour while increasing productivity in the industry. New machines, centralization, the intensive use of guano, new varieties of cane, the introduction of railways and the partitioning of land to labourers - all these helped to expand the industry without necessitating the import of as much labour as during the first phase of its development.

The stabilization of the sugar industry was accompanied by the stabilization of the labour force. In the second part of the nineteenth century, the majority of Indian labourers lived outside the sugar estates in villages. The sugar industry employed a core of labourers on the estates while making having recourse to casual labour outside the estate whenever the need arose. There was greater use of female and child labour for certain tasks in the fields. The shortage of labour was offset by the use of job contractors, sharecropping and the employment of

labourers-cum-small planters.

In India, apart from competition from other countries, in the second half of the century, there were difficulties to recruit labour for Mauritius because the emigration agents could not fulfill the quota for women for Mauritius. With the development of indigo plantations in Bengal, textile industry, mining and tea plantations in Assam, some nationalists found that there was no reason for Indians to emigrate when they could obtain better conditions and wages in India itself.

In the late 19th century Indian nationalists and organisations carried intensive campaigns against indentureship through public meetings and pamphleteering. As a result, many potential immigrants were influenced not to go overseas. It is possible that to overcome the reluctance of labourers to come over to Mauritius, sugar estate owners started sending their Sirdars to directly recruit labour from their villages of origin or from their own relatives in India.

In the third period of indentureship, in the first quarter of the 20th century, the outbreak of the First World War and later the epidemic of Spanish influenza (1918) had some impact on labour recruitment for the colonies. The government of India did not want competition with military recruitment. About one million Indians were recruited for the war to serve overseas. In 1918, the Spanish influenza had killed about 17 million Indians. These two events must have had an adverse impact on the labour available for the colonies. Although it is sometimes argued that these two events had negligible impact on the labour market given the population of India was about 330 million inhabitants, yet one can also argue that the geographical areas for recruiting labour were confined to certain regions and the shortage of labour resulting from these two events must have intensified internal migration from the areas of recruitment and consequently reduced the supply of labour for the colonies.

Finally, there is little evidence that the Imperial Government wanted to prohibit immigration to the colonies for

the economic development of those colonies contributed to the wealth of the mother country. Even when they suspended immigration temporarily or even stopped it, they were still exploring ways to improve the indenture system so as to resume immigration.

In 1922, the British Government of India was willing to consider lifting the ban on immigration to colonies such as Fiji, Ceylon and Mauritius if certain improvements were made in the labour legislation. In Mauritius, the local government responded to the demand of the Government of India by passing the 1922 Labour Act by removing penal clauses in the 1878 Immigration law.

In spite of the resumption of immigration in 1923, the experiment proved a failure and the immigrants who had come here were not satisfied with conditions in Mauritius and had to be repatriated. On the other hand, the report of Kunwar Maharaj Singh in 1925, which recommended the termination of indentureship, found that there was an adequate supply of labour in the island and concluded that no recruitment was necessary. It also noted that more than half of the sugar estates found that the supply of labour was adequate in the island. Except for a few big Indian planters, the majority of Indian planters and small planters, labourers were against immigration. He also found "unanimous opposition (to immigration) on the part of independent and thinking Indians from all walks of life."

For all these reasons, one may venture to say that Indian immigration died a natural death in Mauritius.

Given the importance of economic and social forces impacting on the push-and-pull factors in both India and Mauritius, one can tentatively conclude that these factors must be given some weight in explaining the abolition of indentureship. One cannot deny the crucial role of Indian nationalism during the first decade of the 20th century which compelled the Imperial Government to grudgingly make a number of concessions on the issue of immigration, but in parallel, economic and social changes on the ground were also driving towards abolition, particularly in the case of Mauritius.

(Courtesy : Mauritius Times)

PRESIDENT KOVIND CONFERRED WITH THE HIGHEST CIVILIAN HONOUR

On his maiden visit to Equatorial Guinea, President Ram Nath Kovind was conferred with the highest civilian honour of Equatorial Guinea. Addressing parliamentarians, the President expressed gratitude to the people of the country for their warm welcome and said, "It has been an honour for me to pay the first-ever state visit from India to Equatorial Guinea. This is indeed a



President Kovind & Equatorial Guinea President Obiang

historic occasion for our bilateral friendly ties with Equatorial Guinea. We have taken an in-principle decision to open our embassy in Malabo." He further said, "India is keen to strengthen its warm and

The President added, "Guinea is the point where 0-degree latitude meets 0-degree longitude, where equator and prime meridian special." On Sunday, three agreements were signed between India and Equatorial Guinea, in the presence of Kovind and his counterpart Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo. Kovind is on a three-

nation state visit to Equatorial Guinea, Swaziland and Zambia from April 7 to 12. □

DR. B.L. GAUR HONOURED WITH LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

In the Award function organised by Afternoon Voice, an English daily newspaper in Mumbai Dr. B.L. Gaur, former Vice President and senior member of ARSP a social activist, an author and the Chairman of Gaurs Group, was honoured



with the Life Time Achievement Award for unprecedented efforts and contributions made to social upliftment.

Dr. B.L. Gaur is a renowned and distinguished figure in Hindi literature. His creation of eight books on various topics has fame spread across the country. Earlier in 2015, he had also been awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award in the 3rd Global

Festival of Journalism organised in Noida for the promotion of Hindi literature.

Distinguished Personalities of Mumbai were a part of the audience at Rangswar Auditorium at Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishthan. Near Mantralaya, Mumbai-21. The Programme was organised to support Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao Campaign. □

RAMAYANA EXHIBITION CURATED BY STUDENTS OF EMORY UNIVERSITY



"Tell the Whole Story from Beginning to End:" The Ramayana in Indian Painting—exhibition has been launched at Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University (Carlos Museum), which will continue till May 20. Claimed to be first-of-its kind art exhibit which was curated, organized and researched exclusively by Emory students; uniting artwork and classwork; in the class "The Art of an Hindu Epic"; which was taught by professors Ellen Gough and Marko Geslani from Emory's Department of Religion. □

New Indian Missions to be Opened in Africa

The decision to open 18 new India missions in Africa was taken by the Govt. of India recently. The move is seen as a bid to strengthen ties between Asia's third largest economy and the resource-rich continent where China has built a formidable presence in recent years. The 18 missions will be opened over a four-year period between 2018 and 2021, increasing the number of resident Indian missions in Africa from 29 to 47.

India has organized the India-Africa summits-the first in 2008 in New Delhi and second in 2011 at Addis Ababa. The third one in New Delhi in 2015 saw the attendance of all 54 African countries including 41 at the level of heads of governments or states. □

Gurdwara Among 10 Top Faith Places in England

Europe's largest Gurdwara in the UK has featured in a new list of most important faith buildings in England, according to a media report.

The Guru Nanak Gurdwara, in Smethwick, features alongside iconic locations such as Stonehenge and Canterbury Cathedral. The Gurdwara has been chosen alongside nine other places of faith to feature in 'A History of England in 100 Places' which is being run by campaign body Historic England. The Gurdwara, which was built in the 1990s, housed one of the largest congregations in the UK and was the biggest in Europe, a citation by Historic England said."It continues to expand with Smethwick's growing



Guru Nanak Gurdwara

Sikh population," the citation added. "Community is at the heart of the Sikh faith and Gurdwaras are a focal point for communities to come together and get closer to God." The UK is home to over 432,000 Sikhs, according to the 2011 census, making up 0.7 per cent of the population. □

India, Nepal Revive Bid To Bring 22-Yr-Old Mega Dam Project

India and Nepal have decided to get a project conceived 22 years ago moving by preparing a detailed project report (DPR) on the ambitious Pancheshwar multi-purpose dam that can mark a significant milestone in bilateral cooperation that has often been hostage to politics and tricky negotiations.

The two sides have agreed to resume fresh negotiations to resolve critical issues of water sharing and power purchase agreement under the project to try and achieve a breakthrough that has often proved elusive despite potential benefits by way of drought control and flood mitigation besides water ways and hydel power.

Besides generating hydro power to the tune of 4,800 MW, augmenting irrigation potential and controlling floods, the project-a centerpiece of the February, 1996 Mahakali Treaty between the two countries- has potential to address Delhi's growing water demand through a proposed Sarada-Yamuna interlinking of rivers.

"Both countries agreed to speed up their efforts during the general body meeting (GBM) of the Pancheshwar

project at Kathmandu, Nepal on April 27," an official said. The effort to quicken cooperation during the recent visit of Nepal PM KP Sharma Oli could inject some momentum into the efforts, it is hoped.

Both the countries can jointly undertake execution of the project only after finalization of the DPR comprising all components of technical works, sharing modalities and financial details. The Indian delegation to Nepal for the GBM was led by Union water resources secretary UP Singh.

Though both India and Nepal had agreed on the quantum of electricity to be sold by Nepal to India, nor on its price. Some experts remain in quite sceptical over its very concept due to what they say are the plan's inherent weaknesses. "This project is not viable. It'll not only be damaging to the environment but also from the seismic point of view," said Himanshu Thakkar of the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People (SANDRP). Thakkar, an engineer from IIT Mumbai, said, "We have written to the expert appraisal committee (EAC) of



the environment ministry, giving scientific evidence of the dangers associated with it. Disaster potential of this project is very high due to possibility of reservoir induced seismicity in the earthquake prone zone." There are differing opinions too with the Tehri dam seen as a success despite seismic risks and reports on its utility in reducing the impact of the 2013 Uttarakhand cloud burst.

The proposal was considered by the EAC for river valley and hydroelectric projects of the environment ministry. On the basis of its recommendations, the terms of reference for environmental impact assessment (EIA) studies were issued in October 2016. □

(Courtesy : Time of India)

NEPAL SAYS 'NO' TO CHINA'S OFFER TO FUND HYDRO PROJECT

The Nepal government has said "no" to China to build the Budhi Gandaki hydropower project that was awarded to a Chinese firm by the previous Prachanda-led dispensation in 2016. The previous government had also asked China to list the project under the its Belt and Road Initiative, of which Nepal is a part.

The decision by the current government came as relief to New Delhi amid fears that Beijing's investment would surpass in Nepal and would lessen India's clout. The Prachanda government, without any tendering, had decided to award the contract to China Gezhouba Group Company.

Nepal's Energy minister Barsha Man Pun said the government will call for global tenders to develop the project that is expected to generate 1,200 MW electricity. Its total cost is estimated to be \$2.73 billion. □

INDIAN GRADUATES GAINED MOST FROM US JOB TRAINING PROGRAMME

Indians were the largest group among the nearly 1.5 million foreign graduate students of the US colleges and universities who got authorisation to remain and work in America between 2004 and 2016, according to a study of government figures by the Pew Research Centre.

Chinese students were the second largest group followed by the South

Koreans.

"Graduates from India made up the largest share of those authorised to work under the OPT (optional training programme) during this period, with 441,400 (30% of the total)," Pew Research Center said in a report based on the analysis of the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which it obtained

through a Freedom and Information Act request.

The OPT is a type of work authorisation provided by the US under the F-1 visa programme that allows foreign students to be temporarily employed for up to 12 or 36 months in a field that is directly related to their area of study. □

TWO INDIAN-AMERICANS IN RACE FOR NY CONGRESS SEAT



Omar Vaid and Mohan Radhakrishnan

2016 presidential polls. Vaid and Mohan seek to unseat Donovan. But before that they need to win the Democratic party primary for which at present more than half a dozen candidates are in the race.

Son of two immigrant parents of Gujarati-Indian heritage, Vaid grew up as a Muslim in Illinois and Florida, according to his campaign website. As a member of the Democratic Party, he believes diversity is an asset and that all voices must be included, it says.

A labour union leader, Mohan has been a resident of New York's Staten Island for over 27 years. He is an eminent community leader and a member of the Staten Island Hindu Temple Board. "Our democracy and country is going through a difficult time under the current administration and we should not let it go too far," he said.

Right now there are four Indian-Americans in the US House of Representatives. In addition to Ami Bera from California who is serving his third term, Ro Khanna from California, Raja Krishnamoorthi from Illinois and Pramila Jayapal from Washington were elected in 2016. They have informally formed the "Samosa Caucus". □

(PTI)

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Mohan Singh Dabas

Visit to Bhutan by Indian Foreign Secretary

His Excellency Shri Vijay Keshav Gokhale, the Foreign Secretary of India, visited Bhutan on 1 April 2018.

Foreign Secretary Gokhale received an audience with His Majesty The King and called on *Dasho*TsheringTobgay, Prime Minister, and also met with Mr. SonamTshong, Foreign Secretary of Bhutan, and other senior officials of the Royal Government.

During the visit, the two sides reviewed and updated each other on the several areas of development cooperation including in hydro power and trade, the Golden Jubilee celebrations to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relation between the two countries and other matters of mutual interest.



The visit of the Indian Foreign Secretary reinforces the tradition of regular high-level exchanges between the two countries and strengthens the age-old friendship between Bhutan and India. □

Fourth Royal Bhutan Flower Exhibition in Punakha



His Majesty The King, His Majesty the Fourth King, Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen (Queen) and members of the Royal Family graced the opening of the 4th Royal Bhutan Flower Exhibition on 25 April 2018 at the Thangzonga in Punakha District.

The exhibition this year celebrates Bhutan-India friendship as the two countries mark 50 years of diplomatic

relations. The Ambassador of India to Bhutan participated in the opening ceremony of the exhibition, which includes an Indian Garden developed by the Indian Embassy in Thimphu.

The Prime Minister, senior government officials, and foreign dignitaries also attended the opening ceremony of the exhibition. The 4th Royal Bhutan Flower Exhibition is spread over 9.75 acres of the Thangzonga ground adjacent to PunakhaDzong. Government agencies, entrepreneurs, and international participants from India as well as Thailand have prepared the

installations and theme gardens. The Central Monastic Body, which resides in Punakha during winter months, has also participated in the exhibition this year for the first time, along with two schools – Punakha Central School and UgyenAcademy.

The theme gardens developed for the exhibition include some that will remain a permanent feature of the Thangzonga following the exhibition.



A long-term plan to develop the landscape around PunakhaDzong has been developed by the Ministry of

Agriculture and Forests (MoAF) in consultation with the Department of Culture and Punakha Dzongkhag (District) Administration. The activities shall be carried out in phases following the Royal Bhutan Flower Exhibition 2018.

The MoAF manages the Royal Bhutan Flower Exhibition, with the support and participation of a number of agencies, entrepreneurs, and international partners such as Thailand's Royal Project Foundation.

The Royal Bhutan Flower Exhibition was initiated upon the Royal Command of His Majesty The King, and is aimed towards fostering an appreciation for beautiful public spaces, bringing together communities through public events, and providing a platform for entrepreneurship in floriculture and horticulture in Bhutan. The first Royal Bhutan Flower Exhibition was held at Paro Ugyen Pelri Palace in April 2015.



Her Majesty the Queen Mother Tshering Yangdon Wangchuck, as the Royal Patron for the Royal Bhutan Flower Exhibition, works closely with the event each year. □

DAYS TO REMEMBER

IN JUNE, 2018

June 01 : Global Day of Parents

(This day is observed with the purpose of honouring parents throughout the world. It gives people an opportunity to appreciate the vital role parents play in the development of families)

June 20 : World Refugee Day

(This day was established to honour the courage, strength and determination of men, women and children who are forced to flee their homes under threat of persecution, conflict and violence.)

June 05 : World Environment Day

(Programmes concerning environment are observed throughout the year and they reach a climax on this day. The U.N. creates awareness and encourages political attention to protect the environment.)

June 21 : International Yoga Day

(Promoted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and approved by the United Nations, the World started Observing the International Yoga Day from 2015.) This Day is Also Served as World Music Day.

June 09 : Sant Kabir : Birth Anniversary

June 25 : Croatia - Statehood Day (National Day of Croatia)

June 12 : Russia : The day of Russia

June 26 : Madagascar : National Day

June 12 : Nurses Day

June 28 : Purnima ● □

June 13 : Amavasya ●

प्रवासी भारतीयों में हिन्दी की कहानी का लोकार्पण



महात्मा गांधी अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय हिन्दी विश्वविद्यालय के कुलपति डॉ. गिरीश्वर मिश्र व्याख्यान देते हुए मंच पर बाये से सर्वश्री श्याम परांडे, कमल किशोर गोयनका, डी.पी.सिन्हा, वीरेन्द्र गुप्ता, प्रो. सुरेन्द्र गंभीर, सरिता बुधु एवं वशिनी शर्मा

अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद् के तत्वाधान में 11 अप्रैल, 2018 को यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ पेन्सिलवानिया के पूर्व आचार्य तथा विख्यात भाषाविद् प्रो. सुरेन्द्र गंभीर द्वारा संपादित 'प्रवासी भारतीयों में हिन्दी की कहानी' के लोकार्पण समारोह के मुख्य अतिथि और महात्मा गांधी अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय हिन्दी विश्वविद्यालय के कुलपति प्रो. गिरीश्वर मिश्र ने कहा कि 'हिन्दी को विश्व-भाषा का दर्जा दिलाने में प्रवासी भारतीयों की महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका रही है। वैसे तो भारत से बाहर के देशों में जाने की परम्परा का लम्बा इतिहास है जिसका परिचय इस पुस्तक में दिया गया है परंतु अंग्रेजों की उपनिवेशवादी प्रवृत्ति की चपेट में उन्नीसवीं शताब्दी में उत्तर और दक्षिण भारत के लोग अच्छे भविष्य के लिए देश छोड़कर त्रिनिदाद, फीजी, गयाना, सूरीनाम, मॉरीशस और दक्षिण अफ्रीका जैसे देशों में श्रमिक के रूप में जा पहुंचे थे। उनके साथ भारत की भाषाएं और संस्कृति के विविध रूप भी उन देशों में पहुंचे। आरंभ में इन भारतीयों को अत्यधिक संघर्ष और यातना का सामना करना पड़ा जिसमें हिन्दी उनकी पीड़ा, दुःख-दर्द, सांस्कृतिक एकता और प्रतिरोध की अभिव्यक्ति की वाहिका बनी थी।

उन्होंने विश्वास व्यक्त किया कि यह पुस्तक हिन्दी के अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय आयामों और चुनौतियों को समझने और उनके समाधान की दिशा में अध्येताओं का मार्ग प्रशस्त करेगी और भाषा प्रयोग की विभिन्न चुनौतियों के समाधान ढूंढने में सहायक होगी। 'हिन्दी अपने क्षेत्र की बोलियों के बल पर समृद्ध हुई है। अतः उन

बोलियों और हिन्दी के बीच विवाद न उत्पन्न कर उन बोलियों का सम्मान किया जाए और हिन्दी को भारत तथा भारतवंशियों के गौरव बोध की भाषा के रूप में स्वीकार किया जाए। प्रो. मिश्र ने इस बात पर जोर दिया कि टेक्नोलॉजी के विकास के साथ ज्ञान विज्ञान के भाषा के रूप में हिन्दी का विकास आवश्यक है ताकि हिन्दी विश्व की सशक्त और समृद्ध भाषा का स्थान ग्रहण कर सकें।

मॉरीशस की भाषाविद् एवं संस्कृतकर्मी सरिता बुधु ने कहा कि हमने अपने देश में हिन्दी भाषा को और भारतीय संस्कृति को बहुत सहेज कर रखा है, जिसमें भोजपुरी की भूमिका महत्वपूर्ण रही है। भोजपुरी गीत-गायन को यूनेस्को द्वारा भी संस्कारगीत के रूप में मान्यता मिली हुई है। हिन्दी को विश्व भाषा बनाने में मॉरीशस निरन्तर महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा रही है।

'प्रवासी भारतीयों में हिन्दी की कहानी' की सहसम्पादिका प्रो. वशिनी शर्मा ने इस पुस्तक को हिन्दी की वैश्विक परिदृश्य को समझने के लिये एक महत्वपूर्ण शोधग्रंथ बताते हुए कहा कि इस पुस्तक में विदेशों में हिन्दी के स्थिति का अत्यंत तथ्यात्मक मूल्यांकन किया गया है। उन्होंने आशा व्यक्त की कि हिन्दी विश्व में अपना सम्मानजनक स्थान बनायेगी।

पुस्तक के प्रधान संपादक प्रो. सुरेन्द्र गंभीर ने कहा कि 'इस पुस्तक में तेरह देशों में हिन्दी की विकास यात्रा और वर्तमान स्थिति का मूल्यांकन किया गया। जिस विषय का विवरण न्यूनाधिक मात्रा में प्रायः

सभी लेखों में किया गया है वह है-युवा पीढ़ी में हिन्दी की वर्तमान स्थिति। इन लेखों में भाषा के विविध प्रयोग-क्षेत्रों (domains of language use) में हिन्दी के प्रयोग का भाषा वैज्ञानिक विश्लेषण भी किया गया है। भाषा-पक्ष के अतिरिक्त मॉरीशस, अमेरिका, कनाडा, आस्ट्रेलिया, फीजी, दक्षिण अफ्रीका से संबंधित लेखों में प्रवासी भारतीयों की लिखी साहित्यिक कृतियों का वर्णन है। नेपाल और यू.ए.ई. आदि देशों की भारत से भौगोलिक निकटता, भारत के साथ नियमित संप्रेषण और बॉलीवुड तथा भारतीय टीवी कार्यक्रमों की लोकप्रियता के कारण वहां सभी पीढ़ियों में हिन्दी का अस्तित्व कमोबेश कुछ प्रयोग-क्षेत्रों में बना हुआ। उन्होंने कहा कि प्रवासी समुदायों में अपनी विरासती (हेरिटेज) भाषा का पीढ़ी दर पीढ़ी अनुरक्षण एक बहुत बड़ी चुनौती है। देश हो या परदेश, भाषा का संरक्षण तभी संभव होता है जब उस भाषा का प्रसारण अगली पीढ़ी में हों।

लोकार्पण समारोह के प्रारंभ में अतिथियों का स्वागत करते हुए अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद् के अध्यक्ष एवं पूर्व राजदूत श्री वीरेन्द्र गुप्त ने कहा कि विश्व भर में हिन्दी का प्रचार प्रसार एक नया रचनात्मक स्वरूप ग्रहण कर रहा है। हिन्दी भाषा हमारे देश के सांस्कृतिक राजनय के माध्यम से उन देशों में अपनी स्थिति मजबूत कर रही है, जहां भारतवंशियों की संख्या अधिक है। प्रवासी भारतीयों को जोड़ने में हिन्दी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा रही है क्योंकि वे इस

भाषा को प्राथमिकता प्रदान करते हैं। हिन्दी भाषा भारत के लिये सॉफ्ट पावर की भी भूमिका निभा रही है।

लोकार्पण समारोह के विशिष्ट अतिथि तथा भारतीय सांस्कृतिक संबंध परिषद के पूर्व उपाध्यक्ष एवं प्रसिद्ध नाटककार दया प्रकाश सिन्हा ने कहा कि हिन्दी के माध्यम से संसार में एक ऐसी विश्व संस्कृति विकसित हो रही है जिसके केन्द्र में भारत है। भारत की राष्ट्रभाषा के रूप में संसार हिन्दी को स्वीकार करती है और हिन्दी की साहित्यिक और सांस्कृतिक शक्ति के कारण विश्व के अनेक देशों में हिन्दी में रचनात्मक लेखन हो रहा है। परंतु यह एक विचारणीय विषय है कि भारत में हिन्दी की स्थिति क्या है यदि हम अपने देश में हिन्दी को समुचित सम्मान नहीं देंगे तो हमारा देश सही मायने में अपनी संस्कृति और सभ्यता को विदेशों में संप्रेषित नहीं कर सकता। समारोह के अध्यक्ष और केन्द्रीय हिन्दी संस्थान के उपाध्यक्ष प्रो. कमल किशोर गोयनका ने 'प्रवासी भारतीयों की हिन्दी की कहानी' के

संपादकों को बधाई देते हुए कहा कि इस संकलन के प्रकाशन से गिरमिटिया देशों तथा इंग्लैंड, अमरीका, आस्ट्रेलिया जैसे विकसित देशों में हिन्दी का प्रयोग और प्रचलन का तथ्यात्मक विवरण उपलब्ध हुआ है। यह पुस्तक हिन्दी के वृहत्तर स्वरूप का भाषा वैज्ञानिक आकलन है। विश्व हिन्दी सचिवालय के महासचिव डॉ. विनोद कुमार ने हिन्दी के वैश्विक स्वरूप पर प्रकाश डालते हुए बताया कि विश्व हिन्दी सचिवालय मॉरीशस द्वारा संसार भर में हिन्दी के प्रचार प्रसार का कार्य किया जा रहा है। उन्होंने यह भी सूचित किया कि आगामी विश्व हिन्दी सम्मेलन 18 से 20 अगस्त, 2018 मॉरीशस में होगा जिसमें संसार भर के हिन्दी के लेखक, प्रचारक, प्राध्यापक भाग लेंगे उन्होंने अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद सहित भारत के अन्य संस्थाओं से भी अनुरोध किया कि वे इस सम्मेलन में भाग लेकर सम्मेलन के महत्व को बढ़ावें।

अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद के महासचिव श्री श्याम परांडे ने हिन्दी के माध्यम से भारतीय संस्कृति के

विकास और विस्तार पर प्रकाश डालते हुए कहा कि हिन्दी गिरमिटिया देशों तथा अन्य देशों में जहां प्रवासी भारतीय रहते हैं उन देशों की सम्पर्क भाषा बन गई है। लेकिन इन देशों के अतिरिक्त चीन, सोवियत संघ, हंगरी, जापान आदि देशों में भी हिन्दी अपनी उपस्थिति बनाये हुई है।

लोकार्पण समारोह के संचालक तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद के मानद निदेशक श्री नारायण कुमार ने कहा कि आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल ने जब हिन्दी का इतिहास लिखा था तो उन्होंने राजस्थानी, मैथिली, अवधी, बृज भाषा आदि की रचनाओं को शामिल कर हिन्दी का एक व्यापक स्वरूप प्रस्तुत किया था। अब आवश्यकता इस बात की है कि संसार के विभिन्न देशों में हिन्दी के रचनात्मक लेखन, अध्ययन, अध्यापन और प्रचार प्रसार को हिन्दी के इतिहास में शामिल कर हिन्दी के भौगोलिक विस्तार से भी पाठकों को परिचित कराया जायें। उन्होंने आशा व्यक्त की कि 'प्रवासी भारतीयों में हिन्दी की कहानी' इस दिशा में एक महत्वपूर्ण प्रयास है। □

जुक्रिया जुबैरी काउंसलर निर्वाचित

ब्रिटेन की वरिष्ठ हिन्दी कथाकार जुक्रिया जुबैरी ने पांचवी बार लेबर पार्टी के टिकट पर यूनाइटेड किंगडम में बारनेट चुनाव क्षेत्र के कॉलिण्डेल वार्ड से काउंसलर का चुनाव जीता है। जब उन्होंने अपना पहला चुनाव जीता था तो उस समय वे पहली मुस्लिम महिला थीं जो इस क्षेत्र से काउंसलर बनी थीं।



पढ़ाई भी वहीं से हुई। अपने माता-पिता की ग्यारहवीं सन्तान जुक्रिया जी ने सेकेण्डरी की पढ़ाई इलाहाबाद से की। इन्होंने अपनी स्नातक डिग्री बनारस हिन्दी विश्वविद्यालय से प्राप्त की।

जुक्रिया जी अपनी मातृभाषा हिन्दी को ही मानती हैं। उनका पहला कहानी संग्रह साँकल राजकमल प्रकाशन, नई दिल्ली से प्रकाशित हुआ था। पिछले वर्ष उनके 75वें जन्मदिन पर उनके व्यक्तित्व और कृतित्व पर डॉ. अजय नावरिया और डॉ. आशीष कंधवे द्वारा संपादित आलोचनात्मक ग्रन्थ का लोकार्पण ब्रिटेन की संसद के हाऊस ऑफ कॉमन्स में किया गया था। □

01 अप्रैल, 1942 को लखनऊ में जन्मी जुक्रिया जुबैरी का बचपन आजमगढ़ में बीता और शुरूआती

चीन के लोग हिन्दी सीखेंगे तो हमारी दोस्ती बढ़ेगी : सुषमा स्वराज

शंघाई कोऑपरेशन ऑर्गनाइजेशन (SCO) समिट के लिए चीन पहुंची विदेशमंत्री सुषमा स्वराज ने भारत और चीन के नागरिकों से दोनों देशों के रिश्ते बेहतर बनाने के लिए एक-दूसरे की भाषा सीखने को कहा। भारत और चीन की दोस्ती में हिन्दी के योगदान पर बोलते हुए सुषमा स्वराज ने पारस्परिक सौहार्द के लिए दोनों देशों की भाषा को समझने के महत्व पर जोर देते हुए कहा कि, 'जिस तरह आज हमारे रिश्ते मजबूत हो रहे हैं, ऐसे में यह और भी जरूरी हो गया है कि चीनी छात्र हिन्दी सीखें और भारतीय छात्र मँडरिन।' उन्होंने यह भी कहा कि हमारी दोस्ती में जितनी मजबूती हिन्दी से प्यार करने वाले चीनी छात्र लाते हैं, उतनी तो विदेशमंत्री भी नहीं ला पाते हैं।

सुषमा स्वराज ने चीन में भारतीय फिल्मों की बढ़ती लोकप्रियता की प्रशंसा करते हुए कहा कि भारतीय फिल्मों तेजी से चीन में लोकप्रिय हो रही है। चीन के विदेशमंत्री वांग यी ने बताया कि दंगल, सीक्रेट सुपरस्टार और हिन्दी मीडियम फिल्में यहां बहुत हिट हुई हैं। □

नाथू ला मार्ग से मानसरोवर की यात्रा

विदेश मंत्री सुषमा स्वराज और चीनी विदेश मंत्री वांग यी के बीच बातचीत के बाद जारी संयुक्त विज्ञप्ति में इस बात पर प्रसन्नता व्यक्त की गई है कि इस साल नाथू ला रूट से कैलाश मानसरोवर यात्रा फिर शुरू होगी। धार्मिक महत्व वाली इस तीर्थयात्रा का सांस्कृतिक महत्व भी है, जिससे हर साल सैकड़ों लोग कैलाश मानसरोवर जाते हैं।

पिछले साल भारतीय सैनिकों द्वारा चीन की सेना को भूटान के इलाके में एक सड़क बनाने से रोके जाने के बाद 16 जून को दोनों देशों के बीच गतिरोध की

स्थिति पैदा हो गई थी। इसके बाद नाथू ला रूट से यात्रा रोक दी गई थी। यह स्थिति अब समाप्त हो गई है।

शंघाई सहयोग संगठन (SCO) के विदेश मंत्रियों की बैठक के बाद जॉइंट कॉन्फ्रेंस में विदेशमंत्री सुषमा स्वराज ने यह भी बताया कि भारत और चीन आतंकवाद, जलवायु परिवर्तन, सतत विकास, ग्लोबल हेल्थकेयर आदि के क्षेत्र में मिलकर काम करने को लेकर सहमत हुए हैं। □

भारत की पड़ोसी नीति में नेपाल का स्थान महत्वपूर्ण

भारत के प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी ने जगतजननी जानकी की जन्मस्थली जनकपुर से अपनी यात्रा की शुरुआत करते हुए कहा कि भारत की पड़ोसी देशों की नीति में नेपाल का स्थान सबसे महत्वपूर्ण है। इस यात्रा के दौरान उन्होंने दोनों देशों के रिश्तों को और अधिक सौहार्दपूर्ण बनाने की कोशिश की।

जानकी मंदिर में पूजा-अर्चना के बाद श्री मोदी ने जनकपुर स्थित बारहबीघा मैदान में जनसभा को 'जय सिया राम'

बोलकर संबोधित किया। उन्होंने प्रारम्भ में नेपाली और मैथिली में भी अपना व्याख्यान दिया। श्री मोदी ने कहा कि भारत और नेपाल के संबंध हमेशा सुदृढ़ और मैत्रीपूर्ण रहे हैं। उन्होंने दोनों देशों के बीच आवागमन की सुविधा को बेहतर बनाने की आवश्यकता पर बल देते हुए कहा कि नेपाल को भारत के साथ सड़क, जल और वायुमार्ग से जोड़कर आवागमन को सुगम बनाने के लिए भारत प्रयास कर रहा है।

श्री मोदी ने जनकपुर स्थित जानकी मंदिर के साथ भगवान राम की जन्मस्थली अयोध्या के सम्बन्धों की चर्चा करते हुए कहा कि नेपाल के बिना तो हमारे राम भी अधूरे हैं और हिन्दुस्थान की आस्था भी अधूरी है।

भारत-नेपाल के बीच के संबंधों को मजबूत करने के लिये प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने पांच क्षेत्रों का उल्लेख करते हुए ट्रेड, टूरिज्म, ट्रांसपोर्टेशन, ट्रांसमिशन और टेक्नोलॉजी के रूप में टी-5 को महत्वपूर्ण बताया।

प्रधानमंत्री बनने के बाद तीसरी बार नेपाल पहुंचे नरेंद्र मोदी ने नेपाल के धार्मिक पर्यटन को प्रोत्साहित करते हुए कहा कि मैं यहां प्रधानमंत्री नहीं, प्रधान तीर्थयात्री बनकर आया हूँ।

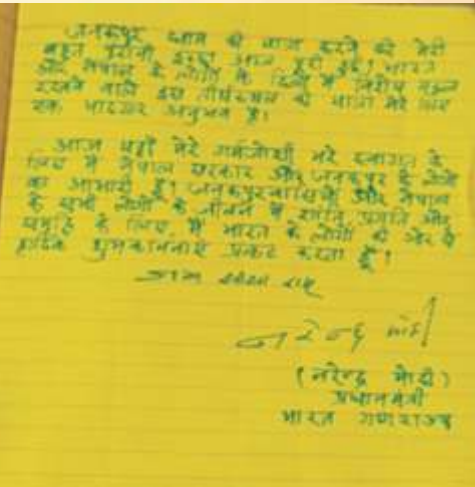
प्रधानमंत्री श्री मोदी ने जनकपुर के लिए कई सुविधाओं की घोषणा की। उन्होंने अयोध्या-



जनकपुर के बीच बस सेवा शुरू करने के साथ क्षेत्र के विकास के लिये 100 करोड़ की आर्थिक मदद का भी ऐलान किया तथा नेपाल के प्रधानमंत्री श्री के. पी. ओली के साथ अरूण-3 जल विद्युत परियोजना की आधारशिला भी रखी।



प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने हिंदुओं और बौद्धों के लिए समान रूप से महत्व रखने वाले मुक्तिनाथ मंदिर में पूरे विधि-विधान से पूजा की। वह इस मंदिर में पूजा करने वाले पहले वैश्विक नेता हैं। मोदी ने बागमतीनदी के किनारे स्थित पशुपतिनाथ मंदिर में



श्री मोदी ने वर्ष 2015 में नए संविधान की उद्घोषणा के पश्चात नेपाल में तीन सफल चुनाव कराए जाने की सराहना करते हुए कहा कि नेपाल ने अपनी लोकतांत्रिक संरचना को मजबूत बनाने के लिए प्रशंसनीय प्रयास किया है।

प्रधानमंत्री मोदी की नेपाल की दो दिन की यात्रा के समापन पर नेपाल के प्रधानमंत्री के. पी. शर्मा ओली

ने यह भरोसा दिलाया कि नेपाल भारत के हितों के प्रति संवेदनशील है और यह अपनी सरजमी का इस्तेमाल भारत के खिलाफ नहीं होने देगा। मीडिया से बात करते हुए भारत के विदेश सचिव विजय गोखले ने कहा कि दोनों प्रधानमंत्रियों की दो महीने में हुई दो यात्राओं ने हमारे द्विपक्षीय संबंध को बहुत सकारात्मक बनाया है।

मंदिरों में मोदी ने की पूजा-अर्चना

भी पूजा की। मंदिर को नेपाल में स्थित शिव (पशुपति) का सबसे पवित्र एवं पुराना मंदिर माना जाता है। उन्होंने एक ट्वीट में कहा कि 'जय पशुपतिनाथ! काठमांडू में पशुपतिनाथ मंदिर में प्रार्थना करने के बाद मैंने धन्य महसूस किया।' □