

ANTAR RASHTRIYA SAHAYOG PARISHAD BULLETIN

Monthly Newsletter of Indian Council for International Co-operation

Vol. 36 No. 11

NOVEMBER, 2023

(16 Pages including Cover)

INDIAN INDENTURED LABORERS CONTRIBUTED TO SHAPING THE VIBRANT CULTURE OF MAURITIUS

A solemn and historic event took place in Mauritius as the nation commemorated the 189th anniversary of the arrival of indentured laborers on its shores. The official ceremony was marked by a wreath-laying ceremony at the Aapravasi Ghat, the very spot where these courageous individuals first set foot on Mauritian soil. Distinguished personalities, including Prime Minister Pravin Jugnauth and India's Minister of State for External and Parliamentary Affairs, Vellamvelly Muraleedharan, paid tribute to these pioneers through this symbolic gesture.

In his poignant speech, Prime Minister Pravin Jugnauth acknowledged the immense hardships and sacrifices endured by these early workers who played a pivotal role in building the Mauritian nation. He emphasized the ongoing transformation of the region surrounding the Aapravasi Ghat into a historic site, offering the world an opportunity to explore crucial chapters in Mauritius's history.

The commemorative event, organized by the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage in collaboration with the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, encompassed various significant activities. These included a wreath-laying ceremony by the Prime Minister, the Special Representative from India, and other dignitaries. Additionally, the event featured the launch of joint postal stamps and souvenir sheets, marking the 75th Anniversary of India-Mauritius diplomatic relations, as well as cultural and artistic exhibitions

highlighting the historical legacy of the indentured laborers. The annual Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund magazine was also launched during the ceremony.

Prime Minister Jugnauth highlighted the arrival of the first 36 indentured workers who set foot on Mauritian soil 189 years ago, following their journey aboard the M.V. Atlas from India. These pioneers laid the foundation for nearly half a million indentured laborers who later migrated to Mauritius. The Prime Minister underscored the remarkable contribution of these laborers and their descendants, who helped shape a multi-ethnic democratic nation, all while enduring adversity with courage, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to their culture and traditions.

India's Minister of State for External and Parliamentary Affairs, Vellamvelly Muraleedharan, spoke of the organized movement of nearly half a million Indian indentured laborers and how it contributed to shaping the vibrant culture of Mauritius. He hailed Mauritius as a shining testament to the triumph of hope, faith, and the indomitable power of the human spirit over external circumstances.

The Minister's visit included meetings with key leaders and officials in the Government of Mauritius. Discussions covered various aspects of bilateral relations, including the commencement of 96 Community Development Projects funded by



Indian grant assistance. Both sides expressed satisfaction at the successful G20 Summit held under India's Presidency, where Mauritius actively participated as a 'Special Invitee,' further strengthening the bilateral partnership. They also welcomed the operationalization of the bilateral agreement for the Employment of Workers from India, effective from October 1, 2023. Ongoing cooperation in areas such as the Ayush Centre of Excellence (ACE), Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA), and the Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) were reviewed.

Minister Muraleedharan and Maneesh Gobin, Attorney General and Minister of Foreign Affairs, jointly inaugurated UTSAV: India Mauritius Shopping Carnival, a five-day trade fair that offers Mauritians a range of choices for Diwali shopping and deepens bilateral business and people-to-people ties.

The visit also witnessed the inauguration of two India-assisted development projects: an 8 MW Solar Power Plant at Henrietta,

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COMMEMORATION OF THE 189TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARRIVAL OF INDENTURED LABOURERS IN MAURITIUS

Dr Mrs Sarita Boodhoo
Chairperson
Bhojpuri Speaking Union, Mauritius

As in the past years homage was paid to the Girmityas at Aapravasi Ghat on 2nd November 2023. In the early morning a solemn yaj ceremony was performed on the world heritage site of Aapravasi Ghat by the "Aapravasi Ghat Indian indentured Immigrants Girmitia arrival Celebration Committee" with Yaj, prayers, tribute, lightning of lamp and shradhanjali with offering of flowers and a hawan by the pandits and panditas of different socio-cultural organizations of Mauritius.



This yaj ceremony to pay tribute to the ancestors was started by Shri Beekrumsing Ramlallah in 1970 and which has been perpetuated by members of the Ramlallah family and Mrs Sarita Boodhoo after his demise in September 2000. HE the President of the Republic of Mauritius Shri Prithvirajsing Roopun and his spouse Mrs Sayukta Roopun participated as Yajman in the Yaj ceremony along Mrs Urmila Ramlallah daughter-in-law of late Mr B. Ramlallah.

In a very highly charged atmosphere, Sarita Boodhoo drew the attention of the gathering to the fact that if hardly a few years after the arrival of the first 36 girmityas on 2nd November 1834 there were 35, 000 small planters of the Indian community who were the largest land owners after the white planters, it is a matter of great concern to note that in 2023, this number has been reduced to 11,000 small planters. An alarming situation.

Secondly, she remarked that Bhojpuri which was the mother tongue of the Girmityas and became a lingua franca of Mauritius should be reintroduced in the formal school system like other languages of Mauritius so that the future generation will know the rich linguistic and cultural heritage of their

forefathers. Thereafter, tribute was paid to the Girmityas by lighting of lamp and offering of flowers.

Official Commemorative Ceremony

A commemorative ceremony was organized by the Ministry of Art and Cultural Heritage and the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund where the Chief Guest was Hon Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius. Shri Vellamvelly Muraleedharan State Minister of External Affairs of the Government of India was specially delegated by Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India to this solemn commemoration.

In his address, Prime Minister Pravind kumar Jugnauth underlined that the indentured immigrants, the Girmityas were united in their suffering and hardship, oppression meted out to them by the plantocracy. Despite the humiliation and social injustice they maintained their dignity. They underwent tremendous sacrifices. Hon Pravind Kumar Jugnauth said that like our forefathers, we the descendants too need to walk with our head held high. He reiterated that it is imperative to preserve and maintain the rich



A.R.S.P. Bulletin

A NEWS & VIEWS MONTHLY
Published Since 1987

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PRINTER

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

PUBLISHER

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Pravasi Bhawan
50, Deendayal Upadhyay Marg,
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www.arspindia.org

PRICE

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



multicultural legacy of Mauritius. He reminded the audience that the first 36 Girmityas who arrived on 2nd November 1834 from Bihar came on board the ship the M.V Atlas. They were the forerunners of some 500,000 indentured labourers. They and their descendants worked hard and with their sweat, tears and blood, they transformed this small country in the Indian Ocean into an island paradise.

Pravind Kumar Jugnauth added that the arkatias lured the Girmityas from their villages and their families telling them that they would find gold under the rocks in Mauritius in Marich Des but gold they did not find but they and their descendants legacied us a prosperous country. This country where democracy thrives and peace and harmony prevail among a multi-ethnic population. They mustered courage, faith and resilience in those moments of abject poverty and oppression yet they did not give up their culture, values and traditions.

At this function, the Hon. Prime Minister Shri Pravind Kumar Jugnauth reminded that while paying tribute to those brave girmityas, we should also draw inspiration from them for moving in the right direction. He also reiterated that the Aapravasi Ghat is not only a national monument since 1987 but also it is listed as a World Heritage Site with UNESCO since June 2006.

The Prime Minister announced that :

- a) Bhojpuri will be taught in schools beginning with the baitkas and the teachers will be paid by the government.
- b) That the International Bhojpuri

Mahotsav will be held in April 2024 and delegates are expected from all over the world.

The Hon Prime Minister said that the Bhojpuri folksongs in Mauritius- the Geet Gawai is inscribed at UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage and World Patrimony of Humanity since 2016. The Hon Pravind Kumar Jugnauth also added that a register of Girmityas of the Indian Diaspora and their descendants will be compiled to assess their contribution along the Indian Indentured Labour Route. He expressed his gratitude towards Shri Narendra Modi for having delegated Shri V. Muraleedharan to this commemorative ceremony. Which manifests the great consideration and special relationship that exists between India and Mauritius. He added that the relationship between Mauritius and India is cemented by bonds of history, blood and culture. This has been reinforced by a financial support from India of 400 million Mauritian Rupees for small development project in Mauritius such as a small complex at L'esperance, a photovoltaic farm at Henrietta as well as the signing of a new MOU between the Mauritius Research Innovation Council and the Indian space Research organization (ISRO) to build a satellite as a joint venture.

The Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund will also benefit from this Grant for major expansion such as the second phase of the Beekrumsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre at Ferney Docks adjoining the Aapravasi Ghat.

The Honorable Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage Mr Avinash Teeluck said that according to a report of the

Government of India, Mauritius reflects the success story of the Indian Diaspora.

Shri V. Muraleedharan said that he felt much honoured to be in Mauritius on this sacred and solemn occasion to pay tribute to the girmityas. He said that the Government of India will continue to stand by Mauritius in its economic and social development which has a sure positive impact on the life of all Mauritians in general.

On the same occasion, a commemorative stamp was launched jointly by the Honourable Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth and Shri V. Muraleedharan to mark the 75 years of diplomatic relationship between India and Mauritius.

At the outset, a tribute was paid to the indentured labourers by laying of wreath ceremony near the 16 symbolical steps of the Aapravasi Ghat, by the Hon Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Shri V, Muraleedharan, the Minister of Arts and Cultural heritage, Mr Avinash Teeluck, the Leader of the Opposition Mr. Xavier Luc Duval among others.

Wreath laying at Phooliyar

On the 1st of November, a commemorative ceremony was held at Phooliyar, Riviere Du Rempart to pay homage to the first 36 Girmityas. Their names are inscribed on a plate at the lotus monument sculptured by Mrs Mala Chummun Ramyeed in 1984 at the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the girmityas. This function was organised by the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage. ■

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emphasizing the commitment to environmentally friendly solutions, and a Sports Complex at L'esperance, the first of 96 new Community Development Projects being implemented with Indian grant assistance.

A significant development during the visit was the signing of a memorandum of understanding

(MoU) between India and Mauritius for the joint development and launch of a satellite for Earth Observation-based applications in agriculture, forestry, weather forecasting, and ocean observation. The agreement includes a training and capacity-building component for Mauritian engineers, enabling them to develop and operate satellites independently in the future.

The visit provided Minister Muraleedharan with an opportunity to celebrate Kerala Day 2023 with members of the Indian community in Mauritius and engage with Mauritian socio-cultural organizations. The Hon'ble Minister also visited the World Hindi Secretariat and met the team, fostering cultural ties between the two nations. ■

Visit of AN Indonesian delegation to ARSP

On October 6, 2023, the Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP) extended a warm welcome to 25 delegates hailing from North Sumatra, Indonesia. The Indonesian delegation comprised individuals spanning various age groups and representing diverse religious affiliations, including Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Confucianism.

Prof. Shashibala (Joint Secretary, ARSP and Dean Center for Indology, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan) presided over the session and initiated the proceedings with a brief introduction highlighting the cultural similarities between India and Indonesia. Following her opening remarks, Prof. Shashibala invited Ambassador Virendra Gupta to deliver a welcoming address. Ambassador Gupta emphasised the profound cultural and economic impact of Indian-Indonesian relations on the global stage.

Subsequently, Abdul Rahman Rahim, the leader of the Indonesian delegation, introduced his team in the Indonesian language, with an English interpretation provided by a student from the University of Delhi. Abdul Rahman expressed gratitude to ARSP for the warm reception and discussed Indonesia's commitment to multicultural and multi-religious harmony, encapsulated by their national tagline, 'Unity in Diversity.' He expressed a keen interest in understanding contemporary multi-religious practices in India.

Members of the Indonesian delegation also raised queries about various issues in India, including caste practices and gender problems. They viewed India as a model for successfully navigating the complexities of a multicultural, multi-religious, and multi-ethnic society, seeking to understand India's approach to unity amidst such diversity.

In response, Prof. Shashibala, Narayan Kumar (Honorary Director, ARSP), K.G. Shyam Parande (Secretary-General, ARSP), T.N. Malhotra (Chapter Coordinator, ARSP), and other ARSP members engaged in a meaningful dialogue with the Indonesian guests.

Prof. Shashibala drew upon examples from Vedic texts and contemporary practices to illustrate India's commitment to gender equality and harmony. She also highlighted the historical religious and cultural connections between



India and Indonesia, citing instances such as Hindu temples, crafts, sculptures, and architecture in Indonesia. She said Bharat and Sumatra had close relations since unknown times. Bharatiyas often know about Bali and Java more than Sumatra. Archaeological findings are the most valuable source to study this. Sumatrans were proficient sculptors who produced magnificent works in bronze. They derived Sanskrit words, Indian writing systems, and cultivation of rice, cotton, and adopted building styles. In Bharat an inscription from Tanjore refers to Indonesia commemorating the victories of Rajendra Chola.

River Musi has four basins where Sumatran civilization flourished because the river banks fulfil the demands for agriculture. One can trace heaps of stones and bricks from ancient shrines in Sumatra. The first discovery was an inscription on a stone that is 2.26 mts in height in 1934 Telaga Batu. It was followed by 30 other stones bearing the inscription – "jaya siddha yatra" discovered from the vicinity of Palembang, glorifying Shrivijaya – "Shrivijaya jaya siddha yatra". It is amazing to find Sanskrit inscriptions in Pallava script on hardened clay from 6th to 10th century AD.

To the east of Palembang city there is a place of pilgrimage. Shrines and monasteries, sacred images of Vairocana, Amitabha, Tara, Manjushri and Avalokiteshvara are the best examples of faith of the Sumatrans. Other artifacts are like Makara trunks, spouts with wing-shaped ears with ornaments, garlands made of leaves, Makara carrying a lion in its jaws, a rampant lion, fragments of yoni, lotus cushions etc. A golden statue of the king of Shrivijaya represents existence of Devaraja cult. A statue of a Sumatran king Sri maharaja-srimat Tribhuavana raja mauli-varman-deva enshrined in Dharmashraya. The golden coins and inscriptions in Nagari are befitting examples of our linkages.

The Sumatran civilization Mainly flourished along river-banks. On the right side tributaries of Musi river are found scattered ruins with Shiva, Kala heads, lions, parrots etc. Muara Jambi was a capital town decked with huge buildings. Malayu was a cultural centre. In AD 671 a Chinese pilgrim I'tsing on his way to Bharat stayed for two months.

Sumatran royal family had cordial relations with Indonesian kings. King Adityavarman had spent his youth at the court of Majapahit, and followed the Bhairava sect getting initiated as Bhairava himself. Bhairava represents power, especially worshipped for gaining political strength.

The texts written in Grantha script accredit that a large group of South Indians were living there. Monasteries or viharas are called Biaras. Padang Lawas – the kingdom of Panei came under Rajendra Chola deva in 1024. Some of the sub-tribes in Sumatra are Maliyala, Pandiya and Coliya.

Narayan Kumar welcomed the Indonesian delegation on behalf of ARSP, providing insights into the historical, political, and linguistic aspects of India-Indonesia relations. He emphasized the role of Indian literature in Indonesia's struggle for independence and the political support extended by India.

Shyam Parande concluded the meeting by addressing questions related to gender, emphasizing that there has been no gender discrimination from the Vedic period onwards. He cited examples of women rulers throughout history and highlighted their continued participation in various fields, including education and politics.

The discussion proved to be an engaging and insightful platform for fostering cultural exchange and understanding between India and Indonesia.



A BRIEF COMMENTARY ON 'BEYOND INDENTURESHIP: INDO-TRINIDADIAN ENTREPRENEURS'

✍ Dr. Ruchi Verma
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The Diaspora Research and Resource Centre (DRRC) - Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP) organised a discussion of the book titled on "Beyond Indentureship, Indo-Trinidadian Entrepreneurs" authored by Mr. Hemraj Ramdath on 20th October 2023. The event was chaired by Ambassador Virendra Gupta, President, ARSP. H.E. Dr. Roger Gopaul, High Commissioner of Trinidad and Tobago was the Chief Guest of the event. Shri Shyam Parande, Secretary General, ARSP, welcomed all.

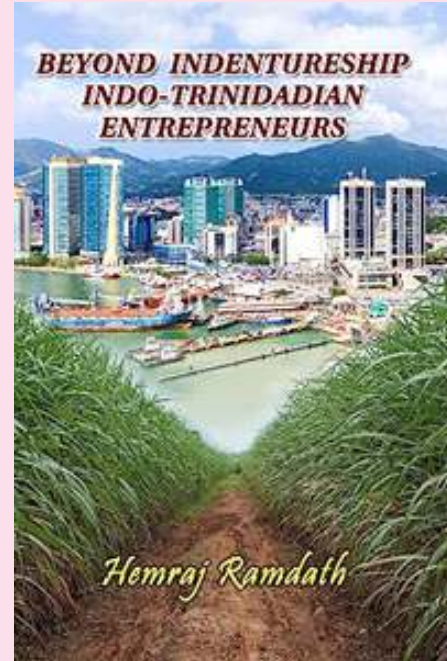
The book discussion was initiated by a panel consisting of Dr. Vishnu Bisram from Guyana, Prof. Ajay Dubey, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Dr Ruchi Verma, Hindu College, University of Delhi and Ms. Komal Chikara, Sri Guru Nanak Dev Khalsa College, University of Delhi. The entire session was moderated by Prof. Gopal Arora, Secretary ARSP. Shri Narayan Kumar, Hon. Director, ARSP presented the vote of thanks.

Summary of the book: This book is well researched and written in a simple style. It captures the experiences and progress of some of the outstanding Girmitia families who rose from poverty to prosperity and from illiteracy to enlightenment in the field of business. It highlights 33 family-owned businesses that have overcome extreme poverty and transformed not only their own lives but also the socio-economic landscape of Trinidad and Tobago. These businesses have ignited economic activities, established thriving communities, and turned rural villages into sustainable commercial and industrial centers. From being brought as laborers on agricultural estates, they have now become the largest employer in the service sector and have grown into profitable, sustainable multinationals that operate across various sectors

and build global brands. Their significant contribution to the growth and development of Trinidad and Tobago is undeniable, and their achievements are worth celebrating. This book reads like a checklist on entrepreneurship and covers every aspect of business; the growth and development of an organisation, overcoming challenges, and governance - how family-owned companies are preparing for the future of their organisation by human resources development and succession planning as well as market intelligence and strategic thinking. This book lists the different categories of business which the freed Indentured Indians pursued including cocoa, coffee, dairy and other agricultural items. They continued to cultivate sugar cane with great success. Later they moved beyond the boundaries of the sugar cane estates and established manufacturing and other forms of economic activities throughout the Island.

The book also throws light on the long years of toil, sacrifice and business acumen invested by them to build several monuments in Trinidad including landmark homes that stand today as testimonies of their resilience and success. Penny by Penny and brick by brick they built monuments to be admired rather than being objects of envy and hate by those who do not understand the true stories behind the success of the post Indian immigrant community.

Beyond Indentureship is the first of its kind, no other book has taken such a deep dive into the makings of some of the most successful Indo-Trinidadian businesses. For example it reveals how the founder of Solo Beverages Ltd felt compelled to change his name from Sarjad Muckmadeen to Joseph Charles when his numerous letters to various soft drink manufacturers in



England did not yield a single reply and also shares the story of businessman Fen Mohammed who had to quit school at an early age because he urgently needed to find full-time work to earn an income. Both men went on to create lasting legacies.

This book also includes a section on women entrepreneurs such as Radhica Saith who started the first local halfway house for battered women and used her status for the betterment of society and business mogul Helen Bhagwansingh who was named Woman of the Millennium by the Energy Chamber of T&T and was the first woman to be inducted into Trinidad and Tobago's Chamber of Industry and Commerce Business Hall of Fame.

The book is a significant body of work that records the success of several business persons and addresses some of the literary gaps with respect to the historical impact of businesses on the economy of Trinidad and Tobago. ■

Book Release

Beyond Indentureship Indo-Trinidadian Entrepreneurs



On October 20, 2023, the Diaspora Research and Resource Centre (DRRC) of Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP) organized a significant event, the "Dialogue with Diaspora and Release of Book – 'Beyond Indentureship Indo-Trinidadian Entrepreneurs.'" This event served as a platform for scholarly discussion and the unveiling of a book that sheds light on the historical and contemporary perspective of Indo-Trinidadian entrepreneurship. The entire session was moderated by Prof. Gopal Arora, Secretary ARSP. The program was graced by notable dignitaries, including the High Commissioner of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, H. E Dr. Roger Gopaul, who lauded the book as a much-needed documentation of the history of Indian indenture. He emphasized the shared responsibility of both the Indian diaspora and their home country to document and preserve historical data. The book, in his view, represented a powerful testament to the struggles and resilience of the diaspora and their journey towards establishment. He found the book personally inspiring and believed it would stand as a valuable resource for future generations.

Ambassador Virendra Gupta

(President of ARSP) emphasized the book's historical and cultural significance. He stressed the book's role in narrating the transformation of the Indian diaspora from indentured laborers to senior positions in entrepreneurship. Ambassador Gupta commended the book for its 33 detailed case studies that provide substance to the perception of Indo-Trinidadian entrepreneurs. He also challenged the notion that Indian indentured laborers arrived empty-handed, highlighting the cultural treasures carried in their Gathari.

Prof. Ajay Dubey, a Professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, placed the book in a broader context, drawing connections between the struggles for settlement, survival, and establishment of the Indian diaspora and the African diaspora in Trinidad and Tobago. He accentuated the notable disparities in the levels of adversity, obstacles, and achievements faced by these two diasporas. He underscored that upon their arrival in Trinidad and Tobago, Indians found themselves in a milieu already dominated by established migrant communities who had secured control over land and essential resources, thereby necessitating a distinct trajectory for

the Indian diaspora. Furthermore, Professor Dubey shed light on the profound contrast between the African diaspora and the Indian diaspora in terms of their connection to their respective homelands. This divergence was attributed to geographical and political factors that facilitated a stronger link for the African diaspora. Despite facing these challenging circumstances, the Indian diaspora exhibited remarkable resilience and determination, ultimately setting a paradigmatic example of a successful establishment despite the harsh conditions. Indian diaspora's enduring ties to their cultural roots, customs, and beliefs, collectively referred to as 'gathari,' played a pivotal role. Professor Dubey also cited illustrative instances, such as the Afro-Asian chair and the Black People conference, to underscore the significance of these cultural connections in forging alliances and fostering dialogue.

Shri K. G Shyam Parande (Secretary General of ARSP), extended a warm welcome to the distinguished guests and participants, emphasizing the vital role of Pravasi Bhawan in connecting with the Indian diaspora and People of Indian Origin (PIO)

over the last five decades. He highlighted the organization's efforts to host programs during the C20 initiative, centered around the theme of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam,' (one earth one family one future) culminating in a 24-hour continuous program, aptly named "Sun never set on Indian diaspora."

Dr. Vishnu Vishram, a distinguished Indian diaspora activist and a journalist, introduced the author, Mr. Hemraj Ramdath, and underscored the book's significance in comprehending the historical and contemporary aspects of Indo-Trinidadian entrepreneurship. He praised Mr. Ramdath's unique perspective, having been an integral part of the Indo-Trinidadian community and a notable contributor to the fields of media and entertainment in Trinidad and Tobago.

Prof. Dipti Agrawal (member ARSP), in her address, highlighted the enduring legacy of Indian indentured laborers who, beyond their labor, carried their culture, traditions, desires, hopes, and rituals for survival, encapsulated in the concept of "Gathari." She commended Mr. Hemraj Ramdath for offering a heartfelt tribute to the Girmitya, referencing the book's 33 case studies that showcase the remarkable journey from indentured laborers to successful entrepreneurs.

Dr. Ruchi Verma, an assistant professor at Delhi University, provided a brief commentary on the book, commending its fascinating title and its well-researched, yet easily comprehensible language. She acknowledged the 33 case studies, highlighting the transformative journey of Indo-Trinidadian entrepreneurs who not only achieved personal success but also reshaped the socio-economic landscape of their country. The book uncovers a

vivid tapestry of the entrepreneurial pursuits embarked upon by the emancipated Indentured Indians. Their ventures encompassed a diverse array of sectors, spanning the rich domains of cocoa, coffee, dairy, and various other agricultural ventures. Unfettered by their past servitude, they demonstrated remarkable proficiency in the cultivation of sugar cane, marking a glorious chapter in their journey. These industrious souls boldly transcended the confines of sugar cane estates, their spirit unyielding. They extended their reach far and wide, weaving a mosaic of manufacturing enterprises and diverse economic undertakings that would come to resonate across the entire expanse of the island.

Miss. Komal Chikara, a research scholar at Delhi University, celebrated the book as a tribute to the untold story of resilience, resourcefulness, and remarkable achievements of the Indian indenture. She emphasized that the book not only delves into business and entrepreneurship but also captures the cultural heartbeats that have persisted throughout generations, expressing the intangible aspects of Indo-Trinidadian culture that have played a pivotal role in their success. The book encompasses a dedicated segment spotlighting the contributions of female entrepreneurs, exemplified by individuals such as Radhica Saith, and Helen Bhagwansingh, and many more who fought, struggled and established themselves as women entrepreneurs not only in Trinidad and Tobago but across the world. She viewed the book as a celebration of not just entrepreneurship but the indomitable human spirit.

Mr. Hemraj Ramdath, the author of the book, offered an in-depth

presentation, utilizing photography, graphics, and anecdotes to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. He commenced with a historical and economic overview of the Indian presence in Trinidad and Tobago during the indenture period. He went on to spotlight the diverse business ventures, struggles, and success stories of Indo-Trinidadian entrepreneurs, supported by numerous case studies. These case studies underscored the significant impact these entrepreneurs have made not only in Trinidad and Tobago but on a global scale. Additionally, Mr. Ramdath highlighted that while the Indians were initially sent to Trinidad as laborers, they have evolved to become the largest employers in the non-governmental sector in Trinidad and Tobago today.

In sharing the motivation behind writing this book, Mr. Ramdath expressed his realization that the success stories of Indo-Trinidadian entrepreneurs remained largely unacknowledged, emphasizing the duty to recognize and document their accomplishments for posterity.

Shri Narayan Kumar, (Honorary Director, ARSP), contributed substantively by incorporating historically significant references that shed light on the subject matter of the book under consideration. Kumar elucidated the pivotal role played by ARSP in establishing and nurturing connections with the global Indian diaspora. Additionally, he assumed the responsibility of delivering the vote of thanks.

Following these presentations, the program allowed for open interaction, during which participants shared their perspectives and experiences, fostering a rich and insightful dialogue on the book and the broader themes it encapsulated. ■

S JAISHANKAR UNVEILS MAHATMA GANDHI'S BUST IN VIETNAM, CALLS IT A SYMBOLIC MOMENT IN THE FRIENDSHIP

External Affairs Minister, Dr. S Jaishankar on October 17, unveiled the bust of Mahatma Gandhi in Tao Dan Park of Ho Chi Minh City. The EAM termed the occasion of great significance.

Indian External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar, made headlines on October 17 as he unveiled the bust of Mahatma Gandhi in Tao Dan Park, Ho Chi Minh City, during his official visit to Vietnam. Describing the event as of great significance, the EAM highlighted the symbolic moment of friendship between the two nations. Gandhi's principles of truth, non-violence, independence, and freedom were acknowledged, with the EAM noting the United Nations' recognition by proclaiming October 2 as the International Day of Non-Violence.

During his visit, EAM Jaishankar engaged with Vietnamese leadership, meeting Ho Chi Minh City Party Secretary Nguyen Van Nen and expressing appreciation for HCMC's contribution to the India-Vietnam partnership. Earlier discussions with Le Hoai Trung, Chairman of the External Relation Commission of the

Communist Party of Vietnam, showcased the convergent approach on key regional and global issues.

The EAM also called on Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, conveying greetings from PM Narendra Modi and valuing the guidance for further bilateral development. The importance of a stronger India-Vietnam partnership for a stable, secure, and prosperous Indo-Pacific was emphasized.

In Hanoi, EAM Jaishankar co-chaired the 18th India-Vietnam Joint Commission meeting with Vietnamese counterpart Bui Thanh Son. The discussions covered a wide range of areas, including political, defence, maritime security, judicial, trade, investment, energy, development, education, training, science, technology, and culture. Post-meeting, the EAM highlighted shared perspectives on the Indo-



Pacific region, commitment to global issues, and collaboration in various multilateral groupings.

Addressing the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam on 'India in the Indo-Pacific,' EAM Jaishankar underscored the shared interests of India and Vietnam in cooperating within the Indo-Pacific construct. He emphasized the significance of ASEAN centrality and highlighted the contribution of the Quad, envisioning a multipolar and rules-based global order fostered by India and Vietnam's independent mindset. ■

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER S. JAISHANKAR UNVEILS RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S BUST IN VIETNAM

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar unveiled a bust of Rabindranath Tagore in Bac Ninh province, Vietnam, and enjoyed a remarkable performance by the Quan Ho Art Theater group. He shared his excitement, announcing the group's upcoming participation in the 9th India International Dance and Music Festival in New Delhi.

Jaishankar also interacted with the Indian community in Bac Ninh and visited the Phat Tich Pagoda, a Buddhist cultural center with historical significance. He met with the Most Ven. Thich Thanh Nhieu of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, discussing spirituality, yoga, art, and culture.

The visit is part of a four-day official trip to Vietnam, where Jaishankar is co-chairing the 18th Joint Commission meeting with his counterpart, Bui Thanh Son. He received a warm welcome at the Tran Quoc pagoda and explored the historic Tran Quoc Pagoda in Hanoi, symbolizing the age-old ties between India and Vietnam, including the Bodhi tree gifted by President Rajendra Prasad in 1959 to President Ho Chi Minh.

During his visit, Jaishankar will also travel to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, holding talks with Vietnamese leadership, meeting the Indian community, and unveiling Mahatma



Gandhi's Bust in Ho Chi Minh City.

India and Vietnam maintain a strong Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, and Jaishankar's visit aims to review progress in various areas and enhance bilateral cooperation. After Vietnam, he will proceed to Singapore on an official visit from October 19-20. ■

TALLEST STATUE OF DR B R AMBEDKAR UNVEILED, MARKING A HISTORIC SYMBOL OF EQUALITY

The 19-foot statue, named 'Statue of Equality,' is part of the Ambedkar International Centre (AIC) being built on 13-acre land in Accokeek city of Maryland, approximately 35 kms south of Washington.

In a landmark event that resonated with echoes of 'Jai Bhim,' the Indian-American community in a Maryland suburb of Washington came together on Sunday to formally inaugurate the tallest statue of Dr B R Ambedkar, the visionary behind India's Constitution. The 19-foot "Statue of Equality," crafted by acclaimed artist Ram Sutar, stands as a testament to the principles of justice and unity championed by Babasaheb Ambedkar.

More than 500 Indian-Americans, representing diverse corners of the US, as well as attendees from India and beyond, gathered for the unveiling ceremony. The atmosphere was charged with enthusiasm as the crowd celebrated the symbolic representation of 1.4 billion Indians and 4.5 million Indian Americans. Ram Kumar, president of the Ambedkar International Center (AIC), emphasized the universality of the message, stating, "This (inequality) is

not only the problem in India, everywhere (in) different forms (it exists)." The statue, dubbed the "Statue of Equality," carries the aspirations of a unified India both in the US and globally.

Deelip Mhaske, leading the Ambedkarite movement in the US, highlighted the community-driven effort behind the statue's creation. Messages of congratulations from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar underscored the significance of the statue in fostering unity and promoting India as a global force for social justice.

Mahindra Rajwade, who traveled more than 10 hours from Kentucky to attend the ceremony, expressed pride, stating, "This is the first time in the world that we have such a tall statue of Babasaheb outside India." The event was not only a proud moment for followers of Dr Ambedkar



but also a historic step towards unifying the Indian-American diaspora and advancing India's influence in technology and social justice.

The unveiling ceremony, held on October 14, coincided with Dhamma Chakra Parivartan Din, a day celebrated by Ambedkarites in honor of Babasaheb's embrace of Buddhism in 1956. Cultural performances by Indian-Americans added a vibrant touch to the occasion, making it a memorable celebration of equality, unity, and the enduring legacy of Dr B R Ambedkar.

DHORDO VILLAGE OF GUJARAT GAINS GLOBAL RECOGNITION AS ONE OF BEST TOURISM VILLAGES AWARDED BY UN WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION

In a historic moment, Dhordo village in the Kutch district of Gujarat has been recognized as one of the Best Tourism Villages by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The prestigious accolade highlights Dhordo's exceptional cultural heritage and breathtaking natural beauty, propelling it onto the global tourism stage.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a staunch advocate for promoting India's cultural diversity and tourism potential, expressed his delight and pride in a recent social media post. He commended the residents of Dhordo for their dedication and contribution to making the village a

beacon of Indian tourism.

In his post, Prime Minister Modi stated, "Thrilled to witness Dhordo in Kutch receive global acclaim for its rich cultural heritage and natural allure. This recognition not only reflects the immense potential of Indian tourism but also underscores the unwavering commitment of the people of Kutch. May Dhordo continue to shine and beckon visitors from every corner of the world."

The UNWTO's recognition serves as a testament to Dhordo's unique appeal, offering visitors a glimpse into the vibrant tapestry of Indian culture and the pristine landscapes that



define the region. As the village basks in this newfound global acknowledgment, tourism enthusiasts and curious travelers are expected to flock to Dhordo to experience its charm firsthand. The honor not only boosts Dhordo's profile but also underscores India's position as a must-visit destination on the world tourism map.

INDO-CARIBBEAN HINDUS OBSERVE FALL NAVRATRI 2023



In a celebration of faith and tradition, the auspicious Fall Hindu festival of Navratri came to a vibrant conclusion on the evening of October 23. This nine-night-long festival, which follows the Pitrk Paksha (15 days of ancestral worship) and precedes the joyous occasions of Dussehra and Diwali, was observed by Hindus worldwide.

Navratri is regarded as one of the holiest periods in the Hindu calendar, marked by fasting and intense worship of the feminine aspects of God. Thousands of Guyanese Hindus based in New York congregated at temples during these nine nights to seek the blessings of Goddess Durga and her divine reincarnations, Goddess Lakshmi and Saraswati. Guyanese Hindus in the diaspora also flocked to temples in New Jersey, Florida, and various other states, as well as in greater Toronto and London. This tradition of observing Navratri and other festivals has been steadfastly maintained by Guyanese Hindus in places like New York, New Jersey, Florida, Minnesota, Georgia, and Texas, where they have made their homes. Additionally, Caribbean Hindus joined in the Navratri festivities.

The Navratri festival began on Sunday, October 15, and continued until the night of Monday, October 23,

with most temples holding nightly sessions. Some temples extended their sessions to celebrate Dussehra, signifying the victory of Lord Rama over evil forces, accompanied by the vibrant Ramleela celebrations.

Apart from temple visits, Guyanese and other Caribbean Temples in America hosted Ramayana sessions and Devi Bhagwatam discourses nightly during this period, while many Hindus performed poojas or yajnas at their homes. These sessions predominantly focused on understanding the attributes of the Goddesses.

Temples across the New York metropolitan area, including New York City, were brimming with devoted worshippers throughout the nine nights. A nightly service presided over by the popular pandit Rajin Balgobin of New Amsterdam was held at the Arya Samaj ground (Cheddi Jagan Square) in Richmond Hill. The festival culminated in the celebration of the defeat of Ravan, symbolizing the triumph of good over evil, also known as Vijay Dashmi.

Navratri, derived from "Nav" meaning nine and "ratri" meaning night, is celebrated through prayers, spiritual dancing, kirtan singing, chanting from holy texts, and discourses by pandits,

especially about its significance. During this time, Hindus fast and worship Goddesses Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati for three nights each, seeking protection, wealth, and knowledge, respectively.

Devotees typically fast for the entire period, abstaining from meat, sex, fish, eggs, and maintaining purity in their homes for nearly two weeks to prepare themselves for the divine presence. The purpose of worship is to seek protection, love, and comfort, with Goddess Durga offering divine protection and the removal of diseases.

Throughout Navratri, devotees hold special morning and evening prayers to pay homage to the universal mother. In the mornings, Guyanese Hindus offer "jaal" or "dhar," a mixture of various ingredients to appease the Gods and invoke bliss for humanity. This tradition is an enduring legacy passed down from Guyanese Hindu ancestors who arrived in then British Guiana as indentured laborers in 1838. Some even invited pandits to conduct puja in their homes.

Navratri, closely associated with the Hindu festival of Ram Leela, will be followed by Diwali on November 3 and then Karthik or Teerat, which marks the conclusion of the year for religious festivals. ■

CONSULTATIVE CUM INTERACTIVE SESSION FOR ROMA COMMEMORATIVE MEMORIAL AT KANNAUJ

✍️ Zameer Anwar,
Research Fellow, CRSCR-ARSP

Centre for Roma Studies and Cultural Relations-ARSP organized a virtual Consultative Meeting for the proposed Roma Commemorative Memorial, being built up by the Government of Uttar Pradesh with the support of Government of India, at Kannauj on 7 November, 2023 in order to seek valuable suggestions and ideas of Roma brothers and sisters with regards to design, architecture, structure and any other facilities, besides contributing artifacts for the museum and cultural symbols representing Romani life. The meeting was chaired by Amb. Rajesh Sachdeva, Chairperson-CRSCR, explained the important role of CRSCR in the construction of the memorial as well as outlined the significance of the memorial. He envisaged that the memorial will further deepen the linkage between Roma and India. Shri Shyam Parande, Secretary General-ARSP pointed out one of the major migrations of Roma took place from Kannauj and how the memorial will be a catalyst for creating awareness about Roma and India connection amongst Indian masses. Shri Asim Arun, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Government of Uttar Pradesh, told about the planning and design of Memorial and dedicated gallery for Roma Community in the Museum of Kannauj. He elaborated the architectural design and cultural elements, indoor and outdoor facilities and event space like Amphitheatre associated with the Roma memorial. Shri Arun also expressed his wish to import traditional "Charkha" that would be installed in the museum.

Mr. Orhan Galjus from Turkey, President of Euroasia Roma Academic Network, said, India shows solidarity with Roma across the world through building a Roma memorial in Kannauj, whereas Prof. Dr. Santino Spinelli from Italy, vice president of International Romani Union (Latvia) and legendary musician, said, he is proud of his Indian origin and pointed out the musical relation between Indian and Romani music. There were many Roma brothers and sisters like Djemaa Chraiti from Switzerland, Marianna



Seslavinskaya from Bulgaria, Dr. Alexandru Zamfir from Romania, Mr. Vladimir Sainovic from Serbia, Ms. Felicia Derosa from USA, Dr. Diana Kirilova from France, Dr. Delia Grigore from Romania, Mr. Alex Stan from Romania, Dr. Neziri Nedzmedin from France who spoke and suggested some valuable suggestions and ideas besides several other Roma from different countries of the world participated in the meeting. Shri Pravin Tandon, Activist from Kannauj requested for ideas related to artifacts and murals for Museum. The meeting ended with vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Rajni Sarin, Convenor of CRSCR.

Following Suggestions were offered:

The design and architecture of the Roma Commemorative Memorial in India should reflect the rich culture and history of the Roma people. Here are some suggestions and ideas for the design and structure of the memorial:

1. **Architectural Design:** The memorial could showcase traditional Roma architecture, incorporating elements such as colorful facades, arches, domes, and intricate detailing. The design should symbolize the resilience and unity of the Roma community.
2. **Cultural Elements:** The memorial should include cultural elements such as traditional Roma artwork, music, and dance. It could feature installations or exhibits that highlight the contributions and experiences of the Roma people.

3. **Interactive Features:** Consider including interactive displays or digital elements that allow visitors to learn about the Roma culture and history. This could include touch-screen kiosks, audio guides, or multimedia presentations.

4. **Memorial Garden:** A peaceful and reflective space such as a memorial garden could be incorporated, featuring plants and landscaping that hold significance in Roma culture.

5. **Commemorative Wall:** A commemorative wall or monument could be included to honor the Roma individuals and families who have shaped history and made significant contributions to society.

6. **Educational Facilities:** Consider including educational facilities such as a library or resource center that provide information on Roma history, culture, and contemporary issues facing the Roma community.

7. **Event Space:** The memorial could include space for cultural events, performances, and gatherings to celebrate Roma traditions and foster community engagement.

8. **Accessibility:** Ensure that the memorial is accessible to people of all abilities, with features such as ramps, elevators, and signage in multiple languages.

9. **Collaboration with Roma Community:** Engage with the Roma community in the design and planning process to ensure that the memorial is a true reflection of their heritage and legacy.



His Royal Highness Prince Jigyel Ugyen Wangchuck, the President of the Bhutan Olympic Committee (BOC), attended the 141st International Olympic Committee (IOC) session in Mumbai, India from 15 to 17 October 2023. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the session. This assembly of IOC members functions as a forum for making critical decisions concerning the Olympic movement.

HER MAJESTY TSEYRING PEM WANGCHUCK RECEIVES ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMPION AWARD

Her Majesty the Gyalyum Tseyring Pem Wangchuck was presented the Champion of Rising Leaders Award by Teton Science School on October 17. The award was for Her Majesty's dedication to environmental conservation and for inspiring and nurturing the next generation of environmental leaders.

The award acknowledges Her Majesty's efforts in promoting sustainability which has been a profound source of inspiration for countless individuals and organisations worldwide. Through Her Majesty's work as co-chair of the Bhutan Foundation, her support of the Bhutanese philosophy of Gross National Happiness has helped transform Bhutan into a renowned model for sustainability and overall well-being.

Bhutan was also presented the Murie Spirit of Conservation Award for its dedication to environmental preservation. The award is in recognition of Bhutan's firm commitment to environmental preservation and for upholding the conservation of the environment as

one of the four pillars of Gross National Happiness. The award also recognizes Bhutan's steadfast commitment to preserving its natural heritage which serves as an inspiring example for nations across the globe by setting a high standard for environmental stewardship, leaving a legacy for generations to come.

Established in honour of the late leaders of the American conservation movement, Olaus and Margaret "Mardy" Murie and Adolph and Louis Murie, this annual award recognises individuals who have demonstrated an exemplary commitment to the protection of wildlife and wild places.

A panel discussion on Bhutan's environmental conservation was held following the award ceremony. The discussion with conservation panellists from the Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN), Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental



Conservation (BT FEC), Bhutan Ecological Society (BES), World Wildlife Fund-Bhutan (WWF-Bhutan), and Bhutan Foundation was moderated by Judge Margaret McKeown, Chairperson of the Murie Ranch Committee of Teton Science School.

The award ceremony which took place at the Center for the Arts, Jackson Hole, Wyoming, United States of America was attended by local government officials, philanthropists, conservationists, local community and board members, staff and students of the Teton Science School.

UN AWARDS PEACE MEDAL TO BHUTAN'S CONTINGENT



Bhutan's peacekeeping military contingent (BHU LQRF) at the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) was awarded the UN Peace Medal on October 11.

The Special Representative of secretary general, Valentine Rugwabiza awarded the medals to the 180 personnel.

The award was in appreciation for the



significant role the Bhutanese

contingent played and the unflinching service towards peace and stabilisation.

R B A Chief Operations Officer Lieutenant General, Batoo Tshering said that His Majesty The King consistently emphasises that B h u t a n ' s

involvement in UN peacekeeping demonstrates our unwavering support for the UN and gratitude for the assistance received as a member.

"His Majesty underscores the importance of our peacekeepers upholding professionalism and the highest standards in representing our nation. The award recognises Royal Bhutan Army's exceptional service, integrity, and professionalism in carrying out their peacekeeping duties worldwide," he said.

The BHU LQRF also received recognition for "Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Force" award for green initiatives and projects towards reducing carbon footprints in the mission area.

Free medical services to the locals - contributions

of construction materials, sports and stationery items are provided to the local inhabitants by the BHU LQRF.

Bhutan deployed the first ever peacekeeping military contingent to MINUSCA, upon the request from the UN in October 2022. The contingent will complete its year-long mission next month and will be replaced by a second contingent from RBA.

In 2016, Bhutan deployed two staff officers at the mission during the establishment of MINUSCA in the Central African Republic.

Bhutan initially contributed uniformed



personnel in 2014 to the UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO), the first-ever peacekeeping mission in the Middle East and MINUSCA. In December 2017, Bhutan also became the first country to pledge rapid deployment of troops as part of the UN Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System.

Bhutan sent 270 Royal Bhutan Police and Royal Bhutan Army personnel have rendered their service as UN peacekeepers.

Days to Remember

in December, 2023

December 01 : Romania - National Day

December 01 : World AIDS Day

December 02 : LAOS - National Day

December 02 : United Arab Emirates- National Day

December 04 : Indian Navy Day

December 10 : Human Rights Day

December 12 : Amavasya

December 12 : Kenya - National Day

December 16 : Bahrain - National Day

December 16 : Kazakhstan - Independence Day

December 18 : Qatar - National Day

December 26 : Purnima

भारत-बुल्गारिया : भाषायी एवं सांस्कृतिक संबंधों पर संवाद



डायस्पोरा रिसर्च एण्ड रिसोर्स सेंटर-अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद के तत्वावधान में 16 सितम्बर, 2023 को प्रवासी भवन में डायलॉग विथ डायस्पोरा श्रृंखला के अंतर्गत बुल्गारिया की डॉ. मौना कौशिक के साथ संवाद का कार्यक्रम आयोजित किया गया।

कार्यक्रम के आरंभ में परिषद की सहसचिव डॉ. शशिबाला, ने डॉ. मौना कौशिक का परिचय देते हुए भारत-बुल्गारिया के भाषायी एवं सांस्कृतिक संबंधों व योगदान पर बात की उन्होंने सुझाव के रूप में कहा कि भारत-बुल्गारिया के संबंधों तथा इतिहास, भाषा एवं संस्कृति पर अभी बहुत काम करने की जरूरत है।

इस समारोह की अध्यक्षता परिषद के अध्यक्ष श्री वीरेन्द्र गुप्ता ने किया उन्होंने अपने अध्यक्षीय भाषण में कहा कि मोना जी की बात से यह लगता है कि जहां हम नहीं देख पा रहे हैं वहाँ भी भारत एवं भारतीय भाषा व संस्कृति

की पहचान बढ़ती जा रही है इसलिए हमें और जिम्मेदारी के साथ काम करना चाहिए। हमें अॉपनिवैसिक मानसिकता से बाहर निकलकर अपनी भाषा को गर्व के साथ अपनाना एवं बोलना चाहिए।

समारोह की मुख्य अतिथि डॉ. मौना कौशिक ने कहा कि यहाँ सिर्फ हिंदी नहीं, हिंदी के साथ-साथ भारतीय संस्कृति भी पढ़ाई जाती है। जहां भारत के अलावा विश्व भर से विद्वान आते रहते हैं। उन्होंने बुल्गारिया में हिंदी व भारतीय संस्कृति के प्रचार-प्रसार में इंडोलौजी विभाग पर प्रकाश डाला। डॉ. मौना कौशिक ने बताया कि बुल्गारियन भाषा में रामायण, महाभारत का अनुवाद तो हुआ ही है लेकिन 1990 के बाद कर्मा, योग एवं आयुर्वेद का बहुत प्रभाव देखने को मिल रहा है। बुल्गारिया में हिन्दी सिनेमा का भी प्रभाव बहुत ही अधिक है।

परिषद के मानद निदेशक श्री नारायण कुमार ने अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद तथा उसके उद्देश्यों को बताते हुए कहा कि इस संस्था का मुख्य उद्देश्य पड़ोसी देशों और डायस्पोरा के देशों के साथ अपने संबंधों को सुदृढ़ करना है। परिषद डायस्पोरा के हितों की रक्षा के लिए लगातार काम करती आ रही है, इसके अतिरिक्त भारतीय भाषा व संस्कृति की रक्षा

एवं उसका प्रचार-प्रसार भी करती रही है। डायस्पोरा के लिए दोनों ही महत्वपूर्ण है, बिना भाषा के संस्कृति की रक्षा नहीं की जा सकती और संस्कृति के बिना भाषा को बचाना नामुमकिन है।

इसके उपरांत लोगों के प्रश्नोंतर के लिए मंच को खोला गया जिसमें भारत व बुल्गारिया संबंधों के विभिन्न पहलुओं पर बातचीत हुई। जमीर अनवर ने रोमा समुदाय के सामाजिक एवं आर्थिक विषयों पर अपनी जानकारी साझा की। इसी क्रम में प्रोफेसर शशिबाला ने भारत-बुल्गारिया संबंधों को और सुदृढ़ करने हेतु कुछ सुझाव दिए और कहा कि ICCR अगर विश्वभर में जो लोग इंडोलौजी में पढ़ाई कर रहे हैं उनके लिए एक फेलोशिप का प्रावधान कराए। Know India Program (KIP) के अंतर्गत हर वर्ष कुछ छात्रों का एक गुप को जो इंडोलौजी की पढ़ाई कर रहे हैं, उन्हें भी भारत बुलाया जाए।

श्री अनिल जोशी ने महात्मा गांधी एवं रवीन्द्रनाथ टैगोर के विदेशों में खासकर बुल्गारिया में प्रभाव एवं महत्व को बताया। उन्होंने कहा हिंदी व इंडोलौजी को लेकर हमने ज्यादातर बड़े देशों के साथ काम किया है, लेकिन हमारा ध्यान अमेरिका, इंग्लैंड व अन्य यूरोपीय देशों पर रहा, यही कारण है कि छोटे-छोटे देश जो भारत से जुड़े हैं उनकी तरफ हम बहुत ज्यादा ध्यान नहीं दे सके। आज अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद प्राथमिकता के साथ इन देशों के साथ लगातार काम कर रही है। अनिल जोशी के धन्यवाद ज्ञापन के साथ कार्यक्रम समाप्त हुआ।

वियतनाम : कंबोडिया की सद्भावना यात्रा



अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद, देहरादून चैप्टर के अध्यक्ष पूर्व आई.जी. श्री एस. एस. कोठियाल द्वारा 21 सदस्यों की वियतनाम तथा कम्बोडिया की 10 दिनों की सद्भावना यात्रा,

श्री राजीव बेरी, अध्यक्ष, उत्तराखण्ड चैप्टर के नेतृत्व में, 25 अक्टूबर से 3 नवम्बर 2023 तक सम्पन्न हुई। वियतनाम में हनोई एवं हो चि मिन्ह तथा कम्बोडिया के अंकोरवाट हिन्दु मंदिर के भ्रमण के अलावा दोनों देशों के ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों तथा फ्लोटिंग विलेज में, वहाँ के रहने वाले लोगों से सम्पर्क कर, उनके

रहन-सहन, आर्थिक स्थिति को समझने व भारतीयों को इन देशों के नागरिकों के प्रति प्रेम व सद्भाव को लेकर चर्चा हुई। भारतीयों तथा भारत सरकार द्वारा किये जा रहे कार्यों को, वहाँ के नागरिकों, विशेषकर गाँवों में रहने वालों तक पहुँचाया गया, जिसकी उन्होंने सराहना की। उत्तराखण्ड सरकार को परिषद द्वारा पूर्व में निवेदित निर्णयों से, माननीय मुख्यमंत्री, श्री पुष्कर सिंह धामी, केन्द्रीय मंत्री, श्री नितिन गडकरी तथा उत्तराखण्ड के वित्त तथा शहरी विकास मंत्री, श्री प्रेमचन्द्र अग्रवाल को अवगत कराया गया।

साहित्य वैश्विक एकता का प्रतीक है।

विश्वरंग, साझा संसार नीदरलैंड्स, वनमाली सृजन पीठ व भारतीय प्रवासी साहित्य एवं संस्कृति शोध संस्थान के संयुक्त तत्वावधान में आयोजित 'साहित्य का विश्वरंग' ऑनलाइन आयोजन, रवीन्द्र नाथ टैगोर विश्वविद्यालय के कुलाधिपति श्री संतोष चौबे की अध्यक्षता में सम्पन्न हुआ।

इस आयोजन में इण्डोनेशिया से सारिका जैथलिया, जापान से रमा पूर्णिमा शर्मा, अरब अमीरात से मीरा ठाकुर और मंजू सिंह तथा भारत से वीणा सिन्हा ने भाग लिया।

अपने अध्यक्षीय वक्तव्य में चौबे जी ने कहा कि साहित्य वैश्विक एकता का प्रतीक है। इस अवसर पर उन्होंने विश्व रंग महोत्सव 22 से 24 दिसम्बर को रवीन्द्र नाथ टैगोर विश्वविद्यालय भोपाल में आयोजित किये जाने

की घोषणा की। इस आयोजन में विश्वभर से विद्वान भाग लेंगे। साथ ही उन्होंने अंतर्राष्ट्रीय हिंदी भाषा केन्द्र भी शीघ्र ही स्थापित किये जाने की बात कही।

श्री लीलाधर मंडलोई ने अपने वक्तव्य में प्रवासी साहित्य पर 'साहित्य का विश्व रंग' व 'प्रवास मेरा नया जन्म' आयोजन के साथ-साथ हालैण्ड से प्रकाशित 'साहित्य का विश्व रंग' पत्रिका के योगदान को रेखांकित किया।

रमा पूर्णिमा शर्मा ने जापान में, भारतीय संस्कृति व जापानी भाषा में, हिंदु देवी देवताओं के नाम और जापानी लोगों द्वारा पूजा किये जाने के बारे में विस्तार से बताया। साथ ही कहा कि जापानी लोग अपने आपको सूर्यवंशी मानते हैं।

अरब अमीरात से मीरा ठाकुर ने ग्लोबल विलेज (वैश्विक मेले) पर और मंजू सिंह ने 'निमिषा' शीर्षक संस्मरण के माध्यम से दुबई की सामाजिक व्यवस्था पर रोचक संस्मरण सुनाया। सारिका जैथलिया ने कहा कि इण्डोनेशिया आधुनिकता और परम्पराओं का अनूठा संगम है और बाली देवताओं का द्वीप है।

भारत से वीणा सिन्हा ने युद्ध की विभिषिका और विस्थापन की पीड़ा पर मार्मिक रचनापाठ किया।

साझा संसार नीदरलैंड्स के अध्यक्ष एवं साहित्य का विश्व रंग के संयोजक रामा तक्षक ने आयोजन का सफल संचालन और सभी वक्ताओं और श्रोताओं के प्रति धन्यवाद ज्ञापित किया।

“बी. एल. गौड़ फाउंडेशन” का पाँचवाँ अंतर्राष्ट्रीय हिंदीसेवी सम्मान समारोह एवं काव्य संध्या

बृहस्पतिवार, 02 नवम्बर, 2023 को नोएडा एक्सटेंशन स्थित “द गौड़ सरोवर पोर्टिको होटल” में राकेश गौड़ धर्मार्थ चौरिटेबल ट्रस्ट की एक इकाई 'बी.एल. गौड़ फाउंडेशन' के तत्वावधान में सम्मान समारोह एवं काव्य संध्या का भव्य और यादगार आयोजन सम्पन्न हुआ। इस गरिमामय और महत्वपूर्ण आयोजन की अध्यक्षता फाउंडेशन के चेयरमैन प्रतिष्ठित लेखक और पत्रकार डॉ. बी. एल. गौड़ ने की तथा मुख्य अतिथि थीं स्टेट बैंक ऑफ इंडिया की पूर्व सहायक महाप्रबंधक सुशील बाला सिंह।

सम्मान समारोह में नॉटिंघम यू.के. से पधारीं



लेखिका, शिक्षाविद् और हिंदीसेवी जय वर्मा तथा अमेरिका से भारत आए अंतर्राष्ट्रीय हिंदी समिति अमेरिका के हिंदीसेवी दानवीर इंद्रजीत शर्मा को हिंदीसेवी सम्मान से अलंकृत किया गया। इस अवसर पर ओडिसी नृत्यांगना



चंदना राउल को भी शास्त्रीय कलाओं और समाज के प्रति उनकी सेवाओं के लिए बी.एल. गौड़ फाउंडेशन की ओर से सम्मानित किया गया।

अयोध्या में भव्य दीपोत्सव में शामिल हुए कई देशों के राजदूत

अयोध्या में दीपावली के मौके पर भव्य दीपोत्सव का आयोजन हुआ। 22 लाख 23 हजार दिए एक साथ जलाकर एक नया कीर्तिमान बनाया गया। भव्य दीपोत्सव को देखने के लिए भारतीयों के साथ कई विदेशी मेहमान भी शामिल हुए। विदेशी मेहमानों में कई देशों के राजदूत अयोध्या के भव्य और दिव्य दीपोत्सव का गवाह बने। सीएम योगी ने विदेशी राजदूतों को सम्मानित भी किया।

उत्तर प्रदेश की राज्यपाल आनंदीबेन पटेल और मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथ की मौजूदगी में भगवान श्रीराम की जन्मस्थली अयोध्या में

राम की पैड़ी पर 22 लाख से अधिक दीप प्रज्वलित किये गये। मर्यादा पुरुषोत्तम श्रीराम की अयोध्या ने नया कीर्तिमान बनाते हुए दीपोत्सव 2023 में 22-23 लाख दीप प्रज्वलित किए। पिछले साल 2022 में प्रज्वलित 15.76 लाख दीपों से इस बार यह संख्या लगभग 6 लाख 47 हजार अधिक रही। झूठे से की गई दीपों की गिनती के बाद दीपोत्सव ने नया कीर्तिमान 'गिनीज बुक ऑफ वर्ल्ड रिकॉर्ड्स' के मुताबिक विश्व कीर्तिमान



बना। दीप प्रज्वलन का नियत समय शुरू होते ही 'श्री राम जय राम जय राम' के जाप के साथ एक-एक कर 22-23 लाख दीप जलाए गए। 'गिनीज बुक ऑफ वर्ल्ड रिकॉर्ड्स' के प्रतिनिधियों द्वारा कीर्तिमान रचने की घोषणा के साथ ही पूरी अयोध्या में हर्षोल्लास व्याप्त हो गया।



अभिमन्यु अनंत,
09 अगस्त, 1937 - 04 जून, 2018

अभिमन्यु अनंत, (09 अगस्त, 1937-04 जून, 2018) मॉरीशस के हिन्दी कथा-साहित्य के सम्राट माने जाते हैं और उन्हें मॉरीशस का प्रेमचन्द कहा जाता है। उनकी कालजयी पुस्तक लालपसीना का विश्व के अनेक भाषों में अनुवाद हो चुका है। उनका जन्म 9 अगस्त, 1937 को मॉरीशस के उत्तर प्रान्त में स्थित त्रियोले गांव में हुआ। उन्होंने 18 वर्षों तक हिन्दी का अध्यापन किया और वे 3 सालों तक युवा मंत्रालय में नाट्य कला विभाग में नाट्य प्रशिक्षक रहे। उन्होंने अपनी उच्च-स्तरीय हिन्दी उपन्यासों और कहानियों के द्वारा मॉरीशस को हिन्दी साहित्य के मंच पर प्रतिष्ठित किया। अभिमन्यु अनंत आर्थिक कठिनाइयों की वजह से सुचारु रूप से औपचारिक शिक्षा अधिक ग्रहण नहीं कर पाए लेकिन अपने श्रम से प्रसिद्ध लेखकों की रचनाओं को पढ़कर उन्होंने अपनी लेखकीय कला का प्रमाण दिया। वे एक सजग, प्रतिबद्ध और कर्मठ रचनाकार थे। उन्होंने अपनी कहानियों को अपने समय के बयान के तौर पर लिखा है। निःसंदेह मारीशस के हिंदी साहित्य के इतिहास में उनका रचनाकाल 'अभिमन्यु अनंत युग' के रूप में दर्ज होगा।

अभिमन्यु का मूल भारत की ही मिट्टी है। इनके पूर्वज अन्य भारतीयों के साथ अंग्रेजों द्वारा वहाँ गन्ने की खेती में श्रम करने के लिए लाये गए थे। मजदूरों के रूप में गये भारतीय अंततः वहीं पर बस गए। मॉरीशस काल-क्रम से अंग्रेजों के शासन से मुक्त हुआ। भारतीय जो श्रमिक बनकर वहाँ गए थे, उनकी दूसरी-तीसरी पीढ़ियाँ पढ़ी-लिखी और सम्पन्न हैं। उनका जीवन स्तर बहुत ऊँचा है। अभिमन्यु की भारतीय पृष्ठभूमि ने उन्हें हिन्दी की सेवा के लिए उत्साहित किया और उन्होंने अपने पूर्वजों की मातृभूमि का ऋण अच्छी तरह से चुकाया। वे मॉरीशस के कथा-शिल्पी हैं, किन्तु उन्होंने हिन्दी कविता को एक नया आयाम दिया है। उनकी कविताओं का भारत के हिन्दी साहित्य में भी महत्वपूर्ण स्थान प्राप्त है।

वह अनजान आप्रवासी

वह अनजान आप्रवासी
देश के अन्धे इतिहास ने न तो उसे देखा था।
न तो गूंगे इतिहास ने
कभी सुनायी उसकी पूरी कहानी हमें
न ही बहरे इतिहास से सुना
उसके चीत्कारों को
जिसकी इस माटी पर
बही थी पहली बूंद पसीने की
जिसने चट्टानों के बीच हरियाली उगायी थी
नंगी पीठों पर सहकर बांसों की बौछार
बहा-बहाकर लाल पसीना
वह पहला गिरमिटिया इस माटी का बेटा
जो मेरा भी अपना था, तेरा भी अपना।

इतिहास का अस्मिता

नहीं चाहिए स्थान मुझे कोई विशेष
तुम्हारे इतिहास में
मैं तो उसमें
बिन स्थान पाये रहूँगा उपस्थित हमेशा
प्रश्न बोध चिन्ह के रूप में।
इतिहास का अवशेष तो
खण्डहर होता है, पंजर होता है
प्रश्न जो अनुत्तरित
और जो बड़ा प्रश्न बना रहता है।
नहीं चाहिए स्थान मुझे कोई विशेष
तुम्हारे इतिहास में
जब तक मैं प्रश्न हूँ
मुझे मृत्यु का भय नहीं
इसलिए इतिहास मेरी अस्मिता नहीं