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September – October 2019

An Eclectic Mix of Films

A FESTIVAL OF FILMS FROM GREECE

COLLABORATION: Indo-Hellenic Society

2 to 25 September 2019

The Greek Film Festival was a mixed bag of genres, including the recent Greek New Wave cinema, of which Yorgos Lanthimos was one of the directors whose work was featured. A film by Theodoros Angelopoulos was also a part of this eclectic mix.

The opening film, *Captain Correlli's Mandolin*, starred Nicholas Cage and Penelope Cruz. Its protagonist amply reminded us that adversity can leave one's core untouched, and at heart his character is idealistic. Captain Correlli's spirit survives the grim realities of war. But in its dramatic moments, the story juxtaposes scenes which portray just this idealism with the inherent weakness of the German officer whose greed and ambition are enhanced when he orders his troops to kill the disarmed Italian garrison. It is these moments that give the movie its punch.

All in all, the film is a sight for sore eyes, but no less memorable for the heroism of many men, including the sagacity of the doctor, when he advises his daughter to follow her heart in choosing the man she loves above the man she is betrothed to, without humiliating him. And Mandras himself, when he sees an opportunity to win back her love, protects Captain Correlli in a moment when he could have justifiably eliminated him.

The same moment of reckoning arises in *Eleni*, based on a true story, whose protagonist, when presented with a chance to deliver 'retribution' is almost divine in letting go of the opportunity for revenge.

Contrast this with the Greek 'weird' wave film that played the next day, *Miss Violence*. Directed by Alexander Avranas, the



film made most of the audience shudder, because it treated a dark subject as it should have, with nuanced treatment and acting. The horror of child sexual abuse and incest in the family made one hate the 'weakness' of the victims who put up with it for so long. The wife of the perpetrator kills him in the end, as he tries to initiate his granddaughter into prostitution. I interpreted her violence as an act of defeatism, because I imagined she had realised she'd been an accomplice in his crime by her long silence. So, at the end of the film, one is left wondering if the 'abused' will become a perpetrator of abuse herself.

My favourite film was *Rembetiko*. It took its time to build up. Yet the captivating music, camera and editing, cutting away to vignettes of the personal life of the artists followed by scenes underlaid with the music, brings the point home even more strongly: that the Greek blues, in their 'melancholic' effervescence, were a product of the artists' lives, laced as they were with economic and social deprivation, but also a determination to emerge from it, on the part of the singer Marika, whose life the film is based on.

The one film I was not impressed by was *Alps*, directed by Yorgos Lanthimos. I discovered a review published by *The Guardian* in 2012 that validated my view: '... The surreal effect is contrived, and any supposed satirical comment on modern Greece is not especially compelling'.

■ MEKHELA DEVA

Gandhi's Thoughts

EXHIBITION:

Time Bound: An Idea of Swaraj and Collectiveness 2018-19 by Shelly Jyoti

14 to 27 September 2019

In continuing support of Gandhi's philosophies, and in consonance with artist Shelly Jyoti's work, the October 2014 exhibition—*Salt: The Great March*, by the same artist, was followed up with *Time Bound: An Idea of Swaraj and Collectiveness 2018-19*. The works were inspired by visiting and re-visiting Gandhi's seminal anti-imperialist text *Hind Swaraj*, written in 1909. Stunning at first sight, the exhibition was deeply inspirational on detailed viewing.



Underlining the worst challenge plaguing the world today—the gaping chasm between commercial-economic growth, and the preservation of earth's life-sustaining natural wealth, Shelly concerns herself with problems of development, sans ethics and righteousness.

In this extensive series with Ajrakh print and dye on khadi, Shelly had chosen the leitmotif of fish to signify the idea of 'collective impact'. The eight panels, 20x6 feet each, of *Civilization and Collective Forces—1*, alluded to the perpetual motion created when millions and trillions of fish school together, able to turn currents. The gradual folding shoals of fish, and merging hues of indigo and madder, amalgamated to make a whole, signifying water as the beginning and end of life.

Works like *Hind Swaraj*; *Tree of Swaraj*; *Lunar Swell: A Dusk Moment and terminator*; *Civilization: Community, Society, Nation, Culture* contemplated the ideas of *Swadharna* as notions of patriotism; *Swaraj*; *Sarvodaya*; *Swadeshi*; *Satyagraha* and *Khadi*, while relating to our *Vedas/Upanishads*.

Largely site-specific in nature, and inspired by a deep conviction of Gandhi's thoughts, Shelly confessed to have conceived *The Khadi March: Just Five Meters* during her *Salt* show at the IIC, leaving viewers in anticipation of what might have germinated during this show at the same venue!

■ ARUNA BHOWMICK

Poignant Images

EXHIBITION

Kynmaw: to remember, memories, to take note, to bear in mind

Faces From Home: An exhibition of portraits of women by Careen J. Langsteih from Shillong, Meghalaya

Bearing Witness: Cyanotype photographic prints by Conrad Syiem from Shillong, Meghalaya

28 September to 5 October 2019

Faces From Home was a series on portraits of women from the artist's family and community. Each of them has a story to tell, a story of struggle, of determination and hope. Responsible and reconciled, these are women who take from life what it gives them without haggling or hankering, delivering on promises made to none but themselves.



Bearing Witness was a series of cyanotype photographic prints by Conrad Syiem. The still and silent monoliths of the Khasi Hills, photographed against the sky, are witness to passing time. Conrad tries to decipher the history within them.

Living Roots grow into bridges to provide vital lifelines between lands cut off by rivers and high mountains. They continue to acquire new character and strength with passing years. There are also people whose personality is shaped by the hills and its resources.

Personal in nature, these images were rendered through cyanotype, an iron-based photographic process discovered in 1842, three years after the 'official' discovery of photography.

Consisting of poignant images expressing attachment and pride in one's roots, all the series dwelt on simple, yet immovable subjects of ethnicity, landscape and people, and a continuity that has weathered time and circumstance, building bridges between the past and the present.

■ ARUNA BHOWMICK

Aura of Inclusiveness

PERFORMANCE

IIC BAITHAKI: Hindustani Violin Recital by Ragini Shankar

ACCOMPANIST: Abhishek Mishra

30 October 2019

Violinist Ragini Shankar, accompanied by Abhishek Mishra on the tabla, complemented one another, with whiffs of the Benaras strain evident in every tap of the rhythm, as also every pull of the violin's bow. The tonal strengths of the *gayaki ang* of bowing completely immersed the playing of Ragini Shankar, who is the inheritor of this tradition from her grandmother N. Rajam and mother Sangeeta Shankar. Besides its melodious overture, *the layakari, tihai* passages and the *taan* patterns gave an aura of *baithaki* characteristics. On the tabla, the *sawaal-jawaab* responses infused a talkative quality to the proceedings, without lapsing into gimmickry. The concert thus carried an aura of inclusiveness, right from the start.

Being an evening programme, the artist's choice of raga *Des* for her second rendition was apt. She managed to



writing out the emotion of pathos that the raga is charged with, and maintained the ambience right till the end. With a conclusive touch through the rendering of *Vaishnava Janato* in raga *Misra Khamaj*, nostalgia came full circle with many in the audience recalling its rendering by this violin foursome, led by their venerable elder, N. Rajam. The concert also reflected the norms of the authentic *baithak*, as Ragini Shankar, in her standing as the younger musician, expressed her individuality by presenting a tried-out number within the bounds of tradition, without falling prey to imitation of the familial style.

■ SUBHRA MAZUMDAR

Ahimsa: In Gandhi's Footsteps

MAKING PEACE WITH THE EARTH

BHOOMI 2019: Saluting Ba and Babu and Celebrating our Cultural Diversity

1 October 2019

Vandana Shiva commenced the panel discussion by bringing forth the contemporary nature of violence, and the danger which it brings upon the world. Sharing Gandhi's concept of *swaraj*, that is freedom and sovereignty in community, she interlinked it with freedom and sovereignty in nature. This illuminates the idea of her organisation,



Navdanya, through which they are creating *Beej Swaraj*, an ecological economy.

Prasanna Prahladachar reflected upon the concept of the political economy as a sacred economy, in the sense of an economy of restraint. He defined Gandhi in the language of theatre, as a person who played many roles. Kartikeya Sarabhai emphasised the importance of Gandhi's *charkha*, as not only a symbol of resistance and independence, but also of sustainable development. Apoorvanand said we need to speak about the unspeakable, reiterating the growing attacks on minorities. Ramin Jahanbegloo observed that the juxtaposition of action and contemplation in the life of Gandhi was his strongest tool. Satish Kumar concluded the forum by sharing the conceptual sense of being an activist. An activist, he said, 'is a journey and a state of being'. Gandhi, for him, is an activist who believes in the idea of diversity as the essence of life.

Vidya Rao and her team energised the stage with the musical rendition of *ashram bhajnavalis*, which echoed the teachings of peace and harmony. Miti Desai animated the stage through her performance of the classical dance of *Mohiniyattam*.

■ STEVEN S. GEORGE

The Poet of Resonating Silences

REMEMBERING KUNWAR NARAIN

The Self Not Taken: Identity, Tradition and Ethics in the Work of Kunwar Narain

SPEAKER: Pratap Bhanu Mehta

CHAIR: Mrinal Pande

17 September 2019

Pratap Bhanu Mehta, in his oration on the renowned poet Kunwar Narain, referred to the latter as a poet of silences; not merely as absence of sound, but inhabited with voices



and echoes, one of which is the echo of the endless (*anant*), resonant, while at the same time unbearable, a 'black hole that can absorb anything'.

He described Narain's work as sparkling with luminous honesty and the poet's vocation as bearing witness, not just as mere record, but illuminating from within. Though he was a part of many literary movements, he neither identified with nor became enslaved to any.

Mehta reads his poetry against the grain, as a poet of rebellion, and his verse as a higher form of dissent than mere politics, lawless abandon or philosophy. In the poet's articulation, poetry is a competitor to philosophy as it unpacks a different kind of truth that no other genre is capable of teasing out.

Focusing on the epic poems *atmajayi* and *vajashrava ke bahane*, Mehta analysed the different registers of the meanings and the nature of death in them. He drew attention to the element of violence, and how poetry can liberate one by opening up an imaginative participation in particularities. The objective of Narain's poetry is to displace the hold that identity has, so that one can experience the joy of existence itself.

■ AJAY JAISINGHANI

The River

DISCUSSION

A Dialogue of Rivers. River Dialogues Discussion led by Shiv Visvanathan

IN CONVERSATION: Shiv Visvanathan; Krupa Ge; Minket Lepcha; and Sarandha Jain

27 September 2019

Shiv Visvanathan opened the discussion on what he termed 'gossip about rivers'. While he stated that the Ganga was often viewed as the sole river, he preferred to question whether the wealth of rivers in the country was more a flow of metaphors.

The discussants painted a less lyrical picture of the state of our major rivers. Faulty development policies have not only destroyed entire ecosystems, but compelled marginalised riverine communities to lose their deep connect with the very rivers that they depended on for sustenance. The rivers are celebrated in folklore, literature and history, but

other than that, there are few reminders of their existence other than floods, sewage and massive dams.

Sarandha Jain has traced the flow of the holy Yamuna from Yamunotri to Allahabad. She critiqued the modern paradigm of development that has reduced the Yamuna to a dirty trickle and a riverfront landscape.

The Chennai floods in December 2015 were a wake-up call for Krupa Ge. The floods, she said, were reflective of serious mismanagement by those in power which exacted a heavy cost of lives and livelihood. On a personal note, she said her own parents bore the fury of the floods.

Minket Lepcha described her relocation from Delhi where she was a successful advertising professional to her hometown of Darjeeling. Now a teacher and filmmaker, she has a deep love for the river Teesta as it flows through Sikkim and West Bengal. She recalled some of the fascinating stories that she has documented along the way. 'The connection of the communities to river Teesta was so moving,' she said.

■ KAVITA CHARANJI

Re-engaging the Mahatma

JAI JAGAT 2020

Is Gandhi a Beacon for Global Development and Peace?

11 September 2019

Etched in our collective consciousness with the catastrophic tragedy, 9/11 is also the birth anniversary of Vinoba Bhave. To mark the occasion, and as a countdown to Jai Jagat's global peace march from Delhi to Geneva, the panel deliberated on Gandhi and global peace.

Ramin Jahanbegloo referred to the Gandhian way as a path to peace, and bemoaned the loss of leaders with a moral voice. A consciousness of peace cannot develop without dignifying the other, irrespective of race, language, religion, sexuality, etc. This interconnected, cosmic companionship is based on an inclusive idea to coexist with respect and non-violence.

Focusing on trusteeship, Rajni Bakshi criticised both capitalism and communism as having failed to look at the means, and being contemptuous of society. She posited the abolition of the WTO as it exists, and using GDP as a single measure of growth, and the limitation of the financial method to measure profits at the cost of the social and environmental.

Ashok Sajjanhar foregrounded the fearlessness of Gandhi, influenced by his study of religious texts, his



belief in Ultimate Truth and its relationship with non-violence. Gandhi revolutionised revolution by confronting his opponents non-violently. Sajjanhar underscored the importance of reinterpreting and reconfiguring Gandhi's message today.

Underlining Gandhi's contribution to human rights and multilateralism, Miloon Kothari emphasised Gandhi's belief in the balance between nationalism and internationalism. Gandhi correlated every right to equivalent duties, which was finally written into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Jai Jagat's task in Geneva is to recall those statements, hold governments accountable and uphold human rights.

■ **AJAY JAISINGHANI**

India's Future Prospects

31ST WILHELM VON POCHHAMMER MEMORIAL LECTURE

Nationalism and Interdependence

SPEAKER: Nitin Desai

CHAIR: Ronen Sen

COLLABORATION: Federation of Indo-German Societies in India

21 October 2019

This illustrated lecture by Nitin Desai, well-known economist and former Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, dealt with observations about the book, *India's Road to Nationhood: A Political History of the Subcontinent*, by Wilhelm von

Pochhammer, a German diplomat.

In the preamble to the talk, Desai contextualised the potentialities and limits of the notion of 'Nationalism' by focusing on economic, ecological, social and cultural interdependence, and contouring between individuals and enterprises, subsumed by national boundaries. His insightful observations apprised us of the fact that a more vocal nationalism is becoming progressively the preferred option of the political class in several countries. The lecture meticulously explored India's future prospects, and emphasised a new vision that needs to reinvent itself in a world where freedom, equality and fraternity also include pluralism, justice and sustainability.

The talk concluded with a round of brilliant discussions and dialogue.

■ **ONAM VAID**

Ethical and Emotional Foundations

TALK

Radical Ecological Democracy

SPEAKER: Ashish Kothari

MODERATOR: Ashish Nandy

18 September 2019

The aim of this seminar was to search for alternatives to unsustainable and inequitable models of 'development'. It began with the question: how can we deal with the multiple crises at the cost of development?

Not only in India, but across the world, legally and policy-wise, the spaces which are available for us or for civil society for people to raise their voices against injustice are shrinking. In many different ways, they find shrinking democracy under threat. Which raises the obvious question: 'Is there any alternative to development?'

Why are we in this crisis? Crisis of inequality, crisis of sustainability, crisis of climate, crisis of social deprivation, and so on. Ashish Kothari tries to find the answer.

In his lecture, Kothari said this is the result of the concentration of power; the power of domination of some over others, be it a corporation, state, caste or ethnicity.

Talking about cities in radical democracy, he enlightened the audience on how to deal with it. He cited the example of Kutch, which is emerging as a society which follows the same village pattern of radical democracy, where people decide for their own society; they are decision-makers where they are living.

Kothari also highlighted the responsibility of the middle class. He cited the examples of Pune, Goa and Bangalore, where middle-class society has created an ecosystem for themselves. In Bangalore, the Rainbow society revived a dead lake into a natural habitat and ecosystem with zero waste, a 100 per cent water recycling colony and an abundance of wild life.

In order for the alternative to be successful, he suggested that we must bury the masculinity within ourselves, and achieve women's participation with equality to re-establish our balance in relation to the rest of nature. He gave an example of Kurdish women who are playing an important role in Kurdish and Middle Eastern society, and are able to overthrow the plans of imperialist and hegemonic forces in the Middle East.

In his closing remarks, he said, 'the wide embrace of radical ecological democracy will require the spread of the core values underlying the framework, a transition guided not only by hard-headed rationality, but also by a strong ethical and emotional foundation.'

■ M. SHAHID SIDDIQUI

Upcoming Talents

FESTIVAL:

The Bloom Festival—Celebrating Hindustani Music with Young Talents

Vocal Recitals by Vilina Patra and Nirali Kartik

Sitar Recital by Dhruv Bedi

COLLABORATION: TWAM Arts

7 September 2019

It is a rare treat to be privy to a concert featuring young talent with great promise. The 'Bloom Festival' at the IIC was thus an exclusive offering to music lovers, wherein three classical performers, with impeccable gharana credentials, shared the stage for an evening of classical renditions. The vocal artists, Vilina Patra and Nirali Kartik, disciples of Pt. Sanjeev Abhyankar of the Mewati Gharana, were slated at the start and conclusion of the concert. A smart move

of sandwiching the instrumentalist Dhruv Bedi, in-between the vocal renditions, introduced all the characteristics of the Enayat Khan sitar gharana, as his tutorship has been under Pt. Buddhadev Mukherjee of the same gharana.



The combined presentation produced an evening that merged equal levels of expertise with individual attributes, as these young musicians, showed perfect *tayyari* through their renditions, at the same time mapping out promising individuality beneath their gharana fit. While the vocal inputs had a strong unhurried melodiousness in the *bada khayal* composition, the shorter *bandish*, as a follow-up, was emphasised with copybook perfection by them.



The *taan* passages showed intense clarity and dexterity both by the vocalists and the instrumentalist, whose *jhala* inclusions made audiences sit up and take notice. The vocalists, in keeping with the Mewati grounding, concluded their concerts with a serene overture of bhajans, bringing the concert evening to a befitting closure. One only hopes that this festival proves to be the start of many more concerts featuring upcoming talents from around the country.

■ SUBHRA MAZUMDAR

A Unique Guru

TO MARK THE 550TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF GURU NANAK DEV

From Rabab to Nagara: Life and Legacy of Guru Nanak

INAUGURATION: Mark Tully

ILLUSTRATED LECTURE: *The Life and Legacy of Guru Nanak* by Mohinder Singh

CHAIR: Shri N. N. Vohra

COLLABORATION: National Institute of Panjab Studies

4 to 6 October 2019

In a befitting celebration of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, an exhibition was organised, titled *From Rabab to Nagara*, displaying paintings and rare photographs of the evolution of the *Khalsa*—from the quest for peace to a clarion call for defending the faith under threat of conversion and atrocities.

In his talk on the *Life and Legacy of Guru Nanak*, Mohinder Singh dwelt on the travels and teachings of the Guru, spreading the message of love, compassion, harmony,

peace, brotherhood, respect for all faiths, and the idea of plurality. Through his humble style, praxis and rational behaviour, the Guru fought a constant battle against superstition and false beliefs, generated by the clergy that exploited the ignorance and faith of unwary people, thus intensifying irrationalities.

During his life, the Guru interacted with criminals, recluses, rulers, ordinary folk, poor people, the clergy and spiritual masters (*bhagats*), whose compositions he not only collected, but which have an honourable space within the holy *Granth*. He believed in dialogue and discussion through gentle logic and listening to the other calmly, rather than debating the issue. The Guru emphasised equality and dignity of women, and castigated any disrespectful references to their physical compulsions. He spoke boldly against exploitation by the rulers and the clergy.

Guru Nanak's mission was continued by successive gurus in the compilation of the *Granth*, an interfaith scripture, that was conferred the title of Guru. Nanak was a unique guru who was a traveller, householder, farmer, literary giant and rationalist.

■ P. S. BAWA

Remembering Gandhi

GANDHI MATTERS

The Compass we Lost

SPEAKER: Dilip Simeon

COLLABORATION: The Raza Foundation

4 October 2019

The foremost issues raised by Dilip Simeon were that Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, more commonly addressed as Gandhiji in India, and regarded as the father of the nation and the major force behind the nationalist movement of ahimsa or non-violence, was actually much more than just that.

The body of work that Gandhi achieved transcends national barriers and locations. Even so, many years after his death, he stirs up controversies. He remains revered across the globe among leaders and politicians, but also

controversial in India for his religious, social and political views, which are encapsulated in his own writings and publications. The most recent desecration of his memorial monuments in India, and the attempts to defend the stand of his assassin Nathuram Godse, are evidence of this.

The speaker argued that Gandhi was primarily the champion of the downtrodden segments of society, the Dalits, the Harijans, the peasant farmers or the destitute, some visible and some not. The message he projected was love and dignity of labour. The central tenets of his existence were adherence to truth, active measures against violence, the dignity of labour and love. It is with this view that all his actions and also inaction during the incidents of Hindu-Muslim violence around the time of Partition, or the bombing of Hiroshima, must be viewed. The speaker mentioned some excellent new material and books that have recently been published, which foreground these issues.

■ MEKHALA SENGUPTA

Contribution of Tibetan Medicine

INAUGURAL FUNCTION

of First Sowa-Rigpa Day Celebration

11 September 2019

In recognition of the significant contribution of Tibetan medicine to alternative medicine in India, a two-day session was organised to commemorate the First Sowa Rigpa Day. After the inaugural Yuthog prayers, traditional scarves were presented to the dignitaries by Chairman, Central Council of Tibetan Medicine (CCTM). A short

running slide show introducing the Sowa Rigpa system and its benefits informed the viewers about the system's institutional progress so far. This was also an occasion to present the Yuthog award (started in 2009 by the CCTM), in recognition of the special contribution to the ongoing research in this medicine. The award—given every three years and only after a stringent selection procedure—was presented to a visiting physician of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Addressing the gathering, the guest of honour narrated how the Dalai Lama revived the medicine system in India as an important part of Himalayan/Tibetan culture by inviting senior scholars in exile from Tibet. As the research has progressed, the need was felt to officially regulate the research. As a result, the Government of India recognised this system with effect from January 2012. The biggest presence of practitioners happens to be in Ladakh at the moment. Another aspect of the medicine that makes it more integrated with Indian culture is that its evolution came through the traditional *guru-shishya parampara*. Besides the discussion of the various technical aspects of this system, the larger message was the call to preserve and promote the Sowa Rigpa system.

■ PRATEEK JOSHI



Upbeat and Dynamic

PERFORMANCE

Hungarian Folk Music and Dance

Presented by Laposa Julcsi's Band from Hungary

COLLABORATION: Hungarian Information and Cultural Centre and Delhi Music Society

29 October 2019

Laposa Julcsi's band itself is an award-winning ensemble that includes award-winning musicians who have performed widely all over the world. The line-up consisted of four musicians and two dancers. The musicians were Laposa Julcsi on folk viola and vocals; Karoly Horvath Jr. on the fiddle, hurdy-gurdy and vocals; Zoltan Szabo on Turkish pipe, bagpipe, flute and Jewish harp; and Marton Timar on bass. The dancers were Fanni Sosovicza and Daniel Bodnar. The hurdy-gurdy is a traditional European stringed instrument that is widely used in folk music. The hurdy-gurdy tradition is particularly well developed in folk music from Hungary, Poland, Belarus and Ukraine.

The band's repertoire mainly encompasses folk melodies and folk dances of the Carpathian Basin from Transdanubia, Transylvania, Eastern Hungary and Moldavia, and the items presented were mostly drawn from this genre. Most of these songs and dances were from various provinces



of Hungary, Romania and Transylvania (now in present-day Romania, but populated mostly by Hungarian-origin people).

The band's performance was tight and well-knit. The songs and dances were mostly up-tempo and dynamic and came across well, establishing a good rapport with the audience.

■ S. CHIDAMBAR



Intrepid Scientist

WOMEN IN SCIENCE IN INDIA

SPEAKER: Sudipta Sengupta

COLLABORATION: Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Govt. of India; and Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi

31 October 2019



The many leaps by women in science can make Indians proud, as it did at a forum with the same title. Sudipta Sengupta was the first Indian woman scientist to step onto Antarctica (with Aditi Pant). Sengupta studied at Jadavpur

University, Calcutta, and is a structural geologist and a trained mountaineer. Through an account of her personal and professional growth, she charted a road map for women to dream, work and create the reality of what society may label 'fantasies of ambitious women'. Her contribution in interpreting deformation of boundinage layers as well as pebbles in conglomerates was recognised with the S. S. Bhatnagar Prize for Excellence in Science.

Sudipta Sengupta's anecdotes had details such as being guided to pursuing geology that matched her love for travel rather than physics, which seemed like familial lineage; however, it was her physicist father who initially led her to science. In the early 1970s, science was still not a common option for women; yet, Sengupta broke barriers to travel to remote areas in the 1980s, both in India and abroad, at a time when women were discouraged from undertaking fieldwork. From early years, she worked in places that preferred men—such as the Geological Survey of India—and applied to be part of the research team to Antarctica. The initial rejection was transformed into two visits in the 3rd and 9th teams. It did not cease there, as she prepared three PhD students to successfully be part of the 15th, 16th and 17th expeditions.

Professionally, geology became more alive with her words, 'rock is not a stone, it has designs that tell a story'. Personally, she invoked her roots as a Durga- worshipping Bengali; 'Durga is in each of us, we have to work upon the strengths'.

■ ASHA SINGH





Director's Note

As in the past years, all our concerned staff, led by the Programme Division, put in considerable hard work for the IIC Festival 2019 to present an enchanting bouquet of programmes to our Members. The Festival programmes were highly appreciated, as evidenced by the comments received and the footfalls. For those who could not attend all the programmes or were not in Delhi during those days, we are shortly bringing out a supplement of the Diary which will provide a pictorial coverage of the programmes held.

Members would be pleased to know that we have established a facility for IIC venues to be booked online. This module can be accessed through the IIC Website. A provision is now available to check the availability of the various venues and to send a booking request to our Centralised Booking Office.

The Centre's initiatives towards conservation of water and electricity have started yielding dividends. During August and September 2019, as compared to the same period in 2018, there was a saving in electricity consumption by approximately ₹3,50,000 per month. 30,000 litres of recycled water are now being generated daily through the Centre's sewage treatment plant; this water is being used for the gardens. Under our Green Concept initiative, we have processed the installation of a biogas plant with a capacity of 500 kg per day, which will be functional by February 2020.

Under a recent initiative, the Library will facilitate the display of sculpted works by our Members. One selected sculpture will be displayed at a time, for a period of one month. Chief Librarian may be contacted for further details.

The Library has six cubicles which are rented only to Scholar-Members of our Centre, to facilitate their research. These cubicles can be taken for a period of three months on a first-cum-first serve basis. Interested Scholar-Members may contact the Library to know more.

The Library has subscribed to Granth Sanjeevani, an endeavour of the Asiatic Society of Mumbai, to showcase its digitised collections online. Granth Sanjeevani has over 20,000 books, newspapers, manuscripts, maps, journals, government publications and reports. A majority of the books are in English, but there are also some in Sanskrit and other ancient and modern Indian languages, and in European languages like Greek, Latin, Italian, German and French. The subject areas include Indology and Oriental scholarship; biographies; genealogy; politics; economics; science; management; travel; and fiction. Around 15,000 have been classified as rare and valuable books, which include first editions of antiquarian books in Indian and European languages. Granth Sanjeevani can be accessed in our Library.



The Centre has opted for a Medical Insurance Policy, from New India Assurance Company Limited, for the medical care of our employees, who will be entitled to medical treatment at any of the very large list of the designated hospitals on a cashless basis. We had envisaged insurance coverage limits of ₹3 lakh, ₹4 lakh and ₹5 lakh, depending on the salary levels of the employees. On this basis, 34 employees were tentatively listed for ₹4 lakh, 33 for ₹5 lakh, and the remaining 326 for ₹3 lakh insurance cover. Employees were given the choice of opting for higher insurance coverage limits. We have received an overwhelming response; 155 employees have now opted for ₹5 lakh coverage.

I am grateful to all our Members who cooperated enthusiastically and enabled a smooth transition to the usage of Smart Cards. This has helped us to automate and streamline financial transactions. More than 60 per cent of our Members have received Smart Cards. Members who have not so far applied for Smart Card, are requested to please do so and get their Smart Cards at the earliest.

■ **K. N. Shrivastava**

DEPARTURES

MEMBERSHIP NO.	NAME
L-0310	SHRI RAM JETHMALANI
M-1402	PROF. T. KRISHNAN
M-2448	COL. BHANU KUMAR RAI (RETD.)
M-3665	VADM S. P. GOVIL (RETD.)
A-1354	SHRI PUNYAPRIYA DASGUPTA
A-7325	SHRI TEJINDER S. OBEROI