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Fix Policy to Fix Economy

SEMINAR

Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah Mid-Year Review of the Indian Economy 2019–2020

PANELLISTS: *Sudipto Mundle; Rudrani Bhattacharya; Bornali Bhandari; Pronab Sen; Vinayak Chatterjee; Debjani Ghosh ; D. K. Joshi and Abheek Barua*

COLLABORATION: *Malcolm and Elizabeth Adiseshiah Trust; National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER); National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP); and IIC*

16 November 2019

The Indian economy has been facing pressures both externally and internally, and these seemed evident in most data indicators presented in the 'Mid-Year Review of the Indian Economy, 2019–2020'. The NCAER pegged India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth for FY20 at a low 4.9 per cent, and also forecast gross value added (GVA) growth for the July–September quarter at 4.9 per cent.

With opening remarks from IIC Director K. N. Shrivastava and NCAER Director Shekhar Shah, Rudrani Bhattacharya of NIPFP introduced a model of growth forecasts developed jointly with NCAER economists. This was followed by remarks on the performance of the real economy and trade by NCAER's Bornali Bhandari. Commenting on macroeconomic policies, Sudipto Mundle of NCAER said: 'The picture of the economy is grim, and this is rather widespread across sectors.' The government would need to make some policy tweaks to revive the economy, he added.

A panel discussion on 'Balancing Macrostability and Deeper Structural Reforms for a Growth Recovery' was also held. Moderated by eminent economist and former chief statistician of India Pronab Sen, the discussion threw up a wide range of ideas for reviving the economy.



Vinayak Chatterjee of Feedback Infra Group said that India's aim of becoming a \$5 trillion economy would require an investment of about ₹20 trillion per year in infrastructure for the next five years. Apart from the Consolidated Fund of India and other public funds, the government could set up a strong development finance institution (DFI) to finance this investment, he said.

Debjani Ghosh of Nasscom said she was cautiously optimistic about the economy, even as information technology and related industries were not sharing the doom and gloom faced by financial and other sectors. But she conceded that automation solutions should work on a people-plus model in India to skill the workforce, unlike in the West, where these reduced dependence on human capital because of an ageing workforce.

On the health of non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), D. K. Joshi of CRISIL said those which did not have great underlying assets or a strong parent were the ones struggling. Stress in the financial system was a good time to push the corporate bond market as an alternative, he suggested, adding that the government could draw ideas from Malaysia's example and create a market for lower-rated paper.

Abheek Barua of HDFC Bank said that it would not be right to say that public–private partnerships in infra projects were not getting enough funding from banks, but added that raising liquidity via corporate bonds was a better idea. He gave two suggestions to revive infrastructure investment: first, the government should remove the risks facing NBFCs by creating a bad bank; and second, the Reserve Bank could take a hit and buy NBFCs' bonds via open-market operations.

■ REETESH ANAND

Remembering Tagore

ILLUSTRATED LECTURE

Tribute to Tagore

SPEAKER: Valerie Doulton

13 November 2019

Valerie Doulton, founder and artistic director of The Live Literature Company, UK, seamlessly connected her personal experience of staging Tagore's play *The Post Office* in 2011 with the larger relevance of Tagore's words in our time. She spoke of Tagore's vision of the universal and the spiritual, and how she drew on them in the crafting and staging of her play; talking about the spiritual approach she took towards the child psyche, instead of looking at the Freudian model, and the spiritual resistance to despondency.

■ SHAYANTANI DAS

Madness of Imperial Violence

PERFORMANCE

Dastan-e-Jallian

Written by Ainie Farooqui

Performed by Ainie Farooqui and Nusrat Ansari

Directed by Mahmood Farooqui

14 November 2019

Dastan-e-Jallian was a soulful dastangoi performance, written by Ainie Farooqui and performed by Nusrat Ansari and Ainie Farooqui, under the direction of Mahmood Farooqui, who has been a pioneer in the revival of this long lost art of storytelling, and has been orchestrating dastangoi performances across the country for the last 15 years.



Written to commemorate the centennial year of the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, *Dastan-e-Jallian* expertly wove together incidents leading up to the fateful tragedy and its aftermath. Drawing from various writings across genres—protest poetry in Urdu and Punjabi; writings of Manto and Krishan Chander; speeches of Gandhi, Nehru and Tagore; and official reports such as the Hunter Commission Report—it presented a tale that is historically relevant and has contemporary socio-political resonances. It made references to the Rowlatt Act, Gandhi, Dr. Saifuddin and Satyapal's unrest movement, and the politically volatile Amritsar of those times. The performance addressed the complex questions of imperial intent, aberrative behaviour versus calculated imperialism, and the insanity of the power of state. Through various incidents, it brought out how the Jallianwala incident should be remembered as a lesson necessary for the decolonised mind.

The script was well written, the performance was meticulous and sensitively directed. The literary references seamlessly blended in with the historical redocumentation, and came across as a powerful comment on the madness of imperial violence. Dastangoi is a medium that distinctly involves the audience in the performance, building upon their reactions as they become a part of the narration. *Dastan-e-Jallian* successfully achieved this feat, finally leaving the audience with a lot of food for thought about the nature of political reality and historical representations.

■ POULOMI BOSE

Grace and Dedication

FILM

Oh that's Bhanu. A film by R.V. Ramani

16 November 2019

Based on the life of dancer Bhanumathi Rao, this film comes with a very original title. It was, in fact, one of the titles proposed by Bhanumathi herself when asked how she would like the biopic entitled. R. V. Ramani, who made the film after spending a lot of time talking to the nonagenarian dancer and her family, has beautifully captured her zest for life, her humour—she cracks numerous jokes, her good health—she goes for a brisk walk everyday, and, of course, her love for dance.

Her story is revealed through a series of interviews with her

family members, the most important of them being theatre artist and solo performer Maya Krishna Rao, and glimpses of the dancer's life through photographs taken over the years. Bhanumathi, who spends her time between Delhi and Bangalore, has a major hearing problem but that does not in any way diminish her enthusiasm for walking, gardening and ... dancing. A short clip of her dancing Bharatanatyam to the song *Krishna Nee Begane Baaro* gives the uninitiated an insight into the grace of 95-year-old Bhanumathi who started off as a Kathakali dancer, but later moved to Bharatanatyam. A few more such clips would have been welcome, but unfortunately there is only one such. The dancer's failing memory entailed a repetition of several lines and snippets of conversation, making an otherwise fascinating film sometimes a little tedious.

■ SWATI DASGUPTA

The Global Musical Connection

PERFORMANCE

Fusion—New Music for a New Age by Richard Steinbach

6 December 2019

On his first visit to India, award-winning concert pianist Richard Steinbach enthralled the audience with a selection of folk and jazz-infused pieces from around the world. He began with a few tranquil folk songs, including his own arrangement of the English folk classic *Greensleeves*. He continued with four classical-style children's songs composed by the American jazz legend Chick Corea, to which Steinbach added his own improvised jazz sections. More than one person in the audience could be seen tapping to the rhythms he produced. The spellbinding *Warsaw Concerto* from the World War II movie *Dangerous Moonlight* captured the tragedy of that era and led the audience into the interval deeply moved.

After the interval, two more tranquil pieces by the American composer Gwyneth Walker provided a dreamlike atmosphere, before Steinbach played a piece each by the Cuban composer Jorge Lopez Marin and the American composer Lowell Liebermann. The programme concluded with pieces he had discovered on sabbatical in Latin America, where he came across composers whose complex and moving work was little known outside the continent. The audience was treated to four Brazilian



pieces in the classical style, proving that music is a truly universal human connector. The evening ended with an encore of the second movement of Beethoven's *Pathétique Sonata*, dedicated to Steinbach's late mother and other 'strong women' who had recently passed away. It was an evening well-spent, with Steinbach's flawless technique and great depth of emotion making for a captivating musical experience.

■ RIMA HANDA ZAHEER

Sarbajaya's Travails

FILM FESTIVAL

The Apu Trilogy

COLLABORATION: National Film Archive of India, Pune

19, 20, 21 December 2019

Born exactly a hundred years ago, Karuna Bandyopadhyay, of the ten-odd films in which she has acted, is undoubtedly best known for her role as Sarbajaya, Harihar's wife, in Satyajit Ray's *Apu Trilogy*. Of the three *Apu* films, Sarbajaya appears in the first two: *Pather Panchali* and *Aparajita*. The screening of the trilogy was preceded by a conversation between film critic Samik Bandyopadhyay, and film maker Adoor Gopalakrishnan, who spoke about Ray, and about the difficulties faced by Karuna in doing justice to her role. And justice she did. Portrayed as a very down-to-earth housewife of a very poor family, struggling to make

ends meet, and yet ensuring the strict upbringing of her two children, Durga and Apu, Sarbajaya has to weather the death of her young daughter, and subsequently of her husband.

Pather Panchali depicts in great detail rural life in Bengal, where Sarbajaya has to put up with the whims and fancies of her sister-in-law, and very convincingly enacts her irritation at the doings of this unwanted relative. The end of *Pather Panchali* sees the family of three, Durga having already passed away, leaving rural Bengal to go and settle in Benares. In *Aparajita*, life looks up slightly, as Harihar now earns much better than in Bengal. This better life, however, does not last very long as Sarbajaya loses her husband and is back to a hard life, trying her best to raise *Apu* and give him a decent life. The film ends with her dying a lonely death, her son away in Kolkata for studies and in search of a decent job.

■ SWATI DASGUPTA

Bridging the Divide

DISCUSSION

Cross-Cultural Conversation: A New Way of Learning. Release of the new book by Anindita N. Balslev (New Delhi: Routledge, 2019)

RELEASE: Dr. Karan Singh

DISCUSSANTS: Dr. Karan Singh; Shri Shyam Saran; Oscar Pujol; and Anindita N. Balslev

COLLABORATION: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group

4 November 2019

In a world deeply fraught with polarities of the global and the national, science versus religion, a single identity as opposed to multiple, Balslev's book *Cross Cultural Conversation* provides a methodology to bridge these paradoxes. *Cross Cultural Conversation* (CCC), she asserted, is an invitation for an open exchange among hard boundaries; to soften them and ameliorate our collective life, thus unlearning prejudices about the 'otherness' of others. She also warned about the abuse of knowledge of the social sciences by governments to

stifle dissent, and emphasised greater public awareness in narrowing the gap between academia and society.

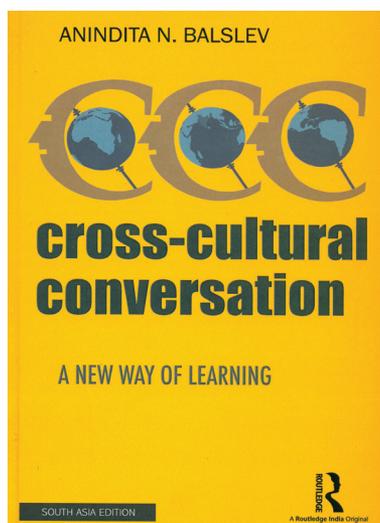
Pujol referred to the present as a third globalisation, which has created multiple encounters, thus necessitating CCC. This conversation is more relevant and welcome, when nations become more chauvinistic, while the problems are increasingly global. He observed that people get reduced to a single identity at the cost of their rich and dense multiple identities.

Saran viewed the subject through the lens of diplomacy, where culture has forever been underrated, though it is universal and communicates across populations. Cultural

empathy, he averred, is a sine qua non to successful diplomacy. The complexities of the present he reflected, can only be tackled by global collaborative responses.

Karan Singh indicated that the 21st century has thrown up a challenge in the form of a blowback against ideas of globalisation that need to be countered. He spoke of his own linguistically-rooted, multiple identities, and underscored the importance of a strong spiritual centre to harmonise multiple identities.

■ AJAY JAISINGHANI



Instrumental and Vocal Music

IIC WINTER FESTIVAL OF MUSIC

*Rudra-Veena Recital by Sharada Mushti and
Hindustani Vocal Recital by Adarsh Saxena*

27 December 2019

The two-day Winter Festival presented music in its entirety as defined in *Sangeet Ratnakar*, *Geetam-Vadyam tatha Nrityam/Trayam Sangeetam uchyate*, i.e., vocal, instrumental and dance together comprise music. There were Hindustani vocal and instrumental performances on the inaugural evening, and dance on the second evening, featuring young talent with remarkable potential.

The IIC deserves kudos for opening the festival with the Rudra-Veena, a fast disappearing ancient Indian instrument, with just a handful of practitioners left. Sharda Mushti, a talented disciple of Arvind Parikh, the doyen of the Imdadkhani Gharana, chose the melodious evening raga *Yaman* for her Rudra-Veena recital. Guided in dhrupad style under Rajiv Janardan, she displayed admirable restraint in her unhurried rendering of the *Alap-Jod-Jhala*, before she played a medium tempo composition set to *chautala*. She was ably accompanied on the *pakhawaj* by Sukhad Munde, who mirrored her rhythmic patterns in a variety of *chhandas*.

The Hindustani vocal recital by Adarsh Saxena was the other attraction of the inaugural evening. A post-graduate



in music from Indira Kala Vishwa Vidyalaya, Adarsh is an ITC-SRA scholar trained under the tutelage of Arun Bhaduri.

Opening with raga *Bihag*, he presented the *bada khayal kaise sukh sove...*, set to *vilambit ek-tala*, elaborating the raga with *Barhat*, *Behelawa* and a variety of *sargam* and *akar taans*. The rhythmically fascinating *chhota khayal* had its *mukhda* starting from the fifth beat of *teentala*. Adarsh also presented *jhaptala* and *teentala* compositions in raga *Jog* before he concluded his vocal recital with a *bhairavi bhajan*. Deepak Singh accompanied him on the tabla and Ravi Pal on the harmonium.

■ MANJARI SINHA

Tis the Season of Dance

IIC WINTER FESTIVAL OF DANCE

*Sattriya Recital by Meenakshi Medhi and
Kuchipudi Recital by Vidhya S.*

28 December 2019

With the *margazhi* season in full swing in Madras, the capital city also saw some brilliantly curated festivals of dance and music. In particular, the IIC Winter Festival of Dance which stood out with performances by Meenakshi Medhi in Sattriya and Vidhya S. in Kuchipudi style.

With the *Bhagavat Puran* as the axial of Sattriya dance's foundation, Meenakshi went on to present *Hajowalia Saali Naas*, which is a soft, graceful dance based on pure *lasya anga*. Based on *Suta* and *Thukoni Tal* and *Sareng raga*, the dancer presented the first *Ramdani* of *Saali Naas* out of the eight different ritualistic variations of this invocatory piece, followed by a *slokabhinaya Sarata Sasanka Kara* from the

Keli Gopal Nat of kirtan written by Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva. The graceful and petite Meenakshi further developed her recital with the presentation of a *Geetor Abhinaya*, choosing a *Rama Vandana Neelambhuja Shyaamala Kamalangam...* With *Putana* and *Bakasur Badh* and *Ajamila Upakhyan*, the dancer with her innate sense of abhinaya chose to end her recital while drenching the *rasikas* in a mood of pure bhakti.

Next in line was a *Pushpanjali* by Vidhya S. invoking the blessings of Lord Vinayaka in raga *Gambhira Nattai*, set to *Adi talam*. In the abhinaya aspect of her presentation, Vidhya chose an *Ashtapadi* and *Javali-Parulanna Mata*, where the *nayika* laments to her *nayaka*, 'Oh Lord of my life, what is the reason that your face is dull? Oh lord of Dharmapuri, please take care of me righteously, I bow to you'. The dancer ended her recital with a *Tarangam*, an intrinsically joyous and vivacious *anga* of Kuchipudi style of dance.

■ MADHUR GUPTA

Rich and Variegated Music

PERFORMANCE

Concert—Guitar Duet by the Grigoryan Brothers—
Slava and Leonard Grigoryan

COLLABORATION: Australian High Commission

11 December 2019

Straddling multiple genres, epochs and cultures, Slava and Leonard Grigoryan presented an eclectic mix of music at their concert. The cold, damp evening air warmed up as their guitar strings vibrated and music scores scrolled on digital tablets placed on music stands, driven by foot pedals. Older brother Slava introduced the duo and the first piece—his own composition, *Fantasy on a Theme* by William Lawes. A wistful work by Tchaikovsky aptly titled *None but the Lonely Heart* followed. From the Romantic era, they went back in time to the Baroque with Handel's *Suite No. 2* arranged for two guitars by their violinist father Edouard Grigoryan. One could almost hear a harpsichord as they plucked their strings in the *Sarabande* between the *Courante* and *Gigue*.

The brothers then presented a suite by their hero Ralph Towner, contrasting the lyrical and rhythmic in *From a Dream*, *Sarabande* and *Duende*. A composition called *This Time* by younger brother Leonard showcased harmonics



and repeating motifs in an almost minimalist style. Dvorak's beautiful *Songs My Mother Taught me* followed. Moving from Bohemia to Brazil, the *Retratos Suite* by Radames Gnatelli featured tributes to Ernesto Nazareth, Anacleto de Medeiros and Chiquinha Gonzaga. The final piece from their soundtrack for the film *A Boy called Sailboat* wove together familiar tunes like the Scottish *My Bonnie* and Belafonte's *Day-O* with a Latin feel. The duo was felicitated by the Australian High Commissioner, and the concert concluded with an encore presentation of an *Arioso* by Bach.

■ PUNITA SINGH

Reviving an Ancient Craft

SEMINAR

After the Nawabs—Suraiya Hasan Bose:
Himru's Muse

COLLABORATION: Craft Revival Trust

23 November 2019

This seminar focused on the complex weave, Himru, that thrived in medieval India. Intricate patterns were created using a double loom manned by two or more weavers. The use of Himru was confined to sultans and bridegrooms. Seventy-five looms worked to the rhythms of qawaali, infusing the fabric with sacredness. Intricate patterns, often botanical or geometric, formed a silken fascia with an under-layer of cotton.

After Muhamed bin Tughlaq, patronage dwindled, and few could pay for a weave that produced less than 3 inches per loom per day. Master weavers drifted to other livelihoods.

If not for the efforts of Suraiya, this art would be dead. India gained independence in an atmosphere for innovation in nation building. No one thought of conservation when Suraiya devoted her life to this: locating one surviving master, setting up looms and training new weavers. Not having the means to pay wages, she trained widows to join her.

A number of experts in crafts, textiles and fashion made presentations to highlight the exclusivity of the hand-crafted, economic considerations, luxury, quality, changing fashion trends, importance of spreading awareness. Radhika Singh, who's book on Suraiya was released at the seminar, said she 'had never met any other so good at what she does, and who seems so oblivious to the larger meaning of her work.' Suraiya looked on as her recorded voice recounted her collecting fragmented samples of Himru, finding one master and setting up a workshop that today has eight looms and gets orders from international fashion houses.

■ BHARATI MIRCHANDANI

Trying Memories

PERFORMANCE

Gathered Leaves. Presented by Ruchika Theatre Group

DIRECTOR: Feisal Alkazi

COLLABORATION: Action for Autism

1 November 2019

Gathered Leaves is a play by Andrew Keatley, a former actor. Feisal Alkazi directed this sentimental though occasionally poignant drama of an affluent family, and its disparate members, gathered to celebrate the 75th birthday of its patriarch who happens to be a blustering bully, and as vulnerable as every other member of his family, perhaps even more so.

In accordance with the content—everyone has been scarred to a greater or lesser degree by the capriciousness of fate—the emphasis is on dialogue of the ‘punch-counter-punch’ kind, to borrow an analogy from boxing. This is not to say that there are no welcome bits of respite; there are a few.

Alkazi is able to rise above the limitations of a formulaic plot, that of a difficult almost tyrannical father; a strong, loving



mother with an unwavering sense of duty; a rebellious daughter, an unwed mother to boot, visiting from France with her charming teenaged daughter by a man from Cameroon; a dutiful elder son, a doctor, devoted to his autistic younger brother. He is able to do so because of excellent ensemble acting. Ashish Dhameja as Gautam, the bewildered, angry patriarch is particularly good. Radhika Alkazi, as Saroj, the family matriarch, is the sheet anchor of the play. Gaurav (Sanjiv Desai), Deepika (Nandini Sra), Anoushka (Manvi Nahar), Aurelia (Lavanya Sinha) Kaushal (Yogesh Sharma) put in spirited performances, despite the cluttered set that made blocking difficult.

■ PARTHA CHATTERJEE

Interpreting Living Temples

EXHIBITION

Interpreting Temples: Lingaraj and Puri Temples by Siddhartha Das Studio

INAUGURATION: Dr. (Smt.) Kapila Vatsyayan

GUESTS OF HONOUR: Ashok Chandra Panda; and R. Balakrishnan

COLLABORATION: IIC and Department of Tourism, Government of Odisha

23 November to 6 December 2019

The exhibition offered a glimpse into the creation of the two interpretation centres for the iconic historic living temples in Odisha—Jagannath Temple, Puri, and Lingaraj Temple, Bhubaneswar—which were built almost a thousand years ago.

Over a year and a half, Siddhartha Das Studio has been working with researchers, subject experts and over a hundred master-craftspeople to interpret these two temples. The exhibition showcased many exquisite objects that ranged from miniature stone and wooden models, to



drawings, engravings and paintings that visualised sacred Vedic texts, and over a dozen films that documented the creation of these objects as well as some of the festivals.

The exhibition brought together excellence in academic research with the creation of museum-quality pieces that were made over a year by legacy bearers of Odisha. A daily curatorial at 6 pm by the curator and designer Siddhartha Das at the gallery gave an insight into the narrative and the creation of the objects, and how the interpretation centres were being conceived. Two illustrated lectures were held in the gallery: ‘On Interpreting Jagannath and Lingaraj Temples, Odisha’ by Siddhartha Das, and ‘Arts and Crafts Associated with Jagannatha Temple, Puri’ by Mangala Prasad Mohanty.

Mapping Ancestry

TALK

Human Origin, Health and Disease: Contemporary and Ancient DNA Perspectives

SPEAKER: K. Thangaraj

CHAIR: S.K. Brahmachari

23 December 2019

A variety of reasons have excited our imagination and quest for knowledge of our ancestry. IIC hosted two well-attended lectures within six months, addressing issues of our origins, and how early migration patterns and social behaviour led to the formation of distinct population groups, allowing for interpretation of migration, settlements, disease patterns and more through social, anthropological, linguistic and genomic studies. Both talks described scientific evidence allowing for no political compulsions to influence conclusions.

S.K. Brahmachari introduced the audience to the Indian Genome Variation project (begun in 2002) in which Thangaraj played an important role, and that led to the first comprehensive genetic landscape of the people of

India showing their clustering into four major linguistic populations—Indo-European, Austro-Asiatic, Tibeto-Burman, Dravidian, also the Andamanese. This set the stage for further research into population patterns and predisposition to disease. Thangaraj gave a fascinating talk on the significance of understanding our origins in the context of health and disease, and how these can be controlled. He traced the journey of the first Out-of-Africa population to Andaman Islands 65-70,000 years ago, further migration to become ancestral South Indians and ancestral North Indians; their subsequent admixture; other waves of migration from the north to form within the four linguistic groups over 4,600 socially and anthropologically well-defined population groups in India. He explained how the practice of endogamy within distinct populations led to disease clustering, enabling mapping relationships between populations. Through examples of disease models, he explained how populations could be traced and diseases managed. Through the potentially complex story of Mitochondrial DNA, Y chromosomes and autosomal recessive diseases, Thangaraj elucidated the complex linkages between our origins, social practices, population dynamics and disease patterns.

■ KONINIKA RAY

Treating Clinical Depression

TALK

The Enigma of Clinical Depression—What does the Evidence say Regarding Origins and Management?

SPEAKER: Sanjay Sidhartha

CHAIR: Air Marshal (Retd.) Naresh Verma

COLLABORATION: National Network of Depression Centres India Foundation

5 November 2019

In his captivating talk, Sanjay Sidhartha spoke about clinical depression and its management. The speaker is currently serving as the Chief of Psychiatry, Horizon Health Network, Miramichi Hospital, Canada.

Sanjay Sidhartha started his talk with a brief description of what clinical depression or major depression is, and followed it up with the different signs and symptoms

that help to recognise if a person is suffering from this condition. The speaker focused on the sudden increase in stress levels among youth, and the ways in which they can overcome and manage them.

Further in his talk, he quoted a line from Michael First, one of the authors of *Diagnostic Statistical Manual*, that depression is 'All day every day', and it is persistent and pervasive. He also mentioned the current scenario of increased levels of depression and anxiety in the workplace, leading to an increase in unemployment.

The speaker mentioned different means of treatment, both physical and behavioural therapy. He also spoke about transcranial magnetic stimulation, and how it will help in reducing symptoms of major depression.

He concluded by answering questions from the floor about the increase in suicides among farmers in India, and the relevance of treatment in curing depression.

■ HINA SHARMA

The Pala Empire

INDIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

The Uren Story: Ascent of Human Society

SPEAKER: Goutami Bhattacharya

CHAIR: B.M. Pande

9 December 2019

Uren is an ancient habitation that is now known to have grown organically in an unbroken sequence over a period of at least 3,000 years from a small hamlet to a major mercantile centre, and then into a significant Buddhist centre with monuments, including stupas and monasteries. The Pala Empire was founded by Gopala of the Kingdom of Gauda in 750 CE, and became the dominant power in the northern Indian subcontinent, with its territory stretching across parts of modern-day eastern Pakistan, northern and north-eastern India, Nepal and Bangladesh, even strongly

influencing Tibet and Southeast Asia. Hiueng Tsang of China and Al Berouni of Iran, who both spent considerable time in India, have written about this remarkable empire, known for its diplomacy, war strategy, and its focus on building enduring monuments: temples, monasteries and universities. The Palas were the last major Buddhist imperial power of India, and followed the Mahayana and Tantric schools of Buddhism at their peak in the early 9th century, a legacy that is still reflected in Tibetan Buddhism. The Palas were overthrown by the resurgent Hindu Sena dynasty in the 12th century.

Gautami Bhattacharya showed slides of the excavation sites and the main findings, frequently citing the names of Major General Sir Alexander Cunningham and Laurence Austine Waddell of the British Indian Army, and Indian historians B.C. Sarkar, Dilip Chakravarty and R.K. Chattopadhyay and their inputs or contributions to this.

■ MEKHALA SENGUPTA

Freedom in Challenging Times

PROFESSOR MUSHIRUL HASAN MEMORIAL LECTURE 2019

Freedom and Sons Ltd.—The Enterprise of Free Speech in a Market of Control

SPEAKER: Gopalkrishna Gandhi

CHAIR: Shri N.N. Vohra, President, IIC

17 December 2019

Delivering the inaugural Mushirul Hasan Memorial Lecture on the right to dissent fearlessly in an age of repression, Gopalkrishna Gandhi hailed the role of Professor Hasan both as an academic and an institution builder, and

segued his way into the nub of the issue—that of the state that stifles dissent and by default makes the individual a stakeholder in the enterprise of ‘Freedom and Sons Ltd.’ which began as an anti-colonial movement and reinvented itself in independent India.

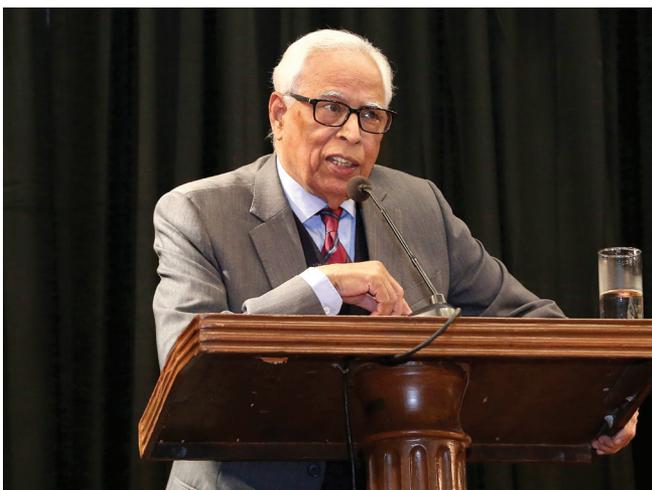
Freedom, he said, is seriously endangered by the role of religion, money and the abuse of political power in politics. In the context of the recent Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), to determine the role of religion in citizenship is akin to the imposition of jiziya in medieval times, or reinforcing the ideology of the two-nation theory.

Money that was voluntarily collected by contributions is now replaced by vast sums anonymously given by corporate bodies, which makes parties beholden. Additionally, without deep pockets, independent candidates are at a disadvantage and their number has almost dwindled.

However, this, he said, is not a new phenomenon, alluding to the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah, the sacking of a democratically elected Communist government in Kerala, and the imposition of Emergency that has set a diabolical precedent.

Notwithstanding the challenges, Gandhi was cautiously optimistic that the judiciary would play its role, and urged the audience to examine the nature of their fear; a symptom though not the disease, to overcome their vulnerabilities, and emphasised that those causing the fear are frightened themselves of losing that capacity and of the truth itself.

■ AJAY JAISINGHANI



Catalysing Social Change

ART MATTERS

Gandhi and the Art of Social Change

SPEAKERS: Akeel Bilgrami and Abhay Bang

COLLABORATION: The Raza Foundation

20 December 2019

Two people offered diametrically different views on how Gandhi continues to catalyse social change. Bang spoke first, touching hearts. Bilgrami was pure intellect.

Gandhi's advice to heed the most vulnerable prompted Bang to focus on saving newborn babies. His simple idea of a 28-day training programme for young women in each district led to a 60 per cent drop in infant mortality within a year.

Bang talked of growing up in Gandhi's shadow. This shaped his education and helped him discover his life's goal when he was just 13 years old. Gandhi had realised that fragmentation of life into separate phases for

education and working was faulty. Life itself is the teacher, and working and learning must continue throughout life. These ideas have inspired Bang and his wife to make an enormous impact on health for the poor.

Bilgrami told us that Machiavelli's options of using fear or love to govern meant nothing to Gandhi, who saw the state not as a reasoning agent, but an emotion-free force. One cannot reason with sarkar, only draw its attention through non-violent protest.

Bilgrami spoke of political trends around the world. Working classes support populism because of the ravages wrought by the capitalism of corporate and banking elites, turning people towards leaders holding out promise of welfare. Globalisation was not the zeitgeist in Gandhi's times. The sheer elegance of his simplicity made Gandhi intuitively know exactly what Indian villages needed.

The scintillating discussion seemed to conclude that Gandhi's understanding was more holistic than one based merely on scientific principles.

■ **BHARATI MIRCHANDANI**

Connect

EXHIBITION: CONNECT: Works in Paper Pulp by Kirti Chandak

22 to 28 November 2019

Kirti Chandak's work is innovative and has a dynamism which evolves from nature. Her engagement with paper pulp has an intrinsic quality of spontaneity which is prevalent throughout her work. Her work celebrates



an exuberance of material character, which is further enhanced by her persona and her empathy with nature. There is a culmination of creative effervescence in her work through her intellect, using paper pulp and natural materials as the medium.



Director's Note

The extreme winter chill is giving way to milder temperatures. Members can enjoy the season with a barbeque lunch in the Annexe Lounge Terrace or a buffet lunch on Sundays in the Main Centre or Annexe. A live station has been added at the Lotus Lounge so that Members can enjoy South Indian and pasta dishes fresh off the fire.

Our gardens present a riot of colour with an impressive chrysanthemum collection. Kale and marigold have also done well and, this winter, larger spaces have been provided for growing varied beautiful flowers.

The Centre continues to make headway in its drive for the application of best practices in energy conservation and the required equipments have been installed to regulate the operation of all important electrical parameters—frequency, voltage, current, power factor, harmonics, current and voltage imbalance. The Sewage Treatment Plant has been upgraded to improve the quality of recycled water which is being used in our gardens, resulting in considerable recurring savings. To promote hygiene a state-of-the-art Dishwasher has been installed in the main kitchen. A Bottle Washing Machine has also been installed to clean glass water bottles.

The Library is shortly commencing implementation of a project to digitise its very large collection of old records and important documents. Once done, the digital collection will be hosted on the Open Source Software (OSS) platform, to enable maximum possible access.

To introduce transparency in the selection of applicants for grant of Membership, the Board of Trustees have decided to modify the existing Rules and Regulations of the Centre and new guidelines have been laid down for the selection of applicants for grant of Short-Term Associate Membership (STAM). The details of the new policy may be viewed on the IIC Website. The STAM Selection Committee, comprising of the Director, three members of the Executive Committee and Secretary will examine all received applications and make recommendations for approval by President. A list of the applicants inducted as STAM Members shall be displayed on the IIC website. It has also been decided that applicants for regular Membership will be considered from amongst STAM who have keen interest in the Centre's activities.

During the conduct of the biennial election held in March 2019, several complaints were received from Members regarding deviation from the laid down norms by certain contesting candidates. To ensure against violators in the future elections, appropriate safeguards have been laid down in the revised Election Bye-Laws. Members may like to see the revised Bye-Laws on the IIC website.

■ **K. N. Shrivastava**



EXHIBITION: *The Earth is Still Going Around The Sun*

15 to 20 December 2019. 13 curated exhibitions as part of the Curatorial Intensive South Asia 2019 programme, mentored by Leonhard Emmerling and Latika Gupta.



DEPARTURES

MEMBERSHIP NO.	NAME
HM-009	SHRI M. M. K. WALI
L-0176	SHRI B. K. SARAOGI
L-0180	SHRI N. G. WALIA
M-1266	JUSTICE Y. V. ANJANEYULU
M-1913	SHRI SURAIN SINGH DHANOA
M-2170	SMT. TARA SINHA
M-2245	SHRI GANGA PRASAD VIMAL
M-3487	SHRI YOGESH M. TIWARI
A-2134	DR. K. P. MATHUR
A-2516	DR. RAM RAJAN SUBRAMANIAN
A-3667	SHRI SURESH SHARMA
A-5573	SHRI VIPIN KHANNA
A-7013	SHRI SYED MUAZZEM ALI

This issue of the Diary has been assembled and edited by Omita Goyal, Chief Editor; Ritu Singh, Deputy Editor; Rachna Joshi, Senior Asstt. Editor. Published by Kanwal Wali, for the India International Centre, 40, Max Mueller Marg, Lodhi Estate, New Delhi - 110003. Ph.: 24619431. Designed and printed by Facet Design, D-9, Defence Colony, New Delhi-110024; Phone: 24624336.