

the india diary international centre

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March – May 2020

Brazilian Melodies

PERFORMANCE

Concert by the Bianca Gismonti Trio

COLLABORATION: *Embassy of Brazil*

11 March 2020

Jazz and Brazil are almost synonymous with each other, each igniting the fervent imagination of heady rhythms, complex melodic structures, thought-provoking irregular beat patterns and chord progressions. The Trio comprising Bianca Gismonti on piano and vocals, Julio Falavigna on drums, ably assisted by Paolo Andriolo on bass. With special guest Joao Bittencourt on the accordion, they took their spellbound, diverse audience on a journey through traditional, modern and avant-garde jazz music that left everyone thirsting for more. Bianca's evocative and fluent singing in Portuguese, Spanish and French, coupled with



her seemingly effortless piano playing, was an absolute delight to the ears. Paolo's solid bass lines and Julio's drum chops, executed with finesse and style, provided just the right support balance of counter-melodies and rhythms.

Weaving complex Brazilian sambas with gentle bossanovas, Bianca paid an emotional tribute to her musician father's teachings and training by performing a few of his compositions. She also dedicated one of her original compositions entitled 'Amongst Friends' to the distinguished Brazilian Ambassador and his wife, who were also present. The special guest musician for the evening was the amazing traditional accordion player Joao Bittencourt who regaled the house with a brilliant display of his musical talent. The group wound up the evening with an exciting fast-paced composition, dedicated to the former South African President Nelson Mandela, replete with African beats and melody. It was an incredibly delightful musical evening, enjoyed by one and all in totality!

■ DEEPAK CASTELINO

Dance Medley

PERFORMANCE

The IIC Double Bill Dance Recital

12 March 2020

Kathak by Sucharita Dattagata from Kolkata, disciple of Smt. Amita Datta and Smt. Sushmita Mishra.

Kuchipudi recital by Nandini Nitin from Delhi, disciple of Guru Smt. Swapna Sundari.



A Slice of Latin America

EXHIBITION

My Latin American and Caribbean Trip

COLLABORATION: *The Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries, India; and Delhi Photography Club*

4 to 12 March 2020



This was a collection of award-winning photographs by amateur photographers selected from over 90 entries from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Panama and Jamaica.

Sparkling Images

EXHIBITION

Three Amigos

4 to 18 May 2020

Among all the arts, photography stands alone as the one that does not begin on a blank canvas, or an empty stage. The subjects for photography exist within their own milieu, time cycles and seasons of light and shadows, newness and antiquity, and tones and textures. It depends on the photographer then to compose and cut their frames, adding meaning to a particular moment.

The IIC's first ever online exhibition, *The Three Amigos*, brought together Vinoo Bhagat, Kishan Rana and Deb Mukharji in a black and white photo show. The three met as undergraduate students at St Stephen's College, Delhi, between 1957 and 1961. Capturing their world in black and white images, they laboured in the sweltering college dark room, sans cooling and air conditioning, driven by a shared passion and limited resources.

The collection had a sparkle and crispness to it, evidence of the love and dedication that must have brought it about. Within each of these works throbbed a slice of life relished and thrilling, moments of wonderment and joy. While many of the pictures were adventure shots, some were Bhagat's recollections of eminence—a visit by James Michener to St. Stephens, acclaimed pianist Claudio Arrau at Sapru



House, Henry Kissinger teaching at college, Anthony Quinn playing Henry II on Broadway, and Indra Gandhi and Elizabeth Gauba at the latter's daughter's wedding.

Kishan Rana is a wizard at texturing with light and shadows. Several of his works were rich tapestries, interweaving nature's delights and made for nostalgia for the Delhi of yore—cotton clouds flaking the sky against a backdrop of autumn branches kissing the sunset; an electric pole with wires strung between destinations; the winter mist beckoning early morning office-goers on bicycles; a tonga on Aurangzeb Road, and another in a hurry, loaded with uprooted shrubbery, passing Ivory Palace; glamour showrooms of Connaught Place; and Emil Zatopek in the Delhi University Stadium, 1956, to coach and inspire distance runners.

Deb Mukharji cuts frames lyrical and poetic. Great tonal variations characterise his compositions, achieved by waiting for the right light to fall on, or be hidden from the surfaces of the mountain terrain he captures, at once forbidding and inviting, challenging one's courage and spirit of adventure. Mukharji's sense of history is also one of majesty with Humayun's Tomb of 1958 shaded by clouds, palms and foliage, combing and framing its elevation. The superimposed Trade Fair on the Qutab made for a one-of-a-kind frame.

The texts alongside added value not just to the images, but also to the image-makers, leaving naught to conjecture. An enjoyable show, suitably underlining how beautiful a world it was that humankind has brought down to worldwide quarantine, warranting a lockdown!

■ ARUNA BHOWMICK

Indian Traditions in Japan

SEMINAR AND EXHIBITION

Hindu Deities and Sanskrit in Japan

CONVENOR: *Benoy K. Behl*

3 to 8 March 2020

Most people are not aware that at least a score of Hindu deities are very actively worshipped in Japan. There are hundreds of shrines to Saraswati alone. There are innumerable representations of Lakshmi, Indra, Brahma, Ganesh, Garuda and other deities. In fact, deities we have practically forgotten in India, such as Vayu and Varuna, are still worshipped in Japan. In many ways, Japan has

preserved very ancient Indian traditions, even when they may have evolved here in India.



Tribute to Ghalib

TALK

Mirza Ghalib: The Simorgh of Indo-Persian Literature

SPEAKER: *Syed Akhtar Husain*

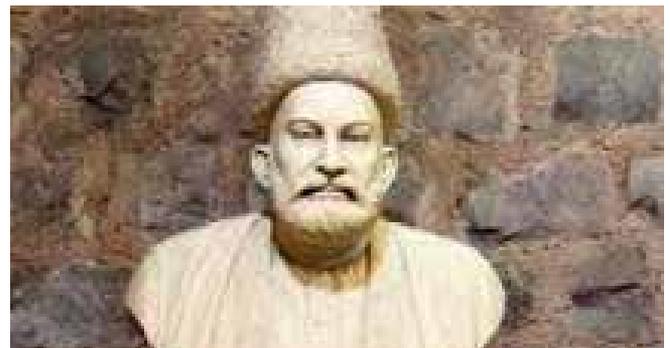
COLLABORATION: *Parzor; and Institute of Indo-Persian Studies*

3 March 2020

This programme was part of the Indo-Persian lecture series initiated by Ramin Jahanbegloo, and hosted by Parzor Foundation and Institute of Indo-Persian Studies in collaboration with India International Centre.

In speaking about Ghalib, Syed Akhtar Husain invoked the legendary Simorgh of Iranian mythology who had cast the 'Seed of Wisdom' through his Persian and Urdu poetry in the subcontinent. A bilingual poet, he was also a great writer of Persian and Urdu prose.

Ghalib's sweetest poems tell us the saddest thoughts with which he was haunted in life. Among his 11 long poems in



Persian, one is an ode to Banaras which he has titled 'Chiragh-i-Dair' or 'The Lamp of the Temple'. He had composed it on his way to Calcutta from Banaras in 1827. He looked upon the city as the Mecca of India where he had seen a divine light illuminating the city and her people. Undoubtedly, his Urdu lyrics brought him fame, but his Persian oeuvre equally deserves our attention. The *Dustambu*, his diary recording the daily events of 1857, is couched in impeccable Persian with profound sensibility. It is indeed a valuable addition to the corpus of Indo-Persian literature which shows the dawn of British colonialism in our country.

Unforgettable Comedies

FILM FESTIVAL: *Day of Hungarian Film: A Festival of Classic Comedies*

COLLABORATION: *Hungarian Information & Cultural Centre, New Delhi*

4 to 10 May 2020

This online film festival presented a selection of the best, unforgettable Hungarian comedies of the past 80 years. Eight seminal feature films were screened with English subtitles, including masterpieces such as: *Hyppolit, the Butler*; *Mickey Magnate*, the most viewed Hungarian film of all time; *Liliomfi*; the cult film, *The Witness*, in a fully restored and digitalised version; *Csinibaba* (Dollybirds), one of the biggest box office hits of the 1990s; and *Moszkva ter* (Moszkva Square), a generational cult film from 2001.

Hyppolit, the Butler is an evergreen comedy about a transportation entrepreneur who suddenly finds himself very rich. His wife strives to live a sophisticated lifestyle

and hires a butler who turns the house upside down.

Mágnás Miska (Mickey Magnate) is about an engineer at the construction site of a railway line who falls in love with a countess disguised as a peasant girl.

Liliomfi follows the story of an actor in a traveling acting company who arrives in town to perform the 'Romeo and Juliet'. He falls in love at first sight with a woman who watched the performance with her educator.

In *The Witness*, the protagonist has the sort of luck that occurs only in movies. His silliest transgressions land him in jail, and each of his many arrests is followed by an instant reprieve.

In *Csinibaba* (Dollybirds), a teenager learns of a talent competition in which the first prize is a rare and highly coveted trip to the other side of the Iron Curtain to attend an international youth convention in Helsinki.

Moszkva ter (Moszkva Square) is named after Moscow Square in Budapest and is about a group of high school students who would rather party than take note of the history unfolding around them in 1989.



Myriad Themes

FILM FESTIVAL

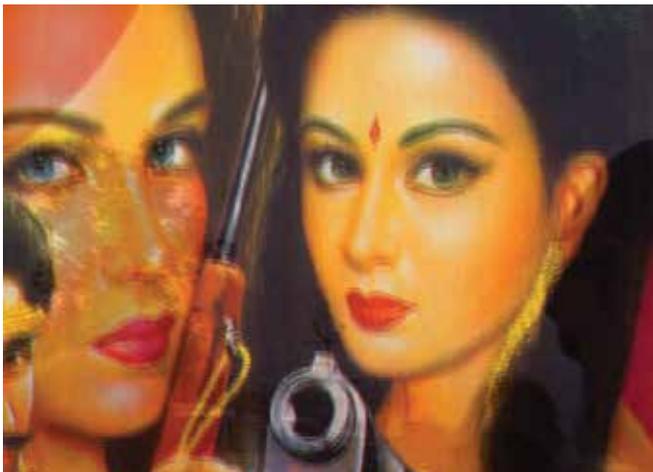
Framing Lives - I

COLLABORATION: *Public Service Broadcasting Trust*

11 to 17 May 2020

The Public Service Broadcasting Trust (PSBT), in partnership with the IIC, screened 12 award-winning films as part of a two-week IIC Online Film Festival, *Framing Lives*. The films explored the themes of separation and loss, forgotten histories, the engagements of artistic practices, the experiences of those living with disability, experiences of disempowerment and violence, and the human impulse for freedom.

Representing some of the best work of independent filmmakers supported by PSBT, these have in the past been screened at prestigious film festivals like Berlin, Rotterdam,



Yamagata, Stuttgart, Prague Film Festival, Film Southasia, Hamburg Film Festival, SiGNS, International Film Festival of India, Mumbai International Film Festival, etc.

Public Service Broadcasting Trust is a not-for-profit that nurtures and supports the production of documentary films by independent filmmakers. Over the past 20 years, it has mentored 500 young, starting out talents, producing over 700 documentary films on myriad themes and subjects, travelling to over 1,860 film festivals worldwide and winning more than 320 Awards, including 53 National Film Awards. Rajiv Mehrotra is the Producer and Commissioning Editor.

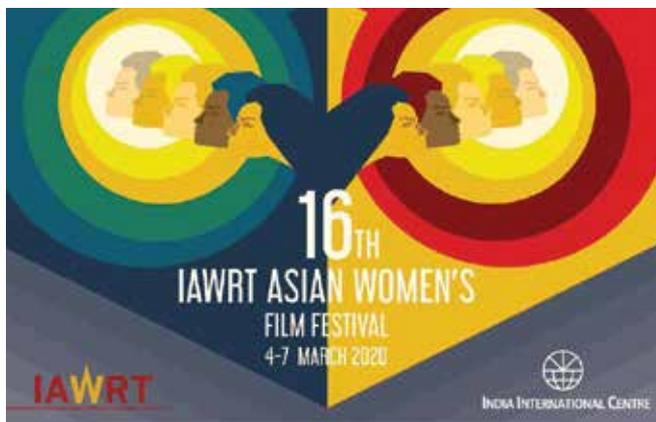
■ TULIKA SRIVASTAVA

A Diverse Range

FILM FESTIVAL

The 16th IAWRT Asian Women's Film Festival

5 to 7 March 2020



Fifty-one films directed by Asian women filmmakers representing 15 countries were screened at the Festival.

Following a robust day-long workshop titled 'We Make Cinema', the much-awaited opening of the festival started with a four-minute delightful film from Iran—*Granddad was a Romantic*—setting the perfect mood for the evening. This was followed by the formal inauguration with the lighting of the lamp in the presence of partner institutions, filmmakers and a large number of IAWRT members. The chief guests for the evening were IIC Director K. N. Shrivastava and Dr. (Smt.) Kapila Vatsyayan, Chairperson, IIC—International Research Division. This was followed by the screening of the opening film *Shut Up Sona*, directed by Deepti Gupta, followed by a Q and A with the director and protagonist of the film.

Dominant themes at the festival were coming-of-age stories with female protagonists, environmental concerns, developmental debates, and the issue of erasure and marginalisation of communities in the current political



context. The festival had a curated session titled 'Her Upside Down Gaze' and a country focus of films from the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The films included both internationally recognised films and those which had their world premiers at this festival.

Another highlight of the festival was the section, 'Women and Photography', which showcased the work of four women photographers. Canon India conducted a workshop on 'Cinematography and Photography Technology', and mounted an experience zone exhibiting latest Canon cinema equipment.



The curtain came down on the festival with the film, *Honey, Rain and Dust*, a documentary film by UAE filmmaker, poet and artist, Nujoom Al Ghanem.

■ NUPUR BASU



Aspects of Protection

TALK

Historic Landscapes from Habitat to Monument

SPEAKER: *Narayani Gupta*

CHAIR: *Mohammad Shaheer*

4 to 10 May 2020

Programme originally held on 2 August 2012

The talk focused on aspects of protection. It discussed the transformation of living places to monuments. Also, the need to protect valuable assets of urban heritage was outlined.



Focus on the Himalayan Club

PANEL DISCUSSION

Ladakh Revealed

SPEAKER: *Bill Aitken; Janet Rizvi; Chhaya Bhattacharya-Haesner; Viraf Mehta*

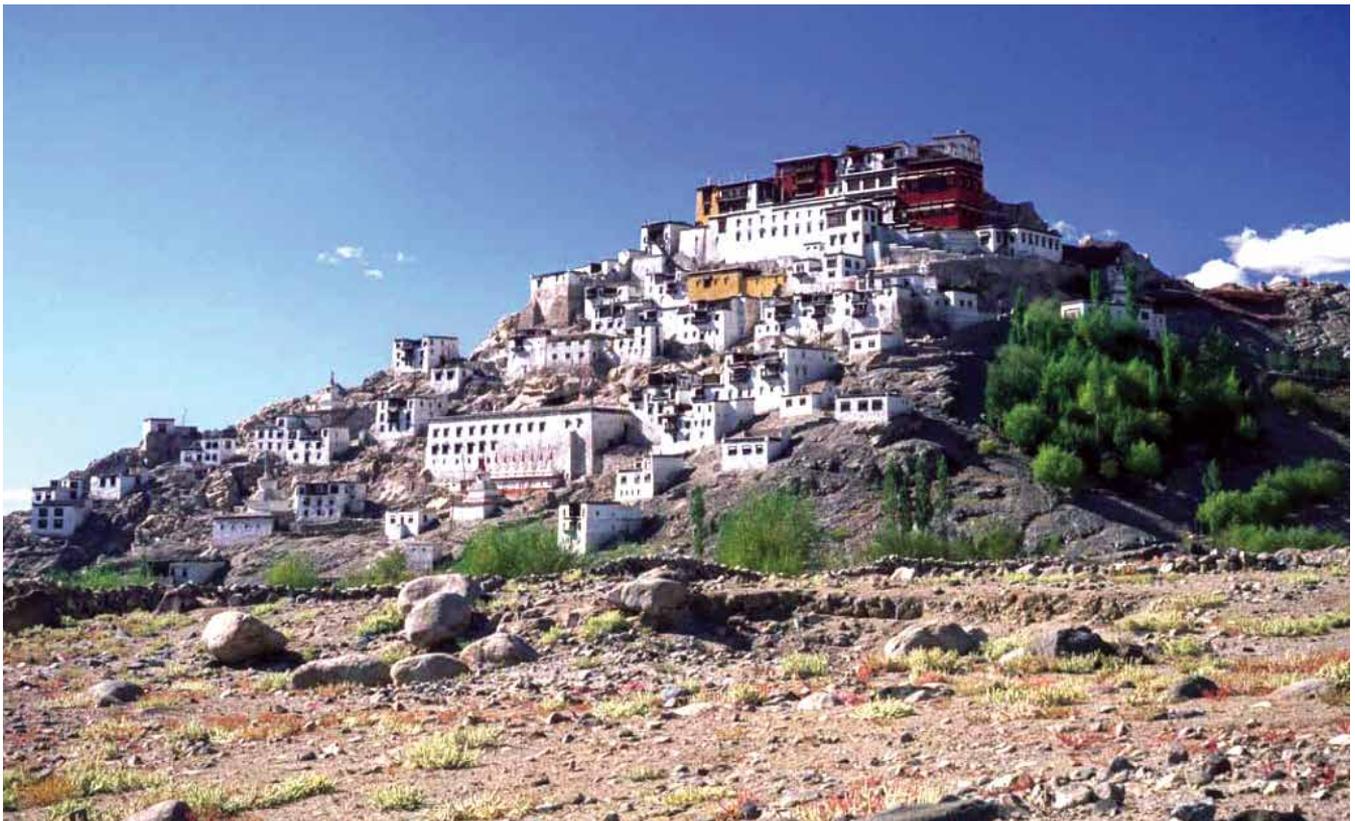
CHAIR: *M. S. Gill*

COLLABORATION: *Himalayan Club*

4 to 10 May 2020

Programme originally held on 23 August 2012

The IIC has been the trustee of the Himalayan Club Collection for many years, and the intention of the discussion was to showcase the valuable collection, with the spotlight on Ladakh. Bill Aitken spoke on 'Introduction to the Himalayan Club Collection'; Janet Rizvi on 'Ladakhi Trader Routes'; Viraf Mehta on 'Hidden Petroglyphs of Ladakh'; and Chhaya Bhattacharya-Haesner on 'The Nubra Valley and Central Asian Trade'. The Chair, M. S. Gill, spoke of his own experiences with the Himalayan Club and his travels in China.



A Grim Concern

TALK

HEALTHCARE IN INDIA: *How Can We Stop India's Youth from Killing Themselves?*

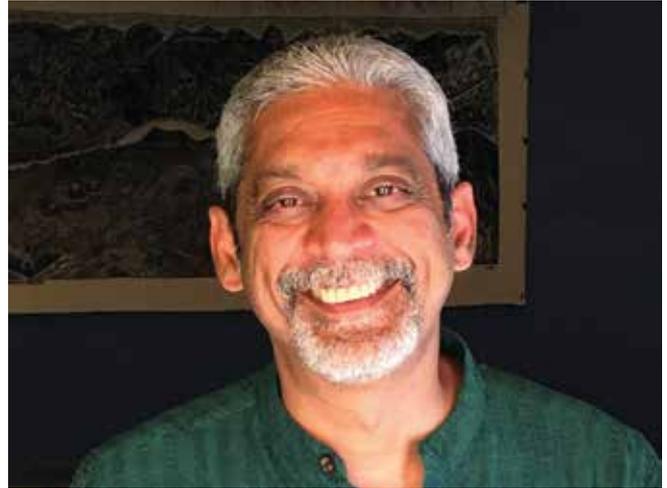
SPEAKER: *Vikram Patel*

CHAIR: *K. N. Shrivastava*

4 to 10 May 2020

Programme originally held on 9 July 2019

The talk sought to create hope for India's youth. It dealt with the issue of youth suicide, why it happens, and the solutions we have for the problem.



Lives of Women

PERFORMANCE AND READINGS

Two Women—Dramatised Readings from Jorasanko

AUTHOR of the novel *Jorasanko*: *Aruna Chakravarti*

DRAMATISED READINGS: *Minoti Chatterjee and Avereer Chaurey*

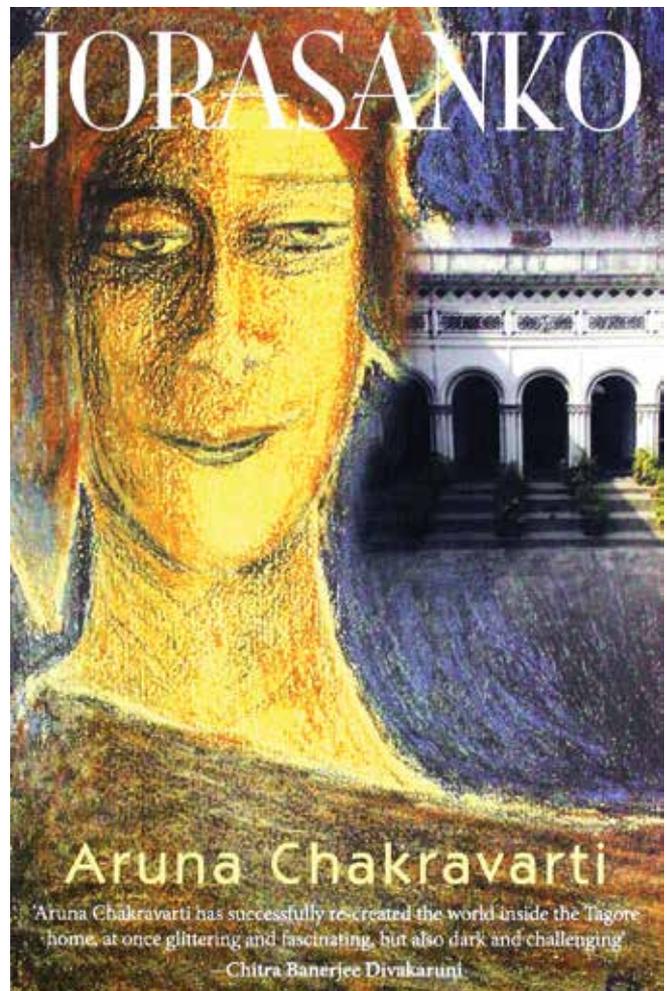
MUSIC: *Jayati Ghosh*

COLLABORATION: *Impresario India*

4 to 10 May 2020

Programme originally held on 16 May 2012

Jorasanko is a novel based on the lives of the Tagore women during the period 1859 to 1902—a unique phase in the history of Bengal. The Tagore mansion of Jorasanko was the hub of the Bengal Renaissance, with the family at the forefront of the movement, and its women playing a pivotal role.



Eclectic Ecology

TALK

Uttarakhand Forests—A View from the Village

SPEAKER: Malika Virdhi

CHAIR: Pushpesh Pant

4 to 10 May 2020

Programme originally held on 7 June 2012

The talk highlighted that Himalayan degradation is not the consequence of overpopulation, overuse, and the backwardness of village communities. Instead, it is the consequence of both geological processes, and a systematic whittling away of local self-governance by state and commercial interests. The speaker called for an increase in the area under *van panchayats*, reduction of governmental interference, and protection from commercial interests.



Musical Tones

PERFORMANCE

IIC Annual Day and Golden Jubilee Concerts.

Sarod Recital by Ustad Amjad Ali Khan

4 to 10 May 2020

Programme originally held on 22 January 2013

Amjad Ali Khan Bangash (born 9 October 1945) is an Indian classical sarod player, best known for his clear and fast *ekhara taans*. Khan was born into a classical musical family and has performed internationally since the 1960s. He was awarded India's second highest civilian honour, Padma Vibhushan, in 2001.





Training at IIC Kitchen During the Lockdown

During the period of lockdown 4.0, the Centre's Kitchen conducted a series of training programmes for thirty cooks from the different departments of the kitchen, along with four chefs from the Indian, Continental, Chinese and Bakery kitchens. The training was conducted by Vijay Thukral, Executive Chef; Amit Kumar, Kitchen Manager; Paramvir, Sous Chef; Rakesh Rai, Chinese Chef; and Asad Ahmed, Pastry Chef.

The training programme covered the following areas:

- Personal hygiene
- Minimising wastage
- Storage of different items
- Job hygiene and food safety
- Cost control and portion control
- Equipment handling
- Menu planning

Along with this, practical classes were conducted every day covering Soups and Sauces; Indian, Chinese, Italian cuisine; and Tandoor. Each practical session included demonstrations of preparation and presentation, and introduction of new dishes—soups, starters, main course—vegetarian and non-vegetarian, salads, rice/ bread/rotis, desserts and bakery items not included in the Centre's regular menu.

A Selection of New Dishes



DEPARTURES

MEMBERSHIP NO.	NAME	MEMBERSHIP NO.	NAME
M-0447	SHRI P. K. CHOPRA	A-0511	SHRI S. K. RUIA
M-0955	SHRI CHANDRA MOHAN	A-0751	SHRI RAVINDRA BHAN
M-2226	DR. R. K. PACHAURI	A-2162	SHRI OM PRAKASH
M-2728	SHRI PARAMJIT SINGH SAHAI	A-2769	SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR
M-2956	SHRI L. K. JOSHI	A-2816	DR. K. S. PURI
M-3382	PROF. P. BHATTACHARYA	A-3967	COMDE CHAMAN LAL SACHDEVA (RETD.)
M-3612	SHRI GURUDAS CHATTERJEE	A-6023	SHRI IRRFAN KHAN
M-4107	DR. JAGDISH SINGH	A-7162	SMT. NALINI VERMA
M-4148	DR. H. S. VASUDEVAN		

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.



Director's Note

The rapid spread of the Covid-19 virus which compelled recurring lockdowns across the country has resulted in the Centre having to completely close its activities since 25th March. However, to maintain contact with our Members we have been engaged in using online platforms to present programmes. While some of these programmes have been drawn from our archives, we have also endeavoured to present new exhibitions and films. The calendar of online programmes is being timely intimated to our Members. We plan to continue hosting online programmes till normalcy regains.

We have not been sitting idle in the past weeks. Besides organising online programmes we have utilised the lockdown period to undertake repair and maintenance of the main Centre, especially works which had continued to pend due to our day-to-day activities in the pre-Covid period. With a view to securing a dust-free and germ-free environment, we have devoted special attention to servicing all air conditioning systems and thorough cleaning of filters. The Dining Hall, Lotus Lounge, Multipurpose Hall and C. D. Deshmukh Auditorium have been given a fresh coat of paint, and our various venues are eagerly awaiting to receive Members and their guests.

The digitisation project being undertaken in the Library, which began in January this year, had to be stopped because of the lockdown. Happily, we were able to resume this work in mid-April and it is progressing well. Our objective is to upload the digital version of the entire collection of rare books and documents on the Open Source Software (OSS) platform so that all our Members can access this invaluable corpus of knowledge.

We have succeeded in not allowing the now prolonged lockdown to damage our gardens. We have had rotating teams of our gardeners to tend to the maintenance of our lawns and timely planting of summer flowers. It is a pity that our Members could not enjoy the last flush of our winter gardens—we had beautiful flowers all over and our roses came out particularly well.

As part of our continuing endeavour to ensure transparency and keep our Members fully informed, the names and details of all new Members enrolled since 1 December 2019 have been displayed on the IIC website. This practice shall be followed for all future inductions.

Before closing I cannot help mentioning that COVID-19 and the consequential lockdowns are resulting in very large financial losses for the Centre, and we have already been compelled to start consuming our savings to pay staff salaries and meet other obligations.

■ K. N. SHRIVASTAVA