

INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE **IIC** Diary

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Synthesis of Cultures

EXHIBITION: *Ray Between the Covers*

PEN, INK, ACTION: SATYAJIT RAY @100

Ray between the Covers: *An exhibition of digital reprints of book jackets, illustrated and designed by Satyajit Ray, beginning with his early work for Signet Press. Included in the exhibition are book jackets for his own fiction and non-fiction work; examples of his calligraphic covers; word play with titles; buoyant and cheerful covers for children's fiction, among others*

The exhibition was on view 18 February to 1 March 2022

This exhibition was part of the year-long celebrations marking the centenary of Satyajit Ray, legendary filmmaker, writer, illustrator and music composer.

Ray Between the Covers presented over 60 covers ranging from book covers he designed for Signet press, beginning with *Khurer Putul* way back in 1944 to a wide range of covers he continued to design for Signet and several other publishing houses, always with unfailing novelty of form and technique.

Known to the wider world mainly as a filmmaker, Ray was a multifaceted genius. His was a rich ancestry of growing up in an atmosphere of creativity, blessed with fluidity of expression, playful and spontaneous, loaded in meaning and context. Such a serious persona, yet blatantly childlike, he came through as not just unafraid, but actually revelling in the comic and absurd.

Children's books form a bulk of Ray's covers and illustrations, particularly with *Sandesh*. With utter simplicity of image and style, his genius could pull off portrayals with captivating accuracy of character and content, missing naught by way of tell tale detailing.

The occasional Tagore school resemblance in his works is seen in the Jibananda Das written Banalata Sen's cover, as are the Bishnu De translated Eliot poems, an unabashed recollection of no less than Van Gogh's Sunflowers, the vase adapted to Bengali folk idiom.

To quote Ray, 'the first set of Bengali books by Signet created a sensation in the publishing world, wherein my use of traditional Bengali motifs on book jackets, and occasionally an illustration in brush or pen, were firsts of their kind.'



Constantly experimenting with new styles on jackets, logos, calligraphies and illustrations, in addition to *Sandesh*, Ray regularly designed covers of another Bengali journal, *Ekshan* (Now). With each issue he played around with the title, design and configuration, the letters different each time. Ray created three English typefaces—Ray Roman, Ray Daphins and Ray Bizarre.

Included were works like *TS Elioter Kobita*, *Haja Ba Ra La*, *Buro Angla*, *The Criminals of Kathmandu*, *Tintoretto's Jesus*, and Ray's Bengali translations of *The Story of the Brazilian Cat*, stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Arthur C. Clarke and Ray Bradbury. Each was an eye opener to not only the richness and variety of Bengal's own literary engagement, but also of its reach and familiarity with the art and literature of several other countries, way back in the mid-1900s, when most others were still grappling with local, regional narratives.

Rightly is it observed that, 'It was not only his experience at Shantiniketan but also his family background and environment that helped Ray in blending cultures of both East and West in a synthesis of values, building an ethos that was his greatest strength, be it as an artist, a graphic designer, an illustrator, calligraphist, or film maker.'

Global Cooperation

IIC DIAMOND JUBILEE PANEL DISCUSSIONS ON PANDEMIC AND CLIMATE CHANGE: *Protecting the Planet's Future: An Environmental Agenda*

Welcome by Shri Kanwal Wali, Secretary IIC

PANELISTS: Jeffrey D. Sachs; Johan Rockström; P. D. Rai; Jayashree Nandi; and Ms Naaya Mehta

CHAIR: K. Srinath Reddy

7 February 2022

Two apparently separate topics are connected in the means to successfully contain and conquer the impact of the global pandemic and the impact of climate change, both of which require strong global cooperation. Both are a test of human capacity to respond with resilience. Multi-level global cooperation is key instead of fulfilling unilateral or bilateral geo-political agendas.

Almost 24 months into the deadly and highly transmissible coronavirus, despite anti-vaccination lobbies, there is successful containment with curbs, lockdowns, facemasks, social distancing and mass vaccination, until finally global social, business, travel and trade conditions are easing. One must recall that global vaccine manufacturers and anti-vaccination lobbyists did not give vaccine distribution the

importance they should have, seeing it as a public good impacting one and all. However, people and nations came together.

Climate change and controlling carbon emission is an older story of declarations but no delivery. It has not been addressed by global statesmen, nations and leaders with the gravity it deserves. Despite the UN declaration for the reduction and capping of greenhouse gases in 1992, greenhouse gas concentration has risen due to vested interests, laxity and political corruption.

The earth is today at planetary emergency point as a result of uncontrolled carbon emission through fossil fuels and greenhouse gases, rampant deforestation of forest cover and ocean algae pollution. Surface temperatures have reached peak levels on both earth and water bodies, resulting in heat waves and temperature aberrations. The self-correcting biosystems are battered and fragile, and have reached an irreversible flash point, breaching planetary thresholds of climate, biodiversity, land use and biogeochemical flows. A roadmap for rapid decarbonisation, recognising and respecting planetary boundaries, was also discussed, where any future development must be sustainable, using renewable energy: solar or otherwise. Only global cooperative efforts can work to cap carbon emission at no more than an increase of 1 to 1.5 per cent each year.

■ MEKHALA SENGUPTA

Listen to My Songs

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP: *A River Sings: The Ganga from Gangotri to Haridwar*

By Anjali Capila (New Delhi: IGNC, 2022)

Launch of the book followed by a discussion

The book was launched by Shri Shyam Saran, Life Trustee, IIC

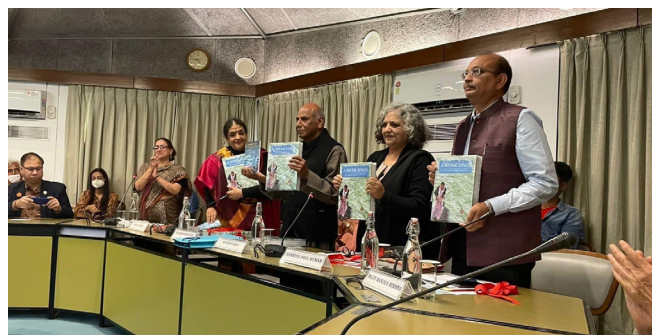
DISCUSSANTS: Sachchidanand Joshi; Rajiv Ranjan Mishra; Sukrita Paul Kumar; and Anjali Capila

CHAIR: Shri Shyam Saran, Life Trustee, IIC

25 February 2022

This book is a unique documentation of the songs of women who live along the banks of the Ganga. It represents a continuum from tradition to modernity: from celebrations like the *Charan Paduka* ceremony, chanting of the ancient *Ganga Lehari*, to current issues like deforestation, cutting trees to build better access to roads and the construction of the Tehri dam.

Anjali Capila admits that she unlearned a lot when the Spirit of the River Ganga entreated her to listen to the voices of the women who lived along her banks. The conceptual framework looks at the interconnectedness of Culture, Ecology and Development in the context of the river. The Garhwali songs have been translated into Hindi and transcreated into English while retaining their essence.



Joshi termed the book an 'emotional journey', and said that it should be translated into Hindi. Paul Kumar said the research was 'inspirational' and 'a dynamic exploration of a collective identity'. R. R. Mishra quoted the song '*paani mein aag lage hain*' (the waters are on fire) as demonstrating wisdom-traditions, and appreciated the author's sketches of traditional architecture that had withstood the test of time. According to the author, the whole process was evolutionary

and organic, and documented the intangible cultural heritage of the sacred landscape of the Ganga River Valley.

Overall, the book breaks the mould of knowledge production and supports the creation of an ecologically sensitive development agenda. Recording of the songs and interviews are included in a USB drive attached to the book.

■ VIJAYLUXMI BOSE

Gandhi's Relevance Today

WEBINAR: *The Great Pertinence of Gandhi to India in the 75th Year of Its Independence*

INAUGURAL ADDRESS: Justice M. N. Venkatachaliah

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS: Shri N.N. Vohra, President, IIC

SESSION I

SPEAKERS: Shri M. Hamid Ansari; Rajmohan Gandhi; and Gita Dharampal

SESSION II

SPEAKERS: Lord Bhikhu Parekh; Shri Shyam Saran, Life Trustee, IIC; and Alan Nazareth

MODERATOR: Arun Maira

COLLABORATION: Sarvodaya International Trust
31 January 2022

Justice M. N. Venkatachaliah began by saying that the first half of the 20th century was a bloody one. Despite communal hatred and economic devastation, Gandhi was a spark of conscience across the world. Sadly, as India prepares to celebrate its 75th year of Independence, the political, economic and social scenario causes more concern than satisfaction. Gandhi's ideals and strategies which secured India its Independence, national unity and progress have been steadily replaced by its ideological antipodes. He was the first victim of religious bigotry in post-independence India. The second was Indira Gandhi.

Shri Hamid Ansari said that Satyagraha for Gandhi was a weapon for all seasons. His tactics were having an impact and so was his general appearance. He chose themes for agitation that appealed to the poorest and the simplest. Rabindranath Tagore asked Gandhi on the 18th of January 1930, how did one coax an aggrieved, disarmed, heterogeneous divided population for an assault on a powerful empire? Gandhi had no answer, but in mid-February of 1930, he got a flash—'assault should be over salt': the Salt Satyagraha. Gandhi is the father of our nation. We should therefore turn to him for guidance. The seven social sins listed on a tablet at Rajghat give us simple yet candid guidance. If we resolve to follow this, it would please the spirit of Bapu.

'The world changes every moment but some situations get repeated in history. There is a similarity between India of the 1940s and today's India,' said Mahatma Gandhi's grandson, Rajmohan Gandhi. There was then a concerted drive to tell India that Hindus and Muslims cannot live together. Today, 75 years later, the two-nation theory is back with a bang amplified by powerful new megaphones. Gandhi gave the mantra for Antyodaya, 'Whenever

you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him.'

Dean of the Gandhi Research Foundation, Gita Dharampal, pointed out a tragic irony. When India is celebrating 75 years of Independence, it also reminds us that Gandhi's assassination took place 74 years ago. Someone asked Gandhi whether India would become prosperous after Independence. He replied that after 150 years of slavery, it would need at least half the time to get rid of that virus. India needs to revisit Gandhi's legacy.

Lord Bhikhu Parekh said that Gandhi is the only Indian who has global visibility. The world judges us by his standards. He believed in the dignity of politics or the spiritualisation of politics. His principle of non-violence was comprehensive. It is an art of dying. Violence is the science of killing. In his list of virtues, courage is important.

Shri Shyam Saran spoke about lesser-known aspects of Gandhi's thinking and vision for India's future, and that is ecological sustainability for humanity. Gandhi had a prophetic kind of vision about the importance of ecological sustainability. Ecological sustainability does not preclude violence. The human species uses violence out of greed, not need. Human beings are trustees of lower animals. Gandhi put forward the compelling ecological truth: 'We may utilise the gift of nature we choose but, in her books, debits are always equal to the credits.'

Alan Nazareth gave the gist of his two books. In *Gandhi's Outstanding Leadership*, he has mentioned Gandhi's transformation from a timid youth to the fearless leader he became. The second book is *Gandhi the Soulforce Warrior who Revolutionises Revolution*. Gandhi believed that what is obtained by love is retained always.

Shri N. N. Vohra, President, IIC emphasised the importance of Mahatma Gandhi's principles and practices to promote and strengthen societal harmony. He recalled witnessing barbaric cruelty during Partition when, in his early teens, he and his family fled from Pakistan and stayed in a refugee camp. The direction and pace of growth and development gets derailed and retarded whenever there is communal disturbance in any part of our country. India has no less than 300 to 350 million people existing below the poverty line. For steady and sustainable growth on all fronts, we need peace to prevail on our land.

At the end of the webinar, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan along with his two sons Amaan Ali and Ayaan Ali played *Raghupati Raghav* on sarod. Neha Vats Khankriyal sang *Vaishnavajan* at the beginning of the webinar.

■ VARSHA DAS

AI is Driving the Fourth Industrial Revolution

IIC DIAMOND JUBILEE LECTURES ON DIGITAL GOVERNANCE: *AI, Society and Governance*

SPEAKER: Arogyaswami J. Paulraj

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

16 February 2022

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) has been a work in progress since the 1950s, even if the term itself was coined in the 1960s by American computer scientist, John McCarthy. In the past decade and a half, however, AI has emerged as one of the most prominent buzzwords, not only in the high-tech world, but also elsewhere because of its application in the lives of ordinary people.

With the merits and promises that we associate with AI, there also are some risks which, according to internationally renowned AI expert Arogyaswami Paulraj, can very well be addressed. 'We know what Artificial Intelligence can do—it can do a lot. It does have some dangers too, but an informed society can help gather the resources to mitigate the risks,' said Paulraj.

Introducing the subject, Director, IIC Shri K. N. Shrivastava identified AI as 'one of the most powerful tools to address

the problems facing humanity, but also one that carried unprecedented risks inherent in that power.' President, IIC and Chair of the programme, Shri N. N. Vohra, listed AI among the most important subjects for the country, around which the IIC was organising a series of lectures by eminent intellectuals.

Paulraj, who explained the history of AI and how it functions, listed better delivery of healthcare and education, increased labour participation, and automation of hazardous jobs, among the social benefits of AI for India. On the fear that automation might replace humans in the workforce, he explained that AI, as in the case of the three previous industrial revolutions, could increase productivity and output, thereby increasing job opportunities, albeit more for skilled manpower. There could be some job displacement for professionals with lower skills, he said.

Among other risks were concentration of power in the hands of governments and big corporations, as they would get enormous amounts of data; and disinformation, especially through social media, leading to polarisation of masses for political and commercial purposes.

Overall, he said, the benefits of AI far outweighed the risks for a country like ours. 'India as a society has 300 million poor people, 150 million of whom are desperately poor. When this AI revolution comes, it will help all our citizens,' he affirmed.

■ REETESH ANAND

Concerted Research and Investment Effort

IIC DIAMOND JUBILEE LECTURES ON SCIENCE: *Clean Energy Transitions in India*

SPEAKER: Anil Kakodkar

CHAIR: R. Chidambaram

28 February 2022

India has pledged to reach zero carbon transmission by 2070. A lucid outline was presented of the current energy demand and supply, with the same demand and supply extrapolated up to 2070, a 50-year horizon. The discussants engaged with the challenges to green energy transition, the significance of biomass, the challenges to introduction of renewable energy, potential megatrends and the future for nuclear energy.

Studies show that approaching net zero, based primarily on nuclear energy, is the most cost efficient way to achieve the decarbonisation target. Capacity, generation, distribution and integration are all cost issues in the equation.

Energy supply in India is mostly from fossil energy—62 per cent coal, 28 per cent crude oil and 6 per cent gas. Green, clean and renewable energy is only 3.5 per cent of the total energy.

It will be a challenge to move from 3.5 per cent to 100 per cent. Biomass and bio energy are viable alternatives, which are currently generated in a polluting and wasteful way. Biomass used with technology will be the cleanest fuel. However, this can only meet a part of the projected demand needs of 28 terra watts, leaving a huge gap of 20 terra watts, which can only be met with a concerted unified nuclear policy and strategy in place. Energy generation, distribution and energy storage must be taken into account with the appropriate cost-effective technologies.

With India still on a development path, energy needs will increase to five to six times its present levels. Electricity

generation will have to be augmented by hydro, nuclear, solar, hydrogen, iodine, sulphur chlorine and biomass. While India has rich thorium resources and hydrogen is a possible future fuel, there are specific security and infrastructure issues that prevent us from tapping into these. We need to develop enabling clean energy transmission technologies within India and become exporters of these, instead of waiting for other countries to develop technologies for us to then follow suit. An example of such an additional critical alternative technology given was ceramic technology available in India

today. While growth and development will initially have to be driven by a gas based economy, there is no alternative to nuclear energy. India needs to escalate efforts towards its nuclear power capabilities to both rapidly meet rising energy needs with clean energy transmission. This needs concerted and active research and investment effort by the nation, by the government, and by business to work together to both create and tap into such scale economies.

■ MEKHALA SENGUPTA

Wide Ranging Perspectives

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP: *A Haunting Tragedy: Gender, Caste and Class in 1866 Famine of Orissa*, by Bidyut Mohanty (New Delhi: Manohar, 2022)

DISCUSSANTS: P. Sainath; Tim Dyson; Sanjay Sharma; Pritish Acharya; Jean Dreze; and Bidyut Mohanty.

CHAIR: Ashwini Deshpande

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME: Rityusha Tiwari
19 February 2022

Akhil Ranjan Dutta introduced the topic. Ashwini Deshpande said that the book was more than an 'economic hardship story' that famines typically evoke in popular imagination; rather the volume dealt 'with sex ratio, gender dimensions and outward migrations.'

Tim Dyson noted the volume as important. He, however, advised caution about Mohanty's claim that 'one third of the region's population perished in the famine'. After all, there was 'no census or civil registration prior to 1872' and 'no systematic census data' either during the calamity in terms of statistics.

Sanjay K. Sharma contrasted the Irish Potato Famine with that of the Odisha Famine of 1866. He was not sure, however, if canal irrigation and railways, if established prior to 1866, would have prevented the onset of the Famine.

Jean Dreze found the work notable in the context of the famines of Bengal and Bangladesh.

Pritish Acharya, brought in the literary-cultural and historical dimensions, endemic to the tragedy of 1866 in terms of the formation of the Odia identity.

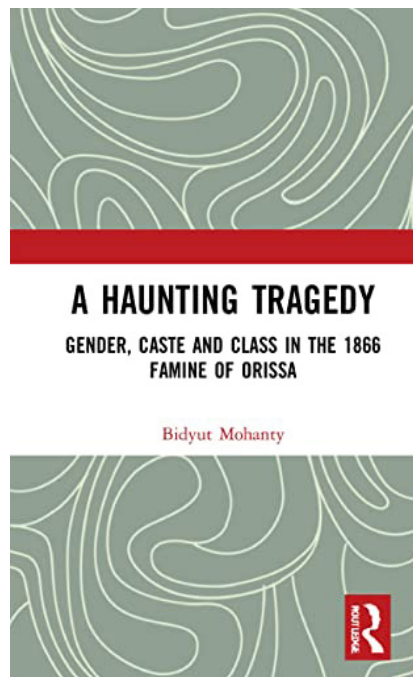
P. Sainath underlined issues of scarcity, hunger, starvation and their intersection with the emergence of literary periodicals like *Utkal Dipika* in 1866.

In her concluding remarks, the author, Professor Bidyut Mohanty thanked the panel for their appreciation and suggestions; she said that the Famine of 1866 tragically wiped out 'one third of Odisha's population.' Her book concentrated, among other aspects, 'on the acute food crisis, mass migration, micro level women agricultural labour, colonial policy, layers of insecurity for different occupational groups, rain failure, and the colonial policy of rice export.' Her research 'dealt with the question as to who were the victims of the famine, and why.' In her opinion, women's deaths in the famine 'were grossly underestimated'. There are 'parallels here', she surmised, 'with the present pandemics where the lives of great many women have been badly affected.'

After a lively Q & A session, the online meeting ended with a vote of thanks.

The webinar on the Odisha Famine of 1866, based on a path breaking book, opened new critical vistas and lessons for the current crises. The tragedy and its aftermath, it turned out during the webinar, were relatively unknown to the 'outside' audience/readership; the calamity, it is clear, has left a lasting impression on the Odia consciousness. Perhaps this aspect could have been captured by the inclusion of multidisciplinary experts from the region. Hopefully, this will be done in future.

■ SACHIDANANDA MOHANTY



Percolating To The Grassroots

SOCIAL CHANGE GOLDEN JUBILEE LECTURE:

Gender, Presence and Representation

SPEAKER: Bina Agarwal

CHAIR: Muchkund Dubey

COLLABORATION: Council for Social Development;
SAGE Publications; and Anthropological Survey of India
22 February 2022

‘The history of women in Indian governance is marked more by absence than presence.’ These were the opening words of Bina Agarwal at her presentation titled ‘Gender, Presence and Representation’, the Social Change Golden Jubilee Lecture.

Women today have representation in our political and legislative spheres; however, this has come after years of struggle and slow change. What does gender representation then mean in our fast-moving times, and how can representation bring about change?

Legislative representation for women truly came only in 1993, even though there are many historical reasons for why gender representation is essential. Greater legislative

representation of women has proven to have a positive impact on policy, lowering corruption and improving gender dynamics, leading to efficiency in governance and other less straightforward gains, including reduction in neo-natal mortality and improved public services.

However, as Bina Agarwal’s typology on participatory exclusion indicates, female legislative representation has yet to reach a stage of widespread empowered participation where they have the right to be able to truly influence decision-making. Effective representation is limited by both internal constraints, such as heterogeneity of identity and lack of meaningful engagement with women’s groups, and external constraints of limited funding and being constrained by party priorities. As she emphasised, for true representation, gender-for-itself has to go beyond narrow interests of political representatives and recognise common interests and act collectively.

Closing out an engaging and informative lecture, she stated a simple yet profound fact—social change cannot be achieved just by having a legislative presence and being under the umbrella of a shared identity of a woman. For true representation, we need to share ideas and priorities, and forge strategic alliances with grassroots groups, gender-progressive groups and public intellectuals to effect change.

■ AVI MAJITHIA

Family Histories

HISTORY AT HOME: *Conversations between a historian and his mother. Book discussion on M. Sreekumari Vasudevan, Hari Vasudevan, Memories of a Malabar Lady: M. Sreekumari Vasudevan’s Reminiscences of Life with Justice K.S. Menon, 1926-1956 (New Delhi, Manohar, 2022)*

3 March 2022

Hari Vasudevan, a remarkable historian with wide ranging interests, is amongst those we lost during the pandemic. This volume, published posthumously, reveals yet another dimension of his multi-faceted personality—his empathetic engagement with family histories, reconstructed through conversations with his mother.

Ravi Vasudevan, Hari’s brother, and a specialist in film and media studies, introduced the volume, providing a glimpse of the fascinating history behind it—of little notebooks in which the conversations were recorded, and how a project meant for family consumption became a book, celebrating

Sreekumari’s incredible memory. Ravi also traced Hari’s life in three continents, through what have been momentous times, etching out the complex contexts within which the project emerged.

In discussing the book, noted historian Lakshmi Subramaniam drew on her own memories of Sreekumari, besides highlighting its distinctive texture—the rich detail, the vivid account of everyday activities, the diverse cultural worlds that Sreekumari traversed, from Chinglepet to Jodhpur, with Malabar as a node that was at once real and imagined. Holding these worlds together were recurrent strands—of travel, food, music, friendships across communities, and tangled familial ties.

G. Arunima drew attention to the distinct layers within the volume. Hari Vasudevan’s introduction, she observed, was in a solemn, scholarly tone, sketching the contours of changes within the region as well as in the larger world, even as these rarely acquired centrality in Sreekumari’s own narrative. She also underscored the intriguing narrative strategy, whereby Hari foregrounded his mother’s voice in the main text, allowing his own interventions and questions to surface

only tangentially. This, she suggested, creates space for acknowledging the distinct value of the quotidian, as well as its richness. She also noted the way in which Malabar and Mamballikalam, Sreekumari's *tharavad*, figure in the narrative—allowing us to view it from the perspective of a non-resident Malayali.

The discussion concluded, evocatively and appropriately, with a moving tribute by Mrinalini, Sreekumari's granddaughter, a poignant yet reassuring reminder of both change and continuity.

■ KUMKUM ROY

A Comprehensive Picture of Society

WEBINAR: *Data Matters: Why, How Often, and What Kind?*

PANELISTS: *Sonalde Desai; P. C. Mohanan; and Mahesh Vyas*

CHAIR: *Ashwini Deshpande*

4 March 2022

Data is commonly thought to be hard to grasp and not very transparent. However, as Ashwini Deshpande pointed out in her opening remarks, it is more important than ever today to separate fact from fiction and be able to understand our economy and society.

This diverse panel of economists, statisticians and data scientists led a rousing discussion on the need for more national level socioeconomic data, the differences in data collection methods and the subsequent real life impacts of the same.

In her comments, Desai pointed to the benefits and challenges of longitudinal data collection that allows for

complex insights into the transformation of Indian society. The methodology being different from the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) allows for different parameters to be captured, and connections made between sociological issues and economic realities. P. C. Mohanan, on the other hand, brought out the challenges in data collection from his decades-long experience with the NSSO. In working with such a large population, issues of time, access and language can play a major role, but with its resources, experience and importance in the history of the country, the NSSO still remains a major source of socioeconomic data today.

Mahesh Vyas eloquently brought out the innovative forms that data collection can take, some of which his organisation, CMIE, are currently applying. All three panelists reinforced the point that while different data collection methods can reveal different outcomes, together they shine light on the socioeconomic status of India today.

An invigorating discussion with insightful questions from the audience re-emphasised that socioeconomic data is highly complex, contextual and needs to be ever evolving. As the panel pointed out in the end, all survey tools bring with them their own unique challenges, but this diversity in data and survey methodology takes us one step closer to a more comprehensive picture of our society today.

■ AVI MAJITHIA

Sensitisation on Air Pollution

IIC DIAMOND JUBILEE DISCUSSIONS ON PANDEMIC AND CLIMATE CHANGE: *Poor Air Quality and Impacts on Health—Perspectives from Clinicians, Public Health Researchers and Parents*

PANELISTS: *Kiran Guleria; H. Paramesh; G.C. Khilnani; D. Prabhakaran; Bhavreen Khandari; and Manjeet Saluja*

CHAIR: *Poornima Prabhakaran*

26 February 2022

Poornima Prabhakaran began by drawing attention to the worrisome fact that India has become the air pollution

capital of the world. The panelists discussed the impact of air pollution on health across the life course, starting from neonatal health to elderly illnesses. They gave an overview of the current evidence base of the health impacts of air pollution in India.

Kiran Guleria, an obstetrician, shared insights on the impact of air pollution on neonatal health and pregnant women. H. Paramesh, a paediatrician, explained the alarming increase in non-communicable diseases in children living in polluted cities. Along with the impact on physical health, Paramesh explained the behavioural aspects such as higher crime rates and poor judgement on high pollution days. G. C. Khilnani, a pulmonologist, drew evidence from studies in Delhi and other cities in India to discuss adult pulmonary health. D. Prabhakaran, a cardiologist, spoke about the lesser-known impacts of air pollution on the heart.

Prabhakaran summarised evidence from the Geo Health Programme and elaborated the link between air pollution and hypertension at a population level.

Manjeet Saluja, representative of WHO India, gave an overview of the major mandates of the WHO to address air pollution and its impacts on health. Bhavreen Khandari, an environmentalist and parent, shared the lived experiences of mothers dealing with impacts of air pollution on the health of children. She also expressed concern about air pollution not being treated as a public health emergency.

The panelists also shared what they do as clinicians and practitioners in addressing the issue of air pollution. The necessity to create awareness of the health impacts of air pollution was pointed out as of utmost importance. The panelists also emphasised the need for sensitisation of the issue of air pollution among fellow clinicians as well as the general population.

■ CAROL WILSON

Ode to the Music Maker

ALL OF ME: An Evening of Poetry Jazz to honour and celebrate Late Soli J. Sorabjee, Life Trustee, IIC
9 March 2022

The fountain lawn looked magical with crepuscular rays shining light from the balloon-filled stage across and over the audience, to bathe the encircling trees in silver. The stage was set for an engaging evening paying homage to Soli Sorabjee's passion for poetry and jazz.



Astri Ghosh introduced the programme with personal recollections of time spent with Sorabjee, giving the listeners a good idea of his human rights work, his extensive poetry collection and love of jazz. She read moving poetry from World War I accompanied by Arjun Sagar Gupta on the piano, whose nuanced playing added a lyrical quality to the reading. The carefully curated poem collection included Wilfred Owen's *Dulce et Decorum est*. The poem's

poignant tone and dreadful imagery came to life through Ghosh's dramatic rendering. This was followed by John McCrae's *In Flanders Fields* and a couple of stanzas of Arthur O'Shaughnessy's *Ode*.

Usha Uthup, Braz Gonsalves and Sunil Sampat regaled the crowd via video link, giving us further insight into Sorabjee's musical journey.

This created the perfect ambience for Sagar Gupta's fantastic four along with Carlton Braganza, who came all the way from Bangalore to be part of the programme, and who swayed us with his energetic execution of jazz numbers. The talented Agneya Singh was marvellous on the saxophone and vocals, as were Sonic Shori on bass and Aditya Singh on drums. From *All of Me* to *Sway* and then on to *Fly Me to the Moon* and *Misty*, the rhythm of jazz had everyone trying to keep time with tapping feet and nodding heads. The evening ended with Sagar Gupta morphing into Louis Armstrong and belting out a beguiling version of *What a Wonderful World*.

The IIC, with its ubiquitous spring flowers filling the atmosphere with colour and heady scent, reminded one what it is to be able to enjoy the outdoors with all the senses in tune. This was a delightful way to remember and acknowledge Sorabjee.

■ RIMA HANDA ZAHEER

A Woman's View

THE IIC DIAMOND JUBILEE LECTURES ON ENGENDERING THE DISCOURSE: Her Voice: Diplomacy Today: A Woman's Agenda

SPEAKER: Nirupama Rao

INTRODUCTION: Smt. Meenakshi Gopinath, Life Trustee, IIC

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

CONCLUDING REMARKS: Shri K. N. Shrivastava, Director, IIC

14 March 2022

India International Centre's Diamond Jubilee Discussions on *Her Voice: Engendering the Discourse* witnessed a stellar opening with a lecture by Ambassador Nirupama Menon Rao.

Against the backdrop of a gradual increase in the numeric representation of women in the traditionally male dominated field of diplomacy, Rao raised several pertinent questions: While women's numbers have increased, have they found voice, agency and identity in the male bastion of diplomacy? Is it just an 'add women and stir' approach that makes the statistical charts look good? Are issues of peace and security being redefined to register the aspirations and interests of women? Do women make their mark by

redefining set agendas with their own distinct brand and contribution and where they do more than conform to foreign policy gospel built by generations of male diktat? Are women enabled to bring their own visions of the world and the region to bear on the conduct of India's diplomacy to imbue it with feminine gravitas and meaning?

Amb. Rao traced the contributions of pioneering women of the early 20th century who pushed the envelope on substantive participation and voice of women in diplomacy. She foregrounded that women in service can impact service planning, administrative reform, public diplomacy strategy, development diplomacy, soft power enunciation and the provision of inputs in security and foreign policy that amplify the space for dialogue, connectivity across borders, confidence building measures, demilitarisation and mechanisms for tension diffusion and reduction.

Smt. Meenakshi Gopinath, Life Trustee IIC, shared a rich exposition on the efforts of feminist international

relations scholars, normative international frameworks and instruments emanating from CEDAW, the landmark UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, combined with women's movements at the grassroots level, which contributed to women's demands for voice, space and power at the high tables of decision making where peace is brokered.

Shri N.N. Vohra, President of IIC, shared compelling statistics to highlight the need for changes in India's national policy framework and the delivery of development schemes to improve women's education, health and employment opportunities. A gender sensitive foreign policy must work in tandem with a gender just national policy framework.

Shri K. N. Shrivastava, Director of IIC, concluded the talk by foregrounding the importance of embedding women's equal representation in policy across all walks of public life.

■ SHILPI SHABDITA

A Higher Purpose than Power Politics

DR. C. D. DESHMUKH MEMORIAL LECTURE 2022:

India's Foreign Policy: Past and Future

SPEAKER: Shri M. K. Rasgotra

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

17 March 2022

Shri N.N. Vohra, President, IIC, in his opening remarks described the origins of the IIC, starting with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to Japan where he met with the Indian community at International House, Tokyo. Shri Vohra spoke at length about Dr. C.D. Deshmukh, the Founder-President, and his brilliant service to India as civil servant, minister of finance, and in other high offices.

Shri Rasgotra, in his lecture lasting about an hour, explained how Jawaharlal Nehru revolutionised foreign policy, and gave centrality to global and human concerns pertaining to preserving peace, accelerating decolonisation, and promoting development with emphasis on the underprivileged. For Nehru, foreign policy had a 'higher purpose' than pursuit of power politics at any cost. Foreign policy cannot be rigid as it has to adjust to international events as and when they occur.

When India became independent, Nehru wished for a world federation with its own military, a world without a national

military. In that world view, there was no place for South Asia as a region.

For any country to have a credible foreign policy, it was necessary to have a minimum of internal stability. Nehru focused on creating that stability and the first Five Year Plan was a great success. The first general election conducted in 1952 on the basis of universal franchise raised the prestige of the country.

It is historically wrong to say that Chou En lai had proposed a deal on the border prior to 1962, and that India should have accepted it. He did propose a deal, but there was a condition: send the Dalai Lama back to Tibet.

As to options before India, it was important to recognise the threat from China and to get closer to the United States of America which responded under Kennedy in full measure to India's request for military help in 1962.

Coming to the policy of non-alignment, it is important to recall correctly Nehru's formulation thereof in his address to the nation on 7 September 1946:

We propose, as far as possible, to keep away from the power politics of groups, aligned against one another, which have led in the past to world wars and which may again lead to disasters on an even vaster scale...

The four words 'as far as possible' are of utmost importance.

Shri Rasgotra was given a standing ovation as Shri K. N. Shrivastava, Director, IIC, proposed a vote of thanks.

■ K. P. FABIAN

India Africa Relations

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP: *India–Africa Relations: Changing Horizons*

By Rajiv Bhatia (New Delhi: Routledge India Taylor & Francis, 2021)

DISCUSSANTS: *Rajen Harshe; Ms Ruchita Beri; Shri Suhas Borker; and Rajiv Bhatia*

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

24 March 2022

A critical evaluation of the evolving relationship between Africa, a continent with 1.34 billion people and China—the world’s most populous country—which has a population of 1.39 billion, is essential to complete the story of the external powers’ engagement in Africa, writes Rajiv Bhatia, India’s former envoy to Kenya and South Africa and the country’s foremost expert on Africa.

‘The past seven decades since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in October 1949 offer a fascinating story of how the Africa–China relationship underwent both visible and subtle changes in character and scope. There was a time when Communist China was not even recognised by many African governments and when the former’s involvement with the continent was quite negligible. In contrast, at the present stage of history, Africa’s external relations cannot be appreciated without devoting ample space and time to the role played by China in Africa’s politics, economy, social sectors and worldview’, pointed out Bhatia.

Both China and India have similar goals, judged by their pronouncements and actions. They desire to contribute to Africa’s socio-economic development; extend assistance in diverse sectors of human endeavour; help it grow into a consequential role-player in world affairs; and seek Africa’s natural resources, hydrocarbons and markets for themselves. They also solicit Africa’s support for their political agenda

and leadership (e.g., UN reform and the proposed expansion of the Security Council in India’s case and acceptance of ‘peaceful rise’ and global assertiveness in China’s case), according to Bhatia.

‘Then, the differences. The fundamental trait on which China and India diverge stems from their long-term goals. Going by the nature of policies followed, it is evident that China looks for dominance, control and strategic gains. India, on the other hand, aims at little more than partnership that is based on equality, mutual respect and benefit.’

In effect, thus, if there is competition, it is between the Chinese model anchored on authoritarianism and state-led capitalism and the Indian model of democracy with development, which moves at a slower pace but is more consultative, equitable and inclusive, noted Bhatia.

“The COVID-19 era brought into sharp focus the India–China competition in Africa. Both Asian powers raced to dispatch medicines, test kits and other medical equipment to their African partners. Later, once the two vaccines made in India and the vaccines made in China became available, both countries strove to share them with Africa. India’s reputation as ‘the pharmacy of the world,’ its past record in producing and distributing drugs at affordable price to combat AIDS, and its proactive ‘Vax diplomacy’ won global admiration.” China’s strategic approach, consistency and persistence, a thick cheque book, technological capacity and vast resources give her a formidable edge. However, India’s advantages—old familiarity; deep mutual empathy born of the shared colonial experience; legacy of leaders like Gandhi, Nkrumah, Nehru and Mandela; geographical and cultural proximity; soft power; Indian diaspora; reputation for appropriate and affordable technology; and strides in IT, pharma, digitisation and capacity building—provide a potent counterpoise. This mix is sufficient to keep India in the race, armed with the stamina of a long-distance runner, according to the senior diplomat.

■ **DIPANJAN ROY CHOUDHURY**

From ‘China Looks to Dominate Africa Unlike India’s Partnership based on Equality’,
(*The Economic Times*, 15 January 2022)



Holistic Framework

IIC DIAMOND JUBILEE LECTURES ON DIGITAL GOVERNANCE: THE NETWORK READINESS OF NATIONS: *Combining Technology and Humanity for a Better Future for All*

SPEAKER: Soumitra Datta

CHAIR: Shri Shyam Saran, Life Trustee, IIC

24 March 2022

In 2000, a group of experts at the World Economic Forum (WEF) were aiming to design a framework for assessing the impact of information and communications technologies (ICT) on the development and competitiveness of nations. The Network Readiness Index (NRI) was the outcome of this project which entailed a holistic framework for assessing the multi-faceted impact of ICT on society and the development of nations. The NRI promptly developed into an influential global benchmark for the application and utilisation of ICT. Many economies utilised it to design their ICT strategies, and the NRI was frequently quoted by leaders from the public and private sectors. Over the last two decades, the NRI framework underwent one major revision which allowed an explicit focus on the impact of ICT. The example of NRI top-ranking economies shows that education is a central tenet of global competitiveness.

The model of this project was reviewed in 2018, given contemporary challenges, and as of today, it has four key pillars—technology, people, governance and impact. Each pillar is measured by different variables. A smaller number of indices give priority to the human factor of network readiness and try to capture the impact of people's choices regarding technology and governance on economic growth, and more generally, the contribution of network readiness

to the achievement of broader goals, such as the SDGs. The report of this project, therefore, has been a key source for formulating policies on technology around the globe.

The pandemic turned digital transformation from a priority into a global imperative. The shift towards an increased reliance on technology has caused recognisable social, economic and political changes that will have a lasting impact. Also, the new landscape of digital transformation is creating new divides and highlighting existing ones. The digital gender divide continues to present a significant barrier to meaningful participation in a digital society, a barrier exacerbated by the effects of the pandemic.

Moreover, technology can help equalise global recovery. Four primary areas are likely to receive the bulk of such recovery efforts: health; greening of the economy; infrastructure; digital transformation. Network readiness requires holistic approaches. As the new digital economy becomes more established, the ability to integrate people and technology within the proper governance structures is key to fostering resilience and sustainability.

Technology readiness remains 'fair game' at the global stage. Although economies in higher-income region clusters remain the most network ready, some of the noteworthy efforts in overall performance identified this year are among the African countries of the middle and lower-income groups.

Digital technology champions are helping bridge income group gaps. China (29), Ukraine (53), Vietnam (63), India (67) and Rwanda (101) are a few economies that continue to close the performance gap between income groups. These economies score above median performance in their respective income groups across one or more pillars. Finally, connectivity is not an end in itself—it is a tool designed to create value for societies.

■ PORTIA CONRAD

Politics of Development and Air Pollution

IIC DIAMOND JUBILEE DISCUSSIONS ON SCIENCE: *Air Pollution: Its Impact and Mitigation*

LEAD SPEAKER: Gufran Beig

DISCUSSANTS: Sachchida Nand Tripathi; Sunita Narain; and Shinjini Bhatnagar

MODERATOR: Shailesh Nayak

28 March 2022

Shailesh Nayak initiated the panel discussion by introducing three critical aspects of the problem of air pollution; scientific knowledge about air pollution and its impact on health; the role of the social system and governance structures in managing air pollution; and the role of the human system in dealing with air pollution. Gufran Beig, the lead speaker, discussed the science of air pollution and presented data from different parts of the country. He also presented the studies by SAFAR on the air quality of Delhi since 2015, and concluded that while good days are increasing, extremely bad air quality days are also increasing in the country.

Sachchida Nand Tripathi detailed the effect of oxidative potential on the lungs and pointed out the impact of increased aerosols on natural systems such as glaciers, monsoon and crop yield. He also highlighted the necessity to look at air quality in rural regions of the country, which is declining at a rate as fast as urban air quality.

Shinjini Bhatnagar, a paediatrician, discussed the impact of poor air quality on foetal health and birth weight. She explained findings from her ongoing study on the association between antenatal exposure to ambient air pollution and pregnancy outcomes. Bhatnagar emphasised that the placenta, when influenced by pollutants,

reduces foetal growth, thereby affecting the health of the country's future generations. Both Tripathi and Bhatnagar acknowledged the importance of interdisciplinary studies to understand the impact of air pollution on health.

Sunita Narain highlighted the fact that health is an essential trigger for action. She emphasised the role of science and technology in guiding public consciousness and the need to act on what we know. Narain concluded with the powerful remark, 'If you don't get your Politics of Development Right, you will never get Air Quality Right.'

■ CAROL WILSON

Hope, Healing and Recovery

.....

EXHIBITION: *Good Earth* by Jyoti Nagpal
30 March to 10 April 2022

.....

This solo exhibition of oils by Jyoti Nagpal expressed a yearning for the regenerative powers of Nature. Appropriately called *The Good Earth*, this collection depicted landscapes imbued with the magic of children's fairy tales; a wistful recollection of flora and fauna as they may have lived when the earth was not ravaged by man's greedy exploitation. The pandemic was unleashed as though to punish mankind, lock us up, shut all polluting transport and industry, and allow the beautiful creatures, plants and trees to reclaim their habitat.

The paintings ranged in style from quasi-realism to impressionism; from landscapes showing movement of time as seasons change, to movement of humans in dance; from colourful flowers and leaves in the wild, to exuberant bunches brought indoors in vases. Water, in ponds, streams and pretty waterfalls, was also a recurring theme, further underscored by a method of painting wet-on-wet that allows oils to capture some of the fluidity of water colours. This method effectively visualised the feeling of fog and distance in the mountainous landscapes, to communicate currents in the water bodies, and movement in the costumes and limbs of the dancers. This method also brought alive the eyes of the deer and peacocks that appear to look straight at the viewer, as though asking, hey, why did you come here?



The paintings are imbued with a sense of innocence and joie de vivre, very childlike in their playfulness and purity, where even dying leaves and fall colours of dense woods take on the joy of being alive, the dance of the never-ending circle of birth, play, growth, aging, and decay. All the stages seem to be undifferentiated, as though advising us to enjoy the glory of each phase, each stage, that we experience.

Although none of the paintings depicted the virus or the pandemic, inherent in these paintings that have emerged from the years of lockdowns and isolation, a message of hope, healing and recovery is strongly communicated.

■ BHARATI MIRCHANDANI

Hindustani Classical Double Bill Concert

IIC DOUBLE BILL MUSIC RECITALS:

Hindustani Music—Hawaiian Guitar Recital

By Neel Ranjan Mukherjee from Delhi, disciple of the late Guru Pt. Debu Chaudhuri and Pt. Anup Jalota

Accompanists: Pt. Pradip Kumar Sarkar (tabla); and Amiya Haldar (tanpura)

Hindustani Vocal Recital

By Lalit Deshpande from Pune, disciple of Pt. Anand Bhate

Accompanists: Lalit Sisodiya (harmonium); and Ujith Uday Kumar (tabla)

30 March 2022

The Double Bill Music concert series showcased Hindustani Instrumental and Vocal recitals featuring Neel Ranjan Mukherjee on Hawaiian Guitar, and Lalit Deshpande's vocal recitals.

A devoted disciple of Late Pt. Debu Chaudhuri, Neel plays Hindustani classical music on this Western instrument without changing or adding any sympathetic strings to it. It was intriguing to watch him play Aalap covering the lower octave with the *Laraj-Kharaj ka kaam* conventionally done on sitar or sarod, when he opened his recital with raga *Kirwani*. Neel played Alap and three compositions in slow Teentala, Drut Ektaal and a faster Teentala ending with Jhala.

Although, one had expected him to opt for an evening raga with more scope than *Kirwani* which is good enough for the second piece.

Remembering his departed Guru, Neel concluded with the Thumri *yaad Piya ki aaye...* immortalised

by Ud. Bade Ghulam Ali Khan. Pradeep Kumar Sircar ably accompanied him on tabla.

An engineer and IT consultant by profession, Lalit Deshpande is a Hindustani vocalist from Pune. Trained under Gurus like Pt. Ramesh Kanole, Pt. Vijay Koparkar and Pt. Anand Bhate, Lalit is also a Sangeet Visharad. Opening his vocal recital with raga *Bihag*, he treated it meticulously with an introductory *Auchar*, a Vilambit Khayal set to slow Ektaal and a Chhota Khayal in medium tempo Teentala with proper Bandish delivery, gradual *Badhat*, *Bahelawa*, *Bol-Alap*, and a variety of *Taiyaar Taans*.

Lalit proved his versatility as a composer as well, singing his own compositions in raga *Saraswati*, set to Rupak and Teentala, before concluding with the Bhairavi Bhajan *Jo bhaje Hari ko sada*, popularised by Pt. Bhimsen Joshi. The admirable accompaniment by Lalit Sisodia on harmonium and Ujith Uday Kumar on tabla though, was drowned in the loud drone of the electronic tanpura.

■ MANJARI SINHA



Gender Justice on Campus

IIC DIAMOND JUBILEE DISCUSSIONS ON ENGENDERING THE DISCOURSE:

Her Voice: Embedding Gender Justice in the Academy

A dialogue with Najma Akhtar; Justice (Smt) Gita Mittal; Eric Falt; N. V. Varghese; Krishna Menon; and Smt. Meenakshi Gopinath, Life Trustee, IIC

26 March 2022

The release of *Navigating the Terrain of Gender Justice: A Handbook on Gender Audits at Higher Education Institutes in India*, which shares WISCOMP's learnings from workshops at 48 higher education institutions, occasioned a dialogue at once provocative and empathetic, self-reflexive and

constructive, on how gender politics curb autonomy, opportunities and imagination, even in the potentially transformative space of higher education. Interventions for making campuses secure spaces were shared. Less easily resolved was the interplay of multiple hierarchies in students' experience, captured sharply in the accompanying exhibition by Rough Edges, *When Women Write In Words and Pictures*, which was used at WISCOMP workshops to stimulate discussion and imaginative appropriation.

Meenakshi Gopinath's introduction set out the audit's parameters: administrative practice, curricular exclusions, organisational structure and culture, professional development, internal and external communication, and campus infrastructure. As the audit engages with mindsets (infantilising or intrusive protectionism), as much as it addresses gaps (in redressal mechanisms), it must be participatory and is always 'work-in-progress'.

Flagging women's declining participation in the workforce since the 1990s, N.V. Varghese saw this as a sign of their investment in higher education. Yet, this does not translate into increased participation at senior management levels, or a critical mass of women in the sector. Interventions to this end must be designed in light of India's current state of job-loss growth.

Gita Mittal demonstrated how stereotypes, discrimination and non-recognition of women's needs thwart their growth in the legal profession. There is a continuum in the denial of dignity—a woman arguing is 'aggressive', women prisoners are not given privacy, acid attack survivors are put away.

Speaking of the interrupted careers of women scientists, Eric Falt recommended instituting industry-academia linkages, mentorships and networking programmes. Najma Akhtar testified to women confronting prejudice even at the peak of

their careers, and remarked that they should cultivate their own leadership styles.

For Krishna Menon, the university is a site of 'social experiment', where participants across social divides can exercise 'bidding rights to classrooms, hangout spots and intimate relations'. Discomforting situations may arise when gender interacts with other axes of difference, but these can be turned into 'pedagogic moments'. Care should be taken not to reduce the audit to a formality, which is then relegated to women.

Rakhi Kalita Moral and Latha Nair R. described how the audit had led them to integrate gender into the curricula, introduce legal literacy courses, and encourage their students to engage with nation-wide discussions on gender justice.

■ NIHARIKA GUPTA

An Artist's Journey

IIC DIAMOND JUBILEE FILM SCREENINGS: FILMS ON ARTISTS: *S.H. Raza, The Very Essence*

DIRECTOR: *Laurent Bregeat*
Produced by Lalit Kala Akademi
The film was introduced by Shri Ashok Vajpeyi

COLLABORATION: *The Raza Foundation*
29 March 2022

This documentary on the famous Indian painter S. H. Raza by Laurent Bregeat was screened as part of a quartet of documentaries by the same director on other well-known modern Indian artists sponsored by the Lalit Kala Akademi, Delhi when Ashok Vajpeyi was its chairman.

S. H. Raza, The Very Essence begins with Raza in his mid-eighties, painting and singing a Hindi film song from his youth; from there the documentary goes on a journey exploring his life and art. He began as a technically sound student with a marked talent for watercolours which he carried into his early life as an artist in Bombay, having left

Sir J. J. School of Art in the city. He also painted some very expressive landscapes in oils while being a founder-member of the Progressive Art group. The other artists who were in the group initially were M. F. Husain, H. A. Gade, K. H. Ara, F. N. Souza and V. S. Gaitonde. Raza was amongst the earliest Indian students to study at Ecole Des Beaux Arts in Paris on a fellowship offered by the French government to cement ties with a newly independent India.

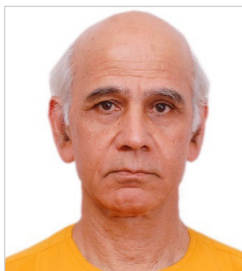
In Paris, he began to find himself as an artist and met his artist wife Janine, whom he had courted for nine years. When in France, he had also discovered the Bindu which was integral to Hindu and Jain cosmology. Through the Bindu, he discovered his calling as an abstract painter, finding both fame and fortune.

Bregeat's documentary is a tame affair. Raza talks incessantly about his life, but precious little of his work is seen on screen. Art critics Yashodhara Dalmia and Geeta Kapur make a few observations about Raza's work, as do Ashok Vajpeyi and a couple of well-regarded French artists and a prominent critic. Yet, the exercise is tame and lacking in energy. The spoken word takes precedence over the image.

■ PARTHA CHATTERJEE

DEPARTURES

We are deeply saddened by the passing away of the following Members of the IIC family, and convey our heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved families.



SHRI ASHOK DHAWAN
A-2768



RADM. H.C. MALHOTRA
(RETD.) / A-3189



SHRI BANBIT A. ROY
A-3876



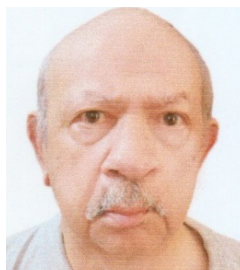
PROF. MANNU BHANDARI
A-5629



DR. MOHSIN ULLAH KHAN
A-6440



SMT. JANAK BALUJA
A-7281



AMB. HARDEV BHALLA
A-7647



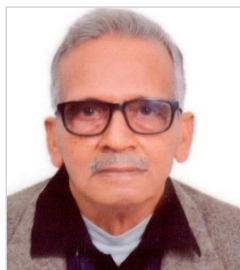
SMT. MANJIT CHAWLA
M-1273



SHRI K.P. GEETHAKRISHNAN
M-2156



JUSTICE N. K. SODHI
M-3192



PROF. RAMESH KUMAR
TIWARI / M-3428



SHRI OM PRAKASH
SRIVASTAV / M-3827



SHRI ARUN PATHAK
M-2875



SHRI MAHESH SAHAI
M-4072



MR. DIVYABH MANCHANDA
M-4192

And the following Members (photographs not available):

MR. GERSON DA CUNHA (A-2256); SHRI ANUP N. KOTHARI (A-3030); JUSTICE S. RANGANATHAN (M-2060)
MAJ H. P. S. AHLUWALIA (M-2659); JUSTICE G. T. NANAVATI (M-3378)



Director's Note

In a landmark initiative, the Centre has digitised its rare books collections and legacy records and created a digital repository of about 20 lakh pages, to preserve these invaluable collections and for securing maximum utilisation. The digitised resources include the Sir Bilgrami Collections, Walter Sykes George Collections, Himalayan Club Collections, India Collections, among others. Some of these publications date back to the 18th century and include rare maps and sketches.

This digital portal, christened DigiLib, can be accessed through the IIC Website both by members and non-members. The digitised sheets can be viewed free of cost by members and non-members. For downloading/printing, there is a nominal charge payable through the online payment gateway.

The winter annuals in the Centre's gardens have fortunately survived the unusually early heat wave and are still in bloom, including Tulips which drew much appreciation from members and visitors. Plans are underway to introduce blooms in the Gandhi-King Memorial Plaza, which has more shade.

The refurbishing of the guest rooms in the hostel New Wing continues; four rooms have been completed.

Our senior members are eagerly awaiting the operation of the lift to the Main Dining Room and Conference Room II. Currently, the construction of the elevator shaft is underway, and the lift is expected to be functional by end April.

The signages for the external areas of the Main Centre and internal signages for the Programme Block are now in an advanced stage of planning and will be executed in phases.

To dispense with our dependency on underground water, we have made sustained efforts to secure additional water supply from NDMC, which has recently sanctioned a new water connection for 25,000 litres supply. Besides, the existing two water supply lines of the Main Centre are being rejuvenated. With these measures, we are hopeful of meeting the Centre's daily water requirement of about 1,00,000 litres from fresh water supply (by NDMC) and recycled water from the STP & ETP. Once this happens, there would be no need to draw on underground water.

With the induction of new STAMs, we are witnessing an increasing number of members using the facilities of the Centre and also attending the physical programmes. While gradually increasing the frequency of physical programmes, we will continue to also hold programmes in the virtual/hybrid mode.

As our dining facilities are running to almost full capacity, we have opened the Annexe. Barbeque lunch, served in the Rose Garden, has been discontinued for the summer months, but special cuisines continue on the weekend and the take-away facility remains very popular.

■ K. N. SHRIVASTAVA