

# INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE IIC Diary

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April – May 2022

## Panchaatmika—A Harmony of Multi-Classical Dance Forms

### IIC DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS 2022:

*Inauguration of the year-long celebrations*

*Welcome by Shri N.N. Vohra, President, IIC*

*Talk by Hon'ble Shri Ram Nath Kovind,  
President of India*

*Vote of Thanks by Shri K.N. Shrivastava, Director, IIC*

**18 April 2022**

The evening performance celebrating the beginning of the IIC's Diamond Jubilee echoed the spirit of the inaugural address by Shri Ram Nath Kovind, President of India, who said that 'here divergent views are accommodated with intelligent dialogue'. *Panchaatmika*, conceptualised and choreographed by Parvati Dutta of Mahagami Gurukul, was a harmony of multi-classical dance styles.

Shiva, comprising the five syllables *Na, Ma, Shi, Va, ya*, representing the five cosmic elements, Earth, Water, Fire, Vayu and Akash, was artistically and metaphysically envisioned as 'realising the five-fold universe within oneself'. Contemplated upon through the revelations of oral, textual and performance traditions, involving the five senses, and through a movement tapestry involving the five-fold rhythmic designs through *tala* (metric) cycles made up of multiples of 3,4,5,7 and 9 units, the work was a harmonious weave uniting the *anga-bhasha* of five dance styles—Kathak, Odissi, Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi and Mohiniattam. Starting with sonorous notes of Raag *Vibhas* (from Bhairavi thaat dedicated to Shiva) with two singers and mnemonics recited with tabla, pakhawaj, mardal, edakkya, mridangam and khanjira percussion, set to *khanda jati* (multiples of five), sensitive choreography right from the opening scene, revealed delightful group patterns with multi-styled dancers, hands held high in *Anjali*. Through Adi Sankara's *Shiva*



*Panchakshara Stotram 'Nagendra Haraya'*, homage to ash-smeared, blue-throated Shiva, wearing a snake garland, with Mandakini on his head, holding fire and trident in opposite hands.

Raga *Natabhairavi*, evocative of contrary moods, with *Udukkai* phrases, ushered in dancers holding metal bowls smoking with incense, conveying the idea of void for the sequence on *Akash*, a canopy of nothingness defying definition, extensive and all pervasive for *Satkhandagama* and a vacuum for *Dhammasangani*. Its seven-fold *lakshanas*, says the Mahabharata, are enshrined in the notes *shaddja, rishabha, gandhar, madhyama, Panchama, daivat, nishaadh*. The substratum of sound produced within, *Akash* is set to solfa passages, and *Sankeerna Jati* (metric cycle of nine units needing a sum of matras), dancers moving in perpendicular formations signifying travelling sound space. Music evoking the difficulty of mapping voids, uses Dhruwad, Kharaj, Sarangi, mnemonics of Buddhist Bowl marking the 'sama, with percussion instruments *duf, Tarpa, morsing*.

The Natya Sastra traces the origin of *Jala Vadya* to a Shivagana who, with Viswakarma's help, created a percussion instrument sounding like rain drops falling on Lotus leaves. Commentator Abhinavagupta described Shiva as *Jala murti*. Set to *tisragati* (metric cycle of units of three), and *Miya Malhar* (the monsoon raga), dancers in graceful steps danced to the sonic rhythm of *mardal, pakhwaj, Dug, Khol, Ghatam and Tung Tabla*.

The Mohiniattam dancer's entry heralded the sequence on bountiful *Prithvi* (Earth), dark coloured Mother and life bearer, in white garment, to *Chatusra Jati* (multiples of four), and raga *Jaijaivanti*, evocative of joy and negativism. Described in the *Vishnudharmottar* as endowed with the five perceptions: *shabda*, *sparsha*, *rupa*, *rasa* and *gandha*, involving the sense organs, the very basis of all art, dancers move, tracing floor space in a square around a square, the geometry symbolising Prithvi, dancing to the sounds of earthy instruments like dhol with sarangi, udukku, mardal and morsang—an expressional whiff conveying five perceptions of touch, smell, hearing, sight and taste.

Symbolising dynamism, powerful but invisible, gloriously riding a chariot in unfettered freedom, set to *Misra jati* (units of seven), is *Vayu*, breath of the Gods and life germ of the Universe. Sangeet Ratnakar mentions the part Vayu plays in wind instruments like the flute. Melodious flute music plays a contrast of a definitive *misra jati chhand* as against just notes in a spiralling enchantment of sound space.



Rag *Marwa* and forceful *khandajati* (units of five) characterises *Agni* (fire) the vital force dispelling evil, initiated in the *nabhi* and rising in an upward triangle to activate mind and speech. Prana and Agni unite in creating Naad.

Less than fair to such an aesthetic, painstaking dance venture, was the depleted audience following inexplicable delay in ushering the cultural programme post-inauguration, with daylight killing lighting effects.

■ LEELA VENKATARAMAN

## Satyajit Ray@100

**PEN, INK, ACTION: SATYAJIT RAY @100:** *Satyajit Ray and the Music he Lived by*

**ILLUSTRATED LECTURE** by Biswajit Mitra

**CHAIR:** Partho Datta

**23 April 2022**

This lecture was part of the year-long, ongoing centenary celebrations on the works of iconic film director Satyajit Ray. It was the first edition of a two-part webinar on Satyajit Ray's music. The first webinar explored Ray's world of music, the music he grew up with, and the influences that shaped his preferences as he developed an intense appreciation of both Western classical and Indian music.

Biswajit Mitra, a senior IT professional based in Munich and a Ray aficionado, enlightened us as he spoke at length about Ray and his music, replete with musical excerpts from different musical genres that enchanted Ray.

Ray's eclectic taste included exquisite and brooding symphonies by legendary composers like Beethoven and Mozart, as well as plaintive Indian ragas he heard in Shantiniketan by Ustad Fayaz Khan of Agra Gharana, Sushree Kesarbai Kerkar of the Jaipur Atrauli Gharana, and also light classical genres like thumri, kajri, chaities sung by Ustad Moijuddin Khan, remembered as the King of dadra and thumri.

A connoisseur of music, the genius of Ray was not limited to only film direction, but encompassed being a film author, a filmmaker with complete command over all aspects of film making, including music. This helped him produce a distinctive and unique musical score for his own films and a handful of others.

Although Ray was completely enthralled by the symphonies of Beethoven and Mozart during his childhood and early adolescence, his exposure to Western music was limited, as his maternal uncle's home, where he grew up, resonated with Indian and Bengali music. He briefly succumbed to the charms of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, and the music of Gershwin, Jerome Kern and Irving Berlin, but promptly reverted to Beethoven and later Mozart, in his college years. Ray enjoyed Beethoven's popular piano Sonata known as *Sonata Episonata*, as much as he did Mozart's three operas which he considered sublime, *The Marriage of Figaro*: a comedy; *Don Giovanni*: a drama; and *Magic Flute*: a fantasy.



The second stage of Rays' musical evolution took place in Shantiniketan, in the imposing company of a few talented people. Of them was eminent Israj (considered the modern version of the Dilruba) player, Ashish Bandopadhyay of Bishnupur Gharana, who had a great influence on him, as also the Jewish German Professor of English, Alex Sorenson, who was a connoisseur of classical music and amateur pianist.

Juxtaposing the basic difference between the two genres—Western classical and Indian classical—Ray observed, Indian music is what the performer makes it. Although he has to play



cannot achieve much on a second-rate composition.

■ GAURIKA KAPOOR

## Legacy of Odissi

**CONCERT:** *Pravaha—The Flow of Tradition*

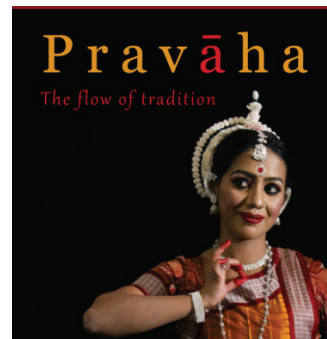
Madhavi Mudgal, renowned dancer, choreographer, teacher and prime disciple of Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra presented her students, trained at the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, in a traditional Odissi repertoire.

First programme in a new series focusing on the Guru-Shishya Parampara in different Indian classical dance forms

**11 April 2022**

It has been 18 years since Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra, a doyen of Odissi dance, passed away. But his legacy has lived on through his innumerable students like danseuse Madhavi Mudgal. She, too, has carried forward this *guru-shishya parampara*. Mudgal presented her students in the first performance of the series, *Pravaha—The Flow of Tradition*. By using old recordings in which Mahapatra's voice can be heard conducting the dance performances, it was as if the clock had turned back.

What made this performance special was that Mahapatra's interpretation of Jayadeve's *Geet Govind* and Oriya poems and the choreography that he had originally designed more than half a century ago were showcased. Whether it was quick rhythmic movements of the feet and hands or the expressive and graceful movements of the body, all the eight students captivated the audience while performing the traditional Odissi repertoire



comprising *Mangalacharan*, *Batu*, *Pallavi*, *Abhinaya* and *Mokshya*. Interestingly, even while retaining the original choreography to highlight the continuity of the guru-shishya parampara, each piece was uniquely rearranged by the students to enable all of them to perform solo as well as in

groups. Considering most of their practice was amid pandemic restrictions, it is indeed creditable that the girls were in sync and wove in the pieces seamlessly.

It was also a wonderful tribute to the musicians of yore who, along with Mahapatra, played a vital role in enhancing Odissi performances with their skill. Sadly, singers Parvati Bhramachari and Purna Chandra Majhi, flautist Jagdish and sitarist Partho Das, who figured prominently in these recordings, are no longer with us.

The performance would have been more pleasing to the eye had not the dancers done away with the *tahia*, the unique hair accessory that distinguishes Odissi from other Indian classical dance forms. Incidentally, Mahapatra was among those instrumental in designing the *tahia* made from white *sholapith* (Indian cork) reed almost six decades ago. Since then, it has been considered sacrosanct to the traditional Odissi attire.

■ SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

## History Doesn't Repeat Itself, it Rhymes

**MUSIC APPRECIATION PROMOTION AND FRONTIERS OF HISTORY:** *'And all this is True because it Rhymes': A Short History of Global Encounters through Popular Culture*

**ILLUSTRATED LECTURE:** Paroma Ghose

**CHAIR:** Paranjay Guha Thakurta

**12 April 2022**

In an increasingly interconnected and globalising world, encounters between countries and their representations seem to occur on a more level plain. This lecture deconstructed this illusion and looked at how contemporary encounters can unravel long histories of prejudice through just a word or a moment. It demonstrated how a history told through cultural sources can provide a very different narrative on the state of the world than one narrated through political polemic.

Paroma Ghose's lecture traced histories of interweaving narratives in popular music, especially rap and hip hop, which are the rage with youth around the globe.

This extraordinary discourse, abundantly illustrated with video clips, quotes and pictures, traced historical lineages that show



up unexpectedly, and sometimes accidentally. These were examined within the context of three imaginaries: Oriental, Black and Immigrant.

Although Orientalism is a Western construct imbued with contempt and corresponding superiority, we were shown how derogatory stereotypes have been assimilated even by Indian and Far Eastern cinema. A song sequence from *Chandni Chowk to China*, a 2009 film, was a hilarious example. A Korean TV serial had a red-tilaked Hindu monk named Nizamuddin performing a mysterious fusion of yoga and tai chi.

K pop is now a rage in the West. This is possibly because the Korean boy band, BTS, uses Western melodies with a feel of the familiar, together with slick videography and post-production.

While the digital platform is assumed to ensure equality, Ghose exposed the insidious Western crafting of narratives. Local imaginations do still manage to incorporate counter currents and surprising cross connections. Examples were shown from across the globe: Philippine band SB19 singing



in Korean, Chinese and Japanese rappers wearing dreadlocks, Kazak band 91 using Spanish phrases; Busta Rhymes singing *Arab Money* with verses from the Koran; Zephaniah, UK, addressing being black in *White Comedy*.

As rap music has emerged from the fringes of society, the lyrics reflect that reality: issues of immigration, poverty, racism, housing and injustice make their music naturally political and grim.

Just as fractals fascinate, Ghose showed that zooming in on just one type of popular culture, studying it deeply, reveals repeating patterns of societal behaviours in all their complexities. Quoting Mark Twain, she concluded: 'History doesn't repeat itself, but it rhymes'.

■ BHARATI MIRCHANDANI

## Salt Satyagraha

**ILLUSTRATED TALK AND EXHIBITION:** *23 Grams of Salt: Retracing Gandhi's March to Dandi by Anuj Ambalal*

*Illustrated talk by Anuj Ambalal who has photographed the places, villages, dharamshalas etc. where Gandhiji and his satyagrahis walked and stayed during the Dandi March in 1930*

**CHAIR:** Shri Ashok Vajpeyi

**COLLABORATION:** The Raza Foundation

**11 April 2022**

**EXHIBITION: 11 to 24 May 2022**

Anuj Ambalal, a young photographer from Gujarat presented a visual narrative of the immaculately planned Salt March. 90 years later Anuj retraced Gandhiji's steps and towards the end, he shows the famous photograph in which Gandhiji is picking up a fistful of salt. He mentioned that it was two days later at Bhimrad when Gandhiji posed for the photograph. It was a fistful of sand mixed with saline, and when that saline was separated from sand it was 23 gms of salt!

Anuj's visual narrative starts with the front gate of Hriday Kunj, in the Sabarmati Ashram. On the way, they stopped at the Gujarat Vidyapith. The third slide was of one Lakshmansinh Chavada, a security guard of the Sarabhais. He walked behind the satyagrahis at the onset of the March. Anuj has taken photographs of some trees, dilapidated houses, and also some people about whom he had interesting stories

to narrate. There is a mango tree under which Gandhiji had rested in the village of Vasana. At the village of Dabhan, he entered into Dalit area, took water from their well and returned to Dharamshala. The village of Ras played an important role. The people of Ras wanted Sardar Patel to address them. As he got up to deliver his speech, he was arrested. That is the reason why he is not seen anywhere in the march.

Anuj has included some photographs taken by Thomas Weber, who is at the La Trobe University, Melbourne. During his visit to India in 1980, he interviewed 21 of the surviving marchers. Fatehsinh Parmar was a child in 1930. He remembered Gandhiji as a short person with an enormous head! One Dhulaji had milked a goat for Gandhiji. Gandhiji was not welcome in the village of Buva because the villagers thought the British government would go against them. In this village a lady wanted to apply *tilak* on Gandhiji's forehead but he declined because she was not wearing khadi. After this incident, she wore khadi throughout her life. One gentleman was old and suffering from dementia, but while talking about Gandhiji his face lit up and he quite vividly narrated his experience. It was difficult to cross one river at Kapletha village. All the bullocks were released from the carts. They were made to stand in a row, which became a bridge for people to cross over. In Dandi, Gandhiji had stayed at the Saifi Villa of Seth Sirajuddin Wasi. The first fistful of salt was picked up here. Gandhiji declared this act as the beginning of the defeat of the British Empire.

While narrating these interesting anecdotes Anuj kept showing the map of the route from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi, and various halts on the way. This programme was organised by the Raza Foundation.



On the 10th of May Anuj had an exhibition of 47 photographs on the same theme, at the main gallery of IIC. It was sponsored by IIC and the Raza Foundation. During the preview Anuj conducted a gallery walk through, and narrated a few more interesting stories. Gandhiji had stayed in the clinic of Dr Chandulal Desai in Bharuch. All those accompanying Gandhiji got the advantage of getting their health check-up. Gandhiji had gained two pounds weight! During the Dandi March Gandhiji did require a shave. In Rayama village Nathuram barber shaved him, and that razor has been carefully preserved.

Included in the display are copies of personal letters that Gandhiji wrote during the March. Even in the midst of this historical march he regularly wrote letters inquiring about someone's health, what kind of treatment should be given, and so on. For example, he wrote on March 14, 1930 to Kusum Desai: 'If Krishnakumari's eyes are sore, get them examined by Haribhai. Tell Chandrakanta that I expect much from her. Get Shantu's teeth examined by Haribhai and ask him to remove the loose ones.

Send me a report about Dhiru and about anybody else who may be ill. Send me your daily programme of work. Do you have a separate room to yourself? How do you feel there?

Blessings from Bapu'

Photographs, video interviews and letters displayed in this exhibition made visitors aware of Gandhiji's multifaceted compassionate personality.

■ VARSHA DAS

## The Republic of India and the Republic of Slovenia

### PERFORMANCE: Sound Fusion

Concert presented by the Slovenian duo Aritmija—Tilen Stepišnik and Šemsudin Džopa, guitarists from Ljubljana with Indian artists, Sabiha Khan on vocals and Vinayak Netka on tabla

**COLLABORATION:** Embassy of Slovenia

**25 April 2022**

The Republic of Slovenia, in collaboration with the IIC, organised a concert to mark 30 years of diplomatic relations between Slovenia and India. The evening showcased a concert titled Sound Fusion featuring Indian and Slovenian musicians. Aritmija, comprising two Slovenian musicians, Tilen Stepišnik and Šemsudin Džopa, collaborated with two classically trained Indian musicians from Mumbai—vocalist Sabiha Khan and tabla player Vinayak Netke—to create a unique blend of music that had strong influences from both countries.

'We realised how beautiful Slovenian music is and how blended it was with our classic music and Aritmija was born', said Sabiha Khan.

The two nations have had many successful joint ventures, but the strongest ties are the ones made by people. Aritmija is such an example. When art transcends all barriers



Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia Mr Anže Logar

of form, of language and interpretation, then a new blend of music has a purity that is like no other. 'Language has no barrier when it comes to music because it is straight from the heart. This is what Aritmija means and what defines us', said Sabiha Khan.

However, the bonds within the group go much further. The songs that the group performed were a mix of traditional Slovenian folk music and some original pieces of music which beautifully blended the two worlds together in song and word. In what better way could the two countries celebrate 30 years of a growing friendship but through music and lyrics that spoke right from the heart and brought the audience together into their unique world.

■ CHRISTOPHER DARUWALLA



# Sanskrit and Science

**WEBINAR:** *Kriti-SAMHiTA: The Plurality of Indian Knowledge Systems*

*The Importance of Sanskrit Manuscripts in Understanding the History of Science*

**SPEAKER:** Dominik Wujastyk

**CHAIR:** Sudha Gopalakrishnan  
*Organised with the support of the Ministry of External Affairs*

**29 April 2022**

In the inaugural talk of a new series of lectures on *Kriti-SAMHiTA: The Plurality of Indian Knowledge Systems*, Dominik spoke about the interrelationship between the history of Āyurveda and the field of manuscriptology.

Pointing out that in talking of the history of medicine, physics, chemistry, mathematics, etc., we often project into the past our own interests, Wujastyk emphasised that historical materials often contain a broader conversation about knowledge and its relationship to the world. In this context, Āyurveda can be understood as a *śāstra*, an organised body of knowledge with its texts, theory and specialists.

Wujastyk went on to ask, 'How do we write a history of Ayurveda? On the basis of what kinds of sources?' Focusing his discussion on the *Suśruta Saśhitā* (The Compendium of Suśruta), he outlined a history of its publication from the late 19th century onwards, as the text came to be edited and translated. Emphasising that the presence of printed editions of the text does not mean that we should stop paying attention to manuscripts, Wujastyk discussed the existence of approximately 224 known manuscripts of the *Suśruta Saśhitā*, which can be found in various repositories, even though many of them are partial. He also discussed the process of critically editing such texts.

Hitherto, the earliest manuscripts of the *Suśruta Saśhitā* dated to the 15th century, but in 2007 the Nepal-German Manuscript Cataloguing Project announced the discovery of a new manuscript of the text, dating to 878 CE. Discovered in Kathmandu, this manuscript is reflective of a broader north Indian tradition of the *Suśruta Saśhitā*. Even a preliminary study shows that it is a different text from the manuscripts currently available and is also more grammatically correct. Wujastyk's team is engaged in the publication of this manuscript, the publication of which will tell us more about the evolution of this important text, as well as how this knowledge came to be transmitted and codified. Further details about their work can be found at <https://sushrutaproject.org/>

■ MEERA VISVANATHAN

# Landscape and Magic

**EXHIBITION:** *Colours in the Hills*

*An exhibition of paintings in water colour, oil, gouache and acrylic by Astrid Kiehn from Germany*

**19 to 25 May 2022**

The artist's hills and valleys are painted as she sees them, adding to them from her mind's eye, following her heart for her flow of colours and the forms they induce. Smooth and soulful, the colours hold a virgin quality, soft, serene and undisturbed by human presence, ready for the rain as it soaks in. Pleasantly conveying Naggar, the works capture the general terrain and vein of the little station nestled deep in the hills of Himachal without really pinning it down to physical landmarks. Those depicted are purely incidental and could well exist in any similar hill settlement. Naggar lovers would know instantly where to locate the subjects of these paintings.

Painting at different areas in Himachal Pradesh, she captures the changing moods and colours of the monsoon skies, the





rolling slopes, and valleys that are home to the somewhat minimal foliage. Using mostly sea green, blue and purple, Kiehn's paintings exude a remote, solitary air, receding enough to allow the viewer to strike a relationship with the terrain, as personal as mystic, as much one of wanderer as that of seeker.

A few temples recall an ancient culture, imbued with myth and faith, magic and devotion, on a land where time is slow to move. Consistency of colour is maintained even as the sanctum of each temple continues to entrance village folk with their dedicated piety. There are the Brahma temples, the temple at Leavy Courtyard, Naggar temple in Solar

Light and a few others, each one poignantly stirring. These temples are no less convincing in their un-spoilt Indian aura, notwithstanding their depiction by a German artist.

With a few works directed to Pahari art, the artist has no compunctions over their being replicas—origin and current holding clearly mentioned alongside each work. Adding colour and variety to the entire display, these works were engaging in their own way if one could just put aside the thought of their beginnings and conception but for a moment.

■ ARUNA BHOWMICK

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## Implementing Utopia?

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**FILMS OF THE SPIRIT:** Curated by Rajiv Mehrotra

*Happiness Class (2021; English and with subtitles)*

*Directed by Samina Mishra*

*Screening was followed by a discussion with: Abha Adams; Manish Jain; and Samina Mishra*

**COLLABORATION:** Foundation for Universal Responsibility of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

**11 May 2022**

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Samina Mishra's *The Happiness Class* is an unusual instructive Television documentary on a novel subject. It is about children in three schools run by the Delhi state government, who along with the usual subjects, also study seeking Happiness as a part of their curriculum. This most unusual approach has been taken up by these government schools attended by boys and girls from all religious communities who come from an economically underprivileged background and live testing lives, with their parents making sacrifices in the hope that their children will make good in life, not only professionally, but as caring humans and responsible citizens.

This programme is an initiative of the Centre for Universal Responsibility, a dream child of the great spiritual leader, His Holiness The Dalai Lama. The organisation is under the stewardship of Rajiv Mehrotra, who is the producer of the documentary as well as the creator of the Public Service Broadcasting Trust. The Happiness Class has the support of the AAP government currently running Delhi state, and its Education Minister Manish Sisodia.

Samina Mishra succeeds well in raising certain fundamental questions concerning all of us, especially school children with impressionable minds who are guided by their teachers to think independently about the abiding pleasures of togetherness, the pursuit of collective happiness and of caring for each other. The director makes one believe that individual happiness can be attained by keeping the larger picture in mind—of respecting both the differences and affinities with their fellow students who may come from different cultural and religious backgrounds.

The exercise also shows how much effort the teachers from the three schools put in to make a seemingly utopian idea work in these fraught times and the positive response they manage to elicit from their students. Kudos to Samina Mishra for this socially important documentary.

■ PARTHA CHATTERJEE

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## Preserving Antarctica

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**IIC DIAMOND JUBILEE DISCUSSIONS ON SCIENCE:**

*Preserving the Last Frontier—Antarctica*

**CHAIR:** Shyam Saran, Life Trustee, IIC

**LEAD TALK:** 'Keeping Pace in Contemporary Antarctic Science under the Changing Geopolitical Scenario'

**SPEAKER:** Rasik Ravindra

**PANELISTS:** Thamban Meloth; Sulagna Chattopadhyay; Sanjay Chaturvedi; and Anindya Sinha

**18 May 2022**

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The in-depth discussion by an array of Antarctic experts analysed what is happening to the Antarctic now, and indeed, what may happen when the Antarctica Treaty comes up for renewal in 2048.

The panel of experts with boundless knowledge on the subject expressed concern and sounded another clarion call to help pass the message that we, the human race, must not exploit Antarctica for mining and hold steady in the face of aggressive territorial claims by many nations who already have 'scientific' stations.

While our research stations there have provided vital insights into climate and weather patterns that influence

India, apart from the understanding of the great Gondwana split and the biodiversity, Rasik Ravindra, former Director of the National Centre for Polar & Ocean Research (NCPOR) Goa, highlighted the work of NCPOR and indeed the historical perspective of India playing an encouraging role in demanding the Antarctic Treaty at the UN in 1957.

Thamban Meloth, Group Director and scientist at NCPOR, talked about the impact of climate change and how an increase in Antarctica temperature could spell disaster for the world. Already there is the presence of atmospheric rivers which are the warm air streams from the tropics that are hitting the Antarctic.

Sulagna Chattopadhyaya, Editor-in-Chief of *Geography & You*, raised the question about why so many nations are still joining the Treaty, and wondered if it was geopolitics at play with an eye for staking a claim. She talked of a need for people's action and very rightly stressed advocacy.

Anindya Sinha, Head of Academics at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, made a passionate plea to save the biodiversity of Antarctica with a focus on the penguins and the balance of life there, mentioning also that the Gentoo penguin mates with the same partner for life!

Sanjay Chaturvedi made a very engaging online presentation from the South Asian University and gave insights into the geopolitics of the region and how many nations are using various tactics to stake claims. It seems to be getting murkier by the minute and he suggested a people's campaign, which many international organisations also concurred with.

In his concluding remarks, Shyam Saran responded with the practical suggestion of having more Polar Ambassadors who could take on the advocacy role in preserving Antarctica for posterity.

■ MANDIP SINGH SOIN

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## I am Counted, Therefore I Am

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**WEBINAR:** *Indian Republic, Democracy, Equity and Count Quest*

**PANELISTS:** *Shereen Joshi; Narender Kumar; Arvind Kumar; and Y.S. Alone*

**CHAIR:** *Suhas Borker*

**4 May 2022**

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The discussion was to flag the issue of the reluctance of the government to do a granular caste census, which prevents the generation of robust data for substantive and meaningful democracy.

Narender Kumar underlined the importance of numbers in a democracy as a primary driver, and the lack of information since the Census of 1931, when caste data was last collected. He indicated the presence of caste not only among Hindus but among Muslims as well. Democracy to be effective has to not only be procedural, but also substantive, and no country in the world that practices affirmative action refuses to count.

Gathering data in India has always been contentious, as people are reluctant to share and be classified, opined

Shereen Joshi. India always gathered data in ancient and medieval times for the object of taxation, and during colonial times the task became structured and also served a racial agenda. Caste terminology has evolved over a period of time. Though the process is fraught, caste is real and the data still needs to be collected for a more nuanced understanding.

Arvind Kumar spoke about the availability of caste data by political parties for electoral purposes, but which remains unacknowledged. Having worked in census gathering, he emphasised that it was not difficult to collect caste data. Democracy, he said, survives in India because of an ability to share power with different communities through diverse mechanisms. Proportionality is an important aspect of social justice and being counted was linked to it.

Y. S. Alone shared the idea of the politics of inhibition. He affirmed that caste was a more important marker in India than religion from pre-colonial times, which also manifests itself in colonial records. Anarchy in caste hierarchy never gets documented by the government and thus practices that to dislodge our claim to democracy or modernity. Urban elites create a sense of inhibition and lock the idea of righteous consciousness, with counter arguments of unity and religious homogeneity. Indian society, he averred, is diverse and needs to be enumerated in all its diversity to make policies and understand conflicts.

■ AJAY JAISINGHANI



# Wide Ranging Concerns

**IIC DIAMOND JUBILEE TALKS ON DIGITAL GOVERNANCE:** *Unlocking Digital Competition and Innovation*

**SPEAKER:** Jason Furman

**CHAIR:** Anupam Khanna

**14 April 2022**

John Furman addressed several questions of paramount importance that ranged from whether competition in the digital market motivates innovation, to whether competition can exist in the digital sector.

While he supports competition to introduce preferences in the market, he also insists on the need for regulation to limit negative externalities. He delved deeper into 'if lack of competition is costly?' For example: If the advertising market

were to be monopolistic in nature, we'd face the following consequences: we would be left with zero preference due to low quality and variety. The tradeoff would be hazardous as the company would have the data of all its consumers, implying that our privacy would be at risk. As a result of no competition, consumers would have to pay more. He said that competition is both beneficial and otherwise, and that with more competition arrives an increase in consumerism. Therefore, there is a need for both economic and non-economic regulations by the respective governments.

Furman's recommendations to the UK government were to make the competition system effective in the digital world. He suggests taking immediate action on a company's breach of trust; it is best to set up an ex-ante regulator (digital markets unit) as opposed to waiting for ex-post enforcement, which sometimes take decades to cater to a lawsuit at a time when technology is advancing rapidly. This reinforces that legislative action must be taken.

■ YOGENDRA SINGH MERTIYA

# The Maldives: India Outflanks China

**TALK:** *Indian Ocean Security*

**SPEAKER:** H.E. Mr. Mohamed Nasheed

**ATTENDEE:** Shri M.K. Rasgotra

**CHAIR:** Shri Shyam Saran, Life Trustee, IIC

**26 April 2022**

Big Brother's evolved; he doesn't just watch any more, he smothers countries in debt and enslaves them after sabotaging democracy and siding with easy-to-manipulate dictators, said Mohamed Nasheed, former President of the Maldives (2008–2012) and currently Speaker of the People's Majlis. China, the contemporary Big Brother and its puppets in Male—the previous Yameen regime—declared Nasheed, were close to turning the Maldives into a Sino-satrap and three treaties were signed to initiate unprecedented land grab.

What remains from that era of instability and subservience is Himalayan debt, and India, said Nasheed, 'a safer pair of hands', will help to bail the Maldives out. Malleable dictators ensure that infrastructure projects are cleared at 'the wrong time, the wrong place and at the wrong price'. The result:

12 islands are with China, hopefully, not permanently. Duelling with dictators or their proxies has a price: Nasheed, sentenced and jailed for a year, lightly remarked that he has been 'tortured a few times'. 'China may become strong,' he replied, when asked about the Yuan becoming a global currency in the future, 'but we don't have to pander to it'.

Rapacious China is threat enough; there's also climate change. If global temperatures rise by above 1.5 degrees Celsius, the coral reefs around the Maldives will begin to die, and then the fish, a body blow to the Maldives. For, every morning, 30 per cent of the country is in the high seas, looking for fish. Like India's Green Revolution that provided high-yielding varieties of wheat and saved a subcontinent from starvation, Nasheed called for another Green Revolution, this time to provide technologies to save coral reefs even if global temperatures rose by 2 degrees Celsius.

Dismissing the Maldives' Opposition's India Out campaign as one without resonance and expressing faith in India's strong democratic system, he seemed concerned about China's recent agreements with the Solomon Islands. All the suffering in jail hasn't killed his sense of humour. Or his combative spirit. About his future, he was hopeful, but 'with politicians you cannot say,' he said. About the Maldives he was reassuringly buoyant. 'We have just got out of a free trade agreement with China....And we want Bollywood stars in the Maldives!'

■ SRINJOY CHOWDHURY

# Flexible Legislations for Security Threats

**IIC DIAMOND JUBILEE LECTURES ON DIGITAL GOVERNANCE:** *IoT Security's Hidden Depths— How Regulators can Enable a Secure IoT*

**SPEAKER:** Richard Hayton

**CHAIR:** Ms Mahima Kaul

**20 May 2022**

Dr. Richard Hayton, Chief Strategy and Innovation Office of Trustonics spoke at length about various nuances and complexities in relation to Digital Governance and the coming-of-age technology of the Internet of Things (IoT) and the ways in which it impacts our daily lives. Dr. Hayton defines IoT as anything that can be connected to the internet, the new equivalent of electric that includes anything from Alexa to the washing machine to traffic sensors in our city. Dr. Hayton emphasises that IoT, at its simplest, is about software and as IoT has penetrated our lives deeply, it also has brought security threats with it. These threats may range from consumer devices being affected to cities or nations being brought to a halt through security breaches at the national level. Dr. Hayton divides these threats into five categories: Data Fakery; Data Abuse; Denial of Service; Data Theft; Device Fakery. These threats impact individuals, enterprises, governments and society-at-large and in here comes the role of legislation. To ward against such threats can be left to

the forces of market or can be mandated by the government. While the consumers cannot be expected to understand all the risks associated with IoT, the well-intended government regulations hardly cover the complexities of IoT. Government legislations can have a prescriptive focus that mandates a secure element to ensure protection, such as ENVCO in payment systems or legislation that can focus upon fixing responsibility. Some innovative solutions have been provided by the automotive industry as WP29 has fixed the responsibility of cyber security of the vehicle on the vehicle manufacturer throughout its life. Dr. Hayton emphasises that the focus of cyber security must be on the scalability of cyber-attacks, and connectivity can provide some solutions. He suggests that the solution can be achieved through trust and resilience. Regulators must focus on data integrity to achieve trust as fake data can be easily used to manipulate markets or start wars. One way to achieve trust can be to provide devices with cryptographic keys to allow the real ones to be distinguished from the fake ones. Individuals should be able to trust technology. Resilience is about minimising the impact of a successful attack and can be achieved through isolation that focuses efforts on critical assets and insulates from the breadth of software attacks. The 'smartness' of devices must also be constantly evaluated to determine whether proposed actions are reasonable or not. Global resilience can be achieved through avoiding a single point of control. The term IoT was first used in 1998 and the technology has been around for a while, constantly evolving and touching upon every aspect of our lives and hence, it is only natural that legislations to deal with security threats must also evolve and remain flexible.

■ YOGENDRA SINGH MERTIYA

# Empowering the Underprivileged

**IIC DIAMOND JUBILEE LECTURES ON DIGITAL GOVERNANCE:** *IDigital Equity: Empowering the Marginalized and Underprivileged through Aadhaar, Aayushman Bharat, Government eMarketplace, and other Digital Platforms*

**PANELISTS:** Ram Sewak Sharma; Talleen Kumar; and Saurabh Garg

**CHAIR:** Talleen Kumar

**26 May 2022**

R. S. Sharma enlightened the audience that in 2008, only 17 per cent of India's population had bank accounts, and of these, only 15 per cent used digital payments; one in 25 people possessed a Unique Identification (UID) document, mainly a passport. Financial exclusion was rampant because

the majority of the rural population did not have UID documents. But even among those who had, the deposit amount was much smaller in proportion to the cost of the paperwork by the banks. Highlighting India's digital journey from 2008 to 2020, Sharma said that India embraced the digital revolution with 1.2 billion mobile connections, 1.22 billion people successfully enrolled on the Aadhaar UID programme, which means 1.22 billion digital identities. Compared to the minimal number of internet users in 2008, India had 636 million internet subscribers by 2020.

According to TRAI's data, over 1.2 billion mobile connections connect 730 million unique mobile subscribers. There is a rise of 25 million per quarter. Aadhaar and eKYC enable smooth SIM registrations of the citizens of this nation. As essential components of the payment layer—Aadhaar enabled Payment System (AePS), Aadhaar Payment Bridge (APB), FASTag, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), and Bharat Bill Payments System (BBPS)—services were built to transfer money, withdraw money, and pay bills conveniently. Such a parallel digital payments revolution is one of its kind

worldwide. As a revolutionary step to deal with the payment system's fragmentations, in 2016, the UPI was launched. It was the standard language of the payment ecosystem and money transfer across all banks and applications to break credit/debit card monopoly over instant payments.

The digital revolution has created a massive amount of data. Several internet platforms gather, retain the user data in proprietary silos, and misuse the data, such as the Cambridge Analytica case. The companies use many technologies, such as AI algorithms, to monetise the data. Utilising the data, the companies influence citizens' mindset on various issues, including political preferences. As an initiative where an individual could control their data, India introduced 'Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture' (DEPA), which put users in control of managing and sharing personal data. As a digital empowering user, India is working on the 'Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019'—a framework that sets regulations for how personal data should be processed

and stored, and lists people's rights regarding their personal information.

Government eMarketplace (GeM) is a transformative initiative by the government, which has brought all public procurement—of goods and services—onto a single platform that is at once shot, open, efficient, inclusive, standardised and transparent. Being a government-owned entity, it has its distinctive set of challenges, but it also has a lot to show for itself in the short while that it has been in existence. In less than four years, GeM ushered in a digital revolution in the process of public procurement by government departments and their autonomous bodies. It has done this by leveraging technology, and making the procurement process contactless, paperless and cashless. For this, it has won the Business Line Changemaker Award for Digital Transformation.

■ PORTIA CONRAD

## Health System Armed to Deal with Disasters

**AWARD AND TALK:** *Chameli Devi Jain Award 2021  
Presentation of the award to an Outstanding Woman  
Mediaperson*

*Followed by B.G. Verghese Memorial Lecture 2022  
Health Beyond Covid—An Agenda Awaits*

**SPEAKER:** *K. Srinath Reddy*

**CHAIR:** *Harish Khare*

**COLLABORATION:** *The Media Foundation*

**4 April 2022**

This is the seventh year of the B.G. Verghese Memorial Lecture and the 40th year of the Chameli Devi Jain award. Harish Khare, Chair, Media Foundation, welcomed the esteemed speaker, K. Srinath Reddy, and introduced the jury headed by Nirupa Subramanian, and judges Githa Hariharan and Ashutosh. The 2021 Chameli Devi Jain Award for an outstanding woman journalist was given to Aarefa Johari, who works for *scroll. in* Mumbai.

K. Srinath Reddy, President of the Public Health Foundation of India, talked about the lessons that health and social systems can draw from COVID-19. He acknowledged the need for an efficient, equitable and empathetic healthcare system that functions reliably to provide a swift, decisive and sustained response to any public health emergency.

He recognised that the primary healthcare system provides the principal defence against public health emergencies and supportive services from advanced care institutions.

During COVID-19, the relative absence of an effective primary healthcare system in urban areas proved costly. There is a need to build a multi-layered and multi-skilled domestic capacity (human resources, test kits, medicines, equipment) in the public and private sectors. Training auxiliaries and community volunteers is required to expand the capacity of public health experts and the health workforce.

India has made substantial progress based on key health indicators like infant mortality rate and maternal mortality rate, but unfortunately, improvement in these indicators is highly uneven across various states. He looked at India's current status by comparing the country's critical indicators like life expectancy, nutritional status, and public and government financing for health with other Southeast Asian countries in a similar economic bracket. He affirmed that the country is suffering from high financial losses, low public health financing, and the inability to achieve universal health coverage due to the high burden of non-communicable diseases, nutritional deficiencies, high out-of-pocket expenditure, and availability of trained healthcare professionals.

The role of the government in this is to strengthen the public sector and contract the private sector where there is need and opportunity. The private sector needs to be involved in primary care, particularly in implementing national health programmes and procuring drugs and equipment at a lower price through a central procurement process to pass on the benefit to the consumers.

He stated that countries should focus on economic development and ensure equality to achieve universal coverage and a healthy population. He concluded by saying that the health system is now armed to deal with disasters with the help of the media and the public health community.

■ VIKRAM DATTA



# Interdisciplinary Perspective on Pandemics

**IIC DIAMOND JUBILEE DISCUSSIONS ON PANDEMIC AND CLIMATE CHANGE:** *Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness: An Ecological and Public Health Response*

**PANELISTS:** Suneela Garg; Pranay Lal; Seyed Ehtesham Hasnain; and Mauli Mehta

**CHAIR:** K. Srinath Reddy

**7 April 2022**

Organised on World Health Day, this discussion on an ecological and public health response to pandemic prevention and preparedness brought in an interdisciplinary perspective to address pandemics such as COVID-19. K. Srinath Reddy chaired the discussion and introduced the linkage between planetary health and human health. Pranay Lal, a biochemist and an artist who works in public health and environment, highlighted the role of microbes in human life and noted the need to rethink the transgressions humankind has committed.

Discussing his recent book, *Invisible Empire: The Natural History of Viruses*, Pranay Lal highlighted the need to focus on internal ecosystems and noted that 'ecology opens the window and genetics is the opportunity'.

Seyed Ehtesham Hasnain, Scientist, National Science Chair and author of the book *Decoding the Pandemic*, discussed the virulence of the Sars-Cov-2 virus and human immunity to the virus. Hasnain explained concepts such as risk factors and types of immunity, simplified for the audience with a non-biological background.

Suneela Garg dealt with the principles for COVID-19 resilience planning, health system strengthening, and how to develop an intersectoral response plan to coordinate attempts to manage the pandemic effectively. Garg presented a summary of the current status of the pandemic in the country and concluded that Risk Communication and Community Engagement are significant in preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

As a recent medical graduate and a representative of the country's youth in the discussion, Mauli Mehta discussed the role of youth in decreasing the risk of future pandemics. Mehta concluded by discussing the importance of pandemic plans, stakeholder mapping, awareness campaigns, tracking-testing-isolating, and time management and follow up to manage the risk of future pandemics.

The panellists discussed different perspectives to combat pandemics and addressed several questions raised by the audience, specifically regarding the recent variants of COVID-19.

■ CAROL WILSON

# Nuclear Security and Regional Landscape

**WEBINAR:** *Nuclear Challenges to India's Security*

**SPEAKER:** Manpreet Sethi

**CHAIR:** Shivshankar Menon

**COLLABORATION:** Society for Policy Studies

**13 May 2022**

The evening saw an enthused congregation of academicians, students, civil society members and security aficionados gathered together to learn from one of—if not *the*—foremost leading voices on nuclear security studies in the country, Dr. Manpreet Sethi. Chaired by former National Security Advisor and former Foreign Secretary of India Shivshankar Menon, nuclear security was examined under the lens of the regional landscape of challenges faced by New Delhi.

As Shivshankar Menon pointed out in his introductory remarks, the nuclear context within which India is operating has changed and evolved significantly with shifting balances of power. Categorising the challenges India faces under three key threats—of a nuclear Pakistan, nuclear China and nuclear terrorism—Manpreet Sethi spoke of how Delhi can achieve strategic stability in line with the attributes of India's nuclear doctrine. With the talk taking place on 13 May, marking the 22nd anniversary of India's second round of nuclear tests, following which it declared itself a nuclear state—it was all the more riveting to learn of the progress India's nuclear capabilities have undergone over the past two decades.

Sethi interestingly pointed out that to truly grasp nuclear security studies, a lot of unlearning is required as it is mostly counterintuitive. For instance, in order to unpack the India-China nuclear dyad, it is important to note that China's nuclear doctrine has remained largely consistent with Mao's original ideas since 1964. However, they have recently moved away from opacity vis-à-vis nuclear deterrence to relative transparency. Xi Jinping's focus on building a 'strong nation with a strong military' to

shape global order as per national interests has led to greater emphasis on nuclear capabilities. This has also seen direct translation into growing Chinese nuclear capabilities; the need for India to rise to this challenge requires delicate manoeuvring to minimise the risk of inadvertent nuclear war, with Sethi arguing for a focus on DIME action.

Contrary to China, Pakistan's nuclear strategy has followed a deliberate projection of uncertain behaviour, according to Sethi. Articulation of vague redlines imbibes a risk maximisation strategy to deter India; Islamabad's lack of interest in crisis stability highlights its focus on acts of sub-conventional terrorism. Deterrence of terrorism rather than nuclear weapons emerges as a challenge for India. Calibrated and controlled use of

force to focus on quick escalation and de-escalation is required, and India's No First Use policy has enabled such a vision. Conclusively, Sethi's thoughts highlighted that over-burdening of nuclear weapons with tasks they cannot perform makes them less credible. Hence, focus must be on survivability and opportunity costs while remembering and reminding all actors involved that the basics of nuclear deterrence and the consequences of nuclear deterrence breakdown must not be forgotten. Conventionalisation of nuclear weapons is not in the interests of the world, and the ensuing discussions did indeed throw light on the strategic balancing needed for maintaining such a goal.

■ EERISHIKA PANKAJ

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## Current Turmoil in Sri Lanka

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**TALK:** *The Crisis in Sri Lanka and Implications for India*

**SPEAKER:** V. Suryanarayan

**CHAIR:** K.P. Fabian

**23 May 2022**

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In his preliminary remarks, K. P. Fabian said that the state's role is to take care of human beings; it is not a superbeing.

V. Suryanarayan began his lucid presentation on the current turmoil in Sri Lanka and its implications for India by exploding many myths postulated by the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils, and advocated the introduction of participatory democracy. It took centuries for Sri Lanka to evolve into a composite culture. Tamils and Sinhalese co-existed harmoniously for several centuries. Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka are like Siamese twins.

On India's reaction to the Sri Lankan crisis, he pointed out a welcome change in India's policy. Unlike in 1971 and 1987 when Indian assistance was intended to bolster the existing regimes, which were not so popular among the people, New Delhi has now stated that it has no intention to support the Rajapakse brothers.

On refugees, he quoted Valentine Daniel—when a person loses trust in the society, or government, he has already

become a refugee. On the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), why should India exempt Sri Lanka (Tamil refugees) and Myanmar? India should give citizenship to those Sri Lankan refugees who want to stay in India. He made an impassioned appeal that while India should bail out Sri Lanka economically and politically, the NGOs, including the IIC, should express solidarity with the democratic forces in Sri Lanka.

What Sri Lanka is experiencing now is not an economic crisis but an all-round crisis. Why did India provide aid to Sri Lanka after a delay of one month unlike during the Tsunami in 2004 and during the 1988–89 revolt when relief was provided immediately? With the current onset of an unprecedented economic downturn, the Sri Lanka government thinks of India as a better friend than China. He ended with the quote from Mark Twain—the worst form of death is to be talked to death.

During the discussion at the end of the programme, one of the Sri Lankan diplomats begged to differ with the speaker on the delay and defended India by stating that Indian support to Sri Lanka started in November 2021 itself. However, academics and journalists present in the meeting agreed with the speaker.

Suryanarayan reiterated that unless participatory democracy is introduced in Sri Lanka, discontent will continue. The greatness of a country comes from how well it treats its minorities. Sri Lanka's dependence on India is bound to rise.

■ S. PRABHAKAR

## 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.*



**JUSTICE R.C. LAHOTI**  
A-3497



**DR. RAM GOPAL GUPTA**  
A-4023



**SMT. REBA KAPUR**  
A-5022



**SMT. SUNDRI GOBIND  
JETHMALANI** | A-5406



**SMT. SAVITRI BAHL**  
A-5495



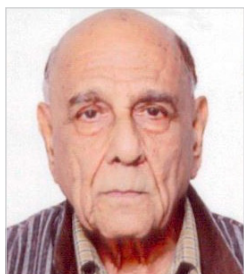
**DR. VINOD GOYAL**  
L-0259



**DR. HARI J. NAIN**  
M-1125



**SHRI M.A. RANGASWAMY**  
M-2116



**PROF. INDERJIT SINGH  
MARWAH** / M-3047



**SHRI D.K. ARYA**  
M-3264



**SHRI ASHOK NATH**  
M-3433



**SHRI A.P. MATHUR**  
M-3828

And the following Members (photographs not available):

**PROF. D.P. CHATTOPADHYAYA (M-2935); PROF. RAJESH KOCHHAR (M-3026)**





## Director's Note

As Members are aware, this is a landmark year in the life of the Centre as it celebrates its Diamond Jubilee. Although the inauguration was scheduled to be held on the Centre's Annual Day on 22 January, COVID-19-induced lockdowns prevented it from taking place. The inaugural function took place on 18 April 2022. It was a proud day for the Centre because it was marked by an address by the Honourable President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind. It was a privilege to welcome him and to hear his very inspiring speech. The day concluded with a brilliant performance titled 'Panchaatmika', an exploration of the five forms of 'Atmika' or self-insight through five dance forms: Odissi, Kathak, Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi and Mohiniattam. It was a unique concept choreographed by Parwati Dutta.

The Centre's relationship with Japan dates back to its inception, when H.E. Crown Prince Akihito of Japan (later Emperor) laid the cornerstone for the superstructure. Since then, the IIC and the International House of Japan (IHJ) have had a long and continuing association. In order to further strengthen this bond, the IIC and IHJ signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for exchange of programmes, ideas and scholars on 18 May 2022. This historic function was witnessed by the President, Shri N.N. Vohra. Even though the signing was done online, there was great enthusiasm and camaraderie on both sides. We are eagerly looking forward to organising joint programmes in the following months.

The International Research Division's 'SAMHiTA: South Asian Manuscript Histories and Textual Archive' project has been formally launched. The SAMHiTA team has started collating information on manuscripts available with repositories at London, Oxford and Kathmandu, on subjects ranging from religious literature to manuals on gardening and military science. The IRD has also initiated a monthly lecture series, 'Kriti-SAMHiTA: The Plurality of Indian Knowledge Systems'.

We are happy to observe that members are using the dining facilities regularly. The weekend special cuisines over the past two months featured Italian, Hyderabadi, Assamese, and a variety of soothing items for the hot summer. New menus are in the planning stage for all outlets.

The upholstery and curtains of some rooms of the new wing have been changed and they are fresh and inviting. We are in the process of re-laying the grass in the Main Lawn. The gardens are in bloom with bright summer flowers and creepers like Sunflower, Zinnia, Kochia, Caladium, Bougainville, Wisteria, Aparajita and Passiflora. The water lilies in the Fountain pond are a delight.

The construction of the elevator shaft has been completed with only a few finishing touches remaining. The new Elevator will be commissioned in June.

The Centre has for some time been pursuing the NDMC for additional water supply. The effort has borne fruit. We are now receiving more than 50,000 litres of water every day through four metred connections; two of them are new. We have installed two Automated External Defibrillators (AED); at the reception of both the Main Centre and the Annexe. Several staff have been trained to operate this device. It shall be ensured that in all the shifts, same trained staff are available to attend to any emergency situation and save life by using this device.

■ K. N. SHRIVASTAVA