

INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE Diary

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Memories of Partitions

DISCUSSION: *Witness to Two Partitions—1947 and 1971*

Martha (Marty) Alter Chen

DISCUSSANTS: Aishwarya Pandit

MODERATOR: Indivar Kamtekar

11 October 2022

This was a fascinating programme on some historical events of two of the 'Partitions' through a unique format. Martha Chen's first presentation was based on letters written to her parents who were residing in the US by her paternal grandmother, an eye witness to the events in her neighbourhood in Rawalpindi and the trauma suffered by their immediate circles of friends.

In contrast, the second presentation describing the days preceding the liberation of Bangladesh were her own recollections as she and her husband, Lincoln Chen, moved to Dacca, East Pakistan, in July 1970 with their 10-month-old son Gregory. As a newly trained doctor, Lincoln had to serve in the US Public Health Service. She persuaded him to do his health service at the SEATO Cholera Research Lab in East Pakistan, having grown up in India—in Allahabad, Mussoorie, Dehra Dun and Lucknow—as she wanted to return home to South Asia.

Chen gave timelines of key events during 1947 and 1970–71 to provide a historic context to these personal recollections. She is from a family that has been in South Asia for five-generations, since 1916 as protestant missionaries in India and what is now Pakistan.

An excerpt from her grandmother Martha Payne Alter's 1947 letters to the family in the US describing scenes of the 1947 partition of India: *February 23, Rawalpindi—Clement Attlee announces the June 1948 date for the transfer of power. March 18, Rawalpindi—two weeks after tensions erupted into riots across Punjab:... For several days people were afraid to come out of their*

houses. The days were so quiet, but the nights were hideous, with all the watchmen calling and every different community calling its own religious slogan. In all the villages, Moslems rose up and attacked the Sikhs, killing, burning houses and shops, forcing conversions, and in some cases raping women. May 15, Rawalpindi....Our close Indian Christian friends, the Fazl Ilahi's, and his two sisters owned three houses in Murree which were burned to the ground among many others. They say that every house in Murree was marked and certain people assigned to certain houses to burn them. Three bungalows belonging to the Presbyterian mission were also burnt....

Excerpts from the 1971 Partition of Pakistan—Marty & Lincoln's Recollections: *The atmosphere remained very tense between March 7 and March 25th when the national assembly was to be held. Rather, at midnight, the Pakistan military began its crackdown, code-named Operation Searchlight. They began by cutting off all communications across the city. Lincoln and I were standing outside our home, when we heard gun shots at the nearby telephone office. We rushed inside our home.*

At 1:15 in the morning of 26 March, Sheikh Mujib was arrested by Pakistani soldiers. Later that morning, Awami League students and professors at Dacca University were murdered. The Pakistani military leaders also ordered their soldiers to go after Hindus: the Hindu priest and his family who lived at the Kali Temple in the middle of the Ramna Race Course and most of the Hindu artisans and their families who lived in Shankari Bazaar in Old Dhaka were killed. Shankari Bazaar, named after the conch shell which Hindu artisans carve into wedding bracelets, was renamed Tikka Khan Lane after the Pakistani general who ordered tanks to be drawn up at either end of the lane to shoot all those who lived and worked there.

It was a fascinating talk, replete with certain aspects of partitions, hitherto not mentioned in public discourse.

■ VICHITRA SHARMA

A Taste of Rampur

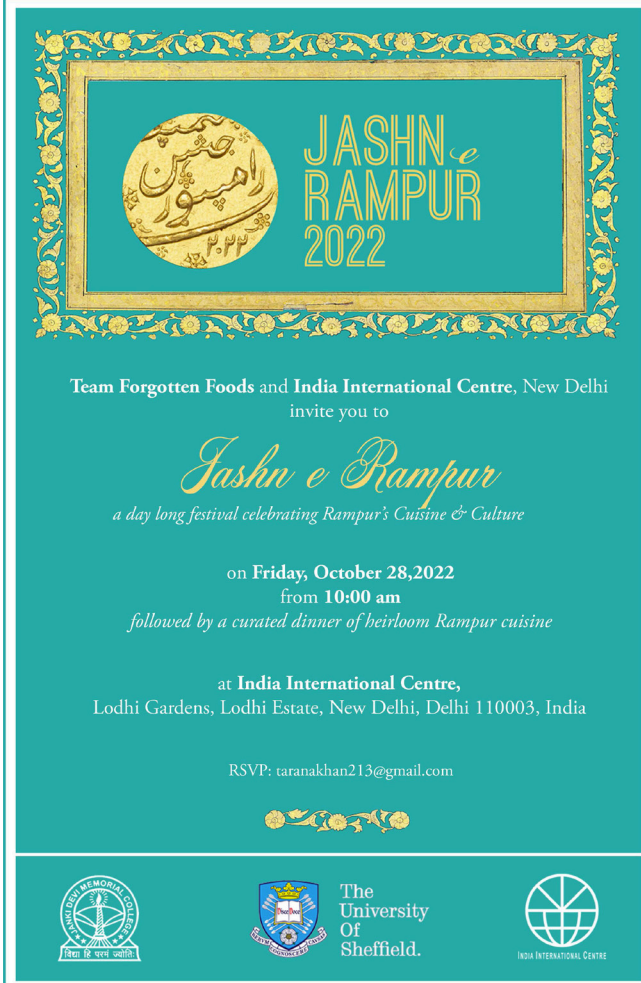
JASHN-E-RAMPUR 2022: A day-long festival celebrating Rampur's cuisine and culture

COLLABORATION: Team Forgotten Foods

28 October 2022

Jashn-e-Rampur was a multi-sensory delight. The welcome address was delivered by the Principal of Janaki Devi Memorial College. The journey of the project so far was reviewed in the opening session by Siobhan Lambert Hurley of Sheffield University, Tarana Husain Khan of Rampur, and Saumya A. Gupta of Nehru Memorial Museum Library. In the next session, Rana Safvi was in conversation with Jayeeta Sharma of the University of Toronto. Tarana Husain Khan, Chef Sadaf Hussain and ecology-responsible farmer Birenda Sandhu from Udham Singh Nagar were the participants in an interesting discussion that covered the fascinating narrative of reviving a lost grain of rice—Tilak Chandan. Sandhu shared with the audience the 'highs and lows' as Tilak Chandan was rediscovered and was adopted by farmers in the Tarai. However, disappointment settled when the grain seemed to have lost its legendary fragrance. The mystery was solved when Sandhu consulted the scientist in Pant Nagar Agricultural University who advised him to shift the planting of rice to take advantage of the cold weather. This was done and the aroma returned!

This was followed by a session that focused on challenges of collecting oral histories in COVID times. Siobhan Lambert Hurley was in conversation with Soumya Gupta and her students. Most of the fieldwork was done by undergraduate students and it was they who shared their experience with the audience with great confidence. The working lunch was rendered more interesting by a taste test of Rampuri Khichdi prepared from Tilak Chandan rice. The post-lunch session began with a documentary viewing of *Dastarkhwan Rampur: A Culinary Journey*, produced by Yousuf Saeed, who discussed the making of the film with Samina Naquvi. The film was an audio-visual treat enriched with miniature paintings from the collection in the Raza Library, pages of old manuscripts, archival photographs and excerpts of music of the Rampur Gharana. After the tea break, the book *Degh to Dastarkhan: Quissas and Recipes from Rampur* was launched and author Tarana Husain Khan engaged in a stimulating conversation with Pushpesh Pant.

The poster for Jashn-e-Rampur 2022 is a teal-colored rectangular card with a decorative gold border. At the top left is a circular gold emblem with Urdu calligraphy. To its right, the text 'JASHN-e-RAMPUR 2022' is written in a gold, stylized font. Below the title, the text 'Team Forgotten Foods and India International Centre, New Delhi invite you to' is written in a small, white, sans-serif font. The main title 'Jashn e Rampur' is written in a large, elegant, white cursive script. Below it, the subtitle 'a day long festival celebrating Rampur's Cuisine & Culture' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The date and time 'on Friday, October 28, 2022 from 10:00 am' are written in a white, sans-serif font. Below that, the text 'followed by a curated dinner of heirloom Rampur cuisine' is written in a white, sans-serif font. The location 'at India International Centre, Lodhi Gardens, Lodhi Estate, New Delhi, Delhi 110003, India' is written in a white, sans-serif font. At the bottom, the RSVP email 'RSVP: taranakhn213@gmail.com' is written in a white, sans-serif font. At the very bottom, there are three logos: the Janaki Devi Memorial College logo, the University of Sheffield logo, and the India International Centre logo.

The next segment of the programme dealt with a unique book, *Desi Delicacies*, edited by Siobhan Lambert Hurely who was joined for a panel discussion by Rana Safvi and Claire Chamber. There was an enchanting Dastangoi session entitled Jashn-e-Benazir highlighting *Rakhtigoi* (the feminine voice in Urdu poetry) by the Dastango duo of Fouzia and Dastango Saneya.

In the evening, there was a lavish spread to tickle the palette—*Dawat-e-Rampur* unveiled Rampur's quintessentially courtly cuisine. Each delicacy had a story to tell—*Nargisi Seekh Kebab*, *Kundan Kaliya*, *Aloo ki Qataliyan* and *Hazour Pasandal* were refreshingly different from the kebabs and lentils served. The deserts—*Adrak ka Halwa* and *Ananas ka Halwa*—registered their presence with subtle understated elegance.

■ **PUSHPESH PANT**

Female-oriented Art Movies

CONFRONTATIONS:

FILMS BY HUNGARIAN WOMEN DIRECTORS

The Festival included a Film Workshop conducted by Balázs Varga, Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE University), Budapest.

COLLABORATION: Department of Slavonic and Finno-Ugrian Studies, University of Delhi; and Hungarian Information and Cultural Centre.

1 to 4 November 2022

A key attribute of world cinema is its universality and its appeal to wider audiences across geographies. Usually focused on human conditions, such cinema portrays experiences which are often relatable across the shadow lines that separate nations. This festival included a series of four award-winning contemporary films directed by Hungarian women directors.

The films ranged from Zsófia Szilágyi's *One Day (Egy haps)*, portraying the frustration of a wife who finds herself stuck in a marriage of adultery and forced caregiving; to Ildikó Enyedi's *Body and Soul (Testről és lélekről)*, a unique love story between a young girl and her middle-aged boss; Lily Horvát's *Preparations to be Together for an Unknown Period of Time (Felkészülés meghatározatlan ideig tartó együttlétre)*, that follows a 39-year-old Hungarian neurosurgeon in pursuit of a romantic rendezvous with a fellow doctor; to *Wild Roots (Külön Falka)*, where a young daughter is in relentless pursuit of her father irrespective of a very wide gap between their sociocultural backgrounds.



Through the workshops held across four days, Balázs Varga drew the audience's attention to the ways through which Hungarian cinema has mutated into the new age, somehow breaking the conventions of the classical and narrative standards. Previous movies directed by these directors as well as some of their contemporaries were screened as well, facilitating a context within which to conceptualise the Hungarian film scene in current times.

The festival was an immensely refreshing venture; one got to watch these female-oriented art house movies focusing on nuanced issues of the biased gender roles and passive abuse in the everyday lived realities of women, which are usually so very easy to gloss over.

■ PRERANA PURNIMA ROY

Showing Polarities

EXHIBITION: *India Tecton—Architectural Expressions in India*

Inauguration by H.E. Mr. Philipp Ackermann and Rahaab Allana.

5 to 14 November 2022

This was an exhibition of architectural photographs by Berlin-based German photographer Nicolaus Schmidt. Born in 1953, Schmidt studied at Hamburg Art Academy and Hamburg University. He has exhibited widely in Europe, taking exclusively to photography for the last 10 years, resulting in several books, including two on India: *India Women* and *India Tecton*.

The displayed works were taken over 2011 and 2020, made possible by association with terre des homes India and other NGOs.

A reflection of the diversity and antiquities of India, these works cover an interesting chunk of the architectural landscape of India. From the ancient to the modern, the royal down to the slums, the religious to educational, the series panned the gamut of built structures across the times and spaces of this vast country.

With the Trithankaras in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh and Durga as the Mahishasurmardini, one discerns the foreign eye, intrigued and mesmerised by much that is Indian. The entire exhibition was in fact a tapestry of contrasts. On the one hand were the intricately coloured relief sculptures that adorn the temple exteriors of the Meenakshi Sundareshwar temple, and on the other were the rigid, austere elevations like those of the IIM, Ahmedabad and the St Martin's Garrison Church at New Delhi.

The polarities stretched beyond stylistic variations, to sharp pointers into the socio-economic broadsheet of

the region. So we had abysmal slums on the one hand and Mukesh Ambani's family residence on the other.

Likewise did lyric and geometry vie with each other as we beheld the concrete trellis elevations of the IIC buildings, alongside the woodcarving of the Nellaippar temple at Tirunelveli and the mind blowing coloured reliefs on the exteriors of the Sri Meenakshi Sundareshwar Temple, both captivating in their own way. Visually contrasting, too, were the delicate trellis works within some of the sprawling royal palaces, against the massive pilasters of buildings such as the City Palace, Jodhpur.

■ ARUNA BHOWMICK



Evening of Poetry

**IIC DIAMOND JUBILEE—CULTURE & CREATIVITY:
LEGACY AND CHANGE:**

A YEAR OF POETRY

Conceptualised by Gitanjali Surendran

6 x 10: Six poets. Ten minutes. No fillers

Jeet Thayil; Keki N. Daruwalla; Akhil Katyal; Arun Sagar; and Alolika Dutta

9 November 2022

This programme was a warm and charming evening of poetry. Organised under the 'IIC Diamond Jubilee—Culture & Creativity: Legacy and Change' series, the event featured six poets, who are among the 94 poets included in *The Penguin Book of Indian Poets* edited by noted writer, poet and musician Jeet Thayil, launched earlier this year.

Keki Daruwalla's powerful voice held the attention of the audience as he recited the haunting, 'If They Ask', followed by 'The Middle Ages', among other poems. Bombay poet Alolika Dutta, also the youngest poet included in the volume, started with a poignant poem titled 'Wretched', about the woes of women, followed

by 'Hands of Time', and a villanelle and a couple of sonnets, all held in place with a tight economy of words. Akhil Katyal, poet and academic, shared his delicate tributes to Farida Khanum and Ustad Bismillah Khan, before moving on to a long poem on the recent Taj Mahal verdict, which led the audience through a deft interweaving of the personal and the political, a hallmark of Katyal's work. Arun Sagar's seven poems, 'Take off', 'Voyage', 'The Sense of Being Watched' among them, meandered through the themes of outward and internal journeys, in both the physical descriptive sense and in an 'elusive, metaphorical sense'. Jeet Thayil's short, incisive poems from the *How to Be* series (toad, leaf, horse, bandicoot, crow) had the audience hanging on to each word as the punchlines hit home. His mic drop moment was 'The Consolations and Advantages of Growing Older' which received thunderous applause. Finally, Aditi Nagrath, a Delhi poet also trained as a clinical psychologist, shared her poems in two different sets: poems about pain, and poems about love. Her poems, infused with a lyrical quality and gentle, flowing words, worked their way through the self, the other, and the intervening experiences felt all too deeply filled to the brim, but not spilling over.

■ KALYANEE RAJAN

Virtuosity, Force and Precision

CONCERT: *Piano Recital by Daniele Buccio.*

COLLABORATION: *Delhi Music Society.*

15 November 2022

What could be common to the pianist Daniele Buccio and Pirelli's tyres?

They are both Italian, but not only! In the 1990s, Pirelli came up with a famous slogan: 'Power is Nothing

Without Control'. For me, these words immediately rang a bell when Daniele Buccio started his recital.

Many pianists enjoy playing virtuoso pieces for the audience's pleasure, but not many manage to really master them because it is their very enthusiasm that makes them lose control. The concert started with the 'Bonner Beethoven-Kantata', transcribed by Liszt. This was to introduce the main piece of the concert, the 'Third Symphony of Beethoven', named 'Eroica', again transcribed by Franz Liszt. His versions of Beethoven's symphonies are straight transcriptions, following the original as closely as possible, 'following the principle

of adding nothing and removing as little as possible.' Throughout the four movements of this symphony, Daniele Buccio always managed to make the piano sound like an orchestra. All the themes were always singing above the multitude of notes, filling in for the 50 musicians of a symphonic orchestra. Jumps of the left hand were always reaching their targets and the piano was producing the maximum power it could deliver.

The second part of the recital was dedicated to the Russian composer Alexander Scriabin, with 'Sonatas Nos 4, 5, 8, and 10'. These pieces are again very demanding for the pianist. Despite the unusual XXth-century repertoire, the Delhi audience gave a warm round of applause at the end of the concert.



Daniele Buccio offered us as an encore, the 'Transcendental Liszt Heroica' study as a tribute to the symphony performed earlier. Virtuosity, force and precision enthralled the audience.

■ PHILLIPE ENGEL

Animal and Human Fables

READINGS: *Beastly Tales*

Poems by Vikram Seth with Stories by James Thurber Presented by Motley Recitations by Naseeruddin Shah; Ratna Pathak Shah; Heeba Shah; and Kenny Desai Produced by Jairaj Patil

17 November 2022

Beastly Tales was billed as readings by the well-known performers, Naseeruddin Shah, Ratna Pathak Shah, Heeba Shah and Kenny Desai. The programme included poems by Vikram Seth from his book *Beastly Tales with stories by James Thurber*, T. S. Eliot's poems from *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, and Robert Browning's legendary poem *Pied Piper of Hamelin*. The starkly designed presentation had no bells and whistles. Led by Naseeruddin Shah, the four performers stood behind their individual lecterns and read out the poems with a flair and perfect diction. Each one read their own piece individually and sometimes, in perfect synchronisation, in a chorus.

Spiced with humour, the content of the performance was deftly curated to reflect on the idiosyncrasies of contemporary times with the follies and foibles of its people, juxtaposed with an animal world which reminds one eerily of *Aesop's Fables* and the *Panchatantra*. The animals were near human too, but unlike the complexities we fallible folk suffer from, the cat, the lion, the tiger, the elephant, the owl were more focused with a single idiosyncrasy each. This curious fact, along with the pulsating rhythm of the poetry delivered with punch and aplomb by the actors, brought out the message of each piece with precision.

Let's pick a few stanzas and see for ourselves the merriness of the mirth involved.

The Tortoise, in Vikram Seth's poem, initially maintained the original story of who won the race thus:

*And the cheering of the crowd
Died at last, the tortoise bowed,
And he thought: 'That silly hare!
So much for her charm and flair.
Now she'll learn that sure and slow
Is the only way to go—
That you can't rise to the top
With a skip, a jump, a hop'.*

But here comes the twist in Seth's version; it is in fact the hare, who became the hero of the hour:

*But it was in fact the hare,
With a calm insouciant air
Like an unrepentant bounder,
Who allured the pressmen round her.
'And Will Wolf, the great press lord
Filled a Gold cup—on a whim—
And with an inviting grin
Murmured: 'In my eyes you win'.*

Each of the selections had interesting, and sometimes mind blowing twists and turns, that made you realise that, as in real life, in these fairy tales too you cannot take a happy ending for granted.

■ MANOHAR KHUSHALANI



Riveting Dance Performances

PERFORMANCE: *Johar: A Jharkhand Dance Odyssey*

COLLABORATION: Government of Jharkhand

18 November 2022



The unique cultural heritage of Jharkhand was on full display with two riveting dance performances, titled *Johar*, in a show presented by artists of the Department of Tourism, Art, Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs, Government of Jharkhand. It was part of the celebrations of the 22nd Jharkhand Foundation Day and Birsa Munda Jayanti declared as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas this year. The programme showcased *Manbhum Chhau* and *Paika*—two tribal dance forms—by internationally acclaimed dance troupes of Gulab Singh Munda and Prabhat Mahto.

The first performance was *Paika*, a unique mix of martial arts and other local dance steps with an all-male cast. The dance steps indicate battle readiness with moves akin to action on a battlefield. It was performed by Gulab Singh Munda and his group displaying colourfully dressed artists deftly covering the stage with swords and shields in their hands and dancing boisterously to the beats of *dhak*, *nagara*, *shehnai*, *bheir* and *ghumka*. Forming a human pyramid they left the audience clapping for more and closed their performance by hoisting the Indian National flag with great pride. The nimble-footed performers wore elaborate costumes replete with feathers and shields. Headgear and chest plates are worn as safety measures.

The second performance was *Manbhum Chhau* by Prabhat Kumar Mahto and his troupe. Dancing vigorously, wearing heavy masks, attired in brightly coloured costumes, they captivated the audience, enacting the folk tale of Mahishasura Mardini. The dance moves were characterised by acrobatic high jumps and somersaults, and artists danced to the live beats of *shehnai*, *dhol*, *nagara*, *ghumka* and *chad-chadi*.

Chhau dance is a form of community celebration or entertainment and is usually performed in the spring festival of Chaitra Parva or Sankranti, and lasts till the beginning of the monsoons. Masks are an integral part of this dance in Purulia and Seraikella styles. *Chhau* dance has been recognised by UNESCO as an intangible international heritage.

■ GAURIKA KAPOOR

Music, Dance and Poetry

PERFORMANCE: *The Fall of the Leafe*

Harpsichord: Justin McCarthy

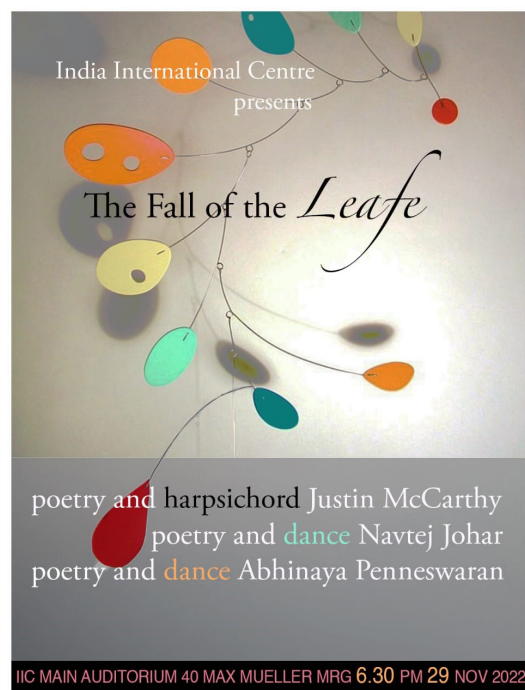
Punjabi Poetry: Navtej Singh Johar

Dance and Tamil Poetry: Abhinaya Penneswaran

29 November 2022

A programme of music, dance and poetry, conceptualised around the themes of nature, human emotions and death, *The Fall of the Leafe* brought together components not usually linked: Justin McCarthy played the harpsichord, and Abhinaya Penneswaran and Navtej Johar danced. Some of the poetry, French, Tamil and Punjabi, was recited, and some of it only served as a take-off point for the dance.

The dances contained moves recognisably from the classical Indian tradition, but they were certainly not conventional dance items. They could not be,



since the accompaniment was 16th and 17th century harpsichord music by English and French composers, such as Byrd and Louis and Francois Couperin. And while the poetry clearly inspired the dance, this was not done in a literal way.

Undoubtedly each individual component was excellent. The performers were sensitive and highly accomplished, and they had clearly thought deeply about the programme's composition. Just how well the individual components combined to produce a whole that was more than the sum of its parts, would perhaps be a matter of individual taste and perception.

This was a creative, free-flowing production, not a carefully structured one, and demanded a similarly creative response from the audience. Which did respond with warm applause. The only complaint I heard was that the duration was rather too short, just about 45 minutes.

The Programme Division of IIC is to be commended for this presentation, and hopefully it will find a way to bring these performers to the platform again, soon.

■ **SAMARESH CHATTERJEE**

Towards Climate Justice

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IIC DIAMOND JUBILEE DISCUSSION: PANDEMIC AND CLIMATE CHANGE: *Climate Change in India: Fighting for our Lives and Landscape*

COLLABORATION: *Nagaraj Adve; Sharachchandra Lele; and Nityanand Jayaraman*

CHAIR: *Amita Baviskar*

4 November 2022
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In the wake of the recent COP 27 held at Sharm El-Sheikh where representatives from across the world came together for climate action, this seminar focused on the very pertinent issue of climate change impact on lives and livelihoods of vulnerable populations. The discussion centred around the social impact of climate change in the Indian subcontinent.

Nagaraj Adve laid the framework for the discussion by focusing on the impact of climate change in the Indian subcontinent. He drew attention to the impact of erratic rainfall, heat waves and floods on small-scale farmers and women. Sharachchandra Lele discussed

the impact of climate change on water systems and explained the multiple stressors that expose vulnerable populations to risk. With the example of Arkavathi river in Karnataka, he explained the impact of local level anthropogenic factors that add to increased water crisis under climate change. Nityanand Jayaraman discussed in detail the reductionist concept of 'climate change' which takes attention away from the struggles of indigenous populations over years and instead focuses majorly on CO2 emissions. Using the example of Ennore creek and the notion of 'porambokku', Jayaraman explained how such land use struggles are integral to the lives of indigenous communities.

The panellists also discussed the way forward towards climate justice. Adve stressed on the necessity to have caps on emissions starting from the household level. Lele drew attention to the need for a reformulation of the rights framework based on community rights. Jayaraman focused on the need to engage with the minds of the youth of the country to promote climate-just actions. The seminar concluded after a lively interaction between the audience and the panellists on the impact of climate change

■ **CAROL WILSON**

India's Resilience Amid Global Uncertainty

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PRESENTATION: *The NCAER Mid-Year Review of the Indian Economy, 2022-23*

LEAD SPEAKERS: *Poonam Gupta and Mridul Saggar*

CHAIR: *Shyam Saran, President IIC*

DISCUSSANTS: *Amitabh Kant; V. Anantha Nageswaran; and Arvind Panagariya*

5 November 2022
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Even as global growth was losing momentum, the Indian economy showed resilience in the first six months of this financial year, according to the NCAER Mid-Year Review of the Indian Economy, 2022-23, unveiled along with expert commentary and debate.

However, the economy is routinely facing shocks—poor global demand, capital flow volatility, oil prices and high vegetable prices—which need to be addressed in order for the Indian economy to grow in a more stable way. Setting the backdrop, Mridul Saggar listed five headwinds facing the global economy—inflation, synchronous policy tightening, waning of pent-up demand seen in revenge buying after COVID, supply-side bottlenecks due to the pandemic, and

the Ukraine war causing global fragmentation and impacting supply chains.

On the other hand, Arvind Panagariya sounded optimistic on India as he forecast 8 per cent growth for the country in FY23. 'We need a total of 32 per cent in the four quarters of the year, and having achieved 13.5 per cent in the first, we need 18.5 per cent in the remaining three, which is doable,' he said.

Upbeat on high-frequency economic indicators, India's G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant said: 'All our high-frequency indicators are robust and underscore the economy's resilience. The two important indicators that need attention are rising commodity prices and depreciating currency.' Anantha Nageswaran

illustrated the country's macroeconomic stability through India's bond yields, which are doing much better than those of others. He, however, added that both optimistic and pessimistic projections should be taken with some scepticism, given the many 'unknown unknowns'.

While presenting the review, Poonam Gupta said that rising inflation in all advanced economies, which is at a 26-year high, policy tightening by central banks globally, and softening of global growth and trade were some worrying indicators that could impact the Indian economy as well.

■ REETESH ANAND

The Lost Buddhist Stupa of Kahu-Jo-Daro

HISTORY AND HERITAGE ILLUSTRATED LECTURE:

The Lost Buddhist Stupa of Kahu-Jo-Daro: An Attempt at Reconstruction

SPEAKER: Sabyasachi Mukherjee

INTRODUCTION: Himanshu Prabha Ray

CHAIR: Shri K.N. Shrivastava, Director, IIC

7 November 2022

This talk was part of a series designed on the theme, 'History and Heritage: The Afterlife of Monuments', to raise awareness about the public life and nature of monuments.

Mukherjee introduced the Buddhist Stupa at Kahu-Jo-Daro, excavated by British archaeologist Sir Henry Cousens in 1909, as part of a large Buddhist establishment in the present-day town of Mirpur Khas in the province of Sindh, Pakistan. The illustrated lecture explored the early history of Sindh and the roots of Buddhism in the Gandhara region, as well as its influences on Sindh and other neighbouring regions. He drew attention to the hundreds of unbaked clay

votive tablets and Arab copper coins at the entrance to the Great Stupa on the west face at Kahu-Ju-Daro, which leads to the conclusion that the establishment was in worship and remained a living Buddhist centre at least till the 9th and 10th centuries CE.

Mukherjee furnished the lecture with accounts of several layers of building and rebuilding of the Stupa, which is corroborated by the contemporary Chinese travellers Hiuen Tsang and I Tsing. He added that Buddhism was at its peak in the Sindh region at the time, and the initial sundried brick level construction of the Stupa was done by the Sammatiya sect, an offshoot of the Vatsiputriyah sect of the Hinayana tradition, before the region gave way to a predominant Mahayana influence. The presence of Kubera and Jambhala images connect the site, albeit remotely, to a fully developed Mahayana tradition.

Mukherjee drew the audience's notice to the impact of the architectural style of this Stupa on the succeeding Buddhist art traditions in the Indian subcontinent. The Stupas in Sindh, the Maha Stupa at Devni Mori at Gujarat, and the later Stupas in Bihar and Bangladesh followed the Gandhara tradition of the square terraced platform supporting a spherical dome, a feature that originally evolved under the Kushanas between the 1st and 2nd centuries CE.

■ PRERANA PURNIMA ROY

Equitable Representation of Women in Politics

IIC DIAMOND JUBILEE LECTURE: *Her Voice: India @75—Affirmative Legislation for Equitable Women's Representation*

SPEAKER: *Rami Chhabra*

CONCLUDING REMARKS: *Gopalkrishna Gandhi, Life Trustee, IIC*

CHAIR: *Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, Life Trustee, IIC*

17 November 2022

Of the 542 legislators in the current Lok Sabha, only 78 are women. This, and similar such figures across Vidhan Sabhas, prompted this lecture by Rami Chhabra on equitable representation of women in politics. Her address was in equal parts stirring and thought-provoking. The commendable strides made in women's representation in panchayats have remained absent at the national and state legislatures. She attributed this to the inherent patriarchy of Indian politics alongside the absence of political will to enhance women's representation. She pointed out where the Women's Reservation Bill, which seeks to

reserve one-third of all seats in the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas for women, is deficient. Calling its formula 'defective', Chhabra alluded to how the Bill pitted men against women by effectively telling one-third of them to forsake their legislative space for women members. That, presumably, explains why discussions on the Bill in Parliament have remained acrimonious.

Instead, Chhabra suggested more harmonious alternatives to achieve greater political participation by women. She mooted the conversion of existing electoral constituencies into 'double/dual-member constituencies', with each section assigned respectively to men and women representatives. Of course, such an exercise must follow closely on the heels of the impending delimitation to ensure constituencies remain both adequately representative and administratively manageable. She expressed hope that the new, enlarged Parliament building would usher in more women by bringing the concept of double-member constituencies to life. Her views received a ringing endorsement from Gopalkrishna Gandhi, whose invocation of Kasturba, Sarojini Naidu and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur asserted that to achieve true equality, governance must be more inclusive and representative of women.

■ **RITWIK SHARMA**

People's Innovations in Science

EXHIBITION: *TIIIC Diamond Jubilee—Science Exhibition: People's Festival of Innovations*
Curated and mentored by Renu Swarup; Anil Gupta; Swati Basu; and Taslimarif Saiyed
Inauguration by Shri Shyam Saran, President, IIC.

19 to 29 November 2022

The People's Festival of Innovations promised much more than the simple celebration could convey. It marked an event that was a recognition of ordinary acts transforming into extraordinary impacts. The programme comprised an exhibition of interventions of small machines, medical interventions or quality testing gadgets created by people. The display and two panel discussions brought to light the important connect between needs, ideas and encouragement to create a dynamic relation between science and society.

The panel discussion on 'Science Led Innovations—Impacting the Development Agenda' truly was in sync with the 2030 Sustainable Goals that lay emphasis on people, prosperity, planet, partnership and peace.

The deep technology in its own share contributed to simple modifications to quality of life: such as long procedure of dialysis with an exercise machine or disease treatment by innovative procedures. The discussion focused on need for 'out of the box thinking' that will promote innovative thinking and easier procedures for medical care, agricultural work and interconnectedness of its impact. On the heels of the dialogues on the societal benefits of creative thinking was a panel discussion on 'Grassroots Innovations for Society—A Sustainable and Scalable Model'.

People from Kashmir, Haryana and other states shared grassroots level interventions to enhance productivity, health, efficiency and the will to live a better life. The local need-based improvisations were refreshing as well as inspiring. It was thoughtfully curated by Renu Swarup, Secretary, Ministry of Biotechnology, and ably supported by Anil Gupta, Director, National Foundation of Innovations. The presentations by practitioners made the discussions lively.

Science and technology have prompted people to be more solution oriented in order to decrease the costs of production, maintain health as well as growth in development of the agriculture sector, education sector and product design.

■ **ASHA SINGH**

Upholder of Constitutional Propriety

TALK: *The Constitution of India and Indian Democracy: Have the Legislature, Judiciary and Executive Remained True to their Constitutional Mandate*

SPEAKER: *Shri Jagdeep Dhankar, Vice-President of India*

26 November 2022

The Vice President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankar, delivered this talk on Constitution Day.

He said that the Indian Constitution is one of the world's finest, and parliamentary democracy is a guiding light for other democracies of the world. Constitution Day was special as 75 years is a milestone for the mother of democracy and the largest democracy. Appreciating the role of the judiciary in particular, he said that since the end of the last century, the judiciary has been engaged in innovation to impart justice to people at large. He congratulated the Supreme Court for adopting technology to ensure ease of justice through initiatives like virtual justice, digital courts, etc. Sublimity of the Doctrine of Separation of Powers is realised, he said, when 'Legislature, Judiciary and Executive optimally

function in tandem and togetherness and with one qualification meticulously ensuring scrupulous adherence to respective jurisdictional domain.'

Referring to the Preamble of the Constitution, he asserted that it firmly imparts as its foundation, its premise 'WE THE PEOPLE OF INDIA'. He went on to say that if we go by the Preamble of the Indian Constitution which is part of the Constitution as per judicial declaration, 'this, according to me, is an inalienable spinal feature of the supreme document of governance—the Constitution of India.'

Shri Dhankar emphasised that we should all pledge to promote values enshrined in the Constitution and strive to build a Bharat that our founding fathers envisioned.

Concluding his speech, he observed that, 'If, as a nation, in most difficult times we are surviving as a shining star it is because of our judiciary, our executive and our legislature acting in tandem and togetherness. My indication and thought process is that this synergical approach needs to be optimised and refined so that we claim the position which rightfully belongs to us, that is, being Vishwaguru.'

Shri Shyam Saran, President IIC, said the Vice President was the upholder of the Constitution and protector of constitutional propriety.

■ MEERA BHATIA

Multiple Challenges

TALK: *Where is the United Kingdom Going?*

SPEAKER: *Ranjan Mathai*

CHAIR: *K.P. Fabian*

23 November 2022

The talk focused on the multiple challenges of the UK economy—the current recession, the Ukraine war induced acute energy crisis, escalating inflation, large budgetary deficit and growing levels of debt, the overall demand for wage increases (in sectors such as transport and health), as well as the geo-political changes and changes in loyalties in Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Brexit, or the exit from the EU, the growing racial diversity and ethnicity, polarisation, massive immigration, both legal and illegal, are all burning issues. Energy concerns of green energy policy priority concerns versus populist concerns must be balanced. With the pandemic, the government deficit

as a percentage of GDP rose to 14 per cent (causing a sharp fall in sterling values). The ranking of the UK fell globally from fifth to sixth position.

Tackling each of these is a formidable task for any government in power. Should the world bother at all with Britain and its matters? The answer is Yes, because Britain remains globally relevant. Notwithstanding Brexit, the quick succession of Prime Ministerial changes at Downing Street and the present challenges, the country remains relevant globally as the UK government is committed to bringing down inflation levels, underlying debt and debt to GDP levels in order to regain investor faith in the financial sector in London. The US, Russia, China, Brussels, EU, Delhi and Tokyo all have an interest in the UK. Britain has a continued lead in international surveillance, advanced defence and space technology, and its focus on integrated defence systems, soft power in cyber capabilities, and the priority given to science and technology.

A lively discussion followed the talk.

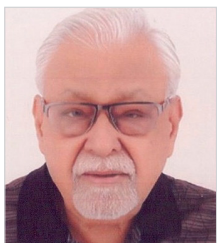
■ MEKHALA SENGUPTA

DEPARTURES

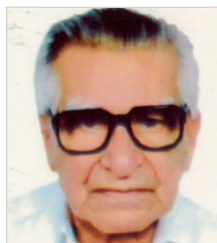
We are deeply saddened by the passing away of the following Members of the IIC family, and convey our heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved families.



DR. RAJNI KUMAR
M-0307



**DR. PRAMOD
KUMAR GUJRAL**
M-1455



**SHRI MAHENDRA
RAJ MEHENDIRATTA**
M-1523



**DR. HARI MOHAN
MATHUR**
M-2136



**PROF. GOPI CHAND
NARANG**
M-2167



SMT. ELA R. BHATT
M-2249



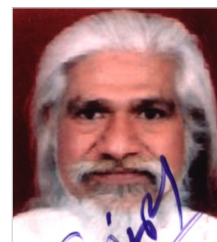
**PROF. MADAN
MOHAN PURI**
M-2944



**SHRI MAHENDRA
KUMAR N. BUCH**
M-3118



SHRI K. K. MADAN
M-3124



**SHRI SURESH
JINDAL**
A-2834



**LT. GEN. ARUN
GAUTAMA (RETD.)**
A-3253



**SHRI VIJAY RANJIT
KHOSLA**
A-3745



MS. SANTOSH DEV
A-3784



**SHRI BIJAY KUMAR
DASH**
M-3860



**SHRI ANIL KUMAR
SINGH**
A-5065



**SHRI JAGMOHAN
BHANOT**
A-6941



**MS. USHA
VENKATESWARAN**
A-6961



**MS. SUHASINI
RAMASWAMY**
A-7103



**DR. JOHN
BROOMFIELD**
OA-228



**SHRI SYED AHMED
MEER**
OA-283



Director's Note

The month of October was IIC's most festive with the annual Festival of the Arts, an event that Members and their guests eagerly await. This year we had a full house at all the performances, film screenings and dinners. It was uplifting to see people getting back to life as we knew it before the pandemic. For those who could not attend the Festival, or those who might have missed a few programmes, we have brought out a special edition of the IIC Diary that covers all the events held at the five-day Festival. This can be viewed on our website (www.iicdelhi.in).

The annual Bhoomi Navdanya dinner, 'vrat ka khana', and Diwali hampers and bakery items were the highlights. In addition, we also presented Bengali, Continental and Hyderabad food items as weekly cuisines.

In the digitisation programme of the IIC Library, about 21 lakh pages comprising several collections termed as communities have been digitised in the first and second phases, and have been uploaded on the digital portal with intuitive search and retrieval options. The portal, christened DigiLib, can be accessed from the IIC Website at <http://digilib.iicdelhi.in>.

The Centre has been improving visual communication by installing signages. On the advice of the Architectural and Design Advisory Committee (ADAC), a professional agency was engaged for this purpose. The categories, design, artworks and appropriate materials have been identified and work has commenced. In the first phase, we have installed external stone signage and external dupont signage at the Main Centre, and internal acrylic signage in the Programme Block. This has been well received. The work will now extend to the Hostel Block, Kamaladevi Block, Lotus Lounge and Annexe.

In order to improve safety, capacity and efficiency, the work of technical audit of major electrical equipments and systems was assigned to M/s Capro System Engineers. They have submitted their report. Action is underway to implement the recommendations made in the report.

Keeping in view the emerging requirements of additional constructions/alternatives at the Main Centre, a revised construction plan as recommended by ADAC, was submitted to the NDMC for approval. For the NDMC to approve these plans, clearances from statutory bodies like the Delhi Urban Arts Commission, Delhi Fire Service and National Monuments Authority were required. After a prolonged follow-up at various levels in these organisations, the Centre has finally succeeded in getting their clearance which entailed in the NDMC approving the revised construction plan. The NDMC has also permitted construction of an additional toilet block at the Main Centre near Gate No. 3 under the Swachh Bharat programme beyond the approved FAR.

Smt. Meena Agarwal, a retired officer of 1981 batch of India Railway Accounts Service has been appointed as the new Honorary Treasurer. She has served in the Indian Railways for over two decades. She also served as Secretary, 7th Central Pay Commission.

Based on several requests from Overseas Associate Members (OAM) from academic background, the Board has decided to divide the OAM into Academic and Non-Academic categories and charge differential Admission Fee (AF) and Annual Subscription Fee (ASF) from them. The revised AF and the ASF for the two categories of OAM are:

OAM	AF	ASF
Non-Academic	US \$2600	US \$850
Academic	US \$1500	US \$400

Members are requested to advise overseas academics/scholars known to them to apply for Overseas Associate Membership under the newly created OAM (Academic).

Accepting the suggestion of the Members, an additional facility of Tea/Coffee vending machine including light snacks has been made functional inside the Main Verandah. This facility is also open to non-members who attend the programmes.

The NDMC has been making a significant impact on promoting sustainability and reducing environmental damage and waste generation. It was judged India's Cleanest Small City in 2021 by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, and is now a Water + City.

The IIC, like other institutions, has been part of this initiative. It is with great pride that we inform our Members that in this year's Swachh Sarvekshan-2022, conducted by NDMC for the months of October, November and December, the Centre has been awarded 3rd position for the month of December 2022 in the category of 'Hotel'. The certificate also carries a cash reward of ₹ 3,000/-.

We are confident that with current initiatives which are under execution, our ranking will further improve and we hope to be the best in the region.

It has been observed that many Members occupy the Main Lounge seats for prolonged hours. This results in increased waiting period for other Members who wish to use the Lounge facilities. In a few instances it has been observed that the Lounge is used for private business meetings with many visitors/guests which is against the ethics of the Centre. Members are advised to refrain from indulging in commercial/business gatherings in the Lounge.

K. N. SHRIVASTAVA