



# Prabha

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## प्रभा

The Prabha Khaitan Foundation Chronicle

"The beginning is the most important part of any work."

— Plato

In this edition of *Prabha*, we come together to celebrate the germination of new ideas, the growth of new bonds, and the magic and thrill of fresh beginnings, be in our beloved country or on foreign shores

# The Start of Something Wonderful



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Prabha  
प्रभा

MANISHA JAIN  
Communications & Branding Chief,  
Prabha Khaitan Foundation



## The Road Less Taken

When we look back on the recent past, it is hard to believe that just two years ago, the world, in the grip of a pandemic, had shut down. At that time, it would have been nearly impossible to imagine how people across the world would survive this challenge and emerge on the other side; and yet, here we are, halfway through 2022, slowly and steadily getting back to normal.

**Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, along with its associates and **Ehsaas Women**, has always found new ways to do things. When the lockdown happened, we found a way to take all of the Foundation's activities online, so that people the world over could continue engaging with literary and cultural pursuits from the comfort of their homes. Now, with offline events gaining momentum again, the Foundation is well on its way to treading new territory and touching newer horizons. In this issue of *Prabha*, we celebrate new beginnings by bringing you a glimpse of the associations being made between the Foundation and illustrious organisations in the United Kingdom — particularly in London, the vibrant UK capital that is also the veritable capital of Indians who reside overseas — and the promise of new initiatives. Most excitingly, we take two of India's most important journalistic voices — Barkha Dutt and Abhigyan Prakash — to speak to UK audiences, and give our readers a look into the launch of the Foundation's activities in the city of Dehradun. These activities are accompanied by conversations around literature, dance, music and art — all of which the Foundation holds dear.

It is also among the Foundation's most cherished goals to make a tangible difference to the protection of our planet and its precious biodiversity. We hope you will read about the Foundation's efforts to spark conversations, both online and offline, around climate change. Last but not least, no efforts to protect the planet can be complete without first helping our fellow human beings. We invite you to join us in our quest to have a positive impact on the lives of those who live on the margins, be they sex workers and their families or young students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of *Prabha*. As always, we look forward to hearing your thoughts and feedback.

*Manisha Jain*

*Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors. They do not reflect the opinions or views of the Foundation or its members.*

## [ SNAPSHOT OF THE MONTH ]



▲ It was a matter of pride when the Managing Director of Shree Cement Ltd, H.M. Bangur, who is also an esteemed patron of **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, was conferred the award for India's Best CEO in the cement industry at the *Business Today* Mindrush 2022 event. The Foundation congratulates him heartily.

## Happy Birthday

Prabha WISHES **EHSAAS** WOMEN BORN IN JULY

2nd July



Sheetal Khanna

6th July



Sujata Sabnis

13th July



Suchitra Sajid Dhanani

14th July



Anshu Mehra

14th July



Vinnie Kakkar

14th July



Aanchal Garcha

16th July



Roopa Mohandas

27th July



Poonam Bafna



# Out To The Undiscovered Ends

Hope is embedded in new horizons; and it is this hope that has been foundational for **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** in its voyage towards touching the lives of more people through literature, music, art, social justice and, most importantly, friendship. Be it building new associations with global organisations, taking the voices of Indian journalists overseas or expanding the Foundation's activities to the cities of Dehradun and Kanpur, the thrill of treading new ground and fostering kinship has been unparalleled. As the poet Hilaire Belloc famously wrote, "From quiet homes and first beginning, / Out to the undiscovered ends, / There's nothing worth the wear of winning, / But laughter and the love of friends."







Kiran Manral

Indian women have long excelled at everything they put their minds to while also battling the greatest of odds, prejudices and stigmas. It is thus imperative to bring women's voices to the fore, all across the country and the globe. To this end, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, which has always been dedicated to promoting women's empowerment through culture, education and literature, collaborates with like-minded institutions across various cities, both in India and abroad. To mark the beginning of its new chapter in the illustrious city of Dehradun, the Foundation organised a special inaugural session of **The Write Circle**, which involved a panel discussion among three renowned authors: Kiran Manral, Koral Dasgupta and Neelima Dalmia Adhar. The panellists' subject of discussion was 'Goddesses, Queens and Leaders: Indian Women Down The Ages'. The session was introduced by Pooja Khanna, **Ehsaas** Woman of Dehradun, at The Hyatt Regency, Dehradun.

Each of the panellists has carved a niche for herself in the literary world. Kiran Manral, a noted journalist and media personality, has been the author of more than 20 books across different genres. Her latest book, *Rising: 30 Women Who Changed India*, features the stories of women who have been instrumental in India's growth and who serve as inspiration to succeeding generations of women. Koral Dasgupta, too, is an author, having written books that are not only academic in their subject matter but also explore the complexities of human nature. Her books have been selected for study at prominent institutes

# Channelling the Voices of Women



Koral Dasgupta

of higher education across the world such as Harvard, Columbia and the University of Pennsylvania, among others.

Neelima Dalmia Adhar, who is the daughter of the illustrious industrialist Ramkrishna Dalmia, wrote her first bestseller, *Father Dearest: The Life and Times of RK Dalmia*, and earned the title of the 'daredevil family chronicler'. Her most recent work, *The Secret Diary of Kasturba*, is novel in its presentation of the life of Kasturba Gandhi, who is usually forgotten in most historical accounts. As an **Ehsaas** Woman of Delhi, Adhar is also actively involved in the activities of the Foundation for the promotion of Indian art, culture and heritage.

The conversation began with Dasgupta asking the other two authors how they perceive leadership. "Leadership today has, unfortunately, become about who has the ability to manipulate others the best," said Adhar. "It is not about the qualities of being godly or queenly. The one who can shout the loudest and influence the most is the leader." Manral, however, had a different take



Neelima Dalmia Adhar



Draupadi was exposed to the unthinkable by her very own family. In her darkest moment of despair, no one stood up for her. This is the predicament experienced by women universally: when she only has herself to stand up for her rights

— Koral Dasgupta

Despite having been popularly portrayed as a submissive, almost elusive figure, Kasturba Gandhi was, in fact, a passionate and sexually-driven woman who dealt with the ordinariness of an extraordinary man

— Neelima Dalmia Adhar

If one woman in her life can inspire any other woman or a child to reach beyond what is prescribed for them by circumstance, luck or anything else that binds them, that woman is a leader

— Kiran Manral

on the question, and said that any woman who manages to inspire another woman is a leader. “If one woman in her life can inspire any other woman or a child to reach beyond what is prescribed for them by circumstance, luck or anything else that binds them, that woman is a leader,” she opined. “It could be the woman in your house, it could be anybody else.”

Who are the goddesses, queens and leaders that the panellists would want to morph into? “I resonate the most with Draupadi,” admitted Dasgupta. “Draupadi was told from birth that she would be the cause of the destruction of civilisation. The palace of illusions could not have existed without her, and Draupadi was exposed to the unthinkable by her very own family. In her darkest moment of despair, no one stood up for her. This is the predicament experienced by women universally: when she only has herself to stand up for her rights.” So why is it important to retell the stories in Hindu mythology from the female

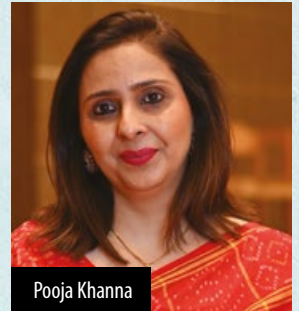
perspective? “I have read the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* many times over as a child,” responded Dasgupta. “However, I did not like the portrayal of women in these sagas because women were suppressed and inadequate. Gradually, I realised that these stories were written from the male perspective and were deeply patriarchal. Owing to their elevated status and the way they are presented, these stories become the yardsticks by which we are expected to conduct ourselves in certain narrow ways. The narrative must be guided in a direction that is much more inclusive of the feminine.”

For Adhar, too, channelling the voice of Kasturba without distorting historical facts was of utmost importance. Though initially reluctant to take up the project, for fear that Kasturba’s life would have been too dull, Adhar’s in-depth research on the topic proved otherwise. “Despite having been popularly portrayed as a submissive, almost elusive figure, Kasturba was, in fact, a passionate and sexually-driven woman who dealt with the ordinariness of an extraordinary man,” said Adhar.

However, despite the strides taken towards women’s empowerment, women who work are still referred to as “working women” and are expected to balance their careers and family with equal panache. “Balance is elusive and women always put themselves last while trying to balance their careers and family,” said Manral. “But women who have charged ahead fearlessly and followed their passions, paying little to no regard to societal expectations, are the ones to have truly made a mark in their fields.” At the end of the discussion, the panellists agreed that while writing their books, they always try to channel the essence of the characters they create so as to give voice to those who have been historically silenced.

The discussion concluded with an engaging Q&A session with the audience and with the guests being felicitated on behalf of the Foundation.

*The Write Circle Dehradun was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Hyatt Regency Dehradun, Dainik Jagran and with the support of Ehsaas Women of Dehradun*



Pooja Khanna



Pooja Poddar Marwah



Harkaran Singh



Neelu Khanna



Vibha Kapoor



Anindita Chatterjee



# Voices From The City



**P**rabha Khaitan Foundation, one of India's most iconic organisations, truly lives by its mantra, 'Apni Bhasha Apne Log'. India is a land abundant with colour, culture, heritage and, of

course, language; and the Foundation does equal justice to the promotion of these aspects of cultural life. Its various verticals aim to empower women, provide basic education to all, aid in social welfare and promote literature and the performing arts. In this manner, the Foundation has slowly and steadily cemented its presence in almost every Indian state.

**Ehsaas** Women, under the aegis of the Foundation, is one such dynamic vertical. "Born out of the Foundation's focus on women's empowerment, **Ehsaas** is a conglomeration of women from various walks of life across India who work for the betterment of society and inspire others to do the same. The Foundation believes that the women of today are the catalyst for change tomorrow."

Launching the Foundation's activities in Dehradun was an exciting phase for my colleague Pooja Khanna and me. After weeks of preparation, when the day finally arrived, there was a lot of anticipation and exhilaration in our beautiful valley. Our guest list was carefully curated to include a mix of young and older people, all of whom genuinely loved literature. What I really appreciated about the Foundation's methodology in making a guest list was the fact that it was not an open-to-all event; it was reserved to a small number of people. The reason for keeping the event contained in this way was that every guest got a chance to personally interact with the speakers and take home a memory for life. Another aspect I liked was the serving of tea *before* the event. In this manner, people got a chance to interact with each other before the event began, and once the session concluded, everyone, including us hosts, were free to go. The General Manager of the Hyatt Regency Dehradun, Harkaran Singh, paid great attention to detail in serving up a mix of local savouries and continental snacks. A lot of emphasis was put on punctuality; in my opinion, that is a very

important strength to have.

The panel discussion, titled 'Goddesses, Queens and Leaders', was true to its name. The panellists, Kiran Manral, Koral Dasgupta and Neelima Dalmia Adhar, enthralled the audience with their views on women in various avatars. These are the moments when being a woman really feels so complete! The conversation among them led to extensive audience interaction, and the event concluded with a sense of everyone having learnt a great deal. The feedback received from those who were part of the event was absolutely fantastic. It left us all with a feeling of 'yeh dil maange more!' That, on its own, says a lot. The Foundation actively promoted inter-state exchanges of handloom crafts — exquisite gifts of *kantha* stoles from West Bengal were given to our speakers.

Sitting with the authors after the event led to another round of conversation. After all, with Kiran Manral at the table, there are bound to be spooky, hair-raising stories about *The Face at the Window*. Koral Dasgupta's inputs on Draupadi and Neelimaji's views on ghostly encounters further added to the camaraderie between the **Ehsaas** Women, the Executive Trustee of the Foundation Anindita Chatterjee, and the authors.

The Dehradun Launch was extensively covered in the national and local media, both in English and in Hindi. *The Himachal Times*, *Garhwal Post*, *The Pioneer* and *Dainik Jagran* graciously added to the success of the event by providing coverage and publishing rave reviews.

The Foundation encompasses the true spirit of India. We are a land that is vibrant with culture, and capturing every element of its diversity is what the Foundation does with style and panache. It truly is an honour to partake in a revolution that aims to paint the rich canvas of our peninsula through each and every Indian state. To quote George Bernard Shaw, "The Indian way of life provides the vision of the natural, real way of life. We veil ourselves with unnatural masks. On the face of India are tender expressions which carry the mark of the Creator's hand."

— Pooja Poddar Marwah,  
Ehsaas Woman of Dehradun





June 21 will always be etched in my mind as the day when the long wait for the launch of **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**'s activities in Dehradun ended. A week before the inaugural event, in the run-up to the launch, the excitement was palpable. My colleague and fellow

**Ehsaas** Woman of Dehradun, Pooja Poddar Marwah, and I had created a buzz among the city's literature and culture enthusiasts by sending out pre-event invitations requesting their confirmation. When we heard that three eminent authors — Kiran Manral, Koral Dasgupta and Neelima Dalmia Adhar — were coming to take the stage with their riveting conversations for a session of **The Write Circle**, we were certain it would leave a mark on the minds of our invitees. The topic of the discussion was deeply engrossing — 'Goddesses, Queens, Leaders: Indian Women down the Ages'.

As the Foundation came knocking at Dehradun's door with its offerings of culture, art and literature, the initial response from the people of the city was encouraging. We started getting prompt confirmations to the invites, and knew that Dehradun's people were ready to embrace the Foundation. With the launch date drawing closer, preparations were in full swing. Our interactions with Hyatt Regency were great; they offered us their best services and cooperation in discussing every minute detail for the event. The Hyatt Regency is situated in the lap of nature, with breathtaking views. The General Manager, Harkaran Singh, put his best foot forward and offered us a great venue and courteous staff. He personally ensured that all our concerns were being addressed. We got in touch with the Head Chef

and proposed the inclusion of local snacks like *arsi*, *bun tikki* and the signature rusks of Dehradun.

On the day of the event, as the clock struck six, people started trickling in. The Foundation's anthem was reverberating through the corridors of the hotel, and was greatly appreciated by everyone. We escorted our eminent guests to an impeccably arranged high tea. From different flavours of tea to other delicacies, our guests truly enjoyed the fare. The Foundation's executive trustee, Anindita Chatterjee, had flown to Dehradun from Kolkata to guide and support us, for which we are extremely grateful. She truly is the soul of the Foundation.

The session started with Mr Singh highlighting The Hyatt Regency's long association with the Foundation. This was followed by my introduction of the Foundation to the audience along with an introduction of each one of our esteemed authors. Thereafter, a powerful and engaging conversation among the authors began. It set the stage on fire, just as we had imagined. The discussion concluded with a Q&A session and a vote of thanks by Pooja Poddar Marwah. Our esteemed guests, Neelu Khanna (Managing Trustee, Aasraa Trust), Vibha Kapoor (Principal, Welham Girls' School) and Mr Singh felicitated the panellists with *kantha* stoles. When we heard a thunderous round of applause after the session ended, we realised that it signalled the arrival of the Foundation in the capital of Uttarakhand. We are immensely thankful to Sundeep Bhutoria for the Foundation — a wonderful platform that truly highlights art, culture and the heritage of India and brings it to the doorsteps of so many enthusiasts all across the nation.

— Pooja Khanna,  
Ehsaas Woman of Dehradun



My association with **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** and Sundeep Bhutoria began from the days when I was working at the Hyatt Regency Kolkata. Mr Bhutoria, who is well known in the City of Joy, is a true activist for culture and social uplift; his

name is synonymous with social welfare activities and the promotion of Indian folk art, literature and culture. I had the pleasure of being a part of multiple Foundation events organised in association with the Hyatt Regency in Kolkata, and was inspired by the work done by the Foundation.

In 2018, when I was transferred to Raipur as the

General Manager of the Hyatt Raipur, I was very keen to associate with the Foundation to promote literature and art through book readings under initiatives like **Kalam** and **The Write Circle**. We organised a number of events, and I can say with certainty that the city of Raipur was overwhelmed by such literary events that brought people together and celebrated the amazing talent we have in the country. I am now heading the newly-opened Hyatt Regency Dehradun, and it is time for this lovely city to witness the aforementioned culture of celebrating literature in association with the Foundation. We at the Hyatt Regency Dehradun are excited to be a part of the Foundation's Dehradun chapter.

— Harkaran Singh,  
General Manager, Hyatt Regency Dehradun





Irshad Kamil

## मैं सफलता का हिस्सा भर नहीं, उसकी वजह बनना चाहता हूँ: इरशाद कामिल

है। आगे के संवाद के लिए उन्होंने अहसास वूमेन कानपुर डॉ आरती गुप्ता को बुलाया।

गुप्ता ने एक पत्रकार से एक शायर और बचपन में फिल्मों की तस्वीरों से खेलने से लेकर आज फिल्मों की तस्वीरों पर अपना नाम देखने का सफर कैसा रहा? कामिल ने अपने बचपन को याद करते हुए बताया, “जैसे बच्चे बड़े होते हैं वैसे गांव का कद भी बढ़ा होता है। हमारे बचपन में आज जैसे खेल के अवसर नहीं थे।

उस जमाने में हम खेलने के लिए पत्रिकाओं, अखबारों की पुरानी तस्वीरों को काटकर आपस में खेलते थे। हम दूरदर्शन पर जो फिल्में देखते थे, गाने सुनते थे, उन्हें बाद में खेलते थे। वे बातें अनजाने ही मेरे मन में बसती गईं। मुझे तब नहीं पता था कि मुंबई जाकर यह करूंगा। मैट्रिक में अच्छे नंबर आए तो घर वाले मुझे डॉक्टर बनाने की सोचने लगे। पर मैं ग्यारहवीं में विज्ञान विषय में फेल हो गया, तब लिटरेचर ले लिया। उस समय मुझे नहीं पता था कि लिटरेचर क्या है, पर इससे जुड़ने के बाद लगा कि यह तो एक खान है, एक बहुत बड़ा सरमाया है। धीरे-धीरे ना-ना करते हुए भी, बचते-बचाते हुए भी मैं उसकी गलियों में अपने आप जाने लगा। मुझे अच्छा लगने लगा कविताएं पढ़ना, कहानियां पढ़ना। फिर मैंने लिटरेचर लेकर ग्रेजुएशन से आनर्स, पोस्ट ग्रेजुएशन किया। फिर वो वक्त आ गया कि मैंने हिंदी समकालीन कविता में डॉक्टरेट किया। इसके साथ जर्नलिज्म किया।”

कामिल ने यूट्यूब पर जारी शायर सीरीज में साहिर का जिक्र करते हुए कहा कि हमारे जीवन में बहुत सी ऐसी छोटी बड़ी घटनाएं और बातें होती हैं, जिन्हें लोग नहीं जानते, पर वही हमें बनाती हैं। उन्होंने कॉलेज के हॉस्टल में वाले दिनों में एक दोस्त द्वारा एक चम्मच देसी घी के बदले वाक-इन इंटरव्यू स्थल तक पहुंचने, पत्रकारिता के क्षेत्र में नौकरी पाने, फिर चंडीगढ़ में मुंबई के निर्माता-निर्देशक लेख टंडन से हुई मुलाकात का जिक्र करते हुए मुंबई पहुंचने का किस्सा बताया। गुप्ता ने श्रोताओं सहित कामिल से अगला सवाल पूछा कि उनके संग्रह ‘काली औरत का ख्वाब’ की यह काली

औरत कौन है? कामिल का उत्तर था कि जब भी कोई भी आर्टिस्ट किसी भी छोटे गांव या शहर से मुंबई पहुंचता है, वह लेखक हो, एक्टर हो, सिनेमेटोग्राफर हो, कोरियोग्राफर हो, कॉस्ट्यूम डिजाइनर हो, स्टोरी राइटर हो, स्क्रीनप्ले राइटर हो, सिंगर हो, म्यूजिक डायरेक्टर हो, सफर तय करता है तो उसका ख्वाब होता है कि एक दिन मैं फिल्म फेयर की उस काली औरत को अपने हाथ में लूंगा और फिर थैंक यू गॉड, थैंक यू पैरेंट्स कहेगा। यह काली औरत इसलिए महत्वपूर्ण है कि यह सबसे अथेंटिक अवार्ड माना जाता है।

कामिल ने कहा कि मैंने सोचा कि यह वह अवार्ड है जो कभी साहिर को मिला होगा, कभी शकील बदायूनी को, कभी मजरुह मुल्तानपुरी को, कभी आनंद बख्शी को मिला होगा, तो एक

जड़ें जमीन में रहती हैं तो पेड़ आसमान छू ही लेता है। जड़ों से कट जाता है, तो बेकार हो जाता है।” यह कहना है इरशाद कामिल का। वे प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से आयोजित कलम कानपुर में बतौर अतिथि वक्ता बोल रहे थे। कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत लैंडमार्क होटल कानपुर की दक्षा आनंद द्वारा अतिथियों के स्वागत वक्तव्य से हुई। उन्होंने फाउंडेशन के कार्यक्रमों की विस्तृत चर्चा की और बताया कि ‘अपनी भाषा अपने लोग’ को बढ़ावा देने वाली ‘कलम’ की यह यह पहल दुनिया भर में लोकप्रिय है। यहां हम बड़े, नामचीन और कई बार नए लेखकों-कलाकारों को भी उनके प्रशंसकों और पाठकों से सीधे जोड़ते हैं। ब्रिटिश रचनाकार रॉबर्ट ग्रेव्स की इस बात- ‘कवि होना एक शर्त है, पेशा नहीं।’ को अतिथि वक्ता कामिल पर पूरी तरह से फिट बताते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि गीतकार, शायर, कवि, नाटककार, संगीतकार, लेखक और समीक्षक कामिल अपनी तरह के अनूठे हैं। भारतीय फिल्म जगत को उन्होंने अपने अनूठे शब्दों से रौशन किया है।

कामिल का परिचय देते हुए आनंद ने बताया कि आपके पास उदासी के बीच भी खुद की तलाश के लिए ‘तू कोई और है जानता है तू...’ दुनिया के मुखौटे के खिलाफ ‘परमेश्वर, हे परमेश्वर....’ प्रेमिका के लिए ‘शायद कभी ना कह सकूँ मैं तुमसे...’ से लेकर ‘है चका चक चका चक है तू...’ जैसे गीत तो हैं ही; ‘आओगे जब तुम ओ साजना अंगना फूल खिलेंगे...’ और ‘तुम्हें मोहब्बत है...’ जैसे गीत भी हैं। ये गाने युवा दिलों की धड़कनों में गूंजते हैं। फिल्म इंडस्ट्री के लोकप्रिय गानों से सबको लुभा लेने वाले कामिल की ‘बोलती दीवारें’, ‘एक महीना नज्मों का’ और ‘काली औरत का ख्वाब’ नामक संग्रह भी काफी लोकप्रिय हैं। आप सोशल मीडिया प्लेटफॉर्म पर भी युवाओं के लिए मौजूद रहते हैं और तीन बार फिल्म फेयर अवार्ड सहित मिर्ची म्यूजिक, आईफा, गीमा, जी सिने, स्टार गिल्ड, स्क्रीन राइटर्स एसोसिएशन अवार्ड, स्पॉटिफाई, गाना.कॉम आदि से सम्मानित हो चुके हैं। आपको साहिर लुधियानवी पुरस्कार, कैफ़ी आज़मी पुरस्कार और शैलेंद्र पुरस्कार से भी नवाजा जा चुका



Aarti Gupta



Anindita Chatterjee





Lata Goel



Daksha



Raj Gupta



Piali Ray

हायराकीं जो बनती हैं, उसमें आपकी खाहिश होती है कि आप वहां खड़े हों। आपको भी उस लीग में गिना जाए। सारे कंपटिशन और प्रयास के बीच इसे पाना आसान नहीं है। इसीलिए जब यह मिलता है तो यह लगता है 'नाऊ आई हूँ अराइव्ड' मैंने उसी सोच पर यह पुस्तक लिखी है। कामिल से अगला सवाल उनकी पहली फिल्म 'चमेली', इम्तियाज अली से उनकी बांडिंग, और पहली साइन्ड फिल्म के बारे में था? कामिल ने बताया कि 'चमेली' मेरी पहली रिलीज्ड पिक्चर थी, जिसमें से आज भी आपको अक्सर उसके गाने सुनने को मिल जाता है, जिनमें—

भागे रे मन कहीं आगे रे मन  
चला जाने किधर जानू ना...

या फिर

मन सात समुन्दर डोल गया, जो तू आंखों से बोल गया  
ले तेरी हो गयी यार, सजणा वे सजणा...

शामिल हैं। मेरे लिए यह खुशी की बात है कि लगभग 15-16 सालों बाद भी आज भी रेडियो इन गानों को बजा रहा है और ये आपकी प्लेयिंग लिस्ट में हैं। पर मेरी पहली साइन्ड फिल्म 'सोचा न था' थी। यह हम बहुत सारे लोगों की पहली पिक्चर थी। यह इम्तियाज अली, अभय देवल, आयशा टाकिया, उसके आर्ट डायरेक्टर सलीम फड़के की पहली फिल्म थी।

कामिल ने कहा कि यह बहुत सारे पिक्चर बनाने वालों, काम करने के शौकीन लोगों की पहली फिल्म थी। यह पिक्चर मुझे इस फिल्म के म्यूजिक डायरेक्टर संदेश शांडिल्य के चलते मिली थी, जिन्होंने 'आओगे जब तुम ओ साजना अंगना फूल खिलेंगे...', 'पिया बसंती रे काहे सताये आ जा...', 'यू आर माई सोनिया...', 'सूरज हुआ मद्धम चांद जलने लगा...', जैसे बहुत सारे अच्छे गीत दिए हैं। शांडिल्य से मुलाकात का मजेदार किस्सा शेयर करते हुए कामिल ने कहा कि मेरे एक दोस्त ने कई बार इनसे मिलने के लिए कहा। पर मैं उन लोगों में से नहीं हूँ, जो किसी से काम मांगने जाएं। अगर मैं उस काम के लायक हूँ तो वह काम मेरे पास आना चाहिए। मैं बराबर कहता हूँ कि 'मैं सफलता का हिस्सा भर नहीं, बल्कि उसकी वजह बनना चाहता हूँ।' शांडिल्य से जब मैं मिला, तब वह खाना खा रहे थे। उन्होंने कहा कि कुछ सुनाइए। मैंने उनके कहने पर अपनी बीस-पच्चीस-तीस गजलें एक ही नाद में सुना दीं। उनमें से शांडिल्य को यह गीत बेहद भाया—

धूप का एक टुकड़ा रहता है  
इन पलकों की छांव में  
अच्छा खासा शहर बसा है  
एक छोटे से गांव में।  
शौक से तोड़ो मेरे सपने  
लेकिन इतना ध्यान रहे  
कोई सपना चुभ न जाए  
मेहंदी वाले पांव में...

कामिल ने उस जमाने का अपना एंथम भी सुनाया, जिसकी कुछ पंक्तियां यों हैं—  
कुछ ना हुए तो ना सही,  
कुछ ना बने तो ना सही  
कुछ ना मिले तो ना सही  
कुछ ना रहे तो ना सही  
मेरी सोच ने तेरे हुस्न के  
सोलह शृंगार कर दिए

अब मुझसे रूठ के सनम

तू ना रहे तो ना सही...

कामिल का कहना था कि शांडिल्य ने सब कुछ सुनने के बाद कहा कि आपसे मिलना होगा। नंबर दे दो, फोन करूंगा। यह बात मैं कई लोगों से सुन चुका था। मुझे लगा कि ऐसा ही यहां भी होगा। पर ऐसा नहीं हुआ। संदेश का कई बार फोन आया, वे हर बार मुझसे एक शेर सुनते थे और रख देते थे। एक बार मैंने पूछा कि यह क्या है कि आप फोन पर एक शेर सुनकर रख देते हैं, तो उनका जवाब था कि मेरा अफेयर चल रहा है। मैं आपसे सुनकर उधर भेज देता हूँ। मुझे खुशी है कि मेरी शायरी किसी की मोहब्बत के काम आई।

गुप्ता ने कामिल से 'तमाशा' फिल्म के गीत के पीछे की कहानी के बारे में पूछा। कामिल ने 'लव आज कल' के गीत के जिक्र के साथ बताया 'तमाशा' फिल्म बन रही थी तो बहुत सारे काम आर्गेनिक होते हैं। पिक्चर का म्यूजिक दो तरीके से बनता है। एक तो कि ये गाने हैं पिक्चर में डाल दो, या कि ये पिक्चराइज में ये गाने डलेंगे। जो पिक्चराइज के हिसाब से गाने बनते हैं वे आर्गेनिक होते हैं। वे किसी और पिक्चर में नहीं जा सकते। वे आपके साथ ज्यादा समय तक बने रहते हैं। ये गाने पिक्चर में डाल दो कि स्थिति आलू की तरह हो जाता है, जो किसी भी सब्जी में डल सकता है। 'अगर तुम साथ हो...' गाने का जिक्र करते हुए कामिल ने कहा कि जब इम्तियाज ने उसे शूट किया तो उस सीन के लिए हमने एक और गाना भी बनाया था। हमने रहमान साहब को दिखाया। हमने तब एक-एक करके चार गाने छोड़े थे। वे सारे गाने अच्छे थे। पर कहीं आसपास से थे। उन्होंने छोड़े हुए गाने कि भी दो लाइनें सुनाईं—

'अब तेरे प्यार की कुछ जरूरत नहीं मुझे,  
ये भी नहीं कि तुझसे मुहब्बत नहीं मुझे।'

पर इसके बाद यह बना—

तेरी आंखों में हैं तेरे सपने

तेरे सपनों में हैं नाराजी

मुझे लगता है कि बातें दिल की

होती लफ्जों की धोखेबाजी

तुम साथ हो या ना हो क्या फर्क है

बेदर्द थी जिंदगी बेदर्द है...

कामिल ने साहित्य में कामर्स से जुड़े सवाल के उत्तर में उसे रोटी की तरह बताया। उन्होंने कहा कि आटा है कामर्स, साहित्य है नमक। मैं उस रोटी में नमक की तरह साहित्य मिला देता हूँ। जब मैं गीत लिखता हूँ तो सबसे पहले खुद को जो अच्छा लगता है उसका ध्यान रखता हूँ। गाने को कानों की बजाय दिल तक पहुंचाने का प्रयास करता हूँ। सफलता-असफलता से जुड़े सवाल पर कामिल ने अपनी कविताओं के अखबारों-पत्रिकाओं से वापस आने से जुड़े अनुभव भी शेयर किया। उन्होंने कहा कि उस दौरान सौ में से 99 बार रिजेक्शन मिलता था। उन सभी चिट्ठियों को मैंने संभालकर रखा है। सफल होने के बाद अगर मुझे अपने पांव जमीन पर रखने हैं तो उन चिट्ठियों की बहुत अहमियत है। वे चिट्ठियां मुझे बताएंगी कि कैसे मुझे जमीन पर खड़े रहना है। कैसे मुझे अपने पांव जमीन पर टिकाए रहना है। कामिल ने इस सत्र में अपने कई गीत सुनाए और श्रोताओं के सवाल, जिज्ञासाओं का भी बखूबी उत्तर दिया। उन्हें स्मृति चिह्न भी भेंट किया गया।

अहसास वूमन के सौजन्य से आयोजित कलम कानपुर के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट।  
हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर हैं द लैंडमार्क टॉवर्स।



# A Toast to New Beginnings



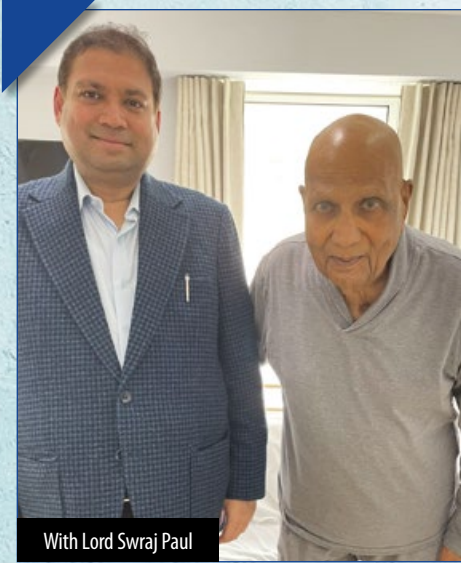
The relationship between India and the United Kingdom has always been one of closeness, complexity and evolution. Most importantly, it has involved rich academic and cultural exchanges, with artists, professionals and scholars from both nations teaching, influencing and learning from one another. Such symbiotic relationships have led to the creation of several new ventures and cultural pursuits. This spirit of forging new bonds and building enduring partnerships found expression in the visits of the Managing Trustee of **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, Sundeep Bhutoria,

to some of the UK's most illustrious cities. The visits involved meetings with academics, dignitaries, creators, **Ehsaas** Women and representatives of several renowned institutions and organizations. With the Foundation's overseas events gathering momentum in the wake of the pandemic, collaborations and new associations were discussed, including the possibility of novel initiatives. Here are a few glimpses from the fruitful meetings which witnessed the coming together of some of the best creative, academic and organizational minds in the two countries.



A meeting with the representatives of various organisations in Birmingham  
(Back row, L-R): Partha Mandal, Steve Ball, Padmesh Gupta and Dharmesh Rajput  
(Middle row, L-R): Titikshaa Shah, Shankar Khemka and Abhigyan Prakash  
(Front row, L-R): Ilika Chakraborty, Iona Mandal, Sundeep Bhutoria, Asha Khemka, Piali Ray, Niti Pall and Jaya Khazaei





With Lord Swraj Paul



With Lord Meghnad Desai at the House of Lords, London



With Deborah Kermode, Chief Executive and Artistic Director, Midland Arts Centre, Birmingham



With Rebecca Hart and Rachel Stevens from the British Council in London



With Lord Rami Ranger

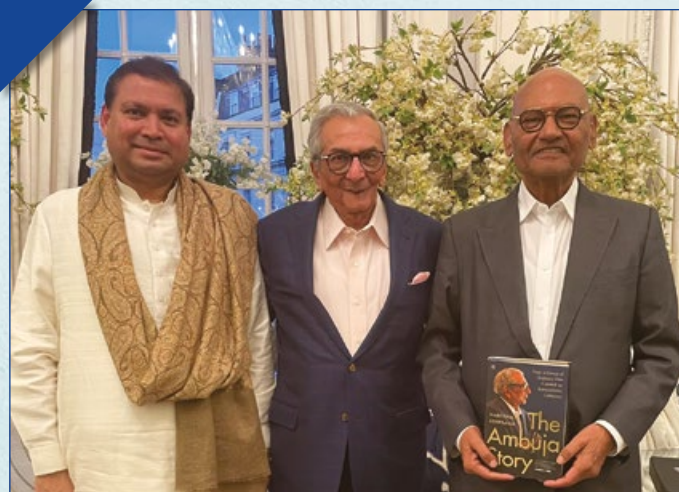


With Kiran Agarwal, Trustee, Vedanta Foundation



With Sriram Aylur, Executive Chef of Quilon, and Padmesh Gupta, Director of Oxford Business College and the Foundation's associate for its events in Oxford





With Anil Agarwal, Chairman, Vedanta Resources Limited, and Narotam Sekhsaria, industrialist and philanthropist



A meeting with Saitesh Singhal, Founder, Youth of India Foundation, and Erik Solheim, President, Green Belt and Road Institute



Sundeep Bhutoria with Vivek Agnihotri and Pallavi Joshi at a lunch meeting. Also present at the lunch were Pooja Maru, Aavya M. Bhutoria, Manjari Maheshwari Bhutoria, Shivani Bhandari, Amish Tripathi, Shekhar Gupta and Lakshmi Kaul



With Bijay Selvaraj, Consul General of India in Edinburgh



With Titiksha Shah and Piali Ray, Ehsaas Women of Birmingham





A lunch meeting with the board members of the Scottish Centre of Tagore Studies and the Consul General of India in Edinburgh at the David Bann Restaurant. Present with Sundeep Bhutoria at the lunch, which was hosted by the Scottish Centre of Tagore Studies, were Lord Charles Bruce, Bashabi Fraser, Gari Donn, Neil Fraser, Stephen Hillier, Lady Joyce Caplan and Bijay Selvaraj



With Geetanjali Shree, author and winner of the International Booker Prize 2022



With Paul Holmes from Edinburgh Napier University, an institution with which the Foundation shares a memorandum of understanding for cross-cultural and educational activities



The electric buzz and warmth of in-person gatherings are unparalleled; after two-and-a-half years of conducting its overseas events online, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** marked the return of its physical events in Oxford, Slough and Birmingham with two of India's most illustrious journalists. Here are glimpses of the wisdom and insights they shared with their audiences at the events



Barkha Dutt

## Walking With the People: India During a Pandemic



Mira Misra Kaushik

winning South Asian organisation. The speakers were welcomed and introduced by the director of Oxford Business College, Padmesh Gupta.

Dutt's book is a memoir of how life changed for the common people when the Indian government declared a sudden lockdown in 2020. She recounted her extensive travelling and road trips across the country during the pandemic. "My extraordinary journey started as soon as

the lockdown was declared, and I went on to cover over 30,000 kilometres," she said. "I wanted to give readers an insight into the crises that the poor faced."

"The work, however, hasn't stopped," Dutt continued. "With new variants of the coronavirus appearing every now and then, we are still battling this crisis. I

have continued my work of recording human stories even after the book was finished." Dutt shed some more light on the people she met from various parts of the country and the stories they had to tell. "*To Hell and Back* exposes the deep-rooted inequalities of class, caste and gender in India," said Dutt. "These inequalities are evident from the stories, most recently those of migrant workers and farmers."



Padmesh Gupta

Barkha Dutt, a featured columnist in *The Hindustan Times* and *The Washington Post*, now runs her own YouTube news channel, Mojo Story. But she has garnered immense fame for her groundbreaking journalism with NDTV. Her courage and determination to consistently report on the lives of people living in war-torn areas made her a household name. She has extensively covered the Kargil War, the 2004 tsunami and the 26/11 Mumbai attacks. Little wonder, then, that she is also a Padma Shri awardee. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, along with the British Council, organised a special session of **The Write Circle** with Dutt at the Oxford Business College. The event witnessed the participation of several lovers of literature who were eager to hear Dutt talk about her new book, *To Hell and Back: Humans of COVID*. Dutt was in conversation with Mira Misra Kaushik, OBE, an independent cultural activist and former director of a UK-based award-

*The Write Circle Oxford was in association with Oxford Business College and British Council*



The audience listens to Barkha Dutt



# The Politics of Development



Padmesh Gupta, Arun Asthana and Abhigyan Prakash

Abhigyan Prakash is well known in the world of journalism. The Senior Executive Editor of ABP News has anchored several award-winning television news shows in his two-decades-long career. His keen understanding of Indian politics has kept him at the helm of specialised election shows such as *Election Point* and *Vote Ki Jung*. In association with the British Council and Oxford Business School, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised two special sessions of **The Write Circle** with Prakash in Slough and Oxford in the

India, as a growing economy, may become the UK's most vital partner, but it should be careful about its social harmony and policy-making at the same time to grow faster globally

United Kingdom. In conversation with Prakash was Arun Asthana, the head of media communications at the Oxford Business School. They discussed Prakash's latest book, *From Lucknow to Lutyens: The Power and Plight of Uttar Pradesh*, which examines the importance of the northern state of Uttar Pradesh in Indian politics.

Padmesh Gupta, director of Oxford Business College, introduced the guest and thanked the Foundation and the British Council for creating an opportunity

for the audience to meet Prakash. During the conversation, Prakash made some interesting points. "India, as a growing economy, may become the UK's most vital partner," he said. "But it should be careful about its social harmony and policy-making at the same time to grow faster globally." *From Lucknow to Lutyens* explores how and why a state that has a population of 300 million and commands arguably the most prominent space in electoral politics in India, is behind other regions on multiple developmental parameters. "In the book,

I have shared my experience of working as a frontline journalist for over two decades," said Prakash. "After 75 years of independence, Indian politics is still influenced by the caste system, vote-bank politics and crimes committed by politicians. This is holding back the development of the country."

The sessions ended with the Slough and Oxford audiences, consisting of residents from different communities and nationalities, researchers from Royal Holloway, students and teachers, asking pertinent questions regarding the influence of UP on the policy-making and political discourse of India.

*The Write Circle Oxford was in association with Oxford Business College and British Council*



The audience listens to Prakash



# Recording Memory Before It Fades

Barkha Dutt's journalistic achievements are the stuff of legend. A featured opinion columnist for *The Hindustan Times* and *The Washington Post*, her reporting has been branded 'fearless', as it tries to tell the stories of people living in war-torn areas and conflict zones. Her coverage of the Kargil War, the 2004 tsunami and the 26/11 Mumbai attacks garnered her immense fame and made her a household name. However, one thing she was yet to check off her bucket list was a visit to Birmingham in the United Kingdom. This wish was fulfilled when she visited the Midlands Arts Centre as the guest of a special session of **The Write Circle** organised by **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**. This was the first in-person session since the pandemic began; Dutt took the opportunity to speak about her book, *To Hell And Back: Humans Of COVID*.

*To Hell And Back* is the result of two years of extensive travelling — Dutt covered over 30,000 kilometres by road to report on the Covid-19 crisis. The latter included an unprecedented exodus of migrant workers across North India. The session's invitees, many of whom were doctors, were keen to hear about the author's experiences. In conversation with Dutt was the founder of Kriti UK and **Ehsaas** Woman of Birmingham, Titiksha Shah. Ranjit Sondhi, CBE, Chair at SAMPAD — an organisation that aims to



If I were to map my two-plus decades in journalism from Kargil to Covid, there is something quite similar in terms of the danger, the adversity and the challenges, and how they transformed me as a human being

connect people to British Asian and South Asian arts and heritage — delivered the welcome note and introduced the guests to the audience. "If I were to map my two-plus decades in journalism from Kargil to Covid," said Dutt, "there is something quite similar in terms of the danger, the adversity and the challenges, and how they transformed me as a human being." With this, the tone for the discussion was set.

Like the audience, Shah, too, wanted to know what *To Hell And Back* was really about. "This book is not about the science of Covid or political policies, which is why you may not want to read it immediately," Dutt clarified. "You may want to distance yourselves or be reluctant to revisit the experiences you've had during the pandemic, but memory needs to be chronicled before it fades."

Documentary producer and news correspondent Anita Bhalla, OBE, Birmingham University's Padma Reddy, Nilti Pal, Peter Patel and Iona Mandal participated in a Q&A session with the author. The legendary Indian dancer Tanusree Shankar was also in attendance, along with Piali Ray, OBE, Director of SAMPAD, Padmesh Gupta, Director of Oxford Business College, K.K. Srivastav, Bakul Kumar and Shibani Nagda of Triveni Media.

*The Write Circle Birmingham was in association with British Council, Sampad, Kriti UK and with the support of Ehsaas Women of Birmingham*





# Those Who Hold Up Half The Sky



Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan

Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan's multi-faceted achievements are no secret. An award-winning children's author whose works have been published in India and the United States, she is also a poet, a translator, an editor and a voice-over artist. Her voice-over work has involved documentaries, educational programmes, journalistic initiatives and audio books. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** hosted a special session of **The Write Circle** in Chennai with Srinivasan. In conversation with Srinivasan was the Indian journalist and author, Minnie Menon. Deepika Goyal, **Ehsaas Woman of Chennai**, welcomed the guests and introduced them to the audience.

Srinivasan and her siblings, one of whom is the parliamentarian and renowned wordsmith, Shashi Tharoor, are known for their exceptional erudition and communication skills. For these skills, Srinivasan credits the Tharoor siblings' mother, Lily Tharoor. Srinivasan emphasised that it was Lily Tharoor who always pushed them to be their best selves. Thus, the author's latest book, *Good Innings: The Extraordinary, Ordinary Life Of Lily Tharoor*, becomes a tribute to her mother, who has lived life on her own terms

and successfully raised three truly global citizens.

However, the decision to write a book on one's mother was not easy for Srinivasan. Thus, when approached by her publisher to write such a book, she was sceptical. "Upon contemplation, I realised that there was merit in the suggestion, as it would mean writing a story about a fiercely independent matriarch which has the potential to inspire the next generation," said the author. "The book was written with the intent of not just celebrating my mother, but celebrating all mothers, all women and those of us who hold up half the sky."



Minnie Menon

Is *Good Innings* a traditional biography? "It is not," said Srinivasan. "It shares, in thirteen chapters, aspects of my mother's life that have been inspiring to her family, friends and those who have known her. But it is also a story that I hope will inspire conversations that reflect on everyone's relationships with their mothers. Moreover, the conception of the book coincided with the pandemic, when people, especially the older generation, were isolated. The book is thus also an effort to revive the



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Lily Tharoor led a life of unparalleled vigour. She never shied away from going the extra mile, whether that be riding the election vehicle with her son, renewing her driving licence as an octogenarian or challenging her children to reach for the stars

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connections that people have with their parents.”

As the conversation flowed, more interesting facets about the fascinating Lily Tharoor were revealed. After all, it is not every day that the first Amul baby in India also goes on to become Miss Calcutta; but Srinivasan achieved both feats in her lifetime because of her mother, who had always wanted her children to be in the spotlight. Despite her husband's early demise, Lily Tharoor led a life of unparalleled vigour. “She never shied away from going the extra mile, whether that be riding the election vehicle with her son, renewing her driving licence as an octogenarian or challenging her children to reach for the stars,” said Srinivasan.

The format of the book also pays homage to Lily Tharoor's unique personality. Rather than being written in the conventional third-person narrative form, it is the combination of a first-person account and a third-person format. “Not only was I the child who gave Lily Tharoor her only granddaughter, but I was also, in a way, the only child that spent time with her consistently after our father's demise. So the stories that are presented are pieced together from the conversations that my daughter and I had with my mother, and also from the accounts of our relatives and my siblings,” revealed Srinivasan. The discussion concluded with the author answering the audience's questions and reading out an excerpt from the author's note. “This book is neither a biography nor simply a self-help text with cult dictums of living... It is a collection of stories put together from the life of a woman who has been a daughter and a wife and is now still a mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. It is a recollection formed from personal memories — a narrative of a strong matriarch.”



Vivek Karunakaran, Vidya Gajapathi Raju Singh, Deepika Goyal, Kaveri Lalchand and Anindita Chatterjee

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Upon contemplation, I realised that there was merit in the suggestion that I write a book about my mother, as it would mean writing a story about a fiercely independent matriarch which has the potential to inspire the next generation. The book was written with the intent of not just celebrating my mother, but celebrating all mothers, all women and those of us who hold up half the sky

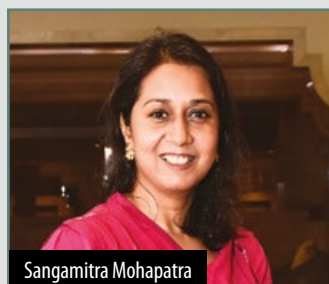
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Vidya Gajapathi Raju Singh, **Ehsaas** Woman of Chennai, delivered the vote of thanks on behalf of the Foundation. Nandita Krishna felicitated the author while Menon was felicitated by Sanjukthaa Roy of the ITC Grand Chola.

*The Write Circle Chennai was organised with the support of Ehsaas Women of Chennai*



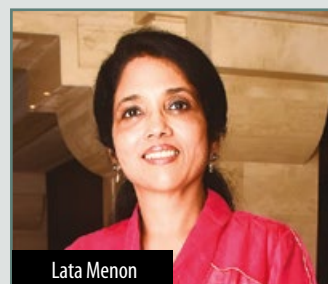
Nandita Krishna



Sangamitra Mohapatra



Sanjukthaa Roy



Lata Menon



# An Ode To the Joy of Dancing



**M**artha Graham, the legendary American ballet dancer and choreographer, had once said, “Dance is the hidden language of the soul, of the body”. Nowhere was this truer than at the seventh edition of the Ballet Exposé in Jaipur, organised by **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** under its **Muskaan** initiative and in association with **Education for All Trust** and **Stripes Inc.** As many as 50 participants between the ages of five and 45 performed ballet and salsa accompanied by authentic Latin, classical and Bollywood tunes, all to bring to life the theme of the event — ‘Nature Nurtures Art’.

The curator of the show, Adittee S. Mansingka, is the founder of **Stripes Inc.**; the programme was moderated by Sakshe Bhatt Somani. While Mansingka expressed her gratitude to everyone who helped her curate the show, Somani helped facilitate the programme. Sumitra Ray, Student Programmes Advisor of the Foundation, spoke about **Muskaan** before the show commenced in full swing.



Adittee S. Mansingka



Symbolising the essential harmony in the natural world and its unmissable effect on the human mind, the first performance was a fusion of Kathak and ballet by the duo, Maati Baani, who gave the audience a unique expression of a *Vandana*.

“It is the imperfections that make the perfections so endearing,” remarked the moderator, as she introduced the youngest ballerinas on the stage, all of whom embodied the perfect imperfections found in nature through their dance. It is, perhaps, the imperfections of life that make it worth living, and the next group of ballerinas explored the joy of life and living through their performance. Celebrating the connection between nature and emotions, the ballerinas danced gracefully and jovially to demonstrate that dance is nothing but a choreography of emotions.

Despite imperfections, the intricacy in every element of nature supersedes any man-made wonder. In order to celebrate this, a video by Stripes Inc. was played showing young ballerinas who practised online during the time of pandemic-induced restrictions. They executed the choreography perfectly and paid homage to the faultless detailing in the natural world. Much like in nature, harmony and synchronisation were also the key elements of Mansingka and Aliya Singh’s creative presentation where Singh’s silhouette perfectly matched Mansingka’s ballet steps.

Nature helps in healing with its innate music and rhythm. And much like nature, dance not only allows us to blend with music and beats, but it also improves our functional movements. Dance in general and ballet in particular help in developing good posture — and this was demonstrated by the young girls with pointed toes, their hands in the air and their

heads held high as they painted a rainbow in the sky with their lovely performances. Correlating all the elements in nature, the young ballerinas delivered several other mesmerising performances that celebrated the beauty of nature to express the idea of ‘flower power’.

The performances, however, were not just restricted to ballet; the salsa dancers soon set the stage on fire with their moves. What followed was even more interesting: a video that showed the children enjoying their dance lessons, as movement is the first and the purest form of communication.

In the grand finale, all the participants in the programme, including Mansingka, executed the choreography accurately, moving along with the music and harmonising with one another. The audience broke out in applause at the conclusion of the show. A perfect blend of choreography and music made each of the performances adhere to the theme, reflecting the essence of nature nurturing creativity and artistic development.

At the conclusion of the show, Mansingka thanked the audience and everyone who had helped her make the show a success. Apra Kuchhal, the Foundation’s Honorary Convenor of Rajasthan & Central India Affairs, praised the wonderful performances and spoke about the Foundation’s dedication to promoting the performing arts, culture, education, literature, gender equality and women’s empowerment. She thanked Mansingka for undertaking the task of keeping a splendid dance form like the ballet alive in the Pink City.

*This session of **Muskaan** was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Stripes Inc.*



Sakshe Bhatt Somani



Sumitra Ray



Apra Kuchhal



A packed auditorium







Neha Raghav



# There Is Only One Earth

An increasingly devastating impact of climate change on the planet and its biodiversity has compelled the United Nations to declare the crisis as 'code red'. Real action will involve much more than just conducting high-level international conferences and signing climate treaties; it will require collective action bolstered by the work of every citizen of the world. To promote awareness about the need to protect our environment, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, under its **Muskaan** initiative, recently celebrated the 48<sup>th</sup> World Environment Day with the theme 'Only One Earth'. Sumitra Ray, Student Programmes Advisor of the Foundation, opened the session by talking about the environment and about the World Wide Fund for Nature-India. "WWF-India's commitment has been to create and demonstrate practical solutions to conserve India's ecosystems and rich biodiversity. It finds science-based, sustainable solutions for protecting, preserving and restoring the rich treasures of nature. WWF-India's outreach awareness campaigns are designed to educate people on how to take care of the environment."

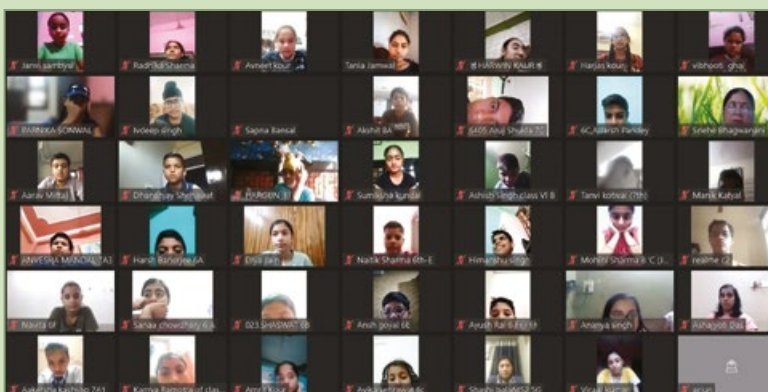


WWF-India's Content and Training, Education Specialist, Neha Raghav, took the stage after Ray. She shared the story of how WWF got its logo. "In 1954, when giant pandas were an endangered species, Chi Chi, a giant panda, was brought to the London Zoo. Chi Chi was chosen as a symbol to promote preservation and conservation. The conservation efforts were doubled as sticking to the colours black and white meant saving ink when printing logos!" Raghav then highlighted the three main areas of work that WWF-India focuses on. "We work to conserve endangered animals, protect their habitats and other 'critical regions', and reduce global footprint by mitigating negative human actions that endanger species and habitats," she said. "The goal of WWF is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature." Raghav even played a short video that showed the kind of work WWF-India has done across the country in the past 50 years to protect tribal populations, places and species.

The young audience was delighted to go on a virtual trip through the natural world, which was part of *One Earth One Home*, an interactive digital journey created by WWF-India. This was followed by a quiz session where students learned about birds and trees. They discussed the significance of these life forms in a healthy ecosystem and the threats they face. The young ones were made aware of soil erosion and forest fires, and the need to plant more trees.

Raghav participated in a Q&A session with the audience before Ray concluded the discussion with a vote of thanks.

*This session of **Muskaan** was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with WWF-India*





# अच्छा रचनाकार वह जिसके लिखे के साथ आप जीने लगते हैं: इरशाद कामिल

अच्छे गीत वो अच्छे गीत होते हैं जो आपके साथ रहते हैं। अच्छे गीत हमारे सबसे अच्छे दोस्त होते हैं। जब मन अच्छा हो तो हमें कोई गीत सूझ जाता है, मन उदास हो तब भी हमें कोई गीत सूझ जाता है, अकेले हों तब भी कोई गीत सूझ जाता है। हर जगह हमें हमारा दोस्त गीत हमें मिल जाता है। हम उसकी उंगली थाम लेते हैं और हमारा मन हल्का हो जाता है।” यह कहना है कवि, गीतकार, लेखक इरशाद कामिल का। वे **प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन** द्वारा आयोजित **कलम** लखनऊ में बोल रहे थे।

कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत **ताज महल लखनऊ** के महाप्रबंधक विनोद पाण्डेय द्वारा अतिथियों के औपचारिक स्वागत से हुई। आयोजकों की ओर से अहसास वूमेन दीपा मिश्रा ने स्वागत वक्तव्य दिया। उन्होंने फाउंडेशन के कार्यक्रमों की विस्तृत चर्चा की और कहा कि ‘अपनी भाषा अपने लोग’ को बढ़ावा देने वाली ‘**कलम**’ नामक यह पहल दुनिया भर में लोकप्रिय है। अतिथि कामिल का परिचय देते हुए उन्होंने उनके गीतकार, शायर, कवि, नाटककार, संगीतकार, लेखक और समीक्षक होने की बात कही और बताया कि फिल्म इंडस्ट्री के लोकप्रिय गानों से सबको लुभा लेने वाले कामिल की ‘**बोलती दीवारें**’, ‘**एक महीना नज्मों का**’ और ‘**काली औरत का ख्वाब**’ नामक संग्रह भी काफी लोकप्रिय हैं। आप सोशल मीडिया प्लेटफॉर्म पर भी युवाओं के लिए मौजूद रहते हैं और तीन बार **फिल्म फेयर अवार्ड** सहित कई पुरस्कारों से सम्मानित हैं।

संवाद की शुरुआत **अहसास वूमेन** कनक रेखा चौहान ने इन शब्दों से की कि साहिर लुधियानवी के लुधियाना और आनंद बक्शी के नाभा के बीच संगरूर जिले के मलेरकोटला में जन्मे इरशाद को किसी परिचय की दरकार नहीं है। पंजाबी, उर्दू, हिंदी से मिलकर खालिस हिंदुस्तानी से जो शायरी हम पढ़ते हैं उससे यह जिज्ञासा होती है कि आपकी प्राथमिक भाषा कौन सी है? इरशाद ने साहिर के हवाले से उत्तर देते हुए कहा कि ‘**किसको मैं अपना कहूँ किसको कहूँ बेगाना, पंजाबी है अगर मां मेरी, उर्दू मेरी माशूक है।**’ पर इसके साथ-साथ मैं यह भी कहना चाहूंगा कि पंजाबी मां और उर्दू माशूक के साथ हिंदी भी मेरे साथ जन्म ली है, साथ चली है। सालों पहले समकालीन कविता पर जब मैंने पीएचडी की तब इस पर सामग्री कम मिलती थी। तब मैं सोचता था कि पंजाबी मुझे मिट्टी ने दे दी है, उर्दू मुझे विरासत में मिली है, इसलिए हिंदी में अच्छे से सीख लूं ताकि पूरी तरह एक जवान का आदमी बन जाऊं। पूरी तरह मुझे भाषाओं का पता चल जाए।

पढ़ने-लिखने से जुड़े सवाल के उत्तर में इरशाद ने कहा कि एक इन्सान अपनी जिंदगी को ज्यादातर एक तरीके से जी रहा होता है। आप उस तरह जीते हैं, जैसे जीना चाहते हैं। कहा भी गया है कि इन्सान जो कुछ बनता है अपनी पसंद से बनता है। लेकिन अगर मैं इसी जिंदगी को जीते-जीते कोई और जिंदगी जीना चाहूँ, तो उसका क्या हल है, क्या तरीका है। इसका एक ही तरीका है कि मैं किसी और लेखक का लिखा पढ़ूँ। अगर आप किसी लेखक को पढ़ते हैं तो उनके साथ उनकी रचनाओं की जिंदगी जीने लगते हैं। गोर्की की मां पढ़ते हुए हम उसके साथ होते हैं, ऐसे ही प्रेमचंद के गोदान, बशीर



Kanak Rekha Chauhan



Deepa Mishra



Madhuri Halwasiya



Anindita Chatterjee



Simu Ghai



Vinod Pandey



Irshad Kamil

बद्र की शायरी, सलीम खतौलवी, रसूल हमजातोव, काजू, शिव कुमार बटालवी को पढ़ते हुए, वे जिस तरह की जिंदगी बयान करते हैं, उसके साथ जीते हैं। अच्छा लेखक वह होता है, जो आपके साथ दस मिनट बिताता है, फिर आपको बहुत देर तक छोड़ता नहीं। कामिल का कहना था कि गा तो लेता है हर आदमी पर हर गाने वाले को श्रोता नहीं मिलता है। अच्छा गायक वह है जिसे श्रोता मिल जाता है।

ओ नादान परदे घर आ जा... गीत की चर्चा और युवाओं में अपनी लोकप्रियता से जुड़े सवाल पर कामिल ने कहा कि **रॉक स्टार** की अलबम में चौदह गाने थे। उस फिल्म के दौरान गाना हिट करने की बजाय कनेक्ट बनाने की कोशिश की गई थी। एक बार दिल में जब घर बन जाती है तो वहां से निकलना मुश्किल है। तब हम डरे हुए थे कि पहला गाना कौन सा रिलीज किया जाए। लोग समझ पाएंगे या नहीं। मेरा तजर्बा यह कहता है कि हमारी नौजवान पीढ़ी पिछली पीढ़ी से ज्यादा समझदार पीढ़ी है। वह मुखौटे में विश्वास नहीं करती। मैं कोशिश करता हूँ कि असल अहसास तक पहुंच सकूँ। हममें से सभी लोगों को पता है कि सही क्या है, गलत क्या है, पर हम उसे नजर अंदाज कर देते हैं। उन्होंने **तमाशा** फिल्म का गीत भी सुनाया।

कामिल ने कहा कि खुदा के साथ हर व्यक्ति का अपना निजी रिश्ता होता है, जैसे एक मां के चार बच्चों का अपना अलग तरह का रिश्ता होता है, अलग तरह के सवाल होते हैं, अलग तरह का हक होता है। कामिल ने कहा कि कई बार हम अपनी फीलिंग को नकारने लगते हैं। कई बार हम बेचैन होते हैं, पर कई बार हमें पता नहीं चलता। पता चल भी जाता है तो हम स्वीकारते नहीं। नारी मन से जुड़े सवाल के उत्तर में कामिल ने कहा मैं जिनके लिए गाने लिखता हूँ, वही हो जाता हूँ। कामिल ने अपने कई गीत और कविताएं भी सुनाई और सवाल-जवाब सत्र में भी हिस्सा लिया। आयोजकों की ओर से सीमू घई ने स्मृति चिन्ह दिया और माधुरी हलवासिया ने धन्यवाद ज्ञापन दिया।

अहसास वूमेन के सौजन्य से आयोजित **कलम लखनऊ** के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट। लखनऊ एक्सप्रेस, हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर ताज महल लखनऊ और मीडिया पार्टनर दैनिक जागरण का भी सहयोग मिला।



Anamika Srivastava



Jyotsana Kaur Habibullah



Pavan Kumar



Vijay Sahi



# The Love of Dogs is a Divine Love

“Home is where the dog runs to greet you.” And Hemali Sodhi is quite familiar with that wonderful feeling. As an animal lover, Sodhi actively works for animal welfare. An experienced publisher, Sodhi’s passion for books and her communications expertise reflects in her literary agency — named A Suitable Agency — that represents writers and provides advice on corporate communications and brand strategy. She is also the consultant for the New India Foundation and the head of communications at the Centre for Policy Research. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised a special session of **The Write Circle** in Jaipur with Sodhi, one that pet parents were elated to attend. Sodhi was in conversation with Richa Mirdha, a former television journalist who is now a freelance editor with Penguin Random House. The guests shared stories about their furry friends and spoke about *The Book of Dog*, a collection of essays penned by dog parents and edited by Sodhi.

“I wasn’t born a dog lover, but I married into a family that adores dogs,” said Sodhi. “Having my first dog, Simba, was a transformative experience. Gentle and friendly, Simba travelled with us wherever we went. He was the anchor my husband and I had during the lockdowns. Simba was happy to see us home all day, and the love that he showered on us helped us through distressing times.”

The conversation moved on to *The Book of Dog*, which, as Mirdha pointed out, “has 45 original accounts of some leading Indian writers, all of whom are dog lovers and pet parents”. Some big names that have contributed to this book are Aanchal Malhotra, Anindita Ghose, Anuja Chauhan, Cyrus Broacha, Devdutt Pattanaik, Gulzar, Ruskin Bond and Sooni Taraporevala. “*The Book of Dog* is a testament to how deeply dogs touch our lives. It explores the unique bond we have with them and the

special place they hold in our hearts,” said Sodhi. What is Sodhi’s favourite story from the book? “I cannot pick one,” said Sodhi. “Each story is special. There are happy stories as well as stories of loss. Loss is inevitable for a dog parent, but it’s the love for a dog that this book encapsulates. Dogs teach us to live in the moment.”

What is Sodhi’s opinion of people who do not like dogs or other animals? “We must clearly understand the difference between being fearful and being cruel,” said Sodhi. “Fear is understandable and can be overcome, but there is no excuse for animal cruelty. We have to teach children and make people aware of the need to be sensitive towards dogs and other animals, and to learn to coexist in harmony.”

Before interacting with the pet parents in the audience, Sodhi read Cyrus Broacha’s essay from the book and shared his humour-laced wisdom about parenting a dog. The session ended with Vaidehi Singh, the Principal of Maharaja Sawai Bhawani Singh School, felicitating the guests.

*The Write Circle Jaipur was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Siyahi, Spagia Foundation, ITC Rajputana and with the support of Ehsaas Women of Jaipur*



Nirmal Sen



Goutam Sen



Nisha Singh



Ritika Bhargava



Pushpendra Bhargava



Nandini Atal



Ajay Atal



Richa Mirdha



Hemali Sodhi



Mita Kapur



Sourav Burman



## Keeping Up With The Magic

**M**agic exploits the gaps in our conscious minds to create powerful psychological illusions. The art of magic digs deep into the idea of perception and reality. And modern magic is equally captivating; even as one of the oldest forms of the performing arts, it never lost its appeal. Sourav Burman is a stalwart in modern magic entertainment in India. A prominent magician, illusionist and mentalist, in his career that spans over thirty years, he has never fallen short of entertaining, engaging and thrilling the audiences.

Burman, who does both large-scale magic shows and more private, interactive sessions, has toured the world and performed as a resident entertainer for the Carnival Cruise Line. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, under its initiative **Muskaan**, invited Burman for a virtual session to entertain a young audience enthusiastic about magic and illusions. Sumitra Ray, the Foundation's Student Programmes Advisor, set the ball rolling with her welcome speech.

Burman opened the show with some quick illusion tricks that immediately captured the young audience's attention. He even asked a young spectator to participate in one of his opening tricks. "Magic is all about optical illusions," he said. "I remember, when I was four or five years old, I was inspired by a street magician who used to visit our colony. He performed many weird acts, one of which was a thread spool trick that intrigued me the most." Burman then performed the same thread spool act for his audience.

He had many more tricks up his sleeve to entertain the kids who were excitedly waiting for more. He used various props such as a piece of paper, Chinese rings, a deck of cards and ropes. A trick that involved four coins and two rubber bands was quite interesting, as the illusionist magically united the bands into one before transferring the coin first from one hand to the other, and then to a glass. Burman also performed a trick in which he turned a handkerchief into an egg, and then pulled it out of his pocket. Not only was the audience enthralled,

but they also learned from the magician as he explained the act and taught them how to do it themselves.

Before Ray delivered her vote of thanks, Burman performed one last trick. He turned a white paper flower into a bouquet of red and white ones. Burman's act was a consummate performance, enriched with synchronised music, captivating tricks and a willingness to teach the young learners in attendance.

*Muskaan is presented by  
Shree Cement Ltd*





# Telling the Stories that Truly Matter



Barkha Dutt

"I hate reporting on people like they are just numbers. I would rather dig deeper to connect my audience to those who are in distress," says Barkha Dutt, who has broken several gender stereotypes in journalism through her fearless reporting. With courage and determination, she has told the stories of people living in war zones. Her extensive coverage of the Kargil War, the tsunami of 2004 and the 26/11 Mumbai attacks made her a household name and won her immense fame. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised a special session of **The Write Circle** in Hyderabad with Dutt, where she spoke about her chosen medium for journalism and her book, *To Hell And Back: Humans of COVID*. In conversation with Dutt was Mourya Boda, **Ehsaas Woman** of Hyderabad. The guests were introduced to the audience by Anjum Babukhan, **Ehsaas Woman** of Hyderabad.

Dutt is a featured opinion columnist in *The Washington Post* and *The Hindustan Times*. Among the many awards she has won, the Padma Shri stands out as the most prestigious. Her YouTube news channel, Mojo Story, is an independent multimedia digital channel that aims to report the truth under all circumstances. Dutt spent two years travelling more than 30,000 kilometres to report on the Covid-19 crisis. *To Hell And Back* gives readers several insights into the years of the pandemic and chronicles the humanitarian crises that plagued the country. Her extensive coverage of the



Mourya Boda

When the 1965 India-Pakistan war broke out, my mother [the legendary journalist Prabha Dutt] wasn't allowed to go cover the war from the frontlines, as she was a woman. So she took leave from work and went on her own anyway. That makes her the first woman to cover a war from the frontlines. This is where my rebellious streak comes from: my mother

largest exodus of migrant workers across North India is second to none.

As the daughter of legendary journalist Prabha Dutt, Barkha Dutt has journalism in her genes. Even though she lost her mother at an early age, she did not forget the passion her mother had for journalism. "Once my mother went looking for a journalist's job at *Hindustan Times* where she was laughed at for wanting to enter mainstream journalism as a woman," said Dutt. "But she worked her way up to eventually become the head of the newsroom." Dutt does not believe that she is the first woman to report from the frontlines of a war zone. "When the 1965 India-Pakistan war broke out, my mother wasn't allowed to go cover the war from the frontlines, as she was a woman. So she took leave from work and went on her own anyway. That makes her the first woman to cover a war from the frontlines. This is where my rebellious streak comes from: my mother."

Although Dutt did not have permission to enter the Kargil war zone initially, she did manage to make her way in. "The greatest challenge was not the lack of food, water or other



resources, but to get the war footage back to the headquarters. I walked for hours, looking for helipads that were carrying bodies of martyred soldiers and begged the pilots to take the tapes to the capital. I wanted people to see the stories of fear, bravery, love and loss that soldiers in war zones experience.”

Dutt believes *To Hell And Back* tells the stories of all the different people who have displayed how resilient the human spirit is. “It’s not just stories of devastation and heartbreak, but hope and compassion too,” she said. “Wherever I travelled, I found a shortage of food and water owing to the lockdown. But people came together to help each other out. We saw oxygen *langars* at the *gurudwaras*, people providing food to migrants and making temporary arrangements for sheltering the homeless.” Dutt’s powerful stories and the way she tells them compel people to care. She advised budding journalists to work on their communication and storytelling skills to find a real connection with their readers.



Anjum Babukhan

Why did Dutt walk away from television news reporting and move to a digital news platform? “There are three main reasons,” said Dutt. “First, I felt disillusioned with TV. There is less news about people’s plight,

Being in the comfortable studio of an established organisation made me lose my connection with people. I always believed that I am a people’s person, but I realised that I was drifting away, and that I didn’t want to be an employee anymore. Having my own space, no matter how big or small, seemed more important. By the end of 2019, I had decided that I needed to find the magic of journalism again. That is how Mojo Story started, because ‘mojo’ means ‘magic’. It’s a constant reminder of what I love about my job

reporting standards have fallen, and loud, misleading debates have taken over. The second reason is laziness. I begin the book by talking about my own journey. And I have to admit that I did become a little lazy. Being in the comfortable studio of an established organisation made me lose my connection with people. I always believed that I am a people’s person, but I realised that I was drifting away.” Her third reason may resonate with a lot of people today. “I realised that I didn’t want to be an employee anymore. Having my own space, no matter how big or small, seemed more important. By the end of 2019, I had decided that I needed to find the magic of journalism again. That is how Mojo Story started, because ‘mojo’ means ‘magic’. It’s a constant reminder of what I love about my job.”

Dutt believes she has found poise and independence in her work and career. “I feel freer and more like my own self. Besides, who does not like to be their own boss? The responsibility is huge, but the rewards are great as well. With Mojo Story, I have my own digital news platform to practise my form of journalism that actually resonates with people, and keeps me motivated to continue doing what I love the most.” The deeply engaging session came to a close with Mansi Malik, **Ehsaas** Woman of Hyderabad, giving a vote of thanks to the guests and the audience.

*The Write Circle Hyderabad was in association with ITC Kohenur and with the support of Ehsaas Women of Hyderabad*



Mansi Malik



Faiz Khan



Jayesh Ranjan



Asghar Hussain





Kalyan Singh Shekhawat

## मायड़ भाषा के बिना राजस्थान गूंगा है: कल्याण सिंह शेखावत से अभिलाषा पारीक का संवाद



Abhilasha Pareek

जै जै जै दूँडाड सुरंगा  
जै जै जै आमेर सुरंगा  
जै जै जै राधा गोविंदा

पिंकसिटी जैपुर की जै जै... दूँडाडी बोली की इस कविता के साथ आखर राजस्थान के इस सत्र की शुरुआत हुई। प्रदक्षिणा पारीक ने स्वागत वक्तव्य और अतिथि साहित्यकार कल्याण सिंह शेखावत और संवादकर्ता अभिलाषा पारीक का परिचय दिया। उन्होंने भाषाई विविधता की बात इस शेर से की—  
चमन में इखितलात-ए-रंग-ओ-बू से बात बनती है,  
हम ही हम हैं तो क्या हम हैं तुम ही तुम हो तो क्या तुम हो..! आगे की बातचीत अभिलाषा पारीक ने की।



(L-R) Monika Saroliya, Thakur Durga Singh, Mrs. Singh, Pramod Sharma and Deepa Mathur

पारीक ने आखर की तारीफ की और अतिथि वक्ता शेखावत के योगदान को रेखांकित करते हुए पूछा कि आपको राजस्थानी में लिखने और साहित्य सृजन के लिए किसने प्रेरित किया? शेखावत का उत्तर था, “बचपन में ही पिताजी का स्वर्गवास हो गया। इसके बाद माताजी सुबह-सुबह हरजस गाया करती थीं, जिसका मेरे बालक मन पर गहरा प्रभाव पड़ा। स्कूल में एक अध्यापक के कहने पर लिखने की प्रेरणा जाग्रत हुई। मेरे गांव में राजस्थानी भाषा की दूँडाडी बोली में लिखने वाला कोई नहीं था, इसलिए मैंने इस बोली में लिखना प्रारम्भ किया। इस कड़ी में सबसे पहले दोहे और चौपाइयों में लिखना शुरू किया। मेरी सभी कहानियां तथा कविताएं पारिवारिक, सामाजिक और बच्चों की शिक्षा पर हैं। दूँडाडी जयपुर क्षेत्र की रियासत कालीन जयपुर राज्य की भाषा भी है।” उन्होंने यह कविता पढ़ी—

गूंगा थारी बात की के जग में पैचाण।  
मायड़ भाषा के बिना गूंगो राजस्थान॥

पारीक ने शेखावत से उनकी शुरुआती रचनाओं में से कुछ सुनाने का अनुरोध किया। शेखावत ने सुनाया—  
मैं दूँडाडी डावड़ो, दूँडाडी का गीत।  
माटी को रिण ऊतरै, बधै सवाई प्रीत॥  
मारवाड़ मुरधर बसै, पहाड़ां में मेवाड़।  
निजरां में सब कै बसै, सतरंगो दूँडाड़...

साहित्य के क्षेत्र में पूरी तरह से सक्रिय कब हुए और आपकी पहली किताब कब प्रकाशित हुई? के उत्तर में शेखावत ने बताया कि वर्ष 2007 में दूरसंचार विभाग से सेवानिवृत्ति के बाद लेखन के प्रति अपनी रुझान को फिर से जाग्रत किया और इसी क्षेत्र में पूर्णतः समर्पित हो गया। वर्ष 2013 में पहला काव्य संग्रह ‘दूँडाडी महक’ प्रकाशित हुआ। पारीक के यह पूछने पर कि ऐसी कोई रचना जिसे रचकर आपको आत्मिक सुख

अनुभव हुआ हो? शेखावत का उत्तर था कि अपने लेखन में कन्या-भ्रूण हत्या जैसे सामाजिक विषयों पर लिखकर मुझे आत्मिक संतुष्टि हुई। उन्होंने सुनाया—

सगळा ही दुसमण बण्या, कन्या कूँख लखाय।  
रगत मांस को लोथड़ो, थां रो कोई खाय॥  
चिड़िया छूँ इण आंगणे, चुगस्युं दाणा च्यार।  
बाबुल घर सूबस बसो, आस्युं बार, तिवार...

पारीक ने पूछा कि आपने बच्चों के लिए भी कई लघु पुस्तिकाएं रची हैं। जिनमें युवराज नवेलो, बालू को टीलो आदि शामिल हैं। इनमें से कुछ सुनाइये। शेखावत ने फिर कई छोटी कविताएं सुनाई—  
के ऊं की मजबूरियाँ, के ऊं कै मन फाँस।

चौराया पर बेचर यो, गुबारा में साँस॥  
साँस की गिणती भूल्यो!  
अठनी देखर फूल्यो !!

दुमदार दोहे —  
बीघा तीन जमीन का, तेरह हिस्सादार।  
सबका सब गढ़ राजवी, मोटा जागिरदार॥  
पारीक ने कहा कि मायड़ भाषा की बात करते हैं, तो हमें पहले अपने गांव की याद आती है। आपने इस पर भी काफी कुछ लिखा है, तो शेखावत का कहना था कि गांव तो मन में बसा हुआ है। उन्होंने गांव को लेकर लिखे दोहे सुनाए—  
यादां में गहरे बस्यो, वा छोटो सो गाँव।  
जठै कदे थिरक्या घणा, म्हारा नाना पाँव॥  
याद सुपनां में झूलां!  
बताओ कीकर भूलां !  
तन मन नै सीतल करै, बूढ़ा बड़ की छांव।  
भूल न पायो आज तक, मैं छोटो सो गांव...

पारीक के अनुवाद से जुड़े सवाल पर शेखावत ने बताया कि मैंने वरिष्ठ साहित्यकार देवकिशन राजपुरोहित की ‘बैकुंटी’ पुस्तक का राजस्थानी से हिंदी में अनुवाद किया है। अंत में उन्होंने बेटी की विदाई पर लिखा गीत सुनाकर सबको भावुक कर दिया। गीत कुछ यों था—

चिड़कली राता कींकर नैण।  
डोल्या डगमग डूंगर मगरा,  
डकरावै ज्युं ऐण॥  
लाडां कोडां पाळी पोसी,  
जामण जीव जड़ी।  
काळजिए की कोर डीकरी,  
मिठड़ी सोन चिड़ी...

कार्यक्रम के अंत में आयोजकों की ओर से प्रमोद शर्मा ने सभी का आभार प्रकट किया।

प्रभा खताना फाउंडेशन और ग्रासरूट फाउंडेशन की ओर से आयोजित आखर के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट, हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर हैं आईटीसी राजपूताना।



Seema Choudhary



Gopal Sharma



Pradakshina Pareek



## साहित्य अपने समय को दर्ज करे, ताकि इतिहास बन सके: डॉ गोरख प्रसाद 'मस्ताना'



Gorakh Prasad 'Mastana'



Md. Danish

साहित्य समाज का दर्पण होता है। समकालीन समाज का दुख, दर्द, पीड़ा, दुराचार लिखा जाना चाहिए ताकि वह अपने समय का इतिहास बन सके। आज के समय में इस तरह के लेखन की कमी है।" यह बात प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन और मसि इंक की ओर से पटना के बीआईए हॉल में आयोजित आखर कार्यक्रम में डॉ गोरख प्रसाद मस्ताना ने कही। आयोजकों की ओर से अतिथियों का स्वागत, धन्यवाद ज्ञापन और डॉ मस्ताना का परिचय मसि इंक की आराधना प्रधान ने दिया, तो मस्ताना से संवाद की जिम्मेदारी भोजपुरी विद्वान दानिश ने उठाई। उन्होंने मस्ताना की ही एक रचना 'भाषा भोजपुरिया पर अर्पित उमरिया, हम पुरबिया हई' का जिक्र करते हुए उनके व्यक्तित्व और कृतित्व यात्रा के बारे में जानना चाहा और पूछा कि आपने भोजपुरी में लेखन की शुरुआत कैसे की?

मस्ताना ने बताया, "हमारा जन्म भोजपुरी की माटी में हुआ। चंपारण भोजपुरी की बहुत पुरानी जमीन है। वहां सभी जाति, धर्मों के लोग, लगभग 99 प्रतिशत लोग भोजपुरी ही बोलते हैं। अब वहां जनम-कर्म हुआ, पढ़ाई-लिखाई हुई, तो भोजपुरी तो मेरे नस-नस में है। मेरे खून में है। लेखन की शुरुआत भी भोजपुरी में हुई। स्कूल के दिनों में शनिवार की बाल सभा में अंताक्षरी होती थी। उस दौरान तुकबंदी करने का फायदा बाद में लेखन में मिला। सातवीं कक्षा में मैंने पहला राजनीतिक गीत लिखा। मेरे मामा जी चुनाव लड़ रहे थे। उनका चुनाव चिह्न हाथी था। तो उसी पर गीत लिखा, गाया। संयोग से मामाजी चुनाव जीत गए, तो उनकी जीत का श्रेय मुझे मिला।"

दानिश के अनुरोध पर मस्ताना ने अपना चर्चित गीत 'भाषा भोजपुरिया हम हई भोजपुरिया, हम पुरबिया हई' गाकर सुनाया। दानिश ने राष्ट्रीय नाट्य विद्यालय के लिए रचित भोजपुरी नाटक 'नरेगा का मेला' का जिक्र करते हुए मस्ताना से भोजपुरी में अन्य विधाओं की स्थिति के बारे में जानना चाहा। मस्ताना ने कहा कि 'नरेगा का मेला' सत्रह एकांकी का संकलन है। यह शैक्षिक एकांकी है, जिससे कुछ शिक्षा मिले। स्कूल में जो नाटक खेले जाते हैं, उससे लोगों को प्रेरणा मिले, इसके लिए इसकी रचना की। पर नाटक लिखने की जो प्रेरणा मिली वह भिखारी ठाकुर को पढ़ते-गुनते हुए मिले संस्कार से मिली। उन्होंने कहा कि भोजपुरी में गद्य, लघुकथा, कहानी, खंड काव्य में लिख ही रहा था, तो मुझे लगा कि नाटक पर भी काम करना चाहिए। चूंकि मैं शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में था, तो उसको हमेशा ध्यान रखा।

मस्ताना ने राष्ट्रभाषा परिषद द्वारा भिखारी ठाकुर समग्र की चर्चा करते हुए भिखारी ठाकुर के विदेशिया, बेटी वियोग, बेटी बेचवा, विधवा विलाप, ननद-भौजाई, गंगा स्नान आदि नाटकों का जिक्र किया और कहा कि ठाकुर ने समाज की विकृति, जमींदारों के अत्याचार, गरीबों की भूख, बेटियों की समस्या को नाटक के माध्यम से दिखाया। दस-बारह वर्ष की उम्र में बेटी का विवाह हो जाने पर उस पर क्या गुजरती होगी, इस पीड़ा को ठाकुर ने दर्ज किया। यही वजह थी कि राहुल सांस्कृतिकान ने भिखारी ठाकुर को 'भोजपुरी का शेक्सपियर, अनगढ़ हीरा' कहा। इसीलिए मैंने सोचा कि जिस तरह से भिखारी ठाकुर ने अपने समय की समस्याओं पर लिखा, मैं भी आज की समस्याओं- भ्रष्टाचार की समस्या, परिवारों के टूटने की समस्या आदि पर काम करूं। आज दिल्ली जैसे महानगरों में वृद्धा आश्रम है, पर भिखारी ठाकुर ने सौ साल पहले 'बूढ़ा घर' नाटक लिख दिया था। इस तरह भिखारी ठाकुर युग द्रष्टा, युग स्रष्टा नाटककार हैं।

भिखारी ठाकुर के प्रभाव से जुड़े सवाल पर विस्तार से अपना मत रखते हुए

मस्ताना ने उनके द्वारा लिखे कई गीतों की चर्चा की, जिनमें से एक गीत एक उम्रदराज लड़के से बेटी के विवाह से जुड़े दर्द पर था। उन्होंने भिखारी ठाकुर द्वारा लिखे इस गीत की बानगी भी पूरे दर्द और लय में सुनाई। बेटी वियोग गीत के बोल थे-

गिरिजा-कुमार!, कर... दुखवा हमार पार;

ढर-ढर ढरकत बा लोर मोर हो बाबूजी।

पढ़ल-गुनल भूलि गइली, समदल भेंडी भइली;

सउदा बेसाहे में ठगइला हो बाबूजी...

मस्ताना का कहना था कि भिखारी ठाकुर ने न केवल अपने समय की पीड़ा को दर्ज किया बल्कि लोक-उत्सव को भी जगह दी। महिलाओं द्वारा दूल्हा के परिचन के समय ठाकुर द्वारा रचित गीत की भी चर्चा की और सुनाया-  
चलनी के चालल दुलहा, सूप के फटकारल है,  
दिअका के लागल बर, दुआरे बाजा बाजल है...  
आंवा के पाकल दुलहा, झांवा के झारल है...

भोजपुरी भाषा आंदोलन से जुड़े सवाल पर उन्होंने कहा कि मैंने भोजपुरी आंदोलन के गीत लिखे और आज वह गीत भोजपुरी का स्वाभिमान बन गया है। मस्ताना ने कहा कि मैंने बहुजन समय के अनमोल लोगों को चयनित कर उन पर भोजपुरी भाषा में किताब लिखी, जिसमें कबीर, रैदास से लेकर कर्पूरी ठाकुर तक पर रचना लिखी है। आज के



Punam Sinha

Mukul Verma, Yashwant Kumar, Aradhana Pradhan,  
Md. Kasif Yunus, Leela Singh and Sangita Verma

भोजपुरी समाज पर चिंता जाहिर करते हुए कहा कि भोजपुरी में अब अश्लील गीत काफी आने लगे हैं, लेकिन 20 साल पहले ऐसा नहीं था। यह कॉरपोरेट कल्चर के कारण हुआ है। पहले भोजपुरी गीत हिंदी फिल्मों में भी संवेदना को दिखाने के लिए व्यक्त किया जाता था। उन्होंने अपनी रचना 'एकलव्य' की चर्चा पर कहा कि द्रोणाचार्य अपने को विलेन साबित कर अपने शिष्य का नाम अमर कर दिया। मस्ताना ने कहा कि भोजपुरी में सारी विधाओं पर गीत है लेकिन छठ के खरना पर गीत नहीं है इसीलिए मैंने खरना पर भी गीत लिखा। मस्ताना ने कई स्वरचित गीत भी सुनाया। कार्यक्रम में यशवंत मिश्रा, अरुण नारायण, कासिफ युनुस, मुकुल वर्मा आदि उपस्थित थे।

आखर बिहार के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट, मसि इंक का सहयोग मिला।





Nandita Palchoudhuri

Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt

## There is Purity in All Kinds of Music

It was a remarkable evening for the City of Joy, as **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** hosted its first ever Kolkata session of **Choupal** with none other than the Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan and Grammy Award-winning musician and instrumentalist, Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, who is globally known for playing the mohan veena. In conversation with the maestro was Nandita Palchoudhuri, a social entrepreneur and a consultant-curator in the field of Indian folk art, craft and performance. The event was hosted at the residence of Kolkata's *kantha* queen, Shamlu Dudeja. The host for the evening was Malika Varma, daughter of Shamlu Dudeja and **Ehsaas** Woman of Kolkata, who welcomed the guests.

While talking about his decision to pursue music as a career, Bhatt credited his lineage for inculcating in him a deep love for music. "Hereditry and environment play important roles in the making of everyone's personality," said the maestro. "In India, we value our cultures and traditions. I was fortunate enough to be born into a family which has been dedicated to Indian classical music for the past 300 years." He revealed that his family's role in

his decision to choose music as his true calling went even deeper. "My origins actually lie in Andhra Pradesh, and my full name is Vishwa Mohan Rao Tailan, with 'Tailan' being a surname commonly found in Telangana. When Jaipur was expanding

in and around the 1940s, some of the intellectuals from my family became a part of the *gunijan khana* in the *darbaar*. They were given a *haveli* in Chaura Rasta and the lane where they lived came to be known as Bhatt Gali. The family of musicians, writers and Sanskrit pandits lived together. It was a tight-knit, joint family of people who cherished the artistic and musical ambience."

The fact that both of Bhatt's parents were musicians also helped him explore his passion, and the musical environment he grew up in helped him to quickly absorb compositions and renditions at an early age. "Fortunately for me, my parents did not force me to take up anything against my wishes," said Bhatt. "In fact, my father's progressive views also allowed my mother to take music lessons when

society frowned upon women learning music. My decision to not go to traditional schools but to receive education privately was also supported

Awards are important, but not more than the dedication or *sadhana* required to pursue and excel in music.

Personally, I have never worked for awards. It is of utmost importance to listen to the music of the greats and to learn from them. What gives me the highest satisfaction is listening to the great gurus and observing the nuances and influences of each piece of classical music, given that the harmonious mixture of *raas* and *bhav* makes classical music unique



by my parents; my mother prophesied that I was meant for greatness!”

Does all the success and fame give Bhatt a sense of true fulfilment? “Awards are important, but not more than the dedication or *sadhana* required to pursue and excel in music. Personally, I have never worked for awards. It is of utmost importance to listen to the music of the greats and to learn from them. What gives me the highest satisfaction is listening to the great *gurus* and observing the nuances and influences of each piece of classical music, given that the harmonious mixture of *raas* and *bhav* makes classical music unique.”

The influence of his culture also led Bhatt to invent the Mohan Veena even though the impetus behind it had been a teenage infatuation. A German student of his father’s who played the guitar really well inspired him to Indianise the instrument so that he could impress her. Later, he realised that it was his calling to play the Mohan Veena, even though he was a star student of the sitar genius Pandit Ravi Shankar. “Brij Bhushanji made some changes in the instrument, and I made some more,” said Bhatt, while talking about the mohan veena. “He added seven strings while I increased it to 20 to incorporate the *tarav* or the sympathetic strings which vibrate without striking them.” Despite the cultural influences, Bhatt did not shy away from fusion music, winning the Grammy with

Ry Cooder for his album *A Meeting by the River*. “I believe that no music is bad as long as it is in tune and in beat — whether it is jazz, pop, folk or western music,” said Bhatt. “There is purity in every form of music. When it comes to fusion music, orthodox people raise their eyebrows but my guru, Pandit Ravi Shankarji, ushered in a revolution in Indian classical music by collaborating with Yehudi Menuhin, George Harrison and other top-notch musicians. People welcomed the change gradually and appreciated western musicians playing Indian classical music on their instruments.”

Bhatt is, however, against commercialising music, whether through maudlin music reality shows or through item numbers for movies. “A musician should always be on the lookout for good offers, and should either perform independently or divert themselves completely to do commercial music,” said Bhatt. The conversation ended on a positive note with the maestro expressing hope that the younger generation of musicians will carry the legacy of Indian classical music forward. The session concluded with Supti Vardhan performing a brief rendition of *Yaad Piya Ki Aye* and Shefali Agarwal, **Ehsaas** Woman of Kolkata, delivering the vote of thanks on behalf of the Foundation.

*Choupal Kolkata was presented by  
Shree Cement Ltd and with the  
support of Ehsaas Women of Kolkata*



Supti Vardhan



Malika Varma



Shefali Agarwal



Shamlu Dudeja



R. Parthiban





# The Challenge of Conscious Living



Makarand R. Paranjape

Makarand R. Paranjape's contributions to the world of literature and philosophy are well known. He is a poet, novelist and columnist, and has also been a professor of English at Jawaharlal Nehru University and the Director of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** hosted Paranjape at a special session of **An Author's Afternoon** at the Taj Bengal in Kolkata. In conversation with Paranjape was Harsh Gupta 'Madhusudan', a public investor based in India whose columns on politics and finance appear regularly in leading publications. The conversation centred around Paranjape's recently published book, *JNU: Nationalism and India's Uncivil War* and what drove the author to write the book.

Why does Paranjape see himself as a "reluctant public intellectual"? "I call myself a reluctant public intellectual because I did not want to get involved in the political turmoil that took place at Jawaharlal Nehru University; it was something that was almost thrust upon me," said Paranjape. "I had to speak up because no one else was doing so. However, that does not mean I am a reluctant intellectual. The life of the mind and the curiosity to understand things have been with me forever. The decisions I took in my life — of studying literature and serving my country despite moments of reluctance — were signs that a public life, a life of ideas, was meant to



Harsh Gupta 'Madhusudan'

be." Does he feel that a crisis of democratic liberalism is prevalent at the moment? "Democracies now are frayed and afraid because the alternatives to democracy are not really attractive," responded the author. "Free societies are losing confidence in themselves because of the cankers that are eating at their vitals. Democracies are being threatened from the inside, as the basic tenets on which democracy is built — freedom, dissent, discussion and debate — are struggling to survive as people are afraid that they will get persecuted for their opinions. Moreover, the biggest pitfall of Indian politics is its inclination



“  
 Illiberalism is the imposition of narrow, sanctimonious views on others in the name of good causes. This leads to the suppression of free speech and the restriction of ideas. Liberalism should allow for the competition of good ideas and good causes; but now, bad ideas and bad causes are being standardised and accepted. Illiberalism, cancel culture and wokeism are all forms of false consciousness. The function of being liberal is to help people see falsehoods for what they are rather than force them to align with a particular ideology  
 ”



Nicolas Facino and Iryna Facino

towards identity politics and its adherence to the correctness of identity *raj*.”

While on the subject of liberalism, Paranjape stated that he believes that most liberals are “illiberals”.

“Illiberalism is the imposition of narrow, sanctimonious views on others in the name of ‘good causes,’” explained Paranjape. “This leads to the suppression of free speech and the restriction of ideas. Liberalism should allow for the competition of good ideas and good causes; but now, bad ideas and bad causes are being standardised and accepted. Illiberalism, cancel culture and wokeism are all forms of false consciousness. The function of being liberal is to help people see falsehoods for what they are rather than force them to align with a particular ideology”.

While talking about the events that took place on the

JNU campus in 2016, Paranjape clarified that he is against antiquated sedition laws which clamp down on people’s freedom of speech. He was not against the students’ agitation, but against an entire university being held to ransom by a group of students with interests of their own. “You can’t hijack a university space and turn it into a political platform against an elected government just because you don’t consider its ideology to be legitimate. Others have the right to differ from you, and you should be able to allow and respect a difference of opinion.”

The solution to the imminent crisis, according to Paranjape, lies in practising consciousness. “We now live in a world of digital totalitarianism; we need to practise awareness and we have to take on the challenge of living consciously. No one else can do it for us,” mused Paranjape. “Consciousness is a matrix, and to have these ideas is to automatically affect humanity. Societal cohesion is the need of the hour. Galvanising



Shamlu Dudeja

the collective *iccha shakti*, *gyan shakti* and *kriya shakti* can help in the creation of a brighter future. In the context of India, we must understand and accept that we’re all stakeholders in the Indian republic. Constant identity-based tension and polarisation go against the idea of fraternity. We have to teach our children to stand

up for what is right. If we don’t, the future will be bleak.”

The discussion concluded with an invigorating Q&A session with the audience, which wrapped up with

Paranjape making a memorable statement. “We can be matter and consciousness ourselves — India is the civilisation that has always said that we are consciousness. And matter itself is a species of consciousness, not the other way around.”

The afternoon came to an end with Nicolas Facino, the director of Alliance Francaise du Bengale, along with his wife, Iryna Facino, gifting dokra artwork from Bengal to the guests.

“  
 Societal cohesion is the need of the hour. Galvanising the collective *iccha shakti*, *gyan shakti* and *kriya shakti* can help in the creation of a brighter future. In the context of India, we must understand and accept that we’re all stakeholders in the Indian republic. Constant identity-based tension and polarisation go against the idea of fraternity. We have to teach our children to stand up for what is right. If we don’t, the future will be bleak  
 ”

*An Author’s Afternoon* was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Taj Bengal Kolkata and The Telegraph Online—My Kolkata





## जो प्रेम आपको बांध दे वह प्रेम नहीं है: रश्मि भारद्वाज



Rashmi Bhardwaj



Amita Pandey

से भी नवाजा जा चुका है। उन्होंने संवादकर्ता अमिता पांडेय के दशक भर से अधिक समय तक अध्यापन करने, फिर प्रकाशन और लेखन जगत से जुड़ने की बात भी बताई और आगे के संवाद के लिए आमंत्रित किया।

पांडेय ने भारद्वाज की आवाज में घुली मिठास, साफगोई और उनके बहुविध कार्यों का जिक्र करते हुए उनके व्यक्तित्व के पीछे की मजबूती को जानना चाहा? भारद्वाज ने अपने परिवार, गुरुजन और प्रिय वरिष्ठ साहित्यकारों की उपस्थिति पर खुशी जाहिर की और कहा कि किसी भी व्यक्ति के लिए अपने जीवन का चयन आसान नहीं होता। जीवन हमेशा अपनी शर्तों पर नहीं मिलता। कई बार आपका चयन गलत भी हो जाता है और उसका खामियाजा भी आपको भुगतना पड़ता है। पर जीवन में आगे बढ़ने की जिजीविषा और अपने चयन के साथ खड़े होने, चाहे वह गलत भी क्यों न रहा हो की हिम्मत होनी चाहिए। मुझे नहीं मालूम कि मैंने जो रास्ता चुना वह सही था कि गलत था। आर्थिक दृष्टि से यह बहुत सफल नहीं है। पर मैं खुश हूँ कि मैं पढ़-लिख पा रही हूँ।

“लिखना और पढ़ना जीवन के हर चैलेंजेज को झेलने की ताकत दे देता है। आगे बढ़ने की हिम्मत दे देता है। रास्ता आसान नहीं होता, पर यात्रा में बने रहना महत्वपूर्ण है।” यह कहना है रचनाकार रश्मि भारद्वाज का, जो **प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन** की ओर से आयोजित **कलम पटना** में बतौर अतिथि वक्ता बोल रही थीं। कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत उर्दू के जानेमाने रचनाकार प्रोफेसर गोपीचंद नारंग को श्रद्धांजलि देने से हुई। डॉ अजीत प्रधान और मोहम्मद नूर आलम ने बेहद शिद्धत से नागर जी के जीवन, रचनाकर्म और उर्दू साहित्य में उनके योगदान को याद किया।

**अहसास वूमन** पटना अन्विता प्रधान ने अतिथि रचनाकार भारद्वाज का विस्तार से परिचय दिया। उन्होंने बताया कि लेखक, संपादक, अनुवादक भारद्वाज अंग्रेजी साहित्य से एमफिल, पीएचडी, पत्रकारिता में डिप्लोमाधारी हैं। उनके संपादन में निकल रही वेब पत्रिका ‘मेराकी’ नए रचनाकारों को अवसर दे रही है। भारद्वाज की कृतियों कविता संग्रह ‘एक अतिरिक्त अ’ और ‘मैंने अपनी माँ को जन्म दिया है’ तथा उपन्यास ‘वह साल बयालीस था’ के उल्लेख के साथ उन्होंने बताया कि भारद्वाज ने रजा फाउंडेशन के लिए एशियाई कवियों की कविताओं का अनुवाद और संपादन किया है और कई प्रकाशनों के लिए अनुवाद, लेखन और संपादन करती रही हैं। आपको ज्ञानपीठ नवलेखन अनुशंसा पुरस्कार, शिवना अंतर्राष्ट्रीय कविता पुरस्कार, सूरज प्रकाश मारवाह साहित्य रत्न सम्मान और पाखी पत्रिका के शब्द साधक सम्मान

पांडेय ने अगला सवाल पूछा कि लेखन आप तक पहुंचा या आप लेखन तक? भारद्वाज का उत्तर था कि दोनों साथ-साथ ही आया। बहुत छुटपन में मेरे नानाजी साइकोलॉजी के स्कॉलर थे, लिखते भी थे। उनके पास बचपन में बीता। बचपन में दीक्षा सी मिली। स्कूल में सुजाता शर्मा जी हिंदी की टीचर के रूप में मिली। मुझे बचपन से ही वह माहौल मिला। पांडेय द्वारा बिहार में साहित्यिक परिवेश के समृद्ध होने पर भारद्वाज ने मजाकिया अंदाज में कहा कि पत्रकारिता और लेखन हॉबी तक ही ठीक है, करियर नहीं बनना चाहिए। पांडेय ने भारद्वाज के काव्य संकलन ‘एक अतिरिक्त अ’ के अनूठे नाम का जिक्र करते हुए पूछा कि इंस्टाग्राम के दौर में एक कवि के रूप में कविता की अर्थवत्ता आपके लिए क्या होगी? भारद्वाज ने कार्यक्रम में वरिष्ठ कवियों आलोक धन्वा और अरुण कमल की उपस्थिति को रेखांकित करते हुए कहा कि हमें इसे सकारात्मक रूप में लेना चाहिए। जितना कविता को लेकर हायतौबा मचाई जा रही है, नए लोग उससे लगातार जुड़ रहे हैं। लोग नए पेज बना रहे हैं, लिख रहे हैं, इंस्टाग्राम पर पोस्टर बन रहे हैं, तो यह तो है कि कविता बाजार में आई है और बड़े ठाठ से आई है। यह बहुत सुखद है। उन्होंने सोशल मीडिया के आने से स्त्रियों को मिले मंच की बात की और उन्हें एक पॉवरफुल टूल मिलने की बात कही।

भारद्वाज ने अपनी पुस्तकों के शीर्षक, उनकी विषय-वस्तु और स्त्री विमर्श से जुड़े सवालों का उत्तर देते हुए कहा कि हमें अपने स्त्री होने पर गर्व है। आप इसे अनुवांशिकी कहिए या जो कहिए, स्त्रियां अलग हैं अपनी प्रकृति में अलग हैं। उनमें करुणा है, सौंदर्य है। वे मां बन सकती हैं और बिना जन्म दिए भी किसी को पाल सकती हैं। पर हमें यह जानना होगा कि हम चाहते क्या हैं? हमें सह-अस्तित्व और संवाद सीखना होगा। हमारा लक्ष्य स्पष्ट होना चाहिए कि हम अराजक स्वतंत्रता चाहते हैं या अपना अस्तित्व। भारद्वाज ने अपनी रचनाओं, कविता और उपन्यास में प्रेम की उपस्थिति से जुड़े सवाल का बहुत विस्तार से उत्तर दिया और कहा कि प्रेम में बहुत जटिलताएं हैं, इन सबके बीच बहुत कुछ बदल जाता है, इसमें जो स्वप्नभंग होता है, वह मेरी रचनाओं में बार-बार आता है। जो प्रेम आपको बांध दे वह प्रेम नहीं है। प्रेम हमें मुक्त करता है। उन्होंने सवाल-जवाब सत्र में श्रोताओं के सवालों के भी उत्तर दिए और अपनी कविताएं भी सुनाई। आयोजकों की ओर से आराधना प्रधान ने धन्यवाद ज्ञापन दिया। कार्यक्रम में पद्मश्री से सम्मानित लेखिका उषा किरण खान, कवि आलोक धन्वा, अरुण कमल सहित कई साहित्यकार और साहित्य प्रेमी उपस्थित थे।

अहसास वूमन के सौजन्य से आयोजित कलम पटना के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट। हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर होटल चाणक्य, मीडिया पार्टनर दैनिक जागरण और नवर्स स्कूल ऑफ परफॉर्मिंग आर्ट्स का सहयोग मिला।



Anvita Pradhan



Aradhana Pradhan



Alok Dhanwa



Arun Kamal



Usha Kiran Khan



Ajit Pradhan



## मेरी जीवन-यात्रा को समझ आप मेरी कविताओं तक आसानी से पहुंच सकते हैं: चित्रा देसाई



Chitra Desai



Ravindra Mardia

“कविताएं मेरी अंतरंग सहेली हैं। दुख में, सुख में वो मेरे साथ रहती हैं। वो मेरा हाथ थामती हैं, मुझे हौसला देती हैं, मेरे साथ रहती हैं। मैं खुश होती हूं तो मेरे साथ उछलती हैं और वो ऐसी सहेली हैं, जिसने न कभी मेरा साथ छोड़ा, न हाथ छोड़ा।” प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से आयोजित कलम अहमदाबाद में यह कहना है अतिथि वक्ता चित्रा देसाई का। आरंभ में आयोजकों की ओर से सनील पारीख ने अपने और सहयोगी अहसास वूमेन प्रियांशी पटेल की ओर से अतिथि वक्ता का स्वागत और परिचय दिया। उन्होंने फाउंडेशन द्वारा कला, साहित्य, संस्कृति और महिला सशक्तीकरण की दिशा में संचालित गतिविधियों के साथ ‘किताब’, ‘लफ़्ज़’, ‘एक मुलाकात विशेष’, ‘द राइट सर्कल’, ‘सुर और साज’ तथा ‘आखर’ जैसे कार्यक्रमों की चर्चा की और बताया कि ‘अपनी भाषा अपने लोग’ के विचार को बढ़ावा देने वाला ‘कलम’ बड़े, नामचीन और कई बार नए लेखकों-कलाकारों को भी उनके प्रशंसकों और पाठकों से सीधे जोड़ते हैं।

अतिथि वक्ता का परिचय देते हुए उन्होंने बताया कि कवयित्री, लेखिका, अधिवक्ता, प्राध्यापक देसाई सर्वोच्च न्यायालय में एडवोकेट, मुंबई विश्वविद्यालय और एसएनडीटी विश्वविद्यालय के लॉ कॉलेज से भी संबद्ध रही हैं। आप ‘टाइम्स फाउंडेशन’, ‘महाराष्ट्र लीगल सर्विस अथॉरिटी’ के लीगल लिटरेसी अभियान से जुड़ने के साथ ही मैग्रेक्स, झील संरक्षण और पर्यावरण से जुड़े मुद्दों पर काफी मुखर रही हैं। आप राष्ट्रीय फ़िल्म पुरस्कार निर्णायक मंडल, केन्द्रीय फ़िल्म प्रमाणन बोर्ड, राष्ट्रीय फ़िल्म संग्रहालय और विदेश मंत्रालय की हिंदी सलाहकार समिति की भी सदस्य रह चुकी हैं। साहित्यिक पत्र-पत्रिकाओं में कविताओं के साथ ही आपके ‘सरसों से अमलतास’ और ‘दरारों में उगी दूब’ नामक काव्य-संग्रह प्रकाशित हैं। महाराष्ट्र हिंदी साहित्य अकादमी पुरस्कार से सम्मानित और राष्ट्रीय, अंतर्राष्ट्रीय हिंदी साहित्य उत्सवों, सम्मेलनों में लगातार उपस्थित रहने वाली देसाई से संवाद रविंद्र मर्डिया ने किया।

मर्डिया ने अहमदाबाद में हिंदी साहित्य को महत्व देने के लिए प्रभा और कर्मा फाउंडेशन का आभार प्रकट किया और सुमित्रानंदन पंत की पंक्ति ‘वियोगी होगा पहला कवि, आह से उपजा होगा गान’ का उल्लेख करते हुए पूछा कि आपने लिखने की शुरुआत कैसे हुई? देसाई का उत्तर था, “अपनी यात्रा कहां से शुरू करूं समझ नहीं आता। लेखन के पीछे एक जीवन यात्रा है। जब आप उस यात्रा तक पहुंचेंगे, तब कविताओं तक पहुंचने में आपको ज्यादा सुविधा होगी। हरियाणा के एक छोटे से गांव में मेरा जन्म हुआ। अनचाही बेटी के रूप में। जब मैं चालीस दिन की ही थी तो मेरी मां ने मुझे मेरी नानी के पास छोड़ दिया। नानी ने मेरा

लालन-पालन किया। मेरी नानी, परनानी और मेरी मां ने मेरी परवरिश मिलकर की। मेरी नानी का घर विद्यादान महादान की सोच वाला घर था। सुप्रीम कोर्ट से चालीस किलोमीटर दूर मेरा यह गांव था।”

अपने बचपन और स्कूल की पढ़ाई के दिनों, पिलानी के बिरला हाईस्कूल के हॉस्टल और झूलों को याद करते हुए देसाई ने बताया कि मैं अपने को याद करने लगी थी। नानी मीरा के भजनों को याद कर रोने लगती थी। कॉलेज में मैंने धर्मयुग को पढ़ा और दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय ने मुझे गढ़ा। वहीं मैंने अमलतास का पेड़ देखा और अपने गांव के सरसों को याद करते हुए अपने पहले संग्रह का नाम ‘सरसों से अमलतास’ रखा। कॉलेज में कविता मैं लिखने लगी थी। राजनीति शास्त्र की विद्यार्थी होते हुए भी मैं कविता प्रतियोगिता में भाग लेती थी। उन्होंने ही मुझे तराशा। लॉ कॉलेज के अपने अनुभवों की बात करते हुए उन्होंने बताया कि न्याय की तरफ मेरा लगाव बचपन से ही था। हालांकि 2015 से पहले मैंने कविताओं को प्रकाशन के लिए नहीं भेजा। कविता ने मुझे कड़वाहट से बचा लिया।

आपकी कविताओं में गांव का वर्णन अधिक है, इसकी वजह क्या है? के उत्तर में देसाई ने कहा कि मैंने कभी गांव को नहीं छोड़ा न ही कभी गांव ने मुझे छोड़ा। आप जहां पलते-बढ़ते हैं, उन जड़ों को कभी नहीं छोड़ना चाहिए। मैं हमेशा कहती हूं कि मैं गांव को अपने कंधे पर लेकर चलती हूं क्योंकि गांव ने हमेशा मुझे अपने सिर पर बिठाया। देसाई ने बीच-बीच में अपनी कविताएं भी सुनाई और कहा कि मुझसे बेहतर मेरी बात मेरी कविताएं कहती हैं। न्याय की देवी और खेतों में बरसात, गांव

के मेलों को याद करते हुए लिखी अपनी कविता सुनाते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि विंब आपके भीतर बसते हैं। उन्होंने सुनाया-

खेत न्याय के लिए  
आकाश से गुहार लगाते हैं  
और बादल बरसता है  
हर खेत पर  
जैसे न्यायाधीश  
आंखों पर पट्टी बांधकर  
न्याय करता है।

देसाई ने ‘विरासत’ कविता और ‘दरारों में उगी दूब’ संकलन के चार खंडों का विस्तृत उल्लेख करते हुए ‘चाक से आंच’ सहित कार्यक्रम के दौरान कई कविताएं सुनाई। उन्होंने अपने कविता-संकलन की प्रकाशन प्रक्रिया, भविष्य की योजना, अपने परिवार में लेखन की अहमियत, कविताओं में अपने भाव के साथ ही श्रोताओं के सवालों के भी उत्तर दिए। अंत में अतिथि वक्ता और संवादकर्ता को स्मृति चिह्न भेंट कर उनका अभिनंदन और आभार प्रकट किया गया।

अहसास वूमेन के सौजन्य से आयोजित कलम अहमदाबाद के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट। हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर द हाउस ऑफ एमजी मंगलबाग और कर्मा फाउंडेशन का सहयोग मिला।



Priyanshi Patel



Shaneel Parekh



# Rhythm and Passion Go Hand In Hand



Feyago



Sumitra Ray

Nature is filled with music and rhythm. Music is life's essence, the first strains of which begin when a mother sings the first lullaby to her child. Rhythm is the soul of life. It makes you move and sets the mood for almost every occasion. There is rhythm in the beats of percussion as well as in the patter of rain. Add poetry to rhythm, and you get rap. Thus, on World Music Day, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, under its **Muskaan** initiative and in association with **Education For All Trust**, invited the rapper Feyago to a special virtual session to celebrate rap music. He shared his journey to inspire budding musicians in the audience, who were introduced to Feyago by Sumitra Ray, Student Programme Advisor of the Foundation.

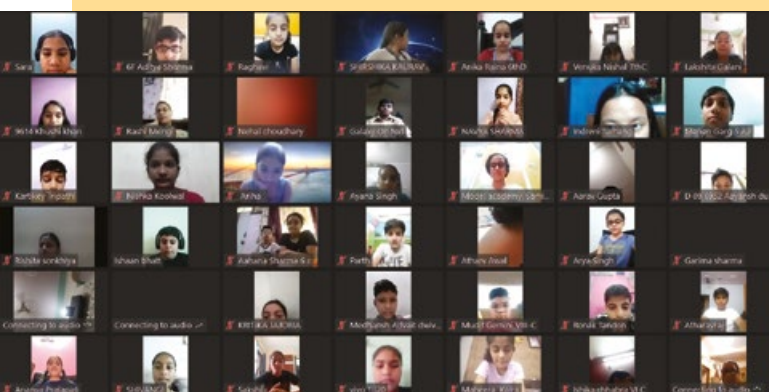
A concert featuring Damian Marley (Bob Marley's son) and American rapper Nas inspired an Indian boy to choose a path that eventually made him a pioneer in the world of Indian hip-hop, and the creator of folk rap. Feyago's songs and videos receive millions

of views on YouTube, garnering him immense fame as a rapper. Apart from being the face of several top brands in India, he also won the Best Hip-Hop Act award at the VH1 Sound Nation Awards in 2014. Feyago is usually the headline act of major music festivals like Bacardi NH7 Weekender and the Ziro Festival. Parts of his journey as a rapper were also the inspiration behind the story of Zoya Akhtar's *Gully Boy*.

As always, Feyago's performance was highly energetic and entertaining. He started with *Someday*, a song he had written back in 2012. It is one of his personal favourite tracks, and the chorus is sung by MelodyCrab from Shillong. Feyago interacted with the audience before playing his most popular song, *Logical Guy*, which is considered the anthem of the music scene in the northeastern states of India. Feyago talked about how he had to work his way up, from writing "not-so-popular-songs" to becoming a chart topper. "We learn more from our flops, not our hits. Flops build your character and personality, they help you overcome odds and make you stronger."

We learn more from our flops, not our hits. Flops build your character and personality, they help you overcome odds and make you stronger

Feyago immediately followed up with his own rendition of *Butter*, a popular BTS track, where he introduced his own lyrics for the chorus. He ended the song with a message to young artists to never give up. "Your reason to do something will always emanate from yourself. Others may discourage you, but they can never put out that fire in your heart." He interacted a bit more with members of the audience, many of whom were eager to learn more. "The mantra of success involves dedication and discipline," said Feyago. "It takes you to places that form pathways to achieving your dreams. You need to water your passion like you do a plant — that nurtures success." Feyago even jammed with young rappers who had original beats and lyrics they have been working on. To conclude the session, Feyago sang *Marzi*, a song that urges people to pursue what they love. "Let your heart follow your dream, that's your *marzi* (volition)."







Chandrachur Ghose

# Telling the Tales that were Never Told



Kalpana Chaudhary

When one thinks of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, one is also obliged to think of Chandrachur Ghose, an author, researcher and commentator on history, economics and environment who is one of the founders of Mission Netaji — a pressure group responsible for the declassification of crucial documents related to the illustrious freedom fighter.

**Prabha Khaitan Foundation** hosted Ghose at a session of **The Write Circle** at the Hyatt Raipur. The conversation centred around Ghose's latest book, *Bose: The Untold Story of an Inconvenient Nationalist* as well as *Conundrum: Subhas Bose's Life After Death*, which he co-authored with Anuj Dhar. In conversation with Ghose was Kalpana Chaudhary, **Ehsaas** Woman of Raipur. Both the speakers were introduced to the audience by Shrishti Trivedi, **Ehsaas** Woman of Raipur.

Ghose worked at the Centre for Science and Environment and at International Market Assessment Private Limited for some time before deciding to embark upon a life as an independent author and columnist. The decision was not an abrupt one; Ghose's grandfather was three years junior to Netaji at Scottish Church College, and was a member of the Forward Bloc, the political outfit created by Netaji. "Despite having contributed immensely

to India's struggle for independence, Netaji was always on the fringe, marginalised by prominent political leaders and parties in India," said Ghose. "The fact that almost 90% of the documents on Netaji were classified by the government made our pressure group push further for declassification. However, despite several documents having been declassified, there are still some that are kept confidential by the government."

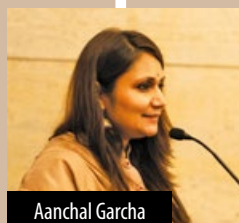
Ghose said that, even though Netaji lived a life in the public eye, his quest involved "always looking out from within". "It was Beni Madhab Das, Bose's school teacher, who inspired an otherwise shy child to go on a quest for spiritualism," explained Ghose. "Netaji carved out his own path in the world of spiritualism, and carried out his mission of winning India its independence, even though he could have left to follow his spiritual quest."

"Bose was a visionary," added Ghose. "The issues he spoke about as the president of the Congress in 1938, such as farmers' debts, the need to improve the healthcare system and the urban administration, are issues that India is still struggling with today. His aim of uniting the four strong pillars of the country — students, industrial workers, farmers and the armed forces — was revolutionary". What

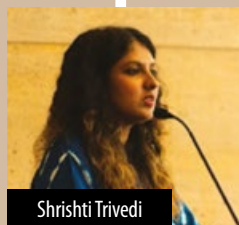
about the ideological rift between Netaji and Mahatma Gandhi? "Even though Netaji had differences of opinions with Gandhi he always accepted that it was Gandhi who democratised Indian politics," said Ghose.

The conversation covered other aspects of Netaji's life and vision, and ended with a Q&A session with the audience. Sailesh Nitin Trivedi, Chairman of Chhattisgarh Textbook Corporation, felicitated the author, and Aanchal Garcha, **Ehsaas** Woman of Raipur, delivered the vote of thanks on behalf of the Foundation.

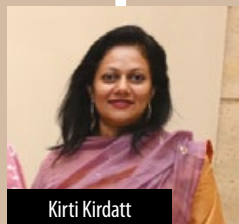
*The Write Circle Raipur was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Hyatt Raipur and with the support of Ehsaas Women of Raipur*



Aanchal Garcha



Shrishti Trivedi



Kirti Kirdatt

Shantam Patil and  
Sailesh Nitin TrivediDeependra Diwan  
and Rahul Singh

Yash Nara



# A Jewel in India's Crown



Indian women have long been making their country proud on a global stage. Adding her name to this illustrious list is Priti Rathí Gupta, the founder of a women-first financial platform that focuses on reducing the gender-based economic disparity in India. Started in 2020, the fintech startup has inspired over 1,00,000 women to aim towards building their financial acumen and making their small savings grow. The inspirational Gupta has now been recognised as the only woman icon from India as part of the Official Platinum Jubilee Pageant Commemorative Album of Queen Elizabeth II. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, which has long been involved in the social, economic, cultural and financial empowerment of women, hosted a tea event in honour of Gupta at the Taj Chambers of the Taj 51 Buckingham Gate in London. Here are a few glimpses of the moments and guests at the occasion.



Sundeep Bhutoria, Priti Rathí Gupta and Pooja Maru with the album





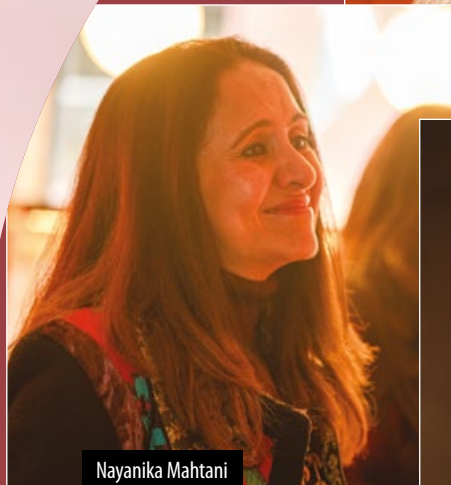
Dipika Khaitan



Abhishek Khaitan



Vimlesh Maru



Nayanika Mahtani



Rashmi Banthia



Gauri Kasbekar



Nidhi Gupta Dalmia



Varsha Saraogi



Sangeeta Datta



Aavya M. Bhutoria







Bishambhar Newar, Prahlad Rai Agarwala, Moloy Ghatak, Shatrughan Sinha, Harshavardhan Neotia and Bipin Newar

## जो अखबार समाज को दिशा देगा, वही याद रहेगा: हिंदी पत्रकारिता पर दो दिवसीय राष्ट्रीय सम्मेलन में हरिवंश

भविष्य संवारना हो तो अतीत की तरफ झांकना जरूरी है। आज विचार नहीं तकनीक का दौर है और इसे ध्यान में रखकर जो अखबार समाज को नई दिशा देगा वही भविष्य में याद किया जाएगा।" राज्यसभा के उपसभापति हरिवंश ने कोलकाता में हिंदी पत्रकारिता पर आयोजित दो दिवसीय राष्ट्रीय सम्मेलन के पहले दिन उद्घाटन सत्र में यह बात कही। छपते-छपते, ताजा खबर और प्रेस क्लब द्वारा आयोजित इस कार्यक्रम में हरिवंश ने हिंदी के पहले अखबार उदन्त मार्टंड को याद करते हुए मौजूदा समय में खबरों पर यकीन कम होते जाने पर चिंता जताई। भारतीय जन संचार संस्थान के महानिदेशक प्रोफेसर संजय द्विवेदी ने कहा कि इनदिनों पत्रकारिता आलोचना के दौर से गुजर रही है, इस पर गंभीरता से विचार करने की जरूरत है। सूचना और समाचार में अंतर बताते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि सूचना गलत हो सकती है, लेकिन समाचार गलत नहीं होना चाहिए।

भारतीय प्रेस परिषद की सदस्य और जन मोर्चा की संपादक डॉ सुमन गुप्ता ने कहा कि पत्रकारिता के लिए बंगाल प्रयोग की धरती रही है, लेकिन यह दुखद है कि अखबारों से संपादक नामक पद धीरे-धीरे खत्म हो रहा है। भारतीय भाषा परिषद के निदेशक प्रोफेसर शंभुनाथ ने कहा कि आधुनिक युग में कलम की जगह माउस और कागज की जगह कंप्यूटर स्क्रीन ने ले ली है। समय की जरूरत है कि पत्रकार वैज्ञानिक दृष्टि से काम करें और अंधविश्वास फैलाने से बचे। पश्चिम बंगाल उर्दू अकादमी के उपाध्यक्ष नदीमुल हक ने अखबारों और प्रकाशन जगत की चुनौतियों पर बात की, तो यूको बैंक की तरफ से



Vikram Newar



Bishambhar Newar

नरेश कुमार ने कोरोना काल में पत्रकारों के काम की तारीफ की। अमर उजाला के सलाहकार संपादक विनोद अग्रिहोत्री ने समाज और अखबार के रिश्ते को पानी और मछली जैसा बताया और बदलते परिवेश में कारोबार, तकनीक व मिशन के सटीक मिश्रण की जरूरत पर बल दिया।

पहले दिन विक्रम नेवर ने अंगवस्त्र प्रदान कर अतिथियों का स्वागत किया, तो छपते-छपते के प्रधान संपादक व ताजा खबर के निदेशक विश्वम्भर नेवर ने संचालन और प्रेस क्लब कोलकाता के अध्यक्ष स्नेहाशीष सूर ने धन्यवाद ज्ञापित किया।

आयोजन के दूसरे दिन पाठक मंच के तहत वर्तमान संदर्भ में हिंदी पत्रकारिता पर विचार विनिमय हुआ। महात्मा गांधी अंतरराष्ट्रीय हिंदी विश्वविद्यालय वर्धा के डॉ कृपाशंकर चौबे ने जहां भारत में पत्रकारिता का जन्म की ज्वाला से होने की बात कही, वहीं प्रभात खबर के स्थानीय संपादक कौशल किशोर ने पत्रकारिता की साख पर उठ रहे सवाल का जिक्र किया। वैचारिकी के संपादक डॉ बाबूलाल शर्मा ने कहा कि शिक्षा व चिकित्सा की तरह पत्रकारिता के आयाम भी बदले हैं। आलिया विश्वविद्यालय की गजाला यास्मिन ने पत्रकारिता की गुणवत्ता में गिरावट पर अफसोस जाहिर किया। जलते दीप व माणक के संपादक पदम मेहता ने कहा कि पत्रकारों को दशा नहीं दिशा पूर्ण खबरें लिखनी चाहिए। विद्यासागर विश्वविद्यालय के डॉ संजय जायसवाल ने पत्रकारों के असुरक्षित भविष्य का जिक्र किया। जनपथ समाचार के संपादक विवेक बैद और मरू राजस्थान के संपादक आर. के. जैन ने भी अपनी बातें रखीं। अंजू सेठिया, ओमप्रकाश चौबे, चंदा प्रहालदा, सत्य प्रकाश भारती, फैज अहमद, दया शंकर मिश्र, राजकुमार व्यास, ख्वाजा अहमद हुसैन ने सवाल पूछे। शब्दाक्षर के संस्थापक रवि प्रताप सिंह और केंद्रीय हिंदी अनुवाद ब्यूरो के नवीन प्रजापति ने कार्यक्रम का संचालन और विक्रम नेवर ने स्वागत और धन्यवाद दिया।



Naresh Kumar, Nadimul Haque, Suman Gupta, Vinod Agnihotri, Snehasis Sur, Harivansh Narayan Singh, Sanjay Dwivedi, Sambhunath and Bishambhar Newar at the inauguration



The audience



# Join Hands to Protect Our Planet



Firhad Hakim speaks at the event



Javed Khan and Andalib Elias



Snehasis Sur



Subhodip Ghosh

The protection of our environment is of paramount importance; its destruction will spell doom for humankind. As such, it is important to keep the conversation about environmental degradation going, so that awareness can be raised and concrete steps taken to combat disaster. The Press Club of Kolkata was the venue for an interesting event geared towards highlighting this conversation. Presented by Environment Governed Integrated Organisation (EnGIO) and supported by **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** in association with The Telegraph Online—My Kolkata, the event, titled *Kolkata's Climate Future, Searching for the Solution*, took place on the occasion of World Environment Day. Snehasis Sur, the President of Press Club, also spoke at the event.

The environment and climate expert, Jayanta Basu, who is Director of EnGIO, led a host of dignitaries, distinguished guests, journalists and students through an interesting and extremely informative discussion on the issues of global environmental disruptions. Among the dignitaries who attended the event were Firhad Hakim (Mayor of Kolkata and State Cabinet Minister of Transport, Urban Development and Municipal Affairs and Housing), Javed Khan (Minister of Disaster Management), Debashis Kumar (Member, Mayor-In-Council, Kolkata Municipal Corporation), Kalyan Rudra (Chairman of the West Bengal Pollution Control Board), Andalib Elias (Bangladesh's Deputy High Commissioner), Subhodip Ghosh (Director General of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce & Industry), Rajesh Kumar (Member Secretary of the West Bengal Pollution Control Board), Professor Arunabha Mazumdar and environmentalist Naba Dutt, among others.

Many ideas and suggestions were discussed at the event, but a noteworthy development was that speaker after speaker highlighted the need for joint collaborative action by all the stakeholders in the fight against climate change. All participants agreed that the road ahead would



Jayanta Basu

be a difficult one, and that people from all walks of life and all parts of the society would need to come together to effectively stem the tide of environmental degradation. This would be the only way to ensure a better future for the next generations.

Firhad Hakim spoke at length about the several reasons that are affecting the environment and urban life as a whole. "I seek the cooperation of the people and their consciousness and greater love for Kolkata, as opposed to the 'I-do-not-care' attitude borne by many," he said. "It is not enough to just criticise; every right we enjoy implies that there are also duties we have to perform in order to be better citizens."

Jayanta Basu, under whose initiative the event had been organised, presented worrisome statistics that showed the severity of the threats to the state's environmental health. He also elaborated on the solutions. "The need of the hour," said Basu, "is to come together and work as a whole. If this does not happen, our planet will be heading towards a speedy decline."

The enthusiastic participation of students and young people in the event did bode well for the future of the city and the state. Students such as Shoham Bhattacharya, Sampriya Roy and Farhan Ali, all of who are studying Environmental Science in colleges in Kolkata, attended the event and voiced their opinions on climate change and how it can be tackled. There were also younger students such as Sayanti Mondal, Patatri Santra and others from different schools, who spoke eloquently on their concerns over where the environment is headed. They appealed to those in power to take the right steps so that their future and lives of following generations are not jeopardized. Their appeals and fervour did not go unnoticed; the dignitaries not only expressed their happiness at the participation of the youngsters, but also pledged their support to any initiatives that the young undertake for protecting the environment.





# The Purpose of Life Is To Help Others

Luck favours some, while fate deals others a tough hand. It is thus a God-given duty for those of us who are blessed with abundant resources in life to extend a helping hand and a caring heart to those who live out their lives in dire need. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, under its **Muskaan** initiative and in association with **Education For All Trust**, organised *Punya Patra*, a drive to provide rations and essential hygiene-related amenities to those who struggle to ensure basic rights for themselves. Under the *Punya Patra* initiative, volunteers distributed essential supplies to the residents of the Kalighat Red Light District. Here are a few glimpses from the drive.





# Teaching India



Education forms the basis of progress of any kind; to further the cause of education is to do the work of the Almighty. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, which sets great store by the importance of education, recently extended its support to 'Jan Jagrati', a project on school and education development carried out by the Jan Jagrati Sevarth Sansthan. The project, which focuses on the educational needs of children in rural areas, will also include the development of an English medium co-educational school in Rajasthan that will provide a holistic education to its students. Here are a few moments from a day of interaction and activities with school-going children whose futures the Foundation hopes to transform.





# Sahir Ludhianvi: Romantic, Lover, Rebel and Reformer



Gurupadesh Singh

Sahir Ludhianvi was a versatile poet because he could swing between many emotions, temperaments and ideas – a man of many experiences, doubts and loyalties. He could be a romantic, a reluctant lover, a rebel and a reformer, all at the same time. It seems he had pigeonholed himself into several compartments and kept shuffling among them.

I see a bit of Hamlet in Sahir. Hamlet loves Ophelia, but cannot love her because of a number of things weighing on his mind. He wants to take revenge on his uncle, but is reluctant, doubtful and timid. Hamlet is vacillating; so is Sahir in his love relations and his non-film poems. Like Hamlet, he is contemplative, brooding, silent yet determined, and aggressive at times. That is why many of his observers call him “paradoxical” (Javed Akhtar), “a mystery wrapped in an enigma” (Surinder Deol), and “a man of contradictions” (Akshay Manwani).

Sahir’s personal, poetic and ideological swings can best be illustrated in his own words: “I have lived all my life in dreams: dreams of beauty’s tresses, her lips, her contours; dreams of artistic ardour, poetic prowess; dreams of civilized living, of nation’s progress; dreams of prison houses and of public execution” (“Aao Ki Koi Khwab Bune”).

Some of the things that weighed on Sahir’s mind and poetry were his troubled childhood, his inconsequential love affairs, his loneliness, his proud temperament and his life-long commitment to progressive ideas. His rich father’s desertion of his mother left him with a sense of deprivation, insecurity and a lack of self-assurance; at the same time, it fostered a strong bond with his mother and seeded an unrelenting hate for all moneyed lords. As a poet, both at college and later, he had many young girls swooning over him, but he could never make a commitment to any of them, probably because of socio-religious differences, his own fear of failure or his distrust of love. In his poetic sensibility, he was highly influenced by Marxist ideology and followed other socially awakened poets like Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Josh Malihabadi,

Firaq Gorakhpuri and so on. This also included the anti-imperialist stance he took during his college days and continued espousing in many of his war poems, culminating in the most famous *Parchhaiyan*.

But, at heart, Sahir was a lonely man. He had no relatives except his mother, and two step-sisters who would visit him occasionally. The hard times he had gone through in his younger days made him stern and volatile in his working relations. Although he had friends in Rafi, Ravi and Khayyam, he still died a lonely man, with a grave that no one visited and which was leveled recently to make room for new burials. The impact of all these factors shows up visibly in his non-film poetry.

Sahir is considered the king of love and romance. But as a poet, he had apportioned his poetic energies to swing between intense romance and high socio-political consciousness.

His poetry is all about love, yet it is not. In *Talkhiyan*, he has a longing for love, yet it is overshadowed by a sense of personal loss and mundane concerns. He is sentimental, melodramatic, yet is reluctant to commit himself to the idea of intimate love. His diction is luxuriously romantic, yet, at times, turns realistic, candid and caustic. Sahir is no Shakespeare who will say, “Take all my loves, my love, yea, take them all”. His love is divided, tintured with a number of personal, social or political constraints. Most of his love poems will be interjected with a big ‘But...’

In his initial poems (in *Talkhiyan*) longing for love is constrained by loyalty to his personal disappointments, his despairs, and his sordid past. The bitterness of poverty, insecurity and failed love sublimates into an attitude of self-denial, and he thinks that he is neither capable of loving anyone nor can he be the object of someone’s love.

In *Shikast*, he writes, “For long I have made my life miserable by carrying the corpse of hope. You have been through only one trauma, my love, I have wasted my heart in every way.” In *Mazoori*, he writes, “Despair has entered into my nature; even if I force myself, I cannot sing. What



did you see in me to declare your love? Can't you see, I am not even of any use to myself?"

In *Mata-e-ghair*, addressing probably his much-talked-about love for Amrita Pritam, Sahir says, "Although you are the love-flower of another person, yet it makes my nights fragrant." But then he immediately swings back by saying, "your patronizing love is real, but seems like fiction to me; the message of your familiar eyes may not actually be another excuse for me to torment my heart." Amrita confirms in her writings that Sahir had a low opinion of his not-so-handsome looks and pock-marked face.

Sahir's highly romantic verses invariably end up taking a realistic turn. He expresses love and romance in the most ardent terms, but never stretches it to the Sufi or spiritual length. Instead, love in his poetry ascends to the higher realm of humanitarian anxiety and social awakening.

In *Kabhi Kabhi* (the original poem, not the film version) Sahir imagines the blissful company of a beautiful beloved, yet denies it to himself as he has moved away from it and has entered a larger territory of 'love for all humanity'. This *nazm*, along with Faiz's *Mujh Se Pehli Si Mohabbat*, can be considered a sort of manifesto of progressive poetry. *Taj Mahal* is an excellent example of how the poet still believes in age-old love but not in its traditional setting. He would like to swing away from the exploitative ambience of the royal monument. Love here leaves behind the romantic paraphernalia and sides with the modest love of the common people.

Sahir's poetic swing between "I can love but can't" is explained directly in his poem *Mere Geet*, where, in an apologetic tone, he confesses that he can sing of love and beauty but also can't, because his nights are haunted by images of war, poverty and oppression. *Parchhayian*, at first glance, is an anti-war poem, but is best remembered for its dramatic presentation of the emotion of love, which Sahir endorses in its most romantic form. Even when people are helpless and alienated, love must prevail.

In the latter half of his poetic career, Sahir wrote many unadulteratedly strong political poems, which gave us some of the most quotable lines. "*Zulm phir zulm hai, badhta hai to mit jaata hai, khoon phir khoon hai, tapkega to jam jayega*" (on the death of the Congolese patriot, Patrice Lumumba); "*Lab pe pabandi to hai ahsaas pe pehra to hai, phir bhi ahl-e-dil ko ehwal-e-bashar kehna to hai*" (on media control); "*Jism ki maut koi maut nahi hoti*" (on the death of Jawaharlal Nehru); "*Khoon apna ho ya paraya ho, nasl-e-adam ka khoon hai akhir*" (on the 1965 war).

During this period, he left behind his romantic streak, that magical interlacing of words, and took up a highly critical idiom that exposed the hypocrisy of State policies. What could be more direct, prosaic and castigating than this: "*Khatm karo tehzeeb ki baat, band karo culture ka shor, satya ahimsa sab bakwas, hum bhi katil tum bhi chor*" (*Gandhi ho ya Ghalib ho*).

The most amazing aspect of Sahir's personality is the agility with which he swung between art and populism. He considered himself a poet, yet commercialized his art. His film songs reverberate with his poetic virtuosity and his progressive ideas. But, on the demands of films, he also wrote songs like "*Sar Jo Tera Chakraye*", "*Mara Gaya Brahmachari*" and "*Ni Main Yaar Manana Ni*". Despite being a Marxist and an atheist, Sahir also produced

some of the most powerful *bhajans* like "*Allah Tero Naam*", "*Tora Mann Darpan Kehlaye*" and "*Aaj Sajan Mohe Ang Laga Lo*". He was not much of a believer in idealised love, yet he produced some of the most memorable lyrics in the famous *qawwali* in *Barsaat Ki Raat*.

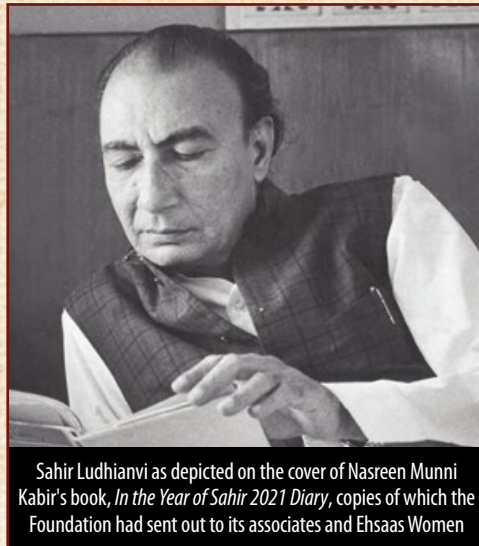
Outside his poetry, in real life, too, Sahir swung between reticence and rebellion. His love affair with Amrita is a narrative of long silences, yet his notorious face-off with S.D. Burman and Lata Mangeshkar, a part of popular film lore now, indicates how strongly he could dictate his terms. His insistence on including the name of the lyricist on radio also speaks of the pride

with which he held his occupation.

There are myriad shades in his film lyrics and there are as many admirers of them. People love his socially sensitive songs in films like *Pyaasa*, *Phir Subah Hogi*, *Sadhna* and so on, but I personally like his two songs in *Chitralekha*, because they challenge the popular metanarratives of our culture. "*Sansar Se Bhage Phirte Ho*" questions the long tradition of renunciation (*tyaag*) and "*Ae Ri Jaane Na Dungi*" unravels the mystery of 'vasl' (union). Urdu poetry sheds copious tears on the torments of a night of separation, but rarely speaks of what happens when lovers meet. Sahir strips away the veil of prudery in this song, and speaks of the intimate physical union they will have.

The swings in Sahir's poetic art are facsimiles of his romantic, intellectual and aesthetic involvements in life. He was a unique and a singular voice that resonates both in the minds and the music of the people.

Gurupadesh Singh is a retired Professor of English from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar



Sahir Ludhianvi as depicted on the cover of Nasreen Munni Kabir's book, *In the Year of Sahir 2021 Diary*, copies of which the Foundation had sent out to its associates and Ehsaas Women





**F**acts about tigers — the largest wild cats in the world — never cease to be fascinating. For instance, their roar can be heard from as far as three kilometres away; it is impossible to find two tigers with the same pattern of stripes on their bodies, as each of them is unique; tigers are excellent swimmers and are often found cooling off in streams and rivers; tiger cubs are born blind and rely on their other senses to locate their kin, usually opening their eyes one to two weeks after birth.

The Earth is home to five subspecies of the tiger today — the Bengal tiger, the South China tiger, the Indochinese tiger, the Amur tiger and the Sumatran tiger. For a species as unique as the tiger, it is a cause for great concern when its number keeps dwindling every year. Less than 100 years ago, these majestic beasts roamed free throughout Asia. The earliest tiger fossils discovered in certain parts of China are believed to be almost two million years old. But recent data show that the number of wild tigers has dropped by 95% since the beginning of the 20th century. Over the years, hunting, poaching, illegal trade,

urbanisation and habitat loss have wreaked havoc on tigers, driving certain subspecies — the Caspian, Javan and Bali — to extinction.

India is home to 70% of the world's tiger population. In 1973, the Government of India launched a tiger conservation programme called Project Tiger at the Jim Corbett National Park in Uttarakhand. It aimed to identify and counter the factors responsible for a steady decline in tiger habitats in the country and ensure a viable tiger population. Nine tiger reserves, covering an area of 9,115 square kilometres, were established in different states based on the core-buffer strategy. By 1997, the number of reserves had grown to 23, encompassing a total area of 33,000 sq km. Today, Project Tiger operates 51 tiger reserves in 18 states, covering 72,749 sq km of land. According to 2018 estimates, the tiger population in the country was 2,967 — 33% more than that of 2014. However, there is still a long way to go to ensure a healthy population of tigers in India and the world.

On July 29, 2010, the 13 tiger range countries,



including India, China and Russia, came together at the Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit and pledged to not only generate awareness on the declining tiger population across the world but also to double the number of tigers across their range by 2022, which is the Chinese Year of the Tiger. July 29 was declared as International Tiger Day, also known as Global Tiger Day, to promote tiger conservation and educate the masses on the importance of protecting the species and expanding wild tiger habitats.

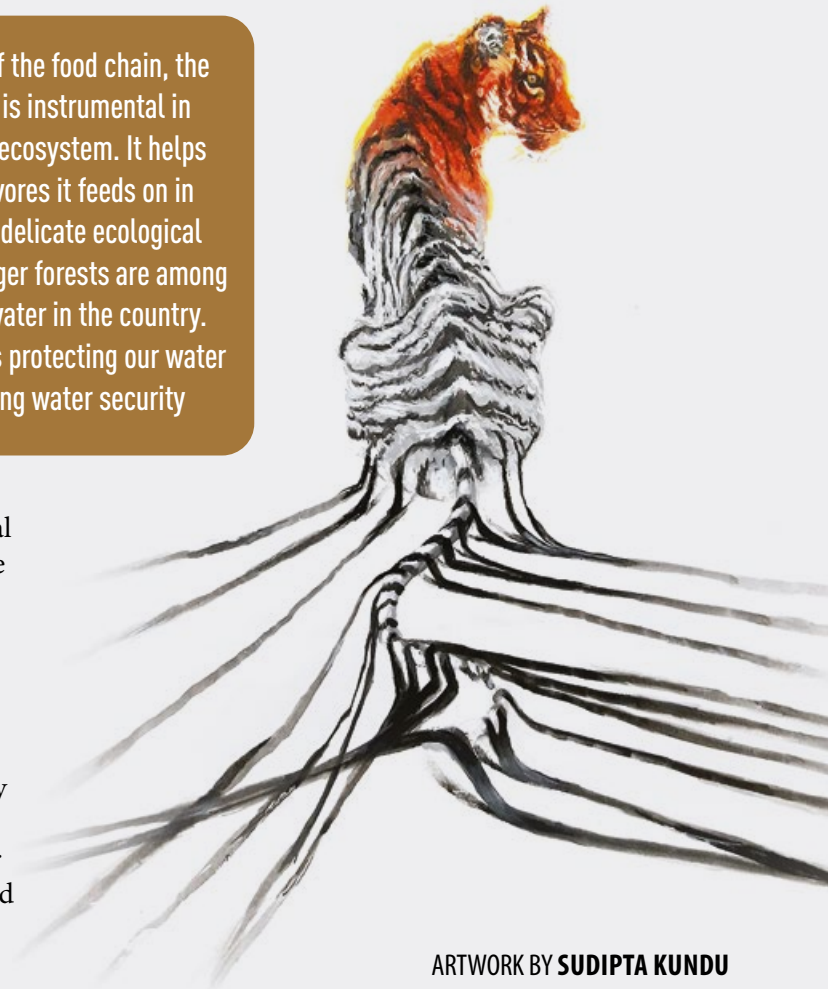
On International Tiger Day 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised India's commitment to nurturing tiger-friendly ecosystems and safeguarding tiger habitats across the country. He said, "India's strategy of tiger conservation attaches topmost importance to involving local communities. We are also inspired by our centuries-old ethos of living in harmony with all flora and fauna with whom we share our great planet."

In October 2021, Bhupender Yadav, the Environment Minister of India, launched tiger rallies across 51 tiger reserves in the 18 tiger range states in the country under the theme, 'India for Tigers — A Rally on Wheels'. Aiming to "bring together people from different walks of life," the rallies covered more than 7,500 km in seven days and were part of the Government of India's Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav initiative.

For several years, tigers have been extensively hunted for sports and as a status symbol, with tiger skins and heads being used as decorative items in homes. Bones of tigers were known ingredients in traditional Asian medicine. As we destroyed forests, tigers started attacking domestic animals in villages for food and came into direct conflict with humans, who ended up killing them in retaliation to protect their livestock and communities. Little did we realise that the extinction of a species can have far-reaching consequences.

For example, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature-India (WWF India), a particular species of the Acacia tree stopped regenerating completely with the extinction of the dodos in Mauritius. As apex predators at the top of the food chain, the tiger is a unique animal that is instrumental in preserving the diversity of an ecosystem. It helps keep the population of herbivores

As apex predators at the top of the food chain, the tiger is a unique animal that is instrumental in preserving the diversity of an ecosystem. It helps keep the population of herbivores it feeds on in check, thereby maintaining a delicate ecological balance. What's more, India's tiger forests are among the most reliable sources of water in the country. Preserving tiger habitats means protecting our water catchment areas and ensuring water security



ARTWORK BY **SUDIPTA KUNDU**

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Isabelle Louis, Deputy Regional Director at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, said, "Everyone has a role to play in stopping the shameful illegal trade in wildlife, be they police, customs officials, lawmakers, community leaders, prosecutors, judges, businesses or citizens. Decisive action against the illegal trade in wildlife is needed to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."

At **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, we strongly endorse harmonious human-animal coexistence and believe it is our duty to secure the future of our wildlife on the planet. Let's join hands to spread the word, act responsibly and voice our concerns to save our national animal before it's too late. Because, as Marco Lambertini, Director General of the WWF, said, "Doubling tigers is about tigers, about the whole of nature — and it's also about us."



# IN OUR NEXT ISSUE



Asha Prabhat



Deepti Naval



Ghazala Wahab



Javed Akhtar



Kshama Kaul



Kshama Sharma



Naveen Choudhary



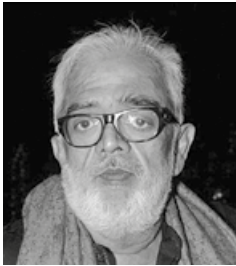
Onir



Priya Hajela



Priya Muthukumar



Rahul Rawail



Richa Chadha



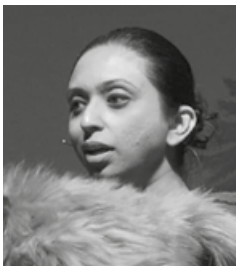
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Sharmila Tagore



Sheen Kaaf Nizam



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