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Prabha

The Prabha Khaitan Foundation Chronicle

प्रभा

Tastes of India

India is the sum total of its diverse parts — its sights, sounds, smells, and, of course, its varied tastes. In this issue of *Prabha*, we explore not just the corners of Punjab through the lens of a food veteran, but also examine what it means to be Indian through music, art, literature and tributes



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Prabha
प्रभा



MANISHA JAIN
Communications & Branding Chief,
Prabha Khaitan Foundation

Celebrating India's Diversity

No country exemplifies the meaning of unity in diversity better than India. With 28 states and 8 union territories, India is renowned for a multitude of languages and cultures. Most importantly, it is also home to varied cuisines that have mesmerised food lovers across the world. This double issue of *Prabha* explores this diversity through the eyes of the food consultant and entrepreneur, Karen Anand, the Indian edition of *A Night of Chefs & Ideas*, and through the various events and initiatives that have hosted writers, musicians and poets.

One of the oldest and richest cultures in the world is found in the state of Punjab. Its sumptuous cuisine is the culmination of its rich heritage and traditions that have stunned connoisseurs worldwide. Karen Anand's chronicle of her visits to the different cities of Punjab reminds us of its beauty while reiterating the brilliance of our **Ehsaas Women**.

But nowhere does this variegated culture of our country find better expression than in our music and literature. We hope you will enjoy reading about the enthralling performances of the singer and songwriter, Sonam Kalra, the dancer Dona Ganguly, and our throwback to our conversation with the sarangi maestro Pandit Ram Narayan. Our *tête-à-têtes* with writers such as Koral Dasgupta and Krishna Kalpit, poets Goutam Datta and Rudrasankar, director Rahul Rawail and others will surely help our readers glean the essence of our literary culture.

As we continually grow our activities for the promotion of the arts, we forge newer bonds and push our boundaries. Read on to discover how that has been made possible by our **Ehsaas Women** who work relentlessly to bring the Foundation's vision to fruition. But no steps towards the future can be taken without acknowledging all that we have lost, and in this issue, we bid goodbye to Dr Srutimala Duara, **Ehsaas Woman** of Guwahati.

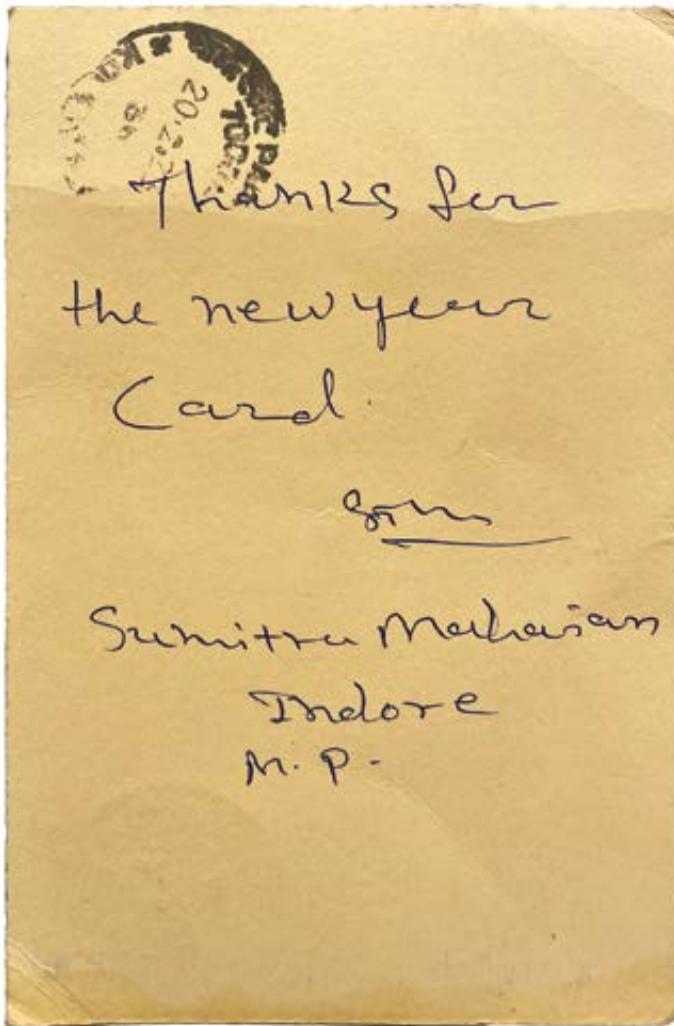
However, all of our progress is rendered meaningless if are unable to protect women and our planet; thus, on Earth Day and International Women's Day, we have renewed our pledge to making our planet a better place to live on.

We hope that you enjoy reading this edition of *Prabha*. Don't forget to write to us at newsletter@pkfoundation.org!

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.

[SNAPSHOTS]



A postcard from veteran Indian politician Sumitra Mahajan, former Speaker of the Lok Sabha and a longtime well-wisher of the Foundation. Here, she conveys her thanks for a greeting card — bearing a sketch by the Grammy Award-winning musician, Ricky Kej, and a note by the International Booker Prize Winner, Geetanjali Shree, both of whom are well-wishers of the Foundation — sent to her on the occasion of the New Year. In an era taken over by the impersonal nature of digital communication, the practice of handwritten letters and cards is a lost art. It began its decline in the late 1990s, and it is quite likely that the present generation will witness its demise. Thus, it was both heartwarming and an honour to receive a handwritten postcard with such a personal touch from an eminent personality like Mahajan. The kindness of the gesture was deeply appreciated by the Foundation



A lighthearted moment shared by Ehsaas Women Pooja Khanna and Shefali Rawat Agarwal as they meet in Frankfurt, Germany



Glimpses of women learning to embroider and make salwar suits at Prabha Khaitan Prashikshan Kendra, Sikar

Through Eyes of Wonder

The mighty state of Punjab is the stuff of legend – replete with history, valour, worship, love and, of course, delicious food! So when a renowned food writer, cook and author like Karen Anand makes her way through some of Punjab's most iconic cities – and, more importantly, writes about them! – it becomes a new historical moment in the story of Punjab and its warm association with **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**. From the glory of Jalandhar and Ludhiana to the histories of Patiala and Amritsar, read about it all, in the words of the master chef herself!



Food, History and Joy: A Punjab Travelogue



Karen Anand

When **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, and, in particular, Sundeep Bhutoria, who is the great force behind the Foundation, asked me to be part of some special sessions of **The Write Circle** initiative and also the **Choupal** initiative in Kolkata, I was, of course, very honoured. This was the perfect way to promote my new book, *Masala Memsahib: Recipes and Stories from My Culinary Adventures in India*, in so many cities of India which are otherwise not exposed to too many literary events. In the process, I also discovered, through the eyes of the **Ehsaas Women**, a sense of what it meant to live in these cities.

What I didn't realise was what a mammoth task it was to organise such events! We started in Kolkata, with Malika Varma hosting the **Choupal** session. It was immaculately organised; the questions, the set-up, the kind of invitations, the people who turned up at the charming garden of Malika's mother, Shamlu Dudeja — all of it was impeccably done.

A few weeks later, we moved on to Chennai, where Kaveri Lalchand hosted the first session of **The Write Circle**. This was quite different from the usual sessions under this initiative, which are usually held in five-star hotels. This session was

hosted in Kaveri's beautiful store in the centre of Chennai. Her guest list, too, was remarkable, and had all the right people — women who really enjoy this kind of literary circle, and who asked very pertinent questions. The food at all the sessions of **The Write Circle** and in all the events of the Foundation is always delicious and well chosen — this is important to me, of course — as well as a reflection of the culture and flavours of that city. The ladies also understood the essence of the book, which is about stories and a woman's journey as well as, of course, about food. It is also a motivational book of sorts, about a woman, for women, and which has a culinary leaning.

After that, I went to Nagpur, which was very different from what I thought it would be. The ladies were delightful and very welcoming, as they are throughout the country. They were very excited to take me for a typical Nagpur meal that night and get me to experience *saoji* — a dark, intensely spicy gravy, typical of Nagpur — in a variety of dishes. They also organised a fabulous weavers' tour in the old town the following day — another fabulous experience. I also found out that *saoji* originated here within a particular group of weavers. It was heartwarming to see both Muslim and Hindu weavers working side by side.

Ludhiana: The Best Welcome

And then, a few weeks later, I embarked on Foundation events in Punjab. This was, again, a testament to their stellar organisational abilities — four cities in five days. This is quite something for anyone to organise, even the biggest event companies. The **Ehsaas** Women did it with a lot of style and smiles. I landed in Chandigarh and then drove to Ludhiana, where I was greeted by Zarqa Jain and Deepika, and was made very comfortable in an apartment. I had a lovely home-cooked lunch, and then went off to participate in the talk amidst beautiful surroundings.



Shopping in Ludhiana



Deepika Bhalla, Karen Anand, Zarqa Jain and Pallavi Pahwa at the Ludhiana session of The Write Circle



Karen Anand signs copies of her book for guests at the event

Jalandhar: The Grandeur of Punjab

I then took a car immediately afterwards to go to Jalandhar, and stayed at The Radisson, which was unexpectedly grand. As it turned out, I knew the General Manager there, from previous meetings in Delhi. Before checking in, Ruhi Walia Syal, who was absolutely marvellous, took me to Rangla Punjab, the epitome of a real Punjabi village, with puppets and entertainment and a lovely typical Punjabi dinner — a great entry into Punjab.

The next day we had our talk, which was, once again, organised very well by the **Ehsaas** Women of Jalandhar at The Radisson. People were very keen to explore all the other things I had done in addition to the book, such as my travel and culinary tours. That evening, I was taken for a spin around downtown Jalandhar by Simran Paintal and her husband, and thereafter to dinner. I had never seen so many enormous villas in my life. It felt like I had gone to the Middle East!



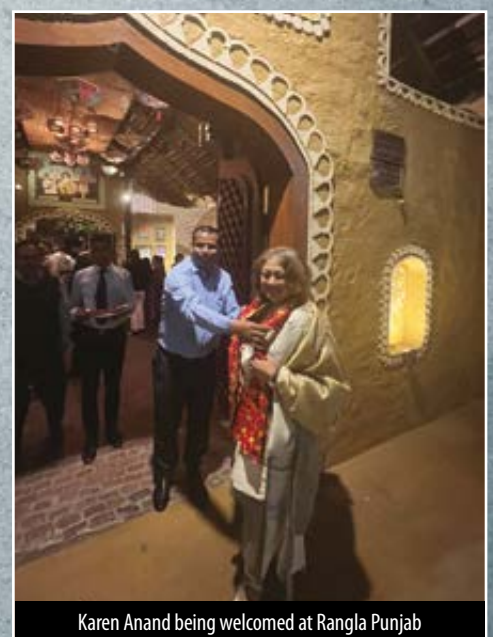
Karen Anand with Ehsaas Women and other guests at her session of The Write Circle in Jalandhar



Karen Anand and Ruhi Walia Syal at The Radisson, Jalandhar



Karen Anand, Dhvani Vohra and Ruhi Walia Syal at Rangla Punjab



Karen Anand being welcomed at Rangla Punjab

Patiala: A City of History

From Jalandhar, I drove with Ruhi and Dhvani Vohra to Patiala. We were chatting so much that, despite the early start, the 3-hour drive just swept by. In the city of history and palaces, I stayed at the beautiful Neemrana. Praneet Bubber was an excellent host and interviewer, who had driven down from Amritsar for the event — again, a woman of extreme depth and knowledge, with whom I thoroughly enjoyed spending time. We had the session at a trendy restaurant called Door No. 3, which was a completely different experience from conducting it in a hotel. They were very welcoming, and served a fabulous high tea to a completely full house. We had dinner at the same restaurant.



Karen Anand and Praneet Bubber at the Patiala session of The Write Circle at Door No. 3



Karen Anand at The Baradari Palace in Patiala



Phulkari shopping in Patiala



Ritika Talwar Singh, Karen Anand, Dhvani Vohra, Praneet Bubber and Ruhi Walia Syal



Karen Anand and Praneet Bubber at the Old Moti Bagh Palace, Patiala

Amritsar: Great Expectations

The next day, we drove off to Amritsar. My expectations were high. Praneet took me to experience the famous Amritsari fish for lunch, along with some mutton *tikka* and the best *tandoori* chicken ever. After this, the session, moderated by Ruhi, took place at the stunning Taj Swarna.

The next day, I was quite free till my evening flight, so I went to the Golden Temple and the Partition Museum. It was Holi, and I didn't want to disturb anyone's Holi plans. I was happy to do a little *jutti* and shawl shopping by myself, and then went to Praneet's for dinner. Praneet had also hosted a dinner the night before at her home, thoughtfully inviting people whom she thought would be interesting for me, and laying out a fantastic table of Punjabi specialities. After that, it was straight to the airport.

This was a whirlwind tour of Punjab – an amazing experience that I will never forget. I have to thank Prabha Khaitan Foundation for organising something like this; it was *par excellence*.



Karen Anand and Ruhi Walia Syal in conversation at the Taj Swarna, Amritsar



Karen Anand at Amritsar's famous Makhan Fish and Chicken Corner



Karen Anand at the Golden Temple



Praneet Bubber, Karen Anand and Ruhi Walia Syal at the Taj Swarna



A Journey Through A Remarkable Life



Karen Anand



Zarqa Jain

Be it a panel discussion or a practical workshop, people are always in the mood for food. This is why it was a cause for celebration when **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised **The Write Circle** with food guru Karen Anand. The session, which was hosted at Club Centra in Ludhiana, traced Anand's footsteps throughout her fascinating life. Pallavi Pahwa, **Ehsaas** Woman of Ludhiana, who gave the welcome speech.

Celebrated food writer, restaurateur and TV personality are just some of the feathers that Karen Anand wears in her cap. While she was in conversation with Zarqa Jain, **Ehsaas** Woman of Ludhiana, the audience got glimpses of Anand's life and heard about amazing recipes and fascinating experiences that helped her redefine Indian cuisine and influence the way people eat. Her culinary memoir, *Masala Memsahib: Recipes and Stories from My Culinary Adventures in India*, was discussed as well.



The audience at the session

"The word 'masala' was a catchy way of describing Indian food," said Anand. "And it can go internationally. I don't know if *Memsahib* does, but 'masala' has a ring to it." She went on to explain how her book, which is her "Covid baby", is a kind of statement against the misrepresentation of Indian food, both in the restaurants of India and abroad. Her book, *Lean Cuisine Curries*, gives people an idea about how we cook at home.

From speaking about her books, Anand moved on to her restaurant projects in London called Dishoom and Colonel Saab, explaining how her entry into the food world happened by chance. After returning to India, she explored her passion for food. As the spouse of a media personality, Anand was approached by a hotel's general manager to create a salad bar, and she agreed. Additionally, in Pune, where the OSHO ashram is located, was a community of foreigners who longed for their own cuisine. Therefore, she established a thriving salad bar with a diverse selection of salads to meet the demand.

Anand shared many facts about the culinary world where continental food was confined to five-star restaurants in the 1980s, and how the now much-loved mushrooms were only available in Delhi and Mumbai at one point. She pointed out how few women are involved in the culinary world, and said that more young women should try their hand at it.

Going back to her experiences, Anand recalled how she was initiated by her husband and friends to focus her culinary experience on giving people a different kind of food experience. She also spoke about how entertaining her husband's guests at home or hosting children's birthday parties gave her the scope to hone her passion for food. This discussion was followed by a rapid fire round with Jain, a Q&A round, and a vote of thanks by Deepika Bhalla. Dr Vanie Thapar felicitated Karen Anand to conclude the session.

*This session of **The Write Circle Ludhiana** was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Club Centra and with the support of **Ehsaas** Women of Ludhiana*



Karen Anand



All Recipes Have Interesting Stories

I felt like I needed to write about Indian food," she said. "Culinary memoirs are not so popular in India. But they are full of stories. There are interesting stories behind the recipes. I always give credit when it's somebody else's recipe. There's so much on the internet about food and recipes, but there is also so much rubbish in them!"

Anand agreed that somewhere deep down, she always had an inherent love for exploring Indian food and recipes, and mentioned how Indian food is missed when one stays abroad.



Ruhi Walia Syal

Food conversations with the legendary Karen Anand are never to be missed. Thus, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organized **The Write Circle** with Anand in Jalandhar. Simran Paintal, **Ehsaas** Woman of Jalandhar, was in conversation with Anand, where they discussed her life, the recipe for success as a professional food writer and some culinary stories that took Anand down memory lane.



Simran Paintal

After some words of appreciation about her book, *Masala Memsahib: Recipes And Stories From My Culinary Adventures In India*, the stage was set for the session. Anand went on to speak about how the book is different from several other cookbooks available in the market. "It was cathartic to write this book, and

Having studied international relations on the academic front, Anand faced a lot of struggles when it came to entering the food industry. "I did intend to join an international organisation or work in the media," she said. "But when I came back to India, I could not find anything to do." Working in the media was not working out for her since her Hindi was "deplorable"; moreover, because of her European perspectives, working for international organisations

in India did not pan out either.

Anand also shared some of her international experiences in Bali and Paris, and explained why she chose the states of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala and West Bengal for her culinary memoir. "I chose them because of my knowledge of the food from those states, which I have visited often," she said. The author went on to speak a little bit more about her book, and even read out a passage from a chapter based on Kerala. The session wrapped up with a vote of thanks delivered by Ruhi Walia Syal, **Ehsaas** Woman of Jalandhar, and Satinder Dugal felicitated Anand with a hand-woven *phulkari* cushion cover.



The audience at the session

The Write Circle Jalandhar was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Radisson Hotel, Dainik Jagran and with the support of Ehsaas Women of Jalandhar

Chronicling India's Diverse Recipes

Prabha Khaitan Foundation's commitment to the promotion of the arts, culture, education and literature is known throughout the country. Distinguished by its unique initiatives, the Foundation has made its mark in the state of Punjab with its activities in the cities of Amritsar, Chandigarh, Ludhiana and Jalandhar. Following its success in these cities, the Foundation has also embarked on its cultural journey in the vibrant city of Patiala. To this end, the Foundation organised a special session of **The Write Circle** with food consultant, entrepreneur and author, Karen Anand. Karm Singh opened the session and Ruhi Walia Syal, **Ehsaas** Woman of Jalandhar, delivered the formal welcome on behalf of the Foundation. She welcomed Anand and Praneet Bubber, **Ehsaas** Woman of Amritsar, who was also the moderator of the session.

Bubber engaged in a lively chat with Anand about the writer's life, career and her book, *Masala Memsahib: Recipes and Stories from My Culinary Adventures in India*, which documents the lesser-known recipes from five Indian states — Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra and West Bengal.

How did Anand start her journey with food? "It was living in Paris for a long time that helped me develop my love for food," said Anand. "However, it was only after reading Madhur Jaffrey's book, *A Taste of India*, that I was inspired to delve deeper into Indian food, even though I had been covering Indian and European recipes in my TV shows."



Karm Singh delivers the introductory speech



Praneet Bubber



Karen Anand

Sharing what went into making the culinary memoir, Anand said she had been collecting recipes ever since she returned to India in the late '80s. "During the lockdown, I started writing this book, and completed it in 2020," she said. "Out of almost 300 recipes, we selected 20 recipes per region. I made sure that there were some recipes that people could identify with; for instance, Goa's *vindaloo*, prawn *balchao*, and prawn curry. The effort was to make the recipes come alive by attaching stories and memories to them."

Anand also warned against the dangers of trusting the internet regarding recipes. She suggested that it was always better to look for trustworthy sources while cooking. The session came to a close with an engaging Q&A round with the audience. Ritika Talwar Singh, **Ehsaas** Woman of Patiala delivered the vote of thanks on behalf of the Foundation. Anand was felicitated by Dolly Singh with a memento handcrafted by the artisans from a town in Punjab called Jandiala Guru.

The Write Circle Patiala was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Door No. 3 and with the support of Ehsaas Women of Punjab



Dolly Singh, Ritika Talwar Singh and Ruhi Walia Syal with Karen Anand



Karen Anand



What We Eat Tells Many Stories



Ruhi Walia Syal

When it comes to talking about the rich variety of recipes found in different Indian states, is there anyone better than the food writer Karen Anand? Keeping the recipes of different states in mind, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised **The Write Circle** with Anand in Amritsar. Ruhi Walia Syal, **Ehsaas Woman** of Jalandhar, was in conversation with Anand, and their engaging conversation covered a lot of ground, including the writer's life and her professional journey towards becoming a food guru. Anand also shared the story of her book, *Masala Memsahib: Recipes and Stories from My Culinary Adventures in India*.

According to Anand, there are two categories of food lovers. Cooking is therapeutic for foodies who love to cook for themselves and their loved ones. The other category of foodies involves simply being a 'Jewish princess'. What does this mean? "It refers to young Jewish women who, as the first generation after their parents, immigrated from Eastern Europe, and they did very well in New York. They became entitled to a lot of things. So, the joke is, what does the Jewish princess do when she is hungry? She makes a reservation!" laughed Anand.

On that humorous note, Anand went back to her childhood, which helped her write this book. "When I was writing *Masala Memsahib*, I found that a lot of what my parents said to me about food resonated with me. In Southall in London, which is typically a Punjabi area, we did not get Indian food or ingredients," she said. "My

father had a weekly shop in Southall for a lot of Indian items. Though this did not make me a food person, it formed a part of my collective memory of food."

Admitting that she never got her culinary influence from her mother, who hated cooking, Anand said that she joined people who knew food and worked in a Michelin-starred restaurant

called Lucas Carton. What are the challenges that people have to face in terms of cooking? "One is cooking, the other is marketing," replied Anand. "Today, marketing is the key, and the chef has to ace it. You have to be visible for your product to sell."



Sheetal Khanna



Praneet Bubber

Creating the book was a mammoth task, as Anand has been collecting Indian recipes for the last 30 years. The opportunity to piece them together finally presented itself in 2020, when the lockdown confined her at home. Despite the constraints, the lockdown did have some silver linings: the process of writing the book consumed six months of her time. However, the photography in *Masala Memsahib* was a different tale. For that, she turned to a couple from Calcutta — Madhushree and Anindya Basu of Pikturinama Studios in Kolkata — with Anindya capturing the images and Madhushree whipping up the dishes. Anand provided the art direction.

Before the session ended, Anand read out the story of Imtiaz Qureshi (the famous chef who revived the Dum Pukht tradition of cuisine), and did a Q&A round with the audience. The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Praneet Bubber, **Ehsaas Woman** of Amritsar, and Anand was felicitated by Kamal Uppal.

*This session of **The Write Circle** Amritsar was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Dainik Jagran and Taj Swarna and with the support of **Ehsaas Women of Amritsar***

From The Heart



Karen Anand is often referred to as a 'culinary explorer', but during our conversations and time spent together, I discovered that she is an explorer of many things. Her passion for travelling the world and uncovering intriguing stories about food as well as exploring various regional cuisines and their health benefits was a joy to witness. We ventured through the markets of Patiala in search of Punjabi handicrafts and also sampled the diverse cuisine of Amritsar. In our conversation, Karen shared her adventures in the food industry with a contagious enthusiasm that was truly captivating.

— **Praneet Bubber**
Ehsaas Woman of Amritsar



I recently had the pleasure of hosting renowned food critic Karen Anand at Door No. 3 in Patiala. It was my first time meeting her, and I was struck by her warmth and passion for good food. Her insights into the local food scene were invaluable, and the audience was left feeling inspired and

motivated to try some exciting recipes from her latest book, *Masala Memsahib*. Thank you, Karen and **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, for giving me this amazing opportunity and making our first event in Patiala truly memorable.

— **Ritika Talwar Singh**
Ehsaas Woman of Patiala



Karen Anand is an accomplished writer and personality, and yet, for me, she is a charming guide and friend who has a childlike curiosity, and a love of life, adventure and new experiences. She is open to everything, and ready to try anything with a vivacious "let's do it!" Be it the local markets or the unique cooking experience at a

langar, she spontaneously jumped into everything. Neither long travels nor back-to-back book events could dim her sparkle to zestfully continue her exploration of the world and milieu around her. Her trademark humour charmed everyone around her. She is someone I will always look up to.

— **Deepika Bhalla**
Ehsaas Woman of Ludhiana

Dear Karen,



I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for the wonderful time we spent together during your visit to my city. Your culinary memoir has been a source of inspiration to many others who share the same passion for food and its cultural significance. Your insight into the world of culinary arts have broadened my understanding and enriched my perspective on food as not just a means of sustenance but a symbol of art, history and human connections. Your visit not only left a lasting impression on us, but it also marked the beginning of a wonderful new friendship. Once again, thank you for the memorable experience filled with love and laughter. I look forward to reading more of our *Masala Memsahib's* work in the future! Much love.

— **Ruhi Walia Syal**
Ehsaas Woman of Jalandhar

The Legendary Women Of Indian Mythology



Koral Dasgupta

Gender studies, art, myths and ecocritical literature are where author Koral Dasgupta's work comes to life. Her five-book *Sati* series retells the stories of the *Pancha Kanya*, where her books cover academic non-fiction and relationship dramas. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** hosted this notable author and digital publisher for a special session of **The Write Circle** in Ranchi, where the author discussed the women of Indian mythology. She was in conversation with Meena Sinha, an educationist and freelance writer who has also served as the media coordinator for the BBC-World Service Trust project.

Seema Singh, who is an author and **Ehsaas** Woman of Ranchi, threw the stage open for the session to begin. It took off with Meena Sinha discussing *Draupadi*, Dasgupta's third book in the *Sati* series (*Ahalya* and *Kunti* were the first two). Why were the *Pancha Kanyas* chosen by Dasgupta? The author explained how there is a Sanskrit *shloka* on the five iconic women Ahalya, Kunti, Draupadi, Mandodari and Tara. "The *shlokas* mentioned in the Vedas refer to them as *Pancha Kanyas*," she said. When *Pancha Kanya* is translated, it means five virgins, and it was surprising for Dasgupta to learn that Draupadi and Kunti are called virgins. "Indian philosophy is vast and beyond religion. The entire politics about women's bodies and the aspect of relating them with women's purity was something that was not propagated in old religious texts, as this upheld a patriarchal mindset," said Dasgupta. From the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, we are told about *Veer Yodhyas* like Bhishma, Karna and Arjun. Sita and Draupadi, however, were portrayed as



Meena Sinha

persons whose actions led to big wars and to the loss of precious lives.

Dasgupta explained how Sanskrit texts got lost in translation because they were rich in philosophies and difficult to understand. Hence the simpler versions of these rich texts were stripped off their philosophies. Dasgupta's Draupadi speaks from a first-person perspective. "I also realised that when you tell a story from a woman's perspective, different stories of the *Mahabharata* flip immensely, and end up telling an empowering story," said the author.



Seema Singh



Rashmi Sharma



Mukti Shahdeo

Dasgupta's main motive behind the five *Sati* books is to draw attention to the aspect of not feeling dejected by what other people think about you. "Right now, young people are in that phase of life where they are trying to understand who they are and where they come from," she said. "Somewhere, our present is messed up with political, religious and gender-based hooliganism. We are going back in history to figure out the things and practices that were very different from today."

The session came to an end with a word of advice from Dasgupta for budding authors, and a reading by the author from the prologue of her book. After a Q&A session with the audience, Rashmi Sharma felicitated Dasgupta, Mukti Shahdeo felicitated Meena Sinha and Poonam Anand, **Ehsaas** Woman of Ranchi, delivered the vote of thanks.



The audience at the event

The Write Circle Ranchi was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Chanakya BNR and Dainik Jagran and with the support of Ehsaas Women of Ranchi



Sonam Kalra delivers an electrifying performance with her fellow musicians

Soaring Notes of Love and Unity

Sufi music is one of the most celebrated of Islamic music traditions, the origin of which dates back many centuries. To celebrate the power of Sufi music that embraces everyone, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised a euphonious evening in Jaipur at the ITC Rajputana with the multiple award-winning singer, composer and songwriter, Sonam Kalra, whose music can be best described as a communion with the divine. The audience sat motionless as Kalra wove magic with her music.

Apra Kuchhal, the Foundation's Honorary Convenor of Rajasthan & Central India Affairs, opened the beautiful evening with a formal note on the contributions of the **Ehsaas Women of India** as cultural curators. She then introduced Kalra to the audience. Before beginning the breathtaking performance,

Kalra mentioned, "Musicians are nothing without the patrons." The ensemble kept the spirit of Sufi music alive. This celebration would have remained incomplete without Kalra's captivating recitation of the soul-stirring poetry of Kabir and the pioneering Sufi poets, Bulleh Shah and Amir Khusrau. Her rendition of *Dama Dam Mast Kalandar*, one of the most popular Sufi songs, had the audience lilt to its rhythm. Music knows no barriers, and this was best understood when Kalra concluded this enthralling celebration of Sufi music with her rendition of *Achutam Keshavam*. The memorable evening was rounded off with the music lovers relishing a range of cocktails and a delectable dinner. Here are a few glimpses from the evening!

The celebration of Sufi music was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with ITC Rajputana

Sonam Kalra



Deependra and Samiksha Rana



Rishi and Megha Mattu



Shagun and Ashwin Dalvi



Ajay and Nandini Atal



Pallavi and Manisha



Aditi and Saloni



Durru Mian, Tripti Pandey and Narendra Singh



Rajnish and Kavita Pardal



Apra Kuchhal



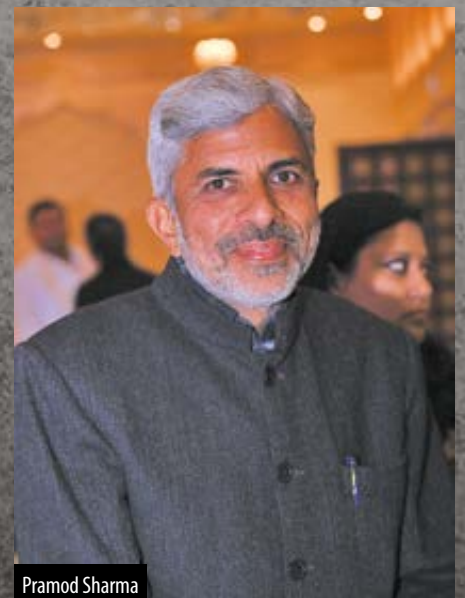
Fauzia Begam



Shazia Ilmi



Manisha Jain and Vinnie Kakkar



Pramod Sharma



Randhir and Manjul Mandawa



Kulsum Malik



Sandeep Bakshi



Pranav and Vishal Virmani



Jai Singh Rathore



Raj Bansal and Mahaveer Sharma



Rudrasankar

Goutam Dutta

Loving Bengal From Afar

The Kolkata International Book Fair is a much-awaited event in the City of Joy. Attracting readers from far and wide, the book fair has cemented its place in the hearts of book lovers.

To celebrate this cornucopia of readers and authors, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised a special **Aakhar** session at the book fair to promote Indian authors writing in regional languages. The poets, Goutam Datta and Rudrasankar, were guests at the session, which focused on the poetry written by them. The renowned theatre personality, Soumitra Mitra, who is also the Foundation's Advisor for Bengali Language, Theatre and Film Programmes, delivered the welcome note, followed by the felicitation of the guests with *kantha uttoriyos*.

Goutam Datta has been living in the United States of America, but has always remained an ardent lover of the Bengali language. Likening the plight of non-resident Indians to that of migratory birds, Datta revealed that he believes that Bengali, as a language, is still evolving. He recited his poems that were centred around socio-political and religious issues, and honoured the sacrifices of his parents.

For Rudrasankar, who is also a non-resident Indian, the beloved book fair was akin to a festival. In the session, he touched upon various genres of poetry of the



Soumitra Mitra delivers the welcome note



Anup Bandopadhyay in the audience

contemporary period through his verses. Reciting poems from his newly-released poetry collection, *Roder Kabita, Bodher Kabita*, published by Kabita Ashram, Rudrasankar informed the audience that his poem, *Andhakar Sesh Katha Noy*, is an appeal to his readers to never lose faith in the face of adversity. While *Priyo Hostel* conveyed his fondness for the student life he had left behind, he also read out lines from his works that spoke about the importance of unity among religions. His other poems, such as *Amra Manush, Ami o Timirkanti, Utsab* and *Ek Avodro*, focused on various relevant issues and kept the audience engaged with the conversations that they inspired. A socially conscious poet, Rudrasankar wrote *Samaj Cholche* in protest against the crimes committed against women.

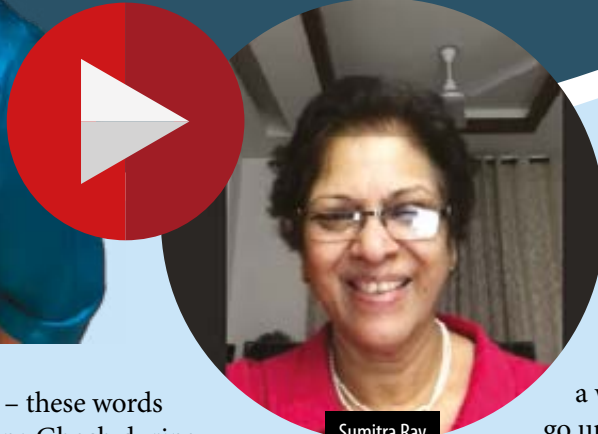
The session concluded with both Datta and Rudrasankar speaking against bigotry and hoping for socio-religious harmony in their poems, *Banglay Gai Gaan Amra Bhalobese* and *Simana*, respectively. In keeping with the literary and intellectual atmosphere of the fair, the session kept the audience engaged with its various themes.

Aakhar Kolkata was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Purba Paschim and Anandabazar Patrika Online

Telling Stories with Energy



Rituparna Ghosh



Sumitra Ray

Fun, happy and cheerful – these words aptly described Rituparna Ghosh during **Prabha Khaitan Foundation's** special virtual storytelling session under its initiative, **Muskaan**. Right from the beginning of the session, Ghosh, with grace and kindness, included even the tiniest tots from kindergarten, Class I and Class II. As the session began, she efficiently got the kids involved in the proceedings, asking if they could hear, see and feel her through their screens. Jumping from one side of the screen to the other, her energy rose with every sentence.

Ghosh believes that “there is a storyteller in each one of us, and storytelling skills are required to make sense of the world and give shape to children’s ideas.” She works with a varied audience including schoolchildren, teachers, parents, professionals and entrepreneurs, as well as people in businesses, not-for-profit organisations and corporations, in order to help them discover emotions, expressions and life through stories.

Before Ghosh jumped into storytelling, Sumitra Ray, the Foundation’s Student Programmes Advisor, delivered

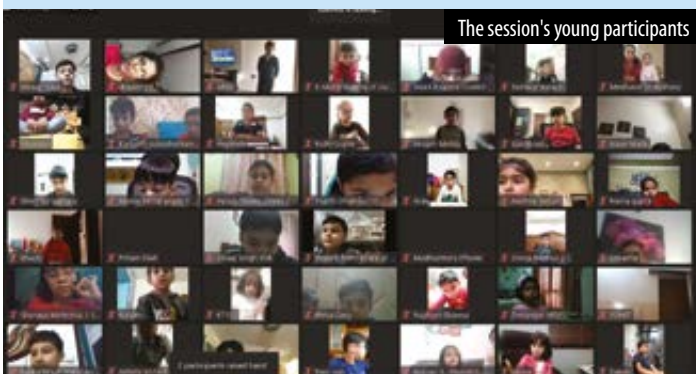
the welcome speech. After that, off went Ghosh with her first story of a baby hippopotamus. She told the children to involve other relatives from their family in the session, and even asked them to get on their feet as they, too, would be the characters in the stories.

The baby hippo, who was born on a winter morning, desperately wanted to go underwater, but was not allowed to do so until summer. As soon as it was summer, the baby hippo waddled into the water and refused to come out. The mother tried, with the help of other animals and relatives, to get Baby Hippo out, but Baby Hippo was having too much fun. Angry and sad, Mother Hippo even turned to Papa Hippo, who instead joined Baby Hippo in the water. In the end, Baby Hippo caught a cold, started to sneeze and came out of the water. But did Baby Hippo receive a scolding or a hug from Mother Hippo? That was for the kids to figure out, as they were asked to repeat the story to their mothers and come up with an answer.

The second story was set at a time when giraffes had small necks. In a forest in Africa, the giraffe was unable to eat from tall trees, and would depend on the grass and leaves on the ground. He even shared the food with his friend, the rhinoceros, who was a greedy animal. One unfortunate day, there was no grass on the ground to eat. This is when an old man offered to help them with a potion that had to be consumed before sunrise. So, the giraffe went to visit the old man the next morning, drank the potion and kept growing. This helped the giraffe to eat leaves from the tree, and although the rhino was angry as he did not receive the potion, seeing the giraffe sharing his food with him again made their friendship even stronger!

After this magical storytelling session, a Q&A round followed. Sumitra Ray delivered the vote of thanks as the session wrapped up.

*A joint initiative with **Education for All**, this session of **Muskaan** was presented by Shree Cement Limited*



The session's young participants

मुशायरा 'अल्फ़ाज़-ओ-एहसास': उर्दू शायरी में डूबी एक खुशनुमा शाम

यह उर्दू शायरी में डूबी राजधानी दिल्ली की एक सुहानी शाम थी। अहसास वूमन दिल्ली के सौजन्य से इंडिया इंटरनेशनल सेंटर के मल्टीपरपज हॉल में प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन ने अपनी पहल 'सुर और साज' के बैनर तले रेख्ता फ़ाउंडेशन के सहयोग से 'अल्फ़ाज़-ओ-एहसास' का आयोजन किया था। तीन घंटे से भी अधिक समय तक चले इस शानदार मुशायरे का स्वागत वक्तव्य और आभार अहसास वूमन दिल्ली नीलिमा डालमिया अधार ने किया। उन्होंने प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन का विस्तार से परिचय दिया और कोलकाता स्थित इस गैर-लाभकारी न्यास की विश्वव्यापी गतिविधियों की चर्चा की। इस अवसर पर उन्होंने फाउंडेशन की संस्थापक डॉ प्रभा खेतान को भी याद किया, जो एक लब्ध प्रतिष्ठित उद्यमी, स्वप्नदर्शी, परोपकारी, समाजसेवी, नारीवादी चिंतक और लेखिका थीं, और जिन्हें भारतीय साहित्य, स्त्री सशक्तीकरण और देश की सांस्कृतिक संपदा से अपने प्यार के लिए जाना जाता है।

अधार ने बताया कि फाउंडेशन यूनेस्को के इस दृष्टिकोण का समर्थन करता है कि दुनिया, विशेषकर तीसरी दुनिया के देशों में गरीब ग्रामीण समुदायों के सतत विकास को बढ़ावा देने में सांस्कृतिक विकास की एक प्रभावी वैकल्पिक भूमिका है, और इसीलिए फाउंडेशन भारत और दुनिया की बहुविध संस्कृति, भाषा, संगीत, साहित्य, दृश्य कला, नृत्य, नाटक, मौखिक परंपराओं और पारंपरिक प्रथाओं का उत्सव मनाता है। उन्होंने प्रायोजक श्री सीमेंट के सौजन्य, अहसास वूमन के साथ और लगभग सभी शहरों में समान सोच वाले संगठनों व व्यक्तियों के सहयोग का जिक्र किया, फाउंडेशन के समृद्ध एंथम की जानकारी दी और हिंदी में 'कलम'; अंग्रेजी में 'द राइट सर्कल', 'एन आथर्स आफ्टरनून'; उर्दू, अरबी और फारसी के 'लफ़ज़'; अन्य भारतीय भाषाओं के लिए 'आखर', 'पोथी', 'किताब'; कला-संगीत-संस्कृति के लिए 'सुर और साज' और 'एक मुलाकात' जैसे कार्यक्रमों के बारे में बताया।

परिचय के बाद अधार ने अहसास वूमन हुमा खलील, साहित्य प्रेमी करुणा गोयनका और प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की न्यासी अनिदिता चटर्जी और शायर विजेंद्र सिंह परवाज़ को शायरी की इस शाम की शामों रौशन करने के लिए आमंत्रित किया। हुमा खलील ने बताया कि अहसास के दायरे में हमने साहित्य और संस्कृति के बहुत कार्यक्रम किए हैं। 'अल्फ़ाज़-ओ-एहसास' अपनी तरह का पहला मुशायरा है। आने वाले समय में देश भर में इसके आयोजन का इरादा है। उन्होंने रेख्ता फ़ाउंडेशन के सालिम सलीम और सतीश गुप्ता तथा अहसास वूमन की जोया और मनीषा का आभार प्रकट किया और कहा कि उर्दू जुबान हम सबकी जुबान है। हमारे मुल्क की जुबान है, हमारी तहजीब की जुबान है। इस जुबान से किसी खास मजहब या तबके का न तो कोई जोर है, न ही अहसान है। इस जुबान से उन सभी का अहसान है, जिन्होंने इस जुबान के लिए अपनी तरह से कुछ न कुछ कंट्रीब्यूट किया है।

खलील ने शायरी के बारे में अपने खयालात जाहिर किए और मुशायरा में मौजूद शायरों के लिए अलेक्जेंडर पोप की चर्चित पंक्तियों के अलावा जावेद अख्तर का यह शेर भी पढ़ा-

अगर पलक पे है मोती तो ये नहीं काफ़ी

हुनर भी चाहिए अल्फ़ाज़ में पिरौने का...

उन्होंने मिर्जा ग़ालिब के शेर-

सुर्मा-ए-मुफ़्त-ए-नज़र हूँ मिरी कीमत ये है



Nusrat Mehdi, Vijendra Singh Parwaz, Fehmi Badauni, Iqbal Ashhar and Shariq Kaifi



Azm Shakri, Minu Bakshi and Waseem Nadir



Poonam Meera, Saalim Saleem and Moin Shadab

कि रहे चश्म-ए-खरीदार पे एहसाँ मेरा...

के अलावा मीर तकी मीर का भी जिक्र किया। और दो सौ साल पहले पैदा हुए इस महान शायर के इस शेर को पढ़ा-

मीर'-साहिब जमाना नाजुक है

दोनों हाथों से थामिए दस्तार.

उन्होंने कहा कि भले ही दुनिया ने कितनी भी तरक्की कर ली हो लेकिन आज भी हमारे अंदर की दुनिया, हमारे जज्बात, एहसासात उतने ही नाजुक हैं। उन्होंने अल्लामा इकबाल को याद किया और पढ़ा-

है दिल के लिए मौत मशीनों की हुकूमत

एहसास-ए-मुरव्वत को कुचल देते हैं आलात...

उन्होंने उर्दू शायरी को अंदर और बाहर की दुनिया को संतुलित करने वाला बताते हुए एक बार फिर मीर को याद किया और पढ़ा-

ले साँस भी आहिस्ता कि नाजुक है बहुत काम

आफ़ाक की इस कारगह-ए-शीशागरी का... इस शेर के साथ ही उन्होंने उर्दू शायरी की इस खूबसूरत शाम मुशायरा 'अल्फाज-ओ-एहसास' को श्रोताओं को सौंपा और ग़ालिब का यह शेर पढ़ा-

देखना तकरीर की लज्जत कि जो उस ने कहा

में ने ये जाना कि गया ये भी मेरे दिल में है...

अपनी तरह के शानदार शायर मुईन शादाब की निजामत में मुशायरा आगे बढ़ा। उन्होंने मुशायरा मंच पर बैठे शायरों के बारे में कहा कि यहां इतने शानदार लोग उपस्थित हैं कि सबका परिचय देना मुश्किल है। ऐसे में मुझे यह शेर याद आता है-

में किसका नाम पुकारू मैं किसका नाम न लूं

यहां तो बज्म-ए जो भी हैं कयामत हैं... शादाब ने भी 'एहसास-ओ-अल्फाज' मुशायरा के बारे में बेहद शानदार बातें कहीं और वर्तमान हालात में शायरी, अदब, साहित्य और लफ़्ज़ की अहमियत का जिक्र किया। उन्होंने हुमा खलील की शानदार तकरीर की तारीफ की और मुशायरा में भारी संख्या में मौजूद युवाओं के लिए अपना यह शेर पढ़ा-

नए दीवानों को देखें तो खुशी होती है

हम भी ऐसे थे जब आए थे वीराने में...

मुशायरा का आगाज सालिम सलीम ने किया। उन्होंने पहला शेर पढ़ा-

हवा से इस्तिफ़ादा कर लिया है, चरागों को लिबादा कर लिया है

बहुत जीने की ख्वाहिश हो रही थी, सो मरने का इरादा कर लिया है... उन्होंने एक से बढ़कर एक शेर सुनाया, जिसमें-

अपने जैसी कोई तस्वीर बनानी थी मुझे

मिरे अंदर से सभी रंग तुम्हारे निकले... भी शामिल था।

अगली शायर पूनम मीरा थीं। उन्होंने अपनी ग़ज़ल के कुछ शेर सुनाए, साथ ही तरन्नुम में अपनी नज़्म भी सुनाई-

हमारे दरमियां करती रही कोशिश रसाई की

मुहब्बत ने बड़ी शिद्दत से किस्मत आजमाई की...

...

दिन तो सोता है रात भर मेरा, शब कहा दिन गुजार आती है

मुईन शादाब ने भी अपनी शायरी से खूब तालियां बटोरीं। एक बानगी देखिए-

दर्द इजाद करते रहते हैं, दिल को आबाद करते रहते हैं

आजकल कोई कामकाज नहीं, हम तुझे याद करते रहते हैं

...

वो आसमानों से उतरें तो हम बताएं उन्हें,

बुलंदियों का हुनर हमें खाक से आया...

अगले शायर बदायूं से आए वसीम नादिर थे। उन्होंने सुनाया-

हम बहुत देर में समझ पाए

दूसरा इश्क भी जरूरी था

...

उसको मेरी तड़प का गुमां तक नहीं हुआ

मैं इस तरह जला कि धुआं तक नहीं हुआ

सादिक कैफी ने सुनाया-

सफ़र हालांकि तेरे साथ अच्छा चल रहा है

बराबर से मगर एक और रस्ता चल रहा है

...

सजाएं पूरी करके लोग घर जाते रहेंगे

मैं फाटक पर खड़ा कैदी रिहा करता रहूंगा

शायरानुसरत मेहदी ने सुनाया-

इश्क में मजनुं और फरहाद नहीं होने के

ये नए लोग हैं बर्बाद नहीं होने के

ये जो दावे हैं मोहब्बत के अभी हैं जानां

और दो-चार साल बाद नहीं होने के

...



Huma Khalil, Ehsaas Woman of Delhi, introduced Mushaira to the audience



Salma Sultan, a renowned journalist



The Urdu poet, Kamna Prasad, with Neelima Dalmia Adhar, Ehsaas Woman of Delhi

अक़ को भूल जा कुछ देर तो नादानी कर
मसलहत छोड़ जरा इश्क में आसानी कर

शायर अज़म शाकरी ने जब अपनी ग़ज़ल सुनाई तो ख़ूब तालियां बजी और कई दशक पहले गांव से हैदराबाद जाकर अपने पहले मुशायरे को याद करते हुए, अपनी जो ग़ज़लें सुनाई उस पर ख़ूब देर तक तालियां बजती रहीं। चंद अशआर यों थे—

जिंदगी यूं भी गुजारी जा रही है,
जैसे कोई जंग हारी जा रही है
जिस जगह पहले के जख्मों के निशां हैं,
फिर वहीं पर चोट मारी जा रही है

...

अब न रोएंगे हम खुशी के लिए, गम ही काफी है जिंदगी के लिए
जो हमें जख्म देके छोड़ गया, हम तड़पते रहे उसी के लिए
जहर भी लग गया दवा बनकर, हमने ख़ाया था खुदकुशी के लिए...

अगले शायर फ़हमी बदायूनी थे। उनकी शायरी ने मुशायरे में वाह-वाह के साथ युवाओं की ख़ूब तालियां बटोरी —

नजर में तेरा चेहरा रख दिया है, सफर का पूरा खर्चा रख लिया है
बिना वादे के उसका मुंतज़िर हूं, बिना सहरी का रोजा रख लिया है

...

एक मेहमान आने वाला है, आज दहलीज़ पर है सारा घर
वो कभी ठोकरे नहीं खाता, दे रहा वो जिसे सहारा घर



Najma Akhtar,
Vice-Chancellor,
Jamia Millia Islamia

हम तेरे गम के पास बैठे थे, दूसरे गम उदास बैठे थे
दोस्तों ने हंसा दिया आकर, अच्छे खासे उदास बैठे थे

अगली फनकार डॉ मीनू बख्शी थीं, जो न केवल बतौर शायर अपनी उम्दा ग़ज़लों के लिए मशहूर हैं, बल्कि बतौर चित्रकार, संगीतकार भी जिन्होंने अपनी छाप छोड़ी है। उन्होंने एक से बढ़ कर एक अशआर सुनाए, जिनकी बानगी यों है—

जलवा-ए-हुस्न में नहाते हैं, रौशनी से फरेब खाते हैं
ये अदा है हमारे जीने की, चोट खाते हैं मुस्कुराते हैं

क्या रखूं उम्मीद उससे दोस्ती निभाने की
लग गई है उसको भी अब हवा जमाने की
नफरतों के शोलों में सारा शहर जलता है
ये अजीब कोशिश है तिरगी मिटाने की...

तेरे ही गम से मेरी तबियत बहल गई
तू याद आ गया तो मेरी जां संभल गई
अब याद है कहां मुझे बाजी की दास्तां
में तुझसे क्या मिली मेरी दुनिया बदल गई

मुशायरा 'एहसास-ओ-अल्फाज़' के अगले शायर थे विजेंद्र सिंह 'परवाज़', जिन्होंने हिंदी और उर्दू शायरी के बीच हिंदुस्तानी के जरिए पुल बनाने का काम किया है। परवाज़ ने शायरी के बारे में कुछ अल्फाज़ कहे और कहा कि मैं यहां नई शायरी



सुनाऊंगा, क्योंकि 'ये इश्क है दुनिया'. उन्होंने जो अशआर पढ़े उनकी चंद बानगी देखिए-

शायरी सिर्फ मोहब्बत की तरफदारी है
हर गज़ल में तेरी गलियों का सफर जारी है
मुस्कुरा कर कोई गरदन पे छूरी फेर गया
जान लेना भी मोहब्बत में अदाकारी है

...
लिखने वाले तू मेरा ऐसा मुकद्दर लिखता
फूल खिल उठते यो कागज पे मैं पत्थर लिखता
कितना चाहा है तुझे मेरे मिटाने वाले
फिर भला कौन से हाथों से सितमगर लिखता
वो तो मैं हूँ कि तड़पता रहा मछली की तरह
वरना आँखों को यहां कौन समंदर लिखता...

शायरी की इस खुशनुमा शाम की आखिरी प्रस्तुति इकबाल अशहर की थी। उन्होंने 2018 में सैन फ्रांसिस्को में पाकिस्तानी शायर सरबत खान से हुई अपनी गुप्ततमू की चर्चा की और बताया कि सरबत खान ने कहा कि मेरा ख्याल है कि उर्दू तो हिंदुस्तान में मर खप गई होगी। मैंने उसी तेवर में उन्हें जवाब दिया कि अगर मैं कहूँ कि हिंदुस्तान में उर्दू नए सिरे से जन्म ले रही है, तो आपको कैसा लगेगा। उन्होंने कहा कि साबित कीजिए। मैंने कहा कि आप गूगल पर रेख्ता टाइप कीजिए। अशहर ने एक से बढ़कर एक गज़ल, शेर, नज़्म सुनाई, जिस पर खूब तालियां बजीं। चंद बानगी देखिए-

वही ख्वाब फिर से चमक उठा, वही जख्म फिर से हरा हुआ

मैं समझ रहा था वो बेवफा मेरे हाफिजे से जुदा हुआ
यहां खुशबुओं की रफाकतें, ना तुझे मिलीं ना मुझे मिलीं
वो चमन के जिसपे गुरुर था, ना तेरा हुआ ना मेरा हुआ...

...
उर्दू है मेरा नाम, मैं खुसरो की पहेली
मैं मीर की हमराज हूँ, गालिब की सहेली
दक्कन के वली ने मुझे गोदी में खिलाया
सौदा के कसीदों ने मेरा हुस्न बढ़ाया
है मीर की अजमत कि मुझे चलना सिखाया
मैं दाग के आंगन में खिली बन के चमेली
क्यूं मुझको बनाते हो तआस्सुब का निशाना
मैंने तो कभी खुद को मुसलमां नहीं माना
देखा था कभी मैंने भी खुशियों का ज़माना
अपने ही वतन में हूँ मगर आज अकेली...

उर्दू, हिंदी और हिंदुस्तानी शायरी से इश्क करने वालों की मानें तो यह राजधानी दिल्ली के दिलो-दिमाग पर लंबे समय तक याद रह जाने वाला मुशायरा था।

अहसास वूमन दिल्ली के सौजन्य से आयोजित 'अल्फाज़-ओ-एहसास' के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट। यह कार्यक्रम प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की पहल 'सुर और साज' के बैनर तले रेख्ता फाउंडेशन के सहयोग से आयोजित किया गया था



The audience at the event



Krishna Kalpit



ज्ञान से बड़ा ऐश्वर्य कुछ भी नहीं होता: कृष्ण कल्पित

मजदूर, यहां के रिक्शे दिखाई देते हैं, पर आपको इसके पीछे की बात नहीं देती।

अपनी कविता यात्रा के बारे में कल्पित ने कहा कि मेरे दादाजी सेवाग्राम में गांधी जी के साथ थे। मेरे माता-पिता का विवाह सेवाग्राम में ही हुआ खादी के कपड़ों में। जब वे गांधी जी के विचारों से दूर होकर वापस आर्य समाज की ओर आए तो उन्होंने गीता का राजस्थानी में अनुवाद भी किया। मेरे घर का माहौल साहित्यिक था। जब मैं छठी कक्षा में था तभी मैंने अपने दादाजी की कविता चुराकर जिला स्तर के अखबार में भेज दी। दादाजी ने वह अखबार देख लिया और पूछा कि तुम क्या कविता लिखने लगे। उन्होंने ही मुझे छंद और बहर समझाया। आठवीं से मैं अपनी कविता लिखने लगा। पर यह वह दौर था जब गद्य कविताओं का बोलबाला था, जिसका खमियाजा भी मुझे भुगतना पड़ा। राजस्थान में तब अकाल भी बहुत पड़ रहे थे। मेरी शुरुआती कविताएं जमाखोरी के खिलाफ थी, जो राजस्थान पत्रिका में छपी थीं।



Anchit

कल्पित ने अपनी कविताओं पर धूमिल के आलोचना के अंक के प्रभाव के अलावा उस दौर की साहित्यिक दोस्ती को याद किया और युवा कवियों के साथ स्वयं के सहज होने की बात स्वीकारी। उन्होंने इमरजेंसी के दौर में धर्मयुग में छपे अपने कथा गीत को याद किया और अपनी पुस्तक 'हिन्दनामा' से जुड़े सवाल का विस्तार से उत्तर दिया। उन्होंने कहा यह पुस्तक तीन साल में लिखी गई। मैं इसे कविता की किताब कहता हूँ। उन्होंने हाली की 'मुसदस', मैथिलीशरण गुप्त की 'भारत-भारती', फिरदौसी की कृति 'शाहनामा' और तुलसीदास की 'रामचरित मानस' की भी चर्चा की। आप चाहे इसे कविता, गद्य, मसनवी या चंपू जो भी कहें, पर यह चर्चित हो रही है। एक अन्य सवाल के उत्तर में उन्होंने कहा कि वर्तमान और अतीत को मिलाकर ही हम भविष्य का सपना देख सकते हैं। किसी भी कृति के लिए भाषा और स्मृति का होना बहुत आवश्यक है। कल्पित ने अपनी पुस्तक 'रेखते के बीज' की एक कविता से जुड़े सवाल के उत्तर में कहा कि कविता मनुष्य का सबसे उज्वल पक्ष है। हर क्रिएटिव चीज कविता में बदल जाना चाहती है। उन्होंने 'कविता रहस्य' को आकर ग्रंथ की संज्ञा दी। पोलिटिकली करेक्ट कविता समय के साथ नष्ट हो जाती है। उन्होंने कहा कि कवि अपने आप में विकट होता है।

कल्पित ने अपने उपन्यास 'जाली किताब' की चर्चा की और जगत सेठ पर लिखे जा रहे उपन्यास के बारे में बताया। उन्होंने अपनी कुछ कविताएं भी सुनाई और सवाल-जवाब सत्र में दर्शकों के सवालों के उत्तर दिए। उन्होंने कहा कि खंडहरों में ही मनुष्यता की नई रोशनी दिखा देती है, चमकती इमारतों में नहीं। कारण खंडहर और उजाड़ में ही हमारी सभ्यताएं, हमारा इतिहास छिपा हुआ है। अनुभा आर्य ने धन्यवाद ज्ञापित किया। अरुण कमल और त्रिपुरारी शरण ने अतिथि वक्ता और संवादकर्ता का अभिनंदन किया।

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

“सर्जनात्मक लेखन के लिए और एक कवि के लिए सर्वाधिक उपयुक्त जगह अगर कोई है तो वह पटना है।” यह कहना है कवि-गद्यकार कृष्ण कल्पित का। वे प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से आयोजित कलम पटना में बतौर अतिथि वक्ता उपस्थित थे। कार्यक्रम के आरंभ में अहसास वूमन पटना अन्विता प्रधान ने अतिथियों का स्वागत किया। उन्होंने भारत और दुनिया के चालीस से भी अधिक शहरों में फाउंडेशन द्वारा कला, सेवा, साहित्य और सांस्कृतिक गतिविधियों के साथ ही महिला कल्याण से जुड़े अभियान की चर्चा की और बताया कि फाउंडेशन 'कलम' के अलावा 'एक मुलाकात विशेष', 'लफ़्ज़', 'आखर', 'पोथी', 'सुर और साज', 'द राइट सर्कल' और 'किताब' जैसे कार्यक्रम करता है।

अतिथि वक्ता कल्पित का विस्तार से परिचय देते हुए प्रधान ने उनकी शिक्षा, अध्यापन, पत्रकारिता और भारतीय प्रसारण सेवा काल की चर्चा की। कल्पित के कविता संग्रह 'भीड़ से गुजरते हुए', 'बढ़ई का बेटा', 'कोई अछूता सबद', 'एक शराबी की सूक्तियाँ', 'बाग-ए-बेदिल' और हिन्दी का प्रथम काव्यशास्त्र 'कविता-रहस्य', सिनेमा, मीडिया पर 'छोटा पर्दा बड़ा पर्दा' और 'हिन्दनामा: एक महादेश की गाथा' जैसी कृतियों का जिक्र करते हुए प्रधान ने बताया कि वे मीरा नायर की फिल्म 'कामसूत्र' में भारत सरकार की ओर से सम्पर्क अधिकारी थे। फिल्मकार ऋत्विक् घटक के जीवन पर आधारित वृत्तचित्र 'एक पेड़ की कहानी' के निर्माण के अलावा 'भारत-भारती कविता-यात्रा' के अखिल भारतीय संयोजक और समानांतर साहित्य उत्सव के संस्थापक संयोजक के रूप में भी अपनी छाप छोड़ी है। अंग्रेजी समेत कई भारतीय भाषाओं में कल्पित की रचनाओं का अनुवाद हो चुका है और वे निरंजननाथ आचार्य सम्मान सहित कई पुरस्कारों से सम्मानित भी हैं।

कल्पित से आगे का संवाद शिक्षक, संपादक, कवि अंचित ने किया। अंचित ने कल्पित को हिंदी का सबसे आकर्षक कवि बताते हुए पूछा कि आपने कब और कैसे तय किया कि कविताएं लिखनी हैं? कल्पित ने कहा कि पटना मेरा प्रिय शहर है। मेरी इच्छा है कि मेरा अगला जन्म अगर हो तो बिहार में हो। बिहार की धरती ज्ञान की धरती है और ज्ञान से बड़ा ऐश्वर्य कुछ भी नहीं होता। मैं जयपुर में रहता हूँ। बड़ा सुंदर शहर है, दुनिया भर से पर्यटक आते हैं। पर जयपुर में रहता हूँ तो मेरी स्मृति में केवल तीन सौ बरस ही रहते हैं, यहां केवल तीन सौ वर्ष की हवाएं ही चलती हैं। जबकि पटना में रहता हूँ, तो बिहार की जो धरती है, वहां तीन हजार साल पुरानी हवाएं चलती हैं। यहां मैं तीन अवसरों पर रहा। आपको तो यहां की गंदगी, यहां के



Anvita Pradhan

...और उस एक दिन ने मेरी जिंदगी को बदल दिया: राहुल रवैल



Rahul Rawail

Shanel Parekh

भूल ही गया था। चिटू ने मुझे पूछा भी तो मैंने कहा कि मैं तो तुम्हारे पापा को काम करते हुए देख रहा था। उसके बाद मैं वहां रोज जाता था। दस-पांच दिन के बाद मैंने मम्मी से कहा कि मेरे पास सात-आठ महीने हैं तो मुझे राज साहब के साथ असिस्टेंट का काम करना है। पापा ने राज साहब से पूछा। उन्होंने मुझसे बात की और कहा कि एक बार जो यहां आ जाता है, वो वापस नहीं जाता। उस एक दिन ने मेरी जिंदगी को बदल दिया।”

“बचपन में मैं ये कभी नहीं सोचता था कि फिल्म बनाऊंगा। पापा चाहते थे कि जो काम मैं कर रहा हूँ वह बेटा करे। मैं न्यूक्लियर फिजिसिस्ट बनना चाहता था।” यह कहना है निर्देशक, लेखक राहुल रवैल का। वे प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से आयोजित कलम अहमदाबाद में बतौर अतिथि वक्ता बोल रहे थे। आरंभ में आयोजकों की ओर से उनका स्वागत चारुलता हितेनपरी ने किया। उन्होंने कला, साहित्य, संस्कृति और महिला सशक्तीकरण की दिशा में फाउंडेशन के कार्यक्रम और गतिविधियों की जानकारी दी। अतिथि वक्ता का परिचय देते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि रवैल ने प्रख्यात फिल्मकार राज कपूर के सहयोगी के रूप में अपना करियर शुरू किया। ‘लव स्टोरी’, ‘बेताब’, ‘अर्जुन’, ‘डकैत’, ‘अंजाम’ और ‘अर्जुन पंडित’ जैसी कई सफल फिल्मों का निर्देशन किया है। आपने कुमार गौरव और विजयता पंडित को ‘लव स्टोरी’ में, सनी देओल और अमृता सिंह को ‘बेताब’ में, परेश रावल को ‘अर्जुन पंडित’ में, काजोल को ‘बेखुदी’ में, ऐश्वर्या राय को ‘और प्यार हो गया’ में बड़े परदे पर इंद्रोच्चूस किया। आपने सत्रह फिल्म और दो टेलीविजन सीरीज का निर्देशन भी किया है। निवर्तमान उपराष्ट्रपति एम. वेंकैया नायडू ने रवैल की पुस्तक ‘राज कपूर: द मास्टर एट वर्क’ का विमोचन किया था, जिसकी चर्चा इस सत्र में होगी। हितेनपरी ने रवैल से आगे के संवाद के लिए अहसास वूमन अहमदाबाद शनील पारेख को आमंत्रित किया।

पारेख ने पूछा कि आप खुद एक प्रसिद्ध फिल्म निर्माता के बेटे हैं। तो क्या फिल्मों में जाना पहले से तय था, या ये सिर्फ एक इत्तिफाक है? रवैल का उत्तर था, “दिसंबर 1967 में मेरे बोर्ड एग्जाम खत्म हुए। मुझे कनाडा जाना था, वहां स्कूल शुरू होता था सितंबर में। दिसंबर से सितंबर तक मेरे पास फ्री टाइम था, मेरे पास कोई काम नहीं था। ऋषि कपूर ‘चिटू’ मेरा बचपन का दोस्त था। नर्सरी स्कूल से जब तक वह चले नहीं गए, हम साथ थे। चिटू का फोन का फोन आया कि तेरे इग्जाम खत्म हो गए हैं। पापा ‘मेरा नाम जोकर’ की शूटिंग कर रहे हैं, रशियन सर्कस वालों के साथ। तो आ जा चलते हैं वहां पर। रशियन लड़कियां आई हुई हैं, छोटे-छोटे कपड़े पहने हुए हैं। उस समय यही सबसे बड़ा अट्रैक्शन था कि छोटे-छोटे कपड़े पहने हुए हैं। तो वहां मैं चिटू के साथ गया और राज साहब को देखा काम करते हुए। हालांकि मैं पहले भी शूटिंग देख चुका था, क्योंकि पापा भी यही काम करते थे। वहां मैं देखा कि एक आदमी करीब पांच हजार आदमियों को कंट्रोल कर रहा है। मैं यह देख कर हैरान था। मुझे लगा यह मैजिक है। लड़कियों को तो मैं

आरके स्टूडियो से जुड़े सवाल पर रवैल ने कहा कि उसका लोको एक यूरोपियन स्कल्पचर से प्रेरित था। राज साहब रोमांटिक थे। बरसात में नरगिस जी के साथ ठीक वही सीन था। वही आरके का सिंबल बना। इसकी तस्वीर बनाई बाला साहब ठाकरे ने। रवैल ने स्टूडियो बनाने का राज कपूर के लंबे संघर्ष के बारे में विस्तार से बताया। इस दौरान उन्होंने ‘आवारा’ की शूटिंग के दौरान हुए विवाद के बाद आरके स्टूडियो के स्थापना की चर्चा की। राज कपूर की फिल्मों के संगीत और संगीत को लेकर उनकी समझ से जुड़े सवाल पर रवैल ने बताया कि राज साहब हर शनिवार-रविवार अपनी बेटी रीतू के साथ गाने की धुन बनाते थे। रीतू पियानो बजाती थी। वे दो गाने उसी दौरान 67 में सुनाए थे। एक था ‘सुन साहिबा सुन...’ और ‘झूठ बोले कौआ काटे’। जहां तक ‘राम तेरी गंगा मैली’ की बात है तो राज साहब एक शादी में गए थे, जहां रवींद्र जैन गाना गा रहे थे। वहीं उन्होंने ‘एक राधा और एक मीरा...’ एक गाना सुना। वे तुरंत उनके पास गए, जब से पैसे निकाल कर दिए और बोले, यह गाना आज से मेरा हुआ। मेरी अगली फिल्म में म्यूजिक तुम डायरेक्ट करोगे और इसकी कहानी भी आपने लिखी है। मैं इस पर फिल्म बनाऊंगा। उस समय किसी को समझ में नहीं आया। कहानी तो थी नहीं। पर इसकी कहानी उन्होंने रामचरित मानस से ली। उन्हें म्यूजिक की बहुत समझ थी।



Charulata Parikh



Priyanshi Patel

रवैल ने ‘मेरा नाम जोकर’ के गीत रिकॉर्डिंग के दौरान राजकपूर, शंकर, जयकिशन, हसरत, शैलेंद्र और मुकेश की उपस्थिति में म्यूजिक स्टूडियो से जुड़ी एक मजेदार घटना भी सुनाई, जो गाने बनने की ट्युन के डमी वडर्स से जुड़ी थी। रवैल ने राजकपूर की फिल्मों को लेकर, उनके निर्देशन, शूटिंग, परफेक्शन, ‘सत्यम शिवम सुंदरम’, ‘प्रेम रोग’, ‘लव स्टोरी’, ‘अर्जुन’, प्रेमनाथ, लता मंगेशकर आदि से जुड़े किस्से सुनाए और कहा कि यह एकलौती पुस्तक है जो केवल राजकपूर के काम की बात करती है। रवैल ने सवाल-जवाब सत्र में भी हिस्सा लिया। अंत में अहसास वूमन प्रियांशी पटेल ने अतिथि वक्ता रवैल का स्मृति चिन्ह देकर अभिनंदन किया।

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

The Beauty of हिन्दी & a Paradise called फ़िजी

Fiji is a beautiful island located in the South Pacific Ocean, known for its crystal-clear waters, sandy beaches and warm hospitality. Recently, the island hosted the World Hindi Conference, which aimed to promote the Hindi language and its culture.

Our journey to Fiji representing **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** was an exhilarating experience that allowed us to immerse ourselves in the rich cultural and linguistic heritage of the country. The journey from India to Fiji was long and tiring, but upon arrival, we were greeted with warm smiles at a bustling airport. The World Hindi Conference in the city of Nadi attracted thousands of individuals from around the world, who came together to discuss the different aspects of the Hindi language.

— **Manisha Jain,**
Branding & Communication Chief,
Prabha Khaitan Foundation



Day One

The first day of the conference was inaugurated by the Union Minister of External Affairs, S. Jaishankar, and it began with a cultural performance by the local people of Fiji, which enthralled the audience.

We had the honour of visiting the Sri Siva Subramaniya Temple along with Jaishankar and the Minister of State for External Affairs, V. Muraleedharan.

Thereafter, we visited a local model village, where we experienced the traditional way of life in Fiji. The existence of ritualistic cannibalism on the island served as an intriguing topic of discussion.



The invitation card from S. Jaishankar



S. Jaishankar at the inauguration of the Vishwa Hindi Sammelan



Manisha Jain and Anindita Chatterjee with V. Muraleedharan



The inaugural ceremony of the Vishwa Hindi Sammelan



A local village experience on the island



Anindita Chatterjee and Manisha Jain with S. Jaishankar (Union Minister of External Affairs) and V. Muraleedharan (Minister of State for External Affairs)

Day Two

The second day of the conference saw sessions on various topics, including Hindi in Girmitiya countries, Hindi in Fiji and the Pacific, and Hindi in the 21st century, among others.

In the evening, the delegates of the conference visited the local tourist destinations with the Indian diaspora of the United States of America, Australia and Canada, who were attending the conference.



A session at the World Hindi Conference on a global perspective of the various forms of Hindi cinema



Anindita Chatterjee, Anant Vijay and Manisha Jain



Anindita Chatterjee, Anoop Bhargava with a fellow delegate



Anindita Chatterjee and Anoop Bhargava with a co-delegate



The delegates at a local village

Day Three

The third and final day of the conference included sessions on different forms of Hindi cinema, the global market and the position of Hindi, and the teaching of Hindi in India and abroad. It concluded with the presentation of the 'Vishwa Hindi Samman' to Hindi scholars from India and other countries for their exceptional contributions to the Hindi language.

The delegates also had the opportunity to explore the island of Fiji and its stunning natural beauty. The warm and welcoming nature of the local people made the trip truly memorable.

Attending the World Hindi Conference in Fiji was an informative and enriching experience for the delegates. Besides providing a platform for the exchange of ideas and discussions, the conference also provided an opportunity to immerse ourselves in the history of the island nation.



Manisha Jain and Anindita Chatterjee with Professor Alessandra Consolaro (University of Turin), Professor Maria Negyesi from Hungary and Monika Browarczyk (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland)



Cr Tarun Dewan (Councillor from Australia), Anindita Chatterjee, Cr Keyur Kamdar (Councillor from Ranford Ward in Australia), Professor Alessandra Consolaro (University of Turin) and Manisha Jain



The awardees at the Vishwa Hindi Sammelan



Balendur Sharma, Dr Mridul Kirti, Anindita Chatterjee, Manisha Jain and Anoop Bhargava



Anindita Chatterjee, Alka Sinha and Manisha Jain



Manisha Jain and Anindita Chatterjee with Sandhya Singh from Singapore, Athila Kothalawal from Sri Lanka and Shailja Saxena from Canada



A dinner with the delegates in Fiji

स्त्री एक कविता का जीवन ही जीती है: रश्मि भारद्वाज

“कविता आपकी आत्मा का ही हिस्सा होती है। आप जो होते हैं वह कविता में उतर कर आता है। आप कहानी बुन सकते हैं, कविता आपके मन को बुनती है।” यह बात प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से आयोजित ‘कलम’ फरीदाबाद में रश्मि भारद्वाज ने कही। आरंभ में आयोजकों की ओर से उनका स्वागत पल्लवी ने किया। उन्होंने कला, साहित्य और संस्कृति के साथ ही महिला सशक्तीकरण के क्षेत्र में चल रही फाउंडेशन की गतिविधियों की जानकारी दी और कहा कि ‘कलम’ का यह आयोजन ‘अपनी भाषा अपने लोग’ की सोच को बढ़ावा देने वाली पहल से जुड़ा है। उन्होंने फाउंडेशन के किताब, लफ़्ज़, एक मुलाकात विशेष, सुर और साज, आखर जैसे आयोजन की चर्चा की और अतिथि वक्ता भारद्वाज का परिचय दिया।

पल्लवी ने बताया कि लेखक, संपादक, अनुवादक रश्मि भारद्वाज ने अंग्रेजी साहित्य से एमफिल और पीएचडी की उपाधि के अलावा पत्रकारिता में डिप्लोमा किया है। आपकी प्रकाशित पुस्तकों में कविता संग्रह ‘एक अतिरिक्त अ’ और ‘मैंने अपनी माँ को जन्म दिया है’ के अलावा उपन्यास ‘वह साल बयालीस था’ शामिल है। आपने रज़ा फाउंडेशन के लिए एशियाई कवियों की कविताओं के अनुवाद और संपादन के अलावा जगनॉट एवं अन्य प्रकाशनों के लिए अनुवाद, लेखन और संपादन किया है। वर्तमान में आप ‘मेराकी पत्रिका’ के संपादन से जुड़ी हैं। आप ज्ञानपीठ नवलेखन अनुशंसा पुरस्कार, शिवना अंतर्राष्ट्रीय कविता पुरस्कार, सूरज प्रकाश मारवाह साहित्य रत्न सम्मान और पाखी पत्रिका के शब्द साधक सम्मान से सम्मानित हैं। उन्होंने आगे के संवाद के लिए विशाल पाण्डेय को आमंत्रित किया।

तेरे माथे पे ये आँचल बहुत ही खूब है लेकिन

तू इस आंचल से एक परचम बना लेती तो अच्छा था... पाण्डेय ने मजाज की इन पंक्तियों के साथ भारद्वाज का स्वागत किया। उन्होंने नारी सशक्तीकरण को समर्पित इस संवाद के अवसर पर मैथिली शरण गुप्त की कालजयी रचना साकेत को याद किया और स्त्री-पुरुष के लेखन को एक-दूसरे का पूरक बताते हुए भारद्वाज के प्रथम कविता संग्रह ‘एक अतिरिक्त अ’ का जिक्र करते हुए उनसे जानना चाहा कि आपके अंदर कविता किस तरह से उतरती है? भारद्वाज का उत्तर था कि यह अतिशयोक्ति होगी कि कविता से अलग मेरी कोई पहचान ही नहीं है। कविता ने मुझे चुना है। मैं सौभाग्यशाली हूँ कि कविता ने मुझे चुना। बचपन से ही छंद में कविता लिखने लगी थी। मैं ननिहाल में थी तो जो भी लिखती नानाजी को दिखाती, तो वे बहुत खुश होते थे। मैं चलते-फिरते गीत बना लेती थी। अब तो छपना बहुत आसान है, पर तब मेरा सबसे बड़ा सपना था कि एक दिन मैं प्रकाशित होंगी, एक दिन मेरी किताब होगी। मैं इसी सपने के साथ मैं बड़ी हुई। बीच में घर होता है, प्रेम होता है, बच्चा होता है। सपना भी कहीं धुंधला होता गया, पर पढ़ना कभी नहीं छूटा, लिखना कभी नहीं छूटा और जब समय आया तो वह भी हो गया।

पाण्डेय ने अगला सवाल ‘कविता’ और ‘स्त्री कविता’ को लेकर पूछा। भारद्वाज ने इस सवाल का विस्तार से उत्तर देते हुए कहा कि एक स्त्री होना भी अपने आपमें कविता है। स्त्री एक कविता का जीवन ही जीती है। जिस तरह से स्त्री प्रेम कर सकती है, घर बुन सकती है। यहां मैं स्त्री की महानता की बात नहीं कर रही, क्योंकि इससे उसका बहुत शोषण हुआ है। फिर भी मैं यह मानती हूँ कि जितनी क्षमता स्त्री में प्रेम कर सकने की है, उतना पुरुष में नहीं है। पुरुष कहीं न कहीं प्रेम करते हुए थोड़ा



Vishal Pandey



Rashmi Bhardwaj

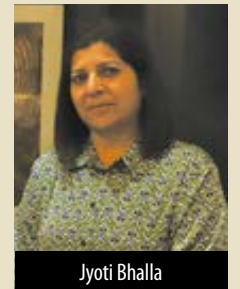
स्वार्थी हो जाता है, पर स्त्री जब प्रेम करती है तो अपने सर्वस्व भाव से करती है। फिर वह घृणा भी उतने ही सर्वस्व भाव से करती है। प्रतिशोध भी उतने ही सर्वस्व भाव से ले सकती है, इसलिए उसे कमजोर मत समझिए अगर वह प्रेम कर सकती है। प्रेम करना स्त्री की सबसे बड़ी क्षमता है और चूंकि वह प्रेम करती है तो जाहिर सी बात है कि उसकी दुनिया अलग हो जाती है। उसके सोचने का तरीका, उसका भाव, चीजों को देखने-परखने का उसका नजरिया, सब पुरुषों से अलग हो जाता है। उसका भाषा घर अलग हो जाता है। आप दो स्त्रियों को बात करते देखिए, कितनी आत्मियता से वे बात करती हैं, उनके शरीर का हर अंग उसमें इन्चॉल्व होता है, वे इतने बहनापे से बात करती हैं। उनकी आंखें, होंठ। वहीं आप दो पुरुषों को बात करते देखिए, वे कितने फार्मल तरीके से बात करते हैं, औपचारिक। यही बात स्त्री कविता में



Pallavi



Shweta Aggarwal



Jyoti Bhalla

है। वहां स्त्री का मन, उसकी आत्मा, उसके प्रेम करने की क्षमता दिखती है और अगर वह प्रतिरोध चुनती है तो वह भी दिखता है।

भारद्वाज ने 60 के दशक के बाद स्त्री साहित्य लेखन, संपादन, लेखन क्षेत्र में स्त्रियों की उपस्थिति, नारीवाद, सोशल मीडिया पोस्ट्स, आर्थिक समानता, स्त्री को लेकर स्टिरियो टाइप सोच, सैद्धांतिकी, अतिवादी सोच, पुरुष विरोध, देह की आजादी, नागरिकता के अधिकार और स्त्री चेतना को लेकर खुल कर बात की। उन्होंने नई पीढ़ी की साहित्यिक रुचियों पर अपने विचार रखे और अपने उपन्यास ‘वह साल बयालीस था’ के प्रेम और किरदारों पर बातचीत के बीच मीरा और यशोधरा के उत्कृष्ट सोच की भी चर्चा की। भारद्वाज ने सवाल-जवाब सत्र में दर्शकों के सवालों के उत्तर दिए और अपनी कई कविताएं सुनाईं। अंत में आयोजकों की ओर से मनस्कृति स्कूल की प्रिंसिपल ज्योति भल्ला ने अतिथि वक्ता और संवादकर्ता का अभिनंदन किया।

कलम फरीदाबाद के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट। हुमैने फाउंडेशन और मीडिया पार्टनर दैनिक जागरण का सहयोग मिला।

Our Common Earth

Ayaan Kapadia

Our colossal Earth is full of conflicts,
We really don't know how to solve it,
Problems erupt here and there,
In every nit and bit.

'Our Common Earth', everyone says,
Show me a trace, I do pray,
Just a pretty word to wrap our darkest greed,
Oh God! Will we ever be freed?

I intermittently think about this
Do not get an idea,
The next day I go on the internet
And see horrible news on the media.

So let's begin the talk on this whole topic,
Is the discrimination of people
Fragments of 'diversity' strewn all over like irrelevant paraphernalia,
From the ground to the steeple.

Engulfed by problems everywhere I turn,
The noble often carried off in urns,
The world seems to simmer on a slow burn,
Will this tide ever turn?

What! What can we do?
Day by day it grows large
With new incidents
Right from a small fight in a garage.

Pedestrians fight on the pavement
This is yours! This is mine!
This happens daily
As the police doesn't take fine!

Love seems to quickly flee,
Whilst hate laughs with sarcastic glee!

Why don't we just become allies
Live in harmony
Just forget the conflicts
And love immensely?



The 10-year-old Ayaan Kapadia has always been a book lover. A passionate writer, Ayaan shares his birthday with the great playwright, William Shakespeare.

What started as an assignment for his school ended up becoming Ayaan's first published book, Maverick's Encounter with the Pirates, for which he has won several awards and accolades

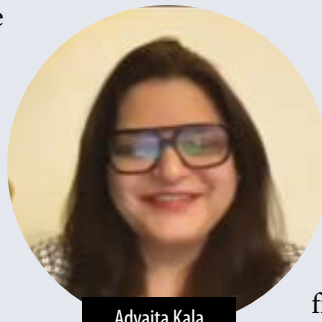
Nanhi Kalam Se is an exciting new section in Prabha to honour the creativity of children. Keep watching this space for children's writing.

Living, Leaving And Returning to Corporate Life



Sandip Ghose

Online discussions and virtual chats have afforded **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** the opportunity to reach out to people all across the world who are interested in listening to eminent personalities. The Foundation organized another special **Tête-à-Tea** session with Sandip Ghose, the business leader and general management professional. Ghose, with his multi-disciplinary skills, is also a columnist for many media platforms, a blogger and a social media influencer. He is an ardent believer in the India growth story, and is passionate about mentoring and developing leaders for the future. He was in conversation with screenwriter Advaita Kala.



Advaita Kala

Before jumping into the discussion, Riddhima Doshi, **Ehsaas** Woman of Udaipur, delivered the welcome note for the session, during which the speakers discussed corporate living, leaving and returning — a subject which holds a lot of relevance in modern times, given everything that is going on in the world of business after the pandemic.

Most people in business work till the age of retirement and enjoy their success afterwards. But for Ghose, it was a little different. He took early retirement before Covid-19 and returned to the professional world again after the pandemic. A lot of the members of Gen Z are quitting their jobs because of work-from-home habits, but Ghose does the opposite. The businessman, who identifies as a “pioneering early quitter”, said, “a lot of people were surprised when I did what I did, and, in those three years, I had a tough time explaining to people that I actually did nothing. This was the most remarkable time of my life, because it helped me to not only rejuvenate myself to some

extent, but also rediscover and reinvent myself.” He continued by saying that throughout his career, he has been a reluctant corporate executive. But right from the beginning, he was fortunate to work with a company that allowed employees to map their aspirations to work departments.

Joining Hindustan Lever was a blessing for Ghose, as it gave him scope for growth, and he even tried his hand at different things. He even had the opportunity to become the CEO of Unilever Nepal, but it was a tricky time because the Maoist movement was at its peak. This was when he jumped into two media companies — this was a different industry altogether, but opened many experiences for him.

Commenting about youngsters quitting their jobs or moving from one job to another, Ghose said, “Youngsters are genetically more able to take risks unlike people of our generation, who were risk-averse and not risk-takers.” Kala also wanted to know why Ghose came back to his profession. “There was some unfinished work,” he replied. “I felt that I had left my people hanging when I packed my bags.”

The session wrapped up with a Q&A round. Riddhima Doshi delivered the vote of thanks on behalf of the Foundation.

This session of Tête-à-Tea was presented by Shree Cement Limited in association with Kahalli

“A lot of people were surprised [when I took early retirement] and, in those three years, I had a tough time explaining to people that I actually did nothing. This was the most remarkable time of my life because it helped me to not only rejuvenate myself to some extent but also rediscover and reinvent myself”



Riddhima Doshi

A Final Adieu



Apra Kuchhal

Honorary Convenor of Rajasthan & Central India Affairs,
Prabha Khaitan Foundation

Dr Srutimala Duara, **Ehsaas** Woman of Guwahati, passed away on the morning of February 28, 2023, after a two-year-long battle with cancer. I had known her since the time she was the chairperson of FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO), North East Chapter. Strong, jovial, and articulate — Srutimala was a born leader.

Srutimala joined the **Ehsaas** family during the Covid-19 pandemic. Her health didn't allow her to physically attend any meeting or event, but she participated actively in the online events. Her positive attitude and willingness to go above and beyond for her work will always be remembered. The last time that I had spoken with her, she expressed her willingness to travel to Kolkata for the city-wise meetings.

Dr Srutimala Duara was also an acclaimed writer and academic. She was a bilingual author and had written books in many genres; English novels, short stories, books of poems, children's story books, and Assamese novels. Her latest book, *My Journey Through Cancer*, is an honest and brave account of her struggle with cancer, in which she emerged a warrior.

A passage in her book gives us a glimpse into her journey as a writer and cancer warrior: "It was on the day I was to leave for Delhi for my surgery that my friend, Rakhee Kalita Moral, hugging me, thrusting her lucky charm into my palm, suggested I should write down my experience as a cancer patient. And immediately I took up her suggestion, on the very day I was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Yes, I started writing that very day. I kept writing, at any time of the day; waiting at the airport for our flight to Delhi, while waiting for the doctor outside the chamber at Fortis, in the hotel room, in the hospital bed of Fortis, while taking chemo at State Cancer Institute in Guwahati, at all times – be it morning, afternoon, late evening or midnight. It is a record of my journey through cancer. I want to share my experiences with a wider world of readers, as I feel this may help people who take life for granted with the belief that cancer happens to others, not to them, women who think nothing can be wrong with their bodies just because there is no outward sign and do not go for yearly checkups, and for those diagnosed with cancer. Hence, this book."

Srutimala, you will be missed!

See you on the other side.



Amarjit Singh Dulat



Living a Life Less Ordinary



Suhel Seth

Amarjit Singh Dulat's journey as the former special director of the Indian Intelligence Bureau and former secretary of the Research & Analysis Wing (RAW) has been nothing less than extraordinary. As a spymaster, he had been at the helm of dealing with two of India's most conflict-ridden states: Kashmir and Punjab. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised a special session of **An Author's Afternoon** with the former intelligence officer to discuss his book, *A Life in the Shadows: A Memoir*. Dulat was in conversation with columnist and businessman, Suhel Seth. Esha Dutta, **Ehsaas** Woman of Kolkata, delivered the formal welcome note on behalf of the Foundation, introducing both Dulat and Seth before opening an intriguing session tracing Dulat's incredible journey.

How did the early years of Dulat's life shape him? "I went to Bishop Cotton in 1951, at the age of 10, and spent six years there," said Dulat, underlining the influence that his school had on him during his formative years. "Most of all, I learned there that truth is important. If you've done something wrong, you put your hand up and own it. That's how you do the right thing." However, despite having a glorious career to his credit, Dulat admitted that it was not the career that he had planned on. "To be honest, I wanted to make it to the Foreign Service, which



I always felt that there were two Indiras — the one up to 1969-1975, when P.N. Haksar (former secretary to Indira Gandhi) was there with her, and the one after Sanjay Gandhi's death. The former version was during the time when she won the liberation war for Bangladesh. She did everything right during that time, but once she lost Sanjay, she was not the same person anymore. Even though she came back with a thumping majority in the 1980 elections, she was different from the first Mrs Gandhi



I didn't," he admitted. "I didn't make it to the Indian Administrative Service either. So, the third best was the Indian Police Service, which I was very proud to be a part of. When I came to the IB, it was also not by choice. I was very lucky to have shared my room with a great man like M.K. Narayanan [the former governor of West Bengal]. He was 10 years my senior. I saw him operate and I learnt a lot from him."

But Narayanan was not the only senior that taught Dulat important lessons. His close association with former IB chief, Shyamal Datta, helped him tackle many situations with panache. "I'd never have been anything without him," said the author. "He made me the chief, and I owe a whole lot to him."

Elaborating further on his career, Dulat pointed out that he had joined the workforce when India was being headed by Indira Gandhi. At the time, Indira Gandhi's popularity was unrivalled and unparalleled. But her career went into a steady decline, especially after the death of her son, Sanjay Gandhi. "I always felt that there were two Indiras — the one up to 1969-1975, when P.N. Haksar (former secretary to Indira Gandhi) was there with her, and the one after Sanjay Gandhi's death," said Dulat. "The former version was during the time when she won the liberation war for Bangladesh. She did everything right

The revocation of Article 370 should have never happened. There are no solutions to the Kashmir problem except to have an elected government rule the state. They're crying out to be on the right side of Delhi, but we're not accepting it

during that time, but once she lost Sanjay, she was not the same person anymore. Even though she came back with a thumping majority in the 1980 elections, she was different from the first Mrs Gandhi."

Dulat agreed with Seth when he admitted that despite Indira Gandhi's popularity, she became autocratic to retain her power. "Once she sent the army into the Golden Temple and Operation Blue Star happened, she knew she would never be left alone by the Sikh community," he remarked. But Dulat also said that the revocation of Article 370 "should have never happened". He maintained that there are no solutions to Kashmir, except to have an elected government rule the state. "They're crying out to be on the right side of Delhi, but we're not accepting it," he opined.

Kolkata, however, has succeeded in being close to Dulat's heart. Not only did he start his career at the Intelligence Bureau by being allotted West Bengal, he has also frequented the city since his childhood to visit family. Even his honeymoon was spent in Kolkata, which always welcomed him with warmth and civility. Speaking of his honeymoon, Dulat said that his wife and he came to Kolkata because that was all that they could afford. "We stayed for a week with my uncle, who was very kind to give us a room. The last five days, we spent with my sister, who was also very kind to make us sleep on the ground!" he joked.

The session came to a close with an engaging Q&A round with the audience. Esha Dutta delivered the vote of thanks on behalf of the Foundation. Shamlu Dudeja, chairperson of Calcutta Foundation and SHE Foundation, felicitated Dulat while Vijay Shrikent, general manager of Taj Bengal, Kolkata, felicitated Seth.



Vijay Shrikent



Esha Dutta



The audience at the event

An Author's Afternoon was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Taj Bengal, Kolkata, The Telegraph Online—My Kolkata and with the support of Ehsaas Women of Kolkata

Aiming Higher

Lucknow, the capital city of Uttar Pradesh, is also the eleventh most populous city in the country. As the centre of North Indian culture and arts, and the seat of the Nawabs in the 18th and 19th centuries, Lucknow has long been seen as a cosmopolitan metropolis. It is still a significant hub for administration, industry, education, commerce, architecture, literature, hospitality and art. Exuding the richness of royal living, the city has been a favourite destination for those willing to experience India's regal past. To that end, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** has been executing its unique literary and cultural initiatives in the historic city. A forerunner in promoting literature, education, culture, and equality, it works together with supporters and like-minded organisations to carry out its initiatives. And many of the Foundation's success can be attributed to the distinguished and talented **Ehsaas Women** who come together from different walks of life to make the Foundation's vision a reality.

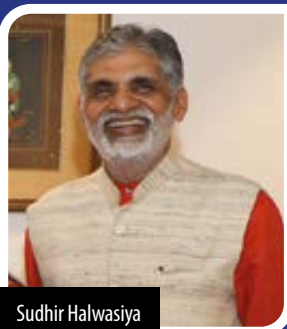
To discuss the furthering of the Foundation's activities in the City of Nawabs, a get-together was hosted with the **Ehsaas Women** to meet and greet the literary, cultural, and artistic fraternity of the city and to delineate ways to continue advancing Lucknow's artistic and intellectual legacy. Here are a few glimpses from the evening.



Sundeep Bhutoria, Navneet Sehgal and Kalli Purie



Manisha Jain, Deepa Mishra, Madhuri Halwasiya, Dimple Trivedi, Kanak Rekha Chauhan and Anindita Chatterjee



Sudhir Halwasiya



Parthi Sarthi Sen Sharma



Jyotsna Habibullah



The late Nawab Mir Jaffar Abdullah and Masood Abdullah



Aalok Shrivastav



Padma Shree awardee
Dr Vidya Bindu Singh



Vijay Sahi, Ashutosh Shukla, Manoj Ranjan Tripathi and Sunita Aron



Mrs Dwivedi, Yatindra Mishra and Balendu Dwivedi



Sanjeev Paliwal



Mukesh Meshram



Vinod Pandey and Abhishek Shukla



Aradhana Shukla



General Kackkad



Anil Rastogi and Rajshree



Alpana Singh



Anil Rastogi and Rajshree



Sangeeta Banerjee and Mr Banerjee



Tarun Raj



Government Arts College, Sikar

शिक्षा के लिए 'सहयोग': सीकर के दो महाविद्यालयों को पुस्तकें और बुक रैक सौंपे गए



खेतान फाउंडेशन शिक्षा और साहित्य के क्षेत्र में हमारे साथ बहुत समय से काम कर रहा है। फाउंडेशन का यह अभियान जारी रहेगा और आगे भी राजकीय और सामाजिक संस्थाओं द्वारा संचालित शिक्षण संस्थाओं को पुस्तकें और शिक्षण के क्षेत्र में पुस्तक के संरक्षण से जुड़े रैक आदि उपलब्ध कराए जाएंगे। फाउंडेशन की इस पहल से शैक्षणिक संस्थानों में साहित्य चिंतन के साथ-साथ साहित्य अध्ययन की प्रवृत्ति को बढ़ावा मिलेगा। आयोजकों की ओर से *अभिव्यक्ति कला प्रशिक्षण संस्थान* के सचिव डॉ. नेकी राम आर्य ने आगामी योजनाओं की जानकारी दी।

इस अवसर पर बड़ी संख्या में शिक्षा जगत और महाविद्यालय से जुड़े गणमान्य लोग उपस्थित थे, जिनमें डॉ. सुनीता सैनी, डॉ. अरविंद, डॉ. महेंद्र सिंह कुडी,

डॉ. भगीरथ मल, राजीव बगड़िया, जितेंद्र ढाका, रमेश पूनिया, डॉ. सुमन झूरिया, हरीश माथुर और लवीना माथुर आदि शामिल हैं। इस संबंध में फाउंडेशन और महाविद्यालय की ओर से निःशुल्क पुस्तकों के वितरण और महाविद्यालय में पुस्तक रैक उपलब्ध कराने की सहमति बनी थी।

राजकीय कला महाविद्यालय कटराथल सीकर के बाद सावित्री बाई फुले बालिका महिला महाविद्यालय सीकर को भी पुस्तक और बुक रैक भेंट किया गया। इस अवसर पर कॉलेज के प्राध्यापकों के साथ ही प्राचार्य डॉ. सीताराम सैनी और सचिव ओ.पी. सैनी भी मौजूद थे। *अभिव्यक्ति* की ओर से डॉ. अनुपमा सक्सेना, डॉ. नेकी राम आर्य, डॉ. सुनीता सैनी, हरीश माथुर और लवीना माथुर उपस्थित थे। सभी ने इस पहल की सराहना की और पीकेएफ को समर्थन के लिए धन्यवाद दिया।

याद रहे कि फाउंडेशन इस क्षेत्र में शैक्षणिक गतिविधियों को बढ़ावा देने के लिए कई कार्यक्रम कर रहा है। *अभिव्यक्ति संस्था* के साथ कई प्रशिक्षण केंद्र संचालित हैं। शिक्षा के अलावा स्थानीय लड़कियों की प्रतिभा का विकास हो, इसके लिए फाउंडेशन अपनी पहल 'सहयोग' के तहत शेखावाटी अंचल के चूरू, सीकर और झुंझुनू जिले की बालिकाओं के लिए *अभिव्यक्ति कला प्रशिक्षण संस्थान* के साथ 'प्रभा खेतान शेखावाटी नृत्य शिरोमणि प्रतियोगिता' भी आयोजित कर रहा है।

'पढ़ेंगे, तो आगे बढ़ेंगे' की सोच को बढ़ावा देने के लिए प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन पूरे देश में, विशेषकर राजस्थान में शिक्षा के क्षेत्र से जुड़ी कई गतिविधियां संचालित कर रहा है। इसी दिशा में संस्थान ने राजस्थान के राजकीय कला महाविद्यालय कटराथल सीकर और सावित्री बाई फुले बालिका महिला महाविद्यालय सीकर को समारोहपूर्वक पुस्तकें और बुक रैक भेंट किया। इस पहल का उद्देश्य स्कूल, कॉलेजों में छात्रों के बीच पढ़ने की प्रवृत्ति को बढ़ावा देने के साथ ही उनकी रुचि शिक्षा, साहित्य और वैज्ञानिक सोच की तरफ मोड़ना है, ताकि उनमें शोध और तार्किकता का विकास हो और उनका शैक्षिक उन्नयन हो। फाउंडेशन की इस पहल को *अभिव्यक्ति कला प्रशिक्षण संस्थान* का सहयोग हासिल है।

राजकीय कला महाविद्यालय में प्राचार्या डॉ. पुष्पा चौधरी ने फाउंडेशन की इस पहल की प्रशंसा करते हुए कहा कि शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में पुस्तकों का महत्त्व सर्वविदित है। विविध विधाओं पर साहित्यिक पुस्तकों की यह उपलब्धता छात्रों में पढ़ने की प्रवृत्ति को बढ़ावा देगी। उन्होंने बताया कि शेखावाटी विश्वविद्यालय ने अनुसंधान कार्य चालू कर दिया है और इस कार्य के लिए राजकीय कला महाविद्यालय को रिसर्च सेंटर के रूप में नामित किया है। ऐसे में ये दुर्लभ पुस्तकें शोध कार्य के लिए अति महत्वपूर्ण साबित होंगी।

अभिव्यक्ति कला प्रशिक्षण संस्थान की अध्यक्ष डॉ. अनुपमा सक्सेना ने बताया कि प्रभा



Savitri Bai Phule Balika Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Sikar

An Incredible Musical Journey

The Prabha Khaitan Memorial Lecture, organized by **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** in collaboration with Siyahi, was held on August 28, 2013, at the J.W. Marriott, Jaipur. The subject of the lecture was intriguing: *Indian Classical Music in a World Scenario*. The presence of the sarangi maestro and Padma Vibhushan awardee, Pandit Ram Narayan, was the highlight of the evening.

Accompanied by his son, Brij Narayan, Panditji visited Jaipur after a hiatus of 30 years to attend the lecture. During the lecture, Panditji's contribution to Indian classical music and his efforts to popularise the sarangi, in India and worldwide, was discussed. This was followed by an interactive session. Eminent personalities like Dharmender Kanwar, Vidya Devi, Timmie Kumar, Arjun Prajapati, Dhruva Sharma and Sudhir Mathur were seen in the audience during the session.

Panditji's father, Nathuji Bijaywant, was an esraj maestro who had introduced him to music. Panditji went on to become the first sarangi player to achieve international recognition and fame. In 1952, he became a concert solo artist on the sarangi — he recorded solo albums and toured Europe and America in the 1960s. During his tours, he had electrifying concerts and taught Indian and foreign students. In recognition of his contribution to music, he was awarded the Padma Vibhushan in 2005.

Today, thanks to Panditji's efforts, the sarangi occupies a prominent position in the archives of Hindustani classical musical instruments in India.



Pandit Ram Narayan at the Prabha Khaitan Memorial Lecture in 2013



Ram Narayan and Sundeep Bhutoria



Brij Narayan and Pandit Ram Narayan with Arjun Prajapati (right)



Ram Narayan with Vidya Devi



Mita Kapur (File picture)



Dharmender Kanwar, Vidya Devi and Timmie Kumar in the audience



Praveen Kumar Jha

एक बार मैं रोशन आरा बेगम का साक्षात्कार सुन रहा था। उन्होंने कहा कि राग बसंत में बहार नहीं है। उसका मूड खुशनुमा नहीं, बल्कि गंभीर है। जैसे होली का रंग चढ़ता है, धमार और होरी गायी जाती है, ढोल-तासे बजते हैं, रंगों की महफिल जमती है; उसके साथ ही बसंत का एक दूसरा मूड भी है। जैसे दूर से कोई बुला रहा हो, हम सुध-बुध खोकर शून्य में देख रहे हों। धीरे-गंभीर। एकांतचित्त। हमारी आंखों के सामने एक भिन्न

आकाश छा गया हो, बसंत के रंग से रंगा। राग बसंत हमें एक ऐसी ही दुनिया में ले जाता है।

उस्ताद विलायत खान का एक संस्मरण दर्ज है, जब वह छह वर्ष के थे। उनके पिता उस्ताद इनायत खान लंदन में एक भव्य मंच पर सितार बजा रहे थे। विलायत खान तो बच्चे थे, उन्हें नींद आ गयी। जब कार्यक्रम समाप्त हुआ, तालियां बजी तो उनकी नींद खुली।

उन्होंने कहा, 'अब्बा! मेरी आंखों को कुछ हो गया। मुझे सब कुछ पीला नजर आ रहा है।'

इनायत खान ने मुस्कुरा कर कहा, 'विलायत मियाँ! घबराइए नहीं। यह बसंत का रंग है। मैं बसंत ही बजा रहा था। धीरे-धीरे रंग उतर जाएगा।'

बसंत ऋतु में तो चूंकि हर तरफ यही रंग दिखता है, तो यह कभी भी गाया-बजाया जा सकता है। किंतु अन्य ऋतुओं में यह रात्रि के अंतिम प्रहर में गाया जाता है। जब सूर्योदय हुआ नहीं हो, किंतु क्षितिज पर एक धुंधला पीलापन दिखने लगा हो।

सुबह चार बजे नींद खुल गयी हो, तो बसंत सुन कर देखें। उस दिन का मूड ही बसंती हो जाएगा।

मल्लिका-ए-मौसिकी रोशन आरा बेगम कैराना (किराना) घराना से ताल्लुक रखती थी। उस घराने में बसंत की लंबी महिमा रही है। पंडित भीमसेन जोशी के राग बसंत कई लोगों ने सुने होंगे, क्योंकि वे अक्सर यह राग गाते थे। लेकिन, इनमें इस राग की वह मनमोहक छाप लाने वाले व्यक्ति इन सभी के गुरु उस्ताद अब्दुल करीम खान थे। भाग्य से यूट्यूब पर उनकी तान सहित यह प्रस्तुति उपलब्ध है-

फगवा बृज देखन को चल री
फगवा में मिलेंगे कुंवर कान्हा
अब बाट चलत बोले कगवा

फगवा बृज देखन को- राग बसंत

आयी बहार सकल बन फूले
रसीले लाल को अगवा

इसके बंदिश को देख कर अगर कोई फगवा के शोर-गुल में सुनने बैठ जाए, तो शायद वह रस न आए। लेकिन जब होली का रंग चढ़ जाए, आंखें झुकने लगी हो, आब-ओ-हवा बसंती हो गयी हो, उस वक्त अगर यह सुनी जाए, तो आनंद आ जाएगा।

मैंने जर्मनी से एक सीडी मंगवायी थी- 'सीक्रेट कलर्स' - मल्लिक फैमिली-मास्टर्स ऑफ़ खयाल।

इसे देख उस समय आश्चर्य हुआ था क्योंकि मल्लिक फैमिली तो मास्टर्स ऑफ़ ध्रुपद रूप में अधिक जाने जाते हैं। लेकिन, जिन्होंने ध्रुपद साध लिया हो, वह खयाल में भी उस्ताद हो सकते हैं। यह तो इसे सुन कर महसूस किया जाता है, जिसमें पंडित विदुर मल्लिक और पंडित प्रेम कुमार मल्लिक साथ गा रहे हैं-

फुलवा बिनत डार डार
गोकुल के बृज नारी
चन्द्र बदन कमल नयन
भानु की लली री
ऐ हो चंचल कुमारी

रखियो आँचल सम्हारी
आएंगे नन्द लाल
देखि के डरी री

फिल्मी दुनिया से जुड़ा एक किस्सा रोचक है। इसे सीधे उन विभूतियों के मुख से सुनने के लिए यूट्यूब पर टाइप करें- 'भीमसेन जोशी एंड मन्ना डे विद राग बसंत'।

हुआ यूं कि फिल्म 'बसंत बहार' (1956) में एक दृश्य है, जब दो गायकों में तुलना होती है कि बेहतर कौन। गीत है- *केतकी गुलाब जूही चंपक बन फूले।*

इसमें पहले गायक के किरदार के लिए पंडित भीमसेन जोशी को अपने अजेय तानों के साथ गाना था। राग बसंत तो पंडित जी का गढ़ था, उन्होंने माहौल जमा दिया। लेकिन, फिल्म में एक ट्विस्ट है। इसमें दूसरे गायक का किरदार भारत भूषण निभा रहे हैं, जो अपनी सुगम गायकी से जीत जाते हैं। इसके लिए मन्ना डे को लाया गया।

जब युवा मन्ना डे को यह कहा गया कि उन्हें पंडित भीमसेन जोशी को हराना है, वह तो पहले ही हार मान गए कि यह असंभव है। लेकिन, उनकी पत्नी ने समझाया कि यह तो मात्र फिल्म में एक दृश्य है, आप पंडित जी का अनादर नहीं कर रहे।

आखिर रिकॉर्डिंग के समय मन्ना डे ने पहले पंडित भीमसेन जोशी के पैर छूकर आशीर्वाद लिए, और इन दो दिग्गजों के साथ यह गीत अद्वितीय बन गया।

प्रवीण कुमार झा संगीत प्रेमी और 'वाह उस्ताद' नामक पुस्तक के लेखक हैं।
वह सम्प्रति नाँवें में चिकित्सक हैं।

Exploring India's Culinary Roots



The Night of Ideas is a French initiative that annually brings world-renowned thinkers together to address important contemporary issues. The Indian edition of *A Night of Chefs & Ideas*, at Sunder Nursery, Delhi, emphasized the colourful story of Indian cuisine with French influences. With this year's theme titled *More?*, the event saw the presence of chefs, experts, policymakers, historians, economists and others discussing more stories and solutions to burgeoning problems regarding food sustainability, security and production.

The evening witnessed discussions on Indian diets from the perspective of our gastronomy, tradition and diversity while also addressing concerns about security, sustainability, and equity. Shoma Chaudhury, an award-winning writer, editor and curator, moderated the sessions, which turned out to be both captivating and thought-provoking for the audience.

The event commenced with Radhika Khandelwal, chef-owner of Fig & Maple and Ivy & Bean as well as an advocate for zero hunger and waste techniques, examining India's unique culinary heritage with Saransh Goila, the chef-owner of Goila Butter Chicken. The next session saw Ajay Vir Jakhar, citrus farmer and the chairman of Bharat Krishak Samaj (Indian Farmers Forum), Mekhala Krishnamurthy, anthropologist and farm markets expert at Ashoka University, and

Rajeswari S. Raina, agriculture policy expert at Shiv Nadar University, debate urgent concerns like climate change, food security and the markets. With his amusing observations on the history, politics and aesthetics of Indian cuisine, the session with food historian Pushpesh Pant concluded the first half of the evening.

During the intermission, the audience enjoyed a sumptuous dinner specially created by a French chef from the Indian countryside. The audience was also able to visit the different stalls showcasing their cultural and gastronomic products at the *Night of Chefs & Ideas Mela*. A riveting discussion between French eco-socialist Corinne Morel-Darleux and natural farming strategist Swati Renduchintala on governments, technology, scalable change and organic revolution marked the second half of the evening.

Discussing the art of conscious living and eating well for oneself and society, the final leg of the evening saw nutritionist and fitness expert Rujuta Diwekar and nutritionist Prachi Prabhat Pandit engage in an insightful conversation. Elaborating upon the wisdom in the *Vedas* regarding food and how celebrities maintain their health, the experts pointed out how going back to our roots will, in the end, be beneficial to us. With this, the evening, which proffered a unique journey into India's variegated cultural and political history, came to an end.

लोकहित और सामाजिक संवेदनाओं को उजागर करता है साहित्य



Gopal Krishna Vyas

आखर पोथी में राज्य मानवाधिकार आयोग के अध्यक्ष गोपाल कृष्ण व्यास ने राजस्थान के हाड़ौती अंचल की तीन पुस्तकों का एक साथ लोकार्पण किया। इन पुस्तकों में विजय जोशी की राजस्थानी गद्य विविधा 'भावाँ की रमझोळ', किशन 'प्रणय' का राजस्थानी उपन्यास 'अबखाया का रींगटा' और नन्दू 'राजस्थानी' का कुण्डली संग्रह 'कदै आवसी भोर' शामिल थी। इस अवसर पर इन पुस्तकों के लेखक और साहित्यकारों ने अपने विचार व्यक्त किए।

वरिष्ठ साहित्यकार घनश्याम नाथ कच्छवा ने कहा कि 'भावाँ री रमझोळ' में कथ्य की विविधता है, जो पाठकों को आकर्षित करती है। इस पुस्तक में कथेतर साहित्य की विविध विधाओं आलेख, शोध-समीक्षा, बाल-कथा, डायरी, रिपोर्ट, रेखाचित्र, संस्मरण आदि रचनाओं का समावेश है। रचनाओं की विशेषता है कि ये लोकहित और सामाजिक संवेदना को उजागर करते हुए सामाजिक संस्कार तथा जीवन मूल्यों को समृद्ध करती हैं।

डॉ नंदकिशोर महावर ने कहा कि साहित्य समाज को आंदोलित कर प्रेरित करता है। साहित्य में वह सब सिमट जाता है जो आसपास के वातावरण और लेखक के जीवन में घटित होता है। उस युग सत्य को लेखक अपना विषय बनाता है और अपनी सृजन यात्रा पर निकल पड़ता है। यह लेखक की मानसिक यात्रा होती है और यात्रा ही उस युग सत्य का दर्शन करती है। 'अबखाया का रींगटा' ऐसा उपन्यास है जो आत्मकथा को लेकर चलता है। इसमें वर्तमान युवा के सुनहरे सपने, संघर्ष और आज की दशा का जीता जागता दस्तावेज है। इसमें अभिनव आधुनिक युग का पात्र है लेकिन वह संस्कारवान है और परम्पराओं को निभाने वाला है। इस पात्र के माध्यम से लेखक चक्रव्यूह में फंसकर निकलने का माध्यम खोजता है, जिसमें आज की युवा पीढ़ी फंसी हुई है। लेखक राजनीति, नौकरशाही, गांव का चित्रण आदि



Ghandhyam Nath Kachhawa

के माध्यम से सच्चाई की अभिव्यक्ति करता है। एक अच्छा साहित्यकार कभी भी व्यर्थ की बातें नहीं करता है, उसे सच्ची बात ही करनी चाहिए। वह किसी से प्रभावित नहीं हो यही उसका सच्चा कर्म है।

साहित्यकार मीनाक्षी पारीक ने 'कदै आवसी भोर' के बारे में कहा कि एक ही छंद के आधार पर पूरी पुस्तक लिखना बड़ी बात है। ऐसे समय में जब लिखने वालों की संख्या बढ़ रही है, लेकिन साहित्य की विविध विधाएं विलुप्त होती जा रही हैं, तब इस विधा को जीवंत करने का कार्य नंदू राजस्थानी ने किया है। इस पुस्तक में राजस्थानी संस्कृति का वर्णन है। वार त्योहार, देवस्थान, संस्कृति, गढ़ किला, धरती धोरां, श्रृंगार, मनुष्यों की कमियां आदि पर लिखा गया है। ये 168 कुंडलियों के रूप में लिखी गई हैं। इनमें लयात्मकता है। जहां पर खत्म होती है वहीं से शुरू होती है। यह 6 चरण की हैं और दोहा

और रोळा का समन्वय है। रचनाएं पाठकों को बांधे रखती हैं। नए साहित्यकारों को भी इस पुस्तक का अध्ययन कर, इससे प्रेरणा लेकर साहित्य रचना करनी चाहिए। यह पुस्तक साहित्य की विलुप्त होती विधाओं को जीवित करने का काम करती है।

लेखक विजय जोशी ने बताया कि रमझोळ पूरे परिवेश को साथ लेकर चलती है। इस पुस्तक में साहित्य की विविध विधाओं को आत्मसात करने का प्रयास किया गया है। मेरे जीवन में जो रेखाचित्र खिंचा वह इसमें है। साहित्य की विविध विधाएं इसमें शामिल हैं। इसमें साहित्यिक और सांस्कृतिक संस्मरण भी शामिल हैं।

युवा साहित्यकार किशन प्रणय ने कहा कि साहित्य-रचना हमेशा बदलते परिवेश के अनुसार ही होनी चाहिए। हम कब तक राजस्थानी में पुरानी बातों पर लिखते रहेंगे। अब हमारी पीढ़ी बदल गई है। नई पीढ़ी ऑडी कार, जगुआर में घूमने वाली, आई फोन उपयोग करने वाली और विदेशों तक में नौकरी एवं व्यवसाय करने वाली बन गई है। इसी हिसाब से साहित्य की रचना करनी पड़ेगी।

युवा लेखक नंदू राजस्थानी ने कहा कि जब मैं प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से 2021 में युवा लेखक सम्मेलन में शामिल हुआ था, तो मैंने भी सोचा था कि कभी मेरी भी पुस्तक हो और आज यह संभव हो गया है। कुछ दोहे लिखे और साहित्यकार जयसिंह आशावत को लिखकर सुनाए तो उन्होंने कहा कि लगातार लिखते रहो। इस पर मैं लगातार लिखता गया और यह पुस्तक रूप में आ सकी।

लेखक नंदू राजस्थानी ने कुछ कुंडलिया भी सुनाई-

मां-बापू रै कारणै, म्हारो घणो वजूद।
मूळ चुकाणों आंतरै, कियां चुकाऊं सूद।।
कियां चुकाऊं सूद, जमारो छोटो लागै।
सात जलम रै तांड, रहूं म्हें इणरै सागै।।
नन्दू री अरदास, इणी सूं कींकर धापूं।
सुरा बणै घर बार, जदैं रैवें मां बापू।।

बडै बडां री बात नै, लीज्यो खूंटी टांक।
पाळें नै थे लांगसो, तो कट जासी नाक।।
तो कट जासी नाक, मती मरजादा ढोळो।
पुरखां री जागीर, मती माटी में घोळो।।
नंदू कहतो बात, सुणी ज्यो चड़ी चड़ा री।
अतनी सी मरजाद, राखज्यो बडै बडां री।।

साहित्य समाज को आंदोलित कर प्रेरित करता है। साहित्य में वह सब सिमट जाता है जो आसपास के वातावरण और लेखक के जीवन में घटित होता है। उस युग सत्य को लेखक अपना विषय बनाता है और अपनी सृजन यात्रा पर निकल पड़ता है। यह लेखक की मानसिक यात्रा होती है और यात्रा ही उस युग सत्य का दर्शन करती है



Kishan Pranay and Vijay Joshi



Pramod Sharma

Nandu Rajasthani

लेखक राजनीति, नौकरशाही, गांव का चित्रण आदि के माध्यम से सच्चाई की अभिव्यक्ति करता है। एक अच्छा साहित्यकार कभी भी व्यर्थ की बातें नहीं करता है, उसे सच्ची बात ही करनी चाहिए। वह किसी से प्रभावित नहीं हो यही उसका सच्चा कर्म है



Tanaya Prafulla Gadkari

मायड म्हारै खून में, म्हूं मायड रै मांय।
इक-दूजै रै वासतै, बरतां दोन्यूं सांय।।
बरतां दोन्यूं सांय, मेळ मनडें में राखां।
करां रुखाळी रोज, पछै फळ जासी साखां।।
लिखै नंद हर रोज सबद री बेवै आयड।
आचंळ सूं दो बूंद, दे'र जीवण रे मायड।।

कार्यक्रम के अंत में साहित्यकार घनश्याम नाथ कच्छावा ने राज्य मानवाधिकार आयोग अध्यक्ष गोपाल कृष्ण व्यास से राजस्थानी भाषा और गीत संगीत पर बातचीत की। इस संवाद में व्यास ने बताया कि मेरी मां फतेह कुमारी व्यास ने विवाह से पूर्व गीत लिखा और गाया, जो बहुत प्रसिद्ध हुआ। लेकिन विवाह के बाद तत्कालीन सामाजिक परिस्थितियों के कारण वह 14 साल तक नहीं गा सकी। मेरी मां की इच्छा का सम्मान करते हुए सामाजिक दबाव के बावजूद मेरे दादाजी ने अपनी बहू को आकाशवाणी पर गाने की अनुमति दी। मेरी मां आकाशवाणी की गायिका के रूप में बहुत प्रसिद्ध हुईं। मुझे मेरी मां से राजस्थानी गानों के सृजन और उनकी पृष्ठभूमि के बारे में भी जानकारी मिली। जैसे, 'तालरिया मगरिया रे, मोरू बाई' गीत में बाल विवाह के बाद बालिका के ससुराल में होने वाली समस्याओं के बारे में जानकारी है। इसी तरह दूसरे गीत 'म्हारी रे मंगेतर चून्ड वाली...' में मिरासी बालिकाओं के अपहरण पर दर्द छुपा हुआ है। इन गीतों के बारे में जानकारी नहीं होने के कारण लोग इनको नाच नाच कर गाते हैं, जबकि यह दुख भरे गीत हैं और इनकी भूमिका भी यही है।

श्री व्यास ने 'छप्पर पुराना रे पिया पड़ गया रे...', 'तुझे किण होली खिलाई रे...', 'बिरज में कैसे होली खेलू रे...' आदि लोक गीत भी सुनाये।

कार्यक्रम का संचालन अभिलाषा पारीक ने किया। ग्रासरूट मीडिया फाउंडेशन के प्रमोद शर्मा ने सभी का आभार व्यक्त किया।

आखर राजस्थान के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट। ग्रासरूट मीडिया फाउंडेशन का सहयोग मिला



Being The Architect Of One's Life



Shefali Rawat Agarwal, Esha Dutta, Jyotika Kapoor, Swami Viswadiyananda Maharaj, Aroop Biswas, Sanjiv Puri, Anindita Chatterjee and Malika Varma with Ram K. Sharma at the book launch

Imagine standing at the crossroads, like Robert Frost did a century ago, pondering your choices and wondering which path to take. In moments of darkness and doubt, when our judgement becomes clouded, it is difficult to ascertain the right course of action. But staying true to oneself lies at the foundation of a good life. Humans are the architects of their destinies. Even the inconsequential choices we make construct bits and pieces of our lives. Integral to Hinduism is the concept of *karma*, which translates to 'deeds' in English. As the only species born with a sense of logic and rationality, humans are responsible for every action they initiate, for every word they utter. It is this action that spells out our destinies. Ram K. Sharma, a notable entrepreneur based in Kolkata, has distilled the complex subjects of spirituality and *karma* into his book, *Karma and You: Create Your Own Destiny*. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised an outstanding event in Kolkata where Sharma's book was launched in the august company of the business magnate, Harshvardhan Neotia, the Minister of Power, Housing, Youth Services and Sports of the West Bengal government, Aroop Biswas — he was also the Chief Guest at the event — the Managing Director of ITC, Sanjiv Puri, and a senior monk of Belur Math, Swami Viswadiyananda Maharaj. The speeches and discussions following the book launch walked the audience through some profound ideas of inner peace and spirituality.



Gauri Basu delivers the welcome note

Gouri Basu, **Ehsaas** Woman of Kolkata, moderated the book launch. Her introductory words about Sharma's book that Biswas formally unveiled set the tone for the event: "Indian religions believe in the divine Law of Karma. Our actions, whether good or bad, influence our current life as well as the next to come." Shefali Rawat Agarwal, **Ehsaas** Woman of Kolkata, felicitated the dignitaries with a gorgeous *gurjari dupatta* from Gujarat.

For a dignified discussion on this book to follow, a befitting atmosphere had to be built. Three dignitaries undertook this task with great finesse. Puri said that he believes *Karma and You: Create Your Own Destiny* makes some complex ideas accessible even to lay readers. "It is a book of profound ideas, very deeply thought through," he said. "It embodies the values and wisdom that Ram stands for — his own *karma*." The book made him reflect on his life and actions and do what he deems is right. To his mind, the ideas of spirituality and contemplating one's *karma* are waning in today's world, but we must think good and act judiciously, because we get back the results of what we do. This thought circled back to the same point about *karma*.

Swami Viswadiyananda impressed the audience with the clarity of his thoughts and the sincerity of his speech. "We have two minds, a good and a bad one," he said. "Our good mind guides us to meaningful

action and the bad mind pushes us into wrongdoing. We exert force and use money to control others, but controlling the self is the most difficult task. Once we master this, we will never commit sins and become unvanquishable.” By harbouring good thoughts, being magnanimous and being in a virtuous company, we can strengthen the soul and communicate with the divine. Inspired by Swami Vivekananda’s teachings, Maharaj added that Vivekananda always used to say, “Auspicious work will bring propitious results and ill actions will cause misfortune. Nothing can interfere with this rule of the universe.”

Following this contemplative speech, Biswas joyfully commented on how literature and novel artistic creations have always been an integral part of the cultural ethos of the City of Joy. He congratulated Sharma on the launch of his new book and briefly spoke about the omnipresence of God. Echoing Swami Vivekananda’s words,

“*kormo-i dhormo*” which translates to “work is worship”, the minister underpinned the power we have at our disposal to shape our lives.

The Law of Karma is a part of the spiritual world. This law has been explained in almost all kinds of spiritual readings, such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Gita and Buddhist teachings. One of the most important ancient books of India, the Bhagavad Gita, contains lessons on the meaning and effects of *karma* in a very extensive manner. The *rishis* of ancient India observed, experimented and discovered the existence of *karma*. They found that the Law of Karma was as real and strong as the physical laws of our universe. The Law of Karma outlines that every action — mental, verbal or physical — has a consequence. None of us, no matter how rich, powerful or influential, can avoid this consequence

These insightful commentaries on *Karma and You* were an overture to a long and profound discussion of Sharma’s books and the multitude of philosophical ideas it contains. Jyoti Kapoor, **Ehsaas** Woman of Nagpur, started the conversation with a note of appreciation for Sharma, who is the managing director of the 100-year-old ayurvedic and herbal medicine manufacturing company, Baidyanath. An ardent believer in the philosophy of *karma*, Sharma’s business acumen and personal pursuits reflect the positive results of his *karma*. This has won him many accolades and recognitions as he continues to lead with flair a company that has become synonymous with living history. To acquaint everyone with the

Law of Karma, he wrote *Karma and You*, on which Kapoor lavished great praise.



Harshavardhan Neotia, Sanjiv Goenka, Aroop Biswas, Abhijit Bhattacharya and Sanjiv Puri with Ram K. Sharma



The audience at the event

Good *karma* is founded on the principles of “inner strength, truthfulness and honesty”. Sharma believes that one needs to be initiated into profoundly spiritual ideas such as these early in their life to be able to make it a part of their being. As a perceptive 12-year-old boy, his encounter with an ascetic, Devraha Baba, who used to live on the banks of the Ganges in Allahabad, left a lasting impression on his mind. Moral rectitude and the power to reflect on one’s choices are some of the qualities that Sharma picked up from his encounters with this sage. The belief in *karma* was planted in his mind during another such encounter. “In those days, our family had built an *ashram* in Vrindavan for the pilgrims,” he reminisced. “Baba knew about this because my mother used to visit him frequently. Once, he asked my mother whether people who got free food and shelter at our *ashram* ever complained of anything or cursed us. To this, my mother said a sentence in agreement. Baba’s resounding laughter upon hearing this left my mother startled. What he said thereafter got lodged in my mind and has stayed with me forever. He said that it was our family’s good *karma* that we served humans for free. Nothing should ever deter us from doing good for others and the self because in this lies the truth of our existence. As a child, I was very impressed with this idea, and this was my first introduction to the philosophy of *karma*.”

Sharma’s book has brought to light many unknown facts about his father, who gave shelter to young freedom fighters, dressed as coolies and truck drivers, in the office of Baidyanath in Calcutta when the British government, sensing trouble, had

imposed Section 144 in the city. Sharma’s father was aware of the repercussions he might face on the personal and business fronts for this daunting task, but Sharma believes it was the former’s *karma* for the cause of the nation. The next morning, all the freedom fighters left the office to join the Quit India Movement. Committed to his nation, his father gave his employees a holiday to join the movement in large numbers. To celebrate this historic event, Baidyanath continued to give its employees a holiday on the day of the Quit India Movement for the next 50 years. Such is the legacy of the business that Sharma has been leading with great success.

Sharma’s book elucidates different types of *karma* – Divine, Family, Spousal, Corporate, Karma for Truth, and so on – through which he dives deep into the ineffable mysteries of the universe. He read an excerpt from his book that captures the crux of his ideas: “The Law of Karma is a part of the spiritual world. This law has been explained in almost all kinds of spiritual readings, such as the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Gita* and Buddhist teachings. One of the most important ancient books of India, the *Bhagavad Gita*, contains lessons on the meaning and effects of *karma* in a very extensive manner. The *rishis* of ancient India observed, experimented and discovered the existence of *karma*. They found that the Law of Karma was as real and strong as the physical laws of our universe. The Law of Karma outlines that every action – mental, verbal or physical – has a consequence. None of us, no matter how rich, powerful or influential, can avoid this consequence.” To Sharma, *karma* begins with the free will we exercise to think and act. He



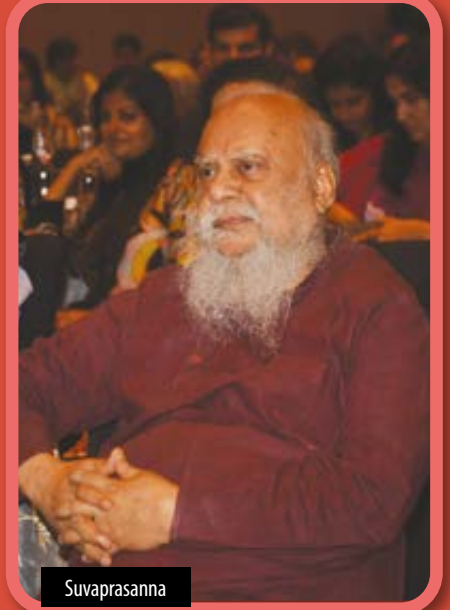
Sanjay Budhia



Ram K. Sharma and Rashmi Sharma



Diya Jaiswal and Nelangi Parekh



Suvapasanna

believes that we are not inheritors of our destiny, we are its creators.

Eminent guests from the audience expressed their understanding of *karma*. Neotia understands *karma* in line with the proverb, “As you sow, so shall you reap”. He equated this philosophy with Newton’s third law of motion – every action we undertake will bring us an appropriate consequence. Good *karma* brings fruitful results, bad *karma* inflicts misery upon us. “*Karma* begins with what we think, even if we do not translate our thoughts into action,” he added. Diya Jaiswal, a certified life coach, spoke about how her clients come to her, embroiled in distress, pain and trauma. We often try to find answers to the ordeal we go through, but in vain. Jaiswal suggested that we “take charge of the self and leave the universe to take care of everything else.” This thought-provoking session made the audience privy to the rationale and approaches of different individuals to the fundamental idea of *karma*.

Kapoor read out a meaningful part from the chapter, ‘Karma for Truth’. Highlighting this as one of the most important sections of his book, Sharma said that we need to cultivate speaking the truth as a portal into the universe and receive its otherwise ungraspable knowledge. We need to manifest the truth by speaking it, much like what the *rishis* used to do thousands of years ago. The chapter, ‘Divine

Karma’, accentuates the ways to attain salvation. *Bhakti* (pure love and devotion to the divine), *Gyaan* (understanding the knowledge of the universe) and *Karma* (doing what is right even when the world around seems hostile) are intertwined ways to reach the divine power and manifest spirituality. We need to remain sanguine even in moments of darkness and be the initiator of positive change in our lives and society. Kapoor underlined that *karma* is a moral compass that anchors us to reality. The universality of Sharma’s book lies in how it has interwoven simple examples from our everyday lives of challenges and tribulations, as well as occasional bouts of happiness and misery, with profound reflections on our *karmic* destinies. We are the results of our thoughts, as Lord Buddha also said, and we are in charge of our thoughts. Trueness to oneself and the universe and goodness of will are qualities within our reach to make our lives better. Kapoor left the audience thinking with a beautiful Sanskrit saying, “*Yad bhaavanatad bhavanti*,” which translates to “As you think, so shall it be”. Malika Varma, **Ehsaas** Woman of Kolkata, concluded this intensely philosophical and reflective book launch with a formal vote of thanks.

The book launch was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with ITC Royal Bengal and with the support of Ehsaas Women of Kolkata



The Songs Of Women's Histories

The ghost of patriarchy manifests itself in different forms. Exorcising this ghost once it lodges itself in someone's head is a daunting task, but never impossible. The epicentre of agency and power has always rested on the identity of the man. The reductive impetus to see one half of humankind as the other is tantamount to the erasure of female agency. Sexism has infected the economic, linguistic, political and social structures into which a human is born. It is not new for the world to see how patriarchy's hegemonic narratives have misappropriated women's voices since time immemorial to suit their imperatives. The intersectionality of gender, class, caste and/or race is the axiom of women's oppression. Nurturing a myopic perspective and seeing the world through a cracked glass are the tools patriarchy uses to confine women within certain spatial and behavioural boundaries. The historic gendering of God further perpetuates patriarchy's endless narratives to suppress women. Understanding and combating women's alienation from their bodies, minds and histories is a work in progress that everyone should be a part of to free women from an arbitrary and oppressive construct of womanhood.

Ideological oppression of women indoctrinates them into believing their survival is contingent upon self-abnegation and yielding to facile gender norms that demand their passivity. With *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Mary Wollstonecraft was a trailblazer in the long history of feminist movements that span many centuries. Civil rights, enfranchisement and socio-political recognition were among the fundamental

demands of the early feminists. The Suffragette Movement gained momentum with the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention in New York. Once women had begun marching on their way to attaining equal political rights, educational, property, reproductive rights, marital freedom and remunerative job opportunities, there was no spirit potent enough to intercept them. The Suffragette Movement gave impetus to several labour movements across North America and Europe at the beginning of the 20th century – all of which spurred International Women's Day.

In the wake of the revolutionary activities against the Tsar in Imperial Russia, on March 8 (February 23 on the Julian calendar), 1917, women textile workers in Petrograd (now Saint Petersburg) took to the streets in large numbers to strike for "Bread and Peace". A few days hence, Tsar Nicholas II abdicated the throne, and the new Provisional Government in Russia enfranchised women. The gravity of this day was such that it initiated the February Revolution in Imperial Russia. To honour women's proactivity towards fighting for their rights and independence, February 8 has gone down in history as International Women's Day.

IWD is rooted in a socialist origin. During the International Women's Year in 1975, the United Nations officially celebrated its first IWD on March 8. Subsequently, in 1977, the General Assembly adopted a declaration that called for the observance of a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace on any day of the year by the Member States in keeping with their individual histories and traditions. IWD is a day to celebrate the collective achievements of women across time, space, race, religion, community, class, caste and many other factors, in order to establish a world unfettered by gender biases, discrimination, violence, race-gender oppression and everything that estranges

women from the reality of their being. Patriarchy has been deploying strategies forever to discipline women's bodies and minds and downsize their histories. But women are exploring and creating languages for themselves to write their tales of freedom and satisfaction. It is not to say that the celebration of IWD globally for several decades now has propelled women to the apex of their achievements. The concept of feminism and the issues addressed by IWD every year have become more inclusive and intersectional in recent times, but we are at the tip of the iceberg. The fight still goes on. Through international days and weeks, the initiators of positive change and development envisage an increase in local and global awareness about issues that plague different sections of humankind. The UN advances resources and institutional backing to champion these causes. International Women's Day 2023 sought to #EmbraceEquity. Women must get a sense of belonging to this large-scale movement to be able to contribute to it, however diminutive the inputs might seem. Every action towards achieving equality and equity is valid — this is what makes IWD inclusive and universal in spirit.

Our lives are now defined by technological intervention at all levels — from communicating with people living far and wide to finding out the routes to our favourite holiday destinations, from working and studying remotely since the years of the pandemic to making online transactions in the blink of an eye. But systemic inequalities have engendered a conspicuous gendered digital gap where 37% of women do not use the internet and 259 million fewer women have access to the internet than men, as stated by the UN. This dearth of accessibility comes with massive costs — millions of



women are not initiated into digital skills that they could have otherwise used to pursue eclectic career choices in science, technology and professions of this ilk. To this end, the UN observed IWD 2023 under the theme 'DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality'. It was not restricted to being a 24-hour affair. It is a celebration of women and girls who are crusading for the use of transformative technology and making digital education accessible to women.

This observance is also meant to research how systemic socio-economic inequalities and a gendered digital gap accelerate each other, and underpin the need to keep women and girls safe from exploitation and violence in digital spaces. Sea changes do not happen overnight, but small steps towards increasing digital awareness will pave the way for an equitable digital future.

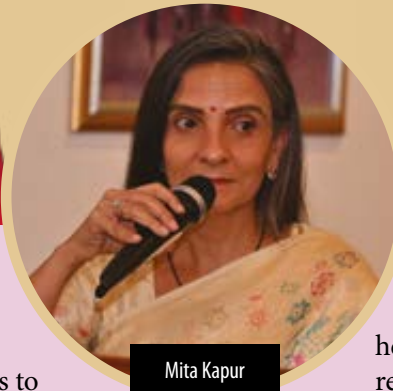
Women have been effaced from history at men's convenience. But women no longer wallow in self-pity or sentimentalism. They are creating their narratives to find redemption from the curse of oblivion. A tokenistic celebration of IWD and a relapse into the habitual modes of discriminating against women on the other 364 days of the year will get us nowhere. IWD teaches all to celebrate women's dreams of ascent and songs of freedom. An inheritor of the ideas of the renowned novelist, entrepreneur and feminist Prabha Khaitan, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** is a champion of women's causes and celebrates all women who are at different points in their journeys. Born out of the Foundation's vision to empower women, **Ehsaas** is an aggregation of notable women from different walks of life who work to create a better tomorrow and make our society a healthy space to live in. In the name of the histories of resistance and poetry of survival that women inherit, let us pledge to make this world as gender-equal as we can.



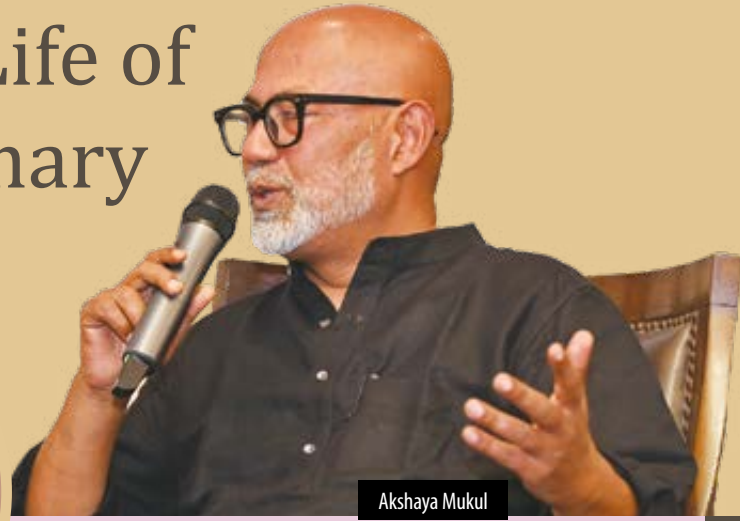
Writing the Life of a Revolutionary



Tamanna Bhanot



Mita Kapur



Akshaya Mukul

Prabha Khaitan Foundation's initiative, **The Write Circle**, brings authors closer to their readers to engage in informal and informative discussions. In a special session of **The Writer Circle**, Akshaya Mukul, a noted journalist, author and independent researcher, discussed his book, *Writer, Rebel, Soldier, Lover: The Many Lives of Agyeya*, giving the audience an insight into the world and mind of the legendary Hindi writer Sachchidananda Hirananda Vatsyayan – popularly known as Agyeya. Mita Kapur, founder and CEO of Siyahi, delivered the welcome address and introduced the audience to Mukul and the moderator, Tamanna Bhanot, a lactation counselor, editor, and the grand niece of Agyeya.

Bhanot opened up the conversation by discussing Mukul's love and admiration for the legendary Hindi writer, and why he decided to read him. "Agyeya was a revolutionary man who began his writing career in jail at the age of 19," said Mukul. "His fearless life raised innumerable questions in me, and I started reading his works. Among them was included the famous *Nadi ke Dweep*."

However, for Mukul, the fact that Agyeya was both a rebel and a soldier was contradictory. Elaborating on how Agyeya was a rebel, he remarked, "Agyeya wished to be a physicist, and started working as a research assistant. That was the time when he started getting involved with the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. He started by distributing pamphlets, and somehow got interested in making bombs. Known as the 'scientist' among

revolutionaries, he was brought to Delhi to make bombs, but was discovered. Following this incident, he spent four years in jail." However, despite being a revolutionary, Agyeya joined the British army, undeterred by the criticism he faced. "He believed that the bigger evil was fascism, and he wanted to conquer it by joining the British Army. This was Agyeya – a man of many contradictions," remarked the author.

Agyeya's personal life was also complex. "He was in love with his cousin, which cost him two other relationships," revealed Mukul. Even though the women that were with him were miserable, they would still want to stay with him; one of them even told Mukul that this was because Agyeya was "a great listener". Mukul also noted that there were many myths about Agyeya, and he had to rely on Agyeya's papers and carry out research in different universities in India and the United States of America to uncover the truth.

The conversation also veered towards the author's first book, *Gita Press and the Making of Hindu India*, wherein he explained how Gita Press's magazine, *Kalyan*, has been instrumental in shaping the idea of Hinduism for lakhs of people.

An orthodox magazine, opposed to women's freedom, it continues to enjoy wide popularity despite hardly ever featuring women authors.

At the end of the session, Mukul read Agyeya's poem *Naam Tera*; this was followed by an engaging Q&A session with the audience. Kapur delivered the vote of thanks, and artist and painter Shan Bhatnagar felicitated the guest and the moderator with mementos.

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

“Despite being a revolutionary, Agyeya joined the British army, undeterred by the criticism he faced. He believed that the bigger evil was fascism, and he wanted to conquer it by joining the British Army. This was Agyeya – a man of many contradictions”

When Stories Choose Their Language



Anukrti Upadhyay



Priyanka Kothari

To understand a bilingual way of writing, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** hosted author Anukrti Upadhyay for a special session of **The Write Circle** at the Radisson Blu, Nagpur. Upadhyay was in conversation with Priyanka Kothari, Ehsaas Woman of Nagpur, both of whom discussed the interesting facets of Upadhyay's world of writing novellas and short stories. The stage was set by Monica Bhagwagar, **Ehsaas** Woman of Nagpur, who delivered the formal welcome speech.

Jumping into how bilingual writing works for her, Upadhyay said, "I write original works in Hindi as well as English. Stories usually tell me in which language I should write. My first two short novels, *Daura* and *Bhaunri*, were both set in rural Rajasthan and written in English. It was intriguing to me why I chose Indian locales and issues [*Daura* deals with Indian bureaucracy, and both novels involve nomadic tribes in Rajasthan], and why both were written in English. Upon analysing, the reason could be that I hadn't read any original English work about rural Rajasthan. Perhaps this was at the back of my mind. It is difficult to say why I chose English for *The Blue Women* when *Japani Sarai* was in Hindi. Both of them are a compilation of contemporary short stories; the stories chose the language."

She even spoke of the confluence of the two languages. According to her, English and Hindi meet in our country. "Hindi is a young language; and the modern language that we speak is Khari Boli, which is a further step away from Hindustani (a mix of Hindi, Urdu, Arbi and Farsi). It emerged toward the early

to the middle 19th century," Upadhyay said.

After talking a bit more about languages and Upadhyay's choice to write twin novellas, Kothari pointed out that readers often feel dejected when they have an abrupt ending to a short story. To that, Upadhyay said that this theory goes for all literature; is it the responsibility of literature to offer a resolution? Art that offers a resolution in the true sense is not a resolution, because that comes from the author's inner world.

The next part of the conversation included a discussion on Haruki Murakami, given Upadhyay's association with Japan with her work *Japani Sarai* and *Kintsugi*. "My husband heads the Japanese Embassy Bank. Japan is a truly unique place, as there is a semblance of recognisability. Japan exists in a universe of its own. I was fascinated to observe how a 200-year-old shrine existed in total calm in Tokyo's urban jungle. Such a contradiction is so jarring! Given that I do not belong to that place, it gave me a lot to explore and admire," she said.

Upadhyay also read a page from her story, *The Dragon in the Garden*, and talked a bit more about its characters. After Bhagwagar delivered the vote of thanks, the author was felicitated with a *kantha uttoriyo* by Payal, Banquet Sales Executive of Radisson Blu, Nagpur.

The Write Circle Nagpur was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Lokmat and Radisson Blu Nagpur and with the support of Ehsaas Woman of Nagpur



Monica Bhagwagar, Jyoti Kapoor, Priyanka Kothari and Parveen Tuli with Anukrti Upadhyay

The Time To Save The Planet Is Now



“I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear I feel every day. And then I want you to act.” These were the words of Greta Thunberg at the World Economic Forum held in Davos in 2019. This was not a warning, or even an entreaty, but a call for action that demanded that world leaders react immediately to prevent the impending climate crisis – one which threatens to annihilate entire cities, countries, ecosystems and populations. The ‘panic’ that Thunberg talks about is an innate fear which has driven thousands of children, activists and philanthropists across the world to create awareness regarding the danger that awaits mankind.

But it is a fact well known that though much of the responsibility lies on the shoulders of the layman to reduce carbon emission, more of it lies on the shoulders of industrialists and corporations. Unless corporations take the responsibility of operating in ways that are friendly to the environment, the ‘fear’ that Thunberg speaks of will only worsen amongst the most socially and economically vulnerable groups across the world.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a scientific and regulatory organisation

that is a part of the US Department of Commerce, reported that 2022 tied with 2016 to be the hottest year to be recorded. It has been recorded that the surface temperature in 2022 was 0.86 degrees Celsius warmer than the average of 13.9 degrees Celsius of the 20th century and 1.06 degrees Celsius warmer than pre-industrial times (1880—1900). Thus, it is no secret that humanity is plummeting towards a disaster of a scale few have fathomed. It is time that world leaders panicked.

While wildfires, extreme weather, coral bleaching, water stress and the loss of Arctic Sea ice remain the most visible and most discussed effects of climate change, the more insidious effects are human displacement and the adverse effects on human health. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that by 2030, hunger, malaria, diarrhoea, and heat waves — which are a direct consequence of climate change — will contribute to an additional 2,50,000 fatalities annually. Moreover, according to data from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), around 17 million of the 28 million individuals who abandoned their homes globally in 2018 were forcibly displaced, and out of those 17

million, 16 million people were displaced as a result of weather-related incidents like storms, floods, typhoons and hurricanes.

One of the immediate risks of unchecked human activities is also the loss of irreplaceable biodiversity. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, almost one million species are threatened by extinction, and many ecosystems are at risk of collapse. The International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species names 42,100 species that face extinction. The IUCN also points out that the extinction of 42,100 would also mean the loss of 28% of all assessed species, wreaking havoc on our environment and seriously endangering human sustenance.

The other pressing issues at present are pollution and waste management. The UN Environment Programme points out that cities throughout the world will generate 2.2 billion tonnes of trash annually by 2025 – more than three times the amount generated in 2009.

Keeping in mind the crises that we face, it becomes imperative for us to act now and campaign for environment-friendly measures in all spheres of life. The origin of environmental activism, however, is 50 years old, and lies in the publication of Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* (1962), which documented for the first time the negative impacts of pollution on public health. It also heightened public concern and knowledge about the environment. The oil spill in Santa Barbara led to a nationwide demonstration on April 22, 1970, under the activist Debris Hayes, against the impact of 150 years of industrialization on human health. This day was also monikered 'Earth Day', and garnered a lot of media interest. Massive coast-to-coast marches in cities,

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towns and rural areas against environmental degradation were planned by thousands of colleges and universities. Members of the US's Republican and Democratic Parties as well as people from different socio-economic groups supported Earth Day in 1970, achieving a rare moment of solidarity. By the end of 1970, the first Earth Day had resulted in additional groundbreaking environmental laws, including the National Environmental Education Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and the Clean Air Act, as well as the founding of the United States Environmental Protection Agency. In 1990, Denis Hayes was approached by a group of environmental leaders to organise a similar campaign, but on a larger scale. By mobilising 200 million people across 141 nations, this Earth Day catapulted environmental issues onto the international stage. Ever since, Earth Day has been an international phenomenon which has brought together leaders and people across the globe.

Thus, while the responsibility of bringing our world back from the brink of disaster lies with leaders and corporations, the history of Earth Day informs us that we must also do our bit in saving the planet. We must work towards climate literacy, reducing the use of plastics, planting more trees and opting for sustainable fashion. This Earth Day, we pledge to continue aligning our actions with larger environmental goals, and inspire people to take more environmentally conscious decisions every day.

ARTWORK BY SUDIPTA KUNDU



Celebrating Colours Through Poetry And Dance

Colours and dance – what better way to host a spring festival? **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, along with Diksha Manjari, organized Vasant Utsav on the premises of the Indian Museum on the occasion of Dol. The event, the main focus of which was the celebration of colours, featured eminent danseuse and **Ehsaas** Woman of Kolkata, Dona Ganguly, and the students from her school, all of whom took centre stage to give the audience an enthralling dance performance.



A dance performance by Raghunath Das and Dona Ganguly



Narration and recitation by Sundeep Bhutoria. His recitation involved the works of legends such as Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam and Gopaldas 'Neeraj'

आज बसंत की रात,
गमन की बात न करना!
धूप बिछाए फूल-बिछौना,
बगिया पहने चांदी-सोना,
कलियां फेंके जादू-टोना,
महक उठे सब पात,
हवन की बात न करना!
आज बसंत की रात,
गमन की बात न करना!

'आज बसंत की रात,
गमन की बात न करना'

— गोपालदास 'नीरज'

After a hiatus of two years owing to Covid, this was the Foundation's first outdoor physical event, where the turnout was a healthy one. The event kicked off with a commemoration of the spirit of Dol in Bengal, portrayed through dance. Various dance acts featuring Rabindra Sangeet, traditional songs related to Dol, and other beloved Bengali tunes added energy and vivacity to the night. Ganguly even included a segment showcasing Radha and Krishna playing with colours through dance.

The next segment of the show was focused on representing each state of India with Holi-themed songs, showcasing the way the festival is celebrated. Dances from the states of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar and Punjab were performed. As interludes, the Foundation's Managing Trustee, Sundeep Bhutoria, recited poems for the audience.

The students wrapped up the event by dancing to a



The director of the Indian Museum, Arijit Dutta Choudhury, delivers the welcome note



Rowan Ainsworth, Consul General
of Australia in Kolkata



Malika Varma



Sayan Bhattacharya

song which paid homage to India's rich cultural diversity. In keeping with Dol traditions, the students then mingled with the audience and applied colour to the feet of elders and the foreheads of others. Before long, everyone joined in on the pre-Holi festivities by playing with colours, which ensured that the event concluded on a happy note.

“For several years, we have been organizing the spring festival at the Indian Museum,” said Ganguly. “It was closed for a few years due to Covid, and then we came back again this year. Seeing people happy in this

environment makes me happy. Vasant Raga, Dhruvadi, Ashtapadi, Rabindra Sangeet, Bhojpuri, Rajasthani, Marathi, Bengali and Hindi Holi songs were danced to, because Holi is for everyone. Most importantly, Holi can't be celebrated without Radha Krishna!”

Vasant Utsav was an initiative of the Indian Museum, Kolkata, and the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, in collaboration with Prabha Khaitan Foundation and Diksha Manjari



The revelry at Vasant Utsav



Arijit Dutta Choudhury, Nicolas Facino (Director, Alliance Francaise du Bengale) and Qin Yong (Acting Consul General of the People's Republic of China)



Glimpses of the dance performances at Vasant Utsav





Glimpses of the dance performances at Vasant Utsav





Glimpses of the dance performances at Vasant Utsav



The Spirit of Coming Together

In India, Holi is a festival that celebrates the joy of companionship. It brings together people from various cultural and religious backgrounds in the spirit of togetherness, love, and sharing. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, through its various initiatives and activities, has always worked towards bridging cultural, educational and societal gaps to uphold this sense of community. To that end, this Holi, the Foundation, under its initiative, **Muskaan**, that helps children develop their skills, celebrated the festival with underprivileged children from various NGOs in Kolkata.

The children were given computers, school supplies, clothes and other gifts that are essential for their development. The activity not only made the children happy, but also inspired the Foundation to undertake more such celebrations so that children from all walks of life have access to basic educational necessities. For the team of **Muskaan**, it was a truly enriching experience – one that they will cherish for a long time to come.





Surendra Mohan Pathak

मैंने अपने रीडर के मिजाज को पकड़ा: सुरेंद्र मोहन पाठक

की, बारह आने की आती थी। उन्हें खरीदने की औकात नहीं थी। उन दिनों इंटरनेट, केबल होता नहीं था, टीवी था। मनोरंजन के लिए या तो सिनेमा था या किताब थी। सिनेमा में पैसे ज्यादा लगते थे, किताब सस्ती आती थी। एक समय ऐसा आया कि किताब के बिना रहना मुहाल हो गया।

पाठक ने यह भी कहा कि मेरा हिंदी भी विषय नहीं था, अंग्रेजी भी नहीं थी। चार ज़बान में लिख-पढ़ सकता हूँ, जो मुझे आती हैं। मैंने बिना इस बात का ध्यान रखे कि वह हिंदी का ही शब्द हो- हिंदी, पंजाबी, उर्दू और अंग्रेजी मिलाकर अपनी भाषा बनाई, जो देवनागरी में लिखी जाती है। मेरी किताब का बेसिक परपज है कि मैंने जो कहा वह आपको समझ में आ गया। किताब का भाषा का परपज सॉल्व हो गया। कालजयी रचनाएं किसी और ही तरह की होती हैं, जो पाठ्यक्रम में पढ़ाई जाती हैं। पाठक का कहना था कि लेखन सिलसिला बहुत अभ्यास से आता है या वह बहुत पढ़कर अपनी जगह बनाता है। उस्ताद लेखक माने जाते हैं, जिनकी पहले से धाक जमी हुई है, आप उन्हें इसलिए पढ़ेंगे वह ऐसा लेखक है। फिल्म स्टार रातों रात कामयाब हो सकता है, लेकिन लेखक को बहुत मेहनत करनी पड़ती है। वह एक-एक सीढ़ी चढ़ता है। उसे दीन-दुनिया की बहुत सी बातें छोड़नी पड़ती हैं।



Anshu Mehra

“प्रेमचंद कहते थे, जिस दिन मैं लिखता नहीं, उस दिन मैं रोटी खाने का अधिकारी नहीं मानता। आजकल के लेखक एक किताब लिखते हैं, और उसे पांच साल तक दिखाते हैं। साहित्यकार तो खास तौर से सालों तक नहीं लिखता। उनको रिजल्ट चाहिए टोकरा भरके मेहनत करेंगे चुटकी जितनी।” प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन और अहसास वूमन की ओर से आयोजित कलम मेरठ में यह बात वरिष्ठ अपराध कथा-लेखक सुरेंद्र मोहन पाठक ने कही। अहसास वूमन अंशू मेहरा ने उनका स्वागत और संवाद किया किया। दुनिया के चालीस से भी अधिक शहरों में चल रही फाउंडेशन की गतिविधियों की जानकारी देते हुए उन्होंने बताया कि ‘अपनी भाषा, अपने लोग’ वह मौलिक विचार है, जिसे बढ़ावा देने के लिए फाउंडेशन ‘कलम’ नामक कार्यक्रम करता है। फाउंडेशन के ‘एक मुलाकात’ विशेष, ‘लफ़्ज़’, ‘आखर’, ‘पोथी’, ‘सुर और साज’, ‘द राइट सर्कल’ और ‘किताब’ जैसे कार्यक्रमों की चर्चा करते हुए उन्होंने अतिथि वक्ता पाठक का परिचय दिया।

मेहरा ने बताया कि पाठक 6 दशक से अधिक समय से लेखन कर रहे हैं। आपकी पहली कहानी वर्ष 1959 में ‘57 साल पुराना आदमी’ ‘मनोहर कहानियां’ में प्रकाशित हुई थी, जबकि पहला उपन्यास ‘पुराने गुनाह नये गुनाहगार’ 1963 में प्रकाशित हुआ था। आपकी प्रकाशित पुस्तकों की गिनती 375 से अधिक है, जिनमें 300 से अधिक उपन्यास, 45 से अधिक कहानी संकलन और 26 से अधिक चुटकुला पुस्तकें शामिल हैं। आपकी कुछ पुस्तकों का अनुवाद अंग्रेजी और गुजराती में भी हुआ है और कई मोबाइल, टैबलेट, किंडल और ऑडियो के रूप में भी उपलब्ध हैं। ‘सुनील सीरीज’, ‘विमल सीरीज’ और ‘सुधीर सीरीज’ के किरदारों को कालजयी बना देने वाले पाठक का 300वां उपन्यास ‘क्रहर’ वर्ष 2019 में प्रकाशित हुआ। आपकी आत्मकथा कई खंडों में प्रकाशित हो रही है, जिसमें ‘न बैरी न कोई बेगाना’, ‘हम नहीं चंगे, बुरा न कोय’ और ‘निंदक नियरे राखिए’ को पाठकों ने हाथों हाथ लिया है।

पाठक ने मेहरा के सवाल पर अपने बचपन के दिनों को याद करते हुए उस समय के संघर्षों की चर्चा की। उन्होंने कहा कि बच्चों को अच्छे और बुरे समय की पहचान नहीं होती। उन्होंने अपनी दादी, पिता, उनके भाइयों और संयुक्त परिवार के माहौल को याद किया। लिखना-पढ़ना कैसे शुरू हुआ? के उत्तर में पाठक ने बताया कि यह कुछ इत्तिफाक की बात है, कुछ सोहबत की बात है। उन दिनों किताब आठ आने

पाठक ने अपनी नौकरी के 34 साल के अनुभव के बारे में भी बताया और कहा कि मैं पिछले साठ सालों से लगातार लिख रहा हूँ। मैंने अपने रीडर के मिजाज को पकड़ा और उसके साथ तालमेल बनाए रखा। यह इसलिए हो पाया कि मैंने रीडर के मिजाज को समझा। रीडर एक कंज्यूमर है। अगर आप उसके बारे में सोचोगे तो उसकी गुणवत्ता कायम रहेगी। आखिर हम अपने लिए तो नहीं लिख रहे हैं। यह एक झूटी की तरह है। जॉब वर्क की तरह है। सस्पेंस और थ्रिल को लोगों की पसंद बताते हुए पाठक ने उसकी तुलना पिज़्जा से की। लेखक का सबसे बड़ा इनाम रीडर का संतोष है। एक सवाल के उत्तर में पाठक ने कहा कि अखबार रेप मर्डर और डकैती से भरे होते हैं। जो लोग रोज टीवी पर इसे देखते हैं, अखबार में पढ़ते हैं, वे ही अपराध लेखन को हल्का मानते हैं। आखिर यह कौन तय करेगा कि यह हल्का है। जिनकी हजार किताब दस साल में नहीं बिकती वे हमारी लाख से अधिक किताबें बिकने से चिढ़ते हैं।

पाठक ने अपनी दिनचर्या से जुड़े सवाल के उत्तर में कहा कि मुझे लिखने से पैसे मिलते हैं। यह खुदा की नियामत है। पहली किताब के मुझे सौ रुपए मिले थे। उन्होंने अपनी अलग-अलग सीरीज के किरदारों से जुड़े सवाल का भी उत्तर दिया कि लोग एक ही तरह के टेस्ट से बोर न हो जाएं। यह एकरसता से बचने के लिए टेस्ट चेंज करने जैसा था। उन्होंने कहा कि मैंने कभी अपराध और अपराधी को ग्लोरीफाई नहीं किया। उन्होंने सवाल-जवाब सत्र में भी हिस्सा लिया और श्रोताओं के सवालों के उत्तर दिए। कार्यक्रम के अंत में एक युवा लेखिका ने पाठक का अभिनंदन किया।

अहसास वूमन के सौजन्य से आयोजित कलम मेरठ के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट। हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर होटल क्रिस्टल पैलेस और मीडिया पार्टनर दैनिक जागरण का भी सहयोग मिला।

चूरु को लंबे समय तक याद रहेगा सांझ लोक गीतां' री कार्यक्रम

प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन के सौजन्य से संवाद संस्थान चूरु द्वारा आयोजित गणगौर महोत्सव के दौरान सांझ लोक गीतां' री कार्यक्रम में कलाकारों ने एक से बढ़कर एक प्रस्तुति दी। फाउंडेशन की संस्थापक, डॉ प्रभा खेतान के पैंत्रिक ज़िले, चूरु में आयोजित यह कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत देव पूजन और वंदेमातरम गीत से हुई। फिर श्रवण सैनी, विनोद राठी, गिरधारी राणोलिया, देवकीनंदन, चम्पालाल प्रजापत और नीरज गौड़ सहित पचास कलाकारों ने लूर गायकी के साथ चक्रासन गींदड़ नृत्य की प्रस्तुति दी।

मातृ शक्ति द्वारा गौरा की आराधना में गाए गीत के बाद बूटियां के मास्टर शंकरलाल महर्षि के नेतृत्व में कलाकारों ने चंग नृत्य और धमाल गायकी की अभिनव प्रस्तुति दी। बिसाऊ की शंकर एंड पार्टी के कलाकारों ने चंग नृत्य किया। कलाकार शंकर ने घूमर, पणिहारी, सेजां, कुरजा, पपिहा और कागा आदि गीत धमाल और लूर में गाए तो दर्शक झूम उठे।

मुख्य अतिथि उपनेता प्रतिपक्ष राजेन्द्र राठौड़ ने प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन को लोक कला और साहित्य का संवाहक बताया और सहयोगी संवाद संस्थान द्वारा समाज, साहित्य, कला और संस्कृति के अभिनव संगम को मंच उपलब्ध कराने के लिए सराहा।

मुख्य अतिथि राठौड़, विशिष्ट अतिथि पूर्व उप जिला प्रमुख हरलाल सहारण, प्रधान दीपचंद राहड़, पूर्व सभापति विजय शर्मा व पूर्व उप सभापति मोहम्मद हुसैन निर्वाण ने कलाकारों को स्मृति चिन्ह प्रदान किया। संवाद संस्थान के अध्यक्ष नरेन्द्र



शर्मा ने फाउंडेशन के न्यासी संदीप भूतोड़िया का आभार व्यक्त किया। संचालन आर्किटेक्ट अनुराग शर्मा ने किया। योगेश गौड़, सुरेश सारस्वत, गुरुदास भारती, महेन्द्र चौबे, श्रवण सैनी, विनोद राठी, नवरत्न टॉक, महेश मिश्रा, राजीव बहड़, डॉ. कमल वशिष्ठ, कालूराम महर्षि, अजय दाधीच, सुरेन्द्र बावलिया, कैलाश नवहाल, विनोद ओझा, गजानंद गौड़ आदि ने अतिथियों का स्वागत किया।



शिक्षा दान सर्वोत्तम: छात्र-छात्राओं को दी गई पाठ्य पुस्तकें

“शिक्षा दान आज के युग में सर्वोत्तम है। एक बच्चे को पाठ्य पुस्तक देने का अर्थ देश के लिए एक अच्छा नागरिक बनाना है।” यह बात कोलकाता स्थित टांटिया हाई स्कूल में प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन एवं 'एजुकेशन फॉर ऑल ट्रस्ट' के सहयोग से भारत रिलीफ सोसाइटी द्वारा छात्र-छात्राओं को पाठ्य पुस्तक वितरण समारोह के मुख्य अतिथि उद्योगपति एवं समाजसेवी देवेंद्र जाजोदिया ने कही।

कोलकाता स्थित भारत रिलीफ सोसाइटी पिछले चार दशकों से 'ज्ञान यज्ञ समारोह' के तहत 'सबको शिक्षा मिले और अर्थाभाव में कोई शिक्षा से वंचित नहीं रहे' की भावना से छात्रों के बीच पाठ्य पुस्तक वितरण कर रहा है। कार्यक्रम की अध्यक्षता संदीप शाह ने की। उन्होंने कहा कि शिक्षा से ही सामाजिक परिवर्तन आएगा। पार्षद

और बोरो कमेटी के चेयरपर्सन रेहाना खातून ने इसे राष्ट्रीय एकता को मजबूत करने की दिशा में एक कदम बताया।

प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से मोहन सिंह और टांटिया हाई स्कूल के सचिव कैलाश शर्मा ने भी अपना वक्तव्य दिया। सोसाइटी के प्रधान सचिव विश्वम्भर नेवर, उपाध्यक्ष जगदीश मूंधड़ा, कोषाध्यक्ष गणेश पेडीवाल, संयुक्त सचिव दिनेश सेठ, नथमल भीमराजका, आशाराम झंवर, भागचंद मूंधड़ा, कमल कुमार सुराणा, लक्ष्मीकुमार बियानी, मदनलाल बिन्नानी, रमेश लाखोटिया, राजेंद्र सुराणा, विक्रम नेवर, संदीप सोमानी और प्रबंधक संजीव राठी उपस्थित थे।





A Soldier's Tryst With His Nation



Poonam Anand, Archana Dalmia, Anantmala Potdar, Gurveen Chadha, Anindita Chatterjee and Vinti Kathuria with Major General B.K. Sharma, Lieutenant General Rakesh Sharma, General Anil Chauhan (Chief of Defence Staff of the Indian Armed Forces), General Manoj Mukund Narvane (the 27th Chief of the Army Staff), Major General Ian Cardozo, Colonel Satpal Parmar, Rachna Bisht Rawat and Tarini Rawat at the launch of *Bipin: The Man Behind the Uniform*

To say that the task of subordinating the self to a bigger ideal – the cause of the nation – is challenging would be an understatement. With an undaunted spirit and unswerving conviction, so many heroes, sung and often unsung, protect our nation's borders from infiltration. Some lay down their lives on the altar of love for the Tricolour while in action, while many survive to tell the tales of their unparalleled heroism.

But any discussion on the unremitting contributions of the Indian armed forces shall remain incomplete without celebrating General Bipin Rawat, the first-ever Chief of Defence Staff of the Indian Armed Forces. His untimely demise left the nation mourning, but he continues to live on in the hearts of his family, colleagues, and everyone he was associated with. The renowned writer and journalist, Rachna Bisht Rawat, wife to Colonel Manoj Rawat, took it upon herself to bring before the world the man that General Rawat was. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**

organised a special **Kitaab** session to launch Bisht Rawat's book, *Bipin: The Man Behind the Uniform*, where an auditorium full of people witnessed the unfolding of Gen. Rawat's life.

Vinti Kathuria, **Ehsaas** Woman of Agra, welcomed everyone to the session in the name of "undying chivalry and the spirit of men behind the uniform". Anantmala Potdar, **Ehsaas** Woman of Delhi, felicitated the Chief Guest at the session, General Anil Chauhan, the present Chief of Defence Staff of the Indian Armed Forces, the Guest of Honour, Lieutenant General Rakesh Sharma, a former Adjutant General of the Indian Army and General Bipin Rawat Chair of Excellence at United Service Institution of India, General Manoj Mukund Narvane, the 27th Chief of the Army Staff, the Special Guest at the event, Major General Ian Cardozo, and Gen. Bipin Rawat's daughter, Tarini Rawat. Poonam Anand, **Ehsaas** Woman of Ranchi, felicitated Rachna



Sudha Sadhanand, Major General Ian Cardozo, Major General Shashi Bhushan Asthana, Brigadier Shivender Singh and Rachna Bisht Rawat

Bisht Rawat, Major General B.K. Sharma, Director-General of USI and Colonel Satpal Parmar. Gen. Sharma fondly reminisced about meeting the Bollywood hero, Raj Kapoor, and discussing retirement plans for a peaceful life in Dehradun with Gen. Rawat – memories that will reside in his heart forever. A short film on Gen. Rawat, specially made by the creative minds at USI, introduced the audience to his journey from the National Defence Academy in 1974 to becoming the first Chief of Defence Staff in 2020, his unforgettable contributions as a part of the 5/11 Gorkha Rifles and so much more. Gen. Chauhan's speech was a testament to the outstanding leadership displayed by the visionary military strategist that was Gen. Rawat. "Bipin Rawat was a man of many facets. One of his biggest achievements was to bring about change," said Gen. Chauhan. "He challenged old perceptions, established ideas and archaic practices. The changes he attempted were not only to keep the armed forces always attentive and ready to meet operational challenges, but to also make them relevant towards the larger goal of nation-building."

The unveiling of *Bipin: The Man Behind the Uniform*, into which has gone extensive research and interviews of more than 20 people associated with Gen. Rawat in different capacities, was followed by a panel discussion with Major Gen. Dr Shashi Bhushan Asthana, Brigadier Shivender Singh, Major Gen. Ian Cardozo and Rachna Bisht Rawat, moderated by the renowned media personality, Sudha Sadhanand. Praising Gen. Rawat's mettle, Gen. Asthana said, "Generals are born and generals leave. But very few leaders are of the kind whose memories leave an entire nation crying." Brig. Singh, who happens to be Gen. Rawat's cousin, mentioned how the latter was the "shining North Star" of their family, who got back to work a few hours after surviving a helicopter crash in Arunachal Pradesh in 2015. Brig. Singh remembered how Gen. Rawat, who will always be an affectionate cousin to him, used to say, "I am not worried



Amit Srivastava gifts a painting to Tarini Rawat

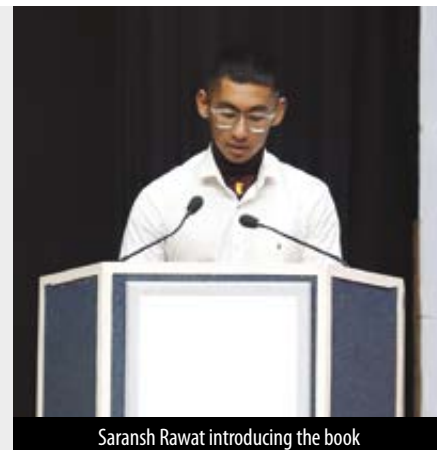


Anindita Chatterjee hands over a bouquet to Geetika Lidder, the wife of Late Brigadier Lakhbinder Singh Lidder



Archana Dalmia

Vinti Kathuria



Saransh Rawat introducing the book

about dying. As long as I am alive, I will keep working." Gen. Cardozo reiterated that Gen. Rawat was never a people-pleaser. For this, the latter often made it to the headlines, with his share of controversies. Gen. Rawat structured his role as he ventured into the unknown by integrating the armed forces and being the first CDS. As Rachna Bisht Rawat shared her knowledge of Gen. Rawat's wife, Madhulika Rawat, as an affectionate and loving woman, Gen. Cardozo underscored the need to give due recognition to the mothers, wives and daughters of men in uniform, who swallow an immense pain after losing their men.

To Gen. Rawat, destiny was always a matter of choice. But an untoward helicopter crash in 2021 claimed his life, along with those of his wife and eleven other people. Everyone present at this session of **Kitaab** unanimously agreed that physical death can never bring an end to the memories and legacy

of this superhero in uniform. Anindita Chatterjee, the Executive Trustee of the Foundation, felicitated Geetika Lidder, who lost her husband, Brig. Lakhbinder Singh Lidder, to the fateful helicopter crash. The famed artist, Amit Srivastava, handed over an oil painting of Gen. Rawat to his daughter. Archana Dalmia, **Ehsaas** Woman of Delhi, concluded this unforgettable session with a formal vote of thanks.

*This session of **Kitaab Delhi** was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Penguin India and The United Service Institution of India, and with the support of **Ehsaas** Women of Delhi*

The Melodies of Holi



Anindita Chatterjee, Poonam Bafna, Sujata Sabnis, Neelam Seolekar and Amita Munot with Shubha Mudgal

The first instalment of **Sur Aur Saaz** in the city of Pune was bathed in colourful hues with the classical music powerhouse, Shubha Mudgal, gracing the event with an exquisite concert. Organised by **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** at the Royal Connaught Boat Club, Pocha Hall, the classical concert on the auspicious occasion of Holi touched a chord that reverberated with the sweetest melodies amongst the audience.

One of the most distinctive and unique initiatives of the Foundation, **Sur Aur Saaz** acts as a connecting bridge between performers and artists who have distinguished themselves in their respective fields, and cultural enthusiasts; connections which otherwise would have been rendered impossible. Mellifluous sojourns under this initiative have been prized occasions for people to celebrate music and the cultural heritage of India.

With Spring imbuing Nature with colours, the human mind, too, is drenched in these shades, celebrating the joyous festival of Holi to mirror the same. Mudgal's concert served to act as both a repository and a reflection of the feelings incited in

humans, acting as an outlet for emotions that rejoice with nature through classical music, encapsulating the themes of the festival of colours.

Known in the popular psyche for unparalleled versatility in classical music, Mudgal is the doyen of the Hindustani classical music genre. An expert in *khayal*, *thumri* and *dadra*, she began her career in the 1980s, initially making her mark as a Hindustani classical singer. She went on to experiment with several forms of music. Her uniqueness becomes evident from her answer to a dance examiner, long before she chose music as a career. It was revealed in an interview that on being asked which school of Kathak she belongs to, Mudgal is known to have replied, "*Hum apne gharane ki Kathak naachte hai*" ("I dance to my own style of Kathak"). This quality of distinctiveness left a mark on her musical career, becoming the reason why she remains so sought after, and why the audience was blessed to hear her perform a live concert.

Mudgal became a name to reckon with after training under the blessed tutelage of the finest musicians in the country. Eminent musician and scholar Ramashreya Jha was her first guru, and she went on to receive



Namrata Agarwal, President, Spectrum



Sunaina Garg

guidance from Pandit Vinay Chandra Maudgalya and Pandit Vasant Thakar. Mudgal imbibed the stylistic nuances and techniques from Jitendra Abhisheki, Naina Devi and Kumar Gandharva.

For her contributions to the music industry, Mudgal was honoured by the Indian government with the Padma Shri in 2000, as well as receiving the Gold Plaque Award for Special Achievement in Music at the 34th Chicago International Film Festival in 1998. With her husband, Dr Aneesh Pradhan, Mudgal is responsible for the creation of an online distribution platform for musicians specialising in diverse forms of Indian music. The Indian music institution stands enriched by her association with numerous projects dedicated to music education in India.

Detailing these achievements and Mudgal's immeasurable contributions to music and the music industry, Namrata Agarwal, President of the NGO, Spectrum, received and introduced the iconic singer to the audience with a formal welcome speech, followed by the Foundation's Honorary Convener for Rajasthan and Central India Affairs, Apra Kuchhal.

As Mudgal took the stage, performing one

captivating song after the other, the audience found substantiation to Agarwal's description of Mudgal as one "who lost herself to the meditative devotion to music and found the meaning of life". She began by saying that "musical performances are a matter of chance, turning out to be good at times and bad at others", and humbly requested her audience for "blessings and good wishes for a great performance". Mudgal's soothing and surreal renditions were perfectly complemented by her eminent musical team comprising Pradhan on the tabla, Sudhir Nayak on the harmonium, and Pooja Vazirani on the tanpura.

The evening took on the brightest hues, and the audience was left mesmerised by Mudgal's mellifluous classical renditions based on the theme of Holi. It became the perfect way to rejoice in the festive spirit and elevate the mood of the season and the festival. The evening was brought to a close with Mudgal's interaction with the esteemed audience, followed by a vote of thanks.

Sur Aur Saaz Pune was presented by Shree Cement Limited in association with Spectrum and with the support of Ehsaas Women of Pune

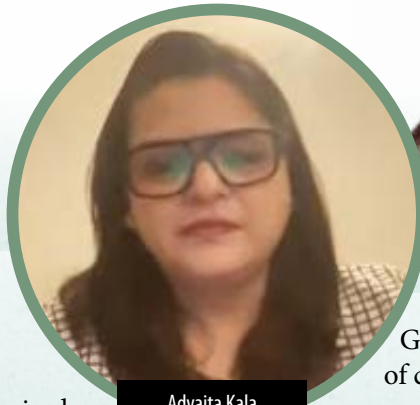


The audience at the event



Members of the NGO, Spectrum

Art is Primarily a Source of Joy



Advaita Kala



Deepika Singh Ahlawat

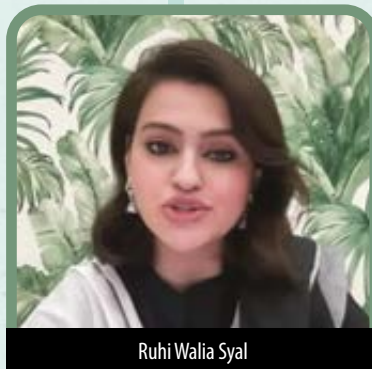
Art is all around us and holds up a mirror to life. To talk more about this, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised a virtual **Tete-a-Tea** session with Deepika Singh Ahlawat, a museum curator and art consultant who specialises in cultural history and the politics of historical narratives. She was in conversation with screenwriter Advaita Kala

After Ruhi Walia Syal, **Ehsaas** Woman of Jalandhar, delivered the formal welcome speech, Ahlawat and Kala dove into the topic of India's 'missing' art scene. Describing her role as an art consultant, Ahlawat explained, "My most interesting line of work is advising museums to move towards the future so that they do not carry the burden of imperial colonialism. We advise them to be more egalitarian in how their collections are formed and how their cultural narratives are formed."

Ahlawat explained why wealthy individuals or billionaires in India don't invest as much in art as their counterparts in other parts of the world, stating that there are various systemic reasons for this. One such reason is India's history. "The British ruled until 1947 and were not patrons of Indian art," she said. "Therefore, the patronage of art was primarily limited to the Indian aristocracy. Traditional Indian art flourished in two distinct parts of India. One was the part of India that was not directly ruled by the British, where traditions continued to be practised due to the support offered to Indian music, dance, and art forms. As a result, a history of patronage was established. However, in 1972, a clash occurred between the Indian ruling houses and the Indira

Gandhi-led government, leading to a period of cultural genocide."

The second cause, she said, was based on the social perception of art in India. "Everywhere else, art is seen as an elevating substance and something that adds cultural value to one's life," said Ahlawat. "In India, it is seen as a frivolous thing. Any art that was not part of state propaganda cannot be traded. "Most of the auction houses (in London) have Indian and Islamic art punched together and have Indian contemporary art evenings. But it is not as vigorous as the Chinese contemporary art scene."



Ruhi Walia Syal

From this, she went on to explain how the art scene can be brought back, how art is not ethnographic and how tradition can be both a nurturer and a shackle. Ahlawat also discussed secular and religious art and the repatriation of artefacts such as the Koh-i-Noor diamond and the treasures of Tipu Sultan that have been taken out of the country. She concluded the informative session by offering tips to those with a

limited budget who wish to purchase art. "Buy what you like," she said. "On a greater collecting stage, one can take advice from an art consultant or get guidance from an art gallery. But the entire experience of art is not meant to be monetized. Art is primarily a source of joy and that should be the primary reason for a person to buy a piece of art." The engaging session concluded with a vote of thanks by Syal.

This session of Tete-a-Tea was presented by Shree Cement Limited in association with Kahalli

Telling Stories With Fingers

The need to tell stories is intrinsic to human existence. Storytelling is an art that assumes different forms: oral, visual, tactile or written. Puppetry is a performative form of storytelling where inanimate objects, such as hand puppets, finger puppets, marionettes, string puppets, and various other types of puppets, are presented as living, performing entities. This is an art whose origin dates back several thousands of years, and India also boasts a long tradition of puppetry. Shreedevi Sunil, an established puppeteer and storyteller, has redefined this art and seeks to initiate today's youth to it. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation and Education For All Trust** organised a session of **Muskaan** with Sunil in Indian Museum, Kolkata.

Sunil, who came from Mumbai to share with children the joy puppetry brings her, said, "Puppetry is a wonderful way to engage, express, and entertain audiences. It was a pleasure to have had the opportunity to present this interactive session to the children from **Muskaan**."

This joint initiative, **Muskaan**, seeks to promote skill development among children through webinars, courses and workshops, and integrate into formal and informal education systems studies of the arts and cultures. It also assists and encourages underprivileged children by providing them with all the paraphernalia for education and nutritious food, among other things. As a part of this venture, it was heartening to see around 70 children from local NGOs gather in this session to learn about and enjoy Sunil's brilliant puppetry. She weaved a beautiful story through her fingers that the children thoroughly loved. She also helped children make their finger puppets with paper, leaving them beaming happily.

The Indian Museum is a landmark on the cultural



Shreedevi Sunil regales her young audience



Sayan Bhattacharya



Shreedevi Sunil



Anindita Chatterjee

map of the country. Arijit Dutta Choudhury, the Director of the Indian Museum, highlighted the significance of having a session like this in the museum. He expounded, "The Indian Museum is a cultural enterprise. It promotes the tangible and intangible heritages of

India, strengthening its artistic, cultural and historical importance. Indian puppetry is one of the primary forms of traditional entertainment. It was a pleasure collaborating with **Muskaan** for the marginalised children from various parts of the city to promote and preserve this traditional form of entertainment, and convey a message on moral values."

The children in attendance delighted in the interactive performance, and were thereafter, treated to a sumptuous lunch. Events like this live up to the promise of upholding various cultural artefacts of the nation before the younger generations.

*A joint initiative with **Education for All**, this session of **Muskaan** was presented by Shree Cement Ltd*



The enthusiastic participants



Aneesh Pradhan, Shubha Mudgal, Pooja Vazirani and Sudhir Nayak

‘सुर और साज’ में शुभा मुद्गल की स्वरलहरी का जादू, भाव-विभोर हुई सांस्कृतिक नगरी जोधपुर

मोहन, मधुसूदन, मुरलीधरन, मोरमुकुट धरण

यदुपाल, चीर हरैया, रासरचैया, रसानंद, रसपाल... राग मारु बिहाग में विलंबित रूपक की इन बंदिशों से शुरू हुई यह संध्या शास्त्रीय संगीत की गायिका विदुषी शुभा मुद्गल के नाम थीं। वे सांस्कृतिक समृद्धि की नगरी जोधपुर में प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से आयोजित ‘सुर और साज’ कार्यक्रम में उपस्थिति थीं। उनकी जादुई स्वरलहरी ने कार्यक्रम में उपस्थित संगीत रसिक श्रोताओं को भावविभोर कर दिया। आरंभ में स्वागत वक्तव्य अहसास वूमेन जोधपुर शैलजा सिंह ने दिया। इसके बाद आयोजकों की ओर से अहसास वूमेन जयपुर, राजस्थान और मध्य भारत की मानद संयोजक अपरा कुच्छल ने फाउंडेशन की गतिविधियों के साथ ही ‘सुर और साज’ की जानकारी दी। उन्होंने बताया कि कोलकाता में 1980 के दशक में प्रख्यात साहित्यकार, संस्कृति-कर्मी, सामाजिक कार्यकर्ता और नारीवादी डॉ प्रभा खेतान ने प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की स्थापना की।

कुच्छल ने बताया कि ‘कर्म ही जीवन है’ को आदर्श मानने वाली संस्थापक खेतान के आदर्श से प्रेरित होकर फाउंडेशन पिछले चार से

भी अधिक दशक से साहित्य, कला और संस्कृति के क्षेत्र में वैश्विक पटल पर सक्रिय है। उन्होंने साहित्य और भाषा के क्षेत्र में ‘एन ऑथर्स आफ्टरनून’, ‘द राइट सर्कल’, ‘द यूनिवर्स राइट्स’, ‘कलम’, ‘आखर’ और ‘लफ़्ज़’ जैसे कार्यक्रम और नृत्य, गीत, संगीत, प्रदर्शन कला और दास्तानगोई के क्षेत्र में ‘सुर और साज’, ‘टेटे-ए-टी’ और ‘चौपाल’ जैसे कार्यक्रमों का जिक्र किया। उन्होंने बताया कि ‘सुर और साज’ कार्यक्रम भारत की विविध प्रदर्शन कला, संगीत और संस्कृति को प्रदर्शित करने के इरादे से शुरू की गई है। यह कलाकार और कला के बीच एक जुगलबंदी की तरह है, जिसे दर्शकों और श्रोताओं के लिए शब्दों में पिरोकर बजाया जाता है। इस अवसर पर सुषमा नीरज सेठिया ने जोधपुर अहसास वूमेन की गतिविधियों की जानकारी दी।

शुभा मुद्गल ने अपनी जादुई आवाज से इस शाम को यादगार बना दिया। उन्होंने श्री कृष्ण स्तुति से शुरुआत की। तीन ताल में ‘मनमोहन छबीला मनभावन, चित ललचावन...’ के साथ कई भजन, तुमरी और चैती भी सुनाई, जिनमें ‘तोरे नैना मुरारी...’ जैसी बेहद लोकप्रिय प्रस्तुति शामिल थी। उन्होंने मैथिली में चैती भी सुनाई, जिसके बोल थे ‘राम जी के वन मां पठऊरे ओ रामा...कठिन तोरा जिअरा...’। एक से



Shelja Singh, Sudhir Nayak, Aneesh Pradhan, Shubha Mudgal, Maharaja Gaj Singh, Maharani Hemlata Rajye, Apra Kuchhal, Preeti Mehta and Sushma N Sethia

“

शुभा मुद्गल ने अपनी जादुई आवाज से इस शाम को यादगार बना दिया। उन्होंने श्री कृष्ण स्तुति से शुरुआत की। तीन ताल में 'मनमोहन छबीला मनभावन, चित ललचावन...' के साथ कई भजन, तुमरी और चैती भी सुनाई, जिनमें 'तोरे नैना मुरारी...' जैसी बेहद लोकप्रिय प्रस्तुति शामिल थी।

”

बढ़ कर एक इन प्रस्तुतियों के बीच कार्यक्रम की आखिरी प्रस्तुति राग पीलू में 'गजब ढा गये तोरे नैन मुरारी... मैं खो गई अपनी सुध बुध दिलो जां हारी...' थी।

मुद्गल के साथ जिन कलाकारों ने संगत की उनमें हारमोनियम पर सुधीर नायक, तबला पर डॉ अनीश प्रधान, तानपुरा पर पूजा

वजीरानी प्रमुख थे। साउंड इंजीनियर नीतिश जोशी थे। कार्यक्रम में मुख्य अतिथि के रूप में उपस्थित जोधपुर के पूर्व नरेश और पूर्व सांसद गज सिंह और हेमलता राज्ये ने मुद्गल सहित संगत करने वाले सभी कलाकारों का अभिनंदन किया। कार्यक्रम में राजेंद्र वैष्णव, श्रीपति मेहता, नरेश सुराणा जैसी राज्य और शहर की कई गणमान्य हस्तियां उपस्थित थीं। अहसास वूमेन जोधपुर प्रीति मेहता ने सभी का आभार जताया।



Sachin Kulkarni

अहसास वूमेन जोधपुर के सौजन्य से 'सुर और साज' कार्यक्रम श्री सीमेंट लिमिटेड की सीएसआर पहल के तहत हुआ। हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर ताज हरि महल जोधपुर का सहयोग मिला।

A Poetic Journey Into The Self



Soumitra Mitra, Dr Ashish Giri, Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay, Pranati Thakur, Pranab Chanda and Bratati Bandyopadhyay inaugurate the poetry festival with a floral ovation

Writing poetry is a journey of self-discovery. Artists communicate with the inner recesses of their minds through the act of creating verses. The meaning of poetry is always in motion; it assumes new shapes in different socio-cultural contexts over time. Our early initiation into literature happens through learning rhymes in childhood. We articulate different things we develop a relationship with – people, places, memories, sights, smells and seasons – through the language of poetry. The illustrious

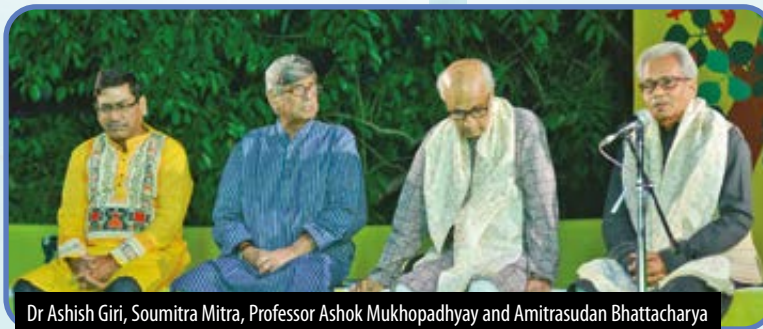
Bengali poet, Shakti Chattopadhyay, conceived the idea of *Kobita Utsav*, which started in 1983 as an initiative of Abrittilok. This Assam-Bengal poetry festival has beautifully preserved the verses of these spaces and reached its 40th year in 2023. As a collaborative enterprise of Sahitya Akademi, the Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and **Prabha**

Khaitan Foundation, Abrittilok celebrated the 40th *Kobita Utsav* as a three-day poetry festival held in Tagore's ancestral home, Jorasanko Thakur Bari, and Srijani Shilpagram, the EZCC's cultural village in Santiniketan.

This is also the centenary year of one of Sukumar Ray's most acclaimed creations, *Abol Tabol*. The 40th chapter of *Kobita Utsav*

was dedicated to this collection of children's poems which is an exemplar of nonsense literature in Bengali. The veteran litterateur, Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay, the renowned elocutionist and newsreader, Pranati Thakur, the eminent

elocutionist, Bratati Bandyopadhyay, the Director of the EZCC, Ashis Giri, the Secretary of West Bengal State Akademi of Dance, Drama and Music, Haimanti Chattopadhyay and Pranab Chandra inaugurated this three-day poetry festival at Jorasanko by offering a floral ovation in water. The Director of Purba Paschim and the Foundation's Advisor for Bengali Language,



Dr Ashish Giri, Soumitra Mitra, Professor Ashok Mukhopadhyay and Amitrasudan Bhattacharya

Theatre & Film Programmes, Soumitra Mitra, welcomed all to this session.

Bengalis have had a tryst with poetry for ages. Rabindranath Tagore, possibly the most influential Bengali poet of all time, brought home the Nobel Prize in literature as the first Asian. Both the national anthem and national song of India, *Jana Gana Mana* and *Vande Mataram*, were initially written as poetry in Bengali by Tagore and Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay. In his inaugural speech, Giri highlighted the bond Bengalis have forged with poetry. "Poetry and recitation are among the most noteworthy artefacts of Bengali culture. Bengalis have mastered the art of recitation and won it recognition at a national, and even international level. *Abol Tabol* does not just provide us with comic relief. It is a tale of human conscience, projected through the lens of humour."

Recitation is an autonomous art form as much as poetry is. Ever since the days of Akashbani or Doordarshan, recitation has been a part of our cultural history. Mukhopadhyay commented, "A recitation is an individual act, but good recitation is also contingent on the quality of poetry. Not all poems can be recited nicely, but there are beautiful exceptions. I was mesmerised by the distinguished theatre practitioner Shambhu Mitra's recitation of Tagore's '*Neelmoni Lata*'. The beauty of recitation lies in the prowess of an elocutionist. Today's elocutionists excel at voice modulations, mastering diction, and changing their expressions while moving from one paragraph to the next." He praised Mitra's commitment to celebrating poetry with flair.

Solo recitations by Prabal Kumar Basu, Saswati Guha, Aweek Majumder, Ramchandra Pal and the children's poet, Debabrata Dutta, brought alive the poetic notes of this session. Chorus performances by the children's groups Sabuj Pata, Kobitar Addaghar, Kala Nalanda, Bratati Parampara, and Prachi Kontho were a feast for the ears. The little members of Sabuj Pata recited excerpts they singled out from *Abol Tabol*. Kobitar Addaghar won the audience's hearts with its breathtaking performance of '*Mishti Mishti Icchera*'. Rwitobroto Mukherjee, a promising Bengali actor of recent times, left all speechless

with his recitation. This was accompanied by a magic show by a 12-year-old student, Shloka Bhattacharya. Pankaj Saha, an admired poet and a renowned name in the world of DD Bangla, recited his own poetry which offered the audience a glimpse of an artist's ability to blend two art forms, poetry-writing and recitation.

The second and third days of this poetry festival were held at Srijani Shilpagram in Santiniketan. Along with Amitrasudan Bhattacharya and Ashok Mukhopadhyay, Giri inaugurated the second evening by lighting the lamp. A festival of this spirit is meant to facilitate artistic and cultural exchanges among artists. To this end, a *Kobi Sammelan* was organised that brought together the guest poets from Bangladesh – Syed Al Farooq and Tarek Sujato – with the Indian poets Sebanti Ghosh, Chaitali Chattopadhyay, Arnab Saha, Bibhas Roychowdhury, Surya Mondal, Rajatsubhra Majumder and several others. Rabin Majumder delivered a remarkable solo recitation performance. The atmosphere this evening also exuded poetry.

The soil of Santiniketan is the bearer of Tagore's undying legacy. The concluding day of this poetry festival harmoniously complemented the cultural spirit of the land. Kajal Sur, Sumantra Sengupta, Basudeb Nandi and Soumitra Ghosh enchanted the audience with their performance. '*Rangamatir Kobita O Gaan*', a unique recital presentation by Swarnavo Roy, Bonhisikha Goswami, Sandip Ghosh and the *baul* artist, Dilip Birbanshi, will forever remain in the audience's heart. In the session moderated by Saiful Islam and Moumi Dutta, solo recitations by Soumitra Mitra, Debshankar Halder, Siddhartha Mukhopadhyay and Shovonsundar Basu were the highlights of the concluding day. The marvellous 40th chapter of *Kobita Utsav* concluded with '*Boshonter Gaan*', a melodious performance by the vocal artists Priyam Mukhopadhyay and Rwitapa Bhattacharya.

Abrittikok was a collaborative enterprise of Sahitya Akademi, the Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, and Prabha Khaitan Foundation



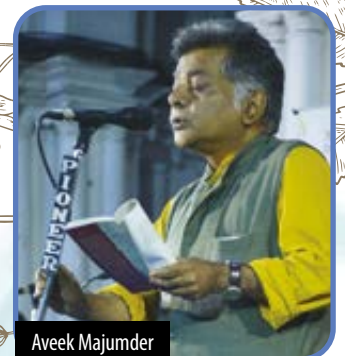
Malabika Mitra felicitates the poet, Tarek Sujato



Saswati Guha



Ramchandra Pal



Aweek Majumder



Vani Tripathi Tikoo

Exploring The Riches Of Young Minds

Children possess the magical ability to let their imagination fly them to an unknown world. Their nascent dreams of escapades seem unrealistic in an adult's world. Their minds are a creative powerhouse that adults often tend to slight. To celebrate young minds' innate powers of imagination and observation, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised a special session of **An Author's Afternoon** at Taj Bengal with the actor and teacher-turned-author, Vani Tripathi Tikoo, whose debut book, *Why can't Elephants be Red?*, is an adventurous journey into the mind of a two-and-a-half-year-old little girl, Akku. In an enriching conversation with the national award-winning director, Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury, Tikoo underpinned our limitations in fathoming young minds and their countless narratives.

Malika Varma, **Ehsaas** Woman of Kolkata, introduced the author and the moderator. Responding to the felicitous introduction and Chowdhury's praise, Tikoo commented, "Kolkata is a city I always love coming to because this is a space of storytellers." She also spoke about the formative aspect of her creative self while living in a family of academics: "I grew up amid books. *Katha vachan* became an integral part of my existence very early in life. Theatre was an extension of the relationship I forged with the arts, thanks to my parents."

Tikoo considers *The Little Prince* a gospel for all adults who want to step into the shoes of a child and explore the world through their eyes. She elaborated on adults' myopic obsession with rigid boundaries of success and failure, boxing the imaginative realities of children.



Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury

Parents and teachers dumb down talents by heaping their unfulfilled dreams on children and constructing a world that reeks of competition and is pivoted to unyielding notions of accomplishments. Unfortunately, children's identities are tied to their academic excellence. Chowdhury added that most parents tend to mould their children to resemble the exemplars of different fields, forcing on them a certain kind of sameness. Talking about stories like Jaishankar Prasad's *Madhua* or Premchand's *Igdah* that she revisits often, Tikoo pointed out how our preoccupation with the literature of the West takes us away from the indigenous tales that we inherit from our grandparents. From *Chander Pahar* to *Sonar Kella*, Bengal has an embarrassment of riches that we must preserve.



Malika Varma



Arindam Sil



Shoma A. Chatterji

Why can't Elephants be Red? offers readers a deep dive into the imaginative mind of Akku, who treats every new day as an adventure and sets loose her imagination to visualise red elephants, crabs with moustaches and unicorns without horns. Her book is a quest to anchor children to reality. The author spoke about the last play she enacted at the National School of Drama, *Laal Laal Hathi*, where children can see a red elephant, but adults cannot. What sowed the seeds of the book in her mind? “The book has a two-fold journey,” Tikoo explained. “One is *Laal Laal Hathi*, the other is very personal. My mother was ailing and bedridden during Covid, and I was with her in Delhi. My daughter, the protagonist of my book, was a two-year-old then, living away from me with her father and my in-laws in Singapore. Singapore shut down, and I could not visit her for the longest two years of my life. These twelve stories in my book are about people who put their lives on hold to care for my daughter. Writing

The book has a two-fold journey. One is *Laal Hathi*, the other is very personal. My mother was ailing and bedridden during Covid, and I was with her in Delhi. My daughter, the protagonist of my book, was a two-year-old then, living away from me with her father and my in-laws in Singapore. Singapore shut down, and I could not visit her for the longest two years of my life. These twelve stories in my book are about people who put their lives on hold to care for my daughter. Writing about this little girl who empowered me and freed me from the guilt of being away from her was therapeutic

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Digital content is preying on young minds, and more so in the wake of the pandemic that alienated children from each other and disrupted their ecosystem. The immersive realities are shoving kids into a vortex, causing identity formation to take a back seat. Tikoo considers lazy parenting to be at the root of this. While Chowdhury commented on the dearth of films about children because of the need to suit the imperatives of the entertainment industry, Tikoo mentioned that the time is ripe to tell stories for children through different art mediums because she believes “children save us from the perils of adulthood”. It is crucial to keep the streak of enquiry in a child’s mind burning bright. Furthermore, Tikoo added that we must not rob children of the simplicities of childhood. She read out a beautiful chapter from her book that is interestingly titled ‘I Love Art’. Varma delivered the vote of thanks and the senior film scholar and journalist, Shoma A. Chatterji, felicitated Tikoo and Chowdhury to conclude this fascinating trip through the alleys of imaginative young minds.

This session of An Author's Afternoon was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Taj Bengal Kolkata and The Telegraph Online—My Kolkata



Sariska: The Wild Beauty Of the Aravallis

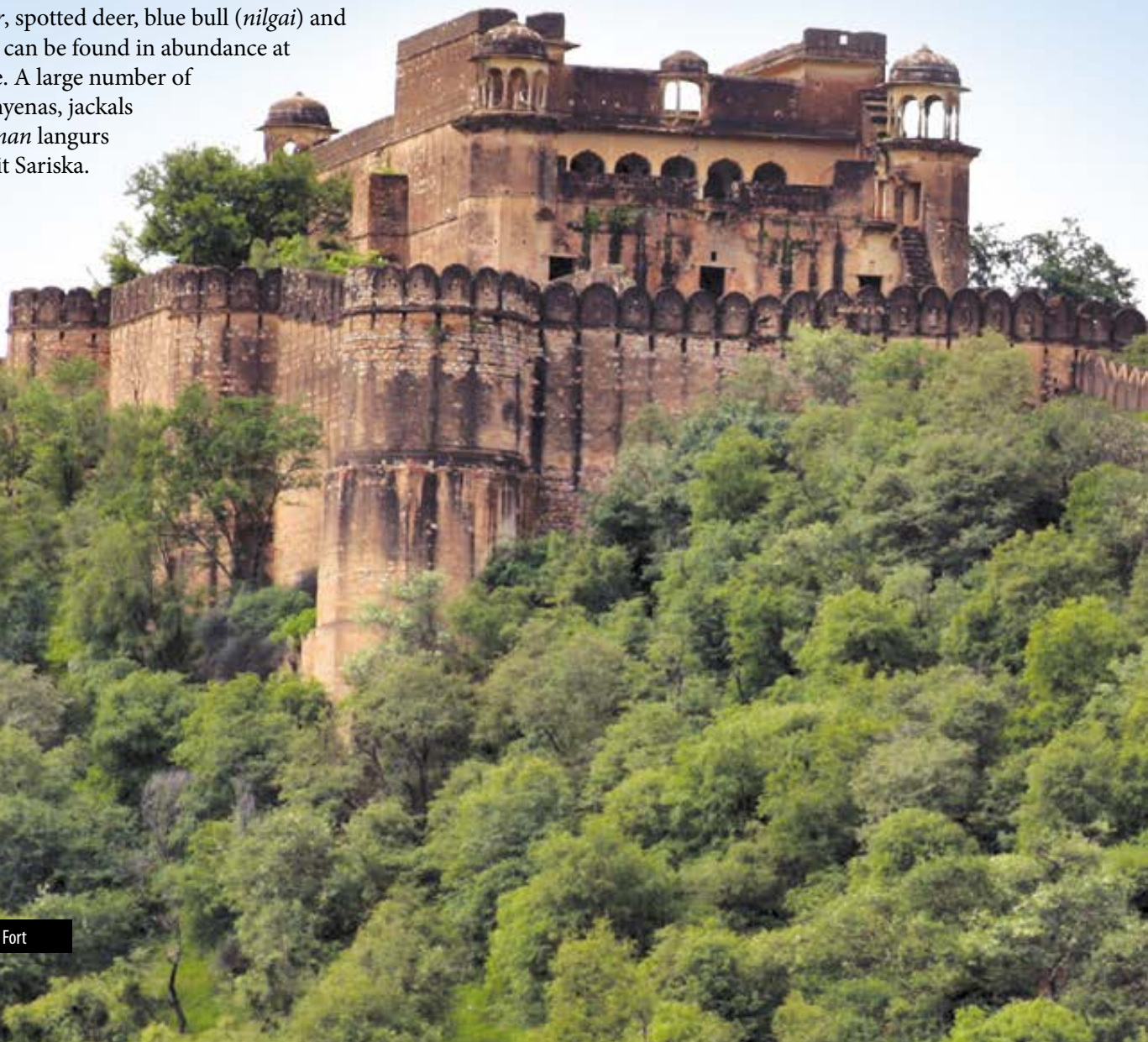


Daulat Singh Shaktawat

Sariska is one of the finest nature reserves in India. In 1978–79, Sariska came under Project Tiger. It covers the entire Aravalli range, which is one of the oldest hill ranges in the world, having a rich diversity of flora and fauna. The tiger is, of

course, the star attraction. But even animals like the *sambar*, spotted deer, blue bull (*nilgai*) and wild boars can be found in abundance at the reserve. A large number of leopards, hyenas, jackals and *hanuman* langurs also inhabit Sariska.

The forest of Sariska was managed as a hunting reserve during the reign of the Maharaja of Alwar. Shooting blocks were maintained for big game hunting. A separate department called 'Shikarkhana' and 'Shikar Pottam' would look after this to control and protect the area from poaching. Shooting was permitted till 1955, and after Independence, five areas were declared as game reserves



Kankwari Fort



A tiger in the Sariska Tiger Reserve, with a collar around its neck for tracking and monitoring (Wikimedia Commons)

population, poaching and poisoning of the big cat has led to major setbacks in Sariska's biodiversity. The biggest setback for Sariska was from 2004 to 2005, when the tiger had completely disappeared from the reserve. The complete loss of the tiger genome in the Aravallis can never be fully recovered.

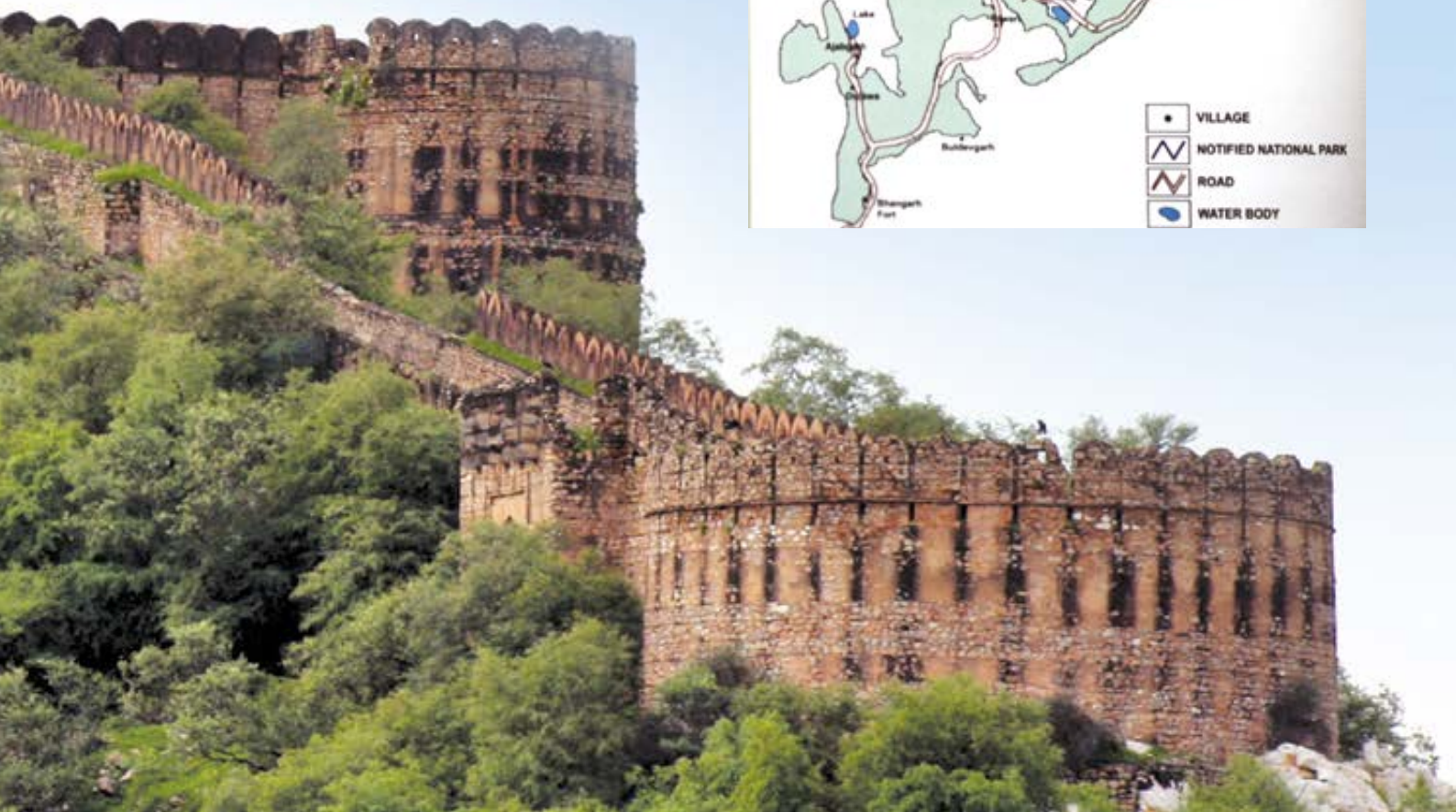
by the State Government in Rajasthan. Sariska was one of these areas.

Sariska enjoys a good connectivity *via* road and railways with Delhi and Jaipur. The nearest airport to it is in Jaipur, and it is hardly three hours away from Delhi. Sariska represents a tiger habitat which is spread purely over the world's oldest mountain range in the Aravallis.

The reserve had a good tiger population and excellent forests with an abundant population of specific animal species. It houses more than 200 bird species and has over 404 plant species.

However, over the years, the increasing pressure of

A map of the Sariska region





The Slopka water hole

The governments have taken strong and ambitious steps to restock the forest of Sariska with tigers of a similar genome, and it was the first time in wildlife conservation history when tigers were transported from one wild habitat to another, without the help of any foreign experts.

Spillover tigers from similar habitats like Ranthambore have been translocated to Sariska, where the first transfer took place on June 28, 2008. Since then, 10 tigers have been translocated to Sariska from Ranthambore, with the last transfer being as recent as October 16, 2022. Today, Sariska has 25 tigers, out of which eight are male, 13 are female and four are sub-adults.

The southern part of the Sariska forests are rich in their archeological and cultural heritage. The Kankwari Fort is an important archeological landmark in Sariska. The medieval fort is situated in the heart of the reserve and is believed to have been built by Aurangzeb in the 17th century. It is where his brother, Dara Shikoh, was imprisoned for several years.

The Garh Rajore Valley has a special status from the archeological point of view as well. There are ruins of the Shaivite and Jain temples which are a thousand years old. The Jain temple has an 18-foot-tall statue of Mahavira, and this complex seemed to be a deserted township.

Bhangarh-Ajabgarh is also known as a city of ghosts which has a popular story behind it. Bhangarh is a treasure trove of great archeological value, especially the ruined fort and a market buried under the soil.

Combining all of these factors makes Sariska a great place for tourism. With its rich flora and fauna, good sightings of tigers and other wild animals and the archeological and cultural heritage located inside and outside the Sariska Tiger Reserve, the place makes for a good visit.



A group of Sambar deer with velvet antlers

The Inner Landscapes of Children's Minds

Actor, author, teacher, celebrity and political campaigner – Vani Tripathi Tikoo has many feathers in her cap. To celebrate the multi-faceted personality and her book, *Why can't Elephants be Red?*, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** hosted her for a special session of **The Write Circle** at the Mayfair Hotels & Resorts, Bhubaneswar. Vedula Ramalakshmi, **Ehsaas** Woman of Bhubaneswar, gave the welcome speech, and Nidhi Garg, **Ehsaas** Woman of Bhubaneswar, moderated the session.

Tikoo took a trip down memory lane to her childhood while also talking about her thoughts and actions about her daughter, Akshara or Akku. "It's fascinating to me that a large body of my work has been on children for many years at the National School of Drama," Tikoo said. "As the daughter of two academics who taught at Delhi University, I was privileged to have parents who considered me a person and not a child. Most parents either talk down to children or bark at them. They forget that children are little people with extremely intelligent minds where their sense of imagination is amazing." Her words emphasised the importance of parents recognising the presence of a child at home, the way her parents did.

Tikoo was always surrounded by literature and would brag to her father about how she read all the books he gave her. But her father also took her down a peg or two by saying that she may have been reading the books he had given her, but what about the books that she had not explored yet? This was where her relationship with libraries started. "There is a lot of exploration left," said Tikoo. "I am now in the process of enquiring about the world through my little girl's eyes. Children are an important and intrinsic part of my consciousness. I keep connecting to children because they are *gurus* who save us from the perils of adulthood."

Coming back to her book, Tikoo explained how the



Nidhi Garg



Vani Tripathi Tikoo



Vedula Ramalakshmi

title breaks barriers from a creative and realistic approach. The book was inspired by the last play she had done at the National School of Drama, called *Laal Laal Haathi*. It told a story of a boy who was average in academics but good in art. In his art class, he had once drawn a red elephant that did not satisfy his teacher. But the boy stiffly responded by saying, "Your elephant is black, but I don't have any problem with that. My elephant is red, but why do you have a problem with it?"

Tikoo then spoke about how everyone puts everything in neat boxes, and how we must find ways of unboxing things instead. She went on to speak about the education system, the double standards of parenting and how *The Little Prince* and *Totto-Chan: The Little Girl at the Window* are mandatory reading for all.

The session wrapped up with some reviews about Tikoo's book and her experience of representing India at the Cannes Film Festival. A Q&A session followed, after which Ramalakshmi delivered the vote of thanks on behalf of the Foundation. Tikoo was felicitated by Dr Gyan Rajan

Sahoo of the National Institute of Open Schooling.

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This session of The Write Circle Bhubaneswar was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Mayfair Hotels & Resorts, and with the support of Ehsaas Woman of Bhubaneswar

किताब भोपाल में मुख्यमंत्री चौहान ने वयोवृद्ध पत्रकार प्रेम प्रकाश की पुस्तक 'रिपोर्टिंग इंडिया' का किया विमोचन



Kanika Hazrat, Suchitra Sajid Dhanani, Shibu, Apra Kuchhal, Unnati Singh and Surbhi Dhupar with Prem Prakash and Shivraj Singh Chouhan

स्वयं के निर्माण के लिए कैसे कोई व्यक्ति अपनी जिद, जुनून, निष्ठा और जज्बे से सफलता के शिखर तक पहुंचता है, इसका उत्तम उदाहरण प्रेम प्रकाश का जीवन है।" मध्य प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री शिवराज सिंह चौहान ने यह बात प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन द्वारा भोपाल में पहली बार आयोजित 'किताब' कार्यक्रम में वरिष्ठ पत्रकार प्रेम प्रकाश की पुस्तक 'रिपोर्टिंग इंडिया: पत्रकारिता की मेरी 70 वर्षों की अनवरत यात्रा' के विमोचन और संवाद समारोह में बतौर मुख्य अतिथि कही। 'किताब' भोपाल में स्वागत वक्तव्य फाउंडेशन की मध्य भारत और राजस्थान मामलों की मानद समन्वयक और अहसास वूमन जयपुर अपरा कुच्छल ने दिया। उन्होंने फाउंडेशन का संक्षिप्त परिचय दिया और बताया कि अपनी संस्थापक डॉ प्रभा खेतान के सुनहरे दर्शन 'कर्म ही जीवन है' से प्रेरित होकर फाउंडेशन ने पिछले चार दशकों में साहित्य, कला और संस्कृति के क्षेत्र में सर्वश्रेष्ठ कार्यक्रमों को संचालित करने की शानदार यात्रा की है, और वैश्विक मानचित्र पर अपनी अद्वितीय छाप छोड़ी है।

उन्होंने पुस्तक विमोचन, लेखक से मुलाकात, धरोहर, संस्कृति और दास्तानगोई के संरक्षण से जुड़े कार्यक्रमों की चर्चा की। हथकरघा निर्मित ब्लॉक प्रिंट के दुपट्टे से मंचीय अतिथियों के अभिनंदन के बीच उन्होंने बताया कि यह फाउंडेशन के 'सपोर्ट' मुहिम का हिस्सा है, जिसमें हम पारंपरिक हथकरघा और हस्तकला के स्थानीय कारीगरों को बढ़ावा देते हैं। कुच्छल ने मंच पर उपस्थित मुख्य मंत्री चौहान, अहसास वूमन इंदौर सुचित्रा साजिद धनानी, सुरभि धुपर, उन्नति सिंह, कनिका हसरत और वयोवृद्ध पत्रकार, एएनआई के संस्थापक-अध्यक्ष, लेखक प्रेम प्रकाश को 'रिपोर्टिंग इंडिया: पत्रकारिता की मेरी 70 वर्षों की अनवरत यात्रा' के विमोचन के लिए आमंत्रित किया।

इस अवसर पर मुख्यमंत्री चौहान ने लेखक प्रेम प्रकाश की तारीफ करते हुए कहा कि आपका जीवन युवा पत्रकारों के लिए प्रेरक है। आपने अपनी कर्मठता, निष्ठा और लगन से पत्रकारिता के क्षेत्र में एक नया प्रकाश पैदा किया है। आपने संघर्ष करते हुए निरंतर 70 वर्ष अतुलनीय कार्य किया है। वर्ष 1957 में एक कैमरामैन से आपने अपना

सफर शुरू किया था। कैमरामैन से निरंतर हमारा संपर्क और संवाद रहता है। वे कैसे संघर्ष करते हैं? किस कोण से कैसे चित्र सही आएँ, उसके लिए कितनी जद्दोजेहद करनी पड़ती है, उसके साक्षी हममें से अधिकतर लोग हैं। वहां से शुरू करके भारत के प्रथम प्रधानमंत्री पंडित जवाहरलाल नेहरू जी से लेकर वर्तमान प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी तक के साक्षात्कार तक का आपका सफर एक अद्भुत सफर रहा है। आपने पत्रकारिता के क्षेत्र में निरंतर उत्कृष्ट कार्य किया है। आपने 1971 में भारत की प्रथम टीवी समाचार एजेंसी एएनआई की स्थापना की, 'एशियन न्यूज इंटरनेशनल'। आज विश्व के अनेक देशों में यह न्यूज एजेंसी कार्यरत है। मैं प्रेम प्रकाश जी का अभिनंदन करता हूँ। वे बधाई के पात्र हैं।

मुख्यमंत्री चौहान ने कहा कि हालांकि मैंने यह पुस्तक अभी तक पूरी पढ़ी नहीं है, लेकिन इसे देखकर लगता है कि मुझे इसे पूरी पढ़नी चाहिए। यह बहुत इंटरस्टिंग होगी। जब वे पंडित जवाहरलाल नेहरू जी से शुरू करते हैं, तो उत्सुकता जगती है। हमने पंडित जी का उत्कर्ष, उनका जादू नहीं देखा। इन्होंने नेहरू जी के उस जादू को घटते हुए देखा। फिर लाल बहादुर शास्त्री ने उस शून्य को भरा। फिर इंदिरा जी के लिए कठिन दिनों की शुरुआत, फिर बांग्लादेश, और फिर लोकतंत्र का सबसे अंधकारपूर्ण समय, उसका भी उन्होंने उल्लेख इसमें किया है। जनता पार्टी के सत्ता संभालने से लेकर, इंदिरा जी की वापसी, राजीव जी का राजनीति में प्रवेश, फिर वीपी सिंह का आगमन, फिर नरसिम्हा राव पर भारी दायित्व आ पड़ा, अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी का आरोहण, फिर मनमोहन सिंह और नरेन्द्र मोदी जी तक की सारी घटना इसमें वर्णित की है। इसके बाद जो उन्होंने लिखा है, जो मुझे भी प्रेरणा देता है कि मेरा जीवन स्वयं को निर्मित करने वाला था। यह पुस्तक निश्चय ही प्रेरणा देगी।

कुच्छल ने चर्चा-सत्र के लिए मंच पर विमोचित पुस्तक के लेखक प्रेम प्रकाश, मुख्यमंत्री चौहान की उपस्थिति में लेखक-पत्रकार रशीद किदवई को आमंत्रित किया। किदवई ने कहा कि इस पुस्तक की विशेषता यह है कि प्रेम जी ने इसे साक्षी भाव से लिखा है। उन्होंने अपने समय के इतिहास के साथ-साथ उसकी कहानी भी लिखी



The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shivraj Singh Chouhan

है। कुच्छल ने पंडित नेहरू के बारे में जानना चाहा, तो प्रेम जी ने बताया कि हम बड़े खुशकिस्मत हैं कि हमारे तमाम प्रधानमंत्री बेहद ईमानदार, मेहनती और कुशल थे। मैं पंडित जी के बहुत करीबी था। मेरा करियर वहीं से शुरू हुआ। जब मैं उनके पास पहली बार पहुंचा, उन्होंने मुझे देख कर अपने स्टाफ से कहा, इसका खयाल रखना। जिस पर मुख्यमंत्री चौहान ने कहा कि आज मैं भी इंटरव्यू ले लेता हूँ। मेरा भी सवाल है। मैंने पंडित नेहरू जी को नहीं देखा, लेकिन अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी जी को देखा है। वे बेहद जिंदादिल इनसान थे। मानवीयता से भरपूर। मैंने हमेशा उन्हें मुस्कुराते हुए देखा है। मैं जब सांसद बना तो विदिशा से जीता। विदिशा सीट उन्होंने खाली की थी। मैं जब भी उनके पास जाता, वह कहते 'आओ विदिशापति'। आपने भी अटल जी को बहुत नजदीक से देखा, उनके साथ बहुत पल गुजारे होंगे। तो आप अपने स्मृति पटल पर अंकित अटल जी के साथ गुजारे समय को हमारे साथ साझा करें। प्रेम प्रकाश का उत्तर था, "आज की दुनिया में बड़ी बातचीत हो रही है एशियन पैसिफिक की। बाली में अटल जी ऊपर एक पहाड़ी से जहां से ये दोनों समुद्र मिलते हैं, उसे देख रहे थे। उन्होंने मेरा नाम लेकर पुकारा और मुझसे कहा, प्रेम प्रकाश देखो सामने। यह हमारा समुद्र है, और वह पैसिफिक, दोनों मिल रहे हैं। वे उस समय भी सोच रहे थे कि एक दिन इकट्ठा होना होगा। वे कितने दूरद्रष्टा थे।"

किदवई ने कहा, प्रेम प्रकाश जी आप कई प्रधानमंत्रियों के साथ जाते रहे हैं। ताशकंद में भी आप थे। रक्षा मामलों में अमूमन अमेरिका का प्रेशर माना जाता है। पर आपने किताब में रशियन प्रेशर की बात लिखी है। शास्त्री जी की मृत्यु को लेकर बड़ा संदेह और विवाद है। आप क्या इस पर प्रकाश डालेंगे? प्रेम प्रकाश ने कहा कि मुझे याद है रूसी नेतृत्व ने सरदार स्वर्ण सिंह से कहा, 'स्वर्ण, यू मस्ट गेट हिम टू साइना।' यह प्रकरण मैं भूला नहीं हूँ। स्वर्ण सिंह बहुत होशियार नेगोशिएटर थे। उनका जवाब था, 'योर एक्सीलेंसी, ही इज अ लीडर। आई विल ओनली कनवे योर मैसेज।' रशियन चाहते थे कि किसी भी तरह पाकिस्तान को अमेरिकी चंगुल से निकालकर अपनी ओर ले आएँ। इसके लिए वे हमें सैक्रिफाइस करने को तैयार थे। मुझे कुछ और भी शक है। मैंने जिक्र किया है कि उस समय जो हमारे राजदूत थे वे वाकई हमारे साथ थे या रूसियों के लिए काम कर रहे थे। हमारे मुल्क में जयचंद और मीरजाफरों की कमी कभी नहीं रही। हर हाल में शास्त्री जी पर दबाव बहुत था, और शायद इसी ने उनकी जान ली।

कुच्छल ने पूछा कि आप हर राजनेता के करीब थे, चाहे वह किसी भी दल के हों? आपने उन्हें मैनेज कैसे किया? प्रेम प्रकाश का उत्तर था, "पॉलिटिशियन भी मेरी ही तरह आदमी हैं। हम सारे ह्यूमन बीइंग हैं। बीइंग ए जर्नलिस्ट हम एक-दूसरे से मिलते हैं, एक-दूसरे के दोस्त हो सकते हैं।" किदवई ने कहा, प्रेम जी आपने पॉलिटिशियन से दोस्ती की बात कही, पर दोस्ती हमेशा आपके काम नहीं आई, पर हां आपके सूत्रों ने जरूर आपको दो बार बचाया। आपने इंदिराजी के समय आपातकाल का जिक्र किया है। यशपाल कपूर वहां थे। उन घटनाओं के बारे में कुछ बताएं? प्रेम प्रकाश ने कहा कि इमर्जेंसी बड़ा ही गंदा वक्त था। बहुत कुछ देखा मैंने, शर्मनाक चीजें भी देखीं। उन्होंने फैमिली प्लानिंग के चक्कर में लाइन में खड़ी ढेरों गरीब औरतों से लेकर अपने ऊपर इनकम टैक्स के छापे तक का जिक्र किया।



Rasheed Kidwai and Prem Prakash

उन्होंने बताया कि उस जमाने में भी ऐसे लोग थे, जिनकी सिम्पैथी हमारे साथ थी। तब हम ऐसी कॉलोनी में रहते थे, जिसमें सभी पत्रकार थे। एक दिन इनकम टैक्स डिपार्टमेंट में मेरा एक दोस्त था, उसका फोन आया, भाई हम लोग आ रहे हैं। मैंने कहा-भाभी को भी लेते आओ। उसने कहा, अरे भाई, हम लोग आ रहे हैं, समझो। मैंने कहा समझ गया। उसके बाद उन दिनों मैं कॉलोनी का अध्यक्ष था। मैंने सारे जर्नलिस्ट को बुलाया। कहा देखो भाई किसी के पास पैसा नहीं मिलना चाहिए। अगर है तो निकाल दो। पकड़े नहीं जाना। उनके जाने के बाद मैंने अपना घर देखना शुरू किया। तो शौक है मेरे कुछ। जो भी दराज खोलूं, सबमें एक बोटल। जब पाकिस्तान आर्मी ने सरेंडर किया था बांग्लादेश में, तो एक पिस्तौल और एक दूरबीन फौज ने गिफ्ट किया था, जिसका कागज नहीं मिला उस समय। तो मैंने ये सब चीजें एक साहब को बुलाकर दे दिया और कहा कि इसे संभाल लेना, बाद में मैं ले लूंगा। जब बाद में लेने का बखत आया तो बोले कि बोटलें तो मैंने फ्रेश में बहा दीं। ये हालत हुई इमरजेंसी में।

कार्यक्रम में कुछ सवाल मुख्यमंत्री चौहान से भी हुए। किदवई ने पूछा, आप इतने सालों से मुख्यमंत्री हैं। ऐसा कोई काम जो आपने करना चाहा, और नहीं कर पाया? चौहान ने कहा कि ऐसा कोई काम नहीं है, जो मैं करना चाहता था और नहीं कर पाया। उन्होंने बताया कि मुख्यमंत्री बनने से पहले मैं राजनीतिक जीवन में किसी प्रशासनिक पद पर नहीं रहा। जब मैं पहली बार मुख्यमंत्री बना तो लोगों ने सोचा कि मैं कुछ ही दिन चलूंगा। मैं अभी तक चल रहा हूँ। उन्होंने मध्यप्रदेश की विकास दर, प्रति व्यक्ति आय, प्रदेश के सबसे बड़े गेहूँ निर्यातक राज्य, कृषि विकास दर में वृद्धि का उल्लेख किया और कहा कि हर पैरामीटर पर मध्यप्रदेश ने अच्छा कार्य किया है। लाइली लक्ष्मी योजना, विशेष पिछड़ी जनजाति बैगा, सहारिया और भारिया के परिवारों के पोषण स्तर में सुधार, नई लाइली बहना योजना, महिलाओं के सशक्तीकरण आदि के लिए हरसंभव प्रयास हुए हैं। अन्य राज्यों द्वारा भी इन उपलब्धियों को इतिहास रचने की संज्ञा दी गई है।

एक सवाल के उत्तर में प्रेम प्रकाश ने कहा कि मैंने कहीं पढ़ा था कि अगर आजादी के बाद पाकिस्तान से कबायली हमला नहीं होता, तो भारत में फौज ही नहीं होती। देश जब आजाद हुआ तो पहला कमांडर-इन-चीफ अंग्रेज था। वह पंडित जी के पास गया एक कागज लेकर कि नया आजाद मुल्क है, मुझे एक मिलिटरी पॉलिसी चाहिए, ये ड्राफ्ट है, देख लीजिए। कहते हैं पंडित जी ने उसे फाड़ दिया। कहा, हम अहिंसा का पालन करने वाले देश हैं। शायद फौज की कोई जरूरत नहीं पड़ेगी। वह ब्रिटिश कमांडर चला आया। उसी के कुछ दिन बाद कबायली हमला हुआ। प्रेम प्रकाश जी ने अफगानिस्तान से जुड़े अपने अनुभव शेयर किए और पूरे चर्चा सत्र में मुख्यमंत्री चौहान, किदवई और कुच्छल की हर जिज्ञासा और विचार को सुना और उनका उत्तर दिया।

इस मौके पर मध्य प्रदेश के लोक निर्माण मंत्री गोपाल भार्गव, सहकारिता मंत्री अरविंद भदौरिया, कृषि मंत्री कमल पटेल, सांसद विष्णुदत्त शर्मा, हितानंद शर्मा, विधायक पीसी शर्मा सहित जन-प्रतिनिधि और मीडिया संस्थानों के प्रतिनिधि उपस्थित थे। अंत में मुख्यमंत्री चौहान ने भी प्रेम प्रकाश जी का शॉल ओढ़ाकर अभिनंदन किया।

अहसास वूमन इंदौर के सौजन्य से आयोजित किताब भोपाल के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE



The next issue of *Prabha* will chronicle the *Ramayan Kala Utsav* — a boutique festival that celebrated the diverse characters of the *Ramayana* and Ramayug, along with the art, culture and ideals of the great epic

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