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Dance Prowess Misses Out On Leela

PERFORMANCE

Samagama Leela by Geeta Chandran

COLLABORATION: *Natya Vriksha*

29 June 2019

With proven credentials in every aspect of Bharatanatyam, Geeta Chandran's *Samagama Leela*, conceptualised with Sudhamahi Regunathan, can be questioned, not for performance accomplishment, but in the approach to the concept of *leela* (play), which Brindavan's Srivatsa Goswami, while introducing the dancer, mentioned as defining what is beyond categorisation. One would imagine that in 'an autobiographical dance journey into the ocean of Bhakti', the real *leela* would spring from a live exchange between singer and dancer, with the yearning for the Divine soaring to impassioned heights (which Gita's dance has done on previous occasions), and with the dancer's performance revelling in on-the-spot elaborations spun around each musical statement. A programme, framed



Geeta Chandran performing *Samagama Leela*

in neatly itemised sequences to recorded music, lost out on improvised play on poetry.

Bharatanatyam's inevitable Shiva Nataraja iconography, in the hymn *Kripa Samudra* (*Mayamala wago wla ragam*), defining Shiva as an ocean of mercy, with all-pervading Shivahood in Adi Shankara's *Shiva Panchaksara Stotram*, had direct word-



Geeta Chandran

gesture *shabdārtha* treatment. Narrative expansion, with *teermanam* punctuations in *Govinda Vandana* (ragamalika music) portrayed Krishna in various roles in his Vishwaroopa: as Kamsa destroyer (Arabhi), as Gokul's Venudhara (in Varali), and as the eternal charmer, *Gopi jana manohara*, and finally as *Jagatguru (Madhyamawati)*.

Bhakti, in its political and subversive aspect, gradually sensed by an evolving dancer was shown through Kabir's abstract verses, set to music in raga *Ghamanashramam*, with evocative *taanam* bits in the music. 'Divinity resides within, not outside,' said the poet. Like sounds heard from an empty pot held close to the ears, delve inwards into this pot-like body to discover its richness, and sense sounds of *dashavidha anahata nada* of Divinity within.

Vatsalya Rasa, or motherly love in dance, has for years been shown through Vyasarayya's legendary lyric in *Yamuna Kalyani*, *Krishna Nee Begane Baro*. But cannot that urgent call be the love call of the nayika? After an edited *vatsalya* portrayal, Geeta's interpretation took on sringar hues.

A Sankeertan singer herself, the Bhajan *Vanamali Vasudeva Jagan Mohana Radha Ramana* made for the right devotional conclusion.

■ LEELA VENKATARAMAN

Rich and Extravagant

EXHIBITION

The Colonial Art of Peru—Paintings of the Cuzco School

COLLABORATION: Embassy of Peru

12 to 18 June 2019

Peruvian sculpture and painting had defined themselves from the ateliers founded by monks, who were strongly influenced by the Sevillian Baroque School till the Spanish conquest in 1532. With the arrival of the Spanish, the introduction of European art through the Cuzco School began, the first artistic centre that taught European artistic techniques to the Americas. Diego Quispe Tito (1611–1681) and Marcos Zapata (1710–1773), respectively, were among the first and last artists of the Cuzco School.

Roman Catholic in its artistic traditions, the Cuzco School of art is characterised by religious subjects, collapsed perspective, and predominance of red, yellow and earth

colours. In addition, it is also lavish in its use of gold leaf, particularly in portrayals of the Virgin Mary. Comprised of a group of European and indigenous painters, active in Cuzco between the 16th and 18th centuries throughout the Viceroyalty of Peru, the paintings reflected a synthesis of European and indigenous influ-



Peruvian paintings

ences, combining several major European styles. We saw exaggerated ideals of beauty and elegance, irrational settings, elaborate clothes and compositions, and aloof subjects who rarely make eye contact at all. Visually rich and extravagant, this is art in an imitation of art, not an imitation of nature.

■ ARUNA BHOWMICK

Art of Fine Print-making

EXHIBITION

Joel Rendon—Mexican Master Engraver

COLLABORATION: Embassy of Mexico

26 June to 2 July 2019

Mexico has the oldest print-making tradition in Latin America. During the 20th century, Mexico was one of the first countries of the world to establish a framework to link art to finely-tuned political messages. Prints documented the plight of the oppressed, and commemorated the achievements of social reform. A spate of prints during World War II addressed the tyranny of fascism as against the virtues

of socialist ideology. Along with politically leaning artworks, other artists made prints reflecting Mexican heritage, customs and daily life.



Mexican Prints

Considered one of the most outstanding engravers in Mexico, Joel Rendon has devoted his life to promote and revalue the art of engraving in Mexico and abroad through audio-visual, graphic design, mural and television. His work combines the long-standing tradition of relief print, contemporary techniques and motives linked to Mexican cultural heritage.

The prints displayed included subjects like the *Skull in Mexican Art*; *Serpents in Pre-Hispanic Art*; goddess *Mayahuel*; *Ingredients of Mexico in Colour*; *Dance of the Elders*; and *The Earthquake of 1917*. Mediums included linoleum relief, linoleum glass printed on gravure, lithographs in aluminium foil, among others.

■ ARUNA BHOWMICK



Mexican Prints

A Medley of Carnatic Compositions

IIC SUMMER FESTIVAL OF CARNATIC MUSIC

Carnatic Vocal Recital by Uma Money

14 June 2019

While introducing her concert, Uma Money promised a medley of varied compositions. True to her promise, she delivered an interesting selection of compositions.

The concert began with Tanjavur Shankara Iyer's varnam in *hindolam*. She then rendered the popular Tyagaraja composition in Sriranjani, *Brochevarevare*. This was followed by that quintessentially Carnatic raga *Begada*. Uma established the raga instantly with some characteristic *Begada* phrases in the raga *Alapana*. She sang a beautiful composition by Patnam Subramania Iyer at a brisk tempo. The centrepiece of the concert was a leisurely delineation of the raga *Purvikalyani*, followed by the majestic Dikshitar kriti *Ekambra Natham Bhajeham*. The composition was embellished with some interesting patterns in the *neraval* and *kalpana swaras*.



Carnatic Vocalist Uma Money

The concert ended with two distinct pieces: a *javali* in *Kapi* by Dharmapuri Subbarayar, and the evergreen Lalgudi Jayaraman *tillana* in *Desh*. The lilting *Kapi* contrasted well with the energetic yet melodious *tillana*.

Uma displayed an interesting range of ideas in her *alapanas*, even though her voice lacks a certain strength and sharpness. She was backed well by some sensitive support from Shankar Raman on the mridangam, but she could have done well with equal support from her violinist, Raghavendra Prasad. The concert brought the summer music festival at IIC to a befitting end.

■ RAHUL RAJAGOPALAN

Global Music

PERFORMANCE

Musica Medicina

22 June 2019

Upon my perfunctory gaze sweeping the stage, I saw a few scattered musical instruments, definitely not instruments to evoke awe. I sat down, wondering what kind of evening lay ahead.

Vishesh introduced us briefly to the various instruments (among them the Chinese *erhu*, Turkish *yayli*, *tambur*, Persian *setar*, *Seni Rabab*). The most complicated was one with three strings. He had tweaked some of them, and even constructed a drum that had an amazing depth of sound that belied its humble origins. Vishesh was brilliant. He went on to produce the most incredible sounds from his throat, which were enhanced by the instruments. The music was primeval and familiar. The senses resounded with knowledge, as if the music was part of my DNA. I could feel my ancestors in the music, and the soul felt exhilarated!

I closed my eyes to enhance my senses while we embarked on a journey to the various parts of the world,



Musica Medicina

with one animal at a time, now in the savannahs, now in the Amazon.

Snigdha's voice lent beauty to the music, conjuring up images of the wind blowing through the trees. No adornments, pure, unadulterated, exquisite.

Jayant's percussion was in complete synch with the rest of the entourage as he employed the various instruments (*darbuka*, *drumset*, *khamok*, mouth harp and wind instruments). Not earth shattering, but perfect! Every sound was used with economy. There were no excesses and no ornamentation.

As the performance came to an end, I felt that I had had a perfect evening.

■ POONAM SAHI

Musical Journey

PERFORMANCE

A Concert in Tribute to R. P. Jain

COLLABORATION: Delhi Music Society; Sardana Creative Consultancy Pvt. Ltd.; and National Centre for the Performing Arts

20 June 2019

From the opening *Rondo alla Turca* from Mozart's *Sonata K 311*, we were off on a rousing musical journey!

Flute and violin mostly took the primary roles. One of the standout performances was flautist Aigerim Beisembekova playing in the *Menuet* and *Badinerie* from Bach's *Orchestral Suite No. 2*, which was actually written for a flute soloist. The violin took the place of the oboe, and young Prayas Biswakarma from Kalimpong played his part with relish, sounding very sweet in *Gabriel's Oboe* from the *Mission* (Ennio Morricone), and appropriately baroque in a Vivaldi *Allegro*. Ruslan Galilov on the clarinet had a very fine solo in Elgar's *Salut D'Amour*, and saxophonist Alpamys Bissengaliyev got a chance to shine in the jazzy *Puttin'on the Ritz* by Irving Berlin.

Not every piece worked so well in its new setting. Extracts from *Bizet* and *Tchaikovsky* could have done with a slower tempo and more dynamic variation. But reducing an



Woodwind Concert

orchestral score to just four instruments is difficult.

On the other hand, *Por una cabeza* by Zequinha de Abreu, a tango from Argentina, sounded perfect. In Bach's *Little Fugue in G minor*, the four instruments clarified the fugal structure better than in a keyboard performance.

The audience clearly appreciated the solid professionalism of the four young, enthusiastic performers. The final *Classical Music Mashup*, a rollicking romp through familiar themes, elicited a standing ovation from a full house, and loud cries of 'Encore!' The musicians duly obliged with an excerpt from *Sleeping Beauty* to send everyone home happy.

■ **SAMARESH CHATTERJI**

Remembering Kamaladevi

TALK

Craft in the Age of Technology: Being a 21st Century Indian Craftsperson

SPEAKER: Laila Tyabji

14 May 2019

Laila Tyabji's talk was not just laden with facts-cum-factors about crafts and the craftspersons in our country, but brought into sharp focus the vital role played by Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay. After all, she was an extraordinary reformer, far ahead of her times. Though she is said to be the most widely travelled woman of that era, what is amazing is the fact that she never moved away from the ground realities prevailing in the country. After all, she gave the much needed platform to craftspersons and their crafts ...working tirelessly and passionately to put our crafts 'out there', in national and international domains.

Tyabji also focused on the prevailing conditions of craftspersons in present-day India. They are neglected, and not really valued. Their masterpieces seldom receive the attention and significance they deserve. For obvious reasons, these realities get compounded in the conflict zones of the country.

In the midst of this, the one big positive that Tyabji spoke about was mobile connectivity in the hands of today's craftspersons. It was indeed heartening, and surprising, to hear that they are using cell phones to connect, to discuss designs, patterns and colour.

In fact, Tyabji, who is herself passionately involved with the crafts of our land, raised some very pertinent issues about our crafts, and how they ought to be valued. Her talk nudged one towards that much required awareness about crafts and their makers.

■ **HUMRA QURAIISHI**

The Kashmiri Gordian Knot

TALK

Lost Rebellion: Kashmir in the Nineties

SPEAKER: Manoj Joshi

CHAIR: Shri N. N. Vohra

8 May 2019

Reappraising his influential book on Kashmir written in 1999 and recently updated, Manoj Joshi gave a synoptic view of the intractable Kashmir problem, taking his audience through its long and tortuous history to make it *au courant*.

He traced the roots of the conflict to the Afghan jihad, midwifed by the ISI, that diverted resources to Kashmir, first through the JKLF, and then the Hizbul Mujahideen, while the government initially fumbled for a policy to counter this guerrilla warfare. The ISI continued to send militants through the mid-90s, from groups like the Lashkar-e-Taiba, and what later became the Jaish-e-Mohammed. A semblance of normalcy returned in 1996 when elections

were held in the Valley, but the Kargil conflict in 1999 completely disrupted the security grid of the region.

Though the early 2000s saw increasing violence and constant bombardment around the LoC, the electoral process in 2002 was deemed to be the fairest in Kashmir's history. After the ceasefire in 2003, the subsequent four years were a period of opportunity and dialogue between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Musharraf, until the latter lost credibility in 2007.

Notwithstanding a reduction in violence, an elusive political settlement resulted in violent civil protest, which the armed forces, owing to the lack of a trained riot control force, were unable to effectively counter.

Manoj Joshi said that to solve the problem, one would have to not only redress the sentiments of the people, but also address the international disputed status of Kashmir through bilateral dialogue.

■ **AJAY JAISINGHANI**

Where is Algeria Going?

DISCUSSION

Where is Algeria Going?

SPEAKERS: Kishan S. Rana and Gulshan Dietl

CHAIR: K. P. Fabian

17 June 2019

Did Algeria really gain independence at the end of French rule? What are the significant milestones in Algeria's history? Where is the country going? These were some of the questions that were highlighted during this discussion.

K. P. Fabian set the tone by saying that the Algerians cannot be said to have got their freedom because barring a brief 'Algerian Spring', political power has been concentrated in the establishment called *le pouvoir*. This establishment, composed of members of the National Liberation Front, some political parties, the military and the rich, has kept out all opposition since 1962. However, the Arab Spring that led to the toppling of several dictators in the Arab world hasn't bypassed Algeria and Sudan, where trouble is still brewing. President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's resignation on 2 April 2019 after 20 years in power is not enough to satisfy anti-establishment protestors.

After Rana's recap of Algeria's history since the departure of the French, Dietl presented alternative scenarios that could unfold in the future, while pointing out that the Arab Spring was alive in the region. One scenario was the likelihood of protests against the establishment in Uganda, Algeria and other states remaining national, rather than regional protests. Second was the army adopting sophisticated techniques to tire out protestors. Lastly, she said that there was a real possibility of the Islamic Salvation Front coming to power. However, for a genuine social revolution, there will have to be a written Constitution and independent institutions in place. The situation in Algeria was uncertain, she concluded.

■ **KAVITA CHARANJI**

Health Care and the Nation

HEALTHCARE IN INDIA

Healthcare by Non-Doctors: An Underused Resource

SPEAKER: K. Srinath Reddy

CHAIR: K. N. Shrivastava

7 May 2019

The talk focused on the need to improve the public health system with requisite systemic changes across economic and social sectors, with a fresh perspective on healthcare. Dr. Reddy has been a proponent of promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative services at all levels. He familiarised the audience with the steps taken by the government in this direction with schemes such as the ICDS, or the rural health scheme that have provided a cadre of primary health workers. In the digital world, new tools have the potential to improve health services, creating a robust public health mechanism through universal health coverage.

Dr. Reddy referred to the dire state of basic demographic indicators in India, such as infant mortality, maternal

mortality and child nutrition, that compare poorly with many developing countries, including several South Asian neighbours. There is also a surge in cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancers, mental illness and other chronic diseases which are killing or disabling millions of young or middle-aged adults.

India's health system is ill-equipped to deal with these concomitant challenges; however, with better training of grassroots level workers, there can be a difference in scale in how healthcare serves populations. He noted that even though some tertiary care institutions are world class, primary and secondary care services have suffered from gross neglect. Transformation is linked to certain tangible factors. If India could train its youth into world class, allied health professionals, it could not only meet its own health needs, but also the health needs of a global population which is ageing. It would be important to work together with private players; however, it should be ensured that private institutions work in a non-exploitative manner.

Dr. Reddy also emphasised the need to include the wisdom of traditional healthcare systems. In brief, transformation would be constructive with a multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary approach in reviewing health, nutrition, sanitation and poverty.

■ ASHA SINGH

Countering Non-Communicable Diseases

HEALTHCARE IN INDIA

Meeting the Challenge of Non-Communicable Diseases in India: From Prevention to Palliative Care

SPEAKER: D. Prabhakaran

4 June 2019

Dr. Prabhakaran began his presentation by detailing the non-communicable diseases (NCD) burden in India, and the options before us to reduce this burden. He said that NCDs are fast emerging as a major public health challenge as they are mainly affecting the young, and adversely impacting the economies of low- and middle-income countries. Major diseases currently classified as NCDs are heart diseases, cancers, diseases of the lung, diabetes and mental health disorders. Dr. Prabhakaran mentioned that there are five major causes of the rise of NCDs: increased use of tobacco; alcohol; unhealthy diet rich in salt and trans-fats; lack of physical exercise; and

increase in air pollution. He also said that two-thirds of all deaths worldwide are currently attributed to NCDs. In India, this number is close to 55 per cent.

Timely management and prevention of NCDs depends on availability, access and high quality of care. Most of these factors are deficient in low- and middle-income economies. Other factors like genetic conditioning and foetal programming also play an important role in the development of symptomatic NCDs.

Dr. Prabhakaran aptly said that NCDs start in the womb and end in the tomb. He concluded by stating that innovative interdisciplinary research with the use of artificial intelligence and integration of palliative care models to take care of pre-terminal patients are the need of the hour. Recent health challenges like rising air pollution and its long-term effect on the health of the population, and non-conventional research techniques, need to be included in current study designs to find practical solutions. We must move from individuals to a population-centric approach to fix this complex problem.

■ VIKRAM DATTA

Reinventing Gandhi

GANDHI MATTERS

Reinventing Gandhi

SPEAKER: Shiv Visvanathan

COLLABORATION: The Raza Foundation

17 May 2019

'We made Gandhi boring.' Shiv Visvanathan, in his lecture on reinventing Gandhi's philosophy and politics, started with his usual provocative style. He linked this audacious proclamation to a truth about our contemporary reality. He argued that Gandhi's goodness has lost its earlier appeal, because the definition of goodness has not changed—which is in opposition to the 'inventiveness of violence'. The only way one can reinvent Gandhi, according to him, is by revisiting the Champaran movement, *My Experiments with Truth*, and by rewriting *Hind Swaraj*. And this can only be done by identifying and acknowledging the manner

in which violence has not only become normal, but also appealing. He explained the last point by looking at the intimate relationship between genocide and the nation state, displacement and development.

Technology, a crucial domain for the state to control, is not interchangeable with science. Visvanathan, borrowing from Anuradha Shah, urged that Gandhi should also be seen as an intellectual who knew the significance of science, without conflating it with technology. Gandhi's philosophy, politics and 'experiments' should be studied with a new lens as they illustrate the potential ingenuity of goodness. Visvanathan suggests that Indian democracy can truly be pluralistic if we re-learn Gandhi in today's context. Perhaps the first step towards that is to realise the importance of memory, that too a pluralistic one.

In his own way, Visvanathan underlined the importance of commemoration by linking forgetting to disappearance, displacement and violence.

■ LEKI THUNGON

Gandhi and Violence

GANDHI MATTERS

Negating Violence: Gandhi's Way

SPEAKER: Neera Chandhoke

INTRODUCION: Ashok Vajpeyi

COLLABORATION: The Raza Foundation

14 June 2019

Neera Chandhoke opened her lecture with the murder of Sir William H. Curzon-Wyllie by a young Indian student, Madan Lal Dhingra, in London, on 1 July 1909. Dhingra was closely associated with the India House radicals, in particular V. D. Savarkar, who at that period of his life tended to glorify the cult of violence. The news of the assassination reached Gandhi who was then travelling to London. Violence, he believed, was not only utterly futile, it was corrupt, corrupting and sterile. This deep conviction had shaped his choice of political strategies—satyagraha—against the racist regime in South Africa.

Hind Swaraj was his 'answer to the Indian School of violence'. Gandhi was impressed by their bravery, but he felt that their zeal was misguided. He drew upon Hindu and Jain traditions to argue against violence, and for non-violence. This was necessary because the revolutionary terrorists had legitimised violence by invoking the

message of the sacred text, the *Bhagavadgita*—your duty enjoins you to kill.

Chandhoke referred to the French political philosopher, Frantz Fanon (1925–1961), who saw violence as a double-barrel gun, lethal as well as liberating. On the day of his execution on 17 August 1909, a letter found in Dhingra's pocket reflected a similar belief.

Gandhi's arguments against violence were summed up in three interconnected propositions: howsoever urgent be the need for violence, it is neither pragmatic nor productive; Gandhi's rejection of violence originates from an epistemological argument on the nature of truth; Gandhi's rejection of violence is ontological, grounded in his belief in the philosophy of Advaita or non-dualism. Gandhi believed that it was possible to negate violence. He unites ethics and politics because politics is no longer about the quest for power, but the quest for ethics in public life. Violence requires an agent, a target, some force, but above all the *intention* to harm. For Gandhi, non-violence is a default principle.

■ VARSHA DAS

Music from Asia

MUSIC APPRECIATION PROMOTION

My Secret Life as an Ambassador: Traditional and Contemporary Music from Asia

SPEAKER: Gautam Mukhopadhaya

24 May 2019

This lecture-cum-demonstration on the traditional and contemporary music of Asia was a delightful journey down music lane, through the countries of West Asia, the Silk Road, and the neighbouring lands of Southeast Asia. Coupled with a lucid account of the personal association behind each of the music clippings played out, the entire experience was a reiteration of the fact that music is a veritable binder of hearts and minds.

With an astute choice of numbers, garnered from recordings of representative performers in the respective countries, the speaker managed to show the distinctiveness, as also

the common thread, of the Sufi tradition that made the offerings appear recognisable to Indian listeners.

Besides the vocal inputs, the speaker introduced the audience to the variety of traditional musical instruments like the *duff*, the flute, the *oud*, the *kamanche* and more. All these sounds, alongside the singing, managed to bring forth the music of emotions that easily blended with the audience as they listened enraptured. Even the singing venues were not confined to formal stage settings, but ranged across a host of platforms, thereby bringing the experience even closer.

By linking the music to a plethora of personal anecdotes about how the recordings were made, the association that Ambassador Mukhopadhaya had created through it, even the escapades he had encountered in the Sufi *khankah* in Afghanistan, gave the lecture greater clarity and dimension. The finale, with a concert featuring Yo-Yo Ma and musicians from countries along the Ancient Silk Road, completed the wonderful experience.

■ SUBHRA MAZUMDAR

Challenges and Experiences of Women in Law

WOMEN IN LAW IN INDIA

Women in Law—The Path of Empowerment

SPEAKER: Justice Sujata Manohar

COMMENTS: Madhavi Goradia Divan, Justice Lahoty, Shri. Soli Sorabjee and Mr. Murli Bhandare

CHAIR: Justice B. N. Srikrishna

3 May 2019

Justice Sujata Manohar is a retired judge of the Supreme Court of India. When asked to decide on the constitutionality of having caste and religion-based quotas for admission to research degrees—one aspect of India's affirmative action programme—instead of just on merit, Justice Manohar ruled this as unconstitutional. This was a landmark case.

Many laws of the 19th century contributed to the women's equality project: the abolition of the practice of sati as far back as 1829; reforms in married women's property rights; women's right to vote in some jurisdictions, etc. Regina Guha's case was the first 'persons case' in India. The Patna high court judges delivered three separate

concurrent opinions on 28 November 1921, upholding the position in Regina Guha, that in spite of the provisions of the General Clauses Act of 1868 and 1897, a woman, although fully qualified, was not entitled to a certificate under the Legal Practitioners' Act to act as a pleader because of her sex. She was not a 'person'. In another five years, Sudhanshubala Hazra initiated the second 'persons case'. Some significant developments separated the Regina Guha case and the Sudhanshubala Hazra case. The first was the passage of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919 in England which, by implication, would allow women to enter the legal profession; the second was the Allahabad high court taking the radical step of allowing Cornelia Sorabji to be enrolled as a *vakil*. This was done by a decision of the English Committee of the Court consisting of the Chief Justice and the judges present. These developments were referred to in the court as excellent ground to amend the anomaly of the Legal Practitioners' Act which became The Legal Practitioners' (Women) Act in 1923, finally allowing women to practise law by removing the disqualification that 'no woman shall, by reason only of her sex, be disqualified from being admitted or enrolled as a legal practitioner or from practising as such'.

■ MEKHALA SENGUPTA

Remembering Amir Khusrau

TALK

Amir Khusrau: In his Times and Ours

SPEAKER: Shamsur Rahman Faruqi

CHAIR: Ashok Vajpeyi

24 May 2019

Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, Indo-Persian and Urdu literary critic, delivered the first Mujeeb Rizvi Memorial Lecture on *Amir Khusrau: In his Times and Ours*.

Faruqi spoke at length on Amir Khusrau as an architect of Indo-Islamic culture in the subcontinent. Khusrau had served at the courts of the seven Sultans of Delhi, but he was more loyal to Baba Nizamuddin. He was a poet

of Persian whose poetry far excelled the great poets of Persia. His multi-layered lyrics were only next to Hafiz, and he stepped into the shoes of Nizami to write *Khamsa* or Quintet. Various are the hues of his poetry which celebrate the greatness of India. By any count, he is more Indian than Indians. He has woven the tapestry of Indo-Islamic culture so fine that even a fussy poet like Ghalib acknowledged his supremacy in the vast domain of poetry. Oral Indian traditions have made a musicologist, a story-teller, a riddler or puzzler out of him. However, it is ironical that not even a bust of Khusrau has been installed in Patyali, his birth place in district Etah, UP.

The programme was conducted by Mahmood Farooqui. Vajpeyi appreciated the speaker for his amusing narrative of Amir Khusrau's poetry, life and times.

■ SYED AKHTAR HUSAIN



Dard Aryans of Ladakh. The Aryan Valley of Ladakh is home to the rich and colourful legacy of the Dard Aryans inhabiting this area. The exhibition presents a visual journey through their habitations in Ladakh. It has been photographed and curated by Virendra Bangroo.



Panorama of faces from Volga to the Ganges. An Exhibition of Portraiture, oil on canvas and gouache on paper by Shanti Kushwaha

OBITUARY

L-0331	Shri Girish Karnad
M-1453	Dr. (Smt.) Vimal Wadhawan
M-1574	Shri S. K. Sahgal
M-1625	Shri Liaqat Ali
M-2436	Justice J. K. Mehra
M-2863	Shri Prabir Sengupta
M-3415	Shri Asok Kumar Mohapatra
M-3647	Shri T. M. C. Menon
M-3801	Prof. G. S. Roonwal
A-0538	Smt. Vinod Kashyap
A-0930	Shri S. Ratnam
A-1500	Shri S. K. Sahiar
A-3000	Shri Triloki Nath Bazaz
A-3272	Smt. Primla Vohra
A-3402	Dr. S. K. Vohra
A-4757	Shri Ashish Gogia
A-5614	Smt. Sudershan Sondhi
A-5621	Smt. Himani Khanna
A-7120	Smt. Saroj Jain

Director's Note

In the Centre's ongoing efforts to propagate the principles of sustainable energy and energy efficiency, all conventional CFL light fittings have been replaced with energy-efficient LED lights. The existing power-consuming split air conditioners have been replaced by ISEER 5.75 rated energy-efficient air conditioners. Old ceiling fans have been replaced by energy-efficient fans which consume almost 60 per cent less energy. These efforts have been made under the Building Energy Efficiency Project (BEEP), provisioned under CSR by Power Finance Corporation Limited (PFCL), and executed by Energy Efficiency Services Limited, which is a joint venture of PSUs and the Ministry of Power.



The 70.4 KW roof-top PV solar panel electric system, provisioned under CSR by TATA Solar Power Company Ltd., is expected to become operational by early August and reduce the Centre's power expenditure by nearly ₹ 10 lakh annually.

Regarding water conservation: the sewage treatment plant has been rehabilitated, and the recycled water distribution pipelines are being laid. This will reduce the amount of underground water being presently drawn by almost 40 per cent; we hope to increase the saving to 75–80 per cent.

The long overdue need for providing separate toilets for ladies and gentlemen next to the main Dining Hall has been met. The new toilets became functional in mid July.

The Centre's initiative to minimise the use of plastic bottled water has been greatly appreciated. In the Lounges and Dining Halls in both the complexes, RO water is now being supplied in leak-proof, swing-top cap glass bottles. We hope to shortly extend this arrangement to the other catering outlets.

■ **K. N. Shrivastava**

REMEMBERING PREMOLA

Premola is gone; gone much before her time. I am deeply saddened by her passing away.

I had known Premola for the past two and a half decades and more, ever since I became associated with the Centre's functioning.

A Miranda House girl, with a First Class Master's in History and a Diploma in Italian, Premola joined IIC as an Editorial Assistant in early 1975. A decade later she shifted to organising Programmes, became the Chief of this Division in 2003, and continued to steer it with élan almost till the day she departed, on 6th July.

A truly talented person, Premola was gifted with a very keen intelligence and a sharp memory. Invariably well informed about vastly varying subjects, she was very well equipped to quickly evaluate and decide whether a proposed lecture, dance or music performance was worthy of being organised at the Centre.

Premola wrote over a half dozen books which were illustrated by her own drawings and paintings. Some of her books for children gained wide circulation, particularly among foreign readers.

Urbane and highly dignified, Premola was known to a large spectrum of our membership, and to successive generations of foreign diplomats, all of whom regarded her very highly. I have received letters from many eminent Members and Ambassadors who have conveyed their condolences.

Premola was invaluable for the planning and implementation of the Centre's programme activities. She will be remembered for a very long time. May the Lord rest her soul in eternal peace.

N. N. Vohra
26th July, 2019