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Current Affairs

## BREXIT: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA AND THE UK

By Rita Payne

One word defines Brexit and the possible impact of Britain's links with other countries once it leaves the European Union - confusion. No one is clear about the implications of the various scenarios - hard Brexit, soft Brexit or no deal...

Economist and Labour peer, Lord Meghnad Desai, was characteristically blunt when he declared at a public meeting that the degree of unpreparedness of the British government was shocking. He asserted that the government had had no idea what to do if the vote went against Remain. No one had agreed what a free trade treaty is or made clear that it takes a long time to negotiate these agreements. This view was echoed at the same meeting in London organised by the Democracy Forum, by another economic analyst, Linda Yueh. She had an entertaining analogy. She said that for Britain to start trade negotiations with another country while it was still part of the EU was like negotiating your next marriage while you were still with your ex-wife.

The fastest growing countries are in Asia and Britain sells more to these countries than within the EU. So it makes sense for the UK to look at opportunities in Asia which has growing middle class consumers and all countries will have to pivot to Asia at some point. The snag is that while Britain is the world's second biggest exporter of services, most trade agreements do not cover services. There is also doubt about whether India would want legal services from UK. Analysts warn that Britain must not assume that because it wants to export services, other countries will welcome them.

So what happens the day after Britain officially leaves the EU on March 29th, 2019? Leavers present a glowing prospect of a world trade boom. However, if one looks at practicalities, there are many hurdles ahead. Britain will no longer have a free trade agreement with the EU so it will need to work under WTO rules. The transition will not be simple since all 160 plus members of the WTO will be required to sign off on any deals. If the UK opts for the Norwegian model it will have to accept free movement of people - and this was one of the main factors that drove the campaign for Brexit; many supporters were vehemently opposed to immigration, especially from Europe.

Negotiations for a post-Brexit future are so tortuous that the government has disclosed that it will have recruited up to 8,000 officials including lawyers and civil servants by the end of next year as it unveiled preparations for leaving the EU without a deal. The arch Brexiteer and Conservative MP Jacob Rees-Mogg admitted, it may take 50 years to get a clear idea of the impact of Brexit on the British economy. Brexit secretary Dominic Raab set off ripples of alarm when he acknowledged that the government would have to take steps to ensure that there were adequate food supplies for Britain to cover the eventuality of a no-deal departure from the European Union.

Against this background, Brexiteers are talking up opportu-

nities for Britain to expand trade with non-EU countries once the break takes effect. Both India and the UK have spoken optimistically about the potential for expanding links once Brexit takes effect. A visiting delegation from the Confederation of Indian Industry, after meeting their British counterparts and government ministers, said new opportunities were there to be explored, with India and the UK representing two of the world's leading economies. However, they warned that the lack of clarity was holding back progress. The main message to the UK from Indian business leaders was blunt: "You need to make up your minds what you want to do. This is real life one needs

ness community, Mr. Mittal is keen that India should play a more central role in the Commonwealth.

The presence of the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in the UK in April was regarded as a signal of India's renewed interest in the 53-member organisation. Richard Burge, Chief Executive of the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council, says "The key to a successful exporting is having expeditious and entrepreneurial exporters. The risk for the UK is that after decades of selling in the EU (in effect a domestic market) many British entrepreneurs may have lost the sense of adventure and

appetite for risk that true exporting requires. But the good news is that the Commonwealth is now a collection of increasing vibrant and growing economies based in increasingly strong and resilient democracies with whom the UK should have a natural partnership".

There are inevitable comparisons between the approaches of India and China on the global stage. India's forays into infrastructure are seen by some commentators as benign compared to China's, which is deemed to be more of an intrusion on sovereign territories. China's \$62 billion infrastructure-building programme in Pakistan is regarded by some as an encroachment on its sovereignty. Similarly, Sri Lanka has borrowed billions of dollars from China to develop mega-projects. Critics fear that Sri Lanka will be unable repay these loans allowing China to take control of these vital infrastructure projects, providing it with a strategic presence in the country.

For India, the EU with Britain as a member, offers a counterweight to China's dominance in Asia. The critical question is whether Britain will still be regarded by India as an important economic partner on its own outside the EU. Why would India wish to negotiate separate agreements with Britain once it leaves the EU when under the present arrangement it has immediate access to all 27 member countries? At the moment, India appears to be willing to explore investment and trade opportunities with Britain when it leaves the EU. However, its patience could well run out if the confusion continues over the exact terms of Britain's break from Europe. India's view is that, now the people of Britain have voted, Britain needs now to get on with adjusting to a future outside the European Union. Of course, there is still one more possibility, Brexit may not materialise at all. So, while there is endless debate and speculation, confusion reigns supreme.

to get on with. Recognising reality will be a great help for us. This is a unique opportunity for both sides."

Dr. David Landsman, Executive Director of the Tata group and Chair of CII-UK, outlined the multiple sectors opening up for India-UK co-operation. One key area is advanced technology. India wants a skilled work force from top universities. He identified the hospitality, automobile and engineering industries as other areas ripe for development. He said that India and UK needed to present in a more modern way what they can offer each other. While there were many opportunities, Dr. Landsman admitted that overheads might rise depending on the model of Brexit.

There is on the whole overwhelming agreement among Indian business leaders on the huge potential waiting to be tapped with India's double-digit growth and the expectation that it would soon overtake China as a leading global economy. However, they point to one issue that remains a key impediment - the difficulties Indians face in obtaining visas to the UK. They complained that Indian students, in particular, were not getting a fair deal. It was highlighted that fears of Indian students overstaying their visas were totally unjustified since there was evidence that 95% of Indian students returned home once they completed their courses.

The CII President, Mr Rakesh Bharti Mittal, highlights the potential for India to re-invigorate economic and trade links with other Commonwealth countries, especially in Africa. India is the biggest economy in the Commonwealth which represents a large trading block. Along with others in the busi-



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Rita Payne is a journalist and media consultant, and President Emeritus of the Commonwealth Journalists Association



Hello again!

This summer has been so unusual. In the UK, we have experienced many weeks of scorching heat followed by thunderstorms which brought some relief. The political situation in Britain has not been much different. Day by day we hear companies are moving out of Britain as the prospects of a no deal Brexit is looming. In our cover story, senior journalist Rita Payne has exclusively reported how Britain's exit from the European union could affect bilateral business relationships between Britain and India, from the perspective of a group of Indian business leaders.

The recent conclusion of a general election in Pakistan has brought new hope for the future of Pakistan. During the past seventy years of its existence, Pakistan has rarely had a stable government lasting a full term in office. Corruption, military rule, assassinations and coups seem to have been a regular phenomenon affecting its socio-economic stability. In this context the former cricketer Imran Khan and his party PTT's victory in last week's election have been hailed as a new dawn by many observers as it shows an aspiration for a change in the right direction. However only time will tell how things might change for the people who voted him to office.

This time we received an unprecedented number of poems for publications and we can only publish a small number of them due to space considerations. We have also received many articles which deserve publication, but their late arrival meant we couldn't include them in the current issue. Yet again, I would like to ask our contributors to send their submissions on time, at least three weeks before the issue release date which is often the beginning of the month. The magazine is a quarterly one and this time it is a bumper one! Happy reading!

*Vijay Anand*

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Telephone: 01689 836 394 / 07801 569 640

MANAGING EDITOR  
**Dr. Vijay Anand**

SUB-EDITOR  
**Malathy Sitaram**

FOUNDER EDITOR  
Late **Joe Nathan**

For subscription enquiries, please email:  
[confluenceuk@yahoo.com](mailto:confluenceuk@yahoo.com)

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# IMRAN: THE WAY FORWARD FOR PAKISTAN

*By Tariq Osman Hyder*

Imran Khan, chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-the Party (PTI), or the Movement for Justice, which he founded, is poised to become the next prime minister of Pakistan. He has done remarkably well in the just-concluded national and provincial elections. The PTI is the largest party by far in the National Assembly and though lacking an absolute majority, it will be able to put together a coalition to govern the country. It has a majority in the Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which it has governed for the last five years. PTI has made a strong showing in Sindh, which is still dominated by Pakistan Peoples Party. And it is within striking distance of controlling Punjab, where Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) — the former ruling party of the now incarcerated ex-prime minister Nawaz Sharif — has marginally more seats. The PTI will be able to form the provincial government there with a coalition, taking in independents. Taking Punjab along, the most populous of Pakistan's four provinces with a population 100 million, is vital for effective governance and reform.

Before the elections, there was an apprehension that a fragmented national assembly and a fragile coalition will lead to instability. But now Imran is well-placed to initiate the ambitious and detailed reform agenda of the PTI's electoral manifesto towards building a "naya" or new Pakistan: An agenda based on transforming governance, strengthening the federation, inclusive economic growth, uplifting agriculture, building dams and conserving water, revolutionising social services and ensuring Pakistan's national security. Internally, a reform agenda that has at its heart the resolve to transform Pakistan into a welfare state where rule of law, meritocracy and transparency are guaranteed to all — a social welfare safety net provided to the marginalised and the elderly. A just order where equal opportunity exists for all citizens in all fields — from health to education to security of life and property. Justice to ensure that women, minorities, the poor, the differently-abled, the dispossessed and disadvantaged are not exploited or discriminated against. And with such an agenda, the legacy of misrule by a corrupt, inept elite will be relegated to the dustbin of history. With that, the country will be able to stand on its own feet and not remain reliant on foreign aid.

Externally, Pakistan's core national interests are defined as territorial integrity and sovereignty; socio-economic development; the resolution of the Kashmir dispute; and protection of its citizens wherever they may happen to be. A 'new' Pakistan confident in itself and at peace with its neighbours on the basis of mutual reciprocity; that seeks friendly relations with all states — including

the United States — on the basis of transparency, mutuality of interests and respect for sovereignty. A Pakistan premised on a strong strategic deterrence, but will seek conflict resolution; and that will not fight others' wars or act as a surrogate for any power.

***The PTI leader has a huge responsibility to bring all Pakistanis together to make it a stronger, more respected and equitable country***

Implementation of such a multidimensional and integrated reform agenda requires sequencing as there cannot be simultaneous movements on all fronts. Pragmatism is required to tackle the gap between objectives and ground realities. Increasing expenditure on the social sectors and



decreasing foreign aid will depend on enhanced revenues. This requires a long-haul reforming of the bureaucracy through skills enhancement, motivation, accountability and freedom from political influence. Foreign assistance is declining and is now tilted towards the soft sectors, strengthening democracy, the rule of law and the social sectors, mainly through NGOs. A filtering process should check that the donors' agendas are in synch with those of Pakistan.

In his post-election speech, Imran has been conciliatory, looking to the future, rather than blaming the past. He has come across as ready to cooperate in response to allegations of poll rigging by opponents and seeking better relations with neighbouring India and Afghanistan and with the major global powers, including America.

Pakistan is already working on Afghan reconciliation, but it all depends upon the US deciding on its own Afghan policy. It remains to be seen whether the US will move decisively towards

supporting reconciliation rather than a kinetic approach to attrite the Taliban and force them to fall in line, which has been a failure for the last 15 years. America views its bilateral relations with Pakistan through the prism of Afghanistan and is reviewing its policy towards this region. While China remains the cornerstone, there has been a slow but upward curve in Pakistan's relations with Russia.

Though security issues have empowered the military apparatus everywhere, the previous government was criticised for ceding ground to the military on important foreign policy issues. This was not unexpected as for the major part, it had no foreign minister. The PTI, bolstered by strong electoral backing and a stable of competent potential foreign ministers, is positioned to have a tighter control over foreign relations.

Imran's main attributes as a sportsman, cancer hospital-building humanitarian and then politician have been consistent. But that intensity should not become a rigidity. The PTI does not have a two-thirds majority to push through constitutional amendments that are needed for some key reforms, including making South Punjab a separate province. That will require both caution and skilful manoeuvring to put together coalitions on these issues. It should not fall prey to the temptation of encouraging a forward block of its main opposition, the PML(N). That will lead to the same polarisation, demonstrations and gridlock that the PTI had used against the previous government. In criminal and civil cases, investigative procedures linked to political opponents should be more thorough and arrests not made for public effect.

Imran has been given this opportunity by a broad cross-section of voters of all ages and walks of life because they felt that it was time for a change, that he should be given a chance. It is not coincidental that these days, the most popular and uplifting song of hope is a poem by Pakistan's famous poet and revolutionary, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Hum Dekhenge (We will see), which begins: "We shall witness, it is certain that we too will witness, the promised day; When the mountains of tyranny blow away like cotton."

Imran has a huge responsibility to bring all Pakistanis together to make it a stronger, more respected and equitable country.

*Tariq Osman Hyder is a retired Pakistani diplomat.*

*Picture: Reuters. This article was first published in The Gulf News, published here with the author's permission.*



# 12 YEAR OLD PALESTINIAN ACTIVIST

By Devi Rajab



Our sense of global humanity evokes strong feelings and responsibilities towards our fellow human beings more acutely than ever before. As we go about our daily business can we switch off the reality of what human beings are doing to each other on our common planet? John Donne reminds us that “No man is an island unto himself” and that we are all an integrated part of this cosmic reality. When David is pitted against Goliath where does ones sympathy lie?

Not because I am anti this and pro that but on account of my inner voice that says justice knows no prejudices, nor loyalties, that I cared to listen to the voice of a 12 year old speak truth to power this week when I attended a private, function hosted by Nadia Meer a dedicated and committed ‘Free Palestine’ activist. I saw a close similarity with her aunt the late Professor Fatima Meer as I witnessed her passion for the oppressed. She has travelled to Palestine several times to work among the children using her art activism as a means of bringing hope at times of near hopelessness. Her work with the children under occupation has been cathartic for them. I have on my desk a beautifully crafted calendar of the children’s drawings with moving commentary of their daily lives and their wish to be free, to see the sea and to be able to enter a world of love and acceptance

As a teenager I recall feeling the slings and arrows of the apartheid regulations on the bus, on the beaches, in our schools and residential areas when I was growing up. I survived the institutionalized belittlement by developing a veneer of narcissistic ethnic pride. I saw this energy in little Janna Ayyad who is visiting our shores from her little village of Nabi Saleh. Perhaps on account of the trials and tribulations of her life in the occupied areas of Palestine she is a cut above her generation of preteens in South Africa and indeed globally. Cushioned by middle class material comfort their concerns are banal in comparison to the children of Palestine where just under 400 are in prison at present. Janna’s

cousin Ahed Tamina is currently in prison for having slapped an Israeli policeman. She is a force to be reckoned with, as a young icon of resistance where streets have been named after her.

When one speaks about the condition of captivity and bondage of the people of Gaza one cannot be dismissed as being anti-Semitic. The facts speak for themselves. No, it’s not about anti-Israelis or Zionist bashing. It’s not about Muslims and their private cause. It’s not about religion either. It’s about a people dispossessed of their land. “We don’t want to disappear and be obliterated as the aborigines or the American Indians” says the leader of the Palestinian authority in an address to the Irish people. The collective refrain echo these sentiments thus: We want to be a recognised part of this land with our 100 year old olive trees which our forefathers planted. We yearn to be a part of our soil and the grainy gravel of our homeland. The voices of our ancestors whisper to us every day, amidst the smoke of the gas canisters hurled at us, inside our homes, in our villages, that we are still an integral part of this terrain. We march with our mothers, brothers, fathers and uncles with flags and no other weapons but our chants. Yet we are seen as dangerous rodents to be exterminated making space for more settlers to encroach on what is rightfully our homeland.

Janna says in her well-schooled American accent “The Israeli soldiers dehumanise us, humiliate us and prevent us from living a normal life. 12 hours of water a week whilst they have 24 hours of water a day. Our movements are restricted by a wall more formidable than the Berlin wall and Check Points at every turn creates havoc in our daily lives. “I get up in the morning and on my way to school I have 2 checkpoints to go through and may sometimes be delayed by hours if the guards are not on duty. Either way we suffer. All I want is to see the sea and live a normal life like any 12 year old. “What was your earliest memory?” I ask. She replies as casually as a youngster would chew gum: “Oh of hiding under the table when the guards stormed our house.”

We awake to shooting and sleep at night with the same commotion. In between we try to normalise our lives however we can. “I paint, I sing, I write and with my camera I take pictures”.

Janna has been registered as the youngest journalist in the world and for this she has been viewed as constituting a threat to the state of Israel. When children of another race, religion, class, caste or nationality are treated differentially by a ruling class, they become products of the process of dehumanization. Often the rationalization is that such children are not like ours. They are sub human. On a daily basis how do children feel if they are routinely treated like scum by the Israeli soldiers. To avoid the dangers of self-fulfilling prophecy the adults in their lives have to sustain their children with emotional warmth and the promise that they are indeed loved. How do they teach their children to love and respect adults of all racial and ethnic groups if they are treated so

inhumanely by a system that is based on 3 historical denials says an activist. The first denial is that Palestine was a land without a people and that the Palestinians were a people without a land. The second denial leading from the first led to the assertion that they had no claim to nation, individual or collective rights. Their place was on the periphery and the strategy to entrench this policy was to acquire “as much Palestinian geography with as little Palestinian demography “as possible.

The fight for ancestral lands is not unique to this or that group. It is a battle that has plagued humanity for centuries and will continue to do so until we all perish or leave to settle on another planet. Even there we will fight for sanctity and rights to ownership. For people who are close to the land which holds the key to their identity, a common heritage and a nationalism spanning centuries, a fight to the bitter end is no loss at all.

Palestinians and Israelis, first cousins in their Semitic identities have always been divided. The years have added an impenetrable crust to the issue making each suspicious of the other’s intention. I came face to face with the problem some 40 years ago. Sitting in the courtyard of the American University in Cairo, (once the city palace of King Farouk) I was watching the antics of the rich and beautiful play tennis, sip coffee and glide gracefully by. A young man came and sat beside me and we exchanged platitudes about our national origins. “South African” I hesitantly stated knowing full well that we were pariahs in the eyes of the world on account of apartheid. “Palestinian” he proudly claimed. I can’t recall whether he was Christian or Muslim We had similar stories to share. “My family left because of the Group Areas act” I explained where settled communities living in interracial harmony were dislodged into housing schemes. You went quietly he asked, without a fight?

The young Palestinian was angry. I was philosophical like most first or second generation settlers. Shrugging my shoulders I said “we had two choices either to accept our lot and move to whatever areas they allocated to us or find new pastures. “Never” he emphatically stated “My pasture is my heritage” “you are wandering around the world, I am hovering in the flanks- along the borders of my ancestral land- in transit- waiting to go home. Someday I want my children to touch the soil and call home Palestine. The situation of the Palestinian people is a battle for coexistence and not obliteration. I ask Janna to describe her dream of a freedom and she describes it as holding hand with other Israeli children and living in one unified country. May this dream come true in her life time.

*Dr. Devi Rajab is a respected South African journalist and former Dean of Student Development at UKZN and the author of several books.*

# POEMS

*By Anju Makhija*

### AN ORDER FOR A NEW HEAD

Small please, grey and white cells, pink too  
(with bits and bytes).  
Make the numbers even, enough odd ones.  
Mould the skull with RDX plastique, the stick-fast variety.  
Set the teeth firmly, rattling disturbs infants.  
Keep the tonsils, I like to trap irritants for happy days.  
One ear is plenty, bomb blasts are deafening in stereo.  
Make the nostrils narrow, like a bone marrow;  
air enough to live.

Now the main request: give me a third eye  
(like the one on the truck).  
A bright red light between two headlights  
Peering through the throat of a village road.

That's all.

Brandy, I and the third eye. In the moonlight...  
coconut trees, omnipresent Gods; two Gods too many.  
Papayas, pulpy breasts; squeeze them dry.  
Falling twigs, a shower of snakes;  
swallowing them, I emerge Medusa!

Shedding my skin, I recoil in the armchair,  
lost to the world.

Get the picture?  
I'm Lao-Tzu smiling at Mona Lisa

### Artefact

The portrait, shrouded in plastic,  
hangs in the loft like an exhibit  
in the Gallery of Modern Art.  
Inside, a face, bust size,  
patchy skin, penetrating eyes,  
mole below lips, eyebrows thick,  
singular features in an innocuous face.

Terrifying, this packing away  
in frames, polythene, white cloth;  
the portrait resembles a monk  
in saffron robes—  
the silence never wears off.

Moth-chewed lips,  
mildew around nose,  
white ant devoured ears,  
spider webs, chin to forehead.

Left to their fate,  
colours bleed, the blush fades.  
The portrait mutely marks time.

### Pickling Season

Every summer, we laze under the mango tree  
discussing unpatented recipes. When raw mangoes  
drop on our head, we pause

to appreciate nature's bounty.  
Then on to peeling, chopping, salting,  
boiling, spicing, bottling...

Will the sorcery work?

By year's end, we hope, when  
the pungent brine matures to its prime.  
The zing depends on turmeric balancing the tamarind,  
the chili complementing the amchur,  
and if the asafetida poured in candle light  
late one night works for pickles  
as if seldom does for couples, apart  
since the first pickling season.

The alchemy has rarely bewitched,  
Jaggery sours, vinegar sears the tongue.  
To change the recipe we've tried  
with old ladies' advice,  
but nature moves inexorably,  
and life proceeds predictably  
beneath the mango tree.

Amchur: dry mango powder

### A Farmer's Ghost

Behind the trunk of a mango tree you were seen  
vigilantly guarding rice fields; later,

collecting dung, rounding up cows,  
you munched dry rotis, beat your daughter-in-law.

A farmer never leaves his land, they said,  
till rice is safe from man and beast.

When bins are full, rice mixed with dry neem,  
he will leave. The old man is dead, not asleep.

That night, I read about witty Veetal,  
short-tempered Zhoting, man-eating Hadals

and other Konkani spirits in The Times. Next night:  
ghostbusting, to dispel tales spreading like flames

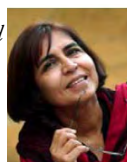
in the night. Dark face, still as a scarecrow,  
leaning against a haystack, you were seen

by all but me. Disconcerted then, now I see the point:  
dispelling superstitions city folk like;

but, to believe the imagined to be true  
can be a way of life, a fact, a truth.

Neem: a bitter leaf

*Anju Makhija is a Sahitya Akademi award-winning poet, translator and playwright based in Mumbai who has written/edited books related to partition, Sufism, women's poetry and theatre. Her articles and columns have appeared in several newspapers.*  
[anjumakhija17@gmail.com](mailto:anjumakhija17@gmail.com)



# BOMBAY DREAMS

By Malathy Sitaram

In recent weeks, I have noticed that my thoughts stray to India very often. I am not sure why. I was born in Delhi but have very faint memories of it as the family moved to Bombay (now Mumbai) when I was five and my elder sister would have been approaching eight. My father- being a civil servant- was allocated a flat in a very nice street. This was long before sky scrapers became the norm in the city. Attractive blocks of flats always five storeys high had been built probably in the early twentieth century and were typical of Bombay. My younger sister was born here and was my father's pet. We lived in what was known as the Fort area. I imagine the fort had something to do with the early days of British occupation of India. We were not very far from Marine Drive, the famed long road running parallel to the Arabian sea the colours of which change at different times of day. People use the promenade most evenings to take the air as well as exercise their limbs by walking briskly right up to the end of the very long road that ends at Nariman Point. There is always a pleasant breeze most evenings. At weekends whole families congregate there and vendors sell hot gram to eat or the famous bhel puri.

We were fortunate in that we lived not very far from a good Convent school where my elder sister and I were enrolled. My memories of schooldays are very pleasant and when I am in India and catch up with school friends, we always talk about our fun days there. I remember finding the summer holiday too long and eagerly waiting for school to reopen. English was my favourite subject with History close behind. One of our neighbours had a daughter also attending St. Anne's High school. We were fortunate in getting a lift to school most mornings in her father's car. School ended around 4pm and when I was in my early teens, a couple of school friends and I would take a bus that had a stop close to our homes. What this is quite clear in my memory I can't remember what the arrangement was when we were much younger. We must have been picked up by a servant. Our teachers were mostly Goans excepting for Mathematics. We had a wiry, grey haired Maharashtrian lady who was very strict and a very good teacher of that subject. I enjoyed our Algebra and Geometry lessons but my pet subject was always English and later, French. I disliked Arithmetic. At the end of the year we had a Prize Giving Day and my parents would beam with pride as my elder sister and I

usually took away several prizes. My elder sister finished school at the early age of fourteen and graduated from college at the age of eighteen.

The lunch break was interesting. Mothers sent a hot lunch in tiffin carriers via servants. There were a couple of rooms for children having a hot lunch and some other space for a sandwich lunch. After lunch we had at least forty-five minutes to play in the extensive grounds behind the school. I remember with great nostalgia, playing Seven Tiles and another game called Kho. For Seven Tiles we kept a cache of large



stones. Seven of these were placed one on top of each other. Two captains chose their teams of about 5 or 6 girls each. A member of one team would start the game by throwing a tennis ball at the stones from a fixed distance, with the others standing behind her to take their turn. The idea was to throw the ball to dislodge the stones. The other team stood just behind the stones and tried to catch the ball. If the stones fell, the throwing team would run away fast pursued by one of the opposing team who would try to hit one of the runners with the ball. That runner was then out. If I remember rightly, it was also necessary to succeed in putting the stones back on top of each other without being hit by the opposing team. This was great fun. The other game called Kho was fun too though I don't remember the rules. We sat in a large circle and someone was chosen to run around and place a hanky or scarf behind one of the seated persons who would be unaware of this. I remember there was a lot of running around the circle and shouting Kho but the rest eludes me. I do remember though that it was a very enjoyable game. These were truly Indian games as I have never met anyone in the UK who has heard of these games.

My mother who had been one of the first South Indian women of her community to

attend college in Madras had very modern and forward-looking ideas. She was studying Physics and Chemistry but sadly had to give up her studies to look after her mother who had developed cancer. I remember she enjoyed reading a British magazine for women which carried romantic stories, recipes as well as ideas for knitting and sewing. She spoke English fluently. The other women in our building came to her for advice on all sorts of matters including errant husbands. My parents had a good circle of friends and there was a lot of mutual visiting. My mother enjoyed trying out new recipes and even learned to make cakes. In Bombay we had gas piped into kitchens and we had a gas cooker and oven which were not available in any other city at that time. It was very modern, very Westernized, with a splendid race course which attracted a lot of Gulf Arabs. We had wonderful cinemas which featured American films and lots of restaurants some of which had a dance floor.

Most evenings after school I would go downstairs to play with other children of my age for a couple of hours before going home. My father would return from work round 6 pm and dinner was served round 8 pm. We always had North Indian cooks as my parents had lived in N India after marriage and had a taste for North Indian food. So it was chapatis at night along with daal and vegetables. It was probably at weekends that we had dosa and idli.

My sister and I had very different interests. I was a book worm and she liked to be with adults and loved listening to their conversations. My mother taught her to read Tamil. Today I have a very poor Tamil vocabulary but my elder sister speaks it fluently. At that time, we imagined that we would never have to leave our beloved city as surely, we would marry Bombayites. Quite the reverse happened. My sister married and moved to Kolkata and I started married life in Rangoon in Burma! Our younger sister lived in Bombay for the most part of her married life but cruel Fate snatched her from our lives when she succumbed to cancer a decade ago. She had earned a reputation as a poet.

*Malathy Sitaram was the first Asian to teach English in Wiltshire Schools and simultaneously, the first Asian to be appointed to the Swindon Bench of Justices of the Peace. Now retired, she is just as busy.*





## SUMANA ROY'S 'MISSING'

*Reviewed By Anjana Basu*

A house with a blind husband ironically named 'Nayan' or 'eye' surrounded by a bustle of carpenters busy making a new double bed. The woman who should be part of the bustle, Kobita – again irony because Nayan is a poet so he is wedded to poetry in human form – is missing. She has taken herself off to Guwahati on a quest to rescue a girl whom she saw being molested in the papers. Nayan is alone in the house – their son Kabir is abroad researching the history of Siliguri's Hill Cart Road and he coincidentally has come across a love letter in his research documents written to a missing girl.

In this world of parallels, Roy makes us wonder why Kobita vanished all on her own leaving her husband to cope with problems that he can sense but cannot see. Nayan misses his wife's interpretation of day to day life and fumbles through whatever he has to do with the carpenter and the bed and enlists the carpenter's granddaughter Tushi to read the newspaper to him. Nayan is hoping of course to find news of his wife in the turbulence that seems to be sweeping across Assam and North Bengal.

However, all he hears is news of people movement and road blockades. His anxiety is heightened by his blindness because he has to rely on what he is told and he remembers that his wife once told him never to believe what the media said. Kabir, on the end of a telephone line, finds himself wondering whether his father has driven his mother away somehow which is why

Nayan is making no moves to find her. Interwoven is the story of Sita's disappearance and Ram's quest to find her.

Of course, Roy underlines the fact that Kobita is independent and in the habit of disappearing in acts of activ-

ism – though unlike most activists who are widely connected, she appears not to have a network of people willing to rush to the rescue with her. Kobita comes across as solitary and is irritated if people try to find her when she is out trying to help a girl in distress – the result is that Nayan finds his hands tied. He cannot tell the police that his wife is missing or put an ad in the papers in case she turns up in the middle of the

night to reproach him for causing an unnecessary fuss. Roy captures the issues that fret the North Bengal region where she lives – immigrants from Bangladesh looking for a steady future, people from nearby Assam escaping from tribal upheavals and political chaos, matters of rootedness complicated by prejudice, all of which overtake molested women or even missing women.

The space in Missing, one room that holds the turmoil of the outside world, is counterpointed by the tensions between the characters and complicated by Nayan's blindness. Despite the undercurrent of urgency, Missing moves at the pace of every day life spread over a week where blanks have to be filled in in both words as in Tushi's and Kabir's cases and in life. Or perhaps the gaps in the words are indicative of the gaps in life because certainly there is no warmth in Nayan and Kobita's marriage.

In the end is it a story of a wife's disappearance or a man's blindness – or are they ultimately the same thing?



*Anjana Basu has to date published 7 novels and 2 books of poetry. The has BBC broadcast one of her short stories. Her byline has appeared in Vogue India, Conde Nast Traveller, Outlook and Hindu Blink.*



# THE WW AND THE CW

By Subhash Chandra



*Subhash Chandra retired as Professor of English from Delhi University. He has published four books of criticism, several research articles as well as short stories in Indian and foreign journals. His latest collection of stories Not just another story has been published in January 2017 by LiFi Publications New Delhi.*

His life had been peaceful, stable and ordinary. But of late he had begun to be troubled by the ordinariness of his existence: no laurels, no distinctions, no honours! He felt like one of the million ants that come out in droves from the kitchen crevices holding their eggs in their tiny invisible mouths and moving zigzag.

But what to do? Honours are not lying around to be picked up. He was not in teaching, so no 'Professor' as prefix to his name, nor was he in the army and hence 'Captain' or 'Major' was out; 'Doctor' got out of his reach when he flunked the medical entrance test.

But the social media, LOOKUP, cheered him. Making his life extraordinary was within his reach! He could use 'Author' before his name. Yes, that was the way to go. And he had the potential, he thought, as he had published a fable in the college magazine about the protagonist's friendship with a Dalit boy. The story had ended with the explicit message, lest the dull missed it: 'Lord God is our creator. So, we're all brothers.'

He was now a wannabe writer (WW). Making his life extraordinary was within his reach. He would be known as Author.

He joined LOOKUP and got a celebrity writer (CW) to be his guide and mentor. The CW's Profile announced twenty published novels, creative writing lectures at institutes, and several interviews given by him. His posts garnered hundreds of Likes and adulatory comments. The WW noticed, the 'Likes' were never less than a hundred, and the comments as many.

Wow! He was lucky. He had got the right guide!

#

"Read," spoke the celebrity writer.

He was rather serious. No issues with that. The WW had expected such a celebrity writer to be serious. But he was stingy with words. So, the WW

had to prod him to answer questions.

"And?"

"Read."

"And?"

"Read."

"For how long, Sir?"

The CW quickly raised one finger, got up abruptly, and scraped the chair noisily, deftly syncing the sound with his rumbling stomach, and left the room. The WW conjectured about the period for reading. Did he mean one week? One month? Or one year?

He ordered from Amazon all the novels by the CW and read them with full concentration. No great shakes. But he was uncertain of their literary value. Maybe they were too subtle for him.

Then he carefully went through the current bestsellers which he had great difficulty in choosing because every other novel screamed its best-seller status on top of the cover page.

#

After one year.

"Sir, I have read all your books."

An approving smile flickered on the CW's face.

"Good ... That's good."

"And many bestsellers too."

The CW ignored this bit.

"Now what, Sir?"

"Look for plots."

"Where?"

"Everywhere."

"For example?"

"Under my chair ... and yours, in the corners of this room and your home" said the CW. Then suddenly he burst into a guffaw.

The WW was perplexed; also disconcerted but waited for some more gems to drop.

"At unusual places, sir, ... unusual places," said the CW, restoring his facial features to the status-quo-ante.

"Such as, Sir?"

"Brothels, lunatic asylums, jails and .... Plots for stories are scattered there."

The WW was hugely impressed. He began chronologically and paid a visit to a brothel. In a week's time, his wife filed a petition for divorce. He recalled he had fleetingly seen a vaguely familiar face at the kotha.

"Sir, my wife has left me."

The CW gave a wry smile. "Life is a game in which the loser takes all," he said sagely.

On his way back home, the WW found himself nodding. "I guess he's right. And he has such deep, philosophical thinking!"

The next he went to a mental asylum.

The Director asked him to meet the doctor on duty. "He'll help you."

The doctor on duty advised him, "Don't get too close to an inmate."

But how was it possible to write a story without knowing what went on in the mind of an insane person.

An orderly accompanied him, but halfway he slipped away. The WW approached a man who was sitting on a parapet with a frown.

"Hello Sir."

The inmate eyed him suspiciously.

"I want to interview you."

A conversation had already been playing in the inmate's mind. His Uncle was saying to him, "If you go to the court, I'll screw you." The uncle had misappropriated all his property after his father's death.

Somewhat similar sounding 'interview' and 'screw' caused displacement and substitution in his mind. He let out a splitting scream and lunged at the WW, grabbing his throat in his iron-grip.

"You bastard! Got you at last. Will choke the life out of you!"

The WW wriggled hard and managed a muffled shriek. Screams were common at the asylum and nobody paid any attention to them. However, providentially, a passing male nurse rescued the WW, but not before the madman had banged his head against a wall.

The WW walked out of the building with a bandaged head and a prescription advising pain-killers and some pathological tests including an MRI and CT scan.

"You see, an MRI and a CT scan are a must. Your head is involved. If it is not properly examined, diagnosed and treated, you might land up here," said the doctor with a wink and a twisted smile – he had suffered from Bell's palsy.

The WW walked out of the building, sweating and in pain.

#

One more place. The jail.

Unbeknownst to him the WW got to talking to a drug-lord with two murders, a few extortions and three kidnappings to his credit.

"How did you get here?"

The jailbird scrutinized him searchingly. "Will you come again?"

"Yes, if necessary."

"Good. I'll tell you my story then. Take this," he said, handing him a folded piece of paper.

"What do I do with it?"

"Ring up the phone number mentioned in it and read out the message to the guy."

When WW came out of the jail-building, he read the paper. It was an extortion threat to a well-known builder. He shredded the paper into small pieces and broke into a sprint.

#

EPILOGUE: The WW learnt later that the CW had self-published all his novels and the links did not function. Soon after LOOKUP blocked the CW, as he had created a hundred fake Profiles.



## TWO POEMS

*By Anita Nahal*



### Metamorphosis and Catharsis

Yes, the mind  
Is roofed with a hat  
From the games of the street, and yes, the mind  
Is aware those games can allude to the rodent and the cat.  
Who is who? Life will always compel to see  
Just open the eyes, decipher, don't always flee  
Just wait, those tender yet strong  
Will sing a fearless and tearful song,  
That many cannot or won't apprehend  
But it's in the step, the walk, the style  
Nothing in it is meant to be a guile  
All things, thoughts, shed and rise, again & again, in the end.  
We all can be the rodent or the cat  
It depends upon the game, though all need not be tit for tat.

*Anita Nahal, poet, flash fiction writer, children's books author, diversity & inclusion consultant, has also served as Assistant Provost for International Programs, Howard University, DC, and Associate Professor of History, Sri Venkateswara College, New Delhi, India.*



### How Can I Pretend?

I heard a person who could not see  
Talk about how different cultures made choices... I thought,  
"How could she speak so eloquently  
about choices? What about colors? Or the patterns on fabric?  
Or the shades of make-up? Or the matching of socks?  
My own bias was clutching my hand tight and pulling this and that way.

And then color spoke to me,  
"Is it possible to know how any person makes choices?  
We can never walk in another's shoes  
So why pretend we know how to..."

No better place to know oneself than in the colorless  
Because color is an artificial construct.



### SHASTRAM – A LIVING ART

*by Kabilan Krishnasamy*

As one of the world's oldest dance traditions, classical Indian dance is a living art. Embodying religion, philosophy, and mythology, the classical dances of India offer worldly beauty and a spiritual, and sometimes humorous, experience for the audience.

While Indian classical dancing has been widely known for their rich traditions, their appeal to the mainstream westernised and modernised audience has been in some ways limited. Fortunately, Shastram has emerged as the first to be providing a platform for this appeal to be revitalised through its innovative and experimental ideas.

On 7th April 2018 I had the pleasure of enjoying the rare delights of Shastram which combines modern theatre and film production in tracing the magical lives of Indian classical dancers. The conceptualisation of Shastram by Ghirija Jayaraj is not only unique but one that has captured the attention of its audience particularly for fusing classical Indian dance with modern and western choreography and dance styles. Ghirija must certainly be commended for her outstanding imagination, creativity and execution of Shastram. The music, screenplay, backdrop stage

setting, and lightings were an enhancement to the show.

Shastram unravels the fictional stories of four dancers: Abharana, a temple dancer set in 16th century Orissa, Meenakshi a Mohiniattam

Druv, who in my view is an exceptional artist who very elegantly and brilliantly combines classical Indian dancing and contemporary dance forms. Dressed in loose-fitting dark clothing, his moves were confident, precise, fluid and frequently unexpected. At one point, I have never seen any other Indian artist able to capture the essence of Shiva's dance so vividly. One can only say here that the vision of Shiva dancing became a hauntingly surreal timeless experience. The intense energy Druv generated within himself propelled the audience into a dimension of great power, awe and wonderment.

The rhythm and melody became livelier as the show continued. One of the most memorable dance pieces was by Satya for her outstanding Kuchipudi dance. With her bare feet beating along with the music against the stage, the rhythm and melody became more tactile to the audience. Accompanied by the colourful costumes and adornments, the dancer herself against the vibrant

a modern day Kuchipudi dancer with a dream, set in 2016.

The journey of each of these dancers is narrated through the main character





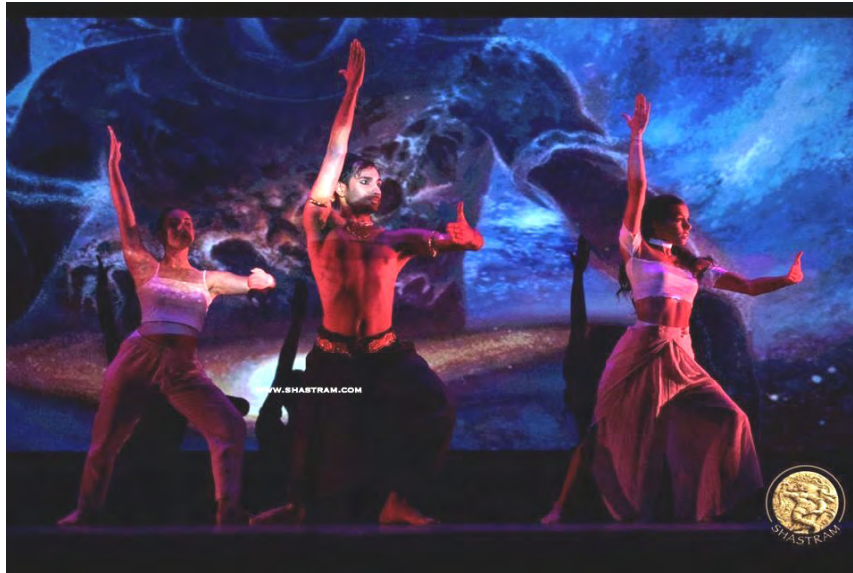
hands, and the dance posture and steps were so elegant one might imagine she is conjuring the spirit of the goddess Kanyakumari. Satya's performance was one that hailed tradition, and it was a breath of fresh air.

Classical fragrance in Bharatanatyam permeated the air through Ghirija's artistic traditions and genuine involvement, which enabled her to evolve a style which vividly captured the beauty of the culture of the past and exhibit it as a living art form in the present. By the excellence of her Bharatanatyam

Ghirija established an individual style and movement in her dance form which were mutually enriching. Ghirija is a stunning dancer; her fluid, beautifully expressive face clearly telegraphs the character's feelings while her posture easily shifts through complicated rhythms and balances. Her strength lies in the maturity and dignity that she lends to her Bharatanatyam style. Grace pervades her movements. Ghirija's commitment and sincerity were evident as was the conviction of purity in her art form.

It is often said the Odissi style of dancing is "a way of life", and true enough Abharana's dancing left not only an indelible imprint in our minds but also transported us into a world of timelessness. Odissi dance today, has established itself to be the most fascinating dances of the world. By virtue

of its sheer beauty, Odissi has been able to win the hearts of all those who witness it. Although the appeal is often emanated through its sculptural poses and imbibed spirit of the dance,



Odissi is spontaneously catered to move any soul that the dance is not meant for the human beings but for the gods. Aabharana's dance was so incredibly



filled with emotions and feelings for Lord Jagannath that transpired to be devotionally uplifting and enchanting. In fact, one could experience her transfer from this world of human bonds to the spiritual world, experienced within her mind meditation and dance.

Mohiniyattam may be viewed as one of the toughest disciplines mainly

because it demands a great deal of patience and creativity as a dancer. Mohiniattam was once the domain of Devadasis or temple dancers who have been held in great esteem. Meenakshi's

Mohiniattam captures gentle sensuality, linking her movements with fluidity. The movements of a Mohiniattam may be slow-paced but Meenakshi's dancing was in sync with the rhythm. In a costume that is elegant, simple and tasteful, Meenakshi renders a picture of the eternal woman with gentle grace. Meenakshi's sweet enjoyment in her commitment to

dance was a joy to behold.

The evening of Shastram was a masterpiece. Each of the 'Shastra dance' was simply exquisite in immersing the audience with their own mood, style and theme. The facial expressions and postures kept me entranced and invested in the various stories told by the dancers. This particular nuance proved powerful, unexpected, and was a testament to the transformational artistry of the performers.

*Kabilan is from Perth, Australia and is the producer of the local community radio Tamil Cholai 95.3FM which operates under the aegis of the Tamil Association of Western Australia.*





# BORDER THOUGHTS

By Dawood Ali McCallum

Pakistan's stadium at the Wagah Border is half the size of India's, in which we sit. Even so it is sparsely populated. Over there a gangly youth in trainers, white pyjamas and green kurta dances a limited routine: running toward the border as though charging with a rifle and bayonet then throwing out his arms toward India in disgust. A couple of spins, an adap to the spectators left and right, marching back towards the flag, stopping, saluting then repeating the whole, over and over.

After about 30 minutes of this, he is joined by a one-legged man similarly attired who leaps, spins and jumps whilst holding aloft the Pakistan flag. Loudspeakers on both sides try unsuccessfully to drown one another out with martial music and patriotic songs whilst body armoured Special Forces stare, basilisk-like at one another through dark glasses across the barbed wire. Gloved fingers on triggers, dehumanised, weaponised physical perfection, statue-still, although the film-star handsome Pakistani Ranger nearest to us can't resist giving his glorious moustache the occasional twirl.

Amid all the hubbub and hullabaloo it is easy to forget that this really is a border crossing. A young Dawoodi Bohra family, the woman in a ridah carrying a toddler in her arms, approach from the Indian side, an aged Punjabi in a turban pushing their luggage on at trolley. They cross into Pakistan where an aged Punjabi in a muslim cap takes their trolley. A woman in hijab crosses in the opposite direction. Then a somewhat bemused Japanese backpacker follows her into India. These travellers are watched in polite silence until the tourist waves tentatively at the crowd and receives a resounding cheer and a round of applause.

The show on the Indian side starts up and is of an entirely different nature and scale. Thousands of spectators are here to be entertained and are only too willing to put their hearts and souls and sweat and voices into it. Many sport 'I love my India' baseball caps. Some have the flag

painted on their cheeks. A warm up artist, all in white, fires up the crowd. Every 'Hindustani!' is answered by a roared out 'Zindabad!' and echoed by a thinner 'Pakistan Zindabad!' from the other side. Women in the stands are invited to come down and form up into rows six abreast. The first line are given big flags and told to run towards the gates with them where a female soldier sends them back to hand their flags to the next six and

stani warriors receive almost as big a cheer as the Indians.

The high kicking, stamping, the dragged-out orders, the macho posturing, the gate slamming proceed with camp histrionics, choreographed more minutely than a ballet. It's fantastic. Tattoo, theatre and performance art at its best, so why am I finding it all so ineffably sad?



I am struck by the incredible amount of cooperation which must have gone in to making this performance possible. Actions, stances, postures and gestures synchronised to the second. I realise just how similar the people on either side are to one another. Languages, food, problems, priorities. As the show ends with a final,

so on and so on. There's lots of cheering, confusion, the odd collision on the turn of but it's all pretty jolly.

Again, the call goes out for female volunteers. The centre of the stadium fills with several hundred women dancing, smiling, laughing, forming circles and groups, taking selfies. The propaganda may not be subtle, but the message is clear: There's a lot more of us on this side of the border and we're having a great deal more fun. In

brief handshake between the officers commanding on either side I am left profoundly moved. For I saw not confrontation but a demonstration of what could be done by two armies which a few decades ago were one, working together.

The image that has stayed with me is of those stony faced elite warriors staring at one another, hour after hour. So similar. So different. So young. I imagine all the other young men huddled on glaciers, scorched in deserts, bivouac-ed on plains and sweltering in swamps similarly staring one another down. I think of their predecessors whose blood and bones have cemented into place this arbitrary border drawn by a long dead foreign hand. I realise that, despite the obscene cost in precious lives and scarce resources, the politicians of both nations find their neighbour a great deal more useful as a potent threat than as potential friend.



the stands men are up and gyrating whilst above us all, a huge billboard image of the commanders of the BSF ('India's First Line of Defence') glowers down into Pakistan.

The centre of the stadium clears once more. Gloriously uniformed troops appear to a huge roar and fast-march, highly stepping toward the border. Across the border big men all in black mirror their movements. The Indian crowd is so fired up with patriotic bonhomie the Paki-

*Dawood Ali McCallum is the author of a series of novels published in India and the UK. Learn more at [www.dawoodalimccallum.com](http://www.dawoodalimccallum.com)*



### A REVIEW OF POEMS BY USHA KISHORE

By Yogesh Patel

This collection is a proud yield of the Word Masala Awards ceremony in the House of Lords in 2016. Todd Swift, an internationally acclaimed poet and a publisher, announced on the day that he would undertake a publication of Kishore's work on a recommendation from the Word Masala Foundation. He stood out as the real champion of the diaspora poetry while most of the others shied away. Usha Kishore's new collection, *Immigrant*, fulfils Lord Parekh's point made at the ceremony for a need to chronicle the diaspora experience before it is lost as the next generation moves on to their own experience devoid of the strong feeling of duality as being both Indian and British. Kishore recurrently reminds us of the 'postcoloniality' as she tries to redefine it. Here is what she has to say in 'Journeying into a foreign tongue':



*Immigrant*  
by Usha Kishore  
Eyewear Publishing  
ISBN 978-

*A new horizon opens, and I  
dressed in borrowed robes,  
journey into a foreign tongue.  
A child, holding the hand of postcoloniality...*

Usha Kishore, born in India, like many British-Indian writers, has a different perspective as an immigrant to those Indians who were born here or came from East Africa. The latter sub-group of the Indian diaspora, which includes me, have African experience mixed in to spawn a palette of triple identity. One can almost say that the postcoloniality of these two different groups – leaving out those born here – have distinct and unique converging journeys to one focal point: A Britain still struggling to find its own identity or a place in the postcolonial era. Kishore captures her situation in her poem entitled 'Postcolonial poem' through sharply cut verses with abrupt sentences leading us to the same present-day experience of both groups:



*First,  
I come. I see. I conquer.  
I teach you your language.  
She is a school teacher. Then,  
You mumble my name  
in your colonial tongue.*

The last verse reveals prevailing 'colonial' attitudes where the host still living in the past demands that the immigrants (as Kishore puts it in the title of her poem 'Bastard children of the British Raj') adopt English as their mother tongue minus accents. (There is an extraordinary poem by Debjani Chatterjee at <http://www.skylarkpublications.co.uk/debjani.html> to illustrate this point). Yet, these hypocrites making a noise about the current crop of migrants wouldn't indulge in properly learning the immigrant's name. So, the immigrant becomes a name whispered – not worth learning – just as her brushed-aside plight dismissed.

This duality is not only the internal coexistence of the two, but also as above, accentuated in the outer social and political spaces as yet another. This is explored more in her poem 'I am not one, but two'.

*I am not one, but two. I live  
on both sides of the sky,  
My past seeps  
into my present;  
India bleeds in my veins; England  
paints my feathers with her mists.*

Everyone who lives a split life, there and here, in the outer and inner spaces, has a problem in that the literati in the West will never be able to appreciate a tearing tug any immigrant lives through, expressed below in terms of language in the first line of Kishore's poem 'Postcolonial sonnet':

*I do not have a language to claim as my own*

Daljit Nagra in his collection *British Museum* takes a step further highlighting three heads he has to wear: Punjabi, Punglish and English! Another sad aspect to add here is that the immigrant gets also dismissed by those back home. While, still, an immigrant in Croydon waiting for the bus gets murdered in an act of racist violence, shockingly the celebrated poets in India writing in English seem perhaps to think that the issue of racism is dead and has almost no relevance or meaning as quoted from the preface by Keki Daruwalla in Saleem Peeradina's *Heart's Beast*: He writes, "He doesn't milk the 'exile' bit, once a common theme of diaspora writing." Should one not write about the 'exile bit' as a real current currency of experience? Why is it milking if it is a current ongoing experience? Is one supposed to shut up as it doesn't affect them? When enough is enough? Who decides? Who is the judge? The debate remains open. Kishore's collection is anything but milking of this sort; today's harsh reality which has not ended as some would assume or find it boring.

For that reason, works by Daljit Nagra, Phinder Dulai and Usha Kishore are important, daring and quite challenging. They map out poets' honesty to current reality. They are reinventing the narrative.

One must not assume that Kishore's poetic craft has fallen victim to the narrative in this collection distilled into all things diasporic immigration. On the contrary, as Pound commanded to make the language anew, she beautifully rescues the clichéd language and refreshes it. Watch Enoch Powell's famous 'rivers of blood' getting renewed in these lines from the poem 'Immigrant';

*Its laughing avalanches dissolve into the rivers  
of my blood, its westerlies echo the swirling cadences  
of my soul, adding yet another story to the history*

*of migrant birds.  
Kishore is essentially a feminist poet at heart, hence she is not missing an  
opportunity to splash that colour here!  
I feel its goddesses in the feminine flow  
of my form, I whisper its twilight prayers  
in my sleep. My country grows with its roots.*

*And in 'Chanting the Vedas'  
I chant the Vedas, I invoke a Dawn  
Goddess, who unveils her bosom  
unabashedly to the Sun God.*

Kishore enjoys an excellent command on Sanskrit and edits Sanskrit literature for Muse India. Her scholarly background allows her to write with authenticity in this collection on Shiva, Pondicherry, Kali, Fish Avatar, Chanting the Vedas and Fire Mantras, as in some of the titles of her poems.

One of the poet's two lives in 'I am not one, but two' is being an Indian Hindu. The expunged British Raj may ooze romantically in the psyche of the imperial mentality, but for an Indian who has left the homeland, politics and the political aftermath mingled with nostalgic Indian patriotism brought to England in a suitcase, retains a distinct voice. Kishore is no exception. Therefore, there are poems in this collection entitled 'Bastard children of the British Raj', 'Jallianwala Bagh', 'Partition 1947', 'Indo-Pak war 2001, and Indo-Pak War 2016'. The *Immigrant's* other identity is thus asserted in the nostalgia in a poem entitled 'Where do I belong?' as a question. For most immigrants, nostalgia assumes nationhood in the confines of their home and social life dislocated in the host nation.

Bollywood (Indian film industry identity bastardised for the West) is hardwired in the Indian culture. It is one thing Indians abroad have found to be part of their international identity. Kishore's poem 'Bollywood on the underground' takes a cue from it. However, Kishore misses here a trick by omitting the game of cricket, yet another cultural cog of Indian identity.

Rishi Dastidar has whirled up our grasp of variations on refugees, immigrants and expats in his very short poem!

*I am an expat.  
You are a refugee.  
They are a migrant.*

By using the word 'immigrant', Kishore has brought a further distinction to this etymologically changing word-set. Usage of the word migrant is more likely to evoke the meaning in the context of a Syrian refugee crisis, while the immigrant may connect more to Asian and African immigrants from the past. A question: When do they become expats? Not forgetting that the Brits are always expats, never immigrants or migrants? In that sense, these are the poems by the immigrant and not a migrant or a refugee or an expat.

*Who can resist such delightful lines in this collection?  
My grandfather  
Taught me mantras  
That I fell into, like ghee  
So, let this collection be an addition as ghee to your bookshelf  
or a required reading.*

*Yogesh Patel is a poet from the UK. A former editor of Skylark, he currently runs Word Masala Foundation and Skylark Publications UK to promote the diaspora poets. By profession, he is an optometrist and an accountant.*





# A DOYENNE OF DANCE

*By Rehana Hyder*

It was the most spectacular show seen in Islamabad, perhaps in Pakistan – ‘Hazon Khwahishen: A Thousand Yearnings’: Indu Mitha’s farewell to the stage. It proved not merely the stuff of dreams, or the magic of music and dance, but something straight out of ‘A Thousand and One Nights’.

The atmosphere was electric at the Lok Virsa (Folk Heritage) Auditorium and the Pakistan National Council of the Arts Theatre in August last year as excited spectators of all ages congregated at the entrance. Ably introduced by the heads of both entities – Dr Fauzia Saeed, shahgird (disciple) of Maharaj Kathak and Syed Jamal Shah, graduate of Lahore’s prestigious National College of the Arts – Indu Mitha’s petite but powerful presence brought the house down and the audience to its feet for a standing ovation that seemed unstoppable.

It was a focused fusion of genres and styles across the spectrum of South Asian dance. The classical Bharatanatyam displayed by the stellar students was stunningly offset by the input of folk dance exhibited by Asfandyar Khattak. He perhaps won the most applause on proclaiming that “This is the first time my father has watched me perform with my ‘ghungroos’ (bells) on.”

I first met Begum Indu Mitha in the 1980s when my parents retired from diplomatic service to Islamabad. Her husband, the distinguished General AO

Mitha founded the Pakistan Army’s elite Special Services Group (SSG), and was with my father at the Indian Military Academy Dehra Dun in 1941-42.

She was a striking figure, carrying the weight of her formidable reputation

Rajput forebears also converted to Christianity. Reginald is well known to readers of Confluence magazine.

On her moving with the future General Mitha to Pakistan, India lost a brilliant exponent of Bharatanatyam. This was

recounted to me with charm and pride by Uncle Mitha on a visit to my parents. My father, who encouraged me to seek Baba Maharaj Kathak’s tutelage, instructed me to always touch Auntie Indu’s feet likewise which is the established protocol between shahgird to ustaad (expert or ‘master of’).



as Pakistan’s principal Guru of Bharatanatyam as gracefully as she danced, choreographed, and taught. She wore an orange silk sari with a delicate gold border, her smiling face framed with a youthful chutiya (braid) and in classes is likewise simply yet elegantly attired in cotton saris in rainbow colours, always with delicate accessories to match.

Born into a family of Brahmins converted to Christianity, she was inspired by the magic of this complex classical dance in South India performed by the sylph-like Rukmini Devi, whom she recalls with greet respect. Much of Indu’s youth was spent in Delhi, and with her father Professor GC Chatterjee of Government College in Lahore, with which city she shares a common heritage with the eminent writer and classical dance critic Reginald Massey whose

India’s loss was Pakistan’s gain. Throughout her husband’s career and postings across country, Indu taught delighted young girls the various stages of the dance, gathering around her generous and gifted persona a following which would include the inhabitants of the foremost havelis (mansions) of Lahore, the Sufi-suffused city of Data Sahib, just as did Maharaj Ghulam Hussain Kathak, her compatriot from Bengal.

Her daughter and pupil Tehreema, based in Washington DC where she teaches, has been mesmerising audiences on her visits home and elsewhere. She is, like her mother, among the world’s leading Bharatanatyam dancers. Indu Mitha has trained young women of various nationalities who are carrying on her tradition, dancing and teaching around the globe: Lucia Nayyar in Spain; and



others in Russia, France, and Holland inter alia.

Attending her classes was both enlightening and enjoyable. Though not her chosen school, the Kathak one learnt from her was unique in style. Maharaj would say of her: “Indu Mitha, wah! Kya grace hae” (“Indu Mitha – Oh! What grace!”) Indeed, she held him likewise in high regard. Aunty Indu never took her eyes off us, reciting the ‘bol’ and controlling the ‘taal’ with her ‘manjeera’, and rising to show us how to do the difficult. She made it seem to flow, with or without the accompaniment of harmonium and tabla. It was the sort of camaraderie created in Maharaj’s classes, a charmed circle.

Her foremost trainee resident in Pakistan, now a master trainer herself, is the similarly diminutive Amna Mawaz whose ‘arangetram’ (debut performance) in Islamabad at the PNCA and solo exhibition at the LitFest enthralled all onlookers. On either side of her stand Feriyal Aslam and Zahra Khalid, both Fulbright scholars. With PNCA and Lok Virsa, it was the US Educational Foundation under its suprema Ms Rachel - and the Asian Study Group led by Parveen Malik - that sponsored and supported these events. Amna here and Tehreema abroad are, vis-a-vis Indu Mitha, what Facih ur Rehman has been in relation to Maharaj. To watch either perform a ‘tillana’ (as Yameema Mitha explains, the Carnatic musicians’ version of ‘tarana’) is to imagine oneself in Nirvana or Firdaus.

Until relatively recently, Indu taught children from tiny-tot stage dance, as well as courtesy, culture, and country-love, at her daughter’s uniquely-named school, Mazmun e Shauq (Towards Appreciation).

These are the pupils who, with PNCA and Lok Virsa expertise, enacted with her star students the amazing performance witnessed in tribute to their marvellous mentor. Bewitched, we entered – if only for an hour or two, but remained spellbound – the magical world of Rakhs



and Mausiqi (Dance and Music) of Indu Mitha, whose impact on classical dance in Pakistan, like that of Maharaj Kathak, and of Sheema Kirmani (Odissi), has been nothing short of iconic.

“Aap sab ne mujhe hairaan kar diya hae!” (“You have all amazed me!”) said a visibly touched Induji on acknowledging this extraordinary accolade. Verily, sights unseen in our supposedly uncultured capital: spectators all but falling off ledges, lining every available aisle and filling every available space in major

auditoria, practically carpeting the floors. Surely this, along with the rousing return of Coke Studio, was a most spontaneous celebration of – and an aspiration, even a prayer – for a positive, progressive, and culturally vibrant Pakistan on its 70th birthday.

*Rehana Hyder who was born in London and educated at Oxford hails from a diplomatic family and has lived in many countries. She now resides in Islamabad, Pakistan.*



# A FORAY INTO THE LIFE OF THE POET

*Based on an email-interview with Jean Arasanayagam*

*By Shalomi Daniel*

I was first introduced to Jean Arasanayagam through a powerful poem woven with dexterity of a Ruined Gopuram set against “white sands and palmyrah fronds” and a “turquoise seas bright with morning sun” as I sat in a sunlit classroom, reading avidly, the skill of the poet evinced by the vivid picture the words painted before my mind’s eye.

On 26th May, 2018, Jean Arasanayagam’s most recent work, a collection of poems titled ‘The Life of the Poet’, won the prestigious Gratiaen Award for 2017. This award is the latest of many awards and accolades the acclaimed writer has won over the years. She has received a Doctor of Letters awarded by Bowdoin College, Maine, the Premchand Award granted by the Sahitya Akademi India, the Lifetime Achievement Award the Sahityaratne 2017, and numerous National Awards including an award given by Sri Lanka Publisher Sirisumana Godage and the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation. Arasanayagam has also been an International Writer in Residence at the University of Exeter, at the Rockefeller Centre, Bellagio and in Iowa.

Jean Arasanayagam, whose linguistic prowess has earned her multiple awards, has over the years built up a literary legacy that will sustain and nourish generations to come.

Arasanayagam has been wielding her pen since the young age of twelve, when she wrote her first long poem. From then on, the pen has not lain still. A student of Girls’ High School, Kandy, Arasanayagam’s writing as well as her award-winning streak began as a young student, when year after year, she would win the Sunethra Wickremasinghe Poetry Prize in school.

Arasanayagam appreciates the awards and accolades she has received over years, viewing them as an affirmation that readers have found her work to be of immense value and meaning, across the world. Speaking of her most recent and award-winning work “The Life of The Poet”, Arasanayagam says that she “felt intuitively and instinctively that this body of poems would be a coherent collection of varied themes with their connective links to the title I envisaged”.

From a very tender age, it is apparent that Arasanayagam saw and heard poetry wherever she went, from the crowded bus stands to the lush paddy fields of her childhood. Speaking of the ubiquity of poetry, Arasanayagam emphasises that “you can find poetry everywhere; you create it as you breathe”.

Arasanayagam chooses to describe her childhood as the “unfolding of daily revelations and miracles that have given me insights”. She fondly recalls as one of her most cherished memories

“the Edenic garden and the thorn-less rose my father created for me in the house on the hill in the provincial township of Kadugannawa”. Akin to her literary works, her life has been resplendent with colour and vibrancy, as she recalls the “Bali ceremonies, parties, picnics, music, friends both young and old” and above it all, her parents who showered young Jean with love and guidance that



has undoubtedly impacted her life and writing. Referring to her parents as the ‘family historians’, Arasanayagam shares of how the stories they relayed played an instrumental role in shaping her identity and enabling her to take cognizance of and reflect on her rich heritage, as she says of “Dutch Burgher extraction, belonging to colonial bloodlines”.

Speaking of the themes under which she writes, she states that there are many themes, especially those that are based on the history of Sri Lanka that she has felt compelled to write about. Her Dutch Burgher ancestry has greatly influenced her writing and has led her to concentrate on themes such as colonialism in the context of post-colonialism, lineage, birth-right and bloodlines. This is also evident in her most recent work “The Life of the Poet”. Arasanayagam’s writing has also focused on a wide range of other themes such as travel, gender, ethnicity, war and violence, the Sri Lankan war, nature, environment and the exploitation and abuse of animals.

For Arasanayagam, writing is an indivisible part of her; it is an outlet through which she channels her experiences, thoughts, feelings and emotions. “I write because it is an inborn and inspirational, indeed visionary and revelatory happening within oneself” she says, adding that she feels the need to highlight through her writing everything that impacts the world in which she lives. Thus, writing for her, is also a means of addressing issues in society, in line with her firm belief that a writer should be firmly grounded in reality and always “fearless in the exposé of the truth”.

Creativity and writing are not just a part of Jean Arasanayagam’s life, but are in fact an

integral part of the entire Arasanayagam household. Jean Arasanayagam’s husband Thiyagarajah Arasanayagam and their twin daughters, Devasundari and Parvathi Arasanayagam are also writers. Thiyagarajah Arasanayagam is the recipient of the State Literary Award for his play ‘The Intruder’ in 1986, the 2015 Gratiaen Award for his unpublished manuscript of a collection of poetry ‘White Lanterns: Vesak 2011’, and was previously shortlisted for the Gratiaen Award for a collection of stories titled ‘Singing of the Angels’ in 2009.

While Jean Arasanayagam has faced numerous challenges during the course of her long and illustrious writing career, Arasanayagam has always remained undaunted, and the confident and brave spirit of this prolific writer cannot be better summed up than in her own words: “I am no Don Quixote – no, never – I do not tilt at windmills – I face every single challenge and try to conquer vulnerability. I do not toe the line.”

Arasanayagam has not confined herself to writing and has dabbled and excelled in many other artistic pursuits as well. She enjoys painting, drawing and sketching, belongs to the Young Artists’ Group and has exhibited her paintings and prints in Sri Lanka, Commonwealth Exhibitions in the UK, in the USA, Paris, Brazil and Hong Kong. She also possesses an ear for music – both singing and playing the piano, having being part of both her school and university choirs.

Arasanayagam also reveals that there is a thespian in her as she has enjoyed acting as well as producing plays. She recalls performing in “The Insect Play” (the Capek brothers) at the then University of Ceylon as well as producing plays at the English Teachers’ College, Panideniya and at St Anthony’s College, Kandy, where she served as a teacher.

Looking forward, readers can expect more literary and artistic masterpieces to come their way, as Arasanayagam decides to dedicate more of her time to writing, as she says she is driven by a ‘sense of urgency to complete my life’s work in all its diverse genres – poetry, fiction, drama, creative non-fiction, together with drawing and painting’. If her illustrious career is anything to go by, literary enthusiasts can rest assured that Jean Arasanayagam will attain her goal, further enhancing the rich legacy she has laid up.

*Shalomi Daniel is a lawyer practising in Sri Lanka. She enjoys reading and writing in her spare time.*





# AN INTERVIEW WITH BHUPINDER KUMAR MODI

*By Chaand Chazelle*

Bhupinder Kumar Modi, a Singapore based entrepreneur, industrialist, philanthropist and founder of: SINGAPORE FILM FUND, hails from a pedigree where innovation is in the genes. His proud father Gujar Mal, turned down the knighthood bestowed upon him by the British in 1945. Instead, he accepted a title of 'Rai Bahadur'. Begumabad, a city 50 KM north of Delhi was re-named- 'Modinagar', in honour of his father. He started a sugar mill when the British imposed a heavy duty on sugar as well as branching out in producing Vanaspati ghee, textile, provision of health and education.

Bhupinder Modi was sent to Scindia boarding School for 8 years in Gwalior. He obtained a degree in engineering from Banaras University. Later he got his MBA from California in 1972. He declined a job offer in USA, instead returning to India to start his own business. "My heart is in India and India is my heart. I started a business to manufacture 'Continental tyres' with German collaboration in a tent. Six months later, we moved into an office".

I met Dr Modi in Hyderabad film festival last year which he attended in order to receive an award. The film fraternity is eagerly waiting for his - Singapore Film Fund to produce quality films.

Six of his sisters were denied parental inheritance. He worked tirelessly from 1998-2006, to: 'persuade the Indian government to change the law of inheritance, so that everyone regardless of their gender should have equal share of inheritance. Unfortunately, gender conditioning happens from the very young age, we should transcend caste, colour, religion, gender and nationality. Both his daughters run big businesses such as Spice telecommunication.

He has several firsts to his credit: he manufactured the first Xerox machine in India, first copier, first computer, first mobile phone and now he is busy manufacturing electric scooter and electric car. He said, "I have lived in New York, LA and Beverly Hills, in the Middle East and in London for several years, I wanted to expand my horizons to understand the new world order. In the light of new changes, one has to align with changing times. Since I studied abroad,

we have to look at both sides of the globe, as to how businesses work".

Dr Modi is based in Singapore. His social consciousness made him take up the cause of housing for the young people. In Singapore, government owns 90% of the housing stock. He wants to change the housing law so that young people are eligible for housing at age 25 not 35 as the law stands now. He suggests that the government impose a condition that those who want housing must earn at least \$2000 a month.'



Author with Mr Modi

Modinagar is now called -Modi city. "We are building a 'Solar city. We have to live where there is less pollution. Autonomous cars (driverless?) not only will reduce pollution but noise too. In Singapore we are building a huge building with solar panels. Solar energy is cheaper than diesel and petrol. People who own industries 30 degrees either side of equator, are not willing to change and government attitude is of no help either".

"I passionately want to achieve peace in the world. All violence: social, national, political and all forms of violence should be eradicated. From a very young age I had this notion of - 'One World'. We are all connected. First of all we want to be happy and live healthy lives. What you put in your body: food, drink, clean air, all are important. I am a vegetarian. Humans could live beyond a centenary but we need peace in the world. The United Nations, created in 1945---- this five Nations body is a jungle and is spineless. Nations with power of veto act in their self-interest not for global welfare. More than 30 million people have since died around the world. We now live in a different world, we need to create a body, which is net-based and is not political but a body constituted of ordinary young people

under twenty, who can think big. They are more intelligent. The political world is still ambitious to acquire land, it has no value anymore. GDP does not depend on land. Old colonial powers like Britain ruled and exploited, treated the colonized people as sub-humans! But new technologies have now liberated us, we are virtually entering a new age-- I-cloud and mobiles have changed the world. People cannot be controlled anymore. Politicians play on people's greed, take from some and give to others. It's not government's money, it's people's money".

"I have created a body called: 'Global Peace Forum' and we already have a million members. I want it to be 100 million and more. Young people are fed up with how things are run, they want their voice heard. They want hope and a new direction, since gender and religion-based organisations are divisive; 80% of the world populace never have any say in world affairs. It's time their voice is heard. George Orwell desired socialist revolution to reconstruct society, Dr M want to restructure society".

"Our 'Singapore film Fund' will compete against Hollywood domination. Instead of Sci-fi or super heroes, I want strong stories to reveal history relevant to modern world which can impact future. I want human heroes."

"Ambitious women shouldn't have to live in fear of powerful men, it's a question of clarity, a simple yes or no. There shouldn't be confusion as to what a woman wants."

Dr. Modi is a warm and pleasant man, full of energy. I enjoyed my chat with him. His work towards gender equality, his desire to empower young and poor, his setting the Global Peace Forum and his focus on manufacturing electric cars to reduce pollution and also his efforts to use solar energy are admirable goals. Let's wait for hi Impact making films and see.

*Chaand Chazelle, who lives in London is a successful Writer/Producer/ Director/Actor and Broadcaster. Her poems have been published and she is now working on a novel. The title of her new screenplay is Stolen Goods.*



# ARTIFICIAL STUPIDITY IS A BIG THREAT TO HUMANITY

*By Anuj Kapoor*

I met a guy last week, Fredrick, whose father is an alcoholic, mother is perennially overworked and he himself was extensively bullied at school by older kids while he was growing up. Now as a 26 year old designer, he works hard to improve his family's lot while pursuing his career and trying to find a woman to have a meaningful relationship with.

He told me how his dad had always wanted to be an auto journalist but never succeeded at getting anywhere near a decent publication and was getting more and more depressed with age. His mom on the other hand was working herself to an early grave he thought. He wanted to help his dad get a shot at blogging about cars, get his mum some time off. He needed to make decent money to support himself and his family, but he also wanted to indulge his own passion for the arts by painting.

So 3 months ago he set up a studio for his family to work from and hang out with other artists and writers. At the studio he hoped that they would discuss the brutal truths of the world and hopefully find some purpose in their lives.

That to me demonstrated how intelligent Fredrick was, how deeply sympathetic and helpful to people around him he endeavoured to be and how hard he worked to make it all stick together. This ability to engage with real problems in a sustained, long term and constructive manner defines intelligence to me.

With all the chat about artificial intelligence, one is forced to examine situations like these and ask how deeply would a self-programming algorithm engage with the complex emotions, aspirations and limitations of humans? Are self-driving cars and semantic web applications intelligence? That an algorithm can predict when I want to buy a carton of milk is cool and useful, but surely, it's not worthy of rising to claim the descriptor 'intelligence'. If all that a

human being could do was these mundane tasks, one would call that person stupid not intelligent. What we have to contend with right now is artificial stupidity and not artificial intelligence. The day machine-learning can produce the complexity and degree of empathy and understanding that Fredrick

It might be harder to monetise an idea or invention with this kind of branding and perhaps produce less sensation, but for the wider world, it will serve much better to reduce the sensationalization and enhance the understanding of these things.

Don't get me wrong, to be able to produce Deep mind and Alpha Go is amazing and what those algorithms have done in defeating the world Chess and go champions by computing and deploying complex gaming moves is phenomenal and smart. Generating a random sequence of musical notes that can create a piece that is interpreted by humans as a symphony is also very cool, but it does not rise to intelligence. It is the same difference

as that between craft and art. Art requires understanding whereas craft remains a skill. In some cases, brilliant skill, but still not art. We have to be careful that when infinite monkeys with infinite typewriters produce the works of Shakespeare we do not infer that work to be a product of intelligence. The monkeys achieve that by sheer brute force of infinite trials. **Machine learning while not doing that, borders on achieving results by learning over time through doing some things quite like it.**

Survival strategies, empathy, creativity and understanding are essential to intelligence. I just don't think we're anywhere near that yet. I would vote Fredrick into any political office over any A.I. any day of the week. And let us not forget that requirements for political office are still at the lower end of human intelligence. In plumbing and purely technical crafts, yes machines could do a good job, like a hammer would with a nail.

I confess that I am afraid of Artificial Stupidity as a sharp tool, Very much so. Artificial intelligence, once it arrives, not so much.



possesses, I believe we will not really have a problem with A.I. That will also be the only day when machine learning should be elevated to claim the descriptor of Intelligence. Till then we should go with the term Artificial Stupidity as it is far easier to understand the challenges it poses when you have that as its calling card.

Semantics are important. The next generation of the internet, Web 3.0 is aimed at improving the semantic reading of pages by machine learning tools to enhance their reading of content and to improve searches, automate emails etc among others things. Semantic web will be the next quality thing in the 'inter-web' space. Which shows that the value of correct definitions, labels and titles is not lost on the tech community themselves who ascribe intelligence to these machines. However, I feel that we in the STEM fields often tend to give erroneous titles to things when it comes to branding new inventions. This really complicates matters in the public domain and public understanding. From global warming to Artificial intelligence if we hadn't been this trigger happy, we could have settled on 'Climate Change' a lot sooner and I therefore strongly suggest we go with Artificial stupidity or something along those lines for 'A.I.'

# INDIAN CINEMA'S HEADLONG PLUNGE INTO REALITY

*By Sunayana Panda*

After decades of depicting impossible love stories, accompanied with endless singing and dancing, Indian cinema has finally plunged headlong into reality. Look at the films released in the last three or four years and you will see that many of them are based on real stories. The most talked about films this week are two biopics. Both of them are about film stars. One is about the legendary South Indian actress Savithri who was the superstar reigning over the Tamil and Telugu film industries in the 1950s and 60s and the other is about Bollywood star Sanjay Dutt. The film on Sanjay Dutt will be released at the end of June but the trailer is out and the discussion about the film has started.

Film producers used to once proudly call themselves "dream merchants" because what they were selling was pure fantasy that could take the audience out of the grim reality of their lives but now the new lot want to catch reality by the neck because much has changed and there is no need to run away from reality. Not only is there an attraction for true stories but also a great desire to film the scenes in a realistic way. Every year now we have a few historical films and biopics among the new releases. This trend of biopics started with the life stories of men and women in the field of sports like Paan Singh Tomar, Milkha Singh, Mary Kom, M.S. Dhoni and has now moved on to the lives of film stars. Also, the historical films are made after long research into the details of the era they are going to depict.

This change in style and content did not happen overnight. It happened gradually and in stages over twenty years. With the arrival of television, the audience had an alternate source of entertainment and expected much more from cinema. Soon after that the urban Indian had access to satellite channels on TV which brought international films within easy reach and after a while the realism of Hollywood films changed the taste of the viewers. More and more Indians were educated and they could not be satisfied with only the simple stories of mainstream commercial films that were being made at that time. The new affluence changed Indian society and what they could accept or reject also changed.

Another step of change came when international production companies set up shop in India seeing what a giant market the country was. They had the money to invest in projects which were off the beaten track. One unsuccessful film was not going to make much difference to their financial standing. They brought some sort of discipline to a disorganized industry that had

long survived without any planning and which had been ruled by the whims and fancies of the stars. For the first time in decades scripts came in bound copies. This was in contrast to the practice of dialogues being written on the sets, minutes before the scenes were shot.

If films are being made to look as close to reality as possible then some part of the credit has to be given to the screenwriters. When a film is successful the producers acknowledge the contri-



bution of the writers. The characters created by them have many shades and speak the language appropriate to their milieu and class. Now it is not uncommon for the screenwriter to be interviewed on TV channels and being recognized by the public. And they are certainly better paid than the writers of the past.

There are now women directors who have brought their unique point of view and sensibilities. Women like Zoya Akhtar, Gauri Shinde, Nandita Das and Konkona Sen Sharma have given us films where the reality of Indian life is seen from an angle rarely seen before. The way they portray women, even minor characters, makes them as real as people we know in life.

This style of realistic film making is actually nothing new. This was the way films were made way back in the 1940s and 50s. Films were instruments of social change and they were progressive in their view of life. Now the films of the 1980s and 90s which were truly in bad taste are seen as a diversion that Indian cinema took for a while before coming back to the earlier path of artistic, socially relevant and meaningful films. The stories are works of fiction but we can see through them a world that is close to the reality in which they are set.

Making films based on real stories, of course, has come with a price. Whenever a historical film is made some group or the other has come up with objections and has followed it up with either violence and court cases. When a film was made on Jodhabai and Akbar some groups threw

stones at the cinemas where the film was being shown because they were offended by the story and last year before the release of "Padmavat", a film based on the story of Queen Padmini, film-makers and actors received death threats. People took offense even for a film on Mangal Pandey of the Sepoy Mutiny fame and also for a film on Emperor Ashoka about whom so little is known.

Generally, biopics are made on the life of people who are dead but in India several films have been made on the lives of people who are still living. Until now the public seemed to be happy to see these inspiring stories but right now the entertainment channels and newspapers are full of stories of how one of the daughters of Gemini Ganesan is furious about the way her father has been portrayed in the biopic "Mahanati" which is about the actress Savitri with whom he lived for fifteen years. The daughter claims her father was not the villain he is shown to be. Meanwhile many believe that what is shown in the film is close to the truth.

Music continues to play a part in Indian films but mostly the songs are in the background of a scene rather than sung by the characters of the story. A song is now placed in a scene to create a mood while the story goes on and the number of songs is fewer than before. The lyrics are often very ordinary words placed in no special order. The melodies of the past have long been replaced with a bhangra drum beat or a tune similar to western popular music where the lyrics are spoken rather sung. Old film songs continue to be popular on music channels though.

Indian cinema has indeed come a long way since the days when a critic in the UK had said, "Indian cinema is either Ray or rubbish". Although mainstream commercial films continue to exist now films are also being made in a style which is close to the European sensibility and they are being appreciated on an international level. Mani Ratnam had said this in London a few years ago: "What happened to Indian literature will also happen to Indian cinema. It will have a global audience". His prophecy is being fulfilled earlier than we thought.

*Sunayana Panda is a writer and an actress. She divides her time between London and Pondicherry in India. (picture attached)*



### IN DEFENCE OF MACAULAY AND HIS ILK

*By Reginald Massey*

For decades Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800 - 1859) has been reviled as a facist and a racist and the class of English speaking Indians whom he created have been disdained as 'Brown Sahibs' and 'Macaulay's illegitimates'. However, the time has come for wiser counsels to prevail. The poet-historian went to Calcutta in 1834 when he was appointed a member of the governor general's council and soon saw that India did not have a uniform or efficient system of education. Hindus concentrated on Sanskrit and Muslims concentrated on Arabic and Persian. Women were usually illiterate.

There was no 'useful learning' being taught in India and he was convinced that India deserved better.

He was an imperialist cast in the Roman mould who saw the British empire as a latter day Roman empire and thus Britain had to take up the 'white man's burden' and lead Indians to the modern age of reason and science. Incidentally, Macaulay was a child prodigy; at Cambridge he won the Chancellor's Gold Medal for Poetry and later wrote a notable tract against slavery.

In 1835 he published his *Minute on Indian Education* in which he wrote: 'It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information that has been collected from all the books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgement used in preparatory schools in England.' He was convinced that 'a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia.' This was perhaps a rather haughty over statement but it made its point and the Orientalists, the European scholars who were keen on Indian languages, were greatly offended. However, Lord William Bentinck, the governor general, agreed with Macaulay.

The Indian Penal Code was framed

by him and suttee was banned, the Thugs were liquidated and Persian was replaced with English and those Indians who were proficient in English had 'ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth which all the wisest nations of the earth have created and hoarded in the course of ninety genera-



tions'. It was Macaulay's intention to create a section of Indians who would 'form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern.' It could be argued that the feudal India of

Oriental despotism was dragged into the modern age. It is not widely known that Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772 - 1833), the father of the Indian Renaissance, supported Macaulay wholeheartedly. When the government proposed to set up a Sanskrit school in Calcutta, Roy opposed the idea on the grounds that the money would be better spent on an English medium school teaching science and other modern subjects. Later, Sir Sayeed Ahmed

Khan (1817 - 1898) who was an Islamic scholar realised that his community was being left behind because of a lack of English

and so he founded a college that became the Aligarh Muslim University.

It is worth recalling that leaders such as Gandhi, Jinnah and Nehru had mastered English and expressed themselves in English. Nehru's speech at the midnight hour when India became independent is considered to be one of the famous speeches in history. So far as I know Maulana Azad was the only leader who refused to speak in the language of the firanghis, the foreigners. Even in the Lok Sabha he spoke chaste Urdu but this caused many Southern MPs discomfort since they did not know Urdu. However, the philosopher Radhakrishnan, a Southerner, who became the president of India said that Britain's main legacies to India were Shakespeare, the Authorized Version of the Bible and the limited liability company.

English is not only the international language with it is also the interplanetary language. The American on the Moon spoke to us Earthlings in English. The emerging super-power China is spending vast sums on teaching its professional classes English. South Asia got English for nothing for which we have to thank Macaulay. Medical sciences, technology, engineering, and higher education in every discipline are taught in English. Today there are more English medium schools in India than they were in Raj times. Even cricket, the ever so English game, has now become almost a religion in South Asia. The upwardly mobile middle classes pay huge fees for their children to be educated in British type Indian public schools. The Brown Sahibs are multiplying and flourishing and are making their mark at the international level.

Those who are reading this essay are doing so because of English. Hence let us stand, raise our glasses and chant 'Four cheers for Macaulay and his ilk!'



### MEERA SANTORO

*By Devi Rajab*

As a young Durban born woman curtsies before the Queen she receives a great honour for her entrepreneurial skill in business. Had she stayed in South Africa would she have reached such great heights one wonders. Free of the constraints of race and gender, racial equity quotas, and restrictive job opportunities, Meera Singh Santoro soars above all expectation to reach that pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

I am privileged to have on my desk a 3D Santoro swing card. What is this? One may ask. And this would not be an unusual question. Few South Africans know the story behind this amazing multi million pound venture that was started in 1995 by a local South African born woman of Indian origin, Meera Singh Santoro and her Italian born husband Lucio Santoro. Driven by their desire to innovate and break new ground, Lucio and Meera embarked on the creation of a revolutionary, interactive, moving 3D greeting card collection that has won numerous design accolades including "Card of the Year", "Most Creative Use of Paper" and an "Art Director" award.

Meera's young parents Roy and Sheila Singh left SA in the late 60s in search of a better life for their three young children. Roy was a photographer and together with his wife Sheila (the daughter of an eminent medical doctor Dr Mistry who lived in Durban, South Africa), opened a little studio in central London. Meera recalls hard times when her father couldn't buy her a doll's house which she longed for. Instead he bought her doll's furniture. Perhaps this accounts for her fascination with children's toys which led to a multimillion sterling enterprise. So great was this achievement that SANTORO Licensing a division of the London based design house SANTORO, has been awarded The Queen's Award for Enterprise for International Trade 2018. It is the UK's most prestigious and highest accolade for International business success. "I have to practise to curtsy graciously before Her Majesty", says an excited Meera with the right amount of self-deprecating irreverence. She is a bubbly, unassuming woman who bounces into a room and enlivens the atmosphere with her personality. One would hardly ever say that she is the drive behind a huge international business endeavour that has caught the attention of even the Queen. Had she remained in South Africa she would never have attained such heights. Historically, Indians as an ethnic group were faced with a barrage of laws restricting their opportunity to

trade freely in the country of their birth. Under apartheid they were restricted to conduct trade in designated Indian areas while the prime trading sites were reserved for white merchants only. They often had to buy businesses in the name of white nominees.

On account of a lack of opportunities to live and work as bonafide citizens many Indians left SA to other shores in the UK and Canada. Meera's parents were among those who left South Africa to give their children a life, free from racial discrimination. In this respect Meera has soared

London asked the pair to design and produce an exclusive collection of stationery which would be sold in the exclusive Jewel House boutique inside the world famous landmark - The Tower of London - to commemorate its reopening.

So how did it all begin? When Lucio and Meera came across a few sketches of some child-like drawings, they saw the potential. What started as a few sketches, became bright, bold and groovy creations. Having transformed the sketches into artwork that people fell in love with, Bang on the Door was launched. Having achieved the highest accolade in the brand and licensing industry, they embarked on yet another new avenue. They signed a publishing agreement with Simon & Schuster in the US to design three pop up books. The books centred on Santoro's interactive, revolutionary paper engineering and vivid artistic scenes. Journey to the Moon (2007) was released first, then Predators (2008) and Wild Oceans (2010). All three books were hailed as major feats in paper-engineering.

In 2011 the couple turned their skills to architecture and interior design and gave birth to Santoro Deluxe Design, creating a number of luxury properties, both nationally and internationally. Their design skills were recognized when these properties were awarded the Bloomberg & Google International Property Award for Best Residential Property Interior. Subsequently Lucio and Meera Santoro were invited to join the ranks of many other world renowned interior designers at the prestigious Society of British Interior Design.

So what is the secret of their unique success? The couple have created a magical world. What makes this magic work is the need for people to have beautiful things around them. We are living through a revolution in the science of design. Very simply, art makes us happy. When we see something attractive (artwork, scenery, another person), a part of our brain which controls hand movement is triggered. Our brains tell us to reach for things we see as beautiful. We are biologically compelled to seek beauty. But, once again, why? Extensive studies are slowly getting closer to the answer. Beauty can be seen to symbolise health; consider it a survival of the fittest concept. Humans instinctively want to reproduce with others who are 'healthy' (read 'beautiful') so their children will be healthy. We are also attracted to beautiful places, artwork, even music. And this is linked to the science of design. The Santoros have understood this human need perfectly.



Deep in conversation with Prince Charles

to great heights in the world of trade and business.

Meera recalls early beginnings "In 1983 we opened a little studio off Carnaby Street in London. With our joint fascination for design, innovation and the challenge of breaking new boundaries we found ourselves starting a journey that would take us from that tiny studio to over 60 countries around the globe, winning 50 international design awards and accolades along the way. Soon after the launch of our debut collection, 20th Century Fox came to visit and granted Santoro the licence to create a print collection featuring Hollywood icons."

Before long, Santoro had outgrown its little studio and needed space to expand its horizons. With its highly successful stationery and gift collections and fast developing reputation for multi award winning creations, Santoro was again receiving some very important visitors. Impressed with their delectable creations, representatives of Her Majesty's Jewel House at the Tower of

### REGINALD MASSEY'S BOOK PAGE



Over the years I have often received questions and enquiries such as 'How do I become a writer?', 'Must I take a course in writing?', 'I have written a novel. Please read it and give me your opinion', 'I have been writing poetry for years. Can you suggest a publisher?',

'I have sent you the manuscript of my book. Could you please write an encouraging Introduction?', and thus and thus, etc, etc. Hence I have decided to address some of these questions.

Authorship is much more than a profession. It is a passionate vocation and is only for those who have a deep belief that they have something to say. Some writers claim that they have been cursed with a creative urge, others will tell you that without fire in your belly, a junoon (divine madness), one cannot make much of a mark. In other words, writers are born, not made. Therefore, taking writing courses is a waste of time and money.

I disagree with that. Writing is not only an art but also a craft and good writing courses certainly hone one's skills and make one aware of the pitfalls of the profession. Since most writers work from home people imagine that they have all the time in the world. But it is not a life of leisure and hence they cannot spare the time to read manuscripts, write fulsome introductions and prefaces and offer advice on where to market the material. Most authors hire agents whom they have to pay.

Moreover, there are publishers whom writers have to deal with. Some publishers are good, others not so good and some are bloodsuckers who indulge in the racket of vanity publishing. As a warning I strongly advise new writers not to pay for being published. The big publishing companies are mainly interested in books which they think will have a wide readership. They therefore do deals with big name authors with established reputations.

It is the small publishers who usually take a risk with new writers.

The Society of Authors (SoA) is a trade union of writers not connected with any political party which was founded and nurtured by the likes of Lord Tennyson, George Bernard Shaw and Thomas Hardy. It is run by dedicated writers for the benefit of writers and has over 10,000 members which include novelists, dramatists, poets, non-fiction writers, journalists, translators, writers of children's books, illustrators, film and TV scriptwriters and travel writers. It represents authors in collective negotiations to improve contract terms and lobbies on issues such as copyright, UK arts funding and Public Lending Right. Its legal department advises members on intellectual property rights and publishing contracts. It organises useful seminars to which members are invited and The Author, its quarterly magazine, keeps members informed of changing developments in the profession. And apart from administering the estates of several celebrated authors the SoA has a fund to help members who might be in financial difficulty. Every year a number of prestigious cash prizes are awarded to both young and senior writers. Another similar body to the SoA is the Writers' Guild of Great Britain (WGGB) whose members work mainly in film, TV, radio, and theatre.

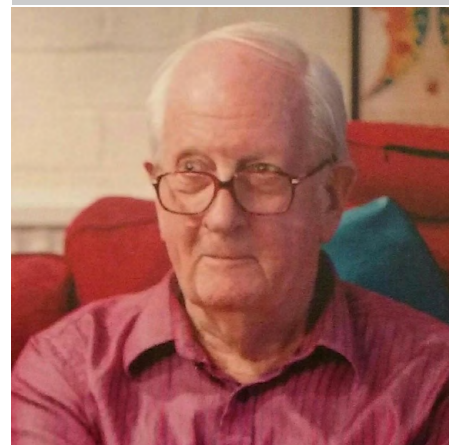
The Authors' Licensing and Collecting Agency (ALCS) is a not-for-profit organisation that collects money on behalf of authors from 'secondary uses' where someone uses work that has already been distributed, such as when schools photocopy books they own or when libraries lend books.

As long as books are read there will be a need for authors to write them. Hence writers are not an endangered species.

### OBITUARY OF DEREK INGRAM

*(died on June 17, 2018)*

*By Richard Bourne*



The death of Derek Ingram, three days short of his 93rd birthday, removes a towering figure in journalism. He travelled widely in the Commonwealth, and attended 20 Commonwealth summits, always reporting with knowledge and conviction. He founded the Gemini news feature service in 1967, which gave opportunities and world-wide exposure to many journalists round the world, such as Cameron Duodu in Ghana, the young Trevor McDonald in Trinidad, and Lindsey Hilsum, now international editor for Channel Four News, in the United Kingdom. Although London-based it took the anti-apartheid line in the struggle between Mrs Thatcher and the majority of Commonwealth governments.

He was a sterling supporter of media freedom, and human rights. In 1978, at a conference in Dalhousie, Canada he and a group of Commonwealth journalists including the Canadian broadcaster, Patrick Keatley, set up the Commonwealth Journalists Association which went on to provide training around the world. In 1987 he was a key player in the establishment of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, now with offices in Delhi, Accra and London. A decade later, in his 70s, he toured the world for the Commonwealth Secretariat, reporting on how the Commonwealth could enhance its image.

He will be remembered for his friendliness, his support for younger journalists, and the hospitable way in which he threw open his mews house in Marylebone for guests and journalists passing through London. He symbolised the best in Commonwealth journalism. He died peacefully. A tall tree has fallen in the forest.

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Richard Bourne  
Trustee  
Ramphal Institute  
Virginia Woolf Building  
22 Kingsway, London WC2B 6LE  
[www.ramphalinstitute.org](http://www.ramphalinstitute.org)

### THREE POEMS

*By Vasantha Surya*

#### 1. Flood

This flood is not of storms and turbulences  
but of a steady seeping  
over days of ceaseless rain  
ignored as but the discharge  
of an over-heavy season.  
Drop by drop it has gathered  
in tomorrow's reservoirs  
until this moment's breach.  
Spilling, it has filled all shallows.  
Time's river, swollen past containing  
laps at the doorstep,  
flows silently over the sills  
of glances, skyward and seaward turned,  
for signs of cyclones and tidal waves.  
These are not wind-blown rains  
whose flailing but quickly-wearied arms  
knock down houses that rise again, groaning  
upon their own rubble, break off trees  
whose wailing stumps grin green  
at sight of sun.  
This flood is not importunate.  
It does not clamour, or threaten.  
But it will enter.  
Once within, the creeping damp will rot  
all bricks, beams, barricades,  
dissolve all record and reminiscence

to settle down as silt  
in fresh deltas, where the river meets  
the ardent surf, and breeds  
new growths, nourishes new populations.

#### 2. Giving Way

I have been tongue-tied many times  
while the world shouted  
a niagara upon my silent stone  
shaping me to a round smoothness  
without edges.  
Dissolving in clay  
I shall surely give way  
one day. My words  
shall roll like rocks  
towards sudden chasms.  
Uprooted trees will be my  
exclamation marks,  
and when the sentence ends  
you shall hear the world's  
wet, pleading whisper.

#### 3. Forecast

Tomorrow there will be no sun.  
  
The clouds we have seeded

Are bearing fruit. .

The whirlwind we have summoned up  
We cannot put back into  
Time's broken bottle.

Flung into trackless space  
We shall not see our way  
Even by the best light  
Of our brightest books.

The last of the senses  
To give up the ghost  
Will be the tongue, silenced  
By the taste of ashes  
As the bombs explode.

Our fate? It's too soon to say.  
If know we must, it could be  
That we're on our way  
To circumambulate some other solar fire.  
For we are, after all, survivors.  
When death has wrenched  
from us breath's final gust,  
We still shall clench in burning fists  
An irreducible ember of desire.

But for now, the picture's clear:  
It's ashes to ashes, and dust to dust.

### SHAH ABDUL LATIF VERSES

(Excerpts from 'Seeking the Beloved: the Poetry of Shah Abdul Latif')

*Translated by Anju Makhija & Hari Dilgir*

unhappy  
is a sufi  
with something  
happy  
is a sufi  
with nothing

creedless  
is a sufi  
struggling with the self  
casteless  
is a sufi  
befriending all

this  
world  
overflows  
with  
egos  
oblivious  
of the  
magician's  
sorcery

why these places of worship  
why this constant fasting?

know the alakh\* within

He is everywhere

with  
the burden  
of ego  
none can cross the ocean

he is one  
discard duality

alakh: one who cannot be  
perceived by the senses

adopt  
the oyster's virtuous ways

surrounded by sea  
it still  
looks up for rain

seeker  
seeing the shades of flowers  
do not get distracted

recognize  
the one  
the only one

a mind troubled  
was appeased  
an eye blinded  
opened  
a garden blossomed  
in the desert

love is your  
eternal twin  
precious as musk  
inseparable from the soul  
never let it go

those who make their  
body a rosary  
mind a bead  
heart a musical instrument  
hear songs of love

god is one  
god is infinite  
even in sleep they remain awake



## MINDFULNESS AND DAYS OF MINDFULNESS

By Rashmi Sahi & Deepa Vanjani



### Bio-note:

*Bhikkhu (Buddhist monk) Thich Chan Phap Kham has been a disciple of Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh since 1987. He was ordained a novice monk in 1998, a fully ordained monk in 2000 and a Dharma teacher in 2004. A native of Vietnam, he immigrated to the United States in 1979, studied, and worked as an electronics engineer from 1983-1997. From 1998 to 2004, he practiced at Plum Village's monasteries in France and in the United States. Since 2005, as member of a team of Plum Village's Dharma teachers practicing in Asia, he has taught the art of mindful living and helped establish communities of practice in Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Philippines, Korea, Japan and Australia. He currently serves as Executive Director of the Plum Village Foundation Hong Kong Ltd. and as director of its 4 working units: Asian Institute of Applied Buddhism, Plum Village Mindfulness Academy, Mindfulness Teachers' Association and Plum Village Mind-Body Well-Being Centre.*

*"Calming, easing and smiling are essential elements of peace and harmony."*

Br Thich Chan Phap Kham talks to Dr Rashmi Sahi and Dr Deepa Vanjani about Mindfulness and Days of Mindfulness

### 1. How was the concept of Mindful Sundays born?

A day of Mindfulness (DOM) as practiced in the Plum Village Tradition is a day for practitioners to get in touch with themselves and with the surrounding environment. We can get in touch with ourselves by practice Mindful breathing, slowing down, and being mindful of things we do in our daily life. Dedicate one day a week to these activities is a good thing for us to nourish our peace and happiness.

The first DOMs were done in the 1960s, as described by Sr. Chan Khong in an article, quoted below:

(<http://appliedbuddhism.org/en/practices/mindfulness-trainings/229-early-days-of-the-order-of-interbeing>)

"I was not unique. Vietnamese and others around the world were also shouldering great responsibilities to try to help alleviate the suffering in Vietnam, but

many of them became exhausted—today we call it "burnout." I never felt that way. I continued to sing and arrange flowers in my room, trying to keep my spirit fresh and happy. One day a cedar friend who had been active for two years before getting married and having children came to visit, and she was amazed at my joyful attitude. "What kind of 'fuel' do you take to be so steady, faithful, and full of joy on this arduous path?" she asked. At her question, I looked back at all my work and was surprised, too, that I was able to take on so many responsibilities with ease. Only later did I realize that my fuel was living simply and practicing one Day of Mindfulness each week."

### 2. What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is an awareness of being in the here and the now, which comes about via the awareness of our in-breath and out-breath. The breath is a link between body and mind. Being mindful of the breath brings the mind back to the body; when the mind is with the body, we can be aware of things happen inside of us (our body, feeling, perceptions, emotions, and consciousness) and outside of us. This awareness helps us to have appropriate actions for situations that we are in.

### 3. How does it impact an individual?

Most of the time, our minds are thinking of many unnecessary things. We are often caught in worry, anxiety, and fear. The mind does not think clearly in that situation. Consider the case of a muddy pond, whose water was stirred-up by a herd of buffaloes. We can't see the bottom of the pond no matter how hard we try. The wise thing to do is to wait for the mud to settle down. The water becomes clear, and we can see the bottom of the pond without making any effort. Our mind is like the muddy water when are angry or anxious. Mindfulness of breathing helps calm our body and mind. Practice mindful and mindful walking for some periods of time, our mind and body will be calmed. Then we are in a better position to act in the situations that we are in.

### 4. How can a layman live each day with Mindfulness?

Mindfulness has its foundation in the Mindful breath. Being mindful of our in-breath and out-breath is the only requirement for mindfulness. Mindfulness is to be mindful of something. To be mindful of something needs our mind to be with our body, and the way to bring the mind and the body together is our breath. Since we need to breathe to survive, we just need to be mindful of our breath. No extra activities are needed. Mindfulness can be integrated into our daily activities because all activities require breathing.

At first, being mindful of our breath may seem difficult. But after some practices, it becomes quite natural. Just like when we learned how to ride a bike as kids. After some time, it becomes natural.

5. If we do not consider this as a Buddhist practice, but as one, which has far-reaching results, how can it foster peace and harmony?

Mindfulness helps us calm our body and mind.

Calming, easing and smiling are essential elements of peace and harmony.

6. In the world of social media, how can mindful help to centre individuals when everything is leading them outwards?

Social media helps us to connect with others. In order to connect with others, we need to connect to ourselves. Mindfulness helps us to connect to ourselves. Peace in oneself, peace in the world.

7. Is there any relationship between the following and mindfulness:

- food we eat
- company we keep
- our work/ professions
- the place we live in
- the lifestyle

Yes, mindfulness connects with everything we do, with the places we are in, with the people we are with. Because we can only connect with others when we connect with ourselves.

8. Why would the world want to adapt the pace of mindfulness when everything around us screams of speed?

The other option is to be exhausted. We can't enjoy life when we are exhausted. Breathe and smile. To breathe is to be alive, to smile is to be happy. Mindfulness helps us to be alive and to be happy.

9. Today's young generation has been caught off guards with the sudden change in the rules of the game of world due to internet and social media. How can we help the younger generations to find themselves in this deluge?

The fast pace of today's society leaves young people with less time and opportunities to get in touch with themselves and with others physically. They may have thousands of friends or followers on social media, but they may have only a few friends in the real world. Physical interactions are necessary for physical, mental and social well-being. Spending more time in the real world, getting in touch with people around them is a viable solution. It is our choice. Not the choice of social media.

10. Does mindfulness have medical and physiological benefits also? What are they?

There are many benefits relating to physical, mental and social well-being for mindfulness practitioners. The most visible ones are being calmer and happier. These benefits have been documented in many studies.

*Deepa Vanjani is the Head of the department of languages in a leading college in Indore, India and a visiting faculty with Educational Media Research Centre, UTD and School of Comparative Languages, Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India*



*Rashmi Sahi lives and teaches in Hong Kong.*

