



Respectful homage to Mata Bishan Kaur Chumber GOOD PEOPLE NEVER DIE



Late Smt. Bishan Kaur Chumber

My dear Prem Chumber,

It was very saddening to know about the sudden passing away of your revered mother Shrimati Bishan Kaur Chumber recently at her home in India. Mata Bishan Kaur who lost her illustrious husband long time ago raised her large family in Punjab single-handedly with dedication and ultimate role of an ideal mother. In the face of difficult and challenging times she had to endure during her life as a single mother, she was able to see two of her sons including yourself and your late elder brother Mr. C. L. Chumber growing up to be successful journalists. It was possible because of her determination, hard work and perseverance.

While the entire family was still reeling under the impact of your elder brother's untimely demise a few years ago this sudden loss of your mother was shocking.

GOOD PEOPLE NEVER DIE:-

Through what I know about her life and the family she lived a very meaningful, inspirational and a purposeful life leaving behind a long trail of her devotional role as a mother.

Her sweet memories will always remain deeply embedded in the hearts and souls of the family and all those who happened to know her.

"Waves and tides of the passing time will not be able to wash away the treasure of her deeply rooted legacy left behind in the entire spectrum of her family.

"Those we love and lose are always connected by heart-strings into infinity."

Please accept my heartfelt condolences for this irreparable loss with prayers to Almighty God to provide strength to accept His commands. May the departed soul rest in peace and tranquility.

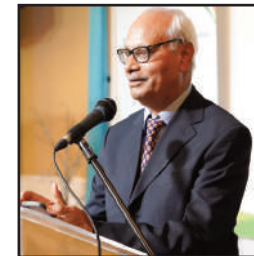
With love and regards

O. P. Balley

Founder Member Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha, Pittsburg (CA) USA

NOTE: Mata Bishan Kaur Chumber's Antim Ardass report and tributes read in next week

The Consulate General of India, Vancouver and Chetna Association of Canada Celebrated the 'Constitution Day of India'



Please see news and pictures on pages 2 to 6

EDUCATION, SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Prem K. Chumber

Editor-In-Chief: Ambedkar Times

Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar laid stress on 'Educate, Agitate, Organize' for the liberation of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) of India. He knew very well that education could not only stir the notion of self-respect among the downtrodden but also encourage them to locate viable solutions to the age-old evil of caste system and Untouchability in India. Educated SCs would challenge their tormentors and refuse to accept oppressive social structures around them. In fact, it was education that imbued the glaring spirit in him of getting rid of caste system (annihilating caste) from Indian society; the most sought after goal of his life time mission.

Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was confident that once the downtrodden get educated they would never sit idly. They would definitely agitate against the system of social injustice around them and eventually organize themselves to put an end to the same. He himself set the example through his life-long struggle for the annihilation of caste. His philosophy was simple that an educated Dalit would agitate against the all-round system of injustice around him and indulge in a struggle to overcome it. It is his self-agitation against the blind system Untouchability that would force him and his fellow-beings to get organized to commence a struggle. The central thesis of his philosophy was to know the system first so that it can empower the downtrodden to challenge social injustice rationally then to set the pace for a long struggle to put an end to age-old social evil of caste system and Un-

touchability.

After seventy four years of India's independence, is there available a viable system of education to SCs in India? Government rural school system has come to standstill. They have turned dysfunctional long ago. Those who can afford costly private school education have abandoned them, thus rendering them just into 'Dalit schools'. This is an open fact that in Government rural schools majority of the students are from the SCs community.

There are, of course, some other students belonging to OBC and upper caste communities but they too belonged to poor families. There is no denying a fact, however, that that majority of the SCs families belong to the poor and most poor strata of the society.

Given the dysfunctional status of Government rural schools, the basic factor of education to change the system of Untouchability as advocated by Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has been pushed to side-line. It is not only depriving SCs of genuine education but also blocking their way to social transformation. So there is an urgent need to revamp the Government rural schools so that proper and useful education could be imparted to SCs students along with others who want to join such schools. In addition an effort should be made to introduce an intensive multi language course work to enable the students to understand the available material in different languages. Along with the existing subjects provisions should also be made to prepare them for job oriented courses in higher education.

The Consulate General of India, Vancouver and Chetna Association of Canada Celebrated the 'Constitution Day of India'



Ratan Paul, Media Coordinator Chetna Association of Canada

Seventy-two years ago on November 26, 1949, India unanimously passed its own constitution and became the sovereign and republic nation.

While the journey since attaining independence 74 years ago has not been easy, India is continuing to emerge as a strong, resilient, and inclusive nation.

To mark the occasion of Constitution Day and honor individuals who are championing the ideals of Dr. Ambedkar and other nation builders, Indian Consulate General in Vancouver and Chetna Association of Canada hosted an evening that consisted of two parts: part one was to discuss the constitution of India and the second part was to honor the individuals who are making contributions and living the ideals of Dr. Ambedkar and many other nation builders.

Scholars and leaders who spoke on the Constitution included Minister Ralston (BC Government), Dr. Shinder Purewal (Kwantlen Polytechnic university), Ms. Manjit Bains (Chetna Association of Canada), Dr. Arun Thakore (Gandhi Charitable Foundation), and Advocate Lovleen Gill, a solicitor-Barrister in Surrey. Min. Ralston highlighted similarities between the constitutions of India and Canada and the common bond that exists between both nations while Dr. Thakore reinforced the com-

mon approach of Dr. Ambedkar and Gandhi, which was to attain justice and peace through non-violence.

Members of the Ambedkarite International Coordination Society (AICS) and Chetna Association of Canada presented the Constitution of Canada translated in Punjabi by Dr. Adv. Inderjit Kajjla.

The consul General was also recognized by Chetna Association of Canada for his and his team's excellent services as well as for the efforts of the Government of India in creating a museum in honor of Dr. Ambedkar in London.

The event was a tribute to Mr. Mohan Lal Karimpuri who attained Pririvan on October 28, 2021. He was the recipient of Dr. Ambedkar Chetna Arts & Literature Award in 2019.

S. Tara Singh Hayer, under whose name Tara Singh Hayer Journalism Award was established in 2013, was also remembered. His family attended the event.

Dave Hayer, son of the Late Hayer, bestowed the Tara Singh Hayer Journalism Award on Mr. Prem Chumber, Editor in Chief, of "Ambedkar Times" (English) and "Desh Doaba" (Punjabi). As Chumber was unable to accept the award in person, Chetna's media coordinator, Ratan Paul, accepted the award.

Prem Kumar Chumber was awarded in recognition of his courage to establish and sustain on-line and print media and provide forum to marginal-

ized communities to share challenges and celebrate successes and milestones.

In his acceptance speech,

Chumber wrote:

"Many congratulations on holding the award giving ceremony by the Chetna Association of Canada under the stewardship of Mr. Jai Birdi in collaboration with the Consulate General of India (Vancouver). It could have been a matter of great pleasure and honor for me to be part of the event but for some unavoidable circumstances. My sincere congratulations to all the esteemed participants and the worthy organizers on the celebration of India's constitution Day!!

**Prem Kumar Chumber
(Editor-In-Chief)
Ambedkar Times (English) &
Desh Doaba (Punjabi) Weeklies
California, USA**

The award ceremony was hosted as a part of India's Constitution Day Celebrations and it was jointly organized by The Consulate General of India (Vancouver) and Chetna Association of Canada.

Recipients of awards

in other categories included:

-Dr. Deanna Reder, of Simon Fraser University, was bestowed with the Dr. Ambedkar Chetna Arts and Literature Award band. She was introduced by Dr. Joanne Currey, Vice President, External Relations, Simon Fraser University. Dr. Deanna Reder was recognized for her contributions

to inclusion and strengthening the resilience of communities by sharing and advancing indigenous literature.

-Mrs. Raminder Dosanjh, of India Mahila Association (formed about 48 years ago), was recognized for her contributions to women empowerment, reducing domestic violence, and educating communities against female feticide. She was bestowed with the Dr. Ambedkar Chetna Social Justice Award and was introduced by Ms. Meera Gill of Our Global Village.

Ambassador Zile Singh (Retired, Indian Foreign Services) was honored with the Dr. Ambedkar Chetna Lifetime Achievement Award and he was introduced by centenarian and ex-bureaucrat with Indian Services, Mr. Khushi Ram.

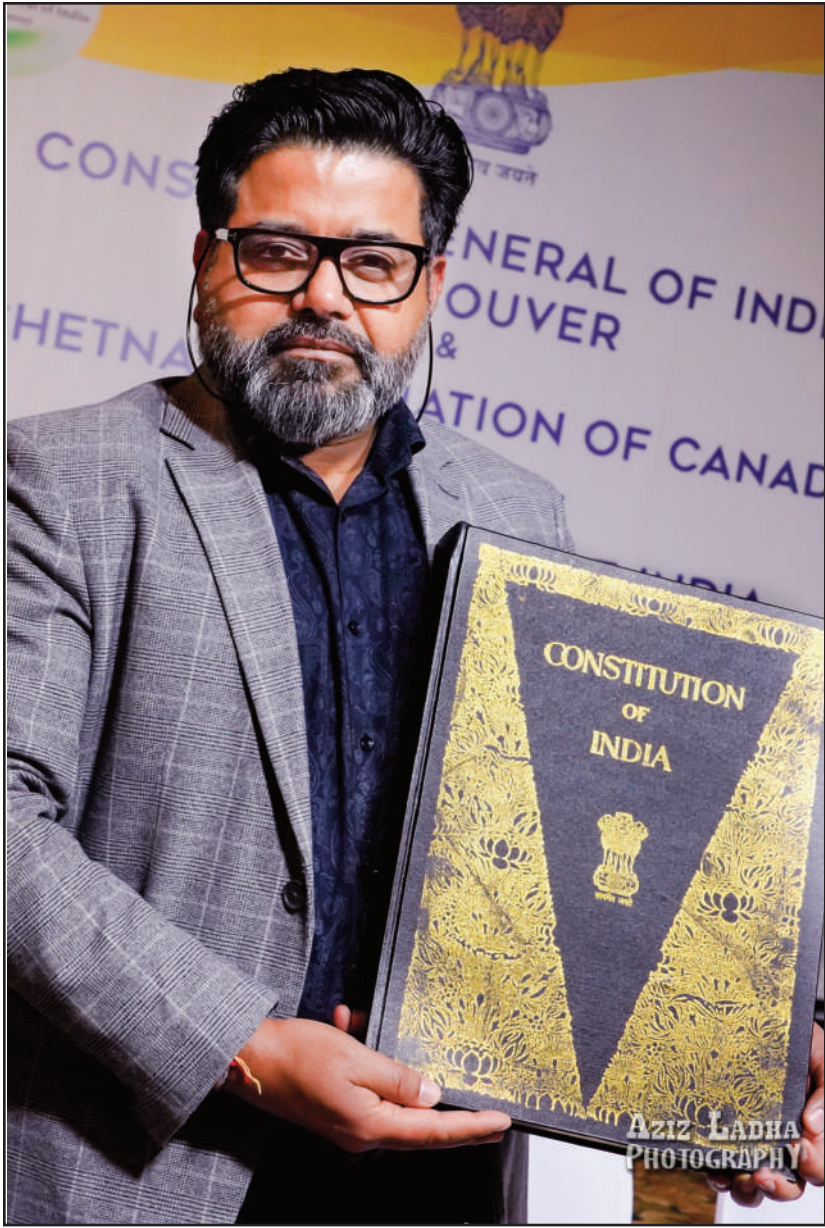
Ambassador Singh was recognized for inspiring marginalized communities and being a role model; and, for advancing values of equality by receiving higher education, entering public service in clerical roles, continuing his advancement in education, and being a dedicated diplomat. Mr. Singh retired from the noble post of Ambassador and is now settled in Canada. The award was presented jointly by members of Chetna Association of Canada and the Team Indo-Canadian Times.

Chetna Association of Canada congratulates Mr. Chumber, Dr. Reder, Mrs. Dosanjh, and Ambassador Singh for the recognition and receiving the award.

The Consulate General of India, Vancouver and Chetna Association of Canada



The Consulate General of India, Vancouver and Chetna Association of Canada



The Consulate General of India, Vancouver (Canada) and the Chetna Association of Canada celebrated Constitution Day

November 26th is a red-letter day in Indian history. An unparalleled living document known as the 'Constitution of India' was adopted on this day in 1949 and enacted two months later on January 26, 1950. It is unparalleled because it enshrines as many provisions as can be envisioned to give a better administration to such a diverse country like India which is known as a sub-continent also. It is one of the largest Constitutions with an adequate rigidity and also flexibility.

The Day was celebrated by the Consulate General of India, Vancouver and the Chetna Association of Canada jointly in Surrey. Every celebration, in addition to joy, spreads awareness (Chetna) as well. For that matter, Chetna's participation was a befitting decision. The stage was dressed in India's Tricolour - saffron, white and green with a copy of the Constitution on the pedestal and the photograph of the Father of the Constitution overlooking the audience in the hope that matters dearest to his heart i.e., Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity are promoted in as fairly and friendly a manner as possible, by law and also by persuasion. The celebration hall was filled with an aroma of 'Indigenous' theme of Canada and Indians (Bharatvasis) of all strata of society; men and women, children as young as 3 months and senior as young as 100 plus years. Political leaders, serving and retired, businessmen, academicians, singers and social activists graced the occasion. The decoration ringed the bells of the Republic (Constitution) and also the Freedom (75th Anniversary of Indian Independence - Azadi

KaAmritMahotsav).

Mr. Manjish Grover, Consul from the Consulate took the lead to start the celebration by acknowledging the audience. The National Anthems of Canada and India were played. A patriotic song "VandeMatram" was sung melodiously by child singers Niharika and Sumana. Mr. Manish, Consul General of India briefed the audience about the

Zile Singh
Ambassador (I.F.S. Retired)

Constitution. The Consul General, as a student of law, explained the Preamble (Soul) of the Constitution word for word. "We the People of India ... gave this Constitution to Ourselves". His words seemed as the words of the wise. The guest speaker Mr. Bruce Ralston,

Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources BC Government explained the similarities between the Canadian and the Indian Constitutions. He talked about the Rights of the citizens. He was amazed how almost single-handed Dr. Ambedkar drafted such a voluminous document when other members left on one reason or the other. Mr. Arvind

Thakore, a Gandhian and founder of Thakore Charitable Foundation drew attention on the roles of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in ameliorating the degrading conditions of the Untouchables of India in their own unique ways. He acknowledged that the 'untouchability' or the caste system still exists' despite the fact that to practice untouchability is anti-law and there is an Act against Atrocities on Dalits. A change of heart on the part of the higher castes is the need of the day. Dr. ShinderPurewal,

Professor of Political Science at Kwantlen Polytechnic University spoke about the 'Birth of a New Republic". He emphasized that the republic is still on its march. A lot progress has been made in this direction. According to him, Republic is a living phenomenon. Mrs. Manjit Bains, Member, Chetna Association highlighted the strenuous efforts undertaken by Dr. B.R.

Ambedkar for the empowerment of women of India. Dr. Ambedkar said, "I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved." Advocate Lovleen Gill narrated a story of a Brick Kiln bonded labour in Punjab who got himself as well as many others of his kind free from the clutches of slavery of the powerful by sheer dint of his knowledge of relevant laws in the Constitution on bonded labour.

At the end of the first part of the ceremony, the Consul General was presented with a Punjabi translation of the Constitution by Dr. Inderjit Kajla.

The second part of the celebration was presentation of Dr. Ambedkar Chetna Awards. Mr. Jai Birdi, General Secretary of Chetna Association welcomed the guests. The following Awards were presented: (1) Arts & Literature Award to Dr. Deanna Reder, University of Simon Fraser for her contribution to inclusion and strengthening resilience of communities by sharing and advancing indigenous literature. (2) Social Justice Award to Mrs. RaminderDosanjh, founder of Indian Women Association for her contribu-

tion to women empowerment, reducing domestic violence and educating communities against female foeticide. (3) Sardar Tara Singh Hayer Journalism Award to Mr. Prem K. Chumber, in-absentia, for his courage to establish and sustain on-line and print media (Ambedkar Times in English & Desh Doaba in Punjabi) and provide forum to marginalized communities to share challenges and celebrate successes and milestones.

The Fourth, Lifetime Achievement Award to Ambassador Zile Singh, Retired Indian Foreign Service Officer for inspiring marginalized communities and being a role model; and advancing values of equality by receiving education and entering public service.

An Award of Appreciation was awarded to Mr. Manish, Consul General of India, Vancouver in recognition of creating a culture of inclusion & respect as well as the Government of India's role in establishing the Dr. Ambedkar Museum in London, observing India's Constitution Day and introducing initiatives that support the vision of Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

Fast Track Appliances Ltd., Planet Paving Ltd. And A&T Insurance Broker Ltd. were given Awards of Appreciation for their generous support to this special event. Ms. JyotikaJasuja and her team entertained the audience with appropriate dance numbers. Mr. Khushi Ram, a Centenarian who attended the celebrations and introduced Ambassador Zile Singh in a befitting manner to prove his worthiness of the Award, was recognized appropriately.



The Consulate General of India, Vancouver (Canada) and the Chetna Association of Canada celebrated Constitution Day



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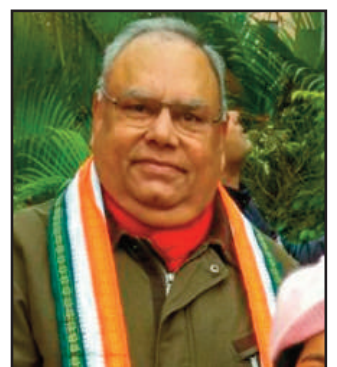
Meri Jiwan Yatra – An Autobiography of Ambassador Bal Anand - Book Review

Ambassador Bal Anand, my senior colleague in the IFS and a friend, guide and philosopher in my day to day life, was kind enough to send me his recently launched autobiography in Punjabi language – Meri Jiwan Yatra: Simriti Di Sarswati (A River of Memories). I could not resist the temptation of reading this book of 436 pages immediately in a couple of days, as against my normal routine of going slow in reading books. Here I am ready to offer my hearty congratulations to Ambassador Bal Anand for giving a succinct account of his journey from a remote village in the Malwa region of Punjab to the capital city of Delhi (now NCR – Greater Noida or Gautam Budh Nagar in the IFS Villas where we have had the pleasure of be their neighbors) passing through the distinct milestones spread over the capitals of the world. I don't know whether I should call it a book review or a humble note of appreciation for a marvelous account of a rich and contented life of a good man. While reading the book, I did not remain a reader alone but felt a part of the narration right from our days at DAV College in Jalandhar in

Punjabi) read at the marriage ceremony of his auntie (Bhuaji), Surjit Kaur in March, 1952. The details of Mela Lohri Da in the village and a befitting souvenir published by the author in 2018-19 in this regards shows the 'sense of belonging' of the author with his native place and the family, a well established and dignified lot. On page 57 concluding the Chapter, Bal Anand Sahib humbly says and rightly so, "Mein Sochda Han Ki Mein Apne Nek Bajurgan Te Pind Da Nam Ucha Kita" on asking a hypothetic question as to what did he do for the village. The second Chapter pertains to the author's education and learning pursuits as the scion of the awakened family of a remote village. Bal Anand Sahib remained a good student throughout from primary to university. He remembers each detail of his schools, teachers and fellow students – hats off to this great attribute of the author. He even remembered a Persian couplet which his teacher in class 7 used to recite – Ilam Hi Nikla Ilam Se Baghi; Akal Hi Nikli Akal Ki Dushman. It was good to note that Bal Anand Sahib used to go for public rallies/meetings in the vicinity of his

his pent up feelings. The gratifying aspect of the exercise was that Bal Anand was fully qualified with a Masters Degree to be on the teaching faculty of a college. The next chapter indicates the sense of satisfaction to have an important prefix to the author's name as 'Prof. Bal Anand' with his job at the prestigious DAV College Jalandhar as a lecturer of English. The narration reminded me of Principal B.S. Behl, an educational administrator of standing, Prof. U.R. Dada, Prof. K.K. Ghai, Principal Jagdish Joshi among others. The conversation with Prof. V.P. Malhotra about the work ethics with reference to Principal Behl on page 95 is really revealing of human mind. Bal Anand Sahib's teaching stints at Government College Bathinda and Government College Karamsar proved to be stepping stones in the run up the Civil Services Examination which culminated in breaking the ceiling in 1969 first in the IPS and in 1971 in the IFS. Keeping with his personality and God fearing aptitude, the author humbly concludes this chapter and says, "Mere Te Rab Dian Ania Meharbania Kiven Hoian; Oh Aap Hi Janda Hai".

blesed the couple. The Chapter 5 of the book pertains to the author's initial postings abroad – Tehran (Iran), Persian as his compulsory language as required in the IFS, was his first regular posting which was full of interesting developments with regard to the evolving political situation with the rising profile of Ayatollah Khomeini in the later years of 1970s against Reza Shah Pahlavi's regime. After the first difficult posting in a beautiful country, Bal Anand Sahib landed in yet another difficult station said to be a heaven on earth by some – Maldives, a string of islands in the Indian Ocean as he asked for a posting in the neighborhood on account of his social and



Ramesh Chander
Ambassador - I.F.S. (Retired)
91-99885-10940



the mid 1960s, as I am also a humble alumnus of the College which the author has mentioned at page 95 and given a photo of our participation at a function in the College, to the corridors of power in the South Block in New Delhi during our diplomatic careers in the Ministry of External Affairs. The places and names mentioned in the narration recalled my own cherished memories of good old days.

The author has rightly said in the preamble of the book that it was very difficult to write about oneself. It is more so for controversial bigwigs. Bal Anand Sahib is the son of the soil who possesses a harmonious personality and as such, it seems, he did not find much difficulty in telling his story. Meri Jiwan Yatra clearly demonstrates that the author has a great sense of history and an eye for details.

The first Chapter is devoted to the early years and his family. One can easily make it that father, Vaid Hardial Nand Singh and uncle Shankar Anand ji had a great influence in shaping the persona of the author. I envy Bal Anand Sahib on the fact that he knows all the minor details of his family so clearly. He has even given the poetic rendering of advice (traditionally called Shikhya in

native place even when he was a student in the high school. The same was true for me also. This trait paid us good dividends in later years. The incident of his speaking on All India Radio in a school broadcast in 1957 and getting a small honorarium very well testifies that the author was fully involved in current events as a good student. The NDA anecdote (page 75) is interesting – failed in OLC (Officer Like Qualities). The Army's loss was the gain of IFS. The details of author's college/university education make an interesting reading – his going for the Humanities rather than Science for becoming a doctor or engineer in spite of good marks in the Matriculation – his stint at DAV College Jalandhar in early 1960s kindled my own memories of food of the mess of Lajpat Rai Hotel, the college Magazine Ravi etc. and also Harbhab Sangeet Mela and also encounter with Jagjit Singh Anand after listening to RSS's Sarsanghchalak Guru Golwalkar along with his father. Some sweet and sour experiences in the Government College Ludhiana is a sad a commentary on our social system and morality. Students with socially marginalized and economically poor students are treated badly. Bal Anand Sahib, like a complete gentleman, is still discreet in registering

The life took a full circle. Bal Anand Sahib was firmly rooted in the elite civil service IFS and joined the LB-SNAA at Mussoorie in July, 1971. The narration of his undergoing training with various offices and wings of the government and JNU and also attachment with the various divisions of the MEA makes an interesting reading. Since I was already working in the MEA since March, 1970, Bal Anand Sahib's presence in the corridors of power in the South Block reminded me of my own humble association with those moments. The author's brief observatory remarks on some of the senior bosses are interesting. Akbar Khaleeli's remarks about Bal Anand Sahib are most telling and apt, "You are too good to be a Punjab." and advised "Don't waste your goodness on those who don't deserve it."

The most eligible bachelor, Bal Anand IFS was ready to get married and was excited to search a suitable match as he puts in his own words "Te Baat Ban Jaye Sade Bhole Panchian Di Bhi". Baat Ban Hi Gai – with Aradhana daughter of a senior functionary of the Ministry of Railways, Nand Lal Ramdassia and they tied the knot in August, 1973. Babu Jagjivan Ram, a senior Minister in the GOI participated in the marriage and

family responsibilities back home. It is said, "Ministry's ways are mysterious." It is easy to reach Delhi from London and difficult from Male. It happened with me also. From Sana'a, I asked for a posting in neighborhood as my father was not keeping well. I was given Kandy in Sri Lanka and it took two days to reach Delhi when my father died in 1986 by hopping flights via Madras (Chennai). Some candid comments on non-resident High Commissioner Thomas Abraham are revealing. With not so good an experience, the author came back to Delhi in the MEA in December, 1978 as Deputy Secretary in the Southern Division. As usual, he has had the taste of the pie – to work with a known quarrelsome boss, interesting conversation between FS Ram Sathe and Australian Deputy Foreign Minister regarding Australian High Commissioner's reported dispatch on the rumours of army coup in India (page 139) and interaction with a delegation of lawyers and law makers, which visited Vietnam, headed by Law Minister Shiv Shankar who had the habit of mouthing abuses (Galis) in Punjabi as mentioned by the author. But it is not surprising that there were many Punjabi politicians to do so as a matter of habit rather than

(Contd. on Page 10)

Required steps for strengthening agricultural sector in India

On the occasion of Guru Nanak's birth anniversary on November 19, 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the withdrawal of three agricultural laws enacted in 2020. Continuing the implementation of the Prime Minister's declaration on November 24, 2021, the Union Cabinet also approved the withdrawal of three agricultural laws. As per the decision of the Union Cabinet, the process of withdrawal of three agricultural laws will begin at the function starting on November 29, 2021. The Union government had hoped that after the announcement of the Prime Minister, the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) would give up its struggle and the struggling farmers at various places would return to their homes. The SKM has declared the Prime Minister's announcement and the approval of the Union Cabinet as its first success and has vowed to continue its struggle till the minimum support prices for agricultural commodities are legally guaranteed and other important demands are not considered.

Since the Union government issued the three Agriculture Ordinances on June, 2020, these ordinances have included farmers, agricultural labourers, rural artisans, and other sections dependent on the agricultural sector, consumers, food security of the country, federal structure of the country, different people started giving their views on the implications of these ordinances. Before the enactment of three Agricultural Laws, various farmers' organizations had asked the Union government to withdraw these ordinances to avoid their deadly effects, but the Union government did not change its decision and enacted three Agricultural Laws in Parliament. The various farmers' organizations of the country started their peaceful and democratic struggle on the borders of Delhi on 26 November 2020 to get these laws repealed and some of their other important demands complied with. During this struggle, several rounds of talks were held with the representatives of the Union government. During the talks, the Union government representatives acknowledged that there are shortcomings in the laws, but instead of repealing them, they agreed to amend them. The collective decisions of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha made their peaceful and democratic struggle a great success, which was lauded nationally and internationally. With the passage of time, a large number of farmers and other sections of the society living in different parts of the country became involved in this struggle. The Union government has decided to withdraw three Agricultural Laws after counting the implications of farmers' grievances in the forthcoming assembly elections in different states.

Although the decision taken by the Union government to withdraw the three Agricultural Laws has been taken with undue delay, while the SKM considers it its first achievement, it will also benefit other sec-

tions of the society besides the farmers in many respects. If only three Agricultural Laws are withdrawn, the plight of farmers, agricultural labourers, and rural artisans will be similar to that of June 5, 2020, when they were living in huge debt and abject poverty and all their hopes of life were dashed by the government and society they started committing suicide which is still going on. Therefore, apart from withdrawing these three Agricultural Laws, there is an urgent need for the government, society and the sections dependent on the agricultural sector to take further steps.

Apart from the withdrawal of the three Agricultural Laws by the Union government, the demand for a legal guarantee on the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) of the agricultural commodities of the SKM is very important. The Agricultural Prices Commission was set up in 1965. It has been making recommendations regarding determination of MSPs of var-



ious agricultural commodities which is generally accepted by the Union government. Initially, the recommendations of the commission were in favour of the farmers, but later they were against the interests of the farmers, which led to strong criticism from various farmers' organizations and some political parties. To get rid of this criticism, the Union government has tried to give the impression that by renaming the commission as 'Commission on Agricultural Costs and Prices', as if the Commission bases its recommendations on agricultural production costs. But that is far from the reality. There are a number of problems/shortcomings in calculating agricultural production costs. Due to the different methods of farming in different parts of the country, their production cost is also different. But when calculating the cost of production, the average of all areas/parts of the country is taken, which is unfair to the areas with high production cost. When calculating the cost of agricultural production, the labour of the farmer is limited to a short period of time whereas the farmer is present 365 days 24 hours a day as per the requirements of agricultural production. Women of farmer families who work in the fields besides household chores, make tea and bread for agricultural labourers and rural artisans, take care of livestock as well as work

in the fields, their labour is not included at all in the cost of production. The land rent and wear and tear of agricultural buildings and machinery are greatly underestimated. Therefore, Minimum Remunerative Support Prices (MRSPs) have to be fixed on the basis of agricultural production costs calculated on the correct basis instead of MSPs. In this regard, many farmers' organizations and some political parties have been demanding remunerative prices by calculating 50 per cent profit on agricultural production costs as per Swaminathan's recommendation.

If this recommendation is accepted farmers who will have marketable surplus, their current deficit loss-making agriculture will become profitable. The point to note in this regard is that according to official figures, 71 per cent of the total farming families in the country are those who have less than 2.5 acres of land. These families have so little quantity

meet the food needs of the country has drastically reduced agricultural employment which has hit agricultural labourers and rural artisans the hardest. It has also affected land-



Dr. Gian Singh

Former Professor, Department of Economics,
Punjabi University, Patiala, Punjab.

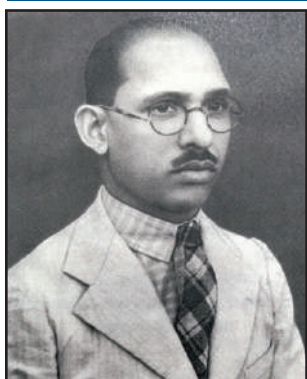
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less, marginal, and small farmers. Under MGNREGA and other similar employment schemes for these sections, employment should be ensured throughout the year as per their requirement. In this regard, the wage rate should be equal to the minimum wage rate fixed by different governments. Land reforms can make a meaningful contribution in the interest of these sections which has been proved by the results of land reforms carried out in different states. The income from the lands of Panchayats and religious institutions is aimed at the welfare of the poor. Sikhism teaches that "the mouth of the poor, Guru ki golak". Therefore, the lands of Panchayats and religious institutions have to be given to these poor sections for cooperative farming without charging any rent. According to a United Nations report, family farming is vital to protecting the world's food supply and protecting the environment from pollution. An important aspect of this report is to keep the agricultural sector out of the control of the capitalist / corporate world. Cooperative agriculture in Kerala and other states of the country is sending a very meaningful message regarding the food security of the country and to protect its environment from pollution. There are more than 68000 cooperatives of landless women in Kerala. The production of these women's co-operative farms is 1.9 times and the net economic profit is 5 times more than other farms. In view of these facts, the Union and State governments have to extend special assistance to the farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans engaged in cooperative agriculture.

For the betterment of the agricultural sector, the government has to adapt and adopt the pro-people and / nature friendly economic development model in place of the pro-capitalist / corporate model adopted in the country since 1991. Doing so will increase the share in national income of the 50 per cent population working in agriculture from 16 per cent to at least a level which would be sufficient to meet the basic necessities of life — food, clothing, housing, education, health care, clean environment, and social security.

Like the rest of the world, India's richest class is obsessed with maximizing its profits. A large section

(Contd. on Page 11)



Ishwar Das Pawar
District and Sessions Judge (Retd.)

My Struggle in Life

The Caste System

That the caste held sway over Hindu society even in the times of the two great epics, the Ramayana (a great Hindu Epic) and the Mahabharata (a great Hindu epic), and that the caste laws were enforced so rigorously and ruthlessly by the kings of the day, guided invariably by their Brahman gurus who were the real masters, is borne out by the stories of two Sudras (people from low caste)—Shambuka and Eklavya. Shambuka was beheaded by Rama at the behest of his Brahman guru for violating the laws of caste by performing tapas (meditation), an act forbidden for Sudras (people from low caste).

Left to himself, a good man like Rama, regarded by his admirers and devotees as maryada purushottam (dignified perfect man), would not have committed such a barbarous deed but for the reason that he had to scrupulously obey the commands of his Brahman advisers. Eklavya had learnt the art of archery by placing before him the image of Dronacharya, whom he could not have adopted as a training guru directly for learning an art prohibited for Sudras. In this art, Eklavya had excelled even better than the Kshatriyas like Arjun.

On coming to know about this, Dronacharya became perturbed over the skill acquired by him and that too against the law. Therefore, he called Eklavya and demanded guru-dakshina (donation given to guru (teacher) as per his demand by the student in lieu of imparting education/training) from him for using his image to learn the art. Eklavya readily promised to make the offering of whatever dakshina the guru liked. On the demand made by the guru, he had to cut off his right thumb to give it as guru-dakshina. The guru felt happy that he had achieved his purpose. And thus with the thumb went his bow and arrow and the archery. Poor Eklavya was undone!

Under the caste laws, the functions and obligations of a Sudra are to submit meekly and without questioning to the service of the so-called high-caste Hindus. Performing of tapas and learning and indulging in the art of archery was violative of the laws and severely punishable. Therefore, Shambuk was punished directly while Eklavya was punished treacherously. The caste laws were discriminatory. While there was virtually no law under which a Brahman could be punished even for most heinous crimes, a Sudra, even for petty and sometimes innocuous aberrations, was to be punished so severely and brutally that one shudders at the very idea. While this system ushered in "God's kingdom on earth" for the so-called high-caste Hindus, it established "devil's hell on earth" for the Sudras and the untouchables.

The Brahmanical social order has been built on four pillars. These are caste, temple, priest craft, and false philosophy. Caste symbolizes and represents the scheme of domination, temple the institutionalized system, priest craft the means of exploitation, and false philosophy a justification for caste and priest craft. For instance, it has been falsely claimed on the basis of some shastras (Hindu scriptures) that the Brahman was created from the head (mouth), Kshatriya from the breast (arms), Vaishya from the thighs,

and Sudra from the feet of the creator. But what will be the position of a man born in a Brahman family who is a wreck physically, mentally, and morally while, on the other hand, a man born in a Sudra family who is a man of high qualities physically, mentally, and morally? To meet such a situation and to plug all possible loopholes, an all-embracing edict was issued providing that "a Brahman is worthy of worship even though he be a congenital idiot or a physical or moral wreck, but a Sudra is not worthy of any recognition even though he be a man of great learning, wisdom, and piety."

The karma (deed) philosophy postulates that a person shall reap good or bad rewards according to his deserts, but it has been perverted to mean that he shall be born in a so-called high or low caste according to his good or bad deeds. Furthermore, according to this philosophy, everybody is born with a predetermined destiny—Mathe ke bhag (predetermined destiny). This philosophy has been invented so that the poor and the exploited should accept and resign itself to the miserable life of ignorance, poverty, and indignity; and the men of property, privilege, money, and false positions might enjoy an uncontrolled, licentious life with their ill-gotten riches and positions. This philosophy had played untold havoc with the minds and souls of the people by turning them into fatalists and determinists. It has the propensity of robbing the people of their initiative and sense of progress.

The caste system is both grading and degrading. It is grading as it divides the society horizontally into water-tight compartments, each caste being superior or inferior, high or low in relation to the others in one respect or the other. It gives rise to graded untouchability vis-a-vis the four varnas (Varna is the term for the four broad ranks into which traditional Hindu society is divided). It is degrading because of the false notions it creates in the minds of the caste Hindus superiority and inferiority complexes. The Brahman is further degraded because of the spurious idea and arrogance of being not only a superb man but a superman. This detracts from him the quality of being a reasonable and good man.

The outcome of caste system has been social injustice, ignorance, inequality, intolerance, and exploitation of the poor and the weak. At the apex of this hierarchical social order are the Brahmans and at the lowest rung are the Sudras. The untouchables, who are now called Harijans (people from low caste) or scheduled castes, are outside the sphere of this social system. Besides untouchables, there have been other categories also, namely, the unapproachables and the unseeables. The first causes pollution to a caste Hindu by their simple touch, the second category renders him unholy by their mere presence within a particular distance while the third one makes him impure by their very sight from whatever distance it might come. In days gone by, preachers of the Arya Samaj used to sing a song depicting the suicidal philosophy of life of the Hindus:

Hath layan murjhan

Hindu Lajwanti de bute.

(Like the touch-me-not creeper Hindus wither by the mere touch [of a so-called untouchable]) A

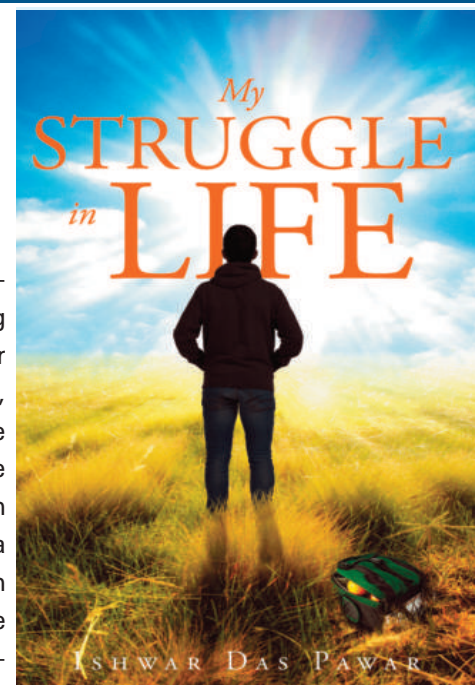
beautiful simile! Coming down to our own times, under the rule of the Peshwas in the Maratha country, an untouchable was not allowed to use

the public streets if a Hindu was coming along lest he should pollute him by his shadow. The untouchable was required to have a black thread either on his wrist or in his neck as a sign or a mark to prevent the Hindus from getting polluted by his touch through a mistake. In Poona, the capital of the Peshwas, the untouchable was required to carry, strung from his waist, a broom to sweep away from behind the dust he treaded on lest a Hindu walking on the same should be polluted. The untouchable was also required to carry an earthen pot, hung in his neck wherever he went, for holding his spit lest the spit falling on earth should pollute a Hindu who might unknowingly happen to tread on it. The unseeable was not allowed to move out of his residence for work before it was past dusk, and he was required to get back to his shell before dawn lest a sight of him should pollute a Hindu who might happen to see him.

The caste system is the worst form of discrimination between persons claiming to profess the same religion. It is also the worst form of slavery imposed on the Sudras and the untouchables in the name of social and religious laws. In the ultimate analysis, it will be found that untouchability is the byproduct of the caste system, and that being the case, it cannot be abolished so long as the caste system lasts. This exploitive social system is without a parallel in the history of mankind as it assigns high or low social positions and avocations to its votaries not on the basis of worth and aptitude but solely on the basis of their birth, that is to say, birth is the sole worth and worth is no worth.

To the caste Hindus, caste has been a Kamadhenu (divine cow goddess) in the matter of suppression and exploitation of the weak, the ignorant, and the poor while it has been a vampire to the Sudras and the untouchables as it has sucked their blood and snuffed all the human attributes out of them. Even in the present age of democracy, socialism, and secularism, the caste is working havoc by permitting and committing untold atrocities and indignities on the helpless sections of society. There are crores (one crore is equal to 10,000,000) of Hindus themselves for whom it is a shame and a disaster to have to belong to the Hindu fold. Ironically, the scheduled castes that do not, as a matter of fact, belong to the Varn Vyavastha (caste system) fold have themselves fallen into the trap by wrongly imitating the caste Hindus in this matter. The caste system has sown the seeds of discord and the disintegration of society and destroyed all the human values. It has forged fetters of slavery for all except a few who are at the top of the

(Contd. on next page)



The Caste System

(Continue from page 9)

hierarchy. The worst part of it is that the Hindu scriptures have bestowed sanctity on this inhuman social system. Just look how the Hindus go about flaunting their caste labels so pompously: one calls himself a Pandit and Sharma, the other a Lala and Verma, and yet another, a Bhalla or a Khanna, and so on. An incident comes to mind indicating how the caste rule played havoc with the society. It relates to the coronation of Sivaji. As he was anxious to have his coronation celebrated in a fitting manner, Sivaji invited learned Brahmans from all parts of the country, and eleven thousand of them, making a total of fifty thousand with their wives and children, assembled at the capital. Sivaji feasted with them with sweets for four months besides giving them costly presents of gold and money. The chief priest, Gaga Bhatta, alone received nearly one lakh (100,000) rupees. The whole ceremony involved an expenditure of not less than fifty lakh (5,000,000) rupees. Some historians, however, put the sum at the huge figure of seven crores (70,000,000). Just imagine the value of this amount in terms of the present currency.

The Brahmans said that the coronation, according to the shastras, could be performed only of a Kshatriya. A genealogy was, therefore, invented by the priest, and it was made out that Sivaji was a Kshatriya. He was then invested with the so-called sacred thread for which he had to pay large sums of money

to the Brahman priests. They then demanded another eight thousand rupees for the forgiveness of the slaughter of Brahmans during Sivaji's expeditions. In spite of these lavish gifts, they refused to initiate him into the Vedic mantras (incantation from Vedas (the oldest scriptures of Hinduism) and continued to speak of him as a Sudra. Sivaji keenly felt his humiliation at the hands of the Brahmans to whose defense and prosperity he had devoted his life. They however insisted on treating him as a Sudra, so even the great Sivaji could not escape unscathed from the gripping and ripping claws of casteism. It will also be of great interest to the readers to know how the tentacles of caste have overstepped the bounds of human sphere and trespassed into the domain of animal kingdom. The following item titled "Caste for Animals" appeared in the magazine Women's Era on its January 1, 1980 issue. It reads like this:

It is not only the Hindus that have been divided by the caste system, but also the animals belonging to the Hindus. For 15 years a court case was fought with full fury to determine the caste of an elephant belonging to temple in Kancheepuram, Tamil Nadu. Two sects of Vaishnavites, the Vadagalais and Thengalais, fought the legal battle in courts and the case reached the Supreme Court ultimately. The demand of the two castes was that the elephant's forehead should be adorned by their respective caste mark. The Madras High court decided that the ele-

phant should change its caste in alternative weeks, that is, the mark of its forehead should be changed weekly.

Not satisfied with the High Court verdict one of the parties took the case to the Supreme Court to have its exclusive caste mark on the elephant's forehead. Mercifully the animal died recently and relieved the Supreme Court of the difficulty of fixing the caste of the animal.

The Shankaracharyas, who are supposed to be the high priests of Hindus, are said to be trying to unify Hindus. The primary necessity to unify Hindus is to remove the caste barriers that divide them. However, what the priests are doing is to inflict the caste system on animals too and waste enormous amounts of the poor devotees' money on litigation for decades.

The so-called high-caste Hindus are reveling proudly in Vanity Fair, allegorized in the celebrated Pilgrim's Progress not on the basis of wealth, position, or any personal distinction or achievement but simply because of a mere chance of place of birth, which determines their caste. The hydra-headed monster of casteism which thrives on ignorance, inequality, and exploitation has survived all onslaughts from the times of Mahatma Buddha to those of Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. Even in the present age of democracy, socialism, and secularism, the politics of the country continues to be dominated and sullied by casteism.

Meri Jiwan Yatra – An Autobiography of Ambassador Bal Anand - Book Review

(Continue from page 9)

bad intension. One such personality, whom I met, was Chaudhary Sunder Singh. The Chapter 6 starts with posting to Romania of Nicolae Ceausescu. Avoiding the unattractive offers of posting to Syria and Brazil, Bal Anand Sahib was posted to Romania in October, 1982, a posting of his liking where he could relax a bit in spite of the fact that, it seems, he did not get considerate bosses to work with and learn from them as a mid-level diplomat. He came back to Delhi as Deputy Secretary and again had to work with yet another 'quarrelsome' boss in the MEA. The author does not hide his unpleasant experience and writes, "Hun Tak Tan Jime Videsh Seva De Unsukhamein Pehlu Hi Dekhe Si Asin." A long stint of postings abroad starts from here. First Madrid (Spain) with a pleasant boss, Ambassador K.D. Sharma – the details in this regard are informative and interesting like; Ambassador Sharma marrying a local staff member of the Embassy and later ending his life with his own weapon, Speaker Balram Jhakar's travails in finding vegetarian food in Madrid, MP Vishawjit Singh, scion of the Kapurthala Royal family, marrying one of the IFS fraternity posted in Spain and one of the finest diplomats of India, Vijay Thakur and interesting details of PM Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Spain. From Spain to Saudi Arabia, a country with religious tradition and modern living – the author seemed ill at ease with the social set up "Pakhand Dian Sabh Seema Ton Par." The first designated Ambassador of India, Abdul Majid returned to India without presenting his Letter of Credence apologized to PM Jawaharlal Nehru, his friend and appointee perhaps because of these social contradictions. It is, of course, is an unusual tale in diplomacy. Yet another difficult posting, Islamabad (Pakistan) but consciously or otherwise, I think, most of the Indian diplo-

mats would love to go there. Bal Anand Sahib was hoping to go somewhere as an HOM but was posted to Islamabad as Deputy High Commissioner in June 1992. The author held High Commissioner Satish Lamba in high esteem and rightly so. Some of the observations of the author are revealing like; the Head of Division dealing with Pakistan in MEA had different notions of friendly relations which did not conform to the Punjabi or say Pakistani psyche. This but I drive from the remarks of the author "Mainu Eh Bhi Japia Ki Pakistani Videsh Mantralya To Bhi Badher Mainu Ane Mantralya Balon Savdhan Rehan Di Zaroorat Hovegi." The events of Babri Masjid in December, 1992 and Pakistan's continuing policy of cross border terrorism made things more difficult. In spite of all these irritants, Bal Anand could win the hearts of Pakistanis with his 'easy demeanor, love of literature, unpretentious Punjabi behavior, in his own words "Sidha Sadha – Punjabi Bhra." The quoted Pritam Singh, a renowned Poet to conclude the Pakistan posting: Suljhe To Yeh Taani Kaise Suljhe; Badde Akalmandon Ne Uljgai Hai" It goes without saying that any diplomat in the IFS aspires to become HOM that Ambassador or High Commissioner to hold the flag of India abroad. The author graduated to become the Indian Ambassador to Panama, a beautiful country in Central America. It seems it was a nice place to relax after the tension ridden time in Pakistan. Since there were not any outstanding political or economic issues with India, the focus was on 'cultural diplomacy' which in any case remained the forte of the author with his added interest in cultural and literary matters. It is surprising to note again some service colleagues played dirty and tried to hit below the belt. From Panama, Bal Anand Sahib reached Yerevan (Armenia) as India's first resident Ambassador, a break

away country from the erstwhile USSR, a beautiful place in the Caucasian region. Before going to Yerevan, Bal Anand Sahib spent some weeks in the MEA on Consultation Duty. Though I had heard of Bal Anand Sahib quite a lot from my colleagues and friends yet we had not met so far in person. I was the Director of Central Asia Division dealing with Azerbaijan, an immediate hostile neighbor of Armenia on the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh. The author has made a reference to the issue in the book (page 171). I do recall that both the designated Ambassadors Bal Anand and Dinkar Khullar, one of the finest diplomats of India who was to go the Baku (Azerbaijan) were advised to synchronize their joining in view of the sensitive issue of Nagorno – Karabakh. Azerbaijan was siding with Pakistan on the Kashmir issue because of our take on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. We used to meet quite often those days for some 'Gapchap' in my office. I greatly benefited from Ambassador Bal Anand's association which later culminated into family friendship. It is gratifying to note, unlike other places, Bal Anand Sahib could get good, competent and friendly colleagues in Armenia and such he could deliver to further strengthen bonds of friendship between India and Armenia particularly in the cultural and educational spheres. From Armenia, the author was posted to yet again a beautiful country, in his own words – Prithvi Da Savaragmai Tota, New Zealand, the last call of duty in the exciting diplomatic career of more than three decades.

The review is getting a bit longer, 2452 words, so far and I would not like to make it unduly lengthy. Bal Anand Sahib is leading a happy and contented life in the greens of IFS Villas in Gautam Budh Nagar in the NCR of Delhi where I happen to be his almost a neighbor. I

have personally seen his large collection of books which were arranged in the basement of the Villa with easy access. He is keeping himself busy in his favorite pursuits of reading and writing. His writings were regularly carried by a periodical "The Identity" published from Chandigarh under the banner "Capital Letter". I am much impressed by the authors inherited trait of writing and preserving letters. I am happy to add here that I have had the honour of reviewing his two of the Punjabi books in my blog - The Sukh Sunehe and The Nave Nibandh. Bal Sahib's book 'Expressions of Freedom' rightly dedicated to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, was well received in the intellectual circles. The concluding chapters present a free-wheeling narration of the author take on matters of common interest to 'We the people of India' with anecdotal inputs of a son of the soil and with a world-view of a seasoned diplomat. The nostalgic account of his native place and people around like Desh Bhagat Diwana (page 210) and impressive personality of Giani Zail Singh is informative and educative. The authors love for poetry and literature is laudable. The author was much impressed by film and literary personality Balraj Sahni and says philosophically "Dunia Doshtian Di Dastan Hai". The Samriti Di Sarswati – Meri Jiwan Yatra concludes with an emotional note addressed to the author's revered father on his death anniversary is really touching – in the words of Mirza Galib "Bahut Nikle Mere Arman Lekin Phir Bhi Kam Nikle"

I hope that this piece of mine will give an over-view of the autobiography of Ambassador Bal Anand particularly to the non-Punjabi knowing friends and readers. I conclude with a quote from the retirement speech of the author:
ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਭੀ ਨਾਜ਼ ਸੇ ਰਖਤੀ ਹੈ ਆਸਮਾਂ ਪੈ ਕਦਮ;
ਲੋਟ ਕੇ ਵਤਨ ਕੇ ਜਬ ਕੋਈ ਗਰੀਬ (ਡਿਪਲੋਮੈਟ) ਆਤਾ ਹੈ।

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

65th MAHAPARINIRVAN DIWAS



O.P. Bailey
General Secretary,
Supreme Council
Shri Guru Ravidass
Sabhas, USA

Today (December 6th 2021) as we all know, is the 65th MAHAPARINIRVAN DIVAS of our Mes-siha, Mentor and crusader for social liberation, Bharat Rattan Babasaheb, Dr.B.R Ambedkar, being observed all over the world with glowing tributes to his relentless efforts seeking justice for the neglected and the marginalized sections in a socially

stratified society.

As always, the Supreme Council Shri Guru Ravidass Sabhas USA, joins the entire world community with their collective and incessant efforts to keep the flame of Babasaheb's crusade against social bigotry and caste supermacies, burning.

Babasaheb was not only the chief architect of the constitution of free and sovereign India but also the pioneer of advocating the formation of various commissions for efficient governance of modern India. He was known all over the world for his versatile knowledge in the field of Economics which led to the establishment of Reserve Bank of India in 1934. As member of Viceroy's Executive

Council from 1942 to 1945 he made remarkable and unprecedented contributions for the benefit of the entire Indian society. He can thus rightly be acclaimed as the founder of modern India.

A True Nationalist:- Babasaheb was a seasoned statesman and a nation builder who, with his profound knowledge and penetrating intellect was able to keep the entire nation welded together with its diversities.

UNTOUCHABILITY STILL ALIVE:- Though the social scourge of untouchability has been constitutionally banned all over India, the monster is still well and alive in the minds and souls of those who support it and efforts are also underway to revive the laws of Manusmriti in its various forms.

Babasaheb's slogan "EDUCATE, ORGANIZE and AGITATE" should be the torch bearer against unjust social degeneration of society which has been eating like a cancer for centuries into the very vitals of human civilization.

It is my proud privilege to meet this noble soul many times in 1955-56 at his residence 26, Alipore Road Delhi as well as on his birthday celebrated publicly by his devoted followers on April 14th, 1956 at Ambedkar Bhawan, New Delhi where I heard him making a landmark speech against the social inequalities permeating through out the entire Hindu society.

I also had the rare opportunity of touching Babasaheb's feet and helped lifting his mortal body personally on the day he attained his Mahaparinirvan at his residence on December 6th, 1956 which



I will carry with me as a holy relic for the rest of my life. I also joined his funeral procession from his residence to Safdarjung Airport before flying his mortal remains to Bombay for final services.

Whatever and where-ever we are today is because of Babasaheb.

We salute him with our bowing heads for the courage and fearlessness demonstrated by him all his life by becoming a voice of the voiceless, fighting for social justice.

Jai Bhim! Jai Bharat!!

Change of Name

I, Akashdeep
s/o Daljeet Singh

Currently Resident of:

1736 Fern Glen Ave.

Sacramento, CA-95834, U.S.A.

Now I have changed my name

From: Akashdeep

To: Akashdeep Singh

All concerned Kindly note it.

Required steps for strengthening agricultural sector in India

(Continue from page 8)

of the middle income group in the country is living in the illusion that they are paying taxes, the income from which is being given to the farmers and other workers in the form of subsidies / grants. Even a student of elementary economics is well aware of the fact that indirect taxes outweigh direct taxes. Farmers and other workers are most affected by indirect taxes. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that humans can survive without cars, bungalows, airplanes, expensive phones and

other luxury items, but bread is essential to the survival of the human race, which is dependent on agriculture.

Understanding these facts, the middle-income group desperately needs to change its understanding of the agricultural sector. Agricultural labourers, rural artisans and other labourers have made a significant contribution to the success of the farmers struggle.

Although feudalism has been legally abolished in the country, feudal thinking is still prevalent among some farmers.

Farmers' organizations have to take necessary steps in this regard. There is an urgent need for all sections of the agriculture sector to understand the spirit of cooperation and adopt it in all aspects of life.

It is the duty of all these groups to make their members aware of the importance of education and health services as well as to convey the message that suicides are not a solution to any problem but the rest of the family suffers numerous problems after someone commits suicide in the family.



Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD

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Goodie Takhar, PhD

The Bits and Pieces

Prinirvan Divas of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar

As usual, every successive year, Prinirvan Divas (death anniversary) of Babasaheb B.R. Ambedkar on December 6, is observed in all solemnity at Ambedkar Bhawan at Nakodar Road (Ambedkar Marg) in Jalandhar. Over the years, Ambedkar Bhawan has become the nerve centre of activities pertaining to Babasaheb Ambedkar, Buddhism and all matters of concern and interest to the community and the society at large. This

Singh Muktsari and the congregation kept a two minutes silence in respect of the departed personality. I may register here with a sense of satisfaction that the stake holders at the Ambedkar Bhawan have done well in the development of the site and making it live and vibrant. But at the same time it is also true that much more needs to be done to make it a 'Centre of Excellence' as a befitting tribute to the memory of our icon, Babasaheb Ambedkar.

Satwinder Hira Ji, as always. Sant Hira is a dedicated spiritual and social leader associated with the holy site at Khuralgarh. I am confident that the community and the society at large would certainly gain from his untiring efforts to put the site not only on the map of India but also the whole world as a befitting tribute to the memory of the great Guru Ravidass Ji.

As per the details in the Wikipedia, Khuralgarh Sahib is one of the most prominent historical places of Ravidassia communities like Ad-

would accommodate nearly 500 pilgrims during any function or event. Guru Ravidass Memorial is built at 14.4 acre of land and is expected to be com-



Ramesh Chander
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Prinirvan Divas of Babasaheb Ambedkar – December 6



Charan Choh Ganga – Khuralgarh



year 2021, the function was addressed by eminent speakers and paid rich tributes to the greatest son of India, inter alia, namely; staunch Ambedkarites Lahori Ram Balley and Dr. Ram Lal Jassi. It was informed that MLA Sushil Rinku, keeping with his promises to contribute towards further development of the historic site of Ambedkar Bhawan, managed to get Rs.40 lakh from the Government of Punjab for further development of Ambedkar Bhawan and honoured his commitment. This gesture was much appreciated by Dr. Gian Chand Kaul, General Secretary of Ambedkar Bhawan Trust and the public at large. Charan Dass Sandhu informed about the sudden and untimely death of a prominent social and community activist, Gurnam

Charan Choh Ganga – Khuralgarh

I have had written about the Charan Choh Ganga, a historic site pertaining to Guru Ravidassji, earlier in my blogs. Yesterday, December 4, a bus load of followers, including my immediate family members, of the great Guru from Deol Nagar, visited the holy site. My two little granddaughters were particularly excited to join the trip when I told them that the chief high priest of the historical place was no other but Sant Maharaj Satwinder Hira Ji who had been to our humble abode in Deol Nagar and blessed the little ones. The group, led by younger brother Paramjit Mahey, from Deol Nagar which visited the site was much appreciative of the personal care taken by Sant

Dharmi, Chamar, Ramdassia Sikhs, Jatavs and Mochis. It is situated at village Kharali, Garhshanker, Hoshiarpur district of Punjab. It is also called Tapo-Bhumi as Guru Ravidass ji spent about three years in the 16th century.

Punjab Government decided to develop the site as a spiritual and tourist attraction in the area and rightly so by erecting and establishing Minar-e-Begampura. It is a 151 feet high hallmark of Guru Ravidass Memorial at Shri Khuralgarh Sahib. This memorial is planned to have a spacious congregation hall having the capacity to accommodate 10000 people. Also there is state-of-the art auditorium equipped with all the modern audio-visual aids to showcase the life and works of Guru Ravidass and

pleted soon. It may not be out of place to mention that Baba Banta Ram Ghera of Ad-Dharam Movement was instrumental in searching and identifying the historical place in the mid 1990s with an active support of Dera Sachkhand Ballan and other stake holders. It is a matter of great satisfaction that the site of Charan Choh Ganga and related facilities are fast coming up and being developed by a team of dedicated spiritual leaders like Sant Sarwan Dass ji of Ludhiana and others in consultation and cooperation of Sant Satwinder Hira under the aegis of All India Ad-Dharam Movement. Sant Satwinder Hira also played an important role in the run up to solution of the issue of the demolished Guru Ravidass Mandir at Tuglakabad in Delhi.