

News from Birmingham

Armed Forces Diwali Gathering

Hindu Chaplain Armed Forces United Kingdom organised the Armed Forces Diwali celebration on October 21 at Shri Balaji Temple, Dudley Road East, Tivadale, near Birmingham. The event included religious, musical and cultural activities.



Apart from prominent leaders, people from different faiths also attended the function.

Those present included the Lord King of West Bromwich, the Lord Mayor of Sandwell, Chief Officers

from Armed Forces, Rt. Revd Bishop of Birmingham, the Chaplain General, Revd Chaffey Director Chp Trg RAF, Dr. Hari Shukla and H. Batia Upshak. S.V. Balaji, Consul (P&I) represented the Indian Consulate.

Shri Venkateswara Balaji Temple

A special 'kalyanam' was presented to Shri Venkateswara Balaji on October 9 by the trustees and committee members of Shri Venkateswara (Balaji) Temple of the United Kingdom, followed by a reception in honour of the chairman and executive

officer of Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanam and 60 top artistes from India.

A special cultural programme was presented by these artistes. S.V. Balaji, Consul (P&I), represented the Consulate.

Diksha Divas

Dr. Ambedkar Memorial Committee of Great Britain celebrated Diksha Divas Celebration in honour of Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on October 18 at Buddha Vihar, Upper Zone Street, Wolverhampton. Many dignitaries including Rob Marris, MP from Wolverhampton, graced the occasion.

Farewell to Consul General

The Leader of the Birmingham City Council, Cllr Mike Whitby hosted a farewell dinner for Consul-General Jordana D. Pavel on October 22 at the Council House. Special invitees attended the dinner. The leader highlighted the role played by Ms. Pavel in enhancing relations with Birmingham. The outgoing Consul-General thanked him for his various initiatives toward enriching relations between India and Birmingham, especially in establishing the India Desk which has been providing better connectivity and networking among businesses of India and Britain.

News from Belfast

Diwali celebrations light up Belfast

Diwali was celebrated at three separate events in Belfast that



brought the Indian and other sections of the Northern Ireland community to mark the traditional Hindu festival. Indian families celebrated the festival at a traditional event of music, dance and food held in the city's Indian Community Centre and led by its chairman Ashok Sharma, a leading businessman. The centre is the hub of activities for the Indian community in Belfast.

Mahabharata epic studied in city

The Mahabharata, one of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India, was examined at a major workshop in Belfast in October. The study was led by John D. Smith, Emeritus Reader in Sanskrit at Cambridge University. He outlined the Mahabharata's importance both to the culture of the Indian subcontinent, and as a major text of Hinduism.

News from Nehru Centre

The Dancing Star



In collaboration with The Cobra Foundation and The Temenos Academy, The Nehru Centre invited the Bishop of London to deliver a lecture on the Lt General Bilimoria Memorial. He held the audience captivated with his lecture on 'The Dancing Spirit — The Promise and Peril of the 21st Century'.

A distinguished soldier and an ardent environmentalist, Lt. Gen Bilimoria was the founder president of a charitable trust, Cobra Foundation. His son, Lord Karan Bilimoria, CBE DL, is a trustee, and the present chairman.

In conversation with Dwivedi



Film historian and director of SACF, Lalit Mohan Joshi had a chat with Dr. Chandraprakash Dwivedi about his commitment as a creative artiste, his acting career, the controversies surrounding serial *Chanakya* and Hindi film *Pinjar* and his present television serial in the making — *Upanishad Ganga*. This programme was chaired by novelist and screenplay writer Farrukh Dhondy.

Dr. Dwivedi is an Indian filmmaker and scriptwriter who is acclaimed for producing and directing *Chanakya*.

A scintillating sitar concert



Well-known sitarist Christian Noçon in a duet with tabla artiste Khadim

Hussain gave a soul-stirring performance that mesmerised the audience.

"If you wouldn't see who is playing, you would think it is somebody from India" — these were the words his Guru used to introduce Christian when he performed for the first time at the Embassy of India in Berlin.

Christian has been learning Indian classical music and the technique of playing sitar since 1995.

About Colours, etc.



The Nehru Centre invited Gaurav Sarin, an architect, master planner and abstract

artist working with a variety of media — ink, oils and acrylics — to mount his exhibition titled, *About Colours, etc.* Gaurav's theme is colour — the graphic representation and meanings one can associate with the dynamism brought through shades on canvas.

The sketches and drawings are "various musings in various places". This exhibition was visited by many artists, art connoisseurs and architects.

The Rapids of a Great River



In association with Vayu Naidu and Penguin Books, The Nehru Centre invited Yasmin Alibhai Brown, renowned TV presenter and commentator, for the launch of the book, *The Rapids of a Great River: The Penguin Book of Tamil Poetry*, edited by Lakshmi Holmström, Subashree Krishnaswamy and K. Srilata.

Lakshmi Holmström and Dr. Vayu Naidu read out excerpts from the book.

Brown also gave insights into migration and multicultural societies.

Benegal and Irani at The Nehru Centre



In association with the London Film Festival, The Nehru Centre invited prolific director and screenplay writer Shyam

Benegal to brief the audience on 'Current Independent Cinema' in India. Renowned theatre and film personality, Boman Irani, was also present and spoke briefly. The programme was coordinated by Cary Rajinder Sawhney, the festival programmer of The Times' BFI 53rd London Film Festival.

SACF Awards



Girish Kasaravalli, Monika Mohta, Nalin Surie and his wife, and Dr. C. Dwivedi

In their ninth annual event, the South Asian Cinema Foundation (SACF) honoured

India's veteran filmmaker Girish Kasaravalli with the Excellence in Cinema Award. The newly instituted 'SACF Catalyst for Culture Award' was also presented to filmmaker and actor Chandraprakash Dwivedi for producing and directing television serials *Chanakya* (1990), *Mrityunjay* (1996) and film *Pinjar* and in recognition of his commitment to exploring India's glorious ancient culture.

Sarangi and flute jugalbandi



The Nehru Centre organised a concert, which had a

breath-taking group performance by Sandeep Mishra on sarangi along with Shyan Kishore on flute, Yymi Turbnbull on *tanpura* and Stuart Fenwick on tabla. Hailing from the Sarangi Gharana of Varanasi, Mishra acquired training in singing under his great grandfather Late Pt. Narayan Das Mishra. He learned the intricacies of playing from his grandfather, sarangi maestro Pt. Bhagwan Das Mishra, and father Pt. Santosh Kumar Mishra.