



# Ambedkar Times Weekly

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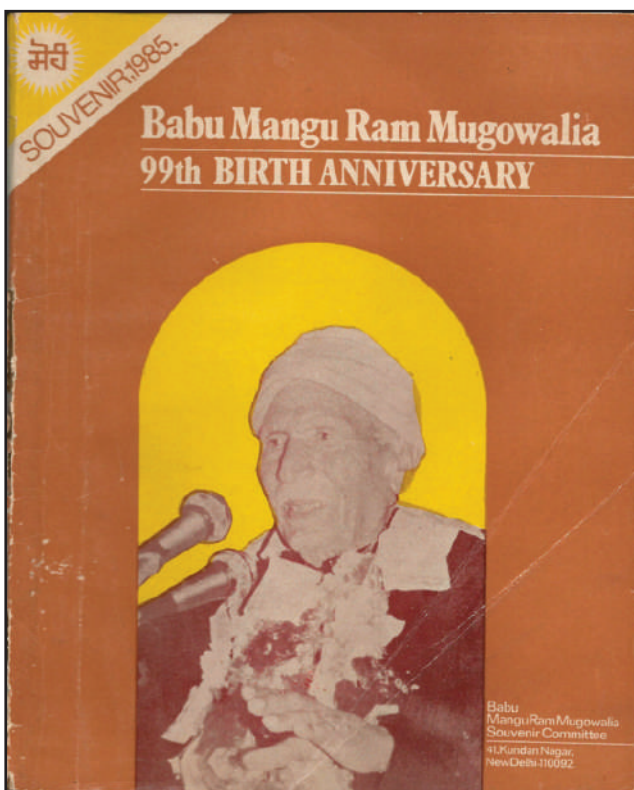
## Preserving the Legacy of Ad Dharm Movement

Prem Kumar Chumber  
Editor-in-Chief:  
Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba

**Ad Dharm** movement brought Dalit consciousness in the undivided vast province of Punjab at a time when varied political organisations (Singh Sabhas, Arya Samajis, Muslim League, Ahmadiyya's, Christian missionary societies) representing mainstream communities, in the regions were making concerted efforts to strengthen their numerical strength for gaining some political space in the promised devolution of political power in the form of limited electoral provisions. Though Scheduled Castes, then addressed as Depressed classes, constituted a significant part of the total population of the Punjab province, they did not have their own exclusive political organisation like that of the other mainstream communities in the province. It was for this reason that all other community based organisations were making best of their efforts to win maximum number of Scheduled Castes towards their fold. All of them were asserting their claim on Scheduled Castes to include them in the religions of their respective communities. In fact, it was for the first time in 1920s that the leaders of different communities realised to consolidate the numerical strength of their respective communities as a potent factor for the acquisition of some share in the British system of governance. It was precisely during this very time that the historic Ad Dharm movement took roots in Punjab.

The Ad Dharm movement was founded by Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia after his return from abroad in 1925. He along with the efforts of Vasant Rai, Thakur Chand and Swami Shudranand

called a mega conference at his native village of Mugowal and laid the foundation of the Ad Dharm

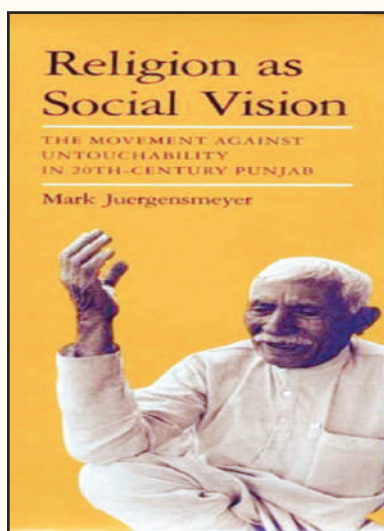


movement amidst various sub-communities of the Scheduled Castes. Within a short period of five years, Ad Dharm movement became a household organization of the majority of the lower castes in the province. It had its own Newspaper (Adi Danka), well-organized headquarter (Ad Dharm Mandal) at Jalandhar, separate religion (Ad Dharm) duly recognised by the British government, sup-

ported Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar during his tie with Mr. M.K. Gandhi on the issue of separate electoral communal award at the London Round Table Conferences, won seven out of eight reserved assembly seats in the Punjab Pradesh Provincial Assembly elections in 1937, and all seats in 1946 Punjab Assembly elections. In 1946, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia got elected from the reserved assembly seat of Hoshiarpur. The Ad Dharm movement, under the stewardship of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, made many petitions to the British government from time to time for the upliftment of the lower castes. Despite stiff opposition from the mainstream communities, the Ad Dharm movement was able to carve a niche for itself and acquired a significant political space for the hitherto neglected segment of the lower castes.

Though after India's independence, the Ad Dharm movement got confined to socio-spiritual domain of the lower castes, its legacy became a rich heritage of the Schedules Castes in the state. Mangu Ram Jaspal, namesake of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, Prof. Mark Juergensmeyer, Mr. C.L. Chumber, Prof. Ronki Ram, among others played a significant role in documenting the history of Ad Dharm movement and preserving its legacy. It is matter of great pride for us to put on records that Ambedkar Times (English) and Desh Doaba (Punjabi) Weeklies have been making earnest efforts since their inception in 2006 and 2012 respectively for the wider dissemination of the information about the rich heritage of this historic Scheduled Caste movement across the world.

**Ambedkar Times and Desh Doaba forum fondly remember the historic days of June 11-12, 1926 – the foundation day of the Ad Dharm Movement!**



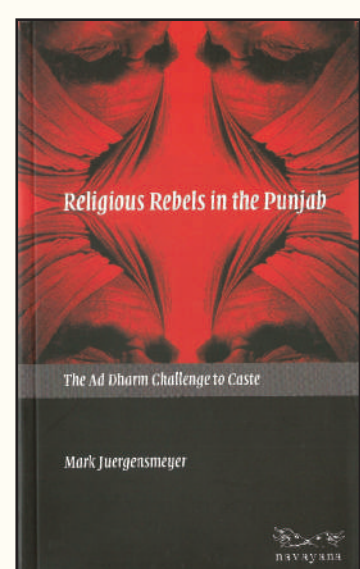
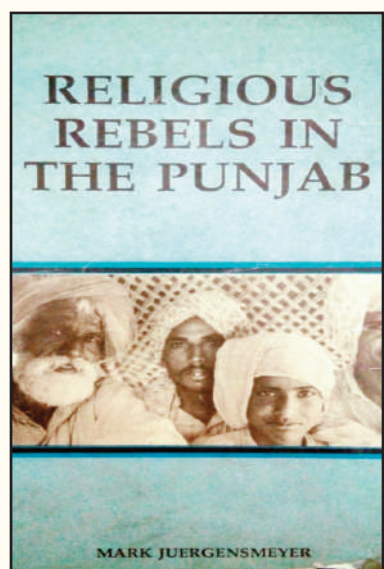
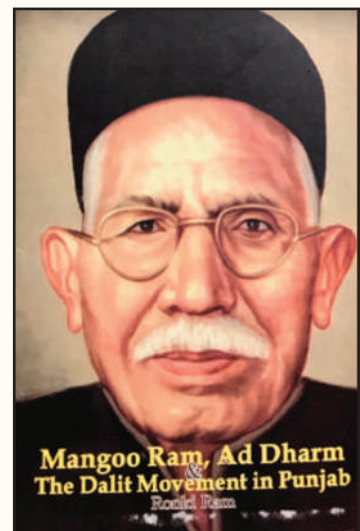
## Congratulations on the Historic Day of the Foundation of the Ad Dharm Movement in the Undivided Punjab

Prem Kumar Chumber  
Editor-in-Chief

Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba Weeklies, CA (USA)

"Ambedkar Times" & "Desh Doaba" congratulate it's esteemed readers, contributors and well-wishers on the historic day (11-12 June) of the foundation of the Ad Dharm movement, the first movement of its kind formed by the lowest of the so-called low-caste people of Punjab in the mid-1920s for their emancipation and empowerment.

This historic movement was led by Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, who was also among the founder members of the Gadhar movement in the Pacific Coast. The Ad Dharm movement generated social and political consciousness among the Scheduled Castes of Punjab, convinced the British government to accord official recognition to its separate religion (Ad Dharm), and was able to make the socially excluded sections of the society to effectively compete in the maiden electoral contest in 1936 and again in 1947, and also secured for them a berth in the then Punjab Assembly at Lahore. This movement laid the foundation for self-respect, dignity and passion for self-rule. The current tremendous support of the well-established and huge diasporic Ravidassia community in the US in favor of SB 403 is a thriving legacy of the historic Ad Dharm movement and its commitment for the cause of the community. Once again we congratulate all our extremely valuable readers, contributors and well-wishers on the historic Ad Dharm day: **Jai Gurudev Ji!**



# On the 97th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Ad Dharm Movement (June 11-12)

## Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia: Pioneer of the Ad Dharm Movement

At present Scheduled Castes in East Punjab constitute one-third of the total state population – largest in comparison to their counterparts in all other states and UTs in India. However, their share in the agriculture land in the state is lowest. Less than five percent of them are small time cultivators. Though in terms of administrative set up they are enumerated along with other caste communities in the census records of the villages in East Punjab, actually they live in segregated Dalit settlements situated in the periphery of mainstream villages. The segregated Schedule Castes' peripheries are contemptuously called *Chamarlees* in Doaba, *Thathees* in Malwa, and *Vehras* in Majha: the three distinct spatial-cultural regions of the state. Nevertheless, Scheduled Castes in East Punjab, like all other communities, are Punjabi first and their religion and caste and domiciliary location-scheme later. Like all other integral segments of the syncretic Punjabi qaum, Scheduled Castes are too valourous and well known for their praiseworthy role during the fights of the Khalsa armies of Guru Gobind Singh against the regimes of injustice and social oppression. To live with dignity prompted them in the second half of 1920s, to organise themselves under the Ad Dharm movement (11-12 June, 1926), the maiden Dalit movement of pre-partition Punjab. The Ad Dharm movement was parallel but independent of various other contemporary Adi/Dalit movements (briefly discussed below) emerged almost at the same time in the South India.

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia (January 14, 1886 – April 22, 1980) was the precursor of the Ad Dharm movement. He belonged to a Dalit family of leather workers of village Mugowal indistrict Hoshiarpur. His father wanted him to educate so that he could him in his leather business by reading transactions written in English. Despite his relatively well off family background, Mangu Ram faced social exclusion, for his so-called low birth, at the school in a nearby village Bajwara. He was forced to leave the studies abruptly without completing his matriculation. Thereafter, in search of easy life, like the early emigrants from the Doaba, Mangu Ram too landed in America in 1909 and earned his livelihood while working in lumber industry and agriculture farms. That was the time when Punjabi emigrants in North America were planning to form a radical organisation for the liberation of colonial India. Eventually, Mangu Ram became an active member of the Ghadar *Lehar* (movement) founded in 1913. He was one of the five proud members of a Ghadrute group who were assigned

the herculean task of ferrying weapons to India for an armed rebellion against the British rule. But *SS Maverick*, the ship that was bought to transport weapons was caught in route and destiny took Mangu Ram into the Philippines, where he spent the next twelve years of his prime life incognito. Finally, he reached his native village in 1925, to the surprise of all, as everyone already knew the news of his alleged hanging.

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia is to the Punjab what Mahatma Jyotirao Phule is to Maharashtra, and just

as the Maharashtra Dalit movement owes its origin to Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, the Punjab Dalit movement is similarly indebted to Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia. If Mahatma Jyotirao Phule was influenced by the writings of Thomas Paine, the famous English-born American political activist, theorist, philosopher and revolutionary of the nineteenth century, Babu Mangu Ram

Mugowalia learnt his lessons of equality and freedom from the proclaimed democratic and liberal values of the United States of America wherein he came into contact, during his sojourn, with the revolutionary freedom fighters popularly known as Ghadari Babas, of the historic Ghadar *Lehar*. This further cemented his resolve to fight for a dignified life for the masses by liberating India from the clutches of the British Empire, and to establish in its place democratic and egalitarian home rule with equality and freedom for all irrespective of caste, class, creed, language, gender and regional differentiations.

On return to his native village, after spending 16 years abroad, Babu Mangu Ram did not find any change in the predominance of untouchability. In his own words: "While living abroad I had forgotten about the hierarchy of high and low, and untouchability; and under this delusion returned home in December 1925. The same disease from which I had escaped started tormenting me again.

I wrote about all this to my leader Lala Hardyal Ji, saying that until and unless this disease is cured, Hindustan could not be liberated. Hence, in accordance with his orders, a programme was formulated in 1926 for the awakening and upliftment of the Achhut qaum (untouchable community) of India" (*Kaumi Udarian* 1986: 23-24). Consequently, he decided to dedicate rest of his life for the emancipation and empowerment of his fellow so-called low-caste people. He established an elementary school in his native village for the lower caste



Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia

children of those self-same socially excluded sections of the society that later came to be designated Scheduled Castes (SCs) under the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) order, 1936, which contained a list (or schedule) of castes throughout the British-administered provinces. Following into the footsteps of his revolutionary Ghadrute leadership in the United States of America, he aspired to both

fight against the caste-based social evil of untouchability and to replace it with an all-encompassing social freedom, as well as to join the fight to free the subjugated India and return to it its political freedom. Like his predecessor in Maharashtra, he faced stiff opposition from the so-called upper castes in his fierce struggle against oppressive structures of domination including untouchability – the most egregious one among them.

The Ad Dharm movement, pioneered by Mangu Ram, soon became a household name among the Dalits of the Punjab like the Satyashodak Samaj movement of Phule in Maharashtra. Seth Kishan Das of Bootan Mandi – a well-known local leather merchant – helped build its headquarter named 'Ad Dharm Mandal' in Jalandhar. Mangu Ram with his untiring efforts literally took the movement to the doorsteps of all the untouchables in the region and soon emerged as a cult figure of the Dalits. Under the flag of Ad Dharm movement, he fought for the long de-

nied land rights of the lower castes who were legally debarred along with other non-agriculture castes from owning agriculture land under the Land Alienation Act of 1900.

Moreover, under the local customary law, popularly known as 'rayit-nammas', the lower castes were also deprived of ownership rights on the residential plot of their houses in the segregated neighbourhoods. They were not allowed to build pucca houses in these separate Dalit localities. They were only permitted to build mud/thatched houses and in return were supposed to perform some *begar* (forced labour without wages) in the agriculture farms of the legal owners of their residential plots.

Another important task towards the material empowerment of the lower castes that was undertaken by the Ad Dharm movement was special legal provision of education and government employment reservation for the lower castes under the state affirmative action. Like the *Satyashodak Samaj* movement in Maharashtra, the Ad Dharm movement soon became a household name among the Dalits of Punjab. It was for the first time in the forgotten history of the lower castes in the state that a golden opportunity knocked at their doors to get them united on a common and distinct platform under the leadership of their fellow-travellers to fight for the most sought after goal of dignified life and to collectively press their long-pending claim for a share in the local structures of power.

In the wake of the limited democratic political process in 1919 prised from the British Government for the institutionalization of the electoral system, every community was busy in organizing its respective members into well-organized socio-political forces (political parties/organizations); and as a young man freshly returned from the US, and meticulously chiselled in the superb companionship of the proud Ghadrute Babas, Babu Mangu Ram able bring together many of his fellow community members to build a separate social and political organization at par with that of the upper

(Contd. on next page)



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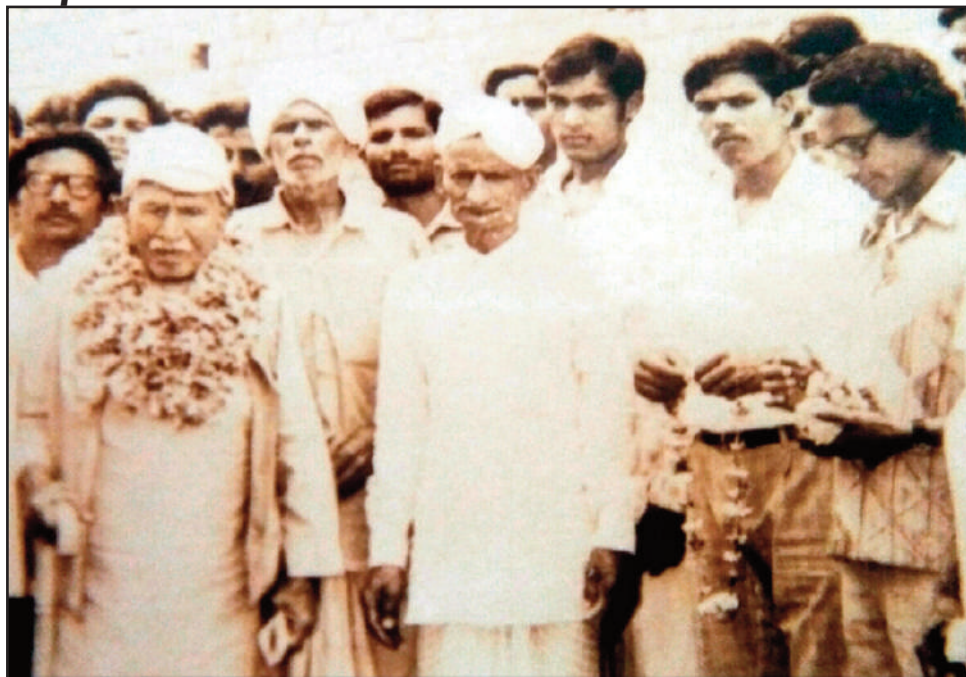
# On the 97th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Ad Dharm Movement (June 11-12)

(Continue from page 1)

caste communities like the Hindu Mahasabha of the Hindus, Muslim League of the Muslims and Singh Sabhas of the Sikhs. This limited election-based legislature-forming-process also led to the formation of similar Adi-movements in other parts of the country like Adi-Andhras, Adi-Dravidas, Adi-Karnataka in the South India, and Adi-Hindus in the Uttar Pradesh province of the North India. Though these different Adi-movements emerged almost at the same time in different regions of the country, there is no evidence to prove that they were instrumental in the rise of one and another. Each Adi-movement was influenced by the then prevailing situations in its own specific context in the given state.

In the posterannouncing the first annual meeting of the Ad Dharm movement, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, along with Swami Shudranand and Babu Thakur Chand, devoted the entire space to the hardships faced by the *Moolnivasis* at the hands of the caste Hindus. He also made an appeal to the *Moolnivasis* to come together to chalk out a programme for their liberation and upliftment. Addressing them as brothers, he said:

*We are the real inhabitants of this country and our religion is Ad Dharm. Hindu Qaum came from outside to deprive us of our country and enslave us. At one time we reigned over 'Hind'. We are the progeny of kings, Hindus came down from Iran to Hind and destroyed our Qaum. They deprived us of our property and rendered us no madic. They razed our forts and houses, and destroyed our history. We are seven crores in numbers and are registered as Hindus in this country. Liberate the Adi race by separating these seven crores. ... Our seven crore number enjoy no share at all. We reposed faith in Hindus and thus suffered a lot. Hindus turned out to be callous. Centuries ago, Hindus suppressed us; sever all ties with them. What justice can we expect from those who are the butchers of the Adi race. The time has come; be cautious, now the Government listens to appeals. With the support of a sympathetic Government, come together to save the race. Send members to the Councils so that our Qaum is strengthened again. British rule should remain forever. Make prayer before God. Except for this Government, no one is sympathetic towards us. Never consider ourselves as Hindus at all; remember that*



**Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and members of Ad Dharm**

*our religion is Ad Dharm (Kaumi Udarian: 1986: 21-22).*

Keen readers of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia have observed that he was conflicted on the issue of the British Raj – on the one hand he feared even greater oppression under Hindu majoritarian rule than under the British – whom he also viewed as possible partners in facilitating a more equal Indian society – but on the other hand he aspired for the dignity of national independence, which necessitated the removal of the British. This remained a recurring paradox in his political approach till the achievement of Indian independence in 1947. In the meantime, he along with other leaders of Ad Dharm movement chose to restore the lost dignity and freedom of the untouchables by detaching them completely from Hinduism and re-consolidating them into their own ancient religion (Ad Dharm). The long domination by the Aryans, they alleged, made them oblivious of their native religion.

Thus, what made the Ad Dharm movement the most politically noticeable and popular of its time was the farsightedness of its visionary leaders in setting the goal of bringing divergent lower caste communities under a single flag and to transform them into a distinct single community at par with other separate communities of Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians etc and to become an appropriate part of the Punjabi qaum. This was the most crucial political move on the part of Babu Mangu Ram, the master strategist, who intervened at a vital moment when limited direct elections were scheduled to be held in the state. He pressed for a separate religion for the lower castes of Punjab to be recorded in the 1931 Census, who in his opinion were neither Hindus, Sikhs, Muhammadans nor Christians. The lower castes, reiterated Babu Mangu Ram, were the original inhabitants – *Moolnivasis* (aboriginal people) of this nation. The alien Aryan invaders, he

continued further, deprived them of their kingdom, looted them, and finally enslaved them. In his brilliant article entitled *Achhut da Swaal* (The Question of Untouchability) published in the *Kirti* monthly of the *Kirti Kisan* party in 1929, penned under the pseudonym of Vidrohi, Shaheed Bhagat Singh supported the Ad Dharm leadership in its tirade against the caste system and for a separate religion, but at the same time also cautioned them to keep their distance from the British.

The Ad Dharm movement, under the leadership of Babu Mangu Ram, aimed at restoring the lost dignity and freedom of the untouchables by detaching them completely from Hinduism and re-consolidating into their own ancient religion (Ad Dharm). However, the task of reviving their ancient religion, in fact, was not an easy one. To revive Ad Dharm was tantamount to developing a new religion for the native people. *Moolnivasis*, the natives of this region, had forgotten their Gurus and other religious symbols during their long period of persecution under the rule of the outsiders. They had been condemned as impure and declared unfit to have their own theology. In order to establish their hegemony and legitimacy over the enslaved *Moolnivasis* of Bharat, the Aryan invaders successfully metamorphosed themselves into upper castes of the first three Varnas (Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas) – the fourfold Hindu social order based on *Chatur-Varnavyavastha*. The natives of the conquered land were allegedly pushed into the fourth Varna of Shudras – consisting of artisan castes and still other further reduced into lowest of the low castes, contemptuously dubbed as Untouchable peoples.

The assertion by Babu Mangu Ram that Dalits were the real inhabitants of this land made an enormous psychological impact on them. It provided a theological podium to them to sustain and reinforce the new Dalit identity. The British Government

granted them, as demanded, distinct status of a separate religion – Ad Dharm. The Ad Dharm was based on the teachings and inspiration from the saints of the North India Bhakti movement, particularly Guru Ravidass, Bhagwan Valmik, Sant Kabir and Sant Namdev. In fact, the leaders of the Ad Dharm movement placed the spiritual figure of Guru Ravidass in the centre of their discourse around which the entire socio-political and spiritual paraphernalia of the movement and the separate Dalit religion was woven. In this way, Babu Mangu Ram played a dominant role in chiseling the distinct markers of separate Dalit identity and restoring the natives their lost heroes, Gurus, and rich cultural heritage. He imbued them with the yearning to become rulers themselves.

During the Census of 1931, around half a million Scheduled Castes in Punjab returned themselves as followers of their newly recognized religion – Ad Dharm. Thenceforth, the followers of Ad Dharm took pride in being addressed as Ad Dharmis. Another equally great achievement of the Ad Dharm movement was that it swept the reserved Provincial assembly elections in Punjab in 1937 & 1946, which made it an important stake-holder in the Punjab legislature, perhaps for the first time in the history of the lower castes in the colonial India. Moreover, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and the Ad Dharm movement provided a fertile ground for sowing the seeds of the mission of Babasaheb Dr B.R. Ambedkar in Punjab. During Dr. Ambedkar's struggle for the separate electoral status for the Depressed Classes at the London Round Table conferences, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia supported him by sending many telegrams in his favour in a tie with Mahatma Gandhi over the question of the leadership of the Depressed Classes in India. An eminent American social scientist, Mark Juergensmeyer, documented in his classic 'Religious Rebels in the Punjab: *The Ad Dharm Challenge to Caste*,' the incredible contribution made by Ad Dharm movement in generating social and political consciousness among the lowest of the low to help them rise against the centuries old discriminatory caste system and to establish an egalitarian socio-political order in the image of 'Beghampura' of Guru Ravidass.

**Reference:**

\* Juergensmeyer, Mark, Religious Rebels in the Punjab: The Ad Dharm Challenge to Caste, Delhi: Navayana, 2009.

\*\* Kaumi Udarian (Punjabi), vol. 1, No. 2, January 1986, pp. 21-24 (Jalandhar, C.L. Chumber, ed.).

# Late Mr. Chanan Chahal (June 13, 1946 - Aug. 7, 2009)



Arun Kumar

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One of the most recognizable and respectable face amongst Dalit NRIs, For 40 years Chanan was a leading force in the UK Ambedkarite Buddhist and Dalit movement. He was a well-known public

speaker, debater, and forceful orator. I had a privilege to work with him since 1978. He encouraged not only me but many others and brought into Ambedkarite fold.

Chanan Chahal was born in the village Vanwallipur, District Kapurthalla of Punjab on 13 June, 1946. He migrated to Great Britain with his parents in March 1962 and settled in Bedford. After having completed his studies in commercial photography in 1966, he started his carrier as a freelance photographer. In 1969 during the protest march in London against the Shankraacharya of Puri for his justification of Untouchability and validity of caste system based on the Hindu scriptures, Chanan acted as a photographer. It was the beginning of his social activism. He came to know about the great services done by Dr. Ambedkar for the oppressed and suppressed people of India. He was so impressed by him that from that day onward, he started reading everything written on and by Dr. Ambedkar. He had the largest personal collection of Dalit literature in whole the united Kingdom.

Chanan started his social activism in 1969 when he was elected General Secretary of Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha, Bedford. In 1970 he helped to build the Shri Guru Ravidass Bhavan in Bedford. He was also one of the founder members of the central body Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha, UK. During his term he brought out first souvenir on the life and works of Sri Guru Ravidass and his contribution to the Dalit community.

He became active in the Indian Republican Group of Great Britain that was formed to help the Republican Party of India and raise the issues of atrocities against Dalits in India. He helped to organise a

number of demonstrations in London against the government of India for failing to protect the poor untouchable communities from the cruelty of the high castes.

In 1970, he founded 'Bhim Association' in Bedford which was later on named Dr. Ambedkar Mission Society, Bedford. Under his guidance, the society translated Dr Ambedkar's books into Punjabi language and also helped many writers to publish their works. Many souvenirs on the life of Dr. Ambedkar and Guru Ravidass were brought out. Because of Chanan's initiative, Advocate Bhagwan Das, a prominent Buddhist scholar was sponsored to give testimony to the United Nation's Human rights Commission in 1983 on discrimination against untouchables and decline of human rights in Asian sub-continent. This testimony was prepared at his house. A number of Ambedkarite leaders visited UK and stayed at his house. A prominent writer himself, he authored a book in Punjabi "Maen Hindu Kiun Nahin?" (Why am I not a Hindu?) He publically converted to Buddhism in 1985. His articles appeared in a number of journals and in ethnic press in the UK and India.

To bring awareness amongst the masses about their rights, he set up a "Kirti Publicaion Trust" in UK and started a weekly newspaper "Kirti Weekly" in Punjabi in 1984. The Trust published this weekly for three years. He served as its Convenor and Harmesh Jassal (Jalandhar) was entrusted to do editorial work.

He was greatly involved in bringing various Ambedkarite organisations under one umbrella. He played a leading role in forming the Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations UK (FABO UK) in 1986. He not only remained its member but also served in various capac-

ities. He was the President at the time of his untimely demise.

To celebrate Babasheb Dr. Ambedkar's Birth Centenary, Ambedkar Centenary Celebrations Committee, UK (ACCC UK) was launched at the House of Commons, British Parliament on 14th April, 1989 and Chanan was elected as a Chairman.



Late Mr Chanan Chahal

As a result of his foresightedness, ACCC UK organised a number of functions at the prestigious venues such as London School of Economics (LSE), Gray's Inn, British Parliament, Hull University, Oxford University, Bedford Central Library, Birmingham, Southall, Holborn. Four volumes of souvenirs were produced. Many documentaries films and radio programmes were made Chanan appeared in them as a spokesperson.

The Commemoration plaque on the house 10 King Henry's Road, London NW3 where Dr. Ambedkar lodged during his further studies (1921-22) was installed and unveiled by the Right Honourable Roy Hattersley MP, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party and Shadow Home Secretary. This plaque confirmed the historicity of the house and helped in purchasing this property and converting into Ambedkar Museum.

He travelled to various countries to attend many international conferences and seminars. Chanan presented a paper 'Peaceful Revolution' on the life of Dr. Ambedkar and his contribution to Buddhism and the conditions of the Untouchables to the Tenth Conference of the international Association of Buddhist studies at UNESCO, Paris in July 1991. He was invited to Bonn and Frankfurt, Germany to speak on Dr. Ambedkar and his movement in 1991. He also attended International Dalit Conference held in 2003 at Vancouver, Canada. Under his guidance, Babasaheb's busts were installed in the Indian High commission, London, LSE, Columbia University, Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada.

Chanan was also one of the founding members of Punjab Buddhist Society, UK and Punjab in 2003. Within three years, a historic Takshilla Maha Buddha Vihara at Ludhiana was built with a cost of over two crores of rupees and opened at the Golden Jubilee of the great conversion to Buddhism on 6th October, 2006. Chanan played a major role in the construction of this historic monument.

Mr. Chahal has established himself as a successful businessman in north Wales, but he was so much concerned about the Dalit issues that in spite of his residence 300 miles away from London, he never missed any meeting or function and contributed financially towards all these activities as well.

Chanan was vehemently opposed to the Hindu caste system and its evils and practices. To include caste into the Single equality Bill, he as a President of the Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations UK prepared a detailed report, 'Evil of Caste' in February 2009 on the prevalence of caste and its effect on the British Society. This report was prepared while he was suffering from lung cancer and was unable to travel. As we were working very closely to prepare this report, he entrusted me to take over for the release of this report. A great function was organised at the House of Commons and the report was released in the House of Commons, British Parliament in presence of a number of Members of Parliament.

He passed away on 7 August 2009.



## Our heartfelt condolences on the passing away of Smt. Ajit Kaur wife of Sh. K.C Sulekh

"Ambedkar Times" and "Desh Doaba" Weeklies share the deep grief and sympathize with Sh. K.C. Sulekh on the passing away of Smt. Ajit Kaur on June 13, 2023 at her residence in Chandigarh. Smt. Ajit Kaur is survived by her husband Sh. K.C.Sulekh; sons: Ashok Kumar (settled in New Zealand), Vijay Kuma (Chandigarh), and Sanjeev Kumar (settled in the UK); and daughters: Pushpa and Sangita. Smt. Ajit Kaur lived an active life till her last breath at the age of 93. Sulekh Sahib, her husband, who recently completed 96, got full support from his life partner throughout his active

service and social activism thereafter. Sh. K.C. Sulekh married Smt. Ajit Kaur in 1945 after one year of his matriculation. However, their engagement took place at a time when both of them were under ten years of age. It was their 79th year of married life!!

We send our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. May the departed noble soul rest in eternal peace.

**Prem Kumar Chumber**

Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba

# Dr Ambedkar Birth-International Day of Equality Dr Shashi Tharoor visits Ambedkar Museum London



**Arun Kumar**  
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**D**r Shashi Tharoor, the renowned author, winner of the Sahitya Academy Award, former Under-Secretary General of the United Nations, former Minister, Government of India and serving member of the Lok Sabha, made

Ms Santosh Dass MBE, President of Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations, UK (FABO UK) welcomed him and showed him around the museum. She had brief discussions with him about the background to the establishment of the museum as well as the campaign against caste discrimination in the UK.

She also raised the issue of caste census in India with Dr Tharoor who indicated he had always supported it. Co-authored and co-edited book by Santosh Dass 'Ambedkar in London' was presented to him courtesy of a copy do-

Ambedkar movement in the UK, lobbying for the purchasing of the property where Dr Ambedkar lodged during 1921-22 and converting it into an Ambedkar Museum, and the campaign for including caste discrimination as a protected category in the British law.

Arun Kumar, General Secretary of FABO UK presented Dr Tharoor a letter with a request that he take up with the Ministry of External Affairs and the Prime Minister of India the issue of declaring 14 April - the birth date of Dr Ambedkar - as International Day of Equality. Arun also re-

C. Gautam, Joint Secretary presented a framed copy of a portrait of Dr Ambedkar - a replica of the painting donated by FABO UK to the Gray's Inn displayed in the Ambedkar Room there.

In the visitors' book at the Ambedkar Museum, Dr Tharoor wrote, "A great privilege to visit the remarkable Ambedkar House, lovingly preserved and curated as a memorial to the great man, with historic photographs, paintings and statues.

The House evokes a bygone era and testifies to the vital importance of preserving the tangible legacies of one of



a visit to the Ambedkar Museum London on 11 June 2023. He is a great admirer of Dr Ambedkar and has recently authored a book 'Ambedkar-A life' in which Dr Ambedkar's story is described with great lucidity, insight and admiration. A number of academics, students and followers of Dr Ambedkar were present during his visit.

nated by the Anti-Caste Discrimination Alliance. This book explores the life and time of Dr Ambedkar during his further studies in London at the London School of Economics, Gray's Inn, his activism during Round Tables Conferences 1931-32 and his visit in 1946 to see Winston Churchill and other British politicians. It also explores his legacy including the

quested him to raise the issue in Parliament so that the real intention of government on this issue is made public. Dr Tharoor assured Arun that he would definitely raise this issue as the equality and fraternity both are very dear to him. Today we have the India's Constitution providing liberty, equality and fraternity but in real sense there is no brotherhood.

the greatest Indians of all times. I hope Ambedkar House serves both a "pilgrimage Centre" and an active site for lively discussions on his life, beliefs and legacy. All the best."

Ashraf Nehal, scholar, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London organised Dr Tharoor's visit to the Ambedkar Museum.



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# Assemblyman Hoover's Representative Report



## Let the Voters Speak on Fentanyl Sentencing

Earlier this week, I stood with my colleagues as a coauthor of Alexandra's Law, ACA 12. If passed, this would allow a statewide vote to amend the California Constitution to make it so those who sell fentanyl that results in the death of the person who takes it, be charged with murder.

Fentanyl is a poison that is killing thousands of Californians, including children, and we need to do everything in our power to get this off our streets.

Legislators should pass this amendment and take it to the voters.

## Aerospace Museum of California Named 2023 Nonprofit of the Year for AD7

On Wednesday I was proud to name the Aerospace Museum of California as the 2023 Nonprofit of the Year for Assembly District 7! Thank you to Linda Martin and Tom & Karen Jones for all you do for our community.

The Aerospace Museum is located at McClellan Park, and while

there, among other things, you can:

Explore more than 40 historic aircraft, including a US Navy Blue Angels fighter and a 'Top Gun' F-14 Tomcat.

Learn about space exploration and see the future of manned and unmanned flight and space travel.

Pilot your own STEM adventure in one of their many activity centers, including building stations, maker crafts, and flight simulators.

## Follow My New Podcast

I am regularly looking for new ways to share information and keep our district up to date on what is going on in Sacramento. With that in mind I recently launched a new podcast, Point of Order, that offers an inside look at California politics and the State Legislature. Each week I am joined by one of my colleagues as we explore the major issues shaping the future of the Golden State.

The show just went live on Apple Podcasts, please visit this link and hit the "follow" button to get access to new episodes. If you like the

podcast, you can also leave a rating and review. The latest episode released this week, you can listen to it here. We discuss a number of topics including the state budget and some of the major legislation recently debated on the Assembly Floor.

You can also listen to Point of Order on Spotify or watch on YouTube. I hope you find this podcast interesting and informative, thank you for listening!

## Ribbon Cutting for Radix Flooring

Recently my staff participated in the grand opening ribbon cutting for "Radix Flooring", located at 5140 Madison Avenue, between Auburn Blvd and Garfield Ave. They are owned and operated by three immigrant brothers who are part of the Slavic/Ukrainian business community. Come check out their enormous 5,000+ square foot showroom!

## Proclamation for the Telugu Association of Greater Sacramento

This week my staff was proud to present a formal proclama-

tion to the Telugu Association of Greater Sacramento (TAGS) for

their incredible work preserving and promoting Telugu culture and language for over 15 years. Their wonderful organization aims to promote friendship and cultural exchange with other similar organizations and community groups, which includes providing resources to support Telugu individuals and families navigate new cultures.

## Ribbon Cutting for Smart Mist USA

This week my team gave a certificate to "Smart Mist USA" in Folsom for their ribbon cutting event. This DIY misting system allows people to enjoy their patio during those hot summer months. Smart Mist USA's high-pressure cooling systems feature the quietest, most advanced pump available. Learn more at their website.

## Aerospace Museum of California Named 2023 Nonprofit of the Year for AD07



On Wednesday, Assemblyman Hoover was proud to name the Aerospace Museum of California as the 2023 Nonprofit of the Year for Assembly District 7! He would like to thank Linda Martin and Tom & Karen Jones for all they do for our community.

The Aerospace Museum is located at McClellan Park, and while there, among other things, you can:

Explore more than 40 historic aircraft, including a US Navy Blue Angels fighter and a 'Top Gun' F-14 Tomcat.

Learn about space exploration and see the future of manned and unmanned flight and space travel.

Pilot your own STEM adventure in one of their many activity centers, including building stations, maker crafts, and flight simulators

"I am proud to name the Aerospace Museum of California in McClellan Park as the 2023 Nonprofit of the Year for Assembly District 7," said Assemblyman Hoover. "It truly is a jewel in our community that celebrates our aerospace history while inspiring the next generation of aviation leaders."

## Prof. Shakti Kumar is new Vice Chancellor of SDGI Global University

**CHANDIGARH-** Prof. (Dr.) Shakti Kumar a renowned computer scientist has taken over as the Vice Chancellor of SDGI Global University Ghaziabad, UP. He was born in a small village named Taunsa in Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar district of Punjab. He belongs to a humble farmers' family and is the younger brother of Kisan-Mazdoor Morcha Convenor Sh. Karan Singh Rana and is a classmate of Punjab's well-known Journalist Avtar Singh Bhanwara.

He has more than 215 research articles, 27 patents, 9 international book chapters to his credit and has supervised 14 Ph.D. scholars. He designed and developed a first of its kind LiFi based experimental TV broadcast station. The broadcast could be received on conventional TVs, mobiles phones, computers and Laptops using light waves simultaneously.

He has received twice, the Best Research Paper Award by International Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology (IASET) for the



a year 2014 & 2015. He has delivered more than 100 expert lectures in India and abroad in the field of Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Soft Computing and Quantum Computing. He is the recipient of Sir Thomas Ward Memorial Prize for the year 2010 and Eminent Engineering Personality, 2019 by The Institution of Engineers (India), Calcutta. His social contributions include more than 30 times blood donation and free services as a member of the Juvenile Justice Board of district Yamunanaagar of Haryana. Dr. Shakti Kumar is a keen sportsman. He has won bronze medal in Hammer Throw, in

the Indian Navy Athletics Championship 1988-89. Prior to joining as Vice Chancellor SGU, Prof. Shakti Kumar has served National Institute of Technology, Kurukshetra, BITS Dubai, UAE and Atilim University, Ankara Turkey. He has also served as Vice Chancellor Baddi University Baddi, Himachal Pradesh.

-Avtar Singh Bhambra

## Man sentenced for posting casteist offensive message online

A man has been given 18 weeks custodial sentence after posting casteist offensive message on social media. He was arrested following a Thames Valley Police investigation and was charged with an offence contrary to section 127(1)(a) and (3) of the Communications Act 2003 for sending an offensive/indecent/obscene/menacing message/matter. Mr Amrik Singh Bajwa posted the grossly offensive message on Tik Tok on 19 July last year. The post deliberately targeted the so called 'Chamaar' and 'Choohra' communities [described as Dalit] hurling sexual abuse, obscenities with threats of rape. In the Tik Tok message, Mr Bajwa also glorified the so-called 'Jat' community for sexually abusing Dalit women in Indian villages as a matter of pride. Members of Bhagwan Valmik Sabha, Southall, Shri Guru Ravidas Sabha (UK and Europe), Shri Guru Ravidas Sabha, Gravesend,

Sikh Federation were present outside Slough Magistrates Court during the court proceedings.

This matter first went to the Crown Prosecution Service for a charging decision but was subsequently escalated to the Attorney General for a final decision.

It is perhaps the first case of its kind in the UK where Caste based slurs and sexual hate speech has been prosecuted.

A spokesperson for Caste Watch UK said 'It was criminally reckless for Mr Amrik Singh Bajwa to post this casteist material online for others to view. It shows the contempt of one caste group for another caste group, a practice familiar in countries like India and shows signs of replication in Britain. His criminal conviction will send a strong message that such caste hate speech and abuse will not be tolerated in Britain'.



**V.B. Soni**  
Ambassador (Retd.)

# Gate Crashers Anonymous

Diplomats during their postings abroad get opportunity of serving in diverse regions of the world, among the 194 odd member countries of the United Nations. Every world's capital is bound to have its own distinct character, tradition, cultural milieu, society groups and norms.

It is common knowledge that classic traditional diplomacy is practised as a specialised craft by trained professional diplomats and public persons like academics/politicians/strate-

larly appear in this section have come to be described as P3Ps (Page Three Persons)!

Of late crass commercialisation has crept in to this reporting of cultural/social activities. Fashion/beauty products, jewellery and art galleries put in paid sponsored sections with photos with the celebrity guests promoting their range of products. Some social climbers pay fancy amount for their photos to be displayed along with celebrity guests. As the entry to such prestigious functions is restricted and closely monitored at the entrance, ingenious methods are used to gate crash.

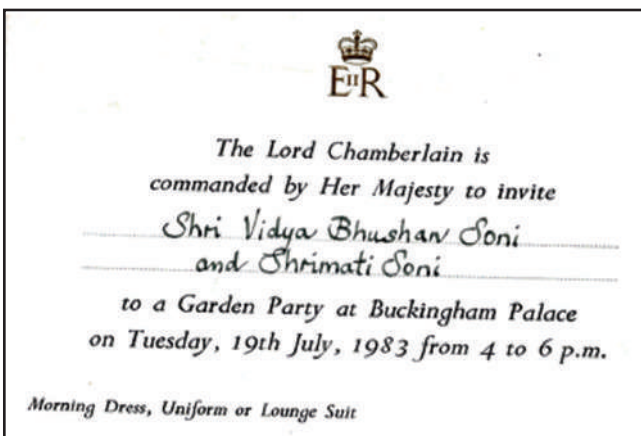
The most daring and auda-

passed through two security checkpoints. After being asked for photo identity at the entrance, they were instructed to proceed to the next gate, when their names could not be verified in the guest list. Apparently, the couple's manner and insistence, as well as the pressure of keeping lines moving on a rainy evening, allowed them entry. The irony is that before being noticed and turned away, they were able to greet President Obama and other guests inside the Reception area! It was a top security breach as the subsequent enquiry concluded.

New Delhi's foreign Diplomatic Corps represents a large motely group of almost 150 resident foreign

land to India. Both of us had served together in Senegal in early 1990s, sharing common interests-Golf and Bridge. Our close relationship was restarted after a decade in Delhi. I was on permanent list of invitees at his Receptions. He introduced me to fellow Ambassadors. I had right royal official entry to the charmed circle.

Shortly thereafter, I joined the corporate world as Chairman of a private Company (2005-2015), undertaking infrastructure project exports in Africa. In no time I was in demand among diplomatic missions, particularly developing countries, some of whom tried to interest my company in undertaking development projects,



gic thinkers. The profession has found a new dimension through, what has come to be known as 'Public Diplomacy'. In a broad sense it means a process of communication, mutual knowledge, influence and enrichment of cultures. Essentially it is a means by which the designated representative of one country tries to influence the society of another country. It is the ability to achieve goals through attractive medium, and not just the easier way of offering gifts, generous hospitality, and weekend getaway/holidays. To understand the culture of another country there is need to communicate with its inhabitants.

Hospitality and entertainment can be a medium. In diplomatic practice this is accepted as the legitimate way of gaining goodwill. Occasions like National Day of the concerned country, visiting-Heads of State/ Government, Ministers, official delegations, international conferences, trade and cultural delegations, sports teams provide good opportunity for hosting Receptions. Diplomatic representatives are entitled to duty free privileges like liquor quota for such accepted 'soft' activity, among other things in the country of accreditation.

Local glitterati add prestige, glamour and aura to the functions. In the host country ambitious social climbers, wannabes like to be invited to such prestigious occasions in order to be seen rubbing shoulders with the high and mighty. Reporting on the social scene, newspapers/magazines initially started with splashing colourful photos and reportage of the events on cultural/social/diplomatic front in City news section of the leading newspapers on Page 3. Those whose photos regu-

larly incident, cause celebre of sort, happened in recent times at no less a



place than the White House, where security is expected to be the tight-



est. The occasion was State Banquet in honour of the visiting Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh by U.S. President Barak and Michelle Obama on November 24, 2009.

Michele Salahi, American television personality and model, along with former husband Tareq Salahi, connected with TV reality shows, succeeded in entering the State Banquet without an invitation! They

diplomatic missions and international organisations, enjoying diplomatic



status. They constitute a diversified but homogenous group, representing-



various geographic areas of the world. They represent a fascinating, active, well-knit and colourful group. India is considered an important post, where top-ranking seasoned diplomats are sent to represent their country's interest ably.

On retirement from Foreign Service in 2002 when I returned to settle down in New Delhi, Walter-Gyger was Ambassador of Switzer-

investment and transfer of technology in their country. Indeed, I had a pretty busy social calendar. It was during this period that I saw from close quarters, how some desperate social climbers were using ingenious methods in trying to gatecrash at Diplomatic events.

They turn up without an invitation card, or force a backdoor entry. A network exchanging vital information among similarly interested parties about details of Diplomatic Receptions being held is firmly in place. From the DIPLOMATIC LIST brought out by Ministry of External Affairs it is easy to find out the date of National Day of the countries. All that has to be checked through sources is the venue, date and timing of the Reception.

Western countries missions are generally strict in regulating the entry of guests on such occasions. In actual practice Embassies of Africa/Asia/Latin America and East Europe can be a bit lax in regulating entry to the functions. One aspiring group of invitees has perfected the art of cultivating local employees in the targeted mission.

They manage to obtain blank invitation card in exchange for consideration, filling in the intended invitee's name on it. A daring party blurted out to me once that he makes as many photocopies of the blank card as required. These are then shown sent as telefax as last minute invitation, a practice followed to save time. That is accepted at the point of entry.

Some well-connected persons, particularly those having flourishing business with a particular country, help form Friendship Association with the concerned Embassy.

(Contd. on next page)

# Gate Crashers Anonymous

(Continue from page 7)

They get to invite its selected members to enjoy free choicest drinks and lavish hospitality. There are reports of the Association collecting a certain 'charge' for making available luxurious hospitality to the beneficiary.

Yet another category consists of people who proclaim themselves to be journalists representing a non-existent agency/publication. More ingenious ones print out computer-generated visiting cards and letterheads specially tailored to impress the concerned Embassy of their credentials.

Any diplomatic mission would like to have on their guest list a galaxy of glamorous super stars/personalities and politicians. I have myself bumped into the likes of Amitabh Bachchan, Hema Malini, Rekha, Sachin Tendulkar, Kapil Dev, Anoushka Shankar, Amjad Ali Khan, Satish Gujral, the Reddys, Milkha Singh, Raghu Rai and a host of others on such occasions. They add to the star power.

Some of those who attend, masquerade as intellectuals/academics or thinkers/opinion makers to enter the scene. All they carry on themselves are impressive looking visiting cards with fancy positions to impress the gullible.

Then there are PR/publicists, art gallery owners, travel/visa agents and lawyers, who attend to serve their personal business interests. The official photographer is kept busy clicking away photos of all and sundry with celebrities. There have been a handful of cases when the gate crasher gets apprehended as an uninvited guest. After questioning he is usually let off with a warning, to avoid any unsavoury publicity.

**South Asia | Police seek Senegal 'diplomat' - BBC NEWS**

May 26, 2003 - Police in the Indian capital, Delhi, are seeking to question the son of Senegalese Ambassador over killing of a driver.

Senegal envoy leaves with murder accused son

The most sensational incident on such an event happened at a Diplomatic Reception, to mark Africa Day celebration in New Delhi on May 24, 2003. Ironically it pertained to the then Dean of Diplomatic Corp, the

senior most Diplomat in the fraternity, who happened to be from Africa. His 24-year-old dependent son was accused of killing the Embassy's Flag Car chauffeur on the premises of Taj Palace Hotel, as the Reception was in progress. It seems that the Ambassador's son, on finding the latter in an inebriated state asked for the car keys, admonishing him that he was not in a fit enough condition to drive the flag car. An argument followed during which the driver was pushed with violent force, resulting in his fall, fatally hitting head on a hard object.



**UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT VIKTOR YUSHCHENKO WITH AMBASSADOR V.B. SONI AT INDIA HOUSE, KIEV. 2002.**

He was declared brought dead at the hospital.

Ambassador, accompanied by family was recalled by his Government within days of the incident, so the accused son could not be questioned. In any case he may have been protected under the Vienna Convention that provides diplomatic immunity to serving diplomats and their immediate family.

On a complaint from the mother of the victim, the only bread winner of the family, Ministry of External Affairs, informed National Commission of Human Rights on April 30, 2004 that the concerned Embassy had paid full compensation of Rs 50 lakh to the next of kin of the deceased driver. That's where the matter ended.

After observing the various local players/gate crashers for more than 20 years from close quarters, let me share my selection of a few of the top performers in the game. They represent

not just themselves, but many of their category.

Bhajneesh (name changed), a smart middle-aged man, emerges as the clear winner. There are not many Diplomatic Receptions he misses out on. His intelligence gathering technique is incredible. The visiting card he dishes out, classifies him as a journalist. But nobody would have seen a copy of the non-existing publication! A discerning drinker, nothing less than a single malt or Johnny Walker Black Label Whisky will do for him. The Embassy which serves the regular brand

American and European. After winning and dining them and giving gifts, he gains their confidence. At the appropriate moment, he discreetly slips in name of a hard pressed visa applicant relative for intervention. The ruse usually works. For this he would get hefty 'commission' from the 'client' for the service rendered. This smart operator is usually accompanied by many cronies at such functions! Organising an invitation card is a piece of cake for him. Lot of business is conducted by him on this circuit, even when his communication skills are suspect.

The third person in the category describes himself as a scientist/technocrat, claiming to specialise in setting up Small and Medium Scale Industries. Tula Ram (not real name) gives the impression of being a forgetful scientist, by not so smart appearance. He barges in a group interaction to impress interlocutors with his workable ideas. He attends international seminars/conferences as a faux intellectual. He demands invitations as a matter of right, becoming argumentative when questioned. On entering the venue he would make a quick dash to the bar and buffet table, as soon as the service starts. After gulping down drinks in quick succession, he would then pile up generous helpings of food on his plate.

The general category of gate crashers would include those who want to be seen to be moving around in the charmed circle. Many socialites have a field day attracting roving eyes. Selfies taken at the Reception are put on Face Book the following morning to attract personal publicity and being noticed by followers.

The Delhi Diplomatic Circuit is indeed a pretty active one. Lot of fun, action, partying, good time with business thrown in. It's a happening place.

Let me conclude by a remark attributed to my former Ambassador I.J. Bahadur Singh, during posting to Cairo in early 1970s. He once quipped: "International Diplomacy is like love making of an elephant. It is conducted at a very high level, accompanied by too much bellowing and the results are not known for 2 years!"

of whisky is badmouthed the whole evening. He has tremendous capacity to consume.

His success rate and resourcefulness to wriggle through most difficult entry points is legendary. The only exception where his ruse does not work are the Embassies of U.S., France and Japan, because of strict surveillance at entry point. He animatedly talks about the only time when he was apprehended after gaining entry, before being dishonourably turned out in full public view.

The next on the list is Oma (name changed). He is an entrepreneur owning many businesses and properties. He drives around in expensive fancy cars which shows that he is loaded. If he can afford expensive life style why the gate crashing then? To promote his business in the travel/visa business. On such occasions he cultivates the senior diplomatic and Consular staff of the targeted Embassy, mostly North



**Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD**

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