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Qila Quotes

THE SCINDIA SCHOOL TRIANNUAL PUBLICATION





President BOG H.H. Maharaja J. M. Scindia sharing light moments with guests and students during the Founder's Day



Chief Guest - Mr Kumar Mangalam Birla addressing the gathering on the Founder's Day

THE SCINDIA SCHOOL

THE FOUNDER

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Mr Rajendra S Pawar

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Mr Vikram Mathur

Mr Jyoti Sagar

Mr Shivshankar Menon

Mr Shashank Vira

Government Nominee

Mr Harish Bhojwani

Mr Amar Jyoti Bindal

Invited Members

Mr Rahul Kulshreshtha (President, SOBA Central)

Mrs Darshana Jaini (Parents' Representative)

Mr Ravi Saund (Expert - Infrastructure Development)

Ex officio Member, Secretary & Principal

Dr Madhav Deo Saraswat

Scindia Old Boys' Association

President

Mr Rahul Kulshreshtha

Vice President

Mr Banjul Badil

Mr Nupur Patel

Treasurer

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Dr Anurag Dixit

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Artist's interpretation of the front cover

The practice of conscious meditative silence at Astachal evolves the Scindian beyond religion

استاچل میں ایک آگہی کے ساتھ مقدس مراقبہ جیسی خاموشی، ایک سنندین کو مذاہب سے بالاتر بناتی ہے۔

ਸਿੰਧਿਆ ਸਕੂਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਲਾਈ ਗਈ ਪ੍ਰਥਾ ਅਸਤਾਚਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਰਵਾਈ ਜਾਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਚੇਤੰਨ, ਧਿਆਨ ਅਤੇ ਚੁੱਪ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਿਆ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਰੇ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਉਪਰ ਇਕ ਰੂਪ ਵੱਲ ਖਿੱਚਦੀ ਹੈ।

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information printed in this edition of the Qila Quotes. If an error has occurred, please accept our apology and contact the editor at visheshs@scindia.edu.



Principal - Dr M.D. Saraswat at the Educator's conclave in Kolkata



Chief Guest for Republic Day, Dr Timir Banerjee (Ex - Ja, 1959) receiving a memento from the Principal - Dr M.D. Saraswat

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE



As our academic year draws to a close we have much to celebrate with many fond memories. On the whole, our students enjoyed another fabulous year, in particular, the last four months. We celebrated 121st Founder's Day, Diwali, and Christmas, and welcomed the New Year in style. We flew kites on the occasion of Makar Sankranti and enjoyed a delectable taste of literature via the Scindia Lit Fest. Last but not the least, we celebrated the Golden Jubilee Reunion of the batch of 1968-69 with its largest ever congregation till date.

Soon, a large cohort of our student body is going to appear for the CBSE board examination. We are all set as a community to support them in their endeavour to do well, hopefully better than previous years. Students and teachers together are working round the clock to ensure that no stone is left unturned to achieve a great result this year. It is very important for us to produce highest calibre of students. In recent years, we've been delighted to see further increase in the number of candidates, who upon receiving sound career-counselling & good board results have received offers from top universities from across the world.

While the above is important to us, we continued to focus on retaining and nurturing the Scindian values of social sensitivity, environmental protection, self-discipline and good behaviour. In fact, recently our team participated in an Inter-School event held at a reputed school in northern India. On the team's return, we received a letter of appreciation from that school's Principal stating exemplary behaviour of our boys during the tournament. This simple affirmation from an outsider confirmed that we are on the right track and the Scindian ethos is intact; in fact it is being strengthened day after day.

We have put in serious efforts to develop environmental sensitivity. Of late, boys have been engaged in classification of the flora of the fort. By July, we'll document each type that exists within the unique ecology of the Fort. We also have plans to take recycling of water to a level where we'll be able to preserve the last drop. As a community, we have also been able to reduce the food wastage in the dining hall to a large extent by collective effort.

Our outreach programme has grown by leaps and bounds. We covered the city of Mumbai, Rajkot, Surat, Kanpur, Lucknow, Kolkata and Delhi. Each visit taught us about the nuances of the Education market and society at large. This learning will culminate into a brighter future for school.

Special thanks to our Old Boys who are the backbone of our school. Their continuous support and contribution is precious for us. We'd also like to thank the parents who have contributed in ways- small, large and unimaginable!

We strongly believe that being great is a matter of choice, not an inherent trait. When we work together, there is no challenge that we cannot meet. That's the only way forward for us.

Wishing you all a Happy New Year & Happy Reading!

Dr Madhav Deo Saraswat
Principal, The Scindia School



Mr Martin Chalker cut the ribbon to mark the opening of the Founder's Day celebrations on the 20th of October



Kite flying on Makar Sankranti

EDITORIAL

As we prepare to bid adieu to yet another Batch of Class XII with the confidence that they will live up to the rich Scindian legacy, the School wishes everyone a happy, prosperous and healthy 2019. Of late, there is some respite from the intense cold wave which lasted for almost two months. The days are getting warmer, early mornings and late evenings continue to be cold. During the last two months, fog struck us only twice, yet the wintry conditions kept the sky obscured, and cold winds which often blow across this ancient citadel ensured a further drop in temperature via the wind-chill factor. Migratory birds and Wild Geese could be seen flocking near the Surajkund and playful monkeys were sighted basking in the Sun on the peripheral walls of the Fort.

Trending

On 14th November, the Principal, **Dr Madhav Deo Saraswat** received the award for The Scindia School, which was recognised as the 'Best Residential School' of the country by 'Future 50 Schools Shaping Success' which is a premium organisation that evaluates and awards progressive K-12 schools across India. It recognises schools that go beyond academics without compromising on academic rigour and help students discover their passion. The next day, he was invited for a panel-discussion where he pressed on the importance of education, which should be promoted as a life skill rather than just a source of livelihood.

Principal, **Dr M.D. Saraswat** attended the 'Educators and Parents Conclave' in Kolkata from 19th - 20th January 2019. He was invited to participate in two panel discussions; first one was - 'The lifelong advantages of a boarding school education', and the second one was - 'How to choose the right school for your child'.

Celebrations

We celebrated the 121st Founder's Day from 20th - 22nd October 2018. **Mr Martin Chalker**, CEO, International Students' House, London, was the Chief Guest for the Parents' Day which was celebrated on the 20th. A theatrical performance titled-Lord of the Flies was staged in his honour in the evening. The day concluded with a scintillating musical evening at the Madhav Pavilion entirely organized in-house. Next morning, i.e. on the 21st, the School flag was unfurled by **Mr Mitul Dikshit** (Ex-Md, 1993) and the exhibitions were inaugurated by **Mr Martin Chalker**. For the evening's programme, The Chief Guest was **Mr Kumar Mangalam Birla**, Chairman, Aditya Birla Group. Mr Birla was greeted with a lively Band performance just outside the OAT, following which he went on to enjoy the evening's programme filled with music and dance.

Mr Pradeep S Mehta (Ex-Vivekanand, 1960 - 1965) received the Madhav Award as an Old Boy of Eminence for his stellar contribution in the field of Consumer Activism. Next day, i.e. 22nd was celebrated as the Old Boys' Day where Hon'ble Justice, **Mr Sanjay Mishra** (Lokayukta, Uttar Pradesh) was the Chief Guest.

The festival of Makar Sankranti was celebrated with lot of fervour on 15th January 2019. In the afternoon, the sky above the School's Oval and Madhav fields became a riot of colours as kites soared in the sky. Yellow, green, blue and white, in fact the entire spectrum of colours could be spotted in the sky. It was accompanied by lovely music and savouries ranging from Rajasthani cuisine to the Punjabi and the South Indian ones. Many girls and teachers from Scindia Kanya Vidyalaya visited the Fort to celebrate the festival with us.

It was a moment of great honour for The Scindia School when our Brass Band gave the Guard of Honour to the Chief Minister of Delhi on the 9th January 2019; to the Chief of Army Staff on 16th January 2019 and the Defence Minister on 22nd January 2019. Lastly, along with other NCC contingents we marched at the Rajpath on the 26th of January 2019.

The 70th Republic Day was celebrated with a lot of enthusiasm on 26th January 2019. The Chief Guest, **Dr Timir Banerjee** (Ex-Ja, 1959), Clinical Professor of Neurosurgery in the US, unfurled the tricolour and inspected the parade. The contingents marched to the tunes of *Kadam kadam badayeja* led by the contingent of the Batch of 1968-69.

Basant Panchami was celebrated in the School on 11th February 2019. During morning assembly, to mark the festival, **Sonam Bhutia** sang a beautiful song in raag jaunpuri accompanied by **Chirag Thirani** on the tabla. Thereafter, **Yuvraj Maheshwari** sang one in raag bageshri accompanied

by Chirag Thirani on the tabla. The singers weaved magic and regaled the audience with their mellifluous voice.

Academics

With Board exams round the corner Classes X and XII have become the prime focus of our endeavours. Special academic sessions have been designed for all students ensuring timely remediation and enrichment. The Winter Study Camp was a fortnight of rigorous drilling of concepts, doubt clarification and testing with personalized feedback. In January and February students were provided several sample papers in each subject by their teachers so that no question appears as a surprise on the final day. Mock exams, too, were held to learn time management. All these efforts have helped our boys identify their areas of strength and weakness and they feel more confident of facing the Boards. We are confident that they will do us proud.

Staff Enrichment

Representatives from the IAYP (International Award for Young People) organised a training workshop for Award Leaders on 20th December 2018 at The Scindia School. The workshop was attended by six teachers from The Scindia School, three teachers from Scindia Kanya Vidyalaya and one teacher from Happy Days School, Shivpuri. In the workshop, the IAYP programme was discussed in detail. The participants were reintroduced to the various protocols and demands of the programme. The facilitators of the programme were- **Mr Bivujit Mukhoty**, the Programme Manager, IAYP, accompanied by **Ms Pallavi Gill**, IGE [International Gold Event] representative for India.

On 6th of December, The Scindia School along with the Institute of Counsellor Training Research and Consultancy (ICTRC) hosted the Regional Summit of Project Paradigm, which was attended by more than 50 school principals from across the region. The issue at hand was 'Child Sexual Abuse: Intervention and Prevention'. **Dr V S Ravindran**, Director General of ICTRC, was the session expert, accompanied by **Prof Keshav Singh**. The sessions were enlightening for all attendees.

School events

The Scindia School hosted the 3rd Scindia Literary Fest from 3rd - 5th December 2019. Students soaked themselves in an ambience of literature, creativity and imagination during this period. Over a span of three days, nine nationally acclaimed authors graced the Fort and exposed our students to the nuances of literature and guided them in the process of developing sophisticated perceptions and eventually, expressions. Each author enraptured the students, and at the end of each session they interacted with the author at length and asked penetrating questions.

Harmony Week was celebrated in the last week of November 2018. Special Assembly, Dance, Drama and *Nukkad Natak* were organized during the week to bring forth the message of peaceful coexistence.

The School hosted the Inter School IPSC Yoga Competition for boys and girls in U-14, U-17 and U-19 category from 24th - 25th October 2018. The overall championship was bagged by Maharani Gayatri Devi School (girls) and The Emerald Heights International School (boys). Vidya Devi Jindal School, Hisar and Sainik School, Bijapur stood second in the competition.

The Scindia School hosted the IPSC Band Competition from 27th - 28th October 2018. 11 Schools participated in the same. Names are as follows: Sainik School, Kapurthala; Sainik School, Ghorakhal; Sainik School, Amravati Nagar; Sainik School, Bijapur; BPS, Pilani; BRCM School, Bhiwani; The Mann School, New Delhi; Vidya Devi Jindal School, Hisar; Raj Kumar College, Rajkot; and The Scindia School, Gwalior. Out of the 11 competing schools, 8 competed for the Brass Band performance and 3 competed for Pipe and Drum Band. The winning trophy was bagged by The Scindia School.

Outreach

'Outreach' was organized in the cities of Mumbai, Rajkot, Surat, Kanpur, Lucknow, Kolkata and Delhi in the preceding four months. Through this event, we learnt that this personalised style of advertising (outreach) is an effective way of generating not only business, but it provides us with an opportunity to connect with Old Boys and existing parents in a neutral setting. The Old Boys warmly welcomed the faculty and assisted the school in this endeavour at each location mentioned above.

Educational Camps

Just after the Founder's Day celebrations got over, the entire school except for class 12th proceeded for the annual educational camps. Students of different grades went to different destinations. Broadly, one group of students got an opportunity to explore Ranikhet and Jim Corbett National Park; another one got an opportunity to hone their leadership skills at Uroli camp; another one participated in a week long service camp in a quaint village by the name of Gadhi in Bhind and in Mussorie; another one went for an educational excursion for a week to Bhopal and Pachmarhi and last but not the least one group went to 'The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve' in the state of Tamilnadu.

Visits

Mr David Klan from Toowoomba Grammar School, Australia, visited the School under the Teacher Exchange Programme from 2nd - 20th December 2018. He taught Social Science, played cricket with the boys and enjoyed a positive engagement with staff.

On 15th November 2018, a musical group- '*Chaar Yaar*' performed Sufi musical compositions in the Assembly Hall under the aegis of SPIC MACAY. **Mr Madan Gopal Singh**, **Mr Deepak Castelino**, **Mr Pritam Ghoshal** and **Mr Amjad Khan** mesmerized the audience with their soothing Sufi compositions. The internationally acclaimed group



Mumbai based author - Ms Roopal Kewalya at the Scindia Literary Fest



Sufi music group 'Chaar Yaar' with Vice Principal Ms Smita Chaturvedi in the assembly hall

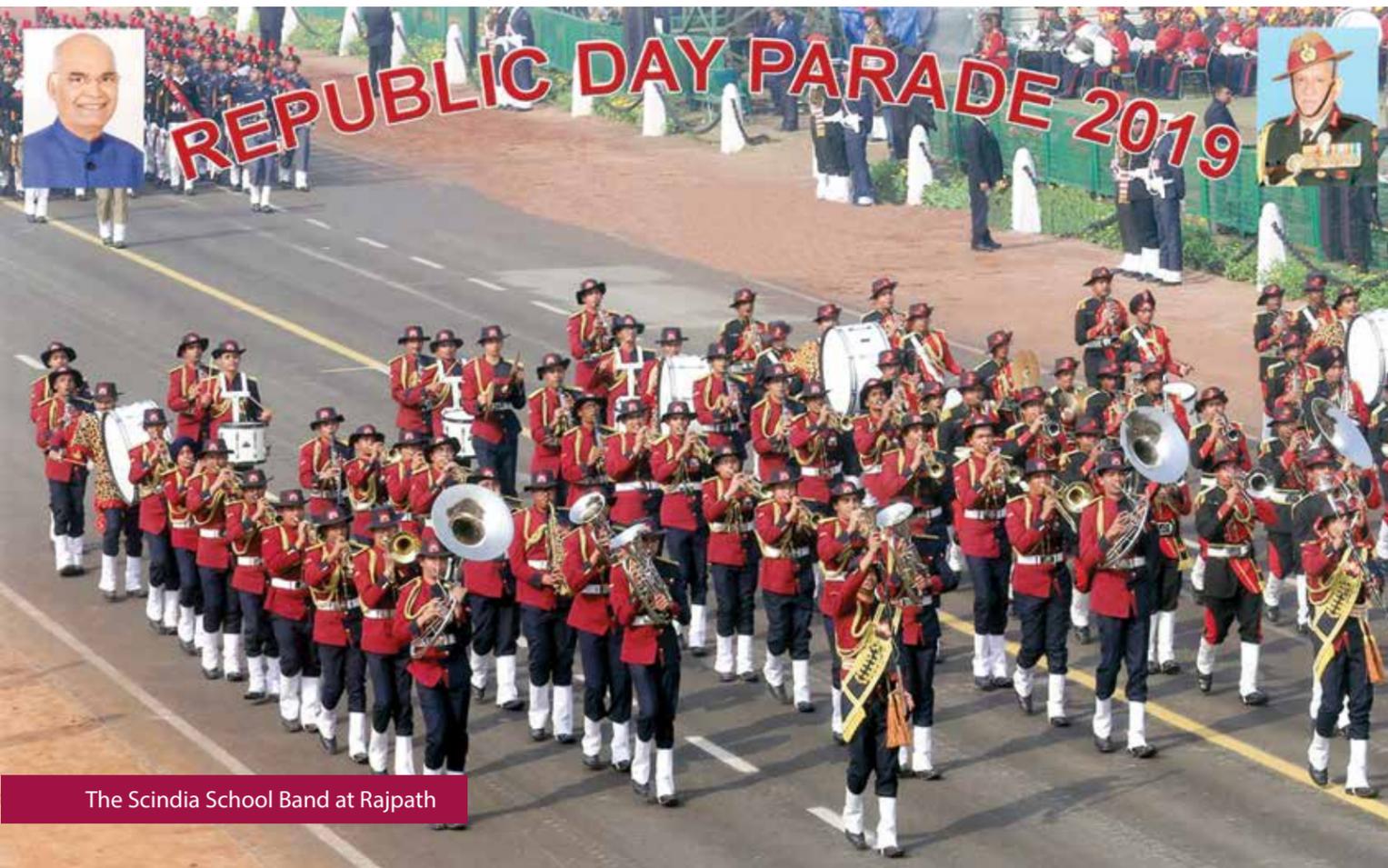
has travelled all over the world and performed with international troupes like the Star Bang and Neo Jazz.

Community Service

Every year the second Sunday of February is celebrated as the *Sonsa* Day. This year too, the members of the Social Service League of the School, along with other faculty members visited *Sonsa* on Sunday, 10th February 2019. The representatives of The Scindia School included 25 faculty members and 64 senior students. The day was celebrated as the 'Sports Day' in which the village boys and girls competed in various sports like kabbadi, 100 meter dash, 3 legged race, sack race, balancing the pitcher on the head, balancing the lemon in the spoon and peacock race. The major attraction was the fast cycling race, 2 kilometers' race and the avid gymnasts. Students of three schools namely, Jarga Junior High School (near *Sonsa* Village), Junior High School (Badhuanli), and High School (*Sonsa*) participated in it. Students enjoyed a sumptuous lunch and played some games as well. It was a delight to watch the skills of the villagers as they played with our students during the various games. The gymnasts of the village, left us spell bound as they displayed breath taking talent. The Sports Day concluded with the Prize Distribution Ceremony. The Vitthal Govind Gadgil Memorial Award was awarded to Ms *Versha Nath* of *Nathon-ka-pura* and Ms *Kajal Yadav* of *Sonsa* Village. The villagers expressed their thankfulness and appreciation towards the school.



Mr D Sharma encouraging the Sonsa village participants



The Scindia School Band at Rajpath

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

Moved by the Pulwama tragedy, some of our boys decided to help the families of those who were martyred. Through their own efforts, they managed to convince parents, visitors and teachers to donate money for the education of the orphaned children. They managed to raise more than 7 lac rupees. Kudos to these compassionate Scindians!

Sujal Jariha, Dharmender Singh and Sameep Mody participated in the final round of the State level Astronomy Quiz held in Bhopal from 20th – 23rd December 2018. Sujal Jariha secured 9th position out of 36 other competitors in MP. He has been awarded with the opportunity to visit two observatories - one in Udaipur and the other at Mount Abu and interact with the scientists during the summer vacations of 2019.

Ishaan Agarwal, Aditya Parashar and Pratham Agarwala qualified for the National level Infinity Contest held at Aditya Birla World Academy in Mumbai from 11th - 12th January 2019. 33 teams participated in this contest, two arrived from Qatar and Singapore. The event was judged by the famous mathematician Dr. James Tanton. Aditya Parashar secured a bronze medal in the same.

In the 79th Inter House Athletics competition 2018, the Senior House 'A' group Sanjeeva Raje Trophy was awarded to Anurag Yadav; Senior House 'B' group Vikram Bogra Trophy to Dhan Bahadur, Kartar Singh and Anoop Adiwasi; Junior House 'A' group Individual Trophy to Sozim Lepcha; and the Junior House 'B' group Individual Trophy went to Ritik Sachdeva.

Ujjwal Singh and Shivansh Bansal participated in a Mathematics Quiz at Vasant Valley, New Delhi on 16th November 2018.

Gauransh Jauhar and Devansh Garg participated in a Clay Modelling Competition at IATS Public School, Gwalior, on 17th November 2018.

Tanmay Kochar, Aryan Girdhar, Ketan Singhal, Veer Arora, Keshav Dudhani, Kartikeya Kulshreshtha, Parakh Agrawal and Rajdeep Semil went to Pragati Vidya Peeth, Gwalior for an interschool dance competition on 19th November and were among the top performers.

Aryan Yadav, Parikshita Singh, Shirish Mehra, Bhuvnesh Gonugunta, Aditya Kumar, Dharmendra, Siddhant Kaul, Jayant Gupta, Vidit

Gupta and Kushal Agrawal participated in the Sahodya Play Competition at SDVM School, Gwalior on 22nd November 2018. Their performance was highly appreciated.

Shubham Agarwal was awarded the Scholar's Blazer for his consistent and outstanding achievements in academics for the year 2017-18. His stellar scores across subjects in the previous academic year won him the blazer.

Zigme Gurung was awarded the Sport's Blazer for his consistent and outstanding achievements in sports for the year 2017-18. He displayed outstanding sporting abilities in Football, Athletics and Hockey at state and national level.

12 students went for All India IPSC Under – 19 Basketball Tournament at Welham Boys' school, Dehradun.

7 students went for IPSC U – 19 Athletics Competition held at PPS, Nabha from 11th -14th November 2018. Adwait Sharma secured 1st position in high jump, Anurag Yadav secured 2nd position in 100 m race, and Dhan Bahadur Kharki secured 3rd position in 3000 m race.

Anuj Singh Rajput and Tanmay Kochar participated in the SGFI National Yoga Championship held in Aurangabad in Maharashtra from 28th Jan - 2nd Feb 2019.



Shubham Agarwal receiving the Scholar's Blazer

OLD BOYS' NEWS

On the occasion of the 121st Founder's Day of the School, the Madhav Award was conferred on Mr Pradeep S Mehta (Ex-Vivekanand, 1960-65). He is a consumer activist par excellence, who has carved an extraordinary niche for himself as a global thought leader.



Mr Pradeep S Mehta - Madhav Awardee 2018

Reunion

The 41st Reunion of the Class of 1977 was celebrated from 30th November to 1st December 2018. 22 Old Boys, 14 of them with spouses, assembled on the fort for this reunion. A special Astachal, wherein students presented a few musical and literary pieces was organized for them. Later, in the evening programme held in the assembly hall, Old Boys were welcomed with the song- '*abhinandan sabka karte hum*', and this was followed by a House-evening organized by Daulat and Jayappa Houses in the honour of the visitors.

On the 25th and 26th of January, 36 Old Boys from the Batch of 1968 -69 visited the School, out of which 31 were accompanied by their spouses. 01 Old Boy, who passed away untimely, was represented by a family member. The reunion also saw 04 representatives from the batch of 69-70 who collected the baton for the next year's reunion. 04 Old Boys from the previous batch of 1967-68 returned to relive the nostalgia once again in this reunion. Old Boys enjoyed a cultural afternoon which was presented by the students on the 25th, participated in the march-past on the 26th, relived old times to the fullest at various nook and corners of the Fort, and interacted with the students and the faculty. Regardless of the fact that the average age was on the right side of 60, it was sheer delight to see them exhibit the vitality and effervescence which is so uniquely Scindian. They brought with them nostalgia, bonhomie and a spirit

of joie de vivre which infused the Fort with a fresh gust of energy during those two wonderful days.

6 eminent Old Boys from the batch of 1959 arrived in school on 9th October, for their 59th reunion, which interestingly coincided with the 59th year of SOBA's existence. Mr Munish Bhargava, Mr B S Sudhir Chandra, Mr Yogendra Gangwal, Mr K K Bhargava, Mr V M Bhasin and Mr Ram Nath assembled on the Fort with their spouses. On arrival, they were escorted by the School Riding team and welcomed by a lively performance from the school Brass Band. During interaction, Mr Munish Bhargava shared that when they were in school, they learnt dignity of labour through various activities like the cleaning and upkeep of Houses and the Labour Camps. They also imbibed a great sense of punctuality and discipline from the right references available in their teachers. Astachal, the spiritual waterhole of the School is a great memory that they have carried with them ever since.

SOBiR

Associate Prof. Kumar Sanjay Singh (Ex-Mj, 1983) visited the School from 5th - 8th December 2018, under the SOBiR programme. He interacted and exchanged ideas at length with teachers, students, senior management and the Principal, concerning all aspects of education e.g. syllabus completion issues, learning beyond the book, usage of the Fort in transacting the curriculum, usage of other historical monuments available on the fort for purpose of education and last but not the least, assistance available to students in subject selection for class 11th.

Dr Sudhir Bloeria (Ex-Mj, 1962) visited the School on 25th November 2018. He interacted with the staff wherein he emphasized on the need to learn from the students and to be conscious of the dreams and aspirations of students. He also talked about the mechanics of team building and how in the contemporary environment only team work will lead to organizational success.

The Old Boys' Day was celebrated on the 22nd of October 2018. Eminent Old Boy, Hon'ble Justice Mr Sanjay Mishra (Lokayukta, Uttar Pradesh) was the Chief Guest for the occasion. The Class of 1993 celebrated their Silver Jubilee Reunion and the Class of 2008 celebrated their 10th year of

passing out. The SOBA Cup was awarded to SOBA Lucknow. The SOBA Award for the year 2018 was given to Mr Sandeep Agrawal (Ex-Sh, 1980). The Life Time Service Award was given to Mr Gurdeep Singh Bakshi – Director Alumni Relations. The formal programme was followed by an entertainment evening.

Mr Mohit Mandeliya (Ex-Sh, 2012) has joined BPCL and is now posted as Sales Officer in Bhopal. He was the recipient of the coveted SOBA Scholarship. He is an MBA from IIM-Shillong.

Mr Yuvraj Nain (Ex- Ja, 2010) has been appointed as an officer in Judge Advocate General's office in the Indian Army. His rank would be that of a Lieutenant. While in School, he participated in Repu after passing out, he completed LLB (Hons.) from Nirma University, Ahmedabad in 2016 and LLM in Commercial and Corporate Laws from Queen Mary University of London in 2017. He is presently a practicing criminal lawyer in New Delhi, and will shortly proceed to Chennai for training.

Dr Pradeep Kapoor (Ex-Rn,1974) has written yet another book, titled –The Last Ball Six which was recently launched by Ex- Chief Election Commissioner Mr S Y Qureshi, during the valedictory programme of Bhopal Literature and Art Festival held at Bharat Bhawan, Bhopal.

Mr Thakur Surendra Singh (Ex-Chaitanya, 1981) has been recently elected as an MLA from Burhanpur constituency. We wish him best of luck.

We congratulate Mr T.S.S. Singh Deo (Ex-Ravindra,1969) who recently took oath as a Minister in the newly formed government of Chhattisgarh. He has been given key departments like panchayat and rural development, health & family welfare, medical education, planning, economics and statistics, 20-point programme and commercial taxes (GST).

Mr Amitesh Shukla (Ex- Rn, 1973) has recently been elected as an MLA from Rajim constituency. We wish him best of luck.

Mr Vivek Kumar Shakya (Ex-MJ, 2010) cleared the Indian Engineering Services Exam 2018 with AIR-148. While at School, he was the Horse Riding Captain & earned a Full Colour in Hockey. After graduating from school, he entered IIT Roorkee & completed his Civil Engineering in 2015.

Mr Kartikeya Ladha (Ex-MJ, 2011) has written his first book titled - Dream Beyond Shadows. The book delves into the author's inner journey in a mystical outer world. While at School, he took interest in music, art and hockey. After leaving Scindia, he graduated from Boston University and then worked in the solar industry in New York, after which he decided to take on the path of a seeker, which took him to faraway lands of South America and the Himalayas. May the seeker find the truth!

Aligarh Muslim University recently honoured Mr Sanjiv Saraf (Ex-Sh, 1975), the Founder of Rekhta Foundation with the prestigious 'Sir Syed Excellence Award' for making outstanding contribution to promotion of Urdu language.



Baton being passed on to the Batch of 1969-70 at Astachal

A 'SCINDIAN SAINT'

A young boy aged ten years entered the gates of the majestic Gwalior Fort in 1949 to study at one of the premier educational institutions of the country. His name was Siddharaj Manik Prabhu. Young Siddharaj, at that tender age, was already heading a leading spiritual organisation in Karnataka called Shri Manik Prabhu Samsthan – established by the great nineteenth century saint and mystic Shri Manik Prabhu. He had been appointed as the 5th Guru of the Samsthan at the tender age of 6 after the early demise of his father in 1945.

Mrs. Pawar, wife of a nobleman of the erstwhile Gwalior state had approached Siddharaj's mother and persuaded her to send her only child to The Scindia School, 1500 kms away from home. The shy little boy took a few months to adjust to the change in environment at the school but it was not very long before the fort cast a mystical spell on him and he started liking his school and the people around him. He found a home away from home at School. His sincerity, humility and obedience won him the love and adoration of his teachers. Along with academics, he developed a keen interest in music and cricket while at school and his teachers groomed him into a fine young gentleman. The Scindian values of modernity firmly backed by traditions left a lasting imprint on his mind. He graduated from the school in 1956 and went home to assume the responsibilities which were awaiting him.

While at School he was always disheartened by the fact that back home, the residents of his village and the surrounding villages lacked good educational opportunities. He would always think about the plight of those who lacked basic educational amenities, who were poor and disadvantaged.

After assuming charge as the functioning spiritual head of Shri Manik Prabhu Samsthan, he embarked upon a mission of transforming this basically spiritual and religious organisation into a throbbing centre of education and social service.

Inspired by his alma mater, he established the Manik Public School at Maniknagar in the year 1972 with Mr. J. L. Dar, his teacher and Ex-Principal of Scindia School as its founding Principal. This was one of the first schools of its kind in the entire region. Mr. S. B. Salvi, Mr. M.C. Packrasy and Mr. N.A. Jose were among some of the other teachers who joined the Manik Public School after retiring from Scindia School. With the untiring efforts of educational stalwarts such as Mr. Dar, Mr. Salvi and Mr. Packrasy the school developed into one

of the most reputed educational institutions of Karnataka. Manik Public School, thus, today stands as a manifestation of his love for his alma mater and can very rightly be called 'Scindia School of the South'.

The values of social service are imbibed in every Scindian in the most formative years of one's life. Siddharaj Prabhu subsequently founded Manik Prabhu School for the Blind which provides education to more than 100 differently-abled children free of cost. He also founded other institutions which include an orphanage called Manik Prabhu Anathalaya in which more than 150 children study free of cost, a Hindi medium High School and a Veda and Sanskrit Pathashala for preserving India's ancient Vedic Culture. His core belief was that service to humanity is service to God.

Siddharaj Prabhu believed that sports and games form an integral part of one's life and are essential for a person's growth. His interest in Cricket, developed at the fort, prompted him to construct a Cricket field in Maniknagar, one of the first in the region. He started the Manik Prabhu Sports Club and provided sporting opportunities to the people of one of the most backward regions of Karnataka. He also constructed a swimming pool, shuttle-badminton court and other sporting facilities at Maniknagar. Despite being a spiritual guru, he defied the notions of protocol and played games like cricket and volleyball with the common people, which was very rare for a person of his position and stature.

While at the Scindia School he was the most favourite student of his Music teacher Mr. M.C. Packrasy. His singing had touched the hearts of his teachers and fellow Scindians alike. His soulful rendition of 'Man Tarapat Hari Darasanko Aaj' - the famous devotional song from the Hindi Movie BaijuBavra would bring tears to the eyes of his teachers and friends. No musical event in the school would be complete

without his rendition of this gripping devotional melody. His love for music later transformed itself into establishment of a Music Academy at Maniknagar.

As the Peethadhipati of the spiritual order called Shri Manik Prabhu Samsthan, he earned the respect and reverence of thousands of his followers. He believed in the Upanishadik message of 'Ekam Sadviprabahudha Vadanti' (Truth is one; but the wise call it by different names) and worked tirelessly to bring about peace, equality and harmony in the society. He left for his heavenly abode in 2009, but he continues to live in the hearts of thousands of his followers.

The Scindia School, which has produced men of eminence in different walks of life, can surely take pride in the fact that it has not only produced successful businessmen, doctors, engineers, technocrats and bureaucrats, but, has also shaped a 'Scindian Saint' who dedicated his entire life for the good of society at large.

Chidghan Prabhu
Class XII



Siddharaj Prabhu



Siddharaj Prabhu with H.H. Maharaja Madhavrao Scindia

INTERVIEW

A Candid Talk with Mr Sudeep Nagarkar

Sudeep Nagarkar (born 26th February 1988) is an Indian novelist and writer of fiction. His debut novel, 'Few Things Left Unsaid', was published by Srishti Publishers in 2011. Till 2018, ten novels authored by him have been published, namely - *That's the way we met*; *It started with a friend request*; *Sorry you're not my type*; *You're the password to my life*; *You are trending in my dreams*; *She swiped right into my heart*; *All rights reserved for you* and *Our Story Needs No Filter*. His latest, 'She Friend-Zoned My Love' was released on 13 March 2018. His writings have the theme of friendship, love and trust in relationships and cover a wide range of human relationships. All his books are based on real life characters and true stories.

Apart from writing novels he has been invited for motivational lecture in various institutions and organizations. He has also written scripts for Marathi shows and is developing concepts and stories for Indian television channels - Colours and Sony.

He is the recipient of the 2013 Youth Achievers' Award for writing and for being one of the highest selling writers in India in romance genre. His book - 'It started with a friend request' - was the most popular fiction book of 2013, according to Amazon India. He has been featured on the Forbes India long list of the most influential celebrities for three consecutive years. His books have been translated into various languages, including Hindi, Marathi and Telugu. He was recently on the fort for the Scindia Literary Fest where he interacted with the boys and the faculty at length.

We present before you a candid conversation which our staff editor Mr Vishesh Sahai had with him.

Question 1: You were born, brought up, educated in Mumbai. How did you manage to accumulate such a wide range of experience to write such a huge literature in such a short time?

Everyone has a story within themselves. You need to identify which one has the potential of being turned into a novel. Not every story can be written. Moreover, if it's inspired by real life, then you need immense strength to handle criticism, pressure and the questions from your relatives. My personal life had lot of drama when I was in college days. I use to throw my frustration by writing a personal diary. Break up, year drop and loneliness! Everything just followed me as if they had no work. But each incident inspired me to pen down my first book which gradually developed passion of writing in me. Now in 7 years, I have written 10 books and touchwood, all are topping the charts and touching the heart of readers. Each book and every character had added a positive dimension in my life and that's made me who I am. I love to meet

people and listen to their stories. All my books are based on real stories of either my friends or close ones. My first 2 books are based on my life. Even 'All Rights Reserved For You' is about the long distance relationship I had with Jasmine, my wife. When you write about people around you, more than research, important is not to hurt their sentiments.

Question 2: You pursued B-Tech in Electronics Engineering from Datta Meghe College of Engineering, Navi Mumbai, completed MBA in Business Management from Welingkar Institute of Management, Mumbai in 2014. Suddenly you took a U turn, quit the job at an IT company in 2012 to fully devote your time to writing. Wasn't it a very daring act? How has been the career transition of an Electronics Engineer turned Author.

Ofcourse, it was not an easy task but I believed in myself as I never felt that I was meant for 9 to 5 jobs. But taking creative field as full time career is always challenging as



we still live in stereotype society where people expect you to go out of your house to earn something. Even if you are earning in lakhs and sitting at home you are still titled as "Jobless". After a point I decided not to convince anyone rather just go with the flow and let time decide my fate. Touchwood it worked as I never went back to my engineering job. However my parents still feel that some day in future I would switch back to my marketing job. Ha ha! No doubt they were very supportive throughout and I just couldn't end answering this question without naming my wife Jasmine who had supported me since we started dating in 2013.

Question 3: How did you come up with the titles for your books? Almost all the titles seem to be the reflection of your electronic engineering degree?

That's something new for me and that makes me smile too. I just have been lucky with the titles. Yes, it's a team work but every time when we brainstorm we come up with something interesting. Generally what I do is that whenever I decide a title I keep in mind that it should be very friendly, something one can relate to very clearly like earlier also there where friend requests, requesting a person to become a friend and connecting one on one but now a day's social media is helping us to connect through friend requests in a different way. I keep all these things in mind when I'm deciding the title but at the same time it should match with the stories

Question 4: Your stories are based on real life. How do you identify that a particular experience /incident can be a theme or can be a part of your novel.

Let's keep it short. If a particular incident touches my heart and my instinct shouts aloud that it needs to be told, I don't think twice and lock the theme. For instance, I felt the need to tell a same sex love story and through the voice of a lesbian girl, I narrated it. I was sure that the book would bomb as I was writing about their rights to exist in the society who doesn't accept love marriages open heartedly. However, I had given it all and was confident about the feelings I had expressed. The book went on to become one of the the thirty iconic books published by Penguin. It's titled 'She swiped right into my heart'. So I just follow my instinct.

Question 5: It needs real guts to tell a personal story on a public platform. Isn't it like washing your dirty linen in public? More over you are exposed to verification, explanation, criticism, and such other pressures from your own people? How did you manage all that?

Belief is all one needs and I had that in me. Moreover, I wasn't hurting anyone in the process of voicing my story. All I did was being honest with the way it was narrated and that's what made the story connect with readers. It wasn't an extra ordinary tale of love but a simple love story of a confused teenager and now when I look back, I feel those emotions made it an instant hit as every teen goes

through that phase in his or her life. Of course, I received a lot of criticism from the literary world and even from the readers who didn't prefer reading pulp fiction. Pulp fiction had just entered the market and thus it wasn't easy to place your book in a particular genre. But as I said during my session too, every writing has its set of readers and you need to tap on it. You don't expect Kapil Sharma to do an action film, right? I ain't comparing with anyone but even light hearted books need to have space in book shelves. Not every book has to be life changing. Some are just made to make you smile, my books fall into the later one.

Question 6: What are your hobbies, other interests and passions, besides writing?

Music and taking my wife on surprise dates! :p

Question 7: You have recently attended the Scindia Literary Fest from 3rd – 5th December 2018. What is your preliminary impression about it? Please suggest, how can we make it better next time?

To be honest, I was flabbergasted. I had heard students were crazy for romance novels but didn't expect such a large fan following for my books. Almost everyone in the auditorium had read atleast one of my books and that really made my visit worth. The best part about the entire fest was the hospitality and how disciplined the volunteers were. That indicates the excellent management skills of the students. Also the audience was extremely interactive and had so much of passion towards reading. I would love if Scindia starts a writing workshop and if so, I would be more than happy to be part of it. Probably, that's what I would suggest before the next lit fest; regular reading and writing workshops so that you create a book club of students where they can actively narrate stories. On the concluding note, this lit fest broke the stereotype that only girls read love stories. Ha ha.

Question 8: Any message/advice you would like to give to our young /budding/aspiring writers about modern Indian writing trends?

Be patient during the writing process and calculative when you submit your manuscript to publishers as it's your hard work. There are many stories around you; you have to be a good observant to feel the spark in them. Also if you are not good in playing with words, doesn't matter, be a good storyteller first. You should have a very good story to tell in the first place. The words will follow. Remember, that your characters should speak and not just your vocab. Don't write because you want to write a bestseller, write because you want to write. Because giving a bestseller will never define whether you are a good writer or a bad writer. Also make a note that though writing is a creative field, it needs a lot of discipline as writing an entire book is not a cakewalk. You have to compromise on your comfort just to make the book reach to wider audience. Moreover, confidence to make your parents believe that it can be a serious profession.

THE TAKING OF THE FORT

Mr. Prem Behari Lal Agnihotri, late Head of the History Department of The Scindia School, Housemaster of Jayaji House and former Vice Principal, informed those of his students that paid attention in his class that the majestic fort of Gwalior was never taken by force in its entire history since the 3rd Century CE. When it changed hands, it did so by treasons, stratagems and spoils. It had fallen, when it did, only by being handed over, relatively peacefully, by rulers that preferred capitulation to destruction.

And so it came to pass, centuries later that on the 21st of October 2018, a slow, but highly effective surgical strike was made to take over the Fort by a group of determined and valiant heroes to do what thousands of others couldn't. They stormed the impregnable edifice beginning with a slow infiltration of the citadel by sending small detachments of seemingly unarmed militia disguised as innocent visitors, keen merely on observing the festivities that the inhabitants of the fort were celebrating their 121 years of unchallenged occupation. They noted the changes that had been wrought in the geopolitics of the region, seeing that unbeknownst to all, forces had been consolidated into one campus occupying the southern portion of the hill. Previous information received had made no mention of these changes and messages flew between the expeditionary force and their headquarters updating the strategic planners in the rear-guard. Nothing daunted, the infiltrators were augmented by trickles of reinforcements throughout the day till there was a considerable number of combatants ready and armed with a deadly assortment of weaponry that included strategic smiles and bonhomie. Gradually, the invading army ingratiated themselves by strategic backslapping camaraderie with the defenders who had hitherto been lulled into a false sense of security by the goodwill and jousness of the occasion.

The festivities began in right earnest and continued, celebrants partied on, unaware of the imminent attack. Speeches were made, awards were handed out, music and dance filled the Shukla Memorial Open Air Theatre. Mr. Kumar Mangalam Birla spoke of his long association with Gwalior, Mr. Scindia talked of the huge contribution that the Birlas had made to Gwalior society. The Principal updated the milling crowds present of the State of the Institution and its many achievements during the year, and still the attack held off, biding its time to catch the defenders off-guard...the tension was palpable, and yet the highly honed discipline of the attacking forces kept them from any precipitate action. The speeches ended,

Abhimanyu's Chakravayuha came to its logical, if confusing, conclusion, the saxophones fell silent and the music came to its orchestrated end, yet the axe did not fall, instead of which yet another award was handed out to a senior achiever, and was duly accepted with grateful, though interminable thanks. The celebrants, with the silently entrenched strike team proceeded to the nerve centre of the Fort for a celebratory dinner. More intelligence was gathered for the final assault, scheduled for the following evening, when the commander-in-chief would arrive to lead the charge. Quietly, silence fell over the Fort, while the vanguard of the attackers retreated from the scene to make ready for the battle to be fought the next day.

The day dawned brightly and a hush hung over the cricket field where the Old boys' match was to be held. Veteran masters of the game practiced batting and bowling lulling the denizens of the fort into a stupor of ignorance regarding the fate that was to be theirs later in the day. Some of the force toured the exhibitions to spy out the lay of the land, but regrettably, the exhibitions didn't take very much time, as there was a paucity of exhibits both in variety and number. Stretching out that exploratory tour for as long as possible, the force watched the match which was played with all the seriousness of a stand-up comedy show. Finally, the match ended, with the Old Boys having scored an impressive score of several hundred runs for 18 wickets declared. The School XI is to be commended for their uncomplaining industry of keeping their tempers despite the unending numbers of OBs that wanted to bat. Their own innings was unfortunately cut short by the summons to lunch, to which all present galumphed with unbridled joy. Lunch was absorbed, one uses the words advisedly, faster than a dry sponge absorbs water, The meal was surprisingly good, with the quintessential "Sada" being replaced with an innovative dished called "Aloo Sada" a phenomenon that hadn't occurred since 1871 when some potatoes were accidentally dropped into a singularly runny brown liquid in which plates had been

washed. We are informed that the personage involved in the accident was on his way to dispose the offending tubers as they had turned into something akin to vodka, when he tripped over a recumbent cook lying on the floor below where the dish wash was boiling away. Anyway, the "Aloo Sada" was duly enjoyed by one and all and accompanying wives were told that they could never match the chef de cuisine at the Central Dining Hall. Suitably chastened, they hung behind to let their menfolk stagger, replete with food, to the Assembly Hall where the Annual General Meeting of the Old Boy's Association was to be held. The meeting commenced about an hour later than it should have because everyone was waiting for someone else. However, this reporter cannot say much about what happened, as the combined effect of the lunch and the warmly echoing hall lulled him like no lullaby could, into a state of blissful somnolence. However, it is significant to report that during this meeting, the masterminds and general of the marauding force, surreptitiously came, saw and made last minute adjustments to their take-over plans. They slipped away, unnoticed, and before long the SOBA AGM ended with a refreshing cup of something that resembled the Urwai Ghati after a particularly heavy rain.

The evening wore on, and this war correspondent, aware that an attack was imminent, awaited the final rush to the ultimate. It wasn't long in coming. There were occasional strains of rock music emanating from the SMOAT, but nothing to disturb the equilibrium of the audience standing in the quod in front of Jayaji House or the area near the bugle banyan tree. Eventually, despite the best efforts of the Gwalior traffic system (if system it indeed is!) the Chief Guest for the occasion arrived. Unbeknownst to all, the Chief Guest, was in actuality the General Commander-in-chief of the Attack Force from Lucknow. He was escorted in great style to the front row of the amphitheatre where he sat surrounded by members of the Board of Governors, The Principal and others of great pith and moment. The Secretary of the OB Association addressed the audience causing much joy to all present welcoming those present and lauding the school for its resilience, and patting the association on its back for having survived 59 years without let or hindrance. This observer wondered what had happened to the 60-odd years prior to those 59 years. Then a short documentary film followed, chronicling the achievements of the Chief Guest which was vastly more appreciated than a speech would have been, but unfortunately about 25% of the LED screen on which it was shown, happened to be obscured by a drum set and other rock music paraphernalia which snaked across the stage in disordered abandon.

The Principal was requested to present the Chief Guest with the SOBA award of the year, and was thanked briefly and succinctly. The SOBA President and Council then presented an award to a former Secretary for his well-deserved efforts to inspire the Association to new heights

and for his service to the School, and then finally, the President announced the pre-eminence of the Lucknow SOBA for having been the most vibrant chapter, verse and homily of the Association. He invited the President and members to receive the award and asked the Chief Guest to present it to his own parent organisation. The attack began and with no loss of life or limb (or collateral damage) Lucknow SOBA captured the Fort! In one fell swoop it swept the stage and defending forces and without a show of resistance, 121 years of occupation crumbled into history.

However, the story did not end there. The occupation lasted a mere twenty-five minutes because the defenders had a weapon of mass destruction that they deployed almost at once. They unleashed on stage a weapon now firmly banned by the Warsaw Convention, called Paulomi and her Cast of Caterwauling Critters who unleashed a mayhem of sound that shattered the evening silence with high-decibel sound waves that lay the invaders waste, writhing in their seats with agony and tortured auditory equipment. It has been reliably learned that the Corps of Artillery on exercise in Babina, some two hundred kilometres away sent urgent messages to the sub-area commander in Gwalior to investigate the phenomenon as they couldn't hear their 600 - pounders firing on the practice ranges due to the noise from Gwalior. Unfortunately the Sub Area in Gwalior had evacuated the area at first sound and retired to safer locations on the western borders where the sounds of neighbourly shelling lulled them to sleep, so the Corps in Babina had to call off their exercises for the evening.

With studied cruelty the barrage continued till the victorious, invading force from Lucknow surrendered and retreated in disorder to lick its wounds as far away as possible to rest and recoup their strength before repairing to the dulcet sounds so abundantly available in the by lanes of Lucknow.

The battle over, one begins to wonder if there is at all any wisdom in educating young Scindians in this form of warfare, where there is clear and present danger to health, happiness and sanity. It is not meet that such methods are employed to elevate the cultural mores of an institution that is 121 years old, even if it is to drive away occupying forces. The ends do not justify the means to attain them. One hopes that the new directives passed by the Warsaw Convention will prevent the School from indulging in such bedlamite retaliation, and induce the institution to stick to convention of the transmission, taste, culture and mores of Indian tradition and not descend to the pits of Bollywood hyperbole and high voltage assaults on sanity.

Abhimanyu Acharya PhD.
(Ex-Ja, 1969)



Musical evening on the Old Boys' Day



Mr Sandeep Agrawal (Ex-Sh, 1980) received The SOBA Award for the year 2018

पुरतकें : खयंप्रभा, समुज्जवाला

श्रुति परंपरा की मर्यादा के समाप्त होने के पश्चात् पुस्तकों की आवश्यकता पड़ी, जिससे ज्ञान के भंडार को सुरक्षित रखकर अगली पीढ़ी तक पहुँचाया जा सके। अपनी भावनाओं को लिखित रूप में वर्णित करने के लिए सर्वप्रथम चित्रों का सहारा लिया गया। आदि मानवों ने गुफा-चित्रों के द्वारा अपनी भावनाएँ व्यक्त कीं और धीरे-धीरे यही प्रचलित होकर लिपि के रूप में विकसित हो गई। अब ज्ञान के भंडार को सुरक्षित रखना सरल बनता जा रहा था। वेदों, ब्राह्मण ग्रंथों व उपनिषदों को लिखित रूप में सुरक्षित रखा जाने लगा। बाद में बड़े-बड़े इतिहासकार अपनी यात्राओं का वर्णन लिखकर सुरक्षित रखने लगे। राजाओं – महाराजाओं ने कवियों को आश्रय देना प्रारंभ किया, तब पुस्तकों का संसार अपनी अगली पीढ़ी तक पहुँचा और एक लंबी सतत् यात्रा के पश्चात वह आधुनिक अवस्था को प्राप्त हुआ क्योंकि छापे खाने के आविष्कार ने इस क्षेत्र में क्रांतिकारी परिवर्तन ला दिया था।

इस परिवर्तन के क्रम में कई तरह के उतार-चढ़ाव होते रहे। कई बार लेखक प्रसन्न भी हुए और निराश भी। लोगों की मानसिकता, व्यवहार व जीवन शैली में भी परिस्थितियों के अनुसार परिवर्तन होते रहे। अतः लेखन के क्षेत्र में भी इन परिवर्तनों का असर पड़ता रहा।

भिन्न भिन्न मानसिक चरित्र वाले व्यक्तियों के लिए लेखन भी भिन्न भिन्न प्रकार का होता है क्योंकि लेखक अपने विवेक से प्रत्येक स्तर के लोगों तक संदेश पहुँचाता है। अब बात यह आती है कि वह किसको क्या संदेश देना चाहता है? और उसके संदेश का ग्राहक कौन है? ऐसी स्थिति में संदेश का स्तर सामाजिक दृष्टि से बदलता रहता है। समाज में धर्म, भाषा, वेशभूषा, मान्यताएँ, सोच आदि के मार्ग से आगे बढ़ता हुआ लेखक अपने गंतव्य को ढूँढता रहता है। ऐसे में कई बार उसे ऐसा लगता है कि उसके विचारों को पढ़ने वाले नहीं बचे हैं तो वह किसके लिए लिखे। स्वांतः सुखाय के लिए लिखने की भी एक सीमा है। एकाकी जीवन कोई कब तक जिए? मनुष्य एक सामाजिक प्राणी है तो उसे समाज के साथ जुड़कर ही अपनी मनुष्यता का आभास हो सकता है लेकिन यदि कोई उससे जुड़ना ही न चाहे तब क्या स्थिति होगी? प्रसिद्ध लेखक व कहानीकार डॉ. राजेद्र यादव ने भी एक समय ऐसी स्थिति को महसूस कर लिखना छोड़ दिया था और अपने इस कार्य को उन्होंने “न लिखने का कारण” नामक पुस्तक में स्पष्ट किया। परंतु सदा से ऐसा नहीं होता, कभी कभी ऐसा भी होता है जब बदलाव के एक दौर में समाज में पुस्तकों की स्थिति अच्छी नहीं होती। परंतु आज ऐसा नहीं है, आज विभिन्न साहित्योत्सव, पुस्तक-प्रदर्शनी, पुस्तक मेला, राष्ट्रीय पुस्तक न्यास, साहित्य अकादमी व ऑनलाइन पुस्तक बाजार ने उनके विकास में बहुत

योगदान दिया है।

ई-पुस्तकों के आने से लोगों व प्रकाशकों में आशंकाओं का बाजार गर्म हुआ था कि अब किताबों की बिक्री कम हो जाएगी परंतु ऐसा हुआ नहीं। लोगों में किताबों को पढ़ने की आदत बनी हुई है, आवश्यकता है तो उस आदत को और विकसित करने की, आगे बढ़ाने की। अभी भी सोते समय पुस्तकों को सिरहाने रखने की पुरानी आदत गई नहीं है। नई किताबों की खुशबू से अभी भी लोग आकृष्ट होते हैं अर्थात् कुल मिलाकर पुस्तकों के उपयोग की पूरी संभावना बनी हुई है। विभिन्न संस्थानों में उस विशिष्ट विषय से संबंधित पुस्तकों की प्रदर्शनी लगाई जाने लगी है। अभी जनवरी के पहले सप्ताह में ही ग्वालियर के कृषि विश्वविद्यालय में कृषि-विज्ञान से संबंधित पुस्तकों की प्रदर्शनी लगी जिसमें पाठकों और अनुसंधानकर्ताओं ने अत्यंत रुचि दिखाई। अनुसंधान के कार्य में पुस्तकें बहुत सहायक होती हैं किसी विषय के अनुसंधान के लिए उसके आधार को खोजने में पुरानी पुस्तकों का भी बहुत योगदान रहता है। पुस्तकों के पन्नों को पलटने की पुरानी आदतों, मन में बसी हुई उसकी संरचना और भारत जैसे देश में इसकी सहज उपलब्धता इन्हें और लोकप्रिय बनाती है।

जैसा कि मैंने पहले ही लिखा है कि पुस्तकों के प्रचार-प्रसार में विभिन्न संगठनों, विश्वपुस्तक मेला, साहित्योत्सव आदि अपनी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा रहे हैं, ऐसे में कई नवयुवकों के लिए यह व्यापार व प्रचार-प्रसार का साधन भी है। हमारे एक पूर्व छात्र अंकित अग्रवाल (1996, माधव) अपने व्यावसायिक प्रतिष्ठान “बुक-वुक” के द्वारा व्यवसाय के साथ-साथ पुस्तकों के प्रचार-प्रसार को गति दे रहे हैं। यह बात अलग है कि भिन्न-भिन्न भाषाओं

में इनकी लोकप्रियता के स्तर के आयाम भिन्न-भिन्न होते हैं परंतु कुल मिलाकर ज्ञान के भंडार को विकसित करने में पुस्तकों का योगदान आज भी सराहनीय है। इससे मात्र पुस्तकों को ही आगे बढ़ाने का अवसर नहीं मिलता बल्कि नवोदित लेखक भी अपनी लेखनी से इस संस्था से जुड़कर अपने लेखन का प्रचार-प्रसार कर रहे हैं व इससे छात्रों के बीच पुस्तकों में रुचि को बढ़ावा मिल रहा है। श्री अंकित अग्रवाल भारत के विभिन्न विद्यालयों में पुस्तक-मेला व साहित्योत्सव का आयोजन करते हैं जिसमें देश के प्रसिद्ध और नवोदित लेखक या कवि भी जुड़ते हैं और वे अपने ज्ञान का भंडार बच्चों के लिए भी खोल देते हैं।

परंपरागत रूप से कवियों और लेखकों का जीवन अत्यंत सादगी भरा और कठिनाई में ही बीतता रहा है। चाहे वह प्रेमचंद हों, शमशेर बहादुर सिंह हों या महाकवि निराला, सभी ने यही माना कि “दुःख ही जीवन की कथा रही, क्या कहूँ आज जो नहीं कही।” परंतु आज की स्थिति ऐसी नहीं है, संचार के साधनों के विकास के साथ-साथ लेखन भी एक व्यवसाय बनता जा रहा है। अब लेखक व कवियों की स्थिति ऐसी नहीं है। फिल्म व टेलीविज़न, विज्ञापन व प्रचार-प्रसार, पत्रकारिता व शिक्षा का क्षेत्र सभी जगहों पर आज लेखन को महत्व दिया जाने लगा है या यों कहें कि लेखन आधार है और इसी कारण से पुस्तकों के महत्व को भी पहचाना जाने लगा है।

भूमंडलीकरण ने भी पुस्तकों को आगे बढ़ाने में सहायता पहुँचाई है। अब भारत में छपने वाली कई पुस्तकें विदेशों में भी उपलब्ध हैं और अधिक बिक्री वाले पुस्तकों को “बेस्ट सेलर” का नाम देकर ग्राहकों को उन्हें पढ़ने के लिए आकृष्ट किया जा रहा है। कई उपन्यासों पर अब फिल्में बनने लगी हैं तो फिर उन उपन्यासों की बिक्री भी बढ़ जाती है। आज श्री चेतन भगत की पुस्तकों की बिक्री में बढ़ोत्तरी के पीछे भी यही गणित है कि उनके अधिकांश उपन्यासों पर फिल्में बन चुकी हैं। “ऑन-लाइन पुस्तक बाजार” में सस्ती पुस्तकों के दौड़ ने भी पाठकों को पुस्तक खरीदने के लिए प्रेरित किया है। कई स्थानों पर व ऑनलाइन भी अब पुरानी पुस्तकें उपलब्ध हैं जिससे कि कम आय वाले व्यक्ति भी पुस्तकों को खरीद सकें। नई दिल्ली के दरियागंज में लगने वाले रविवारीय पुस्तक बाजार में लगने वाले भीड़ को देखकर भी संतोषजनक तरीके से यह कहा जा सकता है कि पुस्तकों का भविष्य उज्वल है। प्रत्येक वर्ष जनवरी माह में नई दिल्ली में लगने वाले विश्वपुस्तक मेले की सफलता ने यह सिद्ध कर दिया है कि पुस्तकों की माँग अभी भी जीवंत है, वे अभी भी हमारा मार्गदर्शन कर रही हैं और करती रहेंगी। लेखन-कार्य सतत् चलता रहेगा और विश्व को दिशा-निर्देशन, मनोरंजन, ज्ञान, सम्मान, अनुसंधान के लिए प्रेरित करता रहेगा।

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