

AMRIT

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Republic Day Celebrations

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AMRIT

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From Editor-in-Chief's Desk

It is after a gap of several months that I am writing to you again in 'Amrit', and there is a lot to cover. We started the year on a high note with the visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó to India in end January, who visited both Mumbai and New Delhi and had fruitful meetings with the Indian leadership. It was satisfying for us to note that this was the third minister-level visit between India and Hungary within a period of six months.

The Embassy then participated in the Winter Festival in Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the first week of February. There had been some snowfall around this time in Sarajevo and I was pleased to see so much snow on the slopes at Jahorina, and even around Trebević mountain, which is connected by the Sarajevo cable car. White skies and ground, punctuated only by the green of the trees, created a wonderful view. At this point of time, the coronavirus appeared to be confined to some distant countries and not a threat to our lives here. This, however, quickly changed. The pandemic not only took away several months in lockdowns but also altered the world and our lives in profound ways.



The focus of our work during the March–June period was on assisting the Indian community and our students in Hungary, who were facing challenges inter alia due to travel restrictions imposed in the wake of the pandemic. Cases of stranded travellers, expiring visas or permits, health issues, other consular emergencies, arranging seats on flights under the Vande Bharat Mission, etc., rightly became our priority. And, in tune with the new demands and requirements of work, we started to increasingly use online tools such as video conferences / webinars. While it was good to maintain our activities using these tools, but webinars do have a few limitations and are not best suited for some types of interactions.

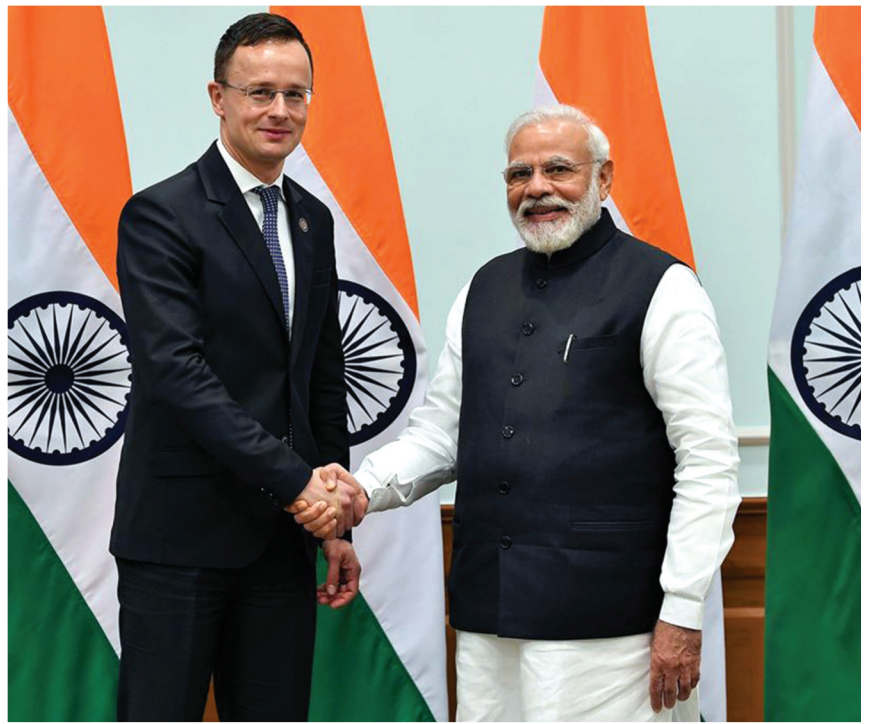
Both the International Day of Yoga and our Independence Day celebrations had to be adapted to the changed times. The theme of International Day of Yoga this year was yoga from home, and yoga with family. A number of yoga schools joined us on our social media pages to live stream the event. And, there was an enthusiastic participation in the yoga essay and poster contests that were launched prior to the event. Yoga teaches us to rediscover ourselves and our position in the scheme of Mother Nature. It appeared ironic that a tiny virus shattered our illusion that we were the masters of nature and made us realize our shared destiny and the need to live in harmony with nature. As Gurudev Tagore pondered in his poem আকাশভরা সূর্য_তারা বশ্বভরা প্রাণ about his place in this universe filled with diverse life forms and sky filled with the sun and stars !

We decided to also stream the Independence Day event online. The number of Indians has steadily grown in Hungary and realizing that it may not be possible to maintain social distancing if everyone was invited to the flag hoisting function at the Embassy, we had to turn to technology for a solution. We were happy to see a large number of community members and friends of India joining our event on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. As we move into this year, online events will continue to be a significant mode for our outreach even as we plan to restart physical classes at the Amrita Shergil Cultural Centre soon.

Kumar Tuhin
Ambassador of India

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary visited India

Mr. Peter Szijjarto, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, visited India on a three day visit on 14-17 January 2020. He visited Mumbai on 14-15 January and called on Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra. He told the state news agency MTI by phone from Mumbai that planned investments in Hungary by Indian companies that employ the latest technology will create 1,000 new jobs. The cabinet will announce these investments over the next two months, he added. The investors include automotive, electronics and energy companies, such as Tata Sons, the Mahindra Group and the Hinduja Group. In New Delhi, Mr. Szijjarto called on Hon'ble Prime Minister on 15 January and participated in the 5th edition of Raisina Dialogue. On 16th January, Szijjarto and EAM held bilateral talks. He also met Minister of MSME, Mr Nitin Gadkari and Mr Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Railways. Appearing on Republic television, Szijjarto praised Prime Minister Narendra



H.E. Mr. Peter Szijjarto, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary with Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi in India

Modi for taking patriotic decisions and global challenges in the same way as the said PM Modi deserved respect, as he saw Hungarian cabinet does in many ways. ■



Raisina Dialogue 2020

Strong Indian presence at SIRHA Budapest in February 2020



LEFT: Inauguration of the India Pavilion by H.E. Ambassador Kumar Tuhin.
RIGHT: Felicitation by ASSOCHAM, the national chamber from India



LEFT: H.E. Mr. Róbert Zsigó, Minister of State for Food Chain Supervision, Ministry of Agriculture inspecting the India Pavilion. **RIGHT:** Interaction with Indian companies

Indian companies had a strong participation in SIRHA Budapest 2020 (regional trade exhibition of food, bakery, pastry, HoReCa, food service packaging and gastronomy) that was held on 4-6 February 2020 in Budapest. An India Pavilion was set up by Assocham, a national chamber from India which saw a participation of around 47 Indian exhibitors from all over India. The India Pavilion of 247 m² was inaugurated by H.E. Ambassador Kumar Tuhin who applauded the synergies between India and Hungary in bilateral trade and economic cooperation, which has seen considerable uptick due to the recent high-level visits by the External Affairs Minister and the Minister of Water Resources from India in 2019 and the Foreign Minister of Hungary in January 2020.

SIRHA Budapest 2020 was inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Róbert Zsigó, Minister of State for Food Chain Supervision, Ministry of Agriculture who also inspected the India Pavilion and interacted with some of the exhibitors. Ambassador was also interviewed by the Hungarian news agency MTVA.

Business entities and companies from both countries are exploring the areas of food processing, agriculture and packaging. Possibilities also exist in the fields of efficient technologies, vegan culture and agricultural commodities. Academic research and student exchange are other exciting areas of cooperation. A JWG set up on agriculture is likely to meet this year to further deepen cooperation. ■

Utazas Travel-Expo 2020 and a Session on travel, trade and tourism



LEFT: Session on travel, trade and tourism.



RIGHT: Inauguration of the Utazas Travel Expo by Mr. Gábor Ganczer, CEO of Hungexpo

Embassy of India in partnership with India tourism office, Paris participated in the Utazas travel and tourism fair in Budapest on February 27- March 01, 2020. Utazas travel expo is one of the largest travel and tourism fair in the region held annually in Budapest. More than 40 countries and other stakeholders from tourism and travel industry participated in the event.

On the eve of the event, the Mission also organized a discussion on tourism and Indian economy which was attended by the representatives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry of Innovation and Technology, travel and tourism fraternity and Indian companies in Budapest. Ambassador Shri Kumar Tuhin gave an overview of the latest development in the field of Indian economy, including on the recently presented Union Budget 2020-21.

The Indian pavilion at Utazas travel fair was inaugurated by Ambassador Kumar Tuhin on February 27 along with Director of the International department of HUNGEXPO Ms. Klara Tihanyi. The tourism office, Paris accompanied by three co-exhibitors presented highlights of Indian tourism sector in a 36 sqm India pavilion. Amrita Shergil Cultural Centre of the Embassy of India showcased a fusion of Indian dance and music to the delight of the visiting public. Several b-2-b meetings were held by exhibitors during two days and heightened interest and awareness was generated on the Indian's tourism sector.

It may be mentioned here that tourism is one of the key vertical of India-Hungary bilateral relationship witnessing rapid growth during recent few year. Efforts are being made



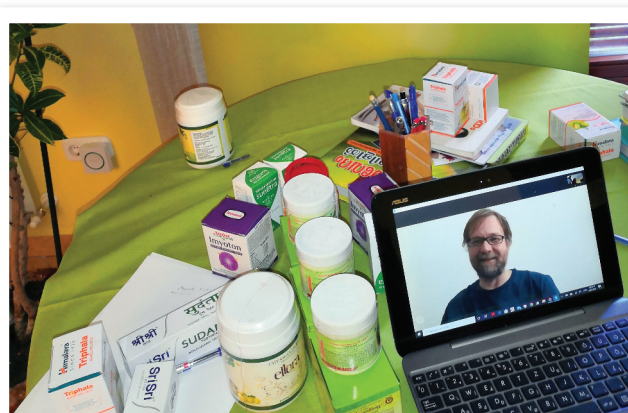
Opening of the India Pavilion by Ambassador Kumar Tuhin and Ms. Klára Tihanyi, Exhibition Director



Visitors at the India Pavilion

by both the sides to increase the two-way flow of tourism and people-to-people contact by organizing various roadshows, and events. ■

Free online Ayurveda Consultation organized by the Ayush Centre of Embassy



LEFT: Dr. Shajahan Shaju in office.

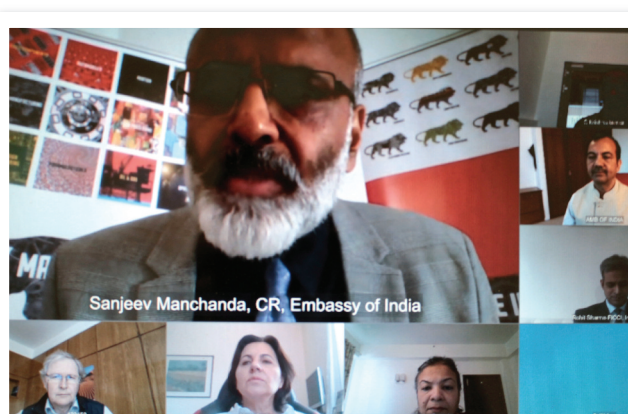
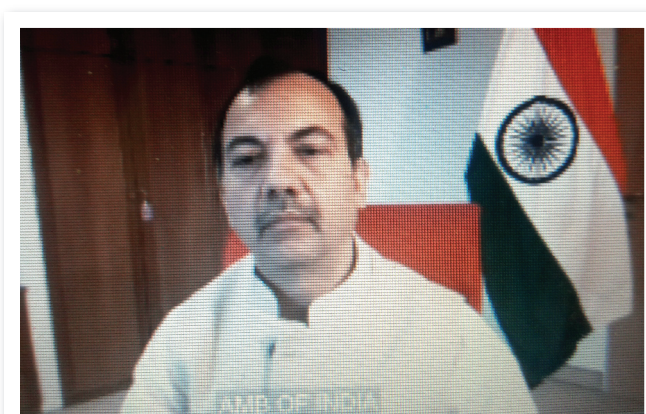
RIGHT: Online Ayurvedic consultation was successfully conducted by Dr. Shajahan Shaju

The Ayush Information Centre of the Embassy has started free online Ayurvedic consultation with its doctor, Dr. Shajahan Shaju. Two sessions were successfully held on 23 and 30 April, 2020. The aim was to disseminate the Ayurveda Advisory with special focus on the preventive care

of the COVID-19 epidemic.

Online Ayurvedic consultation was successfully conducted on May 7, led by the Ayush Information Centre of the Embassy to promote Ayurveda advisory issued by the Ministry of AYUSH. ■

Webinar on economic impact of Covid-19 on bilateral trade and economic relationship



LEFT: Ambassador of India speaking on the webinar. **RIGHT:** Mr. Sanjeev Manchanda speaking

An India-Hungary webinar on economic impact of Covid-19 on bilateral trade and economic relationship was

organised on May 22, 2020. Manufacturing was focus sector with companies from automotive, pharmaceutical, packaging

and electrical machinery participating in the webinar.

The current level of bilateral trade is US\$ 745 mln and Indian investments into Hungary are approximately US\$ 2.8 billion. The Indian and Hungarian companies and participating organizations shared their assessment of the current situation, measures undertaken by the two governments to provide necessary support; whereas the representatives of the national chambers of the two sides spoke more on the policy announcements and future collaboration possibilities. Ambassador of India informed the discussion of the measures taken by the government of India under “Atma Nirbhar Bharat” initiative and what could possibly be the options in the present circumstances.

Suggestions focused on a need to start investment now for the companies for harvesting returns in the time of an impending recovery; technology collaboration and supply chain realignment and joint ventures in the health-care services; academic collaboration for research and development; a joint containment strategy and a bilateral fund which could be appropriately used to boost business; revival of Joint Business Council between FICCI and HCCI; backstopping the stimulus measures and also making them effective so as to sustain viability of all companies regardless of their size; need for government to take more risks to alleviate job losses and announcing of sectoral-specific support. Another important outcome of the webinar was an online B2B engagement of Indian-Hungarian companies in future and positioning India as an attractive investment destination. ■

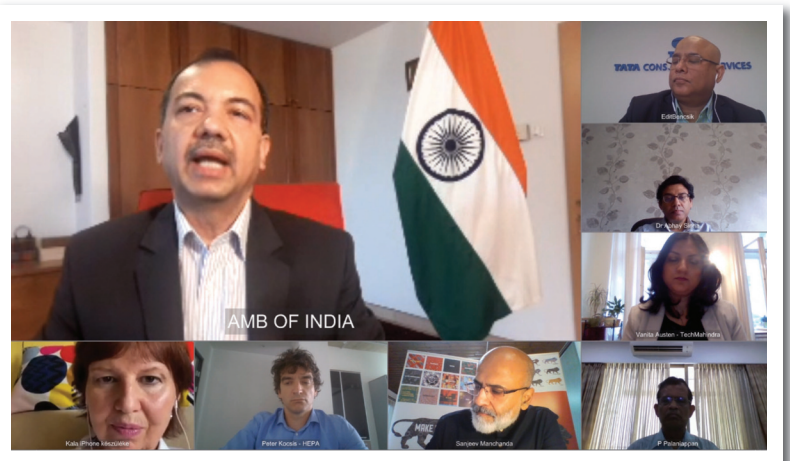
INDIA - HUNGARY WEBINAR
ON ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF COVID-19
AND THE WAY FORWARD
FRIDAY, MAY 22, 11.30 hrs CET (15.00 hrs IST)

H.E. Mr. Kumar Tuhin Ambassador of India Embassy of India	Mr. Sanjeev Manchanda Commercial Representative Embassy of India	Mr. Rohit Sharma Director & Head Europe Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)	Ms. Bidisha Ganguly Chief Economist Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)
Mr. Gergely Orosz Regional Finance Director Eastern Europe and Germany SAP Automotive Minor Technology Hungary (S)	Mr. Chilukuri Krishnakumar Unit Head Apollo Tyres (Hungary) Ltd	Mr. István Szendrői CEO CG Electric Systems Hungary Zrt.	Mr. Nikhil Maheshwari Head - Finance, Accounts & Logistics SRI Limited
Mr. Mihály Kaszás CEO, Regional Vice President Sun Pharma Ltd. Budapest	Mrs. Mária Stark Tényiné Director for International Affairs Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCCI)	Mr. András Rév Deputy Chair of the International Committee of INPCCI Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCCI)	Mr. Samrat Ghatak Assistant Vice President, Corporate Affairs Cadila Pharmaceuticals Limited

Logos: apolloTYRES, SMI, SUN PHARMA, G, SAF

Press Release on India Hungary webinar on economic impacts of COVID-19 on June 9, 2020

In continuation of the India-Hungary webinar on economic impact of Covid 19 organised on May 22 focussing on the manufacturing sector, the Embassy organised the 2nd India-Hungary webinar on June 9. The “services” was the focused sector and companies from environmental services, IT and IT enabled services, educational services, travel tourism and trade, retail exhibition, and other business and non-business services participated. Prominent Chambers of Commerce viz. Services Export Promotion Council of India and Hungarian Export Promotion Agency also participated. The main objective of the webinar was to reach out to the businesses and experts to seek their



Ambassador Kumar Tuhin speaking at 2nd India-Hungary webinar



Participants discussing at 2nd India-Hungary webinar

feedback on the disruption caused by Covid-19 and ascertain inputs for the way forward.

The services form nearly 10.37% of India-Hungary bilateral trade of USD 745 million; the prominent being the business services, transportation-travel and computer and information services. Major Indian companies like TATA Consultancy Services (TCS) and Tech Mahindra are present in Hungary in IT services sector and participated in the webinar, while Mahindra “Waste to Worth” participated from India. 1000 UT travel agency, nominated by HCCI gave their perspective on the tourism sector, while Hungexpo dwelt upon the impact on events/exhibition management. Tempus Public Foundation managing Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship program informed about the impact on the education sector.

Ambassador of India gave a detailed account of government of India’s recent policy measures particularly on “Atma Nirbhar Bharat” and other high priority areas such as food processing, agriculture and farming, digital highways, health care sector cooperation, mobility partnership, effective waste management, etc. He further highlighted new possible areas of cooperation between the two countries and advised the businesses on both sides to explore the opportunities that were now available. SS(Pol & Com)/CR moderated the

**2ND INDIA - HUNGARY WEBINAR
ON ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF COVID-19
AND THE WAY FORWARD**
TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 11.30 hrs CET (15.00 hrs IST)

FOCUS SECTOR – SERVICES

The participating companies are:

- » Tata Consultancy Services
- » Tech Mahindra Limited Hungary
- » 1000 Ut Travel Agency
- » Mahindra Waste to Energy Solutions Limited
- » Hungexpo

The participating organizations are:

- » Embassy of India, Budapest
- » Services Export Promotion Council, India
- » Hungarian Export Promotion Agency
- » Tempus Public Foundation

H.E. Mr. Kumar Tuhin Ambassador Embassy of India	Mr. Sanjeev Manchanda Commercial Representative Embassy of India	Dr. Abhay Sinha Deputy Director General Services Export Promotion Council, India	Mr. Prabal Datta General Manager & Delivery Centre Head Tata Consultancy Services	Ms. Vanita Austen Senior Head/Consulting Manager Tech Mahindra Limited Hungary
Mr. Peter Koczis Head, Corporate relations division HCCI Hungarian Export Promotion Agency	Mr. Gábor Dobos Head of Department, Study in Hungary Tempus Public Foundation	Ms. Times Andrade-Varga Outbound travel expert 1000 UT Travel Agency	Mr. P. Palaniappan CEO Mahindra Waste to Energy Solutions Limited, Mahindra Group Company	Ms. Klára Tihanyi Business Development Director Hungexpo

Logos at the bottom: Tech Mahindra, TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES, Mahindra SOLUTIONS LIMITED, 1000ut, hungexpo

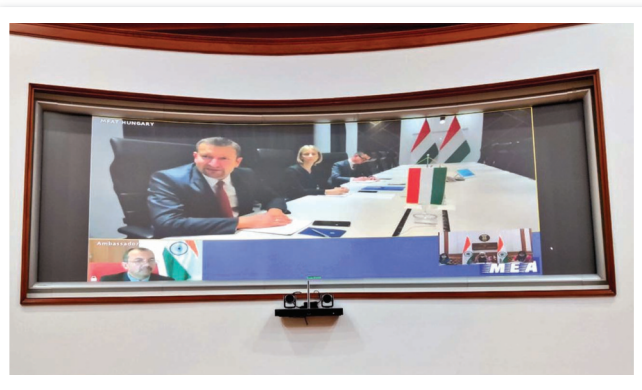
Webinar, which was hosted on the servers of National Informatics Centre of Ministry of External Affairs of India.

There was a general consensus that IT and digitalization would play a significant role in the post-Covid scenario on how the business organisations would leverage their respective strengths. The companies and organisations on the two sides were also able to look at opportunities available on enhancing collaboration to boost India-Hungary trade and economic cooperation. ■

FORTHCOMING EVENTS BY EMBASSY OF INDIA IN HUNGARY

- ❖ **Diaspora Diary**—A Video magazine by the Indian Diaspora
- ❖ **Indian in Hungary Dialogues**—Incisive Video Interviews of Hungarian Experts on key Indian topics

Web Discussion between Secretary (West), India and Deputy State Secretary, Hungary



LEFT: Online discussion by H.E. Mr. Vikas Swarup, Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs, India.

RIGHT: H.E. Mr. András Baranyi, Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary exchanging ideas

Discussion between H.E. Mr. Vikas Swarup, Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs of India, and H.E. Mr. András Baranyi, Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

Trade of Hungary was held on July 23, 2020. They had a fruitful discussion and exchanged ideas to further cement the long standing friendship. India also thanked Hungary for its support to the UN Security Council. ■

11th India-Hungary Joint Committee online Meeting on Science and Technology

11th India-Hungary Joint Committee online Meeting on Science and Technology was held on July 29, 2020. The two sides discussed future cooperation possibilities and exchanged information on current joint projects and related issues. They also exchanged information on current national S&T policies & flagship programmes. 7 projects were recommended with 4 projects under discussion for the period 2021-2024 under call 2019. Priority areas for the next joint call for proposal to be launched in 2021 were also discussed. ■



Participants of 11th India-Hungary Joint Committee online Meeting on Science and Technology

Impressions...

By Tanuja Shankar, Director, ASCC

Looking back at the last few bygone months of 2020, it seems that the world has stopped. It is like a frame freeze moment of celluloid where, the entire world is stand still. That is what my impression at this moment. But as the showman of Indian Cinema, the ace film maker Raj Kapoor had said, 'The Show Must Go On', Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre has been working in a continuous effort to keep the hearth of creativity burning. If I may rewind the sequence of events a bit, I can begin from a very buoyant and exuberant advent of 2020, with a vibrant celebration of Indian Republic Day in January. The artists of India Cultural Centre composed and created a musical ensemble that depicted the beautiful diversity of Indian culture through different dances, musical instruments and Yog. There was also a live painting of the two national flowers of India Hungary delineated beautifully by the artist. It was well appreciated. The blur of events, and the sudden break of pandemic took everyone's breath away. As the winter chill blended into the colourful spring, the streets of Budapest were empty and the people closeted at home. It was a time to pause. Time to think. Time to introspect. What is the meaning of our existence if the nature has to shake us up from our deep slumber of complacency and ennui? Since time immemorial, we have taken nature and the environment for granted. And today we have to reconsider how we treat our surroundings, our families, our people, and our nations. Thus we at the Cultural Centre took up the responsibility to continue our mission forward to join people through art, music, Yog and Indian culture studies. We decided to turn our weakness into our strength and utilise the tools of social media and technology to connect with the people, sitting at home, feeling lost and dejected. A specially designed series of Online Videos were produced which were immediately shared on social media. The videos not only continued the classes in performing arts and Yog but also provided motivation to the students to continue learning and not feel disheartened by the toxic atmosphere of pandemic. The India based as well as local teachers also conducted regular online classes for their students and carried it forward with full enthusiasm. The online platform also gave opportunities to connect with many more people from Hungary as well as other places. Artists and teachers of the Centre engaged in several online programmes through facebook and youtube live providing glimpses of Indian music whenever possible. Artists from India were also invited to perform online and give the students valuable inputs about Indian performing art forms. From May, special Webinars were created on Literature, Music, Yog and Indian Culture. These online activities were welcomed by the people of Hungary and gave encouragement to the artists and teachers to think out of box and create new activities.



There is an old saying, 'No river can return to its source, yet all rivers must have a beginning', we at the Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre have a full calendar of online events planned which can give a relief during the ongoing challenging times, and just like a new leaf, that sprouts on the dry, old branch, we see the future, bright and shining, just round the corner.

I will end with the powerful shloka,

स्वस्तिप्रजाभ्यः परिपालयन्तां न्यायेन मार्गेण महीं महीशाः।
गोब्राह्मणेभ्यः शुभमस्तु नित्यं लोकाः समस्ताः सुखिनो भवन्तु॥

svastiprajābhyah paripālayantāṃ nyāyena mārgēṇa mahīṃ mahīśāḥ
gobrāhmaṇebhyaḥ śubhamastu nityaṃ lokāḥ samastāḥ sukhino bhavantu

May the well-being of all people be protected By the powerful and mighty leaders be with law and justice.

May the success be with all divinity and scholars, May all in the the world become happy

—Tanuja Shankar
Director, Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre

AMRITA SHER-GIL CULTURAL CENTRE

JANUARY

Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas, January 9, 2020



Ambassador of India holding an interactive discussion with some eminent members of Indian diaspora in Budapest

On the occasion of Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas, Hon. External Affairs Minister of India, Mr. S. Jaishankar addressed the members of Indian diaspora live all

around the globe and answered queries from some key missions. Staff of Embassy of India in Hungary participated in the live screening. In the evening Ambassador

of India held an interactive discussion with some eminent members of Indian diaspora in Budapest and addressed their queries and issues.

71st Republic Day Celebrations at Hungary, 26th January, 2020



LEFT: Flag-hoisting ceremony. **RIGHT:** Children singing patriotic songs

71st Republic Day of India was celebrated at Embassy of India premises at 10 am in the morning, with a huge turnout of Indian diaspora and friends of India. After the flag-hoisting by Ambassador of India, Mr. Kumar Tuhin, the audience heard the President's address to the nation, read by H.E, followed by sweet rendition of patriotic songs by small children

from Budapest, and a mesmerising Odissi 'ShivStuti' by dancer Sriradha Paul with Balazs Viraghon Pakhawaj and Chirayu Bhole.

In the evening a Republic Day Reception was held at the beautiful Budai Vigadó (Heritage House) in Budapest where H. E Mr. Kumar Tuhin and chief guest for the evening H.E Mr. Andras Baranyi opened the

programme by addressing the guests present. A toast was raised by the Excellencies to strengthening of India-Hungary partnership.

The evening was made magical by the spectacular musical confluence by 14 Indian and Hungarian artists by Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre presenting a confluence or Sangam off our Ragas (Raag Bhopali,



Ambassador addressing the gathering



Sriradha Paul performing Odissi dance



Tabla (Chirayu Bhole), Pakhawaj (Balazs Viragh)



LEFT: H. E Mr. Kumar Tuhin and chief guest for the evening H.E Mr. Andras Baranyi opening the programme.
RIGHT: Spectacular musical confluence by 14 Indian and Hungarian artists



Group photo

Hansadhwani, Raag Yamanand Raag Bihag) and four Talasor Rhythm in 7-10-12-and 16 beats in a short piece called 'Taal-Tatini' meaning 'flow of rhythm' composed by Dr. Chirayu Bhole & Szabi Toth. This fusion of Indian Tabla (Chirayu Bhole), Pakhawaj (Balazs Viragh) and Sitar (Szabi Toth) with the Hungarian

Cajun (Tibor Motian) and European Handpan (Gabor Korosi) and Guitar (Andor) was appreciated by the audience present. Accompanied by Traditional Classical dances of Bharatnatyam (Panni Somi), Kathak (Karmen Kollar), Kuchipudi (Neethu Mohan) and Odissi (Sriradha Paul), and assisted by Sonali Royand Sarath

is confluence was made unique by one of the most ancient form of spiritual and physical exercise Yog by Yoga Teacher Ankita Sood and a live art demonstration by Pallavi Mojumdar depicting the India-Hungary partnership of a Lotus & Tulip. The evening was given a fine conclusion by delectable Indian cuisine.

71st Republic Day Celebrations at Sarajevo (BiH), 30th January, 2020



LEFT: Group photo. **RIGHT:** HE Ambassador Kumar Tuhin and Chief Guest H.E Marinko Cavara, President of Federation of BiH

Embassy of India celebrated its 71st Republic Day in Bosnia & Herzegovina at Grand Hotel Bristol in Sarajevo on Jan 30th. During the function Ambassador of India Mr. Kumar Tuhin addressed the dignitaries

and eminent people present there. Chief Guest H.E Marinko Cavara, President of Federation of BiH also addressed the audience and spoke on the strong India-Bosnia Bilateral relations. During the programme Ambassador felicitated

the brand ambassador for Yoga from Bosnia & Herzegovina Ms. Selma Muhedinovic and Dr. Semra Caviļjuga, Dean, faculty of Medicine, UNSA for her contribution in promotion of Ayurveda in BiH.

ASCC participated in Students' Open Day at ELTE University



Henna painting



brochure exhibition
for students



Indology Department
presenting courses

The Eötvös Loránd University Faculty of Humanities held an open day for interested students in the academic year. The students ready for admission could learn about the initial training, admission requirements, international opportunities, etc. The Department of Indology hosted the event with the

help of the Embassy of India with books exhibition, henna painting, information materials and Indian tea and delicacies. The event garnered interest in Indian culture & Hindi course amongst the students. The students were also briefed about the scholarship programmes available in India through ICCR.



Students browsing at the table

Embassy of India participates in 'Art of Living Happiness Festival' in Budapest



LEFT: H.E Mr. Kumar Tuhin inaugurated the programme in the presence of Swami Jyotirmay.
RIGHT: Audience listening



LEFT: TIC Ankita Sood speaking. **RIGHT:** Sonali Roy and Chirayu Bhole conducting interactive musical session

On Sunday, 12th January a Yoga workshop was conducted by TIC & Yoga Expert of Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre at the 'Art of Happiness Festival' of Art of Living programme at Budapest, where H.E Mr. Kumar Tuhin inaugurated the programme in the presence of Swami Jyotirmay. Ankita Sood conducted two sessions, first on the happiness programme and a special workshop on

Art of Yoga where she connected the classical yogic techniques to the modern age. It was a house full session with more than 150 Hungarian participants. During the Art of Happiness Festival of Art of Living in Budapest, a musical workshop was conducted by the teachers of Embassy of India & India Cultural Centre, where Sonali Roy and Chirayu Bhole hooked the participants with their interactive musical session.

Movie Club

A BELÉPÉS INGYENES!

Filmklub: Mártir (1999) / Film Club: Sarfarosh (1999)

1025 Budapest, Buzavirág u. 14.

2020. JANUÁR 17.
18.00
AMRITA SHER-GIL KULTURÁLIS KÖZPONT

Regisztráció:
https://www.aolbudapest.gov.in/asc/news_detail/?newsid=251&cat=5

Every month Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre screens choicest Bollywood and other Indian languages movies subtitled in English for the movie lovers. On Jan 17th, blockbuster 'Sarfarosh' was shown to a packed house. This film featured Amir Khan and Sonali Bendre in lead roles.

FEBRUARY

Kathak Workshop at ASCC Basant Panchmi (Saraswati Puja), February 1, 2020



LEFT: Decoration at the altar. RIGHT: Kathak dance by students



Sonali Roy performing puja

In its endeavour to teach about Indian culture through events, classes and workshops, ASCC celebrated Basant Panchmi (Saraswati Puja) in the Kathak Dept celebrating advent of Goddess Saraswati on the 5th day (panchmi) of Basant (spring)

in the Indian calendar under the Kathak teacher, Ms. Sonali Roy. The students gave 'pushpanjali' to the goddess of knowledge, offering flowers, naivedya (fruits & sweets) and roli (red colour) to goddess. They worshipped their art form by laying

their "ghunghroos" (string of bells) at the feet of goddess for her blessings. They also recited mantras under faculty Ms. Sonali Roy. Once again, the relevance of Saraswati Puja was explained by Sonali Roy to the students and other attendees.

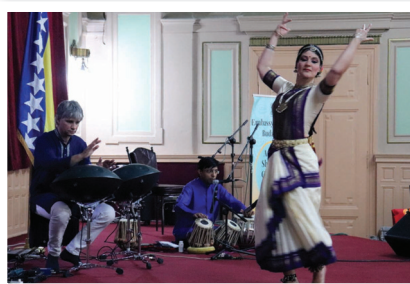
Kathak Workshop at ELTE, February 6, 2020

ASCC conducts classes and workshops at outside premises too. Kathak Lec Dem was conducted by Teacher Sonali Roy at the Hindi dept at ELTE University under Prof Maria Negyesi. The topic was 'unsung women heroes' from the Indian mythology & history. Sonali gave presentations and demonstrated their significance through dance movements.

ASCC in Sarajevo Winter Festival, February 7-9, 2020



Kőrösi Gábor and Chirayu Bhole performing



Artists performing in Sarajevo

Bharatanatyam dance by Panni Somi



LEFT: Group photo. **RIGHT:** Panni Somi performing

From February 7-9, Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre participated in the 6th Sarajevo Winter Festival in Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina. This was the 6th time that ASCC was participating in this prestigious international festival. The first concert was on 7th February at the Army Hall, where Ambassador was also present. A series of Indian and European fusion programmes were

presented by the artists from India & Hungary.

There after the artists conducted an enthralling work shop at the Sarajevo Music Academy where the students of music & ballet participated and engaged in live classes.

On 8th February, at the Figure Art Gallery in Sarajevo, another enchanting

evening of music was held by the artists of Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre under the aegis of Sarajevo Winter Festival. Mr. Ibrahim Spahic opened the evening by his address to the guests present and talked about the strong ties between India and Europe especially through culture. The evening saw a beautiful ensemble of original musical pieces on Tabla, Handpan, Guitar and Cajun. Artist Dr. Chirayu

Bhole gave excellent presentation on his traditional Indian table accompanied by Handpan & other instruments. The highlight of the evening was the spellbinding 'abhinaya' style Bharatnatyam 'Padam' presented

by artist Panni Somi on the composition by Kőrösi Gábor on guitar, the first ever fusion of classical Bharatnatyam on acoustic guitar. As the evening proceeded, the audience remained rooted to their seats,

enthralled by the magical music by the veteran artists. Evening ended with a toast to the artists by Mr Spahic and Mr. Masic who has very aesthetically created this gallery for the art connoisseurs of Sarajevo.

Special Prop Yoga Session at ASCC, PROP YOGA SPECIAL, February 19, 2020

A very special asanas session to increase the flexibility and strength of the joints, muscles with the use of Yoga Props by Yoga teacher Ms Ankita Sood was

conducted. Concert at Sóker Sóbarlang (salt cave). In its endeavour to conduct programme and shows at outside venues, a meditative fusion concert of Chirayu Bhole on Tabla & Gábor

Kőrösi on Handpan & Guitar was held at Sóker Sóbarlang, Budapest. The salt cave is made up of salt and has a healing effect on the participants during the concert.

Mahashivratri celebrations at Embassy, February 21, 2020



LEFT: Mahashivratri celebrations at Embassy.

RIGHT: Puja and Rudrabhishek performed by Ambassador

Lord Shiva is known by several names out of which one is 'Aadiyogi' or 'Aadishwar' which means the first Yog Guru. 21st February being the Mahashivratri festival, one of the most significant festivals of India, Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre celebrated this festival in the Yoga class, celebrating the auspicious marriage of Lord Shiva & his consort Parvati. The festival started with traditional Puja and Rudrabhishek (pouring of milk & water on shivlingam) and there after, H.E Mr. Kumar Tuhin explained the meaning of this festival. Bhagirathi Chaitanya from Vedic Foundation talked about the symbols associated with Lord Shiva like the Snakes, River Ganga, Shiv-Ling etc. Ankita Sood talked about how Shiva is connected to Yog. The Director-ASCC Ms. Tanuja Shankar together with Ankita Sood, Bhagirathi Chaitanya, Mrs. Jayshree Venkatraman and other women from Indian community recited mantras. The celebrations ended with a musical presentation by Sonali Roy & Ankita Sood on shlokas



Sonali Roy speaking

dedicated to Ardhnarishwar and Aadiyogi. The participants were offered the Naivedyam or Prasad after the Puja.

Yoga and Sound Bath at ASCC, February 25, 2020



Sound bath & Yoga session with Yoga teacher Ankita Sood and Gabor Kőrösi Musician & Sound Therapist



View of participants during 'Naad Yog' and Sound Therapy Session with Ankita Sood and artists Szabi Toth & Dr. Chirayu Bhole

The TIC (Teaching in Indian Culture & Yoga) course at Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre held a Sound bath & Yoga session with Yoga teacher Ankita Sood and Gabor Kőrösi Musician & Sound Therapist. The session was attended by many yoga enthusiasts who went through a Therapeutic meditation and relaxation experience where the expert played several instruments like the gongs, soundbells, Koshichimes, Table Tubes and handpan and many others. The session began with Ankita Sood chanting OM and explaining how this universal sound exists around us in various sounds of the cosmos. The participants later shared their unique experiences where they talked about how the sound therapy affected their body and mind and they felt



Group photo

rejuvenated and relaxed. It is the first time a session related with 'Naad Yog' or 'Soundbath' was organised at ASCC.

Violin Concert at by noted Violinist Zoltan Lantos, February 25, 2020



LEFT: Zoltán Lantos and Chirayu Bhole performing.

RIGHT: Birthday cake present for Zoltán

On 25th February, under the 'Tuesday Concerts', Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre showcased noted violinist Zoltan Lantos's

musical rendition, accompanied by Tabla teacher & artist Dr. Chirayu Bhole. Zoltan performed both Hindustani classical and carnatic style of music together with his

own compositions in jazz form. The evening was concluded by a surprise birthday cake cutting by the artist Zoltan for his birthday.

ASCC at Szeged World Dance Festival, February 27, 2020

Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre showed its marked presence at the 'Dance With The World Festival' organised at the Szeged University by the Dept of Dance Anthropology, where nearly 11 countries' students participated and presented ethnic and fusion dances. Sriradha Paul, Odissi dancer from the Department accompanied by artists of ASCC Balazs Viragh on traditional Pakhawaj and Neethu Mohan with classical Kuchipudi presented a scintillating dance drama composed especially for the festival by the three artists.



Dance drama composed especially for the festival

Symposium on Mahatma Gandhi at ELTE on February 28, 2020

An all-day Gandhi Symposium organized by the Department of Indology was held at the Eötvös Loránd University, titled The Figure of Mahatma Gandhi in History and Cultural Remembrance. The event was held with the support of the Embassy of India in Hungary. Commemorating the 150th birth anniversary of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (known as the "Apostle of Non-Violence") on 2 October, 1869, the Government of India declared a commemorative year in 2019. In connection with this, as a closing chord of the events, the Department of Indology organized a symposium commemorating the remembrance of Mahatma Gandhi. The invited speakers



Kata Aklan speaking



LEFT: Group photo. RIGHT: Gandhi exhibition



LEFT: Book exhibition. RIGHT: Ambassador with Dean Gabor Sonkoly & Director ASCC

came from several institutions, on the one hand ensuring high professional standards of research and on the other hand representing a wide range of aspects of Gandhi research. In addition to the Department of Indology at Eötvös Loránd University, the following institutions were represented: Pázmány Péter Catholic University, the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca, and the Central European University. The event was opened by His Excellency Mr Kumar Tuhin, Ambassador of India to Hungary, Prof. Gábor Sonkoly, Dean of the Eötvös Loránd University, and Máté Ittész, Head of the Department of Indology at the Eötvös Loránd University. Ambassador Tuhin gave a remarkable talk on Gandhi's universal spiritual and philosophical heritage.

The Head of Department, Dr Ittész Máté, one of the main organizers of the event, highlighted the diversity of the Department of Indology, its interest and professionalism from ancient India to the most modern age. The lectures approached Gandhi in many ways. In addition to the historical-universal heritage (Anna Aklan), the audience also had an insight into recent research on Gandhi's Hungarian press appearances (Dezső Szenkovics). Perhaps the most exciting presentations of the symposium were the Gandhi images of young people living in today's Pakistan (Dóra Günsberger) and in today's India (Péter Sági). The afternoon session focused on the cultural remembrance of the Great Spirit. First, an original lecture of outstanding scientific quality was

performed on the characteristics of Gandhi iconography in the fine arts, primarily in paintings and in prints, and their development (Zsuzsanna Renner). After that, the audience could hear a special lecture from the view point of theory of literature on the lesser known topic of Gandhi's picture in English-language Indian literature (Sanjay Kumar). The relevance of Gandhi's memory and heritage was brought to life by a lively roundtable discussion, raising important contemporary and global issues. The experts also touched upon the criticism of the Mahatma, which have been partially answered. The closing of the Seminar was by the screening of Richard Attenborough's Oscar winning film Gandhi, which was also introduced by a competent lecture (Júlia Szivák).

MARCH

Sound Therapy & Yoga, March 5, 2020



Sound Therapy & Yog at a Rehabilitation Centre



Yoga & Sound Therapy workshop which was held by India Cultural Centre at Rákospalotai Javítóintézet

March month witnessed the beginning of a series of workshops for 'social development, starting with a very successful Yoga & Sound Therapy workshop which was held by India Cultural Centre at Rákospalotai Javítóintézet, (Rakospalota Rehabilitation Centre in Budapest) where the female juvenile delinquents

were taken through a therapeutic experience of stress relieving and calming Yogic sessions by Yoga teacher Ankita Sood and sound therapist Andras. This centre is the only centre for girls supervised by Govt of Hungary where such cases are rehabilitated. It was for the first time a Yoga session was held for them. The children and teenagers not only felt

better after the session but were also able to share their positive experiences with the team from Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre. Positive mantras, asanas, and soothing music from handpan, gongs, koshichime sand guitar helped the children feel at peace. Tanuja Shankar, Director ASCC, Mr Andras Szim, Director, Ms Katalin Gonosz, division director were also present.

Hindustani Classical Music Workshop, March 7, 2020

Glimpses of the mesmerising Hindustani Classical Music & Dance workshop by dedicated veteran artist Amarnath Ghosh at Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Center where the artist first gave the most easy to understand, enlightening pure Indian classical vocal singing Lec-dem. He encouraged the participants to sing with him and there after sang few classical songs. He also compared and presented Kuchipudi & Bharatnatyam and made the audience spellbound. His



Glimpses of the mesmerising Hindustani Classical Music & Dance workshop

rendition of Radha-Krishna love through the 'Nrity' and 'Abhinaya' of Kuchipudi brought tears into not only

his eyes but the audience too. Amarnath has been trained at premier institutions of dance in India and is master of our

classical dance forms. Accompanying him was Tabla teacher Dr. Chirayu Bhole.

Avis Budget Group, Budapest, March 8, 2020

Special Yoga Workshop on the occasion of International Women's Day at Avis Budget Group, Budapest. Ms Ankita Sood was invited to conduct Special Yoga Sessions focusing on Women's problems and how to manage the sedentary lifestyle culture incorporates. Few batches took place concentrating few women so that better attention was given to them for their health issues.

Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre announced online classes from March 16th, 2020, once the threat to the pandemic was visible in Hungary and its neighbouring countries. All the daily classes at the Centre were cancelled with immediate effect, which included Yoga, Kathak, Tabla taken by the India based teachers. The weekly classes taken by visiting teachers were also cancelled which included Bharatnatyam, Sitar, Odissi and Kuchipudi. The Hindi course under the Embassy of India run at the premises of ELTE University, Budapest was also cancelled. Although classes were cancelled but India based teachers Ankita Sood (TIC), Sonali Roy (Kathak) and Dr. Chirayu Bhole (Tabla) and officers were attending office and thus, work could go on.

The first format that was developed for online classes were 'Video Lessons' that were produced at the Cultural Centre in HD mode, and there after edited and uploaded on Youtube on daily basis. The links of the video lessons were immediately shared on social media like facebook pages of Embassy and ASCC, Twitter and Instagram. The video links were also shared immediately with the students' whatsapp and email groups made by the respective teachers. On youtube a

separate playlist called 'Virtual Classes' was created so that it is easier for the students to find the videos.

Till now 16 lessons have been uploaded on the social media (Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and teachers have been counselling the students online and through phones. Once a week Skype classes are also being taken in Yoga and Kathak. Tabla students are not comfortable in skype hence the teacher uses other methods.

During the lessons not only regular students but general viewers are also logged in and show their presence through likes, sharing and comments. Looking at the response on facebook, we have scheduled Facebook Q&A sessions with students where the teachers can answer the queries and also respond to the reviewers. Zoom software is also very popular here and Sitar Teacher Szabi Toth conducts the weekly Sitar lesson on Zoom which is being regularly attended by all the students of ASCC.

ASCC runs a regular Thursday classes of HINDI at ELTE University which is being conducted by Prof. Maria Negyesi (former HOD of Indology dept) for the last 10-11 years. She has continued the Skype classes during this lockdown period where students not only participate in the Live session, but also do exercises, counselling, read stories from Hindi literature and also share their Skype wall with each other to learn writing in 'Devanagari' which is essential now as there is no hard copies available for exercises. Besides the Online Classes by ASCC, we are also posting links of Indian classical music of artists from India who have visited Budapest and performed here. This helps the viewers



Prof. Maria Negyesi (former Head of Indology department)

and students to enjoy the classical Indian music online.

A series of 'Online games' and 'contests' have been created by ASCC to engage, involve and inspire the students and friends of India during the pandemic. These contests are based on their interests in India like reading, writing, cooking travelling to India. All the activities are related with India. Very good response has been received by audience and soon results would be announced and simple prizes like discount in admissions in courses, books etc would be announced for winners.

There are regular events created to publicise the classes, contests and other online activities on the ASCC and Embassy social media platforms. Last but not the least, we are devising events which would be like well edited videos with a Live feel of Yoga & Sound Therapy (music of Handpan, gongs, sound bowls), Kathak with Tabla, Tabla with Sitar, Tabla & Pakhawaj and likewise. These would be self-shot individual phone videos, edited crisply to give a Live feel and then posted. This would fill the gap of ASCC events that the viewers regularly attended. We are soon going to also start uploading some of the Hungarian subtitled documentaries for viewers to see.

APRIL

In the times of Covid 19, and lockdown, the Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre took all its cultural & academic activities online using the social media platforms and audio-visual medium to the utmost. The month of March saw an upsurge in corona cases; hence the students were also connected from home with the teachers. The following are the activities that ASCC conducted from its social media platforms as well as other accessible media.

Celebration of 70th ICCR Foundation Day



The month started with the celebration of the 70th Foundation Day of Indian Council for Cultural Relations, which runs 37 Cultural Centres abroad to promote cultural diplomacy through

art, music, dance and Indian culture. The celebrations at the Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre at Budapest started befittingly by the video message of the Ambassador of India in Hungary who wished all the

Hungarian scholars, artists and alumini of ICCR scholarship programmes. The alumini shared their video messages and paid tribute to ICCR by presenting their performances online.

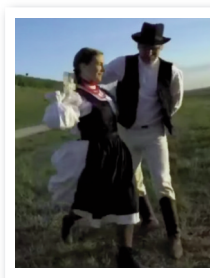
Yoga and Sound Therapy
online event

In its series of online events, ASCC created a live event of Yoga & Sound Bath which Ankita Sood, Yoga teacher and Gabor Korosi Sound Therapist recorded from their homes, edited in a tight programme which was uploaded immediately for the viewers on April 18. This gave a live feel to the event and also garnered immense views and likes by the audience as it was upload on facebook.

Light a Lamp Campaign
by Diaspora

This month, India stood in solidarity and gratefulness for the Corona warriors in India, by lighting a lamp on April 4th. The diaspora in Hungary participated with enthusiasm and a special video was made by the Cultural centre which was shared and appreciated by people online and media.

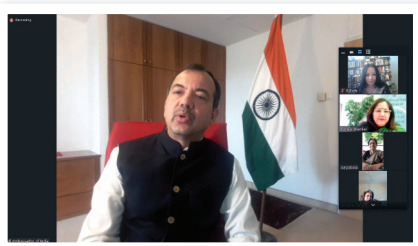
International Dance Day



ASCC also celebrated the International Dance Day on April 29th, by posting 8 forms of dances like Korean Buchaechum, Flamenco, Hungarian sebesforduló dance, classical Indian as well as Bollywood by well known Hungarian artists and the teachers of ASCC.

MAY

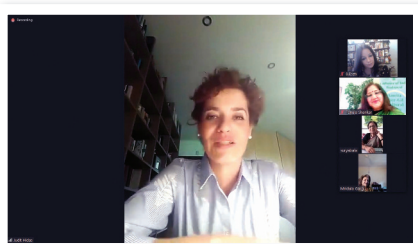
Webinar on 'Role of Literature during time of crises', May 8, 2020



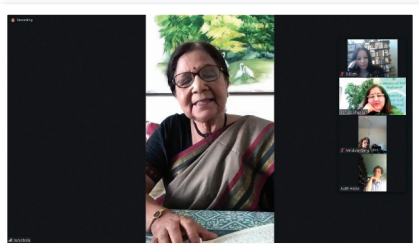
H.E Mr. Kumar Tuhin, Ambassador



Mr. Dinesh Patnaik, DG, ICCR



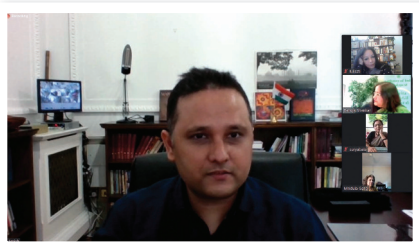
Ms. Judit Hidas



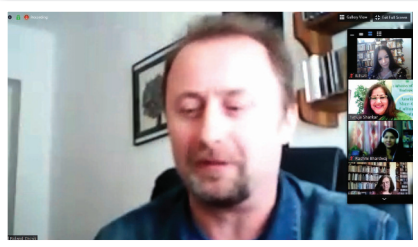
Noted writer, Dr. Suryabala



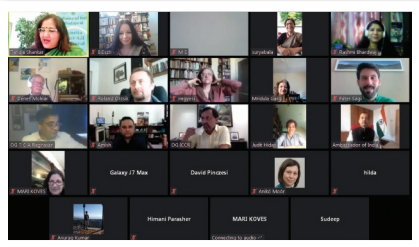
Dr Mária Négyesi



Noted Author Amish Tripathi



Mr. Roland Orcsik

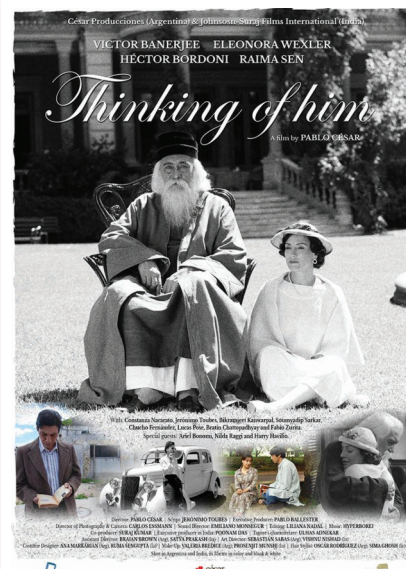


Online webinar

Webinar on 'Role of Literature during time of crisis'. This was the first webinar organised during lockdown where eminent writers from India and Hungary participated in discussions, reading of poems and stories. The Webinar was also attended by DG, ICCR, Mr. Dinesh Patnaik,

Ambassador of India, Mr. Kumar Tuhin, DG, ICWA, Mr. TCA Raghavan and writer Mr. Amish Tripathi from London and moderated by Director ASCC, Ms. Tanuja Shankar. Writers Mridula Garg, Suryabala Lal, Rashmi Bharadwaj, Judit Hidas, Roland Orcsik, Maria Negyesi and Peter Sagi presented their works.

Rabindra Jayanti



During the lockdown while all events and programs were being conducted online from ASCC, the noted Indo-Argentinian film was screened by the well known Puskin Cinema in Budapest online on the occasion of Rabindra Jayanti. The film is based on Rabindranath Tagore's visit to Argentina and meeting the poet Victoria D'Compo. Tagore had composed some soulful poems on his friendship with D'Compo.

Along with that several members of the diaspora and artistic circle engaged in online webinars, performances and musical renditions to pay tribute to the Nobel Laureate on his 150th birth anniversary. ASCC did social media posts and publicity regarding this.

Buddha Purnima, May 6, 2020

On the occasion of Buddha Purnima, Mr. Benoy KBrhl's notable documentaries were showcased on Embassy of India's website and all social media platforms which saw a good response. Besides that, in collaboration with Dharmagata Buddhist College, during their online programme on this occasion, the documentaries were also posted on their online platform for viewing.

United We Fight, May 12, 2020

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) brings together composers, musicians and singers from across India, contributing recordings from their homes, in a beautiful musical creation "UnitedWeFight". Written and composed by Joe Alvares, vocals by Usha Uthup, Salim Merchant, Shefali Alvares Rashid, Benny Dayal, Sonam Kalra, Chandan Bala Kalyan, Joe Alvares, Salome and Samira, and music by Tubby, Pandit Ravi Chari, Pandit Rakesh Chaurasiya and Ustad Faisal Qureshi, this song is a rendition weaving English lyrics into the notes and beats of Indian classical music, spreading the essence of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam - the world is one family. It carries with it the message of hope, joy, resilience, fighting spirit and never say die attitude of all in our collective fight against COVID 19. This virus has had a huge impact on humanity cutting across all boundaries, physical and social,

of nations, caste, class, colour, religion and belief systems bringing the world to its knees. But united we stand, steadfastly helping, assisting, sharing knowledge, cooperating and coordinating with each other, cutting across boundaries fighting as ONE force against the Corona virus.

This composition is an expression of our deep appreciation and gratitude to all brave COVID warriors world over risking their lives to protect ours. It is a homage to all the artists and performers who represent the cultural legacy of our countries and who contribute to keep our cultural heritage vibrant and alive, especially in these difficult times. It is a tribute to and recognition of the countless individuals who are silently helping neighbours, strangers and people around them in these times of distress. A message to the world that TOGETHER we shall surely win the fight against the Corona virus and many



such challenges that humanity and the human race faces. Light a candle, cheer the frontline workers, donate for the needy, spare time for the elderly, be available to volunteer; whichever way, we hope you enjoy this rendition and be inspired enough to continue this "united fight". This song is dedicated to the world by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) of India. ICCR is MEA's autonomous organization mandated to build international understanding, develop closer cultural relations between India and other countries and project India's soft power abroad.

World Culture Day, May 22, 2020

This occasion was marked by ASCC on May 22, by having the second Webinar of the month with cultural institutions and their representatives, artists and members of diaspora. The discussion focussed on how to deal with the covid19 situation in terms of cultural exchanges, programmes and events. It was moderated by Director-ASCC. The Centre also publicised the Webinar on Ayurveda & its relevance today 'Deen Dayal Upadhyay Oration' held by ICCR.



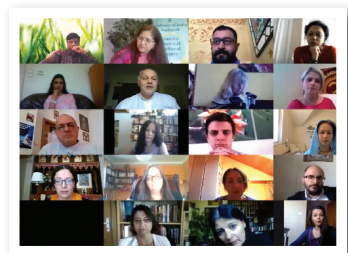
Director moderating the webinar



Poster of the event



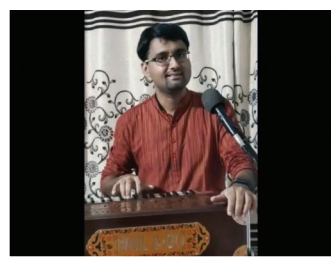
Online participants



Embassy of India, Hungary

'Ragas in Bollywood Music', May 23, 2020

Master Class for students of music at ACC and general public was done on facebook live by Mr. Ajit Pathak from India who focussed on the topic 'Ragas in Bollywood Music'. It was a lecture cum demonstration which was handled by him solo.



Ajit Pathak performing online

Gandhi Katha Facebook Live, 29 May, 2020

Dr. Shobhana Radhakrishna did a facebook live for ASCC on Mahatma Gandhi, and his thoughts on pandemics.

Special Video Messages for Covid19 Precautions by Hungarian dancers through Bharatnatyam, Odissi & Kuchipudi dance movements, noted Hungarian dancers Ms. Panni Somi, Vireg Turi and Gabriella Garima performed in meaningful videos made & posted by ASCC to give a strong message to be safe and secure in the aftermath of Corona in Hungary. It was subtitled in Hungarian.

JUNE

International Day of Yog

International Day of Yog was celebrated by Embassy of India in Hungary on June 21st following the theme 'Yoga From Home' and 'Yoga With Family'. As per the guidelines given by the Ministry Of External Affairs and the Ayush Ministry of Govt of India, Embassy of India had a series of online activities planned as a run-up to the main event on June 21st. Several online Webinars were conducted where besides a talk by Ambassador and eminent persons like Deputy Mayor of Balatonfured city, Director of Heart Hospital in Balatonfured, Director General, Ludovic National Public Service University, Budapest, Principal of International School of Budapest, many Live Yoga Sessions were conducted for the participants for the online events. These Webinars were conducted for ISB School Budapest, Heart Hospital in Balatonfured, Tata Consultancy Services, Hungary, National University for Public Services, Dharma Gate Buddhist University as well as lecture cum demoson Yogic Diet in Budapest and Yoga for Women in Sarajevo.

Embassy received special video messages from the Brand Ambassadors of Yoga, Ms. Andrea Bozo, famous actor, Ms. Boglarka Csoz, Model & Actor, and Amela Kreso, a well-known singer of Mostar. Embassy also received support from the Mayor's offices of important cities and that



LEFT: Ankita Sood conducting class on Heros' Sqaure. RIGHT: Yoga group

included video messages for Yoga Day which were subtitled in English and publicised on social media platforms and in Media. The Mayor offices also posted Ambassador's messages on their official sites and platforms.

The main event was organised at the iconic Hero's Square at Budapest, avenue in the centre of the historic city. Yoga Teacher Ankita Sood Live Streamed the 1-hour common yoga protocol on facebook and was also shared on all social media platforms and received thousands of views. A special song was recorded and played during Live session on 'YogSutra'. Together with this, the whole day on the facebook pages of Embassy of India, 15 Yoga Schools live streamed their 'LiveYoga' based on different themes like Yoga for mental Peace, Yoga for Children, Yoga for Senior Citizens and so and so forth. From 9

am till 5 pm, Embassy of India's online platforms were connected with the people of Hungary and Bosnia & Herzegovina as well as the Indian diaspora who sent their pictures of doing yoga at home.

Embassy of India had announced Quizzes, Essay and Poster Contests on topics related with Yoga at eminent Universities and Schools of Hungary and Bosnia & Herzegovina. Several entries were received and winners were given prizes and certificates. There was also a global Yoga Video Blogging contest announced by Ayush Ministry in which many entries have been received by citizens of Hungary. There was suitable media coverage in both Hungary and Bosnia & Herzegovina which also included articles by Ambassador of India Mr. Kumar Tuhin in some leading magazines.

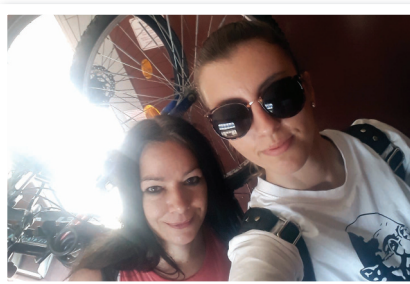
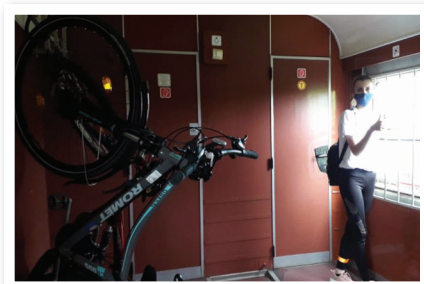
JULY

MoonBike Project

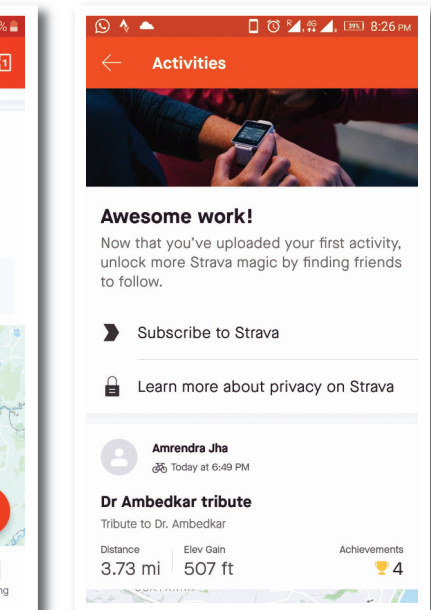
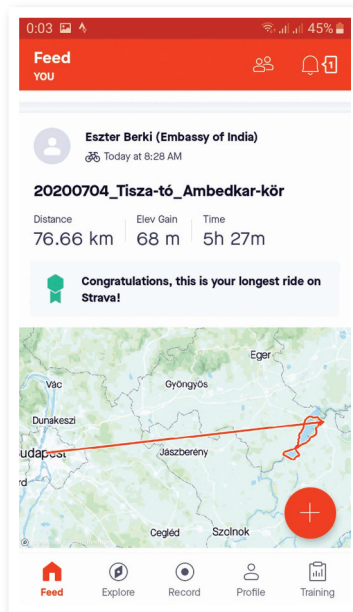
Embassy of India is participating in the MoonBike2020 challenge organized by University of Pécs. The initiative is international to draw attention to the importance of exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle. The Embassy staff is participating paying a tribute to architect of Indian Constitution, B.R Ambedkar and the celebration of Constitution Day this year. You can see some photo collection below about the project.



Members of India Team



Members of India Team



Visit of Viktor Zicho



LEFT: Mr. Victor Zicho with Ambassador at India House. **CENTER:** Tanuja Shankar presenting a token to Victor Zicho. **RIGHT:** Mr Zicho speaking on the occasion



LEFT: Mr Zicho speaking on the occasion. **CENTER & RIGHT:** Mr Zicho arriving at the Embassy and at the Residence

Embassy of India in Hungary felicitated the young Hungarian Adventure Photographer and cyclist, Mr. Victor Zicho who went on an expedition to India recently on his 'bike tour adventure' to trace the footprints of the legendary Hungarian explorer, philologist & Indologist

Sándor Kőrösi Csoma. H.E Kumar Tuhin felicitated him by giving him a shawl, and applauding him for his motivating journey to India. DG, MFAT, H.E Dr. Emilia Fabian, also praised his efforts to take this challenging expedition on cycle amidst the difficult pandemic, and completing

the entire journey from Hungary to India (Darjeeling-which is the final resting place of Sándor Kőrösi Csoma). Mr. Victor Zicho through an eloquent photographic presentation shared his experiences, and gave a very captivating pictorial narrative. The evening ended with Indian snacks at India House.

AUGUST

Independence Day Celebration



LEFT: Ambassador speaking. **RIGHT:** Sriradha paul, Mótyán Tibor and Dr. Bhole performing



Flag hoisting ceremony



Flag hoisting ceremony

This year the 74th Independence day was celebrated online through 'Live Streaming' on Embassy's facebook page where the entire event

from Flag Hoisting, to Ambassador's Address for the Indians to the cultural programme were all streamed live which received immense response from the Indian Diaspora. During

this occasion a 'Hindi Course' was also announced for the children of Indian community where weekend classes would be held for the children. ■

TABLA TARANG

By Mótyán Tibor



Tibor Mótyán playing Tabla Tarang

A tabla tarang egy ütős dallamhangszer, amely 10-16 felhangolt „Dayan” dobból áll. A „Dayan” a tabla dobpár jobb kézre eső tagja, amely a magas hangot adja, míg a balkezes „Bayan” a basszus. A „Tarang” jelentése hullám. A Dayan dobok közepét („Syahi”) megütve különböző magasságú hangokat szólaltathatunk meg, így különböző motívumokat, dallamokat játszhatunk le.

Az indiai államokban már az ókorban megjelentek a ritmushangszerek, amelyek jellemzőek egy adott régió zenei kultúrájára.

Ezeket a hangszereket népi és klasszikus kategóriába sorolhatjuk. A mrudangam, pakhawaj és a tabla az utóbbiba tartozik.

Míg a mrudangam és a pakhawaj igazán ősi, addig a tabla a múlt században vált népszerűvé és az indiai zene sokoldalú hangszerévé, a vele végzett úttörő munkát mind a zenészek, mind a zenebarátok nagyra értékelik.

Az olyan ismert művészek, mint Ustad Zakir Hussain vagy Shri Anand Shankar egynél több „Dayan” tablát használnak előadásai során.

Több tabla használata pedig lehetővé teszi, hogy a ritmus mellett dallamokat is játsszanak. Sok művész a rága skálának megfelelően felhangolt dobsort használ, amely lehetőséget ad, hogy megcsillogtassa tehetségét és tudását.

Az elmúlt évtizedekben a tabla Európában is népszerűvé vált. A magyar fővárosban a zenekultúrának mély gyökerei vannak és sok magyar művészt rabul ejtett az indiai zene és tánc, akik önállóan képzik magukat.

Egyikük, Mótyán Tibor dobos Kiskunfélegyházáról, 6 éves korában kezdte zenei tanulmányait. Először hegedűn, majd 10 évig zongorán tanult. Hortobágyi László szitárjátékos inspirálta Tibort arra, hogy megismerkedjen a tablával. 2000-ben Indiába utazott, ahol először Vinod Pathaktól, majd éveken keresztül több más mestertől tanulva kialakította saját tabla stílusát. Emellett több más nyugati ritmushangszeren is játszik.

Hortobágyi László „közreműködésével” kezdett el tabla tarangon játszani 10 évvel ezelőtt, ugyanis Tibor tőle kapott néhány tabla tarang felvételt. Ezeket hallgatva önállóan tanulva fejlesztette ki játéktechnikáját. Ma már más magyar művészekkel együtt a tabla tarangot használva alkot zenei víziókat.

MY ETERNAL LOVE, MYSTERIOUS INDIA

THE LIVING LEGACY OF ERVIN BAKTAY—INTERVIEW WITH DR. ISTVÁN SZÉKELY

By Stanczik Edina

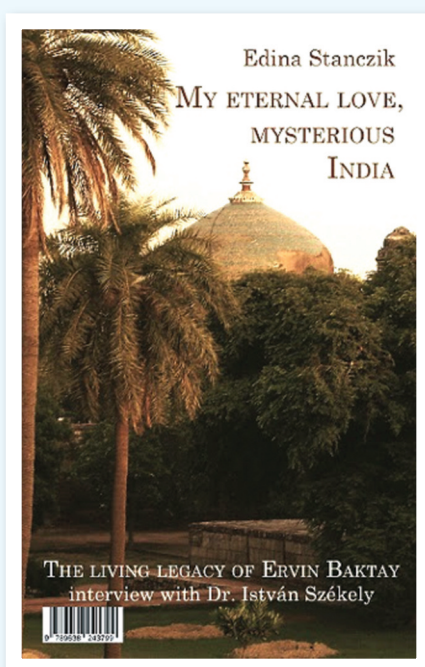
Part I

How do the lives of an Indian and a Hungarian family intertwined in the 18th century? It is like an adventure movie coming true, and this event is important for both cultures, leaves a special mark on both. Let the Fairy Tale begin! And the narrator? Let him stay unveiled till the end of the story...

Once upon a time there was a Maharaja named Dalip Singh, known as the Black Prince of Perthshire. Born in 1838 in the region of Punjab, India, he was the last Maharaja of the Sikh Empire (reign from 1843 to 1849). As he was enthroned at the age of 5, his mother reigned in his place.

He also was the youngest son of the legendary Lion of the Punjab, Ranjit Singh, who reigned for nearly 50 years. After the death of Ranjit power struggles flared up and the British – worried about hostility – sent their troops to the Punjab frontier; this was the beginning of the Sikh wars in 1845, which finally ended in 1849 with British victory. Dalip – who was under British “guardianship” all the time – was deprived of his throne: British India thus annexed the kingdom and at the same time Punjab was attached to British India.

Dalip was then sort of abducted by the British and was taken to the British royal court to be a “guest” of Queen Victoria. The Queen really enjoyed



Dalip's company and she became the godmother of many of his children. She also offered him 12.000 pounds a year in annuities and Dalip converted to Christian religion.

Once one of Dalip's daughters, princess Bamba was looking for a companion, so she posted an advertisement in the local papers. As a condition she expected the applicant to be musically trained and to readily follow her to India over time.

Marie-Antoinette Gottesmann, alias Maria Antonia, who was of Hungarian origin, happened to be in London at the

time, and she came across the advertisement. His father, Raoul Gottesmann was a rich man who encouraged his children to gain experience abroad. Marie-Antoinette also received a family apanage, which she used to travel to London to a friend. That is how she found the ad, and she applied immediately.

Princess Bamba decided to employ her. That was no surprise, the girl sang and played the piano – according to family legend – beautifully. She learned to sing at Puccini. Besides she was a pretty woman according to the taste at the time. That latter was later turned out to be unfortunate for Princess Bamba – her fiancée, the aristocrat scientist Umrao Majithia Singh Sher-Gil and Maria Antonia had fallen in love. They returned back to Hungary newly married in 1912. Their first child, Amrita Sher-Gil (Hungarian name Dalma) was born in 1913 in Budapest, in the mansion at Szilágyi Dezső square. This is also indicated by an English-Hungarian bilingual plaque under number 4.

AMRITA SHER-GIL 1913 to 1941
EMINENT PAINTER AND ARTIST
OF INDO-HUNGARIAN
PARENTAGE
DAUGHTER OF UMRAO SINGH
AND GOTTESMANN ANTONIA.
NIECE OF DR. ERVIN BAKTAY
WAS BORN IN THIS HOUSE
ON 30TH JANUARY 1913

Last time I was there, a wreath with a ribbon adorned the plaque saying “Eternal love for you, immortal Amrita!”

They lived there for a while, and then they moved to the sister of Antonia, Gabriella Gottesmann and to her husband Lajos Szepessy – or as they said in the family; to Ella’s.

They lived in their house in Dunaharaszti for years; Amrita’s sister Indira was born there already in 1914.

Let’s make a small detour in the history of the Gottesmann family. The relationship between the Gottesmann and the Szepessy family goes back to several generations. The Gottesmann family owned a land called Baktaerdő in the territory of today’s Ukraine and Romania, a historical area of Maramureş. In 1868, Franz Joseph donated the noble prename “erdőbaktai” to the family. Adolf Gottesmann, the grandfather of Ella served as an officer in the hussar regiment of the Hohenzollern prince in Theresienstadt (now Terezín, a Czech settlement in the era of the Habsburg Empire). He was the one who bought Erdőbakta. The grandfather of Ella’s husband, Lajos Szepessy, was the comessupremus of Maramureş county that included the Gottesmann estate. (His obituary serves as evidence of him being the supremus comes.)

This is how the two families knew each other, the young people fell in love and got married. Meanwhile, the Gottesmann estate was lost as a consequence of several dubious transactions and poor investments, so Ella’s father, Raoul Gottesmann found employment at an insurance company. Although they maintained a high standard of living, they were no longer landowners.

Now let’s move to Ervin Gottesmann, Ella’s brother, who is known as Ervin Baktay. Who he really



Amrita Sher-Gil

was? It is not easy to answer this briefly, as his diverse personality could be a theme of many books.

Ervin initially wanted to be a painter. His father, Raoul paid attention to the children’s proper education. Thanks to the family’s wealth, Ervin got the opportunity to learn from Simon Hollósy in Munich. Later he painted at the artist residence of Nagybánya. In 1916, he was called by the Great War. He stopped painting at this time then traveled to India in 1926, partly because of the inviting word of oriental art and partly inspired by the Indian mixed marriage of his sister

Maria Antonia and Umrao Singh Sher-Gil. Their daughter’s, Amrita’s first guide in painting was Uncle Ervin.

“Uncle Ervin” has been studying India since the early 1920s; his first stay in India lasted from 1926 to 1929. Although he had previously published writings on India (Rabindranath Tagore (1921), a Mahabharata extract (1923) and selected writings of Gandhi (1926)), his first major work is *India*, a two-volume documentary of the huge differences in social and living standards. Hungarian readers were given an authentic view of this country for the first time, they also

got to know the pioneering scientific work of Sándor Kőrösi Csoma, who had tirelessly researched the origins of Hungarians. Baktay also described the scene of Kőrösi's death. He visited West Tibet' monastery of Zangla and Phuktal, with injured vertebrae, infected with typhoid and malaria, where Sándor Csoma barely survived a winter without heating, only drinking yak butter tea. Since there was no chimney in the rooms and the locals put fire in the middle of the room, the smoke was so corrosive that it made Csoma unable to read. With the help of the lamas, he wrote the main work of his life, the Tibetan-English dictionary. He did all this in the hope that during his research he would find some kind of clue that would lead him to the origin of our ancestors.

Baktay writes that when he was there, "I wrote with ink on the lintels of the door: Csoma's room, and I started to carve out the inscription with my knife." Later, he also got a commemorative plaque carved. The local elders still remembered a "white disciple speaking a strange language", and one of them met Csoma in person. Thanks to this small plaque, Balázs Irimiás, chairman of the Csoma's Room Foundation, could identify recently the location, and, few years ago, with his leadership and with the help of volunteers and locals, the value-saving work in the area could begin.

Baktay did not return from India voluntarily, but for medical indications, because he had malaria and was diagnosed with dysentery. They said they couldn't handle it there, so he returned home with the intervention from Aurél Stein.

His passion for India, however, proved unquenchable, even though he was stuck here in Hungary for a long time. I shall not list all his works, it is enough to say that he wrote many volumes and had at least as many as co-

author, he also made translations, wrote young adult books and gave lectures. Between 1930 and 1944 he was a member of the Hungarian Geographical Society and was one of the editors of its journal, Földgömb (The Globe). This society was the publisher of a series that consisted of large, burgundy coloured, gold-plated, hardcover, beautifully designed volumes. Several books of Ervin on India were published as part of this series: The Country of the Happy Valley, Wanderings in Kashmir; Punjab the Land of Five Rivers, etc. Meanwhile, in 1933 he was inaugurated as a professor in Debrecen and abroad...

Then came World War II and the socialist era. By this time, he was not allowed to publish anything except young adult books. In the early and middle 1950s, he wrote The Art of India, but someone, perhaps György Aczél (Deputy Minister of Culture), said that the volume was to be published only, if it was supplemented by an opening chapter on India entering the path of Communism. Uncle Ervin stated that he was unable to write this because he considered himself an art historian.

Besides India he was also passionate about the world of Native American. Through the summers, even as an adult he went with his friends to Zebegény, and later to the Kismaros Island, where they could only cross by boat, to play to live as Indians. They dressed up as Indians and lived in traditional tents for weeks. They wore self-made embroidered pearl-sewn outfits, and their tents were made of leather and canvas. Ervin was the Sheriff (E. Hooligan Bucktye) and the Boss (Lying Bison). Their "game" was so serious and authentic that in 1937 their tribe was chosen as a member of The National Council of American Indians and their activities were recognized by a certificate, as the whole initiative was preceded by

lengthy ethnographic studies.

In 1998, in memory of these camps, his friend József Lorencz and his second cousin, Áron Hegymegi Kiss, founded an Indian-cowboy museum in Kisoroszi. Lorencz and Áron were members of the group of friends who attended these games regularly. The museum exhibited souvenirs related to these camps, collected with the help of friends and relatives. In 2012, the museum moved to Dunaharaszti to Laffert Mansion, where it can be visited currently. (Baktay Ervin indian-cowboy museum permanent exhibition.)

Between 1946 and 1958 Ervin worked as an independent curator at the Ferenc Hopp Museum of East Asian Art, founded by the eponymous, and took the Indian section under his wing. He was the only person from Europe who got an official invitation by the Indian Government for the *Buddha Jayanti* to celebrate the 2500th anniversary of Buddha's birth. With this, the government could not do anything, and he was given permission to travel.

Just after the revolution, in November 1956, he and his wife, Aditi, went to India and stayed there for a year. Apart from giving lectures in Delhi, he met twice in a year with India's Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, with whom he mostly talked about the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Nehru obtained most of his information about it from Uncle Ervin, who spoke English, German, French, Hindi, and Sanskrit, who even mentioned in his autobiographical book of his youth how fantastic experience he had had reading his favorite books – The Three Musketeers, Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer – in original.

After a year they returned to Vienna, where Ervin also gave lectures and visited his relatives. His wife came home from Vienna to Pest to see if her husband could come, or if he should

stay abroad. They wrote he could come, so he arrived in December of '57.

Unfortunately, Uncle Ervin didn't tell me any stories. When he died, I was 16. I was not interested in these topics at the time, I was most interested in reading and admiring girls. He came to my mother's house regularly with or without his wife. Sometimes I stayed there a bit, but these times he didn't talk about his Indian memories, because they had a close relationship. I sat there for half an hour out of courtesy, and then I left.

My only memory of Ervin is that one Christmas, thanks to his intervention, my brother and I got from Jesus two beautiful big carved bows and hand-made arrows with feathers, they even had a proper tip. The tip was made of some kind of bullet, I remember. Earlier, when we were six or seven years old, he gave us shields 60-70 cm in diameter, gold-colored ones, decorated with Roman motifs, and a spear. Made of wood, like a broom stick, the end is a paperboard-made spear, nicely sprayed with silver.

Whenever a book of his was published, my mother got a dedicated copy, later, when I got older, I also got one. I still have these, only some of them at my brother András. After Ervin's death in '63, the relationship with his widow, Aditi – her name was Edit, but Ervin called her by this nickname – got pretty close to us in her final years.

Since she lived alone, I used to visit her regularly, sometimes with Gizi, my wife. Since not many people visited her, she was very grateful for this. It must have been 20 years ago that Aditi and I went to one of the Liszt Ferenc Square galleries, as the Indians organized an Amrita exhibition of her pictures and photos. In the meantime, Sándor Sára's three-part film about Amrita was endlessly screened, and a small reception was also held.

Coming back to Aditi – at times, if she had a problem, she called me, and I went over to discuss it. She lived in her flat where she lived with Ervin at Eszék Street 16/A, in Buda, close to Móricz Zsigmond square.

Aditi inherited all the copyrights, and she had a testament about the books before she died. She left the copyrights to the Ferenc Hopp Museum of East Asian Arts. In addition to this, a part of the Baktay legacy – his vast library – was donated to the museum in her life with the condition that she keeps the books, but after her death, the books shall be physically transferred to the museum. Further she donated various objects – her desk and armchair – to the museum. (In 2015 there was also a Baktay exhibition in the museum “*The indologist Indian – the memory of Baktay Ervin*”.)

The other great heir was the school named after Ervin Baktay on the main square of Dunaharaszti. His bust can be found there too. The school always invited Aditi to its events. She was always happy to participate, she didn't have other events in her life.

In the 1990s, the Baktay books began to be republished, and since copyright were owned by Aditi, she agreed to take care of his husband's memory after his death. This is how a marble plaque was placed on the wall of their house in Eszék Street by the local government. She saved all the money that came in from republishing the books, and donated to the school. At the same time, she had holes on her stockings. I told her to buy a new one. The answer was, “*Oh, my dear István, that would be very expensive...*”.

Coming back to Ella and family; they had a very close relationship, Ella was Uncle Ervin's favorite sister – and she was my maternal grandmother.

“... My sister Ella was closest to me due

to her age and the fact that she cared about me the most, baby-sitting, playing with me, and – she was often scolded by my mother because of me. In these thrashings, there was some bias from my mother's side, I suppose, and my poor sister must have often felt things unfair, but it was praiseworthy that she did not make me feel this. She continued to take care of me and played with me.” (Ervin Baktay: HOMO LUDENS. Following my memories. Bibliotheca Hungarica Artis Asiaticae 4th. Museum of Applied Arts. Budapest, 2013, p. 14.)

All this we know from his autobiography, which he had no chance to finish – he only got to recall his memoirs till the age of 16 in an interesting enjoyable style. He mentions Ella several times in his book. (The publishing of the memoirs in a form of the book was arranged by Áron Hegymegi Kiss, Uncle Ervin's second nephew.)

My grandmother Ella passed away at the age of 89. She was perfectly healthy, she would probably still be alive today if she hadn't fallen off the bed and broken her hips. She was hospitalized and died from complications. After Ella's husband, Lajos, my grandfather had died, Ella moved into her daughter's, Klári's home, that is to my parents. Granny Ella loved to read, she had got a separate little room with a reading light in the corner; she had been reading day and night. She never had taken medicine, even though her son-in-law – my father – was a doctor who tried to force her every night to take her medicines. My grandmother always told him to just put it on the nightstand and promised she would take them. When she died, her bed was moved and three handfuls of pills was found on the floor beside the wall. But she always thanked my father. “*My darling Béla, thank you, just put it down.*”

We visit her tomb regularly, we cherish her memory. ■

INDIA – MA

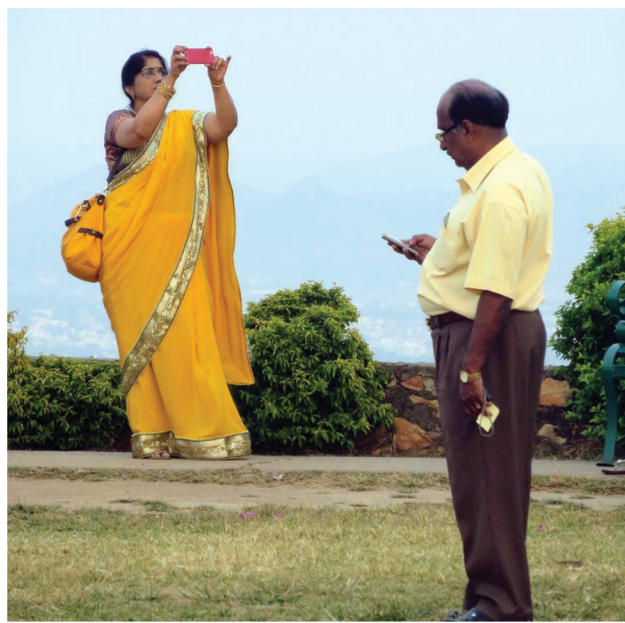
By Dr Sági Péter, Indologist

Legelőször 2009-ben léptem India földjére: latin-görög tanulmányok, illetve az ELTE Indológia Tanszékén (ahol ma tanítok is) némi szanszkrit és hindí előképzettség megszerzése után, huszonegy évesen nyelvi ösztöndíjban részesültem Ágrába, ahol az egyik hindí nyelvoktató intézet található. Ágrá, a Tádzs Mehel otthona, e szédítő középkori város, ahová akkor egy évre tanulni érkeztem, lett India-szerte tett utazásaim kiindulópontja. Az azóta eltelt tíz esztendőből hatot Indiában töltve folyamatos szemlélője lehettem az indiai embereknek, társadalmuk és értékrendjük részben rohamos átalakulásának, részben változatlanságának.

Az elmúlt évszázadokban a nagyvilág Indiát gyakran a perzsa, majd angol nyelvű hódítók szemüvegén keresztül ismerte meg, ami sok előítélet forrása lett. A Himálaja égbetörő havas csúcsai és az Indiai-óceán által közrefogott India, amelyet az árja betelepülők leszármazottai ma is legtöbbször a Bhárat avagy ünnepélyesebben a szanszkrit Bháratavarsa névvel illetnek, de amelyet a muszlim uralom öröksége miatt perzsa szóval Hindusz tán-nak is neveznek, egyaránt volt a világ más nagy tájegységeitől elszigetelt és vonzotta mégis az idegen népcsoportokat. A hódító árjaknak főképp a Gangá és Jamuná folyók közén kialakult észak-indiai klasszikus kultúrája északnyugat felé Afgánisztánig, ahol párszáz éve még virágzott a buddhizmus, közvetlenül érezteti hatását; míg az ezzel részben kölcsönhatásban, részben külön fejlődő déli dravida kultúra szellemi termékei Délkelet-Ázsiáig, egészen a mai Indonéziáig hatolnak. Jelenleg a Föld minden hét lakójából kettő származik Dél-Ázsiából, vagyis az indiai szubkontinensről, de a környező vidékeken ennél is többen élnek mindennapjaikat az indiai kultúrkörben: a Rámájana eposz története például Thaiföld és Indonézia szellemi életét is a mai napig mélyen áthatja.

E hazánktól térben nem is oly távoli – New Yorknál közelebb – ország gyakran zavarba hozza az embereket eltérő életszemléletével, sokan szeretnék legalább valamelyest megérteni, a legtöbbször mégis régi sztereotípiákon keresztül ismerik. Ezen közhelyek közül néhányval kapcsolatosan osztanék itt meg néhány felőtlt gondolatot néhány saját felvétellel kísérve.

Aki a repülőről leszállva először ül taxiba egy indiai nagyvárosban, pislogva követi a mives kovácsoltvas- vagy faragott faerkélyek helyett egyre inkább cementkockákból és csiricsáré hirdetőtáblákból hányaveti módon összedobált bazársorokat a poros útszélen, és figyelni aztán sajnálkozva a szegények hajlékait a vasúti sínek mentén. A párásító gépekkel hűsített, árnyas-ápoltság, kastélyszállók,



A szegény és a gazdag India



Falusi és városi India

felhőkarcoló panorámás lakásai, pazarul berendezett éttermek, a hegyi vagy vízparti nyaralók baráti összejövetelei amennyire rejtve maradnak a szegény indiaiak előtt, épp annyira a turisták java sem fog ebből a keleti kényelemből futó látogatása során sokat látni. De ez nem jelenti azt, hogy ne telne Indiában számosak ideje ilyen keretek között. A legnagyobb nyomor és az elképzelhető földi gazdagság között pedig még mindig nagyon széles az életvitel skálája.

Nehéz megfogalmazni, hogy India szegény vagy gazdag ország-e. Talán legegyszerűbb azt mondani: egyenlőtlen. A kereskedelemben érdekelt európaiak – kezdve a minden aranyukat borsra és finom szövetekre áldozó rómaiakkal –, valamint Nagy Sándor hódító görögjei, a hunok és más régi belső-ázsiai népek, perzsák, afgánok, mongolok és törökök egyaránt szép számmal igyekeztek ide az írott történelem során, a portugálokat követve hollandok, franciák, végül a britek is. Sokkal korábban a Szindhu (Indus) folyó mentén már a régi mezopotámiaiakkal tengeri kapcsolatot teremtő városállamok alakultak, majd a történelemelőtti s az emberemlékezet korának bizonytalan határán a latinokkal, keltákkal, germánokkal, görögökkel, szlávokkal és perzsákkal rokon nyelvű árjak kialakították azt a társadalmat, amely szerkezetében, nyelvében, vallásában minden későbbi behatás mellett a mai indiai kultúra alapja.

Ugyan Indiát a júniusban érkező kiadós eső (arab eredetű szóval monszun) csak szeptember elejéig öntözi, ez a legtöbb helyen évi háromszori betakarítást eredményez. A természet Indiát gazdaggá és irigyelttette, egészen a nyugati ipari forradalom kiteljesedéséig olyan helyé, amely megannyi út célja volt. Az elmúlt három és félezer év során nyomon követhető, hogy miközben az újonnan érkezők természetesen keveredtek is, mindegyikük előszeretettel tartotta meg a szigorú házassági szokások révén etnikai és vallási különállását. Ma az ország vagyonának és szellemi tőkéjének zöme még mindig azoknak a kezében összpontosul, akik hosszú időközön át korábban is birtokolták azt. Itt nem történtek olyan mértékben gyökeres és véres változások a társadalmi osztályok rendszerében, mint a 20. század során (vagy akár előbb) Európában.

India, ahogy az ipari forradalom előtt volt, lassan megint a világ legnagyobb gazdaságává válik. Kérdéses ugyan, az egy főre jutó átlagos jövedelem nő-e majd ugrásszerűen, mindenesetre egy egészen friss ENSZ-jelentés szerint az elmúlt évtizedben az ország közel háromszázmillió (!) lakosát emelte ki a mélyszegénységből. Az indiai állami döntéshozatal kétségtelenül lépéseket tesz a kevésbé szerencsés állampolgárai körülményeinek javítására, közel sem bizonyos azonban, hogy az elmúlt három évtized gazdasági fellendüléséből a továbbiakban egyenlőbben részesedhetnének a polgárok. Mindez a „társadalmi szerződés” módosításával, az aláfölrendeltség hagyományainak enyhítésével lenne elérhető. Éppen ezért, miközben egyre kevesebben járnak rongyokban,



Lelkiség és racionalitás



Fiatal és vidám India



Hangos, színes és szagos India

miközben javul az infrastruktúra és a technológiai újítás tíz éve még nem is feltételezett lehetőségeket teremt az utca embere számára, elképzelhető, hogy a szegények és gazdagok közötti különbség a későbbiekben is szembeszökő marad.

A vidék és a város, a népiek és az urbánusok közötti ellentét már a régi Indiából is ismert. A külföldiek előtt ismeretes indiai szellemi termékek, mint a szitárjáték vagy a karnátikus zene, a klasszikus táncok valamelyike, az indiai filozófia vagy a szobrászat rendszerint a városokhoz kötődnek. Az indiai folklórból talán csak Rádzsaszthán tarka kézműves termékei vagy a pandzsábi bhángrá tánc ért el nemzetközi ismertségre. Pedig e terület megannyi néprajzi tájegysége bőven kínál felfedeznivalót: a népi színháztársulatok, a szóttesek szín- és motívumvilága, a népdalkincs igazi kincsesbányát ígér az érdeklődőnek.

Tapasztalatom szerint a vidéki indiaiak a várost a falu szöges ellentétének tekintik, legyen szó az emberek viselkedéséről, vérmérsékletéről, napi időtöltéséről. Szerintük az igazi nemzeti erőnyerőket őrző falusiak egyben kedvesen naívak, jóhiszeműek, nem úgy, mint a szemfüles, dörzsölt városiak. A modern világ kellékei az indiai városokban már régen jelen vannak, azonban a falvak vagy olykor inkább tanyák között még nagyon sok van, ahová a műút és elektromosság csak napjainkban ér el. Nemegyszer kérdezték tőlem, hogy meséljek, illetve mutassak képet a magyar faluról. Rendszerint azt a választ kaptam, hogy felétek nyugaton a falu is már csak város. A mindig viszonylagos önrendelkezéssel bíró indiai falvak ugyanis egyfelől szegények: a városokban székelő államhatalom évszázadokon keresztül kizsákmányolta őket, keveset térítve vissza bármilyen szolgáltatás vagy építőtevékenység formájában. Másrészt tele vannak a városiaknak mit sem mondó tradíciókkal, ünnepekkel.



Mesés India

India – a sokféle hindú tanítás, a buddhista, dzsaina, szikh vallások bölcsője, ahol honos az iszlám is, a kereszténység pedig jelen van az evangéliumi idők óta. Jóga, elmélyülés, meditáció, az elme elcsendesítése, légzésgyakorlatok. Imádságok, aszketikus eszmények, vegetarianizmus, ájurvédikus orvoslás. Biztosan sok magyar találkozott már ezekkel a fogalmakkal India kapcsán. A mai indiai kormányzat is erre számít, amikor az országimázs kedvező alakulását részben a nemrég elismertett Nemzetközi Jóga Naptól reméli. Ennek az életvitelnek természetesen meglehetnek a maga kedvező hatásai az egyénre; nem szabad azonban megfeledkezni arról, hogy a szubkontinens, benne India kultúrája milyen változatos, milyen sok különböző, akár szembenálló felfogást képviselő csoport él benne, így a felsoroltak amennyire jellegzetesek a külső szemlélő számára, olyannyira kiragadottak is lehetnek. A felső kasztbeli indiaiak például elnéznek afelett, hogy az ország lakosságának több mint fele sem ma, sem korábban nem vette át vegetarianizmusukat, nem beszélve arról, hogy a munkásemberek még a mitikus időkben sem valószínű, hogy hosszas jogagyakorlatokkal kezdték volna a napjukat.

Úgy látom, a 21. század elején Indiában jelentős nézetkülönbségek vannak arról, hogyan érdemes viszonyulniuk szellemi, kulturális örökségüknek a spiritualitás mentén fejlődött tetemes részéhez. Van az elitnek egy része, amely már kevésbé vagy egyáltalán nem ragaszkodik a felmenői hagyományaihoz, idegen nyelvű iskoláztatása révén elfogadta mintának az anyagi életminőség-javítást a nyugati „fenntartható” fejlődés jegyében, nem vesz részt aktívan a vallási életben, az ünnepeknek is már csak kis részét tartja. Az indiai elit egy másik része tobzódik a rítusokban, – részben a gyarmatosításra adott immunválaszként – igyekszik az ősi hindú tanokat, társadalmi és vallási berögződéseket tovább éltetni (a pákisztáni, bángládési oldal ugyanígy az iszlámban látott értékeket), olykor messze az ésszerűség határain túl, nem segítve ezzel a sokféle közösség, köztük a más vallásúak, nyugodt együttélését. Az alig iskolázott, közösségi média révén könnyen befolyásolható tömegeket e két pólus szüntelenül igyekszik magához vonzani, édesgetni. A jövőre nézve ennél fogva az eltérő vallás gondjához képest a hagyományos vagy modern életvitel közötti választást sokkal nagyobb feszültségforrásnak gondolom.

India ma egyértelműen kulturális válsághelyzeten megy keresztül, amikor is választani kényszerül, merre-hogyan tovább. Mit visz magával tovább az úton a megannyi vallási tradícióból, a művészetéből, építészetéből a 21. század elejére itt is tapinthatóvá vált fogyasztói, egyszersmind egyre központosított állami elképzelések vezérelte társadalmi berendezkedés hatására? A dzsógikat, vándorasként lassacskán kiszorítják a jógaoktatók. Nincs annyi a helyi viseletekből, mint a dhótí, mundu és pádzsámá, farmernadrágból annál többet látni a párás-fülledt trópusokon. India hagyománytisztelő értékrendje közrejátszott lakossága megnégyszerezésében néhány évtized alatt. Vajon ez a temérdek fiatal milyen élenként örökíti most majd tovább az ősök hagyományait?

Tíz évvel ezelőtthöz képest India nagyon is tisztább, na és mennyi dolgot el lehet intézni mostanra a világhálón. Talán nem tragédia, hogy már alig látni kígyóbűvölőt. Egy magyar barátom mégis megjegyezte, ő nem látja az emberek arcán azt a sok mosolyt, amelyről korábban annyit hallott. A fiatal India a világ többi részéhez hasonlóan mindinkább a földi javak halmozását helyezi előtérbe a hagyományos közösségek mértéktartóbb életformájához képest. Néhány éve még úgy láttam, ebben a tekintetben hazánkhoz képest nyolcvan-száz év késésben van, de meglehet, hogy a lényegi különbségek ennél kevesebb idő alatt eltűnnek. Egyes rossz, gátló szokásokkal, babonákkal kétségkívül jobb lesz számolni. Úgy érzem azonban, a világfalu divatjai túl erős kihívást jelentenek India egyedi jellegének, különleges sajátosságainak.

Ezzel együtt fiatalos lendületben nem szűkölködik az ország, s ebből, ha ügyesen használják a közeljövőben, sok hasznót hajthatnak. Az utcák élettől duzzadnak, a nagyobb városokban rengeteg kulturális programmal lehet találkozni, folyamatosak a politikai jellegű eszmecsere, vitaestek,

előadások, akár megmozdulások. Az indiaiak általában véve vállalkozó szelleműek, a hagyományos üzletek és startupok mellett sokan vágnak bele valamilyen társadalmi ügy felkarolását célzó vállalkozásba.

Egy magyar látogató számára Indiában minden bizonnyal nem az épített látványosságok, hanem az emberek megannyi apró, a minálunk megszokottól eltérő ténykedésének szemlélése jelenti a legmeghatározóbb élményt. Hangos nevetés, bazári zsvivaj, hangos tereferé, dudálás az utakon, hangos zeneszó, vállveregetés. Hasonló szabású, mégis a szívrágy minden színében és kaleidoszkópikus mintáktól pompázó ruhák, legtöbbször szikrázó napsütés és izzó alkonyat. Falusi romantika, a tűzhely alatt ropogó rőzsének, tehéntrágyának vagy szénnek a hazafelé ballagó jószágok felverte porba vegyülő illata. Fortyogó fűszeres szószok a lángnyelvek marta kerekfenekű edények alján, rézpoharak, mécsesek... Egy repülő átjárás alkalmával néhány órát töltöttem Dubajba, ahol természetesen meg kellett tekinteni azt a kevés óvárost, amivel ez a terpeszkedő sivatagi metropolisz szolgálni tud. Az egyik utcában egy bizonyos fajta füstölőillatot éreztem, és mielőtt körülpillantottam volna, már azelőtt tudtam, itt biztosan a helyi indiai közösség tagjai laknak.

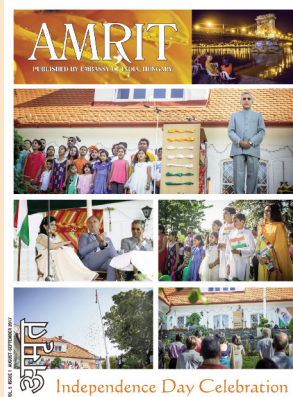
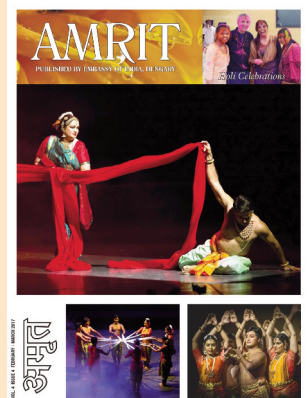
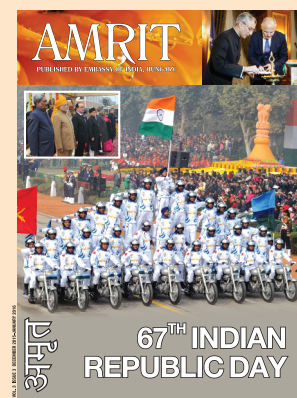
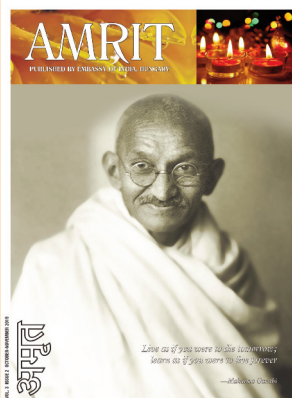
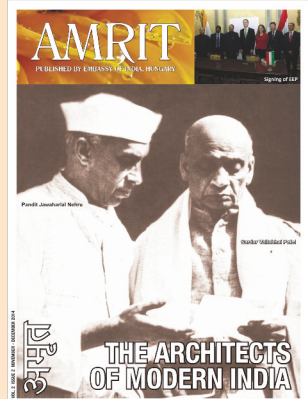
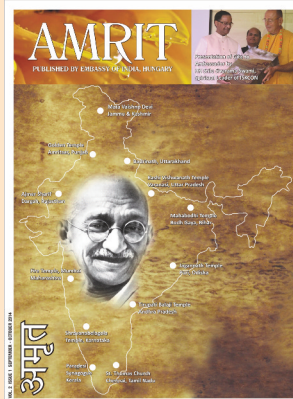
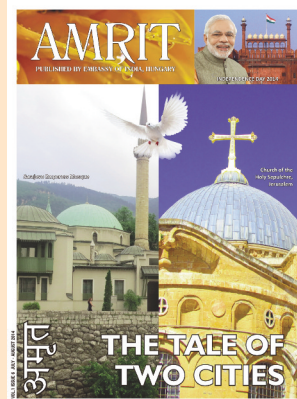
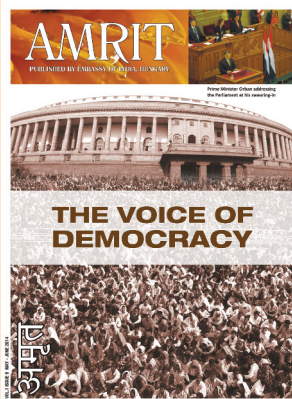
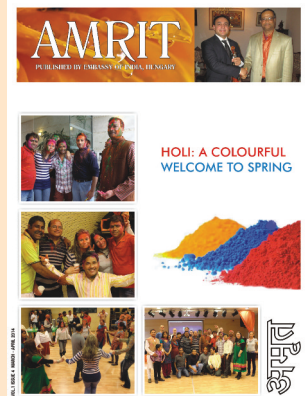
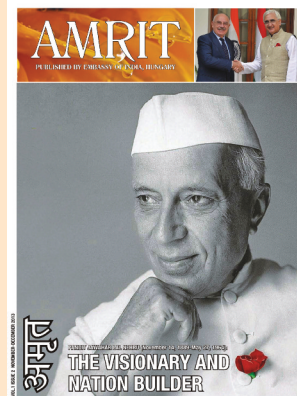
Sokan nyilván hallottak arról, hogy a köztisztaság tekintetében India nem a bolygó legvonzóbb országai közé tartozik. Ezzel kapcsolatban azt is tudni kell viszont, hogy az indiai kormány 2014-ben ötéves programot hirdetett az ország megtisztítására. Jóllehet eleinte ennek sikerében kevesen bíztak, 2019-re már látszanak az eredmények. Nyilván ezek viszonylagosak, de érdemes úgy venni, a pohár nem félig üres, hanem félig teli van. A kormányzat mostanában készíti elő az egyszerűhasználatos műanyagtermékek teljes tilalmát, ami határozottan előremutató lépés. Ha a rendteremtés tovább folytatódik ebben az ütemben, tíz-húsz év múlva a fiatalok már csodálkozni fognak az ezredforduló

környékéről eléjük kerülő felvételek láttán.

India telis-tele van lenyűgöző történelmi és szebbnél szebb természeti látnivalókkal: a Himálaja és a Keleti-, illetve Nyugati-Ghátok magasaitól a csillogó tengerpartokig a csodáknak se szeri, se száma. Egy-egy – rendszerint síkságon, folyópartra települt – indiai városban a megannyi stílust ötvöző épített látványosság között általában a helyi várat-erődöt, palotákat és díszkertjüket, a zsongó bazárt és az óváros régi házakkal telerótt pókhálószerű sikátorait, domborművekkel dúsan díszített tornyos régi hindú templomot, kupolás nagymecsetet és más imahelyet, néha múzeumot, illetve a gyakran tikkasztó éghajlat szárazsága ellenére zölden tartott városligetet és a lakosok szabadidejének eltöltését uraló mozt, újabb bevásárlóközpontot láthatjuk. A szinte minden égövet felsorakoztató természet közelében pedig hegyi és vízparti üdülőket, hegyi vasutakat és szerpentineket, középkori romvárosokat, vadlesre csábító nemzeti parkokat, századokkal-évezredekkel korunk előtt kifaragott barlangszentélyeket és hegycsúcson egyensúlyozó zárandókhelyeket találunk, amelyeket a hazánkban nem élvezhető, délszakian vöröslő, megrendítő naplementében is rendre meg kell csodálni.

Ha úgy érzi az olvasó, ez a leírás érzelgős esetleg, úgy végül megemlíteném, az indiai nyelvek – mintegy harminc főbb – irodalmairól, akárcsak a filmművészetükről, kecses szobraiokról vagy a zenéjükéről megállapíthatjuk: a magyar befogadó számára rendszerint szentimentálisnak, legalább is érzelmesnek vagy érzékinek hatnak. Mint amikor egy játékos megpendíti a szitár húrját és a félhangok vibrálása szétterjed körülöttünk a nyári éjszakában. Engedjünk ilyenkor a kísértésnek, és hagyjuk, hogy megérintsen bennünket valami ismeretlen – hogy általa jobban megérthessük a másikat. ■

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