

CINEMATIC CELEBRATIONS

Waves of cinematic celebration are splashing across the shores of the beach state of Goa. Yes, it is time to swim, to immerse ourselves in the eternal celebration of films, of art, of life. The 53rd Edition of IFFI, the International Film Festival of India, is all set to open soon promising practising and aspiring film lovers nine days of artistic inspiration and celebration. This edition of the festival presents to film delegates a potpourri of 280 films, inviting them to immerse themselves in the lives, aspirations and struggles of peoples from a total of 79 countries. The 53rd edition of one of Asia's oldest film festivals is set to open with Austrian Director Dieter Berner's Alma and Oskar. The passionate and tumultuous relationship between the Viennese society Grand Dame Alma Mahler (1879-1964) and Austrian artist Oskar Kokoschka ((1886-1980) is the subject of this biopic. As is customary, the opening ceremony of the festival is being held at Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Indoor Stadium, Panaji, Goa. Film personalities Mrunal Takhur, Varun Dhawan, Catherine Terese, Sara Ali Khan, Kartik Aryan and Amritra Khanvilkar will grace the opening ceremony. Governor of Goa PS Sreedharan; Chief Minister of Goa Pramod Sawant; Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting Anurag Singh Thakur; and Minister of State for I&B Dr L Murugan will also be present at the opening. The opening ceremony will see many cultural performances featuring top film celebrities from across India and will also include music and dance groups all across the globe. Among them was a stellar flamenco performance by artists from Spain. The theme of the Opening Ceremony is 'Evolution of Indian Cinema in last 100 years,' keeping with the spirit of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations.

The Austrian film, Alma and Oskar, directed by Dieter Berner, will open the festival. Red Carpet for opening film will commence at 2.00 PM at INOX-I, Panjim, followed by the screening of the film. Polish film Krzysztof Zanussi's Perfect Number is the closing film. Red Carpet for closing film will commence at INOX-I, Panjim at 2.00 PM on 28th November, followed by the screening of the film Fixation, a 2022 film set in Germany, Canada and the USA, by Mercedes Bryce Morgan is the mid-fest film. 25 feature films and 19 non-feature films from India will be showcased in the 'Indian Panorama' while 183 films will be a part of international programming. The festival presents a special section for Asha Parekh, the 52nd Dadasaheb Phalke Award winner, with the screening of three films, namely, Teesri Manzil, Do Badan and Kati Patang.

On the occasion of completion of 50 years of Manipuri Cinema, a specially curated package of five Feature and five Non-Feature films, curated by Manipur State Films Film Development Society, is being screened under Indian Panorama. As an initiative to promote films from North-East India, 5 feature and 5 non-feature films, will mark golden jubilee of Manipuri cinema.

There will be special screenings of Pan Nalin's Chello Show-The Last Film Show, India's official entry to the Oscars in the Best Foreign Language category, and Madhur Bhandarkar's India Lockdown. Films from National Film Archives of India will be showcased by the NFDC in the 'Indian Restored Classics' section. These include Sohrab Modi's 1957 costume drama Nausherniwan-E-Adil, Ramesh Maheshwary's 1969 National Award-winning Punjabi film Nanak Nam Jahaz Hai, K Vishwanath's 1980 Telugu musical drama Sankarabharanam and two Satyajit Ray classics, the 1977 period drama Shatranj Ke Khiladi and the 1989 social, Ganashatru. Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement award is being conferred on Spanish film director Carlos Saura. His daughter Anna Saura will accept the Award on behalf of the eminent filmmaker, at the opening ceremony. A retrospective of his oeuvre is being showcased at the festival.



Fundamental Richness

There are some words and phrases that we read or hear that stay with us for forever. When I read the term 'Fundamental Richness' from Buddhist teacher Pema Chodron, those two words said a lot. At a very stressful time in my life, I did not feel at all ready when she suggested, "The key is to relax..." But being the perceptive teacher she is, she offers this way: "...relax to a cloud in the sky, relax to a tiny bird with grey wings, relax to the sound of the telephone ringing..." Reluctantly I tried the suggestion. And it worked. For me.

If we teach ourselves to see that fundamental richness is available in each moment, we develop a habit of mind and heart that can serve us well in tough times. When we are filled to the brim with self-pity, feelings of being victimised, anger or sadness, it is hard to get out of one's own way and notice much else. But if we have been doing this as a joyful practice on a regular basis, we can pause and understand that seeing things as they are is something that becomes easier.

We see people around us – so sadly we are those people – who look at others enjoying what life has to offer and wonder why they can't be like them. It all starts with intention. Then intention leads to practice, and practice can bring about a better emotional climate. We are reminded that fundamental richness is everywhere and available always to everyone. "In raindrops, in blood drops, in heartache and delight, this wealth is the nature of everything. It is like the sun in that it shines on everyone without discrimination," says Chodron.

As we learn to dwell in the space of fundamental richness, paying attention through our sense of sight, smell, touch, taste, hearing,

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God is everywhere but he is most manifest in man. So serve man as God. That is as good as worshipping God. -Ramakrishna

EDITORIAL

Crumbling National Conference

■ PROF HARI OM



One are the days when Kashmir's premier religious-political organization, National Conference (NC), would play all the shots, capture all or nearly all the assembly seats in Kashmir, dominate Secretariat, Legislature and Government and exercise absolute, unbridled and extraordinary legislative, executive, financial and residuary powers with New Delhi always at its beck and call. Such was the political status of the NC till October 2002, when its decline started in a highly dramatic manner. Leave aside the periods - 1965 to 1975, 1984 to 1987 and January 19, 1990 to October 9, 1996 - when the NC was out of power not because it had suffered electoral reverses but because Prime Minister L B Shastri converted NC into Congress in 1965, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi dethroned Farooq Abdullah in 1984 for security reasons and Farooq Abdullah fled to London on January 19, 1990 after causing wholesale exodus of Kashmiri Hindus, Jammu Dogras and thousands of Punjabis from Kashmir to escape the terrorists' wrath. Terrorists had been after him since 1987, when Rajiv Gandhi-Farooq Abdullah power-sharing accord led to the wholesale rigging of assembly elections. As said, the NC started crumbling in 2002. That year, Farooq Abdullah stepped down from the NC's president post. Greenhorn-in-politics Farooq Abdullah's son, Omar Abdullah, became the party chief. All this happened just on the eve assembly

elections. In 1996, the NC under the leadership of Farooq Abdullah won two-thirds majority in the 87-member House. In fact, it won 57 seats, including 12 from Jammu province. And, in 2002, the tally of the NC, which fought the elections under the leadership of Omar Abdullah, came down to just 28. It won only 18 seats out of 47 in Kashmir province, despite the fact that it contested the polls on highly divisive planks. More significantly, Omar Abdullah himself suffered a humiliating defeat in the Ganderbal constituency, which was considered the NC's pocket borough. It's the newly-founded People's Democratic Party (PDP), which upset the NC's applecart. The PDP won 16 seats - all from Kashmir - and formed government in alliance with the Congress (20 seats), Panthers Party (4 seats), CPIM (2 seats) and PDP (2 seats).

The NC again contested the 2008 assembly elections under the leadership of Omar Abdullah but failed to improve the party's tally even by one seat. It again won 28 seats, as against the PDP's tally of 21 seats, all from Kashmir. Omar Abdullah, who this time could manage to win the election from the Ganderbal constituency, was appointed J&K Chief Minister by Sonia Gandhi whose Congress had won 17 seats, mostly from Jammu province. The Omar Abdullah's 6-year reign was one of tensions, anarchy, chaos, disturbances, threats to national security, bitter inter-regional relations, regrouping of terror and separatist outfits and bad centre-state relations as Omar Abdullah, as CM repeatedly questioned the political status of J&K vis-à-vis India, opposed tooth

and nail the AFSPA/institution of the Indian Army and declared again and again that "political package, and not the financial and employment packages, alone could not resolve the political issue of Kashmir". By political package, he meant greater autonomy for J&K or limited accession of J&K with India. 2014 turned out to be the worst-ever year for the NC, notwithstanding the fact that the NC contested the general elections and the assembly elections under the leadership of Farooq Abdullah. The NC suffered humiliating defeats in all the three Lok Sabha seats in Kashmir. Farooq Abdullah himself suffered a defeat in the Srinagar Parliamentary constituency. It's his first-ever defeat. The PDP won all the three seats. The NC had not contested Lok Sabha elections in Jammu province. It had left both the seats in Jammu province for the Congress, which also suffered ignominious defeat at the hands of the BJP. The story of the NC's performance in the assembly elections was also pathetic. It could win only 15 seats, as against its tally of 28 in 2002 and 2008. Farooq Abdullah's brother and former minister Mustafa Kamal, who used to declare day in and day out that "only a Muslim could become J&K Chief Minister as it's a Muslim-majority state", lost his security deposit.

He came fifth. And, the not-so-confident Omar Abdullah, who had contested assembly election from two "safe seats" (Sonawar and Beerwah) in Kashmir, suffered humiliating defeat in the Sonawar constituency and won from the Beerwah constituency by a slender margin of less than 100 votes. Of course, the

NC won all the three Lok Sabha seats in 2019 but the victories were not inspiring for it. That the NC could win the election only by default could be seen from the fact that it could get only 7.87 per cent votes, as against the BJP's 46.24 per cent votes and the Congress's 28.38 per cent votes. As for Mehbooba Mufti's PDP, which suffered only defeats all across J&K, its vote share was a paltry 3.38 per cent.

On Friday, November 18, an important development took place in Kashmir. The case in point is that 85-year-old Farooq Abdullah announced that he will not contest the elections for the post of party president. Many reports said that he decided to hold aloof because of age factor. But one report said that the "resignation came a day after a man heckled Farooq Abdullah in downtown Srinagar, questioning his inability to restore Article 370, which was abrogated by the Centre in 2019". Whatever the truth, the fact remains that Farooq Abdullah has told his senior colleagues that he will not contest the election and it's for the delegates to elect a competent person as new president of the party. The party general secretary, Ali Mohammad Sagar, on November 18 itself issued an election schedule for the presidential election. If all goes well, the election would be held on December 5. And, there are reasons to believe that Omar Abdullah will be elected, may be unopposed. After all, the NC is not a party; it's a private company launched way back in 1932 by Sheikh Abdullah, grandfather of Omar Abdullah. Will the new President be able to restore the ground it lost over the years? Only time will tell.

Murder of Humanity

■ OKMAR DATTATRAY

A hair-raising and spine chilling incident has come to light in Munirka Delhi after five months of its happening in which an adult girl named Shraddha had been killed in most brutal and barbaric manner by her boy friend named Aftab Amin Poonawala. For five long months the girl remained a case of disappearance and mystery. The hardened criminal brutally murdered his friend and live in partner and cut her into 35 pieces which is the most heinous crime ever imagined by men. Aftab stooped too low and committed this heinous crime perhaps to get rid of Shraddha. The victim who reposed trust in his live in partner had been murdered in most brutal ways has shamed the humanity and it is murdering of humanity. One shudders to think how this most savage crime had been committed which puts all of us to shame. Now that the criminal Aftab has been arrested the case needs to be investigated quickly and capital punishment given to this brute who had committed this barbaric crime of having murdered his live in partner after living together in most barbaric and dastardly manner. This barbaric act needs to be solved within shortest possible time so that justice is given to Shraddha and such severe punishment given to the accused that will serve as a deterrent and no such crimes will take place in future. The court has allowed NARCO test for the criminal Aftab so that the police will be able to ascertain the reasons and truth behind this heinous crime and the reasons for committing the dastardly crime. In fact the whole humanity has been ashamed on this savage crime and it has given a bad name to the friendship. After committing the most heinous crime of murdering the girl friend Shraddha Walker the hardened criminal was behaving such a way as nothing has happened. Even after committing the murder of Shraddha, the accused was using the social account of Shraddha so that no one suspects the murder.

It is true that there are some whose overall life experiences have led them to conclude that they can never feel secure. So, instead of forcing themselves to 'stay positive' — often a futile effort — they can more easily convince themselves to at least pause and pay more attention to simple and nourishing moments.

I asked several friends to let me into their nourishing moments where they can pause enough to feel good. I'd like to list a few.

Remember that nourishing moments come from really simple joys: When I wake up feeling perfectly rested; the anticipation of writing in a new notebook with a fresh, new page; when I can ignore cooking and eat just an apple for dinner so I can keep reading the book I'm immersed in; finding my old jeans now fit me perfectly; buying a still warm loaf of bread, breaking a piece and inhaling the aroma before the first bite; when I draw a line through the last task on my To-Do list; waking up before anyone else is up and sitting silently by my window as the sun rises; catching up with dear friends that I haven't seen in a while; the sound of children's uninhibited laughter; my dog greeting me with a crazily wagging tail when I get home after a tiring day; the joy I feel when I give someone a small gift just because; the happiness of receiving a letter or card that someone took the trouble to post.

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concealed these pieces of her body in a refrigerator and he kept these pieces of the body of the victim for some weeks in the refrigerator and every day he was scattering these pieces at different places so that he will not be detected and no one suspects him and his involvement in the crime.

The brute was burning incense sticks to lessen the odor from the pieces of the body of Shraddha. He was also sprinkling some sprays to control the bad smell from the parts of the body of Shraddha.

All this was the animal Aftab doing to conceal his involvement in the murder and he was trying to erase the evidences in the gruesome murder.

Aftab has confessed to have killed Shraddha before the police and the idea of cutting the body of the victim has come by seeing the American TV serial Dexter. Aftab had also transferred 54 thousand rupees from the bank account of slain Shraddha on May 26. The condemnation on this gruesome crime is pouring from all quarters and the people are demanding the death sentence for the criminal.

Aftab is very cunning and he is projecting himself as a psycho path so that he will be saved from the punishment for committing the crime.

But the fact is that Aftab is not mentally ill as he had meticulously planned and executed the dastardly murder and a psychopath will not commit the crime in the way Aftab has done the crime.

The dastardly crime needs to be probed quickly and speedily trial should be conducted and severe punishment not less than death sentence should be given to the culprit Aftab so that such heinous crimes will not take place in future and the criminals will not commit such abominable crimes in future. Aftab murdered Shraddha on May 18th but managed to keep it under wraps till November 10.

The accused used to chat with Shraddha's friends through her Instagram account. After chopping the body of Shraddha into 35 pieces, Aftab brought a 300 liter fridge and kept the body parts of the victim in it for 18 days.

In this murder new things come into light every day. Aftab had killed Shraddha by pressuring her neck and then after killing her chopped her body in pieces and this is the most heinous crime ever thought by the men. This murder has defamed the live in relationship and friendship and now the adults will think 11 times before entering into live-in relationship.

The gruesome crime needs to be investigated expeditiously and taken to conclusion swiftly so that severe punishment of death is given to the accused in order to give justice to the victim and his family.

Afraf Amin Poonawala, who had allegedly strangulated his live in partner Shraddha Walker to death and chopped her body into pieces and other storey tells that he dumped these pieces of the body of the victim in the Chhattarpur area of south Delhi and he told the police that there was a fight between the two over shifting household items for Mumbai.

Aftab who was arrested recently had attempted to

dupe the police of Delhi and Mumbai in initial days of investigation.

Aftab has tried to hide the murder of Shraddha by removing any physical evidence, however he had left the digital evidence that the police traced to reach the truth of the case. When Delhi police initiated the probe, Aftab told the police that Shraddha had left the house on May 22 after a fight.

He told police that Shraddha had only carried her phone with herself and had left her belongings in his flat. He claimed that she is unreachable and he had not come into contact with her since then. However, the truth came to fore when the police checked the phone call records of the couple and investigated their locations.

The Delhi police is at the job of finding the head of slain Shraddha. The Delhi police commissioner has ordered Delhi police to find out the dead body of the Shraddha and he should be told about it.

The Saket court has increased the custody for five days to police remand to Aftab. The lawyers in Delhi were demanding death sentence to Aftab and the Delhi police had to work hard to control and pacify the lawyers in Delhi. Besides this Hindu organizations were also protesting for giving justice to Shraddha and his family and they were demanding severe punishment for the Aftab for committing the heinous crime in most horrific way unheard in human history.

The hearing of the Shraddha case was conducted through video conferencing. It is good that Delhi police is working on war footing on the Shraddha murder case. The three teams of Delhi police have gone to Mumbai Maharashtra, Uttarakhand and HP.

The Maharashtra resident Shraddha and Aftab had gone to HP and Uttarakhand some days before this carnage. Aftab is changing his statements time and again. One shudders to think was the live in relationship and love jihad only reasons for the murder of Shraddha in a most brutal way. The live in relationship may not be the sole reason for committing this dastardly murder of Shraddha.

The fact that Shraddha had not heard the admonitions and suggestions of her parents but had reposed trust in his live in partner who committed the crime of strangulating Shraddha and tore her into pieces and thus betrayed the trust of Shraddha and the police is yet to be collect the pieces of the body of Shraddha for cremation.

It is very unfortunate that some people who are brutes are defending the criminal Aftab by saying that he is psychopath but the fact is that he is a hardened criminal and has executed the gruesome murder in most planned manner and therefore the question of his mental illness does not arise and is unacceptable.

In short, Aftab should be awarded the death sentence by speedy judicial trial to give justice to slain Shraddha and her family so that such barbaric incidents will not happen in future and there will be no Shraddha in future.

(The author is a columnist, social and KP activist).

World Adult Day- Need to create a supportive environment

■ VINOD CHANDRASHEKHAR DIXIT

November 18 is celebrated as World Adult Day to tackle the growing aging problem. It is an initiative to urge adults to live with their old parents and help them. One of the biggest social transformations is population ageing. Soon, the world will have older people than children and more people of old age than ever before. Their health is determined by and contributes to broad social trends. Becoming an adult that old saying "enjoy being a kid while you can" or when people told you that when you're an adult that you will miss being a kid. Everything they told you as a kid was true. As a kid you have no responsibilities, no bills, and no worries. Adulthood is divided into three stages, early, middle, and late adulthood. The definition in the dictionary states an adult means being

completely grown: fully developed and mature. Becoming an adult, also known as young adulthood, is a very crucial stage in one's life. This is the climax of physical and health processes. This is the point in life when we make plans of our futures. It is the time when we think of what life will be like as an adult and make plans for the future. Everyone eventually becomes an adult but just because you turn eighteen does not mean you should be considered as one. Being an adult means being the bigger person in difficult situations. An adult is considered to be "living at home" or "living with parents" on the basis of the adult's relationship to the head of the household. An adult is "living with parents" if at least one parent resides in the household. In 1910, the life expectancy for a female was 33 years, but today it is 82 years. This represents a

remarkable gain of almost 50 years of life. The past century has seen remarkable improvements in life expectancy. This is largely due to improvements in public health. With the growing medical advancements and awareness about health issues, women are living 6 to 8 years longer than the men. The number of people around the age of 60 or more is likely to grow from 900 million to 2 billion up to 2050. Young adults are marrying later i.e., 29 for men and 27 for women. However, many youth experience setbacks by becoming parents too, dropping out of school, failing to find work etc. Getting old can be hard, especially when you are not used to it. Doing taxes, keeping the house and yourself clean, handling a job and making sure you are having three meals a day, can be a little too much to ask. However, at the end of

the day, it is indeed satisfying that you have the whole house to yourself and you are living a self-made life.

Education is life—not a mere preparation for an unknown kind of future living. The whole of life is learning; therefore, education can have no ending. This new venture is called adult education—not because it is confined to adults but because adulthood, maturity defines its limits. There is no doubt that one of the biggest social transformations is population ageing. Soon, the world will have older people than children and more people of old age than ever before. Their health is determined by and contributes to broad social trends. It is a fact that every adult is the heart of a child. We just gradually convince ourselves that we have to act more like adults. Inside every adult there's still a child that lingers.