

Resume of the Centenary Celebrations at Agra

*By MR. KAMT A PRASAD,
ADVOCATE, President, Civil Bar Association, Agra*

Planning

A letter was received by the District Judge of Agra from the Deputy Registrar of the High Court, Allahabad, advising that the High Court Centenary Celebrations will be held at Allahabad on November 25, 26 and 27, 1966, and that each Judgeship, in consultation with the Local Bar, should draw up a suitable programme for the occasion. Accordingly, on September 6, 1966, Sri K. N. Srivastava, District Judge, Agra, invited about 25 prominent members of the local Civil and Criminal Bar to an informal consultation. A tentative programme was drawn up at the meeting; and it was decided that the members of the Bar should hold meetings of their respective Associations to obtain the views of all members with respect to the said programme.

In due course meetings of the Civil and Criminal Bar Associations were called by their respective Presidents. The Civil Bar had, for sometime past, been considering a project of celebrating the GOLDEN JUBILEE of such members of the Agra Bar as had put in about fifty years of practice. Since the High Court Centenary Celebrations constituted a unique event in the annals of Agra, members of the Bar evinced a keen desire that they should organize also their Golden Jubilee function along with the High Court Centenary Celebrations. The District Judge was apprised of this desire and was requested to accept the offices of Presidents of both the functions, to which he readily agreed.

In the beginning of October 1966, a suggestion was mooted by one of the members of the Bar that the Hon'ble the Chief Justice be invited to inaugurate the celebrations at Agra and that, if necessary, for this purpose, a request be also made that Agra be permitted to hold its celebrations on dates different from those on which the centenary was being celebrated at Allahabad. The District Judge consequently addressed a letter to the Chief Justice. Other Hon'ble Judges of the High Court were also invited to grace the function with their presence.

Ultimately, the Hon'ble the Chief Justice very kindly consented to inaugurate the function; and December 17 and 18, 1966, were fixed for the celebrations at Agra. A detailed programme of the two joint functions was drawn up and communicated to the Hon'ble the Chief Justice.

To organize the function successfully, the following committee and sub-committees were formed:

Executive Committee

President

Sri K. N. Srivastava District and Sessions Judge, Agra.

Vice-Presidents

1. Sri Kamta Prasad (President of Agra Civil Bar Association).
2. Sri Amrit Lal Chaturvedi (President of Criminal Bar Association).
3. Sri Shri Krishna Agrawal (President of Taxation Lawyers ~ Association).

General Secretary

Sri P. S. Verma (Civil and Sessions Judge).

Joint Secretaries

1. Sri Maithali Saran Kulshreshta, Advocate (Criminal Bar).
2. Sri R. K. Dar, Advocate (Civil Bar).

Treasurer

Sri L. N. Bansal, Advocate (Civil Bar).

Joint Treasurers

1. Sri D. P. Maheshwari, Advocate (Civil Bar).
2. Sri P. S. Chaturvedi, Advocate (Criminal Bar).

Members

1. Sri Dayal Saran, D. G. C. (Civil).
2. Sri- M. C. Upadhyaya, D. G. C. (Criminal).

- 3. Sri S. C. Saraswat, Advocate (Civil Bar).
- 4. Sri B. K. Dar, Advocate (Civil Bar).
- 5. Sri Joti Prasad Upadhyaya (Criminal Bar).
- 6. Sri R. K. Mehra (Criminal Bar).

Sub-Committees

(i) Guests Reception

Sri K. N. Srivastava, District Judge, Convener

Sri B. K. Dar	Sri Ram Chandra Gupta
Sri L. N. Bansal	Sri R. D. Tiwari
Sri Kamta Prasad	Sri J. N. Pathak
Sri P. N. Agarwal	Sri Shri Krishan Dass
Sri R. K. Mehra	Sri K. M. Raina
Sri Phool Chand Gupta	Sri Dayal Saran
Sri H. S. Gupta	Sri P. S. Chaturvedi
Sri K. P. Saxena	Sri Ram Bharosey Lal

Sri M. B. Tawakley

(ii) National Anthem

Sri Kamta Prasad, Convener	Sri Dayal Saran
Sri M. B. Tawakley	Sri A. P. Chaturvedi

(iii) Building and Compound Decoration

Sri Raghubir Sahai, Convener	Sri M. C. Dixit
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Sri Satish Chandra Agarwal

(iv) Buntings and Garlands Etc.

Sri M. B. Tawakley, Convener	Sri M. P. Sarbhoy
Sri R. K. Mehra	Sri Motilal Gupta

Sri Bal Kishan Agarwal

(v) Electricity and Microphone

Sri M. P Sarbhoy, Convener	Sri M. K. Agarwal
Sri P. S. Chaturvedi	Sri Bal Kishan Agarwal
Sri R. S. Kapur	Km. Ram Kishori Saxena

(vi) Pandal and Seating

Sri Rajendra Singh, Convener	Sri P. L. Bammi
Sri R. K. Mehra	Sri M. C. Upadhyaya

Sri Satya Prakash Agarwal,

(vii) Badges

Sri R. K. Mehra, Convener

Sri K.N. Verma	Sri L.N. Agarwal
Sri K.L. Hora	Km. Ram Kishori Saxena

(viii) Souvenir

Sri Kamta Prasad, Convener

Km. Ram Kishori Saxena	Sri Dayal Saran
Sri Jetha Nand	Sri R. K. Mehra,
Sri K. P. Saxena	Sri M. P. Sarbhoy
Sri P. C. Bhatnagar	Sri Bal Kishan Agarwal

(ix) Photography

Km. Ram Kishori Saxena,	Sri P. C. Bhatnagar Convener
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(ix) Magic Show, Music and Varictv Entertainments

Sri K. P. Saxena, Convncr

Sri J. C. Pathak	Sri Mahesh Mathur
Sri B. N. Tandon	Sri A. N. Chaturvedi

(x) Mushaira and Kavi Sammclan

	Sri K. P. Saxena, Convener	
Sri A. L. Chaturvedi		Sri Mahesh Mathur
	(xi) Film Show	
	Sri Prem Narain Agarwal, Convener	
Sri Narendra Bahadur		Sri P. N. Pathak
	(xii) Exhibition of Old Documents	
	Sri S. C. Saraswat, Convener	
Sri Kailash Nath Varma		Sri Bishan Shanker Mathur
Sri Jai Narain Jain		Sri B. K. Mehra
	(xiii) Catering	
	Sri P. S. Mathur, Convener	
Sri P. N. Shiromany		Sri Bangali Prasad Gupta
Sri S. K. Mathur		Sri O. P. Kulshrestha
Sri R. K. Dar		Sri Kailash Nath Verma
Sri S. L. Tandon		Sri H. C. Mangal
Sri D. K. Gupta		Sri Ram Bharosey Lal,
Sri S. L. Rawat		Sri P. N. Takru
Sri R. D. Saxena		Sri R. C. S. Yadav
	(xiv) In charge Guests and Service	
	Sri Mahesh Mathur, Convener	
Sri D. P. Maheshwari		Sri H. S. Gupta
Sri H. L. Agarwal		Sri K. M. Raina
Sri Raman Lal Sharma		Sri Mathura Dass Gupta
Sri Amar Nath Bansal		Sri Murarilal Srivastava
	Sri K. B. Singh	
	(xv) Address Preparation etc.	
	Sri Mahesh Mathur, Convener	
	(xvi) Press	
Sri Mahesh Mathur, Convener		Sri V. N. Goyal
	(xvii) Co-ordination	
	Sri B. K. Dar, Convener	
Sri Kamta Prasad		Sri Amrit Lal Chaturvedi

The following distinguished guests from Allahabad attended the Centenary Celebrations at Agra:-

1. The Hon'ble The Chief Justice Mr. Nasirullah Beg.
2. Mrs. N. U. Beg.
3. The Hon'ble Mr. Justice K. B. Asthana.
4. The Hon'ble Mr. Justice S. N. Katju.
5. Mrs. S. N. Katju.
6. The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Gyanendra Kumar.
7. Mrs. Gyanendra Kumar.
8. The Hon'ble Mr. Justice D. D. Seth.
9. Mrs. D. D. Seth.
10. The Hon'ble Mr. Justice M. H. Beg.
11. The Hon'ble Mr. Justice G. D. Sahgal.
12. Sri K. L. Misra, Advocate-General, U. P.
13. Sri Lakshman Swarup, Advocate.
14. Sri Gopal Behari} Advocate.
15. Sri Jagdish Swarup, Advocate.
16. Sri G. D. Srivastava, Advocate.
17. Sri Swami Dayal} Advocate.
18. Sri Harihar Prasad Dubey, Advocate..
19. Sri Tejpal, Advocate.

20. Sri Mahendra Kumar Saraswat, Advocate.

21. Sri Pravin Chaturvedi. Advocate

Saturday, December 17, 1966.

Procession

The function was held in a spacious and gaily decorated Pandal put up on the grounds in front of the middle block of the Civil Court buildings. The proceedings commenced with a procession consisting of the local members of the Bar, the District Judge and other members of the local judiciary, members of the High Court Bar who had come to Agra, the Advocate-General of Uttar Pradesh, the Hon'ble the Chief Justice Mr. Nasirullah Beg, the Hon'ble Mr. Justice K. B. Asthana, the Hon'ble Mr. Justice S. N. Katju, the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Gyanendra Kumar, the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Hameedullah Beg and the Hon'ble Mr. Justice G. D. Sahgal. The procession started, appropriately enough, from the grounds in front of the building of the old Agra High Court, and slowly meandered its way into the Pandal. It was a gorgeous spectacle, the black robes of the lawyers contrasting with the flaming red robes of the judges of the High Court and both weaving a delightful pattern against the colourful background of the buntings which lined the route of the procession.

The audience, numbering about 1,000, rose to its feet as the procession entered the Pandal and gave a thunderous ovation to the Chief Justice and the other guests. After the members of the procession were seated, Sri Kubernath Srivastava, District Judge, rose to welcome the Hon'ble the Chief Justice who was the chief guest. He referred in brief to the great jurists whom Agra had produced in the past, such as Pandit Nand Lal Nehru, Pandit Moti Lal Nehru and Pandit Ajodhya Nath. Agra, he said, was also lucky inasmuch as more than one dozen judges, who now adorn the bench of the Supreme Court of India and the High Court at Allahabad, were, at one time or the other, associated with this town. In the end he requested the chief guest to inaugurate the function.

Inauguration

The Inaugural Address provided an intellectual fare to the like of which the people of Agra had seldom been treated before.

With his customary graciousness the Chief Justice observed:

"In fact, I am of the opinion that Centenary Celebrations at Allahabad would not have been complete without Agra sharing in common the honour connected therewith. From this aspect, the present Centenary Celebrations at Agra constitute the natural consummation of the Centenary Celebrations at Allahabad."

The Chief Justice then dwelt on the high traditions of the High Court and the subordinate judiciary in Uttar Pradesh. He referred to some of the towering personalities of the Bar, both in the High Court and in the Mofussil, who had built up rich ethical traditions. His Lordship made an impassioned appeal for the continuance of those high traditions, so that it could be said of the Bench and the Bar, the twin sentinels of freedom in the State:

"We bring the light that saves :

Welf bring the morning star :

Freedom's good things we bring you

Whence all good things are. "

Mr. Justice K. B. Asthana humorously drew a parallel between himself and the High Court. (Both were born at Agra, both shifted to Allahabad and both achieved maturity there). His Lordship appealed to the Bar and the Bench to re-dedicate themselves to the noble task of administration of justice. Mr. Justice S. N. Katju, Mr. Justice Gyanendra Kumar, Mr. Justice Hameedullah Beg, and Sri K. L. Misra, Advocate-General, also spoke on the occasion. Sri Jagdish Swarup, Advocate, lead out the message of Dr. N. P. Asthana, President, High Court Bar Association, Allahabad, wishing all success to the Centenary Celebrations at Agra.

Presentation of the High Court Centenary

Commemoration Volume

Mr. Justice Gyanendra Kumar, Convener of the Commemoration Volume Committee of the Allahabad High Court, presented copies of the Volume for the libraries of the Agra Civil Bar, Collectorate Bar and the Taxation Lawyers' Bar. The gift was gratefully received by the Presidents of the respective Associations.

The plenary session concluded with a short speech of thanks to the chief guest and other guests by the President of the Civil Bar Association.

Exhibition of Documents

An exhibition of old documents was organised as part of the Celebrations. It was held in the premises of the Civil Courts' Club. The Exhibition was declared open by the Chief Justice at 4.10 p. m.

The documents were collected from the Record Room of the Agra Judgeship. It will not be out of place to mention that the building of the Record Room is itself of great historical interest. It is said that, during the Moghul period, it was a stable for the elephants of the Emperor. It is now a part of the buildings appurtenant to the District Judge's Court and office. Some of the exhibits were also lent by the citizens of the town.

The documents were suitably arranged in glass cases, and labels were affixed to the documents, indicating their nature and age.

Two documents merit mention here. One was a Sale-deed, dated Baisakh Sudi 13, V. Samvat 1807, corresponding to 1750 A. D. It is scribed in Hindi and the language used is a quaint amalgam of Brijbhasha and Urdu. The other was a nekahnama, dated 27th Rajab, 1234 Hijri, corresponding to 1814 A. D. In this document, the wife covenants with the husband as follows: "You can occasionally beat me provided the beating leaves no bruises or marks on my body."

Tea and Dinner

From the Club building the visitors to the Exhibition passed on to the Club lawns where they were treated to an austerity tea.

In the evening, at 8 P. M., a non-cereal austerity dinner was held in the Pandal, to which a small number of the elite of the town was also invited.

Cultural Programme

After the dinner, combined Kavi Sammelan and Mushara was held in the spacious Pandal. Mr. Justice K. B. Asthana was unanimously requested to preside over the function as Mire-mushara. The programme commenced with the recital of a poem by Sri K. P. Saxena, Advocate, Convener of the Mushaira Sub-Committee, who sports the poetic alias of "Naseem Akbarabadi". Quite a large number of local poets, both of Hindi and Urdu, participated in the function. It came as a pleasant surprise to the large gathering present on the occasion to find that, contrary to their popular image as wise and learned men perennially busy with dissecting the dry body of law, some of the Judges of the High Court were also eloquent votaries of the Muse of Poetry. Besides the Mir-e-mushaira, Mr. Justice S.N. Katju, Barq Allahabadi, also proved to be a poet of note, and his poems were greatly appreciated by the audience. The Chief Justice added charm to the programme by his presence and appreciation of the recitals, which continued till 1.30 A. M.

Sunday, December 18, 1966

Presentation of the "Souvenir" Book

Members of the Agra Bar had brought out a small Souvenir Book to commemorate the Centenary Celebrations at Agra. The President of the Agra Bar Association made a formal presentation of the Souvenir to the Chief Justice, the Judges of the High Court and to the other guests present on the occasion. Commenting on the smaller size of the Agra publication, as compared to the much larger and more substantial Centenary Commemoration Volume published by the High Court, the President of the Bar humorously observed that the Agra Souvenir symbolized the small and short-lived Agra High Court, while the Commemoration Volume published at Allahabad signified the much larger High Court now at Allahabad and its extensive jurisdiction.

Unveiling of the Portrait of the late

Sri Kripa Narain, Advocate

Sri Kripa Narain was the undisputed leader of the Agra Bar for well nigh 30 years before his death, which occurred at Dayalbagh, Agra on 25th August, 1966. As a lawyer he was famous not only in Agra but in most of the Districts of western Uttar Pradesh, where his services were in frequent demand. His portrait was unveiled by the Hon'ble the Chief Justice Mr. Nasirullah Beg, who paid a glowing tribute to the deceased. According to His Lordship, "There is something magical in the air of this region. Lawyers here are converted into Saints and Saints into Lawyers."

The Hon'ble Mr. Justice' Gyanendra Kumar and the Hon'ble Mr. Justice G. D. Sehgal, speaking on the occasion, disclosed that they had received training as lawyers under the late Sri Kripa Narain and both referred nostalgically to many incidents of their early association with Sri Kripa Narain. They were followed by the Advocate-General of Uttar Pradesh, Sri K. L. Misra, who, with his customary eloquence, dwelt upon the legal acumen, erudition and sweet reasonableness of the deceased. Sarvasri Jagdish Swarup and Gopal Behari,

Advocates, and the writer of these lines also paid homage to the memory of their departed colleague.

Announcement of a Seminar

The District Judge announced that Sri Kamta Prasad, Advocate, in order to perpetuate the Centenary Celebrations, had donated Rs.2,000 with the object that a Seminar on 'Various Aspects of the Rule of Law' be organised year after year, and a Gold Medal be presented to the author of the best paper in such Seminar. The responsibility for organising the Seminar shall be upon the Civil Bar Association of Agra. Its President for the year shall, in consultation with the District Judge and senior members of the Bar, select the subject to be discussed. Invitations to participate in the Seminar will be issued to all the District Bar Associations of Uttar Pradesh and the High Court Bar at Allahabad and Lucknow. The papers submitted to the Seminar shall be examined by a panel of three Judges who should be (a) either a Retired Judge of a High Court, or (b) a person who is holding or has held the position of an Advocate-General of a State, or (c) the President or Vice-President of the Indian Institute of Law at Delhi, or (d) other person of eminence in the study or practice of law. The Seminar shall be called 'The High Court Centenary Memorial Seminar' and the Gold Medal to be presented shall be named 'The High Court Centenary Memorial Kamta Prasad Gold Medal.'

The Chief Justice was pleased to express his appreciation of the idea. He dwelt upon the necessity of upholding the rule of law as the bulwark of every genuine democratic State. Other Judges of the High Court present also expressed their hearty approval of the proposed Seminar. Sri Jagdish Swarup Advocate lent his support to the project and generously announced a donation of Rs. 500'00 to the fund of the Seminar.

Lawyers Golden Jubilee

As already stated, the Agra Bar had decided to hold a Golden Jubilee of their seniors, who had put in about 50 years of practice to synchronise with the Centenary Celebrations at Agra.

The President of the Agra Bar Association, Sri Kamra Prasad, explained the genesis of the idea underlying the Golden Jubilee and presented a joint Address of felicitation to the following ten gentlemen who were qualified for the jubilee. Sarvasri Laxmi Narain Garg, H. P. Bagchi, Kanhaiya Lal Agarwal, Ramchandra Gupta, B. K. Dar, Mathura Prasad Kakkar, Jyoti Prasad Upadhiya, Behari Lal Sharma, Dhani Ram Misra and Sardar Singh Chaubey.

After presentation of the Address, the recipients were individually introduced to the Chief Justice who, in a short but eloquent speech, congratulated them. His Lordship further observed that he was happy that members of the Agra Bar should have revived the essentially Indian Cultural tradition of venerating Old Age for its own sake. He hoped that the custom so aptly begun would be kept alive in future years. .

Variety Entertainment

The programme opened, at about 9 P. M., with a magic show by a local young but talented magician, Prof. Niranjan Mathur. One trick drew special applause. From a new pack of playing cards, a card was selected by the Chief Justice. The magician then called a small girl from the audience, and asked her to look into a glass half-filled with water and to say whether she saw the image of any card reflected therein. The girl answered that she saw the King of hearts. That was the card selected by the Chief Justice.

This was followed by a music programme, which began with a "Vandana" or Prayer. Thereafter, Sri V. N. Saxena sang a 'ghazal' in Rag Darbari. Amongst others may be mentioned Sri Aqeel Ahmad, Kumari Mira Bhowmick and Sri Satyendra Bose, who delighted the audience with their emotion-laden songs. The whole programme was so well liked that, in spite of severe cold, it was stretched far into the night till 2 A.M.

Conclusion

Thus ended the two-day programme on a note of prayer and music. Perhaps, it was a fitting finale to a function in which sincere, though humble, efforts were made to interpret faithfully the ethos of the Centenary Celebrations. Attention was drawn to the role of the subordinate judiciary and the Mofussil Bar in the scheme of a developing Democracy; the value of popularising the concept of the Rule of Law was stressed; and the wholesome tradition of respecting Age was sought to be revived.

May God ordain that the Bench and the Bar in India may combine in a fruitful partnership to produce one music, the music of the Goddess of Justice, in ever vaster and vaster strains.

In the words of Lord Tennyson:

"Let knowledge grow from more to more,

But more of reverence in us dwell:

That mind and Soul, according will,

May make one music as before:

But vaster. "

He became Judge of this High Court on January 12, 1968.