

# NEHRU ABROAD

*The overseas Indian community is celebrating the Nehru Birth Centenary Year. We highlight some of the functions which have been organised in different countries.*



## DENMARK

The commencement of Nehru Birth Centenary Year in Denmark was marked on November 14 by naming of a street after the late Prime Minister in Århus. In a message of greetings to the people of Århus, read by Indian Ambassador R.C. Shukla, External Affairs Minister of India Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao noted that the late Prime Minister cherished the same ideals of democracy, tolerance and dignity of man which characterise the Danish society today. Describing the late Prime Minister as the architect of modern India, Mr Rao said that the coming year will be a period of celebration as well introspection when the people of India will be rededicating themselves to the goals set by the late Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Earlier, the Mayor of Århus Mr Thorkild Simonsen praised Pandit Nehru as a freedom fighter, a nation builder and as a statesman who strongly espoused the cause of non-alignment. He noted that the street, which joins with the one named after late Swedish Prime Minister Oluf Palme was located in the 'Fleet Street' area of Århus with Radio Denmark on one side and Danish School of Journalism on the other.

On this occasion, twenty seven books including three written by

the late Prime Minister and twenty one volumes of his selected works were presented to the Århus Central Library. The function concluded with an half an hour recital of classical Indian music on *Surbahar* by Mr Bjørn Weinreich, President of Indian Music Society. He was accompanied by Mr Frank Juul and Mr Per Thorup.

The Indian Ambassador to Denmark, Mr R.C. Shukla presented 25 books to the Speaker of Folketing, Mr Svend Jakobsen, for the Folketing Library. This presentation was to commemorate the Nehru Birth Centenary Year. The 25 books consist of 3 written

by the late Prime Minister himself namely, *An Autobiography*, *The Glimpses of World History* and *The Discovery of India*. Other 21 volumes consist of *Selected Works* of late Prime Minister Nehru covering his speeches, notes, letters from the period 1903 to June 1948. There was also a book on *Documents on Indian Foreign Policy*.

Receiving the books the Speaker Mr Jakobsen described the late Prime Minister as a great freedom fighter and international statesman. He hoped that visitors to the Folketing Library will make good use of the books in increasing their understandings of India. In his presentation the Ambassador said that he hoped that these books

## BOOKS ON NEHRU DONATED



Photo taken at the Folketing Library shows from left: Mr Svend Jakobsen, Speaker of the Parliament; Mr R.C. Shukla, Indian Ambassador; Mr Lobo, Second Secretary, Embassy of India, and members of Parliament.

dual and the unity and integrity of the nation.

He combined the socialist ideal with the practice of non-violence and sought to usher a silent revolution suited to India's own genius. For India's rapid advancement he chose a planned economy in which the public and private sectors would move hand-in-hand to ensure greater production and prosperity. Nehru's five-year plans were also subject to a constant process of review and to the injection of fresh ideas and inputs. If synthesis is the quintessence of India's ageless civilization, Nehru was the very embodiment of it. He sought to combine the best in India's ancient heritage with the best that modern civilization had to offer and established a vast network of scientific institutions across the territory of India. He used to refer to these and the huge irrigation dams he built as temples and pilgrimage centres of the modern era.

In recalling my earliest memories of Nehru, my mind goes back to 1942 when I was only eight years of age. The Congress had passed the Quit India Resolution moved by Nehru. Participation in these demonstrations came naturally to me as a matter of childish curiosity and I did not realise the high drama to which we were a party. The significance of those events came alive to me only when five years later, at midnight on 14-15 August 1947, freedom dawned. I still see very vividly the Prime Minister of India jumping from his platform into the crowd to give it a semblance of order but the crowd which loved him and hugged him, lifted him back to the stage. Nehru loved those teeming millions and the crowds were always grist to his dynamic energy.

I was to meet this architect of our destiny across the table in early 1959 when he not only confirmed me together with some other colleagues of mine in the

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*We live in a wonderful world that is full of beauty and charm and adventure. There is no end to the adventures that we can have if only we seek them with our eyes open. So many people seem to go about their life's business with their eyes shut. Indeed, they object to other people keeping their eyes open. Unable to play themselves, they dislike the play of others.*

● *The most exciting adventure would be to go to the forests and see the wild animals, both the little ones and the big. Foolish people go with a gun and kill them and thus put an end to something that was beautiful. It is far more interesting and amusing to wander about without a gun or any other weapon and to find that wild animals are not afraid and can be approached. Animals have keener instincts than man.*

● *There are barriers of religion, of caste, of colour, of party, of nation, of province, of language, of custom, and of rich and poor. Fortunately, children do not know much about these barriers which separate. They play or work with each other, and it is only when they grow up that they begin to learn about these barriers from their elders.*

● *One of the things we have lost is the spirit of song and dance and the capacity for enjoyment and this is what the tribal people so abundantly have. We must imbibe something of the spirit of tribal folk instead of damping it with our long faces and black gowns.*

● *How amazing is this spirit of man! In spite of innumerable failings, man, through the ages, has sacrificed his life and all he held dear for an ideal, for truth, less than the speck of dust in this vast universe, he has hurled defiance at the elemental powers, and with his mind, cradle or revolution, sought to master them. Whatever gods there be, there is something godlike in man, as there is also something of the devil in him.*

● *There is only one ambition left in me and that is this: that in the years to come, whatever they may be for me, I should throw all the strength and energy that I have into this work of building up a new India and I want to do it to the utmost till I am utterly exhausted.*

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— Jawaharlal Nehru

Indian Foreign Service but also very graciously autographed his 'Bunch of Letters' for me at my request. All these years Nehru had appeared to me a bit of an angel, someone not entirely of this earth. I still have before my eyes his peerless image — the immaculate cap on his bald head which partly covered his overly high forehead; a gaze that seemed to look back into history and into the future at the

same time and yet firmly aware of the reality around; his protruding lips as though he was ready to come out with a prophecy any moment; his hand resting on his cheek betraying the philosopher in him; and the rose on his 'achkan' (long tunic) reflecting his *joie de vivre* and filling our spirits with joy. Meeting him was an encounter with destiny.



## ROAD NAMED AFTER PANDIT NEHRU



Photo shows from left: Vice Mayor Olaf Christensen, Indian Ambassador R.C. Shukla, Mayor Thorkild Simonsen, and Mrs Kusum Shukla.