

## From shadows to stars

### Rest in peace Rohith Vemula

Sananya Datta

Rohith Chakravarti Vemula, was a dalit 26 year old PhD scholar at Hyderabad Central University. Rohith Vemula was also a writer, and the only thing he wrote was his suicide letter. A lover of science, stars and nature, Rohith died uncared and unloved by himself and the world. A follower of writer Carl Sagan, Rohith in his own last words admitted that a person is reduced to his nearest identity and immediate possibility, a vote and a number among many. Rohith was a great mind yet the world saw him just as a dalit student activist, going against the age old norms, beliefs and practices.



Rohith's suicide on 17 January 2016 ignited protests and outrage all over India and gained widespread media attention as an alleged case of discrimination against Dalits and low status caste classes in India, in which elite educational institutions have been purportedly seen as an enduring vestige of caste-based discrimination against students belonging to "lower classes". His death occurred after a controversy which extended over several months starting in July 2015, when the University reportedly stopped paying him the fellowship of 25,000 rupees per month and expelled him from the hostel along with five other members of the Ambedkar Students Association (ASA). The suicide occurred after the ABVP activists, a youth wing of Bharatiya Janata Party, expressed objection to Rohith's alleged protest against the death penalty for Yakub Memon, a convict in 1993 Bombay

bombings in which 257 people were killed and also his condemnation of the ABVP attack on the screening of the documentary 'Muzaffarnagar Baaqi Hai' in Delhi University. On August 5 2015, the university set up an

On December 17 2015, the decision was upheld. On January 3, after the sanction was confirmed, the five moved out of their hostel rooms to a tent they set up inside the campus and began a "relay hunger protest". A police

inquiry against Rohith and four other ASA members, two days after they allegedly assaulted ABVP leader N Susheel Kumar. Bandaru Dattatreya wrote to HRD Minister urging action and claiming that the "Hyderabad University has in the recent past, become a den of casteism, extremism and anti-national politics". After a series of flip-flops, the five were suspended in September.

case was lodged in the context of his suicide and included the name of Bandaru Dattatreya, Bharatiya Janata Party's MP from Secunderabad and Indian government's Minister of Labour and Employment.

While the whole country protests, languishes and fights over Rohith making him a political pawn, he rests in peace, in that nature which he loved the most, residing among the stars departing from the shadows.

Something, somewhere incredible is waiting to be known - Carl Sagan



## News In Brief

### Kolkata Book Fair inaugurated

The 40th Kolkata Book Fair was inaugurated at Milan Mela grounds. To commemorate 40 years of Vietnam war, Vietnam has been accorded the status of Guest of Honor country at the Kolkata book fair 2016.

### Kamduni gang rape - Murder Verdict

Six people have been convicted for the gang rape and murder of a 21 year old college student in West Bengal's Kamduni. Two other accused in the case were acquitted due to lack of evidence. The ninth suspect died in jail during the trial. The college student was abducted on her way from college and taken to an isolated factory compound where she was gang raped and later killed. Her body was found that night by her brother in a canal.

### SP Salwinder Singh quizzed



Punjab Police SP Salwinder Singh underwent a polygraph test under the supervision of NIA. Although he has been given clean chit by the security agencies, questions remain on his cook and friend. They have to undergo further polygraph test to establish the truth.

### Trade ties with Vietnam

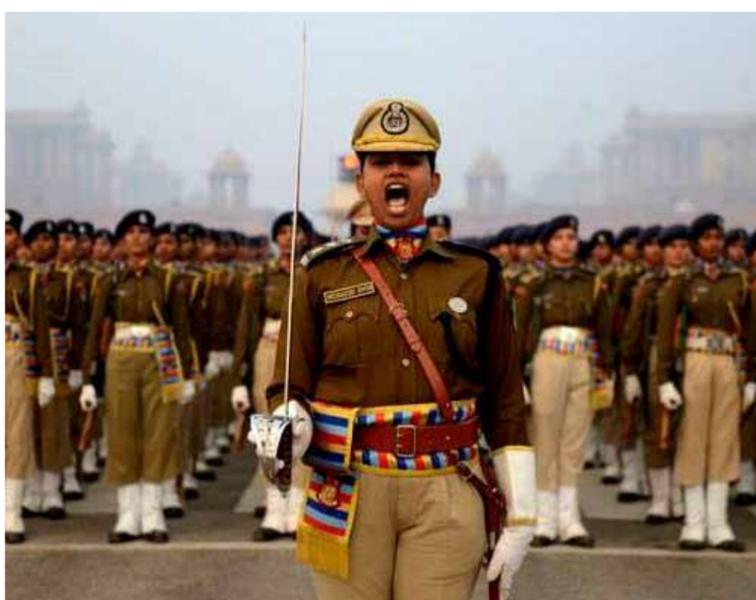
A conference held at MCC chamber of commerce and industry recently highlighted the prospects of trade relations between India and Vietnam. Mr. Ton Sinh Thanh, ambassador of Vietnam was present at the meeting.

### National Girl Child Day

Government of West Bengal observes National Girl Child Day at Sisir Manch. The government will come up with Child protection committees to tackle problems of child marriage, child trafficking etc.

## Martyrs Day: Remembering our Freedom Fighters

Koustabh Das



who are to be remembered when these nations celebrate their own Martyrs' Day.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who was assassinated on Jan 30, 1948, three months past his 78th birthday, indeed was a remarkable monumental figure. Millions of people from across the world held him in high esteem. His death anniversary happens to be observed as Martyrs' Day in India today.

The Republic Day, January 26, which was originally observed as a solemn reminder of those who attained martyrdom while defending the sovereignty of the country and during the freedom struggle preceding the birth of the republic, gave way to January 30.

The occasion, when the Prime Minister and the three chiefs of the armed forces salute the martyrs at India Gate, has instead turned into an exultant celebration, showcasing the latest weapon acquisitions and advertising of military might. It is no longer a solemn occasion. In an attempt to pay a fitting tribute to the brave hearts who laid their lives defending the air base at Pathankot and to those innumerable fights and proxy wars against the agents of terror throughout the geographical landscapes of our country which took away the lives of many sons of the soil we must ensure that the Martyrs' Day on January 30 is "observed with due solemnity and with better public participation."

The Narendra Modi government has asked the state governments to issue instructions to all educational institutions and Public Sector Enterprises to see to it that the day is observed in an honorable manner with the promise that their sacrifices will not be forgotten by our countrymen who feel safe as the brave hearts protect our land, seas and the skies,

It must be noted that the analogous modern phrase 'Father of the Nation' implies less of a contribution to the preservation and integrity of a State than a great role in the founding of a State.

The world boasts of any number of such recognized Fathers of Nations, including 'Baba-e-Qaum' Mohammad Ali Jinnah of Pakistan. But nobody considers such personalities as 'The' martyr. Doing so will amount to rubbishing and doing injustice to, the numerous others

Campus Buzz!

Indrajit Bhattacharjee

# Indian republic: The journey unfolded

Bhavna Yagnik

Subhas Chandra Bose's 119th birth anniversary was celebrated in India on 23rd January. Born on January 23, 1897, Bose popularly known as Netaji was an Indian nationalist whose contribution to the freedom movement is indisputable. In the early part of his political life, Bose was the leader of the younger and radical, wing of the Indian National Congress in the late 1920s and 1930s, and rose to become Congress President in 1938 and 1939. Bose after being ousted from Congress leadership positions in 1939 following differences with Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress high command thereafter formed the Azad Hind Fauj or Indian National Army and also established a Free India Centre and Free India Radio in Berlin. Campus Buzz on the eve of his birth anniversary pays homage to the eminent freedom fighter who dared to appeal to his countrymen to give him blood and would ensure freedom for all.

*"We must re-dedicate ourselves on this day to the peaceful but sure realization of the dream that had inspired the Father of our Nation and the other captains and soldiers of our freedom struggle, the dream of establishing a classless, co-operative, free and happy society in 'his country'. We must remember that this is more a day of dedications than of rejoicing - dedication to the glorious task of making the peasants and workers the toilers and the thinkers fully free, happy and cultured".* Dr. Rajendra Prasad the first President of Independent India in his special message to his countrymen, on the birth of the Indian Republic.

67 years back, a salute of 21 guns and the unfurling of the Indian National flag by Dr. Rajendra Prasad heralded the historic birth of the Indian Republic on January 26, 1950; 894 days after our country became a dominion following withdrawal of British Rule. Since then, every year the day is celebrated with great pomp and show. It marks the birth of our nation as a republic. The origin of Republic day goes back to pre-independence days of 1929, when the Indian National Congress during its Lahore session under the President ship of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru passed a resolution declaring 'Complete Independence' as the goal of the nation and decided to celebrate 26th January every year as the Independence day throughout the length and breadth of the country. From then on till the dawn of independence on Aug. 1947, the nation celebrated 26th Jan. as Independence Day. Later, when India wanted a day to mark its official birth 26th January, the

independence day was chosen. The Indian Constituent Assembly, which was constituted as a result of the negotiations between the Indian leaders and members of the British Cabinet Mission, had its first meeting on December 9, 1946. The Objective of the Assembly was to give India a constitution, which would serve a lasting purpose and hence appointed a number of committees to thoroughly research the various aspects of the proposed constitution. At last on this day, 26th Jan 1950 Indian constitution came into force and India was proclaimed to be a

a lot of unprecedented development and a unique place in the world, but still a lot more to be done. The true meaning/ ideals of the democracy are yet to be achieved at all the levels. Our leaders, those who fought for Indian freedom, those who sacrificed everything they had in course of Indian freedom, have always been the source of our inspiration for the service to this mother land.

This year (2016) had some very interesting facts as people, ministers, the President and The Prime Minister gathered for the republic day celebration.

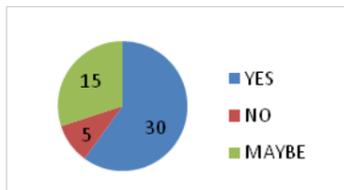
After a gap of 26 years the Indian army's unsung, or unbarked returned to the parade. A dog squad drawn from the Army's Remount Veterinary Corps performed a march past wearing striped coats in their unit's colours of maroon and gold. We also saw that for the first time in Republic Day history foreign troops joined the celebrations as soldiers



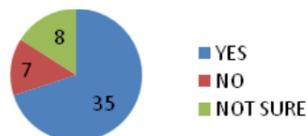
sovereign, democratic and a republic. The Constitution of India took around 2 years, 11 months and 18 days to be completed. Two copies of the Indian Constitution were hand-written, one in English and one in Hindi, both hand-written copies of the Indian Constitution were signed on 24th of January in 1950 by around 308 members of the Assembly. Prior to 1955 (until 1954), the Indian republic day celebrations were performed on the "Kingsway", "Lal Kila", and "Ramlila Ground". The chief guest on republic day celebration, 1961 was Queen Elizabeth from Britain. On 26th of January in 1965 Hindi language was declared as our national language of India. Today, we have come a long way into future from the first anniversary of Indian Republic Day, our country in these years have achieved

from France's 35th Infantry Regiment, one of the country's oldest active regiments, march alongside their Indian counterparts. Apart from all this we saw Indian Women being an important part of the celebration. Daring female motorcyclists from the Women Daredevils Central Reserve Police Force and Rapid Action Force for the first time showed off their skills on Royal Enfields in front of the crowds at Rajpath. Republic Day brings out happiness and patriotism amongst all Indians and as B. R. Ambedkar had quoted "We are Indians, firstly and lastly." – We should be standing there to serve our country because many did and that is the reason we have an independent country.

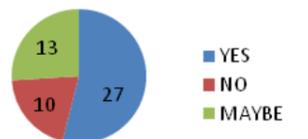
Q1) Should January 23rd be given equal importance as October 2nd?



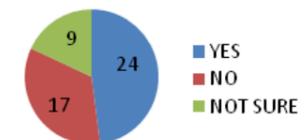
Q2) As a part of Right To Information, should the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose files be declassified by the government?



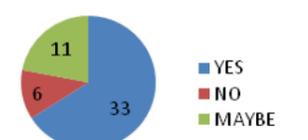
Q3) Does Netaji deserve to be credited for the rebirth of the Indian National Army?



Q4) Should Subhas Chandra Bose be omnipresent on the currency notes of India just like Mahatma Gandhi?



Q5) It is high time that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose be awarded with the Bharat Ratna.



## Movie Review: Airlift

Lahari Basu



'Airlift' is the tale of the largest civil operation in the history of the world, where almost two lakh Indians were evacuated from Kuwait during the Iraq-Kuwait war. The film unfolds with Ranjit Katyal (Akshay Kumar), a Kuwait-based Indian businessman, who has almost forgotten his motherland, living a merry life in Kuwait, realizing his duty as a human being and an Indian, and eventually carrying out a huge civil operation of evacuation of 1,70,000 Indians based in Kuwait during the Iraq-Kuwait war in 1990. Akshay's star power definitely elevates the film. Ranjit Katyal is made authentic as Akshay does not display faux heroism for an unshowy heroism, and there is no one else who could have done the job better. His role seems to be inspired slightly by Liam Neeson in 'Schindler's List'. One may also find similarities between 'Airlift' and Ben Affleck starrer Hollywood evacuation tale, 'Argo'. 'Airlift' takes us through a journey of the awakened sense of responsibility which Amrita (Nimrat Kaur) terms as a 'manufacturing defect in some humans' with thrilling empathy. A very crucial character in the movie is Sanjeev Kohli (Kumud Mishra) the government official who makes the evacuation of the Indians successful by convincing the ministers in India. Acting throughout the film is natural and also

entertaining at times when the Iraqi general (Inaamulhaq) speaks in Hindi with an Arabic accent! Bollywood has not been very famous for films based on real-life events because it mostly does not successfully connect the line

between fact and fiction, which is extremely important for this genre. What often happens is an overdone representation with enormous drama and exaggeration of facts! But Raja Krishna Menon's 'Airlift' plays it right, with the proportionate amount of drama, thrill, patriotism, fact and history. For an overall evaluation, Menon has directed his actors perfectly to represent the Indian sentiment through their performance. Amaal Mallik and Ankit Tiwari's music direction has served the film well, with less number of songs and relevant background score, which shall evoke a feeling of patriotism and give goose-bumps to many Indians. Cinematographer Priya Seth had captured strong and predominantly masculine images flawlessly showing the fearful and tragic situations in the war zone. Hemanti Sarkar's editing is impeccably executed throughout as well. The concept of an individual escalating to tackle an enormous crisis is placed at a key position in the plot. The scriptwriters Suresh Nair, Ritesh Shah, Rahul Nangia and director Menon, have researched Saddam's invasion suitably yet they did not allow the narrative to be boring or too preachy by the politics of history. 'Airlift' without any second thought is a worthy watch as it is informative, real-like and non-exaggerated.