

Religion

Interfaith needs *sattvik* sponsors

"We have always looked upon Sikhism as a separate religion"

by Roopinder Singh

A POLITICAL leader and a former diplomat, Dr Karan Singh is primarily a scholar who is equally at ease expounding on the *Vedanta* and the *Upanishads*, or talking about the luminaries of quantum mechanics. In fact, he sees parallels between the two. For many years, he has been the Global Chairman of The Temple of Understanding, a world-wide interfaith organisation with headquarters in New York. The former head of the *Sadr-e-Riyasat* of Kashmir was in Chandigarh recently, to launch the local chapter of the organisation.

How long have you been involved with interfaith activities?

I have been involved for over 30 years. The Temple of Understanding was set up in 1960. I have always been interested in interfaith issues because I am a born Hindu, in a Muslim-majority state — we were also worshipping at Muslim shrines since childhood. Our family owes its rise to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and our connection with the Sikh Darbar and the Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) was also very deep. We were told from childhood that respect which you give to your own temples is the respect that you should give to the *gurudwara* and the Darbar Sahib. I was educated in Christian schools... so in a way, interfaith is built into my life and I was always interested in *Vedanta*. Now, *Vedanta* is that aspect of Hinduism which is very universal. It fits in very well with the interfaith movement.

I have been attending conferences and meetings the world over for the past 30 years. I have been the chairman of The Temple of Understanding for many years. We have opened an India chapter, which has centres in various cities. The theory behind the interfaith movement is to bring together representatives of various religions in a creative dialogue. We are not seeking a debate on the merits of the religions; we are far from the notion of no religion or syncretic religion. What we are aiming at is that people should look into their own religious traditions and try and find those elements, aspects, and concepts that are conducive to harmony, because in most religions you

can find both types of concepts — love, harmony and brotherhood and those of opposition, disharmony and hatred. In global society now there is no alternative but to move to an interfaith pattern.

What do you think about the recent controversy over the RSS calling Sikhism part of Hinduism?

We have always looked upon Sikhism as a separate religion. Certainly Hinduism has been the predominant religion, both chronologically and demographically, but the religions that have emerged — Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism — are independent religions. There may be many factors in common, but it would be wrong to say that one religion is part of another.

What has been the response to the interfaith movement in India?

I must admit that it still has not caught on in a big way. Crores of rupees are spent — people build temples, gurdwaras, mosques — which is very good. I am all for it. I have built temples myself, but interfaith is nobody's baby. So nobody feels called upon to sponsor the interfaith movement. Nonetheless, the theory of interfaith is in a way built into our Constitution. Although, I feel that secularism has been somewhat misinterpreted as being dismissive of religion, which it certainly is not and cannot be in this nation. India is a deeply religious country and, therefore, secularism can only mean equal respect for all religions and not equal neglect of all religions. Basically the interfaith movement is in line with our Constitution and our tradition. However, as a movement, I am afraid that it is still in its infancy.

Does it have takers only among the intellectual classes or has it been able to involve the masses?

So far, more or less, it has been accepted among the intellectual classes. We do have public meetings, *antar dharma sammelans*, etc. where religious leaders talk about interfaith. Our meetings can be of intellectuals or the elite, but for the concept to click with the masses, we need to go through religious leaders, because otherwise it becomes an elitist movement and one is keep talking to the converted all the time. Our strategy is to try and get on our side those reli-

gious leaders who teach love and brotherhood.

Which religious leaders have been associated with the movement?

Around the world, we have had many, but in India, we have the Dalai Lama and Sama Baba Waryam Singh, Baba Virsa Singh and Swami Agnivesh. I am not a religious leader, but I have become some kind of a ubiquitous presence (laughs). I speak on the *Vedanta* and the *Upanishads*.

Where has the interfaith move-

Religious Initiative, the Parliament of World Religions group in Chicago, and The Temple of Understanding.

Is there any coordination among them?

Occasionally, during these big conferences, there is coordination. The work, however, is so massive that it is more important that everyone works in the same direction rather than putting everybody under the same umbrella.

What is your agenda for the 21st

12 persons. I asked him: "Mr General Secretary, is it possible in the Soviet Union to be a believer as well as a member of the Communist Party?" He said: "No. For us, atheism is an essential tenet. We respect religious beliefs, but to be a member of the Communist Party, you have got to be an atheist. Marxism-Leninism ruled for 70 years — nearly three generations — and yet, after it fell, the upsurge of religion in Russia is unbelievable — the churches are overflowing ever since.

For the West, especially, there has often been a dichotomy of scientific temper and religion. How would you react to that?

Describing religion as a sociological freedom — saying that when people get economically better, they would forget all about religion — was the other approach towards dismissing religion that also failed in our own lifetime.

You see for yourself. Whenever a village gets prosperous, what happens? The first thing that they want is either a temple, a gurdwara, a mosque or a church. This is a natural instinct. When our people go abroad, the first thing they do after they have settled down, whether it is in San Francisco or New York, is to build a temple or a gurdwara.

Religion has turned out to be much more abiding than either Marxist or liberal thought. Now we have to rethink. The Indian intelligentsia has either been against religion or dismissed it. It was unfashionable to talk about it. Religion has gone into the hands of people who do not subscribe to the interfaith doctrine, and, therefore, we have to recapture religion for the broader good of humanity. That is broadly our agenda for the 21st century.

How does that agenda fit in with the information technology revolution?

It fits in very well, because through information technology you can put ideas across instantaneously. The Interfaith movement still doesn't have sponsors. I am not sure that the cola manufacturers would be as interested in interfaith as they are in cricket for example, but if we can get sponsors, *sattvik* (endowed with the quality of purity, goodness, virtuous, righteous) sponsors, not those associated with tobacco, or alcohol or guns, we could build interfaith programmes that could get across the

world. In fact, that is one of the things that I am going to explore. There are *dharma* serials, there are Hindu, Sikh, Muslim serials, where are the interfaith serials? We won't have them unless somebody sponsors an interfaith serial! This we have still not been able to have as yet, but we can use the tremendous power of the Internet for positive purposes.

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Now the basic premise of the *Upanishads* is "*ishavaasyam svam idam sarvam*", that everything that exists is pervaded by the same spirit. I am not trying to make an absolute parallelism, but many of the insights of new science and new cosmology are beginning to converge with the insights of the mystics of the great religions; not the theologians but the mystics.

Ultimately, religion has to revolve around consciousness. Whatever you may believe, whatever you may do, unless it transmutes your consciousness, it becomes a meaningless action. The concept of our all-pervading consciousness of which we partake as seers is beginning to come. There is a principle that the act of consciousness itself changes the nature of the particle, it's either a particle or a wave and so on.

Any interesting books on this subject?

There are many interesting, fascinating books now, like the *Tao of Physics* (by Fritjof Capra), who has

done research in theoretical high-energy physics at the University of Paris; the University of California; Stanford University; and Imperial College, London. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Vienna and explores his own field and the ancient tenets of religions, discovering parallels in their paths towards truth. In non-technical language, he presents the concepts and theories of modern physics in a humanistic view of the universe.) and *God and the New Physics* (by Paul Davies, who has held academic appointments at Cambridge and London Universities, the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and The University of Adelaide, Australia). In the book, he says that science may now be on the verge of answering age-old questions of how the world began and how will it end. Davies contends that far-reaching discoveries of new physics are revolutionising our view of the world and, in particular, throwing light on many of the questions formerly posed by religion. Science, Davies believes, has come of age, and offers an alternative path to God.

So, is there a convergence between science and religion?

These books are trying to show that there is a convergence between science and religion. You have the Internet and an increasing realisation, even amongst the great scientists that ultimately reality is something which is involved in consciousness and that our own participation in the act of cognition is in itself a creative act, that we are all windows, as it were, to the divine. This sort of ideas can be furthered.

We have to look at comparative philosophies, and in fact we should make the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies into a Radhakrishnan Institute of Comparative Philosophy and Religion, instead of having a general higher studies institute. I had made this suggestion earlier, but it fell on deaf ears. I would like to reiterate that suggestion. Even in old days, it was the Himalayas that produced the most creative thinking and you should have all the philosophical traditions represented in the institute at Shimla.

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“If the Sikhs can achieve a consensus on issues which have time and again caused pain, created a fear-psychosis among the principle communities, threatened peace, led to divisions within the Sikh community and ridiculed their institutions, the objective of tercentenary celebrations and the essence of the Gurus' message of "universal brotherhood, peace and well-being of all" would be achieved. ”

Religious means and political ends Sikhs failed to evolve a consensus

by P. P. S. Gill

RELIGION has been variously defined and interpreted since time immemorial. It is as much "man's expression of his acknowledgement of the divine" as it is "a system of beliefs and practices relating to the sacred and uniting its adherents in a community", as the Longman Modern English dictionary defines it.

There have been wars between religion — struggles seeking the right to worship. Often these have developed heavy political overtones. And in Sikhism there always was a symbiotic relationship between religion and politics. Should the two be accepted as a whole and practised as such or be compartmentalised? The great debate goes on.

In Punjab, a sound knowledge of the Sikh religion (and also history) is imperative if one is to follow Akali politics. The roots of Sikhism are traced to Guru Nanak who in the 15th century founded a scientific and logical religion for the benefit of the humanity. It is readily acknowledged that Sikhism has a "universal" appeal and relevance. And only last year the tercentenary of the establishment of the Khalsa was observed.

Yet, the Sikhs have failed to evolve a consensus on a variety of issues, concepts, practices, rituals, scriptures and even the manner of living (rehat-maryada). Difference of opinion persists even on the definition of Sikh. Should only those with "unshorn" hair be called Sikhs or even those who have "cut" their hair be covered by the definition? These people assert they very much remain within the fold of Sikhism arguing that symbolism, rather than substance, seems to weigh more with some scholars and theologians.

In a period of time many organisations have therefore mushroomed within and outside the country. In the same way, "educated" Sikhs, retired or serving, representing diverse interests and coming from different professions, have also joined hands to emerge as self-appointed "conscience-keepers" of the Sikhs' religio-political affairs. On any given occasion, these people express their views and render advice to the Sikh clergy as well as the political leadership. A few lucky ones even manage to become "advisers" to either a political party or the government.

Over a period of time many organisations

shoots. Moreover, the SGPC (Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee) which is "accepted" as the final arbiter of religious affairs has often faltered. It has failed to fully perform its assigned duties. It is struck in the administrative matters (with a strong political bias) of gurdwaras. It has miserably failed to end the cult of idol worship and ritualism widely prevalent among Sikhs, thanks to the existence of babas, saints, mahants, deraas and septs.

The fear of being summoned to Akal Takht and being awarded "tanhak" (punishment for religious misconduct, which is usually in the form of the "accused" being asked to recite Gurbani, clean shoes and utensils in a gurdwara and later seek forgiveness) is an inhibiting factor why the Sikh religion has remained confined to the Sikhs, who, by and large, lack knowledge of the finer points of the scriptures. This is one reason why parents are concerned about Sikh youths going astray as apostasy is facing surreptitiously.

Whenever there has been a ray of hope of something worthwhile taking place, a chorus of voices, mostly discordant, is heard. The issue fades away but bitterness lingers on.

There have been several occasions when the religio-political leadership could have sat together and sorted out controversies and issues in proper perspective. This was, however, not to be. For too long the Sikh leadership (read the Akalis) has survived and sustained themselves on "panthic" sentiments and "emotional" issues.

A typical example is of framing of the All-India Sikh Gurdwara Act. This issue is as old as the SGPC itself. No serious attempt has been made to have this Act passed by Parliament. Punjab has a Gurdwara Commission which had prepared a draft but it has been lost in the political labyrinthine.

Of recent concern and at the centre of a controversy is the role and functions of the Rashtriya Sikh Sangat, an affiliate of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, and its mode of propagating the Sikh religion. This threatens to create serious problems for the State. Then there is the controversy over the "authenticity" of the Dasam Granth and that about the "Nanakshahi" calendar.

In India, on a short visit last week, Dr Chahal said the idea behind the journal was

leadership generates every now and then. This is one reason why the Sikh institutions, notably, Akal Takht and its Jathedars, and the SGPC and its political wing the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), in its many manifestations, have messed up issues. It is a collective failure of the Sikh religio-political leadership and quiet acquiescence of the "alloyed" Sikh scholars and intelligentsia, which has played havoc with the Sikh religion and politics.

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Even as the issue of resolving the "crisis of Sikh identity" persists, the task of distinctly redefining the role and functions of Sikh institutions and other mundane matters remains untouched. There is no common meeting ground even in respect of following certain rituals and practices in the Golden Temple and at Akal Takht. At the other end of the spectrum are the purely political matters pertaining to inter-state differences on sharing water and territory, the status of Punjabi language in educational institutions besides disputes with New Delhi, regarding redefining Centre-State relations and devolution of funds or having a second look at

simple: To bring on one platform scientists, philosophers, theologians and administrators to correctly interpret the Gurbani and represent Sikhism as envisaged by Guru Nanak. Unlike other publications, the Journal has been designed and produced as any "science" journal, where a team of experts drawn from the streams of theology, physical sciences, natural sciences, political and social sciences, medicine, philosophy, history, languages and law examines each article which is submitted for publication.

The whole concept is to create interest and impart knowledge about Sikhism to the

Punjabi. Mostly such journals dealt with the traditional or conventional methods, dominated by mythology and rituals, for interpreting the Gurbani and Sikhism. In this respect "Understanding Sikhism" will be different.

Browsing through the articles in the three issues published so far one finds a wide range of topics by scholars.

Nearer home, there is the "Institute of Sikh Studies". Another one calls itself the "Sikh Core Group". Among the members are those who fight for human rights groups and civil liberties. There is then the "Akhand Kirtan Jatha International (Prabandhi Panchnam)" which also brings out a magazine "Atam Rang".

All these and several other organisations have openly come out in "revolt" against the activities of the RSS, which recently held a convention of its national executive in Chandigarh, and warning against its designs. They fear that it would damage communal harmony.

On the Dasam Granth the feeling is that deliberations on it should be initiated by the SGPC and held in camera. The Akal Takht Jathedars has also said no provocative statements, which will complicate matters, should be issued. Religious sensitivities and sensibilities must be respected and the political executive and clergy along with scholars should sort out all contentious and controversial issues.

If the Sikhs can achieve a consensus on issues which have time and again caused pain, created a fear-psychosis among the principle communities, threatened peace, led to divisions within the Sikh community and ridiculed their institutions, the objective of tercentenary celebrations and the essence of Guru's message of "universal brotherhood, peace and well-being of all" would be achieved.

For all this to happen, there has to be sincerity of purpose at the level of the political leadership, which alone can check a further erosion of religious values and stop the "misuse" of religion for improving one's personal career graph.

sent generation, particularly, in the West, which is alien to Sikhism and which requires to be educated on this sensitive issue with reason and logic rather than by creating fear of the "unknown" and the "divine". There is a vacuum, which has to be filled, globally, by networking and keeping intact the umbilical cord the Sikhs have with the holy Guru Granth back home in Amritsar Golden Temple, he added.

Dr Chahal, who was invited to present a paper on "Sikhism — scientific and logical religion for the third millennium and beyond" in Punjab, University, Patiala, told The Tribune that there were a variety of journals being published by various Sikh institutions and societies. These are in English as well as in

the Constitution.

In such a scenario The Tribune has received the first three issues of yet another magazine, titled "Understanding Sikhism — The Research Journal". It has been brought out by the Institute of Understanding Sikhism. It is based in Canada, Quebec, to be precise. Its editor-in-chief is Dr Devinder Singh Chahal, who was Professors of Applied Microbiology from the University of Quebec. The editorial board has a global spread with members from Canada, Malaysia, India, the United Kingdom and

Amritsar Golden Temple, he added.

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From Amritsar to US Congress

Recognition for Dalip Singh Saund

by Roopinder Singh

NOW a post office in the USA will soon be named after a person from a village that did not even have a school, let alone a post office when he lived there. This is the story of a remarkable man who created history by becoming the first US Congressman of Indian origin in 1957.

Chhajalwadi, 24 km from Amritsar, was the village where Dalip Singh Saund was born on September 20, 1899, and from where he and his brother Karnail Singh would walk to school. On Tuesday, the US House of Representatives unanimously approved a bill to name the US postal service office building located at 30779 Rancho California Road in Temecula, California, as the Dalip Singh Saund post office building. The bill has to be passed by the Senate and President Bush before it comes into effect.

Dalip Singh was elected to the US Congress, not once, but three times. He lived in a joint family, the elders of which were engaged in farming as well as construction business. His father was Natha Singh and one of his three brothers was Karnail Singh, who retired as Chairman, Railway Board, in 1962 and whose engineering skills were legendary. The third brother, Sardul Singh, looked after the family's land.

"Dalip Singh was always interested in public work. He prevailed upon his parents and made them start a school in the

This is the story of a remarkable man who created history by becoming the first US Congressman of Indian origin in 1957

food canning and open up an industry in India. "I assured my family that I would study in the United States for at least two and not more than three years and would then return home," he wrote in his book "Congressman from India".

He was a student of College of Agriculture, University of California, Berkeley, and lived in an accommodation maintained by Sikh Temple, Stockton. He

also took additional courses in mathematics. This was to become his field later and he eventually got a PhD degree in Mathematics.

A political being, he was the national president of the Hindu-Tamang Association of America, and though he was qualified, he could not get any teaching job, because of racial discrimination. He took up various blue-collar jobs, including foreman of a cotton picking gang, and other work in canning facilities.

"In the summer of 1925, I decided to go to the southern California desert valley and make a living as a farmer," says Dalip Singh in his book. He was then still a turbanned Sikh, though later he became clean shaven. He had a tough time as a farmer and though he wrote "My Mother India" (published by the Stockton Gurdwara in 1930) which was a rebuttal to "Mother India", an anti-India book by Catherine Mayo that had caused much agitation among Indians.

Dalip Singh was always politically active and he was a good speaker, using gurdwaras or other public fora such as clubs, for his talks. He married Marian Kostain in 1928. She gave up her US citizenship for him since a Federal law dating from 1790 declared that only White immigrants were eligible for citizenship. She came from a distinguished family of Hungarian painters, and her father was an artist, as was her brother. Dalip and Marian Saund had three children. The eldest, Dalip Jr., was born in 1930, followed by his sisters Julie and Ellie.

In 1946 the Luce-Celler Bill liberalised immigration and Saund was one of the early petitioners for citizenship, which he got in 1949.

A year later, he was elected judge of Justice Court, Westmoreland Judicial District, county of Imperial Valley, but following a lawsuit by local businessmen, he was denied the seat because of a technicality. He was elected judge of the same court in 1952 and served until his resignation on January 1, 1957.

He won the poll to the 29th congressional district by 3,300 votes. He became the first Democrat to have won from the constituency and the first Asian American to do so. He was on the House Foreign Affairs Committee and in 1957, he was sent as an official emissary of the House of Representatives, to tour various Asian countries,

including Japan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines and India.

He received tumultuous welcome in India, and won people's hearts when he spoke to them in Punjabi. He was re-elected to the Congress in 1958 and in 1960, but he suffered a severe stroke, in May, 1962. It left him disabled - he could neither walk, nor speak. However, over a period of time, with the devoted attention of his wife, he eventually was able to walk, with the aid of a walker.

Dalip Singh Saund died on April 22, 1973. He left behind a rich legacy. Indian-Americans have a string of achievements to their credit. However, politically it took 49 years for Bobby Jindal, the man from Hisar to reach the House of Representatives on a trail blazed for Indians like him by Dalip Singh Saund from Chhajalwadi.



Congressman Dalip Singh Saund with President John F. Kennedy

by Gaurav Choudhury, S. Satyanarayanan and Manoj Kumar

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Public Notice was published in various Newspapers on January 12, 2005 inviting comments/objections in respect of draft Regulations on Punjab State Electricity Regulatory Commission (Terms & Conditions for Open Access in Intra-state Transmission System and Distribution System) Regulations framed by the Commission, within 21 days of the publication of the notice i.e. upto February 2, 2005. The Commission has now decided to extend the last date for filing the comments/objections in respect of the draft Regulations upto February 28, 2005.

Secretary,
PSERC, CHANDIGARH

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See Indian Trade Journal dated 09 Feb 2005

davp 4000/1802/04

davp 1051 (11) 2004

Rarewala: A Punjabi-loving gentleman-aristocrat

ROOPINDER SINGH

Gian Singh Rarewala has left a lasting impression on the region. Soft-spoken and suave, he was a multi-faceted personality. We still feel the beneficial effects of the decisions taken by a man who was born on this day a century ago.

What most people remember about him is that he was ever able to relate to a wide spectrum of society despite his aristocratic upbringing.

Born on December 16, 1901, in the Rara village, a descendant of Ratan Singh Bhangu, the author of "Panth Prakash", Gian Singh studied in Patiala (graduated from Mahindra College) and joined the judicial service of the Patiala state. He soon rose to become a judge of the Patiala State High Court. He also served as a Revenue Commissioner and Revenue Minister of the state and was Prime Minister of Patiala during the most crucial period—1946-47—and was both Prime Minister and Chief Minister of Pepsu (Patiala and East Punjab States Union) *et al.*

More than the positions he held, his most significant contribution was the crucial role he played in raising the status of Punjabi as a language.

During his tenure as Deputy Commissioner, Patiala, and President of the Singh Sabha, in 1944,

he invited Maharaja Yadavindra Singh to the Singh Sabha and requested him to adopt Punjabi as the official language of the state.

The Maharaja declared that he would do so, and Gian Singh took a scant 10 months preparation to make Punjabi a state language. He made it the medium of instruction, the administrative language, and the judicial language along with English. This proved to be the beginning that allowed more work to be done in promoting Punjabi.

Even as Prime Minister of Pepsu, Gian Singh kept the departments of Punjabi and Backward Classes under his charge. Being in-charge of Finance, he presented the Pepsu Budget of 1948-49 and 1949-50 in Punjab. It was distributed on cyclostyled sheets because it could not be printed properly at that time. More than 600 new terms were coined in Punjabi for the Budget.

As much as Rs 3 lakh were allocated to the Punjabi Department to develop and print textbooks and other necessary publications. An order of Rs 1 lakh was placed with the Remington typewriter company to develop and deliver Punjabi typewriters. Special efforts were made to introduce Punjabi stenography for official use. Instructions were sent out to use Punjabi as the official language of communications in all state departments.

This zeal for developing and spreading Punjabi had become a passion of his life. Gian Singh came up with the principal of geographical contiguity for determining the language of the area rather than religion through a circular of the Education Department on August 24, 1949. This is what we call the Pepsu Formula, seen as a precursor of the Regional Formula adopted later.

Gian Singh implemented the Pepsu Formula with the active support of the then Deputy Prime Minister Vallabhbhai Patel and Today is the 100th birth anniversary of Sardar Gian Singh Rarewala. States, V. P. Menon, which precluded any kind of opposition or ill-conceived agitation that so bedevilled the implementation of Punjabi as the state language in Punjab.

On July 15, 1948, Pepsu was

formed. It was headed by Maharaja Yadavindra Singh, who was the Rajpramukh and Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala, who was the Deputy Rajpramukh.

Pepsu itself comprised the then princely states of Patiala, Nabha, Kapurthala, Faridkot, Jind, Malerkotla, Nalagarh and Kalsia. The hilly areas of Kasauli,

Kandaghat, Dharmpur and Chail were also part of Pepsu. Gian Singh served as Pepsu's Premier from November, 1949, to May 1951. This was while he was still in the service of Patiala state. Later, he joined active politics and contested in the 1951 polls. He was elected to the Pepsu Assembly from Payal constituency as an independent candidate. Heading the

United Front Ministry, he became the first non-Congress Chief Minister of any state and also played a significant role in the successful experiment in coalition politics.

He was Chief Minister of Pepsu from April, 1952, to March, 1953, when President's rule was imposed and his government was dismissed. During this time, he showed his mettle by providing leadership, political as well as administrative, to the people, though a non-Congress government was obviously an irritant to the Centre. Following mid-term polls, he could not form a government and became the Leader of Opposition in 1954.

Gian Singh had been nominated member of the Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) for a long time and he became president of the SGPC in 1955. During the time, a mohra for Punjabi Suba was observed as a protest against the entry of police personnel into the Golden Temple complex and most of the Akali leaders had courted arrest. He, too, had gone to court arrest, though his presence acted as a catalyst and the government gave in to the demands of the protesters and lifted the orders banning assembly of people and shouting of slogans. In 1956, he and five others, including Master Tara Singh, signed an agreement with Jawaharlal Nehru, giving birth to

the Regional Formula (of giving weightage to the language spoken in a region).

After the merger of Pepsu with Punjab, the man who had resisted various inducements to join the Congress, became its member in 1956. He was elected to the Punjab Assembly in 1957 on a Congress ticket. He became Irrigation Minister in the Partap Singh Kairon Cabinet.

Gian Singh was elected to the state Assembly in 1962 but was

More than the appointments he held, Gian Singh Rarewala's most significant contribution was his crucial role in raising the status of the Punjabi language.

not inducted in the Kairon Cabinet. He won the 1967 election too. He left the Congress (reportedly because of differences with Morarji Desai) and joined the Akali Dal in 1969, an association which he continued till his death on December 31, 1979.

Besides his contribution to the Punjabi language, Gian Singh is also remembered for the crucial role he played as Deputy Commissioner, Patiala, in building a new complex for Gurdwara Dukh Nivaran in Patiala, which reportedly earned him the wrath of the powers that be who transferred him to Narnaul, then a back-of-

beyond place, where he too proved to be an effective administrator.

He was also a representative of Patiala in the Constituent Assembly of India which he joined on April 28, 1947. It was during this time that a lot was happening in the region and Gian Singh was in the thick of it, especially in rehabilitating refugees in Patiala. In this he was ably assisted by his wife Mamohar Kaur as well as a band of dedicated volunteers

Bedar. All were given homes and honourable positions in Patiala.

For many the role that he played in planning a Punjabi university and setting up Punjab Agriculture University, Ludhiana, is memorable. For others, it is building a team of eminent people including Justice Teja Singh, Chief Justice; Sardar Bahadur Mohan Singh Rawalpindi, Chairman, Public Service Commission; Mohan Singh, Managing Director, Bank of Patiala; and Baldev Singh, Deputy Commissioner, Patiala (he was Maneka Gandhi's grandfather) who all contributed to the development of the region.

Gian Singh Rarewala left an impact no matter where he was. In fact, many contemporaries even recall his sartorial elegance and the handsomeness. He spent the first 26 years of his life in an aristocratic environment, enjoying life and studying. He was an administrator for 20 years, he spent 20 years in politics where he served as Chief Minister of Pepsu and Irrigation as well as Power minister. The last 12 years of his life were spent in retirement. Most of this time he was in the company of his daughter, Nirlep Kaur, who had also been active in politics and had been an MP. He was always the epitome of a gentleman-aristocrat, whose administrative skills and integrity are still remembered.

Jinnah's role in Partition of India: A reappraisal

P. K. RAVINDRANATH

While conventional wisdom and perceived understanding of history has it that almost all the principal actors on the political stage, except Mahatma Gandhi, in the late 1940s were responsible for dividing India, Dr Rafiq Zakaria seeks to shift the focus on to a single individual — Mohammed Ali Jinnah.

In his latest book, "The Man Who Divided India" (Popular Prakashan, Mumbai, Rs 350) he gives a cursory nod of acknowledgement of the truth, by quoting (appropriately) of Dr Ram Manohar Lohia from his "Guilty Men of India's Partition" (1960). "But the disease of old age and exhaustion had come over this fighting organisation of freedom in its moment of greatest distress".

Dr Zakaria describes elaborately how Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel deliberately misled Gandhi about the actual implications of the division of India, how Maulana Azad succumbed, how Acharya Kripalani, the Congress President sat drowsily and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan barely spoke at the Congress Working Committee meeting that finalised the

partition resolution. And yet, through the 276 pages of the book his attempt is to pin the entire blame on Jinnah.

He does mention "Another explanation given in support of Partition is that the Congress did not possess the strength and temperament to cope with the civil war that might have broken out between the Hindus and the Muslims. Gandhi would not have been able to deal with it because of his complete involvement in non-violence. Patel and Nehru could have stood the ground but refused to do so. "They lacked the iron will which, for instance, a leader like Abraham Lincoln possessed.... he declared that regardless of the price that the north would have to pay, he would not permit the Union to be dismembered."

Dr Zakaria makes out a case that Jinnah was least suited to assume leadership of Indian Muslims as a whole, and yet in the name of the same Muslims, he forced the Partition on the country to give them a "homeland". Jinnah was not a true Muslim — by birth or temperament. Born an Aga Khan Khoja, a Shiite, unacceptable as a true Muslim for the rich, the scrupulous or the

unscrupulous, the selfless or the self-centred, were of equal importance; he was in a hurry to become the supreme leader of the Muslims. Towards acquiring that position he was prepared for any compromise or adjustment."

Fine, but that does not explain how a galaxy of Muslim intellectuals and political leaders across the country crowned him their sole leader and ultimately the Governor-General of the newly created state.

Till the last 30s, Jinnah was hailed as an "embodiment" of Indian unity. "For the Hindus of all political persuasions, Jinnah was the hope for a united India". He had opposed the formation of the All-India Muslim League in Dacca on December 31, 1906. He organised a countermove in Calcutta at the same time to warn the Muslims not to succumb to the British policy of "divide and rule" which had been endorsed by the newly formed League.

He opposed the League's demand for separate electorates for Muslims and said it was a "pious dose to divide the nation against itself". He even called the Muslim communists of his time, "enemies of the nation".

Dr Zakaria traces how "despite his opposition, Jinnah himself took advantage of the separate electorate and got himself elected to the Viceroy's Executive Council from the reserved Muslim constituency of Bombay. The voters were carried away by his brilliant advocacy at the bar and his arresting personality".

Jinnah became the first non-official Muslim to sit on the Viceroy's Executive Council in 1910. "His three-year term on that body and the lure of Muslim representation gradually drew him away from the purely nationalist mindset to which he had so far adhered and made him turn more to the problems of the community rather than of the country as a whole". This is the nearest that Dr Zakaria comes in offering a rational explanation of the transformation that came over the "embodiment of Hindu-Muslim unity".

Even if Jinnah drew inspiration for his two-nation theory from his mentor, Mohammed Iqbal, he rejected the poet's same advice to find a way to end the "problem of Muslim poverty... the whole future of the League depends on the party's activity to solve this question". Jinnah was mainly interest-

ed in building an exclusive platform for himself. Dr Zakaria says. He adds: "And within no time he managed to gather the Muslims under his leadership without changing either his thinking or his approach. His lack of knowledge of Islam and his inability to speak Urdu proved no hindrance. His

Muslims — in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, racially and culturally one but politically divided. As far as Indian Muslims are concerned Dr Zakaria laments: "I am particularly concerned about the millions of Muslims who have been left behind in India and who because of the terrible burden of

along the politicians, the bureaucrats and the army commanders who ran the government enjoyed the fruits of power while the people were kept under tight control in the name of fake secularism on the one hand and fostering fanaticism on the other".

"The Man Who Divided India" makes fascinating reading. It is basically an exposition of Muslim politics of the Gandhian era, including the Khilafat movement of 1921-22. Dr Zakaria errs in one vital aspect: the Moplah revolt, an off-shoot of the Khilafat movement. Moplahs are not a "sect of Kerala" as Dr Zakaria makes out; they are the Muslims of Malabar region of Kerala. Moplah is also a byword for privileged sons-in-law.

And, they did not revolt against the authorities but largely against the landlords, who invariably happened to be high-caste Hindus. It was basically a peasant uprising, which the British dubbed as a communal riot and suppressed it most brutally. Zakaria's bibliography does not list any of the dozens of studies and books available on this aspect of the only serious Hindu-Muslim clash in Kerala which singularly did not fall for Jinnah's charms.

Saving history from distortion

SATISH K. KAPOOR

Whatever the praxis of historical interpretation, the prime facts of history remain incontrovertible. None, for example, would dispute that Kalachuris were known as Haihayas; Don Francisco di Almedia was the first Portuguese Viceroy of the Portuguese possessions in the East or that the Jallianwala Bagh carnage took place on April 13, 1919. A serious student of history would be naturally irked if factual errors creep in textbooks, more so if they have the stamp of NCERT.

Students who have read both Arjun Dev's and Bipin Chandra's book mentioned above might feel confused and bewildered after studying

the NCERT engaged competent and impartial experts to review its history books so that errors of fact and judgement could be rectified.

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in 1840 at another (page 173). The first lawful Hindu widow remarriage was celebrated on December 7, 1856 (page 100, column 1). But in a subsequent paragraph (column 2) the counting of widow remarriages is made from 1855.

Many other errors have been noticed. The First Anglo-Afghan War fought during the times of Lord Auckland and Lord Ellenborough is normally dated from 1839 to 1842 (vide Percival Spear, The Oxford History of Modern India, page 439) but the book (both English and Hindi editions, pages 104 and 109 respectively) gives the date as 1838-42. While discussing the events of the Rising of 1857, the book says (English edition, page 110; Hindi edition, page 116) that "Mangal Pandey, a young soldier was hanged on 29 March 1857". In fact Mangal Pandey, a sepoy of the

34th N.I. at Barrackpur (near Calcutta) had only been caught after he murdered Sergeant-Major Hughson and wounded Lieutenant Baugh on March 9, 1847, not March 8 as mentioned (English edition, page 60; Hindi edition, p. 60).

Some glaring contradictions in the book also need to be pointed out. Lord Dalhousie's Governor-Generalship of India is dated 1848-56 at page 61 (English edition) which is correct, but on page 74 his period is said to have started in 1849. Similarly, the Paramahansa Mandali is said to have been established in 1849 at one place (page 101) and

out, his hands and feet cut off, and he was forced to eat the flesh of his own child and ultimately beheaded for refusing to embrace Islam.

Banda Bahadur injected the spirit of self-confidence among the Sikhs paving the way for the ultimate conquest of Punjab by the valiant community. He always attributed his success to the Sikh preceptors and issued forth a coin in the name of Guru Gobind Singh and a state seal bearing the words — "Dighi and Tegh are the boons of Guru Nanak — Gobind Singh". But the book describes him as a religious bigot (English edition, page 19; Hindi edition, page 19).

Surprisingly, the book does not even mention the date of martyrdom of Banda Bahadur (June 9, 1716). It simply says: "He was captured in 1715 and put to death". The fact of Mughal atrocities "usual with barbarous or half-civilized conquerors" (to use Cunningham's expression, History of the Sikhs, Chapter 3) on Banda and the captured Sikhs, is not even remotely referred to in the book.

All this is only a tip of the iceberg. Francois Marie Arouet, popularly called Voltaire wrote: "Error flies from mouth to mouth, from pen to pen, and to destroy it takes ages". It is time the NCERT engaged competent and impartial experts to review its history books so that errors of fact and judgement could be rectified. To save history from distortion and interpolation, it is essential that the interplay between the historian and his facts goes on. Historical facts being sacred, let the facts be defended, not the historian.

So there we are. What the Sangh Parivar thinks should be what the nation thinks. Those who don't think like them are Macaulays, Marxists and people from Madrasas, meaning Christians, Communists and Muslims. And, of course, all three categories eat beef while the Brahminic Sangh Parivar doesn't. Therefore, it follows that the Sangh and its followers are superior to all the rest and are the only true Indians.

It's perversion, not policy

ABU ABRAHAM

A recent edition of the riveting programme, The Big Fight, on the Star News television channel was a revealing experience. The subject was the communalisation of education. One of the participants was Dr Rajput, Director of the NCERT, whose task was to defend the recent moves of the HRD ministry to tailor some of the school history textbooks to fit the philosophy and outlook of the Sangh Parivar. The exercise is known as the 'Indianisation, nationalisation and spiritualisation' of school education.

There was a large number of school children, boys and girls, in the audience. What came as a refreshing surprise was the sharpness and maturity of the students in discussing the problem. 'What's so great about whether ancient Indians ate beef or not? If they ate beef, so what?'

'It's important because it hurts the sentiments of the people,' was the answer of the NCERT chief. He said he had received thousands of letters from people whose sentiments had been hurt. 'Is there anyone in the audience whose sentiments have been hurt?' asked Rajdeep Sardesai, the anchor. There was none.

So there we are. What the Sangh Parivar thinks should be what the nation thinks. Those who don't think like them are Macaulays, Marxists and people from Madrasas, meaning Christians, Communists and Muslims. And, of course, all three categories eat beef while the Brahminic Sangh Parivar doesn't. Therefore, it follows that the Sangh and its followers are superior to all the rest and are the only true Indians.

An education policy based on the superiority of the caste Hindu is not a policy but a perversion. Yet that is what we are going to have if public opinion doesn't rise in time to deflect it. A glorified and uncritical view of Vedic India is what our government is seeking to inculcate in our children. Thus the caste system itself is considered to be beneficial to the people of India. Its oppressiveness is to be ignored, and its evil practices explained away.

An education policy based on the superiority of the caste Hindu is not a policy but a perversion. Yet that is what we are going to have if public opinion doesn't rise in time to deflect it. What the Sangh Parivar is doing is to blur the distinction between mythology and historical evidence. Yet, there are important happenings in the country that will make the rewriting of history somewhat insignificant. The Brahminical forces are already on the retreat. On November 4, at the Ramila grounds in Delhi, some one lakh Dalits converted to Buddhism at a function organised by a government officer called Ram Raj who has now changed his name to Udit Raj. Hundreds of Dalits had their heads shaved by Buddhist priests. For them who cannot get a shave even by a village barber, this was a moment of liberation. For them who had forsaken the prison of caste and had chosen the path shown by Ambedkar, Vedic knowledge is irrelevant. After all Ambedkar had asked his followers to discard the Vedas.

The Dalits are writing their own history. Thousands more would have taken part in the rally on November 4, but the Delhi police obstructed their path. The movement is bound to expand and Hindutva will not be able to stop it.

Punjabi dynamism, American accent, lasting legacy

ROOPINDER SINGH

It was 1963. The occasion — the inauguration of the Bhakra Dam. Foreign journalists had been invited by the State government and were told that the Chief Minister of Punjab, Sardar Partap Singh Kairon, would address a press conference.

There was some of sniggering — Kairon was not known for his sartorial elegance or urban sophistication. People wondered how he would address the foreign reporters.

At the press conference, the confident Kairon spoke in English with an American accent. At the end of the meet, one reporter got up and said: "We have been asking ourselves 'Who after Nehru?' Well, we have received an answer today."

This was one of the anecdotes that Sardar Hukam Singh, a former Speaker of the Lok Sabha, often narrated.

The foreign correspondents should not have been so surprised. Kairon, his appearance notwithstanding, was quite cosmopolitan. Khushwant Singh recalls when he asked Kairon the question about what men and which books had the most influence on him. Pat came the answer: "Abraham Lincoln, Lenin, Tilak, Gandhi, Patel and Nehru. As for the books, Uncle Tom's Cabin still remains my favourite."

During his stay in the USA, he came in contact with the Ghadar Party activists. He returned to India in 1929, and for a while pottered around. He started a weekly paper in English, *The New Era*, from Amritsar on April 13, 1931, that was closed down when he became active in politics.

Kairon joined the Akali Party initially, but later changed over to the Congress and was jailed on three occasions. He spent a total of five years in jail.

He entered the Punjab Legislative Assembly as an Akali nominee in 1937, defeating the Congress candidate, Baba Gurdit Singh of

Sarhali. Kairon was a member of the Legislative Assembly of Punjab for 26 years. From 1947 to 1949, he was a minister in the

Gopi Chand Bhargava's Cabinet and from 1952 to 1956, was a minister in the Bhim Sen Sachar cabinet. On January 23, 1956, he was

sworn in as Chief Minister, and shortly thereafter again in April 1957. He held the position for eight years.

As Professor Harbans Singh says: "First as the Development Minister and then as the Chief Minister, Partap Singh Kairon led Punjab in all-round progress and change. Much of his work in the government was concerned with vital details, the removal of hurdles, the creation of opportunities and the psychology and will for work, and the belief in change."

He did singular service in resettling refugees from East Punjab and during his tenure Punjab made significant progress in creating educational, medical, and other infrastructural facilities. His special contribution was in the field of consolidation of fragmented land and creating an irrigation network, both through canals and tubewells.

On a different note, he was responsible of affecting an attitudinal change in the popularising of rearing and consumption of poultry in Punjab.

As Kairon said during a debate in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha on September 18, 1963 on the no-confidence motion moved against him: "Mr Speaker, the per capita income of Punjab was Rs 321 in 1952-53 when the Constitution commenced and the new government came into power. At that time the country's per capita income was Rs 256

which means that our income was Rs 65 more than the all-India figure. Our per capita income rose to Rs 331 by 1955-56. Whereas, our income was Rs 65 more than the All-India (in 1952-53), it was Rs 75 more than the national figures in 1955-56. This means that the difference had increased by another Rs 10."

"Punjab's per capita income in 1961-62 was Rs 401 as compared to India's average of Rs 293. How come that I have done all this? This party and its government have achieved this after channelling people's energy. People have been given land, electricity, factories and roads."

He was bitterly opposed to the demand for Punjabi Suba and faced various kinds of communal tensions as Chief Minister without compromising on his basic principles.

He was a man of vision. Many houses in Leh have Kairon's portraits. He is credited with having provided roads and introduced potato cultivation, thereby significantly improving the local agrarian economy there.

Kairon was a man of the masses who would often enquire from his visitors the health of their family members as well as that of their livestock, not necessarily in that order. At the same time, in a special commemorative issue of *Quami Ekta*, Balwant Gargi recollects that he spent a long time with Kairon discussing the former's tour of Japan, the USA, England and Europe where Gargi had been lecturing on Indian theatre.

This was the time when Kairon was very busy because of the war with China in 1962. He made significant contributions in mobilising the masses and in gathering gold from the villagers for the national war effort. In fact, Punjab made the biggest contribution of gold to the national treasury. He was also an institution builder. The Kurukshetra University, and Punjabi University, Patiala, owe their existence to him.

Jawaharlal Nehru said about him that: "In terms of patriotism, initiative and public spirit, in my considered judgement, in the whole of India there is not another man who can measure up to Sardar Partap Singh Kairon." The same man during the fag end of his life had to

face charges of irregularities and corruption that ultimately forced him to leave office in 1964. The commission of enquiry exonerated him in most cases. But some of the allegations stuck.

He continued to be involved in public service and might have staged a comeback had he not been shot dead by gunmen on February 6, 1965.

Kairon was a multi-faceted personality. He had a larger-than-life image that influenced the shaping of the then Punjab in numerous ways. In developing Chandigarh as the new capital of the partitioned Punjab, for example. Old-timers particularly remember the fight he had with a venerable politician from what became Haryana about the importance and feasibility of Sukhna Lake.

His contribution in the development of PGI, despite opposition from senior members, is also recalled. He is also credited with the development of Faridabad as an industrial hub, the first example of someone exploiting the periphery of the national Capital.

Some old timers treat Kairon as a living entity. His memories are still alive in their minds. His legacy at least is still alive in Punjab and Haryana. More than 36 years after he died many lives are still impacted by what Kairon did. What more could a man want as an epitaph?



Sardar Partap Singh Kairon was born on October 1, 1901

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This was the time when Kairon was very busy because of the war with China in 1962. He made significant contributions in mobilising the masses and in gathering gold from the villagers for the national war effort. In fact, Punjab made the biggest contribution of gold to the national treasury. He was also an institution builder. The Kurukshetra University, and Punjabi University, Patiala, owe their existence to him.

Jawaharlal Nehru said about him that: "In terms of patriotism, initiative and public spirit, in my considered judgement, in the whole of India there is not another man who can measure up to Sardar Partap Singh Kairon." The same man during the fag end of his life had to

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WINDOWS

The Tribune on Saturday

November 18, 2000

AT AN AGE when people are thinking of retirement, you are still getting new ideas and patenting them. How do you manage to do that?

(laughs) What else would I do? The excitement of where this thing is going is what keeps me going. I keep coming up with ideas and ideas are like babies, you can't throw them away!

You got your last patent a couple of months ago.

I had filed for two patents a few months ago and there are four more to come.

How many patents do you have?

American in 1960 and so on.

Are you excited about the direction things are moving in?

If you introduce a field, which is what I did 50 years ago, and then be in it as it develops, you have to be excited about it. First came the fibre optics applications in diagnostic medicine. From diagnostic medicine, we moved to surgical lasers and then came the Vietnam war where they needed night-vision devices that used fibre optics. It was not until the late sixties that we realised that it was possible to make very high purity glass which could transmit light over many kilometres. That immediately

You established Optics Technology in 1960 and you launched your fourth company a few months ago.

I have recently launched K2 Optronics. There are a lot of different ways of looking at K2

many other things and so I coined the term fibre optics.

It has been a long journey from India to England to the USA, from a student to an academic to an entrepreneur.

The physical journey has been interesting and I had straddled academia and industry most of my life, except for the past 10 years because the tempo has picked up a lot in the field.

You were born in Moga, but studied in Dehra Dun.

I was just born in Moga, but I grew up in Dehra Dun. From there I went to London and California. It has been an interesting journey.

When you see a state like

What are the other things that can put off a foreign investor?

Of course, the government is the first one (laughs). The other is the lack of infrastructure, power, transportation, communication, hotels and human resources.

What kind of a skill set would you be looking at if you were to come here?

There are three levels. One is a technical administrator, who understands technology and has the ability to mobilise departments and people. The second set is the hands-on engineers who can handle development of products. I would also need a number of

the universities to shift from MBA to entrepreneurial training. I would also look at the transport problems; it takes too long to get to Delhi or anywhere else. I would make sure that we had a real international airport. Unless you connect people and places to important centres abroad, you will lose. When you are entering into joint ventures with investors, you need to provide facilities to them, so that they feel at home.

Young entrepreneurs here will have to be helped in making their operational plans and finding money on a reasonable basis. Just one of these won't do it; you have to do most of these things if not all. ◆



Narinder Singh Kapani

LIGHT

THE MAN WHO BENT

He was in the Silicon Valley before it was called by that name. He is a pioneer who opened up the whole new field of fibre optics that effected change in ways that had seemed inconceivable earlier. He prospered, founded four companies and made millions of dollars much before other Indian hi-tech entrepreneurs. The man who 'bent light', Narinder Singh Kapani, has been at the centre of the hi-tech world for over 50 years now and is still going strong at 70. Roopinder Singh met the 'father of fibre optics', who was in Chandigarh recently.

You know, I have stopped counting. Probably 150 plus. After hundred, you stop counting.

Are these patents all in fibre optics?

Lasers and instruments and devices of various kinds.

The basic issue is that light was supposed to travel in a straight lines till you started thinking of ways of bending it.

I was a high-school student in Dehra Dun and we had this young teacher who was rather interesting. This guy once said in a very authoritative way, 'Light only travels in straight lines.' I was sitting there as a little child and said to myself, 'Come on, that's not true.' After I graduated, I started training in the Ordnance Factory in Dehra Dun where I laid a number of prisms and experimented with them. This was cheating. The actual use of fibres to transmit light energy started when I was a graduate student at Imperial College, London, on a Royal Society scholarship.

You wrote that famous article in *Nature* in '54.

Yes, that, and the cover article in *Scientific*

opened the optical communication market. First local area networks, then long-distance communication and now voice, data and images are being transmitted through fibre optics. Though now we talk in terms of bandwidth of 10 gigabits or more, I believe that the bandwidth problem will no longer be an issue. We will see huge bandwidth and it will be nearly for free.

The thing that I find very exciting is that the more we are doing, the more opportunities there are for innovation. There is a lot more ahead, whether it is computer-to-computer, within a computer, a metropolitan network or long-distance communication.

You are called "father of fibre optics."

You know, they call me "father of fibre optics," the "unsung hero" (Forbes magazine), and all kind of things, but if dozens of investigators in the field had not contributed to it, this would have just remained an idea. Therefore, I don't deserve 100 per cent credit!

I didn't coin the word fibre optics till 1955 because prior to that, I just thought that we would use fibres in diagnostic instrumentation. In 1955, I realised that it could be used in

Optics. It is Kapani 2, of course it is year 2000 and K2 is the second-highest peak. People said to me, why did you pick up the second-highest peak? I say, well, you know, at my age, it's nice to be a little modest (laughs).

What's this company going to focus on?

Almost entirely on fibre optic communication devices, particularly switches—the area that has a major problem and a huge potential.

When you have a large number of signals coming through a number of fibres and you want to switch any one of these to a particular outside fibre without converting light into electricity, that is a difficult problem, and I have a couple of interesting ideas for making it happen. The other area that we are working in is having a tuneable laser so that you can tune the wavelength. These are both Holy Grails, each of these open a huge market, but who knows what the next idea will be.

When did you setup the Sikh Foundation?

The Sikh Foundation was set up in December, 1967. We ran a magazine *Sikh Sansar* for five years. We have published a

persons who can handle specific tasks.

What kind of curriculum should there be for young students who want to make a career in hi-tech business?

It depends on the kind of industry they want to join—chemical, bio-products, manufacturing or information technology. Whatever their area of specialisation, a background in physics, chemistry or engineering is important.

Do you think that graduate students stand a chance in the open market?

The foundation is there. What now needs to be done is to inspire them. Generally, university professors teach and stay in ivory towers. The days of isolation are gone. I am not suggesting that universities do not need dreamers. You always need them, but you have to be practical as well.

Imagine a situation where you are asked to develop this region for new industries. What will you do?

With a free rein and unlimited resources (laughs), I would not offer entrepreneurs land, because there are too many headaches involved in it. I would rather offer them built-up areas that are nearly finished.

For the availability of people, I would work closely with universities and make their curriculum more hands-on. I would like

IT IS THE SCIENCE of transmitting data, voice, and images by the passage of light through thin, transparent fibres. It is also spelt fiber optics. In telecommunications, fibre optic technology has virtually replaced the copper wire in long-distance telephone lines and it is used to link computers within local area networks. Fibre optics is also the basis of the fibrescopes used in examining the internal parts of the body (endoscopy) or inspecting the interiors of manufactured structural products.

The basic medium of fibre optics is a hair-thin fibre that is sometimes made of plastic, but more often of glass. A typical glass optical fibre has a diameter of 125 micrometres (m), or 0.125 mm (0.005 inch). This is actually the diameter of the cladding or outer reflecting layer. The core, or inner transmitting cylinder, may have a diameter as small as 10 m. Through a process called total internal reflection, light rays beamed into the fibre can propagate within the core for great distances with remarkably little attenuation or reduction in intensity. The degree of attenuation over distance varies according to the wavelength of the light and the composition of the fibre. When glass fibres of core/cladding design were introduced in the early 1950s, the presence of impurities

restricted their employment to short lengths sufficient for endoscopy. In 1966, electrical engineers working in England suggested using fibres for telecommunication, and within two decades silica glass fibres were being produced with sufficient purity that infrared light signals could travel through these for 100 km (60 miles) or more without having to be boosted by repeaters. Plastic fibres, usually made of polymethylmethacrylate, polystyrene, or polycarbonate, are cheaper to produce and more flexible than glass fibres. However, their greater attenuation of light restricts their use to much shorter links within buildings or automobiles. Optical telecommunication is usually conducted with infrared light in the wavelength ranges of 0.8-0.9 m or 1.3-1.6 m—wavelengths that are efficiently generated by light-emitting diodes or semiconductor lasers and that suffer least attenuation in glass fibres. Fibrescope inspection in endoscopy or industry is conducted in the visible wavelengths—one bundle of fibres being used to illuminate the examined area with light and another bundle serving as an elongated lens for transmitting the image to the human eye or a video camera.

—Source: Encyclopædia Britannica

What is fibre optics?

enhancement at hand. But being the glamour junkies that most women are, the message that they receive from the media is that it is not attractive to have a stomach, thighs or hips of normal female proportions. In fact, thousands of women are spending a serious amount of time and money to surmount their "physical handicaps."

Mentally and emotionally, too, an unrealistic body image affects the quality of life. No one can dispute the confidence that the realisation of looking good can generate. However, when "looking good" reads "looking thin", body confidence can take quite a battering. This results in calorie-counting, over exercising and fretting about the body, not to mention the guilt that a cola or a samosa can generate. The truth, however, is that the super-waif look, beloved to the catwalk, is possible if a woman eats nothing but salad and exercises herself to exhaustion.

So the message that a multitude of women are receiving from the fashion industry and fashion media is that to be attractive and successful, a woman must look a certain way. Fat or even normal women aren't worth bothering with. To break out of this masochistic bind that women have worked themselves into, it is essential that positive images of healthy, natural models are projected. Media should use images of women with whom the vast multitude can identify.

Let females be happy with their curves or voluptuousness by allowing healthy women models all those lovely designer clothes which anyone would want to possess. Why must a woman be size 8 to be fashionable? She can be a good size 12-14-16 and still be bang up to the minute when it comes to her wardrobe.

Luckily in the India, there remains a ray of hope. Cable TV, which has brought us the reed-thin models and performers, has also brought forth "women of substance" who dare to be "wholesome." If one looks at the stars of the soaps on the small screen, one sees that many of these women are as normal as can be reasonably accepted of stars. Shefali Chaya, Neena Gupta, Divya Seth etc. act in serials which convincingly portray them as desirable women with several swains. Of course there are others like Achint Kaur as well, but a healthy mix beamed over the cable can only lead to a more acceptable and realistic body image among the women viewers.

There are also some Bollywood heroines even today who remain popular in spite of their rounded figures like Kajol, Rani Mukherjee, Preity Zinta, and Tabu. Women love them and if they stay around they may be able to engender more realistic standards of an acceptable body image. ◆



unconditionally accepts the western silhouette is resulting in a universal look for Indian women. Girls now have role models who emphasise weight and shape without a thought for what is healthy, feminine and desirable. They go to dangerous lengths to acquire 'the look.' In the UK, a British Medical Association report revealed that

approximately one million people in the country were anorexic or bulimic, and 58 per cent girls found their appearance to be the greatest pre-occupation in their lives. As many as two-thirds found themselves feeling inadequate compared to media images of the ideal female. India, too, has cause to worry because anorexia

and bulimia (eating disorders) that were hardly known a decade ago have now become household worries.

Thanks to skeletal stars like

Alley McBeal (Calista Flockhart), the body image can become a problem for thousands of women. Not just people suffering from eating disorders, but normal, everyday, healthy women suffer anxieties and self-disgust as they mull over their perceived inadequacies. Of course, when one looks at a reed-thin model, one can argue that she can't possibly be considered the norm and the way she looks is pure fantasy unless one has a team of stylish, professional photographers, flattering lighting and computer

Shaping concrete into soul-stirring sculptures

ROOPINDER SINGH

More than an artist, Nek Chand was an institution, an iconic figure whose creation put Chandigarh on the international art landscape. He inspired with the art that he brought alive from the leftovers of modern development processes

THE Partition was the catalyst. It resulted in Nek Chand being displaced from his home in what became Pakistan in 1947. It was because of the Partition that the truncated Punjab would need a new capital, which would become the place that would give Nek Chand employment, a new home and eventually allow him to give concrete shape to his creative genius.

Construction detritus was the inevitable byproduct of the execution of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's vision of the new modern city — Chandigarh. Contributing to it was Nek Chand, till one day in 1959, he transformed what was, till then, waste into an expression of the inner artist in him.

He cycled around the city, picking up discarded objects. He transported water and cement to a site that was a store for the Public Works Department in an overgrown piece of land at the edge of the town and set to work with his hands, shaping human and animal figures.

Nek Chand was essentially an introvert and this too was an inward journey, which he shared with his family and a few friends. He carried out his work in secrecy since he was essentially working on public land, without permission of the city officials concerned. When the authorities stumbled upon his creation, they threatened to clear this encroachment.

The secret was out, and when people saw what Nek Chand had done, many were impressed enough to thwart the shortsighted city officials. Artists, culturally inclined persons, judges, senior officers, journalists, and photographers, all came to the support of the man, who had created a wonder in the wasteland.

After the struggle, what Nek Chand had termed as the 'Kingdom of Gods and Goddesses' was named the Rock

NEK CHAND 1924-2015



Nek Chand had a gentle smile on his face and a mild manner. He also had a steely will that enabled him to handle the vicissitudes of life. PHOTO BY THE WRITER

Garden and thrown open to the public on January 24, 1976.

Public recognition followed. He was awarded the Grande Medaille de Vermeil in Paris in 1980, and three years later, a postal stamp that featured the now-iconic sculptures of the Rock Garden was issued. In 1984, he was awarded the Padma Shri by President Giani Zail Singh.

They say that a genius is never recognised at home. While Nek Chand received support from his wife Kamla and children Neelam and Anuj, his

association with officials of the Chandigarh Administration was often patchy. Vicissitudes of time had shaped Nek Chand's personality in many ways. He had a lot of patience and he needed all of it when he dealt with red tape. Many an announcement was made in support of the Rock Garden and its creator, often to be defeated by petty officials.

Matters came to a head in 1990, when the Chief Administrator threatened to demolish the Rock Garden, but people formed human shields and the ensuing

hue and cry made the official machinery retreat. The Rock Garden has gone from strength to strength since.

Nek Chand visited his office in the Rock Garden regularly. He would check his creation every day to ensure that all was in order. He would identify whatever needed intervention and then check again in the evening whether the work had been done to his satisfaction.

His growing international fame resulted in his travelling abroad to showcase his work, or to receive honours. He con-

tinued to inspire young people, and would personally lead teams of volunteers which came to the Rock Garden to learn at the feet of the master.

While mild-mannered, he was a no-nonsense man who inspired with the art that he brought alive from the leftovers of modern development processes. Even as he shaped concrete and rocks into soul-stirring sculptures, Nek Chand helped to shape the image of the city he lived in. He will be missed, even as his work will keep his legacy alive.

Nek Chand and Le Corbusier rock together

RAJNISH WATTAS

The Rock Garden throbs with the beat of bright colours of figurines and sculptural elements carved out of waste materials. Textures of cinder, slag, boulders and rocks create a symphony of tactile surfaces.

DO Nek Chand and Le Corbusier have anything in common? No, most would say. Except perhaps, the cheek-by-jowl locations of their masterly creations: the Rock Garden and the Capitol Complex, both located at the northern tip of Chandigarh. The Capitol, built by design, rigours of geometry and official patronage — and the other by stealth and in defiance of the City's Cartesian grid. Yet, the two share strong primeval artistic impulses inspired by nature and primary elements of landscape.

As realms of public art, the seeming polarities are deceptive. Beneath the palimpsests and patinas of their work, the essential elements are nature, sculpture, colour and texture with the centrality of the human being in their inner core. The spatial experience of visiting both Rock Garden and the Capitol is far more similar in spirit than is obvious. Both are located at the 'head' of the City plan amidst what Corbusier called as the "Capitol Parc" — the stretch of greenery, pastoral, bucolic settings at the north-eastern tip. Of course, one as a conscious choice and the other by quirk of opportunity. But very often the deliberate is merely a crystallisation of sieving layers of ideas and forms. The Capitol was conceived as the



Rock Garden has folksy sculptures, carved by an untrained man with abandon but shaped by hands that moved with divine impulse. TRINUNE PHOTO: MANOJ MAHajan

"crowning glory" of the layout plan enclosed by earthforms with dense vegetation, concealing the edifices from the City and unfold in a nuanced, teasing, playful process. The Rock garden abounds with surprising, turn of corner spatial experiences inside and from the outside fiercely concealing its presence.

The elements of Rock Garden are folksy sculptures, carved by an

untrained mind with abandon, but shaped by hands that moved with divine impulse. Corbusier too would often meander into nearby villages, feverishly sketching vernacular decorations, murals adorning humble mud houses. He was equally fascinated by the shapes of rural artefacts and tools like bullock cart wheels — and in fact by bullocks themselves! Their sharp, piercing

horns held a special fascination for him. Later, he translated this powerful sweep of curves into the form of the canopy above the Assembly building.

Corbusier also spent much time in sketching the shapes, forms and curves of rocks, pebbles, seashells at beaches, river beds; studying their curves, shadows out of which in flashes of creative inventiveness would later inspire architectural forms like the hyperboloid dome above the Assembly, and in many of his other projects.

Beneath the Assembly canopy, the main entrance door is a 21 feet by 21 feet huge door painted by Corbusier with vibrant colours and motifs of sun, cosmos, trees, rivulets and animals etc. This splash of bold colours against the backdrop of the grey rough-hewn textures of concrete surfaces is visually counter balanced by primary colours of yellow, green and red on the giant pylons supporting the arched roof of High Court. The giant tapestries hanging on full walls of the courts and the Assembly interiors are also replete with folk and nature motifs.

Rock Garden throbs with the beat of bright colours of figures, figurines and sculptural elements carved out of waste materials. Textures of cinder, slag, boulders, rocks create a symphony of tactile surfaces contrasting with the slickness of modern urban glossy materials. Corbusier

had called reinforced concrete as, "the molten rock of 20th century" and explored its immense sculptural qualities and deliberately left natural, unfinished surfaces called *beton brut* on his building facades as a design decision.

The Rock Garden in its second phase moves from the primary theme of waste material sculptures to recalling the Amazonian, untouched beauty and order of pristine nature's playground — exploring, discovering hidden waterfalls, pillar roots of giant Banyan trees in serpentine embrace of rocks, boulders or bridges, a walk in some undiscovered island jungle. The Capitol Complex too tries to connect the manmade edifices, cryptic monuments celebrating the movement of sun, folk elements to the cosmic to the jagged skylines of the timeless Himalayas in the backdrop. The elemental, creative driving force in both the Rock Garden and the Capitol is rooted in invoking the timeless, the primordial and the eternal — nature in its raw beauty. As Chandigarh's beloved jewel Nek Chand, affectionately called 'Baaji' leaves this universe to build another fantasy garden up there, the two creative geniuses who gave international acclaim to Chandigarh will rock together.

— The writer is the former principal of the Chandigarh College of Architecture and a noted writer, author and architectural critic.

ON THIS DAY... 100 YEARS AGO

The Tribune.

LAHORE, SUNDAY, JUNE 13, 1915

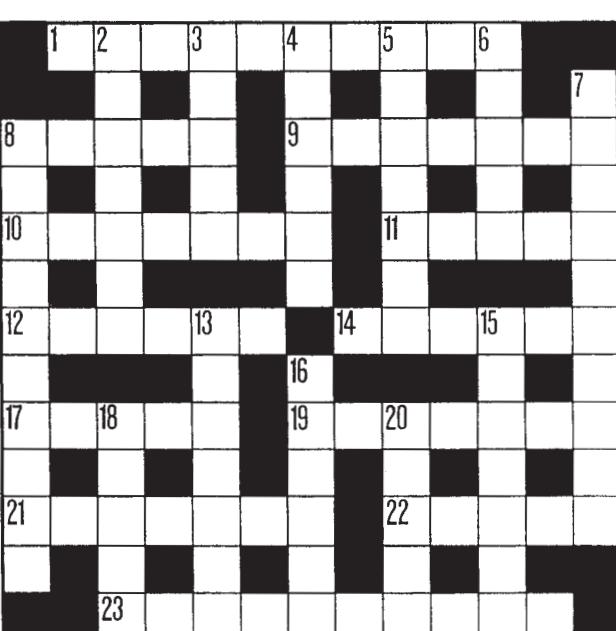
Delhi industries

DELHI, the seat of Imperial Government, is well known as a place that supports some small industries. The tinsel industries and the brassware of Delhi are patronised by most people and it is necessary that these should not be allowed to perish at the present time, owing to the war and we are glad to hear that Government are making certain arrangements to help the industries. It is said that one of the biggest firms in Delhi engaged in the wire and tinsel industry, usually employing 150 to 200 men, has not work enough for one! This shows the nature of the blast of war upon the industry. The Punjab Government, we hear, intend to send some of the tinsel work operatives to Lahore and two men have gone. The lamp-making industry is in a similar plight; and both the U.P. and the Punjab Government have interested themselves in saving it. The Delhi industry relied on German supply of brass burners which the Delhi workmen cannot make for want of suitable machinery and of knowledge of the manufacturing process.

Octroi v. terminal tax

THE proposal made by the Delhi Municipal authorities to levy a terminal tax in place of the octroi has been strongly objected to by various local bodies. The Punjab Chamber of Commerce, the Trades Association, the Millowners and the Piece-Goods Associations have all submitted their protests. One would have thought that the merchants would be the first to welcome the abolition of the octroi and welcome an indirect and more generally and lightly distributed form of tax as the terminal tax. But it is hoped that the Municipal authorities will give due weight to the opinions of the Delhi people whatever they are.

QUICK CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 To start with (3, 7)
- 8 Prestige (5)
- 9 Enter uninvited (7)
- 10 Inconsistently variable (7)
- 11 North African mountains (5)
- 12 Within a building (6)
- 14 Photographer's working place (6)
- 17 Use to no good purpose (5)
- 19 A moral reservation (7)
- 21 Violent whirlwind (7)
- 22 Great pain (5)
- 23 Principle of moderation (6, 4)
- 24 Assess, 2 Cable, 3 Unearth, 5 Ravel, 6 Diverse, 7 Redeem, 8 Go ballistic, 14 Ingrate, 15 Parasol, 16 Garlic, 17 Merely, 19 Ethos, 21 Groom.

DOWN

- 2 Regulated (7)
- 3 Attack (5)
- 4 Indicate (6)
- 5 Take out (7)
- 6 Type of small oar (5)
- 7 Consider important (3, 5, 2)
- 8 Retain friendship of (4, 2, 4)
- 13 Including everything (7)
- 15 Certificate of qualification (7)
- 16 On land (6)
- 18 Small shoot or twig (5)
- 20 Domain (5)

SU DO KU

1							6	9
							6	8
6	5				7		3	
		6		1	4			
4		7	2				6	
	2	4			5			
6	5			4		7		
8				7				
9	2							4

Yesterday's solution

7	2	1	8	9	3	6	4	5
6	9	3	4	1	5	2	7	8
5	8	4	6	7	2	1	9	3
2	6	7	5	4	1	8	3	9
8	1	5	7	3	9	4	6	2
3	4	9	2	6	8	7	5	1
9	3	6	1	8	7	5	2	4
4	5	8	3	2	6	9	1	7
1	7	2	9	5	4	3	8	6

CALENDAR

JUNE 13, 2015, SATURDAY
■ Shri Vikrami Samvat 2072
■ Shaka samvat 1937 (Jayestha shaka 23)
■ Jayestha parvite 30
■ Hijri 1436
■ Krishan paksh tithi 12, up to 11.54 pm
■ Aati yoga up to 10.45 pm
■ Aashwin Nakshatra up to 8.26 am
■ Moon in Aries sign
■ Yogi ekadashi vart (Vaishnav)
■ Gandmula up to 8.26 am.

FORECAST

SUNSET:	SATURDAY	19:27 HRS
SUNRISE:	SUNDAY	05:20 HRS
Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy
CITY	MAX	MIN
Chandigarh	38	24
New Delhi	41	28
PUNJAB		
Amritsar	37	23
Bathinda	37	27
Jalandhar	37	24
Ludhiana	38	26
Patiala	39	26
HARYANA		
Ambala	39	26
Bhiwani	41	27
Hisar	42	27
Karnal	39	26

'The way Sonia dropped me was a shock'

ON RECORD

ROOPINDER SINGH TALKS TO NATWAR SINGH, Former foreign minister and author of 'One Life is Not Enough'

A man who was for years known to be close-mouthed about the Nehru-Gandhi family has opened up, and how. His latest book, 'One Life is Not Enough', has the political classes chattering and the TV viewing classes getting their thrills over the 'juicy bits'. Natwar Singh was an IFS officer for over 33 years, who was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1984. After resigning from the service, he became a politician and served in Rajiv Gandhi's Cabinet. He was the External Affairs Minister in Manmohan Singh's Cabinet till he was named in a report on the Iraq oil-for-food scandal in 2005.

Natwar Singh has written many books earlier, but his just-released tell-all account of his life and politics has raised a furore in the Congress circles, and even provoked a reaction from the reticent Sonia Gandhi. At 83, he has a sharp memory and the perspective of a person who had a ringside view of major events in India, which he pens down with a quill that seeks to undo 'perceived injustices' as he gives his side of the story. Excerpts from an interview:

The closest association that you had was with Mrs Indira Gandhi.
Among the Indians. Abroad, I had E.M. Forster.

With Mrs Gandhi, from what I remember of your other writings, it started with a mutual love of books and then it developed into other spheres.

Then there is the other side [of Sonia] which is harder. I got to know her extremely well and I used to see her almost every day and we used to talk for hours and hours. So when the Volcker thing happened, I expected her to say 'Natwar can never do this sort of a thing.'

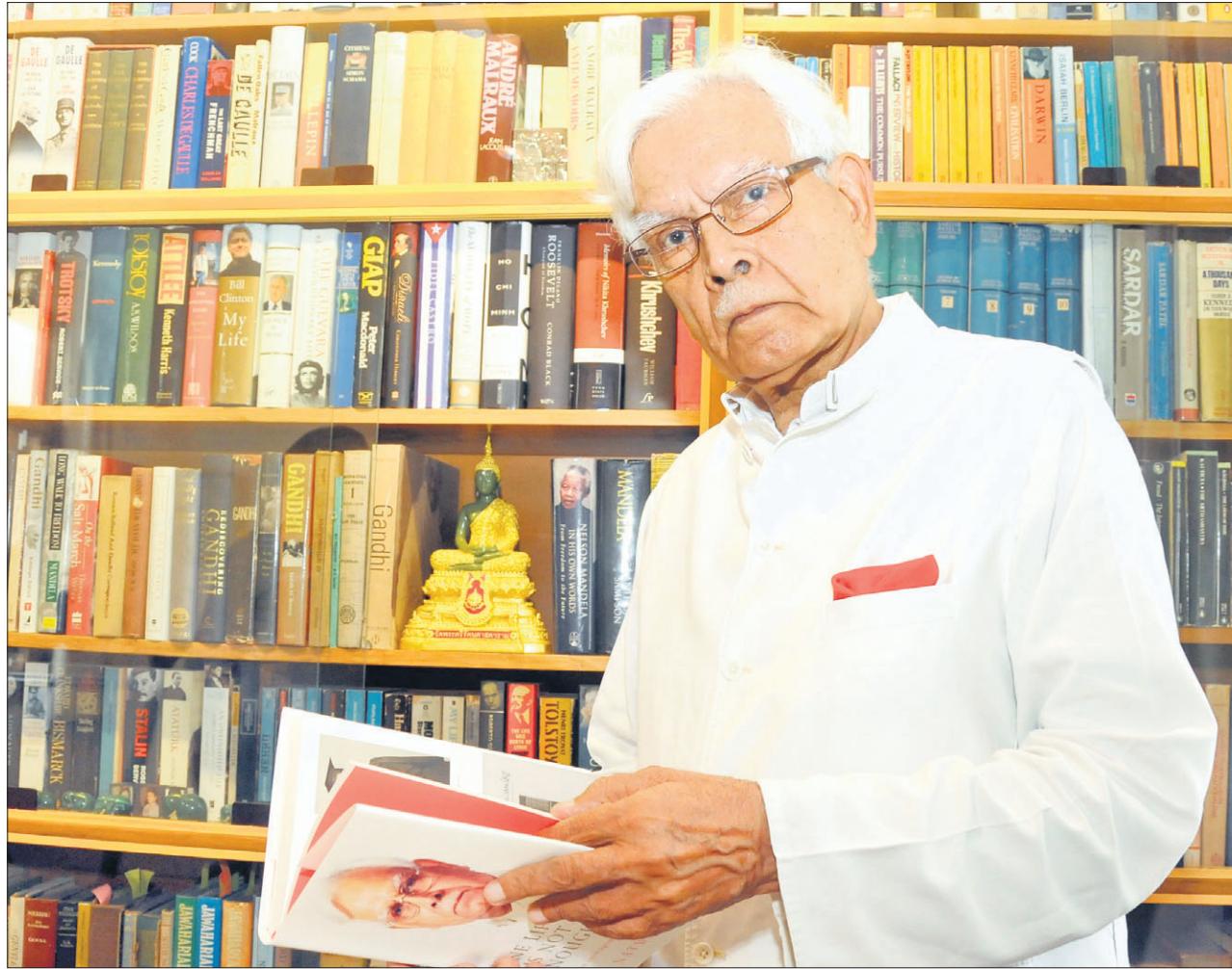
As a son, I give Rahul full marks that he told his mother: "You'll get killed. My father got killed, my grandmother got killed and you will get killed." As a leader, there were great expectations from him because he is a very fine young man, and he reads a great deal. But for politics, you must have fire in your belly, he doesn't have that.

How did you join the Prime Minister's Office?

I came back and joined the Ministry of External Affairs in the UN division. On May 19, 1966, I was told that I was being shifted to the Prime Minister's Secretariat. The appointment came as a surprise and to this day I don't know how it came about. Thereafter I saw her [Indira Gandhi] every day for the next five years. She was exceptionally good to me.

In 1983, although I was the junior-most secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, she made me Secretary General of the Non-Aligned Summit. It was a very big honour and fortunately the Summit ended on a high note. After this I also handled the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting the same year. This was easier, because it was smaller, and everyone spoke English.

How did you get into politics?
After handling the two conferences, I felt that I had reached the peak of my career. I spoke to Mrs Gandhi and said that I would like to get into politics, and that I had the Rajya Sabha in mind. She said nothing. A few months



later, she called me and said, Natwar, why don't you fight for the Lok Sabha? I said: "I will." Some of Rajiv's advisers like Arun Nehru and Arun Singh did not want me to get into politics, and they thought that I would not fight the Lok Sabha elections.

What advice did Mrs Gandhi give you about politics?

Just a few days before she was assassinated, I told her I was leaving for Bharatpur to start politicking. I would get myself a new wardrobe. She said: "Now that you are coming into politics, a thicker skin would be more useful."

Were you able to follow that advice?

No, I haven't followed it. I have a very thin skin.

You were asked to be Lt Governor of Delhi after the 1984 anti-Sikh riots?

After Indira Gandhi was assassinated, Rajiv Gandhi told me that the situation in Delhi was very alarming. He wanted to remove the Lt Governor and appoint me. This was the last thing that I had expected.

I told him that I must consult my wife. Hem is a Sikh and was totally opposed to the idea. The community was being butchered. What kind of message would Rajiv send out by appointing the son-in-law of the late Maharaja of Patiala, Yadavindra Singh, as Lieutenant Governor? I told Rajiv that it would not be advisable for me to take up the job. Eventually, Rajiv agreed.

How was it like interacting with Rajiv Gandhi?

He was a very lovable person with a

big heart. I don't think that he had malice for anybody. That way he was like his grandfather. He had a great sense of humour.

When I was Ambassador to Pakistan, Mrs Gandhi needed Rajiv [to join politics]. She asked several people to speak to him. I also spoke with him. He told me, "Natwar, I am not Sanjay. My salary is Rs 5,000 a month and I have no money. And I like my job." I told him: "Your family is no ordinary family. You have national obligations and there is the heritage of your family and your mother needs you."

What about the Bofors scandal?

The Bofors issue was mishandled. I was sitting next to him in Parliament when he said, "No member of my family is involved." I told him: "Aap ko kya zarur thi yeh kehne ke? (What was the need for you to say this?)". I suggested he should make a committee under the Cabinet Secretariat to deal with it. I knew that the question of him having

taken even a rupee did not arise. It could have been handled better. Then the amount was Rs 64 crore, now there is Rs 64,00,000 crore.

Did President Shankar Dayal Sharma say no to being Prime Minister after Rajiv Gandhi's assassination?

P.N. Haksar [Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi from 1967 to 73] advised Sonia Gandhi to offer the post to Vice-President Shankar Dayal Sharma. I went to him with Aruna Asaf Ali and conveyed Sonia's message. But Dr Sharma said:

"The prime-ministership of India is a full-time job. My age and health would not let me do justice to the most important office in the country." Then she called P.V. Narasimha Rao.

You were there when Sonia announced that Manmohan Singh would be prime minister.

When Sonia announced that she had asked Manmohan Singh to become prime minister, his immediate response was, "Madam, I do not have the mandate." Sonia's choosing Manmohan as prime minister did not go down well with senior Congress leaders.

You have seen Sonia Gandhi over the years. Is her public persona a careful construct?

She is one person in private and completely another in politics. When she came, naturally she was very shy, she was 19 years old. Indiraji groomed her and became very fond of her because Sonia has many positive qualities which people don't know of. She has a great sense of humour, reads a lot, listens to music, and is a very sensitive person.

Then there is the other side which is harder. I got to know her extremely well and I used to see her almost every day and we used to talk for hours and hours. So when the Volcker thing [a report submitted on October 27, 2005, by Paul Volcker, former chairman of the US Federal Reserve, that named Natwar Singh, the Congress Party and several corporate houses, companies and individuals who had allegedly profited from a \$ 60 billion 'oil-for-food programme' established by the UN Security Council in 1996] happened, I expected her to say 'Natwar can never do this sort of a thing.'

The other side of it is that when I had a [heart] bypass operation in November 1988, she used to come to hospital. You can't forget all that. Then our daughter Ritu passed away, and within 10 minutes Sonia was at our house in Vasant Vihar. She was there, giving us strength, sharing our grief, which meant a great deal to us.

So I was very upset that she did not even wait for me to come back from abroad before a statement was issued that the Congress was clean, and Natwar could take care of himself. Nobody defies Sonia, she is a tougher president than Jawaharlal Nehru or Indira Gandhi or Rajiv Gandhi. She is very tough, and I am also very strong-headed. I said, "I am not going to go to her on my knees."

But she came to you.

When it was reported that I was doing an autobiography, Priyanka came and said that her mother had sent her. She asked if I was going to mention the events that took place in May 2004 before the swearing-in of the UPA government. I told her I intended to do so and that no one could edit my book. I would not skirt the truth, nor would I hit below the belt. Certain proprieties could not be ignored. Just then Sonia walked in.

You say that Rahul was the person who insisted that his mother not become prime minister.

As a son, I give him full marks that he told his mother: "You'll get killed. My father got killed, my grandmother got killed and you will get killed." As a leader, there were great expectations from him because he is a very fine young man, and he reads a great deal. But for politics, you must have fire in your belly, he doesn't have that. The other thing is that without Sonia Gandhi the Congress would disappear. She has held the party together for 15 years.

What about Priyanka? Can she be prime minister one day?

What would happen to her brother? The family will not be divided. Unlike her mother and brother, she is a very good communicator. She is at ease in urban and rural India. But I don't see her entering politics.

The Congress is attacking the book even before it has been released.

There will be attacks, but I am not going to respond.

After years of toil, a recognition

PROFILE

HARIHAR SWARUP WRITES ABOUT CHANDI PRASAD BHATT, Gandhi Peace Award recipient

CHANDI Prasad Bhatt, who was decorated with the prestigious Gandhi Peace Award by President Pranab Mukherjee, is known for his work on subaltern social ecology, and considered one of India's first modern environmentalist. The Chipko Movement started by him in 1973 followed the method of peaceful and non-violent Satyagraha for the legitimate rights of the hill people to collect wood and fodder and saving them from calamities owing to large-scale deforestation.

Other recipients of the award include former Tanzanian President Dr Julius Nyerere, Dr Gerhard Fisher of Rama Krishna Mission in Germany, Baba Amte, Nelson Mandela, Dr John Hume of Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan and Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa.

Curtailment of the villagers' legitimate rights to forest products in favour of outside commercial interests enabled Bhatt to mobilise society members and villagers into the collective Chipko Andolan to force revision of forest policies dating from 1917. Women, who had to walk miles to gather home fuel and fodder, took the lead. True to the movement's non-violent philosophy, these women clung to trees to restrict their chopping. Establishment of 'eco-development camps' brought villagers together to discuss their needs in the context of ecological balance of the forest.

Bhatt became increasingly aware of the threat of indiscriminate tree



second child of Ganga Ram Bhatt and Maheshi Devi Thapliyal, in a family of priests. His father died when Chandi Prasad was still an infant. He was raised by his mother and his schooling was done in Rudraprayag and Pauri, but his education was stopped and he could not get a degree. The plight of his family forced him to take up a job as a booking clerk.

In 1956, Bhatt was inspired by a speech of Jayaprakash Narayan who was on a tour of the area. He joined the Sarvodaya movement, organising villages for economic development and fighting liquor abuse throughout Uttarakhand.

In 1960, Bhatt left his job to plunge full-time into Sarvodaya activities, and by 1964, he had instituted the Dasholi Gram Swarajya Mandal to organise fellow villagers in Gopeshwar for employment near their homes in forest-based industries, making wooden implements from ash trees and gathering and marketing herbs for the manufacture of ayurvedic medicine. By the '80s, the Chipko movement spread throughout India and led to the formation of people-sensitive forest policies and stopping of felling of trees in regions as far reaching as the Vindhyan and Western Ghats.

Presenting the award to him, President Pranab Mukherjee said the award was an expression of India's belief that the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi are part of the nation's collective living heritage.

felling in 1970, when a cloudburst over his home district of Chamoli suddenly raised the water level of the Alaknanda over 60 feet. Some 400 sq miles were flooded as roads and bridges washed away and Gauna Lake, formerly 330-ft deep, filled with debris. Also blocked were canals irrigating nearly one million acres in western UP. In August 1978, the largest landslide of the century — over 2 miles long — blocked the Bhagirathi river. Reservoirs behind the great hydro-electric schemes that were the primary energy hope of the subcontinent were rapidly silting up.

Born on June 23, 1934, Bhatt is the

IN PASSING SANDEEP JOSHI



Does this rule apply internally too?

OFF THE CUFF

JASON LIVERMORE, JAMAICAN SPRINTER
Commenting on 'cold Glasgow'

There is nothing unusual about a dysfunctional marriage. Marriage as an institution is only for men.

NAYANTARA SAHgal, AUTHOR
On her failed marriage

HONEY SINGH, SINGER
Talking about his music





FAREWELL, MARSHAL

The Sunday Tribune

CHANDIGARH | SUNDAY | 17 SEPTEMBER 2017



Marshal Arjan Singh was the only officer of the IAF to be promoted to a five-star rank.



Then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi with the then Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Arjan Singh, during the 1960s. FILE PHOTOS



Marshal Arjan Singh debarks a MiG 21.

IAF's grand leader

ROOPINDER SINGH

INDIA has lost a great man. The Indian Air Force's only 5-star officer — a towering personality in all respects — Arjan Singh, DFC, Marshal of the Indian Air Force, was a gentle man, soldier, and a diplomat. Above all, he was a leader who led from the front — in peace, war and even in philanthropy.

Arjan Singh effortlessly transcended stereotypes. This teetotaller dapper fighter pilot was a soldier's General and also a successful diplomat. His ramrod posture and piercing gaze gave him a commanding presence, but he had the knack of making people feel at ease while he was talking to them. I was a diffident college student when I first introduced myself to him, but he made me comfortable. Decades later, when I requested his permission to write his biography, he started off by saying that there was not much that could be written about him. He was truly modest, with not much to be modest about.

MIAF Arjan Singh DFC passed away at 98. Risaldar-Major Bhagwan Singh's grandson Arjan Singh was born to Kishan Singh and Kartar Kaur on April 15, 1919, at Kohali village in Lyallpur, now in Pakistan. Soon after the birth of his son, Kishan Singh went to Edinburgh University to study engineering and then worked with Ceylon Railways. Arjan Singh studied in Government School, Montgomery, and then at Government College, Lahore. He was in his fourth year when he was selected for the Indian Air Force. He trained in England and later joined No. 1 Squadron at Ambala in January 1940. He flew a Hawker Audax, which was shot down in the NWFP by the Pathans later that year. His gunner was injured in the crash.

Squadron Leader Arjan Singh was in Delhi for a meeting in 1943 when he met the pretty, young and petite Teji. The rest, as they say, is history. The two married in 1948 in Delhi at the Janpath house of Sir Sobha Singh, father of noted writer Khushwant Singh. Promotions and postings followed. Arjan Singh



MIAF Arjan Singh DFC (1919-2017)

Marshal Arjan Singh effortlessly transcended stereotypes. This teetotaller dapper fighter pilot was a soldier's General and also a successful diplomat.

was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) in June, 1944 by Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander of South-East Asia during World War II, for his bravery in defending the Imphal Valley.

After Independence, Arjan Singh built up the Indian Air Force virtually from scratch and was a key

force in all the three major wars. He was the first Air Chief Marshal of the Indian Air Force when, in recognition of the Air Force's contribution in the 1965 war, the rank of the Chief of Air Staff was upgraded to that of Air Chief Marshal. He was also conferred the Padma Vibhushan that year. He retired as Air Chief Marshal in 1969.

Two years later, he was appointed Indian Ambassador to Switzerland and the Vatican. In 1947, he was appointed High Commissioner to Kenya. He was Member of the Minorities Commission in 1980 and served as Lt Governor of Delhi in 1989.

He was conferred the rank of Marshal of the Indian Air Force on Independence Day in 2002. He was pleased that the adjunct Retd. would no longer be used with his name, ever. Field Marshal is a life-long appointment.

Two years later, I got a call from Arjan Singh Aulakh. "I am no longer a Jat as you said in the book, I have no land now," he said. I had written in his biography that the Jat in him was kept alive by the farm. "I discussed it with Teji and my children, and we sold the farm to set up The Marshal of Air Force and Mrs Arjan Singh Trust to provide finances for ex-IAF personnel and their dependents in need of help."

The couple had three children. Son Arvind teaches in a university in America, elder daughter died in a car accident in 1999 and is survived by her husband and two children and youngest Asha lives in Delhi. It was in 2011 that Arjan Singh lost his wife Teji, his partner in all his endeavours and the wind beneath his wings.

After her, he continued to soldier on strongly as ever, making his presence felt on all important occasions, national and those connected with the Indian Air Force. His 97th birthday was celebrated in great style by the IAF and the Panagarh (West Bengal) air base was named after him. Today a heart attack sent him to hospital and eventually, as the Marshal of the Indian Air Force soared to meet his maker, he would certainly have looked back at the fulfilling sorties in a life well lived.

FROM THE TRIBUNE ARCHIVES

When Arjan Singh sold off his farm for IAF personnel

ROOPINDER SINGH

MARSHAL of the Indian Air Force, Arjan Singh, DFC, has always had a larger-than-life image, and this is one person whose deeds continue to justify it. The Indian Air Force's only Field Marshal has inspired generations of flyers ever since he joined the IAF in 1939 and was posted to IAF's Number 1 squadron at Ambala in January 1940, flying in frail Westland Wapitis.

The man who led the IAF in the 1965 war has sold off his farm near Delhi, and entrusted a corpus of Rs 2 crore to a trust devoted to the welfare of retired Air Force personnel. Known for personal probity and punctiliousness, the MIAF has set a wonderful example in using personal wealth for the welfare of others.

"This is leadership from the front, which the IAF has seen right from the time he joined it in 1939, the gallantry in the Imphal campaign of 1944 and the conflict of 1965. It is unprecedented and completely selfless, which is what his actions have been throughout," says Pushpinder Singh, editor of the Vayu Aerospace Review.

The Marshal of Air Force and Mrs Arjan Singh Trust will seek to open avenues of financial relief for ex-IAF personnel and their dependents who need assistance.

The money has been invested in RBI bonds and it is expected that the returns from it will be Rs 16 lakh and "15 per cent of the interest will be added to the corpus and the rest disbursed to those applying for assistance," says the MIAF.

MIAF Arjan Singh, his wife Teji Arjan Singh and their son Arvind Singh will be the trustees for life, but it will be run by the president of the Air Force Association and other ex-officio members of the IAF.

"I had full support of the family," says Arjan Singh. His wife, Teji recalls that when she asked him, why he had put her name on it, he replied: "If you hadn't agreed, how could I have done it?"

The farm that MIAF Arjan Singh sold was the last link he had with land, which was very dear to him. His grandfather, Risaldar-Major Bhagwan Singh, had a farm near Lyallpur, now called Faisalabad, in Pakistan, where the young Arjan Singh spent his childhood, watching planes and dreaming of flying one, some

day. After Partition, the family was allotted 80 acres of land in Churwali village, near Adampur, Punjab. "I was also allotted a pucca house. Kartar Singh, a good man, used to look after the land and when I sold it, I gave the house to him. I sold off the land because I could not take care of it as I was in service. In fact, when I told Sardar Swaran Singh (the then External Affairs Minister), in whose constituency my land fell, how much I had sold it for, he chided me for selling it below the market rate," he said in an earlier interview when this writer wrote his biography. The family also had land in Terai, which was tilled by his father Kisar Singh and other family members.

"I am no longer a Jat as you said in the book, I have no land now," said Arjan Singh, recalling a comment made in the book, written two years ago, that the Jat in him was kept alive by the farm.

For this Aulakh Jat, giving up his land is a great gesture, and by setting up a trust for the welfare of others, Arjan Singh has set a shining example in a nation where such things have become rare. He has also institutionalised the trust by ensuring that family members do not run it. IAF officials "who are more in touch with the current needs" control it. This makes it even more important that his example be emulated. For this a climate has to be created, where such trusts are encouraged.

The founder of The Tribune, Dyal Singh Majithia, set up a number of trusts to serve the public, including The Tribune Trust, Union Academy (later known as Dyal Singh School and Dyal Singh College), Lahore, Dyal Singh Library and Dyal Singh College, New Delhi. The nation, on the whole, had gained a lot from philanthropic trusts like the Dorabji Tata Trust, which helped set up the first cancer hospital in Asia, and the Birla Educational Trust that runs hundreds of primary schools and colleges.

Unlike these luminaries, MIAF Arjan Singh comes from a service background. His father, Kishan Singh, a civil engineer, worked in Ceylon Railways. However he has always been large-hearted, and eventually it is not what you have that counts, it is what you give that makes a difference. The IAF will surely remember this magnificent gesture of its Field Marshal for a long time.

This piece was originally published in The Tribune on December 24, 2004



CELEBRATING
TOGETHERNESS
Marshal of the Indian
Air Force Arjan Singh
with his wife, Teji, who
left for her heavenly
abode in 2011.

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Announcement for submission of Online Examination Application Forms (OEAF) with respect to the 'O' / 'A' / 'B' / 'C' Level Examinations of NIELIT to be held in January 2018.

Detailed calendar of events indicated below:

Availability of Online Examination Application Forms at: http://student.nielit.gov.in	September 18, 2017
Online Examination Application Form (OEAF) verification for Institutes at: http://onlineacctr.nielit.gov.in	September 18, 2017
Last date of submission of Online Examination Application Forms (OEAF) with requisite fee for Direct and Institutes' candidates	October 31, 2017
Last date for forwarding the Online Examination Application Form by Institutes after verification and payment	November 10, 2017
Commencement of the theory examinations of 'O' / 'A' / 'B' / 'C' levels	January 13, 2018
Commencement of Practical Examinations	January 27, 2018
Declaration of 'O' Level Result	March 21, 2018
Declaration of 'A', 'B' & 'C' Level Results	March 28, 2018

For latest updates please visit <http://www.nielit.gov.in>.

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS:

- The Examination Application Forms are to be submitted through online mode only along with online payments of related fees through Net-Banking/Debit/Credit Card/RTGS-NEFT. Candidate can avail the services of CSC (Common Service Centre) for filling up of Online Examination Forms and/or Payment of the Examination Fees. The locations of CSCs is available at www.csc.gov.in
- There is processing fees of Rs.100/- per Examination Application Form in addition to the requisite fees for the Theory/Practical modules applied for.
- Before filling the form, candidates are advised to go through the instructions given at www.nielit.gov.in/sites/default/files/GI_OEAF.pdf
- Candidates who have already created login with NIELIT may use the same user ID and Password to fill the OEAF.
- Institute authorized to conduct the courses under NIELIT have to verify candidature of the students who have forwarded their Examination Application Forms through them and pay the Examination fees using the link <http://onlineacctr.nielit.gov.in>.

<http://www.nielit.gov.in>

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Picking up pieces of broken peace

ROOPINDER SINGH

Three remote villages in Punjab's Malwa region have assumed centrestage of the protests triggered by incidents of sacrifice. The tension is palpable, troubling questions elicit few answers. Despite the unease, the villagers remain cautious: No going back to the dreadful days of the 1980s

BURJ JAWAHAR SINGH WALA, Bargari and Panjgrain Khurd are Malwa villages used to being on the sidelines, overshadowed by the historic Guru ki Dhab Gurdwara on the Jaito-Kotkapura road. Flustered residents tend to skirt the sudden spotlight, but the scrutiny is relentless, even though it yields little understanding about what exactly is happening in this remote area.

Political leaders have made a beeline to the villages, and so have religious leaders of various hues. Residents are agitated over the incidents of sacrifice of Guru Granth Sahib. The role of the police, especially its inefficiency and high-handedness, comes in for criticism, but anger, even rage, is reserved for the ruling party and its administrative machinery. Yet, there is a conscious effort to avoid falling into a trap that would evoke the dark decade of the 1980s.

The gurdwara at Burj Jawahar Singh Wala is situated on one of the main roads in the village. It is a small and neat place with the *granthi*'s quarters built in. It is difficult to imagine how someone could pick up the *bir* of Guru Granth Sahib, given its bulk and weight, but that is what happened on June 1. An FIR was registered, but the police did precious little to investigate the matter, a delay that was to cost them and the state dear.

Four months later, residents of nearby Bargari woke up to the disturbing sight of several pages torn from Guru Granth Sahib scattered around the village gurdwara on October 12. This caused immense consternation. The scattered sheets, reverentially called *ang* (literally limbs), were gathered and taken away in a tractor-trailer.

Villagers of the area linked the pages to the *bir* that had gone missing from the Burj Jawahar Singh Wala Gurdwara. There had been no visible police activity in tracking the *bir*, and thus, public anger focused on the police inaction, which was perceived as indifference.

People took to the streets, and the nearby town of Kotkapura became the focus of the protesters, who sat down at an intersection, bringing to halt the traffic movement. Many held *lathis*, some even swords, but they remained peaceful—*langar* was served, and speeches made.

The police attempt to disperse the protesters using water cannons and *lathis*, even arresting some, backfired. Villagers poured into the area, and the local administration backtracked, releasing the protesters. A video of the water cannon and police action went viral, further inflaming the situation. Later, as the crowds got bigger, there was firing by the police. At least one person received bullet wounds.

Protesters blocked roads on October 14, the heavy police presence notwithstanding. In the police firing at Bebhal Kalan, Gurjot Singh of Sarawan village and Krishan Bhagwan Singh of Niamwala village were killed.

In Sarawan, Pritam Singh Matharoo sits on a charpoy in a well-built house. Gurjot Singh's grandfather is frail, yet resilient. Even as locals point towards the grieving household, the pall of gloom over the area makes its own statement. The young man was a motor mechanic. It was in the nearby Kotkapura that he learnt the trade, and the family's pride in his accomplishments is palpable.

The household has many symbols of material success, a result of the family's expatriate history. The 27-year-old Gurjot Singh was planning to migrate to Canada, though his father and recently married brother Jagdeep Singh work in Nairobi, Kenya. This is a family of mechanics, and the young man is remembered fondly by his mother Amarjit Kaur and father Sadhu Singh as being among the first to respond to any call from the local gurdwara for volunteers. He had joined the group of people who were collecting *langar* and serving it to protesters who had blocked National Highway 15, a short distance from the village.

The family generally supported Gur-



(From left) The brother, paternal grandfather, maternal grandfather and mother of Gurjot Singh, who was killed in police firing at Bebhal Kalan on October 14. PHOTOS BY THE WRITER



The mother and sister of Rupinder Singh and Jaswinder Singh, two brothers of Panjgrain Khurd village who were arrested on charges of the blasphemous act at Bargari gurdwara.

jit's acts of social service. There was anger in the entire area because someone had scattered pages from Guru Granth Sahib at the nearby Bargari village. Adding fuel to the fire was the fact that the police had made no headway in locating a missing *bir* from Burj Jawahar Singh Wala village. Provocative handwritten posters had also been pasted near Bargari gurdwara, putting forth a challenge to the Panthic leaders to identify those accused of stealing the *bir*.

After simmering for a while, the religious passions came to a boil. Protesters blocked roads on October 14, and among them was

Gurjot. And the youth who died with him, Krishan Bhagwan Singh of Niamwala. His house bears a forlorn look with a group of women, including his mother, sitting on a charpoy. His father Mohinder Singh is wary of talking to strangers, and would rather be left alone.

That's also the case with Parminder Kaur of Panjgrain Khurd village (on the jurisdictional dividing line of Fardikot and Moga districts). She will never forget what happened in the early hours of October 16. A team of a dozen or so policemen barged into her house, seeking her brothers. Other policemen had surrounded the village.

Getting a sense of it all

BATHINDA has grown into a rich town with infrastructure that could be the envy of many places in Punjab.

The pocket borough of the first family of Punjab politics stands far ahead of other towns of the state in many regards, yet there is a palpable sense of rage against the ruling dispensation. The failure of the cotton crop badly singed the farmers and they blame the government for the questionable insecticide that was supplied to them. As one activist put it: "The first target of the anger is the local representative of the Shiromani Akali Dal or the SGPC, but soon it goes up to the most visible targets, the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister." Remedial measures undertaken by the government are perceived as a case of too little, too late. SGPC members have largely been marginalised.

Incidents of desecration have hurt religious sentiments. However, people are wary, the timing is suspicious and there is a sense that some "agencies" are behind them. The attempt to pin the blame on Dera followers was unsuccessful, and people have managed to keep their cool in spite of a number of provocative incidents in various villages. For this, the credit goes to the ordinary man on the street, who is wise

enough to avoid falling into any trap that would communalise the situation. Coupled with this is active and visible support from non-Sikh communities, especially in urban areas.

A perception of initial apathy by the police, and highhandedness in dealing with the protests that sprang later, fed public anger. After two suspects were arrested from Panjgrain Khurd, the village was unanimous in asserting their innocence in any blasphemous activity. The police eventually released the suspects, and lost credibility in the process. More arrests have been made, and some people have allegedly confessed to their role in other desecration incidents, but the police have yet to provide a credible answer to the question of who has done all this and why. However, the recent change in the police leadership, and subsequently in the manner of its operation, has already yielded some positive results.

Political parties are now active in the region, and this is making new headlines. It would be utterly irresponsible of politicians to exploit a situation like this. SAD leaders speak of the situation taking a political turn. This is true, but nothing new. The public anger is against the political establishment, now other parties too have jumped into the fray. The cauldron is simmering at the moment, every sane person would want it to cool down, not to boil over.

The gurdwara in Burj Jawahar Singh Wala village, from where the *bir* of the holy Guru Granth Sahib had gone missing on June 1.



“

Politics without ideology is the root of the problem. Our politics has become personality-oriented and we see the same economic agenda that is advocated by people who are supposed to be poles apart. We have a feudalistic structure that is not democracy-friendly, and since we go from one election to another, we have short-sighted economic planning and do not plan for the future.

Prof Paramjit Singh Romana, AUTHOR-ACADEMICIAN

“

People take to the streets because they have no way to express themselves. Thinkers played a great role in European revolutions, but our intellectuals like to stay away from politics. However, politics has a fundamental impact on our lives. The issue of farmers' suicide is causing anger. The bedrock of rural economy is farming and if a farmer dies, it impacts not only his family, but others too.

Neetu Arora, POET-AUTHOR-ACADEMICIAN

“

The SGPC has not been able to provide proper leadership after it backtracked on the Nanakshahi Calendar. The youth is angry on various issues and is taking to the streets.

Balwant Singh Nandgarh, FORMER JATHEDAR, TAKHT SRI DAMDAM SAHIB

“

“We were offered ‘rule’ if we didn’t oppose”

ROOPINDER SINGH &
SARBJIT DHALIWAL

Nowhere was the Emergency as stoutly resisted as in Punjab, where the Shiromani Akali Dal launched a series of protests in which tens of thousands of Akali workers and leaders courted arrest.

DEMOCRATIC freedom was suspended and India effectively placed under a dictatorship after the imposition of an “internal emergency” from the night of June 25, 1975, by President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, acting on the advice of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

Nowhere was it as stoutly resisted as in Punjab, where the Shiromani Akali Dal launched a series of protests in which tens of thousands of Akali workers and leaders courted arrest. As Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal told *The Tribune*, Shiromani Akali Dal leaders were assured that they could ‘rule’ Punjab provided they didn’t oppose the Emergency, but they spurned the offer. The *morcha* continued till the Emergency was lifted in 1977.

Four decades after the promulgation of the Emergency, Badal goes down memory lane to talk about his life behind bars and some lessons that can be drawn from the painful experiences of that time.

On ‘mistakes’ like the Emergency
In life, more so in politics, when someone takes a wrong step, he or she can have a mighty fall. I have great respect for our Prime Ministers but some of them made mistakes for which they paid a terrible price.

If we look at history, we see how Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, a great man, never recovered from how he miscalculated China’s response and the subsequent loss of Indian territory. Lal Bahadur Shastri took to heart the critical response to his decision to sign the peace agreement between India and Pakistan after the war of 1965, so much so that he lost his life with the shock that very night. Rajiv Gandhi sent the Indian Army to Sri Lanka, and this led to a great loss for the Army and to him personally.

Now if we look at Indira Gandhi, she committed two Himalayan blunders — the imposition of the Emergency and the attack on Harmandar Sahib. Imposing the Emergency was a blunder. No matter how shrewd she was, she did not understand the sentiments of people. Various people are said to have influenced her, but the final decision, in both cases, was hers alone. She had to pay the price for that also, since the country has a democratic foundation that its people firmly believe in. Even when she lifted the Emergency, she did so because she was unable to judge the mood of the people.

On Akali Dal’s role

I am very proud that the Shiromani Akali Dal was the only political party in India which took a principled stand



Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal: The Shiromani Akali Dal’s role during the Emergency has not been acknowledged PHOTO: ROOPINDER SINGH

against the Emergency. It followed the teachings of the Gurus to fight against injustice, coercion and oppression of the people. The very first day that the Emergency was imposed, we held a meeting at Amritsar to discuss the situation. A messenger from Indira Gandhi brought the offer of perpetual ‘rule’ with no interference from the Congress government at the Centre, if we did not oppose the Emergency.

We, however, were not bothered about ruling Punjab. We had to consider what role to play, given our history and her-

itage. We decided to launch a *morcha* against the Emergency. We were the only political party to launch a series of protests against the Emergency.

At the very beginning, top leaders like Jathedar Gurcharan Singh Tohra and Jagdev Singh Talwandi and I courted arrest (barring Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, who was to organise the *morcha*). We led from the front, even though it was said that only our bones would be returned to our homes after the Emergency.

I feel distressed that the role of the Shiromani Akali Dal has not been given

due recognition. Whenever the nation has faced any challenge, our leaders have stood up for secular values and for the nation, yet we are called communal, even separatists.

On being imprisoned

I was jailed for 19 months in various places, Ludhiana for a little while and Tihar Jail in Delhi for the longest period. Tihar Jail had the largest concentration of political prisoners. I had Chaudhary Charan Singh, Atma Singh and Maharani Gayatri Devi’s son as my barrack mates.

Tihar Jail was an unusual place. A saintly man was accused of being a *tantric* who had influenced the Allahabad High Court judgment against Indira Gandhi. He and his son were incarcerated with us. He told me that he did not expect to live long, because he would only drink cow’s milk and water from the Ganga. “We will get you cow’s milk, but *Gangajal* will take time,” I told him.

Many warders had cows in the jail, which were fed food meant for the prisoners. So we arranged the milk and later got him his water too. He told me to get a register so that he could repay me. I got it and he would give me a *nuskha* every day.

Initially, we are not allowed to meet

other political prisoners, but later the conditions were relaxed and we held some preliminary discussions about forming a political group that became the Janata Party. I met my family infrequently, and that too in the presence of a jail superintendent and a person from the Intelligence Bureau. Sukhbir was only 14 at the time.

The Akali Dal workers had courted arrest because they were on a mission. Akali Dal workers have never sought to reduce their sentence by tendering an apology. There were people who did not seek any relaxation even to attend the funeral of their sons. The nation has not understood, let alone recognise, the true contribution of the Shiromani Akali Dal.

When the Emergency was lifted

We were released after the Emergency. We were, naturally, out of touch with what was happening outside the jail. We decided to go to the Golden Temple to offer our obeisance. You can’t imagine the reception we got. The towns on the way were decorated as if for a wedding party. Members of various associations would be waiting outside the city to welcome us. I have never seen a similar level of respect being accorded to those in politics as I did during that time.

Mrs Gandhi had declared elections soon after lifting the Emergency. When we contested the elections, we did not have to ask for votes, we did not need funds to run our campaigns, but the money kept pouring in. The response cut across all sectarian and divisive lines. People voted for us on their own.

I remember a man at Bhawanigarh Mandi, wearing worn-out clothes. When people were giving me money for the elections, he dropped a wallet in my lap. I asked him to stay and he did so. When the crowd had thinned down, I told him that I appreciated his gesture, but we did not need the money.

“I had come to the market to buy groceries for my family and I had brought the Rs 80 that we had. But when I saw all this, I thought that I must contribute to the cause, we will manage somehow,” he said, adding that he would be offended if I did not take his money. Such was the spirit at that time.

Why Janata Party failed

There were many sub-units in the Janata Party, and even after they had merged, they continued to work in various directions, often at cross-purposes. Indira Gandhi’s arrest, too, was a mistake. It triggered off a sympathy wave among the people.

Lessons from the Emergency
Indians are deeply democratic, and anyone who tampers with this spirit pays a price. Indira Gandhi paid the price of this mistake. Everyone, especially the rulers, should realise that the Indian people do not tolerate injustice, coercion and oppression. Political people at all levels should be judicious in dealing with people at large, including their political opponents.

You do not have the right to trouble anyone. I have helped out my opponents when they needed my assistance. I put in a word to Morarji Desai to bring Harcharan Singh Brar, who had fought an election against me, as Governor from Orissa to Haryana.

People do not tolerate any injustice. I feel that once the elections are over, everyone must work together for common goals.



The declaration of Emergency carried in *The Tribune* on June 27, 1975



Parkash Singh Badal addresses a rally after the Emergency in Muktsar

ON THIS DAY... 100 YEARS AGO

The Tribune.

LAHORE, FRIDAY, JUNE 25, 1915

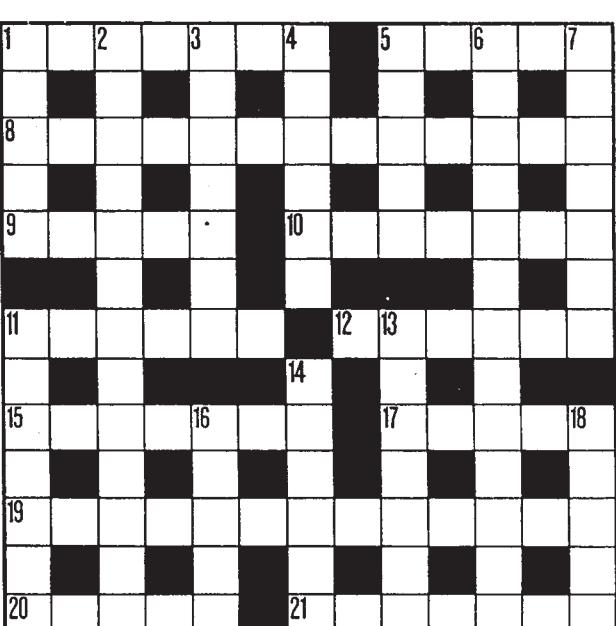
A Governor in Council for U.P.

AT last the *Pioneer* has come to the conclusion that there is no insurmountable barrier to the creation of a Governor in Council for the United Provinces by means of executive action. It has shattered to pieces the bogey of impossibility conjured up by the *Calcutta Englishman* and pointed out how with perfect legality the Province of Agra can be raised to a Presidency and Oudh subsequently added to it. In this case, it appears, there will be a small difficulty as regards Legislative Council, but it can be overcome in U.P. as in Bengal. It is no small relief to find the *Pioneer* conclude as follows: “A consideration of the Consolidation Bill and of the existing provisions of the law therefore appears to show that there is no insurmountable difficulty in proceedings in the first instance by executive action to constitute a Governor-in-Council for the United Provinces, but such action would require to be supplemented by legislation on the lines of that undertaken for Bengal by the Government of India Act, 1912.”

The New Secretary of State for India

THE LONDON correspondent of a contemporary points out the good points of Mr. Austen Chamberlain and says that they are of importance to the guidance of Indian affairs at this important juncture. From his undergraduate days at the Trinity College Mr. Chamberlain was distinguished, says the writer, for his high sense of duty and steadfast conscientiousness and these qualities he still retains. He refers to the fact that the late Mr. Gladstone listened with eager pleasure to “Austen’s” Maiden speech and congratulate his father upon it, predicting for his son a great career. It remains to be seen how the new Secretary of State directs the affairs of this great country.

QUICK CROSSWORD



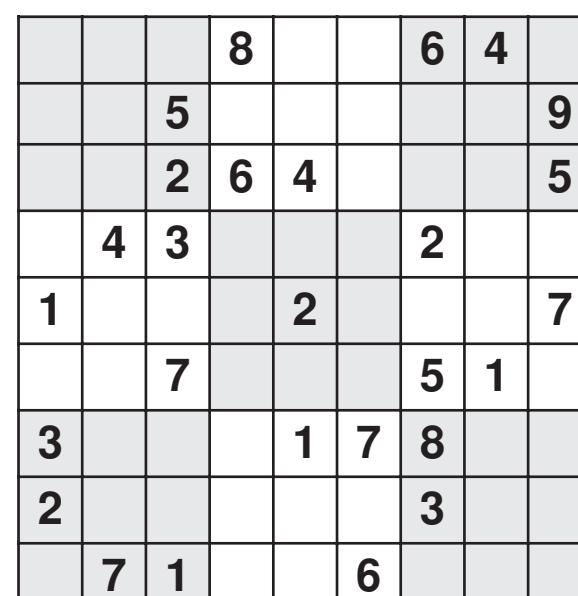
ACROSS

- 1 West African Atlantic country (7)
- 5 Wrath (5)
- 8 Grossly excessive (3,4,3,3)
- 9 Of the kidneys (5)
- 10 No Clue
- 11 Piercingly cold (6)
- 12 Thwart (6)
- 15 In a perfect world (7)
- 17 Fibre used in rope-making (5)
- 19 Repeatedly (5,3,5)
- 20 Clothing (5)
- 21 By that means (7)
- 1 Haul down (5)
- 2 Unacceptable as behaviour (6,3,4)
- 3 Rotate (7)
- 4 Exposure to public notice (6)
- 5 Loathe (5)
- 6 Understand what is meant (3,3,7)
- 7 Beat off (7)
- 11 Member of robber band (7)
- 13 Having left a valid will (7)
- 14 Young swan (6)
- 16 Railway tracks (5)
- 18 Ungracefully tall and thin (5)

DOWN

- 2 Let loose, 3 Phase out, 4 Peletta, 5 Sleek, 6 Seoul, 7 Alter, 12 Gem, 13 Got, 14 Live wire, 15 Mixed bag, 19 Elated, 20 Afoot, 21 Creep, 22 Basis.
- 1 Slope, 8 Pell-mell, 9 Stoat, 10 To be sure, 11 Covet, 12 Gag, 16 Astore, 17 Origin, 18 Met, 23 Level, 24 Fire away, 25 Limbo, 26 One-sided, 27 Feign.
- 7 Fibre used in rope-making (5)
- 9 Repeatedly (5,3,5)
- 10 Clothing (5)
- 12 By that means (7)
- 14 Young swan (6)
- 16 Railway tracks (5)
- 18 Ungracefully tall and thin (5)

SU DO KU



Yesterday's solution

2	9	8	4	3	7	6	5	1
5	3	1	8	2	6	4	9	7
4	7	6	1	9	5	3	8	2
7	6	9	5	8	1	2	4	3
8	4	3	7	6	2	5	1	9
1	2	5	3	4	9	7	6	8
9	8	2	6	7	4	1	3	5
6	5	7	9	1	3	8	2	4
3	1	4	2	5	8	9	7	6

CALENDAR

JUNE 25, 2015, THURSDAY		
■ Shri Vikrami Samvat 2072		
■ Shaka Samvat 1937 (Aashad shaka 4)		
■ Aashad Parvite 11		
■ Hijri 1436		
■ Shukla Paksh Tithi 8 up to 5.46 am		
■ Vari yoga up to 4.38 pm		
■ Hast nakshatra up to 10.23 pm		
■ Moon in Virgo sign		

FORECAST

SUNSET: FRIDAY		THURSDAY		19:30 HRS	
SUNRISE:		05:22 HRS			
Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy	Rainy	Foggy	
CITY	MAX	MIN			
Chandigarh	35	24			
New Delhi	34	24			
PUNJAB					
Amritsar	34	22			
Bathinda	35	24			
Jalandhar	34	22			
Ludhiana	35	24			
Patiala	35	24			
HARYANA					
Ambala	35	24			
Bhiwani	36	24			
Hisar	36	24			
Karnal	35	24			
Sirsia	36	24			
HIMACHAL PRADESH					
Dharamsala	27	16			

The Khushwant Singh Literary Festival, which begins at Kasauli today, is a celebration of the creativity of India's most-read author, who has lived life on his own terms and continues to do so at 97

With a bit of malice and loads of fun

ROOPINDER SINGH

COLUMNIST, journalist, scholar, historian, diplomat and lawyer—Khushwant Singh wears many hats, even as he seldom sports the turban these days. But then, at 97, he can pretty much do what he wants to now, which is what he has done most of his life.

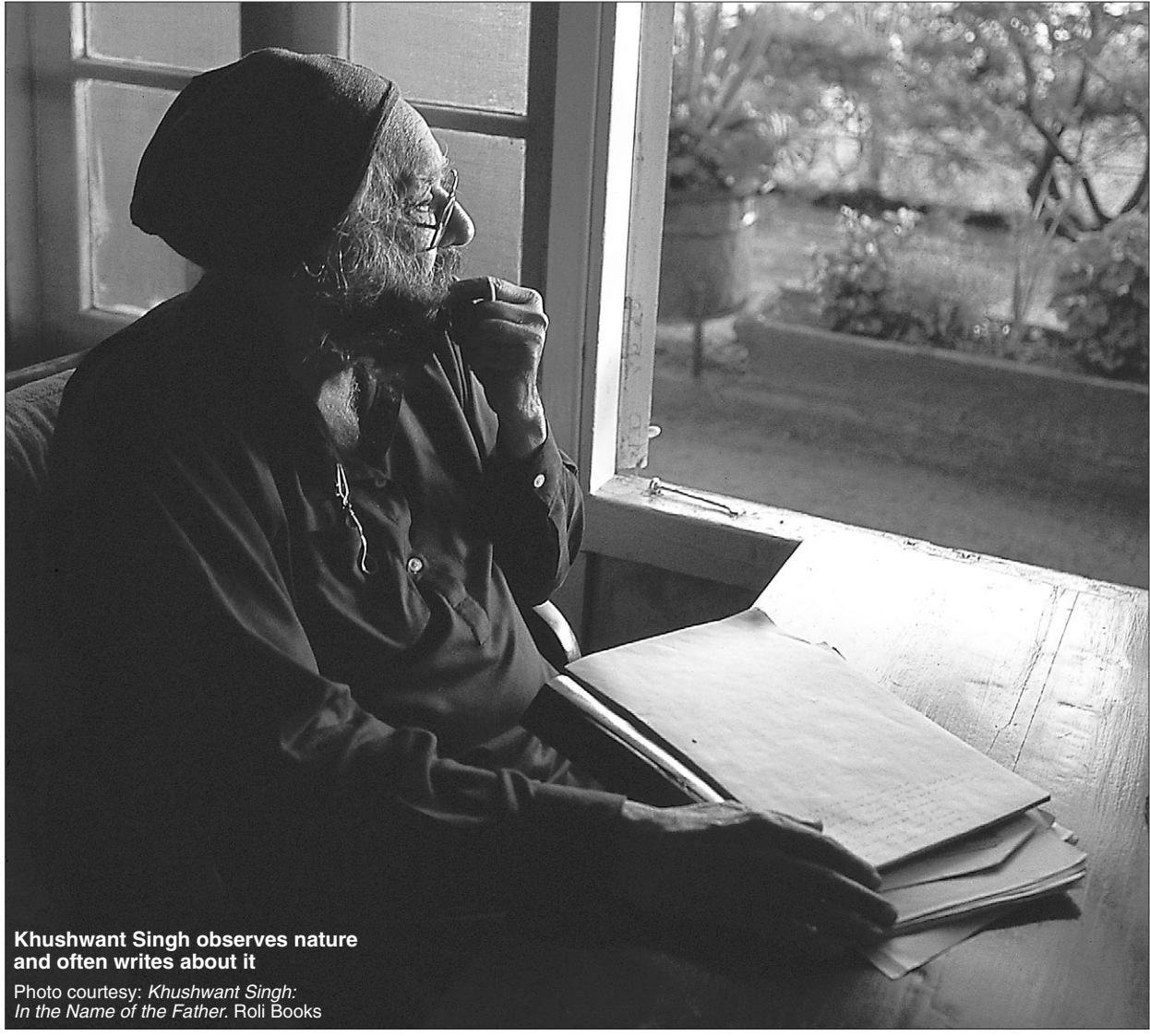
Lakhs of readers in India meet Khushwant Singh through his columns translated into many languages and published across the country. His books have contributed substantially to Indian literature and the study of Sikhism. He has raised controversies, lived life to the fullest, and now is one of the rare individuals having a literary event named after him—the Khushwant Singh Literary Festival—which gets off to a start today at his favourite hill station, Kasauli.

Khushwant Singh was one of the earliest students of Modern School, Delhi, after which he attended St Stephen's College, Delhi, where he was more devoted to tennis than academics. He did clear his Intermediate Arts exam and went to Government College, Lahore, to study law, a pursuit that took him to England, where he did his LLB at King's College, London.

London introduced him to different shades of romance. He met his wife-to-be there, Kaval Malik, daughter of Sir Teja Singh Malik, whom he remembered as a gawky schoolmate. By then she was a much-sought-after beauty. His earlier misadventures in the UK are faithfully documented in *Truth, Love & A Little Malice*, his autobiography, an engaging and candid account of his life.

After he returned to India, Khushwant Singh tried to make a living as a pleader, without notable success. He, however, put his time in Lahore to good use by spending as much of it as he could with many creative people and literary luminaries in the cultural capital of North India.

The Partition made him move from Lahore to Delhi, the city that his father, Sir



Khushwant Singh observes nature and often writes about it

Photo courtesy: Khushwant Singh: In the Name of the Father. Roli Books

Sobha Singh, helped to build as a contractor. He also moved away from law and focused his energy on writing. What he saw as he left Lahore became the subject of a story, *Mano Majra*, which won him a \$1,000 prize from Grove Press. The story of Mano Majra village became the famous *Train to Pakistan* (first published in January 1956), and established him as a creative writer.

Scholar first

Unlike many writers, Khushwant Singh scholarly work dominates the early period, when he translated parts of Sikh scriptural texts, worked for the Unesco and lived with his family, which now includes his son Rahul and daughter Mala, in Paris. Two years

later, he quit, without a job in hand. Earlier, he had served in Canada and the UK as an Indian diplomat, but left the service, much to his father's disappointment.

An editorship of *Yojana*, a government publication, came his way in 1957, but he did not find it fulfilling. With the support of the Rockefeller Foundation, he wrote a *History of the Sikhs*, followed by a biography of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and a book on the Anglo-Sikh wars—all came out in the four years that Khushwant Singh spent on this project, during which period he also taught at the University of Rochester, Princeton University and University of Hawaii.

Lucidity and research define these volumes, and both point towards the disciplined person

that the writer is, contrary to a carefully cultivated image of a bohemian and an epicurean, a persona most people are familiar with, and indeed identify with, somewhat erroneously.

Personal discipline

He is known to drink only Scotch or single malt, and in the case the host doesn't have his brand, the grand old man will get one himself, and the guests are welcome to drink from it, as long as he is there with them. Dinner has to be served at the proper time (by 8 p.m.) and he retires early, even if the party is at his home and the guest is Rajiv Gandhi.

Khushwant Singh is a disciplined person. He gets up and writes every morning, takes his deadlines seriously. He is knowledgeable about birds, trees, flowers and var-

ious aspects of nature.

As his son Rahul Singh likes to point out, it was a case of father following the son into a profession. Rahul had been an Assistant Editor with *The Times of India* in Bombay for five years, when Khushwant Singh was offered the editorship of *The Illustrated Weekly of India*. Rahul left Bombay to become the first Indian editor of *Reader's Digest*. Since Kaval did not want to move from Delhi, Khushwant Singh moved into the PG accommodation that Rahul had previously occupied in Bombay.

Stint as editor

The Illustrated Weekly of India soon became the most sought-after magazine. Its circulation grew from one lakh to over four lakh copies per week. Khushwant Singh men-

tored bright journalists who became successful editors later, including M J Akbar, Bachi Karkaria, Bikram Vohra, and even JIS (Jiggs) Kalra, the famous cook book writer and food critic.

Khushwant Singh was at the top of the world, till it all came crashing down with his abrupt removal, evidently at political behest. The writer returned to Delhi where later he was to edit *The National Herald* and eventually *The Hindustan Times*, where he had a three-year stint.

Controversies & courage

Khushwant Singh and controversies often went hand in hand. Be it the salacious details of gossip that make way into his columns and writing, his fondness for Scotch and girls who gossip, he is a man of contrasts and has unfailingly waged a war against priggish mindsets.

He liked Indira Gandhi but opposed the Emergency. He was fond of Sanjay Gandhi and his wife Maneka, and paid the price for it when Indira Gandhi turned against Maneka, and Khushwant Singh refused to do so. On the other hand, it was Maneka Gandhi's petition to the Supreme Court that held up the publication of the author's autobiography for five years!

He was among the few who stood up to Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and the extremists, and wrote fearlessly against them. This earned him a place on the hit list of the militants who called him a Congress stooge. It was with that party's support that he became a member of Rajya Sabha from 1980-1986. His returning the Padma Bhushan, awarded to him 10 years earlier, to protest against Operation Bluestar earned him the wrath of Congress leaders and many others.

He was awarded the Padma Vibhushan in 2007, a decoration he proudly accepted. However, controversies often arise because of what he writes. Bengalis were upset with him for his comments on Rabindranath Tagore. Marathas lambasted him for what he said about Shivaji, but he has managed to take it all in his stride.

Everyone one meets has a Khushwant Singh story to tell, either something that has been read, or an interaction that became a memorable moment, or some inspiration that changed the direction of a person's life. Such is the man who has lived life on his own terms and has never allowed the inkwell of his creativity to run dry.

He is an ardent admirer of Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa, but the admiration comes with reservations.

His admirers come from all sections of society, and include some of the most prominent people, Indians and foreigners alike.

Popular columnist

Tens of lakhs of readers in India read Khushwant Singh's columns. *This Above All* is published weekly in *The Tribune* and in many other newspapers in many languages. *With Malice Towards One and All*, is published in the *Hindustan Times*.

SESSION 2

6.30 to 7.30 p.m.: Books 2 Movies and Beyond

Panellists: Rahul Bose, Madhu Jain, Bhaichand Patel

FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

VENUE: KASauli CLUB

Friday, October 12

INAUGURAL SESSION

5 p.m.: Welcome address by Ashok Chopra

5.05 to 6.30 p.m.: "Till the pen drops", a film

Launch of 'The Free

Thinkers Prayer Book'

Panellists: Mani Shankar Aiyar, Lord Meghnad Desai, Shobhaa De, Bachi Karkaria, Rahul Singh

SESSION 2

6.30 to 7.30 p.m.: Books 2

Movies and Beyond

Panellists: Rahul Bose, Madhu Jain, Bhaichand Patel

Saturday, October 13

SESSION 3

9.30 to 10.20 a.m.: Train to Pakistan

Panellists: Mani Shankar Aiyar, Lord Meghnad Desai, Bachi Karkaria, Rahul Singh

SESSION 4

10.40 to 11.20 a.m.: Art in the Mountains

Panellists: Yashodhara Dalmia, Dr B N Goswami

SESSION 5

11.20 a.m. to 12.10 p.m.: Making of a Dream: Sanawar and Kasauli

Panellists: Dr Harish Dhillon, Mandep Rai, Raaja Bhasin

SESSION 6

12.10 to 1 p.m.: The Hills are Alive

Panellists: Ruskin Bond, Ganesh Saili

SESSION 7

2 to 2.50 p.m.: Shobhaa and Khushwant: where Mars and Venus meet

Panellists: Shobhaa De, Satish Jacob

SESSION 8

2.50 to 3.30 p.m.: Many Paritions, Many Legacies: Faiz Ahmed Faiz

Panelist: Salima Hashmi

SESSION 9

3:45 to 4:35 p.m.: A Passion Unchained: Dagsai & its Jail Museum

Panelist: Anand Sethi

SESSION 10

4.35 to 5.25 p.m.: A Home in Himachal

Panellists: Romi Khosla, Raaja Bhasin

SESSION 11

5.25 to 6.15 p.m.: Translations from the Hindi Heartland

Panelist: Gillian Wright

Sunday, October 14

SESSION 12

9.30 to 10.20 a.m.: Holidays in Kasauli

Panellists: Deepi Naval, Navtej Sarna, Inderjit Badhwar, Minakshi Chaudhury

SESSION 14

11.25 a.m. to 12.15 p.m.: History of the Sikhs

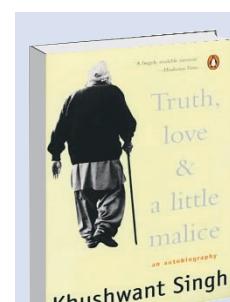
Panellists: Navtej Sarna, Suneet Aiyar

SESSION 15

12.15 to 1.10 p.m.: The Terrorist

Panellists: Juggie Bhasin, Lt Gen (Retd) Kamal Davar

LITERARY TIMELINE



- The Mark of Vishnu and Other Stories*, 1950
- The History of Sikhs*, 1953
- Train to Pakistan*, 1956
- The Voice of God and Other Stories*, 1957
- I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale*, 1959
- The Sikhs Today*, 1959

- The Fall of the Kingdom of the Punjab*, 1962
- Ranjit Singh: The Maharaja of the Punjab*, 1963
- Ghadar 1915: India's First Armed Revolution*, 1966
- A Bride for the Sahib and Other Stories*, 1967
- Black Jasmine*, 1971
- Tragedy of Punjab*, 1984
- Delhi: A Novel*, 1990
- Sex, Scotch and Scholarship: Selected Writings*, 1992
- Not a Nice Man to Know: The Best of*

- Khushwant Singh*, 1993
- We Indians*, 1993
- Women and Men in My Life*, 1995
- Declaring Love in Four Languages*, by Khushwant Singh and Sharda Kaushik, 1997
- The Company of Women*, 1999
- Truth, Love and a Little Malice (an autobiography)*, 2002
- The End of India*, 2003
- Burial at the Sea*, 2004

- Paradise and Other Stories*, 2004
- Death at My Doorstep*, 2005
- The Illustrated History of the Sikhs*, 2006
- Why I Supported the Emergency: Essays and Profiles*, 2009
- The Sunset Club*, 2010
- Agnostic Khushwant Singh, There is no GOD*, 2012
- The Freethinker's Prayerbook*, 2012

Selective list

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNICAL TEACHERS' TRAINING & RESEARCH, SECTOR-26, CHANDIGARH
(Established by Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development)

Phone 0172-2759500, 2759514, 2759602

Website: www.nittcrhd.ac.in

TENDER NOTICE NO.59

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are invited from registered contractors / firms for improving internal roads in campus by laying cement concrete interlocking paving blocks and cement concrete chequered tiles (Interlocking Pavement Blocks & Chequered Tiles shall be provided by the Institute). Detailed requirements and specifications are available on the Institute Website. Last date for receipt of completed / downloaded tender document is 30th October, 2012 upto 5:00 p.m. Technical and financial bids shall have to be submitted in two separate envelopes.

DIRECTOR

ROORKEE MARATHON 2012
21 OCT 2012
OUR VETERANS OUR INSPIRATION

THE BENGAL SAPPERS PRESENT TO YOU

THE ROORKEE MARATHON AND HALF MARATHON ON 21 OCT 2012 WHICH IS BEING DEDICATED TO OUR VETERANS - OUR INSPIRATION

EVENT 1

ROORKEE MARATHON
42 Kms
All above 18 Yrs of age
Entry Fee Rs 300/-
1st Prize 45,000/-

Total Prizes Worth 2.3 Lakhs
And a range of attractive Souvenirs

EVENT 2

THE MAKING OF THE REVOLUTIONARY

Bhagat Singh was a well-read, articulate young man who significantly impacted Indian history and left behind a legacy that even 80 years after his martyrdom is still very much a part of our cultural ethos

ROOPINDER SINGH

COMMITTED communicator, perceptive, passionate, admirable...any young person would be flattered to be the subject of any one of these adjectives. What would happen if all of them, and many more, were used for the same person? Well, he would be a legend—Shaheed. The legacy of the man is such that his name sounds incomplete without this prefix. Bhagat Singh, the freedom fighter, has been immortalised as martyr, so much so that we often forget to acknowledge the person who accomplished the feats that helped change the course of Indian history.

Was it his sacrifice alone that made Bhagat Singh great? No, not at all! There is much more to this man who did not get to celebrate his 24th birthday, but has left a robust and inspiring legacy recognised even 80 years after he was martyred, so much so that numerous political groups want to appropriate his legacy.

To understand Bhagat Singh is a difficult task. Though he did not live for long, as we journey through his life, we realise that it was action-packed—events around him shaped Bhagat Singh's mind. Eventually, he was to have a tremendous effect on shaping history.

The Punjab, during the days of Bhagat Singh's childhood, was in turmoil. He was only 12-year-old when, on April 13, 1919, Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer ordered his soldiers to open fire on an unarmed gathering of men, women and children at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar. The firing lasted about 10 minutes and 1,600 rounds were fired. Official sources placed the casualties at 379, others said the number was over 1,000, with more than 2,000 wounded. It is one of the most horrific events of Indian history.

Although Bhagat Singh initially studied at District Board Primary School in Banga, Lyalpur district, which is now in Pak-

istan, he was studying at DAV High School, Lahore, by this time. It was regarded by the British as a "nursery of seditious activities". Bhagat Singh was precocious, but not studious. He read a wide range of books, and was fluent in Urdu, and he used this language to write his first letter to his grandfather, Arjun Singh.

He was 14 when, on February 20, 1921, at Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Nanak, there was an incident that left a deep impact on him. Narain Das, who was the custodian of Nankana Sahib, and his men, fired on Akali protesters. The firing was widely condemned, and an agitation was

launched till the control of this historic gurdwara was restored to the Sikhs. Bhagat Singh served *langar* (food) to volunteers who passed through his village on their way to Nankana Sahib.

When he was 16, there came the Jaito Morcha of 1923, which was an Akali agitation for the restoration of Maharaja Rupindran Singh of Nabha who had strong nationalistic sympathies.

It was in this backdrop of unrest and the harsh coercive power of the state, which was being used to quell legitimate protests, that Bhagat Singh the martyr was shaped. Often the youth are accused of being rudderless, but what is forgotten is that sometimes young people have a clear vision of what they see as their role in future, and single-mindedly work on it.

By the time he was 16, Bhagat Singh had made conscious choices about what he had to do with his life—he dedicated it to the cause of securing freedom for India. In doing so, he did not follow the constitutional approach of B.G. Gokhale and his supporters. Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation movement did not hold his interest for long. For Bhagat Singh his course lay in following a revolutionary course, even if it meant taking a route of violence in facing the might of the British Raj.

In 1923, Bhagat Singh joined National College, Lahore, where he made a



Illustration: Sandeep Joshi

BHAGAT SINGH THE LAST WORD

A BRIEF BUT EVENTFUL LIFE

Date of Birth: September 28, 1907.

Place of Birth: Chak No. 105, Banga village, Jaranwala Tehsil, Lyalpur district, now in Pakistan.

Grandfather: Arjan Singh.

Father: Kishan Singh.

Mother: Vidyawati.

Siblings: Jagat Singh, Kulbir Singh, Kultar Singh, Rajinder Singh, Ranbir, Amar Kaur, Sumitra (Parkash Kaur), Shakuntla.

Education: Primary School, Banga, Lyalpur; DAV School, Lahore; National College, Lahore (passed FA and left while doing BA).

Historical highlights

1924: Left his parents and went to Kanpur to work with other revolutionary leaders.

1926: Established Naujwan Bharat Sabha, Lahore.

1928: December 17—shot dead Saunders.

1929: April 8—threw bomb in Central Legislative Assembly, was arrested.

1930: October 7—Awarded death sentence by the Special Tribunal in Lahore.

1931: March 23—Hanged till death at Central Jail, Lahore.

ious revolutionaries from across India was called in Delhi under the banner of the Kirti Kisan Party. Bhagat Singh was the secretary of the meet. His later revolutionary activities were carried out as a leader of this association.

Bhagat Singh and his compatriots killed a British police officer to avenge the death of Lala Lajpat Rai who succumbed to his injuries following a brutal beating by the police. Later, Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt, another revolutionary, threw a bomb in the Lahore Assembly to protest against the Defence of India Act which gave more power to the police.

They were arrested and imprisoned. Bhagat Singh used all his court appearances not to press for his acquittal or freedom but to espouse the cause of the freedom of the nation, till the very last, and, in fact, even beyond that.

Shaheed Bhagat Singh became an even more potent rallying point against the Raj than Bhagat Singh alive. The slogan *Inqilab Zindabad* that he has rallied under, as he lived the life of a revolutionary, was now substituted by another one—*Bhagat Singh Zindabad*.

Shaheed Bhagat Singh became too much of an icon—everyone wanted to adopt him. In the course of the decades that followed, the young man was appropriated by political groups that claimed him as their own, earlier, and even now, as we have recently seen in Punjab.

We should be grateful that Bhagat Singh wrote a fair deal and through his articles and diaries, we get glimpses of the mind of the man. The picture that emerges is of a person with an intellect and expression far beyond his years. He was well read, and a number of his letters from the Lahore Jail refer to books or request his friends to send him book and other reading material. On March 23, 1931, Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev were hanged in Lahore.

He was a nationalist, a hero and a youth who became an icon. Even as political parties seek mileage by associating with his name, one cannot but help feeling that Bhagat Singh would have taken to task the pretenders who are not, by any stretch of imagination, as committed to ideals as he was.

Chavan says he wasn't aware of negative report on Thomas

Mumbai: Making a statement in the Assembly on Tuesday, Maharashtra's CM Prithviraj Chavan said he was not aware of any negative report or criminal cases against former Central Vigilance Commissioner PJ Thomas, who had to quit in controversial circumstances. Chavan, who was minister

attached to the PMO in New Delhi before taking over as the Chief Minister last year, said he had suggested three names, including one serving bureaucrat for the CVC post. According to the CM, the Central Vigilance Commission in a letter dated June 25, 2007, had cleared the name of Thomas. —TNS

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Wedding of the season!

ANITA KATYAL
OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, MARCH 22

The who's who in Delhi is vying with each other for an invite to what promises to be "the wedding of the season."

Congress president Sonia Gandhi's political secretary Ahmed Patel's son, Faizal, is to be married on March 25. The reception is to be held two days later at a bungalow on Aurangzeb Road

understandable as Patel is arguably the most powerful leader in the Congress, next only to the party president.

Realising that the wedding could become the talking point in Delhi, Patel has exercised extreme caution and the reception invitation lists his daughter and son-in-law as hosts.

It is learnt, the groom will wear a 'sherwani', created by Tarun Tahiliani, while the bride's 'lehenga' has been designed by Rohit Bal. The 'nikaah' on Friday will be preceded by a 'mehndi' ceremony and a special Kashmiri night, which is being hosted by the bride's family.

were studying together. Given Patel's understated persona and the Congress president's repeated emphasis on austerity, the celebrations are understandably slated to be low-key. However, this has not stopped the Capital's rich and powerful from making discreet enquiries about a possible invite for the March 27 reception. Their anxiety is

Karunanidhi invites Vaiko to join DMK front

CHENNAI, MARCH 22

In an astute move to exploit the exit of MDMK leader Vaiko from the AIADMK alliance, Tamil Nadu CM and DMK chief M Karunanidhi has invited the pro-Tiger leader to join the DMK front for the oncoming Assembly elections. In a let-

ter in party organ "Murasoli", Karunanidhi referred to the decision of Vaiko to leave the AIADMK front and boycott the elections and said the pro-LTE leader's support would ensure a thumping victory for the DMK.

Describing Vaiko as a "striped tiger" and "courageous Indrajit" (son of Ravana, who is hailed as a hero by the Dravidian movement), Karunanidhi said all younger brothers of DMK founder CN Annadurai should join hands and troop back to face the "Aryan attack against Dravidians". —TNS

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