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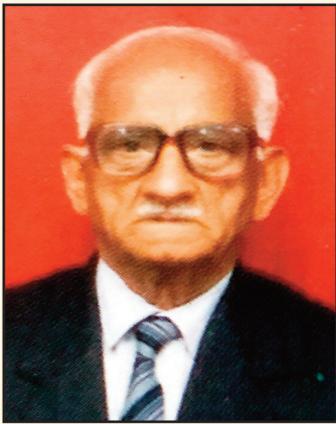
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Remembering Nanak Chand Rattu

Prem Kumar Chumber

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Nanak Chand Rattu had the honour to be a close associate of Dr B.R. Ambedkar for seventeen years. From his first meeting with Dr Ambedkar in 1940 till he had his last breath in 1956, Nanak Chand Rattu remained in constant touch with him. After completing his matriculation in 1938, Nanak Chand Rattu shifted to Delhi in search of government service, which he was able to acquire in 1941 after going through lots of hardships. It was a coincidence that his government service in Delhi offered him the golden opportunity to become a close confidant of Babasaheb Dr Ambedkar, who perhaps found in him a worthwhile person with whom he could share his mind. For Nanak Chand Rattu it was a great challenge to look after enormous handwritten work of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar that he was assigned to convert into typed material. After his official duty, he used to reach Babasaheb's residence at 26 Alipur road every day and to see that all the accumulated work for typewriting was completed before he leaves for his house some 25 kilometers away from the residence of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar. He had also assigned to himself the duties of looking after the health of Dr. Ambedkar. He would also ensure that the proper medicine was taken by Babasaheb, and at times apply massage to relieve him from the overworked induced body-pain. However, the main task for which Babasaheb chosen him to work was to type various manuscripts and letters for correspondence for his mission. He used to reach at the Babasaheb residence after his official duty hours and work over there till late night and returned his house after midnight. This routine continued year after year without any break even on Sunday. "Buddha and his Dhamma", "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India", "The Buddha and Karl Marx", "Riddles of Hinduism" are the most prominent manuscripts that were typed by Nanak Chand Rattu. It took five years to complete the typewriting of these manuscripts. "Buddha and his Dhamma" was published posthumously. It was in the last stage of its completion at the time of Pr Nirvana of Babasaheb Dr Ambedkar on December 6, 1956.



Nanak Chand himself wrote extensively about his reminiscences and various anecdotes that he preserved in his mind while enjoying precious time with Babasaheb. "Reminiscences and Remembrances of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar", "Little Known Facets of Dr. Ambedkar", "Dr Ambedkar: Important Messages, Sayings, Wit and Wisdom", "Last Few Years of Dr. Ambedkar" and also Pioneers of Ambedkar Buddhist Movement in United Kingdom are among the most read books written by Nanak Chand Rattu about Dr. B. R. Ambedkar after his Pr Nirvana. These books provide rich and first-hand information to researchers about the various aspects of the multi-dimensional Babasaheb's missionary life.

Nanak Chand Rattu was a dedicated soldier of Dr. Ambedkar and his mission for the annihilation of caste and upliftment of the lower castes. He completed his mortal life journey on September 15, 2002. His dedication towards Babasaheb and his mission will be remembered for ever. During his life he was awarded with various awards for his contributions towards the mission of Babasaheb. "Ambedkar Times" and "Desh Doaba" weeklies offer floral tributes to this great son of Punjab who dedicated his time and energy in helping spread Babasaheb's mission.

Historicity of Chamar Women's Contribution in the Ambedkarite Movement: Part -7

Kashibai Babaji Jadhav

Miss. Kashibai Babaji Jadhav was an educated woman of the first generation of the Dhor community. There are very few written references to her, but her association with Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar and her contribution to uplifting the Dhor-Chambhar community are very important. Miss. Kashibai Babaji Jadhav studied for a few days at Seva Sadan Institute in Pune. Gopal Krishna Deodhar, the important person in the institute, was called Babasaheb by all the girls. Widowed abandoned women were admitted to this institution. In this institution Miss. Kashibai Babaji Jadhav stayed for some time; later she had to leave the seva sadan. Who studied in Seva Sadan In the autobiography of Gunabai Gadekar, Ms Kashibai Babaji Jadhav is mentioned as follows.

'Another girl from the Dhor community came from Ichalkaranji as Kashibai Jadhav. Seeing that we sit for a long time to eat, she said; I feel somehow. On Monday I did not eat; I used to stand with a plate in the house doors to take snacks. A girl from far away grew khichdi on my plate; It was raining from above. As soon as Kashi saw that, she wrote a letter to Babasaheb (Gopal Krishna Deodhar) saying that the women here are the matrons who treat us like this. Kashibai left. Her education stopped' because of this, we understand how brave Kashibai was. It can be seen that he dared to raise his voice against the injustice and what exactly was Babasaheb's i.e. Gopal Krishna Deodhar's attitude towards women's reform. This is understandable. Kashibai's complaint should have been recorded and the discrimination in the service centre should have been broken, But instead of Ms, It was Kashibai Jadhav who was asked to leave the Seva Sadan.

Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar and Ms Kashibai Jadhav are also related. About this Khairmode has written in detail as follows,

"Miss. Kashibai Babaji Jadhav was a non-matriculation student from the Dhor community. Mr. Pawar's advice, she sent a letter and asked Saheb, he said, "If you want to study further, you should take a nursing course." (Khairmode, 2013:143) This means that with the guidance of Dattoba Powar of Kolhapur, A letter was written to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar also agreed to her request and advised her to take a nursing course. Further, Khairmode writes that the girl stood as Dutt in Saheb's office. Dr. Babasaheb arranged her accommodation and food for (Bapu) Sahasrabudhe. Saheb went and met Dean J. J. to get admission to the hospital. She was not admitted as she was not matriculated. Saheb met the Chief Secretary and made a special case of that girl and got a Rs. 15 government scholarship per month and J. J. got her free admission as a student in the boarding of nurses in the hospital." (Khairmode, 2013: 143) You can see how much effort Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar made for Ms Kashibai Babaji Jadhav. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar started the movement Mahar, Mang, and Chambhar. Dr. Ambedkar was trying very hard to make any person from an untouchable caste work with him.

"It took eight or ten days to complete this case. Until then, the girl was staying at Bapu's house, but she used to spend most of her time in Saheb's office. She used to write three or four letters to someone or someone every day, taking postcards and envelopes from Saheb's table. The work of putting those letters in the post office She told anyone in the office. I had to do the social work of putting these letters in the post many times." (Khairmode 2013:143)

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar wrote the reply to the letters that Babasaheb Ambedkar was receiving and gave them to be put in the post. It appears that Kashibai Babaji Jadhav did it. From the answers written to the letters. From this, it can be said that Kashibai must have been familiar with the movement of untouchables.

"Before going to J. J. Hospital, Mr. Saheb provided the girl with things such as sheets, towels, bed linen, trunk etc. from the money collected from the public and sent her to the hospital on 10.09.27 in the morning along with Mr. Dhondiram N. Gaikwad. ." (Khairmode, 2013, 143)

Miss. Kashibai Babaji Jadhav's stay in the hospital hostel and the facilities there were taken care of by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar seems to have taken it. "Saheb, on the same day afternoon, was engaged in writing a letter to the Governor saying that Mr Jadhav was not taken as 'Day Collector' by the Government, a great injustice was done to the untouchables, the girl alighted from the Victoria and entered the office. "Sir, I felt dizzy after seeing those human cases and blood pools in the hospital. She said I will not pass this course." (Khairmode, 2013:143)

For which course Ms Kashibai Jadhav to J. J. He was admitted to the hospital, where he was disturbed by seeing dead bodies and blood clots, so she left the course. Later Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Ms. Kashibai Babaji Jadhav was again sent back to her parents in a car. From all the above references Information about Kashibai Jadhav's difficulties in the field of education; But it is evident from the context that she became a teacher later. Kashibai Jadhav is also seen to have contributed to the movement for the 'upliftment of dhor society'. Some members of the community decided to hold a meeting to organize and improve the district-wise Kakkayya community. Similarly, initially during the Pandharpur Yatra. On 22 and 23.11.31, a community meeting was held in front of the Pandharpur Kankkaya Samaj monastery. Mr T A. Sonavane was appointed as the president and many resolutions were passed regarding the commercial progress of the society, educational reform, establishment of co-operative societies and holding public meetings and preaching at the time of district-wise yatra. "Keruji Sheth, Shankarao Gaekwad, Savitribai Borade from Mumbai, Gangadhar Yashwant Pol, K. P. Pol and Kashibai Jadhav from Kolhapur and Fakirappa Ghodke from Hubli were present in this meeting." (Pol, 1981: 179) Kashibai Jadhav's contribution to the caste upliftment of the Dhor community means thinking ahead of time. Gangadhar Yashwant Pol in his autobiography says, "On 15.12.31 there was a convocation of Kolhapur BT College. Professor delivered a lecture on 'Primary Education' Kulkarni was invited by B.T. College Principal Shri. G. S. Deshpande presided over my lecture on 'Primary Education' as a guide for teachers. On this occasion Mrs. Savitribai Borade, Headmistress of Mumbai and Mrs. Kashibai Jadhav, Headmistress of Ichalkaranji were present." (Pol, 1981: 174).

So these references of Kashibai Jadhav are currently available. It shows that she was the headmistress of Ivalkaranji and was active in the movement. "On May 29-30, 1926, the first session of the Maharashtra Chambhar Dhor Parishad was held at Pune. Ms Kashibai Jadhav herself was not present at this conference; but those who sent congratulatory telegrams to the conference; Ms Kashibai Jadhav also sent a congratulatory letter." (Dhor, Chambhar Parishad Report p.No.44)

Since the descendants or relatives of Kashibai Jadhav are still unknown today, it is not possible to write about her life in sequence. From the information available about her in written form, it is seen that she was a woman from Dhor society who took a stand against injustice and was active in the movement for social change.



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Madan Bolina – An Obituary

I was shocked to get a message yesterday, September 2, from one of our common friends Roop Lal Roop about the sudden passing away, on August 31, of my school days friend, Madan-Bolina, a fine man with intellectual pursuits of writing Punjabi poetry and reciting it with great passion. I was totally stunned as Madan spoke to me a week ago and shared with me the good news of an addition to their family. He was elated of becoming a grandfather. Madan was still in the state of celebrations but providence had something else in store. Here one gets helpless.



We studied together up to Matriculation from Sain-Dass School in Basti Nau. Both our families were dependent on small-time leather business in Bootan Mandi though their native place was a flourishing village in the vicinity of Rama Mandi on the Hoshiarpur Road, BolinaDoaba. Earlier his father, Joginder Ram was working with Seth Munshi Ram, to whom they were related socially, at Seth ji's Kohenoar Tanneries in Kanpur in UP. Madan was a handsome and a tall lad with a stylish hairline. One of our school mates and a member of the extended family, Lekh Raj Mahey used to compare, in lighter vein, his hairline with that of Wahi-

daRehman, a famous actor of Hindi cinema n Bollywood. I joined DAV College, after Matriculation and Madan some other College in Jalandhar itself. Subsequently, I went to Delhi in the pursuit of earning bread and butter and joined IFS at the lowest rung in early 1970. We met in Delhi in 1971-72 when he came there for his attempt to



join Delhi Police. Madan himself recalled it me later on return to Jalandhar on my retirement as it was not registered in my feeble memory. He was nostalgic and appreciative of those good old days spent together in a small one room accommodation. It made me feel good. We lost touch in the pursuit of our respective careers. He joined service in the Defense Audit and Accounts and shifted to his village, BolinaDoaba.

On my return to Bootan Mandi in 2011, one day, we bumped into each other at some socio-cultural gathering. He came and introduced himself to me with great humility. Our formative

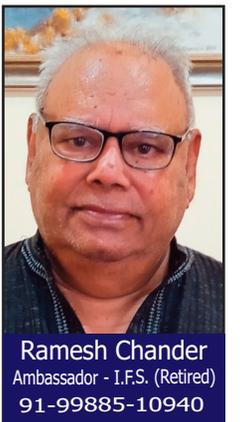
years in school time, sparked into my mind. His humility touched my core and made me feel that he must have had a great regard for me in his heart. We picked up the threads and revived our association particularly with regard to our common interest - his skills of poetry and my simple interest in search of food for thought. We partic-



ipated in many Mushiaras (Poetry recitation functions), me as a Guest and he as a Poet. Madan was a self-effacing personality but I saw him in his spirits while reciting his good and meaningful poetic compositions on the themes of national pride and subjects relating to the weaker sections of the community and the society at large.

One day, we were going to Adampur for a book release where I was the Guest of Honour at a function organized by Adampur Punjabi Sahayatia Sabha in which Madan to participate and join his colleagues in the Sabha for a Mushiaras. Madan impressed me much with recital of his

poem on patriotism targeting Pakistan. On our way back, I asked him, being my fellow Bootan-Mandian, will you like to write some or a write-up for my forthcoming



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book on Bootan Mandi? He was reluctant initially but on persuasion he agreed to his bit and asked for the theme. I suggested writing on

Pritam Ramdasspuri, a talented and acclaimed son of the soil in poetry as Madan had earlier told methat Pritam Ramdasspuri was his literary Guru and one of his mentors. Accordingly, his contribution on Pritam Ramdasspuri adorned my book – Bootan Mandi: Nerve Centre of Dalit Chetna which was launched in April, 2024. Madan participated in the function as an honoured guest.

With the demise of Madan-Bolina, I have lost a dear friend so suddenly. I take this opportunity to pay my tribute to the memory of Madan and convey heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

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Dawn of an era

Metropolitan Capital city takes shape

In the 1930s, Delhi's population of 470,000 was concentrated in the walled city of Old Delhi, encompassed by Lahori/ Ajmeri/Turkman/Delhi/Kashmiri entry gates. The thickly populated area was bursting at the seams. With no contiguous space to expand to, land beyond the periphery came up for consideration. In the north the favourite place was Civil Lines, around which the Old Secretariat/Metcalf House buildings came up, along with the campus of Delhi University. The rich mercantile and trading class (bania) and kayasths (scribes/ advocates) built havelis (mansions) there.

South of the fringe areas, beyond Ajmeri Gate, Sadar Bazar and G.B.Road etc. where land was cheaper, crowded small sized colonies started springing up for poorer sections of the



society—the labourers, artisans, lower caste people with their sub-culture, and red light area. The population by mid 1940s reached a figure close to 700,000.

Nanig Ram bought two residential plots in 1926 at Hanuman Road, off Sansad Marg. Half an acre size plot at number 53, became his dwelling place, while the one at number 22 was for investment purpose. The surrounding area was still a jungle, but with the construction of New Delhi having started, habitation was taking shape slowly. The strategic location of the area has to be seen in the context of the demographic set up that existed in the early 20th century. This enclave is beautifully nestled centrally and strategically, around some historical landmarks around it. It derives its name from an old Hanuman Mandir, which has its own story to tell. The Jantar Mantar observatory is just across, through a bye lane leading to Parliament Street, with its astronomy instruments, made out of large brick structures set in a park. To the west lies the historic Gurudwara Bangla Saheb. On the East is the fashionable shopping centre

Connaught Place inaugurated in 1931. A brief mention of the myth, legend and folklore associated with the surrounding areas, needs to be explored.

Religio-cultural and culinary diversity surrounding Hanuman Mandir

During the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb's reign, Maharaja of Jaipur (Amber) Jai Singh had owned vast tract of land in Delhi, extending from the present Connaught Place, Panchkuin Road, Lady Hardinge Medical College, Shivaji Stadium, right up to Jantar Mantar. Initially the area was called Jai Singh Pura. Now only a small stretch of land on which YMCA is situated, goes by the name of Jai Singh Road. The institutional structure from which the area derives its name pertains to Hanuman Mandir. As per the legend, an image of Hanuman self-manifested itself on the haloed spot here at some point of history.

Maharaja Jai Singh, following his interest/hobby, built Jantar Mantar, as an observatory for astronomical studies, completed around 1728. At the start of construction, as a charitable gesture,



Gurudwara Bangla Sahib

he donated the extra land for extension of the existing old Hanuman Mandir, nearby. The temple authorities explain the development around the present premises, as a result of that benevolence. They cite proof of the connection with Mughal times to the fact that, atop the temple spire on the religious flag, with the usual symbols of 'Om' and 'Shiva', is a half metallic/half-moon replica, that has been adorning it, ever since. It is common knowledge that the crescent moon is auspicious, as per the Islamic belief. This is purported to be an amalgamation of symbols of two religions near one another. It is claimed that as a result of this, the temple was never ransacked by the invading Islamic forces, which plundered Delhi many times in the Middle Ages.

Even before the 1950s, this mandir was a popular place to go to on Tuesdays, the day of special prayers for Hanuman ji. A weekly bazaar on that day assumes the character of a village fair or 'haat'. Amidst festive air, it turns out to be a magical place, with the hustle and bustle and a busy place for shopping for ethnic items. The whole range of Indian savouries are on offer, put up by Chandni Chowk stall owners. There are the mehndi (henna) walis and fortune tellers. It appears as though mini rural India, with its socio-cultural and culinary diversity gets transplanted in the temple surroundings, to make the family outing well worth it. The place hums with activity

and crowd because of the Rajiv Gandhi Chowk terminus of the Delhi Metro network, at the spot.

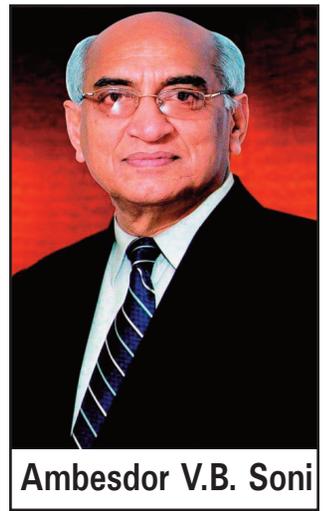
The splendour of Gurudwara Bangla Sahib

At the other end of Hanuman Road is located Gurudwara Bangla Sahib, sacred to the Sikhs and Hindus. At that spot, in the 17th Century, stood Jai Singhpura Palace. During Aurangzeb reign, succession issue of 8th Guru of the Sikhs had to be considered. The designated pre-teen aged Guru Harkishan's elevation was challenged by his elder brother. The former had to visit to Delhi in that connection, during which he was hosted in the bungalow of Jai Singh (1621-24).

At that point of time, the area got afflicted with a lethal epidemic. Guru Harkishan plunged into serving the humble, the sick and the destitute, around the surrounding area, risking

tectural astronomy instruments. Made up of geometric shaped devices, these are for measuring time, predicting eclipses, tracking stars. It is a favourite tourist spot.

A mention must be made of Lady Hardinge Grounds, across from the Medical College, the home of hockey up until 1990s, barely a few hundred yards from Hanuman Mandir, in Raja Bazar area. All major hockey tournaments in Delhi, like Dhyan Chand Memorial and Delhi Hockey League used to be held here. It was our favourite haunt to watch the Indian Olympians in action. It is also the place where we, the Soni brothers used to



Ambesdor V.B. Soni



Connaught Place - an aerial view. 1950s

his own health. Soon, the talk of his magical healing power, with the help of the water from the well on the premises, spread. Sadly, in the process Guru contracted the disease himself and passed away there. The small tank (sarovar) constructed around the well on the premises, became a revered haloed spot. The place came to be known as Gurudwara Bangla Saheb, signifying Guru's stay in the Bangla (mansion). In 1783 Sikh General Baghel Singh Dhaliwal converted the non-descript surroundings into the Guru's appropriate shrine. More imaginative redevelopment work was carried out between 1947-60, increasing the size of the mythical tank, putting the majestic Gurudwara building around it.

Until 1960s, there used to be a huge open public park with well-maintained green lawn across the road from the main gate. I fondly recall playing many enjoyable cricket matches against teams from the neighbouring area, which then housed living quarters for Government officials. During the drinks break, in between the innings, the refreshing water from the Gurudwara provided the badly needed respite. Today the huge dazzling complex that stands there, would be the envy of any religious structure.

The Jantar Mantar observatory

On Sansad Marg to the south, stands Jantar Mantar, an astronomical observatory. It was built by Maharaja Jai Singh of Jaipur in the year 1724. The complex has an array of 13 archi-

play hockey in the competitive league for Independent Club. The other prominent Clubs of Delhi at that time were Khalsa Blues, New Star, Delhi Police, Customs and Railways. It was renamed Shivaji Stadium a few decades back. Today the hockey venue has shifted to Dhyan Chand National Stadium at India Gate, while the original site has been converted into a commercial area with a bus terminus.

Elegance and ambience of Connaught Place

Around the time New Delhi was formally inaugurated as the new Capital City, on completion of major landmark buildings, the central business district was inaugurated as Connaught Place (C.P.) in early 1930s. Named after Duke of Connaught, the complex was in Georgian style, with columns in the inner corridor. It was based on the Royal Crescent semi-circle style at Bath, U.K. It consists of the inner circle (Connaught Place), middle circle and outer periphery (Connaught Circus). Seven radial roads from various directions lead to it. While the ground and mezzanine floors comprise commercial space, the top floors used to be primarily residential, till the end of 1960s.

Slow to pick up initially, by 1950s and '60s, Connaught Place was the best commercial and retail centre of Delhi, with offices of multinational companies and airlines. Later on, when the new high-rise buildings, connecting

(Contd. on next page)

Metropolitan Capital city takes shape

(Continue from page 3)

Barakhamba Road and Curzon Road (now Kasturba Gandhi Marg) came up, its position as the commercial centre became more pronounced.

In those days, for the tailoring

Bachchan and visiting Bollywood crowd. College going generation of my times, grew up listening to Western music on All India Radio weekly programmes, like a 'Date with You' on Friday evenings, and 'Forces Request' on

Among the stand-alone imposing structure, the pride of place has to go to REGAL Building, on the outer periphery. This big plot was given, at a nominal price to Sir Sobha Singh, for service rendered to bolster the Allies'

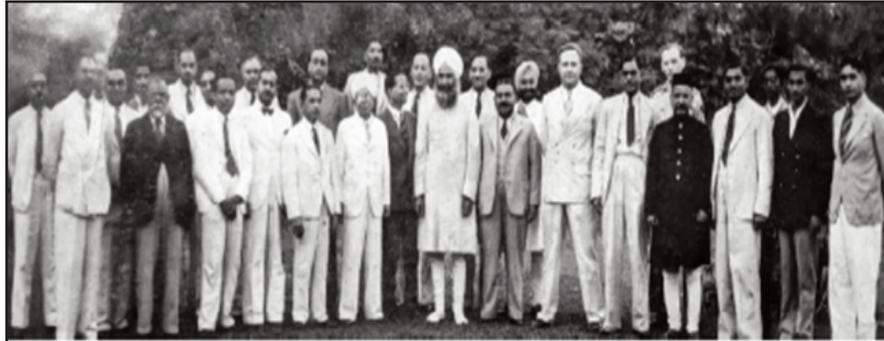
population burgeoned to 23.49 lakhs by 1951(as per the 1971 census figure). Rendered homeless, penniless and without a job, the displaced persons swarmed Delhi and put-up stalls, wherever they could find space, to sell items in demand. The central part of the city assumed an ugly look, with such disorderly mushroom growth and illegal occupation of the available vacant area. Temporary small sized sheds for kiosks were built hastily to accommodate them at Irwin Road (renamed Baba Kharak Singh Marg), Shankar Market and Panchkuian Road. In due course, some were offered alternative space at specially constructed Mohan Singh Place, next to Rivoli Cinema. Simultaneously others found a place in the upmarket Queensway (now Janpath), as well as across to Connaught Circus near Shankar Market. One of the first popular dhabas in the 1950s and '60s, was Kake da Hotel, next to the market

Central Cottage Industries Emporium, opened in a temporary war time barrack, on Queensway (Janpath)



C P Narula

Regal Cinema & Standard Restaurant Connaught Place, 1959. Horse Cart & Bicycle Plying on the Road. No Hustle Bustle of Traffic... Voh Bhi Kya Zamana Tha.



Soni family members at a Reception at Imperial Hotel, 1948.

Mondays. Introduction of Jukebox in the early 1960's at the Standard's Restaurant set a trend, with others joining in. Many restaurants had live bands, playing jazz and popular music, to attract the discerning crowds. The band, which performed at Gaylord's every evening, comprised of Anglo Indian/Goans, staying a few houses away, at Hanuman Road. They would cheerfully wave at us, while passing by our house. 'Jam Sessions' drew huge crowds on weekends at restaurants. With limited money in pocket, we usually ordered 'Cona Coffee', with refills on offer, to enjoy the extended sessions, at no extra cost.

Marina Hotel in the outer circle was popular for stay purposes. Palace Heights Hotel, near Plaza Cinema, was from where Rau Study Circle operated. I honed my skills there, while preparing

war effort (WWI) in recruiting Indian soldiers. Regal and Rivoli cinemas came up in it in the 1930s. Standard's restaurant on the first floor, was added later. One of the tobacconists selling authentic Havana cigar, imported cigarettes, was located a few shops next

of stylish suits and men's outfits S.C.Sharma & Sons and O.P.Vaish, were the places to go to. For dry-cleaning BANDBOX and SNOWHITE, provided excellent service. MAHATTA and KINSEY were the upmarket photography studios. Uberoi and Pandit Bros provided quality sports equipment and accessories. My father also bought a shop in inner circle, not far from Odeon Cinema. It did not meet with success for various reasons and the priceless space was sold off for a pittance Cinema houses like Regal, Odeon, Plaza and Rivoli were followed in quick succession, by a galaxy of restaurants. In



Hanuman Road mansion of the Soni family. A limousine can be seen parked in driveway. 1930s



1957. Above: Inder Gujral, Indrani with Ram Rahman; Satish Gujral, a young MF Husain/

The leading artistes Satish Gujral, Indrani Rehman M.F. Husain & Inder Gural's at Hanuman Road

the late 1940s and 50s, Standard Restaurant in Regal Building and Wenger's were popular rendezvous joints. To these were added - Alps's, Embassy, Gaylord's, Kwaliti's, Volga's, Rambles, United Coffee House, York's, and many more.

In the early 1960s, India Coffee House was opened, where Palika Bazar stands today. It soon became a favourite among artistes, theatre fraternity, media persons, academics, eminent sports persons, leftist thinkers, and the jholawala crowd. There, one could rub shoulders with the likes of M.F. Husain, Indrani Rehman, Yamini Krishnamurthy, Sonal Mansingh, Birju Maharaj, Satish Gujral, his brother Inder, Prem Bhatia, Kuldeep Nayar, Inder Malhotra, M.L. Sondhi, Balraj Madhok, Dara Singh, Milkha Singh, Amitabh

for IAS competitive examinations. Madras Hotel, across the road from Regal Building, provided the best South Indian dishes and filter coffee, at affordable prices, our avourite.

Central Park space was much larger in those days. It had a bandstand, where the Police Band would play every Friday. There would be impromptu art shows and cultural performances by visiting folk singers/dancers. The bhaluwallah, the snake charmer with his instrument 'been' and the monkey trickster, would be seen entertaining the crowd. Vendors could be seen selling balloons. Roasted chana jor garam, peanuts, wafery papads, bhutta and sweet potato (in season) vendors attracted customers. Candy floss was a hot selling item among the children.

to Regal cinema. Gangoly Bros., next to Rivoli had a show room for expensive Swiss watches. Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan set up their establishment in the 1960s to sell cottage industry items.

In the corner on Sansad Marg side of Regal Building, the first discotheque, The Cellar was opened at basement level, much to the delight of youngsters like us. After a few decades, it was turned into an eating joint. Above it at ground level, Tea House operated for a few years. For musical instruments, A. Godin located at the far end of the corridor, offered musical instruments like piano, guitar, sitar, tabla, harmonium etc. Shimla Studios, next to Kwaliti's, catered to photographic requirements. In those days Gaindamal Walayati Ram, at one end of the verandah, was a kind of mini mart for provisions, with a Chemist's counter.

Connaught Place may have got a new name, Rajiv Chowk but youngsters still prefer to address it in its abbreviated form, CP. With the introduction of Delhi Metro in 2005, it became one of the busiest hubs, as the central point for various lines interconnecting various destinations.

Influx of refugees after the partition changes Delhi's skyline

Immediately after the partition of India in August 1947, there was a sudden influx of refugees from across the newly demarcated Pakistan border. From 8 lakhs at Independence, Delhi's

in the early '50s. It became popular because of its large variety of well-designed handicrafts and handloom items, available under one roof. In due course State emporiums replaced the old shabby sheds, in tastefully decorated ambience, to display the art and crafts, associated various states of India, on Baba Kharak Singh Marg.

Hanuman Road earns the tag of an elite colony of New Delhi

It was in such a historical surrounding that Nanig Ram's mansion on a half-acre plot at No. 53, was ready to move into in 1930, about a year after he had passed away. It was spacious, comfortable and centrally located spot, surrounded by green cover. Time to indulge in good things in life, acquiring the trappings of a rich(raees) family. The next generation three brothers were fond of dressing up smartly, in both western and Indian style. On social occasions, achkan (long style coat), silk kurta, starched clothes/dhoti, with golden chain dangling from neck and diamond studs, was the preferred attire in the manner of a privileged class. A Chevrolet car could be seen parked in the driveway of their haveli, with a chauffeur standing next to it. Soon thereafter a horse drawn tonga was added to the stable.

From 1940s onwards, Hanuman Road became known as a posh colony, on account of influential people, who made their home here. Arya Samaj Mandir at No. 15 was one of

(Contd. on next page)

Metropolitan Capital city takes shape

(Continue from page 4)

the first structures to have come up. Pandit Chandra Bhanu would be on standby to conduct religious service. Many cultural functions used to be organised on the premises. Indumati, his wife, taught all our sisters at Raghu Mal Arya Girls School nearby. His son

from upper crust of the fast-developing social circle.

Restaurateurs of Kwality and Gaylord, brothers in law P.L. Lamba and Ghai occupied houses at No. 31 and 55 respectively. After a short stay, Ghai moved out to a house near Jantar Mantar but Lamba stayed on in the

habir, captained Aligarh Muslim University hockey team. Dattar from the same family, led Delhi University/ St. Stephen's College hockey teams. Modern School students dominated the colony Five of our own boys from No. 53 captained various College teams. S.B. (Hindu College), K.B. (Hans Raj College) and V.P. (Kirorimal College), led their respective hockey teams, while RP (K.M. College) and later Anil captained Hindu College Cricket team. During 1960-3, 40 boys and girls used to travel to colleges in Delhi University north campus from the colony by university special bus service.

India's first P.M. Nehru was amongst his clients, as were diplomats, foreigners and prominent Indians. His wife Dr. Pushpa Madan, was Head of Gynecology department at Lady Hardinge Ladies Medical College.

The portion on the right side of the ground floor at our house was hired by a South Indian family by name Swami. One of my earliest memories is of the evening of January 30, 1948 when Mahatma Gandhi was shot dead. As a 6-year-old boy I vividly remember his elder daughter Janaki, lamenting that she felt as

if one of her own family had gone. Chanana family, refugees from Pakistan, was the next one to move into that portion. The open space park, opposite our home, was a boon. It provided excellent shaded cover with sprawling trees and fresh air to breathe. On the green grass we played football, hockey, cricket, badminton and on the tree branches we jumped/romped around, playing langdi. I learned how to ride a bicycle there.

Marriage receptions and religious functions were held regularly on its lawn. In late 1960s the security situation deteriorated, with anti-social elements taking over the place. With the hippie crowd joining in, the area swarmed with the druggies. The poor/deprived section waiting for their turn to donate blood at the newly opened Blood Bank at 54, Hanuman Road by Dr. S.K.Lal pathological laboratory, added to the problem from which it took long to recover. Of late there has been some improvement in the park's beautification drive. The locality has maintained its green cover and old-world charm, despite commercialization around surrounding areas.

The popular newspaper Hindustan Times captured that spirit, in its edition dated May 2, 2018. It chose to photo feature our family haveli 53, Hanuman Road, pointing out the old-world charm of traditional bungalows, amidst leafy foliage.



Hanuman Road gang. Dattar, VB, Arun, Kishan, Mohan. 1970s.

Arun was a delightful extrovert, sportsman and bhangra dancer rolled into one. He would be the life of any party.

Right across our house, the next bigger plot was at No. 48, owned by Dr. J.K. Sen. It had thick vegetation and bushes all around the perimeter, providing a natural screen cover. Apart from well-manicured green lawns, it boasted of colourful seasonal flowers of all varieties. Of particular interest to teenagers like us was the row of luscious fruit bearing trees in the orchard, within the boundary wall. At any conceivable opportunity, we would stealthily sneak inside to pluck the mouth-watering fruits. The alert gardener would set the dog to chase us off. As for the flowers, these were available for the asking, hanging from branches, reaching out of the boundary wall. Devotees like my mother, would invariably pick these up for offerings, on the way to the Hanuman Mandir. The Spanish Instituto de Cervantes took over this plot decades back, developing a popular cultural centre there, humming with activity. After partition, from Lahore came former P.M. Inder Gujral and his artist brother Satish Gujral. They made No. 37 their home initially, before moving on to Friend's Colony. Satish undertook to do a portrait of Indira Gandhi in the 1960s, for which she had to make many visits for sitting sessions in his studio, at Hanuman Road.

In No. 40 lived Sardar Mohan Singh, who founded Oriental Furniture Co. In 1952 he was involved in the construction of the U.S. Embassy in Chanakyapuri. He also built Reserve Bank of India Building on Sansad Marg. He was the first one to have obtained bottling rights for Coca Cola Company in India. Anytime there was a sporting activity in the colony's park, we were all treated to complimentary bottle of Coca Coal by the owner's son Charanjit Singh, who subsequently opened Le Meridien Hotel at Windsor Place. The new shopping complex next to Rivoli Cinema was named Mohan Singh Place after him. When the family moved to palatial house elsewhere, No. 40 was rented out to one of the earlier glamour beauty clinic, opened in Delhi in the 1960s, frequented by ladies

house he had bought. The musical band playing live at Gaylord's, Regal building, had hired accommodation in the by lane behind No. 45.

Auto ancillary manufacturer Gulab Singh Sethi purchased No. 47. During the heyday of India-Soviet Union relationship, he had a tie up with Russian manufacturers of heavy vehicles and components. It became an enormously successful venture. He was a generous host, lavishly entertaining influential persons, politicians, social climbers and achievers from Punjab in cultural/sports fields. One was thrilled to see luminaries, like film stars, popular wrestler Dara Singh, folk singer Asa Singh Mastana, hockey Olympians from Punjab going past our house on the way to his residence.

Ranbaxy's Meharban Singh Dhupia, the founder of Chelmsford Club, and Secretary of International Sikh Association rented No. 55. He was an influential figure in the Punjabi circle. Deva Singh Randhawa, a successful income tax lawyer, was frequently visited by Cabinet Minister Swaran Singh at 43, Hanuman Road. Dr. S.K. Lal' pathological laboratory came up, during the 1960s at 54, Hanuman Road, earlier occupied by the owners of S.C. Sharma and Sons, tailoring establishment in Connaught Place. Halfway down the Road, were houses owned by businessmen, with shops in Connaught Place. These included Shimla Studios, Caxton Press, Vaish Tailors, watch shop Gangoli Bros., Mohan Lal Mehra, the imported cloth merchant stockist, sugar merchant Kashi Ram and real estate agents/contractors. At No. 45 Gaudiya Math catered to religious service in Bengali style, for a few years. A private College operated from dingy quarters in Hanuman Lane. Malik Bros sweetshop greeted visitors, entering Hanuman Road, with a fine array of delicious sweets and snacks.

In sporting activities, Hanuman Road residents made rich contribution. Some represented the Delhi Hockey team, with Dattar Randhawa and S.B. Soni, playing for Rest of India. Pran at No. 29 was a gymnast and ace horse rider. Biro Randhawa from No. 14, excelled as an athlete. Her brother, Ma-

The popularity of Hanuman Road would be evident from the fact that youngsters from other areas would include a 'round' of Hanuman Road, during visits to Connaught Place. A mention must be made of the tenants at 53, Hanuman Road. Kayasth family, the Bahadurs on the 1st floor, was a welcome addition to the fraternity. Their head was addressed as "Munshi ji" and his wife as 'Bau'. Endearing couple, with a fine cultural background, they treated us children with affection and warmth. Showing patience and an endearing 'Dadaji' like figure, he would regale us with fascinating folklore stories, day after day. On the way to the terrace for flying kites, we had to walk right across through their verandah and courtyard, impinging on their privacy. But we were never stopped from using the passage. A professional Marathi engineer S.P. Gupte, shared that floor on the right wing. Along with his son Shirish, I got my first exposure to the fascinating game of cricket, barely at the age of 8 years and have never looked back, ever since. The basics and the rules of the game were learnt from this neighbour.

When Gupte moved out in the early 1950s, Dr. R.L. Madan, an accomplished eye surgeon, trained in Vienna moved in, with a clinic in front portion and living quarters in the rear.

The world of Hanuman Road

Savour the charm of old private bungalows and spacious banyan trees

PUBLIC INTEREST
the Delhi you should see

Stumbling across niches of sheer beauty in Delhi is not an everyday occurrence. You don't even have to look very hard.

Try Hanuman Road that zambles behind the temple by the same name in Central Delhi. The lane is mostly lined with old private bungalows from another age altogether, featuring deeply shaded porches as well as balconies adorned by thick columns.

These bungalows give rise to conjectures. One can only imagine the large number within, perhaps peering over outdated encyclopedias in their high-ceilinged libraries.

A self-contained world, in other words. But the here-and-now can intimidate. Multi-storied commercial buildings loom gloomily in the adjacent commercial district.

Nearby, a fine old mansion with peeling walls is reminiscent of an intergenerational saga, while spacious banyans along the road offer natural shelter from the glaring heavens above.

Then there are those drab "Type B" apartments the government loved to build. A sign in its gate warns roadsters that entrance to the complex is only permitted on Sundays.

No lane is complete without a temple. In this case, an Arya Samaj Mandir with



GET THERE

Hanuman Road

Bus Time: Evening

Nearst Metro Stn: Barakhamba



A spacious garden. The walk's final stretch takes us to a peaceful landscaped park where a young mother lies on the grass — her child sound asleep alongside.

Hindustan Times: 2.5. 2018, 53, Hanuman Road featured as boasting of the green cove, around concrete jungle.