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Alyque Padamssee & Jagajeevan Neelakandapillai

MORPARIA'S PAGE



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MAY 2014

VOL.17/10

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Urban Transport



Alyque Padamsee



J Neelakandapillai



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Burhanuddin Saheb



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Printed & Published by
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One India One People Foundation,
Mahalaxmi Chambers, 4th floor,
22, Bhulabhai Desai Road,
Mumbai - 400 026
Tel: 022-2353 4400
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e-mail: oiopfoundation@gmail.com /
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Printed at:
Graphone (India) Pvt. Ltd.
A1 /319, Shah & Nahar
Industrial Estate. S. J. Marg,
Lower Parel (W)
Mumbai - 400 013

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Outstanding issue

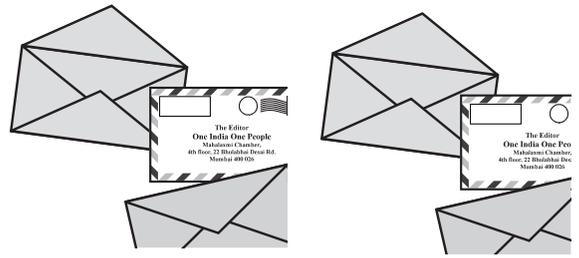
I read the April issue of your magazine and was really impressed by the comprehensive coverage of election manifestos, especially the satire on 'The Manifestoingitis Epidemic' and 'Who reads manifestos anyway' among others. The fact that you managed to get a former CEC's views as well shows how far you went to give us readers an all-round understanding of the topic. I have never seen any magazine do such all-round unbiased coverage of a topic, so kudos to your entire team for a marvellous job!

I really like the Know India Better section that covered Hampi. It was so well written that I felt I was actually there in Hampi with a historian, an architect and an anthropologist, all of them explaining each and every aspect of it in fine detail. Truly amazing! Thank you for an outstanding issue.

– Hitesh Rawtani, *Managing Partner, Igknight, Mumbai*

Certainly, not the end of the party

The April issue on Manifestos looks impressive. However, the title to my article on Congress manifesto (End of the party) is a bit of a hype. The title should have ended with a question mark. I do not see the 2014 elections as the end of the Congress party. Congress is going through a very tough phase and the top leadership is proving to be desperately



inadequate. But this certainly is not the end of the 125 year old party.

– Dr. B Ramesh Babu, *Hyderabad*

One of its kind magazine

One India One People is a very unique magazine that does complete justice to the theme it adapts every month. The March issue on Water covered all dimensions of water, specifically talking about the underground crisis, the state of the Mithi River and the devastation caused by the Uttarakhand floods. What was interesting to read was the concept of water footprint and virtual water that spoke about the need to use water judiciously. I am an ardent reader of this magazine because it keeps coming up with themes of great social relevance in our society. We need more voices like these to educate and empower the public. I think it is magazines like these that re-claim the importance of the fourth estate in a democracy and re-stores faith in it. Keep it up!

– Preetha S. Rajan, *Professor, JNU*

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Just Coming and Going

Indian transport has given us some outstanding personalities like Lalu Prasad Yadav, Mamata Banerjee and George Fernades, says V. Gangadhar hoping that in days to come Indians will learn to appreciate transport better and even clamour for the transport minister's portfolio.

A joke in a Tamil film of the 1960's goes like this... A tinpot dictator seized power in a Tamil state and surrounded by his henchmen was distributing loaves and fish... One of them protested and asked to explain, the man blurted out, "Ayya, idhu enna anyayam. Ninga vaa sonnal vandhen, po sonnal ponaen. Anal enakku onnum Illaya?" (Sir, what kind of justice is this! Whenever you ordered me to come, I came. Whenever you ordered me to go away I went. Don't I get anything?).

The tinpot dictator glared at him, "It is a question of 'poharudhu' (going) and 'varadhu' (coming). You shall be my 'Pokku Varavu' (Transport) Minister." The satisfied man happily went away, the new Transport Minister of the region. Of course the joke is more effective when spoken in Tamil.

Well, that is transport for you. Not a glamour portfolio, not headlines making but if you can operate it successfully, you are in for lots of moolah. The Civil Aviation bloke can reach for the sky merging or demerging local airlines with international ones, buying aircraft when they are not needed and distributing lucrative routes to rivals, all for a price. But the king of transport is on the ground, the rail and road affair which need two ministers. One of them, the Railway Minister can become a national figure because the trains carry the largest number of passengers. Let me admit it, the Railway Ministry has a special glamour. The man in charge can even present a budget of his own. The railways carry a sense of history. Many of the Indian railway stations and even trains absorbed this sense of history. The British regarded the building up of Indian Railways as one of their major achievements in the Raj. And deservingly so! Many of the British rail enterprises found a place in the Empire building and English fiction. Bollywood was not far behind. In my school days, I enjoyed watching movies like 'Bhowani Junction' starring Stewart Granger and Ava Gardner. Of course, Agatha Christie missed travelling by Indian Railways, otherwise we would have had a spine chilling mystery 'Murder on the Frontier Mail' or 'Mystery of the 'Blue Mountain

Express' which would have beaten hollow her book 'Murder on the Orient Express'.

Hollywood used trains for portraying romance and Bollywood followed suit. The train was effective in scenes where the hero standing on the edge of the coach of an about-to-speed train gets reunited with his beloved. Hollywood director Billy Wilder first shot such a scene in 'Love in the afternoon' (Gary Cooper, Audrey Hepburn) and Bollywoodwallas copied it in movies like 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge' and few others.

Indian transport scene gave us outstanding personalities and we are waiting for our films to showcase them. Former Railway Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav became a national hero, by not raising fares for years at a stretch and his rail management was acclaimed even by management institutions. His successor, Mamata Banerjee, ran the Railways without ever visiting the Rail Bhavan in Delhi. One of the earlier railway ministers, the fiery trade union leader George Fernandes became immortal by linking Indian Railways with dynamite, but fortunately his tenure was short.

Road transport was a poor cousin. It had to be thanks to the kind of roads India has. However, 'Dhabas' in Punjab became famous for the delicious fare they offered on highways for bus passengers and truck drivers, and we became familiar with 'sarson da saag' and 'makki di roti'. The truckers were a luckier lot. Unlike the train chaps they could swig liquor whenever they wanted to, halt their vehicles in villages and chase the local belles though and at times

this would lead to disastrous results. Of course when the trucker was someone like Dharmendra the story would end like 'All Is Well'. Hopefully Indians will learn to appreciate transport better in the days to come and clamour for the transport minister portfolio. ■



The writer is a well-known satirist.

Blueprint for Sustainable Urban Mobility

*Highlighting the transportation woes of the urban population, **Sudhir Badami** strongly advocates the need to prioritise pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and efficient road public transport system to address mobility problems.*

TRANSPORTATION is one of the most contentious issues of urban living, especially in a city like Mumbai, whose vehicular population has been growing exponentially, but its infrastructural facilities highly inadequate. It is time for aspiring candidates and political parties to start thinking of Sustainable Urban Mobility in all seriousness to improve the quality of life of the citizens. The swanky, highly capital intensive projects such as Metro Rail and Monorail, though will be used by many, and the flyovers and sea-links and freeways will cater to a very small proportion of Mumbai's population using motorcars – supposedly launched to meet the transportation needs of the city will take a toll on the city's social infrastructure. These projects will fail to deliver due to very high costs and long duration of implementation. An attempt is being made in this article to focus on some pertinent points for serious consideration by not only politicians and bureaucrats, but more so by the "Aam Aadami" so that he demands what is due to him. The common man, who has been shortchanged for long, needs to understand what Sustainable Urban Mobility is all about and his rights in a democratic country.

Environment management and disaster mitigation

To prevent ill effects of global warming and climate changes, it is imperative that environmental concerns should be addressed while attempting to solve transportation related problems in a city's development. For mobility, man has found burning fossil fuel most convenient as it enables speed of travel and good accelerations. Vehicles running on electricity too have similar attributes but most of the electricity generated is by burning fossil fuel. This fact needs to be remembered when some arguments are put forth with regard to it being less polluting. Burning of fossil fuel leads to generation of Green House Gases (GHG) followed by global warming and climate change.

Disaster mitigation and management plans should be inherent in the transportation development plans. Efficient cities tend to find their own optimum levels of population densities. If this population opts for use of personal motorised vehicles

irrespective of whether four wheelers or two wheelers, roads get congested. In congested roads, there is practically no room to allow for movement of emergency services such as fire brigade and ambulance, not to forget, security personnel to move at good speeds when emergency situations arise. With growing densities and population, building collapse and fires have become frequent. Stressful life also needs transportation to hospitals during medical emergencies. Thus demand on mobility of ambulances, fire brigade and security forces are ever increasing even if respective stations are closely located.

Infrastructure planning for mobility must always keep these aspects in mind and facilitate disaster mitigation and environment management.

The health-transport link

Noise and air pollution are major causes of present day stress and health problems of city dwellers. A major contributor to these problems is Transportation. Use of personal motor vehicles for daily commute needs to be curbed proactively and also by providing alternative modes for daily commute.

An overwhelming number of people walk short to medium distances. In a network of roads, there are large numbers of road junctions. People residing at these junctions as well as those who walk and reside on highly vehicular trafficked roads are subjected to considerable air and noise pollution caused by motorised vehicular traffic. It is well established that lung related ailments are on the rise. Alarming durations and levels of exposure to noise also cause adverse repercussions on health, especially on hearing, blood pressures and heart ailments.

The need of the day is to improve the quality and quantity of infrastructure for walking, cycling and road public transport, which will also improve health and quality of life of the citizens.

It is important to adopt sustainable rate of economic growth that would provide quality of life that is healthy, safe and comfortable for all sections of society not only at present but for future generations also.

Rapid economic growth is seen as means to wider employment and thereby financial independence of individuals and hence improved quality of life. While this does appear to



The chaotic vehicular traffic in the city barely leaves any space for pedestrians and cyclists

be logical, the downside of this is aspirations of individuals also give rise to greed and consumerism. Owning a personal means of transport has become a matter of status symbol. A rat-race sets in and the desire to be ahead of everyone else takes a very strong root, so much so that one becomes impatient as reflected in anti-social behaviour like road rage and aggressive honking. Personal growth takes precedence over community growth, where one tends to disregard rules that would be beneficial to the community at large. Enhancing consumption of resources now means borrowing resources from future generations with no intentions of repayment or replenishment.

Mumbai's Lifeline

Mumbai's Suburban Railway System is being considered as the lifeline of the city and rightly so as it carries 75 lakh commuters daily. However it carries 3,60,000 persons per hour during peak period spread over three and a half hours every morning and every evening while its carrying capacity for a safe and comfortable commute is only 1,80,000 persons per hour, rendering the entire system unbearably uncomfortable, unsafe and inhuman, leading to rise in accidents and death of commuters. Even travelling to the station by bus or autorickshaw has become cumbersome

and expensive, and walking unsafe.

Increasing carrying capacity of the suburban trains is impossible without very heavy investment, planned disruptions to the lifeline and long duration of completion.

Persons with disabilities have been completely left out while planning infrastructure. They have no access to public transport whatsoever. Access to railway platforms is non-existent and boarding and alighting the trains is near impossible even during off peak period.

It would not be out of place to state that the suburban railway system follows unsafe practices putting commuters to risk.

Pedestrian and cyclists should be given priority

The CTS-2008 (Comprehensive Transport Study) carried out by MMRDA (Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority) states that barely 2.8 percent of Mumbai population uses personal motorcars in comparison to 3.1 percent using bicycles and 44 percent using singularly the walking mode. About eight to 10 percent use motorcycles/scooters. However, these are used largely by the middle class, which constitute a large population. These motorised two wheelers also contribute to air and noise pollution and unsafe conditions for the users as well as pedestrians and cyclists. Exorbitantly costly schemes are being considered to decongest roads and

trains giving little importance to facilities for pedestrians, which 95 percent citizens use. Providing infrastructure that accommodates facilities for pedestrians and hawkers without causing hardship to either and similarly to cyclists should be given priority over costly road projects that are conceived to primarily cater to the needs of motorists.

While providing pedestrian infrastructure, creative ideas must be introduced to make pedestrian ways interesting and delightful. It is obvious that commercial activities get enhanced where pedestrians and roadside retailing have been imaginatively juxtaposed.

Highways and freeways

Flyovers and elevated roads as well as Eastern Freeways, Western Freeway, Sea Link or Western Coastal Road or Airport Elevated Link Road essentially give access to less than three percent of Mumbai's population. The cost of these projects would be approximately touching ₹ 30,000 crore if not more. These facilities are practically useless to Road Public Transport.

Of the 146.5 km of Mumbai Metro Master Plan (MMMP), about 40 km is underground and 106.5 km elevated. Only 11.4 km Versova-Andheri-Ghatkopar metro is expected to be commissioned soon, the work of which has taken eight years from the day the foundation stone was laid. This Line -1, which was estimated to cost ₹ 19,525 crore in 2004 and expected to be completed by 2021 is now estimated to cost ₹ 1,25,000 crore and will take not less than 70 years to complete. Further, its capacity will be barely 72,000 persons per hour (pph) while the need today is 1,80,000 pph.

The access way to Metro stations too lack planning, causing lot of hardships to pedestrians as they encroach the approach roads/walkways.

Monorail

The 20 km of Monorail, of which 8.3 km has just been completed after six years, will cost ₹ 3000 crore. Its capacity will be barely 6,300 pph. The entire length will take eight years to complete. Barely two months in operations, a shuttle got stuck midway and people were stranded for more than 40 minutes contradicting tall claims that in such an eventuality, evacuation work could be affected in five minutes. The original plan to have 185 km of Monorail seems to have been wisely discarded. At the provided costs, not only is the frequency low but the vibration and noise within leaves much to be desired.

Even the conceptualised "elevated rail" corridor is estimated to cost ₹ 20,000 crore and it is anyone's guess how long it

will take to implement it as it will interfere with the operations of the currently overburdened lifeline of the city. After spending such huge amounts, to what extent will it ease the city transport problems and how many people will it cater to still remains a question mark.

A recent study by Western Railway reveals that the elevated rail is also not a viable proposal as there has been a shift in population from the island city to the suburbs.

Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS), the best solution

Given the acuteness of the transport problem, is there a direction one can take that not only addresses the transportation needs of the city population but also considers environment management and disaster mitigation aspects? Yes! The answer lies in giving top priority to infrastructure design that addresses the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and enhances efficient road public transport system i.e. the Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS). Study shows that the shortfall in the overall public transport capacity of 1,80,000 people per hour can be provided by intelligently designing the BRTS. Two hundred kms of BRTS can be achieved in five to eight years time and at an estimated cost of barely ₹5,000 crore. The bus lane can also be used during medical emergencies, fire emergencies and security related emergencies. Many cities in Latin America, China, Australia and even some cities in USA have successfully adopted BRTS for enhancing mobility.

Facilitating safe walking, cycling and making BRTS central to providing transportation infrastructure, will yield returns in terms of better quality of life, lower carbon emissions, better mobility options, improved environmental management and financial sustainability. With improved overall public transport capacity, suburban railway services running to its design capacity, will be able to provide improved services such as automatically closing doors, near level boarding and alighting and access to persons with disability. There is room for optimism in this. ■



The writer is an IIT Bombay graduate in Civil & Structural Engineering. He is on Government of Maharashtra's Steering Committee on BRTS for Mumbai and Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority's Technical Advisory Committee on BRTS for Mumbai. He is also member of Research & MIS Committee of Unified Mumbai Metropolitan Transport Authority.

Maxim

We spend our days waiting for the right path to appear in front of us, but what we forget that paths are made for walking, not for waiting.

– Bal Gangadhar Tilak

Chasing the holy grail of sustainable transport

*Unless there is public outrage against transportation problems in Mumbai, and a display of vision, courage and leadership from the government to address these issues, sustainable transport in the city will remain a holy grail, writes **Rishi Aggarwal**.*

AS India urbanises, the one issue which has really been haunting cities is that of transportation. It is an issue which affects everyone (and this has to be emphasised) first hand. Cities cannot perform at their optimal capacity without a good transport infrastructure in place and this is a matter of significant concern for the economic growth of the country since most economic activity is now concentrated in urban agglomerations.

The lasting image and talking point for anybody who has travelled to other countries is the almost seamless experience one encounters with any transport system there. And the lasting image of anybody travelling to India is of the horrible experience in moving around. The quality of transport is a big contributor to the quality of life of people and hence needs to be discussed and acted upon. The kind of experience you get while commuting to your place of work or back home, or when you go to see a movie or shop or a trip to the park is important and cannot be dealt with casually.

Agencies working at cross purposes

The past decade has seen a number of good policies and schemes to improve transportation but the outcome leaves much to be desired. Either the policies are not implemented in spirit and there is cherry picking by the decision makers or it is the case of too little too late. Whatever good is supplied gets swamped by the enormous pent up demand.

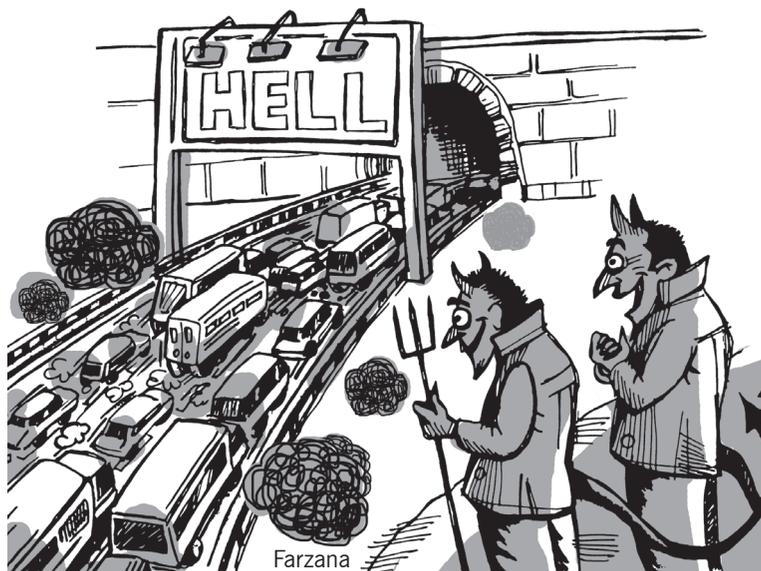
The National Urban Transport Policy (NUTP) 2006, Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) and the requirement to make Comprehensive Mobility Plans have been the hallmark of what we have to offer ourselves in the past decade.

Since the outcome is poor it is now time to think less in

terms of budgets and the technical solutions, and do some introspection whether we even have what it takes to give outcomes. Are we as a society and more specifically the various arms of the government competent to understand the transport requirements of our cities and provide them here and now, rather than only keep discussing all that needs to be done?

Last year in

December, I had raised my concern and annoyance at a workshop as a precursor to the Urban Mobility in India held in Delhi. The workshop had the same subjects, the same speakers and the same examples of success from around the world. My anguish which I shared with the participants was that when will we as a country move to a stage where at such workshops we will have Indian city managers come and share their successes for others in the country to emulate? Is it the European Union where the Scandinavian countries are doing exemplary work to wean themselves away from automobile centric transport policy, infrastructure and giving a singular focus on mass transport and non-motorised transport or it is the Latin



American Countries for their successful Bus Rapid Transport Systems (BRTS)? In the case of Mumbai, the Comprehensive Transport Survey and its recommendations have been the centre, though what should have been the focus is how different agencies are continuously working at cross purposes due to ego and political hassles while 12 million residents of Mumbai suffer everyday.

Running of institutions need a radical change

Far too many people believe that good transport policy and infrastructure are technical issues, while there is no proportionate interest in working on the governance and delivery systems which decide on the final outcomes. Forget governance, what good is it knowing principles of sustainable transport and all the jargons associated if the people whose lives are meant to be improved are themselves just not interested in joining hands for change?

I worked for a two year term at EMBARQ the sustainable transport programme of World Resources Institute where I found myself continuously at odds with many colleagues who were all trained in some aspect or the other of transport planning. Unless you are not competent in influencing government thinking and social mindset, all resources spent on technical people are waste of money in my opinion. Even if there a few good people within decision making unless the way our institutions are run does not go through a radical change things will be wasteful.

Politicians care a damn and commuters are passive

It saddens me to see the great disservice Mumbai as a city is doing to one of the finest public bus services in the South Asian sub-continent. The institution is nebulous in its functioning, seems constantly in the cross hairs of the SS-BJP (Shiv Sena – Bharatiya Janata Party) and Congress political brownie points fight and, investments towards its improvement are held up in stupid arguments even as the city has ₹ 9000 crores for a Coast Road and more to waste.

Today crucial decisions regarding transportation in cities are held hostage by politicians, bureaucrats and solution providers whose views are guided by very narrow spectrum of thinking.

But the decision makers - the politicians and the bureaucrats - are only one side of the story. What really puzzles

me is the commuters who make do with such poor responses every single day. Even after so many years, I am left puzzled and disturbed when I find the people of Mumbai completely unmoved by the number of instances in daily commute where improvement is required.

Whether it is those travelling in the Mumbai suburban trains or those who never step out of the comfort of their cars or those for whom the public bus service BEST is a lifeline or those who walk short distances for regular errands or leisure everybody in the city is short changed. The city is not short of money and its municipal corporation is one of the richest. If it wants more money then there are lenders willing to extend financial support. What Mumbai really lacks is people with a sense of ownership and integrity and a passion for excellence.

No hope unless there is public outrage

It is more than a decade now that I have been involved and having a ring side view of all the key authorities which impact transport planning and traffic management in Mumbai. The view really is not good and a decade down the line even the most basic issues like having a unified transport planning authority for the city are yet to see the light of the day; even the groundwork is yet to be done. New generations have entered the work force and started using the same sclerotic transport infrastructure and, older ones have faded away and everybody goes through the same issues.

The current state of affairs leaves me confident that unless there is significant public outrage and participation and some display of courage and leadership, the situation will be exactly the same even in 2030. In India we have learnt to muddle through it all.

Sustainable transport for Mumbai will remain a holy grail till the time there is some deep introspection by Mumbai's commuters and a firm resolution that the existing status quo will no longer be tolerated. Following from there, is a lot of hard work. ■



The writer is an environmental activist and a Research Fellow at Observer Research Foundation where he convenes the Mumbai Transport Forum. His book "The Futility of Aam Aadmi Party versus the Promise of Active Citizenship" was released in April 2014.

Festive Times

In May every year, thousands of transgenders from all over India congregate at Koovagam, a nondescript village near Chennai to participate in a centuries-old "Kuthandavar Festival". In a unique demonstration of tolerance exercised by ancient cultures and traditional societies to sexual diversity and behaviour that modern societies shun, the entire village rises in celebration that lasts two weeks. The folklore behind the festival shows that Indian mythology abounds in non-discriminating stories about homosexuality and sexual diversity.

Mumbai's lifeline or deathline?

*Mumbai trains have become death traps for commuters taking an annual toll of over 3500 lives. Commuting can be made safer by adopting modern traffic management and cyclic timetable that is followed internationally, writes **Dipak Gandhi**.*

WHAT an irony of fate! The local trains which ferry lakhs of commuters up and down daily and, which were once proudly called Mumbai's Lifeline have now become its death line, taking an annual toll of over 3500 lives. This is despite the fact that both central and the state governments, the World Bank and commuters (through safety surcharge) having pumped in thousands of crores of rupees in upgrading the suburban railways during the last decade under MUTP (Mumbai Urban Transport Project) Plans I & II and despite our suburban railways having enough rakes and tracks. Can there be a tragedy worse than this?

A scrutiny of operations of the suburban railways has revealed that this very rail system has the potential to make travel safe for all commuters in the immediate future, only if our railway authorities move with the times, give up certain obsolete practices and redesign their suburban operations in conformity with today's traffic needs and the principles of time table construction as laid down by our Railways.

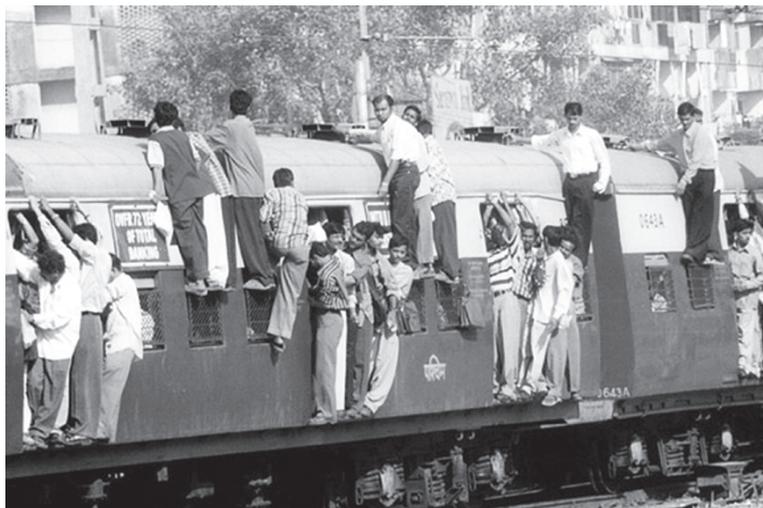
Reasons for hazardous travels

There is a misconception amongst the suburban railway administration that the heavy commuter traffic is only for about three hours each in the morning and evening, where as in reality suburban trains are overcrowded two to three times their optimum rated capacity from 6.00 a.m. to 12.00 midnight. Hence instead of plying maximum number of services only during office peak hours as is being done now, they should

be run from early morning till late night, on both slow and fast corridors without withdrawing any rake from service during day time.

Today the situation is such that overcrowding during other than office peak hours is often worse than that of office peak hours in view of withdrawal of large number of rakes from

service between 10.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. Prior to 1960, afternoon traffic was thin. Hence some rakes were withdrawn from service to conserve power. The situation has changed today, as traffic during afternoon has also grown manifold and there are not enough trains to cater to the rush. There are no technical impediments in reintroducing the rakes



since the existing EMU (electric multiple unit) rakes can run continuously for 20 hours a day, whereas their present average utilisation is only about 13 hours a day as per Railway Board statistics.

During the last two to three decades, the demography of our city has undergone such a drastic change that the present time-tables are topsy turvy to today's traffic needs. Recent traffic survey by Mumbai Rail Vikas Corporation (MRVC) has also confirmed that the present time tables are south-centrist as they were designed basically to serve Churchgate/CST traffic whereas the need of the hour is for more services in the North, where more than 80 percent of city's population now resides and where large number of offices from the South have shifted. The ill planned time tables are taking a toll on six to eight lives everyday. The root cause of hazardous travels for suburban commuters. The situation is further aggravated

with uneven frequency of services, resulting in waste of capacity when too close and accident prone travelling when too far. e.g.- During morning peak hours between 8.00 and 9.00 am Virar to Churchgate fast services are sometimes provided at intervals of seven minutes and four minutes and suddenly after gaps of 14, 18 and even 22 minutes. Most accidents occur when there is humanly unbearable overcrowding. If the same number of services were provided at uniform intervals, commuters travel would be much safer.

The fifth multi directional track between Mumbai Central and Borivali was specially laid about a decade back for plying upcountry trains so as to avoid their adverse impact on the punctuality of suburban services. Yet, a large number of such upcountry trains are being scheduled even now to run on suburban fast corridor adversely affecting punctuality of suburban services and often compelling railways to cancel large number of suburban trains making commuting further hazardous.

How commuting can be made safer

The existing high efficiency EMU rakes are certified to run at 100 kmph. Yet time-tables are framed at an average speed of 35 kmph wasting minimum of 30 percent better efficiency of new rakes. e.g.- In 1937, Western Railway (WR) used to take 70 mts from Virar to Churchgate by a bada fast service. Today similar fast service is provided in 80 to 82 mts when the present EMU rakes can complete the said journey in just 55 minutes as per new rakes running timings worked out by WR itself. This was justified during 1980's on account of heavy conflict with road traffic at over 37 level crossing gates then existing on WR. Now that most of them have been replaced by flyovers, railways can conveniently ply new rakes at their rated speeds with reduced running timings. This would not only help railways run minimum 25 percent more services with the same number of rakes and tracks, but city's commuters too would save millions of man hours every day.

Diamond crossings from fast corridor to slow ones and vice versa is another root cause of frequent irregularity of suburban services throughout the day. Each such crossing block trains on three tracks for three to four minutes each upsetting schedules of all trains plying on these three tracks. As a chain effect, most services throughout the day run late on sub. Railways which were once popular for their clock like punctuality.

Further it is simply senseless to clear recently grown heavy intra suburban traffic north of Dadar by Churchgate/CST services which are jam packed with their own sector traffic from their starting terminals. If this intra suburban traffic were cleared by suburban shuttles available every 10/12 minutes from the first train in the morning till the last

one late night, in both up and down directions between Mahalaxmi and Virar on WR and between Dadar – Kalyan on CR, suburban rail travel would be safe for all commuters throughout the day.

Adopt cyclic time table

Instead of scheduling suburban trains on an adhoc or historical basis as is being done at present, our railways should adopt modern methods of traffic management. One such method internationally adopted is the Cyclic Time Table. Its basic concepts are limited loading on each service and uniform frequency for all sectors. Instead of running *khichdi (jam-packed)* trains packing unlimited number of commuters of 10 to 20 stations per service, if dedicated services, clearing limited number of commuters of only three to five stations per service are introduced with uniform frequency clearing long distance commuters by super fast trains and short distance commuters by slow trains, commuting by suburban trains would be safer for all rail commuters throughout the day.

If the suburban rail operations are revamped as suggested above, our city could have totally 4000 services on 10 tracks (4 C.R. + 4 W.R. + 2 Harbour) at 3 metres headway i.e. 20 services per track per hour x 10 Tracks x 20 hours of operations during the day as against only 2700 services plied at present.

If the present time-tables were redesigned on a systematic cyclic pattern as per today's traffic needs, with limited loading on each service and uniform frequency for all sectors, repeating every 12 metres. Mumbai's suburban railways could ensure with the same number of rakes, tracks and other existing infrastructure.

The potential of our suburban railways is still substantial. The present three minutes headway in practice since 1964 could still be reduced to two and a half and even two minutes, enabling railways to run as many as 6000 services as against the current total of 2700, with the same infrastructure to serve Mumbai's commuters satisfactorily for the next two to three decades. The travel woes of Mumbai's commuters have been totally neglected, with the centre throwing the baby into the lap of state government which has very little wherewithal to feed it. Sadly, despite the enormous potential of our city's rail network, its commuters have to suffer untold miseries. If suburban rail services were to be sporadically increased as possible under the cyclic system, undoubtedly Mumbai's local trains can reclaim its title of being Mumbai's lifeline. ■



The writer is the chairman of the Mumbai Suburban Railway Passengers' Association

Shanghai dreams

*Mumbai is far from its dream of modernising the city on the lines of Shanghai, and a major reason for this is the lack of coordination between the various agencies involved in overhauling its transportation system, says **A.V.Shenoy**.*

A decade ago, there were talk in nearly every forum on Mumbai development about remodeling Mumbai on the lines of Shanghai city. A number of committees visited Shanghai, the largest Chinese city to learn about its development model. However, even today Mumbai has not taken any steps towards modernising the city on the lines of Shanghai, the reasons for which are many.

Lack of coordination and accountability

In Shanghai, when the government decided to redevelop the city, all concerned agencies started working together. Roads were widened, flyovers were built, large plots were redeveloped by demolishing existing buildings using cluster development model keeping in mind the increasing requirement of transport. Public transport network was strengthened. All this was possible because Shanghai had a unified authority controlling all agencies, which were working in coordination. This unified authority was accountable for the implementation and completion of the project.

One of the major reasons why Mumbai has failed to move ahead with the plan is because of lack of coordination between the various agencies. In Mumbai, nobody has worked on a unified well-planned and well-directed transformation work. There are in all 19 agencies looking after transportation and building of infrastructure. Some of the major ones are MMRDA (Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority), MSRDC (Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation), MCGM (Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai), BEST (Brihanmumbai Electric Supply & Transport), Western and Central Railway and MRVC (Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation). In 2008, the state government created a Unified Mumbai Metropolitan Transport Authority (UMMTA) headed by the chief secretary, which was expected to bring co-ordination among the various agencies. However, UMMTA turned out to be a toothless body with no powers to take decisions. It has hardly held any meetings in the last three



JVLR (Jogeshwari Vikhroli Link Road)

years. Therefore, there is no single authority who is accountable for the implementation of the plan.

Delays in project implementation

Inordinate delays in implementing various infrastructure projects like MUTP (Mumbai Urban Transport Project), JVLR (Jogeshwari Vikhroli Link Road), SCLR (Santacruz Chembur Link Road), Metro I, Monorail, Worli-Bandra Sea Link, Eastern Freeway have resulted in transport infrastructure not keeping pace with the increasing needs of the growing population in Mumbai suburbs and MMR (Mumbai Metropolitan Region). Though Railways have increased its capacity by increasing number of tracks and rakes from 9 to 12/15, the trains still run jam packed during peak hours making train travel extremely difficult and unsafe for passengers. Out of three Metros planned for the city only one is scheduled to be completed soon. The work for the second is yet to begin.

There is lack of integrated view while planning, e.g. public transport projects and housing developments are taking place independently, while they should ideally be done in coordination. No minister or commissioner is held accountable for the delays in implementation of the projects.

The state government is encroaching upon the functioning of Mumbai Municipal Corporation for e.g. The MMRDA is responsible for the integrated development plan in the area of seven municipal corporations within the metropolitan region (Thane, Kalyan-Dombivli, Navi Mumbai, Ulhasnagar, Mira road - Bhayandar, Vasai - Virar and Bhiwandi - Nizampur while the development works in Mumbai have to be carried out by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). However, the state government has been using MMRDA for carrying out development works in the area of BMC. This is done by the state government blatantly without involving the BMC.

Mumbaikars shortchanged

BEST, which is the sole public transport authority for running buses is not a preferred mode of transport for long distance travelers, especially office goers, as it cannot provide speed to the commuter. The frequency is also not dependable as the buses have to negotiate the chaotic city traffic. BEST is therefore running in losses due to decreasing occupancy, which has gone down to about 58 percent because of reduction in speed to barely 7-9 Km/hr. The AC buses which were introduced by BEST about four to five years back with much fan fare, especially for office goers are also running in losses.

The traffic discipline in Mumbai has gone haywire due to daily increase in the number of private vehicles, both cars and two wheelers. Traffic police are unable to control traffic offences due to perennial shortage of staff and modern equipment like CCTVs which can read vehicle number plates of offenders.

Increasing number of cars and free parking have resulted in major portion of roads getting occupied by parked cars, commercial vehicles, tourist buses, tankers etc., causing traffic bottlenecks all over the city. Even suburbs which have come up recently are now congested.

Government is giving more emphasis on the long term – high cost and car centric projects neglecting medium and short term low cost projects. This has resulted in insufficient increase in public transport and more and more cars are on the roads. Pedestrian facilities are totally neglected though 52 percent of all journeys are on foot.

The last but most important point is that the Urban Development Department (UDD) reports to the CM (Chief Minister) of the state, who is normally not from Mumbai and has more urgent and pressing issues of the entire state and

more particularly his own constituency to look into. Therefore, the infrastructure projects of Mumbai do not get the necessary priority or adequate funding. In my opinion, a Mumbaikar/ Mumbai-based person who knows the pulse of the city and its problems in-depth is more suitable to head the city's administration and capable of delivering.

It is therefore unfair that despite being the highest tax payers, the citizens of Mumbai are deprived of convenient and comfortable transport in the city. Despite being the financial capital, not much is being done to speed up the urgent transport needs of the city. The Centre does not allocate sufficient funds for suburban railway network projects though railways earn their profit from Mumbai.

Achievements so far

Some of the projects which have been completed recently like JVLR, SCLR (partly), Eastern Freeway, Monorail have given some relief to Mumbaikars. Metro I, which is expected to start soon, is also expected to bring further relief and improve the East-West connectivity between suburbs. However due to delays in completing the projects as mentioned above, they are not able to meet the present requirement of the citizens.

The present Development Plan for 2014-34 under preparation by MCGM is trying to consider transportation as an integral part and make provisions for the same in line with the proposed land use plan.

The Cluster Housing Redevelopment guidelines under discussion presently propose housing redevelopment in line with Shanghai model. However, the modifications made in the same do not ensure proper transportation or other infrastructure development which was the main purpose why it was adopted in Shanghai.

What needs to be done to achieve the Shanghai dream?

- There is a need to have a single point governance system where one person will act as the Mumbai Governance Head (MGH). All agencies i.e. state, central, municipal or otherwise functioning in Mumbai will have to coordinate with him to implement the various projects. He will be responsible for all the development work by the government agencies and will be accountable to the people of Mumbai. The state government should not interfere in the day-to-day functioning of the MGH.

(Continued on page 22)

Did you know?

The game of Snakes and Ladders was created by the 13th century poet saint Gyandev. It was originally called 'Mokshapat'. The ladders in the game represented virtues and the snakes indicated vices. The game was played with cowrie shells and dices. In time, the game underwent several modifications, but its meaning remained the same, i.e. good deeds take people to heaven and evil to a cycle of re-births.

METRO RAIL

Inter-modal connectivity missing for a seamless travel

Bina C. Balakrishnan points out the basic flaws in Indian metro rail systems, which she says have been designed as stand-alone systems, completely ignoring the need for inter-modal connectivity, leading to high commuter stress.

THE transportation systems in Indian metropolitan cities have far outgrown their capacities for meeting the demand for movement. The cities desperately need more efficient modes to cater to the daily journey to work. The modes of transportation that predominantly exist in our cities today are still the “traditional” forms of transport – buses, intermediate public transport (IPT) and cars. Although cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore have implemented heavy metro at least on certain routes, they are not yet in their most efficient forms, thus operating at far below their capacities. Delhi, especially, has a fairly large length of routes, and the metros carry a fairly heavy load during peak hours, but these systems could, with a little better planning, operate at a much higher efficiency.

Flaws in the systems

So what is not quite right about our metro systems? Primarily, it is the fact that these mass transportation systems seem to have been designed in isolation, as stand-alone systems. No journey starts and stops on the metro. Most journeys require the commuters to change at least one mode of transport before they reach their destination. Every journey has two last mile connections, with the metro, suburban train or bus supplying the transportation for the major distance.

With all the metros in India, the primary problem is the complete lack of inter-modal connectivity. This means the facility to transfer between modes during a journey.

The journey to work, or commute, is the most important trip made in an urban area, because it is one trip that cannot be avoided, and transportation systems are therefore designed primarily for these trips. One can change the timings of the trips, and move the trips around the city, but you cannot avoid them. Unless, of course, we reach an ideal level of tele-commuting where majority of people can work from home, but that stage is a long way off.

Improve inter-modal transfer

The ideal commute would be walk from your home to the train station, ride the metro, exit at the destination station, and walk to your final destination. The walk trip at either end is commonly called the “last mile”, and ideally should be less than a five minute walk, or within 500 metres. Unfortunately, this is very rarely the case in Indian metro cities, although this is exactly how it is in several cities of the world, where a bus or a transit stop has been located within 400 meters of every home, so that regardless of the number of changes you make on the metro system, you can walk from it to your destination. In India, this “last mile connection” is often made on another motorised mode, which includes autorickshaws, buses, taxis, motor-cycles or even cars.

The points at which one changes modes from a secondary mode to the primary mode and vice versa is called inter-modal transfer and if these transfer points are not well designed, they can become major bottlenecks in the system, affecting the operational efficiency at which a system functions. The commuter experiences the highest stress during his commute when he is making these changes between modes, as he is trying to optimise the time he spends in the system. It is desirable then that the commuter is presented with the least inconvenience during the time that he transfers from one mode to the other. Stresses can be imposed in the form of a poorly



designed boarding/alighting place for the secondary mode, a long walk from this point to the train/metro station or platform, poorly designed holding spaces, resulting in crush of commuters walking in all directions (and consequent loss of time), and lack of information on the arrival/departures of the modes in the area, resulting in uncertainty about the onward journey. In India, all these factors hold true at inter-modal transfer points.

The inter-modal transfer points have to be designed to affect rapid changes from one mode to the other —ideally, the various modes have to be brought as close to the main mode as possible; in cities in Europe, the bus stops are exactly in front of the train stations, so the commuter gets off the bus and walks directly into the train station. Auto stops and taxi stands also need to be located within the station premises and not far out on the street as is currently the case. The movement path from a parking lot to the concourse has to be smooth, logical and as short as possible. Information on the various modes available needs to be easily accessible, and friction between modes and pedestrians should be eliminated to the greatest extent. This is the greatest stumbling block in the great Indian transport scenario. This is what our metros are lacking – integration with the other modes on offer in the cities.

Lack of coordination between various authorities

Integration has to be at three levels – physical integration, information integration and ticketing integration.

In India, transportation is handled by a range of authorities, who report vertically to different departments in the state government, and then on to different ministries at the Centre. To an unfortunately great extent, these agencies operate in water tight compartments, focusing exclusively on their work alone, regardless of the impact that may have on the working of other departments, and consequently the impact on the convenience, comfort and safety of the travelling public.

What is required is co-ordination between these authorities in the planning of the systems, terminal buildings and routes because none of these transportation systems can operate in isolation. The transportation systems in an urban area need to operate as a composite whole: the metros and suburban trains need to be complemented by the road based systems like bus and autorickshaws/taxis. Where the heavy metro cannot or does not reach, it is necessary for the bus services to provide a feeder service, connecting the further areas to the metro, at timings that meet the requirements of the travelling public. Mode changes should be designed at the convenience of the commuter; metro authorities need to work along with other authorities to locate boarding/alighting points for taxis, auto rickshaws and buses conveniently, and the pathways leading to the metros should be clearly identified and free of obstructions. The exits for passengers should be carefully designed: in denser

areas, where the last mile may be just a walk trip, metro exits should be located on more than one street.

The current scenario is that passengers alight on the streets from various modes at various locations, and flow towards the entry points of the metro. When the flow of commuters exits the station, they become an uncontrolled sea of humanity, emerging from one or two exits, and then flowing at random over the surface streets, to reach their destination. If they are allowed to select their exits within the metro station itself, the volume emerging at each exit on the surface will be smaller, and the commuters will have a much shorter distance to walk to their final destination. In the absence of this, they look for another form of transport, or just take over the streets, causing delays to the surface transport and increasing the risk of accidents. If the distance to be covered here is inconveniently long or the inconveniences imposed are large enough, they will simply eschew the metro for a car trip, rather than risk life and limb on treacherous footpaths. People will also tend to use a motorised mode to avoid the inconvenience of frequent changes of modes.

The authorities are working on a common ticket that can be used on the trains/metros as well as the buses, and to an extent also on the taxis, but the physical integration, which actually causes greatest discomfort and is more time consuming, is almost completely absent. Information integration requires that passengers be able to access real-time information on the most convenient mode for completion of their journey on their cell phone, or on boards that can be noticed and read from a distance. This information should include the location of the mode, its timing, its route and the time taken to reach the destination. If this is available, the commuter will be in a position to plan his journey more efficiently.

Early implementation of Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority

In recognition of these stumbling blocks, the National Urban Transport Policy has recommended the setting up of a Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (UMTA). Several cities have set up some form of UMTA, but these are more like committees that have no statutory powers, and therefore there is no real coordination of planning or dove-tailing of design that takes place. Early implementation of UMTA is required if this co-ordinated planning is to become a reality, and the metros are to become efficient transportation systems that make commuting a stress-free experience. ■



The writer has over 35 years of work experience as an engineer and a planner and has been working as a transport consultant.

Skywalks, a boon to pedestrians

*In increasingly shrinking public spaces in metros that are criss-crossed with speeding vehicular traffic, skywalks are a boon as they provide safe, uninterrupted walk for the teeming pedestrians, argues **Krishnaraj Rao**, as he highlights its many advantages.*

ANY discussion about Mumbai's skywalks evokes strong reactions – both for and against it. Various stakeholder groups, including some activists, are polarised in their views on the subject. In this debate, the most significant fact about skywalks is completely ignored. Skywalks are an acknowledgement of the existence of pedestrians by the planning authorities. Otherwise, the disappearing footpaths, extremely rare zebra crossings, insurmountable traffic dividers, eight-lane roads, flyovers and all other vehicle-centric development seem to be based on the planners' belief that nobody needs to get around on foot any longer.

The only dedicated facility for pedestrians

At the risk of stating the obvious, one needs to put this statement of fact upfront. Skywalks, pedestrian subways and pedestrian underpasses are dedicated pieces of infrastructure made specifically for the common man or the man on the street. Skywalks are relatively low-cost, low-tech and low maintenance. They should be considered as a bare minimum and mandatory facility in all areas where high volume of pedestrian traffic mingles with vehicular traffic on roads.

Strangely, they are seen as an ill-planned extravagance by the thinking classes and opinion makers, most of whom drive around in air-conditioned cars and rarely set foot on the streets. While crores of rupees spent on widening roads and building scores of flyovers for vehicles are considered unquestionably necessary, alarm bells start ringing when a small number of steel structures are constructed for pedestrians to walk uninterrupted, safe from traffic and bad road conditions.

Influential NGOs based in south Mumbai have successfully campaigned against MMRDA's (Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority) project to build skywalks around Churchgate and Fort area. These crusaders for open space successfully argued that, "Unsightly yellow skywalks (such as the one at Bandra) will mar/block the view corridors of heritage buildings (like High Court, CST Station, Municipal Corporation Building etc.), *maidans* and precincts and destroy their heritage character and status." And thanks to their opposition, many skywalk projects were scrapped.

Cannot undermine its utility

Skywalks are extremely useful for millions of pedestrians and railway commuters, who are currently jostling with vehicular traffic daily, climbing on and off footpaths every 30-40 metres, waiting for lights to turn green or impatiently walking through red signal, besides walking around countless obstacles. During morning and evening rush hours, before or after a long train commute in a sea of sweaty armpits, millions of commuters and office-goers walk like maze of rats on cluttered pavements and risky roadsides. They have been doing this for decades, and they continue to do this amid increasingly dense traffic.

A skywalk that enables a straight walk from Churchgate to Regal cinema or CST Station would have served as a breath of fresh air. During monsoon, walking with an overhead awning is luxury as opposed to getting half-wet on splashy roads under an umbrella. From a vantage point on a skywalk, people may even enjoy the beauty of heritage buildings better. So skywalks cannot be said to be an assault on the "beauty" of heritage buildings.

One particularly significant skywalk project proposed in 2009, but later scrapped, was proposed to link:

- Churchgate to Mantralaya (via LIC Building)
- Vidhan Bhavan to Regal cinema (over Cooperage Maidan,
- Wodehouse Road, Madam Cama Road and the Regal Circle)
- Regal cinema to CST (over D N Road, and passing by GPO etc)
- CST to Churchgate (over Azad and Cross maidans, Western Railway HQ, etc)

By building these skywalks, MMRDA would have given an additional facility to lakhs of pedestrians, enabling them to walk several kilometres safely and with dignity, unobstructed by traffic, hawkers etc. This would have given added safety for children, elderly, visually impaired and the physically challenged. Furthermore, as the skywalks were proposed to have toilet facilities to facilitate thousands of aging people who find it difficult to control their bladder for a long time, it would have provided a humane option.

But, this was put on ice, thanks to activists who screamed, “Why should pedestrians climb up and down? Instead build bridges to make vehicles climb up and down, while the pedestrians can walk at ground level.” These aesthetic and philosophical objections ended up incapacitating the policy makers who were taking their first baby steps towards creating dedicated infrastructure for pedestrians.

Issues raised by critics

Objections to skywalks are often in the form of observations that very few pedestrians use some lengthy skywalks (e.g. Dahisar), especially in the evening hours, therefore raising security concerns for the pedestrians and the neighbourhood. Admittedly, some skywalks appear to have been badly planned – the main shortcomings being the relatively few entry and exit points for accessing the skywalks, and two-storeys of stairs that pedestrians have to climb up.

The challenge for those climbing the stairs is habitual and psychological. Pedestrians have long become habituated to zipping in and out of roads and traffic signals, dodging rush-hour traffic, and jaywalking while inhaling vehicle smoke. They need to be educated and motivated to use skywalks, just as motorists need to be painstakingly taught to use seat belts and crash helmets.

Yes, the skywalks should be ideally fitted with lifts and escalators to enable senior citizens and people with physical limitations to use them. But the absence of lifts and escalators does not detract from the usefulness of skywalks for millions of Mumbai’s pedestrians, who routinely climb suburban railway bridges of a similar height. One doesn’t hear the same activists protesting about how it is better to cross tracks than take the railway bridge.

It is wrong for city planners to say that since only a few hundred pedestrians use some skywalks, and prefer to walk on roads, we will stop building skywalks. That is not the way forward, leading towards governance; that is the way leading towards chaos.

See the inequities present in the way road space is currently used:

- Private vehicles carry about seven percent of commuters, but occupy over 45 percent of road space. On-road, parking of private cars, rickshaws and taxis occupies about 30 percent of the available road space during the daytime, and reduces the traffic-carrying capacity of the roads where they are parked by over 45 percent during normal hours, and over 60 percent during rush-hours.
- Taxis and auto-rickshaws carry about five percent of commuters, but occupy over 25 percent of road space.
- Buses and suburban trains carry 88 percent of commuters. Buses, which carry about 45 percent of passengers, use

10 percent of road space.

- More than 85 percent of commuters walk daily for over two kilometers to bus stops, suburban trains, residences, offices and markets. However, less than one percent of the road space is demarcated and reserved for them to walk in the form of exclusive footpaths. Majority of them are forced to share road space with motor vehicles. This is unacceptable in civilised metropolises the world over.
- Hawkers and illegal shop extensions occupy over 10 percent of road space. They cause vehicular congestion on all station-roads and approach-roads to trunk roads, and reduce the road’s traffic-carrying capacity by over 60 percent. In other words, they increase the journey-time of vehicles to more than double during rush hours, prolong the length of the city’s rush hours by over two hours in the evening, and increase the journey time of tired pedestrians by over 20 percent. (It is true that hawkers render commercial service to society by making many goods cheaply available, but they impose hidden costs on society that are unaffordable. They occupy disproportionately large amount of public space without regard to public convenience and safety and avoid paying legitimate rentals for space usage and legitimate tax dues to civic bodies.)
- About one percent of public space at any given point of time seems to be under repairs, flyover construction, widening, concreting etc. However, raw materials, machinery and debris from such activity are loosely regulated, and take up more than three percent of the space, reducing traffic efficiencies. Furthermore, hazards like ditches and open manholes persist long after the completion of that work, as closure of work is not done in a focused manner.

The same inequity extends to use of public funds for facilitating transport. Crores of rupees are spent on flyovers and sea-links for private motorists, whose number is small compared to pedestrians. Not much thought is given to building infrastructure for pedestrians, despite the fact that pedestrian spaces are shrinking. It is strange that pedestrians are not even being accounted for in the budgeting of public space and infrastructure funds.



It is time to end this inequity now by taking decisive policy stance that recognises not just the existence but the predominance of pedestrians amidst vehicular traffic. ■

The writer is a journalist and a leading campaigner for pedestrians rights, Right to Information and Judicial Reforms.

Mumbai may have already missed the bus

S.Sriraman *talks about the distinctive problems in Mumbai's transportation and why they cannot be solved at least the way it is now being attempted.*

WHILE transport has a major role in influencing the location of cities, it has had an even more significant role in defining city shapes and sizes. The concentration of population, employment and activities in urban areas to a great extent is due to transportation. The cities have outgrown themselves and reached a stage when the transport system is hindered in its effective functioning. It is against this background that an attempt is being made to analyse a few issues in the context of Indian cities, more specifically, Mumbai.

Complex problems faced by metros

Cities like Mumbai are locations having high concentration of economic activities. They are complex spatial structures that support transport systems which, in turn, support them. Larger the city, greater is its complexity and potential for disruptions, particularly when this complexity is not effectively managed. Urban productivity is highly dependent on the efficiency of its transport system to move labour, consumers and freight between multiple origins and destinations. Additionally, important transport terminals such as ports, airports, and railway yards are located within urban areas, contributing to a wide array of problems. Among the most notable urban transport problems are:

- Traffic congestion and parking difficulties
- Longer commuting
- Public transport inadequacy
- Difficulties for non-motorised transport
- Loss of public space
- Environmental impacts and energy consumption
- Accidents and safety
- Land use and consumption
- Freight distribution

And all these problems are sought to be typically addressed only by a supply-based response model. These problems are due to the prevailing imbalance in modal split; inadequate transport infrastructure and its sub-optimal use; no proper integration between land use and transport planning; and no improvement or little improvement (or in most cases a worsening) in city bus services, which encourage a shift to personalised modes of transport. The important characteristics of current

problems are the scale and intensity of such problems which arise not only due to inadequacy of available resources but also, for example, from emerging land use patterns and lack of effective governance. In other words, one problem has to do with the urban form and its interaction with transport, while the other relates to planning, policy, implementation and regulatory framework. We look at these two issues in some detail.

While there are differences amongst various cities due to a variety of factors, the general pattern of urbanisation has been characterised by high population growth, especially in the metros. This pattern is expected to prevail in the future too, as the basic economic and social forces which encourage the growth of these cities, continue to dominate. Several times in the past, there have been arguments for policies to contain urbanisation (especially excessive growth) and thereby the size of cities. More specifically, the relevant question that has been (and continues to be) raised is: Is it not possible to restrict the growth of cities to an optimum size? The concept of an optimal city is based on comparison of costs and benefits associated with the city size (population measured on the horizontal axis). Adopting the common assumption of an S-shaped benefit curve and a U-shaped cost curve, it is expected that net benefits would become zero at some finite city size. Hence, this could indicate the optimal city size.

However, it is not as easy as that since a bewildering set of optima can be identified. Moreover, the meaning of benefits and curves is rather obscure. The economic and social benefits of large relative to small cities appear stronger in developing economies than in developed ones. Furthermore, the social costs probably remain lower in developing countries despite increase in pollution, congestion, etc. Thus, there has been a basis for arguing that the hypothetical critical city size that provides maximum net benefits, if could be measured, would be greater in developing countries. The question that arises then would be: how much more greater? This is an issue that is being looked at seriously in other parts of the world in recent years but not in the Indian context. It must be recognised that the urbanisation process is very often accompanied by rapid growth in income and employment and there is a commonly held view that it might not be in the interest of

the concerned countries to stop economic growth of cities like Mumbai. Further, it is increasingly being realised that it is impossible to stop or arrest migration into cities even though it may be desirable to do so. It is more likely that it is possible to influence the growth pattern of urban areas in a desirable manner by re-orientation of land-use planning policies in such a way that the city grows into an organic and vital agglomeration node. Is this being done at least?

Land-use planning policies needs a fresh look

Firstly, it is assumed that there is absence of space as a result of which households, firms and governments choose only one location with the result the role of land-use planning has often been underplayed if not overlooked completely. But it is well recognised that space is not only an input in production but it is also an important element for locational planning of economic agents and also an important source of local authorities to finance city development. Land-use decisions invariably introduce strong convexities in consumer preferences and production technologies. Secondly, the essence of urban areas is that there is an agglomeration of many people and firms in close quarters. This introduces an element of non-price competition which complicates operation of the free market process. Further, high densities of population, traffic congestion, provision of public services involve externalities. Besides, existence of space between locations means that producers of local goods (both public and private sectors) can be monopolies.

Development plans are more often abused than implemented. In the name of redevelopment, more housing, commercial units are planned and executed without any consideration for the impact of additional traffic generation. Almost all the textile mill lands have been used in such a way that has given rise to a significant number of additional trips. The plan for an elevated rail corridor assumes real estate development in a big way to partly finance the mega project that has no plan to deal with additional trips expected to be generated on other modes. The third metro line is to be partially funded by increasing FSI (floor space index) along its alignments which are already high dense areas. This is nothing but TOD (transit oriented development) with a vengeance without any consideration of the implications of additional demand that can be expected especially road-based.

All these problems suggest that urbanisation issues, especially economic activity (land-use) patterns are far more complex to be dealt with than merely some ad hoc supply side responses and that an approach far different from the past needs to be adopted to evolve meaningful demand side solutions to be put in use. We now turn to governance issues.

A faulty transport governance system

A cursory examination of the existing governance structure for transport in Mumbai even today reveals a highly fragmented framework in that there are so many agencies involved in the management of transport and traffic with virtually no

coordination between them. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) had no set-up to deal with the road traffic issues with Mumbai Urban Transport Project (MUTP). The Municipal Act was amended to set up a Traffic Management Unit (TMU) in BMC. As of today, it is the police department that manages the traffic, but only as a reactive measure. They are ill equipped to carry out a traffic survey from time to time and suggest policy changes, particularly on modal issues. Similarly, the railway component is still handled by a central government organisation in a way that the response to a typical local (demand) need is almost always national in character whether it is investment, pricing or even on the operational side. While the formation of Mumbai Rail Vikas Corporation (MRVC) was welcomed as a major step towards separating the suburban from non-suburban services, the understanding in many quarters is that MRVC is likely to be involved only in carrying out construction of railway projects under MUTP and will not to be involved in operations, at least for quite some time to come. Unless urgent steps are taken to treat the suburban rail system as a distinct entity (with clear earmarked allocation of fixed assets, semi-variable and variable costs that are attributable and imputable under transparent costing principles, the system would continue to be aligned to national rather than local interests. The suburban railway system ought to be accorded complete autonomy to fulfill its proper effective role.

Conclusion

The current institutional changes at the governance level that have been proposed and half - heartedly implemented have hardly been adequate in establishing a rational transport operations and management system in the Mumbai metro region, even though it may have been adequate for implementing the different phases of the MUTP. What Mumbai needs is a statutory transport authority that will not only execute similar projects in the future, but will actually be on top of the problem on a continuous basis and come up with planning, policy changes and implementation ideas as the situation becomes more complex and difficult. Even the successful handling of some component of the MUTP has at best been a temporary, reactive and fire-fighting project – one thorn to be taken care of. Though this experience afforded an opportunity to reform the entire system effectively, Mumbaikars have apparently missed the bus (or the train or even the boat).

To conclude, unless some very basic issues underlying the provision of transport facilities in Mumbai are handled satisfactorily, the system will continue to be inadequate, underfunded, in-efficient and, above all, not at all service or user oriented. ■



The writer is Walchand Hirachand Professor of Transport Economics, Department of Economics, University of Mumbai.

Weak public transport, Mumbai's bane

*Public transport is the backbone of Mumbai but this is an area which has been neglected for too long, resulting in increasing dependence on private vehicles and traffic congestion that is adversely impacting human life, writes **Amit Bhatt**.*

INDIA is growing rapidly and transport is a foundation pillar of that growth. But the current focus on facilitation of private transportation (two and four wheelers) does not augur well for the economic growth of the country. Our cities are congested and polluted, and on an average we are losing one to two percent GDP growth annually due to this. In addition, the current transport approach is contributing to inequitable growth with people in the lower economic strata getting priced out from many options as there is no space for them to travel by cycle or walk safely, which are the only transport modes they can afford. This is adversely impacting the quality of human life.

Mumbai has about 12.43 million people living in 437.7 sq kms, with high levels of concentrated economic activities. The current status of Mumbai's traffic and transport cannot satisfy the numerous requirements of urban mobility and this impacts the productivity of people. Extreme growth in population and vehicles, poor quality service of public transport modes coupled with on-going construction works and parking related issues have increased mobility related issues in the city.

Mumbai in a grid lock

In the last few decades, Mumbai has considerably grown and is expected to go up to 34 million by 2031 in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR). Its repercussions will be more pronounced in Greater Mumbai as the concentration of employment and activities in this area will continue to be the nucleus. The growth in population and pedestrian activity has dramatically impacted the usage of footpaths and crosswalks. Footpaths have been encroached by motor vehicles, vendors, hawkers and other activities due to which in many places, pedestrians are forced to walk and use traffic lanes partially or fully.

Traffic congestion is mainly due to the rapid growth in motorisation, while the road network has not changed much in the last four decades. This rapid growth in motorisation is despite problems of traffic and parking, and can be explained by the income growth of a highly aspirational population

coupled with extreme saturation in public transport.

Of the approximately 20.3 lakh vehicles as of March 2012 (Source: Total Cost of Ownership), two wheelers account for 55.7 percent, four wheelers account for 30.6 percent, auto rickshaws account for 5.5 percent, buses account for 0.5 percent, trucks/lorries/delivery vans account for 3.9 percent and other vehicles account for 3.8 percent. While two wheelers and four wheelers have a vehicle share of about 86 percent they carry only 13 percent of the total trips. Despite a small population using personal vehicles, the road transport infrastructure investments are made to cater to this minority.

The numbers of private motorised transportation modes have steeply risen and the quality of life of urban dwellers has drastically deteriorated with this rapid motorisation. On an average 450 new vehicles are being added to the road network each day in Mumbai. As the number of vehicles increase day by day (with the growth in the last decade alone being 88 percent), the travel time of people who have to commute for work has also increased. In addition, more than one lakh vehicles per day enter/leave Mumbai city, adding more load to an already strained system. This sharp increase in automobiles in the last decade has pushed Mumbai into a situation of a grid lock.

Eighty percent of the people access public transport by walking; apart from this there is also a high volume of walk trips – as many as 42 percent people make their entire journey by walking and these high walking shares are an asset and need to be encouraged even more.

Public transport fails to meet the demand

Public transport is the backbone of Mumbai's transportation need. However, the existing road public transport provided by bus service fails to meet the demand of today. This is one of the major reasons for increase in automobile dependence. Till last decade the percentage share of public transport was 88 percent which has fallen to 78 percent. This has a lot to do with the low quality of service which is offered by the mass transit system, especially the suburban rail system. In

order to maintain the public transport share, given the limited scope for further expansion of road work, public transport should be given utmost priority. Various studies have strongly recommended and have accorded priority to public transport for catering to the future travel needs. In the recently conducted Comprehensive Traffic Study (CTS) (2005-2008), 100 kms of BRTS (Bus Rapid Transit System), 450 kms of metro rail system, and additional 250 kms of suburban transport system, have been recommended for the metropolitan region. Long term policy measures including projects recommended by CTS need to be incorporated in a phased manner based on the priority.

Integrate multi-modal transport networks for seamless travel

Apart from public transport what it also needed is integration of Multi-modal Transport Networks. It is necessary to ensure multimodal integration. With multiple modes of travel used for completion of a journey it is necessary to ensure seamless integration of different modes at various suburban, metro and monorail stations with measures such as integrated ticketing system, passenger information system, and physical integration. Once the much needed public transport system is in place with the desired level of service and comfort, it can then be coupled with demand restraint measures such as congestion pricing etc., to reverse automobile dependence.

We also need to focus on some important areas at the

planning stage e.g. In existing areas in Mumbai land use and development strategies should preserve densities and a mixture of uses or encourage them where they are missing. In suburbs/new greenfield developments, master plans should zone for good densities and mixed uses, especially around new public transport stations, as this will help in preserving open spaces and producing affordable housing, with good connectivity to area jobs and areas of major activity.

In existing and new urban developments, public transport and non-motorised modes should be prioritised. Flexible bus-based services for transit should be considered. Bus of High Level of Service (BHLS) and BRT are excellent options for medium to high capacity corridors, while metro lines can be considered for very high density corridors. High quality pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure should be built to complement the mass transit corridor and provide last kilometre accessibility. These facilities will not only encourage sustainable development of Mumbai, but will dramatically improve the quality of life which is now becoming an increasingly important indicator of development. ■



The writer is the strategy head – urban transport at EMBARQ India. He is based in Delhi and provides vision and leadership to all transport initiatives across EMBARQ India, managing relationships with partners and stakeholders.

Shanghai dreams

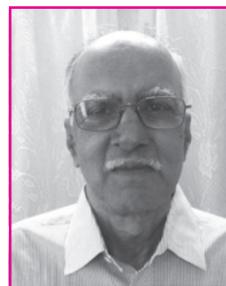
(Continued from page 14)

- UMMTA should be given powers to take all decisions related to Mumbai's transport and they should be binding on all authorities. UMMTA chief should report to the MGH.
- Mumbai Suburban Railways should be separated from Indian Railways and a Mumbai Suburban Rail Corporation should be established. The entire Railway network in suburban Mumbai should be owned by this corporation.
- There should be integrated land use planning with transport infrastructure.
- The short and medium term low cost projects should be given equal weightage along with long term projects.
- There should be citizen participation in planning, implementation and evaluation of development plans and participation of voluntary organisations in development and environment.
- There should be special transport fund for city transport infrastructure projects which can be obtained partially from Central funds like JNNURM (Jawaharlal Nehru National

Urban Renewal Mission) and the rest generated locally from transport cess, toll or parking fees.

Learning from Shanghai's mistakes

While following the Shanghai model, it is necessary that we steer clear from the mistakes Shanghai made. Shanghai built the city as car-centric eliminating seven million cyclists from the roads for which it is now paying heavily in terms of pollution. It felled trees lined alongside famous riverside of the Bund - a waterfront to make way for the riverside car park and elevated promenade which blocked the magnificent view of the river. The scheme implemented by Shanghai authorities ignored the cultural and commercial diversity of the old city. We need to keep all these aspects in mind and



provide for sustainable transport which includes walking, bicycle lanes, good public transport, when we redevelop Mumbai. ■

The writer is a member of Mumbai Vikas Samiti looking into issues relating to infrastructure, transportation and housing in Mumbai.

KNOW INDIA BETTER



The Royal Reserve
BANDHAVGARH

One has to be lucky to see a tiger in every other reserve, but really unlucky not to see one in Bandhavgarh. But, the tiger is lord of his domain and not ours to command.

Text and photos: Katie Dubey



A stream dashes down the hillslope in the Bandhavgarh forest

OUR jeep bumps off the road, negotiates the low height of the hillock and grinds to a halt. From this vantage point, we scan our surroundings, like a hawk on a perch. We readied our cameras on tripods, to roll into action the moment we sighted our target. It has been opined that one has to be lucky to see a tiger in every other reserve, but really unlucky not to see one in Bandhavgarh. But, the tiger is the lord of his domain and not ours to command. Sitting silently in the jeep, each one of us was immersed in his own thoughts. The driver and forest guard, speaking in whispers were discussing the tiger's last sighting; trying to predict the next one. They peered repeatedly at the ground, got our attention and pointed to the red, muddy forest floor 'pug marks'.

'Pug marks! Smudgy and nearly wiped out; my companion and I felt disappointment weighing us down. Two days had elapsed, wandering the Bandhavgarh forest, morning and evening chasing leads offered by other drivers and guards. The chase led nowhere. My companion said in a bitter voice, "I think it is just publicity to get people here. There are no tigers." My own thoughts echoed, but, I replied, "Sure there are but, we are not in the right spot at the right time. Let's wait a bit." Way out in the distance, water glistened throwing up showers of starry sparks in the heat haze.

The epic connection

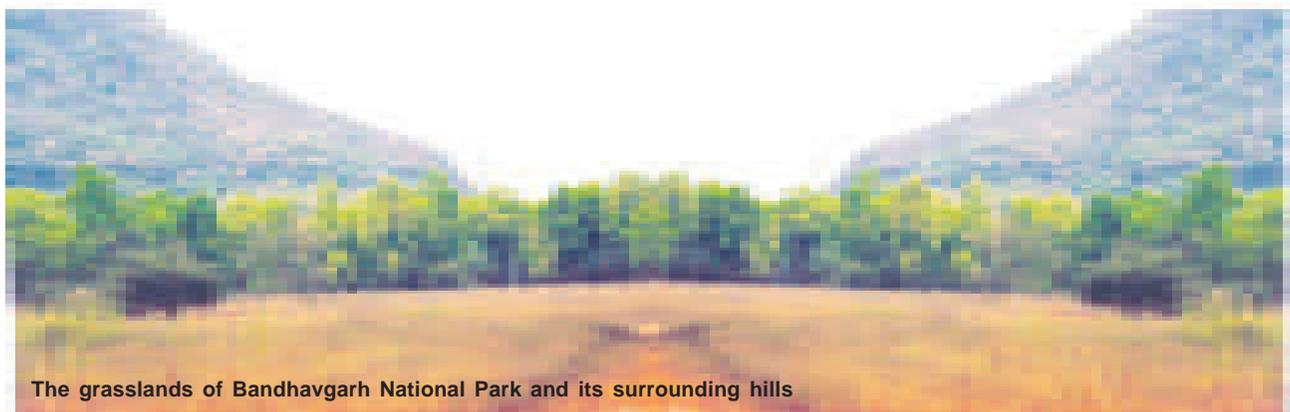
Bandhavgarh is of an incredibly ancient lineage, stretching 2,000 years into the recesses of time and sanctified by the footprints of the God-king Ram, hero of the epic Ramayana. Ram, heir apparent of Ayodhya, was exiled to the forests by his manipulating step-mother, Kaikeyi, who wanted the throne for her own son, Bharat. Ram left the palace, accompanied by his wife Sita and brother Laxman and entered the forests to live out the stipulated 14 years of exile. Here, the demon king Ravan sees Sita and desires her. Knowing that Sita would



The tiger's pug marks on the mud track

never bend to his wish, he creates the mirage of an enchanting golden deer in the forest that catches Sita's fancy. She insists on having it for a pet. Ram goes into the forest to catch it, leaving Laxman to protect Sita. This poses a problem for Ravan. So, impersonating Ram, he gives a distress call. On hearing Ram's voice, Sita is upset. She urges Laxman to go and aid Ram. Laxman refuses, saying that Ram was a match for an army. Sita loses her cool and accuses Laxman of unworthy intentions towards her. In a quandary, Laxman finally draws a magical boundary around the house, asking Sita not to step out of this 'Laxman-rekha' under any circumstance and leaves. Having got both the brothers out of the way, the devious Ravan, posing as a mendicant, comes to the hut asking for alms. Sita steps into the hut and gets him food. Then, remaining within the boundary stretches out to place it in the sadhu's bowl. Feigning anger at her stretching out thus, Ravan draws Sita beyond the boundary, grabs her by the hair and abducts her to his kingdom of Lanka, an island in the sea. A distraught Ram wanders the forest looking for clues to her whereabouts. He comes to the kingdom of 'vanars' (monkeys). Here, among two brothers, one had ruthlessly abducted the wife of the other, the rightful king, exiled him and proclaimed himself king. Ram helps the rightful king regain his kingdom. In turn the vanars promise to help seek out Sita. Hanuman, a leader of the vanars, becomes Ram's unflinching devotee. It is he who scouts the land, locates Sita in Lanka and brings news to Ram of her whereabouts. Later, he, along with others build the 'setu' a bridge across the sea for Rama to cross over when war is declared on Lanka. The 'setu' is now an established fact and is seen through satellite imagery.

The same two vanars are also considered the architects of the fort at Bandhavgarh; used by Ram and Hanuman when they return from Lanka after vanquishing Ravan. Fourteen years over, when Ram is returning to Ayodhya, he gifts the fort to his brother Laxman, who gets to be known as 'Bandhavdish' Lord of the fort: The title carries on and is still used by the Maharaja of Rewa, owner of the fort. Here legend fades, reality emerges.



The grasslands of Bandhavgarh National Park and its surrounding hills



The Bandhavgarh Fort assumed to be 2000 years old

Historic connection

Bandhavgarh Fort sits on the plateau of a hill 811 meters above sea level. This hill is the highest amongst 32 hills and hillocks in the Bandhavgarh area, belonging to the Vindhya ranges in district Umaria of Madhya Pradesh. A formidable stronghold of the 10th century it forms the centre point of Bandhavgarh National Park, but remains isolated from it by the smooth hill-slopes dropping into deep valleys below and is fenced off by surrounding smaller hills.

This fort is not recorded in any historical document and bears no date of construction, but it is assumed to be 2,000 years old, based on references found in texts like the Narad-Panch Ratra, Shiva Purana and its explicit association with the Ramayana.

Folklore of Madhya Pradesh indicates that the fort was constructed by the Gond kings, belonging to the Pandro caste, because its architecture is akin to other forts built by them. The Gonds also built 12 talabs or ponds a few of which still remain. The Gonds reside within the vicinity of the fort to date. The edifice is a receptacle of the history of various dynasties who ruled from its precincts. The Maurayans ruled



Spectacular sunrise at Bandhavgarh

during the 3rd century B.C. followed by the Vakatakas who remained until the 5th century; from the 6th century to the 13th century, three dynasties left their stamp on Bandhavgarh: Sengars, Kalchuris and finally the Baghels who ruled the longest from the fort; from the 13th century to the 15th century.

Life flowed in full measure through the fort. It became a centre for traders travelling between Kaushambi and Bharhut and was known as Bardawati. Under the Vatakas the fort became the recipient of the written word and was enriched with stone writing and sculpture. In the reign of the Kalchuris it came to be known as 'haihay kshetra'. Karan Deo made Bandhavgarh the capital of the southern part of the Gahora kingdom in 1245. The Baghels were the last to hold the fort. They ruled from the end of the first millennium to 1494 AD. Midway, the kingdom was lost to the Kuruvanshees; but, lost in war it was recovered in love! A Baghel prince enticed the Kuruvanshee princess Kaurvi. Marriage interlocked the two clans and Bandhavgharh came back to the Baghels as a prized piece of dowry of the Kuruvanshee princess; the fort changed hands



Inside the forest

again. The Baghels settled in and ruled from Bandhavgarh, extending their territory at the same time. By 1618 AD they had extended their kingdom to such an extent that Bandhavgarh fell into a corner of it.

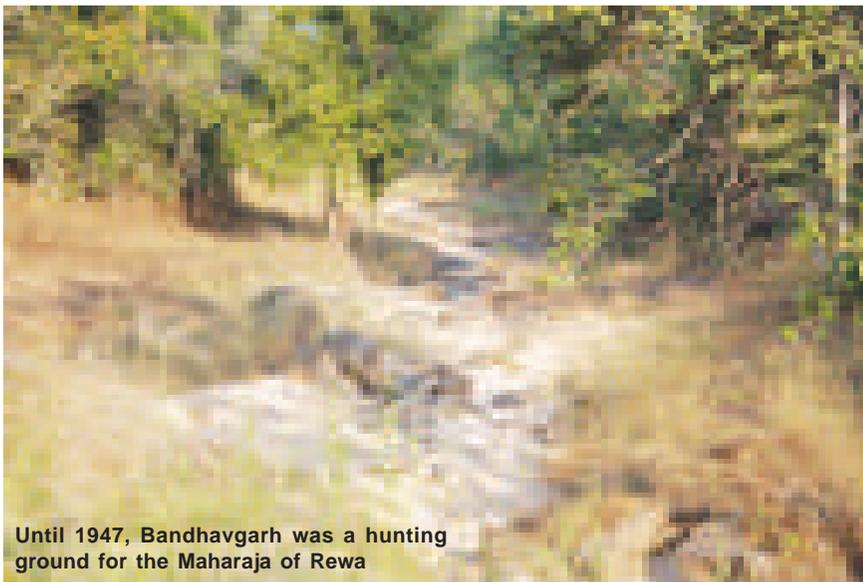
Administration from Bandhavgarh became difficult. Travel on horseback took weeks; distances were measured in days; the rulers needed a central location for efficient administration. They moved to Rewa. With the rulers, the administration and the army moved a large chunk of the population. Bandhavgarh lay deserted and pressures on the land diminished. Shortly, like a shout of joy, the habitat responded and the jungle reclaimed its own. Vegetative density attracted herbivores to the area and in their wake followed tigers.

Un-intentionally, the Maharaja of Rewa had laid the cornerstone for a tiger reserve. On his return to Bandhavgharh, the Maharaja was amazed and delighted to find a dense jungle teeming with tigers surrounding the fort. It was immediately proclaimed a Royal hunting reserve. Royalty had adopted the blood thirsty sport of hunting as a mark of royal breeding.

Killing a tiger, marked a heroic man; that these animals were cornered and then shot did not seem to matter to those valorous men. Stories told, recount that to be known as truly heroic, the magical figure of 107 had to be attained in the hunt. To gain the title and the magical figure, Raja Gulab Singh Baghel decimated 83 tigers in just one year!

Enroute to Bandhavgarh Hill fort

A visit to the fort requires prior permission, as it is still owned by the erstwhile Maharajas. The approach road is steep and narrow and the entrance barred by an ancient gate known as the Karn Pol.



Until 1947, Bandhavgarh was a hunting ground for the Maharaja of Rewa

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Lord Vishnu, preserver of the world, lies asleep on Sheshnag. This stone sculpture known as Sheshshaiya is by the bank of a stream in Bandhavgarh

North of the Bandhavgarh mountain foothills, beginning at the edge of the Chakradhara meadow and leading all the way up to Sheshshaiya, the landscape is dotted with man-made caves, dug out of sandstone, conclusive evidence of human activity of a bygone era. They bear 'brahmi' inscriptions and have rock paintings credited at being the oldest. Several caves have etched animal figures of the tiger, pig, elephant and horsemen on their walls. The largest of these, called '*badi gufa*' (big cave), has a broad entrance, nine small rooms and several pillars. It is spacious with an adequately high ceiling for a person to stand upright, but, in every other aspect, appears primitive. The caves are of indeterminate purpose, but suggestive names help in conjecture. Thus, there is the Astabal – stables, Kachheri – courtroom, guardrooms, and others. There are 39 caves, all of which lie within a circle of five kilometers around the old village of Gopalpur and are now taken over by tigers and bats.

Moving up the hill one encounters the sculptures of Vishnu's incarnations; Varah – boar, Matsya – the fish, with dimensions of 9 feet, 2 inches by 11 feet 2 inches; Kurma or turtle is the largest of its kind in India and the 18 feet high Narsimha, carries the head of a lion on the body of a man. The most famed, is the enormous sculpture of Lord Vishnu reclining on the body of the seven-headed serpent, *Sheshnag*, called

Sheshshaiya. The Lord of the world sleeps with his head to the east and legs to the west. From near his feet, gushes a stream – the Charanganga that waters Bandhavgarh. On Janmasthami, Lord Krishna's birthday, devotees flock to *Sheshshaiya* and the temple of Bandhavadheesh that enshrines Laxman, the brother or 'bandhu' of Lord Ram, and also Ram and Sita. The temple is actively used and a priest remains in residence. The Fort is held in great reverence as it has all 10 of Lord Vishnu's avatars.

Next to the temple is a large tank, the Rani Talab. On its banks stands Rani Mahal, queen's residence also called Moti Mahal, because of its enchanting and imposing structure that is reflected in blue-green water. Several small temples with elaborate carvings dot the periphery of the tank. Opposite the Bandhavadheesh temple stands the *Bhandar* or treasury.

Famous men who left their mark

Bandhavgarh seems to have exerted a magnetic pull, particularly on those, destined to leave a mark on the sands of time. In the 16th century the famed poet and saint, Sant Kabir was drawn to the area. A story goes that, Kabir gave a salutation to the whole of central India. The Maharaja of Rewa had heard about Kabir and was informed about the saint's arrival in his kingdom. He invited the saint to his fort palace. When the



A group of tourists are lucky to spot a majestic tiger as it crosses path in the forest

saint arrived, the Rajput king was in a dilemma. As Kabir was not a Brahmin by birth, the Maharaja could not touch his feet in reverence. Kabir solved the problem by saying “Salaam Sahib” and the Maharaja reciprocated; ever since, this has become the traditional way of greeting in Bandhavgarh. Kabir is known to have stayed in Bandhavgarh Fort for some time. A Kabir temple marks the place where the saint meditated and held discourses for his coterie. His first disciple, the wealthiest merchant of Bandhavgarh, Dharamdas Naam Sahib, was initiated here.

Another twist in the tale is that, when Humayun was on the throne of India, Sher Shah Suri, the Afghan invaded it. Humayun’s queen, pregnant at the time, was sent away to Bandhavgarh, as the fort was believed to be extremely secure. Akbar, was in fact born in Kalinjar fort, north of Bandhavgarh. Akbar was never able to sever his connection with Bandhavgarh. As an emperor, he kept an eye on it all the time and was informed of all that was happening there. When Tansen, the great musician joined the court of Rewa under Raja Ramachandra Baghela, Akbar sent one of the fabled gems of his court, Birbal, to invite and escort Tansen to the Moghul court. Birbal was welcomed at Bandhavgarh and liked the place so much that he decided to stay on a while. A palace called Birbal Bhavan within the fort testifies to Birbal’s extended

stay at the court of the Baghels. An infuriated Akbar, then sent his army to conquer Rewa, but, at this point, Tansen himself mollified the emperor, defused the tension and shifted to Agra.

Back to the present

The sun blazed overhead. We sat in the open jeep with our guide and driver fascinated by their narration of Bandhavgarh’s story. I was in a daze, grappling with the fact that we were actually in the vicinity of the oldest fort in the world. That Ram and Laxman had actually lived and walked through these very forests in which we were moving around. I wondered how this royal trio walked unafraid through the jungle, most definitely denser then, than it was now and teeming with wild animals. That was a time when man was in sync with nature and living in the forest was very natural, for it contained all the resources to sustain life.

Shaking myself out of my reverie, I breathed deeply as I pondered; true; we had been exceptionally unlucky for the tiger eluded us constantly. But hope always reigns supreme. I looked around and absorbed the beauty of the varied terrain. Green hills in the distance, bare rocks in the foreground, stubby yellow stalks of grass poking up from fissures in the earth and the mud tracks on which we so anxiously and hopefully motored around. The still haze was shattered by the shrill call of



A tiger resting in the bushes

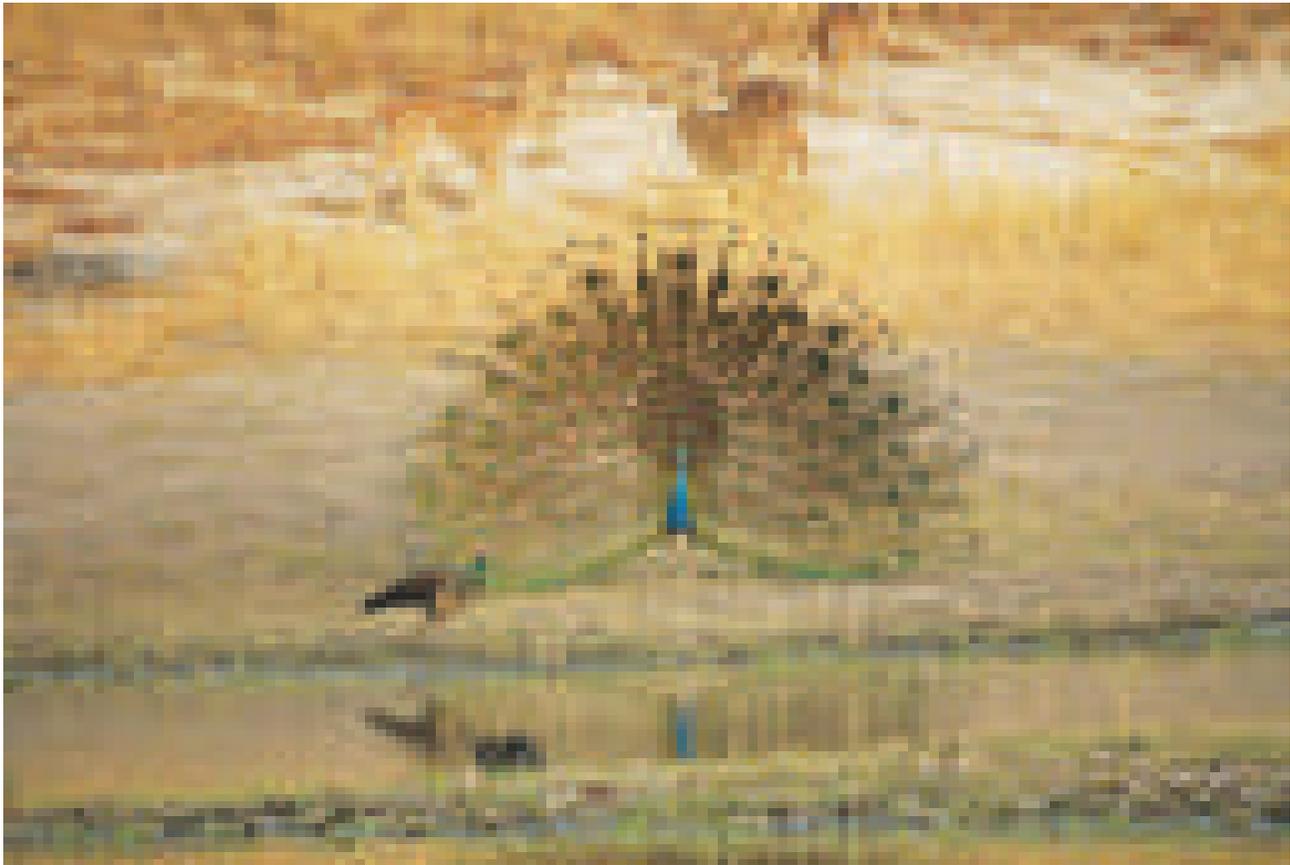
langurs, followed by an anxious bark from the deer. “The tiger is on the move”, said the forest ranger. “Let us move closer to the pond. Perhaps the tiger is heading there for a drink”. We nodded our assent. The driver gunned the jeep’s engine to life and we steadily slipped off the hillock and joined the mud track below.

Bandhavgarh National Park

Bandhavgarh Hill being the centre point, the reserve bears its name. The park lies between the Vindhya mountains and the eastern flank of the Satpura hill range. It spreads out between Shahdol and Jabalpur districts in Madhya Pradesh. The hill is a sandstone formation and allows water to permeate



A herd of deer grazing in the open Savanah grasslands



A peacock dances in isolation in the scrub of the rocky terrain

into it. As a result, there are several springs and streams that originate from it. The rivers Son and Johilla on the east side and the river Umrar flows on the west side. The hill-top is a plateau with marsh meadows. Bamboos and Sal cover the plain tracts, degenerating in growth and quality as they ascend the hill, owing to edaphic conditions. A rare species of insectivorous plant like *Drosera peltata* and a medicinal plant, the *Acorus calamus* or Buch are found in isolated patches of the Tala range.

Until 1947, Bandhavgarh remained a royal hunting ground or Shikargarh for the Maharajas of Rewa, but post independence, princely states were abolished and Rewa became a part of Madhya Pradesh State. Wildlife and forests were the least of the new government's worries. Lack of protection gave poachers a free hand and degradation of forests set in. The erstwhile Maharaja, Martand Singh of Rewa, was disturbed by this wanton destruction and proposed that an area of 105 square kilometers be declared as a National Park. No conservation measures were taken until 1968, when the area was constituted as Bandhavgarh National Park.

Two hundred and fifty species of birds inhabit the forests among which are the blossom-headed parakeets, making their presence known with their shrill cries, partridges, hornbills, golden orioles, falcons, golden eagles, hawks and numerous sun birds.

Across the country, poaching was rampant: The tiger was on the verge of extinction. Project Tiger was initiated in 1972 and the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 came into force. In Bandhavgarh, it was realised that demarcating only 105 square kilometers as tiger habitat was insufficient. So, in 1982, three more ranges, namely Khitauli, Magdhi and Kallawah were added to the Tala range – the original Bandhavgarh National Park. Bandhavgarh became part of Project Tiger in 1993 at which time the adjoining Panpatha Sanctuary was added to the reserve.

In search of the tiger

We motored around the park on roads cut out for jeeps. The entire forest area is rocky and hilly, nurturing a mixed deciduous forest in patches. Some trees, were leafless, but held up beautiful bright yellow flowers, like golden cups holding an offering of nectar to the sun. Coral tree flowers bloomed in clusters of bright red or orange. The scene was kaleidoscopic changing from deep green and grey, to brown, orange-red and yellow. We encountered chital deer grazing quietly amidst grass filled rockbound spaces. A handsome



Flowers on the bare branches brighten the landscape

antlered stag with his harem and their young, kept a wary eye on the surrounding as he grazed. Along the track, the guide spotted small pug marks, those of a cub going in the direction of a drying water hole and we followed them, until suddenly there were no more. Our guide said that their information was that the tigress had moved deep into the forest with her cubs to shelter from the rising temperature of the advancing day. So, we back-tracked and branched off along another road that led to a larger watering hole and by and by came upon a sambar. He blended perfectly with his surrounding, his colouring perfectly matching the rocks he was seated amongst, so it was difficult to distinguish him at first. Only when he flapped



Peacocks abound in the park

his ears did we really notice him. Majestic deer, the sambar are solitary and seen in ones and twos only. Later, we chanced upon a serpent eagle and a kingfisher, but of the tiger there was not a trace. The day was advancing towards noon and by park rules we had to exit, leaving the birds and beasts to their peace and quiet.

Having somehow got through our own chores without any electricity at the resort, we were back in the jungle by 4pm. The blaze of the sun had dimmed a bit and a breeze fanned our hot faces as we drove along by the road skirting the *chaurs*. The long dry stalks are known to be the hideout of tigers when stalking their prey. Near the waterhole we encountered a grey



The female of the sambar deer stands alert to the sounds around it



A leopard lies on the fork of a branched tree concealed by the foliage

heron, still as a statue, standing in the pond, patiently waiting for fish to swim within spearing distance. We stopped a short distance away from the pool to watch the drama being played out at the pool. The sun was on its westward journey, and had cast a spell of quiet over the land. On the muddy shore of the pool a peacock danced in gay abandon, fanning its feathers to the fullest and twirling around like a dervish. A couple of langurs by the shore took no notice of the peacock and were intent on de-lousing each other. All was tranquil; in the words of the poet 'God's in His Heaven; All's well with the world'. We moved on, our route taking us to the rear of the park with its natural fencing of tall cliffs, where only the eagles dared. White patches of bird droppings made the presence of birds very evident. The green bee-eater flitted across our line of vision complacently, a blue jay, or the Indian roller as it is also called, remained perched serenely on a rock, the grey hornbill called from the canopy of the trees nearby and the jungle fowl strutted around in the scrub.



A sambar deer



The Asiatic wild dog or Dhole is an endangered species

Rich bio-diversity

The richness of Bandhavgarh's bio-diversity is immense. There are 35 species of mammals, some of which are endangered and rare; the common langurs, Rhesus macaque, Asiatic jackal, Bengal fox, sloth bear, gray mongoose, striped hyena, jungle cat, leopard, tiger, wild boar, spotted deer, sambar, chausingha, nilgai, chinkara and gaur. The dhole or wild dogs, the small Indian civet, palm squirrel and lesser bandicoot rat are seen occasionally.

Two hundred and fifty species of birds inhabit the forests among which are the blossom-headed parakeets, making their presence known with their shrill cries, partridges, hornbills, golden orioles, falcons, golden eagles, hawks and numerous sun birds.

The Chakradhara area of Bandhavgarh, with the exception of the Western Ghats, has the highest density of butterflies. A total 111 species of butterflies inhabit this



The Indian Roller or Blue Jay gets its name because it is in the habit of rolling over in flight



The Indian Gaur is the largest bovine in the world and can be dangerous if disturbed

forest. Its flora is equally diverse, with 500 varieties of trees and shrubs, while the forest floor is home to 16 species of snakes. Along the edges of the forest, most parts of the valley are covered by bamboo clumps and grasslands that provide the thrills and chills of a safari.

Adding to the fame of its tiger sightings was its star tiger 'Charger'. The feats of Charger have been chronicled

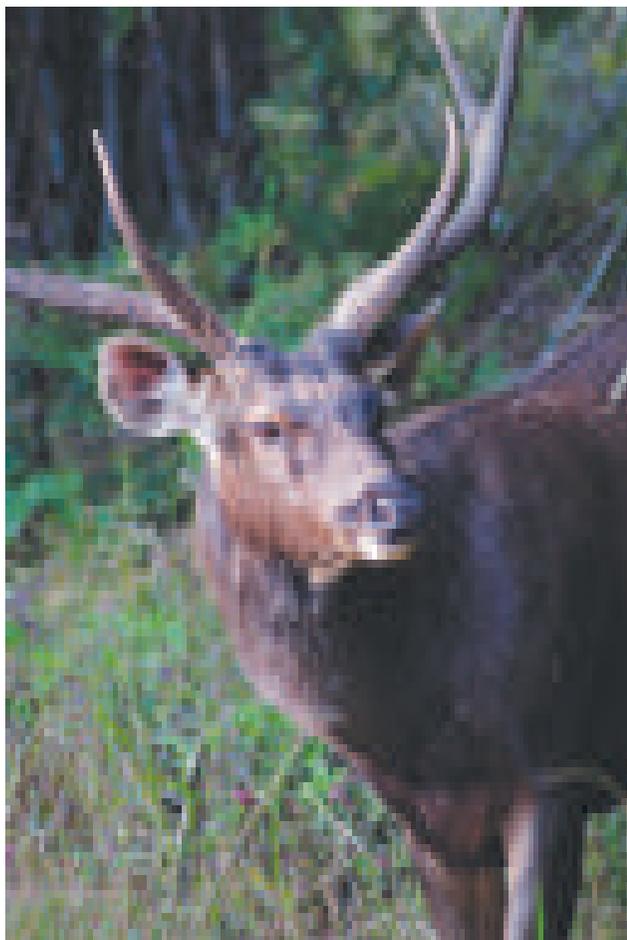
with religious zest. This huge dominant male once charged an elephant carrying tourists and spread panic, but earned his sobriquet 'Charger'. Defying the normal, Charger enlivened the forests of Bandhavgarh for 17 years, while most tigers fade away in 12 to 14 years. His name is immortalised at 'Charger Point' the enclosure where he breathed his last.



A sambar stag rests amongst the boulders in the shade of the trees. Its colour merges with the surrounding offering the necessary camouflage from predators



A herd of chital come to the pond for a drink, but not all drink together. One stands apart like a sentry, on the lookout for lurking danger and ready to warn his companions



A full grown sambar stag

Adieu to Bandhavgarh

At 5 am we were on the road, motoring to Chakradhara. Hope ran high that on this, our last visit to the forest we would come across the animal we so ardently sought – the tiger. We moved through the gates as soon as they were opened. The sun was just peering over the horizon at the far eastern end. In a surprisingly short while, it was a blood-red disc, seen through the tall trees and hallowed the entire area in a red glow. As we continued to move towards Chakradhara, the sun fell behind the table-top mountain. Chakaradhara, when we

got there was tranquil. Nothing stirred and there were no calls from bird or beast. Surmising that the tiger was not in the area, we motored off to Gopalpur, a green algae covered lake and stopped at a safe distance from the shoreline, so as not to disturb the animals at their morning routine. A large serpent-eagle, perched on a low branch, eyed us severely, as he waited to warm up in the rising sun. A couple of sambar came to the lake and began to drink water. Suddenly, they raised their heads in alarm. Our guide and driver, in the front seat of the jeep twisted around with eyes sparkling and a finger to their lips. We looked at each other, the excitement in our hearts bursting out as smiles on our lips. Abruptly, there was pandemonium all around. The monkeys began to call, deer barked, birds burst into chatter and the forest was agog with sound, heralding the approach of the tiger. We sat with our eyes glued to the line of short bushes way ahead. Incredibly, the sambar kept standing a short way in the water with its head cocked to a side. We saw ripples beneath the surface of the water, indicating a crocodile and held our breath. Then, like a flash of lightening, the tiger leapt out of the bush towards the stag in the shallow water. Galvanised into action the sambar took a flying leap and was off, dashing towards safety on the opposite shore; the crocodile saw an opportunity and grabbed at the paw in the water. Taken by surprise, the tiger recoiled, tail raised and stiff. He let out a roar and snatched his leg out of death's jaw in the nick of time and stepped back on shore. Then, he turned his tail and headed into the bushes. We sat in the jeep stunned by the drama, but, ecstatic at the sight.

The entire drama took about five minutes to enact, but, left an indelible mark on the memory that remains etched in every detail to this very day. ■



The writer is the author of three coffee-table books and writes for various newspapers and magazines on nature and environment.

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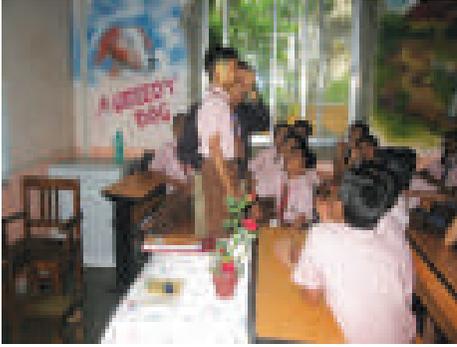
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Monorail on a bumpy ride

Jagdeep Desai says the country's first monorail is an ill-conceived system forced on the city of Mumbai, just to boast that the city has a monorail in addition to a metro.

THE much-awaited Mumbai monorail, India's first, was thrown open to the public in February 2014, ending the city's wait for a new mode of public transport. However, less than three months after its launch, serious doubts are being raised about its utility.

Monorails are public transport vehicles which run on single tracks, as against the common double tracked trams, railways, and can be at grade, i.e. on ground, underground or elevated. Proponents of monorails argue that the advantage of monorail is that the traction rail is half, both in cost and material, and hence economical. But there's the rub.

In regular railway systems, the tracks are all connected, the alignment fixed by the sleepers or ties, and the entire arrangement is supported on the metal ballast. In contrast, the commonly used elevated monorail is supported on a very heavy reinforced cement concrete beam, and the vehicle runs with rubber tyres on it.

It is widely accepted that the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) decided to implement the monorail, ostensibly as a feeder service to cater to crowded and narrow congested areas of the city. In reality though the Mumbai monorail, runs on quite a sparsely travelled route.

But seriously, the Mumbai monorail is extremely lacking in capacity, even if they manage the most optimum headway between services. And that is itself a moot point, since there should be enough demand to enable it to succeed. At present, the services are only from Chembur to Wadala, which are running in huge losses. MMRDA officials attribute it to poor feeder services at Wadala, and to cover up its poor planning, MMRDA says one needs to wait till the entire set up is in place.

This huge facility, with construction going on since six years or more, has already cost over a thousand crores, and the expenses will be at least three times more for the rest of the stretch, not to mention operations, regular and routine maintenance and repair cost per month.

For the same investment, Mumbai could have got around 3000 air-conditioned deluxe buses like Volvo or Mercedes, and commensurate smaller ones for the narrower streets and lanes. Such buses would have had the flexibility of being operated singly or in multiple units, which would have so many advantages over this elevated monorail.

For one, it is going to be very difficult to see passengers keep going up and down every day, twice a day for this type of



ride. Such enormous investments could have been better utilised with a much clearer action plan for public transportation in Mumbai, and for that matter in all the other urban areas where monorails and metro rails are being built and developed.

A downside of these overhead structures like monorails and metro rails, which are as good as permanent, is that they virtually block the city's landscape and give absolutely no scope for having more lines in different directions, because by default they follow the road carriageway route either by the side of it, or above and along the median.

Further, while the average speed for road traffic is said to be around 17 kmph, the average speed for monorail will be at best 31 kmph, not at all significant when we consider that the passengers have to go up and down, then get to the monorail station by autorickshaw or taxi or bus or foot, and same way at the destination. In a good multi-modal transport system, change overs from one mode to another have to be smooth, if not seamless. Here, the situation is not at all like that. Over all, the monorail is hardly something which will radically change commuting in Mumbai.

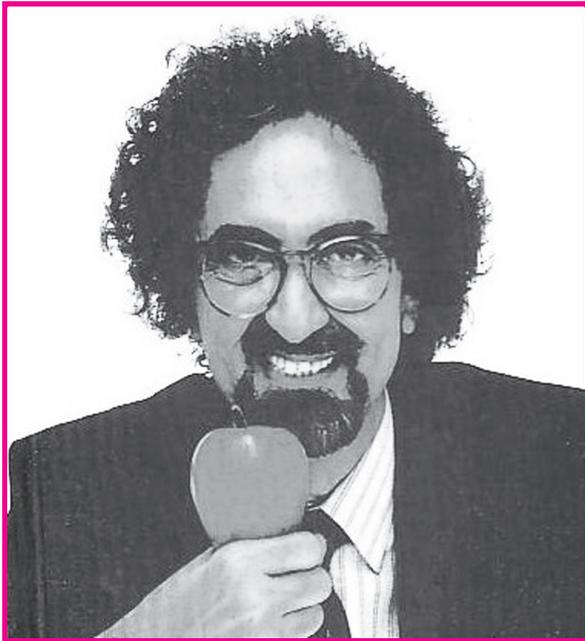
At present, the bus services are hardly coordinated and synchronised with the monorail or metro, as it ought to have been. The stations do not have drinking water facilities or

even seating arrangements. One could say that monorail in its present form is an ill-conceived system that has been forced on the city of Mumbai, just to show that the city has a monorail, in addition to a metro. ■

The writer is an architect and founder trustee of Forum for Improving Quality of Life in Mumbai Suburbs.



The return of Alyque Padamsee



Alyque Padamsee is an institution unto himself – in the advertising world and in the world of theatre. His personal life has also been extremely unconventional ranging from his complete agnosticism when he withdrew from the religion he was born into through his three marriages that amazed the masses when he took all three wives together with the children for lunch or dinner at some posh dining place. When this very radical and revolutionary socialist who is immersed in civil rights in his city withdraws from the stage as an actor but continues directing, it makes news. It makes bigger news when he returns to act after 40 long years.

Padamsee, nearly 90, in a tete-a-tete with **Shoma Chatterji**.

What remembrances do you have as a small boy?

I have many memories, most featuring my mother sending us to a boarding school because she was too busy giving birth to children. I loved watching the clouds up in the sky, changing their shape constantly, becoming butterflies and then waterfalls in innumerable imaginative ways. Picasso once said that it took 60 years for him to see life through the eyes of a child. 'That is when I became a painter and everything became new, filled with the wonder with which a child looks at an aeroplane flying above.' I think a little of that child has been with me all along, helping me to look at life and at the world with the wonder a child's vision is filled with.

You were recently in Kolkata for two performances of 'Death of a Salesman'. Why Kolkata after 20 houseful

performances in Mumbai?

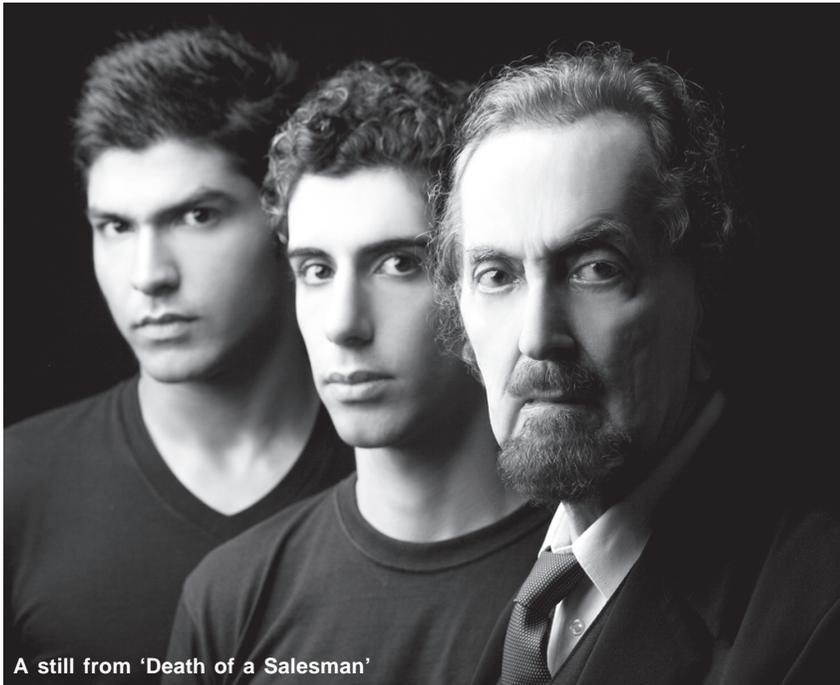
The best thing is that the entire performance was possible because of the industrial house *Emami* coming forward to sponsor it, not very common in this city. It gives a different complexion to theatrical performances. I keep wondering why Bengali industrialists do not come forward to sponsor culture and art. Look at what TATA has done to the Mumbai cultural world through NCPA. With the success of these two performances, I hope more industrialists in West Bengal will come forward to sponsor the arts that include painting, sculpture, music and theatre. Besides, to my mind, the best audience in the country for any form of artistic performance is in Kolkata.

You withdrew yourself as an actor four decades ago though you continued to direct. What made you come back?

My daughter Raell who owns and runs Ace Productions almost coerced me back on to the stage. And believe me you, it made me realise how much I had missed the audience-actor magic that cinema can never parallel. I played Mohammed Ali Jinnah in Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi*. It is one of the most memorable roles I played in my life. But I still hold theatre dearer to my heart and life than cinema. *Death of a Salesman* becoming a big commercial success will perhaps give a boost to more sponsors. I love each performance I play in.

Since you speak about your portrayal of Jinnah, what difference do you find between theatre and cinema?

The electric chemistry that evolves between the actor and the audience during a performance of a play is totally absent in cinema. While the play is on, there is a line of unwitting communication



A still from 'Death of a Salesman'

that evolves between the actor and the audience. In cinema, there is no such interaction because the actor and the audience are in two worlds and there is no direct contact. The portrayal of the actor is frozen in time and place and enactment. He cannot improve upon, change or transcend his performance in any way. But an actor, sometimes consciously depending on the audience applause, cheers, catcalls and they like, changes his portrayal a bit here and a bit there and therefore, his performance is dynamic, on-going and ever-changing. It is never frozen in time, place and performance. I am not saying that the character changes or the performance changes drastically. But I might add a mannerism here or a facial tic there and somehow, this change has been instilled in me by the audience that has watched my play the previous night. So, Willy Lowman of *Death of a Salesman* performed for 20 nights will come across as 20 different performances that are similar but never identical. This is the magic of theatre which cinema can never ever attain.

What brought you to theatre?

It was my elder brother Sultan better known as Bobby who took us on the road to theatre. I fell in love with it and I am still nurturing that love to this day. For me, it is an obsessive compulsive disorder. Bobby banded together Ebrahim Alkazi, Hamid Sayani, Jean Bhowmagiri and Deryck Je-ffereis. Theatre performances were staged with a flourish on the terrace of our home. Sultan died early in life — but I was too young to understand what was happening. The seed was sown and I am still here, acting and directing.

You are known as the Brand Father of Indian advertising. The Advertising Club of Mumbai has vested you with the title, "Advertising Man of the Century". You are also the guru of English theatre in the country. How did you manage to merge these two disparate worlds so beautifully for so long?

Why do you call them two 'disparate worlds'? Both deal with communicating with the people. Both demand a creative brain – the director/performer on stage and the audience out there. Both

demand creativity, industry, hard work and the capability to spot talent at the right time and the right place. It is only in terms of application and execution that some differences in strategy and technique come up. I do not look at them as two different worlds at all. I can dream up a campaign like the Liril soap one or the Lalitha detergent one as fluidly as I can direct *Death of a Salesman* and do the main part in it.

In what way does your perception of Willy Lowman in 'Death of a Salesman' differ from most other productions of the play across the world?

Death of a Salesman authored by Arthur Miller and first staged on Broadway in 1949 is a hit till today because of its universality in terms of time. Its portrayal of a family stands out in its contradictions and its vulnerabilities as a microcosm of all families everywhere. To me, Willy Lowman is a very positive character because he makes the greatest sacrifice to ensure a bright future for his older son Biff. He sacrifices God's greatest gift, his life so that Biff can collect the \$20,000 of the insurance money. Lowman commits suicide for a very noble cause – for his son's success which places his act in a positive light and marks him as a successful man. Death comes as a very different catharsis in this play. I do not think other performances of this play have given this positive interpretation to Willy Lowman. His suicide is a very positive, optimistic, and courageous act.

You keep saying, "You do not play the character, the character plays you." Would you elaborate?

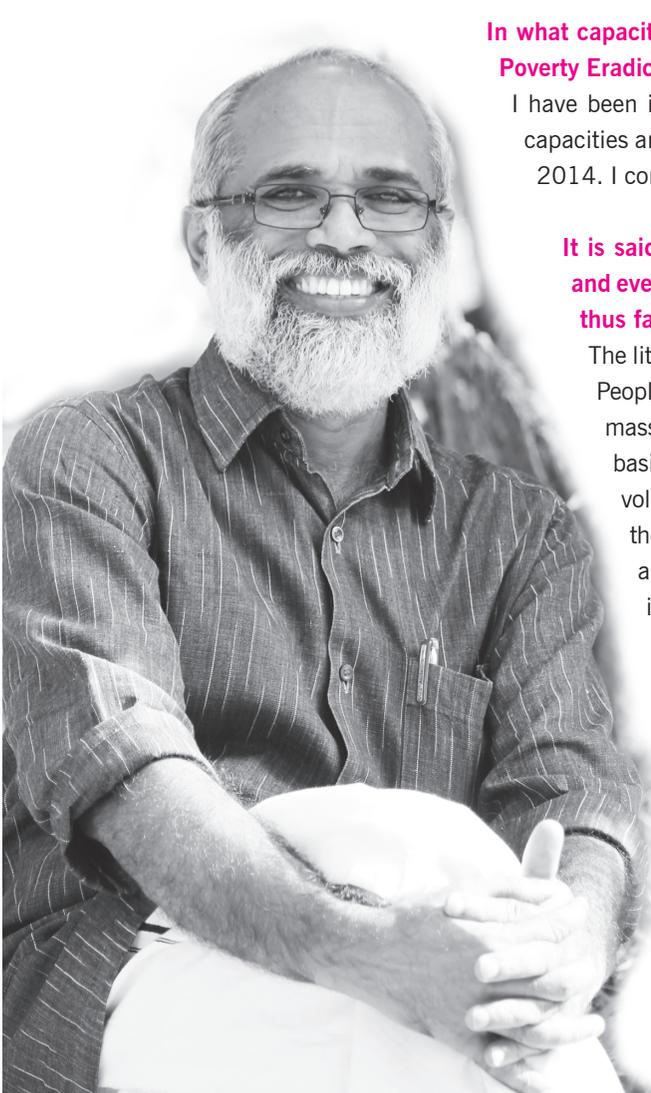
It is Marlon Brando who said – 'I do not play the role, the role plays me. I do not know what I am doing once I am into the character.' This becomes a dynamic interaction when it is an on-going

(Continued on page 44)

“Kudumbashree women have moved towards leadership, governance and politics”

Jagajeevan Neelakandapillai was a former programme officer with Kudumbashree Mission and former general secretary of the Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP, also known as the People’s Science Movement). Currently, he works with the department of health, Government of Kerala and continues to be a key Resource Person (RP) for the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) – Community Based Organisations (CBOs) Convergence Project of Kudumbashree.

In an interview with **Anuradha Kalhan**, Neelakandapillai tells us how Kudumbashree has been Kerala’s highly effective poverty eradication mission.



In what capacity and for how long have you been associated with Kerala’s Poverty Eradication Mission Kudumbashree (KS)?

I have been involved with Kudumbashree mission since 1998 in various capacities and was its Programme Officer from December 2006 – January 2014. I continue to be its resource person.

It is said that every second household in Kerala has a KS member and everyone recognises its name. Can you tell us about your journey thus far?

The literacy campaign of Kudumbashree between 1989 – 90 and the People’s Plan Campaign (PPC) in 1996 created the environment for mass mobilisation for development activities, especially on voluntary basis. The CBO mobilisation culture promoted by the vast mass of voluntary resource persons for these campaigns paved the way for the Kudumbashree project. For being a member of Kudumbashree, a non – economic poverty index was decided by the community itself. This was evolved in the context of the urban basic services for the poor project with UNICEF support in Alappuzha in 1993, followed up by a community-based nutrition programme project in the district of Malappuram in 1996. The nine point poverty index-based strategy and the involvement of the local elected representatives brought in many more families into the network. A cascading approach of training was followed for the mass campaigning for all these programmes, which led to wider mobilisation of the communities. A large pool of resource persons were placed at the state, district and local levels to ensure participation of the communities. In 2007, Kudumbashree began replacing the resource pool from the PPC with women members from the community network and undertaking massive training programmes through

community-based training groups, which were brought in as part of various campaigns, for information dissemination as well as for programme execution. These included understanding the Kudumbashree by-law, training on the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) programme, campaign for understanding micro finance, sustainable agriculture and food security, total social inclusion etc. The large scale intensive trainings ensured that the community leadership was thoroughly engaged and the knowledge about the programme seeped through the entire network. It also ensured that a large array of informed and conscientious leadership of poor women was being constantly created and challenged to enhance their world view.

What are the other new initiatives by KS?

The Gender Self Learning Programme (GSLP) is one of the new community-based initiatives of Kudumbashree. The unequal power relation within a family and in the society is one of the major dimensions of poverty. A survey done in 2006 showed that only 40 percent of the Kudumbashree women engage in any activity other than thrift and credit. Domestic responsibilities and lack of opportunities to speak out made most of them stay quiet. This was affecting the sustainability of the project. GLSP was launched with the vision that women who face discrimination have the experience and hence the right to speak up for themselves. They should be given the opportunity to self-evaluate the discriminations, identify the reasons and share it in the larger space. The first theme taken up was Women and Work as most women were associated with MGNREGS and it was a good starting point to begin talking about their rights and entitlements. This was followed by

Women and Health. The third on Women and Mobility would be introduced soon. The *Sthree Shakthi* Portal, another new initiative, is an online forum for Kudumbashree women where they can freely interact and discuss any issue concerning them with other Kudumbashree women. Centre for Development Studies (CDSs) all over Kerala (more than 80 percent of them have been covered) have been provided with computers, and skills have been imparted to a certain number of women in every CDS to involve with the portal. *Snehitha* Gender Help Desks and Short Stay Homes are also new initiatives of the Kudumbashree Mission. At the Gender Help Desk, a woman can approach and seek help for a variety of things including physical/mental support, legal support, information regarding agriculture or work related activities etc. In every CDS, provisions have been made for a gender corner that would essentially look into the specific needs of women. The introduction of Master Farmers and Farmer Facilitation Centres as part of the Joint Liability Group (JLG) initiative is also recent. Kudumbashree Mission is now looking towards the creation of JLG collectives. The BUDS Rehabilitation Centre for the mentally challenged, home shops and monthly/festival markets for marketing produce of the micro enterprises, Café Kudumbashree as part of the micro enterprise initiative, producer collectives are among the other new initiatives of Kudumbashree.

How are the women responding to the new initiatives?

Women feel that the initiatives have given them respectable space and voice in their households, both physical and political. The experience sharing by Kudumbashree women has been a successful initiative. The experiences of the women and their

transformation were compiled into books. Each CDS produced a book. A PusthakaYatra (journey of books) was organised. Books were collected and cultural rallies were organised from Kasargode and Thiruvananthapuram to Ernakulam where the rally ended and 1072 books were released. The whole process was a metaphor that showed how personal transformations happened through collectives. It boosted the confidence levels of the women. Theatre festivals were held as part of the 15th anniversary celebrations of Kudumbashree. While on one hand, it was an opportunity for the women to exhibit their talents and express their emotions, on the other hand, it brought back the local culture of the state. The initiatives thus brought multiple results.

What is the one most recent innovation in KS?

The Participatory Assessment of Poverty Status (PAPS) is a recent and ongoing initiative of Kudumbashree. It focuses on strengthening governance within an NHG. There are 12.5 lakh volunteers from 2.5 lakh NHGs across 40000 centres. The basic objective is that Kudumbashree women should themselves be able to identify their status and take necessary steps to find solutions for it, at their own level or with the help of the network. This would politically educate them.

A Kudumbashree unit is a local social institution that should along with all its other activities; indulge in micro level self – governance. As a primary step to this, on 26 January 2014, all NHGs held full day meetings at their own places, answered a questionnaire and graded the status of their own NHGs. They identified the poorest among them and listed down their needs. Further they would think of solutions to solve it within the NHG itself, or else take it to the next level. They

could provide two kinds of support – financial support or support based on rights and entitlements. Based on the issues and the respective solutions identified, the NHG would make an action plan. In the process, the members would get sensitised that an NHG is also a self – governance mechanism and they have the capacity to fight poverty.

What are the hurdles faced by KS?

As of today one of the hurdles that persist is that caste/religion based political organisations make similar SHGs. This leads to multiple memberships and multiple loans, the latter being a problem as it creates a financial trap. Another issue is the slandering of women who come up through the Kudumbashree

network and begin to actively engage in the socio – political space by the men and society. Their growth is being seen as a threat by the male community. A third hurdle would be that banks when approached for opening account/loans by Kudumbashree women still show red tapism, making it a cumbersome process. Cooperative banks usually provide friendly service, but that is not the case with the others. Bank managers need to be sensitised and the bank space needs to have a women-friendly atmosphere.

Is KS nearer to its goal of poverty eradication in Kerala?

Yes. Kudumbashree has clearly resulted in economic and social empowerment.

Alyque Padamsee

(Continued from page 41)

‘conversation’ between the actor and his audience. In cinema, your performance is frozen forever in time and space and you have no clue about how your audience is reacting to your performance. So when you are doing the same thing the next day, it is not really the same thing you did today because the audience has somehow inspired those changes. So, even when you have internalised a character completely over many performances, it is the character that keeps manipulating your portrayal from one performance to the next.

You have said in your autobiography, ‘A Double Life’ that you are a good spotter of talent. Did it come from theatre or did it come from advertising?

It is the wide and intense travelling across the country, the world and the interactions with different situations, different kinds of people, different environments. I have been privileged by, both as an advertising person as well as a theatre personality. It has given me

this gift of being able to spot talent and put it to the best use or position it is ideally where a person’s true talent will find ideal expression. Travelling gave me the opportunity to witness Laurence Olivier and Al Pacino perform on stage live.

We would like to hear of some of these talents who became famous household names in different fields.

The first name that comes to mind is Shyam Benegal. He was a painter and when I saw him working under Gerson Da’Cunha also from advertising, I told Gerson: ‘I see possibilities in Shyam. He will be better off in my department than in yours.’ Gerson said: ‘Give him a try.’ And I did! I asked Shyam to paint a mural on the water tank of our terrace and he did it. Later, he did the make-up of the entire cast of my play *Hamlet*. His wife Nira did the costumes. Today, he is one of the most outstanding film makers in India. *Evita – The Musical*, created a galaxy of stars – Sharon, Shiamak Davar and others. Among other names are Kabir Bedi who I picked for *Tughlaq* when my original idea of taking Amitabh Bachchan failed after his

How has KS overcome the limitations of both the policy design and implementation process, in other words how has it evolved?

The mass base and wide community reach created through Kudumbashree cannot be negated by any political movement. The democratisation of organisation in Kerala increased rights - based sensitivity in the community. This indeed improved the social pressure capability of the network on political parties. This has created a sense of respect for the Kudumbashree movement. Today, everybody accepts the activities of Kudumbashree. This social process should in fact be studied by academicians in detail. ■

accident on the sets of *Coolie*, Rachel Reuben, Suneeta Rao and Alisha Chinai, who are pop stars now; Jaaved Jaffrey, a wonderful actor, dancer and reality show anchor today and Karla Singh, who went on to become top choreographer. Zeenat Aman and Persis Khambatta are included in this list.

Among the plays you have directed down the years, which one do you hold closest to your heart?

Evita – The Musical, *Jesus Christ Superstar* and my latest play, *Broken Images* which has had over 100 houseful shows in 16 cities in the USA. I am in love with every play I direct at that given point of time. This does not mean I grow away from it but rather, I grow with it and extend myself to reach out and do more. *We did Streetcar Named Desire* twice and the same goes for *Death of a Salesman* in 1981 and again today, in 2014. The audience belongs to two different generations almost. But they respond positively which means that the plays are not outdated and they strike a chord somewhere across all audiences across time, place and culture. ■

“Let us pledge to care for our elders”

Pratik Mantri is a freelance writer based in Ahmedabad. He loves to read, write, follow sports and politics closely.



Pratik Mantri

INDIA is a nation of young people. A lot of emphasis is therefore on the youth and their dreams, but the country also has many citizens who are in the twilight of their lives and face a lot of problems which do not get the attention which it should. These senior citizens have invaluable knowledge and wisdom, derived from years of experience and various situations in their life, which the youth can learn from. Changing family values and nuclear families being preferred over the traditional joint families, rising costs of living, among other issues are negatively impacting the lives of our elders in more ways than one. Poor healthcare facilities, dwindling savings, high medical bills and not being cared for by their own

children are some of the issues that many elderly citizens are battling everyday.

Our traditional values lay stress on respecting our elders and caring for them. But as nuclear families become a norm and younger and middle aged are living a fast paced life, elders are feel isolated and emotionally insecure. This has a lot to do with our changing priorities. Now-a-days, accumulating wealth and professional success are on the top of the tree for most of us and in the process our elders and their needs are neglected.

There are currently 90 million senior citizens in our country and this number is expected to cross 170 million in the next 25 years. Apart from the economic and health problems that the elders face they are also sometimes subjected to abuse from their son/s and daughter/s-in-law.

Senior citizens belonging to the lower socio economic strata are in a worse situation. Another shocking statistic is that 75 percent of those who face abuse live with the family and 69 percent were owners of the house in which they were thrown out of. With a view to protect the interests of senior citizens the government has come up with several bills like The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, National Policy of Older persons among others. But,

most of the senior citizens refrain from reporting instances of abuse.

One thing which is often ignored is the fact that our upbringing comes with a view that the ‘provider is the dictator’ and parents control the choice of their kids right till the very end and when the kid grows up the roles get reversed and then parents face the music of dictatorship. Parents should lead by example, by displaying love and affection towards their own parents and that’s the best way to teach a child how to respect his elders.

But, over and above all it’s really sad to see our elders isolated, lonely and devoid of any emotional security whatsoever. It is the job of children to take care of their parents no matter what. They should not do it out of compulsion, but out of love and care. I have seen some of the older people doing petty jobs to survive just because all their property has been usurped by their children. I wish that all those elders who have been betrayed by their own blood get immense strength and courage to fight for their rights against their children. Let us pledge to respect and care for our elders; they have a lot to offer.

In the words of Francis Bacon,

“The joys of the parents are secret and so are their griefs and fears: they cannot utter the one, nor will they utter the other.” ■

Elections, manifestos and women

Women have emerged as a potential vote bank in India. Analysing election manifestos, Kiran Moghe says there is not a great deal of substantive difference in the promises made by Congress and BJP.

It's election time a time to make promises, never mind if they are not kept later! If the electoral pledge to pass the Women's Reservation Bill is any indicator, for women, at least these promises appear to be empty political rhetoric. It's an assurance that has appeared in the manifestos of every major political party ever since the 12th Lok Sabha elections and remains unfulfilled for the last 18 years! And yet, as a glance at the manifestoes of the Congress and the BJP shows, there is a brazen reiteration of the promise, with not even a single line expressing regret for their crass betrayal.

Emergence of women as 'vote bank'

Of late, women have become a special focus of political parties and their election campaigns. For many years, like much of the work they do, the voting power of women has remained hugely invisible. It was somehow assumed that women have no independent political opinions and followed the diktats of the men in their families. It is only after the debates around the question of political reservations for women at the time of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments that first reserved one-third of seats in Panchayats and Municipal bodies for women that the political representation of women started being taken seriously by mainstream political parties. It is no coincidence that it was the same period during which many parties had to find a way of wooing new voters since they were fast losing their traditional base due to their inability to solve the basic issues of poverty, inflation and unemployment. Women's organisations were also at the forefront in pointing out

the failures of respective governments to address women's issues. As a result, the eighties saw the beginnings of special measures aimed at attracting women's votes, and the emergence of the notion of a distinct women's "vote bank". The National Perspective Plan for Women, subsequent policies for women at the national and state levels, the formation of the National and State Women's Commissions, the incorporation of the concept of "gender policy and mainstreaming" in the planning process were all a result of these intertwined and complex processes.

Rise in women's representation

It is therefore interesting that over the years, there has been a consistent increase in the proportion of women voters, in comparison to men. The difference in 1957 was 17 percent; it went down to five percent by 2009. The voter sex ratio (the number of women voters per 1000 men) increased from 795 in the 2009 Lok Sabha elections to 846 in the Assembly elections. In fact in the recent Assembly elections, women appear to have outpaced men; in Delhi, 65.6 percent women voted compared to 65.4 percent men, in Madhya Pradesh, their proportion was 74 percent compared to 70 percent men. The impact of women's reservations in the local self government bodies which has resulted in a greater visibility to women in public spaces, as candidates, campaigners and voters, coupled with the opportunity to raise women's issues on these platforms has no doubt been an important factor. The Election Commission has also played a role in encouraging women voters

by identifying and focusing on those areas where women have displayed low voter turnouts. It is therefore not surprising that political parties are now obliged to include a chapter of women in their election manifestoes, and the current parliamentary elections are no exception. The Congress (I) stands for "Women's Empowerment and the Protection of Children", for the BJP it's "Women - The Nation Builder", for the AAP, it is a question of "Gender Justice" while the CPI (M) speaks up "In Defence of Women's Rights".

Interestingly, a reading of these chapters reveals that there is not a great deal of substantive difference in the issues raised and promises made in the manifestos. Empowerment, security, dignity, development are words that appear with unfailing familiarity and regularity. Strict implementation of laws for women, loans to women's self help groups at lower rates of interest (only the CPI (M) specifies four percent) skill training, encouragement to the girl child through various schemes, loans for women entrepreneurs, hostels for girl students and working women, strengthening the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) and improved conditions of Anganwadi workers, improved civic facilities such as toilets and drinking water are some of the common assurances in all these manifestos. On the face of it, then, there doesn't seem to be much to choose between them. They all appear to be committed to the cause of women's equality and justice. It is actually the titles that reflect their differences in approach to the "women's question" in general. The Congress continues

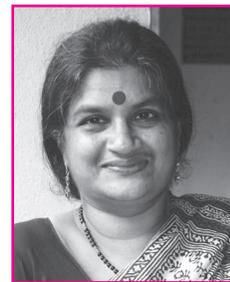
with its traditional “Women and Child” approach, while the BJP reflects the ideological perspective of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh that talks of Bharat Mata (Mother Nation) and equates the honour of the nation with women’s honour. It is only the AAP and the Left that speak the language of rights and about justice for women.

Neo-liberal economic agendas responsible for discontent

The party manifestos should therefore actually be assessed in the context of the overall policies that these parties and their manifestos represent. Regardless of the electoral rhetoric, the experience of the last 20 years has borne out the fact that there is no fundamental difference in the policies of the BJP and the Congress. Both subscribe to neo-liberal economic agendas, and these are fully reflected in their manifestos, past and present.

The new entrant, Aam Aadmi Party sees the crony capitalist policies pursued by both these parties as a root cause of the corruption it has declared it will eradicate. However, apart from the Left parties, none of them point out the link between their economic and social agendas. It must be noted that it is neo-liberal economic policies that deprive people of their livelihood and access to public services; the discontent that arises out of this deprivation is manifold for socially oppressed sections such as Dalits, tribals, minorities and women. They also breed and encourage sectarian tensions based on caste, community, region, language, etc., which are utilised by political parties to catch votes on the basis of chauvinist slogans. Women lose out on all counts – due to the adverse impact of the economic policies, and the emerging social tensions that impact them.

It is in this context that we must see the ‘Charter of Demands’ put forth by the secular and progressive women’s movement for the 16th Lok Sabha elections. As they put it in their preamble, they consider it as “a crucial battle, coming as it does in the wake of increasing sexual violence, honour crimes, and atrocities against Dalit, adivasi and minority women, together with rising unemployment, hunger, and relentless price rise.” The Charter states that the “the outcome of these elections will greatly impact women’s struggles for safety, equality and progress, and gives a call to all women in the country to vote in a



“a secular government that promotes women’s interest.” ■

The writer is National Secretary, All India Democratic Women’s Association.



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Kathakali – The story dance

Kathakali can be described as the “theatre of imagination” where the dance signifies good over evil. Dr Kanak Rele explains the nuances of this dance form through its acting, music, colour and costumes.

KATHAKALI is the story dance from the southern state of Kerala. Kathakali literally means “Katha” (story) and “Kali” means a dance or a performance. It is a composite art where different actor-dancers take different roles. The stories are usually from the Indian epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. Kathakali is a very majestic art and when you see the costumes you realise how much thought and aesthetic values have gone into the making of this art. The entire idea is of ‘total theatre’ where there is acting, music - both vocal and instrumental and also the colours, psychology and costumes playing roles.

Rituals of the dance

A performance starts by lighting of the ceremonial lamp. It has just two wicks – one wick is towards the audience and the other towards the stage. It signifies that the light of knowledge must spread not only to the actors but also to the audience.

And what is the message? The message is very simple. It is “the victory of good over evil. Kathakali can be described as the “theatre of imagination” where demons and good human beings clash in the realm of imagination, where the good human beings are eventually victorious.

Aesthetics of the dance

Kathakali make-up is the most complicated and the most colourful of all the make-up in the Indian classical dance styles. The make-up is called *aharya-abhinaya* and it follows the colour-psychology.

The characters are divided into certain broad-based groups. The *uttama* characters are the lofty characters, the *madhyama* characters are the middling characters and the *adhama* characters are the lowly characters. Every character has its own colour combination.

For instance, when green base is applied on the face which is called the *pachha* make-up, it is meant for the good



of high sort of characters. The middling characters have a knife-like pattern *katti* painted on the cheek. The lowly sort of characters, the thorough rascals are called the beard or *tadi veshams* and they have red and black predominating them. The cheek is outlined by a white outline which is called *chutti* and which is made up of strips of cloth which are bound together by a paste made up of rice flour and lime.

A traditional Kathakali performance starts late in the evening by playing the orchestra which is considered to be very auspicious.. It also announces to the villagers around that a performance

is going to take place. The orchestra is very traditional and it has not been changed for almost three centuries. The lead singer has a metal disc in his hands which is called *chengala*. There is the secondary singer who has heavy cymbals in his hands which are called *yelatalam*. The cylindrical drum, the *chenda*, is played by two sticks. The *maddalam*, which is a very ancient percussion instrument, is played by adding some coating on the fingers of the right hand in order to give resonance. The mode of singing is Sopana Sangitam which is indigenous to Kerala.

Dance postures

The position of foot is very interesting and unique in Kathakali. The foot is placed on the ground not flat but on the outer edge of the sole. This gives the necessary spring in the walk. The legs provide the solid base for the billowing skirts. It is the waist which acts as the pivot for the torso to perform the full movements.

Another very noteworthy tradition of Kathakali is the “curtain look.” Before every character makes an entry a curtain is held up and to the sounding of the drums it is slowly lowered to reveal the character. It is by the manner in which the curtain is agitated and lowered that the audience would come to know the type of character which is entering e.g. a gentle one or a demonic one etc.

- 1. Pachha** - The *sattvika* characters e.g. Gods like Rama, Krishna, (green base) and great heroes like Arjuna, Nala etc.



2. **Katti** - The rajasika characters e.g. Ravana, Duryodhana etc. (green base) These are basically courageous people but they have an evil streak in their character resulting in the katti like red (knife)

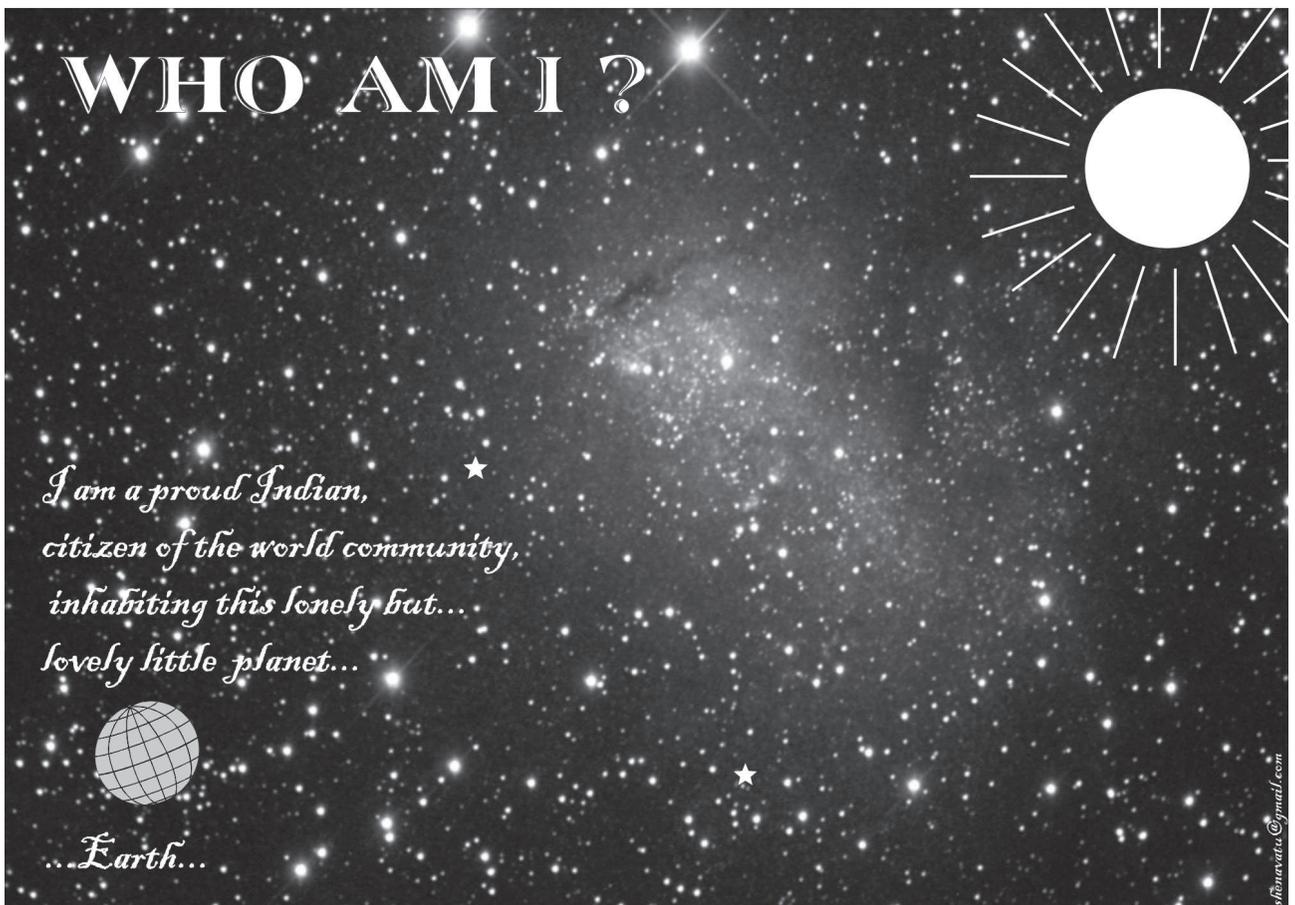
- pattern on their cheeks.
3. **Tadi** - The tamasika or lowly characters.
 - i) Red beard – Evil character like Bakasura.
 - ii) White beard-Low born characters who are saintly e.g. Hanumana
 - iii) Black beard-Jungle folk and very low beings like hunters etc.
 4. **Minukku** - Shining make-up for women characters, sages, Brahmins etc.
 5. **Kari** – Black make-up for low females like demoneses, huntresses etc.

Historically, Kathakali is the end product of a long line of theatrical practices. The germs of Kathakali are to be found in the Kutiyattam, the Sanskrit drama which has been the preserve of the Chakyar Brahmin community for almost 2000 years. There are references to be found in the southern epic -- Shilappadikaram which describes

a dance that a Chakyar presented in the honour of the victorious king. The present form of Kutiyattam was finalised in 1000 A.D. Together with the Chakyar's art flourished Nangyar Kuttu performed by women. In the 16th century we come to the next phase in the development in the Krishnattam which presents the Krishna cycle in eight days. Later in the 17th century developed the Ramanattam which presented the Rama cycle. It is Ramanattam, which is no more practiced, which resulted in Kathakali. ■



The writer is Director, Nalanda Dance Research Center and is a recipient of Padmabhushan award, Akademi Ratna (Fellow of Sangeet Natak Akademi)



Weaving Paithani saris and dreams in Aurangabad

Step into a town where dream fabrics have been woven for centuries. Whether it is the vibrant Paithani in gold zari and silk, the rare Mashru or Himroo, originally known as 'kamkhwab' or 'little dream', the looms of Paithan taluka in Maharashtra have kept these heritage textiles going even today. Meet 60-year-old Sainath, whose skilled hands create beautiful heirlooms saris day-in-and-day-out or walk into the home of elderly Mohammad, one of the last five people in the area who know how to make the Himroo, a 600-year-old craft, in this excerpt from 'Beautiful Country – Stories From Another India', by **Syeda Hameed and Gunjan Veda**.

Aurangabad has always been a silk and cotton textile production centre. In the old days, a fine blend of silk with locally grown cotton was developed here and became famous as Himroo. The other classic was Paithani silk from the nearby taluka town of Paithan where we were currently headed. Till 1960, Aurangabad languished as a city, remaining industrially backward. In 1960 the region of Marathwada merged with Maharashtra. This was when the industrial development of the Marathwada region began through designated backward area benefits. Today, Aurangabad has become home to well-known industrial brands. The road was lined on both sides with signs of well-known industrial houses. This was the corridor through which we entered ancient Pratisthan (Paithan), the capital of the Satavahana dynasty from the second century BC to the third century AD. We thought of these industries as the 'temples of a new civilization' who

were conveying us to the old civilization.

Once we reached Paithan, we went to the large retail store, which had been kept open for us despite the lateness of the hour. Splendid Paithani saris were on display. Made with heavy gold zari thread from Surat and silk thread from Bangalore, it takes anywhere between two months to two years to make a single sari. Next to the showroom was a weaving centre with 150 weavers. We met Sainath and his son Chintamani. They told us that in addition to what we saw there, another 30-40 weavers worked in the village. They earn between ₹3,000-3,500 per month. A weaver gets ₹11,000 for a sari that sells for ₹40,000 and may take over six months to complete. Most weavers were men; women helped with yarn work. 'Some of us have been weaving for 300 generations. The Paithani weave itself is over 2,000 years old,' said Sainath with a toothless smile.

By the time we returned to the city, it was late into the night. But it was our only chance to look at the 600-year-old Himroo craft. As children, we had heard of Mashru and Himroo fabrics made of cotton and silk but with the lustre of satin. We had never asked where they originated. It was that night that we learnt that the Himroo was originally known as *kamkhwab*.

Mohammad Tughlaq introduced the craft to Aurangabad when he shifted his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. At the time, it was the members of the royal family and the nobility who used the fabric. We found ourselves in a shop with a few looms. This was one of the last repositories of this dying craft. At one of the looms sat Mohammad an



Paithani sari

ageing weaver with a white cap and a grey beard. He said, it takes 20 days to weave a shawl that sells for ₹ 2,500, while we earn ₹ 100 per day. There are only five people left in Aurangabad who know the original Himroo.' He told us that, 300 years after the art of Himroo came to the city, the jacquard weave was introduced. The shawl, which took 20 days earlier, could be woven in four days with this technique using a mechanical loom. Its product was more reasonably priced.

'For 30 years I worked on the machines but this handloom weave, it has a charm of its own. In 1982, I came back to Aurangabad and went back to Himroo', said Abbas Khan another weaver.' Majid Pawar, an elderly man in white kurta-pyjama, has been weaving for 40 years. He is one of the five people who know the original Himroo handweaving. 'In 1968, I started using the jacquard. We have been in this business for three generations but my son is a B.Com graduate. After me, there is no one.'...■

- **Women's Feature Service**

Chaudhvin Ka Chand:

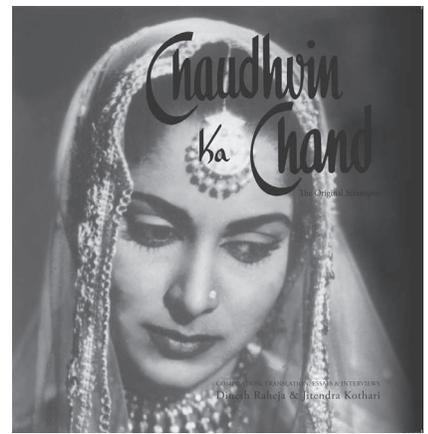
The Original Screenplay

Authors : Dinesh Raheja and Jitendra Kothari

Publisher : Om Books International

Pages : 254

Price : ₹ 595



IN 1984, noted film maker Vijay Anand spoke about a book he treasured – Ten Best Hollywood Scripts, which he said was compiled from the shooting scripts. He then lamented the lack of bound scripts in the Hindi film industry, and that we had lost some treasures. Prophetic words, indeed.

The initiative launched by Vidhu Vinod Chopra to publish the original screenplay of three of Guru Dutt's films – *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam*, *Chaudhvin Ka Chand*, and the yet to come *Kagaz Ke Phool* – is truly commendable. As India still hasn't learnt the importance of archiving, screenplays were hard to come by, author Dinesh Raheja averred in an interview elsewhere. He was given a rough, salvaged screenplay of *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam*, so, he saw the film at least 40-50 times, before he and co-author Jitendra Kothari could compile the book.

Guru Dutt's magic

Perhaps no other filmmaker of yore has influenced contemporary Indian cinema as has Guru Dutt. In their essay 'The Guru Dutt Effect', the authors allude to Mukul Anand's 'Hum' where "the aging protagonist (Amitabh Bachchan) is unable to reconcile with his one-time inamorata (Kimi Katkar) because of her autograph seeking fans, harking back to a similar sequence in *Kagaz Ke Phool*." A scene from *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam* "in which a group of coach drivers discuss their masters' fortunes finds an echo in Madhur Bhandarkar's Page 3, which showed chauffeurs gossiping about their bosses while waiting outside a party."

They further elucidate, that Guru Dutt was integral to the development of 'Bromance' (male bonding), the buzzing genre of today's films. Two buddies in love with the same girl or love triangle as it was then called often ended in the death of one. *Chaudhvin Ka Chand* was the precursor to films like *Sangam*, *Saagar*, etc. Replete with grace, elegance and reverence, *Chaudhvin Ka Chand* also gave rise to the Muslim social genre.

The film – a classic

Though a film about male bonding (Guru Dutt and Rehman), it had a female centric title; Waheeda Rehman's character is integral as the two friends fall in love with her. Yet the friendship between Johnny Walker, Guru Dutt and Rehman is pivotal. Set in Lucknow, where Islamic culture flourished. Another integral part of any Guru Dutt film, comic relief was provided by Johnny Walker. This tale of male bonding and romance remains one of the runaway hits of Guru Dutt; the film's director, the veteran M Sadiq too made a resounding comeback.

Besides, the studied essay, interviews with the surviving cast and crew give a few behind-the-scenes insights. Initially, Waheeda Rehman was reluctant to sign the film, but relented because of Sadiq's insistence. Despite the emergence of colour, the film was shot in black and white, yet it received a positive response. Later, Guru Dutt re-shot a couple of songs in colour and inserted them. The censors objected as Waheeda's eyes were red and looked sensual. Guru Dutt had to explain the technicality saying that it was

a song she was singing to her husband.

Chaudhvin Ka Chand didn't have the casting carousel of *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam*, nor does it have any autobiographical reference like *Kagaz Ke Phool*. With the passage of years many associated with it have passed away; yet a few of them share some highlights: actress Farida Dadi (a child actor then) played Johnny Walker's impish kid sister, costume designer Bhanu Athaiya, whose eye for detail and research had her craft authentic costumes for Meena Kumari and Waheeda Rehman in *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam*, *Kagaz Ke Phool* and *Chaudhvin Ka Chand*, and other actors of all three films.

Preserving cinematic literature

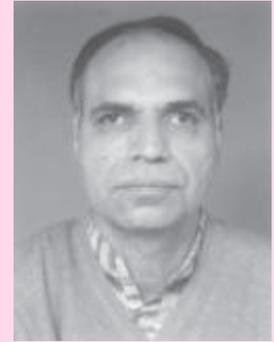
The screenplay, which is the raison d'etre of the book and the series, is love's labour, but not lost. The screenplay in Hindi (Devnagiri and Roman script) and its English translation are a boon to students especially. Considering Indian cinema is studied in universities elsewhere as well, the translations are handy references.

'Chaudhvin Ka Chand: The Original Screenplay' written by Dinesh Raheja and Jitendra Kothari makes the cut as a study aid since the screenplay is book-ended with the essay, 'The Guru Dutt Effect' and interviews with Waheeda Rehman, Bhanu Athaiya, Farida Dadi and others. Limited access to persona notwithstanding, the authors manage to evoke enough interest to make one want to watch the film after reading the book. ■

Piroj Wadia is a freelance journalist.

New land reclamation brings hope

Judicious use of new environment-friendly methods and inputs has helped farmers to reduce their costs significantly while improving income as well as productivity.



Bharat Dogra

is a Delhi-based freelance journalist who writes on social concerns.

SIADULARI (45), is just a small farmer of a little village (Padaraha village of Kanpur district) but she is a symbol of hope for the resurgence of India's agriculture and its economy.

It has been said time and again that farmers' crisis is rooted in two big problems. First, they've been trapped in expensive technology and inputs. Over 80 percent of India's farmers are small farmers and they can't afford expensive, high-risk technologies. Second, these technologies linked to chemical fertilisers, pesticides, weedicides etc., are also not environment-friendly as they harm the natural fertility of soil and over-exploit as well as pollute water sources.

So what farmers really need is a path to get out of these ecologically destructive and expensive technologies but the question is whether they can do this without reducing their productivity.

This is where the work and experience of Siadulari comes in. She has demonstrated with her hard work that it is possible to protect or even increase production while getting out of the existing trap of expensive, ecologically destructive technologies.

She is not alone in achieving this, although she has played a leadership role. Many other farmers in this village describe similar achievements.

While the use of chemical pesticides has been stopped completely by most farmers in this village, they continue to use chemical fertilisers in very low doses. They've started relying on composted manure and amrit-pani, a mixture prepared from neem oilcake/oil, cow urine and other locally available ingredients which helps to keep away pests and disease. Careful use of new environment-friendly methods and inputs have helped farmers to reduce their costs significantly while improving income as well as the quality of their soil. Also the food obtained by these crops is more nutritious and tasty.

These changes have been brought about under a project implemented by Shramik Bharti (SB) a voluntary organisation. This project has two components (i) reclamation of sodic land using organic methods and (ii) improving prospects of sustainable farming by small farmers using organic, eco-friendly and low-cost technologies.

The increase in productivity is partly due to the reclamation of sodic soil, but it has also risen on normal land, says Siadulari as she has been involved in this effort with a lot of enthusiasm from the outset. She proudly points to the various compost pits on her farm, and a good crop of healthy tomatoes which has managed to survive the vagaries of unfavourable weather. She has helped to convince many other women farmers to accept new environment-friendly methods.

Some farmers were helped and encouraged (without providing cash incentives) to set up demonstration farms on their land. All farmers in the village are small farmers and they have been very happy with the new cost-reducing methods. In addition more encouragement to tree-planting and horticulture has made the village greener.

They are equally enthused with better nutrition and taste of food crops, including rice, wheat, mustard and vegetables. "The tomatoes here are so famous that traders themselves come to the village to buy the crop," says Shivani Singh, a coordinator of SB.

Similar success has been achieved in other villages of this block like Dibanivada. Here reclamation of sodic land using organic methods has been taken up on a significant scale.

Sushila Yadav, a Dalit farmer, explains the technology: "We first spread raw cow dung on a patch of sodic land along with paddy residues or pual. This is done at a time when the paddy crop is to be taken. Then later wheat crop can be taken." She is encouraged by the healthy yield given by the land that earlier produced almost nothing. ■

COOL CHAMP



Try to answer the questions below and send your answers along with your name, address, date of birth, school and photograph to: **“YOUNG INDIA QUIZ”** One India One People Foundation, Mahalaxmi Chambers, 4th floor, 22, Bhulabhai Desai Road, Mumbai - 26. You can also log on to our website and answer our quiz online at www.oneindiaonepeople.com. We will choose two winners (the Cool Champs) from all the correct entries and publish his/her photograph and name along with the answers in our next issue. **(Last date for entries: May 20, 2014)**

Quiz No: 124

1. What is the symbol of Rakhi Sawant's political party?

- a. Clock
- b. Hand
- c. Bow and Arrow
- d. Green Chilly

2. Mohiniyattam is the dance form of which state?

- a. Tamil Nadu
- b. Karnataka
- c. Kerala
- d. Andhra Pradesh

3. Who is elected as the new Chief Justice of India?

- a. Justice Radhakrishna
- b. Justice P Sathasivam
- c. Justice Ranjana Desai
- d. Justice R M Lodha

4. Which river is located in Hampi?

- a. Kaveri
- b. Tungabhadra
- c. Krishna
- d. Koyna

5. Who won the title of ICC World Twenty20?

- a. Sri Lanka
- b. India
- c. New Zealand
- d. Australia

Answers to Quiz # 123

QUESTION 1

Answer: (b) Ila Pathak

Ila Pathak, a social activist was the founder secretary of Ahmedabad Women's Action Group (AWAG). She was a president of India Chapter of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

QUESTION 2

Answer: (c) Bharata Natyam

Bharata Natyam is a classical Indian dance form that is popular and nurtured in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. This dance form denotes various 19th- and 20th-century reconstructions of *Sadir*, the art of temple dancers called Devadasis.

QUESTION 3

Answer: (a) Fish

Stingrays are a group of rays, which are cartilaginous fishes related to sharks. They are classified in the suborder Myliobatoidei of the order Myliobatiformes and consist of eight families.

QUESTION 4

Answer: (a) Justice Sujata Manohar

Justice Sujata Manohar is an Indian judge and a member of the National Human Rights Commission of India. In 1994, she was appointed Chief Justice of the High Court of Bombay, again, the first woman to hold that post.

QUESTION 5

Answer: (d) Jamnagar

Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary is a bird sanctuary also known as safe haven for birds located in Jamnagar district of Gujarat, India. It has about 300 varieties of migratory birds, in 1984 104 species of birds were reported on a single day.



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Quiz No. 123

Winners



Loukya Bhat
Bangalore



Indian Museum

Fqs

The oldest museum in India turns 200 this year.

- **When and where was the Indian Museum established?**

The museum was established on February 2, 1814 at the premises of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in Kolkata.

- **Who was the first curator of the museum?**

Dr Nathaniel Wallach, a Danish botanist was the first Honorary Curator of the Oriental Museum, as it was then known. He was one of the largest donors to the Museum in the beginning.

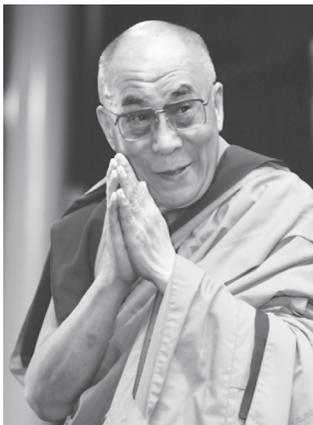
- **When did the public gain access to the museum?**

After the museum shifted to its present location, it opened its doors to the public on April 1, 1878 with two galleries – the Archaeology gallery and bird gallery of the Zoological Section.



Who is Tenzin Gyatso?

WE know him better as the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of the Tibetan community. He was born as Lhamo Dondrub on July 6, 1935. Tenzin Gyatso is the shortened version of his religious name.



At the tender age of two, he was recognized as the reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama and was formally enthroned as the 14th Dalai Lama in 1950. Following China's invasion of Tibet and the brutal repression of Tibetans in 1959, he fled to India with his retinue. He set up the Tibetan government in exile at Dharamsala.

Loosely translated, 'Dalai Lama' means 'ocean of wisdom'. The title of Dalai Lama was first bestowed by the Mongol ruler Altan Khan on Sonam Gyatso in 1578.

- **How big is its collection?**

The Indian Museum is the largest multipurpose museum in India. It has six sections comprising thirty five galleries, viz. Art, Archaeology, Anthropology, Zoology, Geology, and Botany. Among its prized exhibits are an Egyptian mummy, the Buddhist stupa from Bharhut, Lord Buddha's ashes, the Ashoka pillar, whose four-lion symbol is the official Indian emblem, fossil skeletons of prehistoric animals, rare antiques and a collection of meteorites.



- **How did the museum celebrate its bicentenary?**

The Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh released a commemorative postal stamp and a monograph to mark the occasion.



Supersalesman

Sparkler

Adapted from a tale by the 19th century American humorist, Eli Perkins



ONE morning, a book salesman called at the house of Mr. James Watson, a rich businessman from New York, and would not leave till Mr. Watson had bought a copy of the book he was selling, *Early Christian Martyrs*.

Shortly afterwards, Mr. Watson left for work, taking with him the book he had bought and which he now regretted buying.

When he returned in the evening, his wife informed him that she had purchased a book from a salesman.

Mr. Watson flew into a rage when he saw the book.

"That rascally salesman sold me the same book this morning!" he bellowed. "Now we have two copies of the darned book! If



I ever get my hands on that fellow, I'll...!"

"Why there he is," said Mrs. Watson, pointing out of the window.

The salesman was going towards the railway station.

Mr. Watson saw a neighbour, Mr. Steven, outside, and yelled to him to stop the salesman from



boarding the train. Then he hastily began putting on his clothes.

Mr. Steven hurried after the salesman and caught up with him just as he was about to get into the train.

"Mr. Watson asked me to stop you," he said. "Mr. Watson?" said the salesman. "Ah yes, I know what he wants. He wants to buy one of my books but I can't miss this train to sell it to him."

Mr. Watson reached the station just as the train was leaving it. He was huffing and puffing and had a terrible look on his face.

"It's all right," said Mr. Steven. "I got it for you".

"Got what?"

"The book you wanted," said Mr. Steven. "You owe me two dollars", and he handed him a copy of *Early Christian Martyrs*.

Puzzle

Who Writes What?

- Sydney does not write mystery or humorous stories.
- Agatha's writings do not make people laugh.
- Robin and Agatha do not believe in writing ghost stories.
- Agatha does not write science fiction.
- Graham's stories are not scary but funny.

Answer: Sydney writes ghost stories, Agatha writes mystery, Graham writes humour, while Robin writes Science fiction.

Floating Paradise

Panorama

LOCATED 48 km from Imphal, Loktak Lake is the largest freshwater lake in northeast India. It is considered the lifeline of Manipur, given its importance in the state's socio-economic and cultural life. In 1990, it was designated as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.

The lake is called the world's only floating lake on account of a maze of *phumdis* dotting its picturesque waterscape. *Phumdis* are unique naturally formed floating islands of vegetation, soil and organic matter. Only 1/5 part of these marshes float above the water. These islands offer a unique habitat for a rich variety of flora and fauna.

Even local fishermen who fish in the lake build their huts on these *phumdis*. Boats are their only means of transport connecting their homes and the town. The lake boasts of 425 species of animals including the waterfowl and Indian python.



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DR. SYEDNA MOHAMMED BURHANUDDIN SAHEB

An inspirational spiritual leader (1915-2014)

AS the 52nd Dai al-Mutlaq, His Holiness Dr. Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin Saheb stood for peace and prosperity for the Dawoodi Bohra community. He was held in great respect by leaders from world over and was honoured with awards and rewards for his knowledge and tremendous work towards the Bohra community, thus building a legacy of goodwill for his followers who had entrusted him as a leader.

Born in 1915, Syedna received religious and administrative training from his father and predecessor, Syedna Taher Saifuddin Saheb.

He succeeded his father in 1965 after his demise, and Syedna's role as the Dai got instantly recognised because he took over the role of the leader with a fresh outlook towards the community's upliftment and infused new dimensions towards its growth. In 2011 he became the first Dai al-Mutlaq to complete 100 years of age.

His beliefs were quite straightforward; adhere to the Islamic teachings at the same time weld into the modern world changes. One of them was emphasising on following Islamic business ethics and adopting the Quranic concept of interest-free transactions. He thus initiated an interest-free loan scheme called "Karz-e Hasanat" for the community's financial needs.

He consistently stressed on the economic upliftment and welfare of the Dawoodi Bohra Community by motivating them to indulge in business and self employment. The Burhaniyah Business Counseling Centre (BBCC) was therefore established in 2007 for the same purpose. He also established the Burhani Foundation in 2011, whose core message was to address the environmental problems in India and around the world in a more structured and scientific way. One of their core projects was the Guinness World Record breaking distribution of 52,000 sparrow feeders across the world for "Save Our Sparrows" project. This project was undertaken on Syedna's 100th birthday.

Some of his other initiatives included, continuing his father's tradition of mass marriages to curb expenditure of individual marriages, also called "Rasme Saifee", community kitchens all over the world where the Dawoodi Bohra

Community can avail hygienic cooked meals at their homes, the Saifee Hospital at Charni Road, Mumbai for medical needs of the common man, and lastly the Saifee Burhani Upliftment Trust project of redevelopment of the crowded Bhendi Bazaar locality in Mumbai with better living facilities for the existing residents.

Syedna was also an heir to a remarkable tradition of learning and education. He was keenly interested in the educational advancement of the community, and also for all those

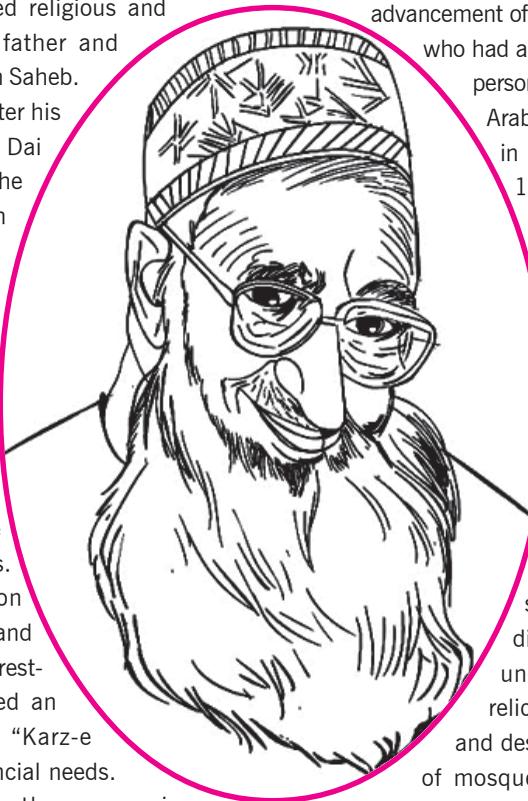
who had a thirst for knowledge and learning. He personally supervised the curriculum of the Arabic academy "Al Jamea Tus Saifiyah" in Surat. This academy was founded in 1814 AD by the 43rd Dai Syedna Abdeali Saifuddin with an objective to provide integrated education in an Islamic atmosphere. This academy was constantly reoriented by its successors, and Syedna too expanded it by founding its counter parts in Karachi in 1984, Nairobi in 2012 and Marol, Mumbai in 2013.

Besides promoting the blending of secular and religious studies of Islam-oriented schools in different parts of the world, he also undertook the restoration of Fatimid relics and promoted Fatimid architecture and design. He constructed a large number of mosques, mausoleums and other public buildings all over the world. The most memorable of

such works has been the restoration in 1980 of Al-Jame Al-Anwar, the grand mosque in Cairo built by the Fatimid Gawhar Al-Siqilli. The other has been the renovation of The Grand Mosque of Kufa, one of the earliest mosques of the world.

While preparations were going on in full gusto for his 103rd birthday celebrations as per the Islamic Hijri year on 17 January 2014, the community was shocked with the sudden news of his demise. Thousands gathered from all over the world to pay their last respects. With the tremendous effort with which the Syedna lead the Dawoodi Bohras, there is no denying to the fact that he will always be known as the one who kept his community as a close knit family. ■

– *Mariam Dholkawala is a technology writer and game producer from Mumbai.*



KHUSHWANT SINGH

Witty and fearless writer (1915 – 2014)

In his syndicated column, *'With Malice Towards One and All'*, Khushwant Singh was given a unique logo that finds no parallel among journalist and columnist across the world. He was shown sitting inside a light bulb. This logo was conceived, created and executed by another unique artist Mario Miranda. The 'light' signified that Singh was shedding light, humour, satire and punching them with his tongue-in-cheek digs directed at himself.

With his passing away last month, that light has gone out forever. One more year and he would have crossed a century in the cricket of life. But that was not to be. His wife Kawal, predeceased him some years ago and Singh is survived by his son Rahul, a noted journalist and daughter, Mala.

But that is not what he leaves behind. He leaves behind much more that go beyond family and friends. He leaves behind memories of his tremendous courage he vested his pen with, easily turning it into a sharp knife, a sword, a drop of acid poured into pages of writing despite being thrown out summarily of his editorial post with the *Illustrated Weekly of India* during the Emergency because he fell foul of Indira Gandhi as was shunted out without a by-your-leave. He was openly critical of her complete censorship of the fourth estate during the Emergency.

Another instance of his courage was expressed when he returned the Padma Bhushan, the third highest civilian award 10 years after he got it in 1984 in protest against the army siege of the Golden Temple of the Sikhs in Amritsar. Other sources state that he had given the award back because of the destruction of the Babri Masjid calculatingly undertaken by Lal Krishna Advani and his Hindutva brigade.

His novel, *Train to Pakistan*, remains an all-time classic based on a bloody slice from India's Partition which was later made into a film. His other noted books are – *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale*, *A History of the Sikhs*, *The Company of Women* among the 30 novels, many short

stories, essays and countless commentaries. When he was editor of *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, its circulation leaped to an incredible 400,000 and is still remembered by elders addicted to it as one of the most outstanding magazines in English in the country. He radically introduced a page of jokes, cartoons and a glamour photograph when there was no Photoshop, no Adobe and no Internet to fall back on and the popularity of the weekly was determined exclusively by the quality of the editorial content and the images.

His travelogues beautifully describe his wanderings to exotic lands like Turkey, Libya and Syria and to Papua New Guinea where he encountered a Sikh working as an immigration officer. Singh was founder-editor of *Yojana* magazine from 1951 to 1953. He was nominated to the Rajya Sabha by Indira Gandhi and was Member of Parliament from 1980 to 1986.

Singh did not think twice before he spanned the entire spectrum of the written word except, perhaps poetry. He created punch lines, jokes addressed to everyone including himself, wrote short essays, short stories, novels and plays filled with lovely settings and memorable characters. Most of us have not read his longer works because his columns, created from within that lovely bulb, kept us entertained, enlightened and busy. In a tribute in the *Indian Express*, Prateek Kanjilal described him precisely when he writes, "A devastating loose cannon, he needed a persona that played harmless, like that caricature. Finally, it was the delicate art of self-deprecation that let him say almost anything and get away unscathed, all his charmed life."

He must be laughing his guts out watching us all write tributes to him because they did not matter to him when he was alive. They do not matter to him now that he is no longer around. ■

– **Shoma A. Chatterji** is a freelance journalist, film scholar and author, who has won the National Award for Best Writing on Cinema.



BRIGADIER DESMOND E HAYDE MVC

The braveheart Commander (1926-2013)

BRIGADIER Hayde was born on 28 November 1926 in Exeter, UK in an Anglo-Indian family of Irish lineage with an old tradition of soldiering. He studied in Asansol and Bangalore. He joined the IMA, Dehradun on 20 January 1947 and was commissioned into 3 Jat Regiment on 12 September 1948. He assumed command of the battalion a few hours before the unit marched into Pakistan at 4 a.m. on 6 September 1965.

The unit reached village Ghosal- Dial, not aware that a company of three Baluch had arrived in the village. Hayde intercepted an officer asking for fire support and took the first prisoner. The village was cleared by 6 a.m. Twenty one enemies were killed and 17 taken prisoners. Subedar Khazan Singh received shrapnel in his skull but refused to be evacuated. He was later rewarded with the Vir Chakra. Hayde placed two companies across the canal over a partly demolished bridge. The radio sets of the battalion and artillery officer providing link to brigade head quarters were damaged. The troop of Scinde Horse (a regular cavalry regiment of the British Indian Army) got orders to fall back. Due to lack of artillery support and withdrawal of own tanks, 3 Jat too had to fall back to village Dial. The attack on Dograi had failed due to lack of coordination. Pakistan then occupied Dograi in strength and the second attack by 15 Dogra and 13 Punjab on 7 September failed.

The period of 11 to 18 September was utilised for regrouping. Information of enemy's dispositions was obtained by intense patrolling which also hardened the troops to enemy fire. On 21 September, Hayde took his officers to within 500 yards of enemy defences to reconnoitre and observe. Hayde received shrapnel in the thigh and Subedar Khazan Singh was injured by a deflected bullet. Khazan Singh insisted on staying on in the unit. Hayde and officers talked to the men to follow the glorious traditions of the Regiment. The men extracted promise from their buddies that if wounded they should not be left

behind but taken forward to the objective.

At 1.30 a. m. on 22 September, 523 Jats rose as one man and moved forward. Subedar Pale Ram shouted the Battle Cry, "Jat Balwan, Jai Bhagwan" and called upon the men to follow him. They charged into the hail of enemy bullets and routed him. Pale Ram received six bullet wounds but survived to be decorated with Vir Chakra. Similar activity

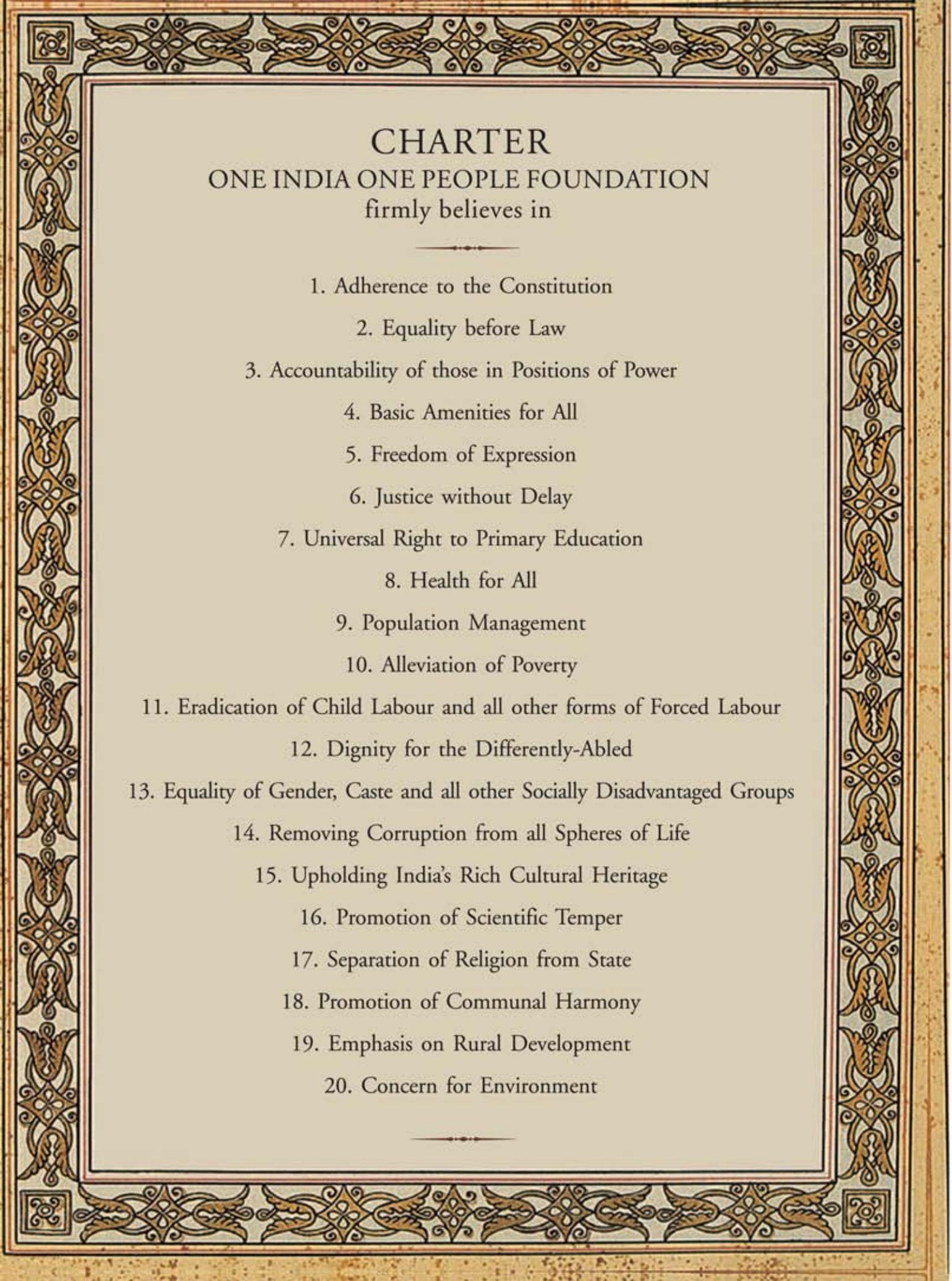
was enacted by other companies. It can be said that every soldier displayed gallantry at some time or the other with acts of blowing bunkers with pole charge, lobbing grenades into defences and close quarter combat. By 4 a.m. the Pakistanis ran away. Lance Naik Om Prakash hoisted the tricolour on the canal. By mid-day of 22 September, three counter-attacks had been foiled. While charging an enemy group, 2/Lt Kartar Singh saw a tall man diving under a tank. Kartar pulled him out. He was Colonel Golewala, the commanding officer 16 Punjab of Pakistan. Next day on 23 September attack by 8 Punjab of Pakistan Army was beaten back. The pledge of not being left behind when wounded was not an empty rhetoric. Major Vatsa and Naik Sri Ram carried on to the objective with help from comrades after having received bullet injuries. Vatsa succumbed at the objective.

Lt. Gen Harbaksh Singh, the Army Commander called it the toughest battle of all times. The most glowing tribute was paid by Subedar - Major Islamuddin of Pakistan "Only my old battalion could have done it." Hayde was awarded the second highest gallantry medal MVC. He commanded a brigade in Jammu sector in the 1971 War. The unit had the distinction of being addressed by Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri at Dograi and it was during that address that Shastri gave the slogan "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan."

After retirement, Brigadier Hayde took up assignment of IG Mizoram. His son joined the same battalion. Brig Hayde passed away on 25 September 2013. ■



– Brigadier Suresh Chandra Sharma (retd)



CHARTER
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firmly believes in

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 2. Equality before Law
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 5. Freedom of Expression
 6. Justice without Delay
 7. Universal Right to Primary Education
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 12. Dignity for the Differently-Abled
 13. Equality of Gender, Caste and all other Socially Disadvantaged Groups
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 16. Promotion of Scientific Temper
 17. Separation of Religion from State
 18. Promotion of Communal Harmony
 19. Emphasis on Rural Development
 20. Concern for Environment
-

WHO AM I?

- Am I a Hindu first or an Indian first?*
Am I a Muslim first or an Indian first?
Am I a Christian first or an Indian first?
Am I a Buddhist first or an Indian first?
Am I a Brahmin first or an Indian first?
Am I a Dalit first or an Indian first?
Am I a South Indian first or an Indian first?
Am I a North Indian first or an Indian first?
Am I the President of India first or an Indian first?
Am I the Prime Minister of India first or an Indian first?
Am I the Commander-in-Chief first or an Indian first?
Am I a supporter of any 'ism' first or an Indian first?
Am I a white-collar/blue collar worker first or an Indian first?
Am I a youth/senior citizen first or an Indian first?

*In all cases you are Indian First, Last and Always.
Be a Proud Indian. Make this country Great, Strong and United.*



Sadanand A. Shetty, Founder Editor

(October 9th, 1930 – February 23rd, 2007)

ONE INDIA ONE PEOPLE