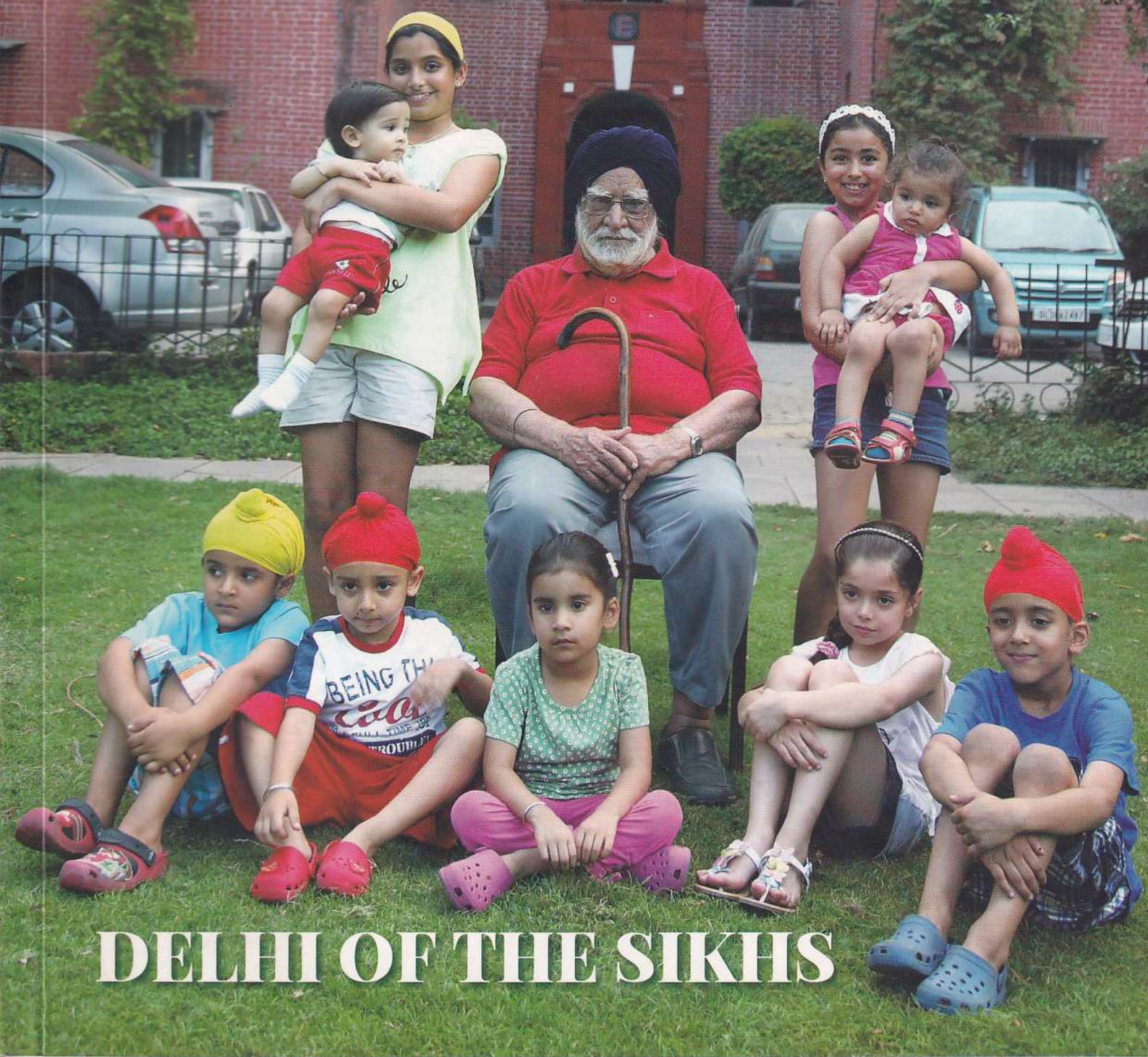


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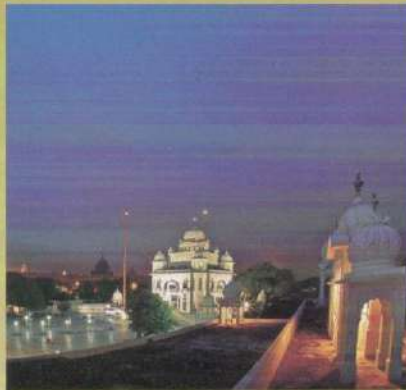


DELHI OF THE SIKHS

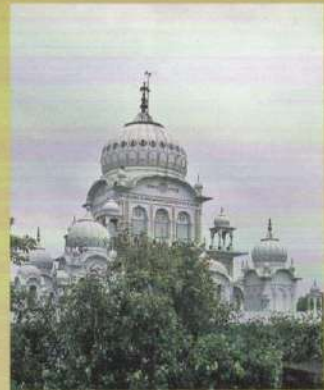
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Cover: Brigadier Gurbux Singh, son of Sardar Bahadur Sir Sobha Singh, with his great grandchildren at Sujan Singh Park in New Delhi, which is named after his grandfather

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Editorial

Delhi of the SIKHS

Ever since Guru Nanak trod this earth and Sikhism arose, Sikhs have been a glowing and important presence in Delhi, Old and New. Of course, as in all life, the good and the bad intermix. The focus in this issue is on New Delhi, but the city's roots lie in the old town and that connection cannot be sundered; it must be reconciled in any narrative. Old Delhi and its new adjunct are truly inseparable.

I look out the window in my home town, New York; some parts are almost 300 years old with narrow, winding streets; others are new high rises, kissing the sky. Yet, it's hard to draw a line between the old and the new. Delhi, old and new, is also like that with layers to its narrative.

Just a few hours in Delhi is enough to see that the heart beat of Delhi is synchronous with that of the Punjab. In fact in many ways, Delhi appears to be another, if bustling and progressive, extension of Punjab. That some other states of India are wedged around and between Delhi and Punjab becomes apparent only when one looks at a map of the country or encounters border crossings in traveling between Delhi and Punjab. A common culture unites the two.

It takes a little parsing of history to feel the intimate connection, akin to an umbilical cord that joins them. Despite the passage of time, this cord remains anatomically and functionally viable. The vitality of the capital city of Delhi has always stemmed from this structural and functional intimacy with Punjab and Punjabis, as much as ever. The land that is now Delhi has occupied both mythologists and historians for centuries. This is testimony of its importance to both

the people of India, even before there was an 'India' as well as to Indians today, and speaks to its defining place in the nation that now is the Republic of India.

Indian myth and lore traces the antecedents of Delhi to the times following the Mahabharata. During the intersection of fact and myth, Delhi was perhaps the site of Indraprastha. Nothing remains of it now except legend. The earliest record of that era comes from the thirteenth century when its last Hindu ruler, Prithviraj Chauhan, held sway.

Qutb-al-din Aibek defeated Prithviraj and renamed the township as Delhi. It became the seat of his government. Over the centuries, hordes from the north and north-west, including the Mongols, continued their periodic invasions through the Khyber Pass into the Punjab and then into Delhi. There have been many incarnations of Delhi. In the thirteenth century, Ala-ud-Din Khilji built a new fortified city (Siri) as Delhi's first incarnation at its south. Less than a century later, Tughlak rulers founded a new city, Fatehpur-Sikri on the Delhi-Agra road but it had to be abandoned because of scarcity of water. Later, the emperor's successor established another city, Firozabad as the new capital which is now embedded in Old Delhi.

Delhi has had many more lives than the proverbial phoenix. Invasions continued and Delhi died a thousand times with just as many reincarnations. In the sixteenth century, Mughal emperors temporarily shifted the capital of their far flung empire away from Delhi, but the romance and allure of Delhi prevailed and that's where they returned. For reasons that remain unexplained and untraceable, the Sikh influence on Delhi, Old and New, remained relatively untouched by historians. Scholar

Historians will explore the Sikh stamp on Delhi in this special issue of the *Nishaan*. As the Sikhs gained strength in Punjab, political power, inimical to the larger populace remained concentrated in Delhi and this connection and confrontation between the two was inevitable. At least two places commemorate visits by Guru Nanak to Delhi. The Mughal Emperor Humayun, after his defeat, visited Guru Angad on his way into exile. Bhai Gurdas, in his eleventh Vaar, mentions the presence of Sikhs in many cities across the land, including Delhi. They lived freely and openly. At that time, tensions had not yet escalated to open war between Sikhs and the Mughal rulers, even though Guru Arjan had been martyred and Guru Hargobind had fought four battles with the ruling empire. Guru Har Rai did not visit Delhi, but the rebel prince Dara Shikoh visited the Guru while fleeing from the army of his brother, Aurangzeb, who overcame his father and siblings and captured the throne of Delhi. This emperor questioned some lines in the *Adi Granth*. Guru Har Rai deputed his son, Ram Rai, to go to Delhi to assuage Aurangzeb's concerns. Ram Rai unfortunately deliberately misread Gurbani to the emperor's satisfaction but suffered the Guru's wrath. Guru Harkishan visited Delhi, but refused to meet the emperor. Guru Tegh Bahadur visited Delhi several times, finally to uphold the cause of the Kashmiri Pandits against brutal oppression for which he was martyred. He was beheaded in what is now Chandni Chowk of Old Delhi on 11 November, 1675. The palace associated with Gurus Hargobind, Harkishan, and Tegh Bahadur is now Bangla Sahib. Gurduara Sis Ganj stands at the spot where Guru Tegh Bahadur was martyred. Gurduara Rakabganj is where Lakhi Rai Wanjara surreptitiously brought and cremated the body of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

In 1707 Guru Gobind Singh personally marked the spot at Rakabganj, near where, two centuries later, the British were to select the site for India's new capital. In the post-Guru period, Mata Sundri, the wife of Guru Gobind Singh lived in Delhi until her passing in 1743. But, as is usual with Indian history the narrative seems largely incomplete. During that period, the Sikhs fought many major battles with the Mughals. In Punjab, Banda Singh Bahadur had wrecked the

Mughal presence and shaken the rulers of Delhi. Were the Mughals not aware of her presence? How was she able to survive in the midst of enemy territory? Banda Singh Bahadur's public execution in Mehrauli, south Delhi is another milestone in the history of Sikhs in and around Delhi and that is a compelling saga. By then, Mughal power was fatally weakened and Sikhs were in the ascendance.

In 1765, under the command of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Sikhs defeated the rulers of Delhi even though skirmishes and battles continued. In 1783, the Sikhs under Baghel Singh, laid a siege which lasted two months. Their base, where close to 30,000 troops were encamped (Tees Hazari) is now the site of the Delhi Courts. The Sikh warriors prevailed. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Jassa Singh Ramgharia and Baghel Singh flew the *Nishaan Sahib* from the ramparts of the historic Red Fort, exactly the same location from where the Indian Prime Minister today addresses the nation every year on India's Independence Day. However, it was in New Delhi that the Sikhs, elected to India's first free parliament, chose not to affirm the Indian Constitution because parts of this rankled then - and the same parts continue to offend the Sikhs today.

I have presented a synopsis, admittedly swift, of the Sikh presence in Old Delhi. But our attention now turns to New Delhi. In 1911 the British announced shifting of their Indian Empire's capital from Calcutta to Delhi. Swinburne, Lutyens and Baker were commissioned to design a modern Delhi. Raisina, Rakabganj, Malcha, Madhoganj and Jaisinghpura were key villages where New Delhi exists today.

The British designed a lodge for their Viceroy to rival the Red Fort which was pride of the Mughal rulers. Then they wanted to build a wide tree-lined boulevard that went through Rakabganj. Lutyens, unaware of its significance, ordered dismantling of its walls. Malcolm Hailey, an indologist sympathetic to Sikhs, cautioned against it, but without success. The wall was demolished in 1913, leading to massive protests. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar flamed further anger in the Sikhs. The British sought Sikh support in the First World War; the walls of Rakabganj as well as the seized land were restored to the Sikhs in 1921.

The city of New Delhi was officially inaugurated in 1931. The Delhi Gurdwara Management Committee came into existence in 1974 to manage gurdwaras in Delhi, Old and New. The design of New Delhi may have come from Lutyens and associates, but the world-class and first-rate construction is a product of mostly Sikh engineers, contractors and builders. Almost all were recognised by the British government with awards but three were also knighted, including Sir Sobha Singh, father of the eminent writer Khushwant Singh. The most prominent of them were collectively known as the *Panj Pyaray*. Among these lamplighters were Sardars Baisakha Singh, Dharam Singh Sethi, Teja Singh Malik, Narain Singh and Mohan Singh. Following the partition of India and the expansion of New Delhi, came many new Sikh builders the most prominent amongst these being Uttam Singh Dugal from Rawalpindi and his son Harcharan Singh; the names of Lachman Singh Gill and Mohan Singh (who also introduced Coca Cola into India) must also be recorded. Of the most influential Sikh authors, writing on Sikh causes, I would add two eminent scions of the builders of New Delhi: Khushwant Singh, son of Sir Sobha Singh and the late Patwant Singh. And today, reminding us of both the Jassa Singhs and Baghel Singhs, we have the eminent economist* Dr. Manmohan Singh who sits astride the Indian nation as the Prime Minister of India and General Bikram Singh, who is the incoming chief of India's vast army.

Manmohan Singh is a world-class economist and the first Sikh Prime Minister of India. General Bikram Singh is only the second Sikh in his high office as Indian Army Chief, this in spite of the fact that the cadre of senior officers and generals in the Indian army has always had a preponderance of Sikhs. In the early 1950s, more than 50% of senior generals were Sikhs but were systematically sidelined. Two Sikhs became Chiefs of the Indian Air Force but another two who were logically in line, were retired on the eve of their taking over.

The story of Sikhs and New Delhi would be woefully incomplete without a brief comment on the mass murders of thousands of Sikhs in November 1984 in a pogrom directed by people with political power. That is when Khushwant Singh returned his honours to

the government and drew a wrenching parallel between the lot of Sikhs in India and that of Jews in Nazi Germany during the Second World War.

During the troubled decade of the 1980s, at the height of a tense exchange on the killings of Sikhs in Delhi, one visitor to New York, a representative of the ruling political faction (Congress Party) from India, baited Sikhs with the tasteless challenge: "Your Sikh kingdom was based in Lahore; why don't you all go to Pakistan and capture Lahore?" I could not resist responding, perhaps equally tastelessly, "Why don't we take Delhi now, as the Sikh Nishaan Sahib also flew there at one time; Lahore can come by and by."

Until the British and the French came to India by sea, most invaders entered India through its northwest corner and hurtled into Punjab to stay, conquer and plunder, return or perish in defeat. Consequently, Punjab has known little peace except briefly during the reign of Akbar during the 16th century or for another half a century in the 19th during Ranjit Singh's consolidation of power. It has been rightly said that we Sikhs make history but we do not record it. Perhaps there was little time or leisure to do so. But our early history when added to the 500 years of Sikh presence in Punjab have embedded and encoded that lifestyle in our DNA.

The *Nishaan*, in this issue, purports to capture some of those voices (such as that of the eminent writer Khushwant Singh) that we can still access, along with existing records so that they are not lost in time. I know that my piece here paints the larger-than-life canvas with broad brush-strokes. But readers will find details aplenty in this issue with striking images that enshrine its history forever.

Still there are dots that I did not connect and nuggets of history that I missed, including the fact that apart from the ten historic gurdwaras there are scores more, ever vibrant and attracting both adherents to the faith and millions of others who visit Delhi, the capital of India and one of the great cities of the world. Readers of the *Nishaan* are invited to move the story forward.

I. J. Singh
Dr IJ Singh

A History of Delhi



The walled city of Delhi and Cantonment in 1857. Compiled from sketches and drawings in the East India House by S & T Daniel, Col. Hardinge, Col. Luard, Capt. Bacon and other authorities. (Published by M&N Hansbert Lith)

The earliest reference to a settlement in the Delhi area is found in the Mahabharata (an epic narrative about two groups of warring cousins, the Pandavas and the Kauravas, both descendants of the prince Bharata). According to the narrative, a city called Indraprastha ("City of the God Indra"), built about 1400 BC, under the direction of Yudhishthira, a Pandava king, on a huge mound somewhere between the sites where the historic Purana Qila (Old Fort) and Humayun's Tomb were later to be located, was the capital of the Pandavas. Although nothing remains of Indraprastha, legend holds it to have been a thriving city. The first reference to the place-name Delhi seems to have been made in the 1st century BC, when Raja Dhilu built a city near the site of the future Qutb Minar tower (in present-

day southwestern Delhi) and named it for himself. Thereafter Delhi faced many vicissitudes and did not reemerge into prominence until the 12th century AD, when it became the capital of the Chauhan ruler Prithviraj III.

The next notable city to emerge in the area now known as the Delhi Triangle was Anangpur (Anandpur), established as a royal resort in about 1020 CE by Anangapala of the Tomara dynasty. Anangapala later moved Anangpur some 6 miles (10 km) westward to a walled citadel called Lal Kot. The Tomara kings occupied Lal Kot for about a century. In 1164, Prithviraj III (Rai Pithora) extended the citadel by building massive ramparts around it; the city then became known as Qila Rai Pithora. In the late 12th century Prithviraj III was defeated and the

city passed into Muslim hands. Qutb al-Dīn Aybak, builder of the famous tower Qutb Minar (completed in the early 13th century), also chose Delhi as his capital and made Lal Kot the seat of his empire. The Khalji dynasty came to power in the Delhi area in the last decade of the 13th century.

During the reign of the Khaljis, the suburbs were ravaged by Mongol plunderers. As a defence against subsequent attacks by the Mongols, Ala-ud-Din Khalji (1296–1316) built a new circular fortified city, which was the second city of Delhi, at Siri, three miles northeast of the Qutb Minar, that was designated as the Khalji capital. Siri was the first completely new city to be built by the Muslim conquerors in India. The region passed into the hands of the Tughluq dynasty in 1321. A new capital, which was the third city of Delhi, was built by Ghiyas al-Din Tughluq (1320–25) at Tughlakabad, but it had to be abandoned in favour of the old site near the Qutb Minar because of a scarcity of water. Ghiyas's successor, Muhammad ibn Tughluq (1325–51), extended the city farther northeast and built new fortifications around it. It then became the fourth city of Delhi, under the name Jahanpanah. These new settlements were located between the old cities near the Qutb Minar and Siri Fort. He then suddenly moved the capital to Deogiri (which he renamed Daulatabad), in the Deccan plateau to the south, in order to supervise territories that he had recently annexed there.

Muhammad ibn Tughlaq's successor, Firuz Shah Tughluq (1351–88), however abandoned the Daulatabad site and in 1354 moved his capital farther north, near the ancient site of Indraprastha and founded the fifth city of Delhi, Firuzabad, which was situated in what is now the Firoz Shah Kotla area of contemporary Delhi. After the invasion and sack of the Delhi area by Timur (Tamerlane) at the end of the 14th century, the Sayyid (1414–51) and the Lodi (1451–1526) dynasties, which followed the Tughluqs, confined themselves within the precincts of Firuzabad at Agra so that Delhi experienced a temporary diminution in its importance. Babur, the first Mughal ruler, re-established Delhi as the seat of his empire in 1526. His son ascended the throne in 1530 and in 1533 founded a new city, Din Panah, on the bank of the Yamuna River, on the site between Kotla Firuz Shah and the Purana Qalah.

Sher Shah, who overthrew Humāyūn in 1540, razed Din Panah to the ground and built his new capital, the Shalimar Shahi, now known as Purana Qila fort, in southeast Delhi, as the sixth city of Delhi.

Delhi later again lost importance when the next two Mughal emperors, Akbar (1556–1605) and Jahānār (1605–27), preferred to rule India from Agra in the 16th and early 17th centuries. But the city was restored its former glory and prestige in 1638, when Shah Jahan, Akbar's grandson, laid the foundations of the seventh city of Delhi, Shahjahanabad. He instructed his engineers, architects and astrologers to choose a location with a mild climate somewhere between Agra and Lahore (now Pakistan). The choice was on the western bank of the Yamuna, just north of Purana Qila. Shah Jahan started the construction of the new capital, focusing on his fort, Ujani Mualla, today called Lal Qila, or the Red Fort. The structure was completed in eight years, and on 19 August 1648, Shah Jahan entered his fort and his new capital, Shahjahanabad, from its riverfront gate. Shahjahanabad today is Old Delhi.

The greater part of Old Delhi is still confined within the space of Shah Jahan's walls, and several gates built during his rule—the Kashmiri Gate, the Delhi Gate, the Turkana Gate, and the Ajmeri Gate—still stand. With the fall of the Mughal Empire during the mid-18th century, Delhi fell to raids by the Marathas (a people of peninsular India) and an invasion by Nader Shah of Persia, and a brief spell of Maratha rule before the British arrived in 1803. The Sikhs defeated the ruling Emperor in 1783 and the Nishaan Sahi fled from the Red Fort. (See article 'Delhi after Sher Shah Gurus').

Under British rule the city flourished, except during the Indian Mutiny in 1857, when the mutineers seized the city for several months, after which British power was restored and Mughal rule ended.

In 1911 the British determined to shift the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi, and a three-member committee was formed to plan the construction of the new administrative centre. The key architect on the committee was Sir Edwin Lutyens; it was he who gave shape to the new city, which was built largely by Sikh contractors. The British moved to the partially built New Delhi in 1912 and construction was completed in 1931.

Sikh Gurus in Delhi

After the Punjab, Delhi emerges as the place which has played major direct and indirect role in shaping Sikh history. During the Sikh Guru's period which spanned two centuries, from the 16th to the 18th, Delhi was where much happened in history, with their presence. There are two places particularly associated with Guru Nanak's visit to Delhi, which are Nanak Piao and Majnu ka Tila. There is strong possibility that Guru Nanak visited Delhi more than once, but there is scarce historical recording of the time and the places associated with his visit. We have hagiographic accounts which serve as basis of belief associated with above mentioned places. While Sikh hagiography believes that Majnu Faqir (of Gurdwara Majnu ka Tila) was a contemporary of Guru Nanak, Dargah Kuli Khan's 1741. Persian manuscript Muraqqa-e-Dehli portrays him as a Nanakpanthi mendicant who lived between the reigns of Aurangzeb and Muhammad Shah.

After Guru Nanak, Guru Amardas's Sikh Gangu Shah's name emerges as a successful banker of Delhi. He was appointed Manjidar of Delhi region by Guru himself.

One of his successors, Kharak Singh had a small following of Sikhs in Delhi named as Gangu Shahi sangat but his efforts to emerge as the eleventh Guru of Sikhs were successfully stalled by Mihar Singh, a Nihang of Delhi. Very little is known about Guru Ramdas and Guru Arjan's connections with the city. Bhai Gurdas's Eleventh Var that describes the presence of Sikhs of first six Gurus in all major cities of India, Afghanistan and Iran is silent about the Sikhs of Delhi. As to the Masand who administered *charan pahul* to Sikhs of Delhi, there is no evidence. But that Sikhs lived in Delhi, not as obscure minority, is evident from the presence of Bhai Kalian's Dharamshala in the walled city. According to Sarup Singh Koshish, Guru Hargobind stayed at this place probably after return from Gwalior and the Sikhs of Delhi celebrated the memory of this visit on full moon of Assu every year. Bhai Kalian's dharamshala is mentioned by Guru Tegh Bahadur in one of his Hukumnamah. Guru Har Rai did not visit Delhi but Dara Shikoh visited him and his father Emperor Shah Jahan, was grateful for his help in curing Dara of fatal illness which he suffered as a result of the conspiracy of Aurangzeb. Guru Har Rai



Guru Harkrishan Sahib coming to Delhi (Painting by G.S. Sohan Singh)

protected Dara's life once again in 1658 at the ford of river Ravi near Lahore when he was being chased by armies of Aurangzeb after the battle of Shamugarh. In this struggle for the crown, Aurangzeb emerged victorious and he wanted an explanation from Guru Har Rai for his help to Dara. According to Sarup Singh Koshish, Mirza Raja Jai Singh's diwan appeared at Kiratpur with this message. Guru Har Rai deputed his son Ram Rai (also known as *Karta Purkh*) to attend the meeting with Aurangzeb. Diwan Dargah Mall and Bhai Gurdas of Bahlo family accompanied him to Delhi. Their stay was arranged at a camp in Chandrawal Khera (this was later acquired for building the house of British Resident Charles Metcalfe. Metcalfe House today houses the Defence Research and Development Organisation.

New Chandrawal Khera came up at what is presently the site of Kamla Nagar near Delhi ridge, surrounded by Delhi University campus. At this camp, Ram Rai had numerous meetings with Aurangzeb who developed some fondness for him, but actually for his miracle-performing capability. It was through the letters of Bhai Kaliana that Guru Har Rai came to know about such activities which he strongly condemned. Finally when Ram Rai offered an evasive explanation before Aurangzeb by substituting the word 'beiman' instead of 'Mussalman' in Guru Nanak's Asa Di Var (*mitti mussalman ki paide pai kumhar*). This hurt sentiments of the Sikhs very much and the matter was reported to Guru Har Rai at Kiratpur in a letter written by Bhai Kaliana, Bhai Gurdas Bahlo and Bhai Dargahi Mal. Bhai Daria took this letter to Kiratpur and brought back Guru Har Rai's response which censured Ram Rai's acts. Ram Rai decided to appear before Guru immediately and left Delhi. While either at Kot Pathan or Ropar he received another letter from Guru asking him not to show his face at Kiratpur. Ram Rai went to Lahore and stayed there until forgiven by Guru in 1662. While at Kiratpur, Ram Rai was again invited by Aurangzeb. Guru Har Rai asked Bhai Dargah Mall, Bhai Gurudas, Bhai Kaula, Bhai Daria and Bhai Kaliana to accompany him to Delhi. He stayed at Chandrawal where he continued to have meetings with Aurangzeb. Two Sikhs of Delhi, Bhai Nanu Ram and Bhai Gurbux invited him to celebrate Guru Hargobind's visit at Bhai Kalian's Dharamsala. A few days after this, Ram Rai received his mother Mata Sulakhni's letter which brought the painful news of Guru Har Rai's

passing away. Hearing this, Aurangzeb came to con Ram Rai (this is recorded by Sarup Singh Koshshis *Guru Ki Sakhian*).

During Guru Har Krishan's period, Ram Rai stayed at Kiratpur for a year assisting his grandmother Mata B in affairs of the sangat. In 1663, he was again invited by Aurangzeb, to Jai Singh's diwan at Kiratpur. This time Ram Rai stayed at the village of Raisina (today's seat of India's Government). He had meetings with Aurangzeb in his court, who expressed his desire to meet Guru Har Krishan, and understand why Guru Harkrishan was chosen as the successor of Guru Har Rai. Raja Jai Singh's diwan, a frequent visitor to the Guru's household came again and at his request, Guru Harkrishan asked Bhai Daria to make arrangements for the departure to Delhi of Mata Sulakhni, Mata Bassi and Diwan Dargah Mall for Delhi in 1664. Guru Har Krishan stayed at Raja Jai Singh's Rai Sina Bungalow. An account book of Talwara Pargana Jind, *Khata Jalahane Puaron Ka* mentions a brief meeting between Guru Har Krishan and Aurangzeb in the presence of Ram Rai, Bhai Mani Singh, Diwan Dargah Mall, Kanwar Ram Singh and Bhai Gurbux at Delhi.

Guru Har Krishan mahal Athma beta Guru Har Rai ka. Sal Satran Sai ikkis chetr mas shukla pakhe thit guruwar ke dihun sava pahar din chade palki te swa Dehli badshai darbar men aye. Gaile Guru Ram Rai aye, Bete Guru Har Rai Ji Mahal Satmen ke diwan Dargah Mal aya beta Dwarka Das Chibber ka. Ka Ram Singh aya Raja Jai Singh Amberpat ka. Gurbu beta Baghe chippe ka. Mani Ram aya, beta Mata Sulakhni jalahne ka, hor Sikh fakir aye.

It is possible that Guru shunned him from any further meetings but communications did not cease. In his letter written to Aurangzeb, he wrote Guru Nanak's shabads:

*Kia khadhe kia paidhe hoi,
ja man nahi sacha soi.*

*Kia meva kia ghio gur mitha,
kia maida kia masu.*

*Kia kapru kia sej sukhali,
keejhi bhog bilas.*

*Kia lascar kia neb khavasi avay mahali vasu.
Nanak sachai nam vin sabhe tol vinasu.*

Aurangzeb, the Mughal Emperor who had ordered Guru's arrest, was then at Hasan Abdal in the North West

Dyal Das beta Mai Das ka, pota Balu Raon ka Guru Tegh Bahadur gailon sal satran sai batis mangsar sudi panchmi virvar ke dihun Dilli Chandni Chowk malhan shahi hukumm gail mara gaya. Sath Mati Das, Sati Das bete Hira Mal ke potre Dwaraka Das Chibber ke Bhargav gore Chibber Brahmaan mare gaye (Bhat Vahi Talaonda Fargan Jind).

On 11 November 1675, Chandni Chowk in Delhi witnessed the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur after three days of torture by Mughal officials. Earlier, three of his Sikhs, Bhai Dyal Das, Bhai Mati Das and Bhai Sati Das were brutally tortured in his presence:

Guru Tegh Bahadur ji mahal navan ke Nur Muhammad Khan Mirja, chonki Ropar balon ne sal satran sai batis sawan parvshite baran ko Malakpor pargana Ghanola se pakar kar Sarhand paunmchaya. Sath Sati Das Mati Das bete Hira Mal Chibber ke sath. Dyal Das beta Mai Das Balaont ka pakria Sarhind aya. Char mah Sarhind aur Dilli ke bandi khane me rahe (Bhat Vahi Purbideccani Khata Jalhane blaonton ka).

Finally Guru was brought to Delhi along with Sati Das, Mati Das and Dyal Das.

Guru Tegh Bahadur ji mahal navan ke Nur Muhammad Khan Mirja, chonki Ropar balon ne sal satran sai batis sawan parvshite baran ko Malakpor pargana Ghanola se pakar kar Sarhand paunmchaya. Sath Sati Das Mati Das bete Hira Mal Chibber ke sath. Dyal Das beta Mai Das Balaont ka pakria Sarhind aya. Char mah Sarhind aur Dilli ke bandi khane me rahe (Bhat Vahi Purbideccani Khata Jalhane blaonton ka).

Gurujii's last visit to Delhi was for taking up the case of Kashmiri Pandits with Aurangzeb. He left for Delhi from Anandpur Sahib after bestowing Guruship on Guru Gobind Singh. He knew that this was going to be his last visit to Delhi. He was arrested on the way at Malakpor Ranghar, where he was kept in detention at Bassi Pathana for four months.

Finally Guru was brought to Delhi along with Sati Das, Mati Das and Dyal Das.

Gurujii's last visit to Delhi was for taking up the case of Kashmiri Pandits with Aurangzeb. He left for Delhi from Anandpur Sahib after bestowing Guruship on Guru Gobind Singh. He knew that this was going to be his last visit to Delhi. He was arrested on the way at Malakpor Ranghar, where he was kept in detention at Bassi Pathana for four months.

Aurangzeb asked Guru to perform some miracles like Ram Rai had done, which was refused. Aurangzeb then ordered the severest punishment but this was moderated at Kanwar Ram Singh Kushwaha's intervention. Guru Tegh Bahadur was put in Kanwar's custody along with other Sikhs where he lived for two months. After his freedom, Guru stayed for three days at Bangla Jai Singh at Raisina before leaving for Patna, the second time he stayed at this place. Guru Tegh Bahadur accompanied Raja Ram Singh to Assam and only returned to Delhi in 1671 while he sent his family to Lakhnor near Ambala. At Delhi, Guru stayed at Bhai Kallian's dharamsala:

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji Mahal nama ko gam Dhamtan pargana bangar se Alam Khan Ruhela shahi hokum gail Delhi ko laike aya. Sal staran sai batis kartak mase shukla Chibber ka, Gurdas aya beta Kirat Barhaye ka, Sangta aya Binne Uppal ka, Jetha, Dayaldas aye -bete Mai das Jalhane balont ke hor sikh fakir farhe aye (Bhat Vahi Purbideccani, khata Barhyyon Kanaoton ka).

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After a few days, Guru Har Krishan began to show symptoms of small pox fever. He continued in this condition for five days and shortly named Guru Tegh Bahadur at Bakala as his successor before he passed away. He was cremated at village Bhogal on the Jamuna banks and his grand mother Mata Bassi took the ashes to Kurapur for immersion in the Sutlej. Guru Tegh Bahadur made a number of visits to Delhi, some times as a prisoner and some times otherwise. He met Guru Har Krishan at Delhi in 1664. In October 1665, he was brought to Delhi as a prisoner having been arrested at the village of Dhmatan in the Punjab.

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Guru Tegh Bahadur (Painting at Rakabganj Sahib)

Frontier Province. His hands were already stained with the blood of Sufi Sant Sarmad who was beheaded on the stairs of Jama Masjid.

It was Safi Khan, Subedar of Delhi who ordered the torture of Guru Tegh Bahadur. Having asked him to perform miracles, which was declined, Guruji was beheaded following royal orders, his body was not to be cremated but to be hanged on the four darwazas of Delhi to set an example. But a fierce storm in the evening nearly blinded everybody, leaving Guru's body unguarded. Paranoia had gripped Delhi for many days in anticipation of this tragedy. People spent sleepless nights and spotted a comet in the sky which aggravated their fears. It was on this dark and horrific night when a house in Rakabganj was set aflame. Bhai Lakhi Shah Vanjara had come with his caravan of bullock carts from Narnaul and had taken away Guru's body. His son Nagahia, Hema and Kahna's son Dhuma were with him. Bhat Keso remembers this thus:

*Chala chalayee ho rahi, gad gad ukhre mekh.
Lakhi Nagahia le gaye tu khara tamasa dekh
Lakhi Nagahia lakh gaye, hom harau aath,
Sakha sarikha lakh gaye bahur na aye is bat.
Guru ki loth uthaye liani, jas jag me paya,
Pita poot roshan bhaye aya.*

While the body was cremated in Rakabganj, Bhai Jaita and Bhai Nanu were carrying Guruji's head to Kiratpur Sahib. Sikhs of Delhi cremated Bhai Mati Sati Das and Bhai Daisal Das at Bhogal. Baba Gurditta, who had died at Bhai Kalain's Dharamsala was also cremated at Bhogal.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom created an indelible scar on face of the Mughals. Qazi Abdul Cahab Bohra became so paranoid that after this he died within fifteen days. Masre Alamgiri records an unusual event which took place on 27 October 1676. When Aurangzeb stepped out of a boat and boarded his Takhte-Raven (moving throne), a Sikh threw two brickbats aimed at him. One missed but the other hit the Takhte Raven. The Sikh was captured and detained at the Kotwali. Aurangzeb now looked upon every Sikh household with suspicion. While traditional Sikh history treats families of Ram Rai, Dhir Mall and Pirthi Chand as loyal towards the government and enjoying its favours, Bhat writes that Aurangzeb was equally hostile towards them.

After Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom, Dhir Mall was arrested at Bakala. He was brought to Delhi along with Shihan Masand (who had fired at Guru Tegh Bahadur at Bakala) and Bhai Damodar. They were detained at the Kotwali in Delhi, produced before Aurangzeb and then sent to Ranthumbhore fort, a prison from where no one had ever escaped. Dhir Mall died there in 1678. His son Baba Ram Chandr was chosen his successor but soon he was detained by Suba Lahore and sent to Delhi. He was detained at Kotwali Delhi and produced before the Emperor, a fatwa issued against him and he was brought to Chandni Chowk. In September 1679, his three Sikhs Bhai Isar, Bhai Dharama and Bhai Tulsu were burnt alive under royal orders. Baba Ram Chandra was beheaded by executioner Muhammad Hussain. A manuscript of Adi Bir at Bunga Ragian Hazoor Sahib records it thus:

*Sammatt 1735, bahdaon vadi 1 dihun budhwar ik
ghari din chare Sri Guru Ramchand ji samane Dehli
vikhe.*

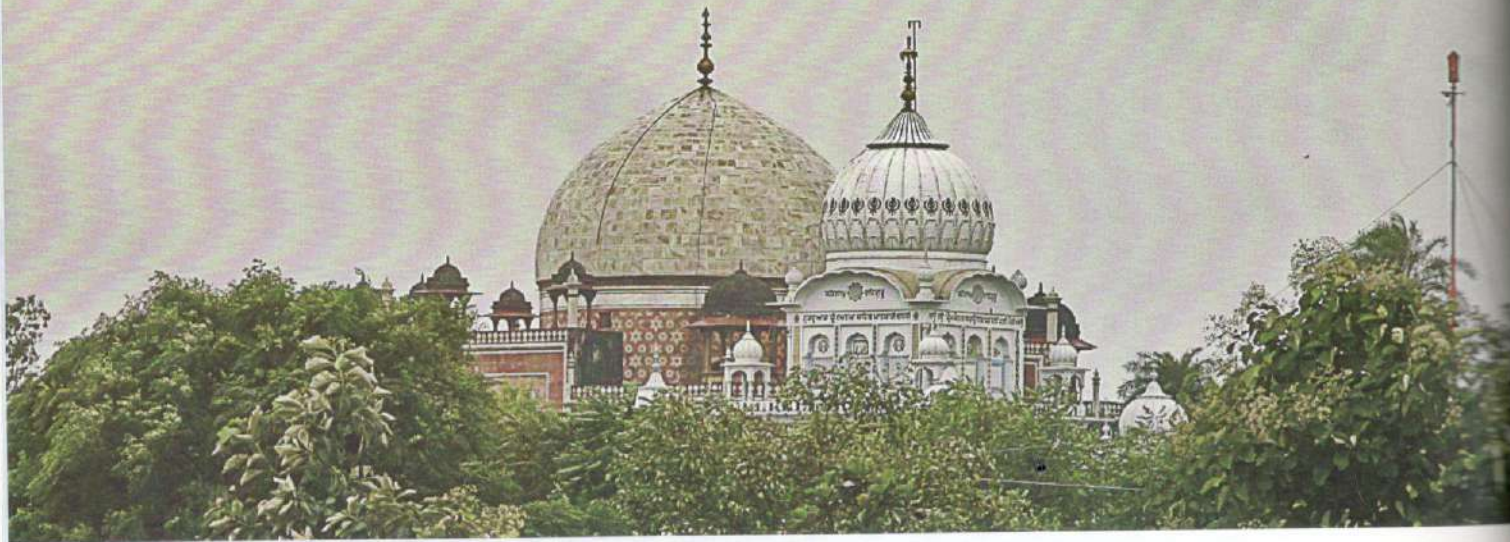
They were cremated at Bhogal and their ashes taken to Baba Bakala by Bhai Gurbux and Bhai Nanu of Delhi. Granth ji da Path was recited at Bhai Kaliana Dharamshal in Delhi. Guru Gobind Singh's relationship with Delhi is of more indirect nature. When Guru Tegh Bahadur's head was brought to him by Bhai Jaita, he expressed shock at the passivity with which the Sikhs of Delhi accepted Guru's martyrdom. Bhai Jaita writes in his work Sri Gur katha:

*Kaahe Dilwali Sikh Gur te bemukh hoi.
Kaahe nar naar nahin Guru paramnyo.
Kaahe Gur Sikhian ke man lajyaye nahin
Kaahe naahi Turku bhi Sikh pahchanyo.
Kaahe nav sronat abhakh rahio sang sam.
Kaahe nahin Hind su khunas manah aanyo
Kaahe bhuj Dand bhi asakat bhaye trin sam
Kaahe bad bodh kratavay naahin janyo.*

(He wondered why Delhi Sikhs had turned away from Guru, why they were not ashamed and why the Turks (Mughals) failed to identify the Sikhs?)

This in fact was main inspiration for creation of the Khalsa, the unique and martial identity of the Sikhs:

*Yaahi su bichar Gur man mina dhar ab
Sikh kau ayudh, sab hath pakrayongo.
(Sri Gur Katha kirt Bhai Jayata)*



It was not easy for the Sikhs of Delhi, they suffered humiliation and persecution for following the Khalsa *rehat*. When Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa panth in 1699, he sent Hukumnamahs to Sikhs asking them not to do Bhadan (head shaving ceremony). When a Sikh died in Delhi and Bhadan ceremony was not performed by his family, the majority community boycotted them for not following the rituals of death. They were boycotted in trade, commerce and social interaction:

*In so savda mat karhu nahin kutamb biohar
Jo aagay kul me bhayee so varato sansar
(Sri Gur Sobha kirt Sainapat)*

The boycott was imposed compelling them to keep their shops shut, it being decided by the community panchayat that an example be set:

*Karaye ab inso bidh soi
Kahe na fer Khalsa koi.
(Teach them a lesson now so that no one declares himself as Khalsa ever again.)*

An appeal and offerings to the Emperor were also considered. When the Emperor asked Sikhs for an explanation over the usage of 'Khalsa' (which was a regal

term), Sikhs informed him about end of the Masands and that the Sangat's only allegiance was to the Guru. Community elders insisted that Sikhs should be kept under detention (*ek bar in ko gahe kijai*). The power of bribes blurred the vision of justice and some Sikhs were detained (*ketak Sikh pakre batahye*), Sikhs to be boycotted (*ek or bhayo khalsa ek or samsar*) abuses hurled at them in the city (*kahate hain kapat bain sunat hi na parat chain*). Sainapat's recording of the happenings at Delhi has contemporary relevance: the majority community have often tried to teach a lesson to those who declared themselves as Khalsa (1984).

Guru Gobind Singh's first known visit to Delhi was in 1707, when he changed the route of his journey towards the Deccan at Baghaur in Udaipur state after receiving news of Aurangzeb's death in Ahmednagar. He made the journey to Delhi to observe the war of succession (*kooch keyo parabh ne tabhe le ghoran ko tang, bhant anekan dekhyaye ja sultani jang: Sainapat*). Looking towards Shahjahanabad, Guru Gobind Singh did not visit the walled city but is said to have spent some time at Moti Shah's haveli, which marks the site of Gurdwara Moti Bagh today. Guruji also spent time at Gurdwara Damadama Sahib, in the vicinity of Humanyun's tomb, near Nizamuddin in south Delhi.

Delhi after Sikh Gurus

Of the times that followed the Gurus, Mata Sundari is perhaps the Sikh having the longest association with Delhi. She came to Delhi along with Mata Sahib Kaur, Bhai Mani Singh, Bhai Jawahar Singh and Bhai Dhanna Singh in 1706 after the siege of Anandpur and lived here till the end of her life in 1743. She lived during the reigns of Aurangzeb, Bahadar Shah, Firozkohyar, the Sayad brothers and finally rule of Muhammad Shah till the invasion of Nadir Shah in 1739. From Delhi, she made a number of visits to Talwandi Sabo, Burhanpur, Nander and Mathura. Besides her mansion at Turkman Gate, today's site of Mata Sundari Garhwarra, two more places are associated with her stay: Bhai Jawahar Singh's house at Kucha Dilwali Sikhian near Bazar Kazi in Ajmeri Gate, but no trace of this place is found today. The other is Kalal ki Haveli near Chitli Kabar in Matia Mahal. Dr. Mohinder Kaur Gill extensively researched Mata Sundari's stay in Delhi and places this at S.S. Mian lane in Matia Mahal, (but it should be remembered that most houses in the walled city were razed to the ground in 1857). At Delhi, Mata Sundari spent time in compiling Guru Gobind Singh's writings which were scattered since the siege of Anandpur. Bhai Mani Singh assisted her in this task of compilation and Bhai Sushan Singh prepared the manuscript. Bhai Mani Singh mentions Nam Mala Ki Pothi, Krisan Avtar, Chritropakhan in his letter to Mata Sundari from Amritsar.

Mata Sundari's household remained under the constant vigil of Mughal authorities. No meeting between Mata Sundari and Banda Singh Bahadar is recorded in history. Mata Sundari's adopted son Ajit Singh, who was presented a mourning robe by Bahadar Shah after Guru Gobind Singh's demise at Nander, was virtually an implant by the authorities in the household. After he turned away from the Khalsa brotherhood, Mata Sundari told him to leave the house. Earlier he had tried to wear Guru Hargobind's arms upon his body and develop the self image as an eleventh Guru of Sikhs. However Mata Sundari did not disown his wife Tara Bai and son Hathi Singh :
Chaubanda hor hatiya Guru japan nal dur hosan,par ih hatiya gunah bakhshiaiga nahi jo manukh ke jame upar

Hukamnama by Mata Sundari ►

ਚਿੰਟੜਗੁਰੂਜੀਕੀਛਿਤਤਾ॥

ਸਿੰਗੀਅਕਾਕਪੁਰਖਜੀਕਾਖ... ਯਕਰੀਰ
 ਜਿਨਕੀਠੀਆਵਾਤਗੁਰੂਜੀਚਿਤਅਏਤਸੀ
 ਸਾਡਬਰਾਨਾਸਿੰਘਜੀਤਾਈਦੁਨੀਸਿੰਘਜੀ
 ਰਾਈਜਗਤਾਸਿੰਘਜੀਕੁਠੀਗੁਰਬਖਸ
 ਸਿੰਘਜੀਉਗਰਸਿੰਘਜੀਕੁਠੀਗੁਰਮਾਸਿੰਘਜੀ
 ਸਰਜਤਖਾਲਸਾਟੁਗੁਰੂਕਾਕਪੁਰਖਜੀ
 ਕਪਾਸੇਲਿਖਤੰਗੁਕਾਮਖਾਲਸੇਜੀਕਾਕ
 ਨਸਿੰਘਜੀਦੁਕਾਸਿੰਘਜੀਕੁਠੀਸੁਜਾਨ
 ਸਿੰਘਜੀਸਿੰਘਜੀਮੁਗਲਸੇਪੁਸਰਬਤਖਾਲ
 ਥਾਵਾਤਗੁਰੂਕਾਕਪੁਰਖਕਾਟੁਗੁਰੂਜੀਕੀ
 ਕੀਛਿਤਤਾਦਚਲੀਖੁਸਕਕਾਕੀਦਾਤਗੁਰੂ
 ਅਕਾਕਪੁਰਖਜੀਤਾਰਮਾਚਿਤਅਏਸੁਖ
 ਤੇਠੀਖਾਲਸੇਜੀਕਾਕੀਕਾਥਾਕਾਤੇਠੀ
 ਅਕਾਕਪੁਰਖਜੀਮਾਗਠਤਗੁਰੂਕਾਕ
 ਸਿੰਘਕੇਪੁਤੁਤੀਪੜਕੇਖਾਲਸਾਜੀਬਤੁ
 ਤਖੁਸਕਕਾਕਤੇਠੀਕਾਕਪੁਰਖਕਾਕ
 ਥਾਸਾਜੀਦਠੀਅਕਾਕੀਕੋਤਖਜੇਤੇਤੇ
 ਕੇਕਾਕੀਅਤੇਠੀਜਿਨਨਤਖਿਲਾਸੇਦਕੇ
 ਤਹਿਤਿਕਕੇਕਾਸੀ। ਗੁਰੂਗੁਰੂਜਪਲਾਠੁ
 ਤਗੁਰੂਗੰਗੇਸਿੰਗੇਕਨਕਾਕਕੇਕਾਕੀਕਾ
 ਤਦੈਠੀਖਾਲਸਾਜੀਕਾਈਕਾਨਸਿੰਘਜੀਕ
 ਉਮਾਤਾਸਾਤਬਜੀਗੁਰਮਾਸਤਗੁਰੀ
 ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰਜੀਕੀਮੁਕਕੀਤੀਤੇਖਾਲਸੇਜੀ
 ਚਿੰਟੜਗੁਰੂਕੀਕੀਕੀਕੀਕੀਕੀਕੀਕੀਕੀ



Ramparts of the Red Fort, today

aitkad karenge. (Reciting Guru's name can cleanse all other sins but this sin of worshipping a human being is a mortal sin Ajita and can not be forgiven) *Khalsa ji tusan sivai Akal duje no mannana nahi. Sabad Dasvin Patshahi tak khojna* (Khalsa ji have faith in none but Akal). There is no Shabad after tenth Guru. *Guru ka nivas sabad vich hai* (Shabad is Guru's abode.)

Guru Gobind Singh's maternal uncle Mama Kirpal Singh also stayed at Delhi. Along with Mata Sundari, he too guided Sikh panth through various crises. Sewa Singh records his visit to Amritsar along with Ajit Singh (*Matul Gur Dashemesh ka, mama Singh Kripal, ayao gail Ajit Singh, Dilli thin us kal*). While Mata Sundari stayed at Delhi and Bhai Mani Singh looked after affairs at Amritsar, Banda Singh Bahadur was busy laying the foundations of Sikh rule. At the same time, schism had set in Sikh movement. Sikh elite who wanted to cooperate with the authorities used the name of Mata Sundari for legitimacy for their acts and invented the myth of Mata Sundari's curse on Banda Bahadur. Bhai Mani Singh was praying for Baba Banda Singh's safety at Akal Bunga, so how could he go against the wishes of Mata Sundari if such differences really existed?

In March 1716, Baba Banda Singh was brought to Delhi after the fall of Gurdas Nangal. More than seven hundred Sikhs were brought along with him. They entered Delhi through Burari grounds. While Baba Banda Singh was confined to the fort along with his son and some other Sikhs, the rest were beheaded in batches of one hundred daily on the chabutra of Kotwali towards Tarpolia gate (Mirza Muhammad, author of Ibratnama records this place). While Delhi was witness to their determination and courage with which they faced death (John Surman and Edwards Stephanson wrote about this to Robert Hedges,

Governor of Fort William in Bengal in a letter dated 10 March 1716), Khafi Khan, author of *Muntkhab ul Lubab* describes this young boy who refused to be released when his mother secured his freedom on some false pretext. *Twarikh-e Muhammad Shahi* records his answer in these words:

Man namhe danam ki een madar keinst, veen arus az kuja avurda. Veen chiguna sukhan hai me goayad. Rafikane man guzshant, v aknu vaqte mo az dast me ravad. Veen muhlat bais azar mast. (Copied by Bhai Randhir Singh)

On 8 June 1716, Banda Singh Bahadur and his six year old son Ajay Singh were tortured to death in most brutal manner near the mausoleum of Khwaja Bakhtyar Kaki in Mahrauli. Bhagwant Singh, Kaur Singh and Baz Singh, who were sent by Guru Gobind Singh who were among the five Sikhs from Nander with Banda Singh were also martyred here on the same day:

Bhagwant Singh beta Nathia ka, Kaur Singh beta Nathia ka, Baj Singh beta Nathia ka, Sham Singh beta Nathia ka. Potre Ballu Rao ke parpaotre naik Mul Chand ke chanderbansi gotre puar bans Bijhe ki banjhror jalhane, sammat 1773 Asadh mase sudi ekam ke divas sava pahar dihun chdhe Bakhtyar Kaki ke makbre pas Jamna nadi ke kinare Baba Banda sahib nal shahadatun paye gaye. agaye Guru aapu bhane ka khawand, Guru ki

रेलवे कोलोनी पुल मिठाई
दिल्ली-54



gani Guru janey Guru Guru japna janam sauraega
(Bhat Vahi Bhadson).

After Mata Sundari, Mata Sahib Kaur continued to stay at Delhi, during which time Mihar Das fakir, Bhai Thakur Singh, Bhai Sukhchain Singh, Bebe Gulab Kaur looked after Sikh Sangat. After Mata Sahib Kaur, Delhi declined as centre of Sikh Sangat's spiritual refuge. During the reign of Muhammad Shah Rangila, there are some references about Bhai Arjan Singh who was posted in Delhi as faujdar. He was grandson of Bhai Kanahya Sewa Panthi. In time, he turned rebellious against the government and was arrested from the house of his sister at Sialkot. While Sikh history remembers Ajit Singh as Mata Sundari's adopted son, few remember that the same status was enjoyed by Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia in his childhood. After his father Sardar Singh's death, he arrived at Mata Sundari's dera in Delhi with his mother who used to recite Gurbani in the sangat. She was a master of string instruments and so recognised by Rattan Singh Bhangu.

From 1723 to 1729 they stayed with Mata Sundari, who treated Jassa Singh like her son and made arrangements for his education. While departing, Mata Sundari blessed him: *tere ar teri santan aage asian vale chalia karange* (you and your descendents shall be led by



What was once the camping ground of thirty thousand Sikh horsemen, is today the site of 'Tees Hazari' Courts.

mace bearers). Jassa Singh was to eventually be described as Patshah and Sultan-ul-Qaum. While the Phoolkian States came into existence after Guru Hargobind's blessing to the children Phool and Sandli, Kapurthala owes its existence to Mata Sundari's blessing to the child Jassa Singh.

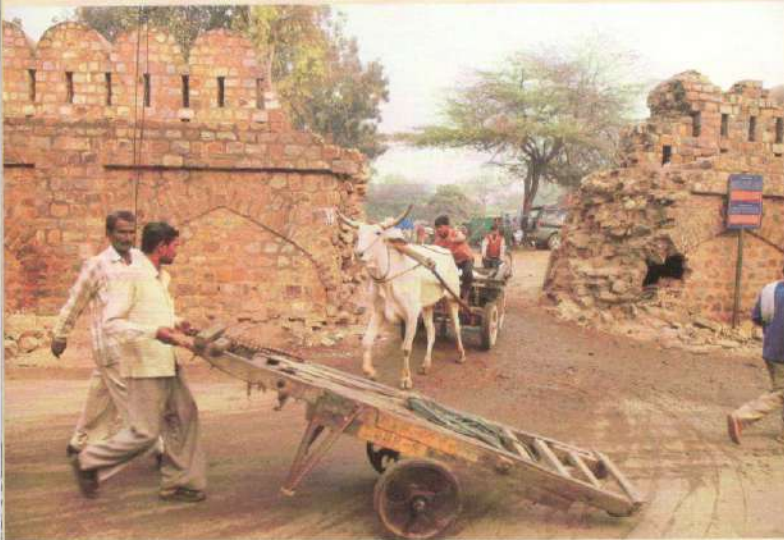
Sardar Jassa Singh was among the first Sikh Sardars to take over Delhi, as he went on to attack Najib-ud-Daula Rohela (who was appointed Commander in Chief by Ahmed Shah Abdali, while Emperor Shah Alam remained his puppet). On 4 February 1765, the Sikhs defeated Najib ud Daula's army in battle at Subzi Mandi. This was the first Sikh offensive on Delhi. More attacks on Delhi were made in 1768 in the areas of Patparganj, Subzi Mandi, Paharganj and Mangolpuri. Najib-ud-Daula, Commander in Chief was now frantically writing to Shah Alam that he was not in any position to protect Delhi from the Sikhs and Shah Alam was alarmed at the possibility of Sikhs taking the throne at Red Fort. His despair is recorded by Sir Jadu Nath Sirkar:

“What was to prevent the Sikh Lords of Delhi from crowning a puppet from among the swarm of beggarly vagrant Shahzadas and under cover of his legal authority conquering the Empire for themselves? It was this fear that prevented Shah Alam from accepting Jassa Singh's proposal regarding his installation in Delhi from Allahabad.” (*Fall Of Mughal Empire Vol.2* quoted by Dr Ganda Singh)

Sikhs continued their skirmishes around Delhi, the largest attack launched being in January 1783. They laid a two month long siege around the city. Sardar Baghel Singh camped in the area that is now called Tees Hazari courts (taken from the *Tees Hajaur*, or 30,000 horsemen camped here). In March they made a breach in the wall, which is

Pul Mathai as it is in this age





Still used as an entrance: Mori Gate today

now unintentionally known as Mori (breach) Gate. Entering the city through this narrow passage, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Baghel Singh occupied the Red Fort, for the first time in history. They then made a treaty with Shah Alam, after which both Jassa Singhs returned to the Punjab, while Baghel Singh stayed on. Shah Alam had agreed to give him the places sacred to the memory of Guru Har Krishan, Guru Tegh Bahadar, Guru Gobind Singh and Mata Sundari.

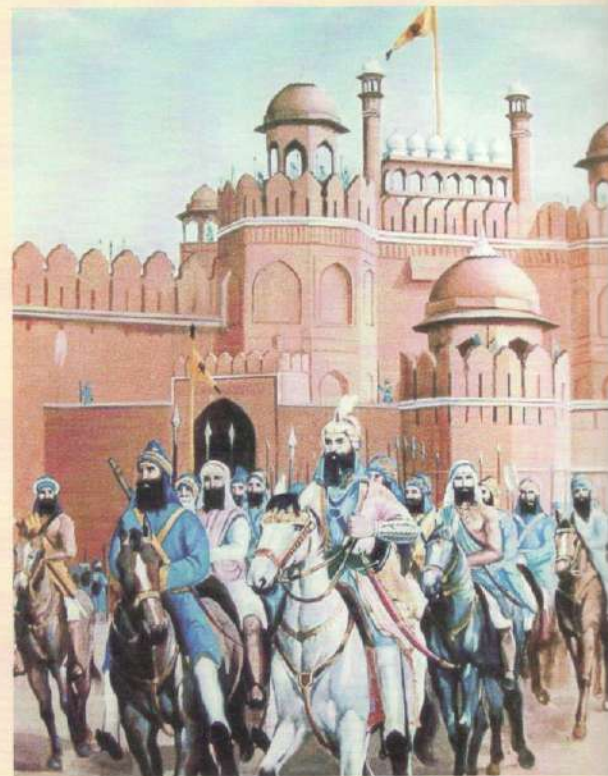
Sardar Baghel Singh thus laid the foundations of Gurdwara Sis Ganj and Gurdwara Rakab Ganj. In the process he faced opposition from the local population, whenever any issue of some local mosques arose, but Shah Alam was bound by the treaty so he made many personal interventions. Baghel Singh continued to stay at Delhi and to collect a part of Octroi at Subzi Mandi. He used to distribute sweets among the poor of Delhi and Pul Mithai near (Old) Delhi Railway Station is named after this. Distributing sweets was the favorite activity of old time Nihangs. Baba Bishan Singh who headed Taruna Dal for sixty years used to give sweets to stray animals as well.

After the building of Gurdwaras was begun, Baghel Singh left Delhi and stayed at Chalaudi. Begum Sombre of Sardhana, who was close to Shah Alam used her good offices whenever required and she even tied rakhis on Baghel Singh's wrist. Begum Sombre's house in Delhi is today's Bhagirath Place (wholesale market) in the heart of Chandni Chowk. The Gurdwaras built by Baghel Singh remained the reason of strife between Sikhs and the local population. Mosques were rebuilt whenever an

opportunity was found. Raja Sarup Singh of Jind personally led a contingent in support of the British during the 1857 mutiny, then secured the right to rebuild Gurdwaras opposed by long drawn litigations which ended up before the Privy Council at London and the case was settled in favour of the Sikhs. Gurdwara Rakab also faced such conflicts; in 1914, its outer wall was demolished and most of land acquired by the government to widen the road to the proposed Viceregal lodge. This led to protests from Sikhs and the walls were rebuilt by government in 1921.

From 1922, Delhi Gurdwara mahants began to come under the control of the Gurdwaras to Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandhak Committee (SGPC). Unlike most mahants of Punjab, who had posed challenges to the process, mahants like Hari Singh B.A., were first to surrender control in 1922 but mahants of Majnu Ka Gurdwara were the last and finally handed over in 1963. The present Delhi Gurdwara Management Committee came into being in 1974.

Amanpreet Singh



Painting of Baghel Singh at the Red Fort

Delhi glows with the LIGHT OF SIKHS

Historically, Delhi is very important for the Sikhs, with so many important Gurdwaras being located in the city and its environs. Many Gurus honoured the city during the period of the Sikh Gurus, including Guru Nanak Dev ji. Guru Hargobind was lauded in this city, having stayed several times at a Gurdwara near Delhi. Guru Har Krishan died here from the plague, which not only struck followers, but the teeming masses of the city as well.

The Great Guru of peace Guru Tegh Bahadur was executed in Delhi's Chandni Chowk, after he had publicly challenged Emperor Aurangzeb's scheme to force the Pandits of Kashmir to accept Islam, as part of his objective to banish Hinduism (and all religions, save Islam) from India. The Guru Tegh Bahadur Memorial on the outskirts of Delhi, along the Grand Trunk Road is unique not only for its concept and architecture but as a reminder to the millions that pass this way to the capital city of Delhi that the great Guru was indeed 'Hind ki Chaddar'.

This ancient city is soaked with the sacred blood of many thousands of Sikh jewels; the brave and fearless martyrs who died purely and clearly to maintain, defend and fight for the most noble of human causes - the protection of one's liberty, the right to practise one's own religion and the freedom to live with the assurance of justice.

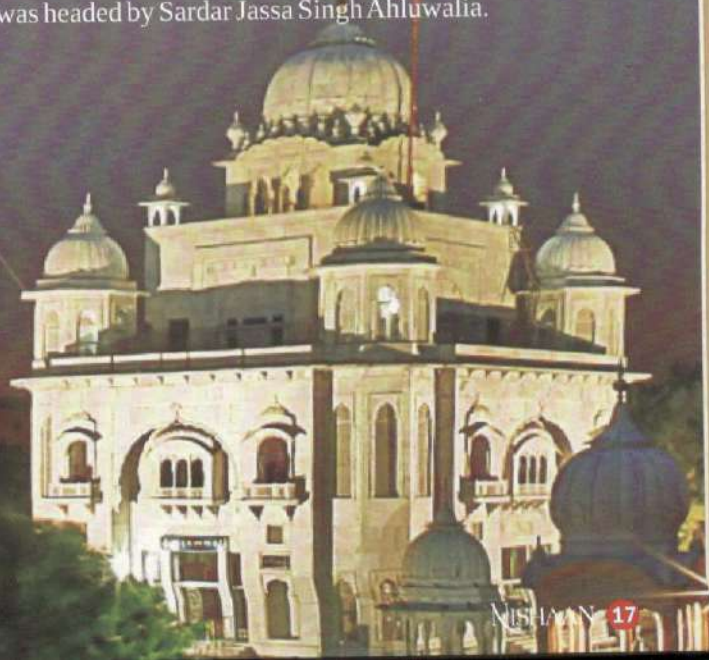
The Sikh Gurus, beginning with Guru Arjan Dev and continuing with Guru Tegh Bahadur lit the path for the Sikhs to follow and as history confirms, the Sikhs did not flinch from their duty. Many hundreds and thousands of Sikhs did not hesitate in stepping on this difficult and treacherous path as is evident from the many monuments and landmarks present in this great city to commemorate the fallen Sikh heroes both of the 18th century and beyond.

In Guru Tegh Bahadur, Banda Singh Bahadur, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Bhai Baghel Singh, Bhagat Singh and many others we find the steely determination to root out the tyranny of injustice from this sacred land of the saints; their blood and sweat soaked into the soil of this historic city. Was it not for these determined souls of the Lord, the city would not have the independence, democracy and freedom that is enjoyed today. One hopes that this fact will always be remembered by the residents as they go about their daily carefree lives now - and into the future.

The streets of Delhi were also witness, after the long siege at Gurdas Nangal, to a macabre parade, led in a mocking version of a grand Mughal's entrance to Delhi, by a huge elephant carrying a caged Banda Singh Bahadur, his young son in his lap, followed by his starved and dying companions, with their ranks swelled by thousands of hapless Sikhs gathered from their villages in the long march to Delhi. A march that included columns of Mughal soldiers, each of whose spears carried the head of a fallen Sikh. The well documented event (recorded by even 'foreign hands') relates that lacking enough footmen with spears, that wagon loads of Sikh heads would bring up the rear of the dreadful display of man's inhumanity to his fellow man; one of the most gruesome acts of savagery in mankind's history.

Delhi was also host to Guru Gobind Singh's wife Mata Jito ji and the mother of the Khalsa Mata Sahib Kaur, who lived out their days in a local Gurdwara. It was in Delhi that Mata Sundari appointed Baba Deep Singh, the great Sikh Giani (scholar) and warrior, who had ensured safe passage of the two women (so elemental to Sikhism) to Delhi, during the bitter flight from Anandpur Sahib, to become the first Granthi of Damdama Sahib.

In the waning years of the Mughal Empire, Delhi and its Mughal Emperor came under the control of Bhai Baghel Singh, a great general of the Karorsinghia Misl, who is still celebrated as the vanquisher of Mughal Delhi. The Karor Singhia Misl was one of the misls under the Dal Khalsa, which was headed by Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.



Historical Gurdwaras in Delhi

While in command of Delhi, Baghel Singh built many of the historical Sikh Gurdwaras in honour of those who fell here or have an important relationship with the city. These Gurdwaras include:

Gurdwara Mata Sundari ji

Gurdwara Bangla Sahib

Gurdwara Bala Sahib

Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib

Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib

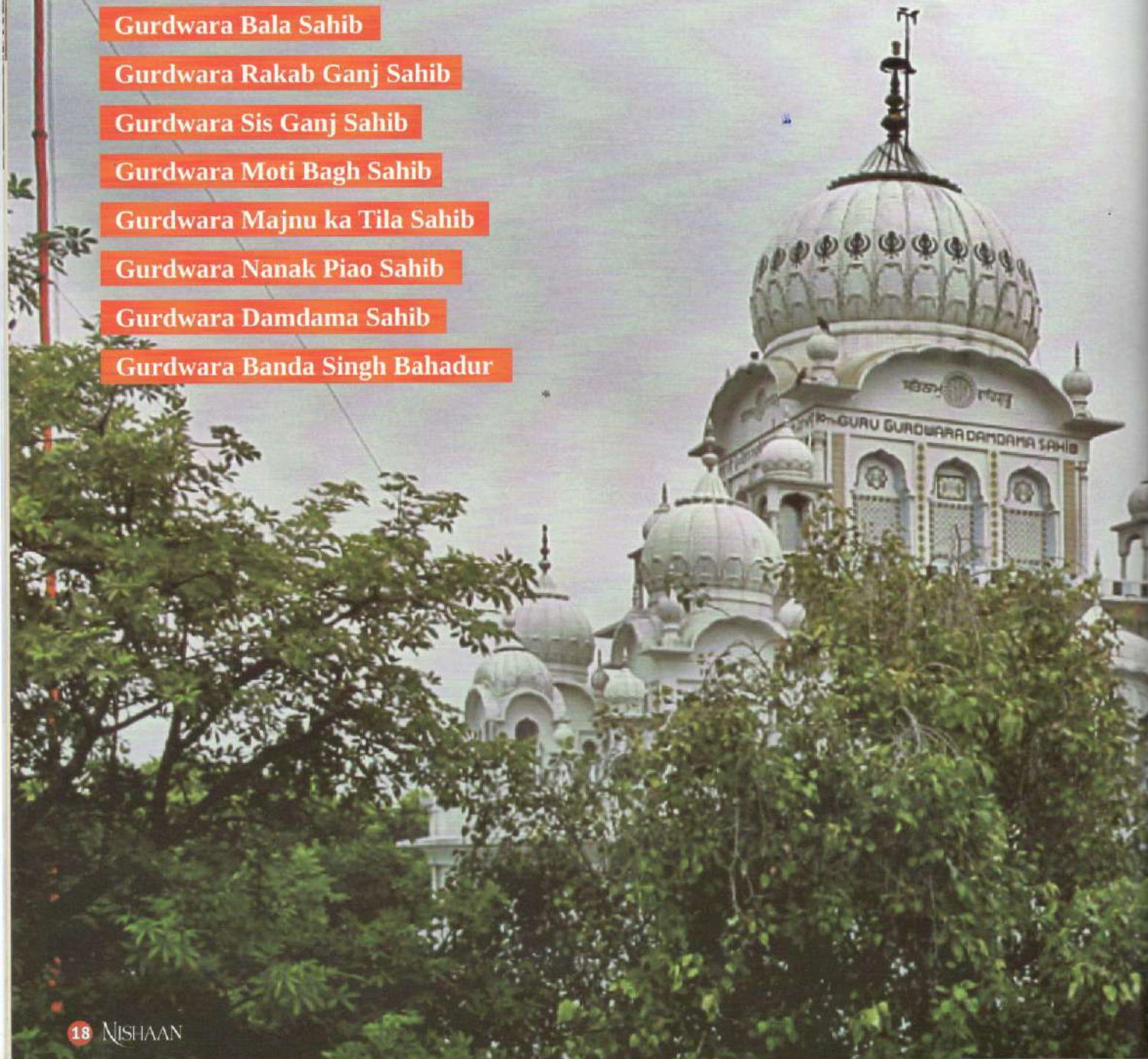
Gurdwara Moti Bagh Sahib

Gurdwara Majnu ka Tila Sahib

Gurdwara Nanak Piao Sahib

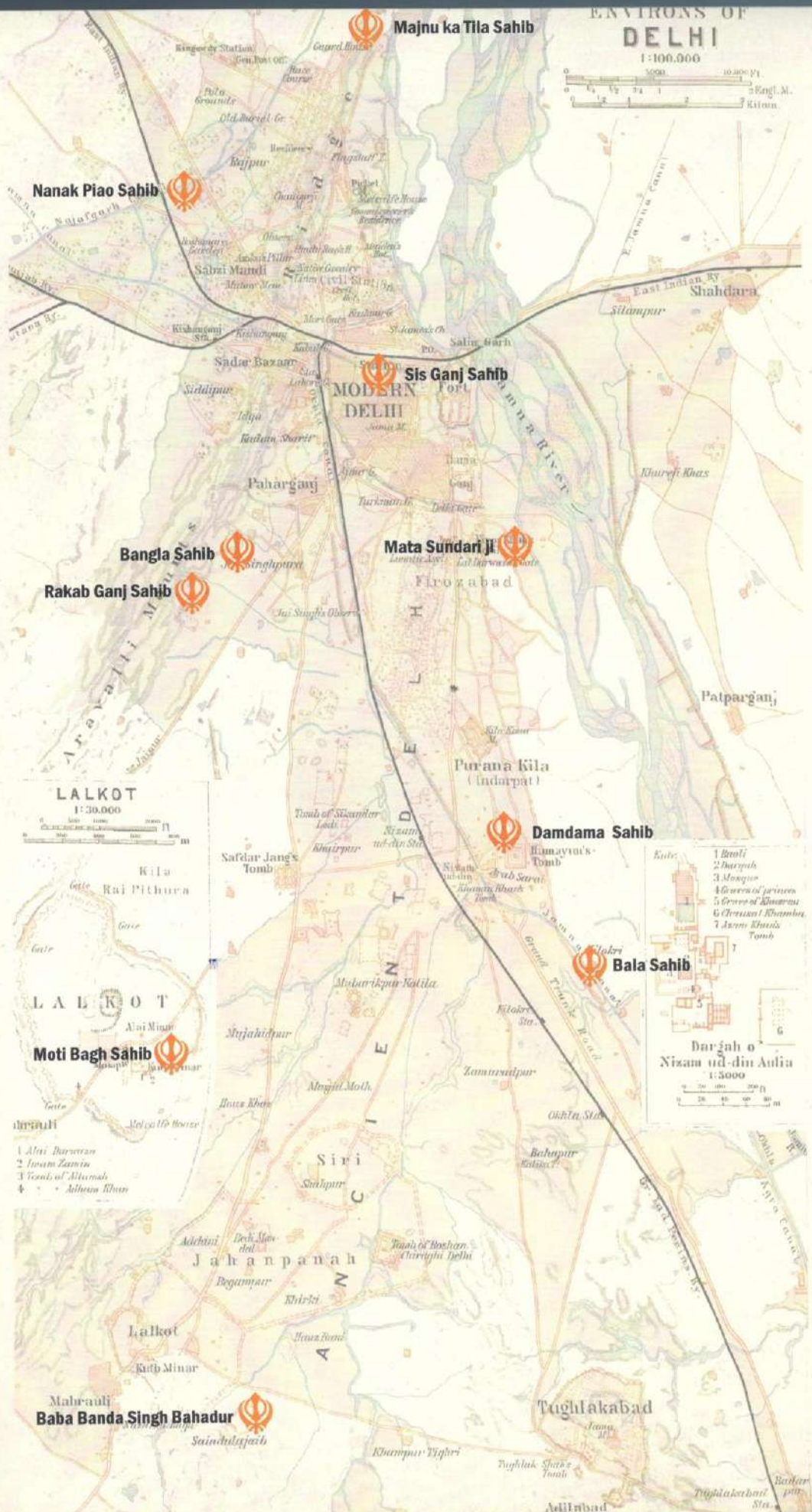
Gurdwara Damdama Sahib

Gurdwara Banda Singh Bahadur



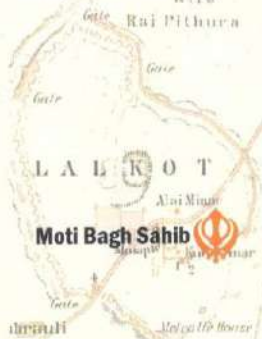
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DELHI

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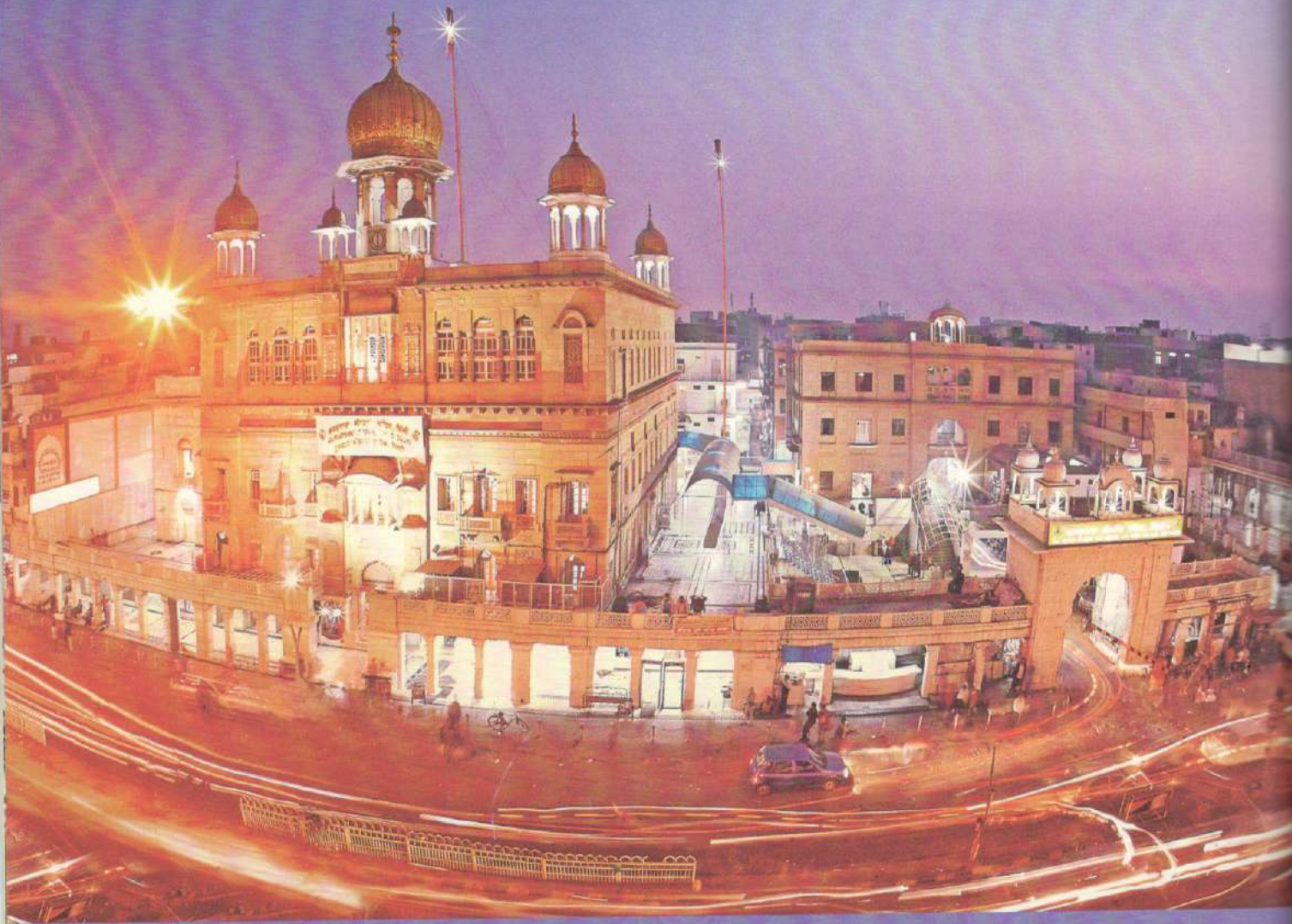


1. Alai Darwaza
2. Insitu Zamina
3. Tomb of Alauddin
4. Tomb of Alauddin Khwarizmi



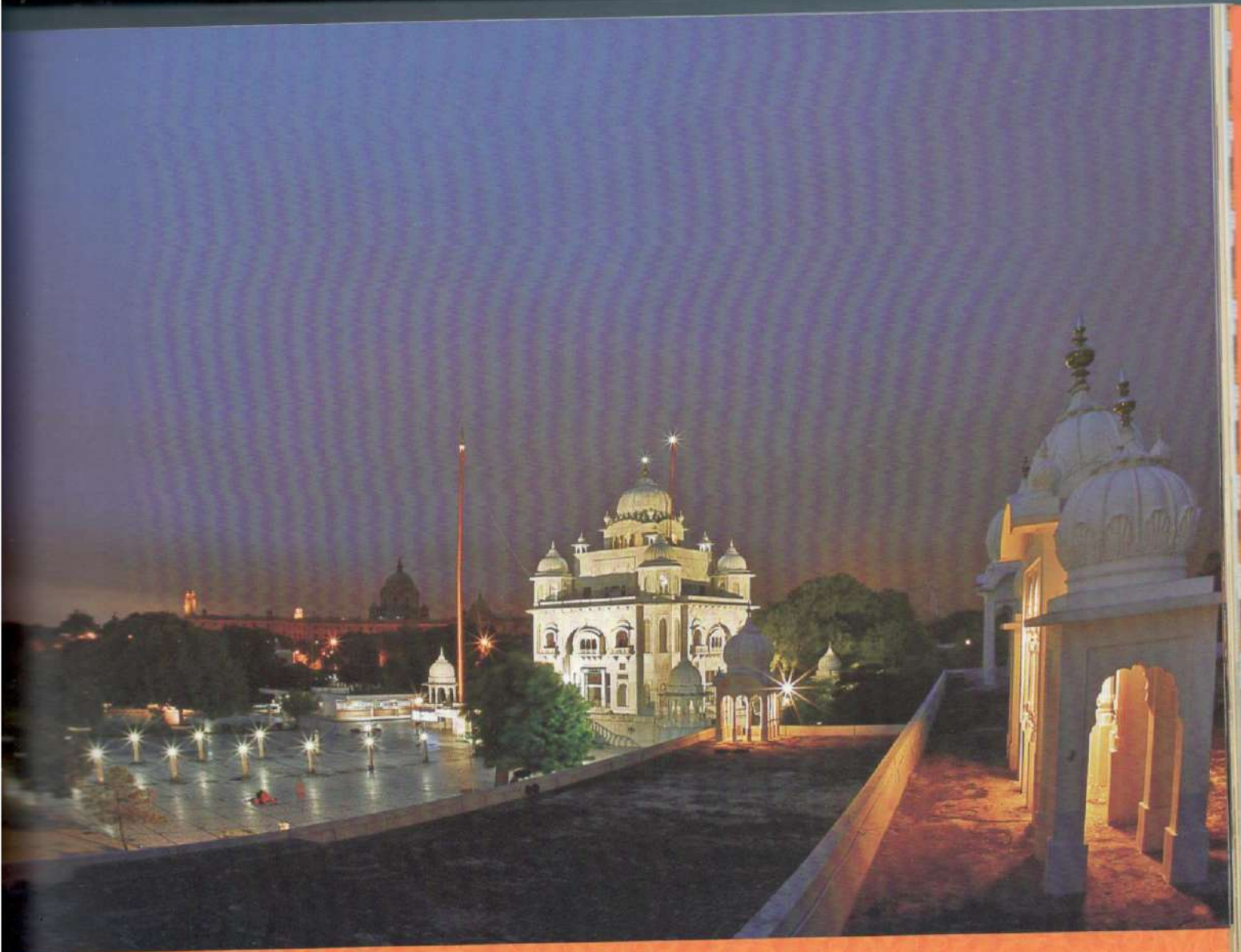
Barah of Nizam ud-din Aulia
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Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib

Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib is built at the place in Chandni Chowk area of Old Delhi, where the ninth Sikh Guru Tegh Bahadur was martyred in 1675 on decree of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. Before his body could be quartered and exposed to public view, it was taken away during a storm and under the cover of darkness by one of his disciples, Lakhi Shah Vanjara, who took to his house and burnt it down to cremate the Guru's body. The severed head (Sis) of Guru Tegh Bahadur was then taken to Anandpur Sahib by Bhai Jita. The Gurdwara there is also called Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib.



Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib

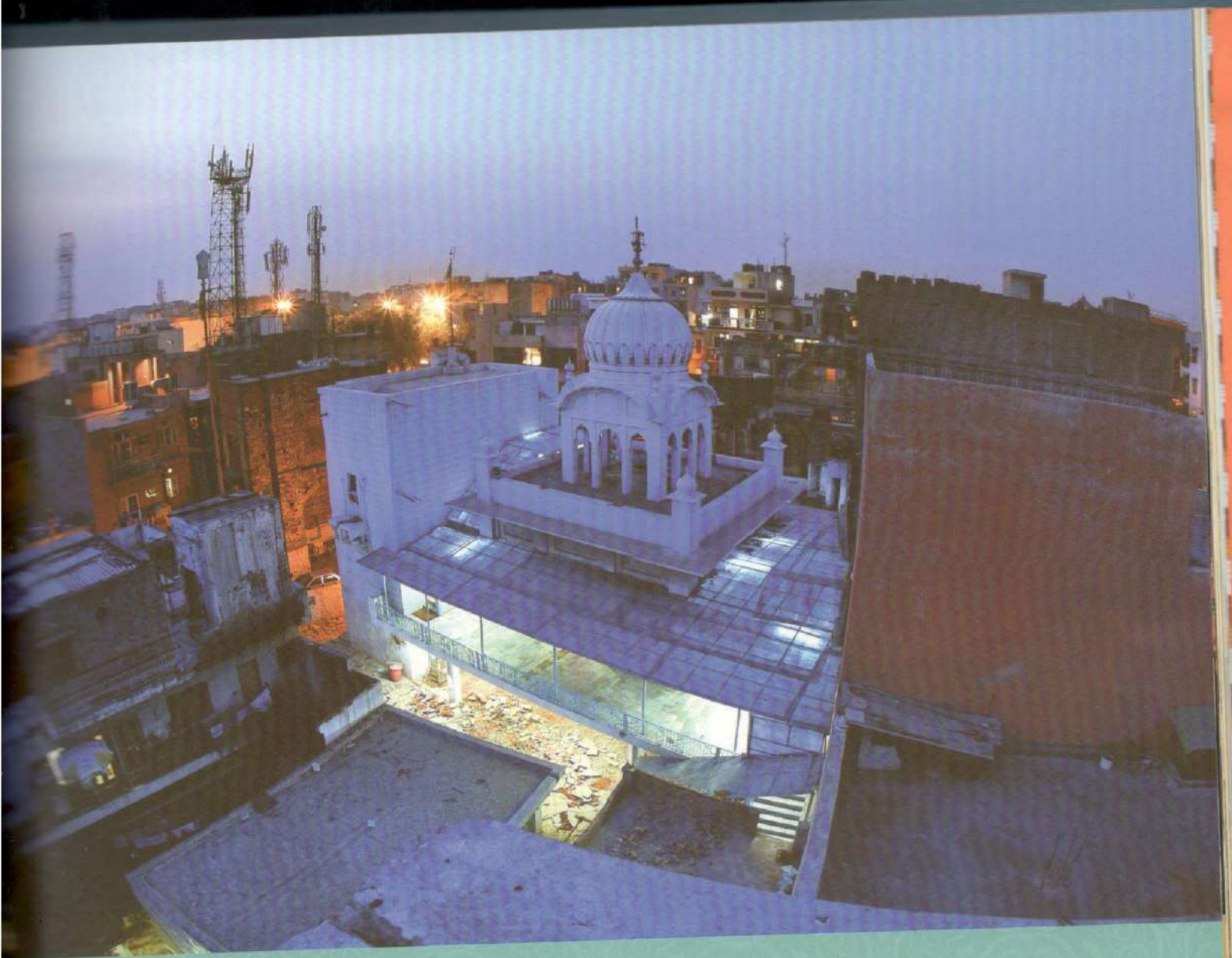
Situated in the heart of New Delhi, Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib marks the site where Lakhī Shah Vanjara, disciple of Guru Tegh Bahadur burnt down his own house so as to cremate the body of the Guru. The Gurdwara was first built in 1783 by Baghel Singh and later redone in splendid white marble, and surrounded by beautiful gardens. It was virtually next to Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib that 240 years later, the capital of British India was to be constructed in and around the village of Raisina.



Gurdwara Majnu ka Tila Sahib

Over 500 years old, Gurdwara Majnu ka Tila, on the Outer Ring Road in North-Eastern Delhi is symbolic of the historical connection of Sikhs with Delhi. Five centuries ago, this location was named after the mystic who was engrossed in communion with the Divine. When Guru Nanak came to Delhi, Majnu realised that he had found the teacher he had been waiting for to reveal the path to salvation. He became the Guru's disciple and built the first Sikh shrine in what had been the capital of India for centuries.

Majnu ka Tila continued in Sikh lore : Guru Hargobind camped at the Tila before he returned to the Punjab after imprisonment at Gwalior. Guru Gobind Singh is also believed to have visited Majnu ka Tila during the reign of Bahadur Shah I. The Tila served as headquarters of Sardar Baghel Singh when the Khalsa General surrounded and invested Delhi in 1783.



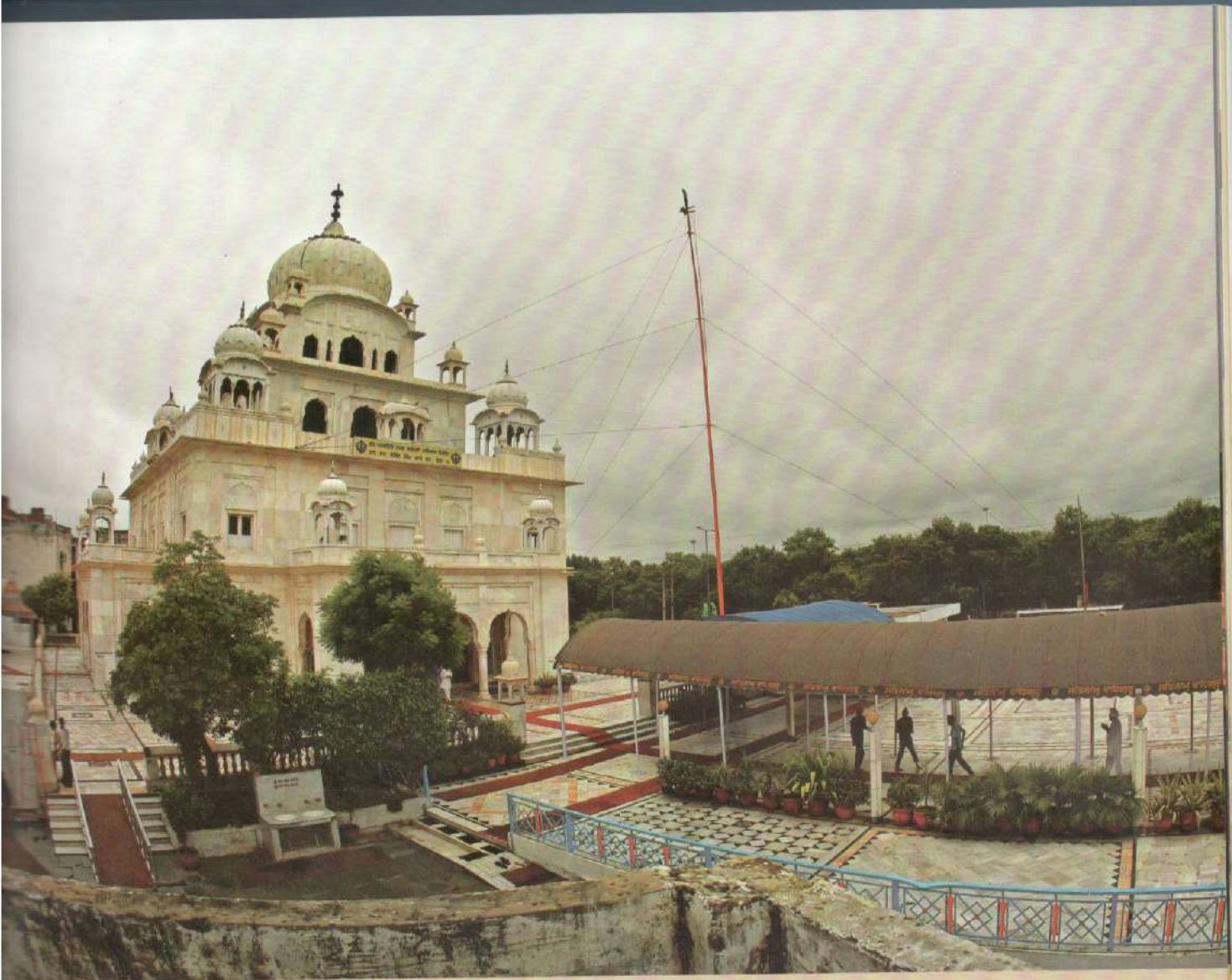
Gurdwara Banda Singh Bahadur

Gurdwara Banda Singh Bahadur Sahib is a historical location at Mehrauli, near the Qutab Minar, commemorating the legendary Sikh warrior and commander. It was here that Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, his four year old son Ajai Singh along with forty Sikhs were tortured to death by the Mughals. Banda Singh Bahadur remained calm and serene, completely absorbed in the Guru's grace and Wahe Guru's glory.



Gurdwara Damdama Sahib

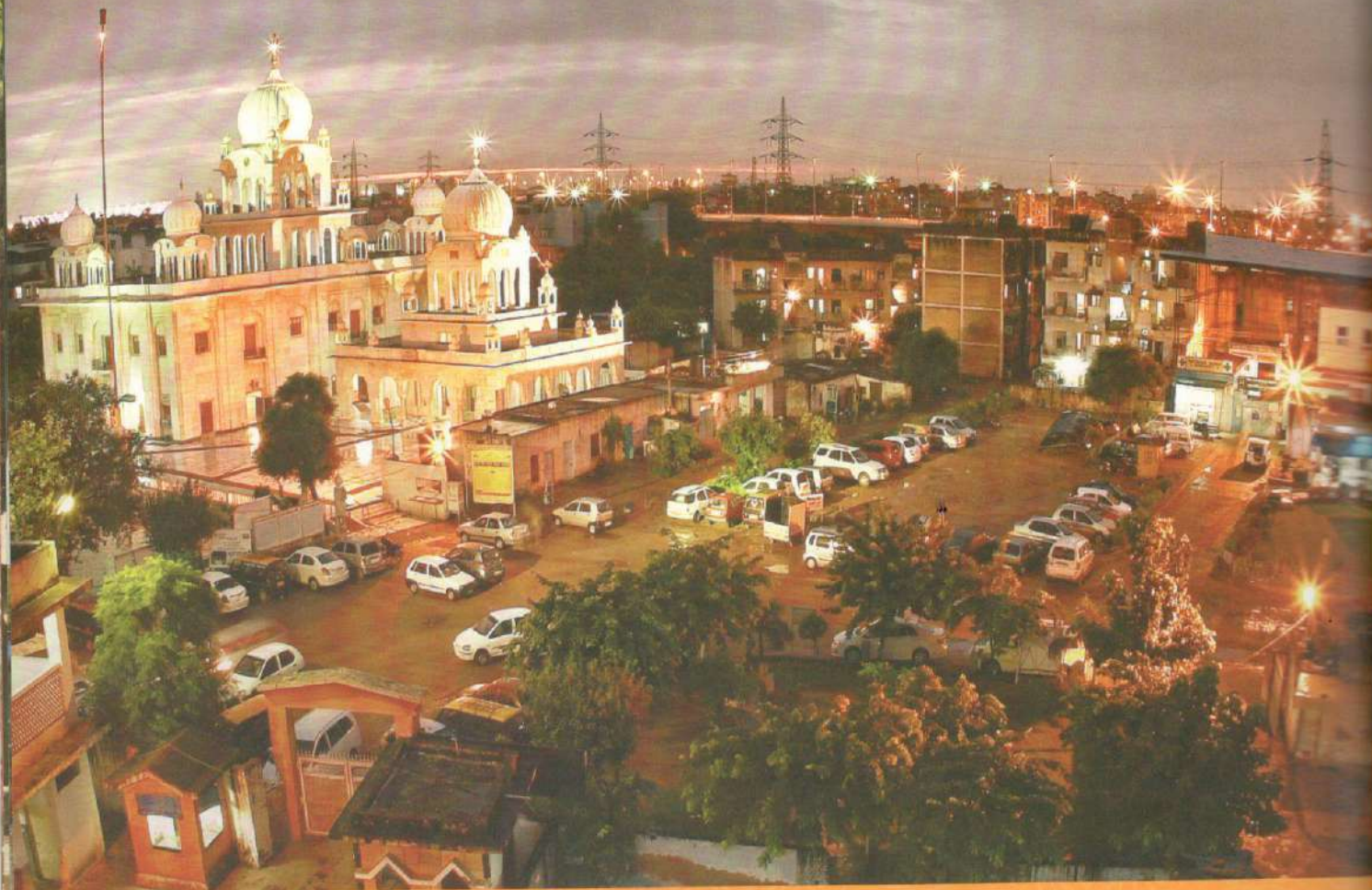
Located near the Humayun's Tomb, this Gurdwara is associated with the Tenth Guru Gobind Singh and commemorates his meeting in 1707 with Prince Muazzam, later Emperor Bahadur Shah. Guru Sahib had been requested by the Prince for help in his battle for succession for the throne with his brother, after the death of Aurangzeb. Guru Sahib met the Prince at this place and drew up the strategy.



Gurdwara Moti Bagh Sahib

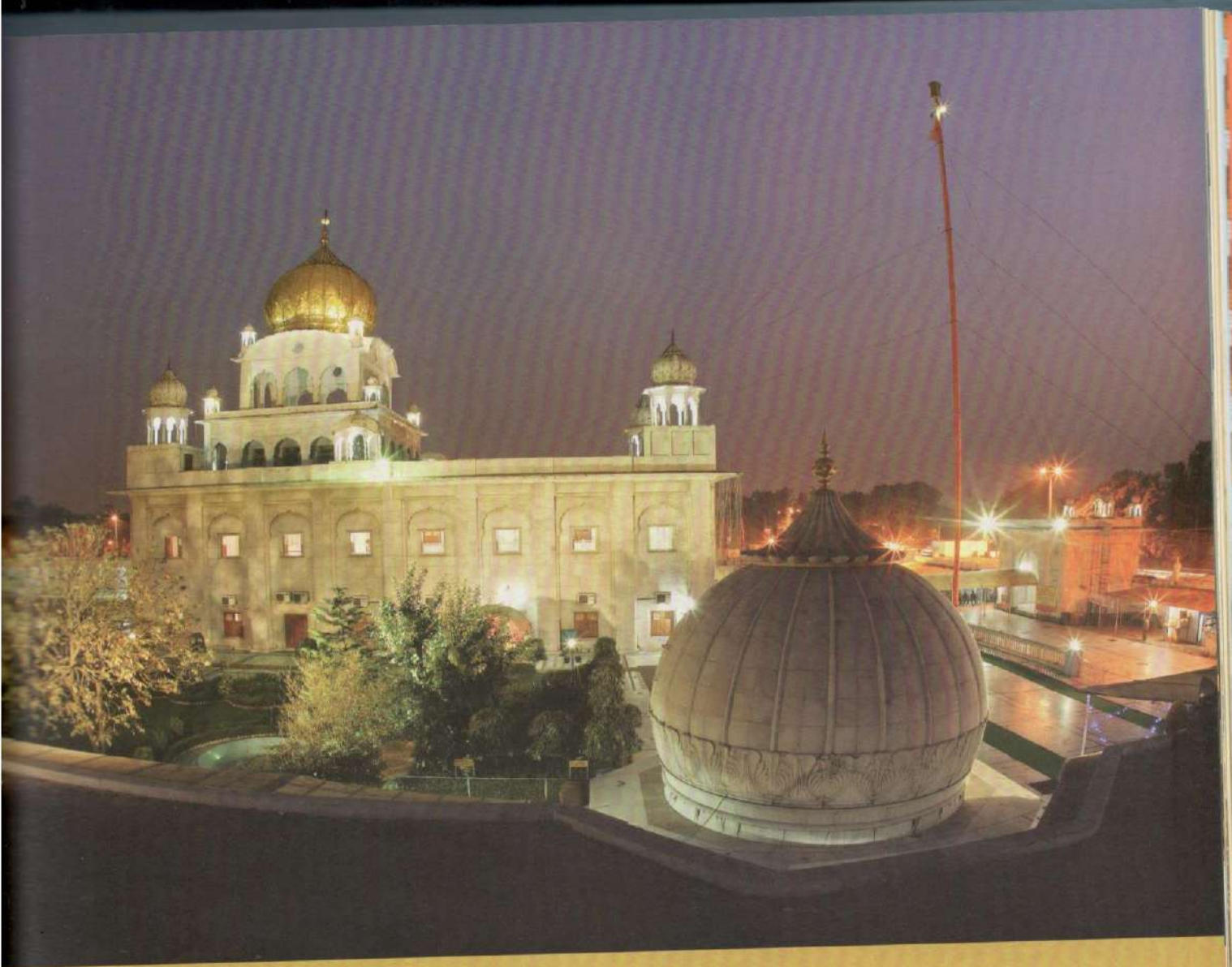
Gurdwara Moti Bagh Sahib is situated on Ring Road in Delhi city between Dhaula Kuan and RK Puram (Shanti Path) south of the intersection with National Highway 8.

Guru Gobind Singh ji camped at this site with his army. Earlier it was known as "Mochi Bagh" and later the name was changed to "Moti Bagh". An old story relates that the Guru, an accomplished archer, shot two arrows from a colony of cobblers in Moti Bagh which bit the 'Divan' (throne) of Prince Muazzam in the Red Fort, ten miles away.



Gurdwara Bala Sahib

Associated with the sixth Sikh Guru, Harkrishan Sahib, Gurdwara Bala Sahib is located near Ashram in South Delhi. Guru Harkrishan Sahib was popularly known as Bala Pir. During the epidemic of small pox and cholera, the Guru took great care of the afflicted people but contracted the disease himself and soon passed away. This Gurdwara houses the Angitha of the Guru as also those of Mata Sahib Kaur and Mata Sundri.



Gurdwara Nanak Piao Sahib

This historic Gurdwara is located in north Delhi and dedicated to the first Sikh Guru Nanak Dev, built at the site of a garden where Guru Nanak Dev camped when he visited Delhi in 1505 during the reign of Sultan Sikander Shah Lodhi. People flocked to the revered prophet and offered him precious gifts and food. Guru Nanak would distribute these and water to the hungry and thirsty, hence the name of the shrine : ' Piao' means "a well" and is symbolic to the offering of water to all needy.



Gurdwara Mata Sundari ji

When Guru Gobind Singh ji left for the Deccan, his wife Mata Sundri ji and Mata Sahib Kaur ji, mother of the Khalsa, came to Delhi and stayed for some time at the Haveli of Bhai Jawahar Singh close to the Turkman Gate, behind Maulana Azad Medical College. Mata Sundari ji stayed at the Gurdwara till she passed away. It was during her stay at this Gurdwara that she appointed Bhai Mani Singh ji as Granthi (head Priest) of Sri Darbar Sahib at Amritsar.



Gurdwara Bangla Sahib

Perhaps New Delhi's most prominent Gurdwara, Bangla Sahib with its stunning golden dome and large sarovar, is situated close to Connaught Place. Associated with the eighth Sikh Guru, Guru Har Krishan, this was originally the site of a bungalow of Raja Jai Singh. In 1664 Guru

Har Krishan during his stay in Delhi, worked to stem the smallpox and cholera epidemic drawing fresh water from the well at this house. The Gurdwara and its Sarovar are now a place of great reverence and visited virtually around the clock by worshippers of the faith and tourists, many of them foreigners.

Raisina to New Delhi



In 1910, the Imperial British Government decided to move the capital of Imperial India from Calcutta in the east to Delhi in north-central India. This would eventually add another city to the existing layers of seven cities that had comprised Delhi over the millennium (Inderprastha, Siri, Rai Pithora, Jahan Panah, Purana Qila, Tughlaqabad and Shahjahanabad). It was not named New Delhi at the time and there was even a proposal to name it as Georgeabad!

In December 1911 the Coronation Darbar was held in Delhi where King George V alongside Queen Mary announced transfer of the capital. They laid foundation stones for the new city at village Daka (now Kingsway Camp). Then in 1912, Viceroy Hardinge entered the city and led a procession on an elephant in Chandni Chowk. A bomb was thrown at him, he escaped but began to be ever fearful of Delhi and ordered cutting down all the trees of Chandni Chowk.

In any case either the Viceroy did not like site of the new city at Daka village and Malcolm Hailey, Commissioner

of Delhi agreed with him. When the chosen city-planning team of Swinton, Lutyens and Baker arrived at Delhi, they began the search for an alternative site. Extensive tours of the area around the city were conducted, where ridges, ruins, graveyards, mausoleums, mosques, khambh, temples and small villages stood. The villages of Raisina, Rakabganj, Malcha, Madhoganj and Jaisinghpura were where the future New Delhi was to be built. Most of this was under the control of Jaipur state, as the names of places like Jaisinghpur and Madhoganj suggest. The Rajput princes had close relationship with the Mughals but also with the Sikh Gurus, which had begun during Guru Hargobind's confinement at Gwalior. Raja Jai Singh of Amber played a major role at the time and it was at the house of Jai Singhpora that stayed Ram Rai, Guru Harkrishan and Guru Tegh Bahadar. The owners were Mirza Raja Jai Singh, his wife Pushpa Devi and son Kanwar Ram Singh whose names are associated with Guru Harkrishan, Guru Tegh Bahadar and Ram Rai. This is where Gurdwara Bangla Sahib is today.

1911-2011



Another village in the surroundings was Rakabganj. Rakab means 'stirrup' and Ganj is 'market', but in Sikh history this is commemorated as the place where Guru Tegh Bahadur's body was cremated by Bhai Lakhi Shah Vanjara. In 1707, Guru Gobind Singh visited Rakabganj and marked the place of his father's cremation and it was here, in 1783 that Sardar Baghel Singh built the Gurdwara Sahib.

The area around Rakabganj witnessed great activity after the Raisina Hill was chosen as the centre for India's new capital city. Planned were impressive buildings where legislative functions could be performed, where the Raj could work and live, where Indian princes could stay and where the Viceroy, Commander-in-Chief could live in exalted glory. Government House, today's Rashtrapati Bhawan is built of same Dholpur stone which was used in the construction of Red Fort, the exalted seat of Mughals.

Wide boulevards were planned to link New Delhi with Shahjahanbad for which the boundary walls of Rakabganj

Sahib were pulled down, causing much agitation amongst the Sikhs. In 1918, the Central Sikh League was established and in 1919 Sardul Singh Caveeshar called for an army of volunteers to rebuild the walls and lay down lives in case of confrontation with the Government. Hindus and Muslims too came forward as volunteers. The Jallianwala massacre had recently taken place and the British government, so as to avoid any further confrontation, decided to rebuild the wall and restore land to the Gurdwara. This was done and the walls rebuilt in 1921.

Nearly a century on, Rakabganj Sahib Gurdwara, which is situated at the epicenter of India's capital city virtually next to the country's Parliament House and North Block, is 'ground zero' for the Sikhs of Delhi where all important Gurburabs are celebrated and various functions held through the year.

Adjacent is Guru Gobind Singh Bhawan which houses offices of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee.

Sikhs in the Building of New Delhi

Sardar Bahadur Sir Sobha Singh

Sardar Bahadur Baisakha Singh

Sardar Bahadur Dharam Singh

Sardar Bahadur Mohan Singh

Sardar Bahadur Ranjeet Singh



Sikhs make history but rarely write it". This is a cliché but not without truth and one realised this while the author was researching on the Sikh builders and engineers who built most of the significant structures of New Delhi.

Very little details of their lives are available in print. Khushwant Singh's article on Sardar Sir Sobha Singh ('My Father The Builder'), an unpublished piece about his life by the younger son Brigadier Gurbux Singh, and a short entry on Sardar Dharam Singh Sethi in the Encyclopedia of Sikhism (Ed. Harbans Singh), was all that we really had in record about the Sikh builders of New Delhi, which city's 100 years of foundation was marked in December 2011.

India's most famous author and writer Khushwant Singh recollects that these Sikh builders were known as *Panj Piaraye* (the five beloved of Guru Gobind Singh). The five did not confine themselves to building works only, but also ran companies, opened cinemas, established hotels, contributed in building the Sikh heritage of Delhi - and participated in politics too. What is dominant as their legacy for New Delhi are the buildings they built for the Government and the houses they built for themselves. Most of these houses are today Bhawans for State Governments and also Embassies.

Sardar Bahadur Sir Sobha Singh's first house ('Baikunth') at Jantar Mantar Road is now Kerala House and his second house (by the same name) at 1-A Janpath is the Hungarian Cultural Centre. Sardar Uttam Singh Dugal's house on Ratendon Road (Amrita Shergil Marg) is now Goa Sadan. Sardar Baisakha Singh's house at Aurangzeb Road became the home for Muhammad Ali Jinnah and is today the Dutch Ambassador's residence. Nearly all of them were given titles of Sardar Bahadur but Sobha Singh and Teja Singh Malik were knighted as well. Sardar Mohan Singh was the only person who got a title from the Government of independent India, the Padam Shree. Except for Baisakha Singh and Dharam Singh, all builders were father-son duos, including Sujan Singh-Sobha Singh, Narain Singh-Ranjit Singh, Uttam Singh-Harcharan Singh and Mohan Singh-Charanjit Singh.

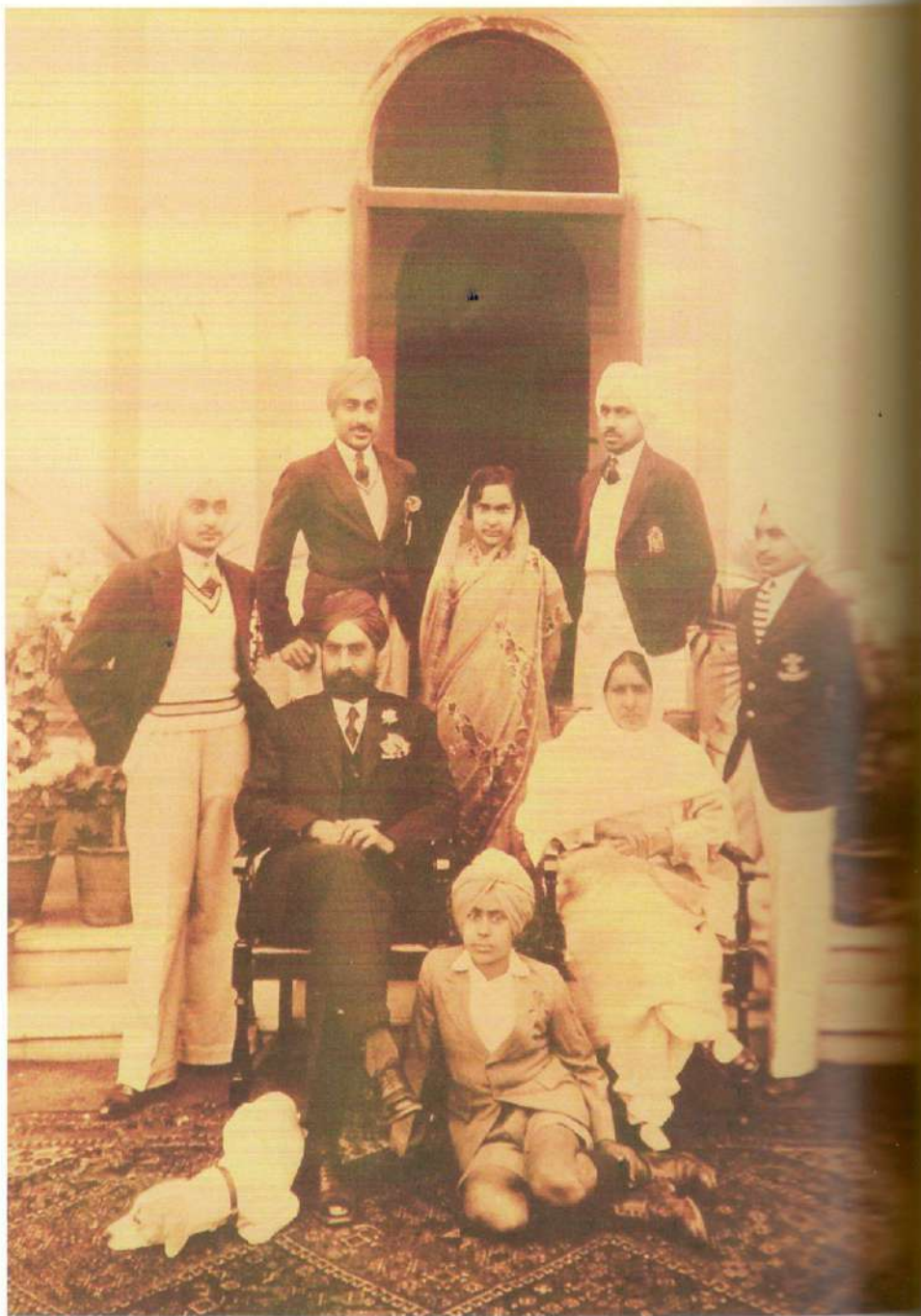
Amanpreet Singh Gill

Sardar Bahadur Sujan Singh

India's best known writer, the iconic Sardar Khushwant Singh remembers his ancestral village Hadali in southern Punjab (now in Pakistan) as virtually "like the Sahara desert". A few date palm trees, minimal agriculture, a sparse population and little education, described Hadali in Shahpur district in the first decade of the twentieth century. Only its proximity to the salt range of Khewra rocks, a major source of revenue and commerce since the times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was the redeeming feature.

Sardar Sujan Singh was born and brought up in a Khattri trader household that organised caravans of salt loaded at the Khewra mines to various cities of the Punjab. From these cities, caravans returned with provisions which were then supplied to smaller towns and this brought capital into the family. Trade coincided with local banking practices, although with attendant risks. Trade and banking could not be possible without literacy and education so these came naturally to the family. Recent conversion to the Khalsa Sikh form, gave the family a new sense of identity in an area where 95 % of the population were Muslims.

Sardar Sujan Singh was the second generation Khalsa Sikh, his grandfather Pyare Lal Khurana being a sahajdhari and father Sardar Inder Singh becoming the first Khalsa Sikh of the family. They probably came under the influence of



*Sir Sobha Singh and his family
at their residence 'Baikunth' 1-A Queen's Way (now Jangpatti)*

Sewa Panthi sants who were Sikh preachers in the region, some of whom had shares in the salt trade too. Like early leaders of the Indian National Congress, Sardar Sujan Singh also believed in the advantages of progress, prosperity and peace, which British rule gave to the great Indian middle class.

The irrigation-linked colonisation of the Doaba region was complete by this time, railways and roads crisscrossed the region up to Sind Sagar Doab. The region produced cotton, wheat, indigo and sugarcane but the cotton trade dominated. Sujan Singh's father had also shifted from salt to cotton trade. Since all cotton produced in the region was of the American variety, and manual ginning was not possible, cotton ginning factories were the first to come up in the region. Sujan Singh established his first factory *Under Cotton Ginning* at Sargodha which prepared cotton bales after ginning, which were then sent on to Lancashire via the Karachi port. Sir Malcolm Hailey, the Jhelum colonisation commissioner, who was responsible for the expansion of Sargodha played a significant role in the development of Sujan Singh's career. Since he took much interest in the development of the canal colonies, it is possible that Sujan Singh began to undertake building contracts at his behest.

In 1911, Malcolm Hailey was chosen as member of the Coronation Durbar Committee at Delhi and asked Sardar Sujan Singh to prepare the vast grounds for the darbar (known as Kingsway Camp today) while Sardar Narain Singh of village Akoi (Sangrur) was to construct the roads to and within the Darbar grounds. It was a miniature royal city in the making. Sardar Sobha Singh also worked with his father in the preparation of the Darbar grounds where King George V soon announced relocation of the capital of India to Delhi.

Malcolm Hailey became the commissioner of Delhi and was Hardinge's close confidant. Sardar Sujan Singh was Hailey's confidant and the family's prospects in the future city of New Delhi were promising. By 1913, the decision to choose Raisina Hill as site of the new city was final. The *Sujan Singh & Sons' Company* was recognised as 'A' class civil contractors by Central Public Works Department. However, the Great War in Europe broke out in August 1914, before actual work on the site began. Focus shifted from building of a new capital to protection of the Empire.



The War gave new opportunities to 'loyal classes' with Muslims and Sikhs of the Punjab being recruited in large numbers to the army. Landed aristocracy used their influence among villagers for them to join the army. The Tiwanas of Shahpur emerged as the biggest such contributors.

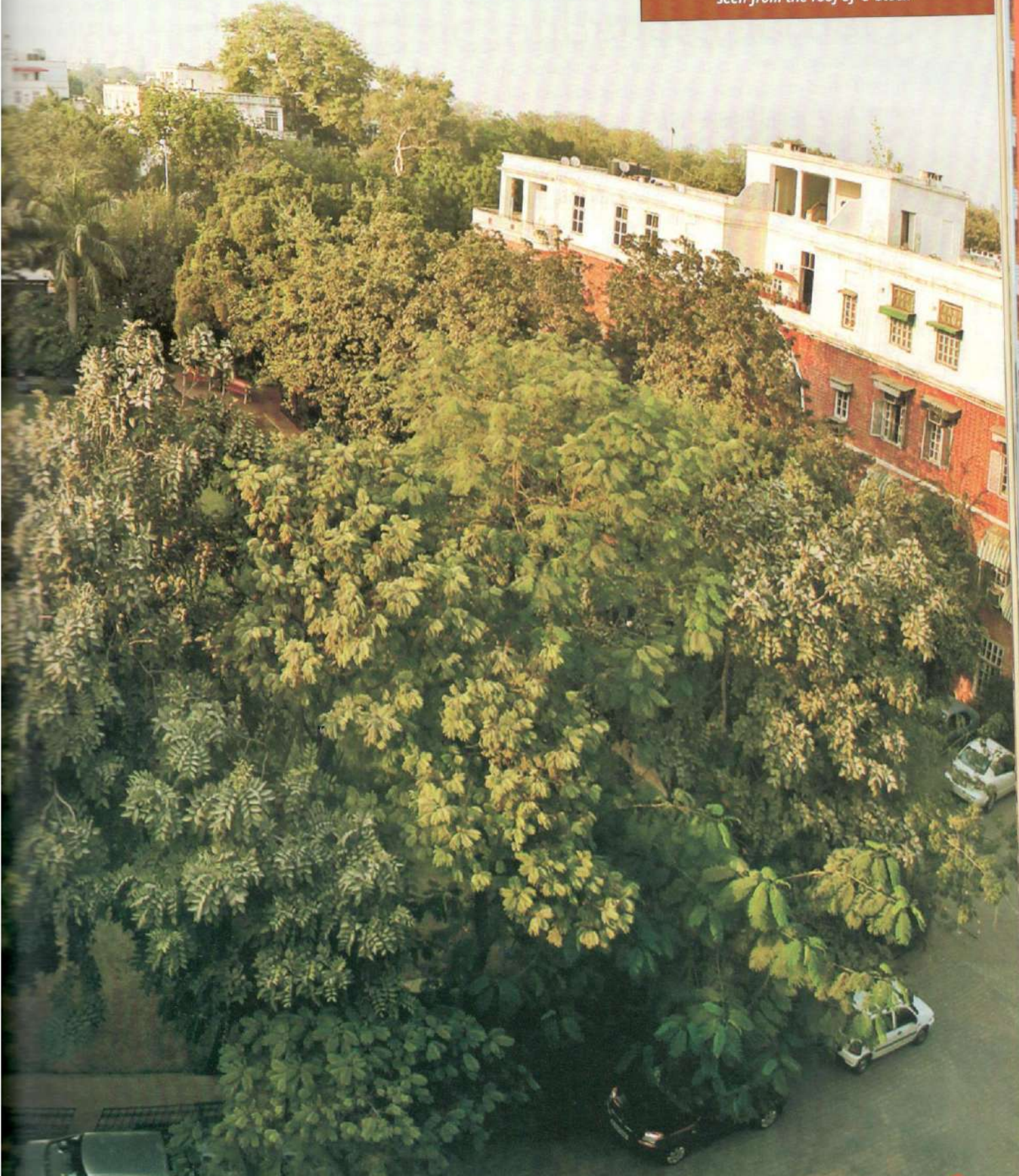
In village Hadali, Sardar Sujan Singh inspired large numbers to recruit to the army and Hadali earned the distinction of becoming the village that sent the maximum number of recruits in the First World War. During this time, the family acquired more land in Mian Channu in district Multan and two more cotton ginning factories were established there. Business was diversified into oil press units too. While Sujan Singh's elder son Sobha Singh busied himself in consolidating construction at New Delhi, his younger son Ujjal Singh took interest in running the mechanised farm at Mian Channu and Sargodha.

Sardar Sujan Singh passed away at Mian Channu and his son Sobha Singh later named 'A' Block of Connaught Place after him. But New Delhi remembers him most for that iconic housing apartment in his name, the first of its kind which is now 'Sujan Singh Park' on the erstwhile Cornwallis Road in Lutyens Delhi. It was designed by Walter George who worked with Edwin Lutyens at that time. When Sardar Sobha Singh named this after his father, he had little idea that this would equally fill public memory for the fact that his son Khushwant Singh would live here for most of his life. Brigadier Gurbux Singh, his younger brother, and many of his children, grand children and great grand children live in Sujan Singh Park today. Madhu Jain aptly calls it as 'Singhan Di Haveli' in her essay on Sujan Singh Park.

In Pakistan, between Multan and Khanewal, there is a railway station named Kot Sujan Singh. Indeed, a rarity, to be remembered thus in both India and Pakistan.



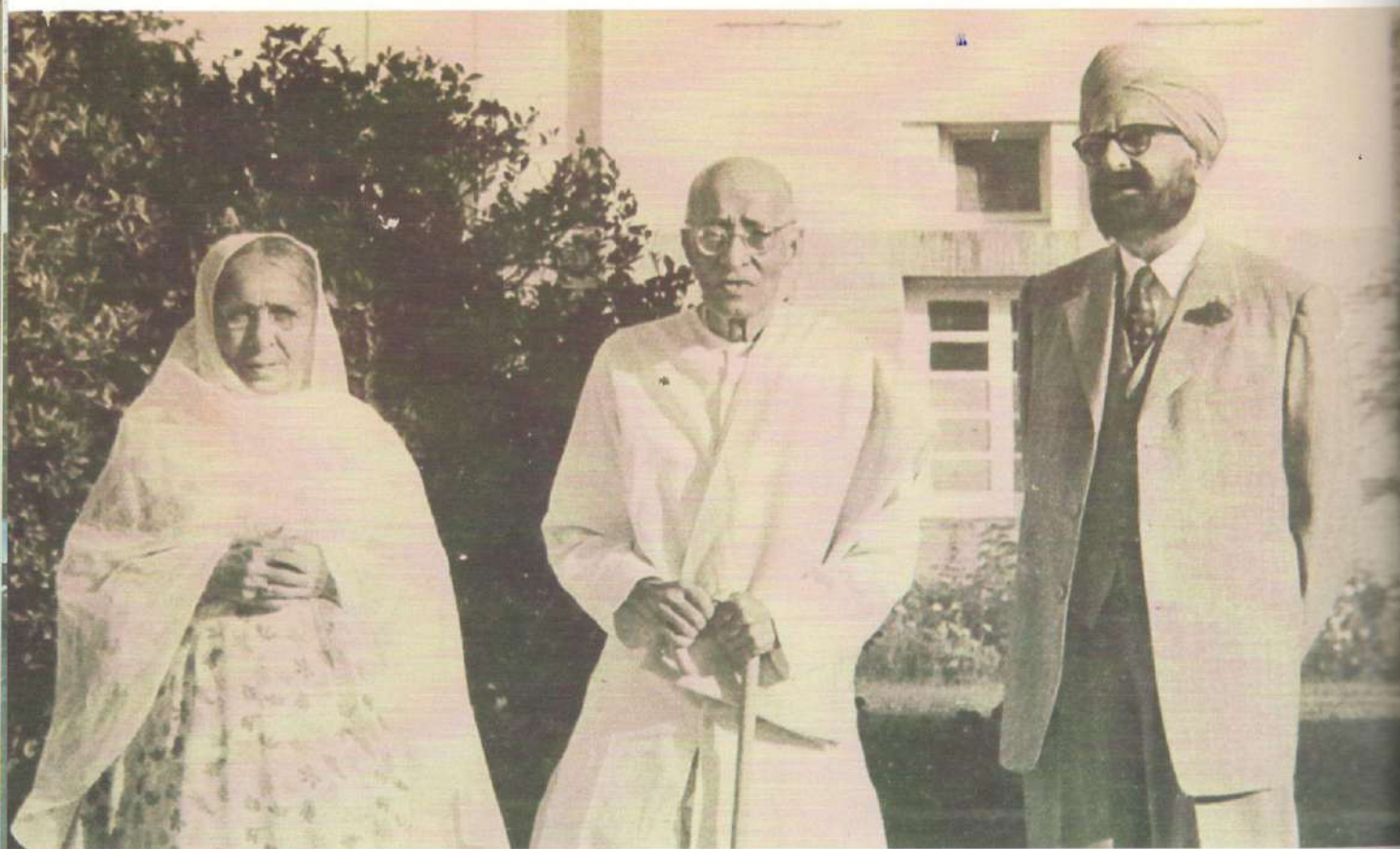
The southern side of Sujan Singh Park, seen from the roof of 'C' block



Sardar Bahadur Sir Sobha Singh

Sardar Sobha Singh was a second generation entrepreneur, following his father Sardar Sujan Singh, whose families earlier owned cotton ginning mills at Mian Channu (Multan) and Jaranhwala (Lyallpur) and there were also mechanised farm estates at Mian Channu and Sargodha. But Sardar Sobha Singh chose a different path for himself, initially accepting a modest assignment, but one which was to earn him a place for posterity.

come with three bullock carts and some labourers. The lanterns were dimmed, the stones dislodged and loaded on the bullock carts to begin the eleven mile journey towards Raisina Hill. While Sobha Singh paddled his bicycle along, he had little idea that he would emerge as the biggest builder and largest single owner of real estate in the new city whose foundation stones he was transporting to an alternative site that night.



C. Rajagopalachari with Sir & Lady Sobha Singh at their home in New Delhi

However, much earlier and far from Mian Channu, in the midst of an abandoned ground in Delhi on a pitch dark night, with silence prevailing, was young Sobha Singh standing before two foundation stones. This was the 'Coronation Park' between Dhaka and Burari villages which two years earlier had been laid by King George V and Queen Mary amidst much fanfare at the Delhi Durbar. Sobha Singh had

On 12 December 1911 these foundation stones had been laid by King George V and Queen Mary to symbolise the transfer of capital from Calcutta to Delhi. Today's Kingsway Camp was the proposed site of the new city but in March 1912, King George V directed Brodie, Lutyens and Swinton to look for an appropriate site for New Delhi as the place of foundation stone-laying was not sacrosanct. Delhi

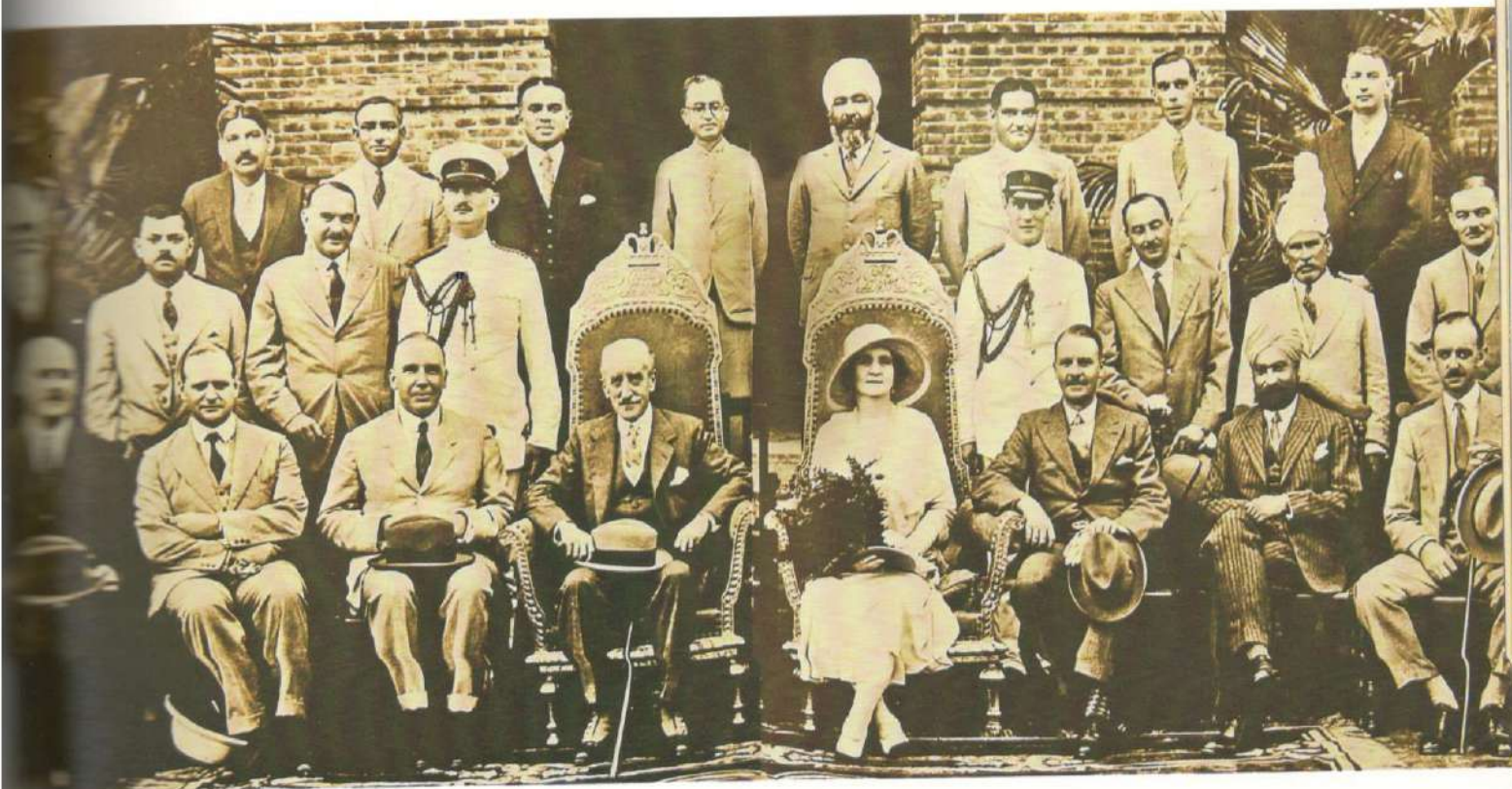
Commissioner Malcolm Hailey and Viceroy Lord Harding had already begun this search. Finally, Hardinge, Hailey, Lutyens, and Baker all agreed upon Raisina Hill and Sobha Singh, well known to Hailey, was taken into confidence so as to remove these foundation stones in the middle of the night to avoid any public controversy.

Sardar Sobha Singh had already been involved, having prepared the vast coronation ground in 1911, alongside his father. When Sobha Singh saw the prospects ahead in the making of this new city, he had left the family business in Punjab which was being undertaken by his younger brother Sardar Ujjal Singh (later Governor of Tamil Nadu) and hereafter entirely devoted himself to building of the new capital. He earned contracts for building South Block of the Secretariat, India Gate (then called War Memorial) and parts of the Government House as Rashtrapati Bhawan was then known.

Along with the construction contracts from Central Public Works Department, he undertook some personal building projects too, including Scindia House, A-Block of Connaught Place, Sujan Singh Park, Regal and Rivoli, the first cinemas of New Delhi built and owned by him. He

emerged as the most successful builder entrepreneur of New Delhi. Without him, New Delhi would have remained just a Raj Enclave. He gave a Midas touch to the barren lands which soon were transformed into becoming handsome and utilitarian habitats. Walter George, Lutyens' close associate was his favorite architect who was later to build the first school of architecture and planning in Delhi. It was he who designed 'Baikunth' Sobha Singh's residence on Queensway (now Janpath), Regal Cinema and Sujan Singh Park, New Delhi's first apartment building.

In politics, Sardar Sobha Singh stood on the liberal side. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, M.M. Jayakar, C. Rajagopalachari all stayed at his home. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, a liberal convert to Muslim League, was his next door neighbour and a close friend. They probably shared more interest in real estate than in real politics! While Jinnah was pleading for a separate country for Muslims, he was investing money in the real estates at Delhi and Bombay at the same time. Sir Sobha Singh became a Member of the Council of States in 1942 and earlier he had experience of local self government, being member of the New Delhi Municipal Council and the first Indian to become its President.



The Viceroy Lord with Lady Willingdon, with their staff, construction supervisors, contractors and some of the Indian personalities involved in the building of New Delhi. Amongst them are Sir Sobha Singh (front row seated, second from right) and Sir Teja Singh Malik (third row, fourth from right).

Besides real estate, construction, politics and business, Sir Sobha Singh contributed to New Delhi's education. He established the well-known Modern School along with Thakur Raghuvir Singh, initially at Daryaganj, then built the Barakhamba campus of Modern School almost single handedly as others were reluctant to shift the school campus outside the 'safe areas' of Daryaganj. Sardar Sobha Singh remained the President of Modern School's governing body for 47 years. The fact that a school dropout like him (he had left Khalsa School Amritsar after class five to join his father's work and never went through formal education afterwards) was responsible for the establishment of this prestigious institution, seems to be part of divine direction.

While he achieved much success at everything he undertook, Sobha Singh had his fair share of frustrations too. Running a textile mill (called Jamna Mill) was unsuccessful and the changing power structure of the country affected him as he was among the first targets of the nationalist interim government formed in 1946, which looked at all the British-era entrepreneurs with suspicion. A supernormal penalty of Rs 50 lakhs was imposed upon him by a Mr. Kurlawala (under the direction of finance minister Liaqat Ali Khan) and he was accused of tax evasion on the income he earned during the Second World War. Independent India's government virtually cold shouldered him, as the emphasis now was on a socialistic pattern of society which discouraged any spirit of entrepreneurship.

C. Rajagopalachari, who founded the Swatantra Party to oppose these vicious and unfair policies was on good terms with Sardar Sobha Singh. But the government's suspicion did not subside, which became even more evident when

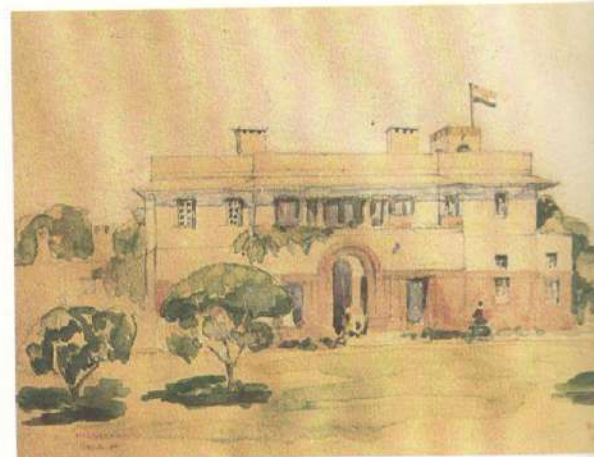
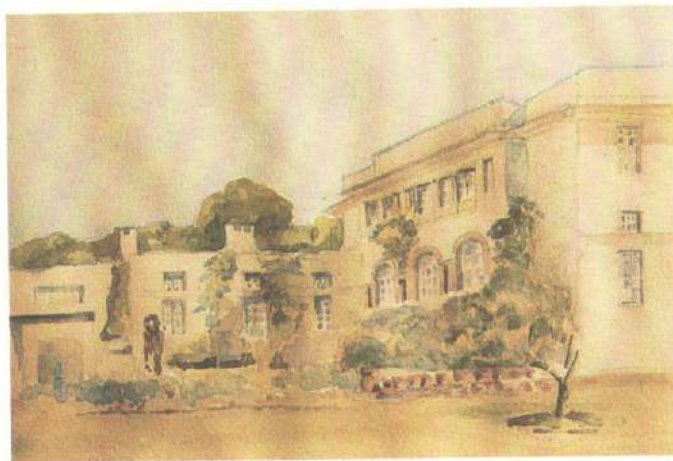
officialdom displayed a stubborn apathy towards his personal project of building a shelter for the relatives and patients admitted to hospitals.

Unlike the government, that claimed to be 'socialist', Sobha Singh felt great anguish at the sight of people sleeping on footpaths around the hospital. Three times he pursued his proposal, supported by his own charitable trust funds, but it was turned down on one or other pretext.

It took 27 years for his sons to realise this dream even as they built a hospice at Guru Tegh Bahadar Hospital. Compare this with the 20 years that the British took to build the entire new capital city itself!



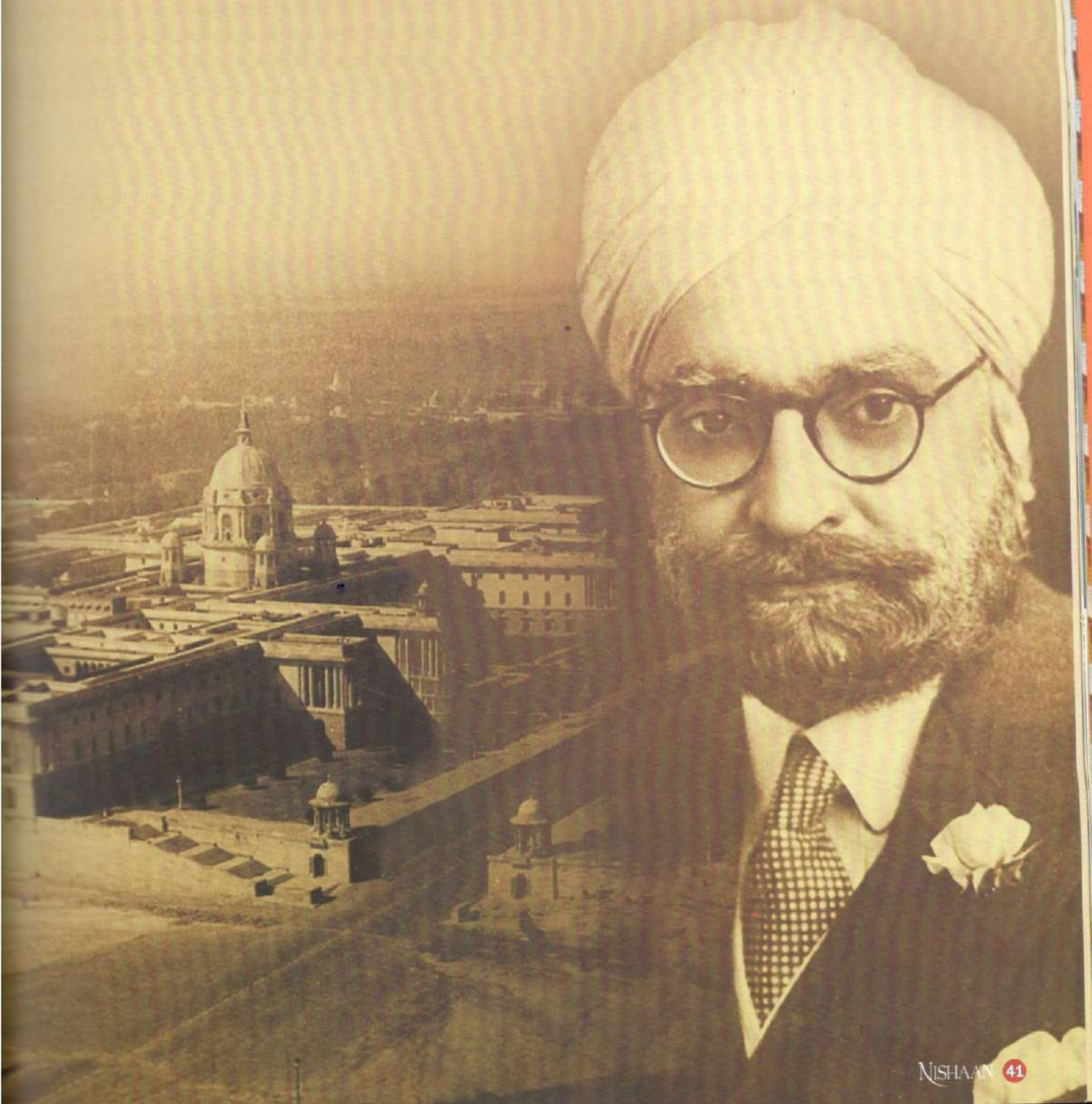
Sir Sobha Singh with Rabindra Nath



Water colour painting of 'Baikunth', Sir Sobha Singh's house, done by the grand daughter of Sir Edwin

Khushwant Singh on "My Father the Builder"

Sardar Bahadur Sir Sobha Singh



My father Sobha Singh had a younger brother Ujjal Singh, who later became Minister then Governor of Punjab and Tamil Nadu. Their father Sujan Singh was the real founder of the fortunes of this family. He named many factories that he built after his father Inder Singh: in Mian Channu, Jaranwala and Sargodha (now in Pakistani Punjab). Our home in Hadali was a large haveli...our business at that time was taking camel caravans with rock salt from the Khewra mines to Lahore, Amritsar and Punjab's other cities and in exchange bringing oil, spices, tea, sugar and textiles to sell in the villages around Hadali. It was reasonably profitable. We were the most prosperous family of our village. Later the family started acquiring land and we spread our business operations to places like Sargodha and Jaranwala, putting up cotton ginning and spinning factories and growing cotton or indigo to supply to the British mills in Lancashire. This continued till we shifted to Delhi.

Now to Delhi. The story starts on 12 December 1911, when King George V and Queen Mary came to Delhi for the Coronation Durbar. Amongst the many things they said and did was to announce the shifting of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi. It was a well-guarded secret – no one knew about it till this announcement was made. To put the seal on their decision they planted two foundation stones, one by the King, the other by the Queen, in what came to be known as Kingsway.

There was opposition by the European business community of Calcutta. Both Lord Curzon and Mahatma Gandhi opposed the move. The Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, dismissed all objections and decided to go ahead. The following year, that is 1912, Captain Swinton of the London County Council to which the job had been entrusted, consulted the Royal British Institute of Architects to suggest the name of Edwin Landseer Lutyens. In turn, Lutyens suggested the name of Herbert Baker with whom he had worked earlier in South Africa. In 1912, Swinton and the two architects arrived in Delhi. They took a look at the place where the King and Queen had planted foundation stones and decided it was an unsuitable site for the new city.

They scouted around Delhi on elephants and horseback, looking for a suitable site and ultimately came to the

conclusion that the far better place was village Malcha on Raisina Hill. It was on an elevation and had the ridge behind from which they could quarry stone.

Lutyens and Baker were sent around the country to see works of great Indian architecture. Both the King and the Viceroy were of the opinion that the new city should be in the traditional Indian style. The Viceroy and the King were upset with the report submitted by Lutyens and Baker. A compromise was arrived at: the architects agreed to give their buildings external semblances of Indianness. The three items they chose were a sun breaker (*chajja*), a latticed window (*jali*) and the dome (*gumbad*), which they called the *chattri* (umbrella). So you have these external embellishments that resemble Oriental architecture. The rest is almost entirely British.

They said that the concept of law and order that the British brought to India should be exhibited in the style of the buildings that they were making. Their opinion was accepted. There were still lingering doubts over the choice of Raisina Hill as the best site. During the monsoon, Baker and some of his friends rode up to Raisina Hill. They were standing on top. It was raining intermittently. As he looked down at the vast collection of ruins of cities, tombs and monuments lying below them – a scene of total desolation – he was filled with doubts about his decision. Suddenly the rain stopped, the clouds cleared and a huge rainbow spanned the horizon ending where India Gate stands today. This was a good omen.

The first job my father, then about eighteen years old, got was to transplant the two foundation stones from Kingsway to Raisina Hill. It had to be done in the stealth of the night lest superstitious Indians construe it an ill omen. He hired a bullock-cart, packed the stones in it and rode on his bicycle alongside through the city suburbs in the light of petromax lamps, and implanted the two stones of what was to become the capital of India. He did not tell me what he was paid for it.

World War I broke out in August 1914. Everything was suspended for the duration of the War. Work was taken up after 1919...my memory goes back to the time when there was no city but a lot of brick kilns. There was a miniature train, which ran from Badarpur up to what is now Connaught Circus. Called the Imperial Delhi Railway, it was a narrow-gauge railway line that brought sand, gravel,

stones and other building material and deposited them at different sites. The contractors got the labour, largely Bagaris, from Rajasthan. At one time there were 30,000 of them in Delhi. There were also Bandhanis from Punjab who were tougher and bigger so they could carry the heavier loads and there were Sangtarash (masons) descendants of the people who built the Taj. They worked under the instructions of a master mason, a Scotsman named Cairn. Contractors lived along what was then called Old Mill Road, because of a wheat grinding *chakee*.

My grandparents, parents and my elder brother and I lived in a large shack...soon the builders became prosperous. They used the surplus stocks of cement, stones and bricks, to build themselves big houses on what is today Jantar Mantar Road extending from Ashoka Road at one end to Parliament Street (Sansad Marg) with the Free Church and the Planetarium at the other.

I spent all my school and college years in the home my father built and named 'Baikunth' (paradise). It is today Kerala House. Our next-door neighbor was Baisakha Singh, my father's closest friend. They breached the dividing wall so that they could go across without having to come in through the front gates. The house next to Baisakha Singh's was an enormous mansion of stone and marble built by Dharam Singh Sethi, who at one time was the richest of the contractors as he had the monopoly of supplying marble, granite and sandstone from quarries in Dholpur. Next to him was Ram Singh Kabli. Facing us was Rai Bahadur Narain Singh from Sangrur. His son Ranjit Singh, however, made more money out of his sugar mills in Uttar Pradesh and the Imperial Hotel on Janpath that is still owned by his descendants.

They were known as the *panj pyaras*, the first five disciples of the 10th Sikh Guru Gobind Singh. There were other contractors notably Akbar Ali of Jhelum and Seth Baroon from Sind, who were Muslims. Slowly the city began to rise. By 1922, building materials were in place. My father bagged the South Block of the Secretariat; Baisakha Singh the North Block. The Viceregal Lodge as well as Vijay Chowk were shared by many, as were roads, houses for senior officials and quarters for clerks. By 1923 or 1924, the new city began to take shape. You couldn't believe that in what had been a wilderness, a metropolis was beginning to rise. Lutyens looked into every detail. As soon as he marked out the roads, trees were planted on either side. New Delhi was meant to take about four to five

years to build; it actually took nearly sixteen. But by 1929 the major buildings had been completed.

Among other monuments my father built was the slender Jaipur Column in front of the Viceregal Lodge. What is notable is the inscription which echoed Lutyens' sentiments: *In thought faith, in word wisdom, in deed courage, in life sacrifice, so may India be great.*

I come to the last part: the personal reminiscences of my grandfather Sujan Singh who showed the way to prosperity to his two sons. I have faint recollections of him. He was a powerfully built man with a flowing white beard covering his chest. My father, Sobha Singh, was way ahead of his times. My elder brother Bhagwant and I were enrolled in Modern School which had just opened in Daryaganj. It was the first co-educational institution in Delhi. (*The third brother Gurbux Singh went to the RIMC at Dehra Dun before being commissioned into the Indian Army from the IMA.*)

My father, Sobha Singh, was a very different kind of person...a six footer and slimly built. He was very particular about his attire, wore English suits: coat and striped trousers, bow tie or silk ties and dinner jackets. I never saw him in shervanis and chooridars.

He was reckless in his hospitality. There was never a time when he did not have guests staying with him in 'Baikunth' in Delhi or his large house 'Sunderban' in Mashobra, six miles from Simla. Many stayed for months on end. Among regular visitors to his house were Rajagopalachari, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr Jayakar. When I was in Delhi, I often saw Mahatma Gandhi strolling in my father's garden talking to Mr Jinnah.

My father's great passion was gardening. He grew the best grapefruit in the city and beds of strawberries that nobody could match. His garden had a great variety of exotic roses which he invited everyone to admire.

He was the first man to build a cinema – 'the Regal' – in the new city. The Regal building included a restaurant called Standard which later became Gaylord. He then built another cinema called 'Rivoli'.

My father was a modest man. He did not name a single building after himself. The many he built and owned were named after his father, including Sujan Singh Park. One he named after his nephew Narinder, whom he brought up as

his son. Not one after his children. He built more of New Delhi than any other contractor. Besides the buildings mentioned earlier, he built the Chelmsford Club, AIFACS Hall, Broadcasting House (All India Radio), the National Museum, Dayal Singh College, TB Hospital, the Red Cross Building and Baroda House. And much else besides. He was the largest owner of private property in the city. People spoke of him as 'Aadhee nai dilli ka maalik' (owner of half of New Delhi). Whatever recognition he got was from the British. He was knighted; he became a Member of the Council of States and the first President of the New Delhi Municipal Committee. He had ambitions of getting into politics. He had Mr Jinnah come over from Bombay to attend my wedding to Kaval Malik, daughter

of Sir Teja Singh Malik, the first Indian Chief Engineer of the CPWD.

Their names appear in alcoves on either side in the South and North Blocks of the Secretariat. The slab on the South Block has his name on top followed by Dharam Singh, Baisakha Singh and four or five others. On the other side are names of architects and engineers: Lutyens, Baker and Teja Singh Malik. But not one road in this city is named after anyone of them. You have doctors, lawyers and needless to say unknown, nondescript politicians after whom roads and parks have been named. Not one after the men who built New Delhi, neither Lutyens nor Baker, nor my father, nor Teja Singh Malik.



At 97, the legendary S. Khushwant Singh at his home in Sujan Singh Park
(Photograph by Malkiat Singh)

Amongst the landmarks of New Delhi built by Sardar Bahadur Sir Sobha Singh



All India Radio Building



Chelmsford Club

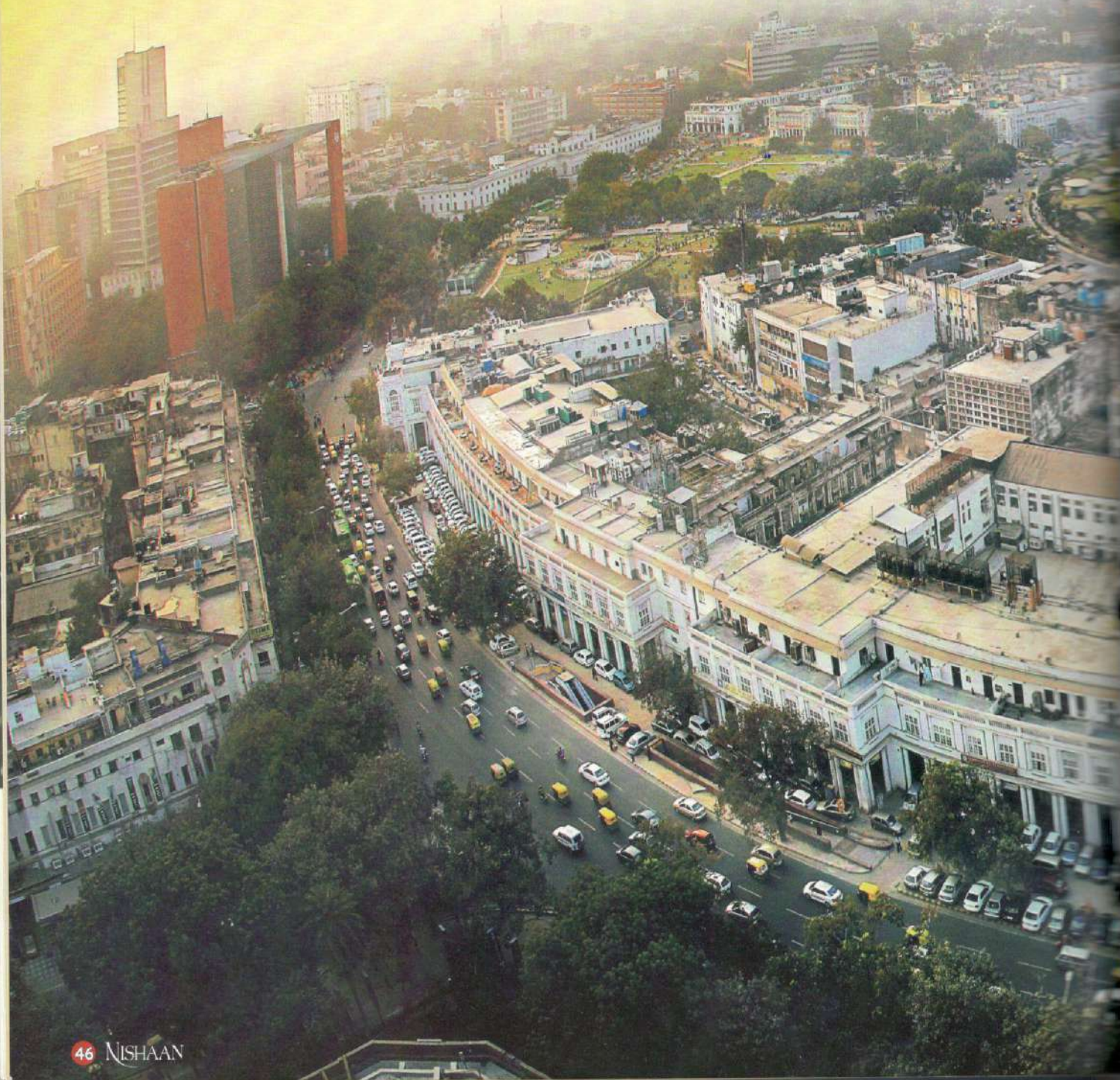


A.I.F.A.C.S. Hall



The Regal Building

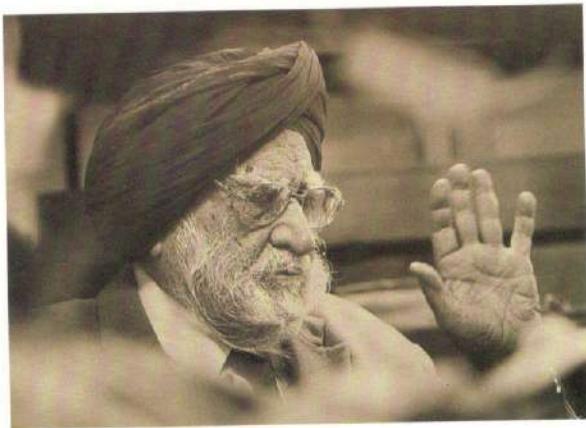
Connaught Place



New Delhi



Brigadier Gurbux Singh

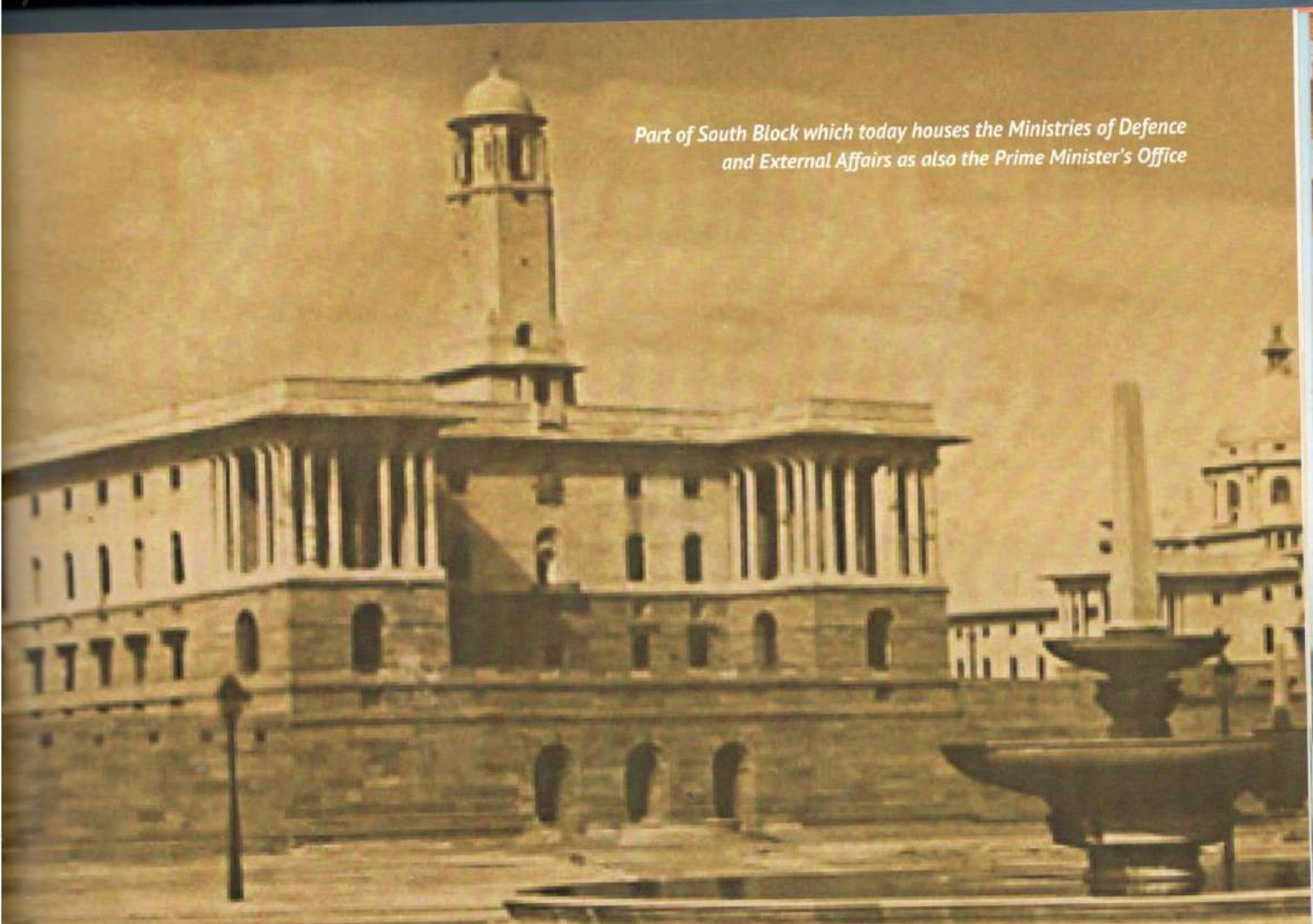


Brigadier Gurbux Singh, the third-born son of Sardar Bahadur Sir Sobha Singh has looked after the family's interests since his retirement from the Indian Army.

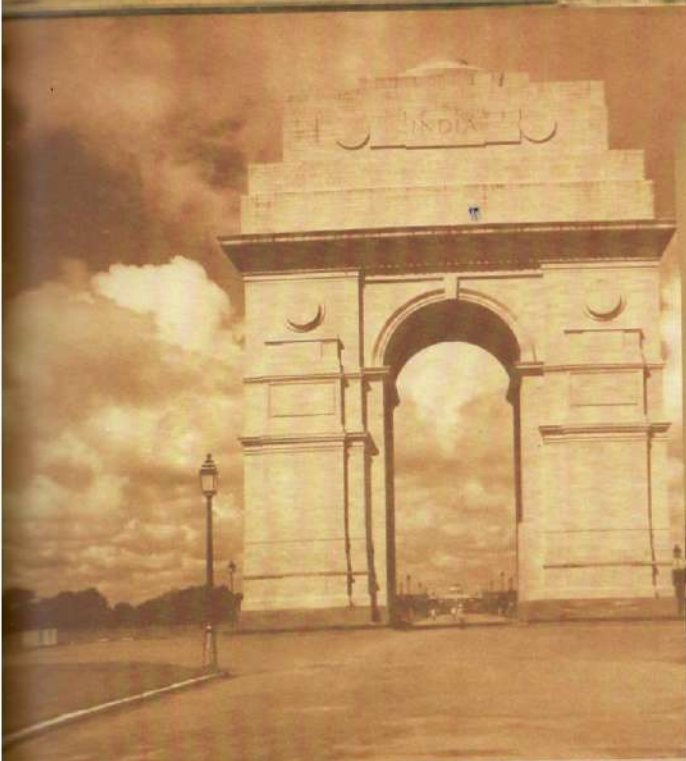
In his office at 1-A Janpath, an annexe of 'Baikunth', are placed evocative photographs of New Delhi as it was being built in the 1920s, including the iconic picture taken on completion of the South Block just ahead of the 'rival' North Block and the resplendent India Gate, built to honour the fallen of the Indian Army during the Great War (1914-18).

Brigadier Gurbux Singh and his elder brother Khushwant Singh finally fulfilled their father's dream to build a Dharamshala for the weary friends and relatives of patients at the adjoining Guru Tegh Bahadur Hospital. With great help from Delhi's Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit and surmounting endless red tape, this endeavour was finally met 27 years after it began. The Dharamshala was handed over to the hospital in March 2005, on Sir Sobha Singh's birth anniversary.





Part of South Block which today houses the Ministries of Defence and External Affairs as also the Prime Minister's Office



India Gate was originally known as the War Memorial, built in tribute to the fallen of the Indian Army in the Great War.



Atop the South Block, which was completed on 30 September 1927, are the engineers and workers who 'won' the race against the North Block !

Sardar Bahadur Baisakha Singh

Sardar Bahadur Baisakha Singh was an A-class civil contractor who worked for both the Governments of India and the Punjab. If South Block is immortally associated with Sardar Bahadur Sir Sobha Singh, few are aware that contract for building North Block was given to

Baisakha Singh. He finished it just the day after Sobha Singh had completed South Block, also in record time. Along with Sobha Singh, his name finds mention among the builders of New Delhi on the slab below South Block. He was bestowed with the title of Sardar Bahadur by the Viceroy.



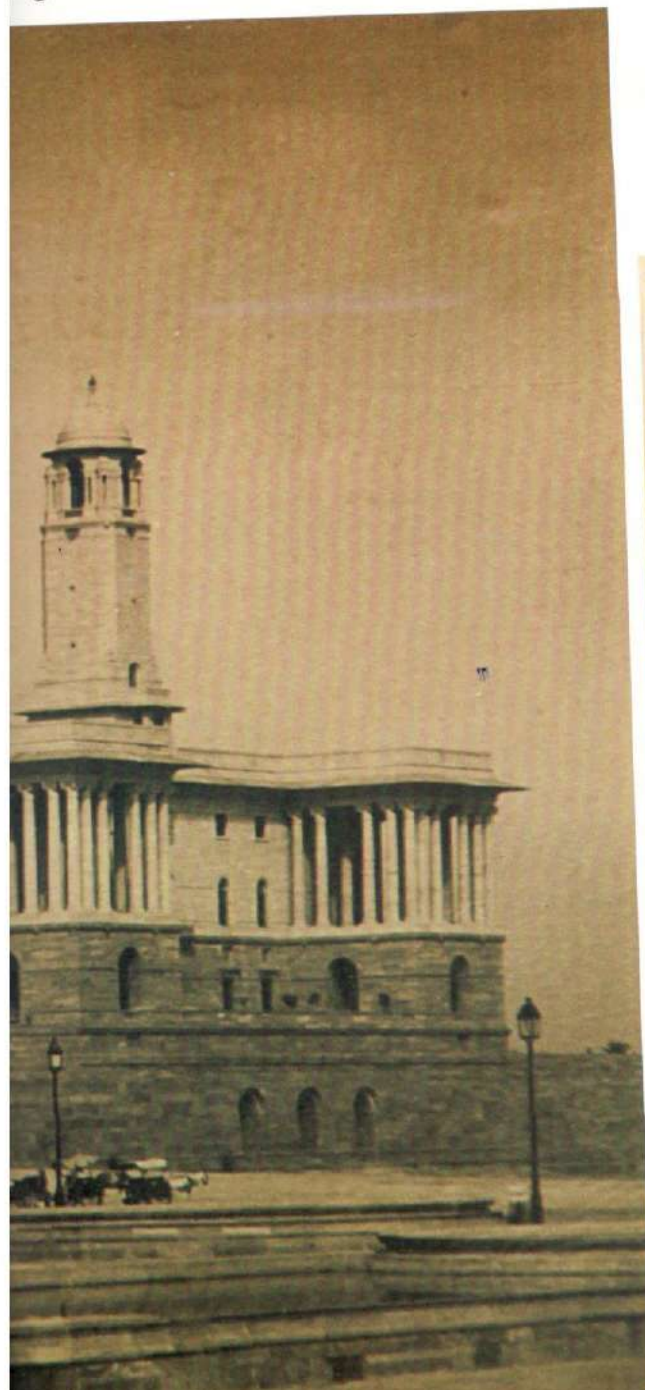
me from village Muchal in Punjab, situated on the
 Trunk Road between Beas and Jandiala Guru.
 alwadi, another village on the same road is from where
 Bahadur Karnail Singh (Chairman Railway Board)
 his son Anup Singh (also member of the Railway
 Board) came. His uncle, Dalip Singh was first Asian
 member of the US Congress while grand uncle (Comrade
 L Singh's father) who was a leading contractor, had
 introduced young Baisakha Singh to the world of
 construction business.

Baisakha Singh's name is associated with many fine
 buildings of Lahore too including the Punjab Assembly

building, jointly built by him and Sardar Uttam Singh
 Dugal. The latter's eldest son Harcharan Singh Dugal
 fondly remembers how Baisakha Singh helped his father to
 reestablish business in New Delhi after the partition.

They were devout Sikhs. Baisakha Singh contributed in the
 making of the new Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib in 1930. In
 1922, when the SGPC was formed, he was among the
 founding members of the body which also managed Delhi
 Sikh Gurdwaras and he was elected its President. At Tarn
 Taran (city founded by Guru Arjan Dev) Baisakha Singh
 built a Bunga for stay of the Sangat, that visited it every
 month on the day of Amavas. (Today this is named Bunga
 Baisakha Singh). He later built a magnificent house for
 himself at 10, Aurangzeb that was designed by R Blomfield,
 but later sold this house to Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Baisakha Singh's son Pritam Singh also took active part in
 Delhi Gurdwara affairs.



Rai Bahadur Sardar Baisakha Singh with his family

◀ *North Block, which houses the
 Home and Finance Ministries*

Sardar Bahadur Dharam Singh Sethi



Rai Bahadur Sardar Dharam Singh & Family

Also known as '*Panth Prasadh MahaaDani*' in recognition of his philanthropic and spiritual nature, Sardar Dharam Singh could memorise much of the Guru Granth Sahib even before the age of 6 years. Born near Sialkot, after his matriculation he did his Civil Engineering at Roorkee and in 1901 joined the public works department and was posted to Burma.

Returning to the Punjab, he worked on the upper Jhelum Canal and in 1912 started a career of his own which was essentially concerned with construction of New Delhi, alongside S Ram Singh Kabli. Sensing the requirement for special materials he setup mines and quarries for stone and marble at various places including Dholpur. The red and cream coloured sandstone ultimately became symbolic of the construction of New Delhi.

From 1922 onwards he undertook construction all over India including the Rashtrapati Bhawan (then Viceregal Lodge) and also the Church of Redemption, the Assam-railway link and various railway tracks in what was then the Madras Presidency. In appreciation in his work, he was conferred the title of 'Sardar Bahadur' in 1930.



Letter to Rai Bahadur Sardar Dharam Singh by
Sir Edwin Landseer Lutyens.

17, BOLTON STREET,
PICCADILLY,
W.1.
October 8th, 1931.

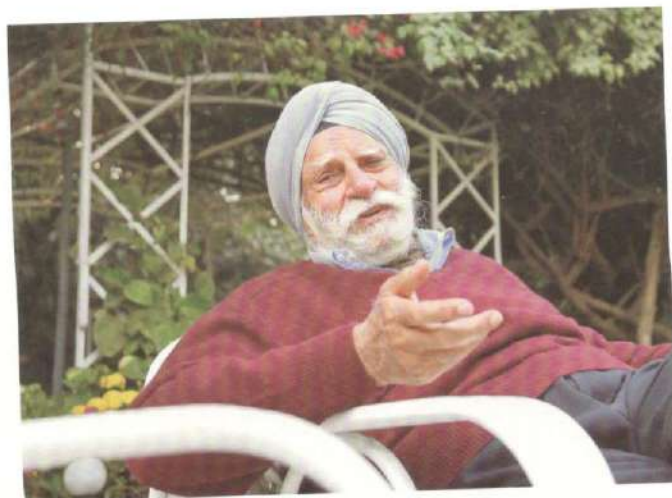
Sardar Bahadur Dharam Singh has been General Contractor
of the Viceroy's House at New Delhi, for some years, supplying
the stone and marble, and carrying out the construction work.
He has made every effort to produce a good job, and to
that end has engaged the best craftsmen that could be found.
The successful completion of a building of a class not
attempted in India before, would have been much more difficult
without the co-operation of a Contractor of his generous spirit.

Edwin Landseer Lutyens
NA

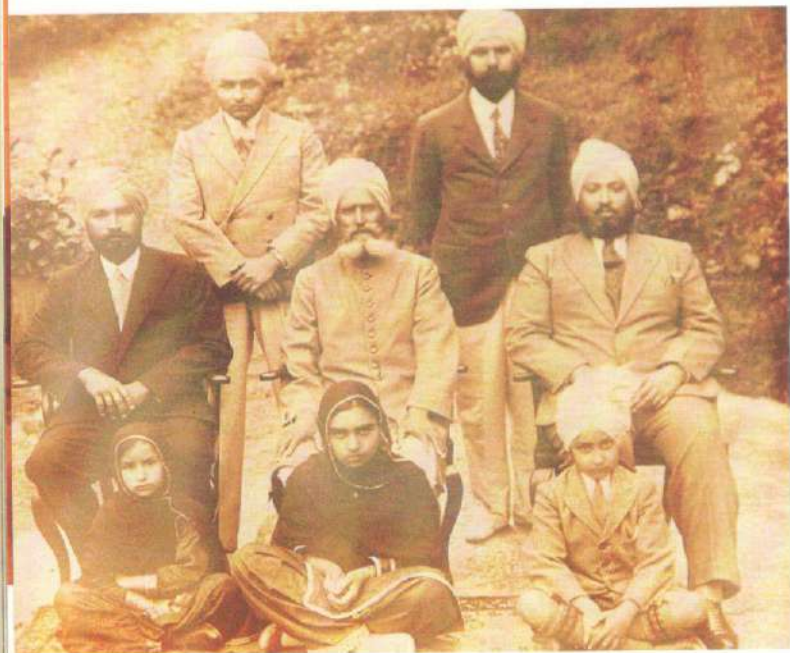
Sardar Gurpreet Singh

Sardar Bahadur Dharam Singh's son-in-law, Sardar Arjan Singh continued the great philanthropic and spiritual nature of work, which included looking after the Guru Nanak Vidya Bhandar Trust which was set up in 1924. In this he was greatly helped by other eminent personalities including Sardar Bahadur Baisakha Singh, Sardar Bahadur Shivdev Singh and others. After Sardar Arjan Singh's passing his son Gurpreet Singh, who was Vice President of the Trust, requested Chief Justice Sardar Ranjit Singh Narula to become President who contributed freely of his time for the next 25 years in directing activities of the Trust.

Sardar Gurpreet Singh has furthered activities of the Trust, which includes running the Gurmat Vidyala at Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib as also the Sardarni Sadar Kaur Khalsa Girls School in Darya Ganj, New Delhi. Here, 1400 girls students on the rolls are provided with completely free education and the school is now in its 7th decade. In addition, Sardar Gurpreet Singh established a most modern and contemporary school called 'Sikhya - The School of Learning' at Chandigarh which provides the latest in education as well as in spiritual and physical development completely free of cost to the poorest of the poor.



Sardar Narain Singh



*Rai Bahadur Sardar Narain Singh &
Sardar Bahadur Ranjit Singh with family, 1911*

Sardar Narain Singh came from the village Akoi in district Sangrur. He was responsible for building the infrastructure and roads of the Coronation Durbar City in 1911. After the project of making New Delhi started, he had a share in building the Council House (today's Parliament House) and was awarded the title of Sardar Bahadar.

Sardar Narain Singh's son Ranjit Singh is remembered for his public life. While he was appointed member of the Advisory Council to Chief Commissioner of Delhi, he also served as honorary magistrate of New Delhi and was member of the governing bodies of Hindu College and Inderprastha College for Women. He played a role in Sikh politics and religious affairs while working as President, Panthak Darbar and President, Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Board.

The Imperial Hotel, located on Janpath (earlier Queensway) in the heart of New Delhi was built and originally managed by Sardar Bahadur Sardar Ranjit

Singh from 1931. This remains a fine confluence of a rich historical past and contemporary international appeal. After many restorations, the Hotel has regained its timeless charm and exudes its former glory. The hotel is a virtual arts paradise with Frasers and Daniells paintings and the *Tavern* named after them, the symbolically named '1911' restaurant and bar, the Royal ballroom were the places where have met and are still as popular today. The Hotel is a jewel of architecture and its location in the heart of New Delhi.

The 24 king palms that lead up to the porch are an integral part of and witness to the very creation of New Delhi. The Hotel has designed to be one of the finest monuments of Lutyens' grand vision of the Capital City's original master plan – a unique blend of Victorian, Old colonial and Art Deco styles. The hotel was named and conferred the exquisite Lion Insignia by Lady Willingdon.

Presently the hotel is owned by Sardar Hardev Singh Akoi and Sardar Jasdev Singh Akoi, grandsons of Sardar Bahadur Ranjit Singh.



Sardar Sir Teja Singh Malik

Amongst the Sikh contractors of New Delhi, there are two engineers too: Sardar Teja Singh Malik and Engineer Bahadur Singh, the latter becoming head of the first group formed to manage Delhi Gurdwaras (it was initially called the Engineer Committee) while Sardar Teja Singh Malik's name is closely associated with the Department of Public Works. He was chosen Executive Engineer of the Imperial Delhi Committee in 1913, this committee responsible for planning and building the city of New Delhi and headed by the Chief Commissioner of Delhi. This committee was converted into full fledged central public works department on 1 April 1930. Teja Singh Malik became its first chief engineer while Robert Russel was chief architect.

Besides his engineering profession, Teja Singh Malik played a judicious role in Sikh politics at the time of independence, playing host to meetings between Muhammad Ali Jinnah and various Sikh leaders at his home which were arranged by his brother, the legendry Hardit Singh Malik. The latter started his career with the Royal Flying Corps (see *Nishaan's* Premiere Issue April 1999) and later joined Indian Civil Service and finally became the Prime Minister of Patiala State. Like him, Teja



Singh also developed a passion for golf and became the founding member of Delhi Golf Club. He was awarded the title of Sardar Bahadur and later given knighthood. His name is inscribed at South Block along with Lutyens and Baker.



“Delhi built by the Mughals and the Dugals”

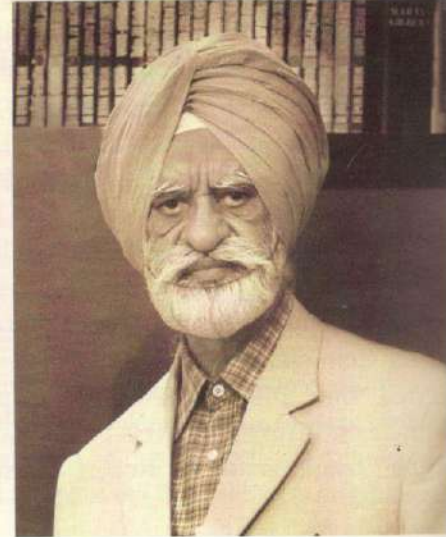
Sardar Uttam Singh Dugal and Harcharan Singh Dugal



Sardar Bhagwan Singh



Sardar Uttam Singh Dugal



Sardar Harcharan Singh Dugal

In my first meeting with Sardar Harcharan Singh Dugal, scion of Sardar Uttam Singh Dugal, it was as if meeting a former army general. At 81, his meticulous dress, upright posture, firmness of tone and piercing eyes give the idea of a personality who held things in firm control in his career. He betrays no signs of being a former Member of Parliament or being the owner of one of India's largest civil engineering and construction companies. Past association with politics or business leaves no mark on his personality. The fact that General Mohindar Singh Chopra was his father-in-law and General Jagjit Singh Aurora was his brother-in-law might partially explain these traits.

Sardar Harcharan Singh Dugal is a third generation builder. His company's name is associated with Lutyen's zone's biggest post Independence marvel, that is the Supreme Court Building. Narayni Gupta an authority on Delhi, writes about this: “The Supreme Court in Tilak Marg is a PWD exercise in Lutyenssesque style, which is one answer to the problem of how to add new buildings in the Lutyen's zone without disrupting its harmony”. To Build the Supreme Court building, Harcharan Singh went in search of quarries which had supplied red stone for the Red Fort. These quarries in Dholpor were re-activated,

and the stone was quarried in the same way as in Mughal times. His relations with Mughal tradition does not end with this only. A set of miniature paintings in his library describes most of his buildings in New Delhi, like the Udyog Bhawan for the Ministry of Industry; bridge in Delhi like the Jamuna rail bridge and Jamuna road bridge at Wazirabad, or the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, various buildings of various embassies or the seats of justice like the Supreme Court of India and Delhi High Court buildings. The British artist who made these miniatures described this series as “Delhi built by the Mughals and the Dugals”!

He comes from a family that shaped its career from its association with Rawalpindi Cantonment. How his family came into construction business is an interesting case in the making of entrepreneurs during the Raj. His grand father, Sardar Bhagwan Singh of Dhamial village supplied building quality timber to Rawalpindi Cantonment, which he imported from the state of Kashtwar through the river Jhelum. He entered construction business to complete a seven barrack project in Rawalpindi Cantonment and developed a penchan construction. He achieved the rare feat of constructing a one mile long rail-cum-road bridge across the F



Sardar Uttam Singh Dugal with his mother, wife, daughters and their husbands, sons and their wives and grand children at their residence on 18 Ratendon Road, New Delhi.

helum in the last decade of 19th century. He used to trap lumber coming from the hills by laying a vast boom of rafts in the middle of the Jhelum River which enabled him to have greater understanding and greater control of the river.

His son, Uttam Singh Dugal, was a born builder. He began his career by building roads in the Frontier to connect the Attock oil refinery. He built the Peshawar Legislative Assembly building and the Punjab Legislative Assembly building in Lahore. Along with his father, Sardar Uttam Singh did not confine himself to normal building structures, but specialised in building technical structures of industrial and strategic importance like airfields, steel plants, dam projects, and rail and road bridges in difficult terrain. In fact, most of the pre-partition airfields of the Royal and Indian Air Forces, were built by this Company as also post-partition, the new airbases of the Indian Air Force in both the Western and Eastern sectors.

He was actively involved in building independent India's major industrial projects such as the steel plants at Rourkela, Bhilai, Bokaro and Kudremukh Steel plants. Besides steel plants, he also built thermal power stations, oil refineries, coal washing plants, etc.

Sardar Uttam Singh Dugal was an early nationalist, who joined the Indian National Congress in 1916. In 1937, he was elected as member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly. In 1947, he resigned from the Congress in protest to its acceptance of the Partition proposals.

Unlike his father and grand father who learned more from experience in the field, Sardar Harcharan Singh Dugal decided to acquire higher learning in civil engineering and obtained a degree from the University of Durham. On his

return, the Company ventured in providing alternative designs to the CPWD. They provided designs and built bridges such as on the River Tawi in Pathankot which is known for its unique structure and strategic importance. The three generations constructed structures for the Military Engineering Service, and the experience gained in working with military and colonial rule enabled them to complete many projects ahead of schedule. Under the direction of Harcharan Singh Dugal was completed the Netaji Indoor Stadium in Calcutta (1975) in an incredible four and a half months and later the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium for Asian Games 1982 in just sixteen months. It was this hallmark that made him a favourite with foreign governments. He also built the American Centre in New Delhi, the Philippines Embassy, Malaysian High Commission and the Embassy of Egypt.

This world of success ended with a flash of disillusionment in 1984, when Harcharan Singh Dugal was consulted on re-building of the Akal Takht after Operation *Blue Star* : the Central Government wanted to rebuild the Akal Takht under a Government contract, in sharp difference to the Sikh community's tradition of '*Kar Seva*'. He advised the Government that the Sikh community would never accept this and if the Government proceeded with such an act, the Sikh nation would tear down the Government-built building at the first opportunity and re-build under '*Kar Seva*'. And when this prediction turned out to be true, he decided that the time had come to gracefully move on and so retired.

Today, he leads a quiet life of self chosen anonymity; but the work done by three Dugal generations will remain outstanding for aeons to come.

Amanpreet Singh Gill

Landmarks of New Delhi built by



The Oberoi Hotel

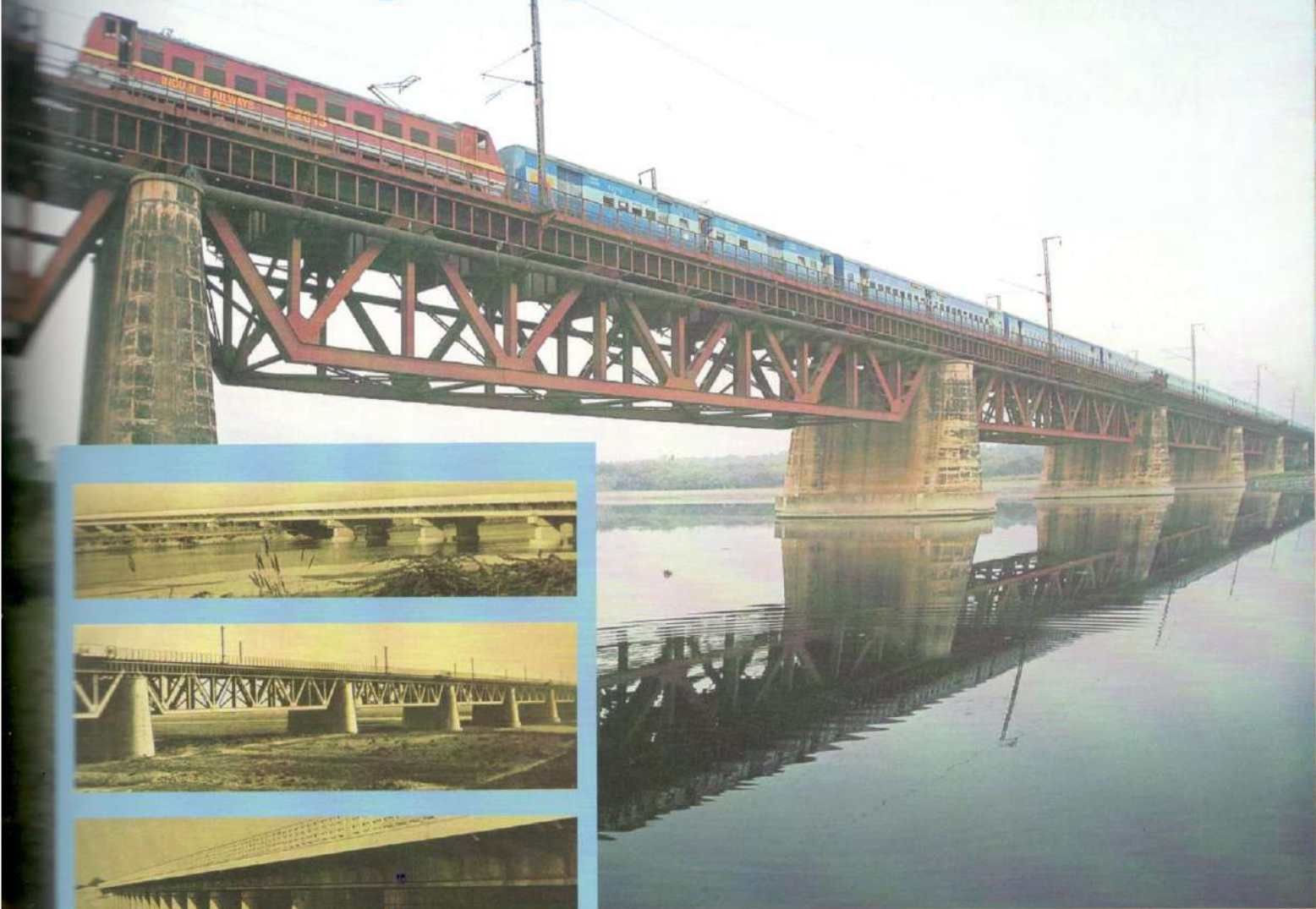


American Centre



The Supreme Court of India

Uttam Singh Dugal & Co.



Yamuna Bridges



Hotel Samrat



Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium

Sardar Mohan Singh

Sardar Mohan Singh (whose involvement with Coca Cola is to differentiate him from his other famous namesake) came from village Rara in Ludhiana and was among those Sikh constructors who were known as *Panj Piaras*. While he was building major structures, his focus remained on sourcing building timber and was responsible for making and supply of furniture to the Government House (now Rashtrapati Bhawan).

After independence, he shifted from construction to beverages and introduced Coca Cola to India, taking its franchise rights in 1950. Later he evolved his own brand,

Campa Cola, which was inherited by his son Charanjit Singh who also ventured into hotel business and became member of the Rajya Sabha. Hotel Le Meridien is now run by Charanjit Singh's wife 'Bubble's Charanjit Singh and is one of the most modern and prestigious commercial properties in central New Delhi.

Sardar Mohan Singh was awarded the Padam Shri and served as President of New Delhi Municipal Council. Mohan Singh Place just off Connaught Place, commemorates his years with the NDMC.



The 21st Century Sikhs of Delhi



New wing of Guru Tegh Bahadur IT College, Rajouri Garden.

From 1947, Delhi's demography changed forever. An estimated 25 million Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs criss-crossed the newly drawn borders to reach their new homelands. In northern India - undivided Punjab and North Western Frontier Province (NWFP) - nearly 12 million were forced to move from as early as March 1947 following the Rawalpindi violence.

Delhi received the largest number of refugees for a single city - the population of Delhi grew rapidly in 1947 from under 1 million (917,939) to a little less than 2 million (1,744,072) between the period 1941-1951. (The National Capital Region (NCR) has today a combined population of 17 million - and growing). The refugees were housed in various historical and military locations such as the Old Fort Purana Qila, Red Fort (Red Fort), and military barracks in Kingsway (around the present Delhi

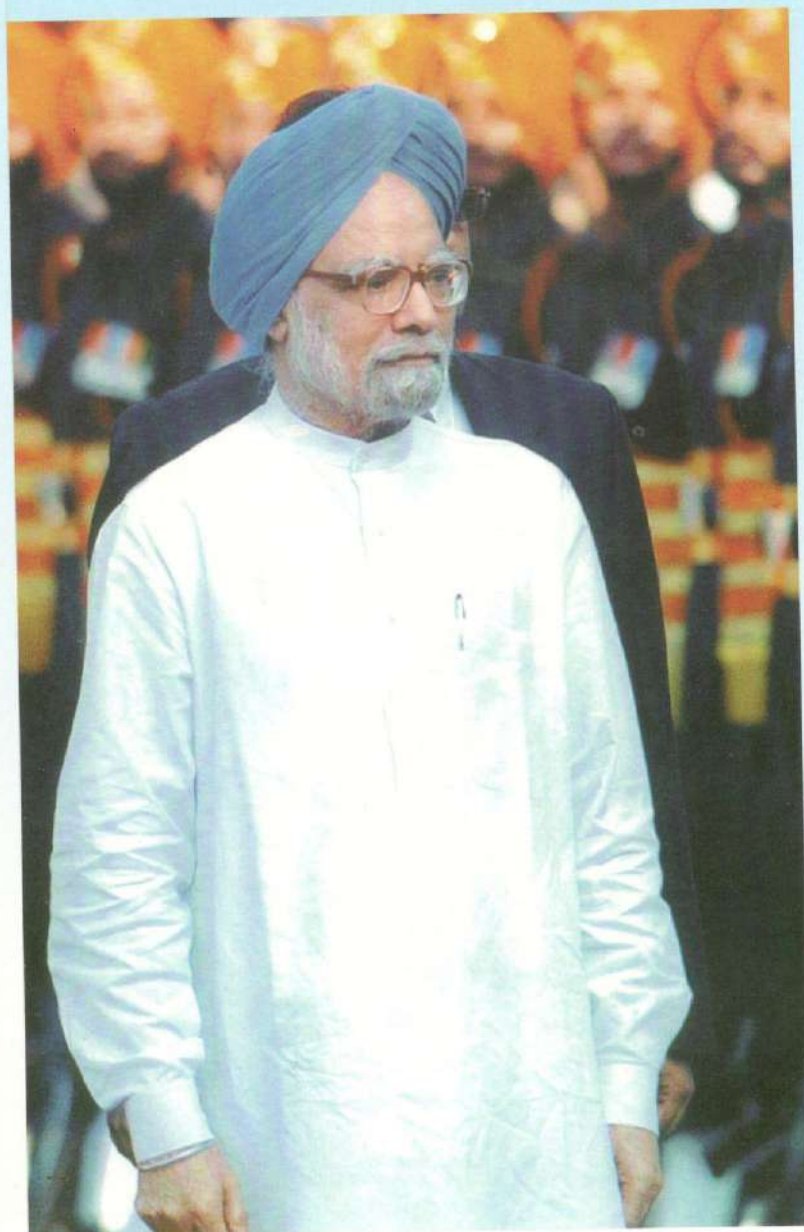
University). The latter became the site of one of the largest refugee camps in northern India with more than 35,000 refugees at any given time besides Kurukshetra camp near Panipat.



result of natural population growth, which has made Delhi one of the fastest growing cities in the world. By 2015, Delhi is expected to be the third-largest agglomeration in the world after Tokyo and Mumbai.

Hinduism is followed by some 80% of Delhi's population, and there are large communities of Muslims (10%), Sikhs (8%), then Parsis, Anglo-Indians, Buddhists and Jews and others.

While Hindustani is most common language, English is the principal written language of the city along with Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu, all four scripts painted on official signboards in the NCR.



Sikhs, which number nearly 1.5 million in the capital of India, live throughout the megacity, but mostly in the North and North West, South and East.

In 2011, the office of Prime Minister is adorned with the portrait of the world-renowned Sikh economist, Dr Manmohan Singh, who has been the Prime Minister of India since 2004.

Five years earlier, before he assumed this august office, Dr. Manmohan Singh formally released the very first premier issue of the Nishaan, illustrated journal for Sikhs, now in its 12th year of publication.



▲ The inspiring 'Nanhi Chhaan' movement is committed to twin causes of protecting the girl child and preserving the environment. Its concept has been promoted by Harpal Singh, Chairman Emeritus the Fortis Group of super specialty hospitals amongst many other initiatives. He is seen here with Mrs Sheila Dikshit, Chief Minister of Delhi and others at a Nanhi Chhaan event in India's capital city, and the movement is now active throughout India from Amritsar to Chennai.