



Mandir Palace of Jaisalmer

EXQUISITE ARCHITECTURE

SAMAR SINGH

India is known for its forts and palaces of yesteryears. Among these, the ones at Jaisalmer in the desert region of northwest Rajasthan stand in a class of their own. Here, in the midst of shifting sands and isolation, one can see one of the oldest lived-in city forts of India and a temple palace quite unique in itself.

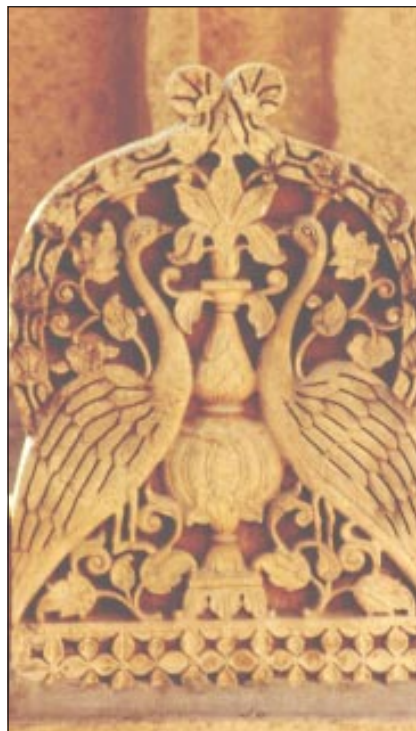
Jaisalmer derives its name from Rawal Jaisal, a Bhati Prince who ruled these parts in the middle of the 12th century AD. His ambition and enterprise helped in establishing a kingdom in this remote and desolate desert region. It is believed that on the advice of a hermit, he started building in 1155 AD a fortification atop a rocky hill that has become famous as *Sonar Qila* or the Golden Fort, because the rays of the setting sun impart such an impression. Over time, Rawal Jaisal and his successors raised on the rocky hill an enormous two-tiered wall having ninety-nine beetling bastions to provide protection from sandstorms, marauders and invaders. Inside the wall, gradually a



Photographs here and on facing page display the architectural splendour of the Mandir Palace.

whole township came into existence, which has survived the vicissitudes of time and continues to this day. Viewed *en masse* from the outside, it presents a remarkable unity and a sight to behold.

Raising such a fortification in those days under the most inhospitable conditions was undoubtedly a stupendous task and a mind-boggling exercise. A critical factor in deciding the location must have been the assured availability of water. This is borne out by the fact that within the fort premises seven deep wells exist to date – each



about 300 ft in depth – with perennial supply of water. Even more surprising and distinctive is the exquisite architecture adopted and developed over the years. It is modelled to suit the demands of residence in the desert and, at the same time, utterly ornate and pleasing. The living quarters have been constructed of thick blocks of stone to provide insulation against the sun and heat, but these have been well merged with the walls and battlements to give a picture of one huge fortification. A closer inspection reveals a riot of fine detail carved on the locally quarried yellow and red sandstone that is remarkably easy to make into intricate designs and shapes and yet hardens with weathering as





the time passes by. The blend of the heavy with the very fine is a unique feature of the architecture of Jaisalmer, which has to be seen to be believed!

In the course of the next five-six centuries, the Bhati rulers of Jaisalmer erected several palaces, temples and other buildings within the fort premises and outside. Some wealthy merchants vied to make their own ornate residences, called *havelis*, which have lately attracted the attention of the tourists. However, one architectural marvel that defies explanation and stands out for excellence in Jaisalmer is the *Mandir Palace* (literally the Temple Palace), located below the city fort within the township that has developed in the wake of more settled conditions in the region during the past two hundred years or so.

As the name suggests, this new palace originated with two temples. The first to come up around the year 1770 was a temple of Lord Rama made at the instance of the mother of Maharawal Mulraj II. Then, in about 1810, the Maharawal himself, who was a devotee of Sri Krishna belonging to the Vallabh sect, got a temple built in the same premises dedicated to *Girdhariji* (another name of Lord Krishna). Its location was determined by the fact that earlier when Vallabhacharya Sri Hari Raiji from Vrindavan visited Jaisalmer, he had stayed at this very place and hence it was considered sacred and auspicious. Almost simultaneously, a

“Badal Mahal” – with the City Fort in its backdrop.



The “Sonar Qila” (above) and the “Jawahar Vilas” (facing page).

residence for the ruler was raised nearby and this was really the starting point of the Mandir Palace complex. Much later in the first half of the twentieth century, Maharawal Jawahir Singh (1914-49) made the Mandir Palace his residence on a regular basis. He and his predecessors made several additions to the palace complex around the aforesaid temples. The most notable are the seven-storied tower-shaped *Badal Vilas* made during the time of Maharawal Berisal Singh and the *Jawahar Vilas* constructed by Maharawal Jawahir Singh.

The *Badal Vilas* is like a bell-tower, more than 50 meters high, and stands out as the tallest structure below the hill-top city fort. A profusion of intricately

carved doors, screens (*jalis*), balconies and other motifs adorn the building, which also has several drooping roofs resembling the wooden roofs of Bengali huts and hence this style is called *Bangladhar*. However, the star attraction in the Mandir Palace complex is the *Jawahar Vilas*, with its tiers of very ornate balconies, canopies and delicately carved screens that are truly exquisite and represent a high point of local craftsmanship in its finest and purest form. Inside there is a lovely glasshouse whose walls have extensive glass and lattice work in gold of different hues and designs. The Durbar Hall for state assemblies has latticed screens and carved balconies and motifs that are spectacular indeed. The overall



effect is indeed pleasing and one cannot but marvel at the finesse of the artisans and of the materials that have made these masterly creations possible.

In a sense, the Mandir Palace is quite unlike other palaces built in India. Evidently, the much prevalent Mughal style or the European trends of later times did not influence its establishment. Its architecture is rather Indo-Saracenic: a blend of the Rajput style and of some Islamic patterns that were carried to Jaisalmer through the caravans from Afghanistan and Persia. But, the result is evidently old Jaisalmer style at its best and has to be appreciated as such.

A distinctive feature throughout the precincts of the Mandir Palace

is the omnibus presence of the Indian Peafowl. Its carved depiction in various forms is almost everywhere: at the main entrance, on doors, walls and balconies, in the courtyards, especially in front of the temples, in glass work and so on. The main reason for this is the strong association of the peafowl with Lord Krishna and the fact that the Bhati rulers of Jaisalmer belong to the lunar race and trace their ancestry to Lord Krishna. Besides, the peafowl has had a long association with human beings in this desert region and elsewhere in Rajasthan, which has religious significance as well. Also, the peafowl is verily nature's masterpiece of colourful splendour and very much a visible manifestation of India in

all its beauty. In fact, it is India's National Bird. In Jaisalmer's Mandir Palace, the presence of this beautiful bird is certainly a dominant theme, perhaps more so here than in the other palaces of India.

The present owner of the Mandir Palace is Maharaj Hukam Singh, son of the late Maharawal Jawahir Singh. He and his family still reside on the premises and in recent years, one part of the palace has been turned into a nice heritage hotel, mainly for the tourists.

Photo courtesy: Maharaj Hukam Singh of Jaisalmer.

◆ *The author, President of the World Pheasant Association-India, is also a noted freelance writer.*





Kinnaur

VIBRANT & PULSATING

Text & Photographs: K.J. CHUGH

The 200-km drive to Kinnaur from Shimla is both exciting and tiring; mountainous terrain, twists and turns, green fields, isolated huts and Satluj give company. A great deal depends upon the time of the year. Kinnaur remains virtually closed during winters when all activities come to a standstill. The land is covered with snow, roads are blocked and denizens confined to their hamlets.

Come spring and Kinnaur begins to reverberate with music and song. People here are beautiful and carry a pleasant smile. They are extremely hospitable and full of life. Their traditions, colourful costumes and music, which can be heard over the top of the mountains, bear testimony to this.

Kinnaur is one of the most beautiful regions of Himachal Pradesh. The tribals here enjoy both the traditional values and the fruits of modernity that have been coming about since independence. Its total area of approximately 6500 square kilometers runs along Satluj river and is shared by three mountain ranges namely, the Zaskar, the Himalayas and the Dhauladhar.

There are various schools of thought about the origin of Kinnaur. Some feel that they are an ancient tribe that lived in the Himalayas and were fond of

A panoramic view of the Kinnaur countryside.



Apple, apple everywhere...

singing and dancing. Others relate them to the mythical days of demigods. It is also believed that the Pandavas spent a greater part of their exile in this region. Polyandry, the custom of having a common wife for all brothers, prevailed here and is thought to have started from the *Mahabharat* times.

However, men and women are considered equal and enjoy complete freedom here. They are brought up equally. Literacy is spreading. Almost all children go to school. Some of them even go to the nearby cities and even metros for further studies.

Women play a very dominant role in the life of Kinnaur. Besides attending to their children and

daily chores, they go to the fields to work and in the evening come back with the farm produce. They also take decisions in all family matters and are actively involved in the social and cultural affairs of the society. Immaculately dressed, these women display their art and culture through their costume, dance and music, thus keeping up the traditions in the most admirable manner. Their dance movements initially are slow and rhythmic but as the music picks up, their dances also become vigorous – almost forcing you to join them.

Men on the other hand are easy going and like to have '*ghanti*' at the slightest pretext. *Ghanti* which means bell in English, is a local popular brew which is served as a



matter of ritual on all occasions, be at birth, marriage or even death in the family.

There are over a hundred festivals and fairs in Kinnaur. *Phulaich* is one of the most famous and widely celebrated among them all. The festival signifies commencement of the harvesting season and blooming of flowers. Fairs and festivals also afford an opportunity to market their farm produce.

Kinnaur is a fast-developing and forward-looking region of the state. Having been declared a tribal area it is making full use of the privileges that go with it. All signs of development exist here. The area is accessible and more and more villages are drawing benefits from government schemes. The soil is rich. A large variety of staple food, vegetables and fruits are grown here. Individuals and communities have been given land for cultivation and development. Education is fast spreading and people are joining the national mainstream, be it defence, administrative services, finance or even politics.

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Beautiful girls of Kinnaur (top); a locally-made shawl (middle) and typical jewellery of Kinnaur.

Saving the Black Buck...

Text & Photographs: PUSHP JAIN

The very thought of Black Buck immediately conjures up the image of an animal leaping and bounding – a black and white, graceful antelope with spectacular spiral horns. Its large eyes circled with white make it one the most elegant antelopes in the world. That is perhaps the reason why Black Buck finds ample reference and representation in the history, culture and religions of India. Be it the seals of Indus valley civilization (3500-1500 BC) or the rock paintings of central India (5000-2500 BC), Black Buck is duly represented! It has also been the subject of Rajputana, Mughal and Pahari school of paintings. Mughals found in it a favourite pet and an object of hunting sport.

The name *Mrigya* in many of India's classical languages and literature is interpreted as a reference to a deer or antelope, but it has been found that the authors more often than not were referring to the Black Buck! Is it then just a coincidence that the species is endemic to the Indian subcontinent?





Black Buck lives in herds, in open country and in close proximity to man. On an average the animal is 80 cm high, weighing around 40 kg with male having 50-60 cm long horns. Some females too have horns. Male acquires black and white plumage after three years of age, while female is yellowish fawn above and white below.

In the past, Black Buck was common and numerous in India. One estimate puts its number to be around four million in the subcontinent. The Mughal ruler Jahangir (16th century) during a fortnight long hunt could bag 426 bucks from an area around the present-day international airport of New Delhi, the capital of India! T.C. Jerdon in his book, *Mammals of India* (1874), spoke of a congregation of ten thousand bucks at the Government Cattle Farm, Hissar, in the present-day Haryana State of India. M.K. Ranjitsinh estimated that at the time of India's independence in 1947, Saurashtra peninsula in the present day Gujarat State of India alone had eighty thousand animals.

However, loss of habitat of the animal and its habit of raiding crops has resulted in its open conflict with man. This has led to mass extermination of the species. Presently, around 40 thousand animals are said to have been left in the country, particularly in Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and in some other Indian states.

One of the better known Black Buck Projected Areas is *Tal Chhapar*. This sanctuary is



located in the Churu district of Rajasthan. Originally, the area was the hunting preserve of the erstwhile rulers of the princely state of Bikaner. After independence, the area was surrendered to the Government of India; it was declared a Reserved Forest in 1962 and a Sanctuary later in 1971. Though the area of the Sanctuary is merely seven sq km, more than 1500 Black Bucks are concentrated here.

Tal Chhapar is a plain open area surrounded by fields and habitation on all sides, except hillocks on the western side. The area turns into a lush green carpet of grass during the monsoons. During one of my visits to the sanctuary, I had a pleasant surprise when during our tea-break, a Black Buck suddenly appeared on our tea table and quickly bit into a plate full of biscuits! Brij Daan, a sanctuary official, told us that “she is Menka, who has been with us since she was brought to us by some villagers in August 2002, few hours after her birth. The baby was delivered in a farmer’s field and curious villagers lifted it as soon as it was born, resulting in the mother abandoning it immediately and the baby becoming an orphan.” In fact, Brij played a major role in raising Menka. Brij, a forest guard, is a commerce graduate and has been in service at Tal Chhapar for the last 24 years. His family has been serving wildlife for the last seven decades. “Earlier, my father provided a yeoman’s service to the sanctuary for more than four decades, and now I am carrying forward the family tradition.” Due to his expert guidance, we could watch and photograph about a

dozen loose herds of Black Bucks, some of which were more than 200 strong.

Menka’s habit of following the visitors inside the sanctuary proved a boon for us. She led us to the site where there were located about 15 territorial sturdy bucks. Most of them were sitting or standing on piles of pellets. The male, in whose territory we were parked with the innocent Menka hanging around, got terribly excited. He started displaying his muscles and power by running around and closer to Menka all this while, threatening the neighbouring studs to keep off. He was excited enough to ignore the presence of a jeep with four persons. He fought ferociously with a neighbour who dared to venture near Menka. She appeared to be full-grown but was too young to be even aware that she had caused a riot around! Her entire attention was focused on whether we would offer her some goodies.

We were rather surprised that despite the stray dog menace that the bucks have to face, and also surrounded by human beings, the Black Bucks were surviving in a virtual island. It was heartening to learn that the people consider Black Buck a blessing for the area. They do not kill the animal even though they face tough time saving their crops from them. On the contrary, during times of droughts people give them fodmmder to survive!

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The author is a wildlife conservationist.

Global ICT

INDIA'S PROWESS

Dr. MEHEROO JUSSAWALLA

At the dawn of the 21st century, India's traditional image of an economy tied down by stringent state-owned sectors of industrial development has been radically transformed to a vibrant, future-oriented knowledge economy fuelled by its prowess in the ICT (Information Communications Technology) sector. India has today established its unique competitive edge in this sector, challenging global competitors with its outstanding and competent workforce which also has full command of the English language. The process of liberalization has revolutionized the country's potential for domestic and international enterprise. According to NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Service Companies), annual revenue projections for this sector are in the vicinity of US\$87 billion by the year 2008.

Thanks to the efforts of early visionaries like Homi Bhabha and Vikram Sarabhai, India's entry into the cyber world, space technology and nuclear research got a head start. Today India's tech boom employs 800,000 professionals and exports \$12 billion worth of software and services as per NASSCOM data. During the decade of the nineties, India's import policy for computers and software was reduced to 10% and it now stands at zero. The government also gives tax incentives to software exporters. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is

freely allowed in all sectors including the services sector.

Institutional support for the ICT sector has been of immense value to the state-of-the-art training for the labor force. The Indian Institutes of Technology date back to the futuristic policies of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. There are today seven such Institutes spread all over the country that foster the rapid growth of India's qualified engineers. In 1999, Bangalore took the lead in setting up an Indian Institute of Information Technology funded by a public-private partnership. It leveraged IT research and development and gave an impetus to making Bangalore India's Silicon Valley. Bangalore already had the Indian Institute of Science pioneered by J.N. Tata as far back as 1909. In 1973, the Indian Institute of Management was established in Bangalore to augment the talent being siphoned off to the IT sector.

India reformed its telecommunications sector in 1999 by setting up a Regulatory Authority which made this sector the fastest growing in the economy. Against this backdrop further privatization took place when VSNL, India's monopoly carrier for international communications, was privatized in April 2002. This paved the way for the explosion in demand for the Internet which is cable-based, with over 10 million users. The

stimulus given to the private sector in promoting ICT investment has spurred the global presence of such companies as Tata Consultancy Services with operations across Asia, followed by Wipro under Hashim Premji now considered India's richest man, and Satyam Computer Services, IBM India and Tata Infotech. All these companies headquartered in India are global in their market reach and also cater to the growing domestic demand. Currently the ICT sector is growing at 6% per annum which is among the fastest in the world. Sankhya Infotech in Hyderabad is one of three companies in the world to develop a complete package of software that delivers 3-D animation for flight simulators to teach pilots aircraft technologies. It also has a joint venture with Israel's Magic Software for virtual reality programmes. Wipro's clients are spread all across America and its business has been growing at 50% per annum since 1995.

The outsourcing debate has taken on a feverish intensity. Those who brand outsourcing as bad are misinformed. During the period of the Y2K crisis itself India's software parks exported a wide range of net-related products from browsers on new generation wireless phones to e-commerce websites. India provided U.S. companies software to debug their networks to forestall the Y2K problems. This goes to show that outsourcing is nothing new for India.

Outsourcing is a structural economic trend derived from process specialization and

unbundling of activities. Today's reality is that without such leveraging of outsourcing, companies cannot take advantage of economies of scale and best solutions for process execution. Whether driven by lower costs or by product differentiation, it is determined by access to resources. The hue and cry over loss of jobs in the affluent countries is misplaced if we examine the advantages to the companies investing in this activity. Even China's Huawei Technologies has 700 people working in its Bangalore office and this number is growing. In fact the debate in the U.S. over outsourcing is providing Indian companies with advertisements that they could not have afforded without the buzz. For example, Accenture has doubled its workforce in India to 10,000 people spread over Bangalore, Hyderabad and Bombay (Mumbai). India's low-cost delivery base has become a necessity for foreign companies as far away as Switzerland's STm Microelectronics. Unisys, Trilogy and Google are expanding their back office and call centers to provide technical support to their clients. This is not a major problem as made out by CNN's Lou Dobbs, because the U.S. Labor Department survey released in June 2004 shows that the jobs lost in America are less than 2% of the total layoffs in the first three months of 2004.

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“Bollywood and Beyond” in Germany

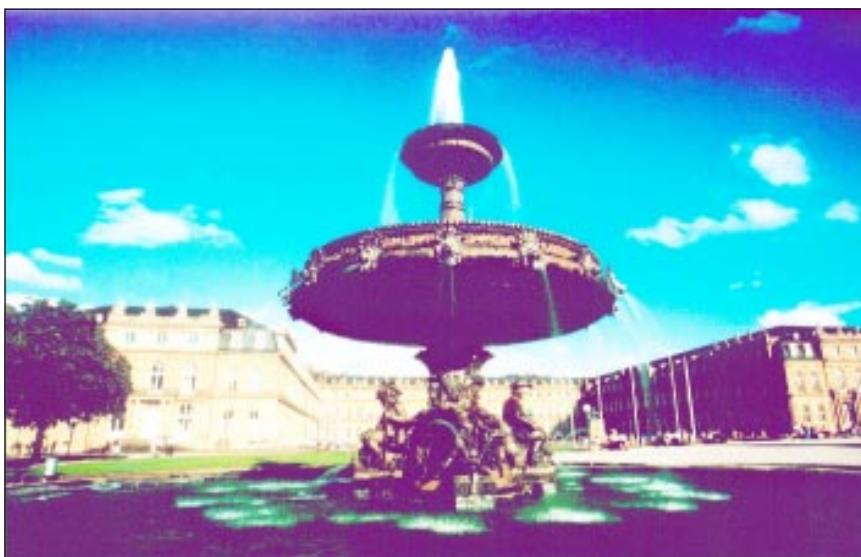
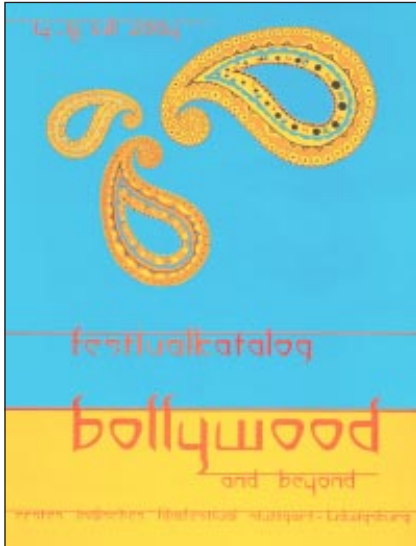
“Bollywood and Beyond”, the first Indian film festival in Stuttgart, Germany, was organized in July this year in cooperation with the Stuttgart media team and the Film Commission Region, Stuttgart. The festival became instantly popular among the audiences, so much so that in a span of just four days (14 to 18 July), a total of 3,500 guests had attended the sold-out shows in the Filmhaus and in Ludwigsburg. Nineteen features, eight documentaries and nine short films represented an interesting cross section of the Indian film landscape. The festival attracted many cine professionals like Catherine

Isberner and Helge Alber from Berlin, Ulrike Schaz from Hamburg and Claire Schnyder from Zurich, among others.

As pointed out by the festival director Oliver Mahn, “The goal of the festival was to interconnect cultural and economic interests, and we have succeeded in doing so.” Film producers, directors and mediapersons from India got an opportunity to scout for possible filming locations in Baden-Wuerttemberg through the extensive location tours conducted by the Film Commission Region, Stuttgart. The tour included visits to places like classical buildings, opera

Festival Director Oliver Mahn (2nd from left) with India’s Ambassador to Germany, Mr. T.C.A. Rangachari (3rd from left).





Schloss platz, Stuttgart City (above) and posters of the Festival (top).

house, television tower, the Mercedes Benz museum, black forest, open air museum, old farm houses and the Stuttgart airport, which is an amazing example of modern architecture.

Appropriately titled “Bollywood and Beyond”, the festival presented contemporary trends in Indian films. The films that were screened included *Maqbool*, *Chandni Bar*, *Meenaxi*, *Main*

Madhuri Dixit Banana Chabati, *Hoon*, *Company* and some other popular films.

Short films, animated films and a documentary section from different regions of India were also well received. The highlight of this section was *Khamosh Pani* by Sabhia Sumar, who won the audience prize.

An interesting bouquet of events designed to showcase the

versatile culture of India was also organized on the sidelines of the festival. This included dance performances, culinary specialties, panel discussions and the *Bombay Boogie Night* – which saw a young German crowd dance to the tunes of Bollywood hits till late into the night.

As the Festival director Oliver Mahn rightly summed up, “The festival will not only promote Indian culture but will also act as a catalyst for promoting mainstream Bollywood cinema as well as regional Indian cinema in Germany.”

– Naresh Sharma, a filmmaker.

Bobby Cash

“ONE IN A BILLION INDIAN COWBOY”

RAMA GAIND

Bobby Cash is India's first country music singer, but his unpretentious manner and warmth has already won him many fans in Australia. His popularity Down Under is not only a dream come true for him, but a total surprise as well! He is humbled by accolades that he received wherever he performed.

One of Bobby's dreams was to sing at the Tamworth Country Music Festival, which he did, but the fact that it proved to be a springboard for widespread admiration is what's overwhelmed him beyond words. Wearing a black broad-brimmed hat, fringed leather jacket, black leather pants and cowboy boots, he's cool, calm and collected about this unexpected bonus.

“I had long dreamt of coming to Australia, and to be here from a district in India that's totally

unknown to the Australians seems absolutely impossible. But I'm here. I still really can't believe it.” He was in the national capital of Canberra in early February 2004 for the National Multicultural Festival and performed at two sold-out concerts at the National Press Club before making his way to Melbourne for several engagements.

He could be right when he claims that he is one Indian (apart from the Indian cricket team) who is creating a stir in the island continent. You might have seen him singing the Indian national anthem at the start of the fourth cricket test between India and Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground on January 2, 2004.

“It was an incredible honour to stand alongside those great players and sing my country's anthem on that hallowed turf of the SCG.



More so because it was not just another test match but a historic one – being Steve Waugh's last and a decider! To sing my country's national anthem and inspire the team was amazing."

Bobby Cash has a self-assured, pleasant singing voice, a warm manner and he plays that guitar with confidence. There maybe a novelty in being an Indian country singer, but his appeal lies in the fact that he makes the country standards his very own. His repertoire covers some songs that he has written, together with mainstream Nashville music of the 60s and 70s and Hindi pop love songs that we, in Australia, absolutely adored.

Bobby Cash, 42, stands 185 cm tall, looks like Imran Khan and sounds like Glen Campbell, complete with a perfectly authentic American accent and an extraordinary gift for the guitar. He not only performs traditional country and western music in perfect American-English, but also Hindi songs in the country and western style.

Born Bal Kishore Das Loiwal (but

prefers to be called Bobby Cash), he grew up in north India in the foothills of the Himalayas. His father used to call him "Babu" which became Bobby – and Kishore became "Kish" which later became "Cash". For as long as he could remember country music was played in his house. In the early 1960s an aunt moved to Nashville and would regularly send the latest country releases to Bobby's mother. With an uncle who made electric guitars and sisters and cousins with a similar passion, Bobby's home in Dehra Dun became a kind of incubator of country music in India.

He remembers growing up listening to the tearjerkers from artists like Jim Reeves, Merle Haggard and Willie Nelson. Having grown up in a semi-rural environment, he said he could understand what that kind of music was saying. That's when he developed an appreciative perception for music. Not only did it fit in with his family's life at the time, but listening to those records became a way of life. So inspired was he that from an early age he also found himself strumming on his guitar, singing along with those





Bobby Cash with his benefactor
Roy Eykamp (right)

“dyin’, cryin’ cheatin’ and lyin’” songs. Having no one to teach him meant developing a playing style that was all his own. He began finger-picking a nylon-string guitar and taught himself to create a novel style which encompassed rhythm, bass and lead playing. To replace the bass he uses his thumb; for the rhythm he uses his middle fingers, while simultaneously picking the melody with his third and little finger. Soon after, his talent found him composing his own songs. Indian culture and country music may seem poles apart, but according to Bobby Cash similarities do exist.

“While India has no established market for country music, I believe it will appeal because it fits in with the Indian psyche. Country comes straight from the heart. Its message is real with roots in family life. It shares a lot of common values such as loyalty, respect for elders, family and neighbours... and the biggest selling music of all time there is country music. John Denver’s

‘Country Road’ being the all-time best seller. The same goes for Glen Campbell songs like ‘Rhinestone Cowboy’ and many of Kenny Rogers’ songs.” Having grown up in India, he wasn’t aspiring to play professionally, but after being urged by his ‘extended family’ he decided to go to the capital New Delhi and played in numerous clubs and hotels. To make ends meet, he recorded two Hindi-pop albums ‘*Yeh Pyaar Hai*’ and ‘*Rukja Baby*’, along with a guitar instrumental for the sake of versatility. Even though the last album did pretty well and he was cajoled to keep recording in that genre (a harmonious blend of Indian and western melodic styles which play a pivotal part in the country’s popular music scene), he was adamant about wanting to pursue his first love. That move was just as well because it was while he was playing in the capital’s Oberoi Hotel that he was



“discovered” by Australian television producer and director Colin Bromley, who was there working on a project for an American network.

Sydney-based Mr Bromley said, “I couldn’t believe my ears. Even his guitar playing was just extraordinary. On being introduced to him, one of the first things he said to me was that he always had a dream to perform at the Tamworth Country Music Festival. That’s when it struck me what a great concept it would be to make a film of him realising that dream from India to Tamworth and back again”.

That’s how Bobby Cash became the subject of a documentary “The Indian Cowboy – One In A Billion” which is the story of his first trip to Tamworth tracing his roots in the foothills of the Himalayas to his becoming the smash hit of the festival.

At the Tamworth Festival in 2003 he also caught the attention of a

wealthy 85-year old benefactor Roy Eykamp, who made his fortune pioneering the production of Kikuyu grass seed and whose aunt had been a missionary in India between the 1920s and the 1950s. While knowing nothing about Bobby Cash, he offered to help him record a CD, in the hope that some of the profits would go to help underprivileged children in India. As it happened the singer and his family already ran a school and hostel for underprivileged children.

For Bobby Cash, Tamworth was a chance to play for and be with people who truly love the same music as he does. He became an overnight sensation. This was the perfect environment for him. Being a genuine country artist at heart, it didn’t take him long to endear himself to the locals. Everyone knew him within a week and he wasn’t “a stranger anymore”. If there was any confusion as to what continent he was from, the inquisitors were soon put right after it was pointed out that he was not

an “American Indian”, but “Indian as in New Delhi”.

Bobby Cash has maintained his contact with Australia and returned in June 2003 and recorded his first country music album titled ‘Cowboy at Heart’ with some of the cream of the Australian music industry. Included on the album are duets with the legendary Smoky Dawson and Tania Kernaghan.

For Bobby Cash, country music has been a life-long passion. Now his patience has been vindicated. “Good things do happen if you wait”. It’s been a road well-travelled, but the journey has only just begun for Bobby Cash. There’s interest in the US in both his documentary and the CD. While it’s been a tough haul from New Delhi to Tamworth, the road to Nashville for this ‘One In A Billion’ Indian cowboy may not be quite as rough.

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The author, a noted journalist, is based in Australia.

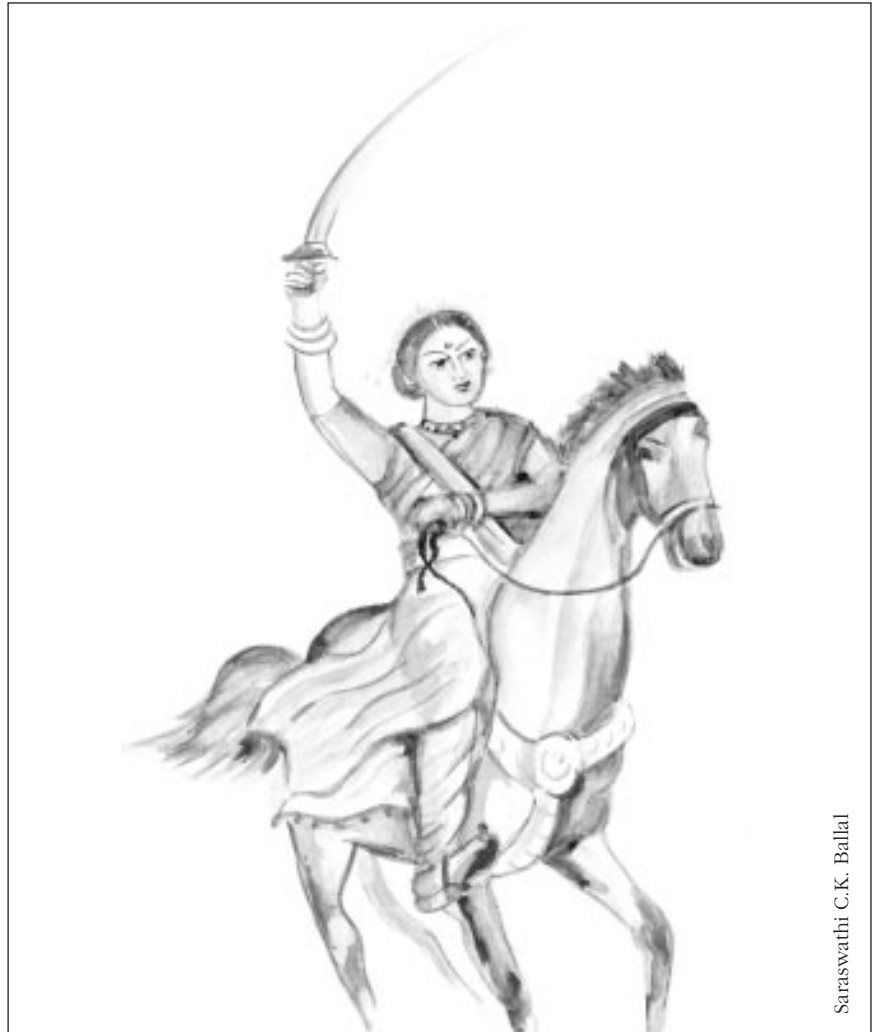
Abbakka Devi

WARRIOR QUEEN OF KARNATAKA

M.K. DHARAM RAJA

The legendary warrior queen Abbakka Devi of Karnataka has left an indelible imprint on the history of the land. Her heroic campaigns against the nefarious depredations of invaders is the theme of folklore to this day. Her all-out battles against a series of incursions of the colonising marauders in the medieval period

are the theme of chronicles in coastal Karnataka. Her place in history is at par with her compatriot Rani Chennamma in the south and Rani Laxmi Bai of Jhansi in the north. Like them she galvanised her forces and mobilised her subjects of all faiths and creeds in a never-say-die crusade against the powerful invaders from overseas.



Abbakka devi belonged to the Jain royal dynasty of the Chowtas, who also had *Somanatheshvara* as their family deity and therefore commanded the allegiance of their Hindu subjects as well. The Chowtas ruled over a large domain with the port settlement of Ullal on the Arabian sea-face as their subsidiary capital. Succession in the dynasty was through the maternal line. The Chowta patriarch Thirumala Raya had taken care early enough to initiate his niece Abbakka into martial arts like fencing and cavalry combats. By the time she came to rule over the Ullal territory Abbakka was a well-accomplished warrior.

Ullal through the ages had been a prosperous port for exports in pepper and other spices grown on the extensive hinterland downwards south from the Portuguese colony of Goa. Fierce competition prevailed during this period among the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British for naval supremacy in the region. Colonisation and commercial exploitation through hegemony in the region was the name of the game. But they were being foiled by the combined strength of the chieftains all along the coastal tract upto the land's end at the confluence of the three seas. The resistance to alien domination, in fact, transcended the barriers of caste and communities.

This fertile strip on the south-western coast nestled between the heights of the lush Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea had remained a bastion of resistance against the buccanneers from abroad. Their objective was to secure footholds on the mainland. The ploy was to bargain for trade links as cover for conquest of the land.

Abbakka Devi who came to rule at Ullal in the later period of the sixteenth century had acquired fame for proficiency in warfare. She was regarded as a flaming symbol of the patriotic fervour of her subjects. The young queen who was also well-versed in the methods of diplomacy and statecraft had come to be hailed as RANI ABHAYA, the fearless queen.

A statue of Queen Abbakka on horseback greets the visitor at the promenade of the Ullal beach-resort. It is a fascinating throwback to her battles against the imperialist freebooters. The portrayal of the warrior queen with a raised scimitar in hand brings back the memories of the heroine rallying her forces against the foreign foe.

The Chowta King Thirumala Raya had with foresight arranged his niece Abbakka Devi's marriage with Lakshmappa Arasa of the powerful Banga dynasty. The Bangas had their capital at Mangalore just north of Ullal across the harbour. The matrimonial alliance that strengthened the position of the Ullal Queen had upset the calculations of the Portuguese government in Goa. It was also rattled by the Queen's astute handling of export trade. The phenomenal expansion of the turnover at Ullal port foiled the designs of the Portuguese government.

Acting on the time-honoured maxim that "the enemy's enemy is a friend" Abbakka had arrived at a mutual defence and friendship pact with the Zamorin of Calicut who was a known adversary of the Portuguese in Goa. The colonial administration in retaliation sent an ultimatum to the Queen demanding the payment of tribute as penalty for breach of an earlier standstill

agreement. Payment of tribute would have implied acknowledgement of Portuguese suzerainty over the Arabian Sea region. The Queen took up the challenge posed by the alien imposters. The Goa administration tried to take over Ullal by sending its formidable naval force there. The first battle at Ullal took place in 1456 A.D. But there was no clear victor in the skirmish which terminated with an uneasy truce.

The Portuguese colonialists meanwhile were alarmed by Abbakka Devi's ascendancy in the region. The next face-off between them followed in 1458. A strong fleet led by Commander Louis De'mellow was despatched to Ullal. But when his shock troops attempted to take over the port-town by storm they met with stiff resistance and counter attack by the Queen's battalions. Besides the Zamorin's men from Calicut (Kozhikode), the Arab Moors and the Meplah (Muslims of Malabar and southern Karnataka) contingents fought on the Queen's side.

The enraged Portuguese commander sent his soldiers into Ullal to ransack the town. They went amuck on a savage outrage of pillage and plunder. Houses were burnt down but their attempt to take over the rich settlement was foiled. The Portuguese were stunned by the fierce defence of the area on all fronts. Chronicles of the period refer to the masterly diplomatic skill of Abbakka and her expertise in the nuances of warfare resulting in repulsing the powerful foe.

The alien aggressors were forced to retreat once more from the Queen's domain. Another period of lull ensued with the Portuguese signing



a trade pact as compromise. But the Goa government smarting under the setback to its expansionist designs continued to persist with the harassing tactics. It sent a fresh ultimatum to Ullal objecting to its friendly ties with the Zamorin. Trade links with Persia (Iran) was also branded as an unfriendly act. Commercial transactions, it said, must be conducted solely through Portuguese intermediaries who must be allowed to set up trade outposts at Ullal. The brave Queen dismissed the colonialists' demarche with disdain.

The discomfited Portuguese then began plotting to undermine the Queen's position at Ullal through the double-dealings of diplomacy. Emissaries were sent to Abbakka Devi's husband, the Banga King at Mangalore to warn him that his capital would be burnt down if help were to be provided for the defence of Ullal. The King's nephew, Kama Raya, who was biding his time to usurp the Mangalore throne, was bought over by assuring him of help. The heir-apparent duly set about the task of conspiring against his uncle. King Lakshmappa Arasa who was thus

checkmated and isolated found himself unable to come to his wife's aid in the next round of hostilities with the Portuguese.

Goa's Viceroy Anthony D'Noronha led the Portuguese forces comprising a number of battleships and 3000 troops in the year 1481 A.D. with the avowed object of overthrowing the Queen and annex the Ullal territory. After launching a pre-dawn surprise attack the Portuguese went on a rampage of indiscriminate killing, wanton destruction and large-scale looting.

Queen Abbakka who was alerted about the treacherous attack on her way back from the Somanatheshwara temple asked her forces to face the enemy bravely without losing heart. Her clarion call to them was to throw out the invading hordes. "Let us fight them on land and the sea, on the streets and the beaches", were her inspiring words. Clad in battle dress, Abbakka led her forces in a fierce counter-offensive assuring them of her resolve to fight for the freedom of the motherland till the last breath of her life. Unfortunately, she was seriously wounded in the fusillade of gunfire. The invaders met with stiff resistance while they tried to trace the Queen's whereabouts. Her loyal soldiers carried the Queen to the sanctuary of the palace. Even on the verge of death Abbakka was heard intoning, "Defeat them, push them back into the sea"

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The author is a senior journalist.



Radha playing Krishna's flute.

Raslila Theatre of Braj

M.L. VARADPANDE

Raslila is a musical dance-drama form that originated in the Braj region of Uttar Pradesh in the 16th century. The Braj region nurtured by river Yamuna is mentioned in the ancient literary works and scriptures as a beautiful grazing land covered by dense forests and inhabited by cowherd community. This region was also known as *Surasena* with Mathura as its main city. Megasthenes, envoy of Greek king Seleucus Nicator, to the court of Emperor Chandragupta Maurya, in his work *Indica* has referred to this region, cities of Mathura and Vrindavan, and the cult of Krishna that flourished there.

According to scriptures, Krishna spent his eventful childhood days

in the Braj region and lived in cowherd settlements of Gokul and Vrindavan. It was here as a naughty child he stole milk and butter from the houses of cowherd girls, killed several demons who came to eliminate him, lifted on his little finger mountain govardhana to save his fellow cowherds from incessant rains caused by the wrath of Indra and drove away poisonous cobra Kalia from river Jamuna.

And it was here, on the full-moon winter nights that he performed delightful *Ras* dance with cowherd girls, fair as Champak flowers, on the banks of river Yamuna. It was here his romance with beautiful Radha flourished.

Raslila theatre basically depicts the life of Krishna which he spent



in the Braj region. And Radha is his main companion in the *Raslila*.

It was Sanskrit dramatist Bhasa who dramatised episodes from Krishna's life through his plays for the first time in 400 B.C. The tradition continued in different forms. But *Raslila* theatre as we see today was the creation of Vaishnava saints who settled in the Braj region in 15th-16th centuries. They created a beautiful musical opera with Krishna as its central theme.

Raslila theatre has two distinct components. In the *Ras* portion the dance of Krishna, Radha and their female companions is shown. *Lila* means sportful acts of Krishna. In the *Lila* portion, episodes from Krishna's childhood in particular are enacted.

It seems that initially Raslila was confined to showing the episodes of Krishna dancing with cowherd girls. *Ain-i-Akbari*, written

Vrindavan on the banks of Yamuna (above) and the Raslila performers (facing page).

towards the end of the 16th century by Abul Fazl, courtier of Emperor Akbar, refers to performance evolved by a class of Brahmin "smooth-faced boys who dress up as women and perform and sing in praise of Krishna and recite his acts."

However the full description of early Raslila theatre is found in the book, *Letters From a Maratha Camp During the Year 1809* by Colonel Thomas Deur Broughton. While describing Raslila performance held in the Camp of Maharaja Scinda to celebrate *Janmashtami* (Birthday of Krishna) the Colonel says: "Both their singing and acting were far superior to that of common performers, their attitudes were exceedingly graceful and their voices never raided beyond natural pitch. Their dresses were appropriate and elegant." Colonel James Tod in his *Annals and*



Antiquities of Raiasthan and F.S. Growse in his *Mathura: A District Memoir* has described the Raslila performances in glowing terms.

The organisers of Raslila troupes are known as *Rasdharis*. The children under the age of puberty are selected for enacting different roles and are trained in dancing, singing and dialogue delivery. In the script poems and songs of medieval poets of Brajabhasha are woven skilfully. There are several plays on Krishna theme in the repertory of *Rasdharis*. The plays are enacted in temples, on the circular platforms known as *Rasmandal* in the open ground and in theatre halls. The plays are enacted throughout the year but *Janmashtami* and *Holi* are the main events when Mathura and Vrindavan reverberate with Raslila plays for days together.

In the opening scene we see Radha and Krishna sitting on the throne, their female attendants standing by their sides. After

worship is offered to the divine couple, they all perform alluring dances while *Rasdharis* in the wings sing and play on musical instruments.

When this portion, known as *Ras*, is over the enactment of *Lila* starts. An episode in Krishna's life is dramatised and presented through songs, dances and dialogues in prose.

Some eminent *Rasdharis* like Swami Ramswarup and Swami Hargovind have constructed huge open air theatres in Vrindavan for performing Raslila plays.



The author is a noted art critic.

PATIALA

HUB OF PUNJABI CULTURE

Text: M.M. LALL
Photographs: SANJAY KAUSHAL

Patiala is comparatively a young city of Punjab, less than 250 years old. There are towns in this north-western Indian state which are older to Patiala; Bhatinda finds a mention in the life history of Razia Sultan, the only female ruler who sat on the throne of Delhi over seven hundred years ago; Ludhiana was flourishing before the Mughals came to India, and the holy city of Amritsar is closely associated with the Sikh gurus.

Patiala, the city of princes, lies 60 kilometers from Chandigarh and is located on the Ambala-Dhuri railway line which goes further upto Bhatinda. The city is the crowning glory of the *Malwa* region – which is one of the three major components of Punjab – the other two being the *Manjha* and *Doaba* regions. The *Malwa* (meaning elevated surface) region falls between river Sutlej in the west and river Ghaggar in the east.

After Amritsar, which boasts of the *Harmandir Sabeb* – the Golden Temple – Patiala is the second most important city of Punjab. Home to valiant warriors, Punjab has a long history dating back to the times of *Vedas* (Hindu scriptures) and even earlier. An eminent Indian historian and archaeologist, Dr. H.D. Sankalia, says it has been established that the early man first entered the foothills of the north-west Punjab at the end of Inter-Glacial period and the

beginning of the Second Ice Age in the south west Himalayas. When the Aryans settled in this north-western tract of India, the region came to be known as the *Brahmrishidesa*. At one time, the borders of Punjab touched Afghanistan in the west and the Gangetic plains in the east. Later on, the Greeks gave it the name of *Pentopotamia*. Known as the land of five rivers, *Punj-ab* (*Punj* means five and *ab* means water), the region came to be called as Punjab during the reign of Mughal Emperor Akbar in the sixteenth century AD. It now falls between the rivers Ravi and Ghaggar.

Patiala was founded by the Sardar (leader) of *Phulkian Misl*, Baba Ala Singh, in 1756. After the death of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in 1707, the Mughal power in Delhi was on decline due to succession feuds, the rise of regional satraps, repeated invasions by Afghan warlords and the advent of the British. Anti-Mughal sentiment pervaded among the Sikhs because of the persecution of Sikh gurus at their hands. It was at this juncture that the Sikh *misl* (confederacy) system of governance took roots in Punjab, and they were twelve in all, equal but with differing fighting strength. Every *misl* was free to act the way it liked in the area it controlled; only in matters affecting the community as a whole were the dictates of *Dal Khalsa* at Amritsar supreme.

A Swiss writer, Col. Polier, described a *misl* as “that formidable aristocratic republic of Sikh soldiers who are indefatigable, mounted on the best horses that India can afford ... Fifty of them are enough to keep at bay a whole battalion of the king’s forces”.

Though Phulkian, with Baba Ala Singh at its head, was the twelfth *misl*, it did not entirely submit to the dictates of the *Dal Khalsa*. Even during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh of *Sukerchakya misl*, relations between the Durbar at Lahore and Patiala were not very cordial. However, the Amritsar Treaty of 1809 cut off Malwa from the overall control of Lahore, and the territories falling on the eastern side of river Sutlej came under the British protection. This was what the Malwa rulers wanted.

The *misl* of *Phulkian* takes its name after Baba Ala’s grandfather Phul. Baba Ala Singh, who originally came from Barnala, a town near Dhuri, laid the foundation of his fort, the *Qila Mubarak*, at Patiala in 1763. However, the early construction was carried out by Baba Ala Singh’s grandson Amar Singh who had succeeded him after his father Shardul Singh (Baba Ala’s son) had died of wounds at the hands of Afghan soldiers. The construction work at the *Qila* continued for about 100 years.

According to *Phulkian State Gazetteer*, the Patiala fort is built on the ruins of “*Pattanwala Theb*”



where ruled a Bhatti Rajput princess called “*Pattan-ki-Rani*”. The name of Patiala is said to have been derived from the name of this mound, as per the account given in *Patiala and its Historical Surroundings*, a Punjabi University publication. The first construction at Patiala began in 1757 with the building of a “*Deorhi*” for residences and a small “*Kachi Garhi*” (mud fort), presently known as “*Sodbian-di-Garhi*”.

The Qila Mubarak, which lies in the centre of the city, has several structures including the *Qila Androon*, *Sard Khana*, *Jalaun Khana* and the Florence Palace. The Durbar Hall, with its chandeliers, has been converted into a museum with an arms gallery. In a special enclosure in the *Qila Androon*, a *dhuni*

(smouldering fire) keeps burning; it was brought here from Varanasi over 200 years ago. There is a belief that Patiala will remain secure as long as this flame keeps burning!

Considering its historical and cultural value, the World Monument Watch Fund has listed the Qila Mubarak as an endangered site. It now expects to receive funds for its restoration, to be undertaken by the Patiala Heritage Society. Spread over 12 acres, Qila Mubarak is said to be the only fort in Punjab which had been built by a Sikh ruler and his successors; most others had been built either by the Mughals or by the Afghan warlords.

While Qila Mubarak represents the rising power of the House of Patiala, the Moti Bagh palace marks its consolidation and flowering.

The National Institute of Sports (NIS), Moti Bagh Palace.



“Sheesh Mahal” (above) and its inside view (facing page).

With acres of expansive lawns, this palace was built by Maharaja Narinder Singh in 1847 on the pattern of Lahore Shalimar Gardens with terraces, fountains and the like. It is a huge building running horizontally with long verandas, latticed windows and high walls coated with yellow paint that signifies the spirit of Sikh valour and sacrifice. The judicious use of red sandstone on arches, terraces and railings breaks the monotony of the yellow coating of the walls. The wide staircases, the huge halls, the red sandstone pavements lend the palace a touch of royalty, munificence and style.

A railway coach is parked in one corner of the lawns facing the palace. It has a story to tell. A bet was waged between a royal

personage and a ranking British as to who would reach Delhi first, a horse rider or a railway coach powered by a steam engine. The animal is said to have won over the machine! The coach was handed over to the royals for winning the bet.

Once the home of erstwhile Patiala rulers, the Moti Bagh palace now has become the campus of the *Netaji Subhash National Institute of Sports*. The 268-acre sprawling campus, situated amidst sylvan surroundings, has hockey and football grounds, basketball and volleyball courts, cricket pitches and archery range. Facilities for badminton, billiards, boxing, fencing, judo, squash, table-tennis, weightlifting, wrestling, yoga and conditioning are also available.



The Moti Bagh palace is also home to the National Sports Museum which displays a large number of medals commemorating the Olympics and Asian Games and numerous other sports mementos. A pair of gloves worn by the boxing legend Mohammad Ali, at an exhibition match in New Delhi, is also on display.

The campus also houses the *Sheesh Mahal* (palace of mirrors) built by Maharaja Narinder Singh, which now houses the Punjab State Museum. The three-storied palace has a rich collection of swords, battle-axes, helmets and shields, orchestra pieces, Punjabi dresses, Phulkari motifs, royal thrones and chairs. A hall of chandeliers of various sizes and weights is of interest to visitors. A picture gallery

of the Patiala rulers tells the story of the past. The hall of mirrors and the gallery of medals also merit a visit.

Nearby is the Moti Bagh Gurudwara (Sikh temple), built to mark the visit of the Ninth Sikh Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib. Another well-known gurudwara is *Dukh Niwaran Sahib* which also is related to the Guru's visit. Though the Patiala princes sought to promote the Sikh religious fervour, they also generously gave lands and grants for building Hindu temples, as also for their upkeep. The important temples are of goddess Kali and Raj Rajeshwari; two mosques and a church also dot the cityscape.

The story of palaces will not be complete without the mention of the Rajendra Palace (*Rajendra Kothi*) adjoining the Baradari

gardens. Maharaja Rajendra Singh (1876-1900) got it built for his living when he decided to leave the Moti Bagh palace. With over 20 rooms, the three-storied *kothi* displays the influence of the Mughal and British colonial architecture. When the Punjabi University was set up in 1962, it functioned from its premises for about five years. Plans are afoot now to convert the *Rajendra Kothi* into a heritage hotel.

Besides palaces and gardens, Patiala is also known for its significant contribution towards the development of arts, sports and education. The city boasts of the oldest college in the north-west India, the Mahindra college, set up in 1875. For long it was the only college between Lahore and Delhi.



An inside view of the fort "Qila Mubarak" (above) and the entrance to the Punjabi University complex (right).



When the Delhi College (rechristened as Zakir Husain College) was closed for a few years, a good number of students took admission in the Mahindra College. With the setting up of the Punjabi University in the city, Patiala has turned into an educational hub in this part of the country. Government Medical College, Thapar College for Engineering and Technology, Ayurvedic College and many other educational institutes provide opportunities for higher learning in various disciplines.

Patiala can rightly claim to be the sports capital of India, dating back to the princely days. Renowned cricketers like Hearne, Rhodes, Tarrant, Anwar Hussain and Lala Amarnath showed their skills on the Patiala grounds at one time or the other. Maharaja Bhupendra Singh led the Indian cricket team when it toured England in 1911. The setting up of the Cricket Club of India was the culmination of his efforts. His son, Maharaja Yadavendra Singh, was once the President of Indian Olympic Association and was

succeeded by his younger brother, Raja Bhalendra Singh, whose son, Randhir Singh, is presently its Secretary General. In addition to cricket, the House of Patiala provided financial and infrastructural support to promote games like polo, hockey, archery and athletics. When we talk of wrestling, we remember "Gama Pahelwan" whose feats are fondly remembered even to this day. This *Rustam-e-Hind* (champion of India) and later *Rustam-e-Zaman* (champion of the world) flowered with the support of Patiala court.

But icing on the cake is Patiala's contribution in the fields of music and painting. Under the royal patronage was born the Patiala *Gharana* (school) of Indian classical *gayaki* (singing). With the fall of Mughal power in Delhi, musicians like Mian Tan-Ras-Khan landed in the court of Maharaja Narinder Singh. Ali Bux and Fateh Ali adorned the court of Maharaja Rajendra Singh. But the most famous singer and exponent of the Patiala *Gharana* was Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, son of Ali Bux.



The famous "Parandas" (braids) and "Jutties" (footwear) of Patiala.



Frescoes and paintings adorn the walls of Sheesh mahal and other palaces depicting the major incidents in the lives of Sikh Gurus and Hindu gods and goddesses. The Patiala court patronized painters who had migrated from Lahore, Kangra and other adjoining hill states. Patiala is also famous for its handicrafts that include *jutties* (footwear) embroidered in golden thread, *nalas* (strings to tie *churidar pyjamas* and *salwars*), and colourful *parandas* (used for braiding the hair by women).

Among the rulers of Patiala, Maharaja Bhupendra Singh has a place of his own. There are stories galore about his munificence, his large-heartedness and religious fervour. There are also legends that speak of his appetite for good food, his fondness for good dresses, emeralds and diamonds and good company. There are also stories about his physical strength as well. I am tempted here to quote what Baron Jean Pellance says about

him: "Patiala seems to be the living incarnation of those omnipotent sovereigns of the past, whose ungovernable personalities loom large across the ages; men of the stamp of King Herod or Henry the VIII. None could embody more superbly than the Eastern Prince of fairy tales, the hero of our childhood dreams; none more aptly illustrates the magnificence and despotic power of the last absolute monarchs." The Baron goes on, "There is much of the ideal tyrant in his physical appearance. Above a torso bulky as a wine-cask rises a huge puissant head. Between the Sikh turban sitting well upon his temples like a helmet, and black rolls of beard which like a chin-piece wrap his neck and jaw, a dark face peers out". It seems the Baron was somewhat carried away when he found himself in the presence of Maharaja Bhupendra Singh. Though the oriental monarchs had their foibles and particular characteristics, they cared for their subjects.

There is definitely something in the air of this princely city that

overwhelms you. There is a certain old world charm along with the modern-day sophistication that pervades the life of this city. There is something very peculiar about the way its residents walk, talk, dress and drink. In the high-walled saloons all over the world, the "*Patiala peg*" is famous for its strength and intensity. Patiala is the story of a people who live a good, fuller and rich life.

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Mandovi river flows along the Idalco Palace.

Idalco Palace of Goa

Text & Photographs: ASHOK NATH

The magnificent red tiled-building by the banks of Mandovi River in Panjim, which houses the Goa Government Secretariat, has perhaps seen and made more history than any other building in Goa. Built by the Sultan of Bijapur, Adil Khan (Shah) probably in the 15th century, the building was called *Palace de Idalco* by the Portuguese – *Idalco* being a distortion of Adil Khan. One of the few existing relics of Muslim rule in Goa, the Idalco Palace is a significant landmark in

the chronicle of the changing fortunes of Goa. After its capture in 1510 by Alphaso de Albuquerque it was converted into a strategic military station; some artillery and foot soldiers were deployed with whose help the commander of the garrison inspected all vessels coming up the river.

With the passage of time the castle of Adil Khan underwent various modifications. In 1613, during the regime of Dom Jeronimo de Azevedo, it was made habitable in



External view of the Palace.

order to provide transit facilities to dignitaries leaving and arriving in Goa. The French traveller Francois Pyrard de Laval described it thus: "There are in this fort ample rooms, which make it a lovely and comfortable palace where Viceroys coming in from Portugal disembark and rest till they make their solemn entry and take charge; and the outgoing Viceroy resides till his departure." In those days the waters of the river used to reach the door of the Adil Khan Palace where the Viceroys used to land in boats.

The Adil Khan Palace is a typical *Mauresque alcazar* (castle) built around a *patio* (courtyard) in the architectural tradition of the middle ages which has remained almost

unchanged in its outer appearances through the ages. The rear-admiral Viscount A. Fleuriot de Langle during his voyage across the Malabar in 1859 paid a visit to Goa and left some impressions which were later published in the journal *Le Tour du Monde*. The Adil Khan Palace was described as having "a vast structure crowned with a series of sharp ceilings which cover each separate apartment, as it was customary in the past century, which lends to this building a majestic appearance. A big staircase of marble climbs down the northern facade of the Palace until the river. The halls of the Palace are vast and the upper floor is built specially for the warm climate of Goa. On the ground floor is a chapel founded in

1760 and of the invocation of our Lady of Conception".

In 1887 a complete renovation of the interior of the Palace was undertaken to make it a suitable place for the Governors-General to live in. The Palace remained the official residence of the Governor-General till 1918 when it was shifted to Cabo Palace, former convent of the Franciscans. (The Cabo Palace has now become Raj Bhavan, the official residence of the Governor of Goa). From 1918 onwards the Adil Khan Palace housed the Legislative Council, Secretariat and the office of the Attorney General.

After the liberation of Goa in 1961, Adil Khan's Palace was renovated



and extended in 1971 to become the secretariat of the Union Territory of Goa. The Coat-of-arms of the Viceroy of Goa was replaced by the Ashoka Chakra, the wheel of law, which forms the central motif of the Indian Flag. The flagpost in front of the building has now become a landmark, as on 19th December, 1961, India's National flag was hoisted on it to mark the liberation of Goa. It was but natural that this historic building should house the legislative assembly, offices of the Chief Minister and his colleagues, as well as those of the administrative officers and other staff of the Government.

The historic building on the banks of river Mandovi is truly situated in one of the most picturesque settings for a Government Secretariat anywhere in India. It gets prettier at night when the flood lights are switched on. There is a huge bougainvillea tree in front of the building which explodes into a blaze of vermillion in summer, blending itself admirably with the already fantastic ambience of the place.

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The author is a former senior civil servant.

Stairs to history... Idalco Palace.

Folk Dances and Music of Haryana & Rajasthan

Text and Photographs: MULK RAJ SIDANA

Life manifests itself in rhythms and no rhythmic expression celebrates life more beautifully than the folk music and folk dances. Every aspect of life inspires rural people to celebrate one way or the other. The rural folk are also sensitive to their surroundings, and their songs and dances mark the changes often in a poetic way.

Folk dances, however, do not aim only at entertaining people and they seldom expect big audiences. For the rural people dance is an integral part of their life. There is a tribal saying, "the tribe which dances does not die." So it is very essential that these traditions are maintained and preserved. Folk culture consists of folk music,





instruments and folklore. Folk instruments are the soul of folk dances and songs.

In the states of Haryana and Rajasthan, there is a striking similarity in the musical instruments which accompany the dances. These are '*Dhamal*', '*Chimta*', '*Dhol*', '*Nagara*', '*Dhaphal*', and '*Been*'. *Dhaphal* and *Been* are common musical instruments used by folk singers in both the states. The farmers of Haryana dressed in all their finery perform the joyous *Dhamal*. Some of the dancers carry large *Dafs* in their hands which are frilled with brightly coloured fabric. Other accompanying instruments are *Sarangi*, *Khartal*, *Bansuri* (flute) and *Chimta*



(foreceps). With the music, the dance gradually gains in tempo. The dancers also sing and perform according to the rhythm of the instruments. The songs are based on the lyrics penned by Lakhmichand, the famous poet of the masses. When the folk singers sing the *Raginis* of Lakhmichand, the audience, inspired by the rhythmic beat of the *Daf*, begin dancing with gay abandon. The singers use pitcher (*matka*) shaped pot made of baked clay whose mouth is covered with goat skin. When beaten with the hand palms, it produces a melodious sound. '*Been*', usually used by the snake charmers, also forms a part of the musical repertoire. It is made of dry gourd into which are inserted two bamboo tubes. Some finger holes are made on the tubes. The *Chimta* (forecep) consists of two large flat blades of steel. Its arms are fixed with two small iron rings which produce the melodious sound when beaten against the palms.

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The author is a freelance photographer.







Chhaya

THE MESMERISING ARTIST!

BHARAT BHUSHAN

When you see the works of this artist and then have a look at her own portrait, it is difficult to decide which of the two artists is better – the god who made her or she who created her paintings! Meet Chhaya Parekh, a well-known Indian artist who has captured the hearts of millions through her mesmerising paintings on Indian heritage and hypnotic figures.

Her beautiful but agile frame hardly gives away the stature that Chhaya has acquired in the art world. She could easily be mistaken for a teen student in quest of learning more about Indian art. And yet her paintings adorn the walls of some of the big business families and film personalities, institutions and hotels around the globe.

Chhaya was born in Mumbai in 1965. She graduated in Fine Arts from the J.J. School of Arts and did her post-graduation from London (St. Martin). Her journey into the art world began with interior designers Neetu Kohli and Kavita Singh who promoted her works. Later on, Harrods in London and 'Khazana' in all the Taj Hotels in India became regular outlets for her creative outpourings. Since then, she has come a long way and has held solo shows in Dubai, Hong Kong, London and the US, with corporate houses vying with each other to sponsor her shows.

Ever since she was a two-year old child, Chhaya has been fascinated by 'eyes' – beautiful eyes! She used to scribble on any and every blank paper she could lay her hands on, and that has now become her major repertoire. Though she may have learnt the basics of art, as they say in her mother's womb itself, but it was always her "Papa who nurtured her dreams of becoming an artist."

Moving from modelling in over 150 assignments and featuring on the covers of fashion magazines and doing TV serials, Chhaya has now adopted painting as a full-time career. She is fully devoted to making



Chhaya the artist (above) and her untitled paintings displayed in this feature.

her figurative creations add spice to many homes around the world. She loves the works of masters like Renoir and Raja Ravi Varma. Her canvases, which are larger than life, are based on oil and mixed media with a three-dimensional raised technique that enhances their decorative element, thus bringing out the intricate details of *Sringar* (art of adorning) in her lovely women.

“Yes”, Chhaya admits, “Women are a focal point of my works because women are the epitome of beauty. They portray divinity,

grace and serenity.” The occasional doves in her paintings portray ‘love’, and also add momentum while parrots and peacocks depict romance, colour and beauty.

Chhaya is grateful to god for gifting her with this satiating art – which not only bestows peace on her but also gives pleasure to the owners of her paintings!







OCTOBER 2004

India Perspectives



From the Editor...



This issue seeks to provide a good peep into the kaleidoscope that is India. A land of diverse cultures and traditions; a country that experiences the vast vicissitudes of weather – from snow-capped Himalayas to the Thar desert of Rajasthan, from the vibrant and pulsating culture of Punjab to the simple and captivating tribes of Himachal Pradesh, India has them all. Even the 'Raslila' theatre of the Braj region, that celebrates the childhood and early youth of Lord Krishna, has an attraction uniquely its own.

Patiala, the second largest city of the Indian state of Punjab, is considered the hub of Punjabi culture famous the world over. Replete with history and historical monuments, the city boasts of its magnificent palaces and gardens. It is also known as the sports capital of India for its significant contribution to the development of sports in the country.

Kinnaur is one of the most beautiful regions of the state of Himachal Pradesh. Though it remains covered under a thick blanket of snow during the winters, but come Spring and this quaint little town begins to reverberate with music and dance. The common thread of folk music and dance also runs through the states of Haryana and Rajasthan who have folk dances and many identical musical instruments that breathe life into these two states of India.

Besides this cultural bonanza, this issue also focuses on India's transformation to a "vibrant, future-oriented knowledge economy fuelled by its prowess in the Information Communication Technology". India has today established its unique competitive edge in this field, "challenging global competitors with its outstanding and competent workforce".

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MANDIR PALACE OF JAISALMER: EXQUISITE ARCHITECTURE	Samar Singh	2
KINNAUR: VIBRANT & PULSATING	K.J. Chugh	8
SAVING THE BLACK BUCK...	Pushp Jain	12
GLOBAL ICT: INDIA'S PROWESS	Dr. Meheroo Jussawalla	16
"BOLLYWOOD AND BEYOND" IN GERMANY	Naresh Sharma	18
BOBBY CASH: "ONE IN A BILLION INDIAN COWBOY"	Rama Gaiind	20
ABBAKKA DEVI: WARRIOR QUEEN OF KARNATAKA	M.K. Dharam Raja	24
RASLILA THEATRE OF BRAJ	M.L. Varadpande	27
PATIALA: HUB OF PUNJABI CULTURE	M.M. Lall	30
IDALCO PALACE OF GOA	Ashok Nath	36
PHOTO FEATURE: FOLK DANCES AND MUSIC OF HARYANA & RAJASTHAN	Mulk Raj Sidana	39
CHHAYA: THE MESMERISING ARTIST!	Bharat Bhushan	42

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Front cover: A painting by Chhaya.

Back cover: Haryana folk dancer and musician.
Transparency: Mulk Raj Sidana.