



MEMOIRS OF A Broken Past

The 1947 Partition Archive is an initiative to put together heartfelt tales straight from the mouth of those who survived the severing process

By SHUTAPA PAUL

RAVI CHOUDHARY

of Socio-Cultural Anthropology and Religious Studies at the University of Virginia in the US, is at present in Punjab conducting interviews of survivors. "The knowledge of the fact that my ancestors are originally from a small village called Kana Kachha outside Lahore sparked my interest in all matters relating to the moment of severance, August 1947, and the long drawn out process of complete separation that ensued," says Sandhu who has collected over 40 stories and is the only non-volunteer working in the organisation as part of the American India Foundation.



Manleen Sandhu with Guneeta Singh Bhalla (left); survivor of Partition (above); a letter from the past (below)

A 36 year-old software engineer, Farhana Afroz mostly collects stories in the San Francisco Bay area in California and has travelled to her birthplace, Bangladesh, as well. "It's hard to

US in 2011. Bhalla started filling the rank and file of the organisation with other enthusiasts and The 1947 Partition Archive was eventually registered in several other countries.

Manleen Sandhu, a 24-year-old student



Hearing tales from survivors of the event is immensely more powerful than reading a book or watching a movie.

A familiar sense of loss, gruesome memories of violence and rude reminders of upheavals have united virtual strangers for a common cause. A motley group of people across the globe are working to create the first of its kind archive of human stories dating back to the Partition of 1947, aptly titled The 1947 Partition Archive. This unique exercise is the brainchild of Guneeta Singh Bhalla, a PhD in Physics and US resident. The archive will essentially be a digital library of oral histories on the Partition that affected the lives of citizens

across the Indian sub-continent.

"The effects of Partition continue to haunt the subcontinent. Unfortunately, we have mostly lost our primary sources. We are functioning in a state of urgency as our primary sources are leaving fast. We are using the best of modern communication technology to empower ordinary citizens in the documentation process," says Bhalla, who visited India in February to collect a few stories. In her early 30s, Bhalla, like most volunteers across the world, is of Indian ethnicity and has deep emotional connections with the Partition. The lack of teaching

and documentation of the Partition propelled the young physicist to take matters into her own hands. "After we moved to the US, we learned about the holocaust in Europe and Hiroshima/Nagasaki but never about the partition, which I knew must be an equally important event. My grandmother had told me stories, and I realised that people didn't take it seriously when I repeated her stories. They had to hear it directly from her," says Bhalla.

In 2008, while pursuing research for her PhD in Japan, she came across the oral testimony library at the Hiroshima Peace

Memorial. "It was immensely powerful to hear directly from the survivors, more so than reading a book or watching a movie. I knew at that moment what needed to be done for the Partition and how to get stories like my grandmothers' out there for the world to hear. My grandmother unfortunately passed on long before. But thousands of other grandparents were still alive," she adds.

Bhalla started archiving stories from 2009 and knowing that she needed others to help in the mammoth task she registered the organisation as an NGO in the

Stairs to Fulfil Sporting Dreams

An initiative by Siddhartha Upadhyay called Stairs works to harness the sporting talent in underprivileged kids and helps realise their dreams By VISHAKHA TALREJA

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. Going beyond the obvious meaning of the proverb, 33-year-old entrepreneur Siddhartha Upadhyay, through his initiative Stairs, is ensuring that underprivileged children do not spend their days in a dull fashion. His organisation is offering a level playing field to the children by giving them access to sporting facilities and equipment to play.

As a student Upadhyay

a bat and a ball, and within minutes there were at least 10 of them who wanted to play," he recalls.

That was the beginning of his initiative Stairs, giving children a medium to reach where they wanted to. Today more than 50,000 children are regularly playing under different programmes, such as 'Khelo Dilli', 'Khelo Haryana' and 'Khelo Himachal', run and managed by Stairs.

Stairs has 172 centres in Haryana, 28 centres across

gold medal at Asian Power Lifting Championship," Upadhyay says with pride.

It was with his funds and some borrowed money from friends that Stairs climbed up from training a handful of students to thousands every day. In a couple of years, it managed to get corporates on board. In 2006, international brand Reebok tied up with Stairs to organise the annual event, Reebok Stairs Cricket Championship, at

is concentrating on. At Stairs centres, children play volleyball, football, hockey, kabaddi, basketball, handball and even sepak takraw (kick volleyball). "In India people have a pre-conceived notion that if it is about sports, it must be cricket. But we want to promote indigenous games like kabaddi as much as we want these kids to excel," Upadhyay makes his point.

What's the next game that he wants to play? "We will



Stairs started its journey with Upadhyay's funds and some borrowed money and today it trains thousands of children every day.

was actively involved in sports, and it was early in life that he realised how sports could change lives of the underprivileged. It was about 10 years ago when he was working in an insurance company that he realised he wanted to do something for society and the answer was sports. "When the idea struck me, to check if it works I went to a slum near my house in Delhi with just

Delhi and covers more than 100 villages of Himachal Pradesh. But it's not in these numbers that Upadhyay's success lies. Stairs is about making a difference in the lives of these children. "It's the success stories of these children that are a testimony to the achievement we have made at Stairs. For instance one of our kids went on to play for the Delhi Daredevils team, another has won a

Una in Himachal Pradesh. Later, in 2010 it went on to become a multi sport event. Around the same time, Uflex, a packaging company, started organising Uflex Stairs Cricket Championship where talented children were given a chance to showcase their talent and also get sports gear and free coaching as part of the programme. Later, it started granting the Uflex-Stairs Cricket Scholarship and since then about 72 students have been granted this scholarship.

What makes Stairs unique is that it's not cricket that it

now be working with differently-abled people. We have already done a few workshops with them, and you have to see to know what kind of potential they have. Some of them are very good at sports. Besides I am working towards creating awareness regarding the 'Right To Play', he says.

Famous boxer Muhammad Ali once said that champions aren't made in the gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them: a desire, a dream, a vision. Through Stairs, Upadhyay is giving wings to these dreams.



Divya Shrivastava with members of the local tribes; handicrafts (below)

TIGER HEARTED WELFARE

Dhok, at Ranthambore in Rajasthan, is an epitome of how welfare of the local community has helped tiger conservation By SUNDARI SIVASUBBU

Thanks to silent crusaders like Divya Shrivastava, we can still recite the lines: "Tiger, tiger, burning bright, In the forests of the night" from William Blake's poem 'The Tyger' if we happen to visit Ranthambore in Rajasthan.

This young, soft-spoken woman's determination and innovative application of the spirit of enterprise is not only giving the majestic predator a lease of life, but also saving local artisans from vanishing forever.

One of the biggest and most renowned national parks in north India, Ranthambore is not only a major wildlife tourism attraction, but also a famous hunting ground favoured by the Maharajas of Jaipur to the present-day poachers. With little development or employment opportunities, the local tribes often turn to poaching as a means to earn and to feed their families. Laws exist but help neither the endangered animal nor the locals who are themselves on the edge of survival.

Amid these crippling constraints, Shrivastava founded Dhok, a unique social enterprise unit in Sawai Madhopur, around 130 km from Jaipur. The grassroots organisation works with local communities and ex-poachers in and around Ranthambore by training them in alternate livelihoods which in turn helps break the socio-economic cycle of de-

pendence on poaching.

Shrivastava gave up a thriving career as a corporate dietician and relocated to the forest, thanks to her husband Dharmendra Khandal, a conservation biologist with Tiger Watch, an NGO working in Ranthambore.

"It was the late Fateh Singh Rathore, founder of the Ranthambore National Park and his family, who encouraged me to start Dhok. They helped me realise that for any conservation effort to succeed, the local community must be involved," she reflects.

The four objectives of Dhok are: to provide free vocational training to the Mogya boys (a traditional hunter-gatherer tribe) to stop them from poaching; to provide alternative livelihood to the communities living around the park; to attain maximum tourism benefits to the 'tiger's neighbours', and to contribute 10 per cent of the profits towards tiger conservation.

"The Dhok tree gives shelter to the wildlife in these forests. Likewise, Dhok provides shelter to the local communities," Shrivastava says. Dhok trains women and children in tailoring, block printing, embroidery, and helps sell their products, ranging from clothes, bags, purses, home furnishing, black

pottery, baskets and toys. In the three years of its existence, Dhok has worked with nearly 50 individuals. "By involving local artisans, Dhok has helped preserve the rich and brilliant craft heritage of the region," she explains.

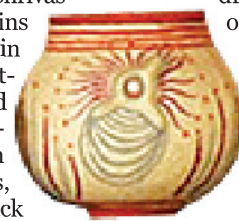
Working with local communities, especially ex-poachers, is not easy. "They are erratic, disappear for months, spoil raw materials and are late in submissions which delays delivery to customers. They don't want to change their old ways and often go back to poaching. Retention is an everyday challenge," she rues.

However, Shrivastava is glad to be part of their empowerment process. "Education is a rarity here and that too only for boys. So when some of my employees began to send their girls to schools and colleges after working here, I was overwhelmed," she says.

Shrivastava also addresses several other issues such as man-animal conflicts, responsible tourism, through her photo-blog "Ranthambore Tales".

Awareness is the key to spreading and sustaining the love for wildlife. "Seeing a tiger is like a dream you'd want to hold on to. Each of us should do our bit to ensure their continued survival and well-being," she signs off.

To purchase Dhok products online visit www.dhok.com, or www.facebook.com/dhokcraft



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R A D A R

Mush to Return Home Today

Karachi: After being in self-exile for over four years, Pakistan's former military ruler Pervez Musharraf will return home on Sunday to participate in the country's elections in May. **P12**

'Doing Biz in India is Messy'

Washington: Despite the recent series of economic reform being pushed by the Indian government, US investors and officials have told visiting Economic Affairs Secretary Arvind Mayaram that doing business in India is "messy".

Saif Charged for Poaching



Jodhpur: Fresh charges were on Saturday read out against actors Saif Ali Khan, Sonali Bendre, Tabu and Neelam by a court here in the 14-year-old blackbuck poaching case. **P11**

Joshi is BJP K'taka Chief

Bangalore: Facing a daunting task of leading the ruling BJP in the May 5 Assembly polls in Karnataka, Lok Sabha member Prahlad Joshi on Saturday took over as the state chief admitting that the party's image had been dented by "some blunders" in the last five years.

'Extinct' Gecko Resurfaces



Mumbai: Geckoella Jeyporensis or Jeypore ground gecko, an enigmatic lizard from the Eastern Ghats which was considered extinct, has been rediscovered after 135 years, according to naturalists at the Bombay Natural History Society. **P7**

Kejriwal on Indefinite Fast

New Delhi: Accusing the Delhi government of not listening to people's problems, AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday launched an indefinite fast and 'Civil Disobedience Movement' from a home in the city.

Boat Capsizes in Ganga

Mumbai: Seven bodies were fished out while three others are missing in a boat capsized in Ganga at Bhagalpur on Saturday. Bihar CM announced a compensation of ₹2 lakh for next of kins of victims.

Omar Asks for NIA Probe

New Delhi: Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday spoke to Union Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde and demanded that the case of arrest of alleged Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist Liyaqat Shah by Delhi Police be transferred to NIA for a "time bound speedy probe".

EXPRESS POLL OF THE DAY

By guaranteeing no death sentence and no arrest of the marines, has India conceded too much?

YES 86% NO 14%

TODAY'S QUESTION:

Does Sanjay Dutt deserve to be pardoned?

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Fear of Moles Prompts Vetting of Babus

Recent espionage cases that exposed spies in sensitive ministries force Centre to mull cell to keep eye on officials with access to classified info

by Yatish Yadav

New Delhi: Are the Union ministries full of moles, which are passing on information to their foreign masters? Apparently, the government thinks so. According to latest government statistics, in the last three years, 48 spies working for Pakistan's ISI were arrested, of which, 38 were Indians and only 10 were Pakistani agents. Of the 38, 10 were government officials. The tipping point came on March 4, when the IB and the Rajasthan

police caught Home Ministry official Surendra for passing on classified information to ISI agent Sumer Khan.

Rattled by recent espionage cases, which led to the exposure of moles deeply imbedded in sensitive ministries, the Centre is mulling setting up a separate secret cell named Positive Vetting (PV) Cell to handle officials in contact with 'Top Secret' matters. Government sources explained that positive vetting means a 360 degree intense security profiling of the

bureaucrats—a long drawn process that includes the assessment and background check of babus and their family members, before granting them clearance to access top secret files. The allocation of resource-

es for this exercise will come out of the ₹1,000 crore budget meant for gathering domestic intelligence.

"PV requires huge manpower and resources. Although, vetting is being carried out

within the existing system, a separate cell with extra staff would be needed to ensure that intelligence officers entrusted to carry out a thorough background check don't miss out anything," sources said.

According to sources, over 1,200 posts in the PMO, ministries and other departments are considered 'extra sensitive', and require 360 degree security profiling. But, with many officials in sensitive posts retiring every year and fresh recruits — direct or on deputation —

joining, a proposal was recently mooted to introduce a mechanism to prioritise those existing jobs that require high security clearance.

"It has been proposed that a new list be prepared with broadly two criteria—'top secret' and 'extra sensitive nature of posts' to eliminate loopholes. Trackers — intelligence operatives charged with monitoring sensitive appointments — will ensure the transfer of officials handling classified information is updated," sources said.

CRACKDOWN BEGAN DURING RAJIV'S TENURE

According to an official, the stringent assessment process began in 1985, after moles were netted in the PMO during the late prime minister Rajiv Gandhi's tenure. The infamous 'Coomar Narain spy ring', involved at least 12 government officials, mostly from the President Secretariat and PMO, including TN Kher, personal secretary to the then principal secretary PC Alexander.

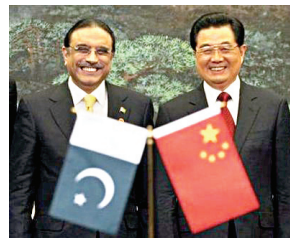
China, Pak Ink Secret Deal for N-reactor in Chashma

Washington: China has secretly entered into an agreement with Pakistan to construct a third nuclear reactor at Chashma in Punjab province that the Obama administration says will violate Beijing's promises under an international anti-nuclear weapons accord, a media report said.

"According to US intelligence and diplomatic officials, the secret agreement for the Chashma 3 reactor was signed in Beijing during the visit by a delegation from the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission from February 15 to 18," *The Washington Free Beacon* reported.

The agreement calls for the state-run China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) to construct a 1,000-megawatt power plant at Chashma, where two earlier Chinese reactors were built.

While there was no confirmation of the news story from Pakistan or China, *The Washington Free Beacon* quoted an unnamed State Department official, who said that such a Chinese move would be in violation of its international promise. China, which joined the



Pakistan Prez Asif Ali Zardari with Chinese ex-PM Wen Jiabao

A transfer of new reactors at Chashma extends beyond the cooperation grandfathered when China was approved for NSG membership — U.S. STATE DEPT OFFICIAL, as quoted by Washington Free Beacon

Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in 2005, agreed not to sell reactors to Pakistan beyond the two reactors sold earlier.

Under NSG guidelines China is not permitted to sell nuclear goods to any country that is not part of the International Atomic Energy Agency. "NSG participating governments have discussed the issue of China's expan-

sion of nuclear cooperation with Pakistan at the last several NSG plenary sessions," a State Department official was quoted as saying. "We remain concerned that a transfer of new reactors at Chashma appears to extend beyond the cooperation that was 'grandfathered' when China was approved for membership in the NSG," the official told *The Washington Free Beacon*, which reported that the US is to protest the sale at an upcoming NSG meeting in June.

According to Henry Sokolski, director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, China appears to be keeping the nuclear deal secret to avoid international opposition. Mark Hibbs, from the Carnegie Endowment's Nuclear Policy Programme, said that there is nothing in the NSG guidelines which prevents the Chashma 3 reactor sale.

According to Hibbs when China joined the NSG in 2004, it provided the NSG a list of nuclear items which said it intended to provide to Pakistan under a longstanding bilateral agreement between the countries. PTI

Italy Marines to be Tried in Delhi Court?

ENS & Agencies

New Delhi/T'puram: On a day when Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy wrote to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, seeking to hold the trial of the Italian marines accused of killing two Indian fishermen in the State, the Centre asked the Delhi High Court to set up a special court to try the duo.

The Law Ministry reportedly forwarded a Home Ministry proposal to the Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court on Saturday, requesting for the setting up of a special court to try the case.

"Since the special court will hear this case only, it will automatically work on a fast track basis," said a Law Ministry official. Meanwhile, Chandy wrote a letter to the Prime Minister, reasoning that the Sessions Court in Kollam, where the case was committed for trial, can be designated as special court.

"It is pertinent to note that all records and evidence are now before Sessions Court, Kollam, where charge was submitted after investigation was completed," he noted.

MORE: P6

Get Your Act Together or Face the Heat, Mulayam Warns Akhilesh

by Subhash Mishra

Lucknow: A red-faced Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav was left squirming in his seat at a public meeting on Saturday, after his father and Samjwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav lashed out at him for rampant corruption and an under-performing government in the State.

Speaking at a function to mark the 103rd birth anniversary of socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia, the Samajwadi Party chief showered praises on BJP leader L K Advani. "Advani sahab says

UP is in a very bad state and corruption is rampant.... Now I have to assess the situation when a senior leader like Advani says such a thing. He never lies. He always speaks the truth, as I have said many times," Yadav said.

"There is large-scale corruption in police stations and tehsils of the State.... The ministers are enjoying government comforts and furthering their vested interests. They are ignoring the interests of the party and the government," the SP chief charged.

Citing Advani's views, Yadav said that if the Chief Minister

failed to control the law and order situation, he would be tagged as an incapable administrator: "If you do not perform, you will ruin your image forever." In a not-so-veiled warning, Yadav set a deadline for his son to get his act together: "Improve your performance, otherwise I will have to rethink after five or six months."

Meanwhile, Union minister Beni Prasad Verma launched another tirade against Mulayam Singh Yadav, saying: "Those serving the interest of their family cannot be termed as socialists."

MORE: P6

Museum of Neglect Imperils Rare Manuscripts

by Pratul Sharma

New Delhi: India's heritage is under threat. Priceless treasures are at risk of irreparable damage at Delhi's premier National Museum because of poor upkeep and official apathy.

Disregard for history and its preservation means a virtual Aladdin's cave of art, ranging from iconic Harap-

pan seals to exquisite Mughal paintings, being left at the mercy of time.

Unimaginative display apart — proper lighting and additional information are non-existent — six of the 26 galleries have remained shut for years on end, ostensibly for renovation.

The manuscripts gallery, home to rare scripts and documents, has not been



seen by visitors since 2003, when it was closed for a makeover. Work is apparently still on, raising ques-

tions about the efficiency of the agencies involved. The official excuses for the state of affairs vary from prosaic to downright flimsy.

According to one official, the decorative arts gallery-1, closed to host the Nizam's jewellery exhibition in 2006, has not been opened as civil and electrical work is being carried out.

The Central Asian antiq-

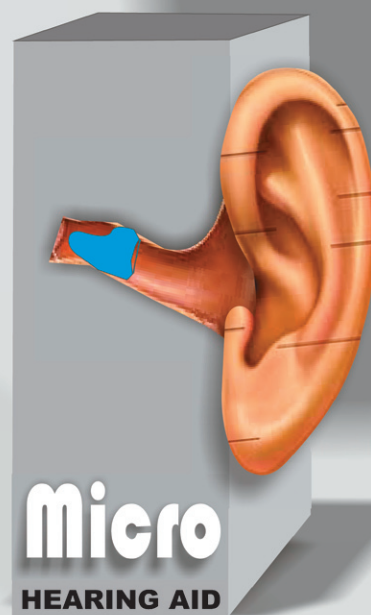
uity gallery, which, according to the museum authorities, is the richest, both qualitatively and quantitatively among the non-Indian collections, has been shut since 2004, when the roof began to leak. The collection comprises outstanding wall paintings, painted silk banners, wooden sculptures, coins, pottery and documents. **MORE: P6**

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