



Delhi - Ye shehar  
nahin mehfil hai



**VERBOS INCENDIUM**

**ISSUE NUMBER: 7/19**

**THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**MATA SUNDRI COLLEGE**

**UNIVERSITY OF DELHI**

### **Editor's Note**

*Humne maana ki dakkhan mein hai bahut qadre sukhan; Kaun*

*jaye zauq par, Dilli ki galiyan chhod kar*

Through the above lines, the nineteenth century poet Mohammad Ibrahim Zauq professes his unending love for the capital which prompted him to decide against moving to the Deccan, where both poetry and patronage were flourishing, and to choose to not leave Delhi. This unadulterated love for the city is not only a reflection of the commitment of the poet towards the city but also the continuing allure of Delhi. Till date, Delhi continues to enamor and allure people for various reasons. Some are attracted to its promise of economic and professional advancement some come here for education and some in search of a better life. There is also no dearth of people who love to hate the city. But no matter what the reason, Delhi cannot be ignored. Spaces capture their inhabitants and can leave a lasting impact on them. After all,

could there have been a Shakespeare without the London theatres?

Delhi is an organic and thriving city- effervescent, vivacious and endlessly regenerative. It has the power to offer redemption but can also be unflinchingly brutal. This issue of the department e-magazine is an ode to this complex, confounding yet compassionate city. We bring to you poems, articles, observations and images of/on the city captured by our students. As I always say, the magazine is possible only because of their contribution and contagious energy. I would thus, like to thank all the contributors as well as the student editors. Our student editors are the invisible force behind this enterprise. Many thanks to the faculty members who sent their contributions and lent us their support- Dr. Kiranjeet Sethi, Ms. Praveshika Mishra, Ms. Hema Sen and Ms. Menka Ahlawat- your involvement has made the issue all the more special. I would also like to thank Dr. Suprita

Jha, the Editor-in-Chief, for her constant support and able guidance. Last but not least, I would like to thank Dr. Harpreet Kaur, our Patron, without whose support this magazine could not have been possible.

AVANTIKA POKHRIYAL

(Faculty Editor)

## CONTENTS

## **Prose**

THE TRUE BLUE LOVER by Ms. PRAVESHKA MISHRA

DELHI- LITTLE THINGS, COLOSSAL MEMORIES by KRATI GARG

THE ARCHAIC AND THE MODERN by SONALI

THE CAPITAL'S LOVE FOR FOOD by DIKSHA

DISMAL DELHI by JYOTI NEGI

YEH DILLI HAI MERI JAAN! by NITIKA CHOPRA

I'D RATHER BE A SPARROW THAN A SNAIL by HEMA SEN

FROM SHAHJAHANABAD TO NEW DELHI by RIA SEHGAL

## **BIDDING ADIEU**

FAREWELL NOTES by THIRD YEAR STUDENTS

## **Poetry**

A CUP OF TEA by NANDINI DOGRA

ANOTHER POET OF DELHI by SHRUTI GUPTA

A DARK CITY by ANKITA SHARMA

DELHI- EVERYMAN'S LAND by JYOTI NEGI

THIS FLEETING CITY by SIMRAN

TO LOOK WITHIN by ISHTA HANDA



## **Art**

**THE PRIDE OF INDIA - INDIA GATE by SANJAM**

**THE EVERYDAY HUSTLE OF DELHI by SIMRAN ARORA**

**YOU SLEEP TIGHT WHEN YOU HAVE INVESTED RIGHT by Ms. MENKA AHLAVAT**

**DIFFERENT SHADES OF DELHI by SANJAM**

**CONGESTED HEARTS- AN URBAN REALITY by Dr. KIRANJEET SETHI**

**SKY ABOVE US, SKY BENEATH OUR FEET, DELHI IS BEAUTIFUL INDEED by SANJAM**

**THE SILENT FOOTFALL by SANJAM**

## **The True Blue Lover**

I often hear people call Delhi "culture less", that it has no value system of its own and outsiders find it too fast and baffling to adjust to the pace of the city. Having been born and brought up in Delhi, for me, this was a rather unsavory morsel to gulp! Needless to say, I love my Dilli and like it does, I welcome one and all with open arms and gush with pride while taking stock of the countless reasons to fall for it.

It does have a culture, that of acceptance. The city's socio-cultural landscape became increasingly hybrid in the process of adapting and indulging in the ethnicities which came as a package deal when people turned to it in the name of shift, education, vocation, sojourn, security et al.

Yearning for authentic Bengali cuisine? You will find umpteen joints to satiate your craving. Want that awesome Mekhla Chadar? Assam Emporium is right in the center of Delhi. Missing a stroll in the long alleys of Lucknow? Purani Dilli is no distance...thanks to the Delhi Metro! The rich heritage spots also add glamour to the undying charm of this eternal city.

"Ye shehar nahin mehfil hai..." No city can offer as much as Delhi does. It never stops sharing itself with all who embrace it. Everyone can take a piece of it but it still showers its love in abundance. It is like a woman, the nurturer...so delicately strong who bounces back with relentless zest even after stones of tragic times are hurled at it frequently. Delhi has seen it all...the good, bad and the ugly. The face of the city changes



every other decade but its soul remains as pure as the oldest, sweetest wine. It teaches its people to live each day with the boldest attitude, throws challenges which make them learn how to swim and cross the bridge when the time is right. My city never fails to surprise me with its capacity to widen its arms when its people need it the most. No time of crisis passes in isolation and its folks can only be grateful for the tough lessons it has taught them. Delhi O Delhi, may you stay your awesome self!

Praveshika Mishra

Assistant Professor



The Pride of India – India Gate by Sanjam (III Year)

## **Delhi- Little Things, Colossal Memories.**

Eyes on the screen, I stand searching the contents of my playlist on platform one of the Yellow Line metro, the concrete beneath my feet familiar yet carrying a different consonance of tremors – of a million footsteps synchronized into a symphony – every morning. My feet pick up this beat quickly, I have finally found the right song, and even before my eyes dart away from the screen, I see at least a hundred stories float across my mind. I begin remembering how the Delhi of my dreams has changed over the years and how my perception of it as my ‘dream city’ has also evolved with time.

Visiting Delhi as a child of seven and then re-visiting the same city years later, as a teenager – at eighteen – has shown me many colours of Delhi which I would have otherwise never discovered. For the seven year old me, Delhi was a place that was endlessly fascinating- grand monuments, the ramshackle buildings, the metro service, yumilicious food, the clingy yet dreamy lanes of Chandni Chowk, the very famous Dargah, and so on.

*"Ye Dilli h mere yaar, Bas IshqMohabbat Aur Pyaar"*, goes the line from a popular Bollywood production, but I have realized over the years that Delhi isn't all whimsical it's more of a trap- a crazy place full of traffic, noise and congestion. Delhi, no doubt, has a charismatic fervor that excites all but the people here often suffer from loneliness

and, at times, are found lacking in the love and care which is often associated with the city in some of its more optimistic narratives. People migrate to this chaotic yet beautiful city in the hopes of fulfilling their dreams but many end up bamboozled by it.

Sitting in the metro, I recall how when I was younger, being in Delhi was like a visit to the amusement park for me where everyone used the metro service. But today, traveling in the metro reveals a different story to me, a story that a child of seven years would have never even thought of! I see men and women clustering upon fading yellow arrows on the floor, nobody here shares a language. *Amma* tears up, in mild disbelief at her own agility, as she climbs up her first ever escalator in one swift step. *Bhaiyya* nervously paces between announcements as an interview awaits his chewed nails at the end of the Yellow Line. This is the daily start and finishes to my days, the magic of the pale blue Metro Cards. This is actually the metro, the Delhi Metro!

The only thing that has not changed over the years is mine as well as the city's love for reading. Since childhood, I have always been in love with the Sunday Book Market at Daryaganj in Delhi. I loved it when I was seven and I love it even when I am twenty-one. I appreciate how people, despite their busy schedules, manage to pay a visit to the book market or the bookstores for buying a huge amount of books for themselves or for their little ones and thus, keep the Delhi streets lively.

Something beautiful and interesting that I have come across in the city now is the initiative by an entrepreneur, Mrs. Shruti Sharma, called 'Books on the Delhi Metro'. Although not many people know about, it is wonderful concept to spread knowledge and love. Under this initiative a team drops books at different metro stations to encourage the habit of reading among metro commuters. Their motto is – pick a book, read it, and drop it back for someone else to enjoy. Being a part of this wonderful initiative has helped me satisfy my obsession with reading and has helped me make friends from diverse cultures and beliefs. They have made me realize that indeed, the journey is more beautiful than the destination. I came to this city to complete my undergraduate studies from the University of Delhi and I am sure I will be leaving the city not only with bookish knowledge but also with loads of worldly knowledge, for I have surely become somewhat familiar with the ways of the world by living here.

And while I was lost in my own bittersweet flashbacks, an announcement is made: "Next station is Rajiv Chowk. Doors will open on the left." I smile at my thoughts and realize that I have loved Delhi in my own complex way. I can write on and on about this city, but words will be only words and they cannot describe all that I have felt. Let me tell you this- no matter how many articles you read about Delhi, they will never do justice to what actually lies here, for the city never fails to amaze its visitors and each time reveals a different shade of its own.

– Krati Garg (II Year)



The Everyday Hustle of Delhi

Simran Arora (III Year)

## A Cup of Tea

Rising before the sun does,

I find my face kissed

by the early morning dew,

mixed ever so slightly,

with a pinch of smog.

A square-faced part of

the sullen, southern social circle.

I don't really feel out of place.

The familiarity, is strangely conversant.

The signature track pants,

my constant companion,

help me brave the chill

I usually feel

as I traverse through paths,

used by kings who now,

hibernate cozily

in their earthly compartments.



One, two, three and four,  
just before I start with the fifth repetition,  
I find my bubble of solitude pricked.

The four legged companion,  
keeps me on my toes.

Until the chase of a domestic breed  
mixed with the expletives of the owner  
excite it more.

I start tracing my steps towards home now.

My mind halting on the word.

Home,  
a place, person or just fantasy?

I don't know.

Neither born, nor brought up here.

No four walls, with a garden  
in the backyard, belonged  
to my family for generations.

Yet, it is home, now.

With a sip of  
(a little too sweet)  
steaming hot tea,  
I feel Delhi  
residing in me now.

Even if it's the other way round.

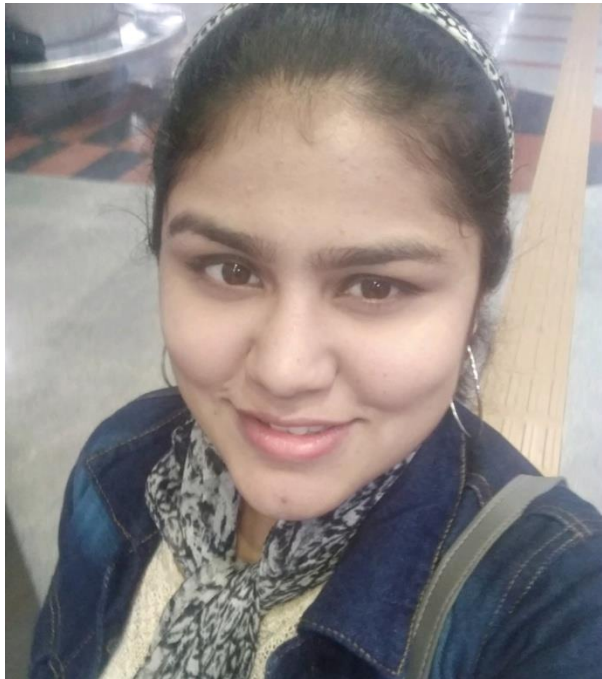
-Nandini Dogra (I Year)

## Bidding Adieu: Farewell Notes



*My first brush with our seniors in the college left a lasting imprint on my mind. They were giving us a gist of their experience in this course. There is one particularly beautiful statement my senior said, that I remember and can quote to this day- "I am truly and irrevocably in love with literature". This one line caught my attention and now after three years I know why she said that- and I hope one day I will be capable enough to use it in my own words!*

- VARSHA ANIL NAIR



It has been a great experience travelling through the world of literature with teachers and friends. Will cherish this experience my entire life.

- KAMALPREET KAUR



*A place like home,  
that gave me friends  
like family, memories  
to cherish, lessons  
to live by, and  
professors who will  
forever be close to  
my heart.*

-GAURAVI DHINGRA



*For a person coming from a science  
background, falling in love with literature  
would have seemed like a laughable matter  
back in the first year. From learning about  
different discourse to grappling with ideologies,  
only to abandon them all in the end, it has  
been a thrilling journey. This college has  
made me the person I am today.  
I owe a great deal to my teachers whose  
values are true diamonds- resplendent and  
indestructible- lodged in the center of my  
heart!*

-SUKHJOT





*From making notes myself to borrowing notes from others, from attending each class to bunking each class, from writing summaries to analyzing everything critically, it has indeed been a literary journey.*

-SIMRAN ARORA



*Hours of laughing on meaningless jokes, hopelessly working on assignments just a few hours before submission, having crazy friends- it has not been easy but definitely a beautiful journey to graduation*

- VANSHIKA KAUSHIK

## The Archaic and The Modern

Delhi is the perfect example of the blend between the old and the new. The ruins of the old forts and monuments like Humayun's Tomb and Purana Quila present a gateway to the world of the kings who resided in Delhi in the bygone era. Buildings like the Secretariat, blending the Mughal Architectural style with the English Monumental style, represent the confluence of styles which has contributed to this city's landscape.

In accordance with the diversity of India as a country, Delhi exhibits its diverse nature in the various spheres of lifestyle, religion, art and culture. Here, you will see the English songs lovers walking alongside Sufi poets, Ghazal events organized after a Jazz festival is over and lovers of classic paintings hobnobbing with modern abstract painters.

Delhi has a significant importance in the history of Indian cities. It was first mentioned in *Mahabharata*, which was composed around the 4<sup>th</sup> century, as *Indraprastha*— the capital of the Pandavas. Over a period of many centuries, it was the royal seat of Kings from a range of dynasties, including the Rajputs, the Tughluqs, the Khiljis and the Mughals followed by the British Empire. The world has come to Delhi over these periods and remnants of that glorious past can be seen in the ruins and different antiquated streets spread throughout the city. Every portion of this city tells a different story, adding to its vibrancy. Sometimes it speaks of the victory and grandeur of the

kings such as the Red Fort (abode of Shah Jahan after he shifted the capital of his empire from Agra to Delhi), sometimes it cries its tears of loss as in the Raj Ghat (the resting place of Mahatma Gandhi). Sometimes it presents its wisdom to the world as in the inscription engraved on the Iron Pillar near the Qutub Minar and sometimes, it presents its eerie side through Agrasen ki Baoli.

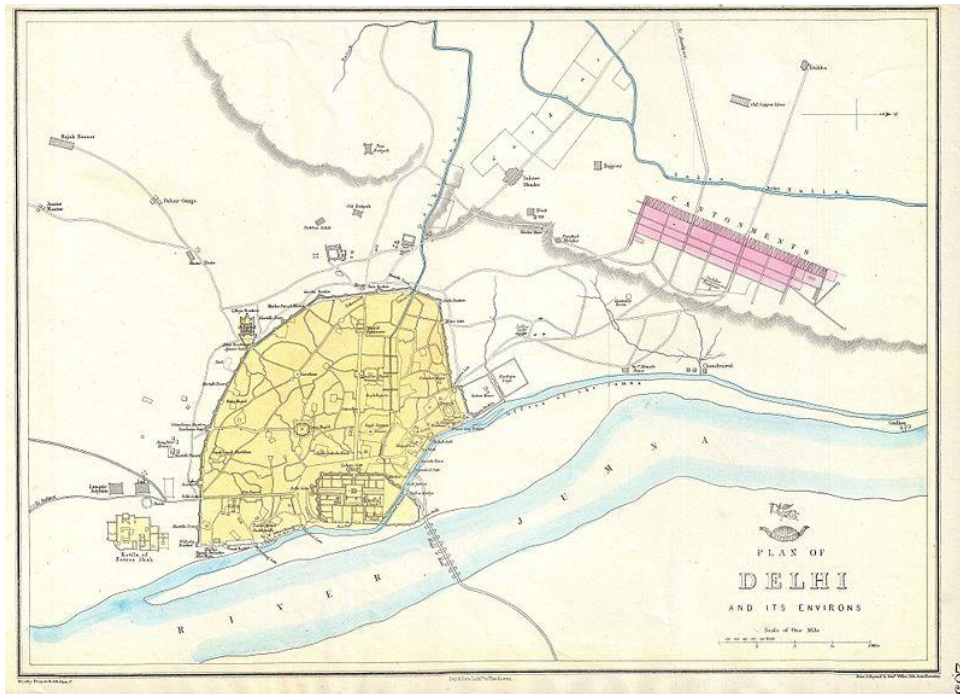
The Mughal as well as the British Empire have influenced this city the most and have shaped Delhi we know of today. The Mughals brought with them Persian culture and art, it was under their rule that Urdu emerged as a language through a process of cultural and linguistic assimilation as Persian got mixed with Arabic and Hindi. Urdu is not as famous as before but is still preserved by minority communities here in Delhi.

During the time of Shah Jahan, Delhi was the center of Sufi culture. Old Delhi still preserve this Sufi culture and is the heart of many Urdu poets

*"Ik Roz ApniRooh Se Poocha, KeDilli Kya Hai.  
To Yun Jawab Me KehGayi,  
Ye DuniyaMaanoJism Hai AurDilliUskiJaan"*

-Mirza Ghalib





Map of *Shahjahanabad* (now known as Old Delhi) in 1863

(Pictures source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Delhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Delhi))

In 1803, the British captured Delhi after defeating the Marathas. In 1911, it was announced that capital would shift from Calcutta to New Delhi. In Delhi, the Europeans lived with wealthy Indians and enjoyed Persian poetry and culture. The Delhi College was established in 1792 which became the center of Indian Renaissance in Urdu language. It took twenty years to build New Delhi, whose planning and designing was entrusted to Edward Lutyens and Herbert Baker. It was constructed as ten mile square city on Raisina Hill. The Rashtrapati Bhawan, with the Secretariat buildings on either side, was built on higher ground than Shah Jahan's Jama Masjid to assert British supremacy. The features of these buildings were borrowed from different periods of

Indian history, for instance the central dome of Rashtrapati Bhawan was taken from the Buddhist stupa and the jali work from Mughal architecture.

It is not all glitter and glamour here in Delhi. It has had its share of scars left by the violent deaths of its citizens during the Partition when the Hindus and Muslims were relocating to either sides of the border. It changed the social complex of the city. Many of those who came from Pakistan were lawyers, teachers, landlords who had new tastes in food, dress and arts.

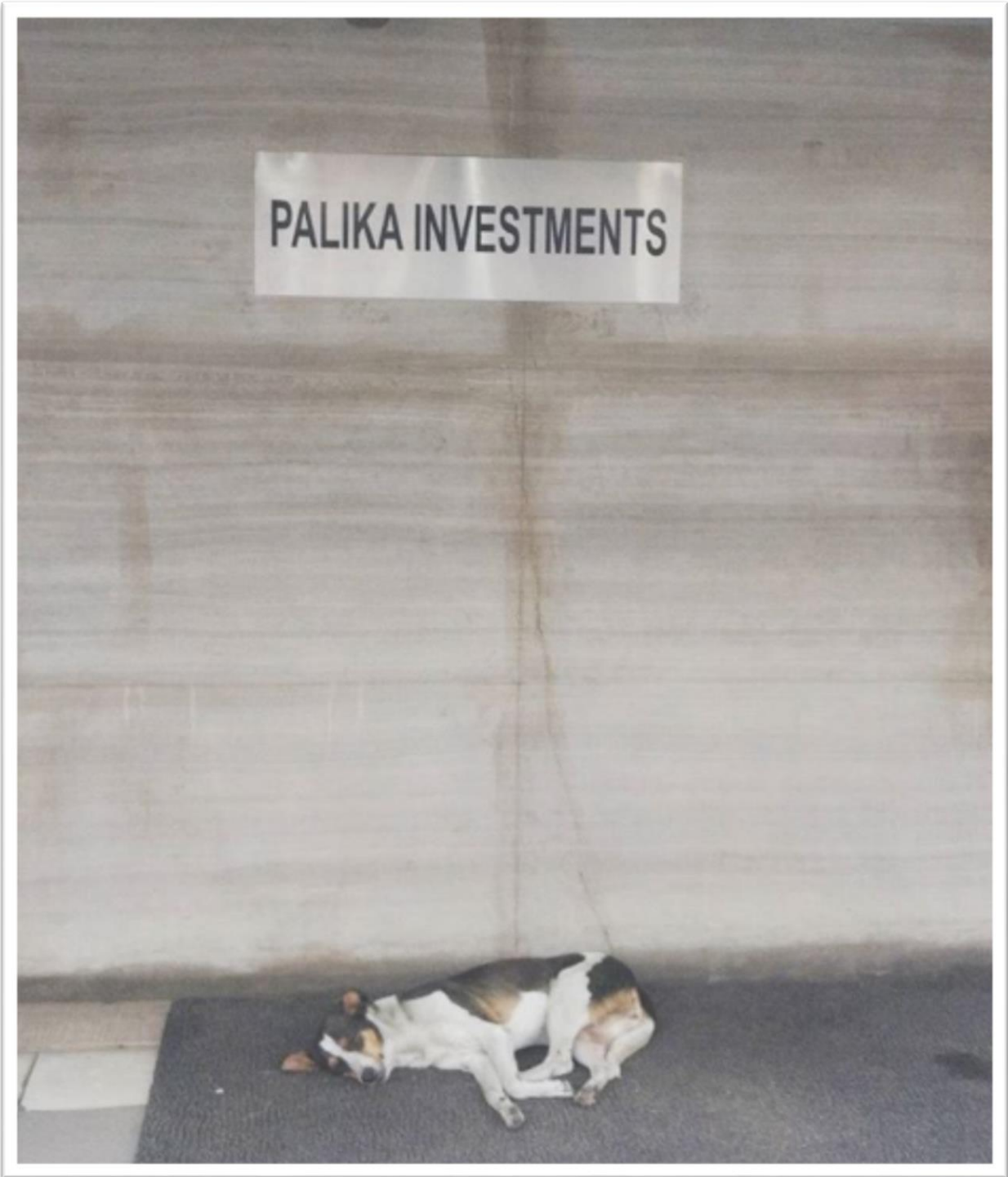


Map of Delhi 2017

Different museums, art galleries, auditoriums, monuments, botanical garden and places of worship provide a unique blend of the traditional with the modern. The ever changing cosmopolitan style of this city can be seen through its restaurants, sports arcades, shopping malls, leisure centers, etc.

Now, Delhi has a metropolitan population of 25 million which makes it the second most populated city in the world, after Tokyo. Delhities are progressing but are still bound by their old roots. They should try to balance their lives between these two opposite ideas by getting strength from their history and progressing to the future with an open mind.

- Sonali (II Year)



You Sleep Tight When You Have Invested Right

Clicked by Ms. Menka Ahlawat (Assistant Professor)

## Another Poet of Delhi

The city of shayars and poets

Monuments and markets.

This city revels upon dead remains

smoke and dust add to its lyrical melancholy

listen carefully...

the atmosphere is mourning.

Yet, with naked eyes one can only see

Beating hearts so proud to live in this city.

Just another lost poet looking for a muse

Searching for beauty in the ruins.

Decayed walls of the city seem to know

The little secrets that I whisper quietly to my soul.

Yet, the city fails to become my true muse

No denial in the fact that it helped me write

But it snatched away my light.

I see no beauty anymore which can make me smile.

Even when Delhi never sleeps at night

No one ever contemplates in their free time

As they are always looking up

At the happy stars of Dreams  
And I stand there inhaling the smoke  
With no expectation of hope  
I never looked up... only down...  
Looking at each and everyone in the crowd  
No one speaks or hears at night here  
Too loud screams the crimes here...

We were all alive, once.  
But too busy in nostalgia now  
It is too easy, after all, to do nothing serious  
And pray while looking above...  
Hoping for a miracle.

-Shruti Gupta (II Year)

## The Capital's Love for Food

Delhi is not only famous for its rich heritage but also for the wide variety of cuisines one can find here – ranging from street food to the gourmet. And what that excites us gastronomes is our love for trying out the succulent dishes Delhi has to offer and then patting ourselves on the back for being voracious foodies! If you are one such foodie, then read ahead for some insight into some of the popular dishes that are found here.

### **Flatbreads**

They accompany each and every dish and have their own unique identity. It is a staple in many places and is mainly used as a breakfast option. The people of Delhi consume flatbread in various ways: as *roti*, *paratha*, *naan* or *kulcha*, all served with a generous layer of ghee or butter on top. *Parathas* are now easily available in most of the Indian restaurants for when street food is taken into consideration, *parathas* top the list of famous foods. But if you want to experience the real taste of *parathas*, you need to pay a visit to some of the famous places such as Murthal in Haryana or Parathewali Gali in Chandni Chowk (a lane dedicated to just parathas), which serve all types of Parathas you can think of - stuffed Parathas, Halwa Parathas, Jaipuri Parathas and many more.





Picture: chole naan (chickpeas with flatbread)

### **Chaat:**

The real flavor of street food lies in *Chaat*. It is a lip-smacking roadside delight found all over Delhi. The variety of *chaats* are endless ranging from fresh to dried fruits. It is a mixture of potato pieces, crispy fried bread, *Dahi Vada* or *Dahi Bhalla*, gram or chickpeas and tangy-salty spices, with sour Indian chili and *Saunth* (sauce made from dried ginger and tamarind). Fresh green coriander leaves and yogurt are added for garnishing. Other popular variants include *Aloo Tikkis* or *Samosa*. The best options include *Golgappe*, *Papdi Chaat*, *Aloo Chaat*, *Moong Dal Ladoos* with *chutney* and fresh *Fruit Chaat*. Amidst the streets of Chandni Chowk, you will come across the very famous Daulat ki Chaat. Do give it a try, if you have not already!

## **Biryani**

Let's just face it- while our love for momos, noodles, or pasta is unquestionable, our love for the aromatic, steaming pot of biryani is unparalleled. *Biryani* is one of the most popular dishes here. It is prepared in households for celebrations small or large. *Biryani* is also a staple meal for *Iftar* (the evening meal with which Muslims end their daily Ramadan fast at sunset). It is a rice dish which comes in endless varieties and is said to have been introduced by the Mughals in India. Rice is kept in water to boil while the utensil is sealed with a dough paste. The heat in the sealed utensil creates steam that cooks the biryani slowly. Two of the accompaniments of Biryani are- *Mirchi ka Salan* and *Dahi Chutney*. *Biryani* in Delhi can be found in every North Indian and Mughlai restaurant.

## **Kulfi**

The rich concoction served with *Rabdi* (condensed milk) and prepared from pure milk is one of the most famous desserts in north India. The most popular version is served with a steaming hot *Jalebi* that suits well with the chilled *kulfi* – the flavor is only heightened due their contrasting bases. *Kulfis* are available in a variety of flavors such as rose, paan, and *kesar pista* – traditionally, the most popular flavor of *kulfi*. You can enjoy mouth-watering kulfi at Giani di Hatti located in Chandni Chowk, Old & Famous Jalebiwala, again located in Chandni Chowk and Roshan di Kulfi in Karol Bagh.



Picture: Kesar Pista Kulfi

### **Aloo Tikki**

We breathe and live for the scrumptious *chaat* that you'd probably find in every by-lane of Delhi. The most common way of eating these mashed potato patties with a thin, crisp golden crust is with the sweet and tangy tamarind *chutney* (sauce) and a spicy mint and coriander chutney, sweetened curd, a sprinkling of pomegranate, and finely chopped onions.

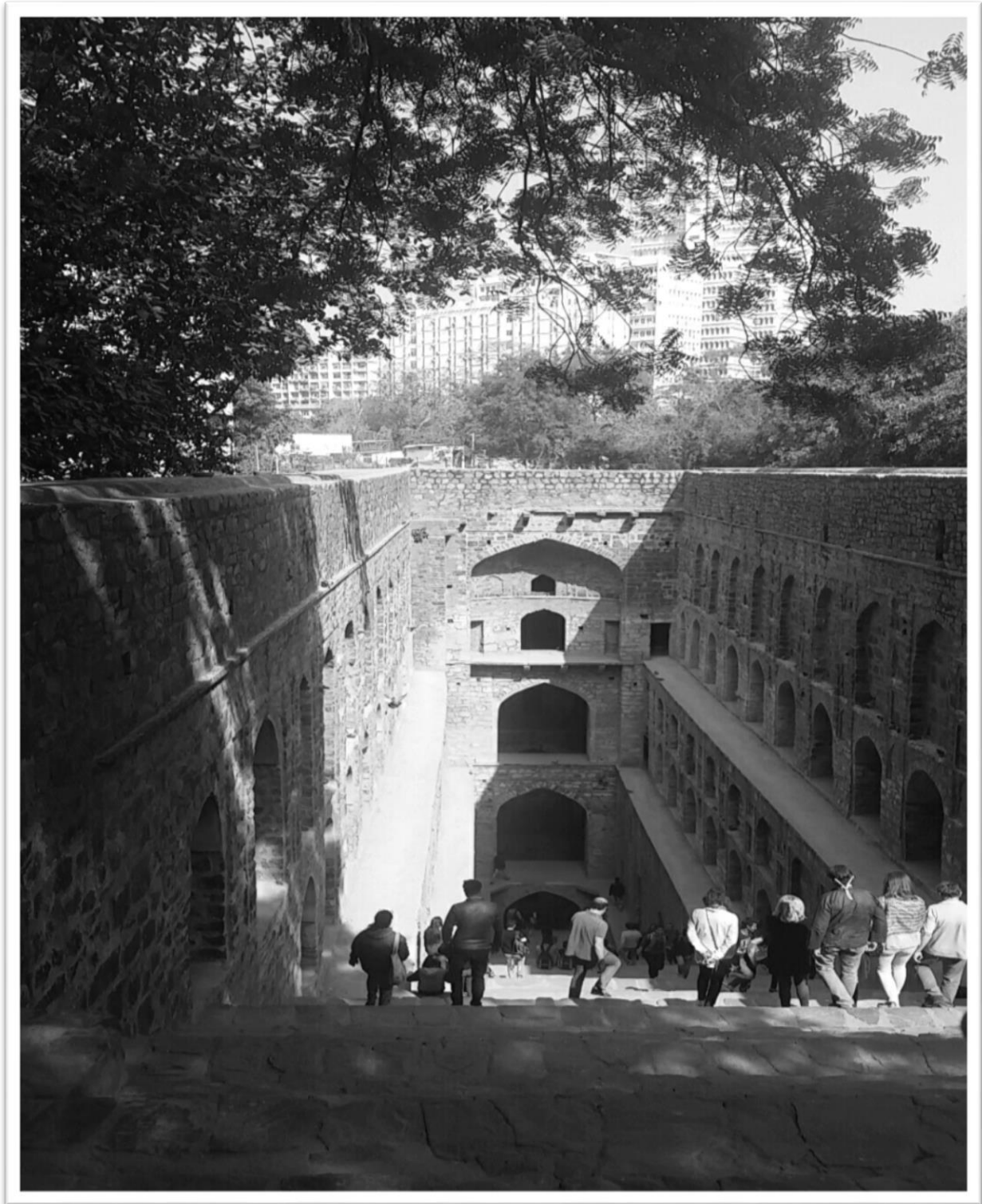
A delightful variation of the dish is the one topped with curried chickpeas, *chutneys* and a sprinkle of fresh coriander and green chilies. There are numerous stalls selling Aloo Tikki in Delhi, for some of the best ones try one of the outlets of Bittu Tikki Wala or Prabhu Chaat Bhandaar in Khan Market.



Picture: Aloo Tikki

However, the list is never ending as the city is a foodie's paradise but these food items stand apart from others in the street food list.

— Deeksha (I Year)



Different shades of Delhi at Agrasen ki Baoli

Harjas (III Year)

## A Dark Delhi

My city-Delhi-that seems to be filled with light,

This city that is magnificent and bright,

With a history of grandeur and might,

Has its own dark side.

A side that will haunt you,

A side if seen will paint its own plight.

Yes, my beautiful city,

Has its ugly side.

Here,

Women are raped.

Men kill and fight.

Poverty stricken grieve,

Children learn to play games which divide.

My city Delhi has a dark side.

Even if we have opened our gates to outsiders,

We have gates to our minds locked.

Even if we are surging towards development,

We are flooded with taboos that form flaws.

Yes, this city that seems to be filled with light,

Has its own dark side.

-Ankita Sharma (I Year)



## Dismal Delhi

Delhi, the city of diverse cultures, has been a hotbed of settlement since the colonial era. With the number of people pouring into the city, it has become a gravitic domain of opportunities, more so in the recent years. People find it easier to come here, be it to establish a stable financial base or to set up a provisional abode. The steady increase in the working population has helped the city become the backbone of the economy of our country.

The thriving commercial marketplace has become increasingly democratic over the years as it encourages women to become a valuable asset in the commercial sector, by participating in the workforce. Women are no longer seen only as domesticated breeders expected to perform all the stereotypical tasks assigned to them by virtue of their sex. But once we begin to look beneath the surface we see a different reality.

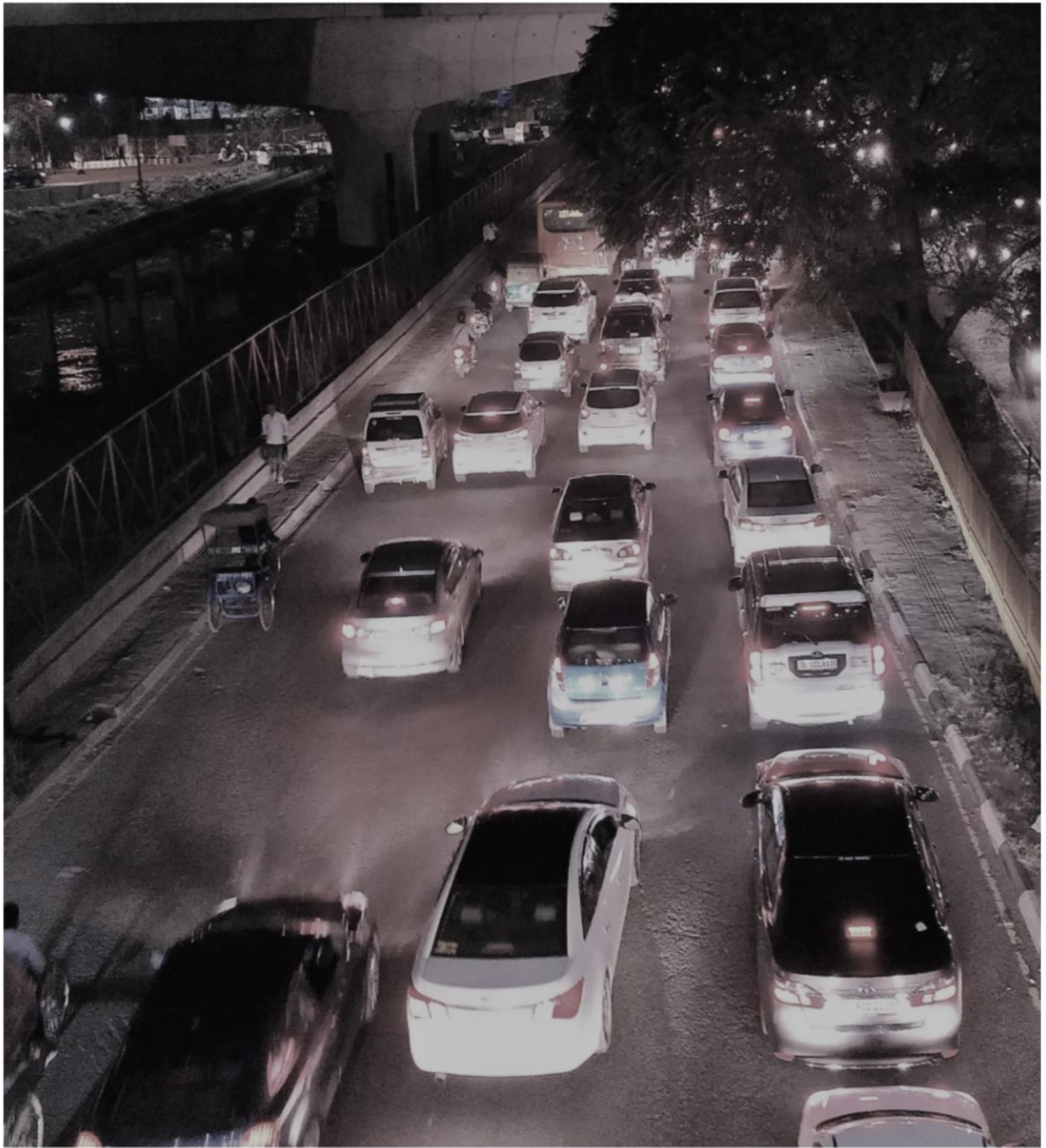
Putting the few privileged women aside, who have the educational and professional opportunities to realize their potential, we come to those who belong to the lower echelons of society. Under what conditions they make ends meet is something a large number of people are oblivious to. Most of the people don't even know a lot about the women living in the red light district of the city, and what accounts for their circumstances of living. Not only this, the people who don't fall under the universally accepted binary of gender are still seen with a mixture of disgust and suspicion.

The women who take up the responsibility of the household and the workplace are often regarded as multi-tasking 'super women' but nobody really cares about the immense pressure such unfair expectations put them under.

The passivity of these women can be understood via the prevailing culture dominated by a certain group of people, thus, depicting a deep-rooted politics behind it. A darker reality stays hidden under the guise of sexual purity. Keeping in mind these undiscussed aspects we realize that this city has still a long way to go.

Sexual violence against women and the third gender has become so common that it would not be wrong to say that it has been normalized now. With the help of authorities, the city has somewhat succeeded in fighting the menace of sexual exploitation. The general public plays a bigger role in seeking justice for the disenfranchised and disempowered. But the problem can never be resolved if it does not include the involvement of the masses. Only when we start teaching people the fundamental importance of individual equality, can there be a radical change in society.

- Jyoti Negi (III Year)



Congested Hearts- An Urban Reality

Dr. Kiranjeet Sethi (Associate Professor)

## **Delhi- Everyman's Land**

The air, the water, the burning heat

The cars, the traffic, the broken seats

The mosque, the gurudwara, the Hindu shrine

The beggars, the riots, the heinous crimes

The office, the college, the disguised brothel

The school, the factory, the cheap hotel

The monuments, the garbage, the bloody roads

The corruption, the protests, the advertisement boards

The minister, the accountant, the underpaid teacher

The limbless, the pickpocket, the priest, and the preacher

The crossroads, the signs, the English names

The shanties, the sewer, the political games

The factories, the workers, the automation

The programs, the scholarship, the biased education

In the end, I have decided Delhi is not a place

It is everything that we can imagine in one big space.

-Jyoti Negi (III Year)

## Yeh Dilli Hai Meri Jaan!

While writing stories with edged fingertips, I found fragments of untamed actions and trembling emotions - deciphered by none, but felt by many -which had spilled on the streets of Delhi. The streets of Chandani Chowk have an ancient flavor, waiting to be soaked.

I tossed my hair into a bun and covered my head with the colorful scarf I bought from a street vendor and entered the Gauri Shankar Mandir to see how the 800-year-old temple still stands and resonates, day in and day out, with the faithful prayers of the people blessed with miracles.

After enjoying the special '*The Delhi Darshan*' bus tour, I chose to spend four hours at the Jama Masjid. The drool-worthy fragrance of delicious *Kebabs* distracted me from the task of admiring the architectural beauty of this mosque – one of the many majestic gems which enhance the beauty of Delhi.

I forgot to bring my Kindle to this trip, but a walk to Daryaganj was enough to remedy this problem. Various novels, like those by Charles Dickens, Dan Brown, Jane Austen, etc. were stacked to steal the heart of a literature lover.

In the hustle-bustle of Delhi, I have always found solace in little moments, such as cherishing a rare clear starry night sky while lazily munching on crispy wafers. A visit to Gurudwara Shri Bangla Sahib can quell the disease of any and all. Delhi regularly

gives me that one magical moment when I can feel my heart dancing and mind being held captive by a dazzling ray of affection drenching the city in love.

The dulcet tones of the moon made me sleep yet each breath yearned for a familiar voice, in the city where life goes on as fast as the crowd disperses on the metro station, I sought serenity in the morning walks at Hauz Khas Village. I laid my head in the lap of nature and it kissed my forehead silencing the storms brewing in my head. How can I forget the way wind caressed my hair, untangling them only to tangle my heart strings.

The little stalls adorned with marigold flowers, the roadside hawker selling pizza made on the griddle, selling clothes carried on the arm, etc. Everything captivated my child-like heart which wanted to explore unstoppably. After emptying the pocket at Central Market, I relished the presence of water sellers quenching my thirst in just one rupee.

All of this was enough to call it '*a city of amalgamation*' which consists of diverse cultures and variety of flavors to suit every person who explores Delhi.

- Nitika Chopra (II Year)





Sky above us, sky beneath our feet, Delhi is beautiful indeed.

Sanjam (III Year)

## **This Fleeting City**

What should I tell you about Delhi?

The seven beautiful cities,

Some divided via distance,

Some divided via people.

Yet,

It'll still be Delhi,

no matter how old or new.

Mornings don't begin with sunshine,

but running after the buses,

to reach office on time.

People after people,

Followed by yet another horde,

When you look at your sides,

Every age group you'll find,  
Differentiated with thoughts,  
But brought together by earphones.

Food stalls litter the streets  
People relishing it like treasure  
Having chuski in hot weather  
Becomes a rare pleasure  
Exploring the monuments, the forts, the museums,  
For not all who wander are lost.

Walking along the fresh air,  
Some spaces are taken by the pairs having the time of their life,  
While some are alone, busy making a life.

More than the people  
life is racing faster.

Maybe this is why some cross the red lights,

Yet some stop by the beggars.

People are everywhere,

Yet no one to trust anywhere,

Things change faster than the roads,

For change is the only constant.

Delhi is a feeling,

Delhi is an emotion!

But as they say,

feel the feeling,

but don't become the emotion.

Witness it, allow it, release it.

- Simran Arora (III Year)

## **I'd Rather Be a Sparrow Than a Snail**

Simon and Garfunkel's El Condor Pasa is now an out of fashion song and so are the animals referred to within it. The once ubiquitous house sparrow which used to happily flock about in huge numbers is now a visual rarity. Growing up one remembers them happily twittering away asking you for their share of your breakfast which you were extremely unwilling to share. It was only when the breakfast was not at all to your liking that you deigned to give them most of it out of the goodness of your heart. They ate it up anyway, not caring whether you were a saint or a sinner.

The house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) was made the state bird of Delhi in the year 2012. This has not done a lot to prevent a rapid decline in numbers. A survey done by TERI estimates that the numbers of the house sparrow population have fallen by 50% within the NCR itself. Other common birds in Delhi such as the house crows and the rock pigeons have suffered much less relatively. Environmentalists attribute the cause of this to the rapid concretization of the city depriving the sparrow of its traditional food sources.

If you were lucky enough as a child to live in a relatively green area of Delhi like the ridge area or the Sanjay Van area, sparrows although unwillingly were the most reliable of your playmates. While your friends had annoying things like tuitions or music lessons that prevented them from joining you, the sparrows had no such problems. All

you needed was a fistful of rice to tempt them and soon they'd be sitting next to you chattering away. Children in the city these days do not have this luxury. Someday a child might possibly ask, "What is a sparrow?"

- Ms. Hema Sen (Assistant Professor)



The Silent Footfalls

— Sanjam (III Year)



## To Look Within

Eighteen years in this city  
The capital, where I was living, following the legacy of my kin  
But something felt missing.

I kept looking for happiness, globally.  
Looking for something which would stop the gap.  
Feeling empty and detached,  
I wanted to escape,  
Until I came to terms with actuality.

That the city of my dream  
Was none other than the city I was in.

It was a day in late spring,  
I went to the place of genesis of this state  
The Old Delhi or *Shahjanabad*, historically.

What I saw, was a treat to the eyes.  
Dazzling and breathtaking.  
Never thought I was missing on something which would leave

An ever lasting impact.

I relish giving a vivid description

Of what I perceived,

Hustle and bustle of personages,

Irrespective of their age.

Blazing and glazing, radiantly

In every compact quarter,

Stocked with impoverished dwelling.

I am reckoning and so should you,

That it is essential to look

At what you have within.

Indulge in it, feel it.

Before looking at what others have to give.

-Ishta Handa (I Year)

## From Shahjahanabad to New Delhi

The heart of the nation, Delhi, bears a vibrant cultural heritage. It is divided into two parts – the New and the Old Delhi. Old Delhi was founded by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in 1639 and named *Shahjahanabad*. It was a flourishing economic center with beautiful gardens, mosques, magnificent mansions and the royal court.

Delhi is both finite and not. It is a soldier's city, a politician's city, a journalist's city and also a diplomat's city. Often regarded as Asia's Washington, Delhi has truly entered our hearts and embraced our soul. It is wilful and obdurate and evokes the contrasting emotions of joy and despair in its people.

The New Delhi, designed by Edwin Lutyens and contrasting with its older counterpart, lies in the hearts of millions. The glorious and tumultuous history of Delhi is 5000 years old and it has prevailed from the time of the *Mahabharata*, when it was known as Indraprastha. Its vast history contributed to its amazing culture. Delhiites are known to celebrate each occasion with pomp and fervour and feel much pride at being one. Delhi comes as a merger of the modern lifestyles as well as the old traditions and values. On one hand, we can see the Old Delhi still living in the past, to some extent, and upholding the values of a bygone era. While, on the other hand, we see a culture in New Delhi where people have become slaves to ostentation.

Today, even as modernity has taken over, one often finds tombs of emperors – the titles of lost dynasties – located behind busy traffic junctions. Khushwant Singh summed up the duality and complexity of the city in the following words:

*That's Delhi. When life gets too much for you all you need to do is to spend an hour at Nigam Bodh Ghat, watch the dead being put to flames and hear their kin wail for them. Then come home and down a couple of pegs of whiskey. In Delhi, death and drink makes life worth living.*

The myriad faces of the city are simply fascinating and breath-taking. One has to be in Delhi in order to live the city as words fail to express the grandeur of it.

-Ria Sehgal (I Year)

## THE EDITORIAL TEAM



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