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EDITORIAL

Just the other day, I was skimming the pages of the past few issues of the journal. I realise that each time I sit down to write the editorial, my thoughts go inevitably to violence, terror and inhumanity. What is frightening is that each time the situation is worse than before, and each time the means employed to destroy and silence are becoming more outrageous. This is not just in our country and region. Violence is now truly global. I hope we can save ourselves before it is too late.

In the midst of so much angst, mistrust and persecution, it is a relief when one reads or hears of small stories of new beginnings, even modest success. It is commendable that the students of a university in Tamil Nadu have built a nano satellite on campus, entirely through their own efforts. This was recently launched with others from across the world. Government officials in Uttarakhand have to do without air conditioned cars and other luxuries, or at least until they provide government schools with basic amenities! Ramzan is a time to give, not take—this is what the residents of a village in Bijnor believe. They have returned state funding and have built toilets through their own efforts. An intriguing initiative is Innov8 Delhi Chapter. It is a Human Library, and the ‘books’ are ordinary people sharing their experiences on issues concerning ordinary people. Perhaps like the concept of the *adda* of years past. It will be a long and difficult path, but perhaps one day many of these initiatives will coalesce and bring some respite from the current deficit of trust and tolerance.

Coming to the present issue. Leonard Gordon’s is a brilliant account of the emergence and trajectory of the INA and the trials in 1945–45 at Delhi’s Red Fort, once the heart of the Mughal Empire. For Gordon, the importance of this history is the role it played in mobilising Indians to force the British out of India.

The Red Fort and Delhi come up again in the paper by Ather Faruqi, this time through a literary work by Shamsur Rehman Faruqi, *The Mirror of Beauty*. It is the story of a bold and outspoken woman that ends with the Mughal dispossession of the Red Fort.

Eesha Kumar has chosen to comment on what she describes as the ‘genre-bending’ book, *But Beautiful*, by Geoff Dyer. She finds it difficult to categorise, except to say that it is a ‘book on jazz’.

Khushwant Singh was part and parcel of the city of Delhi. He had his share of virulent critics and ardent admirers, and Arvindar Singh gives us an insight to this complex man.

Nyla Ali Khan’s personal narrative of a Kashmiri in the US diaspora is a thoughtful piece that asks a relevant question: does nostalgia for one’s place of origin tend to romanticise the past?

A. R. Vasavi’s narrative is a vehicular journey on different modes of transport; a journey that is also a microcosm of people’s lives and social relationships.

Shiv Visvanathan deliberates on how we can out-think the West, invoking our own civilisational categories to do so—this has nothing to do with nationalist fervour and everything to do with alternate modes of thought.

Victor Patterson draws attention to the number of people who suffer from epilepsy in India, and what stands in the way of treatment.

Adding to the discussion in the special issue on education last year, Jandhyala Tilak argues in favour of the public school system which he believes is at the heart of a civilised society.

The theme of the photo essay is unusual—French weddings. Arundhati Virmani takes us from their Christian foundations to contemporary times.

I would like to conclude by remembering a great supporter of the *IIC Quarterly*. Justice Leila Seth. She gave us permission to publish her famous *Times of India* article, ‘A mother and a judge speaks out on section 377’. It appeared in the *Quarterly* in Summer 2014 with the title, ‘You are Criminal if you are Gay’. We will miss her.



OMITA GOYAL