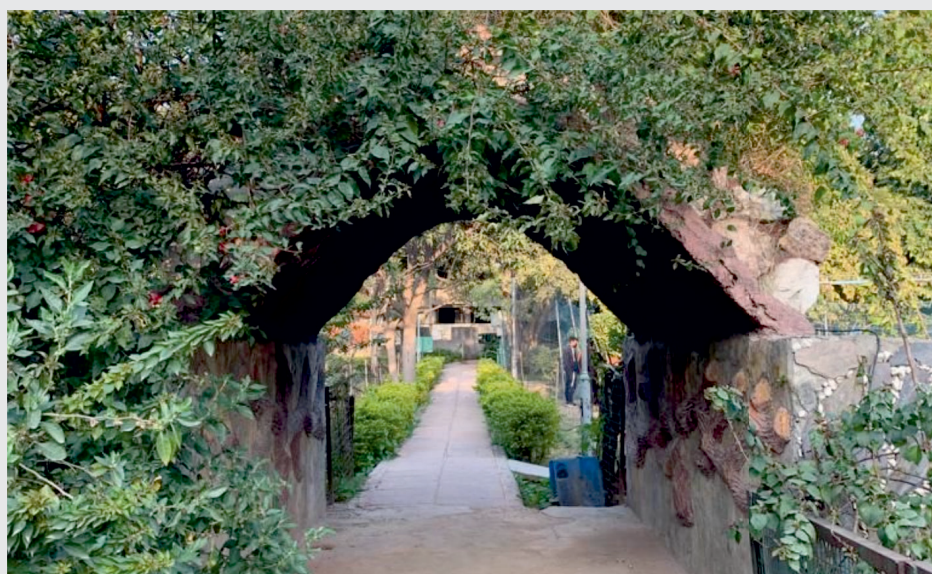




## SPOT ON - A QUIZ

BY SHIVRAJ PARSHAD



Straight out of a fantasy film? This is a spot many morning walkers frequent. Can you guess where this photo was taken?

Send us your entries i.e. block, street, landmark and an interesting caption to [hellovvwa@gmail.com](mailto:hellovvwa@gmail.com). Best entries stand to win exciting prizes. To qualify:

1. You need to be a VVWA member with up-to-date subscription.
2. Only 1 entry per member.
3. Enter to win a voucher from NEU Salon, Vasant Vihar.

Contest ends on 25th April, 2022.

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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Gurpreet Singh Bindra



We bring this issue of our newsletter to you with our greetings and compliments. You would notice that the newsletter is now re-christened as "aVVWAz". We feel that this reflects VVWA and the work it does more effectively. We have also put in place, a new editorial team headed by **Mrs. Mridula Murgai**, our Director (Administration). The team comprises of our block representatives **Mr. Shivraj Parshad** (from B Block) and **Ms. Nina Jain Bimbrahw** (from C Block). **Gen. S. P. Murgai**, has also volunteered his services, which we gratefully accept as his experience will be very valuable. **Surveen Singh**, a student of Shri Ram School who has a flair for writing and designing has joined our team as an intern and has made significant contributions in terms of conceptualization, design and layout of aVVWAz.

With the new financial year, VVWA has geared itself up into action and we are putting together our financial plan for the coming year. As and when these are ready and approved, we shall release it for everyone to peruse.

The previous month has been taken up with serious litigations. The first that comes to mind is the current matter in the High Court pertaining to deconcretisation, ramps, guard boxes etc. It started with a simple contempt petition related to deconcretisation of trees in Vasant Vihar as it is very richly endowed with probably the maximum number of trees in any colony of Delhi. Your committee consulted technical and legal experts who were unanimous that deconcretisation was necessary. The Society and VVWA did not challenge this. However, in subsequent hearings, the Learned Judge extended the scope to the removal of the guard boxes, ramps etc. At this stage, the Society and VVWA jointly took a decision to intervene in the matter. We have kept everyone informed about what is happening in the Courts. The matter is subjudice and we would not like to comment anything further.

The next important thing that is causing us concern is the rapid, rampant growth of encroachments in our colony. We have pursued the matter vigorously with SDMC. They have carried out a few raids, but we find that in the next 2/3 days, all the hawkers and vendors return. We now feel that the stage has come for us to move the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi to secure removal of all encroachments.

The other big news is that the three Municipal Corporations are once again going to be merged into one. At the point of writing this, both houses of Parliament have approved the bill and only the President's signature is awaited. This will be followed by a period of reorganisation and consolidation. At this point, we cannot say how this will impact our work and it's operation. But we write to inform you that we are keeping a close watch on this situation and that we will do everything possible to protect the interest of our community and its residents.

Now that we have some respite from the Omicron variant of Covid, our focus is now on our infrastructure issues. Water, Waste Management, Parks etc. are being looked at very seriously. We are concerned about the traffic scenario in Vasant Vihar with the commencement of schools. In our next issue, we will be in a position to bring everyone up to date with the progress on these fronts.

# SEEN BUT UNSEEN

by Nina Jain Bimbrahw

Did you know that the Mother Dairy booth in C-Block market is run by Mr. Ram Niwas, an ex-Army 'Naib Subedar' and that too since 2005?

Hailing from Urika village, Jhunjhunu district in Rajasthan, Mr. Ram Niwas joined the army as a teenager. He was part of the infantry and served in the army at various locations nationally – Leh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan - as well as internationally – Somalia for 1 year. He speaks of his army days with great pride and enthusiasm!

He retired from the army in August 1998, and that is when he started working at a Mother Dairy outlet in Malviya Nagar.

## About the Mother Dairy Booth...

In 2005, Mr. Niwas applied for setting up the outlet in C-Block Market, Vasant Vihar, and was happy when his application was accepted. From Malviya Nagar, he moved to Vasant Kunj to be closer. Due to growing demand and long hours, he then moved to Vasant Apartments where he now lives with his son and daughter-in-law.

Mr. Niwas and his son, Mr. Pawan Kumar, both work at this outlet from 5.30 am to 1 pm and then again from 4 pm to 10 pm. Retailing all Mother Dairy products such as Milk, Dahi, Ice Cream, Ghee, Butter, Mithai, etc., they cater to a footfall of 100-200 people a day. **"Pehle 400-500 log aate they. Ab kam aate hai, jabse yeh sharaab ka theka band kar diya."** says Mr. Niwas. He further adds, **"Yahan bahut ladaiyan hoti thi. Ab theek hai."**

Mr. Niwas also has 2 daughters who are married. One daughter's family manages a Mother Dairy Booth in E-Block and the other daughter's family manages an outlet in Shankar Vihar.

What is absolutely striking about him is that he continues to work with army-style precision and pride. I was reminded of the saying: 'You can take a soldier out of the Army, but you can never take the Army out of a soldier!'

*When Mr. Pawan Kumar (Mr. Niwas's son) realized I was one of the C-Block reps, he immediately requested, "Is banyan tree ko cut karva deejiye. Ek din yeh gir jayega aur bahut nuksaan hoga". I told him a letter has already been submitted to the Department of Forests for cutting and Horticulture Department for trimming.*



*Mr. Ram Niwas lost his wife on April 19, 2021. He remembers her with great fondness and immense grief. She passed away due to complications from chronic diabetes, and also contracted COVID-19. He returned to work after 13 days to keep his mind away from the pain of losing her.*



# SPICY TRIANGLE

by Milly Murgai



If you would like to contact Mr. Ashwani, please do call or WhatsApp: 98102-23252



## Spicy Triangle – A Cloud Kitchen in Vasant Vihar

It is not easy to categorise Mr. Ashwani Shroff's profession! He runs a Cloud Kitchen from C 6/10, supplying delicious Indian cuisine to his die-hard followers all over Delhi NCR! What's impressive is that he has cooked and provided free food for over 400 people everyday during the height of Covid 2.0 as far as Gurgaon and Noida, going to the extent of obtaining e-passes for his delivery guys. And now due to the success of Spicy Triangle, he has opened another branch as his Cloud Kitchen with a partner in Gurgaon covering over 480 sq.ft.

During our very interesting conversation with Mr. Shroff, we learnt that he comes from a family of restaurateurs and followed this path on his own starting 2020. He is well known among his social circles as being a phenomenal cook, which encouraged him to convert his talent into a commercial venture. However soon after he began, Covid struck and he turned his passion into a philanthropic venture, providing food to those families for whom food was not easily accessible. But then, that is a story for another day!

And how does he grow his business? Word of mouth (pun intended) is his publicity. He is a stickler for fresh ingredients as this is his specialty, and personal hands-on cooking is his hallmark. He ensures that the menu changes every few months, with some regular popular items that stay constant and some new ones being added. As he does not have a freezer, every delicacy is prepared and served fresh.

## About Cloud Kitchens:

Home Delivery Kitchens/Cloud Kitchens are personalised businesses. Each centre has its own specialities and dedicated clients. The Chef-cum-owner is well-known to his regulars and they know that they can request specific dishes prepared to match their tastes.

*This article is the first in our special series: Unusual Occupations*

# TOP-TIER

## *Vasant Vihar specials*

by Surveen Singh

Whether it's catching up with old friends, spending time with family, reading a book, or finishing pending work, it never feels complete without that perfect cup of coffee. Here are my personal favourite coffee places near our very own colony.

### Perch wine and coffee bar

Located right next to Modern Bazaar in Basant Lok, Perch is the perfect place to go to catch up with your friends. The ideal blend of vintage and modern, the interior is a pleasure to the eye. Their hospitality is an added boon to the variety of coffee options that light up your taste buds.

Their cold coffee refreshes your mind and leaves you transformed into an energetic and enthusiastic person. On the other hand, their hot coffee calms you down and leaves you relaxed and rejuvenated. Perch is centrally located, aesthetically pleasing, and a must-visit wine and coffee bar.



### Blue Tokai Coffee

A three-floored cafe with a bookshelf containing a variety of books, Blue Tokai is the quintessential workplace. It is quiet and peaceful and the coffee and food are amazing. What is notable is their recycling policy, The leftover coffee grounds, which is a well-known ingredient for compost, can be taken home for free and used to recycle coffee back into the ground.

With the environmentally friendly atmosphere and the Medium Dark Roast aroma, Blue Tokai located in Basant Lok can be your new go-to cafe.

### L'Opéra

An authentic pastry, bakery house and Salon de Thé, specializing in French products in India, L'Opera is a stylishly designed bakery with exquisite products. The French ambiance of the cafe is an added attraction! Coffee may not be what they are renowned for, yet their fabulous aromas will make you want to come back often.

The staff is courteous and soft-spoken, making your experience even more delightful. Their macarons and pastries go beautifully with a glass of freshly made cold coffee. Grabbing a cup of coffee, and of course, their French pastries, from L'Opera is an experience to be savored often!



# THE BUZZ AROUND VV & VVWA

March Edition

The last few weeks have been a busy time for VVWA. Good events, traumatic happenings, all this happened during these days. We were shocked with the breaking of the ramps and driveways of our fellow residents; and we were delighted to be awarded a Certificate for Excellence in Waste Management in the A and C Blocks.

Here are some details of all that has been happening:

## 1. Award for Waste Management –

We were honoured to receive a Certificate of Excellence in Waste Management in A and C Blocks from the Swacchta Abhiyan. The other blocks are in the process of becoming a part of this project whereby we are teaching families how to segregate waste and not send waste to the dhalaos. Very soon we hope to close all the dhalaos and make this a zero-waste colony.



## 2. Water Crisis –

The water crisis in Vasant Vihar never seems to be getting fully solved and shelved. There is scarcity of water, there is irregular supply of water, and the timings seem to change every day. We are in constant contact with both DJB and MVV and are putting pressure on them to synchronise the systems and make life easier for our residents.



## 3. Vaccination Camp –

Under the auspices of Medanta Hospital we held a Vaccination Camp at the Kalyan Kendra. The response was muted since most people over the age of 60 had already got their booster doses. But it gave us an opportunity to provide vaccinations for the 16 to 20 categories also.

## 4. A 15 Park –

As part of the Park Projects under our MLA, Shrimati Dheeraj Pramila Tokas, the A15 park was the first park to get new and upgraded swings for the children. These have replaced the old swings which were beginning to fall apart. This process will be continued in other parks soon.

# THE BUZZ

Contd...

## 5. Deconcretisation of Trees:

Many years ago, when a tree census of Vasant Vihar was done by Ms. Vallari Sheel - an environmental scientist and urban ecologist - we discovered that we had over 4000 trees in our colony. After that over 900 trees were planted in the Miyawaki park on Munirka Marg. We are proud of the fact that Vasant Vihar has the largest tree cover in the South Delhi area. However, many of these trees are on the pavements and have been surrounded by concrete and bricks. This is likely to lead to a time when some of them may die or wither away. Under the directive of the High Court, all these trees have now been deconcretised. It has led to many side-effects such breaking of tree roots, collection of malba on the pavements and many irate Vasant Vihar is. In the long run this will help the environment and our colony a lot, but we do realise that presently this is causing a lot of discomfort to those who live next to the dug-up areas.

## 6. Ukraine Embassy:

Not many Vasant Vihar residents realise that the Ukraine embassy is among the 59 embassies located within Vasant Vihar. However, from the time the war began in Ukraine it has become a focal point for those who wish to offer flowers or candles in support of the Ukrainians. Initially the street was full of media vans and journalists. They were soon joined by police vans and a large contingent of policemen all around the neighbourhood. Very soon the embassy was putting out daily updates on their notice boards outside. As the war has extended over the days, the media has left but the police van and personnel are still around. Every evening candles are lit, and the embassy staff and many others join for a candlelight vigil. We understand and respect their sorrow and heartbreak and wish we could help them at a personal level in some manner.



# A WALK THROUGH THE ARAVALLI BIODIVERSITY PARK

by Tertia Sandhu

The Aravalli Biodiversity Park (ABP), previously known as Scindia Farms, covers an expanse of 692 acres comprising of mini forests, ravines, valleys, and pits located between Vasant Vihar and Vasant Kunj. Truckloads of mica, which were mined here, would trundle past Poorvi Marg at all odd hours until the DDA took over the development and afforestation drive around 2005.



Previously infested with Vilayati Kikar, the ABP now has many species of trees native to the Aravallis as well as those found in tropical rain forests such as teak and bamboo. Old narrow paths and dirt tracks meandering through sparse vegetation and barren landscape have given way to wide gravel tracks conducive to walking and jogging. One can take the shortest route from the entry point at Vasant Vihar to Vasant Kunj and back, covering an approximate distance of 5 kms, or one can add a few extra kms by taking diversions here and there. If you are an early morning walker, the sounds of birds chirping as they wake up at dawn is sure to delight you! The sunrise is awesome, and the air is fresh and invigorating. Evenings are equally great for getting away from the stresses and strains of the day.

There are 6 nature trails leading to various conservation areas that are otherwise restricted to visitors. What lies beyond those locked gates one might wonder? I was fortunate enough to have explored the nature trails on various occasions with small groups led by a botanist or a herpetologist. Just behind the office building is the butterfly conservatory with over a hundred species of host plants to match an equal number of butterfly and moth species. Further on is an orchidarium, fern conservation, medicinal garden, nurseries, water bodies, open grasslands, narrow paths etc. Chances of coming across families of nilgai, jackals, hare, and porcupine etc; along the nature trails are great.

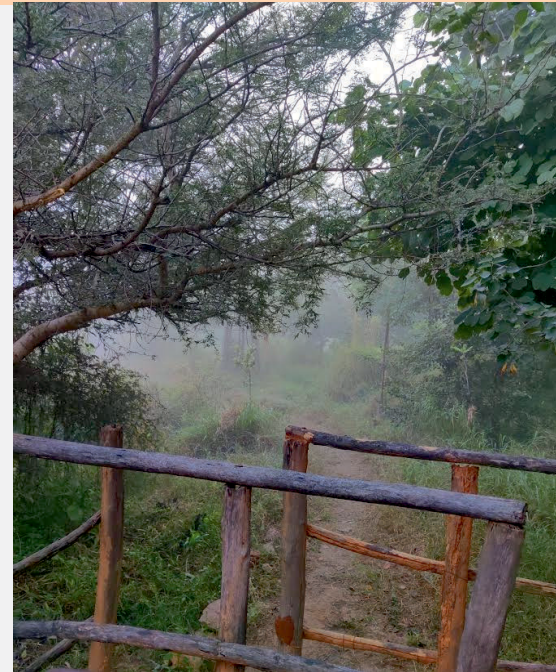
ABP is home to many species of mammals, birds, insects, amphibians, and reptiles. Rare sightings of the grey hornbill have been reported. The profusion of Lantana flowers after monsoons, and other wild flowers native to the Aravallis at different times of the year are very pleasing to the eyes. Plants that are of religious importance are found in the area surrounding an old Devi temple. This is the only place where people can rest awhile as there are no benches which discourages non-serious walkers and idlers. While the approach from Vasant Vihar is nondescript, the entrance from Vasant Kunj is spread out and affords plenty of space for yoga enthusiasts, meditators, laughter groups and those who simply enjoy being amidst nature. Food is not permitted inside the park and feeding of wildlife is prohibited.





Apart from acting as the green lung of Delhi, ABP is a boon for Delhites, more so for the residents of Vasant Vihar and Vasant Kunj who only need to step out of their homes to be swiftly transported into the lap of nature. Study groups from schools and colleges, bird watchers, photographers, and scientists from different parts of the city also visit occasionally.

*Ms. Tertia Sandhu is a Past Life  
Regression Therapist  
@ Past-life journey*



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## VASANT VIHAR CELEBRATES HOLI -Maj Gen (Retd) S P Murgai



Once again Holi celebrations were back in Delhi with fervour and joy.. The focus was on renewing the bonds of friendship and brotherhood with the hues of fabulous colours.

Continuing the traditions of many decades, VVWA and the Society organised Holi celebration at the Kalyan Kendra. VVWA lit the Holi bonfire celebrating Holika Dahan on March 17, 2022. The next morning, the Society held a sumptuous lunch, combined with music and songs at the same venue. The festivities were eco-friendly as only natural colours were used.

The response was phenomenal, over 300 people joined the lunch, and over 150 people attended the Holika Dahan. It was a pleasure to join in the celebrations!

# Soul Talk with Romesh Chopra

by Maj Gen S P Murgai

*Men of substance are never forgotten by the community they have served.*

*Romesh Chopra of 25 Palam Marg, popularly known as Romi is one such person, who changed the mindset of 'Vasant Viharis' to think beyond humdrum matters such as bijli and paani, into a homogenous, happy colony of friendly people. Romi is an aesthete - a man of many talents. A philosophy graduate from Cambridge and a close friend of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, he has made significant contributions in the field of textiles, architecture, and urban planning. He conceived and directed many large-scale outdoor events to celebrate India's history, and was actively involved with the national festival of India in Paris.*

*Some excerpts from my chat with Romi:*



I have been a resident of Vasant Vihar since 1971, living in our lovely house built by my father way back in 1967. In those days there were no high-rise buildings. I could see Qutab Minar sitting in my drawing room!

As a long-term resident and given my experience of working with government and political leaders, I was approached by senior residents for assistance with colony matters. One thing led to another and in 2006, I was elected President of Vasant Vihar Welfare Association.

First thing I did after stepping into VVWA's office was to call two representatives from each block and ask them which issues needed immediate attention. 'Bijli', 'Paani', and 'Naala' (sanitation) was the response from all 6 blocks! These 3 became my focus areas, and I immediately put all my efforts to improve our locality. I became personally involved in every improvement area of our colony. During my tenure, several projects for the betterment of Vasant Vihar were completed.

Meanwhile, I met with the then French Ambassador's wife Marie-Laure de Villepin, who suggested that a cultural festival with music, dance and literature be organised in Vasant Vihar, which would help create a community feel. I met Sheila Dixit, the then Chief Minister of Delhi, to elicit her support for organising a 'Vasant Utsav' – a cultural festival, themed on the colours and moods of spring. To my utter surprise, she readily agreed not only to support the festival, but also to attend the event. The event was very successful and remains the talk of the town till this day!

# Soul Talk

Contd...

Another special moment I cherish is my meeting with His Holiness Dalai Lama. For three days in March 2008, a few of us were invited to attend Dalai Lama's meditation course in Delhi. It was very special because being in his presence is so unique. He exudes a calm that is majestic, a strength that is serene, a faith that transcends all doubt. And his humanity compels attention even from the inquisitive outsider. I feel that his blessings are still with me!

I am now 78, living alone, and keep myself busy by going through messages on my i-Pad, sorting out my old photographs and catching up with my close circle of friends: Asha Chopra, Sanjana Raj, Jaspreet Singh, and Ambassador Dalip Mehta.

*Wish you Romi great going for many more years in good health, joy, and happiness!*




From The Editor

Hi Friends,

Welcome to the first edition of avvwa3. आइये हमारी आवाज़ सुनिये !

We aim to make this community newsletter not only the voice of vvwa but also the voice of all the residents of Vasant Vihar! We invite suggestions from all about what you would like us to cover, news ideas, articles you would like to submit or a question you may have. Email me at [hellouvva@gmail.com](mailto:hellouvva@gmail.com).

I would like to thank our editorial team - Gen. S.P. Murgai; Nina Jain Bimbrahw; Suvreen Singh - our intern; and Shivraj Parshad - our photographer. I am proud to be a part of this team as the Editor of avvwa3. Write to us, call us, talk to us - we look forward to interacting with you! Do follow us on social media:  

Milly Murgai



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