

## VASANT VIHAR WELFARE ASSOCIATION



Today on our cover page we feature the beautiful terrace garden at the residence of Mr. & Mrs. Malik of D2/4FF.

Sangeeta aptly says:

What is it in the plants and flowers that gives so much joy to everyone? Because for decades flowers have been an expression of joy, love and happiness. They make our stressed daily life relaxing and beautiful.

Flowers signify love, they resemble women; soft and tender both from inside and outside, grab attention very relevant to women's emotions and above all they make your house look beautiful. No object d'art can match its natural beauty.



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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Gurpreet Singh Bindra



The weather during April and now into May brings the harsh reality of climate change to mind. While we enjoy the cool weather, which is different from the oppressive heat, there is cause for worry. Several Meteorologists are of the opinion that until and unless we experience normal heat conditions, the monsoons are liable to be badly hit. What we all need is a good monsoon. This will be best for our crops, water supply etc. So, I sincerely hope we soon begin to experience a normal summer.

We have already shared the good news that MCD has agreed to ensure a compactor exclusively for Vasant Vihar. CHINTAN has already started work in two of our blocks and is gradually spreading out to all the other blocks. Once this settles down, we will go to the next step of arranging compacting machines to convert our wet waste to manure. The ultimate goal is to ensure a 100% Zero Waste colony within Vasant Vihar. Simultaneously, we will also create avenues for disposal of plastic and e-waste. This has been extensively covered later in this issue.

Since I last wrote my column, we obtained an Order from the Delhi High Court constituting a three person committee consisting of Asst. Commissioner MCD, an Inspector from the local Police Station and President, VVWA. This committee is tasked with the object of identifying and removal of encroachments in Vasant Vihar. The Committee has started its work and in due course, we will see that the encroachments are removed.

While your committee has worked to push the work on various other fronts, I would be failing in my duty if I did not highlight the problem that exists. We, every day, read about the ongoing tussle between the Lt. Governor and the Delhi Government. While this is playing out, the decision making has come to a stand-still. This is very badly affecting all work. On another level, the political struggle for control of MCD has also hurt us very badly. While we have a Mayor and Dy. Mayor in place, there is no standing committee or ward committee. As a result, financial allocation and approval is also at a total standstill. Adding to this, is the fact that MCD has a precarious financial situation. Improvement in this has to wait for the formation of the standing committees, a process which is currently being played out in various courts of law.

Schools and colleges have now closed for their summer vacations which will give several of us an opportunity to travel on holiday. For those of us who are travelling, I wish them a safe and enjoyable journey. For those of us who will continue to stay in Vasant Vihar, I wish them a pleasant and enjoyable holiday season.

# OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

by Arunima Kukreja



## BLOCK

Having lived in A block for some years, I have come to appreciate its many nuances which are absent in so many colonies of Delhi. The large trees lining every street, the broad roads and markets in every block, make life beautiful and easy. When we started to build our home, my husband and I especially designed it, keeping the large tree in front as the central axis of the house. Today its canopy and those of so many other large trees give us a picturesque view of dense foliage and an illusion of a forest. Of course, sometimes a peekaboo of a house under construction drags us back to reality. The parks are lovely chambers of oxygen and visual respite which break the monotony of an otherwise concrete jungle.



On our usual daily walks, we often enjoy and admire the architecture of newly built homes and plantations until of course we stumble on carpets of cow dung, which makes us realise that it's not too good to have your head in the sky, but bowed, with eyes on the street. The swashbuckling cows who leisurely walk the block and the dogs who are the self-appointed kings of the streets (no offence to animal lovers) jolt us back to reality. We are often reminded of the delicious gol gappas of Bengal Sweets when an occasional riotous person on a scooty with Bengal Sweets emblazoned at the back of his carrier speeds through the streets with the swishing sound of the wind.

Having a lovely cultural centre right in the heart of A block, and now a restaurant within it gives us a feel of Europe where one can easily drop by for a cup of coffee. The block with all its other different peripheral facilities and luxuries makes living here an all encompassing experience and one doesn't feel the need to venture out.



**No colony or block comes without its share of challenges, and to ignore these and only glorify certain features makes us look backwards. While we have the basic foundation of a beautiful block, to retain its pleasures we need to actively involve ourselves in its up keep and one can begin from the very street where our home stands. Like they say,  
If we wish to rebuild our cities, we must first rebuild our neighbourhoods".**



# MEET OUR NEIGHBOURS

by Milly Murgai

Over a cup of excellent Vietnamese coffee, in a beautiful home in A Block, we met Pankaj and Preeti Saran, both of whom are IFS Officers and retired Ambassadors. It is rare to find a couple who have both excelled in their chosen careers, and we are proud of the fact that they are Vasant Vihar residents. Today, we will introduce you to Pankaj Saran, very soon in another issue we hope to acquaint you with his lovely wife Preeti.

## PANKAJ SARAN

An erudite and polished diplomat



Mr. Saran modestly claims that it was luck and destiny that brought him into the realms of diplomacy! An alumnus of Hindu College and Delhi School of Economics, he said that the Indian Foreign Service was always his first choice of career. He was fascinated by the aura of the diplomatic life, the lovely big homes, and the travel to various countries. He was very clear that if he had not got into the diplomatic service he would have gone into academics!

The Gods were kind and very soon he was travelling as the Indian representative all over the world. His first and last posting was in Russia! He has served in Indian missions at Moscow, Washington DC and Cairo and he was the Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh in 2015 when the historic India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement was ratified by the Parliament. From 2018 till 2021 he was Deputy to the NSA.

When we asked him to describe the role of a diplomat in another country, he elucidated that they need to initially judge as to how the strategies in that country affect India, and on what basis does it make policy decisions regarding India. It is the skill and training of a diplomat which comes into the fore as he observes and understands and helps his host country get a better understanding of India. It requires a very delicate balance between promoting our own interest and achieving a cordial relationship between the two nations.

With over four decades of experience in this field, it was fascinating to listen to him while he fluently articulated about what he felt were the most important attributes of a diplomat. The ability to listen was very essential, because as you listened you absorbed the nuances in the conversation, you picked up the information and learnt to connect the dots. Often these helped him to anticipate and understand the unsaid policies, judge the early warning signs of a crisis or an issue, and above all be able to guide your own government into making the correct policy decisions. Another very important attribute of a diplomat was the ability to meet and engage with people from all over the world! You need to be able to talk to everyone, make friends and become an expert in picking up what is not being said!

# MEET OUR NEIGHBOURS

contd...

As a Deputy to the NSA, he was part of a very important part of our security apparatus. We were amazed to learn that this very significant agency is comprised of officers from all realms of the government, such as military, cyber threats, financial threats, and of course threats from foreign sources. It is an organisation that reports directly to the PM, and he was privileged to be a part of it. He clarified the importance of an apparatus such as this by stating that its objective was to prevent us from living in fear. It is mandated to deal with hard security issues and to seal the country against security threats. His focus was on issues relating to foreign affairs and external threats that our country faces. He called diplomacy a game of chess and said that diplomacy and intelligence gathering were very similar! Even after retirement, he is watchful of all that is happening in the world, and as he eloquently stated, "Even now our antennas go up if something does not seem right or not in sync with India's interests".

When we requested him to give us his thoughts on how he felt we could make a difference in our colony, he had a few suggestions:

- Improve or change the signage's on the streets/lanes.
- Lighting on the street needs to be improved.
- Lack of connectivity is a major issue that needs to be resolved.
- The traffic police should put up road signs such as no horn, speed limit, etc. This will give some semblance of uniformity in the colony and hopefully some people may begin to follow the rules.

We are fortunate to have him as part of our community!



Hi friends,

Often, as I look around Vasant Vihar, I am surprised and delighted with the amazing heterogeneous society that lives in our neighbourhood. On my own C6 street we have 5 embassies, and residents from all over the world. We are fortunate to have over 150 bureaucrats, retired and serving, as our fellow residents in our colony. In every issue we cover one of our neighbours, and I am sure you must be enjoying reading about them.

We invite our readers to suggest names of people who they feel we should write about. We also welcome articles from all of you. Please do contact us in case you are interested, we would be delighted to talk to you.

Looking forward to interacting with you.

Milly Murgai  
Editor - aVWAZ

# PROBLEMS PLAGUING VASANT VIHAR

by Maj. Gen. (Retd) S. P. Murgai, AVSM



There have been conflicting reports about various issues. We decided to ask VVWA President relevant questions, so that matters can be put in a proper perspective.



**V.V. wants to know series...**  
**Getting answers from Mr. Gurpreet Singh Bindra**



**You are on record as having stated that MCD is financially strapped whereas a newspaper article states that MCD has had a record revenue collection. What are the facts?**

We are all aware of the newspaper article in the Times of India, which states that MCD revenue collection has increased by 23% to Rs. 8,900 crores last year, which is the highest ever. At the outset, we would like to mention that MCD has a monthly salary bill of Rs. 800 crores, which translates to Rs. 9,600 crores per year. This clearly exceeds the total revenue. During our discussions with senior MCD officials, it was also pointed out that they have an amount of Rs. 9,000 crores as outstanding payments due to suppliers and contractors. VVWA, itself, has to receive approximately Rs. 24 lacs as reimbursement under the PPP Scheme for parks. If we analyse the increase in the revenue figures reflected in the TOI, Rs. 655 crores has come from an one-time amnesty scheme in respect of property tax. This is a one-time receipt and will not be repeated next year. Therefore, our statement is factually correct. However, we do hope that the MCD finances improve because we do have a vital stake in MCD services.

The requirement of an annual subscription was mooted by VVWA during the AGM held on 28th February, 2021. In the position paper, it had been clearly stated that a part of the subscription would be utilised for urgent maintenance services in Vasant Vihar. We have already clarified the MCD financial situation. It is important that we maintain our colony so that residents enjoy a good quality of life. We, therefore do not see any harm in spending money wherever necessary for the betterment of our colony.

**A few residents have objected that you are using money received from annual subscriptions for expenses which normally should be incurred by MCD. Your reasons?**

**One of your major electoral promises was removal of encroachments. What is the position now?**

Encroachments is a major source of concern. These had multiplied during the Covid and the post Covid periods. Having failed to get any meaningful result from MCD, we approached Hon'ble Delhi High Court who was pleased to constitute a three-member committee consisting of the MCD Asst. Commissioner, an Inspector (to be nominated by SHO) and President, VVWA. The committee has met and has identified the encroachers. The Committee will meet once a month, as directed by the Hon'ble High Court. A tabulated list of encroachers has been handed over to the court appointed committee for further action. We now expect MCD to swing into action and remove the encroachments. VVWA is engaged in a close follow-up with the MCD and the Police Station, Vasant Vihar on the subject.

# PROBLEMS PLAGUING VASANT VIHAR

contd...

The major issue plaguing Vasant Vihar is the presence of 19 schools. Approximately, 16000 children come to study in the morning and leave in the afternoon. This causes major traffic jams. We are in constant touch with the Traffic Inspector and the schools. You will be aware that recently Shri Ram School unilaterally changed their traffic pattern, which is creating problems on Paschimi Marg. We are talking to the school to see how best we can tackle the situation. The crux of the problem is that barring a few, the schools are not cooperative. Resolution of the traffic issues is an on-going problem; part of it is compounded by the fact that the traffic inspectors are frequently getting transferred.

**Traffic in Vasant Vihar is getting out of control. What plans do you have?**

**Maintenance of our water supply has been a major success of your team. Even after the departure of MVV, you continued to maintain good water supply. How do you view the situation in the coming months before the monsoon?**

Water supply to Vasant Vihar requires constant follow-up and interaction with DJB officials. It is necessary to keep a very close watch on the daily supply position, so that immediate remedial action can be taken. We must realise that the allocation to Delhi has remained constant at 960 mgd, whereas the population is increasing. For a start, we have ensured that all the leakages in the pipeline from Moti Bagh to Vasant Vihar have been plugged. Vasant Vihar is at a higher gradient than our adjoining colonies. This has necessitated a change in the supply pattern, within Vasant Vihar and our neighbouring colonies. This is yielding good results. Water supply continues to be a constant challenge but we are confident of meeting the challenge. Our 24x7 water scheme is ready for commissioning, but is held up for the final water allocation. We are getting good cooperation from all DJB officials.

The speed breaker project was conceived to curb cars, motor cycles travelling at high speeds on the arterial roads of Vasant Vihar. A sum of Rs. 29.15 lacs was sanctioned by the PWD and a tender was awarded for the construction of ten speed breakers. Unfortunately, the proposed speed breaker, located opposite the Church on Poorvi Marg was stalled for reasons beyond our control. As a result of ensuing delay, the contractor abandoned the work. A fresh tender is in the process of being floated and we hope that the work will resume very shortly. Our first priority would be to complete the speed breaker in question. We are pursuing the PWD officials so that this work is re-started expeditiously and thereafter completed.

**The speed breaker work has got stalled. A number of accidents have taken place at A-Block. What is the reason and what remedial measures are being taken?**

# THE BUZZ AROUND VV & VVWA

March & April

Here are some details of all that has been happening:



## Stress Management Counsellor:

The Poly Clinic at the Vasant Vihar Gurudwara are proud to announce that every Saturday from 9 am till 11 am, Dr. Sangita Sharad will be present to help people who need emotional support and counselling. She is a Life Coach and a Counsellor and will be available to help all those who need professional guidance in order to be able to cope with stress and other mental issues in their lives.

## Free Health Checkup Camp:

On 15th April, 2023, Vasant Vihar Welfare Association in collaboration with Max Saket and Golden Lions Club, Delhi Greater held a Free Health Checkup Camp at the Kalyan Kendra. We provided the venue and the facilities, Max Super Speciality Hospital, Saket provided the doctors and all the medical testing apparatus and the Lions Club, did the organisation and provided us with the volunteers.

Together, we held a very successful camp, where over 50 people came to consult with the doctors and technicians. Among the investigations available were BP, Random Blood Sugar and BMD. The consulting doctors were Urologist, Orthopaedic, General Physician, Dermatologist and Ophthalmologist. The Acupuncturist was also present. Many people got new spectacles prescribed and bought them at discounted rates from them. Special arrangements were made for the Multiple Sclerosis of India, Delhi Chapter patients. They were delighted to see the easy accessibility and the facilities available for all those who came. We look forward to holding more such camps.





# THE BUZZ

contd...

## C Block's Know-Your-Neighbour party:



This is how initiatives begin and become a success! A conversation among two C Block ladies about the fact that despite living in the block they did not know too many people, led to a plan for a gathering of the C Block residents. WhatsApp was, as usual, the source for passing the word around! Over 70 residents signed and over 20 of them offered to provide the food. The venue was originally the C2 park, but the rain came pouring down and we had to change the venue to the Kalyan Kendra. Everyone was given a name tag with their address on it. We discovered new friends and new next-door neighbours. We ate excellent food, provided by our very generous residents. It was an unforgettable evening, and everyone wanted a repeat sometime soon.

## Nizami Brothers at the Vasant Vihar Club:

Fabulous music and excellent weather, combined together to give us an amazing evening at the Vasant Vihar Club. The soulful and rapturous music provided by the renowned Nizami Brothers kept over 700 members enthralled for many hours. India's heritage of music that has been handed down to us over the centuries still lives among us and it was our privilege to enjoy it that evening.

## Dr. Meeran Chadha Borwankar – our very own woman cop:

It was a pleasure to see Meeran Chadha Borwankar being featured in the Delhi Times. She is a highly decorated police officer, a Fulbright Scholar, a lawyer, an author and above all – a resident of Vasant Vihar! This particular article in the paper was about her being felicitated at the release of the trailer of the new TV series Dahaad – starring Sonakshi Sinha. Meeran spoke about her four decades of service and about her hopes that a realistic portrayal of a woman police officer in a TV series would encourage more ladies to join the police force. Dr. Meeran, we are proud to call you one of our own! .



# Power Girls of V.V.

'POWER GIRLS' IS A SPECIAL SERIES ABOUT WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AND PROFESSIONALS IN V.V.



-Featuring-  
*Shirin Sabharwal of Dine Divine*



Meet Shirin Sabharwal, a chef specializing in European Continental Cuisine. Shirin's journey as a chef started with watching her grandmother and mother in the kitchen, and little did she know then, that she would pursue a career in professional cooking!

Following her passion, she completed her degree in Culinary Arts from the Indian Institute of Hotel Management, Aurangabad. With extensive training and exposure from various Taj and ITC hotels in India, she started her own brand 'Dine Divine' in the year 2016, with the main aim of letting her customers entertain their friends and family during parties without the hassle of making, creating, serving food. Shirin would take complete charge of the kitchen, cooking fresh meals for house parties and staying till the end of the party.

With the onset of COVID, in 2020, Shirin branched out to delivering pre-set carefully-curated meals. With daily menu changes, the three-course menu which includes a salad, main course and dessert, is priced just right, and serves two persons. She started this to deliver gourmet meals, made fresh and served hot within Vasant Vihar, so that people would not miss going out to restaurants.

## Awards

Shirin was most recently awarded the JURY choice award for 'Best Home Chef' (non veg category) at the Gurgaon Food Freak Awards on 31st August 2022. These awards are judged by some of the best Chefs and Food critics in India. The Jury comprised of Pawan Soni, Rocky Mohan, Manisha Bhasin, Rocky and Mayur, Nita Mehta, and Sabyasachi Gorai.

Seen in the photo is Shirin accepting the award.



## Dinner Menu

Here is the photo of a dinner menu, all packed and ready to be delivered!

**Top Left:** Orange and pomegranate salad with Goats Cheese

**Top Right:** Grilled Chicken in Brown Butter Sauce

**Bottom Left:** Side of sauteed vegetables

**Bottom Right:** Lemon tarts

Shirin does deliveries for meals as well as catering for house parties, kids birthdays, tea soirees and much more. For menu options and all other enquiries, please reach out to her:

 9654186691

 [dinedivinebyshirin](https://www.instagram.com/dinedivinebyshirin)

# VVWA INITIATIVES

by Parul Gaur

Waste Management and the state of our Dhalaos have been a constant discussion on various WhatsApp Groups. Over the past few months, VVWA has spent a lot of time, brainstorming on how to overcome this problem. The overall objective is to make Vasant Vihar a Zero Waste colony where all waste, except sanitary and hazardous, waste that is generated is handled within the colony. This will lead to a cleaner environment and will help eliminate the Dhalaos. One positive factor has been MCD's acceptance of our proposal for a Compactor. We will need to construct a Fixed Compactor Transit Station; preliminary work on which has already started.



CHINTAN is an NGO that is very active in the field of Waste Management. They are also impaneled by MCD. Over the past few months, VVWA has had extensive discussions with CHINTAN and we have now mandated them to offer us a one-colony, one-stop solution to all waste management activities. They have already started work in three of our blocks and are gradually extending their activities to all blocks and various other facets.

CHINTAN will retain and work with all the existing garbage workers, and train them in segregating and handling of waste. The wet waste will go to composting units, which CHINTAN will help us establish. This will ensure that all wet waste gets converted to compost. They will also help us establish a facility for the handling of all green waste. E-waste will also be collected on a fortnightly basis. We are also now in the process of finalizing the disposal of plastic waste.

One of the important factors of our arrangement with CHINTAN is that all existing garbage collectors will be absorbed and they will not be retrenched. Garbage collectors will be given uniforms and their service conditions will be greatly improved with facilities such as E-Shram Card etc. They will also be trained in how to assist residents in segregating their waste. They will collect a nominal charge from all households.

ZERO WASTE

Vasant Vihar is a very large colony with a lot of complex issues. In order that this project is successful, it is essential that all residents cooperate in segregating their waste. We have no doubt that we will have the support of all our residents to help us ensure a Zero waste colony, which will translate into a clean environment.

*We Continue To Serve*



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