

Our Chachaji

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Design: **Bhattathiri**



Jawahar Bal Manch

New Delhi

English

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(Children's literature)

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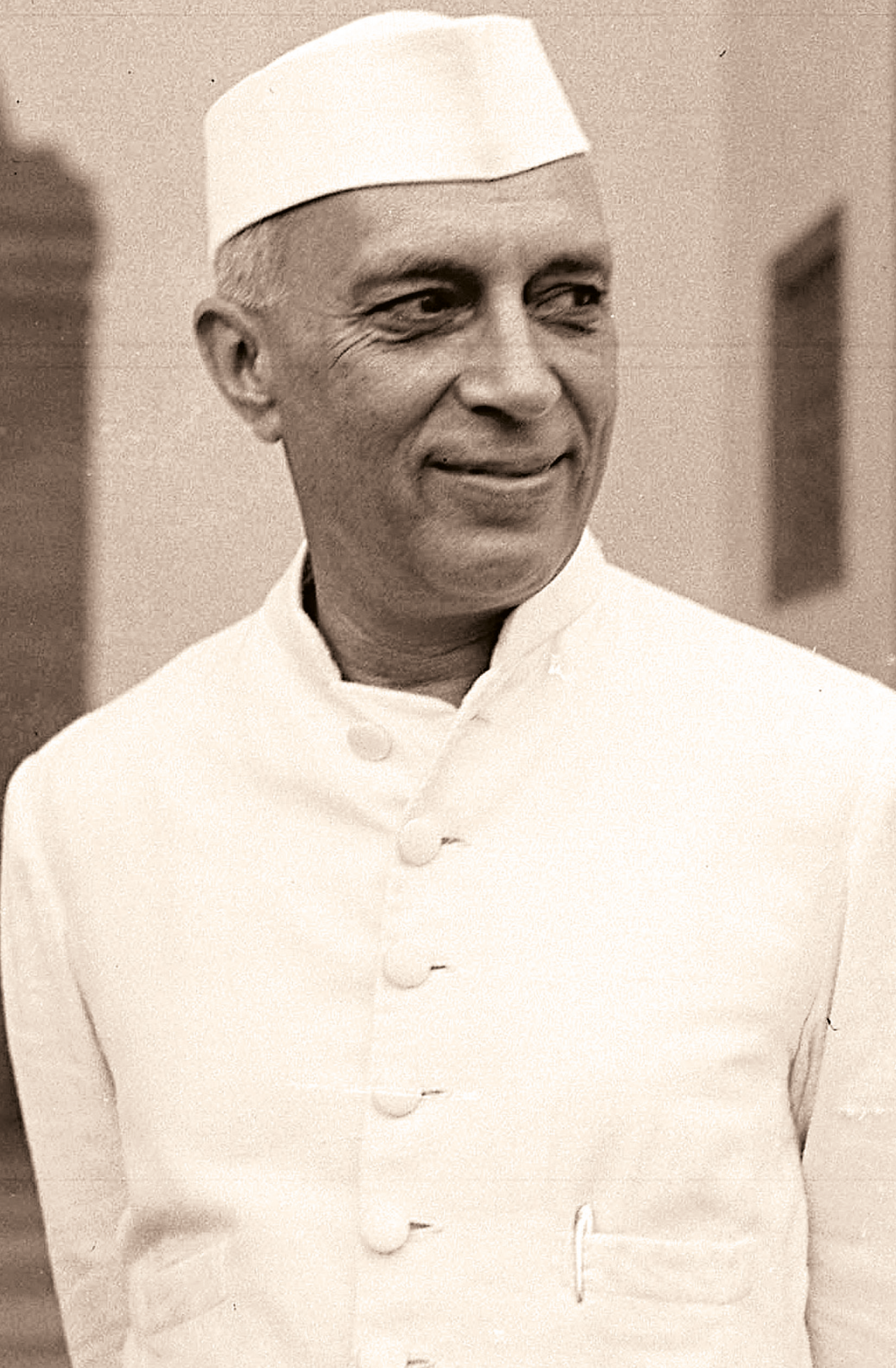
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Preface

We are passing through a very special period. We are witnessing people of different generations – those who participated in freedom struggle, those born after independence, those born after the silver, golden and platinum jubilee years of attaining freedom – mingle with one another and lead a very peaceful and contented life.

One hundred and fiftieth birth anniversary of father of our nation Mahatma Gandhi and of his wife Kasturba passed by. Fifty-seven years have elapsed after the death of the builder of modern India, Jawarharlal Nehru. We are entering the seventy fifth year of attaining independence.

We are now enjoying the freedom in this democratic country because of the legendary fight against the British by our forefathers/ancestors. But sadly, we are slowly forgetting those who got us this freedom. Of late, we are witnessing wilful efforts to malign the leaders and the martyrs of the freedom struggle. These activities are not only an insult to the history of our country but also an

injustice to the future generations.

The efforts put forth by our predecessors will prove to be a leading lamp and imparting energy in the difficult life ahead. This series of narrations about our heritage and freedom struggle in book form is a humble effort by the Jawahar Balmanch to impart knowledge to the children. We are starting this ambitious project by publishing illustrated books on the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, vision of Jawarharlal Nehru, brief narration of the freedom struggle etc. We sincerely hope that these books will help in imparting an affection towards our mother land and fair understanding of our history and heritage among the children. Materials for further understanding will follow soon. Balmanch is the largest children's organisation having wide reach throughout the length and breadth of our country. publishing similar literature in all Indian languags is in the anvil.

Familiarising our own history and heritage among the children and youth is the aim of these publications. These are being published with limited resources to enlighten our children. Hoping that you will support us and point out if there is any lapse/mistake that need to be corrected.

Dr.G.V.Hari

Chairman

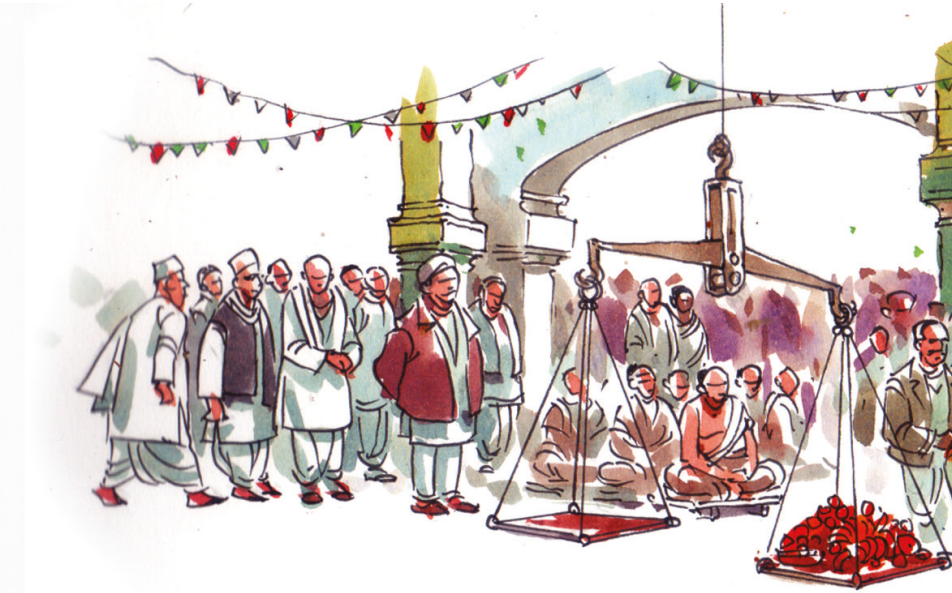
Jawahar Bal Manch

Memory of a Birthday

The house seemed like a palace adorned with many coloured flowers and balloons. The toys lie heaped and guests are all around exchanging pleasantries and the children playing in the garden. The kitchen smells of sumptuous varieties of food.

In between all this noise, sits a child in princely grandeur. The child is now being taken to a holy weight (Tulabhara) where the child will be weighed with an equal amount of fruits, sweets, which would promptly be distributed among the servants and the poor neighbourhood. The child asked the mother, 'when will my birthday come again?' 'Next year', said the mother. 'But I want it again and again,' the child was obstinate. The anxious child wanted to distribute many more fruits and sweets to his neighbours and servants.

This child was none other than the man destined to lead the nation and eventually sacrifice himself for it, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.



Loner Even In Prosperity

Jawaharlal was born as the eldest son of the famous advocate and immensely rich Motilal Nehru and Swarup Rani. They were both Kashmiri descendants. While Motilal was a legal expert and a progressive, Swarup Rani was a god fearing woman full of motherly love.

The ancestors of Motilal settled in Delhi in the eighteenth century. He was one of the most acclaimed advocates in Allahabad High court.

Jawaharlal was born on the 14th of November, 1889. Although endowed with luxurious life, expensive clothing and countless toys, he was never happy. Although he had many a servants to take care of him, he was always in



solitude till his sister was born at the age of eleven. Jawaharlal opens up about this in his autobiography.

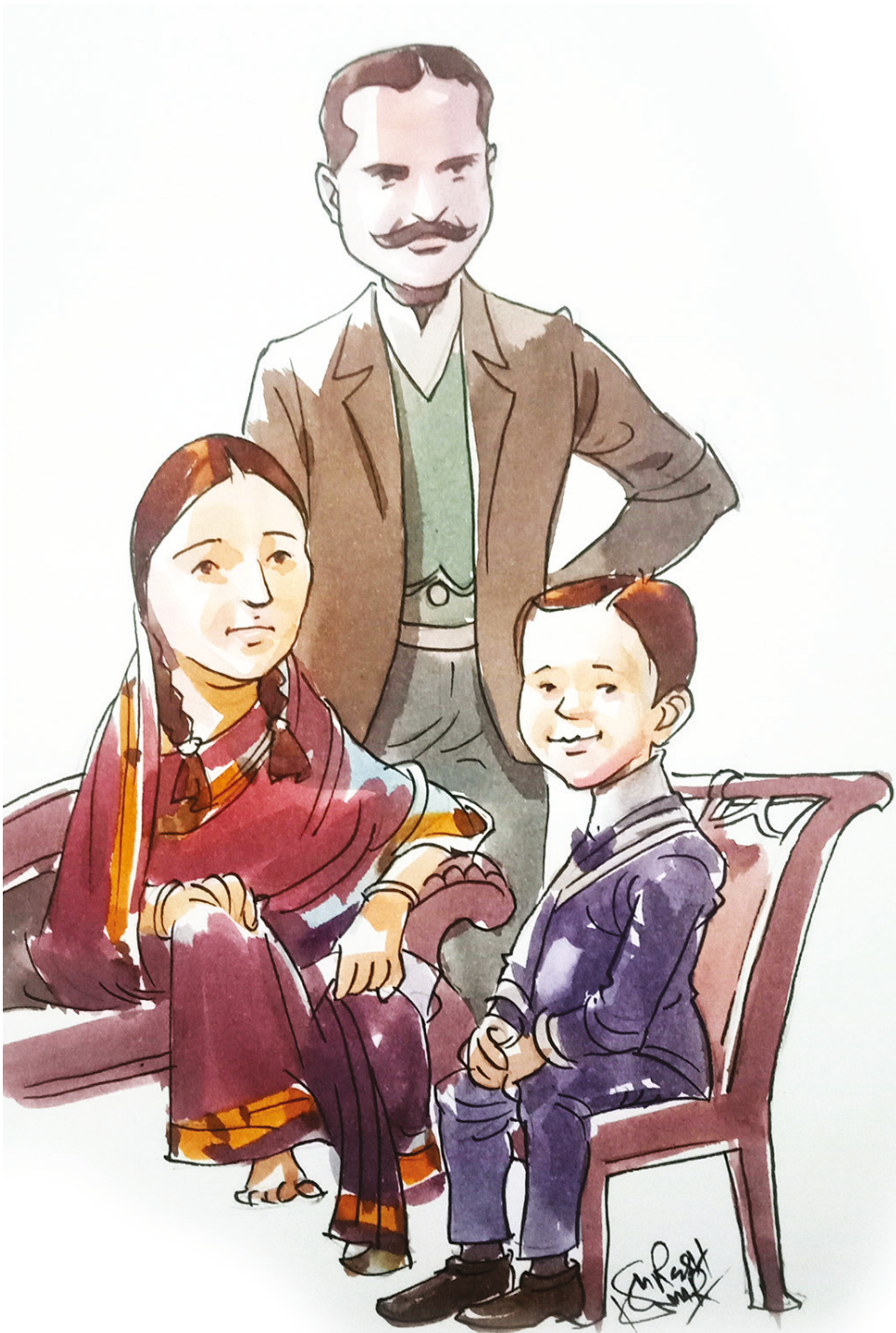
“With rich parents and luxurious life in disposition, the chances of loosing track of the right values are ripe, especially in an Indian context. I grew up mostly alone, as my sisters were born very late. I was very much lucky not to have missed the rights paths before my sister was born.”

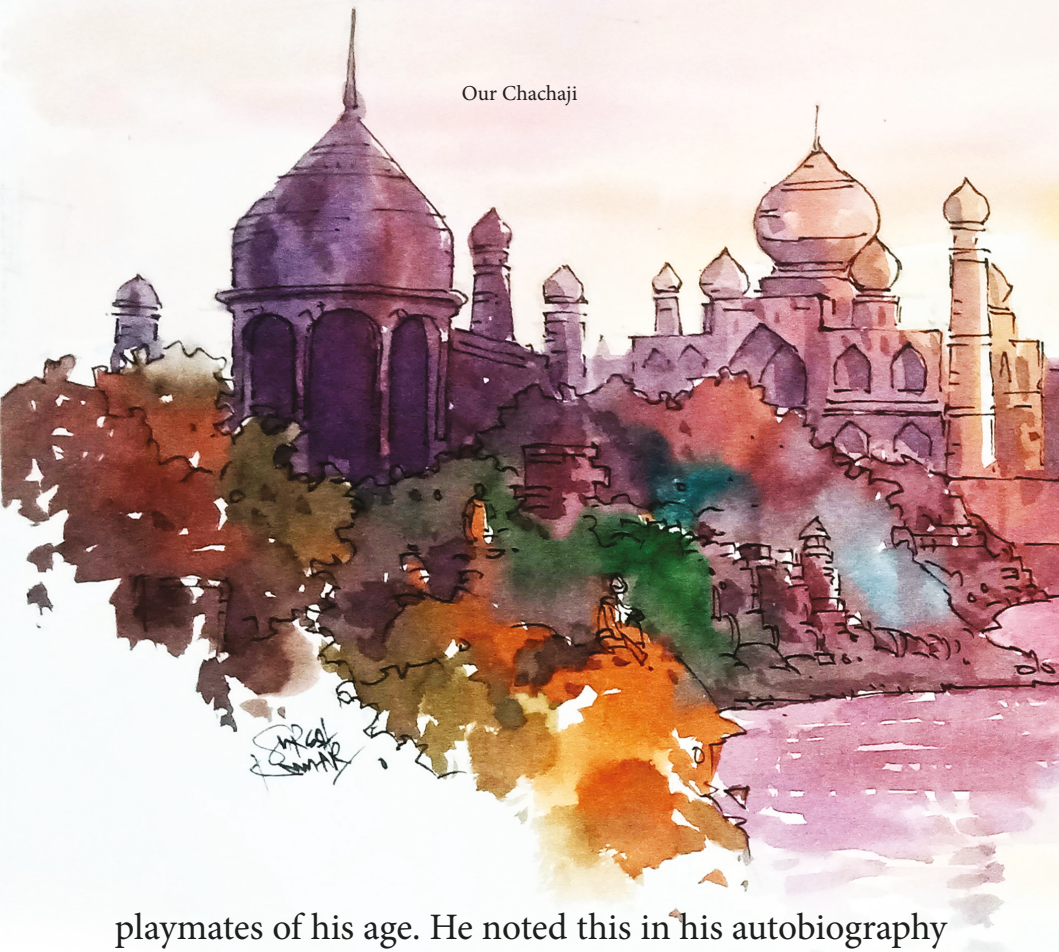
Motilal As An Ideal Model

Jawaharlal grew looking up to his father Motilal as a model. Motilal was a believer in the greatness of perseverance and the purity of intention. His mother, possessing all the virtues of the traditional Indian womanhood, loved him immensely. She inculcated in the child, the virtues of confidence and ethics. Although his mother was a staunch believer in religion, his father didn't care about religious rites. Motilal never performed any compensatory rites for crossing the sea, which was supposedly a big religious sin. Jawaharlal agreed with his father.

Jawaharlal's education, much resembling the princely life, was never sent to a school. Instead an English tutor and a few teachers taught him various subjects. Along with this, he was trained in swimming, horse riding and cricket. Later these became his favourite hobbies.

Jawaharlal, by the force of his circumstance, was always sad that he couldn't study in a normal school and have





playmates of his age. He noted this in his autobiography with immense sadness.

Munshi- The Companion

Jawaharlal's best mate was his father's trusted clerk Munshi Mubarak Ali. He opened up to munshi, whenever something was ailing or disturbing his mind.

Munshi, who knew most of the history and myths, would narrate an apt story or a joke giving Jawaharlal a way to relate to his predicament. Jawaharlal was able to imbibe the countless stories of empires, brave kings and queens, tales of arabian nights, jokes in king's court,



biographies of our ancestors, instances from mythologies from him. He came to know about the First War of Indian Independence of 1857, the bravery of Rani Lekshmi Bai of Jhansi and the eternal beauty of Shah Jahan's Taj Mahal from him. Munshi while making him happy gave his mind the beauty of the broader world.



Milestones in Life

1889 - November 14 - Born to Motilal Nehru and Swarup Rani in the city of Allahabad.

1905 - 1907 - Schooling at Harrow in London.

1907 - 1910 - Pursued honours degree in Natural Science from Trinity College, Cambridge University.

1910 - 1912 - Studied law at Inner Temple Inn, London.

1912 - Returned to India and took office as an advocate of the Allahabad High Court

1913 - Assumed charge as the joint secretary of the St. John Ambulance Brigade in Allahabad.

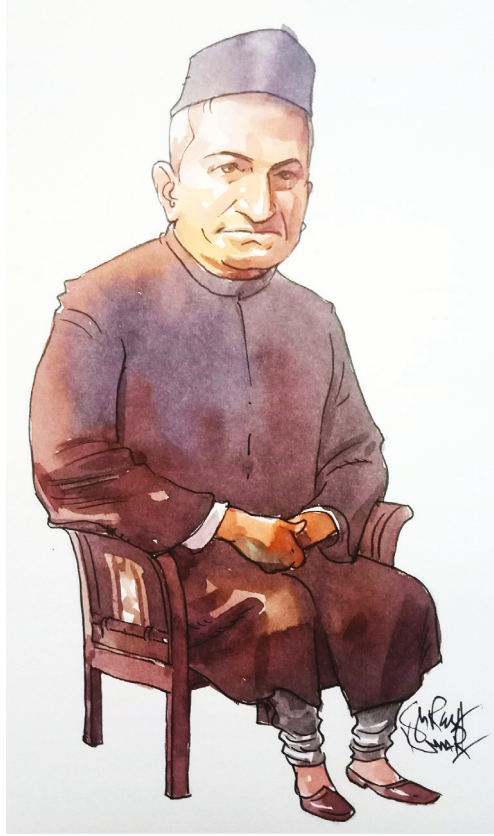
1916 - Nehru married Kamala Kaul. 1920 - Became an active member of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

1921 December 6 - Arrested for boycotting Prince of Wales' visit to India.

1922 March 3 - Acquitted. Arrested again on May 11 for picketing clothes stores.



- 1923** January 26 - Acquitted. Got elected as Allahabad Municipal Board Chairman in April.
- 1925** January- Resigned the position. Nehru suffered imprisonment for violating the restriction to enter the princely state of Nabha on September 19. Released from prison on October 6. In December Hindustan Seva Dal was founded.
- 1923- 1925**-Assumed office as the General Secretary of Indian National Congress.
- 1926- 1927** -Travelled across Europe and Britain.
- 1927** Attended the congress of oppressed nationalities in Brussels in Belgium. Visited Soviet Union in November. Presented his 'resolution for independence' at the Indian National Congress Assembly.
- 1927** - Once again assumed charge as the General Secretary of Indian National Congress.
- 1928**-Chaired the April session of Punjab Provincial conference. Formed 'Independence for India' league in August. Assumed presidency of Bengal Students Conference in September. Led a fierce protest to boycott Simon Commission. He fell victim to a lathi charge in Lucknow.
- 1929**-Presided over the Nagpur session of All India Trade Union Congress as well as Indian National Congress Lahore session.



1930 - Participated in the Salt Sathyagraha. Apprehended on April 14. On October 11 he was released from prison. Imprisoned again for a provocative speech refusing tax on October 19.

1931 January 26 - Released from prison. Father Motilal Nehru's demise on February 6. Government imposed travel ban on Nehru restricting him within the Allahabad Municipality. Imprisoned on December 26 for the breach of the travel ban, until release on 1933 August 30.



1934-Worked as a strong force in the process of rehabilitation of the survivors of the devastating earthquake in Bihar. On February 12, he was arrested for the speeches at Calcutta. Released on 1935 September 4.

1936 February 28-Kamala Nehru died in Switzerland. Presided over Indian National Congress Lucknow session on April 23rd.

Engaged in election campaigning from April to December across India. Chaired Indian National Congress Faizpur session on December 27th.

1938 -Swarup Rani Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru's mother died.

Took office as the Chairman of National Planning Commission. Visited Spain, France and Britain along with some other European Nations.

1939 -Visited Sri Lanka and China. Prepared the Indian National Congress's resolution on war

1940-He was anointed second in position to perform personal satyagraha. Arrested on October 31 for the speech he delivered at Kharagpur and was imprisoned until released in December 1941.

1942 -Diplomatic meeting with Sir Stafford Cripps. Quit India resolution passed by the Congress party. On August 9 Nehru was arrested and imprisoned.

1945-On June 15th Nehru was released from prison. Remained a representative of Shimla Congress from June 25 to July 13.

Then, campaigned for electoral candidates. Performed the role of a lawyer once again to defend Indian National Army Officers in November. Assumed presidential charges of All India States Peoples' Conference in December.

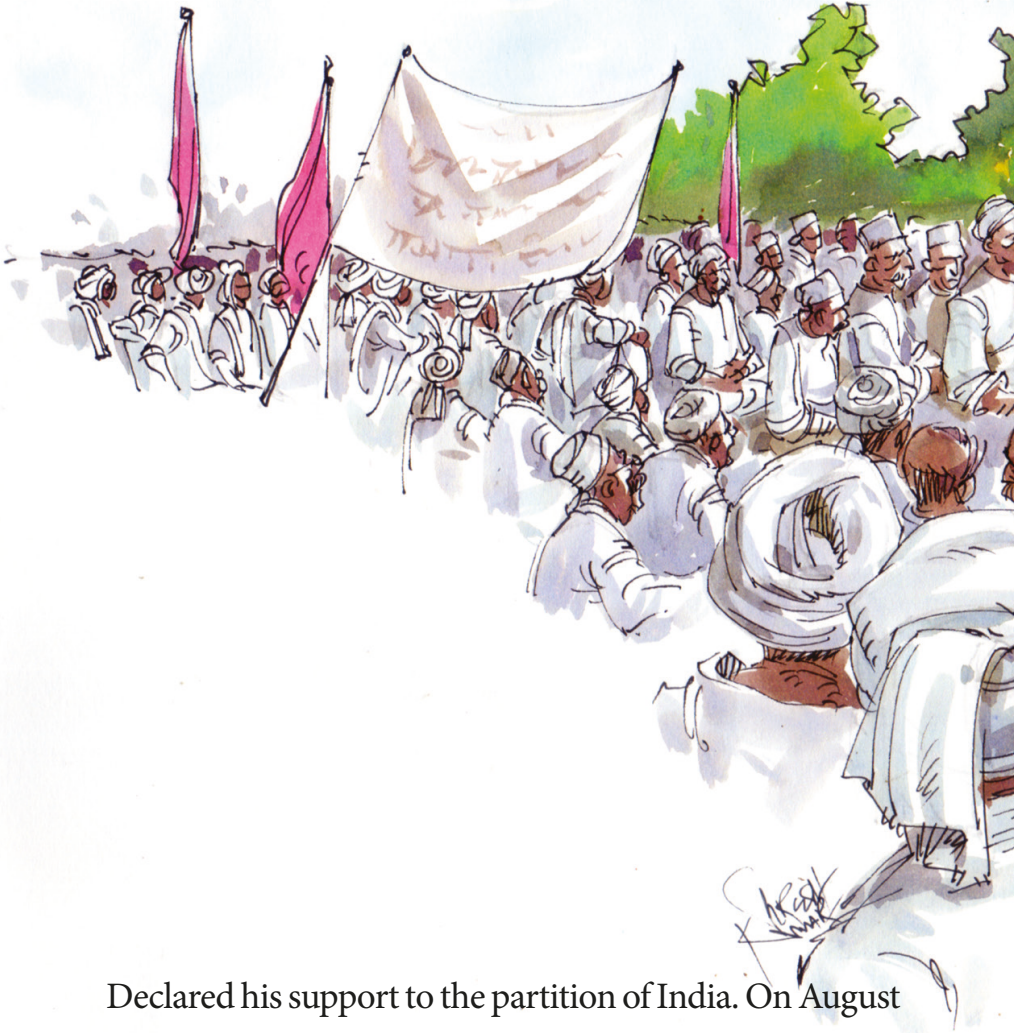
1946 March - Visited South-East Asia. Engaged in a dialogue with the members of British Cabinet Mission. Took charge as the president of Indian National Congress





in May and renounced power in September. Nehru was arrested, imprisoned and released later at Kashmir. In September, Nehru held the position of Vice President in the Interim Government of India, along with the position in the Viceroy's Executive Council as the head of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations. On December 13, Jawaharlal Nehru presented an 'Objective Resolution' in the Constitutive Assembly.

1947 June 3 - Nehru addressed the nation through a radio broadcast.



Declared his support to the partition of India. On August 15, he took office as the foremost Prime Minister of Independent India.

1948 January 30 - Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated. Participated in the Commonwealth Prime Ministers



Conference convened in London. On November 3, Nehru delivered a speech at the United Nations General Assembly held in Paris.

1949 January 20 - Inaugurated the eighteen Asian nations conference to condemn the Dutch attack on Indonesia.

First foreign travel after appointed the prime minister.
Visits the USA and Canada in October- November

1950- January 26 - The new Constitution of India made India a sovereign democratic republic. Took charge as the chairman of Planning Commission in March, and remained in the position until his death.

1951 - Once again Nehru assumed presidential charges of Indian National Congress.

1952 -First elections to Indian Legislative bodies were held, followed the new government. Community Development Program was initiated on October 2nd.

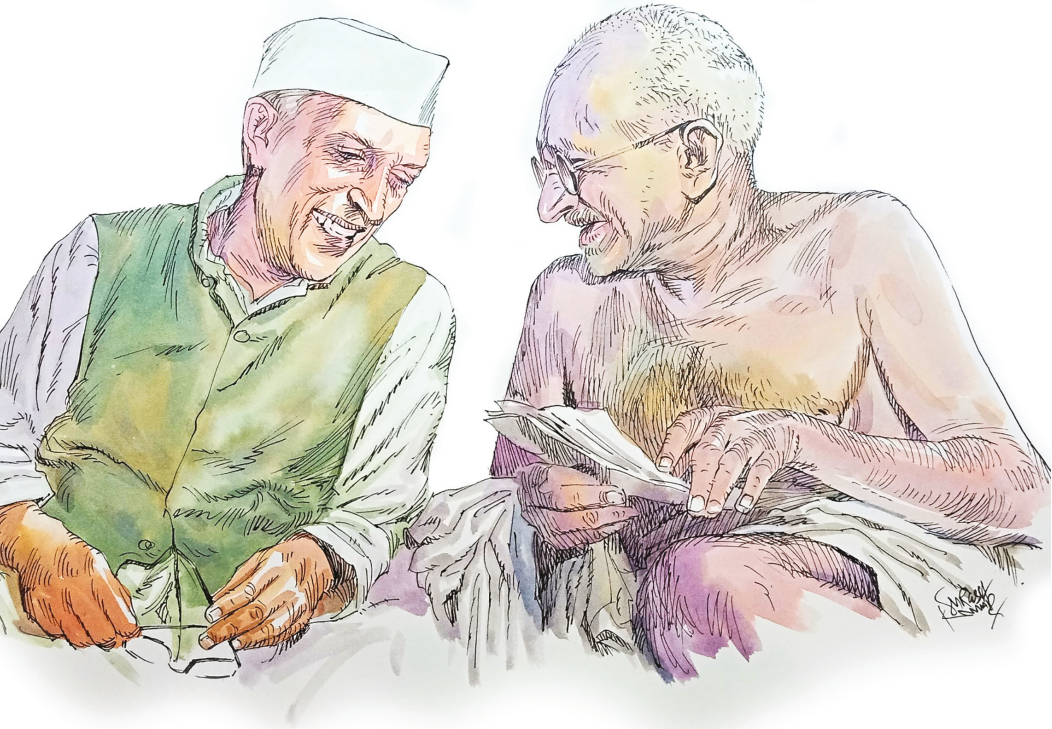
1953 -Chief ministers' Conference was held in Delhi, appointed the State Reorganisation Commission.

1954 - Zhou Enlai visited India. India and China signed the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, known in India as the Panchsheel.

1955-Indian National Congress Avadi session adopted a resolution to establish the 'socialistic pattern of society'. Participated in the Afro-Asian Conference.

1956 July 17,18 - Dialogues between President of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser and Yugoslavia's president, Josip Broz Tito happened. Conference of the Prime Ministers of Burma, Indonesia, Ceylon and India was held in Delhi.





1957 - Second General Elections. New Government took over and Nehru assumed charge as Prime Minister once again.

1959 - Indian National Congress, Nagpur meeting presented concepts regarding 'cooperative joint farming' and about the role of state in the in the food crop market.

1960 - Delivered a speech in the United Nations General Assembly on 3rd October.

1961 - Participated in the Belgrade Conference of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement.

- 1962** April - Third General Elections, new government. Presided the National Integrity Council. October-Chinese aggression in Indian soil. Emergency announced.
- 1963** - Ministers resign agreeing to the 'Kamaraj plan'. Took initiative for the structural reconstitution of Congress party.
- 1964** May 27 - Dies unexpectedly leaving the nation in shock and dire sadness. Put to rest in Shanthivan, near the banks of Yamuna near Delhi. Ashes fluted in the agricultural fields along the nation.

Companion of Children and Nature



Nature and children were both close to Nehru's heart. For children he was their chachaji. An agnostic himself, he believed that children are the nearest equivalent to God. He always found time to talk and spend time with children. He was always enthusiastic about having fun with them.

Children made Chachaji happy by presenting him with Rose flowers. He once said, 'I forget all my sadness while I am with children. They dissolve away my ego with their innocent smiles.'

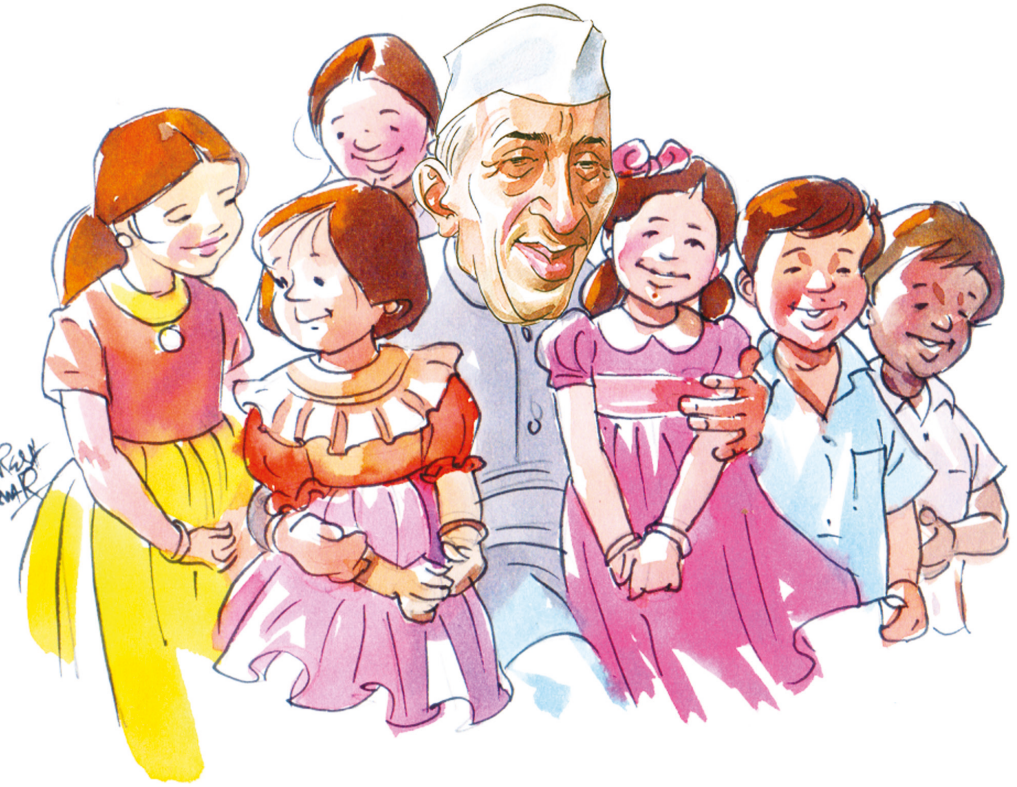
The acclaimed speech that he gave in the parliament of Yugoslavia goes like this, 'I am not simply talking to the people's representatives of Yugoslavia, rather to the larger humankind who wishes for the larger goodness to the world... I am always welcomed around the world by children with their innocent smiles and beautiful flowers. I had the same experience in America, Russia and china. This brings my thought to this- these little children with their innocent smiles is looking into the future with a lot of optimism. Don't we have some duties towards them? Aren't we responsible for building a world filled with peace and prosperity for them?'

In one of the letters to his daughter Indira, that he wrote while in jail, Nehru says, "The creation of tomorrow is in the hands of you and those of your generation - in the hands of millions of girls and boys, growing up in different parts of the world, receiving training for writing that tomorrow."

Like children, Nehru carried in his heart a love towards nature, since childhood. The Himalayas were his weakness. He was greatly fond of the flora and fauna around him.

Nehru's friends during his solitary confinement in prison were the flowers, the birds and the animals, along with the books. While in Naini jail, he befriended some parrots. At the Lucknow jail, squirrels kept him company.

The wasps, centipedes, scorpions and snakes which

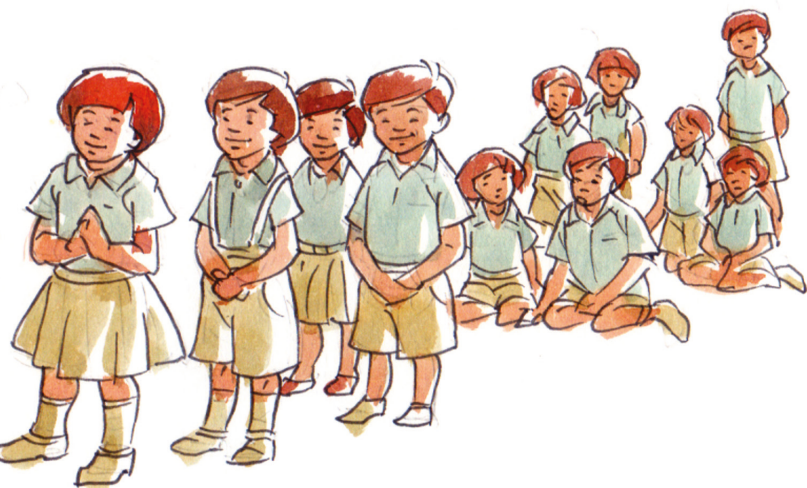


frequented the prison cells produced fear in his mind. Heeven included a chapter The Creatures in Jail in his autobiography.

When under immense stress, Nehru sought relief in mountains, valleys, overflowing river banks and forests where wild animals roamed freely. Extreme wintery weather and heavy downpours excited him.

Even when he was extremely busy, he found time to tend to plants and speak to his domestic animals.





Nehru was able to stay creative and productive with his communion to nature, even during trying times in life and solitary confinements in jail,

Once he saved the life of a famished squirrel in his prison cell by giving milk to it using the filler of his pen. He recounts this tale with much joy and detail in his autobiography.

Nehru's love towards rivers and mountains is very popular. In 1954 June 21, he wrote the following about the Ganga and the Yamuna,

“I have a personal connection with the Ganga and the Yamuna, ever since my childhood. Th s connection,

which commenced in Allahabad, grew stronger with my age. I observed with curiosity, the changes these rivers underwent as time passed. The history, legends, stories, tradition, songs regarding them softens me. It also awakens and stimulates my thoughts.

Ganga is a dear river to me; also the most important oneto India. Her hopes, anxieties, victories, defeats, and even songs are intertwined with the river Ganga.

Ganga is the symbol of the eons-old Indian culture and civilization. Indian culture is in constant flux and is ever-evolving. But Ganga alone subsists, immutably. It evokes in metherecollections of the snowy Himalayan ranges and its abysmal valleys.

The Ganga, which beams and dances in themorning sunshine and fills with darkness and mystery in the evening shadows, still persist in my memory. During monsoon, the modest Ganga flows slowly and mildly. To me, Ganga is the memory and symbolisation of an India that is flowing from the past, through the present, towards the future.”

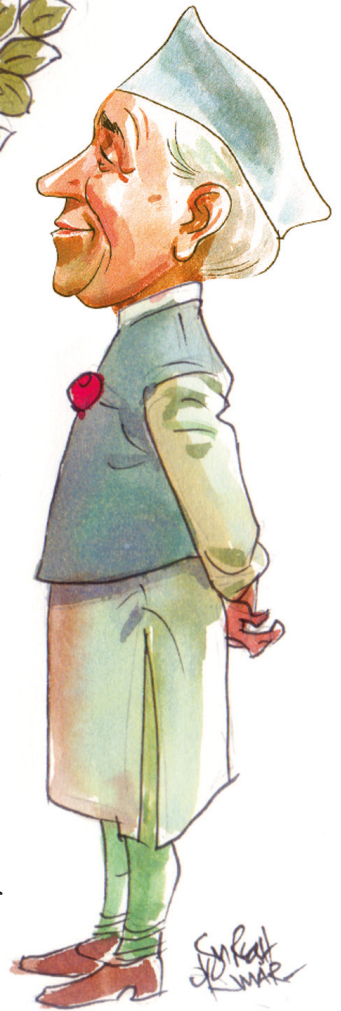
The Architect of the Five Year Plan

On becoming the first Prime Minister of independent India, he created the Five year plans to help the citizens achieve self- sufficiency and self sustenance



Non-Alignment Policy

When India became Independent, the world outside was ideologically bifurcated. Nehru played a key role in devising a foreign policy that maintained a neutral standpoint. He collaborated with the then Yugoslavian President Marshal Tito and Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, to form the non-aligned movement (NAM). “Peaceful Coexistence” became the hallmark of the movement and of India’s foreign policy.



Writer

As a writer, Nehru produced many acclaimed works. Most of them were the products of his involvement in politics. He wrote a good portion of his works while in jail. His first book Soviet Russia was a record of his 1937 visit to Russia.

His next publication was Letters from a father to his daughter. During his jail terms between 1930 and 1944 he produced his most important works - Glimpses of World History, Autobiography and Discovery of India. Autobiography, which was published in London in 1936, sold out ten editions in the same year. India Today and Tomorrow is considered to be his last work. The presentation of India's past like a motion picture in Discovery of India develops an insight in the reader. In this acclaimed work, Nehru presents history by linking it to the present.

Letters from a Father to His Daughter

Letters from a Father to His Daughter is a compilation of letters Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to his beloved daughter Indira, when she was ten years old.

These letters were not merely personal letters of parental queries, instead through them Nehru made sure that his daughter received all the guidance he can provide to her growth with a fair understanding of the real world.

Nehru wrote to her about a large variety of subjects



including the origin of the universe, evolution, natural diversity, primitive life forms, the origin of animals and human beings, communities of people, languages, culture, religion, history, Aryan invasion, and epics such as Mahabharata and Ramayana. Nehru carefully elaborated on them in a simplified language for his daughter's benefit.

These letters illuminate how Nehru's wisdom guided Indira's perspectives. The book is a haven of inspiration,

which has the potential to lead any reader into the unending possibilities of knowledge.

The book is an equally enriching experience to parents and teachers as well and not just to the young readers.

In the Preface to *Letters from a Father to His Daughter* Jawaharlal Nehru added that,

“I wrote the letters to my daughter, during the summer of 1928, while I was at the lower plains of The Himalayas and she, at Mussoorie. Some of my close acquaintances brought to my attention the many elements in the letter which could be beneficial to others and suggested that it should be made available to the public to read. I’m rather skeptical as to what extent these letters would be useful to the other kids but I’m hopeful that a reader would eventually develop an understanding of the world as one united family inclusive of many nations. I believe that I would evoke at least half the happiness, of what I experienced while writing them, in the readers.”

The Moment Of Reckoning

August 14, 1947, is a day of great significance in the history of the world as well as in the history of India. The empire on which the sun never sets was plunged into an abyss of darkness on this very day. When the clock struck midnight, an emergency meeting of the Constituent Assembly convened to declare Jawaharlal Nehru as the

first elected Prime Minister of the Independent India. The iconic speech Nehru delivered that night addressing the assembly gained worldwide attention.

“At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity.” (An excerpt from Nehru’s speech)

Tryst With Destiny

Towards the midnight, Jawaharlal Nehru delivered his seminal speech which he identified as Tryst with Destiny. The principal address of the first Prime Minister of independent India resonated inside the Durbar Hall, of the Parliament, on the eve of India’s Independence and was celebrated as one of the greatest speeches of the twentieth century by the world.

“A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity. This

is no time for petty and destructive criticism, no time for ill will or blaming others. We have to build the noble mansion of free India where all her children may dwell.”

No t e d Ne h r u poetically and added, “On this day our first thoughts go to the architect of this freedom, the father of our nation, who, embodying the old spirit of India, held aloft the torch of freedom and lighted up the darkness that surrounded us. We have often been unworthy followers of his and have strayed from his message, but not only we but succeeding generations will remember this message and bear the imprint in their hearts of this great son of India, magnificent in his faith and strength and courage and humility. We shall never allow that torch of freedom to be blown out, however high the wind or stormy the tempest.”

The Final Moments

The decline of Nehru’s health began during his participation in the Bhuvaneshwar session of the Congress in January, 1964. Despite treatment, his was never fully rehabilitated and his health got worse in May.

Upon his return from four days of rest in Dehradun on 26 May, he was feeling quite robust. But on 27th, his ailments came to a head, and he passed away by 2pm, in the afternoon.

“I wish to declare with all earnestness that I do not want any religious ceremonies performed for me after my death. I do not believe in any such ceremonies. When I die, I should like my body to be cremated. If I die in a foreign country, my body should be cremated there and my ashes sent to Allahabad. A small handful of these ashes should be thrown into the Ganga. The major portion of my ashes should, however, be disposed of otherwise. I want these to be carried high up into the air in an airplane and scattered from that height over the fields where the peasants of India toil, so that they might mingle with the dust and soil of India. Do not preserve even a trace of it.”

“My desire to have a handful of my ashes thrown into the Ganga at Allahabad has no religious significance. I have been attached to the Ganga and Yamuna Rivers in Allahabad ever since my childhood and, as I have grown older, this attachment has also grown.”

Fulfilling Nehru’s final wish, his ashes were thrown into the Triveni Sangam at Allahabad on June 8. On June 12th the remaining ashes were scattered on the Himalayas and farming lands across the country via airplane.

Memorial at Shanthi Vana

300kms away from the funeral memorial of Gandhiji at Raj Ghat, Chachaji was laid to rest at Santhi Vana on the banks of the Yamuna. In accordance with his last Will, his

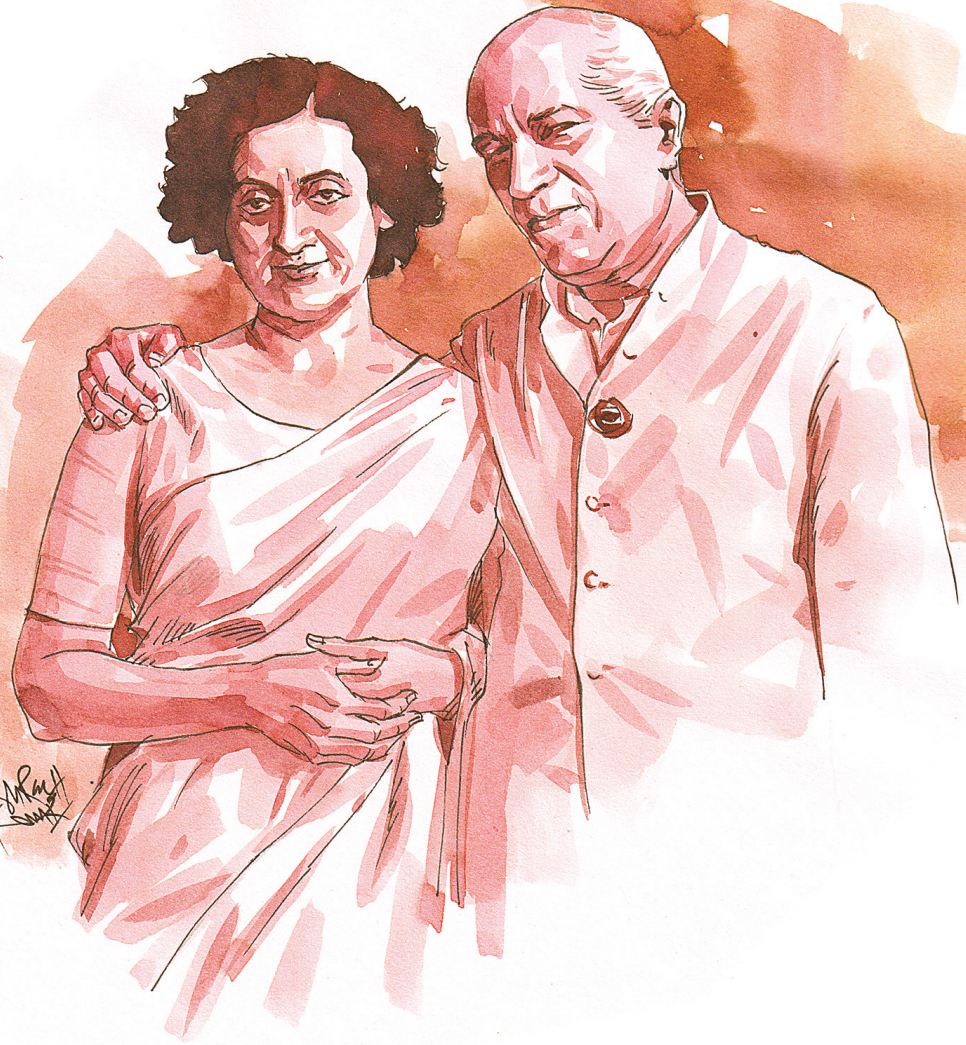
ashes were thrown into the Triveni Sangam at Allahabad on June 8th. The remaining ashes were scattered on the Himalayas and farming lands across the country on June 12th.

A Daughter about Her Father

It is indeed difficult for any daughter to speak about her father. Especially when they had been more than just family, two great friends. Our friendship dates back to as early as my days of infancy. We are all unique individuals. Yet most of us suppress certain dimensions of our individuality and project a few others. My father could liberate all his individual qualities and stay interested in all phases of his life simultaneously, and this I think, is what makes him different from most others.

A Real Teacher

My father was a real teacher. I amassed most of my knowledge from him. Any Indian who had listened to at least one of his speeches would have understood that his speeches were never argumentative ornamented wordplays, but were sincere efforts to educate the populous- his listeners.



His Speeches.

His speeches were all memorable and honest attempts to educate his listeners with something, which would create an everlasting impact in their lives. His speeches could've been in villages or valleys, but his words were

always about the latest inventions of science, the numerous paths of history, and the power centers that were shaping the world.

Some people thought his speeches were long and boring. That's mostly because the topics spoken about were familiar. It was only later while we visited those villages and valleys that we realized, how impactful those speeches were, among the people. I believe this surely is a reason why modern ways and ideas are accepted in even the remotest parts of the country.

The nation keenly observes international events. I doubt if there is another country in the world where even the villagers are concerned about and are well versed with, the events taking place in the farthest of nations. Not just concern, but an ability to comprehend them as well.

A Good Student

While being an excellent teacher, he was a good student too. He believed that a person can never stop gaining knowledge. The thought that one has gathered enough knowledge is the point where the mind closes turns itself away from learning. He, therefore, always lived as a student, who constantly gathers knowledge and information.

He considered a few of his friends who were scientists, writers, and artists as world-class scholars. But he learned new things not just from savants but also from the common villagers and tribals of this nation.



The zeal of awakening

He believed that the unity of this nation was real. He was so firm in his thought that each citizen of this nation has some things to learn and contribute to this nation.

I remember the journeys that I had made with him. I've seen the plights of many. It is true that we still have poverty. But I believe that the pictures we see today are

very different from what we experienced in the twenties or thirties. The real strength of this nation lies in the spirit that we see in our citizens.

The true might of India

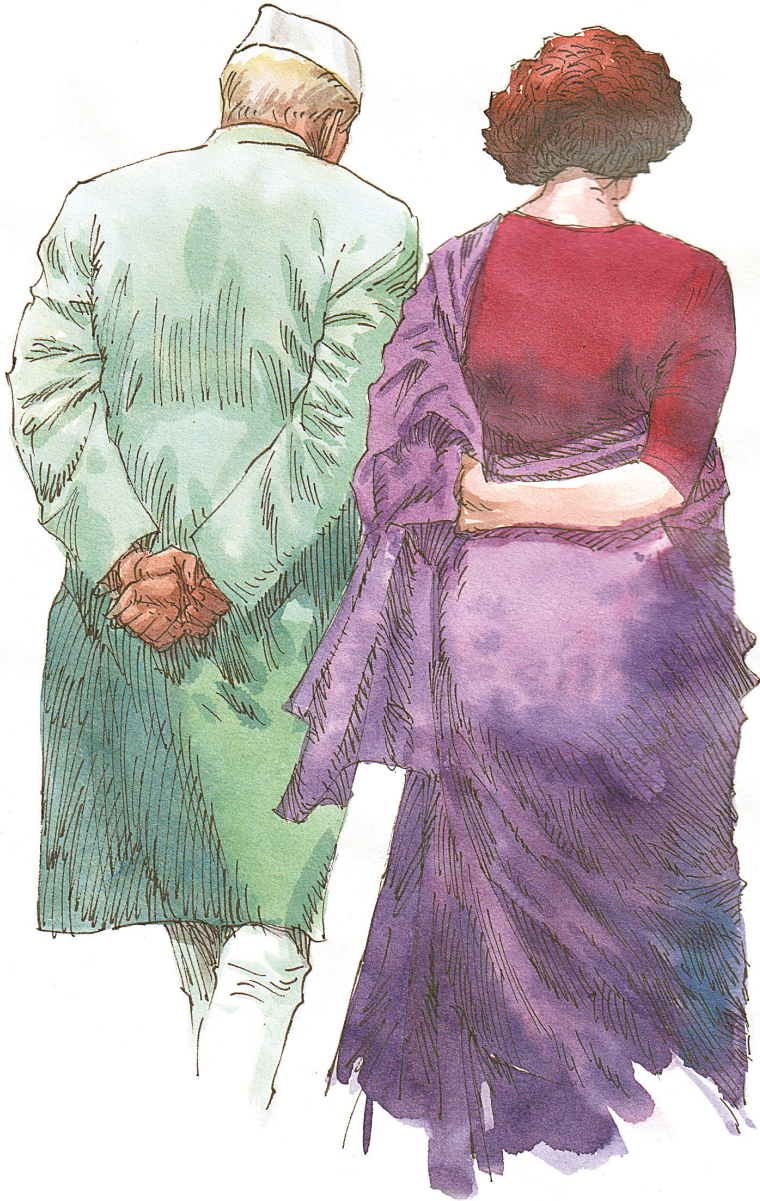
It is in the villages, that the love for one's own country and the sense of independence are more prevalent. This is not only the desire to form our own government and maintain material independence, free from foreign powers. Rather, it is a desire to maintain our own freedom to formulate our own policies despite any pressure and to act in a way that makes us feel right, regardless of how strong the interests and opinions of others may be.

I think this awareness is present in all Indians. This consciousness is manifested when there is foreign aggression or internal strife. This is the real impact of India. I think he worked hard to reflect this effect on the people as he traveled to every part of the country. Yet he was not confined to India, as he saw India and the problems here in the context of developments in other parts of the world.

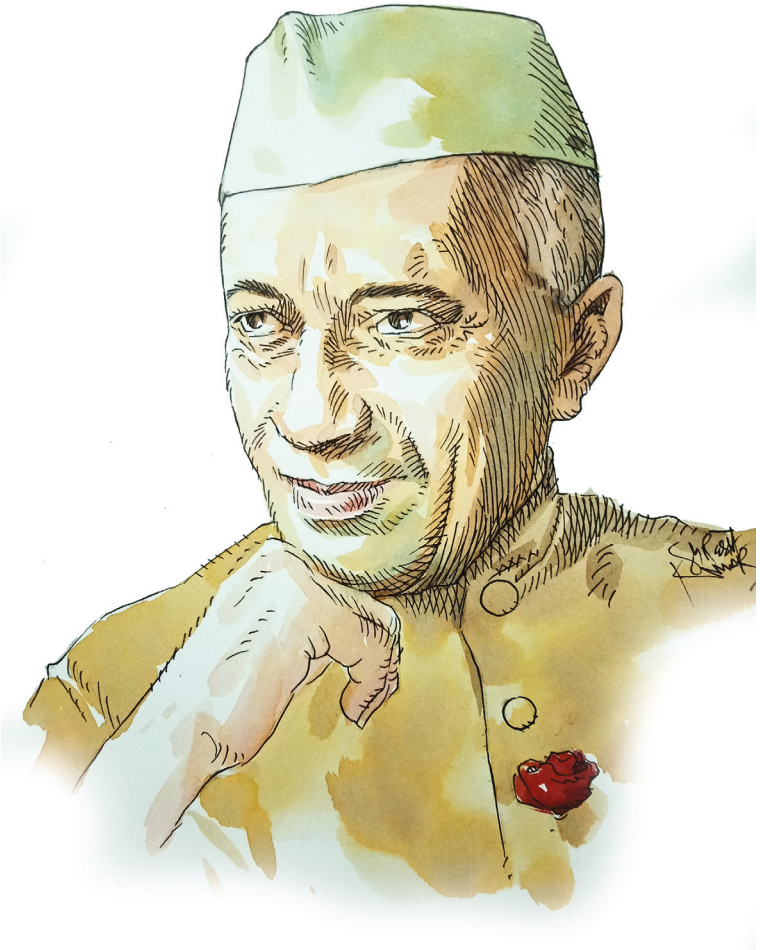
He believed that our progress and peace were related to others. That is why he followed the policy of peace. I believe this is a fact that all Indians accept today.

Dreamer

Sometimes people called him a 'dreamer'. But we know that not a single little thing in the world came into existence



without someone imagining it first. This is the secret behind all the innovations since the beginning of the cultures, the invention of fire. Any action is shaped by



dreams and fantasies. But Nehru did not calm down with mere dreams. The moment he dreamed, he thought about how to make it a reality. Otherwise, no progress we see today would have been possible. Our economic foundation would not have been so strong and our army strong enough to withstand the challenges.

New light, new theme

Dreams and deeds have a place in our life. So do teaching and learning. If we can coordinate all these, we can give a new light and a new resolution to our society.

India has achieved a lot. But we know there is still a lot to do. We cannot do this just by looking at the past. Individuals have different responsibilities and temperaments. We do not want a nation that blindly follows someone - no matter how great he/she is. All the great ones have said to those who blindly follow his ideas: “Think for yourself, test all beliefs and consider something before deciding that it is acceptable to you and other people.” The same was the thoughts of Nehru.

His identity was so great that no matter how extensive any definition seems to be, it'll be unable to contain Nehru's personality.

