

# The CHC Journal

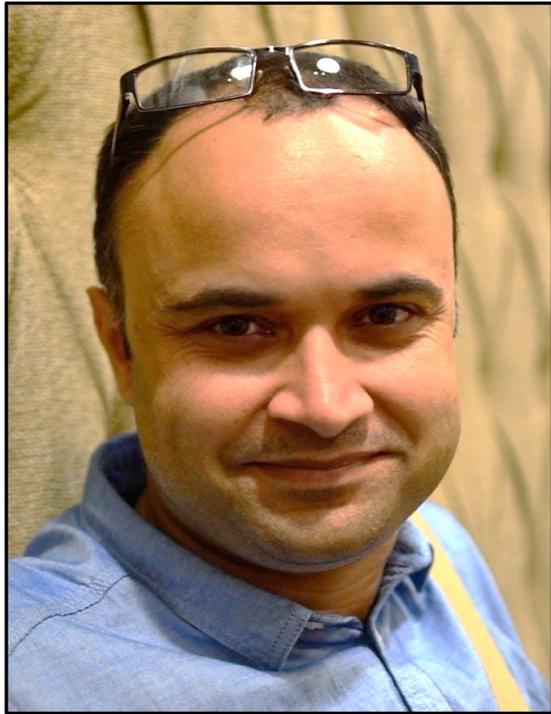
Volume I  
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**H** CALCUTTA  
HERITAGE  
COLLECTIVE

# The CHC Journal

Vol. I Issue VIII April 2022



## Point of View

Until India learns how to monetise our heritage buildings by allowing paid public access and turning these buildings into self sustaining business units, the danger our heritage buildings face will remain. Across the western world, aside from the intrinsic cultural and historical value heritage buildings have, their monetary value has and is being realised. Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle are both enormous revenue generators yet remain very high security buildings. Likewise with private buildings, tax incentives and breaks coupled with far stricter laws are needed to protect and monetise them. Finally, a 'National Trust' type organisation that can protect, purchase and maintain heritage buildings as well as being legislatively empowered to take criminal action against those who fail to protect buildings is urgently needed. Emotions and history work when the public are aware of such value, India values money, and thus revenue is the way to save our built heritage. ~ **Anthony Khatchaturian**

## Respect . Restore . Reuse

The GPO is a grand edifice in the bustling area of Dalhousie. It teemed with activity and is now a testimony to the changing times. Technology has overtaken the now quaint activity of sending and receiving letters and the postman has been relegated to the margins of history



The GPO has repurposed a part of its area into a beautiful cafeteria and is certainly an example for us to restore and reuse our heritage

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/a-peek-inside-indias-first-post-office-cafe-in-kolkata/videoshow/90476873.cms>

# The Bengal Story

With the Mughal conquest of Bengal, zamindar became a generic title embracing people with different kinds of landholdings and rights. To achieve the goal of maximization of public revenue and its punctual remittance, Murshid Quli divided the province into 13 chaklahs (administrative divisions) and placed the smaller zamindars under the jurisdiction of Chaklahdars who were none other than the larger zamindars. From moderate territorial possession large estates were built by marriage, inheritance, machination, bribery or even force. The revenues to be paid by zamindars were of three sorts: (1) the mal, made up of rents from arable land and uncultivated lands containing woods, groves, marshes and ponds; (2) the sair, the next important source of revenue that consisted of tolls and excise collected on river traffic and markets and of fees paid by the various service classes; and (3) baze-jama in the form of fines, forfeitures and marriage fees.

Four factors impacted the Revenue collection system - provincial powers trying to get independence, the Maratha incursions, the erosion of the Mughal political system and the ascendancy of the East India Company

The Zamindars in Bengal may be classified into four types.

**The Autonomous Chiefs** which included Hindu chiefs of great antiquity such as the Rajas of Koch, Assam and Tripura. Their traditional hereditary rights were recognised.

**The Frontier Zamindars** enjoyed independence and were important because of their estates in the outlying parts. On payment of nominal peshkash in return for defending the country these Western and North Eastern provinces were free within their jurisdiction.

**The Big Zamindars** were the most important in the Mughal Revenue system and they acted as intermediaries between the imperial authority and the subordinate landed classes. These were with great lineages and traditional family backgrounds. These families grew in power and had their rights and privileges, including their hereditary rights recognised

**The Petty Zamindars** were the overwhelming majority and owned smaller tracts and cultivated their own land.

In 18th century, "Sheherwalis" community of businessman from Rajasthan migrated to Murshidabad. They worked tirelessly to create their empires in textile and banking and went on to become Zamindars. The Sheherwalis adapted to the then prevalent cultural influences in the region namely, Mughal, British, Bengali and European and as such created their own unique culture over generations. The most notable Sheherwali was Jagat Seth (literally, 'universal banker', title accorded by the Mughal empire).

The triumph of the English at Plassey in 1757 shattered the political supremacy of the Nawab and changed the economic system of the country. Mir Jafar failed to pay the promised sum and had to cede the districts of Nadia, Burdwan, Hughli, Hijli and some Zamindaris of Dacca to redeem the debts of the Company. Thus began the integration of the British Empire and a different breed of entrepreneurs - **Vibha Mitra**

## Down Memory Lane

This gorgeous shield and cup sit resplendent in my living room. In a non sporting family? Yes, the story goes back to a century or more ago.

I cling to it. A legacy. Alas when I hear stories of the grand opulence and renown, my husband's family lived in, my heart cringes a bit. We have to move on and let bygones be bygones! Incidentally the same grandfather was feted by the queen for his cricket. An Oxford Blue. I assumed it was a cricket cup when I noticed a bunch of guys playing football engraved on one side ~ **Vibha Mitra**

<https://vibhamitra.com/family-history-lost-and-found/>



## Heritage News

"Food - How Bijoli Grill, Ananda Caterer, Guin Caterer and Bhoj Caterers started Kolkata's catering journey - Telegraph India" <https://www.telegraphindia.com/amp/my-kolkata/lifestyle/how-bijoli-grill-ananda-caterer-guin-caterer-and-bhoj-caterers-started-kolkatas-catering-journey/cid/1856651>

The Cake Man From Piedmont - Raising a toast to Calcutta's very own master chef <https://www.telegraphindia.com/culture/the-cake-man-from-piedmont/cid/1856701>

A superb initiative by Narayan Sinha to preserve legacy

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/my-kolkata/people/narayan-sinhas-public-art/cid/1847164>

In a world where virtually everything has been over-reported there is finally a place you can take your children where they will listen with rapt attention. The Calcutta Police Museum!

<https://www.facebook.com/819155695/posts/10165603193630696/?d=n>

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/my-kolkata/places/puchki-and-cookie-on-an-italian-adventure-via-the-kolkata-police-museum-in-calcutta/cid/1840511>

<https://www.facebook.com/819155695/posts/10165603193630696/?d=n>

# CHC Foundation Day Celebrations



CHC celebrated its 5th anniversary by commemorating its Cause Ambassador **Padma Bhushan Shri Victor Bannerjee** as well as all those members who have worked towards its mission of Restore Respect and Reuse.

CHC member **Shri Aditya Chamaria** gave an interesting talk on the heritage site of the Mauritian coolie camp and its associated areas. CHC member **Shri Pradip Chopra** suggested that the area be converted into a museum honouring all indentured labourers who were taken by the British and transported to various parts of the world



CHC Trustees, **Rupali Basu**, **Mukul Agarwal**, CHC Cause Ambassador **Victor Banerjee** along with CHC trustees **Gaurav Gupta**, **Sangeeta Dudhoria** and **Munish Jhajharia**



# CHC Members Commemorated

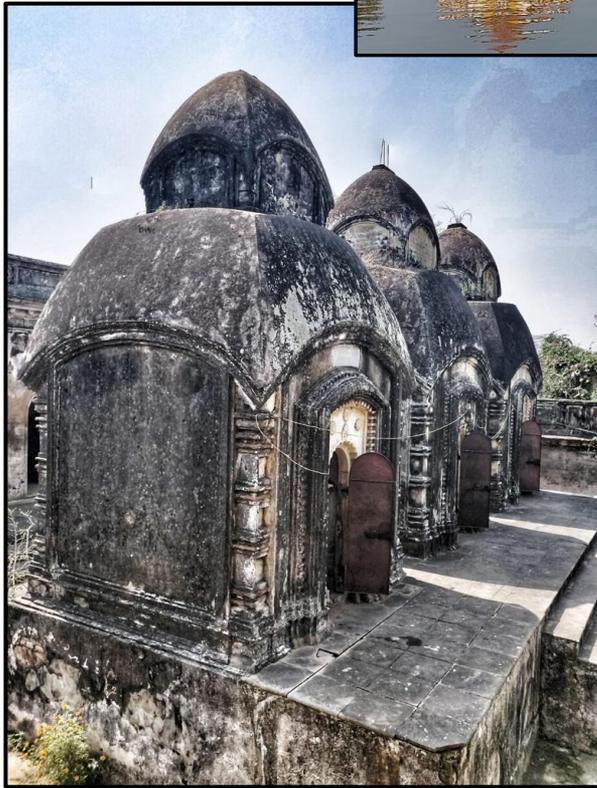


**Ayan Sen, Pradeep Chopra, Mimi Mahapatra, Sandip Nowlakha, Rajiv Soni, Oindrilla Dutta, Supriya Newar, Navpreet Arora, Sreela Mitra, Rupande Shah, Vibha Mitra, Ipsita Ganguli, Nikita Kejriwal** were some of the members present whose contribution to the CHC cause was recognized and commemorated



# CHC Heritage Tour

A Day trip to Rural Bengal. We went to Dhanekhali, Dasghara and Chakdighi. Dhanekhali a weavers paradise, the spinning and weaving process was fascinating. At Dasghara the Biswas' have a regal house and a beautiful Gopinath terracotta temple. The owner Mr Subrato Biswas graciously welcomed us into his home. We moved onto Chakdighi. The beauty of the Baganbati was mesmerising, capturing the shades of a stunning bygone life. The Majors Hall was closed to outsiders but the pillars and the façade again told us of the grandeur that existed once upon a time. Khazanchibati a home for the treasurer as the Name indicates has been restored into a lovely homestay. Definitely worth a visit!

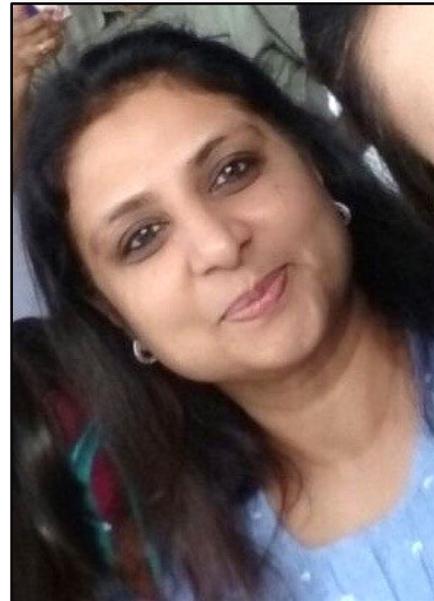


## Know your CHC Members



Architect **JP Agrawal** graduated from MS University of Baroda in the year 1986 with two gold medals. He started his professional practice in 1988 under the banner “Agrawal & Agrawal”. Architect Monal Agrawal (spouse)

joined in 1990. Several project designed by the firm are widely considered as the “Landmarks” of Kolkata. By now in last 35 years, the firm has completed more than 800 projects across 12 states of India. The practice is largely committed to the environment & user friendly design approach. In this endeavour, the firm has designed various platinum rated & Gold rated Green Buildings. The firm has been awarded the “Green Champion’s Award” for designing the highest green floor space in the country by “Indian Green Building Council”. JP and his team’s work is recognized time to time by various national level magazines and publications. The testimonial includes prestigious awards comprising of “A+D Spectrum Architectural Award”, “Ultratech Excellence Award” & “Achiever’s Award”. Their various recent projects also received CNBC & CREDAI awards in different categories. JP was honored with “Better City Better Life” award for his contribution in the field of “Green Architecture” for Kolkata City



A “recent” addition to Kolkata, **Nikita Kejriwal** moved to the city in 2012. She has a Bachelors degree in Architecture and a diploma in Interior Design

from the University of Cincinnati, USA. She has worked on various projects in the US ranging from individual residential apartments to a boy scout camp, a church, hospitals and was part of the GBBN team for Cincinnati’s HOK Sport designed Great American Ballpark. Having lived and worked in the US for over 18 years, Nikita admits that working in India took some getting used to, but now with projects in Kolkata, Mumbai and Nagpur, there is no looking back. Her favourite part of living in Kolkata is Durga Puja time. While most people around her choose to leave town, Nikita prefers to go pandal hopping and every year she is awestruck by human ingenuity and creativity. She is a part of various organizations and also works with smaller NGO’s to help raise funds for them. An active member of CHC, Nikita has been part of the core team for the Clubs & Spades series and the CHC Journal. She is passionate about art and books, loves travelling and always seeks the path less travelled

Members are welcome to contribute for any of the journal sections. We would love to publish your articles/notes. Please message Vibha Mitra (+919830933434) or Ipsita Ganguli (+919831283192) or send an email to [contact@calcuttaheritagecollective.com](mailto:contact@calcuttaheritagecollective.com)

# The CHC Connect

March has indeed been extremely eventful for CHC members, many of whom seemed to be everywhere. CHC trustee **Dr Rupali Basu** was invited as Chief Guest at many events, be it for flagging off the Kolkata Marathon run or lightning the inaugural lamp at Parampara or being awarded with the WonderWomen Award on Women's Day. But the most exciting win for her this month was probably the Champion's Trophy at Dadagiri, an immensely popular Quiz Show in Bengali hosted by Sourav Ganguli.



CHC members **Navpreet Arora** and **Kounteya Sinha** were both awarded the RSV Hospital Award for Excellence on Women's Day - Kounteya in recognition for his Remembrance Project highlighting the lives of 150 women of Kolkata. This project covered both **Navpreet Arora** and the Coeditor of the CHC Journal, **Ipsita Ganguli**

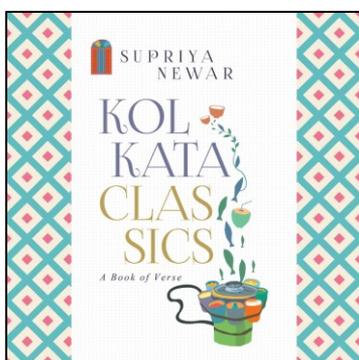
**Ipsita Ganguli** was also seen in several events this month. She anchored the Women's Day Coffee

Meet and the Calcutta Club event, Ode to Spring. She was invited by Indus Valley World School to read her poetry as part of the Women's Day celebration. She was also invited to special poetry reading sessions for the launch of KALEIDOSCOPE an anthology of world contemporary poets. But the highlight of the month was her invitation to read her poetry at the Kolkata Literature Festival from her book Rooted, India 75 and We the people at the Kolkata Book Fair. These are available for purchase on amazon.in

Our Editor **Vibha Mitra** was invited as a panellist to participate at the Kolkata Literature Festival held at the Kolkata Book Fair in an interesting programme entitled Kolkata, my Muse

Murshidabad Heritage Festival was organised by CHC members **Sandip Nowlakha**, **Pradeep Chopra** and CHC trustee **Sangeeta Dudhuria**

CHC member **Supriya Newar's** first Book of Verse, Kolkata Classics is now available on for preorder on readomania



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- Respect · Restore · Reuse

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