

IN MEMORIAM



A TRIBUTE TO

Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman

MKR: A legend lives on

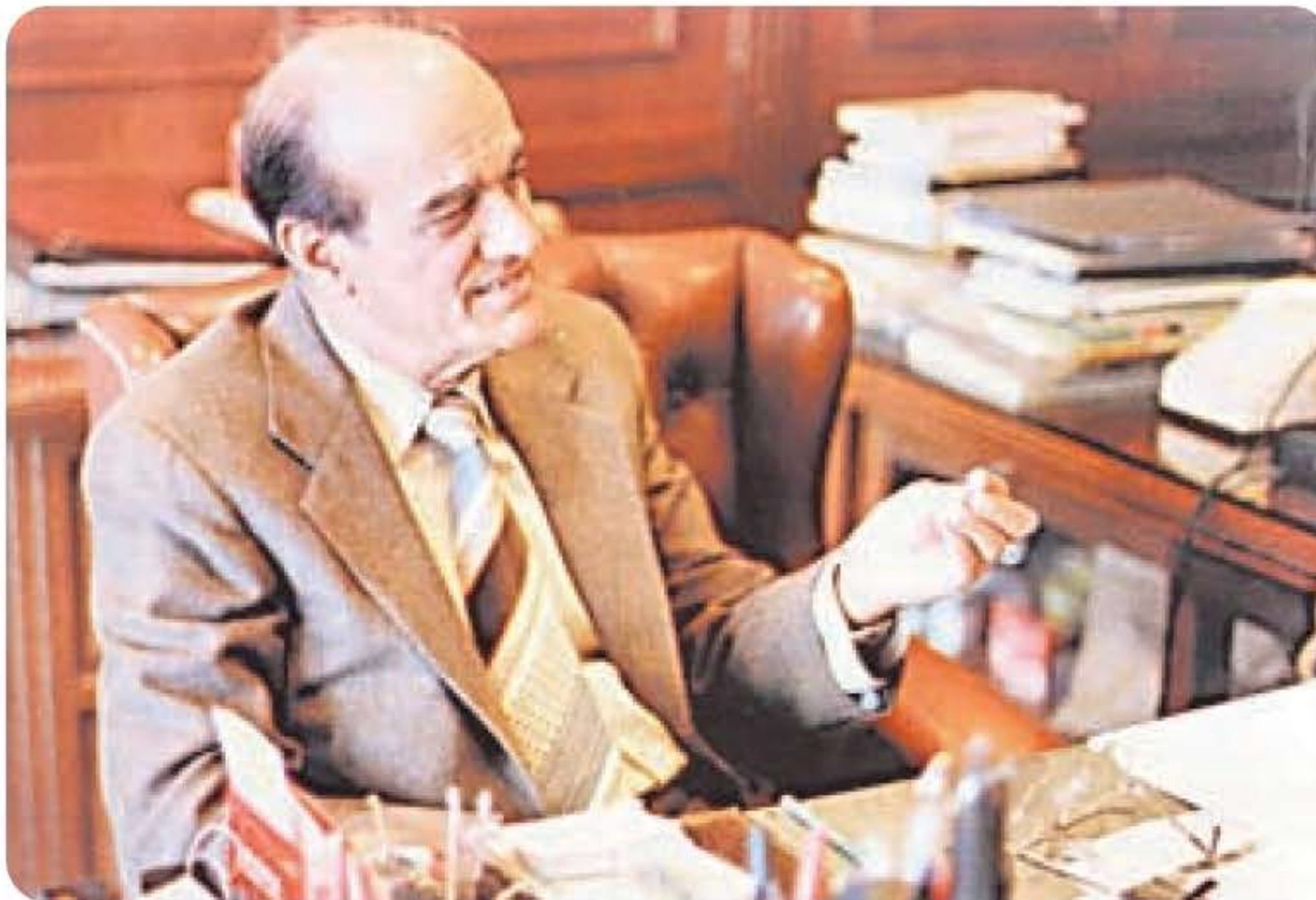
By Wajid Shamsul Hasan

It was my good fortune to have been born to a father, late Syed Shamsul Hasan, who was associated with All-India Muslim League, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan from 1913 until after the birth of Pakistan. As a youngster I had the privilege to have had exposure to some of the big wigs in politics and journalism. It is always a pleasure to reminiscence about a person who had been many things to me in most part of my life. That's what Jang/Geo's founder Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman was to me with whom my association lasted for more than 30 years until his death.

It is indeed, a challenge to size up an icon of a man who made Pakistani journalism much of what it is today. It is like putting together waters of many oceans in space like that of Rawal Lake. His life was multifaceted, each facet more glorifying than the other. I can never forget a meeting with him for the first time in my life. Those were the days when Jang had a small office on Elander Road (off intersection of I I Chundrigar Road). Incidentally, besides Jang there were three other newspapers being in the market at that time. We regularly visited the lane for buying family supply of pan as both my father and mother were addicted to chewing pan. Once my father took us to Jang's office and there we met a gentleman who was dusting the furniture. That was Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman or MKR (as he is usually called with this acronym by his colleagues)-a humble man who started his climb from the lowest rung to the pinnacle of success, fame and honour earned through dint of his hard work and dedication.

His life was a challenge all through. As a young graduate, instead of seeking future in normal business, MKR found himself bitten by the bug of freedom, to seek and not to yield. It was onerous task. Having no proper financial means of sustaining a daily newspaper, he had the spirit and determination to pick up the gauntlet to fulfill his ambition and Quaid's mission for a Muslim mouthpiece in Urdu. His perseverance showed the way forward and his unflagging spirit made Jang a household name in pre-partition Delhi and it became a flag bearer for Muslims' struggle for freedom.

How was Jang made a household name in no time is a long story that leaves many lessons to be learnt. Those were the days of the post-Industrial Revolution transformation in India in the print media. While the indigenously-owned English, Hindi and other vernacular newspapers had made their mark by the time World War II had erupted, technology for Urdu printing was in a rudimentary phase; it was expensive and cumbersome too. Yet MKR caught the bull by the horn to launch Jang and since his was one-man show-he made it big by being its printer, publisher and distributor all by himself. He used to sell his newspaper on his bicycle with no additional hands to support. And once he had sold first few hundred copies of Jang, he would rush to paper market, buy extra rolls and rush back to the press to have reprints several times



in a day. Brick by brick he built his Media Empire that stands as a colossus today as a most glowing tribute to the man who made it from rags to riches.

I joined as an apprentice in Daily News in Jang group in 1962 and I can say without any fear of contradiction that whatever I achieved as a journalist-editor, I owe every bit of it to MKR, his tutoring, his grooming and his experience to extricate oneself out of a difficult situation least scathed in periods of worst media censorship, controls and intimidations. Despite the fact that his stakes were high and his huge financial interests were under a constant threat of being taken over by the government-he did not compromise on issues of freedom of expression.

As the Editor of Daily News as well as Weekly Mag, I can write volumes on difficulties MKR faced on account of the aggressive manner we fought back General Zia-ul-Haq's draconian censorship when even printing of the truth in the best national and public interest was a crime. One could not even print the Quaranic Ayahs dilating upon the believers to raise their voice against oppression, evils of dictatorship, abuse of religion by the state and the ruler and to say no to "jabir sultan" under the so-called

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Islamist regime of patron Salafie Saint that General Zia-ul-Haq had come to be. Not only that, we were forbidden to print quotes from Quaid-i-Azam, Allama Iqbal and other Muslim leaders who fought for Pakistan.

If one were to get hold of newspaper copies of the early days of censorship under General Zia's martial law, one would not be surprised to see newspapers with scores of blank spaces created by censoring officer's plucking out the "objectionable" item (in the eyes of the censor) from the page. Initially, they did not bother to realise the impact and damage the blank spaces in newspapers would cause both within and outside Pakistan. However, later on some bright officer/s opened their eyes and it was decided not to let newspapers go with blank spaces. So we were required to be with extra 'useless' items to instantly fill in the blank.

When I recall those draconian days of censorship and the displeasure we caused to Zia regime by failing its policy to control dissemination of news and views-it makes me feel elated even now. It was not for nothing that each of Jang group's newspaper/magazine was rated first among its contemporaries. How can one forget to see censoring officer pulling his hair after reading my editorial on Chilean dictator General Pinochet. The beauty of the editorial was that each and every condemnatory word was about General Zia-ul-Haq but without naming him. It was Catch-22 situation for the Director of Censorship. He accused me of saying everything against Zia under the cover of Pinochet. And when I challenged him, he took the copy to Sindh Information Secretary, Ahmed Maqsood Hameedee, gem of a man, a sheet anchor for freedom.

Before Director could say anything, I told Hameedee Saheb, "Your director is sick, he wants me to interpret my own words in his biased way of thinking. Here is my editorial against Pinochet and he says it is against Zia." Legally there was nothing wrong and the Information Secretary allowed it. In another instance the Director Censor took an exception to our headline-a direct quote from American

President Reagan..."Martial Law is war against people". And in the second deck in a much smaller type-"Regan tells Polish people not to pay taxes." Once again, late Hameedee Bhai overruled the Director and I was vindicated. The headline had a context with Martial Law in Pakistan.

Freedom is a relative term. It changes from time to time. Some time it is overly oppressive such as General Zia's when journalists were whipped in public for defiance of martial law. At others such as Ayub Khan's when media was controlled by the Press and Publication Ordinance. His Goebbels Altaf Gauhar used to threaten newspapers with closures and forced editors to resign or face serious consequences. Those who now monopolise freedom of expression as their birth right and often abuse it as a license do not know how much Mir Sahib had to suffer and withstand pressures along with his team of journalists to make inroads to break through the then straight jacketed print media. When he appointed me as the Editor of Daily News, I came to know of his predicaments as the head of Pakistan's largest media chain and that his was no bed of roses.

Since Mir Saheb was a thorough professional committed to good and independent journalism, he did not interfere in the working of the newspaper. His editors were by far the most independent. However, as the head of Pakistan's most expansive growing media chain, he had to face the main brunt of pressures and arm twisting of a dictator who did not tolerate even legitimate criticism. And Mir Saheb had a team in Daily News that was out there to expose the sins of omission and commission of the regime. While he used to tell us to be cautious, he did not discourage dissent nor stop us from printing news that was good enough to be published. Mir Saheb stood tallest and most outstanding in the galaxy of his contemporaries. He could bend when the hostile winds blew against him but he would not break. Indeed, men like him are not born even in centuries.

Last but not the least-the quality that made him the polar star in the world of media was his insatiable urge to do more and better in the field of technology. He had an eye for innovation. His group would always be remembered as pioneering in introducing foto-offset printing, first to produce multi-colour newspapers and his most lasting contribution would be *Noori Nastaliq* Urdu computerised typesetting that he helped in invention with Mirza Jameel Ahmed of Elite Publishers with British Monotype. His last achievement would have for him a permanent and unique niche in the hall of fame for revolutionising Urdu from calligraphy into computerised type-setting. Unlike many big entrepreneurs who are not, MKR was fortunate to have left a rich legacy of competent heirs such as Mir Shakil-ur-Rahman and his children who refuse to look back or look down.

-Author is former High Commissioner of Pakistan to UK, Adviser to PM Benazir Bhutto and a veteran journalist, Editor of Daily News and Weekly Mag

A teacher, a mentor

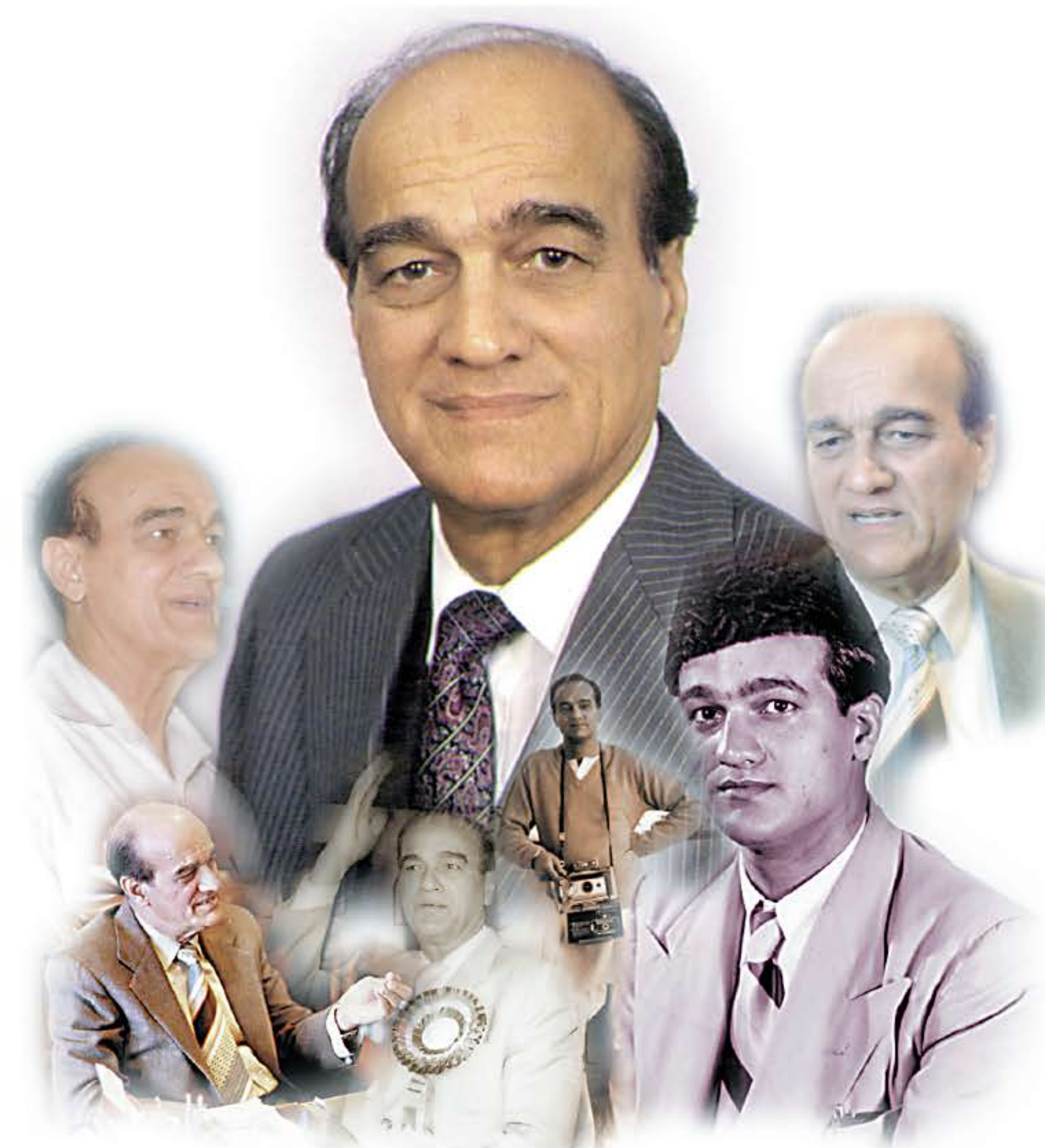
By Arshad Imam

Human beings are physically similar in many ways; the difference can only be gauged through their way of thinking and their ideas, the ideas which can bring revolutions.

Some people are like an indelible imprint that refuses to fade away with the passage of time. Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman, the founder of the Jang group, was one such person. The first time I met Mir Saheb in person, I felt for a moment that I was standing before a man who was not an ordinary man. He was different. Admittedly, though, it was not easy for me to differentiate clearly but I could feel it quite right. When I was called in his room for an interview, I saw him seated gracefully there. Dressed in a neat and clean suit along with a decent necktie, he was sitting with two or three other men in his room. The first question he asked me was about my education and past experience (which I didn't have at all), and why I wanted to join the Jang group. Hardly five to six minutes after this conversation, he called in the resident editor and asked him to take me along with him to assess whether I was suitable for the position of an editorial assistant or not. I am not sure if I am right or not but the impression that I took from my brief interaction with Mir Saheb was that he had a very agile mind and a quick decision power.

Wasting time was a sin to him. His clear thoughts and confidence in his work made him different from so many average people like us. This is a time-tested fact that such habits fill ordinary minds with air. They get carried away with their success so much so that it goes to their heads. A false feeling of piety, self righteousness and pride makes inroads to their head. But having worked with him for years and years, I can say with confidence that no such feeling of being ahead of others and better than them ever crossed Mir Saheb's mind. We never felt these things in his conversation or mannerism.

However, the fact was that he was ahead of others in many things, personal or professional, but he himself did not take it that way. No self pride. No false airs. No self praise. He would lead his colleagues with personal example, his work, dedication and sense of commitment and accomplishment. He was a great man with lofty ideals. But he never wore these things on his sleeve. His greatness was not like a show piece to be displayed on a high cornice to invite the attraction of people. This was not his style. He would work all day and night. We saw him in office regularly. He believed in work, so he worked and worked hard. That was the first thing that he required from all of his employees, we never saw him talking unnecessarily, only important points and substantial facts with a guiding tip here and there. His focus on the results was incomparable- totally unwavering. Sincerity and



being true to his work was the crown jewel of his professional self.

"If you are not sincere with your work then don't do it." This was the core philosophy of Mir Saheb. A man can appear to be hard-working but still not sincere with his work. It is because a person cannot be a real hard working and committed if he is not sincere with his work.

All other qualities deemed necessary automatically emanate from this fountainhead. Floral write ups and gem-decked stories are usually short lived. They lose their shine shortly while sincere efforts last long-rather much longer. It is a widely known fact that personality reading is a difficult task. Every

one cannot do it. Normally first we hold someone very high in our eyes and then start painting him high. But on the other hand, if you start with someone with no pre-conceived image in mind and get to know that person bit by bit and keep doing this observation for an appropriately expanded span of time and then paint the picture of that personality, this will bring a truer and close-to reality image of that person.

I knew absolutely nothing about Mir Saheb when I first met him. For me, he was only a person who owned and headed the organisation that I was trying to join. He was the boss and I was an applicant for a small post in his office. I had never worked in a newspaper

before and I had no degree in journalism. Indeed, a strange situation. Actually it is here that a boss, a true leader, comes to the forefront. He sees, observes, what others cannot. It is not everybody's job. It takes a piercing eye, a fully active mind and complete and unwavering confidence in yourself to take a step forward. True leaders possess extraordinary qualities which an ordinary person lacks most of the time. And it is not only in my case that he decided to try a completely novice in the profession. There are many such examples, where his hawk eyes saw the hidden talent of people and he decided to explore their talent for the good of his organizations. Many such names who had no prior identity as journalists later emerged as the known names and became veteran journalists in this field.

A teacher's impression is usually of a kind and skillful person, keen to convey anything valuable to his pupils and at the same time watchful, diligent and dutiful. But in reality things can be different. We usually find people getting lethargic when elevated in worldly standing. A true leader, however, is disciplined and dedicated. He never behaves like a person loftier than his colleagues and co-workers. He seldom loses sight of basic human norms and values. He never looks down upon people around him. That is how he commands true respect and reverence of his subordinates, and lives in their hearts rather than hanging heavy on their nerves. He gets best out of them and treats them all fairly and compassionately.

Bosses like Mir Saheb have no special favourites. Anybody who works honestly is close to them and enjoys their support. Undoubtedly, everyone in Jang group who has worked with Mir Saheb remembers him as a good boss. His professional skills and standing was very high but as a man, his attitude towards his workers was always full of care and sympathies.

So many years after he left this world to rest in peace, his memories are still as sweet and fresh as if it were only yesterday that he presided over a meeting of the staff and told them what to do and how to do the assigned tasks. It was because of his efforts and dedication that his newspaper ranked above its contemporaries, as Mir Saheb himself remained head and shoulders higher than those who happened to be his contemporaries.

The living proof of Mir Saheb's love for work is before our eyes in the shape of his "Group" which is head and shoulders higher than all its contemporaries whether it is print media or electronic media.

As for my personal feelings regarding Mir Saheb, I will always feel grateful to him as he was the man who lifted me raw from the grass root level and taught me the things which I knew nothing about in this profession to which I was very new. His patronage has remained very close to my heart and will always remain so in the days to come.

-The author works at Jang



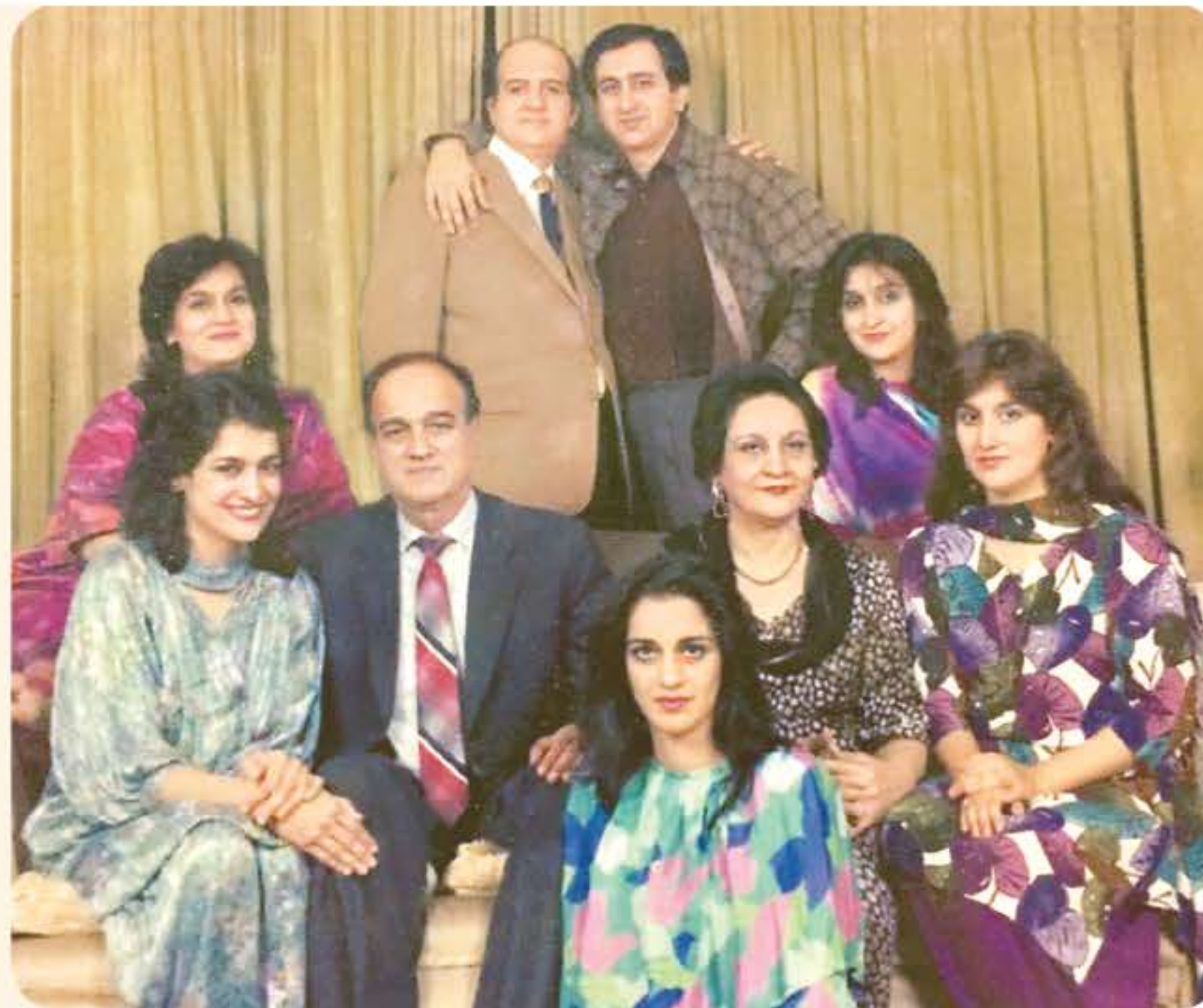
Mir Saheb was ahead of others in many things, personal or professional, but he himself did not take it that way. No self pride. No self praise. He would lead his colleagues with personal example, his work and dedication.

'Always busy, anxious but confident'

A memorable interview of Begum Mehmooda Khalil, wife of Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman

The Daily Jang began its publication in 1941 from Delhi, much before the partition of India. Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman migrated to Pakistan in 1947 and began publication of Jang from Karachi. In 1990, The Daily Jang proudly commemorated 50 years of its existence. This was the newspaper's golden jubilee. On this memorable occasion, a beautiful and well bound souvenir was published. Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman's wife, Begum Mehmooda Khalil-ur-Rahman was interviewed for this souvenir and made some interesting revelations about her husband and his work. The interview was conducted by her daughter-in-law Ghazala Javed, who is the wife of Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman's elder son, Mir Javed Rahman.

Ghazala Rahman is a reputed journalist and well-known writer. She was in those days very much involved in the field of journalism and interviewed many important personalities. She was also a reporter and wrote a column under the title 'Maazrat Ke Saath'. She was also known for her features and articles which were published in leading periodicals.



Behind every great person and his achievements, stands a woman

By Ghazala Javed

They say behind every great person and his achievements, stands a woman. The heights that Mir-Khalil-ur-Rahman attained in journalism would not have been possible without the support of his wife, Begum Mehmooda Khalil-ur-Rahman. Her contribution to his success cannot be understated. This interview gives us a glimpse into Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman's contribution to journalism, the journey of his life and the struggles he underwent. We are proud to present the memorable interview, which was published in 1990.

Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman was orphaned at a very young age and was deprived of his parents' love and affection. He was the eldest of a large family and had to take care of three brothers and two sisters from a very early age. He was taken in by his paternal uncle, who got him married at a very young age so that he could take care of his siblings. This was the only reason for his early marriage. God is very kind. He found a wonderful partner who had the qualities of an angel, was extremely kind hearted and displayed tremendous empathy for his predicament and struggle. She looked after her husband's siblings more than her own children and kept them close to her heart and brought them up with dignity. Nobody knew at the time that this innocent orphan would be so hard working, brilliant and would display multiple talents. Nobody could predict that one day, this young man would, through his struggle and hard work, be known as the emperor of journalism and literature.

Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman launched 'The Daily Jang' from Delhi. He had not yet forgotten the pain of being orphaned when he was confronted with the partition of the sub-continent. He left everything behind and migrated to Pakistan and

single handedly began the publication of Jang from Karachi. Despite scant resources, he did not let his passion dissipate and made his own world, based on a dream. He wrote most of the newspaper himself, published it, oversaw its printing and distributed it. His passion and struggle was rewarded and Jang was recognised as a leading newspaper of Pakistan. Not one to be satisfied with this success, he worked tirelessly and Jang was subsequently published from Rawalpindi, Quetta, Lahore and London. Jang was now Pakistan's number one newspaper in terms of circulation and print orders. It was also a newspaper of record and was known for its credibility and the multifarious viewpoints it published on its op-ed pages. Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman never compromised on the quality of his newspaper and despite suffering losses, stuck to his principles and never sold out. He believed in speaking truth to power with great courage and determination. He defines the age in which he lived and his contribution lives on in history. His life is an open book and he never belonged to any party or group. His journalism was always balanced and different points of view were accommodated. Debate and discussion rather than diatribe were the hallmark of Jang. He was responsible for introducing the Urdu Nastaleeq typing system in Pakistan. All the leading journalists of the country have worked in Jang at one time or the other under his editorship.

Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman originally belonged to Kashmir and his forefathers left the beautiful valley and settled in Gujranwala for economic rea-

sons. He was born in Gujranwala but spent a lot of time in Delhi till the independence of the sub-continent. He matriculated from Fatehpuri Muslim High School in Delhi and received a B.Com degree from Daryaganj Commercial College, also in Delhi.

Gujranwala had a special place in the world of Indian journalism. Three of the most famous editors ie Maulana Zafar Ali Khan of Zameendar, Maulvi Mehboob Alam of Paisa Akhbar and Deewan Singh Maftoon of Riyasat hailed from



this city. Mir Saheb took his newspaper to a greater level and achieved fame and success because of his special talents, hard work and dedication. He made a name for himself as a pioneer in journalism and literature. Mir Saheb is gifted with a charming personality and he uses words with such dexterity that people who listen to his conversations are totally under his spell. He has a tremendous sense of humour and can turn a phrase which makes people burst out in laughter. In company, it is difficult to imagine that this person who is making the company so

light has worked so hard and so seriously at his profession. He is extremely affectionate towards children and is very popular amongst them. He is known to be a brilliant writer and an astute journalist. Whenever he picked up the pen, and wrote the editorial himself, it would leave the readers entranced. He set new standards and is always looking to innovate. He is a patriot and has tremendous love and belief in Pakistan. Whenever he talks about the conditions prevailing in the country and especially in Sindh, his eyes turn moist and he is overcome with emotions. When he once spoke as the president of the APNS about the conditions in Sindh, the entire audience was overcome with emotions.

The Creator of the Universe, in his infinite wisdom uses individuals to give instructions and directions to mankind. Mir Saheb has been serving Islam as a true believer in the faith. He embarked on the journey of translating verses from the Quran and printing these on the front page of his newspaper. It is not commonly known that he wrote these verses down himself and therefore displayed his knowledge and ability in calligraphy. Thousands of readers have benefited from these verses.

Mir Saheb has made a mark in the field of both journalism and literature. His style is unique and striking. His style is marked with understatement, clarity and a certain humility. He displays love and big heartedness and a softness in his approach towards big issues. He respects everybody's opinion and is not known to discriminate between the views of the rich or the poor, big or small.

In 1990, by the grace of God, Jang celebrated 50 years of publication. Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman has been the editor of Jang for this period as well. This is a huge achievement by the grace of Allah. We now begin our interview with Begum Mehmooda Khalil-ur-Rahman.

A TRIBUTE TO MIR KHALIL-UR-RAHMAN

Ques: When and how did you get married to Mir Saheb?

Ans: Ours was an arranged marriage which took place with the blessings of our families on the 20th of February 1944.

Ques: How was he as a husband and a father to your children?

Ans: Mir Saheb is a very fine, upright, honest and pious person. He is very loving as a husband and as a father. Since he is so busy he is unable to devote as much time as he would have liked to his children. I think the children have missed this involvement. Very often, when he would come home from work the children would be fast asleep and when he woke up, they would be in school. However, his days and nights were spent working and for the benefit of his family.

Ques: What were the most important elements that Mir Saheb tried to inculcate in his children?

Ans: He emphasised Islamic principles and made sure that his children understood basic Islamic thought. He ensured that all his children loved Pakistan and tried to teach them Urdu. Mir Saheb wanted his children to speak the truth and be honest in their dealings. I am confident that these elements were imbibed by the children and they will go on to serve the country and contribute to its prosperity.

We spoke to each other in Punjabi and switched to Urdu when conversing with the children. Mir Saheb believed that Urdu was the national language of Pakistan and that the future belonged to this language. Therefore, our children had to be well-versed in this language. Fortunately, our grandchildren also speak Urdu and are very amused when they hear their grandparents chatting in Punjabi. I feel, and I've often said it to my husband, that the children who learn Urdu in school, but we have deprived them of their mother tongue, because now none of them speak or understand Punjabi.

We have two sons and thank God that both of them are extremely honest and pious. Both my sons have inherited their father's capacity for hard work and have the ability to take his legacy to greater heights.

Ques: You have seen the ups and downs of Mir Saheb's life. What do you think was the defining moment in his life?

Ans: Ever since we got married I have seen turmoil in his life. There are many events that come to mind but one which took place during Bhutto Saheb's time is very important and is etched in my mind. Jam Sadiq Ali was minister of

local bodies. He telephoned us and told Mir Saheb that Bhutto Saheb had ordered our water supply to be stopped. He also told Mir Saheb that he had orders to dump all the rubbish and refuse of the locality in front of our house. We were shocked and shattered. However, Jam Saheb called again and told Mir Saheb not to worry. He said, we have persuaded Mr Bhutto to take the orders back.

During the Bhutto period, Mir Saheb was under a lot of pressure. A number of income tax cases were filed against him. He was subjected to a number of inquiries and was targeted for what was appearing in the newspapers. He faced these cases and inquiries with fortitude and by the grace of God, the courts ruled in our favour. We spent that time in great pain and anguish. But thank God we emerged with our integrity intact. I must say, that in every government, Mir Saheb has faced great adversity. In the beginning of each government things seem to be going well, but then the rulers suddenly begin to take umbrage with the reportage and begin to show their anger by applying pressure. It's a game of hide and seek. Sometimes, they are happy, at other times, they are very, very unhappy.

Ques: When Mir Saheb launched the newspaper from Delhi how many hours did he work and on an average how many hours did he devote to office matters?

Ans: When he launched Jang, it was virtually a one man show. He did everything by himself. He edited the paper, displayed it properly, oversaw its printing and then distributed/sold it by himself. I think he worked 24 hours a day, so it's difficult to assess how many hours he devoted to



At Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman's former S.M.C.H.S. residence, Karachi (R-L) J.C. Anand, Syed Mukhtar Ahmed, Nisar Murad (Waheed Murad's father in dark glasses), Mehmood Haroon, Dr Majeed Akhtar (3rd left with arms folded, at present he is 97 years old, hale and hearty living in U.S.), Sultan Ahmed, Yousuf Mitha (owner of Rex Cinema) and Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman with other dignitaries

the business. Even today, he works for ten hours on an average. He is so involved in his work that if left to himself he would take his bed to the office.

Ques: How do you take his devotion to his work?

Ans: In the beginning, I was very disturbed. But when I saw his passion and love for his work, I realised, slowly but surely, that journalism is a demanding profession. I reconciled myself to his absence and would spend a lot of time praying for his success. Allah has heard my prayers and I am extremely grateful that his labour has borne fruit. But I always say, that all our success is due to the many blessings of my father-in-law. Mir Saheb's grandfather Mir Jan Mohammad and his father Mir Abdul Aziz were both great benefactors of their extended families. Mir Saheb is blessed by his ancestors.

Ques: Who were some very interesting world renowned people you met with Mir Saheb? What was his reaction?

Ans: Mir Sahab travelled to many countries along with the heads of state. We have a strange custom in our part of the world. Somehow wives of journalists are not invited on these trips. I don't think this is correct. Anyway, I have met many famous Pakistani personalities, amongst them the most memorable was meeting Fatima Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan, Begum Liaquat and Ayub Khan. When we went to India, I had the privilege of meeting Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru and the Governor of Bengal, Sarojini Naidu. I have also met Turkey's Ismet Inonu. Mir Saheb would feel very happy whenever he met an important personality and would always thank God for giving him this opportunity.

Ques: Jang has always had an independent policy. Can you recall incidents that took place to put pressure on Mir Saheb?

Ans: Fortunately, he is a man who has great humility. Once, fire broke out in Javed Press. Mir Saheb and all other staffers rushed out of the office and stood on the street. The flames were shooting onto the sky and the fire brigade of Karachi rushed to the scene and tried to put the fire out. Despite their efforts, the fire could not be doused. Mir Saheb never felt more helpless than on that day. He stood there watching the fire destroy all that his work and struggle had created. You can understand the pain he

had to endure. When a plant grows and blossoms, the gardener understands how much work has gone into its flowering. He, at that moment, realised that all his colleagues were safe and this gave him great relief. Whenever such an incident occurs, Mir Saheb always thinks of his colleagues and staff. They are the most important people for him. Similarly, when there was firing at our house, rain started pouring down and perhaps saved us. Because of the rain, no one was outside, nor in the rooms where the bullets were fired at. We thank God for saving our lives.

Ques: It is a known fact that behind every great person is a woman. Does Mir Saheb take your advice on issues? Were there any occasions when you had to give him advice and needed to boost his morale?

Ans: If you talk about difficulties, there were so many that they became easy to overcome. Mir Saheb has a great capacity to endure trouble and turmoil. He never loses courage nor has he ever cowed down to adversity. He never shirks from difficult situations. He tries not to create difficulties for other people although his work is such that it causes pain to those who are criticised. He has always been worried about the ups and downs of government. I try my best to keep his spirits high and offer advice from time to time. My prayer has always been with God to protect us from jealousies and from enemies.

Ques: What does Mir Saheb's preference in terms of clothing and food?

Ans: He hardly has any time to think about what he should wear. Sometimes I feel that if left to himself, he would make do with just one set of clothing. I make it a point to shop for him and have his clothing stitched. He has never said that my choice was wrong. He has simple tastes. He eats whatever is served and has never made demands when it comes to food.

Ques: What does he do on a holiday?

Ans: Let me tell you, we journalists have no concepts of holidays. Newspapers come out virtually every day. When there is a holiday, he spends most of his time in his library. He sits there going through newspapers, magazines, books and files. He is not interested in picnics or entertainment. We have been in Karachi for 43-44 years and maybe we've been to Hawkes Bay once.

Words speak volumes

By Zaib Azkaar Hussain

Rupert Murdoch is an Australian-born media mogul, the executive chairman of 21st Century Fox, and executive chairman of a newspaper empire News Corporation. His father, Sir Keith Murdoch had been a reporter, editor, and senior executive of the Herald and Weekly Times newspaper publishing company, covering all Australian states except New South Wales. For Rupert Murdoch, "great journalism will always attract readers. The words, pictures and graphics that are the stuff of journalism have to be brilliantly packaged; they must feed the mind and move the heart."

On the same note, Mar'a de la Soledad Teresa O'Brien, an American broadcast journalist and executive producer and the anchor for CNN morning show Starting Point, says, "I don't think journalism changes. It's about digging into stories and telling them well. The basic tenets of great reporting stay the same while things around it change."

These and other quotes given by great media personalities of our time point towards the onerous task a journalist has to fulfill and the responsibility a print or electronic media organisation has towards its society and its people. Only those people and organisations have left their indelible marks in this field who have kept these norms as the basic pillars of their profession. sa

Pakistan is a country where many media personalities have gained international fame due to their sheer hard work in this field. Some of them have also attained a legendary status over the years. One such personality is of Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman, who is termed as the "Father of modern Urdu journalism." He earned this title not only because of his Urdu newspaper Jang which became a household name and a tool for educating and informing the masses, but also because of the technological advancements he brought in, in the country in this field. Both his friends and rivals acknowledge his services.

It's been 27 years since Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman, the founder of Jang Group, left this world to live in his heavenly abode, but still, after more than two decades, it isn't hard to find the admirers of Mir Saheb. Some enjoyed personal relationship with him while others kept it professional. For the workers of his organisation, he was a mentor, a teacher and an example to follow. While for the people who knew him personally, he was more than a friend, always there for them in their time of need. We interviewed some of his workers, and his close friends, who recalled the memories of Mir Saheb.

Wajihuddin Ahmed, former Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the acting Chairman of Aam Log Ittehad Party (ALIP), while sharing his memories about Mir Saheb, said that whenever he met with Mir Saheb, he found him to be a modest and a down-to-earth person.

He added that Mir Saheb was a man with great reputation in the newspaper industry of Pakistan. Undoubtedly, he was the leader of this industry and financially he was in a very sound



position but still he was a down-to-earth person that showed his inner decency and brilliance.

Ahmed, who spoke at length on Mir Saheb, said that he would always keep himself abreast of any technical advancement going on in the print industry not only in Pakistan but any innovations in the international technological world never skipped his eyes. He wanted to make his newspaper more viable and useful for the readers. He was also open to the suggestions given by his friends and his well wishers. Ahmed pointed out that he also gave Mir Saheb some suggestions on how to make pages (other than the front page) in such a way that the portions of the news which were carried forward from front page to other pages, become easy for the readers to find

out and read. The suggestions given by him (Ahmed) were taken seriously by Mir Saheb, and soon he noticed that the remaining portions of the news stories carried forward from front page to other pages were made so easy to read by marking them with specific numbers. This practice is still in vogue in Jang.

While recalling another meeting with Mir Saheb, Ahmed said that once he was hearing a case in which Mir Saheb was not even the defendant but Ahmed was surprised to notice that Mir Saheb himself was present in the court and attending the hearing. Ahmed further said that it showed the deep sense of responsibility Mir Saheb had towards newspapers in general, though he himself was neither summoned nor indicted to be a respondent in any case.

A leader of Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islam (F), Qari Sher Afzal, termed Mir Saheb as a God-fearing man and a strong believer of Khatm-e-Nabuwwat (the finality of Prophethood). "Mir Saheb proved his conviction by his actions and helping the believers on achieving their tasks in Pakistan in this regard," said Sher Afzal.

Qari Sher Afzal said that there was a time when he was very close to Mir Saheb and used to visit his office frequently and Mir Saheb would always welcome him. Due to his frequent visits, his friends used to call him a close friend of Mir Saheb. However, Mir Saheb, despite this close friendship with him, never gave him undue political favour in his paper as he was determined to maintain an impartial policy for his newspaper. "Once I suggested to Mir Saheb that his sons should contest elections. Mir Saheb did not agree to this suggestion as he clearly said that he and his paper enjoyed an impartial policy in terms of politics and if his sons contest elections it would create a different impression of his newspaper which was not fair," he recalled.

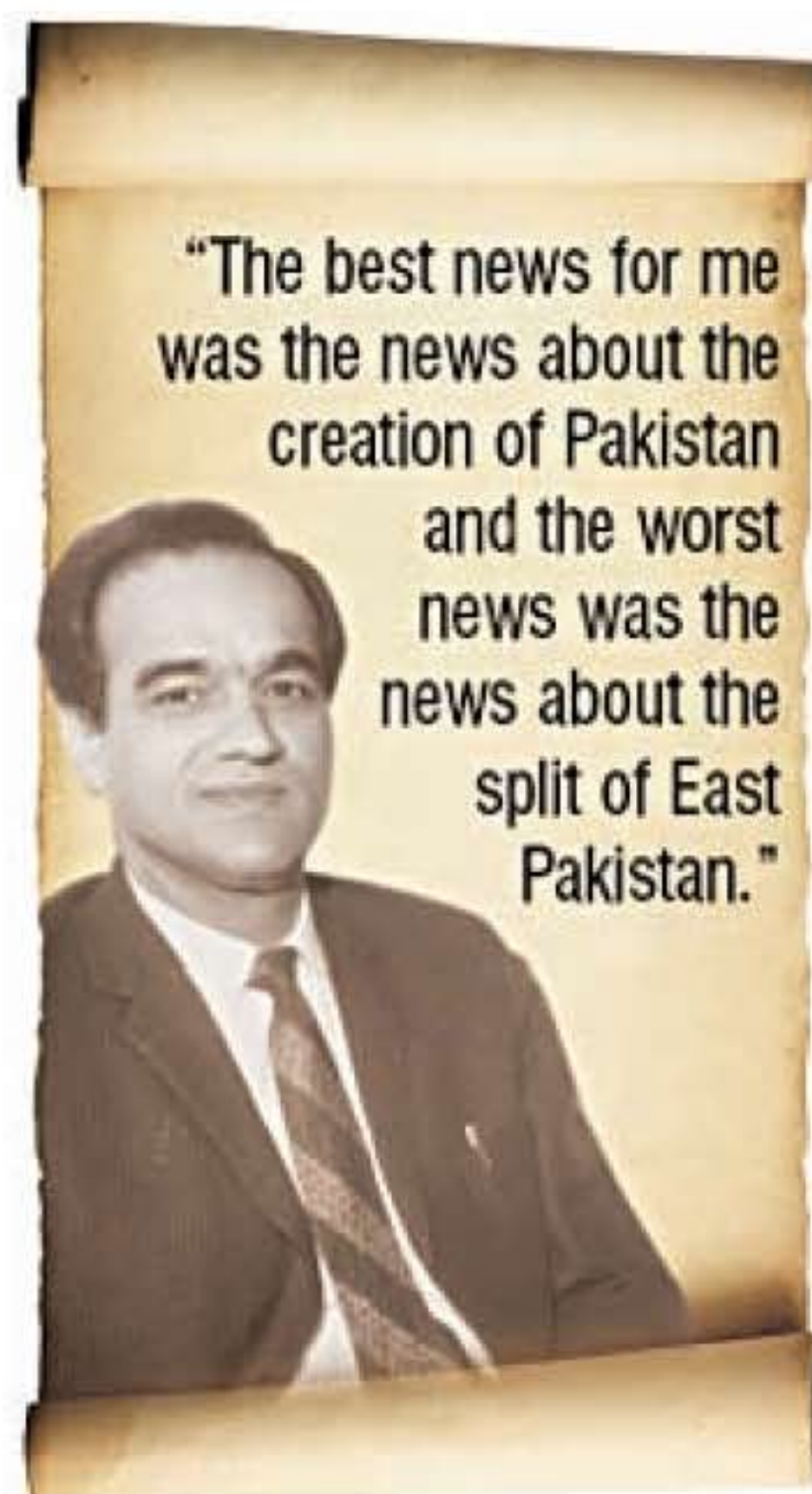
President of Pakistan Mazdoor Kissan Party (PMKP), Advocate SM Altaf, while recalling his memories said that he, along with other students, representing the National Students

Federation (NSF), used to visit the office of Jang when it was located near Eidgah, adjacent to Qureshi Hospital.

"Mir Saheb was very kind to students, his newspaper always tried to adjust press releases of these students' representatives," said Altaf. He further said that once a group of students gave their version through a press release and tried to undermine the role of another students' group, on the some issue. The representatives of the other group approached Mir Saheb directly. He listened to them patiently and asked his staff to adjust their viewpoint as well. This was the reason as to why students of his time never hesitated to give any major development on the students' activities in Karachi University and other colleges of the city in his newspapers. The students would always inform the newspaper editorial staff about any wrong news floated by some other group to mislead people. In such a case, the same news used to be dropped by the staff immediately. SM Altaf further said that Mir Saheb was a kindhearted person and used to help people in their hard times. He cited the example of one of his employees, namely Dada Basheer, who served Mir Saheb in different capacities like driver and helper for many years. Dada Basheer was the father of three daughters and had no house to live. When Mir Saheb shifted his offices to I I Chundrigar Road, he gave his plot, where the Jang offices were located earlier, to Dada Basheer after his retirement. "It was the generosity of Mir Saheb to permit Dada Basheer to stay at that place forever. Such acts of kindness are unmatched and remembered for ever", said Altaf.

Another ALIP leader Azhar Jamil said that once he visited Mir Saheb, in order to discuss a misleading story published in Jang given by some right wing politicians. He was accompanied by the then Qaumi Mahaz-e-Azadi Chief, Meraj Muhammad Khan.

It was probably early eighties when Meraj Muhammad Khan was a renowned left wing



leader of the country who complained to Mir Saheb about the publication of some news, which to him seemed misleading. Azhar Jamali briefed Mir Saheb about the wrong version of the right wing politicians who created an impression as if the left wing leaders have disappeared from the political scene. Mir Saheb listened to them calmly and replied that the policy of his newspaper was impartial. The policy is aimed at examining the worth of the news and nothing more. He offered Meraj Muhammad Khan to write his point of view clearly and the same will also be published in his newspaper.

"Such a wonderful, professional and kind attitude of Mir Saheb not only inspired Meraj Muhammad Khan but also his colleagues, who visited the office along with him," said Altaf.

Senior Editor of Geo TV Network, Muhammad Nasir, said that it was his golden time when he worked with Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman who proved to be a great teacher and mentor to him. While sharing his memories with Mir Saheb, Nasir said that Mir Saheb taught him the basics of journalism and the ways to work in this field. Nasir further added that Mir Saheb was well versed with the practical journalism and its prerequisites in the field. He informed that Jang Group was the first newspaper that imported the most modern printing technology of the time in order to bring the newspaper at par with the international standards, besides keeping its readers updated on the national and international affairs. Nasir recalled the time when for the first time a fax machine was imported in Jang office, and he was briefly trained by Mir Saheb himself on how to work on that machine and receive and send correspondence. "Only Pir Pagara Saheb, the then leader of Pakistan Muslim League (F), had such modern equipment other than Mir Saheb," informed Nasir.

He further said it was the desire of Mir Saheb to make his newspaper modern in terms of technology, and that was why he brought in modern equipment and trained his workers on them. Nasir also gave reference of the concept of printing of coloured pictures for the first time in Jang's newspapers and periodicals, adding that Mir Saheb was indeed one of the most forward-looking journalists, who would keep an eye on modern printing technology as well as processes.

Nasir said he never saw Mir Saheb ever giving a cold shoulder to any of his employees or any other person who visited him despite the fact that he had a lot of irons in his fire as being the owner and Editor of the Jang Group. "He used to check each and every line in the newspaper before sending it to final printing," Nasir added.

President of Arts Council of Pakistan (Karachi), Muhammad Ahmed Shah, said that Mir Saheb was a man of a great vision who introduced modern technology in Jang and in other periodicals of Jang Group. Shah recalled the days when he met Mir Saheb. "Mir Saheb used to take keen interest in the affairs of youths and their advancement. He also introduced awards for the brilliant students of Karachi



University's Mass Communication department.

Every year, brilliant students not only get awards from Jang Group but they are also offered good job opportunities in the Jang Group," Shah added.

"It was in 1981 when a group of students of Karachi University held a seminar on journalism at a local hotel. The seminar was not only sponsored by Mir Saheb but he also accepted the request of the students to become the chief guest of the event and give gold medals to the position holders of the Mass Communication Department of the University." Shah further said that since he was representing the students' group, he drew the attention of Mir Saheb towards the problems of unemployment of fresh graduates and requested him to hire qualified graduates in his organisation. "Mir Saheb immediately approved the request and announced jobs for all the qualified students who had graduated from the Mass Communication Department of the Karachi University."

Ahmed Shah said that the announcement of Mir Saheb not only encouraged the graduates but it also showed Mir Saheb's zeal, interest and commitment towards the advancement of the journalists of the country.

Shah also paid rich tributes to Mir Shakil-ur-Rahman by adding that the brilliant sons of Mir Saheb carried forward the vision of their father and despite all the hurdles and difficulties, they managed to achieve the goal of great success by adding popular English newspaper The News International and satellite TV channels under the brand name of Geo TV Network under the umbrella of Jang Group.

Throughout his life, Mir Saheb tried to find truth and then conveyed it to his readers, who always trusted Jang for its impartial reporting. He lived true to the words of Walter Cronkite, an American broadcast journalist, "We all have our likes and our dislikes. But... when we're doing news - when we're doing the front-page news, not the back page, not the op-ed pages, but when we're doing the daily news, covering politics - it is our duty to be sure that we do not permit our prejudices to show. That is simply basic journalism."



A man of abundant qualities

By Zoya Tariq Khan

Success is not final, failure is not lethal: it is the courage to continue that counts. Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman was one of those people who never discouraged himself with the thought of failure. He saw many ups and downs in his life, a life he had made himself. He was a courageous man and even in the worst of circumstances he faced challenges with equanimity and emerged as a successful media tycoon. In those days newspapers were the only effective means of communication with the masses which was dominated by Hindus. Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman accepted the challenge, faced strong words against him and spread the message of Muslim League and its stance to every nook and corner of India, particularly to the Muslims. It was his humble but very strong contribution towards the movement of Pakistan, which was fast gaining momentum in those days. He put all his abilities to this sacred cause which he later

A person with an immense sense of humour

Mir Saheb also had a great sense of humour. Many of his colleagues witnessed his sense of humour. One of his companions Farhad Zaidi shared his experience. He mentioned that when he was the president of APNS, one of the meetings of executive committee was held in Peshawar. Everybody made a plan there to visit Torkham. They all boarded two coaster vans with the Frontier Constabulary escorting them and headed towards Torkham. This was the time while Russian war was going on in Afghanistan. On the way, he asked Mir Saheb that what would happen if a Russian plane bombards their convoy. Mir Saheb instinctively replied: "What else? Majeed Nizami will become the APNS president", and with that Mir Saheb shared a hearty laugh with other pressmen present in the van. Everyone enjoyed the



described as the cause of creating awareness about Pakistan, a country he envisioned for the Muslims of the sub-continent where they will be able to lead their lives according to the cannons of Islam. Consequences were not easy to face.

Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman was a multi-talented person who liked innovations. He was a person who pioneered journalism in Pakistan. He not only laid the foundation of modern Urdu journalism but also introduced highly sophisticated and modern technological methods in the print and publication industry of Pakistan.

A firm believer of Islam

Mir saheb was a firm believer of Islam and Pakistan. His deep passion for Pakistan was observed on many occasions. He would always show his concern when people used to say "what Pakistan has given to them", he would always say in return that Pakistan has given them with everything. It is now for people to see what they are giving in return to Pakistan.

He used to cite his own example and candidly express that whatever he is today, it is just because of Pakistan. Had he been in India, he would have never attained the status which Pakistan has given to him.

Those who knew him found him a religious person to the core. He used to offer prayer five times a day, recite Holy Qur'an and keep fasts in Ramazan very religiously. Mir Sahab was the first person who started printing translation of Qur'anic verses in Urdu on top-front of his newspaper. This tradition still continues in his daily newspapers.

quip in his sentence.

An excellent advisor

The founding father of Jang Group, Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman, used to tell his colleagues and other members of the creative staff that the prime responsibility of the print media is to educate and inform people about the happenings, inventions and innovations and to encourage the youngsters to contribute their thought-provoking articles for general benefit. Almost all of his pages in the newspaper would stand witness to his vision and the content on these pages used to be creative, thought-provoking and informative. He specially started a page for youth to give them a platform to raise their voice on various issues. Through this page, their vision and their ideas reached people at the helm of affairs. He considered youth as the future of Pakistan.

A supporter of women

Mir Saheb was highly concerned about women issues, and whenever he was requested to highlight such issues, he was willing to give space in his publication.

All in all he had a multifaceted personality, and it is difficult to highlight all facets of his life in one article. He is truly worthy of being called the Mir-e-Sahafat. Mir Saheb's life conveyed an exceptionally germane message for all Pakistanis that if a person sets his goals and battles ceaselessly for achieving them with devotion, then he would never fail.



Perfection personified

By Shahzada Irfan Ahmed

It was 26 years ago that Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman, the legendary figure who revolutionised journalism in this part of the world, left for his heavenly abode. It was he who supported the Pakistan movement with the help of his Urdu newspaper, Jang, and left an indelible print on the pages of history. He was well-known in those times and is still remembered as a man with immense professional integrity and strength of character.

He was called as Mir Saheb by his contemporaries and the staff who had developed a strong bond with him, based on the principle of mutual respect. Born in Gujranwala in 1927, he had moved to Karachi and settled there. There he started publishing Daily Jang and introduced innovation in this profession. Mir Saheb was bold enough to make experiments but all his moves were calculated and were made with the aim to benefit from technological advancements made from time to time.

Those who have met him, known him or worked under him talk extensively about his diverse qualities and remember him with good words. One such quality of Mir Saheb that we would like to discuss here is that he had nurtured very cordial relations with his staff starting from top to bottom. He was not selective when it came to giving respect to others and caring about them. A proof of this is that he would sit with his workers, whether they were editors or helpers, in a comfortable environment and listen carefully to what they had to say. He was a God-fearing and practicing Muslim so he always ensured that he did not do injustice with anybody or treat him inferior to others.

Muneer Khokhar, who was appointed as the In-charge of Camera Section in Lahore in 1981, recalls how he would simply walk into the under-construction building at Davis Road and sit down wherever he would find space. He says that Mir Saheb was not fond of getting protocol or treated in a special manner for being the owner of a media empire.

Khokhar further says that whenever Mir Saheb would come to Lahore office, he would try to ensure that he had met the staff employed in each department of the newspaper. He was often seen talking to the printing section staff and asking them about intricate issues regarding printing quality. He knew every process involved in newspaper publishing so he very

well knew what he was talking about. Similarly, he says, it would be very easy for the staffers to explain their point to him because he knew what problems could prop up in their sections. The katibs were very close to him and he would specially sit with them and discuss their issues.

Munzir Elahi, a member of the founding team that launched Jang in Lahore and worked in the group for 25 years, remembers him as a very keen listener, always open to advice coming from wherever it could be. He says he was an extremely sober person who would never utter a harsh word and refrain from hurting others with his comments. Regardless of his reply being in positive or negative, it seemed he was listening to each and every word of those talking to him with full attention. "In fact, those talking to him would feel special due to his interest in what they had to say," says Elahi.

Mir Saheb is also remembered for being a humble and down-to-earth person. He used to have the services of Yaqoob, helper in Lahore who would bring paan of his choice when he wanted to have it. He would hardly bother any other person for his work other than him.

Elahi adds that Mir Saheb would convey his message to his staff in a very candid and non-offending way. While citing an example he shares that one day he came to a room where some senior staffers of the newspaper were taking notes and discarding paper slips cut out of newsprint after writing on one side of the slips. What he did was that he lifted some paper slips from the wastepaper basket and suggested the staffers to write on both the sides. He was so careful in his speech that he did not address any particular person, despite the fact that he knew

who was wasting these without remorse, and just made a personal comment. The point he stressed was that newsprint was an imported item that costs Pakistan foreign exchange and should therefore be used prudently, Elahi adds.

However, this does not mean that Mir Saheb was not a progressive person or he avoided spending on development of his staff and his organisation. Elahi shares, it was Mir Saheb who got Urdu printing software, Noori Nataleeq, developed by Monotype Corporation London, when others could not even think about this. This, he says, was an example of how progressively he used to think.

Tikka Khan, Elected Lifetime Secretary General of All Pakistan Akhbar Farosh Federation, is yet another person who has sweet memories of great times spent in the company of Mir Saheb still fresh in his mind. Talking to The News, he says that having risen to the top through hard work Mir Saheb knew the issues of the working class and therefore could relate with them very well. He had great respect for the workers and would never differentiate with people on the basis of their social class or financial standing.

Khan also remembers him as a cool-tempered and composed person who would never lose his calm. There

were many occasions where contentious issues were discussed with the union for long hours but these meetings always ended on a positive note. He shares Mir Saheb was aware of the problems of people and that is why he would object to the suggestions of other newspapers' owners to reduce the commission of newspaper sellers. He remembers Mir Saheb rejecting this demand on grounds that it was unfair to deprive one of what one was getting at the moment. A person shall not be forced to forgo his lifestyle by making a cut in his earning and making his family suffer was what he would say to justify his stance.

These are just a few of the qualities of Mir Saheb discussed by some of his admirers out of many. Though the details are not exhaustive, these will definitely give an idea about his personality to the readers as well as reveal the traits of Mir Saheb's character that made him gem of a person and an extraordinarily professional.

He was often seen talking to the printing section staff and asking them about intricate issues regarding printing quality. He knew every process involved in newspaper publishing so he very well knew what he was talking about.

