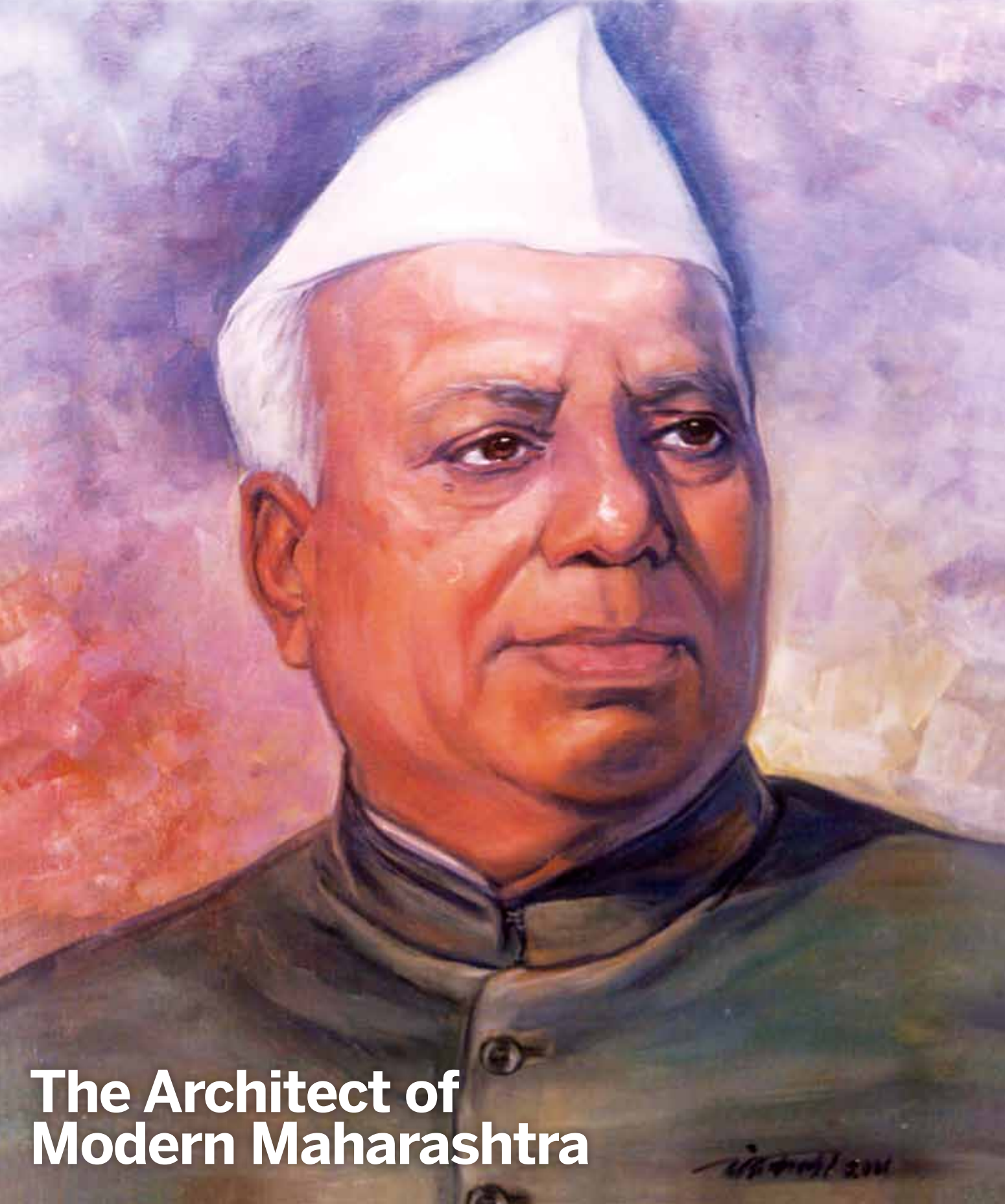


MAHARASHTRA AHEAD

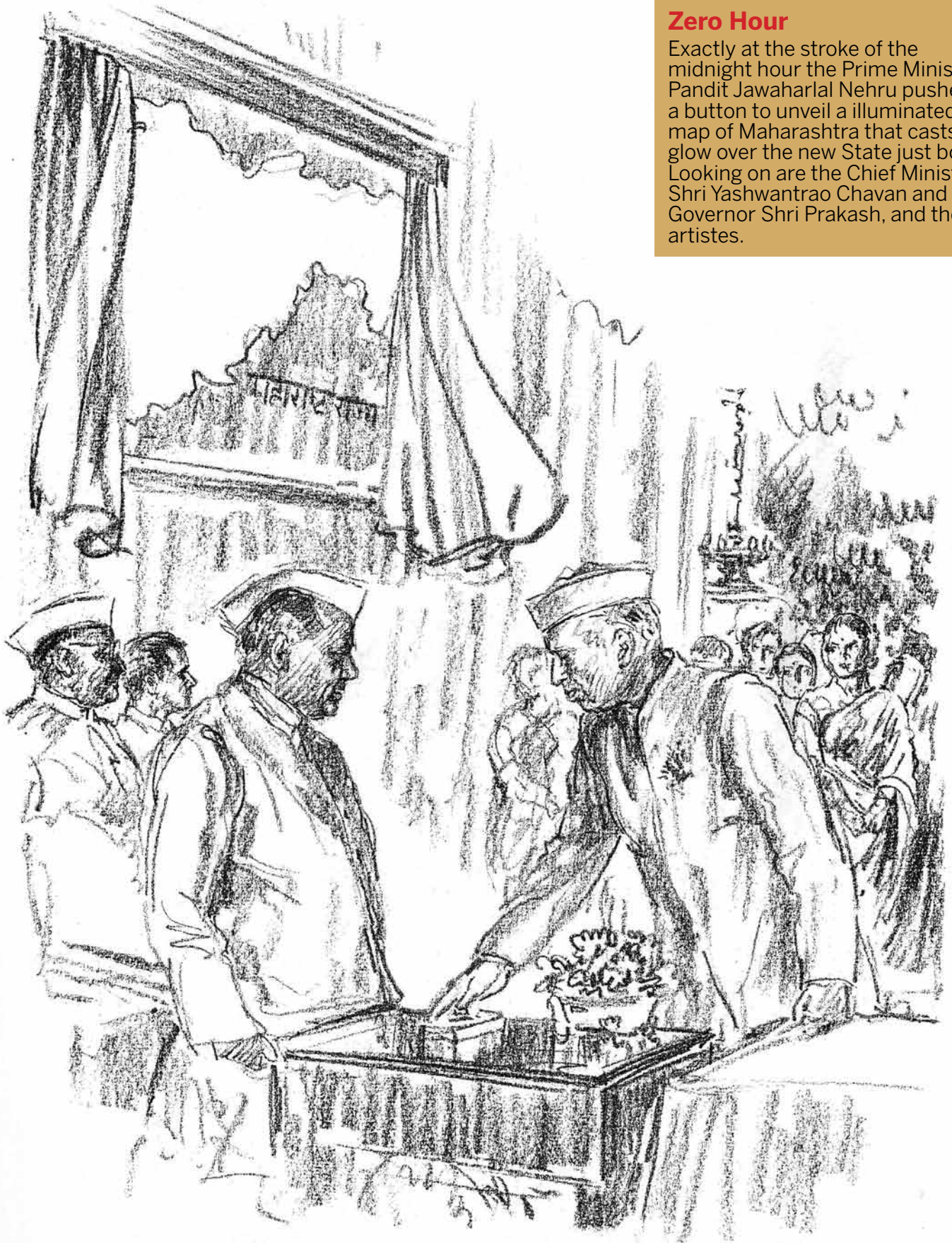


**The Architect of
Modern Maharashtra**

Handwritten signature in the bottom right corner of the painting.

Zero Hour

Exactly at the stroke of the midnight hour the Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru pushes a button to unveil a illuminated map of Maharashtra that casts its glow over the new State just born. Looking on are the Chief Minister Shri Yashwantrao Chavan and the Governor Shri Prakash, and the artistes.



The Treasure of Rich Legacy



The birth centenary year of Yashwantrao Chavan, the first Chief Minister of Maharashtra, is beginning from 13th March 2012. In this commemorative year, the only befitting tribute to the architect of the progressive State would be to remember his good deeds and get re-inspired by his philosophy that he had put into practice in his life time so as to progress on his footsteps.

This special issue of 'Maharashtra Ahead' is one of the initiatives taken up by the Government of Maharashtra to mark the centenary. Credit for the issue must go to the Chief Minister Shri Prithviraj Chavan. It could not have been possible without his encouragement.

Much has been written about Yashwantraoji and yet re-evaluation of his achievements and reinterpretation of his words give us different perspective and renews our bliss every time we read his speeches. It is said that the career of visionaries is always ages ahead. And literature published in the issue bears testimony to this.

Yashwantraoji had the multi-faceted personality - a successful leader with foresight, a social reformer, a think tank, an orator, a literature, an aficionado, an able administrator, an excellent Parliamentarian etc. Born in the family of a farmer from Devrashtre, a remote village in Maharashtra he went on to become the Deputy Prime Minister of India to prove the mettle of citizen of Maharashtra. It was in Yashwantraoji Maharashtra proudly witnessed a son of its soil who got the highest honour in the politics of India, years after Mahadji Shinde.

It can never be denied that the development of Maharashtra and its reputation the progressive State is based on the politically matured ideologies of the Yashwantraoji. Impact of his towering personality and thoughts is felt in different spheres of life such as education, cooperation, science, technology, arts, literature etc. Landmark institutes named after Yashwantraoji such as, the Yashwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration - Yashada in Pune, the Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University in Nashik and the Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishthan in Mumbai stand as guiding star for the coming generations. Yashwantraoji, an icon of the cultured leader, has left a rich legacy for Maharashtra's generations to come which will rejuvenate us on our way to better future and will continue to guide Maharashtra as well as India in the future.

Even as we have strived for the best bringing out this issue, we still feel it could have been yet better for there is always an opportunity for the best. Articles of Yashwantraoji's long-time associates, veteran writers and his erstwhile friends garnished this issue and we are sure our readers will cherish it.

Renowned painter Smt. Chandrakala Kadam has adorned the cover and inside pages of the issue. Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishthan is amongst the others who contributed in the making of this issue by providing us some rare photographs and vital references. All the writers have devoted their valuable time scripting their articles. We thank one and all.

Pramod T. Nalawade
Editor-in-Chief, 'Maharashtra Ahead', DGIPR

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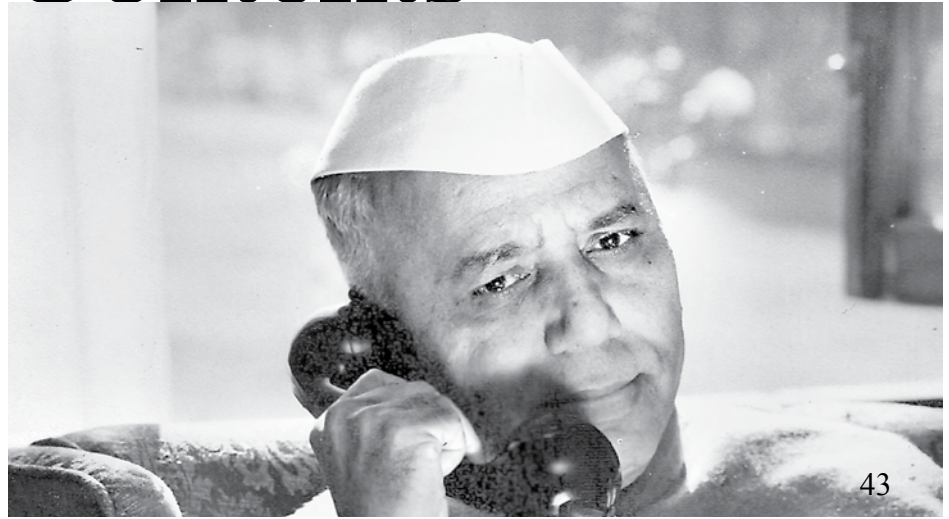
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The Leader Above All

Yashwantrao Chavan was a fine blend of rare qualities that made him a leader of high stature

The highest qualities such as a friend of all, a strategist, a bureaucrat, able administrator, an orator, a philosopher, balanced politician, connoisseur of arts, aficionado of literature, a litterateur himself and a thorough gentleman became identity of Yashwantrao Chavan, says the Chief Minister, **Prithviraj Chavan**

"For the people, of the people, by the people", as the democracy is often described, is the formal definition because it does not precisely connote the system of governance. I would say that democracy in administration means the governance in the consultation with each others. To me the real democracy is the system where peoples' representatives come together and think over citizens' common issues with open mind. I don't at all approve with the meaning of democracy as merely a system of governance."

- Yashwantrao Chavan



Yashwantrao Chavan has aptly underlined the importance of democracy in the beginning of this article. He knew that every decision in the democratic system is citizen-centric and for the

welfare of the people. People are the leaders. He is always called the architect of modern Maharashtra, the first Chief Minister of Maharashtra, the connoisseur of literature and music, the philosopher etc. All

these adjectives used to describe his personality are true, however are not enough for his personality. He was multi-faceted, multi-dimensional. He was the leader above all. A leader of his stature is rare.

FUNDAMENTAL THOUGHT

Yashwantrao was the scholar of political science and administration. He had studied different administrative systems very well. He was of the opinion that political science is a social science and hence is flexible to change. We are living in the world that is changing and social life also changes, this fact has to be considered, this was his thought. He had deep trust in the Parliamentary Democracy India has adopted.

He had thought of administration fundamentally. His simple ideology was that the governance and administration are two different things. They have their own strengths. Administration means political system. It is one side of governance. It's other side is political. If there is good coordination then people are satisfied. But he knew that peoples' contentment is altogether a different thing. Therefore, he took the firm stand that political democracy should go hand in hand with the social and economic democracy to make it the real democracy.

He has stated that if political democracy gives equal opportunity to all, then every citizen should get equal opportunity in social and economic fields alongwith the political rights. If democracy is confined to right to vote then it will ruin the society, he used to think. His thoughts are very much pertinent even today. He used to say it jokingly that if ministers are trained to say 'No' and bureaucrats to say 'Yes', all questions will be solved.

Every citizen will get the benefits of democracy only when the democracy is strengthened by all means. And if this happens, the society as a whole is strong. In such a society everybody is independent and the whole society is intellectually free. Today when government and administrators are bearing the wrath of media Yashwantrao's thoughts need to be considered.

LITERARY CONNOISSEUR

Yashwantrao had a rare quality of a political leader and the connoisseur of literature who had trust in the strength and beauty of word. He believed that

the medium for politics and literature is the same - words. Politicians and writers belong to the same fraternity, he used to say. *Krushnakath* and *Runanubandh*, two of his autobiographic books bear the testimony of his literary quality. He often used to contribute for newspapers and special Diwali issues of literary magazines. And he had carved out his niche readership through that.

All India Marathi Literature Conventions, other literary events and musical soirees always used to be on the priority list of his agenda. He would make a point to attend concerts of classical music, popular Marathi plays despite his busy schedule. He used to be amongst the people as one of them and the real connoisseur; and never as the political leader.

Languages prosper on the thought expressed in it. Thoughts expressed by folk arts come right from the root of the heart, he was of the opinion. Hence he had very high respect for the folk art. He could corroborate the view giving relevant quotations from various books. He was of the firm belief that literature is not at all for entertainment. It is for the enlightenment of human society, he once said in one of the literary conventions.

RATIONAL THINKER

Yashwantrao was the rational thinker. His thoughts had scientific base. Science should help people overcome calamities. It should also lend more strength to human being through research and innovative technologies. On these two aspects science should be propagated. The later was much important he was of the view.

The basic nature of science complements logic and rational thinking. This thought should get percolated to the commonest of the common man to develop modern society. Only then the conventionally obsolete thoughts and superstitions will get eliminated from the society. The soon this happens the faster we will grow as the developed nation, Yashwantrao used to say.

He would then give examples from the Western countries like the Industrial

Revolution that facilitated human life. This revolution has changed the point of view of the Western people. It is the science that gave the courage to man even after the devastation of two world wars; it created ambitious thoughts of landing on the Moon and conquering space above the Earth, he has stated.

He stressed on the need to explain the values of science by educating people. The young generation should be inspired by intellectuals and inculcate values of science in them. This should take the shape of a movement. If this happens the dreams of the coming generations will be better and more glorious than that of ours, he stated. Pro-science atmosphere would help us create new nation sans various isms and discrimination towards each other such as regionalism, casteism etc. Yashwantrao's thoughts are very relevant for us even today.

VISIONARY LEADER

To be a political leader Yashwantrao was brought up in the atmosphere of struggle of Indian Independence. His political career groomed in the days of some landmark political events and Gandhism, Satyagrah, Disobedience Movement. Russian Revolution also had a great influence on his personality. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on one hand and Mahatma Gandhi on the other hand were the leaders of his time from whom he learnt a lot. It won't be impertinent to say that the qualities of both leaders shaped Yashwantrao's personality.

Yashwantrao's real inspiration was Gandhiji's Disobedience Movement. Hatred for the British Rule and quest for the Freedom got germinated in this atmosphere. Indians' sentiments were with Gandhiji. Panditji's views were inclined towards Socialism, the base was the Russian Revolution. During the transformation from the foreign rule to the home rule i.e. the Independence Yashwantrao was graduating. He collected every minute details of the time. He was aware of the social and political changes in India and abroad. Therefore it could be said that Gandhiji laid the foundation of Yashwantrao's

political education and thinking while Nehru led his politic maturity.

BILINGUAL STATE AND YASHWANTRAO

Formation of the Unified Maharashtra led Yashwantrao's career to the peak. At the time of the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement a report on the restructuring of States came out. The report advocated the concept of balanced bilingual State. Yashwantrao firmly opposed the findings of the report. However, as an obedient party man he had to take up the responsibility to implement the report by taking over the reins as the Chief Minister of the bilingual Mumbai State, not before registering his views on unilingual State. This showed the stuff he was made of. Even as he was a loyal Congressman he dared to vent out his views publicly that were not in tandem with the stand taken by the party. On one hand he was with the people of Maharashtra on the other hand he preferred to abide by the party directives in the larger interest for never ever in his political career he shirked the responsibility given to him.

Many alternatives came forward to resolve the matter and he stood firm on his stand of the Unified Maharashtra convincing the party bigwigs of the general sentiments of the people of Maharashtra. While leading bilingual State concept of unilingual State was always in his mind, he has explained. I was determined to run the bilingual State in the larger interest of the nation to see if the experiment could succeed.

ARCHITECT OF UNIFIED MAHARASHTRA

When Nehru was on Mumbai tour Yashwantrao had a detailed discussion with him on the bilingual State. He apprised Nehru on the experiment saying that even though he was leading the bilingual State peoples' sentiments were not in favour. This experiment would not succeed, he opined. After this Nehru turned in favour of the unilingual State. He had experienced the feelings of the people at Pratapgad when he had



come to unveil the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

Finally the day came. On 1st May 1960 the Sun dawned on the Samyukta Maharashtra. Panditji consented to the demand of Maharashtra and Yashwantraoji came from Delhi with the Mangal Kalash of Samyukta Maharashtra. The new State came into existence. The then Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru came to inaugurate it.

In his first speech as the first Chief Minister of Maharashtra that is today, Yashwantraoji said: The days of ordeal of the people of Maharashtra have come to an end. Now we can expect stability. People can look at their development and they could face whatever comes in their stride. It is right to expect now that we can have a better future. I would feel honoured if I could bring people closer to the fulfilment of their expectations.

On taking the reins he dedicated himself to the development of the State. He personally took up the responsibility of the ministry of industries and established the Maharashtra Industrial

Development Corporation. He made fruitful efforts to generate employment in rural areas. He set up the Irrigation Commission to streamline growth of agriculture sector. He also established Farming Corporation. In the interests of the small farmers he promulgated the Land Ceiling Act. Education was yet another sector on his priority list. He set up Maharashtra Literature and Culture Board. He made earnest appeal to all to cooperatively work for the betterment of the new State.

As with a little twist a Kaleidoscope changes the images, you change your view looking at Yashwantrao's personality and there is a different dimension to it. The highest qualities such as a friend of all, a strategist, a bureaucrat, able administrator, an orator, a philosopher balanced politician, connoisseur of arts, aficionado of literature, a litterateur himself became identity of Yashwantrao Chavan. Credit for Maharashtra's development in last half century that has helped the State carved out its own niche, definitely goes to the vision of Yashwantrao Chavan. ■

The Visionary Leader

It is an appropriate time to bring his thoughts and contributions before all especially the youth.

Yashwantrao had envisaged a civilized prosperous and secular Maharashtra. His ambition was to see Maharashtra shine on the horizons of the world as the most progressive State. He took every decision with a view to speeding up the progress and strengthening the common man. His ultimate aim was to safeguard the interests of the people of Maharashtra, says the Deputy Chief Minister, **Ajit Pawar**



We all have love, reverence and high respect for Yashwantrao Chavan, the first Chief Minister of Maharashtra and the architect of modern Maharashtra. The progressive Maharashtra that we see today is the result of his prudence and the perfect decisions during his tenure. He proved his mettle as the national leader time and again when he was in the Central ministry. He carved out his

own niche in the hearts of the citizens of India by his performance during the period that deserved him the Deputy Prime Minister's post. Maharashtra is proud to see the most able Deputy Prime Minister in Yashwantraoji, the first person from the State to be adorned with the honour.

He had envisaged a civilized, prosperous and secular Maharashtra. His ambition was to see Maharashtra

shine on the horizons of the world as the most progressive State. He took every decision with a view to speeding up the progress and strengthening the common man. His ultimate aim was to safeguard the interests of the people of Maharashtra.

He was very much convinced with the future prospects of Maharashtra. He guided the progress of the State in the fields of agriculture, education,

economics, industries, culture etc. Even as his involvement in social and political fields is prominent, his contribution in literature, arts, sports and culture can not be undermined. Taking into consideration the love and respect in the heart of every citizen of Maharashtra, the State Government has decided to celebrate Yashwantraoji's birth centenary between 13th March 2012 and 12th March 2013 through various initiatives and people's participation. It is an appropriate time to bring his thoughts and contributions before all especially the youth and thereby make them immortal. Therefore, a study centre in the name of Yashwantraoji is being set up in Shivaji University, Kolhapur.

Yashwantraoji's entire life is inspiring. Born in the family of a farmer from village Devrashtre of Sangli district, he was a staunch patriot ever since he was a student. After completing his primary education he went to Karad for further education. Still in his teen, as a student of Tilak High School, he unfurled India's national flag which was an offence in the then British Raj and was sent to jail for 18 months. Having completed his Matriculation he got law degree in Pune and started his career as lawyer in 1942 in Karad. Mahatma Gandhi had given a call of 'Quit India' to the then rulers and the flame of patriotism in the heart of Yashwantraoji got ignited. He led the freedom movement in Karad district. His second arrest earned him two years imprisonment. He was then a 'just married'. His wife Venutai was also a patriot and walking on the path of Yashwantraoji, she too was sent to jail.

As Yashwantrao had a great foresight, he was also a patriot from the core of his heart and he always had the larger interest of the nation in his mind. His response to Pandit Nehru's call in 1962 to leave Maharashtra to be in New Delhi at the time when China had invaded Indian territory only corroborates this quality. Nehru and Chavan were both leaders of high stature at their respective levels - one at the national level the other at the State at the time. People had earned lot of

respect for them. Metaphors used for these leaders were Himalaya - Nehru and Sahyadri - Yashwantrao. Hence Yashwantrao going to Delhi in the hour of the national calamity was described by political experts as Sahyadri joining hands with Himalaya. Nehru's invitation was considered as an honour for Maharashtra.

After the war with China Yashwantrao modernized Indian Army in his capacity as the Defence Minister and that fetched positive results in 1971 when we fought against Pakistan. At the national level shouldering responsibilities of Defence Minister, Foreign Affairs Minister, Home



Minister, Finance Minister, Chairman of the Finance Commission and the Leader of the Opposition, he proved his mettle. He has put his indelible mark wherever he went and his contribution in every field can not be undermined. Therefore he was honoured with the most deserving post of the Deputy Prime Minister. The stature of the post really got elevated with the leader like Yashwantrao adorning it.

Yashwantrao had a multi-faceted personality. He was a cultured man, a great thinker, a litterateur, a bureaucrat, a politician with patience, the ruler who respected the opponents, a leader of the masses... He elevated the politics in the State and earned the trust of the citizens of the nation. He facilitated the development in the State at the same

time guided the social and political system. He was the politician above the politics.

With his appreciating nature he picked up the best talents from every sphere of life and brought it in the mainstream so that Maharashtra could have an all round and balanced growth. The malice and bias could be nowhere around him. Moreover discrimination over the caste and creed was far, far away from him. He never sacrificed the larger interest of the nation and always used to consider the views of opponents sympathetically. At times he used to take them along with him. The healthy political atmosphere of cooperation among the rulers and the opponents that is seen in Maharashtra is the inheritance of Yashwantrao.

The formation of the State of Maharashtra is the real pride for us. The movement for the demand of the State is the glorious history. The martyrdom of 105 can never be forgotten for without their sacrifice the Maharashtra that is today could not have come into existence. Yashwantraoji's role as the activist, the mediator, the leader and the visionary is very significant for it was he who convinced the leaders in Delhi. He kept the balance. He ably conveyed the sentiments of the sons of this soil to the central leadership. He explained them that Maharashtra never wanted to get cut off, but to continue in the national mainstream. As it is said that all is well that ends well, so all the bitterness of the times of the Samyukta Maharashtra was wiped once Yashwantrao became the Chief Minister of the State that was demanded by the people of the land.

His plans for the progressive Maharashtra were fixed, focussed and very well-designed. Soon after holding the reins of the State he took up the mission of unifying the hearts of the people from different regions with different geographical conditions and cultures like Konkan, Khandesh, Western Maharashtra, Marathwada and Vidarbha. Knowing that major part of the newly formulated State was predominantly agrarian, he promoted agriculture while running the State



administration. His emphasis was on the cooperative sector. For the all round growth he also gave equal prominence to the industrial sector. Creating employment in the rural areas was his yet another priority.

He saw to it that the democracy should percolate to the grassroot level. Therefore, to reach out to the rural people and to facilitate them to get the benefits of the democratic system he decentralized the system by giving the required rights to the people by streamlining the local self-government bodies of Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad. This created a good path for the peoples' representatives in the Legislative Assembly. This also made the system of decision-making more people-oriented.

He declared Marathi as the State language. Yashwantrao always used to keep peoples' interest in the mind. He introduced new Kul Kayada that gave rights to the real farmers. The small farmers became the big beneficiaries. He started the Five-year Plan of the State. These are some of his landmark

decisions. His ambitious projects include Koyana and Ujani dams, university in Kolhapur; the agricultural universities; the Marathi literary and cultural board and the Marathi Encyclopedia Board.

He promoted culture, literature, arts and folk culture. He pushed the thought of secular society and tried to eliminate caste system from the mind of people. He aimed at developing the State on the foundation of the principles of equality, fraternity and freedom so that every citizen in Maharashtra gets social justice. This gradually resulted in the modern and progressive State of Maharashtra.

Even in anguish, despair and ordeals in his personal life, such as the loss of near and dears he did not over-indulge in that but kept peoples' issues on the top of his agenda. He was the first person to rush to wipe out the tears of the ill-fated people of Panshet and Khadakwasala who became homeless when the dam burst swept away all that they had earned in life. Yashwantrao's quality as an able administrator and the

leader shone at the time of this calamity, one of the worst tragedies in the history of Maharashtra.

This does not take away the credit of Yashwantrao's mother Vithabai and wife Venutai in his life. Vithabai's contribution in developing this great leader and Venutai's able support to Yashwantrao at every stage in his life can not be undermined.

Yashwantrao's greatness is reminiscent in every thing that he did. He lent Maharashtra many occasions to feel proud of. We are fortunate to have the person like him as our leader. A beginner in the politics and an activist in social life like me Yashwantrao was the real Guru. He is my inspiration. I always remember him in distress and despair. His memories inspire me. He is a guide for me. We are trying to take forward his legacy. Yashwantrao had dreamt of making Maharashtra the most developed State in the world; and to make his dream a reality is the responsibility of all of us for that would be the real tribute to this towering personality. ■

The Taskmaster

Chavan brought Maharashtra to the forefront and also encompassed the ordinary folk to become a part of the democracy

He was a great political leader, an able administrator and an efficient parliamentarian. He always stood for principles of democracy, secularism and socialism. As a leader he tried to give justice to all sections of the people. He concentrated his efforts for the fulfilment of the needs of the common man. His distinctive approach to maintain a good bond with all sections of the society, was unique. He was popular in the class of writers, poets and artists. He was titled as the 'Man of Crisis'.



Monitoring the East Border with Prime Minister Pandit Nehru

As Chief Minister of the new Maharashtra, Yashwantrao Chavan successfully managed to lead the State in a progressive manner. Chavan, with his dynamism and pragmatic approach, laid the solid foundation of agricultural and industrial transformation in Maharashtra. He played an imperative role in the social and cultural spheres of Maharashtra.

Chavan's stature rose immensely when Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru especially called him to assume the Defence Minister's post in the Centre leaving behind his chief ministership as China had declared war against India. He took over the charge on 21st November 1962 at a time when the Indian Army was facing a major debacle in the North-east of India. The decision

of the announcement of the unilateral cease-fire and withdrawal of the Army by China was a surprise and the unusual beginning in the career of Chavan.

The atmosphere of suspicion, distrust and lack of communication resulted into chaos. He started the practice of morning briefing with a view to having constant communication. He expanded and reorganized the Armed Forces as well as modernized their equipment. He kept a close contact with the three Chiefs of the Army. He succeeded in bringing back the confidence of the Army personnel skillfully organizing the ministry and the armed forces. When he followed a strategy of the defence of the country he was equally aware of the fact that, a developing economy would certainly add some new points of strain, even for

the direct defence preparedness.

The handling of the Report on the debacle in NEFA popularly known as the Henderson-Brookes Report was a challenge that he ably faced in the Parliament. The Ministry of Defence Annual Report of 1964-65 heralded the changes that were put into practice that year as a result of the China war. For the first time there was to be a defence plan to be implanted over a period of five years. The plan included 'strengthening the defence production base to eventually meet the requirements of arms and ammunition and improving the fields of procurement, storage, training etc.

STRENGTHENING THE ARMY

As the Defence Minister he promoted the growth in the defence field. Chavan strengthened the military intelligence away from Intelligence bureau. In search of arms he visited countries like the USA, the UK and the USSR which also marked the turning point in India's foreign relations. His hard work in the defence ministry gave an edge to Indian military force to meet the Pakistani aggression in 1965. He allowed the army officers to work with full strength without undue interference.

Success of Chavan's leadership manifested itself in the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965. Pakistan launched a massive attack on India on 3rd September, 1965 sending infiltrators (Mujahids) into Kashmir. When Pakistan's army marched into the Chamba sector of



Yashwantrao Chavan and Smt. Indira Gandhi - at 31st convention of UNO, 4 November 1976

Jammu and penetrated into the Indian Territory, India was prepared for the attack. The Indian forces had crossed the border in the Lahore sector.

General Chowdhary had advised of this action and counter move to save the 'life-line of Kashmir' from being throttled and choked and he expected Chavan's approval immediately. Chavan stood firmly behind him. The Chief of the Army Staff and the Chief of Air Staff informed him that the Air Force should go for the action. When he was assured about the immediate attack from his chiefs he ordered them, 'Go ahead'. Having studied the situation he was convinced that there was no other go, he took the decision on his own as he was left with no time to consult Prime Minister Lalbahadur Shastri. However, later when he reported Shastriji, the later backed Chavan's decision. This decision had strengthened India's position over the Pakistani forces and brought ultimate victory.

MAJOR CRISIS AVERTED

He was appointed as the Home Minister of India in November 1966. At that time, the agitation of the Sadhus demanding a ban on cow-slaughter, had sparked off disturbances in Delhi. The tension in the capital forced the Prime Minister to change the leadership in the home department. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had chosen Chavan in the place of Gulzarilal Nanda as a home minister in the matter of crisis. Chavan handled the situation carefully and had shown his ability in this critical situation.

1966 was the year of Hindu revivalism, regionalism and political confusion in the history of India. When Chavan

took over the home ministry the wide spread student unrest, the fast of Jagatguru Sankaracharya of Puri in support of the demand of the Sadhus for the ban on cow-slaughter. Sant Fateh Singh and eight other Sikh leaders had threatened to self-immolate for the support of Punjab's claim for Chandigarh had made the situation critical. The National Students March was organized by the Samajwadi Yuvajanasabha controlled by the SSP. The organizers concentrated their efforts particularly in Uttar Pradesh to mobilize students for the demonstration. The government took the strict measures in the form of police posting at railway stations, bus terminals, Parliament House and the area around the Delhi campus. This prevented the wide-spread agitation of the students in Delhi.

Chavan handled the problem with humanism. Jagatguru Sankaracharya of Puri, one of the five Jagatgurus began a fast unto death in a temple on the banks of the river Yamuna in Delhi to force the Government to accept the principle that the slaughter of cows should be banned. After consulting Prime Minister, Chavan had taken Jagatguru out of Delhi to avoid further trouble. He was shifted to Pondicherry and after moving to Puri was released after some time. Chavan defended the Government's action in the Parliament. The cabinet announced the appointment of the commission and the issue was forgotten after the general elections of 1967.

Chavan asked Sardar Hukum Singh, the speaker of the Lok Sabha, to handle the issue of Sant Fateh Singh tactfully. The Akali Dal finally accepted the proposals made by Sardar Hukum Singh and the Sant broke his fast while the

seven leaders gave up the idea of self-immolation. Chavan faced a police revolt in 1967 in which the police surrounded his house in Delhi. He understood the serious situation in the absence of the Prime Minister and settled their demands. Later the commission was appointed to examine the policemen's issues and agreed some of their demands.

After the elections of the 1967 the political complexion of India changed. The State Governments run by the different political parties with different ideologies came into existence that disturbed the relations between the Centre and the State. The role of home minister of the Congress party was crucial in the management of the Center-State relations. His speeches in the Parliament regarding many constitutional matters established him as a Parliamentarian.

He also faced the main controversy over the role of the governors in the State. He faced the political instability, dissolution of legislatures; imposition of President's rule on the different states. He was answerable to the Parliament and the people on different matters. When India faced Political defections that led to the fall of the some of the State Governments he analyzed the democratic challenge in his report. The preparation of a report on defections was an important achievement. As a Union Home Minister, Chavan had to deal with the Princes, whose purses and privileges were to be dispensed with.

While finding the solutions for the law and order problems he tried to understand the fundamental causes of the problems. He was of view that the police force could be used in the necessity, but mere police force could not provide all solutions. Thus, as a home minister, he handled many critical situations effectively.

THE BUDGET MASTER

He worked as the Finance Minister of India from June 1970 to October 1974. When Chavan resumed office of the Finance Ministry he faced challenges like shortage of raw materials, high prices of the essential commodities, acute drought conditions. The stabilization of prices was the most important and

urgent task before him. He considered black money not only economic problem but social and political evil too. His strong administrative measures in the process of eradication of corruption proved to be highly effective. In the process to curb the use of the black money from the country the Government had appointed the Wanchoo Committee. The panel submitted its report in which a set of measures to check tax evasion and avoidance was considered.

As the Finance Minister, Chavan presented four budgets. At the AICC meeting in Delhi, Congress adopted the ten-point programme. The slogan 'Garibi Hatao'(Eradicate Poverty) was adopted by the Congress in its election campaign in 1971. It insisted more responsibilities on the finance minister. Chavan did major job in holding of the price line, removal of inequalities and imbalances, the extension of the public sector, stepping up of the efficiency and economic viability of the public sector units and the follow-up measures on bank nationalization. General poverty and the glaring social and economic disparities and imbalances always remained one of the major problems for the finance minister.

The expectations were increased due to the promises of the politicians. He tried to reduce the dependence on the foreign aid and was selective in accepting the same. His views are available in the form of speeches at different meetings of International Monetary Fund, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank. Several measures had been taken to provide direct assistance on easier for the setting up of industrial projects in less developed areas.

After the war of the Bangladesh, millions of the refugees crossed over from the East Pakistan to India that affected the Indian economy. Chavan initiated measures of far-reaching significance to bring the entire field of insurance under public ownership. He also gave impetus to make the public sector banking a truly effective instrument of change and to re-orient the same towards the needs of the small man and weaker sections of the society. Likewise the concept

of development banking was vigorously implemented. He undertook various measures to place the working of the management of the nationalized banks as well as the trade union movement in the banking sector on a proper footing. He insisted that the banks should give a new orientation, a new social content and meaning to programme and policies. Chavan had encouraged the public sector banks to have a more imaginative and constructive approach.

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

As the Finance Minister of India he tried to establish the concept of the Democratic Socialism in the adverse economic situations. During his tenure Government had taken a decision to adopt the scheme of different rates of interests so that loans and advances could be made available to the small cultivators at lower rates and would be changed for the well-to-do cultivators. As a finance minister, the national problem of the unemployment was his prime concern. He clearly stated that, "In the long run solution of the problem of the unemployment can be found only by increasing the rate of growth of industrialization of the econ-

omy." The unemployment of educated and technically qualified youth was not only a human problem but it was an economic problem.

The loan facility, provision of the resources and new techniques were adopted in the field of the Agriculture. The government appointed a committee headed by Dr. K. N. Raj, a distinguished economist to critically examine the structure of direct taxation in agriculture and to suggest specific measures for the mobilization of fiscal resources through taxation of income and wealth in this sector.

As Finance Minister, his first concern was to make the public sector banks a truly effective instrument of change and to reorient them forwards the needs of the small man and the weaker sections. The concept of the development banking was initiated and vigorously implemented by the public sector banks. As India's Governor of the External Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank, he participated in international deliberations on economic and monetary subjects in various parts of the world. He sought a



Addressing at a World Bank Conference as Union Finance Minister

long run solution to the problem of unemployment in the growth of the industrialization of the economy.

PEACEFUL CO-EXISTANCE

Chavan was the foreign minister of India from 1974 to 1977. As a foreign minister he worked for the deliberate policy of normalizing and improving relations with all its neighbours. When he became foreign minister he visited number of countries like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Yugoslavia, Guiana, Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico, Lebanon, Egypt, Peru, etc. He clarified the role of India in the different conferences of the United Nations. He worked hard to establish cordial relations with the countries like China, Pakistan and Bangladesh. He believed in the promotion of the peaceful co-existence and the friendly relations in Asia. He insisted the friendly ties with other countries not merely by political manner but by promoting co-operation in economy, trade, technology and culture. He made a number of speeches in the Parliament, in U.N. General Assembly in New York, academic institutions, international conferences and seminars. In the United Nations he actively advocated the policy of India to make the Indian Ocean a zone of peace.

As an External Affairs Minister, Chavan stood firm for the commitment of the Non-alignment movement as the ideal instrument for the perseverance of the independence of the newly liberated countries. He worked to strengthen the liberation movements in struggle against evil factors like imperialism, colonialism and racialism. India had taken initiatives for the normalization of relations and the establishment of the peace in the sub-continent. As a foreign minister he paid special attention to the relations with China. He also observed the deterioration in the Indo-Pakistan relations. He firmly stated to the U.S. Administration after the U.S. decision to resume the supply of arms to Pakistan and mentioned in his letter that, "Either you are deceiving yourself or you are trying to deceive us. It is either of the two". His foreign ministry career was shadowed by the era of Emergency.

Unfortunately the effective leaders like Y. B. Chavan remained helpless and indifferent at the time of the emergency.

After the defeat of the Indian National Congress in the general elections held in 1977, Chavan as the leader of Congress in the Lok Sabha was the first one to be designated formally as the leader of Opposition. The political future of his prospective leadership was stated at the international level. But his service to the nation was limited to his post as Deputy Prime Minister. He was unable to perform with zeal in the later period of his political career. The political situation was changed in the Indian scenario and the equations for the political power for Y.B. Chavan too. When he passed away in 1984, he was the chairman of the Eighth Finance Commission of India.

Throughout his career Mr. Chavan has exhibited rare courage of conviction and an uncanny capacity for taking calculated risk. He was a great political leader, an able administrator and an efficient Parliamentarian. He always stood for the principles of Democracy, Secularism and Socialism. As a leader he tried to give justice to the all sections of the people. He concentrated his efforts for the fulfilment of the needs of the common man. His distinctive approach to maintain good bond with all the sections of the society, was unique. He was popular in the class of the writers, poets and artists.

His parliamentary career spanned nearly forty years from 1946 to 1984. He was highly effective parliamentarian. His legislative and parliamentary speeches show that he was not only a good debater, but also a mature political statesman. His ability to establish quick rapport with any one whether an officer, political worker, artist, businessmen or writer proved to be great asset of his distinguished personality. On the critical situation his calmness and balanced state of mind was rewarding and he was also titled as the 'Man of Crisis'.

The affinity with the centre was the noteworthy quality of Y. B. Chavan. He occupied the most important portfolios of Defence, Home, Finance, and External Affairs at the centre, which merit a more detailed recall, analysis and as-

essment. His balanced judgment in many national crises proved to be effective. Y. B. Chavan was the voracious reader. His interest in humanities had widened the horizons of his personality. His intellectual attitude differentiates him from any other political personality. His distinctive approach to understand the problem with studied manner reveals the intellectual factor in his leadership. He was awarded with the Kelkar prize for his autobiography 'Krushnakath'. He was the author of many publications and a number of articles in English and Marathi. He arranged and attended many literary conferences in the State. His speeches reveal his broad vision, sensitive and constructive thinking process, and his deep concern for the social, political and economic problems of India and stand as the important documents of the Indian History. His literary sensibilities were reflected in his writings. His speeches, his studious nature and thorough reading of the Indian society also exhibit his quality as a political thinker.

Chavan proved to be one of the successful mass leaders from Maharashtra and added new features in the areas of the leadership. The striking feature of his leadership was his deep concern for the poverty in the society and his constructive efforts to work for the common man. He was a great visionary of the strong, independent, democratic and Socialistic India. He did hard-press on the importance of the democracy, socialism and planning in his tenure. He brought the State in the Indian nation without any fissure. It did give strength to the nation if we account for the various disruptive forces that are affecting Indian nation. He not only brought out the Maharashtra State in the forefront but also encompassed that ordinary folk to become a part of this democratization. These traits signify the constructive leadership of Yashwantrao B. Chavan. He truly represented a new trend in the evolution of leadership in Maharashtra that was a broad-based and mass-oriented trend. ■

- Dr. Bhavana Patole

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Maharashtra's Great Leader

Yashwantrao has served as the trouble-shooter for India, at every crucial juncture when India was in trouble he played stellar role.

Yashwantrao has left no property in Delhi or Mumbai. The leader who promoted cooperative sugar factories but there is no factory named after him till the date. In his State Bank account at the time of his the balance was Rs. 36 thousand.



Yashwantrao first became the chief minister of the bilingual Mumbai State in 1956. The Congress party that elected him on the post was at the time fractioned. The Mumbai State formed on the principle of linguistic state was un-natural and there was a natural unrest amongst the people as it was against their will and wish. He became

the first chief minister of Maharashtra, the unilingual state (usually called the Samyukta Maharashtra that we see today) in 1960. At the time the State was not integrated. Vidarbha was opposed to the Samyukta Maharashtra. They wanted an independent Vidarbha.

Public ire for Samyukta Maharashtra's demand had culminated in the formation of Samyukta Maharashtra

Parishad, a lenient wing under the leadership of Shankar Rao Dev on one hand and on the other a radical wing of Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti under the leadership of S. A. Dange, P. K. Atre and S. M. Joshi. Marathas were split as Bhausaheb Hiray, a stalwart at the time, was by-passed. They had gone against Yashwantrao for having got support of Morarji Desai, who was



unpopular due to the brutal stand he had taken against the agitators of the Samyukta Maharashtra. Yashwantrao's first challenge was to unite the state and establish an administrative system that would be admissible to all.

Yashwantrao was fully geared up to take up the challenge. He was groomed up in the Independent Movement. He had come close to the Socialist ideology during his imprisonment. He has understood the importance of being with the weaker sections of the society. His views were further matured by the influence of the Radical Humanism of the Manavendranath Roy. For Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy was yet another guiding spirit for Yashwantrao, who later set himself on the path of first Prime Minister Jawaharlas Nehru's Socialism.

Yashwantrao could encash on the opportunities lost by his predecessors who had come from the larger strata of the society and made the best of it. His success as the leader corroborated this. He was well-acquainted with Indian social and religious culture, history as well as politics, economics etc. The highest qualities of his personality were writing and oratory. He was well-versed with English as well as Hindi literature. For this he is the role model for all politicians, especially the young. He could quote Marathi litterateurs at the same ease as Socrates, Aristotle, Tolstoy, Lasky or Mill. He was so fluent

and affluent in Marathi literature that his keynote addresses would score over the Presidential speeches.

Yashwantrao was the real diplomat. As the senior leader of the party he did not vent out his views about bilingual state's uselessness. But it would be unfair, illogical and unjust for the leader like Yashwantrao to say that he was not aware of the fact that the bilingual state would not last longer. His statement that Nehru was greater than Maharashtra was mistaken and misinterpreted at that time. In the right context what he meant as Nehru was not a person. He could have taken Nehru as a symbol of the national leadership for he was of that stature. The other side of the fact must also be considered that he would have thought it inevitable to say so as he would convince the national leadership of the importance of the unilingual state some time in the future

A leader could be popular by winning the hearts of the people, but to be successful as the chief minister he needs to have hold over the administration. Yashwantrao also had this strength. He also had guts to tell the adamant bureaucrats, when needed, that government was above all as they were the peoples' representative. With the politeness that is rarely seen in politicians; sweet toung, urge to understand the issues he could score over the opponents at the last moment.

He signed the pacts of Akola and

Nagpur to win over Vidarbha first and the demand for separate Vidarbha fizzled out. Like an expert chess player he had an ability of making decision at the right time. Through Nehru's mediatorship he made Kannamwar deputy chief minister and thus a strong supporter of the separate Vidarbha was brought on his side. As a result only Vidarbha stood with the Congress in the 1957 Assembly Elections even as in the rest of the state the party lost heavily. Even Yashwantrao could win by the margin of just 500 votes. He would refute at the right time to weaken opponent's stand. When G. T. Madkholkar raised a question in his editorial, 'Marathi state or Maratha state', Yashwantrao replied him strongly in a public meeting in Nagpur and assured that "It will remain Marathi State".

It was the political inevitability that the leader like Yashwantrao would not be in the state for a long time. Nehru gave him a call on 20th November 1962 to serve nation being in Delhi. It was a critical time. Mao had betrayed India and Nehru heart felt it. Army's moral was down. At this juncture Yashwantrao took over the reins of the Defense Ministry. His priority was to boost Army's morale. The first thing he did was to have a joint meeting with all the three chiefs. He took them in faith. His efforts paid off. The Indian Army made all to forget the bitter memories of China war and won two consecutive wars of 1965 and 1971 against Pakistan. He deserved the credit for winning the war not just by the virtue of being the minister, but his active involvement in moral boosting. This was made clear when his diary of the time got published. Yashwantrao was constantly in touch with the army chiefs. He was the shrewd strategist. It was his decision to concentrate the attack on the west that changed the entire situation.

Yashwantrao's leadership wrote yet another chapter in the history of Indian politics when he became Foreign Minister. It was the time when Pakistan and China had joined hands against India. Having proved his mettle in the Defence ministry, when he took up the new responsibility, he proved

his versatility and the international perspective. Yashwantrao had kept himself apprised of the activities going on all over the world, so he countered both the enemies by visiting Russia, America, Japan and other developed countries. His foreign tours resulted in putting pressure on Sino-Pak nexus and maintaining political peace in South Asia. With mediatorship of Maulana Azad he saw to it that the Gulf countries should not join Pakistan.

Wherever there was crisis, Yashwantrao used to follow it and douse it. Later when he was made Finance Minister it was the phase of recession. His emphasis in the budget was to cut down the deficit yet promote the development. His budgets were balanced. People used to feel comfortable after the budget as prices of essentials were controlled and tax-payers used to get concession. The responsibility of the Union Home Minister also came in his stride in the similar manner. In 1965 Delhi witnessed unprecedented riots on the issue of cow slaughter. The then Home Minister Gulzarilal Nanda had

resigned on moral ground owing the responsibility. Yashwantrao dared to step in and controlled the situation skillfully.

During his decade-old tenure at the Centre he earned credibility and popularity, yet controlled the politics of Maharashtra. Then came the period of real turmoil in his life as well as in the party. Some senior Congressmen as rebels against Indira Gandhi formed Syndicate. In a crooked move this fraction of disgruntled party men supported Sanjeev Reddy for the Presidential Post. Indira Gandhi too supported Reddy initially. Yashwantraoji was naturally on the side of Indira Gandhi. Indiraji suddenly changed her stand in retaliation to the Syndicate and brought V.V. Giri in the fray. Yashwantrao's ordeal, a bad patch started from this moment and continued for a long.

Indiraji appealed all the party men to use their discretion. Yashwantrao got caught in two minds - to be (on Indiraji's side) or not to be ... He could see the bright future for Indira Gandhi but on the hand he saw his old friends

for whom he had already lent his support. It was too late for Yashwantrao to change his side. Syndicate bit the dust. Giri was elected as the President. Indiraji grew strength in strength. She became the most powerful politician in the country. She took some very important progressive decisions such as nationalization of banks, abolition of remuneration to princely states. Yashwantrao welcomed the decisions and praised Indiraji. As she was becoming powerful, Jaiprakash Narayan's Sampurna Kranti movement was taking momentum.

5th June 1975 marked the historic day in the history of India. Allahabad High Court declared Indiraji's election null and void. She was also barred from contesting elections for six years. Indiraji was trapped. In the desperation she took the extreme decision, the worst of all. 25th June 1975 became the black in the history of Indian democracy. She declared internal emergency. This gave her unlimited powers. All fundamental rights of citizens were curbed. Those who opposed the Emergency were put





behind the bars. There used to be mass arrests every day. The entire country had turned into jail. The powerful prime minister became the dictator.

It was the real test for Yashwantrao. He had to choose between the values of democracy on one hand and dictatorship on the other hand. Emergency got Indiraji isolated. Communist Party, Jansangh, the break-away Congress and Bharatiya Kranti Dal got united under the leadership of Jai Prakash Narayan. The one-point agenda of all of them was hatred for against Indira Gandhi. Yashwantrao was known as the man of principles. Those who were opposing Indiraji had respect for Yeshwanarao and were expecting that he would change his side. However, he chose to be with Indira Gandhi despite her atrocities. This decision changed his identity. People started calling him power-monger.

Finally, Indira Gandhi lifted the Emergency and declared elections in 1977. She lost. The first non-Congress came to power but proved short-lived. Indira Gandhi again came to power with thumping majority. Yashwantrao was rewarded with deputy prime ministership for supporting Indira

Gandhi in her wrong doing. However, he lost credibility in the country, lost his grip over the state politics and finally lost his friends. This also changed the entire political scenario of Maharashtra.

Maharashtra saw many able chief ministers no body could get the honour Yashwantrao got at the centre and in the country. In the period of Yashwantraoji's decline the central Congress leadership ironically used his name to create misconceptions and discontent among leaders. When Shankarrao Chavan was to be made chief minister he was told that "we have no objection, but get the consent of Yashwantraoji first. This created wrong notion in the mind of Shankarrao that Yashwantrao was not in his favour. This resulted in the state being split with regional loyalties taking front seat.

When Vasantdada Patil became the chief minister he sought support of Indira Gandhi than Yashwantrao. Patal was replaced by Sharad Pawar in a bizarre political development. Pawar was not with the Congress. However, such a political situation was created that as if Pawar was doing this on the guidelines of Saheb, Yashwantrao.

In the peculiar political situation Yashwantraoji could not disown his pupil and deny openly as it was not warranted, but damage was done. After this Yashwantrao went in alienation, He would keep waiting until the call comes from the prime minister. He would interact only when his opinion was sought. Gradually, Yashwantrao life slipped into a tragedy. He lost his nephew, his wife. After completing his auto-biography he fell sick. He was hospitalized. The then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi used to visit, however, he was ignored by most leaders from the state.

Yashwantrao has left no property in Delhi or Mumbai. The leader who promoted cooperative sugar factories but there is no factory named after him till the date. In his State Bank account at the time of his the balance was Rs. 36 thousand. It is the irony of life that as one goes to scale the peak he has to be alone. Yashwantrao was not an exception to this. In this year of his birth centenary we all must accept that Yashwantrao is the only leader of a stature as high as Lokmanya Tilak. Hence he is the leader of the people. ■

- Suresh Dvadashiwar

The Troubleshooter

He laughed more easily and more often than any other Indian I have met

Extracts from T. V. Kunhi Krishnan's book 'Chavan and the Troubled Decade'. It portrays Yashwantrao Chavan in different dimensions on the backdrop of The Decade of 1960-70, that saw some crucial national and inter-national developments - wars with China and Pakistan, the death of Jawaharlal Nehru, two successions to prime ministership, three general elections, the emergence of religious and communal forces on the political scene, the great split in the Congress Party preceded by splits in the Communist and Socialist parties. Chavan's life served as a binding thread to put together the story of the Troubled Decade.

In fact, unlike many of the other leaders of the Indian freedom movement, Y. B. Chavan did not have a head-start in life and did not begin at a high level. His development from a poor village boy into a powerful leader of the Indian Freedom Movement has a thoroughly indigenous character. Pictures of him at the age of twenty reveal a slim, awkward youth, with the stamp of rural life on his face. Since then he has changed a great deal. His broad forehead, penetrating eyes, big nose thick under lip and receding chin are set in a round face which now gives the impression of power. He has a disarming and captivating smile. "He laughed more easily and more often than any other Indian I have met."

The spacious and well-furnished drawing room in his official residence - 1 Race Course Road, New Delhi - speaks of the rare combination of simplicity and consciously developed sophistication that characterizes the man. The sitting room in the adjacent building where visitors are received is one of the best furnished and elegant that any minister in New Delhi has. There are pictures of Gandhi, Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Dr. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Zakir Hussain, V.V. Giri, and Indira Gandhi in his drawing room, but his own picture is conspicuous by its absence.



The new Cabinet formed in 1966 with Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister

His rough exterior gives no indication whatsoever of his intellectual pursuits and interest in new ideas which have not been dead-ended by years spent in pouring over musty government files. He was one of the two Cabinet Ministers who without formal invitation found time to attend a meeting in remembrance of Bertrand Russell held in New Delhi in March 1970 by the six O' clock Group in collaboration with the India International Center. Frank Moraes, the editor of The Indian Express, who spoke at the meeting, referred to Chavan's presence among the audience and said that he would in

future think more kindly of the Government of India.

He works deep into the night, up to 1.30 p.m. He rises at about 7.00 a.m. and reads the morning newspapers in bed for about 45 minutes. By 9.00 a.m. he is ready to receive his private secretary who gives him urgent communications received during the night. By the time he finishes his bath and breakfast. He is in his office in the North Block of the Central Secretariat by about 10.00 a.m. A briefing session with the secretaries at 10 a.m. was a daily routine he never missed for three and a half years as Home Minister. When he was De-



With John K. Gerhart, Commander-in-Chief, North American Air Defence and Mrs Gerhart

fence Minister, he met the three chiefs of the armed forces and the Defence Secretary every morning at 9.30. At 1.45 p.m. he goes home and has a substantial lunch. He loves chicken curry and does not miss rice, although his doctors have advised to give up rice to guard against further increase in weight. From 3.30 pm to 7.00 p.m. he is in his office again. After 9.30 p.m. he is down to work and goes through the mountains of files that come to him in sealed boxes. Each box is above 2' x 1 1/2' x 1' and some nights he has to deal with 10 boxes of files.

He likes to relax but seldom gets the opportunity to do so. He loves children. His house in Delhi is full of children of all ages –nieces, nephews and grand nieces and grand nephews. His wife, Venutai Chavan an extremely charming but totally self-effacing person with no interest in politics, had her own share of jail life during the freedom movement. Chavan has little time for entertainment or recreation. His favourite sport is Cricket which he had played as a young lad in the high school at Karad in Satara district. He said, "I was fond of cricket. But I found it was a game for rich students, not for one like me, coming from a poor family... I must confess there is a sort of regret that I could not continue to play the game".

In spite of the every great respect he had for Gandhi, he did not come under the Mahatma's spell as some other Congress leaders did. He does not belong to the generation of politicians who grew up in the spiritualistic ethos of Gandhi. His reverence for the great leader did not prevent him from being critical of Gandhi's policies. Referring to the days when he was in jail in 1932 he said: "We were rather critical of Gandhiji and wondered how his movement was going to help us to attain our goal." He has great respect and admiration for Nehru, but he has never been a hero-worshipper. He has contempt for arm-chair politicians and theorists.

He left the Congress Socialists Party because he found that the party consisted of a "group of fashionable people, no doubt people of character but without any real understanding of the problems of the masses in rural areas." He was later attracted by the radical ideas preached by M.N Roy, the Communist leader, but when he found that Roy's ideas were "too sophisticated to be practical", he parted company with Roy.

He is a lonely man, an individualist at heart, but with conscious efforts he has succeeded in submerging his individualism in the collective milieu of politics. Whether he is among the

jawans on the battle front or generals at the Army HQ, among heads of State or peasant and workers, he is at ease and establishes immediate rapport with those around.

THE REBEL

Recalling the activities during the underground days Chavan said that he and his co-workers distributed anti-Government pamphlets, trained recruits for sabotage and organized clandestine study groups. He admitted it was difficult to keep up popular enthusiasm in the face of harsh police repression. After about 10 months there was a lull. Police was on the offensive and the freedom fighters were on the run. The underground leaders in Satara resorted to violence and sabotage. Though Chavan had his qualms of conscience he was a member of one of the terrorist squads entrusted with the task of sabotage work. The new direction of the movement led to the formation of Patri Sarkar [Parallel Government], activities of which resembled Guerilla warfare. Chavan said, "I can not claim that I had taken an active role in Patri Sarkar movement which began in the later part of 1942. In fact it became strong only by the time I was arrested in 1943. It was a further development of the same movement we were carrying on."

In 1945, the Government decided to hold elections to central and provincial legislature. "I had my qualms of conscience about standing for elections because my family depended on me. One Saturday afternoon, when I was at the Miraj, Tuberculosis hospital with my brother, some friends came to me and asked me to contest election. We were sitting outside my ailing brother's room and discussing my candidature. I explained to them my difficulties. I said I had done my quota of national work and after I was able to find some peace, after my brother improved his health, I would again come back to active politics. My brother heard our conversation and called us in. He said, 'you have already done a lot for the country. It is only right that you should now go forward and take some sort of responsibility. Don't run away from it. If you do not

agree to contest I will not stay a minute longer in the hospital. That was how I decided to fight election to the Bombay Legislative Assembly in March 1946. That's how my career as a Legislator began.”

THE CHIEF MINISTER

Another of his contribution was the decentralization of administration. He said that one of the important aspects of his work was the democratic decentralization of administration. He set up Zilla Parishads (district councils) in early 1962. The councils were democratically elected district councils with the primary responsibility for all development projects in the district. They were given funds and executive authority to conduct administration and plan for development at the local level. The aim of the Zilla Parishad was to energize the villages and associate the rural masses with development programmes. Each council had about 60 members elected on the basis of adult franchise. A miniature election, with all the paraphernalia of nomination, returning officers, polling booths, reserved seats for backwards classes, provision for nomination of women if none were elected, is held normally every five years in each district along with elections to the State Legislative Assembly. The President of the Parishad is elected by the members of the parishad. He is given rent-free, furnished accommodation, an honorarium of Rs 500 a month and a conveyance and is assisted by a vice-president and the two chairmen also receive honoraria.

THE DEFENCE MINISTER

When Chavan was Defence Minister a proposal was made by his ministry to take Military Intelligence away from the IB. It was, however, dropped after a discussion in the Cabinet. Chavan strengthened the MI, gave more funds, equipments and men to it. At one time he was in favour of the work of the external intelligence being shifted from the Home Minister to the Prime Minister. In early 1963, he sent a note to Nehru on the subject. Nehru discouraged the idea, although he approved of

it in principle, he said that if Chavan felt strongly about the proposal, he might himself speak to Lal Bahadur Shastri, the then Home Minister. Nehru probably thought that was not the time to do it and did not want to displease Shastri.

Chavan was ambitious and wanted to make a success of his debut in Delhi. He worked very hard to give a new image, a new direction to the armed forces. He had his critics, however both inside and outside Parliament. Some senior civil servants were not too impressed by him and said that he had brought no new ideas to the defence problems. Another criticism against him was that he was not as self-assured as he should be during Parliamentary debates. It took him sometime to master the idiom of life in Delhi. Defence was not an academic subject that could be mastered by regarding briefs prepared by departmental heads. It was a thoroughly practical affair, and required knowledge of the cost and capabilities of aircraft, ships, guns and military techniques. But Chavan was willing to learn. He was cautious and “not easily hustled into saying or doing things and as a result he sometimes gives the impression to those who do not know him of being somewhat slow in the uptake. But Chavan is usually wide awake and will not easily be caught napping. Nor is he easily rattled.

After having cleaned the house and created proper climate for increased defence production, the Defence Minister turned his attention to acquiring defence materials from abroad. India had sought military aid from the USA, the UK, the USSR and other friendly countries during the war. The response from the USA and Britain was initially warm. After the cease-fire, the aid giving countries slowed down the pace of assistance and wanted a fuller examination of India's defence needs.

FINANCE MINISTER

His new job was indeed a great challenge, for here was an opportunity for him to work the economic programmes he had been strongly advocating in the party forums. In fact, he has been the chief spokesman of the Congressman



on economic affairs since the Faridabad session of the Congress in 1968. He had drafted the resolution on economic policies adopted by the Bangalore session of the AICC in June 1969. At the Delhi session of the AICC in September 1969 and again at the plenary session of the Congress in Bombay in December 1969, he moved the resolution on economic policy. At Patna, in October 1970 he drafted and moved the economic resolution in the AICC. He made a spirited speech there on economic goals –his first speech in Hindi in the AICC. Even as Home Minister he had given considerable attention to economic issues and had spoken about them extensively.

HOME MINISTER

Although the Home Minister's immediate task was to maintain law and order, he felt he should go deeper into the problem of students unrest. He told the consultative committee of Parliament attached to his ministry that he did not agree with those who looked at the students' unrest purely from the angle of law and order. He drew the attention of the committee to the reluctances of the older generation to share the experiences of the younger generation. It's urges and aspirations, frustrations and joys. “We must do everything possible to provide a framework of idealism to the youth, and make it possible for them to work for its realization as active partners in the nation's struggle for progress and prosperity.” He said “communication channels should be created between leaders and students” and added that the existing socio-economic conditions were responsible for the unrest which was not confined to India alone. ■

Passionate Book-Lover

His chemistry with politics and literature was very fine.

Whatever was good for the people, Yashwantrao adopted it. He has once said people are bigger than the state. He meant that no local pride should come in the way of national interest.

Yashwantrao's love for books is well-known. He would buy 15 to 20 books every month and would never go to bed without reading 25 to 50 pages daily irrespective of his tight schedule. He would feel at ease in the company of writers, poets, playwrights, critics and actors; and would relish being with them as he would enjoy meetings of party men, bureaucrats and people from all walks of life.

We found in him a rare combination of an able administrator and a connoisseur of arts, music as well as literature. His chemistry with politics and literature was very fine. Venutai used to look after his library with the same dedication, love and care that she gave to her other half. Yashwantrao would have debates and discussions with eminent critics on controversies in literature.

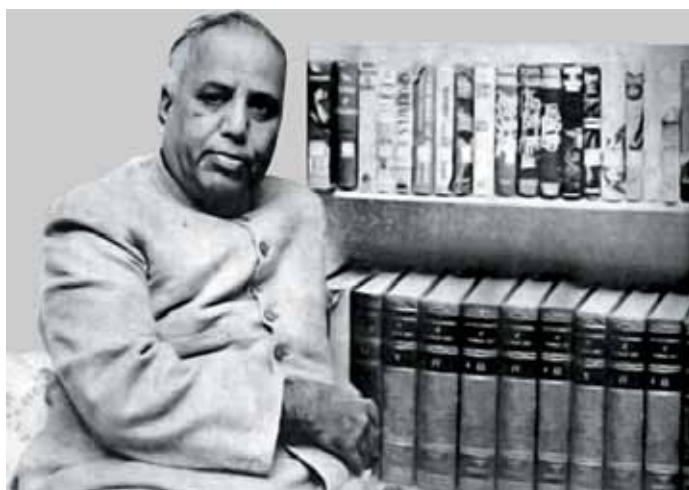
Yashwantrao is the real architect of Modern Maharashtra for he promoted agriculture and industrial simultaneously, strengthened democracy at the grass root level through local self-governments of Gram Panchayat, Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samiti. He initiated Koyana and Ujani dams and propagated Kolhapur -style dams to facilitate irrigation. Agriculture universities were his brain-child.

In the cooperative sector he helped start 18 sugar factories on the cooperative basis. He had good relations with industrialists from Maharashtra even as he was in Delhi. He took initiative in clearing files of B.G. Shirke who had introduced an innovative technology in civil construction.

He started University in Aurangabad and Kolhapur. It's true that cooperative sugar factories flourished in Maharashtra during the tenure of Vasantdada Patil but the fact is that Yashwantrao was supporting him from Delhi. He had envisioned the overall development of agriculture with the support of cooperative sector by promoting dairy and animal husbandry, agricultural produce marketing and agro-based product processing units.

Whatever was good for the people, Yashwantrao adopted it. He

has once said people are bigger than the state. He meant that no local pride should come in the way of national interest. Yashwantrao was influenced by Vitthal Ramji Shinde whose work in abolishing the untouchability is unparalleled. When Yashwantrao became the Chief Minister he scrapped the Mahar Watan Act. The Harijans who got converted to Buddhism had become ineligible to get the concessions. Yashwantrao started it again. He was also influenced by the Marxism. This reflected in his progressive policies.



When Sharad Pawar and the Congress legislators supporting him decided to form the government along with the Janata Party, Yashwantrao was in the Congress. It was the time when the one-time Guru and Shishya were on two different ends. During the Emergency Yashwantrao had opposed Indira Gandhi. However, in 1978 Lok Sabha elections Indira Gandhi got elected from the Chikmangalur Constituency, a fraction of the Congress

that was in favour of amalgamation of Congress appealed for the unification of the party. Yashwantrao was of the view to be with the national stream. The fraction suggested that Yashwantrao should be with Indira Gandhi and if he differs he should form a new party. Lot of changes took place. The Congress got split and then got unified again. Yashwantrao came back home (Congress).

Yashwantrao became deputy prime minister and Pawar was made Defence Minister. Being with Congress Yashwantrao continued his presence in Maharashtra as well as the Central Government. He put his stamp on every ministry he handled. He was very thoughtful in politics. At times he confronted with bigwigs of Congress. While he had a great respect for Nehru, he was not on good terms with Indira Gandhi. On the backdrop of today's politics of corruption and commercialization Yashwantrao's cultured politics that had the rural touch stands tall. India would have been much benefited had Yashwantrao been the prime minister. ■

- Hemant Desai



Landmarks in the Life of Shri Y.B. Chavan

- 12 March 1913 : Born at village Devrashtre in Satara district. (now Sangli district)
: Primary education at Devrashtre in the local school.
- 1918-19 : A plague epidemic, due to which his father Balwantrao Chavan dies.
- 1927 : Passes vernacular final examination from the Karad Central School. Secures admission in the Tilak High School of Karad.
- 1931 : Becomes the recipient of first prize of Rs. 150 in the elocution competition held on behalf of Nutan Marathi Vidyalaya of Poona for best speech on the topic, 'Village Improvement'.
- 1930-32 : Participates in the Non-Cooperation Movement and is sentenced to 18 months imprisonment.
- May 1933 : Released from Jail
- 1934 : Passes Matriculation and joins Rajaram College at Kolhapur where he comes in close contact with Prof. N.S. Phadke and Dr. Balkrishna, whose guidance stood in good stead in his future career
- 1938 : Passes BA examination of the Bombay University with History and Politics as his principal subjects.
- 1936-38 : Deeply influenced by the political philosophy of M.N. Roy.
- 1940 : Elected President of The Satara District Congress
- 1940-41 : Gets through the LLB examination and starts legal practice.
- 2nd June 1942 : Gets married but is forced to go underground , because of his political activities , some months after his marriage.
- 1942 : Shri Chavan assumes leadership of the 'Quit India Movement' launched by Mahatma Gandhi on 9th August in Satara district.
: Elected Chairman of the seminar held under the auspices of Dakshin Maharashtra Sahitya Sammelan (South Maharashtra Literary Conference)
: Joins underground movement in Satara district, directs and guides it.
- 1942-43 : Succeeds in being in the company of Smt. Venutai Chavan who is ill.
: Arrested by the police during his stay at Phaltan.
- 1943 : Bereaved by the death of elder brother Dyanoba.
- 1945 : Released from jail.
- 1946 : Elected to the Bombay Legislative Assembly from South Satara in the first General Elections.
- 14 April 1946 : Appointed Parliamentary Secretary in the Home Department of the Bombay Government
- 1947 : His second brother Ganpatrao passes away
- 1948 : Elected Secretary of the MPCC
- 1952 : Re-elected to the Bombay Legislative Assembly
: Appointed Minister for Civil Supplies
- 25 September 1953 : Signs the Nagpur pact alongwith the late Shri Bhausaheb Hiray and Shri Nanasaheb Kunte
- 1954 : Establishes the Bombay Rajya Panchayat Sangh
- 19 November 1957 : Inauguration of Shivaji Memorial at Pratapgad, at the hands of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
- 1958 : Appointed member of the All India Congress Committee
- March 1959 : Undergoes surgery, rests for 42 days
- 13 February 1960 : Inaugurates the Vidarbha Sahitya Sammelan at Savargaon Durke
- 1May 1960 : Presides over the formation of new Maharashtra State and becomes its first Chief Minister

- 21 October 1960 : Public felicitation at Pune on behalf of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee
- November 1960 : Appointed member of the All-India Congress Election Council .
- 10 November 1960 : Consents to the holding of one session of Maharashtra Legislature every year at Nagpur as part of the implementation of the provisions of the Nagpur Agreement; first session of the same held
- 21 December 1960. : Establishment of Maharashtra Rajya Sahitya Sanskriti Mandal. Inauguration at Nagpur
- December 1960 : Inauguration of Shivaji statue at Mumbai
- 1961 : Elected to the All-India Congress Committee from the Congress High Command
: Chairman of the Reception Committee of the forty third Marathi Natya Sammelan held at Delhi
- 1 May 1962 : Launches the Panchayat Raj Scheme
: First article in Marathi entitled “Niyaticha Hat” (The Hand of Fate) published in the Diwali special issue of Kesari.
- 23 November 1962 : Assumes office as India’s Defence Minister
- 1963 : Elected unopposed to the Lok Sabha from the Nasik district
- 1963 : Visit to the USA in response to invitation by Mr. McNamara, US Defence Secretary
- August 1963 : Visit to the USSR; held discussions with Mr. Khrushchev
- 1964 : Began tour of Russia from 28 August
- 1964 : Elected President the Maharashtra Education Society of New Delhi
- 1965 : Inaugurates the Forty-seventh Session of the All-India Marathi Natya Parishad at Nanded
- January 1966 : Attends Shastri- Ayub Khan talks at Tashkent
- 14 November 1966 : Appointed Home Minister at the Centre
- 26 January 1970 : Appointed Finance Minister
- 1971 : Participates in a seminar on financial matters in the Conference of Developing Nations
- October 1974 : Appointed Minister for External Affairs
- 1975 : Visited Guiana, Cuba, Lebanon, Egypt, Peru, America, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait and France
- December 1975 : Chairman of the Reception Committee of the All-India Marathi Sahitya Sammelan held at Karad
- 1976 : Visited Turkey and Algeria
- 1977-78 : Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha
- 1978 : Joins Sanjiv Reddi Congress following differences with Smt. Indira Gandhi
- July 1979 : Appointed Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister in the coalition Government of Shri Charan Singh
- 1980 : Elected to Lok Sabha from Satara constituency in (the only victorious candidate of Reddy Congress in Maharashtra)
: Re-entry into Congress-I. Appointed chairman of the Eighth Finance Commission
- June 1983 : Bereaved following the sudden death of Smt. Venutai Chavan
- 25 November 1984 : Breathes his last at Delhi, at 7.45 p.m.
- 27 November 1984 : Cremated at the “Priti Sangam” of Krishna-Koyna at 3.40 p.m. at Karad.
- 1984 : His autobiographical book *Krishnakath* is awarded the Sahityasamarat N.C.Kelkar Prize
- 31 May 1986 : Conferred the Posthumous award ‘Samajik Nyay Puraskar’ on behalf of the Ramshastri Prabhune Pratishthan of Kshetra Mahuli (Satara dist.)

My Mentor, My Rolemodel

I will never forget that Yashwantrao Chavan laid the foundation of my political career

Yashwantrao Chavan taught us that administration must have a human face, and a leader must win the trust of administrative machinery. The opportunity to work in the public life, in the administration or any other field springs from common people's backing. So their interest must be at your heart, remembers **Sharad Pawar**, Union Minister for Agriculture

I was active in public life even in my childhood. I loved it. At school, and even in the college, I played the organizer's role enthusiastically, may it be a cultural program or a sports event. I spent a lot of time in extra-curricular activities and little in studies. I got more and more involved in such things. My family had influences of Satya-shodhak movement and the leftist politics of Peasants and Workers Party.

In 1968 I passed my matriculation exam and joined Brihanmaharashtra College in Pune. I shifted to the college hostel, and had much more freedom than at home. In the first year I contested a college election and won. So my involvement in the college activities expanded.

My public life started in Pune, as I tried to help these outsider students from rural area. We formed friend circles in every district. I and my friends also actively participated in college elections. This period coincided with the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement. It had created a new kind of political mood. Acharya Atre, S M Joshi, N G Gore, Uddhavrao



Yashwantrao and Sharad Pawar, Union Minister for Agriculture

Patil, Nana Patil, Shahir Amar Shaikh etc were the leading lights of the movement.

Bilingual State of Maharashtra was formed, and Yashwantrao Chavan

became its Chief Minister. But the demand of Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti was that this bilingual State should be split up to form separate States of Maharashtra and Gujarat, and it was finding favour among the masses. Congress lost the 1957 polls, but Samiti too did not get a clear majority. The task of running the State in these difficult times was assigned to Chavan. We youngsters backed the Samiti. But Chavan handled the people's agitation with a great sensitivity and understanding. His predecessor, Morarji Desai, had taken a high-handed stand. In contrast, Chavan appeared to be more civilized.

Chavan too wanted a unified Maharashtra, but he was not ready to take on Pandit Nehru. Chavan ran the bilingual State, and simultaneously tried to persuade Congress high command to concede the demand for unified Maharashtra. The then Congress president, Indira Gandhi, sided with him, and notwithstanding Desai's stiff opposition, Chavan could bring Nehru around. The unified Maharashtra came into existence in 1960, with Nehru

presiding over the function at Mumbai's Raj Bhavan.

Once the demand was conceded, the political mood in the State transformed. People understood Chavan's stand, and misconceptions melted down. I and my colleagues had begun to work for the Youth Congress. Chavan, and his thinking about the way forward for the State, attracted all of us. 1962 elections followed, and Congress, under Chavan's leadership, won the mandate. The Chinese invasion came immediately thereafter. Indian army found itself in dire straits, and people's morale sank. Defence Minister Krishna Menon faced barrage of criticism in the Parliament, even Nehru was assailed by the opposition. To save the situation, Nehru called Chavan to Delhi to replace Menon.

As Chavan assumed the charge, China announced ceasefire. Chavan won people's trust. The army was demoralized after the defeat. Chavan toured the border areas and tried to boost the troops' self-confidence. He had realized the disastrous consequences of lack of modern weaponry and other resources. He took decisions to improve the situation, which helped restore the troops' moral. Millions of youth in the country, like me, began to admire Chavan.

I remember, we had invited him to a function at the college. He talked to me with interest after the function was over. He always wanted to have a full picture of the State. After I told him my name and the village I came from, he immediately got the idea of my background, and encouraged my plan to work among the youth. After this, we began to attend every public meeting or function where Chavan was to be present.

His career in Delhi was on the ascent. Nehru fell sick during the Bhubaneswar convention of Congress, and passed away on May 27, 1964. Lalbahadur Shastri succeeded him. Yashwantrao continued as Defence Minister. He had succeeded in boosting the troops' morale and getting modern weaponry for the forces. This paid off during the 1965 war with Pakistan.



Sharad Pawar in a meeting with Yashwantrao Chavan [1978]

The enemy bit the dust, people's self-confidence surged, and Yashwantrao won a lot of admiration and affection. India's ally, USSR, invited leaders of both the countries to Tashkent for reconciliation. A peace treaty was signed, whereby India agreed to withdraw its army from Pakistani territories and free its captured soldiers. It had a reaction in India. Then the calamity of Shastri's sudden death occurred. Yashwantrao, who had accompanied the Prime Minister on that visit, had to return to Delhi with Shastri's dead body.

There was a vacancy for the top post. A large section of Congress MPs and the party's executive committee wanted Chavan to become the PM. The sentiment was conveyed to Chavan, but he hadn't forgotten that Indira Gandhi had helped during the formation of unified Maharashtra. He discussed the issue of leadership with her, and my guess is that he assured to support if Mrs. Gandhi wanted to become the Prime Minister.

During this period, he constantly encouraged me. He assigned me the responsibility of leadership of youth at the State-level. I could talk to him as a close associate. I believe that this association and the encouragement he gave me played an important role in shaping my personality and my career.

He always attended the big events organized by Youth Congress. In

those days, I used to camp out at Tilak Bhavan, the Congress headquarters in Mumbai. The stay there helped me develop contacts with Congressmen across the State. Assembly election came around by 1966-end. My associates suggested I should contest, and I too wanted to take the plunge, but I had no backing among the Congressmen of Pune district. I sought ticket for Baramati constituency.

When my application was discussed, all the senior leaders said that I was unelectable. Chavan was present at this meeting. He asked casually: How many seats we expect to get in Maharashtra? Everybody agreed that Congress would get around 200 out of the 288 seats. Chavan said, "That means we would lose in some sixty-seventy places. Why not add one more to the tally and give a chance to Sharad?" He himself campaigned for me. The youth of my constituency handled the campaign. I won, with the highest number of votes in Pune district.

I started working for the constituency and the organization from the very next day. These days, even first-time MLAs have dreams of becoming a minister. The thought never occurred to me. I was elected as general secretary of Maharashtra Congress, and remained very active in the assembly as well as in the party organization.

Then the 1972 election took place.



Chief Minister Vasant Rao Naik submitted a list of prospective ministers to the Congress high command for approval. Mrs. Gandhi okayed it. My name did not figure in the list. Not that I expected it. But, as I later learnt, when Naik showed this list to Yashwantrao, the latter phoned Mrs. Gandhi and told her that Sharad must be there to represent the youth. Mrs. Gandhi agreed and I was made a minister of State for Home and General Administration. The opportunity had come my way only because of Chavan. He kept encouraging

me as he was very keen on getting the youth into the organization.

Once he said in the party meeting that there can not be stasis. 'If a roti on a hot plate is not flipped, it will burn'. This must not happen in the Maharashtra politics. I will never forget that Chavan laid the foundation of my political career. He taught us that one must network and form relations with the wider society. One must be in touch with various sections of the society. A political leader should have contacts in the fields

of literature, music, arts and sports. However high one rises; decency, modesty and civilized attitude must remain indispensable. He was our role model. Chavan was friends with people from various fields. He was always well-read, and emphasized the importance of the culture of reading.

I and many others were lucky to come in contact with this man. He taught us that the administration must have a human face, and a leader must win the trust of the administrative machinery. The opportunity to work in the public life, in the administration or any other field, springs from common people's backing. So their interest must be at your heart.

Congress split up before the 1980 polls. Indira Gandhi headed Congress (I). I and many others became a part of the splinter group led by Swaran Singh. I was the Chief Minister of the State then. We worked hard in the election, but people were not with Congress (S). Only Yashwantrao could win from Satara. Post-election, he expressed the view that people had accepted Mrs. Gandhi's Congress, and we too must respect this sentiment. I remember, the meeting at the house of Laxmanrao Patil, the chairman of Satara Zilla Parishad. Chavan advocated joining Congress (I). Many of those present said that they supported this idea. But I differed. I suspected that Congress (I) would not accord the due respect to a towering leader such as Chavan. I was not at all in favour of joining the party.

For the first time I was taking a stand at variance with his. It pained me a lot, and Chavan, who had immense affection for me, too felt a similar pain. We stayed with Congress (S) and worked hard to promote the party. Whenever we got success, Chavan's face would betray satisfaction. I always called on him whenever I went to Delhi. Venutai, his wife, passed away in this period. This towering, courageous man could not get over his grief. She had been with him through thick and thin, he could not come to terms with the loss. Whenever we talked about her, his eyes would well up with tears. ■

As told to Vijay Naik



Pioneer of Decentralised Power

He instituted Panchayat Raj System to take the power to the grassroot level

Yashwantraoji laid the foundation for the State's cultural and financial prosperity. He made the schooling free for the poor children. He gave prominence to social equality, educational and cultural development. He taught the same attitude to his associates, says **Sushilkumar Shinde**, Union Minister for Power.

Yashwantraoji Chavan built and shaped a leadership of the youth in Maharashtra. Not only he strived hard to uplift the masses and drew people from all castes and religions to the politics. It was Yashwantrao who brought an administrative officer like S G Barve, or a scholar like Rafiq Zakaria into the politics.

Yashwantraoji's political ideology was to take everyone and all together. He had that knack of getting along with people of different attitude and nature. He was a political philosopher, much like Plato. His political Guru could have been Plato, who has written that 'the ruler should believe in equality and take everybody along.'

He rendered yeomen service for bringing people of various castes, creeds and ideologies into the political arena and gave them a social direction. His strongest desire was to make Maharashtra a developed and advance State. To ensure this he gave prominence to social equality, educational and cultural development. He taught the same attitude to his associates.

Yashwantraoji laid the foundation for the State's cultural and financial prosperity. He made the schooling free for those earning less than Rs. 1,200 per year right in the initial years of the new State of Maharashtra.

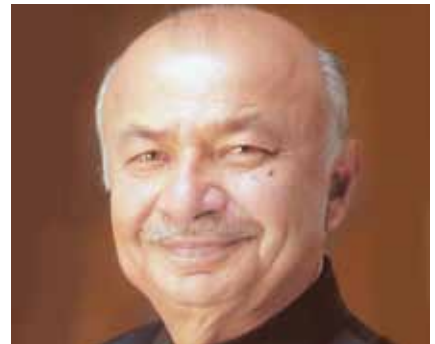
While in Mumbai, Yashwantraoji witnessed several social and labour agitations, and mastered the art of handling them. Then Prime Minister

Jawaharlal Nehru rightly gauged his talents and offered him the post of Minister of Defence. Personality of Nehru, the first Prime Minister of the Independent India, was looked at as the Himalaya by all and when called Yashwantraoji, many political experts phrased the incident metaphorically as Sahyadri (the hill range in Maharashtra) - Yashwantraoji, leaving for the help of Himalaya.

I was a newbie in the politics and was working with Sharad Pawar as the general secretary of Congress Forum for Socialist Action. Yashwantraoji was Pawar's political mentor. Pawar introduced me to him, and told him that I had studied at a night school, and was active in various fields. Yashwantraoji was surprised to learn that I was working as a boy peon in the court. His own father had worked as a court bailiff, so perhaps he felt a sort of kinship for me.

During this period of my proximity to him, I came across his ideologies - his Leftist leanings, influence of M. N. Roy's rationalism, his socialist bend of mind, and his quest for social equality. I used to closely observe three prominent leaders of those days: Yashwantrao Chavan, Vasantdada Patil, and Vasantrao Naik. I studied how they handled and solved issues which helped me hone my leadership skills. But Yashwantraoji's thinking became benchmark for me.

I am fortunate to get the opportunity of releasing his book, 'Krishnakath'. The function was held in Karad. He



Sushilkumar Shinde, Union Minister for Power

came to know about my speech and immediately phoned me and said, 'I heard you spoke very well'. I have still cherished this certificate.

Yashwantraoji had warm relations with writers, artistes, actors, directors, playwrights, and even folk-artists. He took certain steps for their welfare. It was he who took the decision to waive entertainment tax on plays. His guidance has left an indelible imprint on us. In fact, I am sure that if we could take his thinking forward, Maharashtra would become the numero uno State in every respect.

It is unfortunate that today's politics is marked by fractures. Telling lies with conviction is the mantra now. Political Pundit Machiavelli, who once wrote that, 'a ruler should be brave like lion and cunning like a fox', could be an idol of present day politicians. Today's political scenario makes me think what Yashwantraoji would have felt had he been alive today! ■

As told to **Surekha Taksal**

My Friend, My Guide

He had great appreciation for creativity and used to encourage writers and artists

Yashwantrao always made time for enjoying a work of art. He used to appreciate good literature and analyze good books, says **Vinayakrao Patil**.

From the time he became the Chief Minister, I had been hearing Yashwantraoji's public speeches. He was a wizard of words, and I used to hear him with rapt attention. In the company of friends, I used to mimic Yashwantraoji's mannerisms and the exact intonations. That would regale the party workers, and I became popular. But I was always curious to know how Yashwantraoji spoke in private gatherings, and for a long time I wanted entry into his private circle. I got to know him well gradually, but people would be around, and the conversations would be formal.

Good things do happen, though often late. I was sure I would get this opportunity. Finally it came my way one day. I was in Delhi on some business. After finishing my work, I went to see Yashwantraoji before leaving for Maharashtra. I had been given two minutes. I was standing in the drawing room when he entered. Now I had the chance to talk to him face to face, but I couldn't think of what to say! He asked me to sit down. I sat down, thinking he would ask some routine questions about happenings back home and dismiss me in five minutes. So I was caught off guard completely when he said, "I heard you do a nice send-up of Mr. so-and-so!"

This so-and-so was a minister in Maharashtra cabinet, and I used to mimic his style of speaking, with the eccentricities, adding my own inputs. Place or time were no bar to me. I gathered quickly that Sharad Pawar must have reported this to Yashwantraoji, because Pawar had been in the audience several times for my mimicry 'shows'. I prepared myself for a rap on the knuckles. So imagine



my surprise when Yashwantraoji said, 'Let's have it!'

I nearly fell out of chair! Then I braced up, wiped the perspiration, and started off. First two lines of the mimicry, and Yashwantraoji laughed out. Now he took off his cap, and began to listen with more interest. For the next twenty minutes, he laughed so much that there were tears in his eyes. This meeting did away with the formality in our relations. He told me to drop in anytime I was in Delhi. I, of course, never missed the chance to call on him. We shared so many things with each other: shayari, gazhals, travel experiences, anecdotes. Yashwantraoji had an elephantine memory and a way with the words. To top it, he was a great conversationalist. I also realized that he had a fine taste in literature and films.

As the Minister of Defence, it was very difficult for him to go to the movies like a commoner, for obvious reasons of security. Once, he and I went to meet Madhav Apte. Apte

recommended very highly an English film that was playing at the nearby Regal cinema. Yashwantrao had some free time that day. He had two tickets of afternoon show booked, without telling anybody. At quarter to three, he told me, "Vinayakrao, we are going on a special mission". We entered the cinema hall after the film started, and got to our seats in the darkness. Not even his security officers knew about this "mission". Yashwantrao had taken off his trademark cap, so that he wasn't recognized. We enjoyed the film, though afterwards other viewers did recognize him and he was mobbed.

Yashwantrao always made time for enjoying a work of art, and he also encouraged the writers and the artistes. I remember a day. It was January 1, 1977. He had come nearby my village to inaugurate a library in the memory of a youth named Kumbharde who was killed in the China war. Yashwantraoji made it a point to attend the function for this youth had joined the Army responding to the appeal of Yashwantraoji. Before the program, he was to have lunch at my house. There was some time, and I suggested that he take rest, instead, Yashwantraoji asked poet N D Mahanor to recite his poems and a poetry session began. Yashwantrao expressed his appreciation with utmost spontaneity. He indeed held writers in high esteem.

He used to appreciate good literature and analyze some particular books. His views were completely objective. On reading Laxman Mane's autobiography, 'Upaara', in which there is a line: "When I see all this, I feel like bombing the Parliament". Yashwantraoji's reaction to it was fundamental. He said, "Due

to the social conditions, a boy hailing from my village feels like bombing the Parliament, of which I am a member. I must understand the sentiments of these boys, and the conditions ought to change.' He knew several poems by heart. Once, reciting a popular Marathi nursery-rhyme about a train-ride to 'Mama's (uncle's) village, Yashwantrao suddenly stopped. I asked him why he broke off. He said, "This poem reminds me of my childhood, Vinayakrao." As a child, due to adverse financial condition at home, he had to live with his uncle for some time. Then he reminisced about childhood, and his uncle, who had helped.

His memory was really prodigious. Once, in Mumbai, I went to see him. He was going out and asked me to accompany him. I learnt that we were going to Talegaon in Pune district. It was a three hours' journey by car, during which I narrated a few couplets of Amir Khusro. There was some function at Talegaon, and I was amazed when Yashwantrao quoted those couplets during his speech verbatim. He had heard them only once.

I was quite close to him, almost like a grandson. I could ask him anything. Once we were at his place in Delhi, when his personal assistance brought the news of the death of Devraj Urs, former Chief Minister of Karnataka. Yashwantrao said: 'Oh, that's sad news.' Then I asked him what he thought of the death. He said: 'Death is a bitter fact of life. I came face to face with death when my father passed away. Then I felt the severity of this fact, but later, with age, I became more and more objective about it. But still some deaths leave you unsettled. The death of my associate, Kisan Veer, left me with a great sense of loss. I wept a lot when he died.'

I also asked him about his relationship with his wife, Venutai. I said to him, 'You two seem to be made for each other'. He asserted that I was right, and narrated an incident when he was the Home Minister. During the Question Hour in the Parliament, he heard that there was some communal trouble



Smt. Venutai and Shri Yashwantrao Chavan

in Karad. He returned home and asked Venutai if she had heard the news. She said she had, and added, "Your bag is packed." Yashwantraoji said Venutai had a very good understanding. She could convey many a things without speaking. "Yes, we are made for each other", Yashwantraoji told me.

He could be soft-spoken but candid. During the conversation, his face would be very responsive. It responded to

every sentence of the other person: showing agreement, disagreement, anger, happiness, humour.

Once, in a public speech, I referred to Brahmaputraa, the great river of North-East India. He later corrected me, saying it was Brahmaputr. Then he dwelt on the river at length. Such guidance shaped the orator in me. I am fortunate that I received his affection and guidance. ■

As told to Manisha Pingle

Shadow of Sahyadri

Venutai was a multifaceted woman. One such her 'avatar' was of Annapurna'

It is the more clichéd idiom - 'behind every successful man...' yet in case of Venutai one can not restrain from not using it, for it was the reality. The success of towering personality of Yashwantrao was based upon sacrifices made by Venutai.



Smt. Venutai, Yashwantrao with Shripad Dongre, Ram Khandekar and other family members

Yashwantrao Chavan and Venutai were complimentary to each other in real life. Venutai took care that Yashwantraoji was not bothered by little worries and issues of daily household. She made it possible for him to devote maximum time of the day for his public life and successful political career. She remained away from celebrity life of clubs and kityparties and felicitations but relentlessly submitted herself to her worthy husband and his family life.

Venutai was more than happy to have an educated and freedom-fighter husband. She soon realized that to be a life partner of a freedom fighter was

not an easy task. Freedom struggle was getting hot. Yashwantrao was an activist with arrest warrant against him. He could have been arrested any moment, to avoid that he was working underground. In their efforts to search and arrest Yashwantrao police harassed Venutai.

Police thought Venutai to be a soft target, but the young, inexperienced, yet determined Venutai proved to be a hardnut for police brutalities. She did not utter a word and faced all tortures with a smile in her face. All were taken aback, when they learnt about the police brutalities. Yashwantrao and

his colleagues were at peace when they learnt that Venutai stood as rock against police brutalities without revealing anything. They were revitalized, but were worried about health of Venutai.

Most of the freedom fighters remained in contact with their families directly or indirectly. Had Yashwantrao been arrested, the course of history could have taken a different turn. Not only that, the future of Yashwantrao could have been uncertain, for the entire erstwhile Satara district was plunged into freedom struggle. A parallel government was set up in this district and Yashwantrao was active

member who had thrown a challenge to the British Government.

It is the more clichéd idiom - 'behind every successful man...' yet in case of Venutai one can not restrain from not using it, for it was the reality. The success of towering personality of Yashwantrao was based upon sacrifices made by Venutai.

It was hours before the dawn of freedom. Most of the freedom fighters have returned home. Yashwantrao too had returned. Venutai was visibly happy, but it made Yashwantrao worrisome, for her health had deteriorated. India became independent. Everyone was happy. But that marked the beginning of a period of ordeals for the newly married couple.

Venutai was admitted to hospital at Miraj. Sickness and deaths overshadowed the family. Yashwantrao, who was given great responsibility in the Government, was held up in Mumbai, however he remained in contact with Venutai over telephone and through letters and friends. Venutai was finding it hard to meet the two ends of expenses, but never let it known to Yashwantrao. She always took care that Yashwantrao was less bothered with household worries.

The couple lost their child in its infancy, only to be the guardian parent of many other children throughout the life. They shouldered responsibility to bring up children of Yashwantrao's



A quiet evening with Venutai

elder brother, whose death came untimely. Venutai brought them with meticulous love and care, more than what mother would do. Venutai earned a special position in Chavan family, with her motherly care.

Yashwantrao Chavan became Chief Minister of bilingual Mumbai State in 1956. Political atmosphere in Maharashtra, in those days was unfavourable for Congress party. Besides, two States brought together were to be administered skillfully. Even 24 hours in a day were insufficient to fulfill the task. Important letters were

to be dictated during a drive between Malabar Hill and Secretariat with relentless follow-up.

Thus responsibility befell upon Venutai, not only of her nephews and nieces, but of the entire family. Venutai was very cautious in reaching up the children, that no one should be able to point finger at her or her husband. Meanwhile, Venutai had to shoulder responsibility of her siblings also. Yashwantrao would be a while with the family, only late in the night after completing the days work.

Venutai was a multifaceted woman. One such her 'avatar' was of Annapurna'. Yashwantrao Chavan and Venutai were so attached to each other that without speaking a word they would understand what is going on with the other.

It was on 1st June 1983 that Yashwantrao Chavan decided to hospitalize Venutai. She was not told of this decision. She was busy from the sick bed in preparations of wedding anniversary celebration. She however sensed it and called Yashwantrao to her bed side she asked if he had decided to hospitalized her. Yashwantrao hesitantly confirmed and began to explain the need. But it was too late and she breathe her last. Yashwantrao could not bear this loss for long. ■

- Ram Khandekar

Although the Home Minister's immediate task was to maintain law and order, he felt he should go deeper into the problem of students unrest. He told the consultative committee of Parliament attached to his ministry that he did not agree with those who looked at the students unrest purely from the angle of law and order. He drew the attention of the committee to the reluctances of the older generation to share the experiences of the younger generation. It's urges and aspirations, frustrations and joys. "We must do everything possible to provide a framework of idealism to the youth, and make it possible for them to work for its realization as active partners in the nation's struggle for progress and prosperity." He said "communication channels should be created between leaders and students" and added that the existing socio-economic conditions were responsible for the unrest which was not confined to India alone.

- Chavan and the Troubled Decade by T. V. Kunhi Krishnan

My Guide, My Pride

I am what I am today only because of Saheb, he was the father-figure to me

He also told me that as a Government administrator, it was my responsibility to make the system accessible to the common man and work for the upliftment of the poor and downtrodden dalit population, says former MLC and retired IAS Officer, **Shrinivas Patil**.



was growing up.

I was born in 1941 in the village of Masalhaveli in the Patan taluka in the district of Satara. Within a year of my birth, we shifted to Karad. My father bought a small three-bedroom house in the Borate building near the famous Datta Mandir in Shanivarpeth. An Atmaram Narayan Jadhav used to live in the apartment above ours. His wife, whom we use to call Badi, was a very intelligent woman.

In my young age I used to play on the roof top of our neighbour's building along with my friends, it was around then that I first glimpsed Saheb. He used to be a frequent visitor to

Narayan Jadhava's house, and whenever he would drop by, Badi would tell us to play quietly, so as to not disturb the two men at their discussions. Saheb would always be garbed in white and as was prescribed routine, he would remove his shirt, hand it on a peg and rest for a bit.

He was always accompanied by a coterie of leaders and workers and they would spend time discussing politics, something that I came to know much later. And he would leave in a hurry if he received a message from Krantisinha Nana Patil.

I used to study in the school opposite our house in the 7th standard, when I came first in class. Then I went on to the Shivaji High School which had been founded by Saheb himself, one which was equipped with an excellent faculty,

including the likes of Pandit Sapre and Shankarrao Karambelkar. I aced by SSC board exams in 1957 and was all ready for college. At that time, Karamveer Patil of Rayat Education Society asked my father to enroll me in his college. At the same time, Karambelkar Sir gave Saheb's message to my father, saying that Saheb wanted me to go to Pune's SP College. And as per Saheb's wishes, I went to Pune and stayed at a hostel.

Saheb was the Chief Minister of the bilingual state at the time I started the Samyukta Satara Students' Association. I requested Saheb to inaugurate it, which he readily agreed. He even picked me up from my hostel in his Dodge car with the distinctive 9001 plate number, to go to the Fergusson college amphitheatre I was overwhelmed by the modesty that Saheb so graciously and modestly displayed, despite being the Chief Minister of a State on the request of a mere college student. He even commended me on my speech. It was the mark of the kind of the man he was. I went on to pursue an MA from the Gokhale Institute after completing my BA. At the institute, I was exposed to many important thinkers including Dr Dhananjayrao Gadgil who was a visiting professor.

I then went on to obtain a law degree from Government Law College in Mumbai. Simultaneously, I also sat for and passed the Deputy Collector's exam for the MPSC, clearing the exam with merit. I immediately went to meet Saheb at "Riviera" with great anticipation to give him the news. That was in 1965. Saheb took the sweets I had got and asked me what it was for. He said that if they were for my having

I had won the election from the Karad constituency and was on my way to the Parliament for the first time. Accompanying me was Sharad Pawar, who was like family to me. On the way to the Parliament house, there is a statue of Yashwantrao Chavan that one has to pass. Sharad Pawar pointed it out to me; we took a minute to pay our respects before proceeding further. This statue was installed by Sharad Pawar himself, a protégé of Yashwantrao, when he was the Chief Minister of Maharashtra. Looking upon his statue that day, the most important day of my career, it hit me that I was where I was only because Saheb had come into my life, for the first time when I was just four years old. I was fortunate that he was such an influence in my life as I



A public meeting at Jhansi in 1966

achieved success in the law exam, then he was sorry but he had diabetes. But if they were for my decision to join the civil service, then he would happily eat them! He went on to tell me that I would be the first person from Karad in the last 26 years to become Deputy Collector; the last one having been Shankarrao Mohite way back in 1939. Saheb was thrilled when I told him that I had decided to join the civil services. He telephoned SV Chavan, the commissioner of Pune and asked him to give me an appointment. This incident is etched clearly in my memory; Saheb's joy and his guidance and training.

His words to me on that occasion are as clear now as they were then: "Shrinivas, remember one thing," he told me, "in a Government job, a person who joins in the morning is senior to the person who joins in the

...we presume that the unexpressed wishes of the common people are fulfilled as the new Maharashtra State nurtures the courage and ambitions of its people and brings forth new life, with new dreams and hopes...

- Y.B. Chavan

afternoon. Protocol and hierarchy are very important." He also told me that as a Government administrator, it was now my responsibility to make the system accessible to the common man and work for the upliftment of the poor and downtrodden dalit population. I have tried my best to live up to his expectation in all these years.

My posting during my initial years of probation was at Karveer. Saheb was touring that area at the time, and he introduced me to the senior leaders present there as his son. His love,

blessings and guidance have always been my main source of inspiration and motivation.

Yashwantrao formed the Pimpri-Chichwad Pradhikaran according to the advice given by the great economist Dr VM Dandekar and appointed me as its first chairman. My journey to that appointment was preceded by a stint as a collector of the Beed district, followed by the collectorship of the Pune Commissioner of Pimpri-Chinchwad.

I became the chairman of the NTC at Nagpur. Whenever Karad was discussed, it would inevitably lead to a remembrance of Saheb. His memories are close to my heart. His favourite disciple Sharad Pawar brought me into politics from civil service. It gave me a great opportunity to follow the teachings of Saheb for the welfare of society at large. ■



Yashwantrao Chavan



Smt. Venutai Chavan



Yashwantrao Chavan in his younger days



Welcoming Mangal Kalash on joyous occasion of formation of Maharashtra State.
[1st May, 1960]



Chavan with his wife - life long inspiration



Yashwantrao Chavan



Smt. Venutai Chavan



Yashwantrao Chavan with senior foreign diplomats



Yashwantrao Chavan alongwith Pandit Nehru and Smt. Venutai



Yashwantrao Chavan and Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil



Sarhad Gandhi Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and Yashwantrao Chavan



A Great Revolutionary Senapati Bapat and Yashwantrao Chavan



Smt. Venutai and Yashwantrao Chavan reviewing INS Vikrant in 1964



Dalai Lama and Yashwantrao Chavan



The then Governor Shri Prakash and Yashwantrao Chavan



Yashwantrao Chavan with foreign defence diplomats



Yashwantrao Chavan with Babu Jagjivan Ram



Yashwantrao Chavan



Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and Yashwantrao Chavan in Tashkent, 1966



with Acharya Atre



Yashwantrao Chavan In a meeting with Smt. Indira Gandhi [1974]



Morarji Desai, Pandit Nehru, Union Minister Sardar Swaransing, former President S. Radhakrishnan and Yashwantrao Chavan



Yashwantrao Chavan Taking oath as the Chief



President S. Radhakrishnan administering the oath of office and secrecy to Yashwantrao Chavan as Defence Minister in 1962 .



Yashwantrao Chavan in a relaxing mood



Yashwantrao Chavan with troops at Sela Pass



Every night Yashwantrao used to read for an hour completely unrelated to his official work



Minister of the bilingual Mumbai State



The Prime Minister and the Defence Minister



Former President Shankar Dayal Sharma and Yashwantrao Chavan



Lata Mangeshkar and Yashwantrao Chavan



Trying to keep pace with Pandit Nehru at Pratapgad



Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Yashwantrao Chavan

Mass Appeal

Dr Sudam Jadhav travels down memory lane and recalls his first meeting with the charismatic Yashwantrao Chavan, and the impact he left on the people of his country.

Ever since I had heard about Yashwantrao Chavan from his party workers and from what I had read in newspapers had left me in deep awe of the man. It prompted me to want to meet the legend in person.



Every night Yashwantrao used to read for an hour completely unrelated to his official work

It was just after the emergency, when Indira Gandhi had declared the national elections that I could finally realise my wish. Yashwantrao Chavan, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, was slated to give a speech at Shahganj. I attended the meeting with the sole purpose of hearing the man in person. As expected, the speech was eloquent and the meeting successful. But one question that kept nagging at me was why people called him sahib. The word had deeply negative connotations in those days, what with it being associated with the British rulers who had quit the country just a few decades back. The wounds were still raw and the word an unpleasant reminder. And in complete contradiction, here was a completely Indian leader, a salt of the earth, son of the soil leader nowhere near an echo – at least physically – of the light-eyed, fair-skinned, arrogant British. Yashwantrao was kind, cultured and loving, much more than the word sahib indicated, whom the people loved and respected.

Yashwantrao Chavan's deep and abiding love for literature is well known and he was always a presence at literary meets, when he could take the time from his busy schedule. Such was the case during the Golden Jubilee Conference of Marathi Literature (Sahitya Sannam) was held at Ichalkaranjee in 1974 with the late PL Deshpande as its chairperson of the meet and Ranjeet Desai as the chairperson of the working committee. Yashwantrao too attended the meet and also gave a speech. A group of protestors had arrived from Kolhapur to create trouble for him but

he remained unperturbed and spent the time there leisurely talking with Marathi writers. The next literary meet was to be held in Karad, Yashwantrao's hometown. Predictably, given the deep associations, he himself was the chairperson of the welcome committee on the occasion that saw Durgabai Bharat preside over as chairperson of the meet. This time around the country was going through the upheaval of the emergency, and the writers and intellectuals were in a revolutionary mood. Durgabai, in her speech, was vocally and critical of the Central Government and the emergency, which was listened to with acceptance and an open mind by Yashwantrao, an integral cog in the Government machinery. Needless to say, the three-day event concluded with no disruptions.

I finally got an opportunity to meet Yashwantrao Chavan in person when I was pursuing my MA in Marathi literature at the Marathwada University. A study tour of Agra and Delhi was organised by the university for 50 students. After visiting Agra, we proceeded to Delhi. The then Members of Parliament, Manikrao Poladkar and Sayajirao Pandit had made arrangements for our stay in Delhi at the MP quarters. In our four-five-day stay in the capital, we visited the Parliament, met with then President VV Giri and also had the privilege of meeting Indira Gandhi on the lawns of her bungalow. But we were also very eager to meet Yashwantrao Chavan, an unforgettable event in our young lives. We were taken to his bungalow on Racecourse Road and after a thorough security check, we were ushered into his house. Yashwantrao and his wife, Venutai welcomed us warmly and offered us snacks. Yashwantrao then showed us his personal library and even held discussions with us. The highlight, however, was when he readily agreed to taking a group photograph. He was a true leader of the people, a kind, loving statesman who exemplified true leadership.

My last meeting with Yashwantrao was a few years before his demise, when he was visiting Ambejogai in



Marathwada to attend a musical concert. While travelling from Aurangabad to Beet, he had graciously agreed to an en route stop over at my village, Pendgaon. At the time, he was just a member of parliament with no portfolio under his purview. Despite that, his popularity was undiminished and his visit drew hoards of his followers and supporters. We all stood along the shoulder of the highway holding garlands and flowers at the ready. As his white ambassador arrived, he asked his driver to halt the car and stepped

out. He was accompanied by former minister of Maharashtra Manikrao Palodkar and MP, Ramraoji. Despite his obvious frail health, Yashwantrao got out of the car, folded his hands and acknowledged the love of the people, gave his blessings before getting back into the car. That was it. Soon after, we got the unfortunate news of his having passed away on November 26, 1984. He was probably the last of his kind, a great leader, a visionary and moreover, one who was unanimously loved by the people of his country. ■

- Sudam Jadhav

More of a Statesman Than a Politician

He was willing to do what was best for the nation and had no interest in personal gains or glory

Yashwantrao Chavan was a great leader and a firm believer in encouraging actions and ideas that he thought had great potential. While a charismatic leader in his political life, he set an example in his personal life too, says **Dr. Mohan Dharia** Senior Social Worker.

Yashwantrao Chavan was born in a poor family to a very ambitious mother, Vithabai. She harboured great dreams for him, and worked hard to earn money and educate her son. The young Yashwantrao was very hard-working and focussed. Young activists imprisoned for participating in the freedom movement against the British Raj used to get political training in prisons. In the broiling crucible of diverse revolutionary ideologies that young activists were exposed to, Yashwantrao found himself drawn towards the humanist philosophy propounded by Manavendranath Roy.

Later Yashwantrao assisted Krantiveer Nana Patil in the formation of the underground Patri Sarkar where his organisational skills were of much value. He was also one of the integral forces behind building the Congress organisation in Maharashtra. In 1946, a year before India gained Independence, Yashwantrao Chavan was elected as the Parliamentary Secretary of the Congress. It was a party he stayed with till his last breath.

While an ideal candidate to become the Prime Minister of India, Yashwantrao Chavan was more of a statesman than a politician and his value to the Congress lay more in his skilled eloquence, charisma and organisational abilities. After the China war, before Lal Bahadur Shastri succeeded Jawaharlal Nehru to the prime ministership, political experts were speculating on Yashwantrao Chavan as the ideal



Mohan Dharia and Yashwantrao Chavan

candidate for the job.

After the unfortunate heart attack of Lal Bahadur Shastri in August 1965, a group of MPs Atulya Ghosh, Nijalingappa, Chanobabhan Gupta, SK Patil, along with young MPs such as Chandrashekhar, Unnikrishnan and I met Yashwantrao, accompanied by Om Mehta. Over a course of a marathon two hours at his residence at 1 Race Course, we tried to convince him to take over the reigns of the country. Yashwantrao, however, left it to the party high command.

Yashwantrao Chavan was a great leader and a firm believer in encouraging actions and ideas that he thought had great potential. While a charismatic leader in his political life, he set an example in his personal life too. He was willing to do what was best for the nation and had no interest in personal gains or glory.

The 1970s were a period of great

political turmoil in the country. It was the decade of the Emergency, and the formation of the Janata Party, which lost the 1979 elections. Charan Singh had become the caretaker Prime Minister. And yet again, a coterie of MPs visited Yashwantrao to convince him to take on the mantle of prime ministership. There was no one more deserving. And again, he refused.

Yashwantrao and Venutai were both well respected. And Yashwantrao was a loyal and loving husband; he stood firmly by his wife's side even while she was suffering from tuberculosis, which was incurable in those days. Venutai passed away before him. Whenever I met him after her demise, his eyes would involuntarily fill up with tears. He was unable to take the shock of her death and passed away soon after her. And India lost a great man, that can never be seen again. He was a rare entity. ■

Common Man's Leader

He always looked beyond caste, religion and class

He was an extraordinary leader who cared for the common man. He always felt responsible and accountable for people's problem. It is need of hour to follow Yashwantrao Chavan's ideas and thinking today. I hope his centenary year is the harbinger of much-needed change says **Ulhas Pawar**, Member of Legislative Council



My generation received political guidance from Yashwantrao Chavansaheb. Having been a part of the youth Congress during that period, I can personally vouch for that. Yashwantrao Chavan was referred by all as Saheb. We used to congregate for discussion at Dadasaheb Chavan's residence, who was Yashwantrao's nephew.

In the early days after independence, it was mandatory for all Congress workers to attend annual camps, conferences and Chintan Shibirs. Yashwantrao was a major force behind this discipline. National policies were discussed during these camps. The idea was to conduct brainstorming sessions at the grass root level. As young Congress workers, we used to wait eagerly for Saheb's and Jagjivanbabu's speeches during these camps.

In 1971, I was president of the Maharashtra Yuvak Congress. Saheb was to visit Pune in 1972 to unveil the statue of Maharishi Vitthal Ramji Shinde, which was very close to my residence. I wrote to him, requesting him to visit my house. I went to the airport to receive him, alongwith many senior leaders of the Pune Congress like Shivajirao Dhare, Namdeorao Matey and Bhausaheb Shiroley. Everyone wanted Saheb to visit his house, but Yashwantrao told his PA that he would be visiting mine.

The fact that Yashwantrao wanted to visit a junior worker's house surprised every other leader present there on the occasion. But it was just the mark of the kind of man he was, always encouraging juniors. Just as he had promised, he came to my house on Kabir Chowk. I had rented two rooms in Kirad Wada. His car was unable to enter the small lane, so he got out and walked in from the main road. He came over and we had a wonderful conversation over tea. He seemed to have developed a liking for me and did not bother about status.

He was an extraordinary leader who cared for the common man. He also took the pioneering decision to protect and preserve folk art and pulled it out of obscurity. It was Yashwantrao who insisted that tamasha, (a traditional dance-drama of Maharashtra)



The warm send-off by Maharashtra State Employee's Federation was given to Yashwantrao Chavan after becoming Defence Minister

be called Lok Kala (folk art). The traditional Marathi sport form of wrestling (kushti) was also promoted.

A particular incident comes to mind when I think of his magnanimity. Once, in a meeting at Aurangabad for which he was present, I had given a speech that he had liked. After the meeting, he was unable to find me to convey his appreciation. But he still made it a point to seek me out and commend me on my speech. Even in his personal life, Yashwantrao was a kind and loving person. He loved his mother, who single-handedly brought him up through great hardships, and adored his wife, Venutai, whom we used to call Kaki.

He also advised me to contest 1977 elections. I, of course, listened to him. He used to tell us, "Once you are elected, you belong to everyone – those who voted for you as well as those who opposed you." You are the representative of the entire constituency. There was a fakir in Karad, who, while asking for alms used to say, 'May god bless those who give and those who don't.' That is how the elected politician should be." He always felt responsible and accountable for people's problems. He once expressed that democracy would lose its relevance if differences of opinion became ego wars which would spiral into envy and jealousies.



The Chief Minister Yashwantrao Chavan gave visit to Vengurla Nagar Parishad in 1961. To his right P.K. Sawant

He wanted to create leaders with a healthy attitude. He wanted to create the local self-governments at the rural level as laboratory and workshops for such leadership. It was because of him that Maharashtra became a pioneering State for the Panchayat Raj. The leader seeking to enter the State Assembly and Parliament were required to go up the ladder of local self-government. The Panchayat Raj was supposed to be the training centre for political administrators.

He always looked beyond caste, religion and class. This helped make the Congress party a secular organisation. His politics was of addition. He brought Dadasaheb Gaikwad, a senior

leader from the Republican party to the Congress. He recommended Bandhalkar, a member of the Ramoshi caste, as a Member of Legislative Council, while at the same time, suggesting Dada Limaye, a Brahmin, as chairman of the Colaba Zilla Parishad. It is certain that he would have been deeply disillusioned by the current-day election process, the prevalent castiest attitude and the financially-oriented scenario.

Today, if the Congress has to move ahead, it is imperative to follow Yashwantrao Chavan's ideals and thinking. I hope his centenary year is the harbinger of that much-needed change. ■

As told to Arun Khore

A Leader with a Difference

A rare quality of Yashwantraoji was to get apprised of any issue he would come across.

If the officials differed on any issue, he would try to understand it, and convince them about his view if necessary. This showed that at the core, he was a civilized man. He never tried to show off his ministerial authority, says **Sharad Kale**, General Secretary, Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishthan.

I worked with Yashwantrao Chavan from 1974 to 1977, and again for some time in 1979. He didn't know me when I was posted in Delhi. Sharad Upasani, who had worked with Chavan, recommended my name. Chavan was the Finance Minister when I joined his office. Soon after, he became the Minister of External Affairs. He asked me if I wanted to stay in the Finance Ministry or shift to Ministry for External Affairs along with him. There was a reason: Other ministries had IAS officers, but Ministry of External Affairs was the domain of IFS. I said, 'I

came to Delhi so that I could work with you. I don't care which ministry I serve in.' He took me into Ministry of External Affairs.

One important feature of Yashwantrao Chavan's persona was lack of duality as a leader and a person. He was a sensitive and cultured man. His politics was transparent and clean. He stood out amongst the leaders of his time due to his love for literature, studiousness and connoisseurship. He was a discerning and knowledgeable reader of Marathi literature. He was curious about the



Dalit literature that was being published widely then.

His studious nature marked his functioning style as a minister. He read the proposals closely. A studious person doesn't take decision without thinking it thoroughly. Yashwantrao had this quality. He had to make speeches often as the External Affairs Minister. There would be a constant traffic of foreign dignitaries. Yashwantrao often had to deal directly with them at the ministerial level. He made it a point to do homework about the respective country and India's policy regarding it. Usually such preparation is the job of the officials in the ministry. But Yashwantrao would not be contented. He always used to look for more information.

Even prior to foreign tours, he would read up on the country to be visited in addition to the briefing by the officials. When in London, watching



Yashwantrao Chavan with foreign senior officers

a play would invariably be on his agenda. He tried to get information about the latest developments on the British stage. In USA, his favourite haunt was book stores. He could easily spend two-four hours in a book shop. His tours would be planned accordingly. I used to carry his money, so it would be my responsibility to pay book bills. He would also keenly visit museums in foreign countries. Yashwantrao believed that museum speaks a lot about the country's culture. He had this attitude to looking at the things with awareness.

He accompanied the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on Russia tour in 1976. In bilateral relations, some issues can be resolved only at the high level. The decision-maker must have a thorough knowledge, because a minor mistake can cost his/her country dear. There is no scope for amendments later. A certain language has to be used. In those days, India and Russia traded in respective local currencies, i.e. Rupee and Rubles. Elsewhere, the trade was conducted in a foreign currency. India and Russia were discussing this issue for long. Andrei Gromyko was then the USSR Foreign Minister. He had a formidable reputation as an international statesman. Indira Gandhi assigned Yashwantrao the task to hold talks with him, though the issue concerned the finance ministry and Yashwantrao handled the talks with élan.

Henry Kissinger visited India just 15 days after Yashwantrao took the charge of the External Affairs Ministry. Sale of American weapons to Pakistan was then a burning issue. India needed to assert its stand and articulate its worries strongly. Yashwantrao did that very well. He exemplified how any task should be accomplished keeping the nation's interest at the top of the mind. If the officials differed on a certain issue, he would try and understand it, and convince them about his own view if necessary. This showed that at the core, he was a civilized man. He never tried to show off his ministerial authority.



Attending a meeting as Minister for External Affairs.



After the 1962 war, Sino-Indian relations were being maintained only at the lower official level, not at the level of ambassadors. Yashwantrao felt that relations needed to be restored. In the foreign affairs, protocol is very important. It is also important to choose the right avenue of communication. He had been the Defence Minister, so he was fully aware of seriousness of the situation between the two countries. And yet, he felt it was not advisable to nurture a permanent adversarial relationship with our big neighbour. Restoration had to start at the ambassador's level, because ambassador could be the conduit to reach out to the top Chinese leaders. Yashwantrao played an important role in all this process, and as a result, K

R Narayanan was appointed as our ambassador in Beijing.

As the External Affairs Minister, his department did not deal with common man's issues. But he regularly received letters from the people of his constituency. Letter-writers looked upon him as if he were an elderly person of the family, because he had familial relations with the people. The typical Maharashtrian simplicity was very much visible in his behaviour, attitude and dressing. Yashwantrao always had excellent relations with the officials working under him. He knew them on the first-person basis. He was always a stickler for keeping deadlines; I never saw him postponing something to tomorrow that needed to be done today. ■

As told to Vijay Chormare

The Man of Principles

Yashwantraoji's honesty and selflessness made him the icon of the leaders of his time.

Yashwantraoji changed the traditional framework of bureaucracy. He brought in a new structure so that officers, right from Mantralaya to district level, co-operate with the people. He transformed the Maharashtra.



Such a towering personality Yashwantraoji had that whosoever came across him felt humble before him. His centenary year takes me to the down memory. I am one of the fortunate journalists who had chance to meet him many a times.

It was sometime in 1958-59. Yashwantraoji was the Chief Minister. The Samyukta Maharashtra (Unified Maharashtra) agitation had flared up in Belgaum, Karwar, Nipani and other areas along the Maharashtra-Karnataka border. Nine agitators were killed in the police firing ordered by erstwhile Belagum district police chief, Mr. Lewis. The incident drew an angry reaction across Maharashtra. People were furious. Yashwantraoji asked Maharashtra Congress Committee President, Rajarambapu Patil, to prepare a fact-finding report. I was a part of this delegation headed by Patil that visited Belgaum. We heard the woes of the ill-fated people. People narrated the instances of police atrocities. I had made my own notes, as a journalist.

A report was prepared by one of the delegates. It did not contain details. Patil did not approve it as he was to send the report to the Maharashtra Chief Minister and the Prime Minister. It was necessary that the report recorded all the relevant incidents in an objective manner. Patil assigned the task to me. I wrote up an elaborate report. But MPCC also needed to articulate, in this report, what justice it expected from the Centre. Patil contacted Chavan over phone. The Chief Minister asked us to come to Mumbai for a discussion.

Patil and I then went to Mumbai and met Chavan. The report was approved by MPCC's executive committee unanimously and it was forwarded to the Prime Minister. The effort paid off. The Centre took a serious note of the inhuman police firing that had claimed the lives of nine youths. Mr. Lewis was transferred to Assam. During this

period, I came to know Chavan very closely and it later developed in to a friendship, rather than a professional relationship between a politician and a journalist. The Samyukta Maharashtra agitation from 1953 to 1960 is a piece of recorded history. The Delhi leadership wasn't in favour of creation of unified Maharashtra. However, after Chavan became the Chief Minister of the bilingual state in 1956, he met the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru many times on this issue and apprised him of the ground realities, the intense feelings of the people of Maharashtra. He tried his best to persuade Nehru and eventually succeeded, yet, he did not claim the credit for this victory. Instead, publicly, he credited it to the people of Maharashtra.

I wish to declare that this State of Maharashtra, recently formed, will work for the betterment of the common people of Maharashtra, but if it comes to sacrifice whatever best and grand we have, it will be done primarily for India. This is so, because, we believe from the beginning that Maharashtra depends on India; its greatness depends on the greatness of India. All Maharashtrians believe that both India and Maharashtra can progress only when there is oneness of interest.

- Y.B. Chavan

After the new State came into existence, Yashwantraoji focussed all his energies on bringing about an all-round development. Maharashtra faced problems in myriad areas: agriculture, education, industry, irrigation, roads, whatnot. Yashwantrao tried to make the people aware of the new challenges, and primed them to face them. Government took the policy decisions and facilitated the finance for the

development. He believed that development could not be achieved without people's participation. Along with people's cooperation, a positive assistance by the bureaucracy too was crucial.

Yashwantraoji changed the traditional framework of bureaucracy. He brought in a new structure so that officials, right from the Mantralaya to the district level, cooperate with the people. He transformed Maharashtra, and in the process mentored people. Therefore he is aptly called 'the Architect of new Maharashtra'. In 1962, while he was crafting the policy for Maharashtra's all-round development to make it a model state, Prime Minister Nehru summoned him to Delhi. Yashwantraoji had to rush to the national capital leaving the task un-accomplished. However, he left his legacy of self-less politics behind.

He assumed the charge of Ministry of Defence. However, in the years ahead, he had to take on various other responsibilities. He became the External Affairs Ministers, and then went on to become the Deputy Prime Minister. During his stay in Delhi he carved out a distinct identity as a studious and knowledgeable parliamentarian.

He received accolades from all over the country and also from abroad to become a prominent national figure. He became so much a confidante advisor and the fellow cabinet colleague of the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru that in any national crisis Nehru used to seek his advice.

His 22-year tenure at the centre earned him only bouquets and no brick-bats at all. Yashwantraoji was the man of principle, ambitions and sincerity. His honesty and selflessness made him the icon of the young and upcoming leaders of his time. In this centenary a befitting tribute to late Yashwantraoji would be to imbibe his commitment to the nation and to the people as well as his integrity. ■

- Rambhau Joshi

The Pioneer in Many Ways

Armed with a progressive outlook and modern vision for State, Yashwantrao was responsible for many firsts

With a perspective of Maharashtra's overall development he saw to it that Vidarbha, the part of erstwhile Central Province and Berar, get equal importance and should not feel left out. He took the decision to hold winter sessions of the Assembly in Nagpur.



With Prime Minister Pandit Nehru laying foundation stone of Koyana dam in 1962

A popular figurehead both with his fellow politicians Yashwantrao Chavan was India's youngest Chief Minister when he took over the reigns of the bilingual State of Maharashtra at the age of 42. Loknayak Jaiprakash Narayan believed him to be the most efficient Chief Minister in the country. Yashwantrao was proudly praised for his political efficiency and administrative skills by then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

Yashwantrao Chavan's influence resonates through the pages of history and is embedded, literally in the State of Maharashtra itself. It was his decision to name the newly formed

State Maharashtra, in consensus with the Centre and the members of the opposition.

Political leader is his first and natural identity as he shouldered many an important responsibilities in political field. The other side of his personality without which his real identity would be incomplete is that of a litterateur of a great stature and a connoisseur of arts with high standing amongst the maestros.

He gave Marathi the status of the official language of the State of Maharashtra and set up the Directorate of the Marathi Language, thus making Marathi the language of

the administration. In the very first Assembly Session of the Maharashtra State he formed Maharashtra Rajya Sahitya and Sanskriti Mandal December 21, 1960.

He initiated awards and prizes for plays and playwrights and started scheme of financial assistance to artists under which Balgandharva was the first to receive honorarium of Rs. 300 and Rajkavi Yashwant was awarded Rs. 400 per month.

He established the Vishvakosh Mandal (encyclopedia board) at Wai on May 17, 1962. He appointed a special committee under the chairmanship of Tarkateertha Lakshman Shastri Joshi for the development of literature and culture, and had many prominent thinkers and intellectuals on its board.

His perspective of development of Maharashtra as a whole had no bias, malice or discrimination towards any region. Therefore, he saw to it that Vidarbha that was the part of Central Province and Berar get equal importance and should not feel left out. He took the decision to hold winter sessions of the Assembly in Nagpur.

In a regime that encouraged inclusive growth and development, Yashwantrao was very particular about ensuring that each and every citizen, no matter what his background, was well looked after. And in keeping with that policy, he accepted the demands of the Buddhist community to be considered

backward, and gave the community all the concessions that the Harijans, Dalits and other backward classes were entitled to.

The Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Memorial was constructed at the Nagpur Diksha Bhoomi where Dr Ambedkar took his oath and his birth anniversary on April 14 was declared as a state holiday.

On the backdrop of the paucity of power that is being faced by the State today, Yashwantraoji's efforts in the field gain much importance. The Koyana Hydroelectricity Project was stated on March 1, 1958 by Yashwantrao, who also inaugurated the first operational generator in the project on May 16, 1962. The Purna Project in Marathwada as well as the Paras Thermal Power Plant in the Vidarbha, were also brought to fruition under Yashwantrao's able leadership

During his tenure as the Chief Minister from 1957 to 1962, Yashwantrao took many important decisions that facilitated people's welfare. He improved the administrative machinery in the State and brought about revolutionary changes in the educational, social, cultural and agricultural segments in Maharashtra, making it India's most progressive and developed State.

Armed with a progressive outlook and modern vision for his State, Yashwantrao was responsible for many firsts. A Development Commission was appointed for planning and development. Revenue tribunals benches were established at Nagpur and Rajkot in order to decentralize the administration.

The Educational Policy of the State was restructured during his tenure which encouraged vocational education, started Foundation Courses, offered scholarships to rural and economically backward classes.

The decision to set up the Marathwada University at Aurangabad and the Shivaji University at Kolhapur to spread education all over the State was taken under his leadership. Ashramshalas were also opened to educate tribals.



At the Convocation of Marathwada University

The first ever military education school was started at Satara with his efforts. This helped the students get basic training and preparation for the admission test they would have to undergo for the National Defence Academy (NDA).

Industrial sector was also given a major boost under Yashwantrao's Chief Ministership by establishing the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC). Municipal corporations and local self-governments were encouraged to start industrial zones.

The Mumbai State Financial Corporation (MSFC) was created to provide financial assistance to the industries. It was subsequently called the Maharashtra State Financial Corporation.

Yashwantraoji promoted Cooperative Sector in the rural areas by forming rural cooperative banks and credit societies. Cooperative banks and land development banks were also promoted to provide loans to farmers.

The face of agriculture underwent a drastic transformation under Yashwantrao's supervision. The

Mumbai State New Farm Labour Act (Mumbai Rajya Nava Kulkaayada) was enforced, which served to revolutionize land ownership in agriculture.

The Land Ceiling Act was made applicable in Maharashtra during Yashwantrao's tenure. The Central Government followed the suit and made it applicable years throughout the country after 12.

The State Irrigation Corporation was formed under the chairmanship of SG Barve. The Irrigation Subdivision was formed and the survey of available water resource was also conducted.

The Worli Dairy was set up in order to supply milk to the city of Mumbai. Yashwantrao also introduced a diploma in dairy technology at the Dairy Technology Institute in Aarey Dairy. The Diva-Dasgaon Railway was started in the Konkan region and Yashwantrao also obtained permission from the Centre to start the Diva-Panvel line.

It is he who introduced the Wild Animal Protection Act first that prohibited hunting and made provision to create sanctuaries. ■

- R Sohani

An Able Administrator

An able administrator, Yashwantraoji was the real task-master and the decision maker.

Once for a scheduled programme volunteers got late. Yashwantraoji did not tolerate it and said, "It is their programme. They should have been on time. People must be waiting for us, let's not waste time." Such a stickler for efficiency and time he was, says former IAS Officer, **S. Rajgopal**.



S. Rajgopal



I would always cherish memories of my association with Yashwantrao as they are very precious to me. He was very pragmatic leader. I was indeed fortunate to have worked with this foresighted leader.

I remember having met Yashwantrao Chavan first time in 1960 when I was the assistant collector of Saurashtra, a district of then Mumbai State comprised major parts of today's Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Gujarat. I was just 27 then. Sir V.T. Krishnamachari, my grandfather, the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission was a good friend of Yashwantrao and he suggested me to opt for a posting in Maharashtra.

I worked at Mahad, Panvel, Jalgaon, and various other places. I am tempted to mention here that while in Jalgaon I was the returning officer when Pratibha Patil (now the President of India) won her first election as MLA from Jalgaon.

Yashwantrao was the Chief Minister. He had assigned the crucial task of drafting a bill on the Panchayat Raj to a committee headed by Balvantrai Mehta. Abasaheb Khedkar, Narendra Tidke and Yashwantrao himself were closely watching this process. Soon the Bill was passed and Zilla Parishads were set up across Maharashtra. Yashwantrao appointed me as CEO of Satara Zilla Parishad.

Yashwantrao used to visit Satara district every week, generally over the weekend. The then Commissioner of Pune Shankarrao Mohite often accompanied him. They would stay at the Circuit House. When Yashwantrao toured the rural parts, I doubled up as driver, with the Chief Minister riding shotgun. Yashwantrao would take me along because I knew the area well. I had picked up Marathi. I had crisscrossed the whole district, and could give correct information on any local issue. So Yashwantrao trusted me. He would speak to me in Marathi.

We would visit six-seven villages in a day. Thousands of party workers would meet the CM to air their grievances. Yashwantrao would personally talk to the officials and ask



With rural people of Ladakh dancing on the beat of folk music

them to do the needful. He used to mix-up with the people and communicated with them at ease. He would hold meetings with the officials late night and the meetings would last till 10 pm. Government projects would be reviewed. He would check if the official information squared with what the locals had to say. So the officials had to do their homework before coming for the meeting.

Whenever he toured three-four villages during a day, locals at each village would arrange for him a meal, especially non-vegetarian. He knew that I was a vegetarian, and would make sure that I, and other officers, had had our meals. Yashwantrao never refused. One day I advised him of not to eat in every village as that could take a toll on his health. He said that the poor villagers felt a lot better when he ate with them. It was a token of their affection for the Chief Minister, so he must partake of their food. He was such a kind-hearted person and a through gentleman that he always respected peoples' sentiments.

Once he was scheduled to attend a program in a village. He was ready, but the local volunteers were yet to turn up. I was ready with the jeep. He sat next to me, and asked, "who are we waiting for"? I told him that the local volunteers were yet come. Yashwantrao quickly replied, "Let's go. It is their programme, they should have come here on time. People must be waiting

for us, let's not waste time." This was the testimony of the peoples' real leader and an able administrator that he was. He was a stickler for efficiency and time. Often he would be punctual even on the tours, especially when he was to meet people.

After the war with China, austerity measures were applied across the country. States were asked to cut the expenses. As a result, the construction work on Satara CEO's residence was left unfinished. When Yashwantrao came to Satara local workers pointed this out to him. He saw the incomplete building and directed concerned official at once that the construction be completed. He opined that the austerity measures were applicable for new works and not for the works that had already began so as to leave them incomplete halfway. He was the real task-master and the decision maker.

When he left for Delhi to take up new assignment at the Centre on invitation from the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, he asked me to shift the base there. I went to Delhi as a deputy secretary. Working under him, I learnt a lot. The workers coming from Maharashtra received a lot of affection from him. Venutai, his wife, too was a very warm, affable person. She was a decent lady! In Yashwantrao's absence, she used to look after the relatives and workers who passed through their Delhi residence. ■

As told to Dr. Sambhaji Kharat

An Ideological Friend

He believed that Indian democracy could be enriched and kept free of flaws only if we abide by the Constitution

An inspirer, a role model for many, Yashwantrao Chavan was an aficionado of literature and had kept himself apprised of the latest literary trends. Here are the glimpses of the leader from the eyes of a trend-setter writer in Marathi Dalit literature, a new genre, **Laxman Mane**, senior writer and social worker who calls Chavan an ideological friend.

I met Yashwantraoji around 35 years ago. On one hand I was frustrated by the poverty and was angry with the dehumanizing social system around me. At the same time, I was exploring the brilliant thought of Dr Ambedkar. I had also come under the influence of socialism. I met Yashwantrao at this juncture in my life. We became friends in the very first meeting.

When I was a child, I often heard about him from others. Phaltan, where I lived, was the place of Yashwantrao's in-laws. So this area had a lot of political awareness. In fact I studied in a school named after Yashwantrao, till Std. XIth I saw him in person for the first time during the 1957 election. We met much later, in 1973, at Satara.

I was then working with Narendra Dabholkar, in Samajwadi Yuvak Dal. We conducted several agitations against Yashwantrao; but he, unlike other politicians, never tried to evade our issues. He tackled them head-on.

Therefore, not a day passes when I don't remember him. I wrote Upra in 1980. When Yashwantrao read it, he liked it very much.

Our relations became firmer. He visited my house which was in a slum in Mangalwar Peth area of Satara. We became family. He looked upon my wife, Shashi, as his daughter. It was this book that brought me closer to him.

Yashwantrao had immense

sympathy for the poor. He was of course the first Chief Minister of Maharashtra, but more than that, he was a visionary who dreamed of all-round development of the country. He struggled to secure dignity for the common man, no one has acknowledged this struggle of his. He strived to offer dignity to the poorest of the poor workers in the rural areas, at the expense of higher classes. When Yashwantrao became the Defence Minister at the Centre, he made Marotrao Kannamwar the Chief Minister. Kannamwar, who hailed from Vidarbha, belonged to Beldar community, a nomadic tribe migrated to Maharashtra from Andhra Pradesh. After that he made Vasant Rao Naik, the Chief Minister who too belonged to a nomadic community. Naik was the Chief Minister for 12 years. Yashwantrao appealed to the poor, and gave them dignity. This style of functioning was indeed praiseworthy, it had a great appeal.

Yashwantrao took along the farmers, farm labourers and those neglected by the society while trying to deal with their problems. He was always insistent about implementation of Kul-Kayda and agricultural land ceiling act. Dr Ambedkar had to struggle for long in the Assembly on Mahar Watan land issue. Yashwantrao, it can be said, achieved what Ambedkar had sought on this issue.



The act which Yashwantrao brought in on Mahar Watan issue put an end to a century-old slavery. Dadasaheb Gaikwad, R D Bhandare, R S Gavai and Dadasaheb Rupwate provided him a crucial help in this process.

Yashwantrao also saw to it that the system did not enslave the untouchables again. Though Pandit Nehru influenced Yashwantrao to some extent, he drew upon Ambedkar's thought for achieving his goals and executing his policies. He was a socialist, as well as an egalitarian and a democrat. He never endorsed regressive ideologies. His objective was empowerment of poorest of the poor, which the Constitution too expects. So whether or not he resolved the issues as per Ambedkar's thought does not



Chavan's Library

Chavan's library is lined with books on politics, economics, philosophy, social science and a large number of novels. He has books in his drawing room, in his bed room, in his dining room –in every room. The range of books he reads could be judged from the following titles picked at random: Durants' 'The Story of Civilisation', Ilya Ehrenburg's 'People and life', Simone De Beauvoir's 'Force of Circumstances', John F. Kennedy's 'The Strategy of Peace', Vladimir Nobokov's 'Lolita', Gunter Grass's 'The Tin Drum', Ritchie Calder's 'The Inheritors', Pierre Teilhard De Chardin's 'The Phenomenon of Man', Henry Miller's 'Nexus', Albert Camus's 'The Fall', Bertrand Russell's 'My Philosophical Development', Arnold Toynbee's 'History of the World', Alexander Solzhenitsyn's 'One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich', and Michael Sholokhov's 'And Quiet Flows the Don'. He has many titles of Lawrence Durrell, Norman Mailer, Mary McCarthy, J.D. Salinger, Graham Greene and C.P. Snow.

In his young days he was a poet and an essayist. He confessed with some hesitation that he used to write poetry and added : " I think everybody in his early days is a poet. There is a sort of Poetic age, I would say through which every one passes. Some write, others don't. Some of the poems I wrote were politically motivated." He is an avid reader and reads whenever he can-on journeys, during weekends, at night. He said: " Every night I read for about an hour something completely unrelated to my official work."

- Chavan and the Troubled Decade by T. V. Kunhi Krishnan

matter here.

Yashwantrao knew that the Constitution could accelerate the social transformation and give it a direction. Therefore, he was very sensitive to the Constitution. He believed that Indian democracy could be enriched and kept free of flaws only if we abide by the Constitution. Whenever he and I discussed anything in the context of the Constitution, he never put

forward any thought that strayed from the Constitution. The Constitutional philosophy has the common man at its centre. It puts greatest emphasis on the man and his holistic welfare.

Chavan too, in his politics, kept the poor at the centre, and aimed at their elevation. He transcended caste and creed and endorsed the social justice articulated by Mahatma Phule, Chhatrapati Shahu, Dr Ambedkar and

Pandit Nehru. He knew that social transformation can not start until the feudal system is broken down. He believed that human beings should be empowered therefore he laid the foundation for creation of local civic bodies. The idea was that if the power percolated to the common man, it would accelerate the social transformation.

He was a fine writer and an extremely well-read man. Because of his powers of observation and his reading, his writing had the quality of a professional writer's work. In fact he was a more of a writer than a career politician. His writings centered on the life, not the art.

Since he believed that man is at the centre of life, his literary values reflected that. Books such as Krishnakath, Bhumika, Sahyadriche Ware show this clearly. His writings seek and dare to take the society forward. Yashwantrao was extremely curious about Dalit literature. He had a literary friendship with N D Mahanor, Bhalchandra Nemade, Namdeo Dhasal, Parth Polke, etc. He had a lot of affection for pro-transformation writers.

The Congress in which he believed was a people's Congress. The party had then adopted the thought of socialist democracy. Yashwantrao believed in transformation through the Parliament. His politics had been shaped by democratic values, so he insisted that politics must be based on the Constitution and the democracy. He also believed that socialism will find roots in Maharashtra first. Therefore, as long as he was on the political scene, the common people of this country were assured of security and transformation.

In the times of Yashwantraoji forces of caste, money and muscle-power had not overtaken the democracy. Now the democracy is being decimated at every step. India being an agricultural country, Yashwantrao promoted agriculture-based industrialization. Today, we have capitalist economy, which has wrecked everything. This economy was brought in by the current establishment, and the common man is suffering because of it. Those who chant his name must do some introspection on this. ■

As told to Arun Jawle

An Intellectual Statesman

Yashwantrao was successful because of his spotless character, friendly feelings and practical wisdom of Maharashtra

Yashwantrao laid the foundation of all-round development. He introduced Education Bill so that the poor should not face any difficulty in educating themselves. He also adopted the Zilla Parishad Act so that the local bodies could become strong to develop rural areas.

The glorious period of freedom movement in India proved to be a producer of intellectuals and men of character who not only forgot themselves before the Nation but gave ideal leadership to India. Several personalities were developed in the movement whose greatness is still an example worth analysing, understanding, emulating. Innumerable persons right from the lower strata to the higher strata of society shone like stars in the firmament of national life in those days. Yashwantrao is one such in whose life we see the reflection of all these forces of idealism and changing life.

Yashwantrao was born in a poor farmers family on March 12, 1913 and his family which had its roots in rural area was living a humdrum life like hundreds of other rural folk, who never experienced any hope, any enthusiasm or any change from their penury; there life had no touch of any development. Yashwantrao's father however, refused to get suffocated in this dire poverty and migrated to the near by town Karad to seek new pastures, where he got employment as a bailiff.

With the entry of modern urban civilization into one's life new doors of development are opened. Of course all are not fortunate in this respect. But Yashwantrao was one of those fortunates whose life began to undergo a radical change because of the opportunity of getting English education. For this

credit goes to his brother Ganpatrao, who was greatly influenced by the social revolutionary idealism of Mahatma Jotiba Phule. Ganpatrao was convinced of the importance of English education and he readily showed Yashwantrao the path of new education despite being poor.

Satyashodhak Samaj's message of great social revolution was making powerful impact on the rural areas of Maharashtra, especially in the districts of Nashik, Pune, Satara and Kolhapur through intensive propaganda. A new freedom movement front was also being launched on a big scale at the same time in the rural areas and small towns. Yashwantrao, who was a witness to this two conflicting views and thinking, also came under their influence. These nationwide struggles were started against the alien rulers under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi during the three decades almost after a 10-12 year period each and the British Imperialism breathed its last at the end of the last struggle. The first movement of non-cooperation started in 1920 and subsided in 1923; 1930 witnessed a civil disobedience movement on a great scale, when Yashwantrao (16) was studying in a secondary school.

PARTICIPATION IN STRUGGLE

Being a lively teenager, he enthusiastically participated in the struggle since Indian Nationalism was



Congratulating Laxmanshastri Joshi for Padmasri

a guiding star in his life. As he was seeing the world with open mind, the national movement and international events influenced his mind when he was a student. He completed his college education during the period from 1930-1945 but at the same time he underwent political and cultural training during his jail trips during the Freedom Movement. Prison was his university where he studied Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru and M.N.Roy and also acquainted himself with the basic ideology of different revolutions in the west. Because of active participation in the Freedom Struggle he had hardly any time to thoroughly study text-books. But through the comparative study of Indian conditions, social and political

conditions and different ideologies and philosophies he cultivated a co-ordinating outlook. Even if he had to compromise with principle, he never swerved from the path of idealism.

PEOPLE’S TEACHER

In the freedom movement, he was a devoted follower and participated in it with all his heart into it. These freedom struggles not only developed Yashwantrao’s thinking power but also his oratory. He developed a style of his own and spoke with the masses and opened his heart to them, talked with them in a friendly manner. His speech was an intimate talk with his audience. Oratory is one of the essential arts in a democracy. Yashwantrao never wanted to conquer the gatherings or meetings. He spoke as if he was a teacher explaining the things in a simple style, a heart-to-heart talk. Yashwantrao desired to nurture democracy and a leader of democracy must be a people’s teacher like Yashwantrao.

UNDERGROUND LEADER

In the ‘Quit India’ movement of 1942 Yashwantrao led Satara district. He obtained law Degree in 1941. However instead of concentrating on legal practice he took burden of the political leadership of Satara district on his broad shoulders. He married Venutai, a beautiful damsel from a cultured family on June 2, 1942 and the marriage was celebrated with great pomp and show. But immediately afterwards he had to lead the underground movement and Yashwantrao was the youngest one among the leaders of ‘Quit India’ movement. He was elected to the Legislative Assembly 1946.

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY

Bombay is in a way the economic capital of India. This city was the nucleus of all cultural, religious and political activities in India before Independence. Yashwantrao went to live in this Bombay, when he assumed the post of Parliamentary Secretary on April 14, 1946 in the Kher Ministry. His friends and relatives in Satara Ardently desired that Yashwantrao should have been

given the charge of full-fledged ministry. But Yashwantrao was not after the power and accepted happily whatever came his way. He was pleased that he secured a seat in the Government. Morarji Desai was Home Minister. Then Morarji Desai learnt that this young man could not be firmly established in the Bombay administration till he was able to secure a honorable place in Maharashtra’s politics. He felt that it was necessary to train Yashwantrao, an able youth from the common strata of the rural area. So Morarji inquired of Yashwantrao courteously and asked him to join the Home Ministry. How could Yashwantrao refuse to accede to such a courteous request? He joined Morarji as his Parliamentary Secretary.

Morarji belonged to the tradition of British officers. Yet Yashwantrao



skillfully tried to become the pet of Morarji and became a good administrator like Morarji. Morarji was stern and stubborn, but Yashwantrao was able to please him and learnt the pros and cons of police administrative machinery.

During 1948-49 there was a spate of Hindu-Muslim riots. At that time Yashwantrao restructured the Homeguards organization and established a sort of army of volunteers who could protect themselves and others. He disciplined the civil supplies Department. Yashwantrao was the lover of art and folk arts, he also appreciated classical literature and he was enamoured of folk dances and ‘Shahiri’ played on the beat of ‘dud’ and ‘dholki’. He was the first Minister who succeeded in giving Government recognition to the ‘Tamasha- Maharashtra’ popular folk dance.

Though Yashwantrao was working

as Parliamentary Secretary in Bombay his mind was with his villagers and relatives. His brother, Ganpatrao was suffering from T.B. Ganpatrao’s wife also caught this disease, while attending her husband, young Venutai, Yashwantrao’s wife was engrossed in taking care of these two patients and she also caught T.B. Ganpatrao died in December 1947 and his wife also followed soon after. Yashwantrao now had to undertake the responsibility of bringing up Ganpatrao’s children. In the meanwhile Venutai’s sickness developed much and any how she became fit after taking treatment of Dr. Johnson, a missionary doctor of Miraj.

ASSUMES CHIEF MINISTERSHIP

The agitation for reorganization of States on linguistic basis gathered momentum not only in Maharashtra but in the whole country. The Congress high command was doubtful about the formation of States on linguistic basis, nevertheless demand for such State was proclaimed everywhere through meetings and various media. In Andhra Pradesh this problem assumed serious proportions and Pandit Nehru unwillingly gave his consent to the formation of the separate Andhra Pradesh. Agitation for Samyukta Maharashtra was launched as far back as in 1946, in which the litterateurs took lead. This agitation started by literary persons become people’s agitation later on and the Government of India constituted the Fazal Ali Commission to go into the problem of formation of States on linguistic basis and its report was published in October 1955. At that time even the Congress Party was seized with the problem of Samyukta Maharashtra and agitations over it. The Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee unanimously passed a resolution calling for the formation of Samyukta Maharashtra. But the Commission did not accede to the demand of Maharashtrais and the Congress broke into two groups-radical and liberal. Bhausaheb Hiray was the leader of the radical group. The agitation for the Samyukta Maharashtra was getting

fierce and fierce and Bhausaheb Hiray fully backed the agitation. Yashwantrao Chavan was from the beginning for the Samyukta Maharashtra but he was not ready to break away from Congress for that cause and participate in the struggle. After the 1956 elections the Congress Party was divided and instead of Morarji, Yashwantrao stood for election as the legislature party leader and he got elected.

FORMATION OF MAHARASHTRA

The bilingual Bombay State was formed on November 1, 1956. Yashwantrao Chavan became Chief Minister. At that time the Samyukta Maharashtra agitation had assumed a state-wide fierce nature. The whole of Maharashtra was pulsating with great morchas and mammoth meetings. During Morarji's regime from 1952-56 as many as 105 persons had become martyrs for Samyukta Maharashtra. Yashwantrao had to take the reins of the bilingual State against this background. No doubt it was a courageous decision of Yashwantrao and he publically proclaimed that he would not use guns to rule the new State and really he administered the State ably and skillfully.

Ultimately he explained to Pandit Nehru and other leaders that the Gujarati and Marathi speaking people are not willing to live together in the same state and brought round them to his views. He explicitly told them that if the bilingual experiment continued the Congress rule will be a thing of the past in Gujarat and Maharashtra in the next elections. The high command therefore agreed to form the Samyukta Maharashtra consisting of Western Maharashtra, Marathwada, Vidarbha and Konkan with Bombay as its capital. Accordingly the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha adopted the bill and Maharashtra State was formed under Yashwantrao Chavan's leadership on May 1, 1960. Yashwantrao was successful during the fifteen year period from 1946-60 because of his spotless character, friendly feelings and practical wisdom.

During the six year period from 1956-



Father Shri. Balwantrao

62 Yashwantrao laid the foundation of all-round development of Maharashtra. He introduced the Education Bill so that the poor should not face any difficulty in educating themselves. He also adopted the Zilla Parishad Act so that the local bodies could become strong to develop the rural areas. He explained the network of co-operative societies and led the basis of Maharashtra's agro-industrial development. His fame as a mature statesman, politician spread throughout the country during this period. The Indian rulers were lulled by the slogans of Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai and the Chinese betrayed India and attacked her in October 1962. Krishna Menon, friend of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who was the Defence Minister at that time had not any inkling of the Chinese betrayal. People were angry with him, the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha demanded his removal from the ministry. A demand was made that Yashwantrao should be made Defence Minister.

AS UNION MINISTER

Yashwantrao had run Maharashtra's administration, keeping in view the future development of Maharashtra. But as he was invited by the Prime Minister to perform the task of Defence Ministry, he unwillingly gave up Chiefministership of Maharashtra and assumed the charge of Defence.



Mother Smt. Vithabai

Afterwards, he excelled as Finance Minister, External Affairs Minister and Home Minister at the Centre.

In 1977, the Congress under the leadership of Indiraji suffered defeat at the Lok Sabha polls. Afterwards till 1980 Yashwantrao Chavan and the late Prime Minister Gandhi had a difference of opinion and they parted company. Yashwantrao felt sorry for this separation and repentant Yashwantrao returned to Congress (I) in 1981.

During the last four years, Yashwantrao had to face various domestic and family problems Dr. Raja Chavan, his nephew, who was almost a son to him died in a motor accident. His lifelong companion, Venutai expired on June 1, 1983. He was sorely grieved, almost lost interest in life. But gradually he overcame his grief. He accepted the championship of the Eighth Finance Commission and submitted his report to the Government. He went on doing all the work entrusted to him as MP. His mind was quite at ease and peaceful during the last year or so. He used to say, 'I have now not to gain anything. I have offered my services to the Janta Janardan'. He was falling in health but nobody thought that the death was knocking his door. He died on November 25, 1984, after a brief illness while dutiful serving the Nation. ■

- **Tarkateerth Laxmanshastri Joshi**

(Reproduced from Lokrajya March 1985)

Yashwantrao Chavan and the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement

Yashwantrao Chavan bore the wrath of the people at the peak of Samyukta Maharashtra movement, but became the winner ultimately.

Sensing the mood of people Jawaharlal Nehru accepted the proposal that the new State be called Maharashtra and chose Yashwantraoji as the first Chief Minister.

Yashwantrao Chavan's controversial role in Samyukta Maharashtra Movement proved a turning point in his career as a politician. Though Y. B. Chavan was always a staunch supporter of Samyukta Maharashtra including the city of Bombay, he refused to leave the Indian National Congress when the Congress High Command, the Congress working Committee and the Government of India rejected the demand for a unilingual state of the Marathi-speaking people and decided to create the bigger bilingual Bombay State. At the peak of the agitation for Samyukta Maharashtra with Bombay city as its capital, he had to incur the wrath of many people in Maharashtra.

As a student, Chavan had participated in the Salt-Satyagraha campaign launched by Mahatma Gandhi in 1930-1932 and had courted imprisonment. During the Quit India campaign in 1942, he evaded arrest for quite some time and organized resistance to the British Government in Satara district. In 1946, he accepted, after some hesitation, B.G.Kher's offer to join the Bombay Cabinet as a Parliamentary Secretary. Like many others, he shared the feeling that the masses in Maharashtra were not adequately represented in the Congress Ministries of Bombay in 1937 as well as in 1946. Yet when attempts were made to form a ginger group called Congress Shetkari Kamkari Sangh, he opposed the idea of forming such an intra-party



group with a separate constitution and a separate programme. When Keshavrao Jedhe, Shankarrao More, Bhausaheb Raut, Nana Patil, Tulsidas Jadhav and others left the Congress to form a new party called the Peasants and Workers Party on June 13, 1948, Chavan and his friends chose to remain in the Congress. Bhausaheb Hiray took over as the President of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) and Chavan was regarded as his trusted lieutenant.

In 1952, though Morarji Desai was defeated in his home constituency of Balsar, he was unanimously elected as the leader of the Legislative Congress Party and appointed as the Chief Minister of Bombay State. Chavan was inducted in the Bombay Cabinet as a

Cabinet Minister in 1952. At this time the demand for Samyukta Maharashtra including Bombay city was widely known that Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Chief Minister Morarji Desai and veteran Congress leaders such as S.K.Patil were opposed to the demand of Marathi-speaking people for a unilingual State of Maharashtra with Bombay as its capital. The Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad, an All Party organization, formed in 1946 and led by Shankarrao Deo and Bhausaheb Hiray, was trying to achieve its objective by restoring to methods of persuasions and negotiations. Though Chavan was never an active and enthusiastic participant, he continued to associate himself with the Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad despite his misgivings about Shankarrao Deo's strategy of forging an all-party front.

In 1953, when the appointment of the States Reorganisation Commission was under active consideration of the Government of India, both Deo and Hiray tried to secure the unreserved support of all Congressmen from Maharashtra and persuade them to play an active role in the work of the Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad. Assuring his support to Deo in this cause, Chavan expressed his personal opinion in a letter to Deo on 16th June 1953 and suggested that the solution to the question should not be sought through agitational politics. He believed that their immediate objective should

be to bring about an agreement among the Pradesh Congress Committee of Hyderabad, Vidarbha, Nagpur, Maharashtra and Bombay. He requested Deo to guide them without any inhibition and assured him that as far as his relations with Hiray were concerned, he would not allow anything to come between them because of personal considerations. It seems that coming events were already casting their shadows in June 1953 and Deo, perhaps, tried to forestall a possible attempt of Morarji Desai to weaken the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement by pitting young and ambitious Chavan against his senior colleague, Bhausaheb Hiray after creating a rift between them.

MEMORANDUM TO SRC

The Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad decided to submit a single memorandum to the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC). This, however was not acceptable to an influential section in the MPCC consisting of B.M. Gupte, Deokinandan Narayan, Malojirao Naik-Nimbalkar, G.D.Tapase and T.R.Deogirikar. With the help of N.V.Gadgil and Y.B.Chavan, Shankarrao Deo succeeded in persuading the Executive Committee of the MPCC to drop its earlier plan of sending a separate memorandum to the S.R.C.

On October 4, 1955 an informal meeting of the Maharashtra leaders was held at D.K.Kunte's residence and along with Hiray, Deogirikar and T.R. Naravane, Chavan assured Deo that he would do everything to make it impossible to run a bilingual state if it was brought into existence on the recommendation of the SRC. In his memories Sahnkarrao Deo admits that he was surprised as well as pleased to find Chavan determined to oppose the bilingual state. The SRC not only rejected the demand for Samyukta Maharashtra but also excluded Mahavidarbha from the 'balanced' bilingual state of Bombay by proposing its formation as a separate State. When the Maharashtra Congress leaders appealed to the Congress High Command, the Congress President Shri U.N. Dhebar, invited Deo, Hiray, N.V. Gadgil, Deogirikar, Kunte and Chavan



for discussions.

In their talks with Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad and Gobind Ballabh Pant a stalemate was reached. Deo, in consultation with renowned economist Dhananjayrao Gadgil, decided to propose the formation of a bigger bilingual Bombay state including Mahavidarbha as an alternative solution. In an emergency meeting hurriedly called at H.V. Pataskar's residence on 19th October 1955, Chavan lost his temper and accused Deo of betraying them and making the new move without taking them into confidence. He threatened to go back to Bombay and refused to accompany the Maharashtra delegation which was scheduled to meet at Azad's residence for third and final meeting. In order to pacify Chavan, Deo gave an assurance that in their meeting with the Congress High Command, he would not, on his own, propose the alternative of a bigger bilingual Bombay State. But he did not keep the promise and in retrospect he felt that it was but natural for Chavan to draw his own conclusions about the way in which Deo was conducting the negotiations.

STORMY PHASE

8th November 1955 marked the beginning of particularly stormy phase in the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement in which there was an unprecedented outburst of violence and police repression. Morarji Desai

precipitated a crisis by issuing a whip that if any Congress Legislator wished to speak on the Government resolution based on the three-state formula, he must make a speech in its favour or abstain from voting. This attempt to gag all criticism was resented by several Marathi-speaking Congress Legislators including Hiray and Naravane who were willing to resign. However, Chavan felt that such an action would prove unwise and suicidal for the Maharashtra Congress. About 30 legislators led by him decided to remain absent or abstain from voting when 116 Congress legislators handed over their letters of resignation to Hiray. Chavan and his friends refused to toe the line. Chavan's defiant posture was denounced by Maharashtra Congress leader as betrayal. Deo had undertaken a fast for five days to atone for misdeeds of a large section of the audience which had heckled Morarji Desai and S.K. Patil and hurled stones and shoes at them in public meeting on 20th November 1955. The fasting leader lost his temper and made certain disparaging remarks against Chavan. When Deogirikar conveyed to Chavan gist of Deo's comments, Yashwantrao felt insulted and decided not to call on Deo for further discussion. On December 1, 1955 he raised the banner of revolt at the meeting of the North Satara District Congress Committee held at Phaltan in the Manmohan Palace. In his frontal attacks on Deo's

leadership, Chavan declared that he was not at all in favour of resignations and strikes. He also reiterated what he had said in 1953 that given the choice between Nehru and Samyukta Maharashtra he would always prefer the former. Chavan raised a hornet's nest by this speech and his reported remark indicating preference for Nehru against Maharashtra was often quoted by his critics for many years. What he meant thereby was that he preferred the wider national perspective as represented by Nehru against the demand for Samyukta Maharashtra. Which was confined to only one part of India. Widespread impression in Maharashtra was that Chavan and his colleagues were dancing to the tunes of Morarji Desai who was believed to have master minded the intra-party wrangle. The feeling persisted that it was a command performance and Chavan, Naik- Nimbalkar and Tapase had readily obliged Morarjibhai who wished to dislodge both Deo and Hiray as the leaders of MPCC.

On December 22, 1955, the Bombay Municipal Corporation passed a resolution moved by opposition corporators demanding the inclusion of Bombay city in Maharashtra. This

was possible because of the support of 21 rebel congressmen guided by T.R. Naravane. On December 26, Morarji Desai retaliated by asking Narvane to resign from the cabinet. The MPCC leaders could not make up their minds whether they should accept a city-State of Bombay or make Bombay city a centrally administered area. In a radio-broadcast on January 16, 1956, Jawaharlal Nehru formally announced the Government's decision to make Bombay a centrally administered city. This was followed by serious disturbances in Bombay which according to Pro-Samyukta Maharashtra Writers led to the death-toll of 105 persons who died as a result of indiscriminate police-firing. The Marathi speaking cabinet members including Hiray and Chavan did not care to protest even once in cabinet meeting against the high handed manner in which Morarji Desai handled the situation in Bombay. In its meeting on January 19, 1956, the MPCC called on Ministers and Legislators to tender resignation. Chavan supported this move but when the Congress working Committee passed a resolution on January 23, all ministers including Hiray and Chavan promptly with

drew their resignations in accordance with the MPCCs delightfully vague and innocuous resolution of January 28, 1956.

C.D. DESHMUKH'S RESIGNATION

Only the union finance Minister Shri. C.D. Deshmukh resigned on this issue and his resignation was accepted on July 26, 1956. Deshmukh's resignation accelerated the pace of events to such an extent that within a fortnight, the idea of a bigger bilingual Bombay State was accepted by the Parliament. As Morarji Desai was willing to accept the leadership of the Congress Legislative Party of the New State only if he was chosen unanimously and as Hiray had decided to contest against him, Morarji had to withdraw from the contest. In a straight contest between Hiray and Chavan on October 16, 1956, the latter secured 333 votes against 111 polled by Hiray thanks to the solid support given by the Congress MLAs from Gujarat, Kachcha, Saurashtra and Bombay city.

CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP STYLE

When Chavan took over as the Chief Minister of Bombay State, the stock of



the Congress had reached an all-time low in Western Maharashtra which was always considered to be a strong hold of the Party. It was extremely difficult, if not impossible for the Congress men to organize or address public meetings. Stones and shoes were hurled at the dais and the leaders had to be escorted to safety very often by the police who had a grueling time controlling the angry crowds greeting them with black flags or trying to break the police –cordon and besieging their cars or chanting slogans in favour of Samyukta Maharashtra.

With Chavan in power, there was a distinct change in the style of leadership. The tone of his speeches was persuasive and his manners suave. He spoke with restraint and carefully chose his words. Unlike Morarji Desai, there was no stress of self-righteousness or sermonizing in his speeches. By and large, he did not make hard hitting speeches and was always prepared to admit publically, the validity of certain objections raised by his critics. He accepted constructive criticism and disarmed the opposition by conceding the need to change the policy of the Government within the framework of the bigger bilingual state. He often made attempts to cajole or convince opposition leaders who had formed the militant Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti after the eclipse of the all-party Parishad. His policy looked like a policy of appeasement. Yet, in fact, it turned out to be a shrewd move to weaken the opposition which was prevented from fully exploiting the only issue to its advantage. Being an astute politician he knew how absolutely necessary it was to soothe the feelings of the Marathi-speaking people and help them in healing their wounds.

By repeatedly asserting in public meetings that the bigger bilingual Bombay State had come to stay, he seemed to be making a sincere attempt to ensure the success of the new set up. In the second general elections of March 1957, he managed to scrape through by a narrow margin of less than 1700 votes. However many Congress leaders from Western Maharashtra including

stalwarts such as N.V. Gadgil, H.V. Pataskar, P.K. Sawant and D.K. Kunte were defeated in the election. For at least six months after the election the MPCC leaders had to adopt a defensive posture as the initiative remained with the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti for quite some time. Chavan slowly tightened his grip over the organization wing of the Congress Party. He replaced the old guards or their disciples by his supporters. He made a carefully planned bid to rehabilitate the Maharashtra Congress by inviting Nehru to unveil the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji on Pratapgadh on November 30, 1957. Evidently, the MPCC leaders wanted to cash in on the Prime Minister's visit and prove that they could mobilize the support of the people in the rural areas. Entire Government machinery was geared up and effectively used to prove that the Congress was not a spent force in Western Maharashtra.

By whipping up the castiest feelings MPCC managed to rehabilitate itself and staged a rapid recovery.

BIFURCATION

The Congress however, continued to lose by-elections and its reverses in Bombay city and in Marathwada caused consternation. S. K. Patil urged the Prime Minister to re-examine the earlier decision. He could see that the voters in Maharashtra were likely to be won over to their side unless the demand to bifurcate the bigger bilingual State was conceded by the Congress high command. In a speech at Aurangabad on August 23, 1958, Jawaharlal Nehru declared that, 'If by peaceful methods parliament were persuaded to revise its earlier decision, he would not stand in the way.' In October 1958, Nehru broached the subject of bifurcation of Bombay State in his talk with Chavan at Hyderabad. According to S. Gopal the biographer of Nehru a private meeting was held by Prime Minister to consider the issue in all aspects and the meeting was attended by Pant, Morarji Desai and Chavan. Sensing the mood of the decision – makers Chavan had already informed them of his increasing difficulties in

holding the bilingual State together. Those who moved in the corridors of power were aware that the Bombay Cabinet was divided into two clear groups and with great difficulty Chavan was able to recouple their demands. A nine men committee was appointed to help the new Congress President Shrimati Indira Gandhi in studying the problem. Pant was the Chairman of this committee. The territorial aspects of the final deal did not present much of a problem since Chavan agreed to give away the Dang district and several villages in Thane and West Khandesh district to Gujarat. The controversy centered round the financial aspects of bifurcation. Chavan agreed to provide financial assistance for a period of 10 years.

The only aspect of the Bombay Reorganisation Bill 1959 on which the Congress High Command eventually respected sentiments of the people of Maharashtra was regarding the name of the State. P.K. Atre, who earlier had effectively used both humor and rhetoric in the Samitis election campaign in 1957 had to launch once again a vigorous campaign against Congress High Command for deliberately deleting the name Maharashtra. Sensing the mood of people both Nehru and Chavan accepted the proposal that the new State be called Maharashtra. Chavan became the first Chief Minister of unilingual Maharashtra State when it came into existence on May 1, 1960. He claimed that the goal was achieved through negotiation to concede in the Bombay Legislative Assembly that the success was not entirely due to their efforts but was the ultimate success of the people themselves. It is true that the final deal was reached through negotiations but cannot be forgettable to that they were preceded by a sustained and vigorous agitation.

A powerful mass movement organized by the two opposition alliances in the State. The realization of the goal was a result of response given by ruling party to the formidable challenge of opposition. ■

- Dr. Y. D. Phadke

(Reproduced from Lokrajya March 1985)

Yashwantrao's Contribution as a Statesman

Yashwantrao Chavan proved himself as a distinguished statesman.

Yashwantrao Chavan proved himself as one of the best administrators of the country. He also proved himself as distinguished statesman. He merged himself in the task entrusted to him with accuracy and with credibility. He used the machinery of power for the lower strata of society and bring equality in social life which was the aim of socialism.

Yashwantrao Chavan was indeed a seasoned administrator. Like all other Congress leaders he moved from the field of agitational politics into administration after the elections of 1937. He was also inexperienced in the art of governing, like those who formed Congress Ministries under the new reforms introduced by the British Government. That was the step which the Congress took towards enjoying power under a limited form

of Legislative authority. It was limited to the extent of a Governor appointed by a foreign power overruling the authority of a popular ministry. The representatives, elected by the people under the constitution were also elected with a small franchise. They could not therefore be called to represent the broad masses of the people, who were virtually denied voting power. And yet the Congress Leadership decided not only to fight the elections but also to

form their own ministries, wherever they got substantial majority. This step was contested by a large section of Congressmen, who were called no-changers while Gandhi and his staunch followers stood against acceptance of limited power.

The change of strategy—from struggle to acceptance of power—was advocated by Sardar Patel and others with a view to having experience of administration so that the Congress could wield power



Monitoring the Armed Forces

systematically and with imagination when the nation succeeds in getting independence. The acceptance of power was a new experience for Congressmen. Yashwantrao Chavan was one of those who got the opportunity of having this experience. He began his career as a Parliamentary Secretary to Shri Morarji Desai who was the Home Minister of the Bombay Government. That was the beginning of Chavan's administrative career which developed into post of authority- as minister, as Chief Minister of Bi-lingual Bombay, Chief Minister of Maharashtra State and then on to Delhi as Defence Minister and a never-ending chairs of responsibilities of all kinds of Ministers.

ABLEST ADMINISTRATOR

Shri Chavan proved himself as one of the best administrators of the country. He also proved himself as a distinguished statesman. It is surprising how Chavan merged himself in the task entrusted to him with unfailing accuracy and with distinct credibility not only among the leaders but also in the general public. Chavan's great asset was the thoughtfulness, his sobriety and his demeanour to be loyal to his friends and supporters and he possesses generous understanding of his opponents. In all his political and administrative life of over fifty years, Chavan never made enemies or one may say, he succeeded in neutralizing his opponents. His contribution as a statesman has been the result of his deep study and deeper meditation. The study enabled him to choose his line of thinking –regarding political philosophy, social orientation and practical administration. In all these matters he allowed himself to be guided by those whom he chose as leaders. In politics his one adorable leader was Jawaharlal Nehru. He imbibed the doctrines of socialism though Nehru, and Chavan never swerved from the path chosen by Nehru.

Chavan did not become a doctrinaire socialist. Like Nehru he brought the doctrine of socialism into practical life. He used the machinery of power for the upliftment of the lower strata of society and bring equality in social life



Communicating with Troops

which was the main aim of socialism. As a socialist his inclination was towards the poor people –the peasants, workers and the lower middle classes. Whenever he wielded administrative power, he thought of the measures which could be adopted to improve the life of the common people to remove the injustice being heaped upon the labourers by vested interests, to open avenues of work for agriculturists, and to remove unemployment among the middle classes. He performed all these tasks with statesmanship. He allowed the industrialists to open new factories, particularly in the rural areas, but at the same time he persuaded them to fix remunerative wages for the workers. In his regime industrial relations improved because of the introduction of labour laws which gave protection to workers in their disputes with the industrialists. Chavan was essentially a man of consensus, and not of conflict though fought relentlessly. Almost ruthlessly in the struggle for freedom. But that was for the freedom of the country from foreign rule. When independence was established Chavan changed his whole line of thinking and became an advocate of consensus in all matters of conflict.

AN ACT OF STATESMANSHIP

His most remarkable achievement was when he requested the method of consensus, in choosing a successor to Jawaharlal Nehru. That was an act of statesmanship, as his resolution on

unity was on the issue of split in the Congress. The intransigence of the old leadership of the Congress defeated that idea and the split in the Congress continued, resulting in the success of Indira Gandhi whom Chavan supported with conviction as the majority leader of the Congress and the Congress Parliamentary Party. As a matter of fact, Chavan could have utilized the chaotic condition prevailing at the time for his personal ends. There was every possibility that he could have emerged as the dominant leader of the Congress with the Prime Ministership falling at his feet. But Chavan had a conscience and higher ideals of life. His whole politics was based on values – moral and intellectual. He therefore never succumbed to petty personal interests, but maintained an dispassionate outlook on life, which he consider higher than politics.

He was a dedicated person. Dedicated to politics of his choice, social ideals of his conviction and administrative methods emanating from his conscience. To him ideals were guidelines . Therefore he fought politics on the base of ideals. Ideals on social development gave him real inspiration. This could be visualise in his taking the lead in calling for bank nationalization in the interests of the common people in the land-particularly those living in the village and suffering poverty due to lack of finance. Chavan's statesmanship lay in the way he advocated this measure,



With Robert Mackonmare, Air Force General of America and others



through a resolution of the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee. This resolution paved the way for Indira Gandhi to take the decision about bank nationalization. Chavan kept himself out of publicity, though he was the moving spirit behind this measure.

DECENTRALISATION

On the issue of decentralization of power, Chavan inspired the Maharashtra Government to launch steps in this direction. While in Delhi and in the vortex and heat of political power, Chavan the thinker, continued to remain a guide not only to the Maharashtra Congress, but also to the Maharashtra Government. He allowed Vasant Rao Naik, Chief Minister of Maharashtra to take the credit for introducing Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Raj in Maharashtra. But as the supreme leaders of Maharashtra all the knowing people recognized Chavan as the architect of this new experiment of peoples' power being established at the root level.

His statesmanship came to light

during the formation of linguistic provinces. It was he who did not allow himself to be carried away by passions to the extent of undermining the power and prestige of Nehru and relied solely on persuasive methods to establish the Maharashtra State. Those who came to scold at him in the beginning remained to pray at his feet when he achieved the goal. He naturally became the Chief Minister of Maharashtra. Since then he ruled so wisely, humanly and progressively, that his name came to be prominently recognized as one of those few Chief Ministers who could dawn the mantle of Nehru as the successive Prime Minister of India. Man of the stature of Jaiprakash Narayan freely mentioned him as the possible successor to Nehru.

CONTRIBUTION TO THOUGHT –PROCESS

When the history of 37 years of India after independence will be traced, Chavan's contribution to national growth and endeavour will claim a distinguished place comparable to all those great leaders of India who built up the nation, enriched its tradition and embellished its prestige and reputation. Chavan with his philosophical outlook, his enthusiastic support to social revolutionary programmes, and his practical drive towards bringing these ideas into action, paved the way for making Maharashtra Congress and

Maharashtra Government into vehicles of thought which guided the estimates of this nation. Yashwantrao Chavan, came sharply into prominence as Nehru's trusted follower to spread, propagate and co-ordinate his ideas on Socialism, Secularism and Democracy. Among all the provinces Maharashtra represented a glorious tradition not only of social reform but also of social revolution built up by a galaxy of leaders like Jotiba Phule, Shahu Maharaj and Dr. Ambedkar. Chavan took up the threads left by them with enthusiasm and understanding and co-ordinated them with modern thought propounded by Marx, M.N.Roy and Nehru. Chavan never felt ill at ease with democratic or socialist thinkers or originators of religious philosophies like Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar or humanist philosophers like M.N.Roy. He was perhaps the only modern thinker in the Congress, besides Nehru, who could attempt to plan a new life for the nation and give it a practical shape through planning, research and invention. Yashwantrao Chavan encouraged all these processes as best he could as Chief Minister of Maharashtra and Defence and Finance Minister of India.

His clear thinking on the issues before the nation and his insight into modern thoughts on management and organization strengthened the basic structures which created and brought vitality and life into the workings of these structures. Chavan's name may remain buried in these files of the Government. But those who would look into these files deeply, in course of time will give their verdict that this peasant leader coming from a humble family of Maharashtra, contributed a great deal to the building up of the nation after the achievement of independence and created a niche for himself both as an administrator and a statesman among the tallest leaders of the country.

His contribution to the thought process and progressive re-orientation of the society, will remain ever enshrined not only in the history of Maharashtra but of India. ■

- D.B. Karnik

(Reproduced from Lokrajya March 1985)

My Ideology

We reproduce the speech delivered by Yashwantrao Chavan at Nagpur, responding to his felicitation on the occasion of his 47th Birthday on 30 March 1961

In the history of India, there started a new era during the freedom struggle. Owing to the achievement and merit of the leaders of this country, during the era of Tilak and Gandhi, there developed a situation in this country, a kind of atmosphere where whoever took initiative in this atmosphere, became great by the blessings and virtues of these great leaders

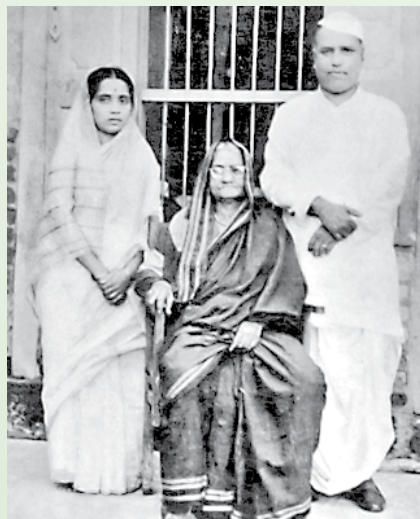
I am fully satisfied by the shower of your love upon me. There is nothing that I should demand now as an individual.

But having said all these things, I want to put before you one view which is not that of the worship of an individual. When I try to look at my life from a certain distance an idea strikes me. The idea is that there emerges such a powerful force, during a certain period that, that force becomes a source of greatness for some men. A similar thing has happened in my case.

In the history of India, there started a new era during the freedom struggle. Owing to the achievement and merit of the leaders of this country, during the era of Tilak and Gandhi, there developed a situation in this country, a kind of atmosphere where whoever took initiative in this atmosphere, became great by the blessings and virtues of these great leaders. A man like me, when I did not know anything about the country and about the Government, held high the national flag with courage and this boy from a village joined the freedom struggle. And, I believe that I am what I am today, only because of joining the struggle.

That struggle was the driving force of that era. It was the force of freedom, of the people, and that of human welfare. It was the force of equality and the strength of the people. I got passionately involved with that driving force, became one with it. And, even today, I am representing that force. So, if we want to welcome something,

felicitate someone, we must do so with regard to this force. That force did not cease with the passing away of Gandhiji; on the contrary, it went on growing. It is that force which awakened our minds, and, it is the same force which gave us our freedom. So, we have to generate a new strength from this force which has developed in our life, and established economic and social equality. This is the responsibility entrusted to us by our history, and it has emerged from



Smt. Venutai and Yashwantrao with mother Vithabai

the power of history. By realizing the importance of this power of history, we must try to become one with that power, honestly, and, with full intellectual and emotional devotion. This is the work going on in our country today.

But, there is a mind-blowing situation in the entire world today. This situation produces fear in the minds of the

people who wish to develop themselves honestly, peacefully, and through hard labour. But, humanity is a power today and an outlook. We must all think about the way we can make this humanistic attitude successful, healthy, powerful, and onward-going. It doesn't matter, then, whether you are in Maharashtra or Gujarat; Laos or America; Russia or anywhere else. This is the real problem of mankind, today. It doesn't matter which is your political party, or which is your language. What we must do is that, we must take steps to ensure integrity of our behaviour, speech and practice, to the original humanistic attitude. We must observe this important attitude in our country, and in our work.

I am the servant of this humanistic force. Let us now think about the responsibilities that we have to shoulder, to realize this force in the diverse areas of work. In my opinion, the very first responsibility that is generated by this force is that we must be able to keep our country united. Partition was the first terrible disaster to occur in this country. There are external threats, as well. There is ill feeling in the North, and there are grudges in the minds of our neighbours. But I am not worried about these external threats, until there is strength in our bodies and in our minds. If all our minds are united, if there are good wishes in our minds, and if our bodies generate power together, we have no reason to worry. But today, it is a matter of great concern, that whether even great men fall victim to the smaller demands and slogans. I do not address to the local



To make the visit memorable and long lasting Queen Elizabeth planted a sapling during her visit to Mumbai

situation here. The local situation here, is a minor and negligible thing. I am not worried if some people cause some disturbances in Nagpur, today.

Our country is facing different problems today. There are attempts to raise different types of issues in our country. It is our duty to preserve the integrity of our country against the background of conflicts, over the issues of languages, regions, castes and tribes, religious differences between the Hindus and Muslims, etc. Recently, I read a book by an author. He has informed us of a very thought provoking idea. It is as follows : during

the first ten to twelve years after independence, we were busy building our country, in which we were successful to a certain extent, but now, the next ten to fifteen years are extremely critical for our country, The reason for this is the rise of aspirations in the minds of the people.

Simultaneously, there is also the rise of ambitions in the minds of some individuals. These individuals think that they can use the coin of caste or language or win power. We must be able to save our country from all these traps, and lead our country towards progress by preserving its unity. This is the

crisis of our country. And during this hour of crisis, all of us have to shoulder the responsibility of the country. We must be able to recognize each other's responsibilities now. The very first responsibility is to try to recognize this situation.

And while doing this, we have to ensure that the strong roots of democracy in our country develop. This is our second important responsibility. Whenever I look around India, I don't see a single country in which there has not been a fall of the democratic government. Go right from Ceylon, to Myanmar, or to Egypt. You will find at least two upheavals in the recent history of each of these countries. The tenure of the Prime Minister lasts only for eight days, or fifteen days, a month or two. Some of them have blown over by the winds, like a torn-off kite. I have seen the history of the Commonwealth for the last twelve to fifteen years. But among all, only one Prime Minister continues in power, and he is Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India. For the last fifteen years, he has worked continuously in order to win support for India's morality, India's voice, and India's language, And, he has made an attempt to continue this work unanimously, following the single voice of democracy.

We must be proud of this achievement, and we must strive to strengthen this in our country. We must strive to strengthen democracy in the world, at least in the countries in Asia. A common man may perhaps commit mistakes while doing this. But without making much ado about these mistakes, we must try to increase the strength of our democracy by generating new strength from these mistakes. We have to safeguard this democracy and the democratic values that accompany it. But, we won't be able to protect this democracy, if we don't give the man awakened by the spirit of democracy, his due social position, and his due opportunity for economic progress. Therefore, we need to care for this idea of democracy, and the idea of socialism that accompanies it. This will ultimately lead to human welfare in this country.

By felicitating me, I think, you are accepting the responsibility of felicitating democratic and socialist ideas in our country, because, I am the worshipper of these ideas. This is my position regarding the politics in Maharashtra, and the politics in our country. I will carry the gift of your blessings with me, and whatever strength and power I will gather from these blessings, will be used for the worship of national integration, democracy, and socialism. After all, my ideology is to worship all the three powers in the service of mankind. This is the tradition of my thought. Ultimately, I have become a humanist, learning from Gandhiji, from the saints of Maharashtra, from the different traditions, from Shivaji to Lokmanya Tilak, from my moderate contact with an eminent scholar like Manvendranath Roy, and from my own understanding of history. My ideology is that of human welfare. And, I am not going to give it up. Until, we are working in Maharashtra, I must strive to achieve this. I have accepted the principle of worshipping all these forces, all these powers and goals.

Therefore, we must be able to develop a situation in Maharashtra, by which we can generate one powerful force combining all these principles. If we succeed in doing this, we will be able to be of service to India in a good manner. And India, too will be able to render service to mankind in a more powerful manner. I am doing this work as a worshipper of this principle. Although, we have been fortunate enough to succeed a little, we should not be content with this success only. Many times, we have to face failures. We should not allow our minds to be disturbed at such times. I once again promise that whatever strength I will gather from your blessings, will be used for service to mankind.

My path is clear. I would try my level best to make this formation of a new unilingual state of Maharashtra a success. I would try my level best, until the last drop of my blood remains, to awaken the Dhyaneswar, Ramdas, Tukaram and Mother Marathi existing



in the minds of the Marathi people. I am not working in fear of any obstacle of a balance in somebody's hand or someone's safe. It is being whispered secretly, that I am interested in promoting only a state of the Marathas. But once again I declare from the land of Nagpur, that the day on which it will be proved that an attempt has been made to promote the state of only one community, of only one group, that day, by facing public inquiry, I will readily undergo any type of punishment. I have accepted the responsibility of this state taking this vow.

I thank you for your invitation and for your felicitations. Today, in March 1961, when you are honouring me, I accept this honour as a promise of taking the responsibility of running this state successfully. This is the responsibility of all those who have supported this function. My understanding of history is that even fifty men, of one will and one determination, can change the history of the world. And, therefore, I have tried my level best to explain the nature of the responsibility that history has imposed on us. What I have said was not out of anger for somebody. I spoke with a firm belief in the faith of all my friends. What I have achieved during the last four or five years is the collection of good friends. I may lose the position

of Chief Ministership, but not my friendship. Such men as Sheshrao Wankhede, Vasantao Naik, and Kazi are my comrades who love me like a brother. How many names shall I tell you? I am trying to treat the ministers in my ministry as friends. There are some junior and young workers. Everybody made a different demand once. But today, we have decided unanimously that all our energy will be used to enrich Marathi life. At last, we must strive towards progress with the only goal of achieving welfare of Maharashtra, India and the common people.

At this huge programme of felicitating me on behalf of all the common people, I remember my old mother residing in a faraway village. Credit goes to that illiterate mother of mine, for my eligibility to be worthy for accepting these felicitations. She does not know much about the latest developments in the world. I, her youngest son, am the Chief Minister, but she doesn't know even today, what a Chief Minister is. I remember that old mother today. Her virtuosity, her simplicity, her love; two to four good qualities that she inculcated in me in my childhood have proved quite useful in my life. I end this speech on a note of salutation to her. ■

(Reproduced from the Winds of Sahyadri)

Political Administrator Par Excellence

Principles practiced by him have become part of the modern management text books

Yashwantraoji had the ability to establish within seconds a complete rapport with anyone. His voracious reading and wide circle of friends gave him a breadth of vision and depth of knowledge which set him apart from one-tract politician.



Yashwantrao joking with army officers in 1964

I had the good fortune to work with Yashwantrao Chavan as his Private Secretary when he was Defence Minister and later Home Minister. The services rendered by him to the nation first as Chief Minister of Maharashtra and later as Cabinet Minister holding important portfolios in the Government of India have been narrated many times and are part of the history of modern India. But what are not so wellknown are many facets of his personality which had an intimate bearing on his success as a political administrator. Shri Chavan was a leader in every sense of the word. He successfully practiced for thirty years management principles which have only now become part of the modern management text-books. There is therefore little wonder that he could build a competent and high-morale team whichever portfolio he

held. The most remarkable thing in Indian context is that he literally built up leaders by dozens – both in the political and administrative fields. Working with Shri Chavan was like learning at the feet of a master. It was a treat to see him reach right conclusions in complicated issues and a consensus in differing and often conflicting views. He could find the right solution because his moral standard were high, national objectives clear and reading of the pulse of the common man perfect. It was often unbelievable to see him turn a dispirited organization into a high morale and competent one. The difference between Maharashtra of 1956 and 1960 and the difference between the Armed Forces of the country in 1962 and 1965 bears an eloquent testimony to his leadership qualities.

When I first called on him in his

office, I had no idea that he had already selected me to head his personal staff. As I walked into the Defence Minister's room, I had the natural nervousness of an officer with only six years service entering the seat of power in the South Block. As I sat down, Yashwantraoji surprised me by asking me whether I found my mathematics training useful in solving administrative problems and also whether I could keep up my cricket after joining service. He had obviously seen my record and with this informal beginning, I could certainly give off my best. As I soon found out, this incident was nothing special; Yashwantraoji had the ability to establish within seconds a complete rapport with any one whether a political worker, an officer, a general, a scientist or a writer. His voracious reading and wide circle of friends gave him the breadth of vision and depth of knowledge which set him apart from a one-tract politician. Yashwantraoji never demanded blind worship; his friendship was based on mutual respect and trust with complete freedom to express one's views. One could have honest differences of opinion with him without losing his friendship. He was a democrat in every sense of the word. He always persuaded and never forced anyone to accept his views but when opinions differed he accepted the difference without any prejudice, malice or irritation.

There is a belief among some that Yashwantraoji had a wavering mind. Several cartoons showed him as a man sitting on the fence who was unable to make up his mind. However, as a

Minister, I always found him decisive. He would certainly consider important issues in depth and allow everyone to give his views, but he never avoided his responsibility in taking decisions. What is more important, he could invariably carry people with him.

I am reminded of an incident while I worked with him in the Defence Ministry. It was 1st of September, 1965. As a retaliation to our capturing Hajipur area in Kashmir, Pakistan had launched a full fledged armoured corps attack in Chhamb-Jurian sector. Geographically, this was a difficult sector for us to defend. By afternoon, many of our forward pickets had fallen. I received a call from Air Marshal Arjan Singh at 4.00 pm for an emergency meeting with the Defence Minister. Both he and General Chaudhary were in my room in five minutes. The Defence Minister was holding a large meeting in his room and so, instead of calling them to his office, he came to my room and had discussion with them. Both pointed out that there was no way of repulsing Pakistani attack without using Air Force. After the 1965 and 1971 wars, use of Air Force looks natural today but it must be remembered that the sino-Indian war of 1962 was fought without use of air power. Escalation of war through air attacks on civil population was considered dangerous. After listening to the arguments of the Chiefs of Staff, Yashwantraoji agreed that Air Force must be used. He asked me to contact the Prime Minister in the Parliament House on the special phone. Unfortunately, Lal Bahadurji was intervening in a debate in Parliament and it would have taken some time before he could be called out. Yashwantraoji asked the Chiefs of Staff how much time he had to take the decision. They replied that the Air Force, to be effective, must be used before sun-set and considering the time involved in communicating the decision and scrambling the planes, the decision had to be made within 5-10 minutes. Yashwantraoji looked at them, paused and said, "order the Air Force to attack". How the Pakistani attack was repulsed is now a part of history. I accompanied Yashwantraoji to the Parliament House

where he rushed immediately to meet the Prime Minister. He was with the Prime Minister in his room only for a couple of minutes. As we headed back in the car to South Block, I asked him what happened. He said that Lal Bahadurji merely observed, "Well done, this is the most appropriate decision." The story brings out both the decision-making capability of Yashwantraoji and the excellent rapport he had with the Prime Minister in terms of general strategy for the war.

Another interesting incident occurred prior to the war. Against the background of Pakistani infiltration in Kashmir and the expected Pakistani thrust in Chhamb sector, a high level

and made it clear that the strategy should be determined solely with a view to win the war and the point of attack should be in the area of our choosing. This was approved by the Prime Minister. Six days were required from zero date to put the counter-attack plan in operation. The decision was taken on the 1st of September and the attack on Lahore was launched on the 6th of September. So well-guarded was the secret that the surprise was total; Pakistani thrust in Chhamb-Jurian petered out and it was forced to take a defensive role. As Yashwantraoji observed later "Two thousand years of Indian history was a history of invasions on India which Indians tried to defend.



In a meeting with Prime Minister Pandit Nehru and Defence officers

meeting was held to decide on Indian strategy in the event of war. Gen. Chaudhary recommended a counter-attack on the Punjab front arguing that, on account of geographical handicap, a counter-attack over the cease-fire line in J & K would not be effective. The Foreign Office did not agree to the escalation over the international boundary (as different from the cease-fire line) and insisted that 48 hours ultimatum would be necessary if counter-attack was to be launched on the Punjab front. Any ultimatum would have removed the element of surprise. Yashwantraoji strongly supported General Chaudhary

On 8th Sept. 1965, India changed for the first time from defence to counter-attack and took the initiative." Thanks to these bold tactics, India could defend its honour in 1965 in spite of the more sophisticated armed forces of Pakistan.

Yashwantraoji was very methodical in his work. As a Defence Minister, whenever he was in town, he would start the day with his morning meeting at 9.30 AM. This would be attended by the three Services Chiefs, Defence Secretary and other very senior officers. He would mention all the important points gathered by him the previous day and which he had carefully recorded in

the small notebook always carried by him. The officers would then brief him on the situation and this would be followed by discussions on important issues. The result was that he was always well-informed of the situation and his officers were clear about his thinking and directions on important issues. Another advantage was that the officers could concentrate on their work for the rest of the day without being called by the Minister. He would reserve the whole morning for official discussions and meetings with Governors, Ambassadors and other important dignitaries. He would return home for lunch at 2.00 pm, take rest for an hour and then start meetings with political workers and others which went on till 9.00 pm. After dinner, he would dispose of his files which consisted of 2 or 3 bags as a Defence Minister but 5 or 6 as Home Minister. He would go to bed only after the last box was completed and this might be 12 O'clock or 2 O'clock in the morning. Every file that went to him the previous day was returned to the office next morning. With this speed of disposal by the Minister, Officers had to be quick in clearing their desks.

Yashwantraoji had extraordinary skills of man-management. He made full use of the strengths of the persons without complaining about his deficiencies. The result was that his team was far more effective than the same team under any other leader. He was a good judge of men and could make use of the advice of different persons by making proper allowance for their personal prejudices and weaknesses.

Yashwantraoji's capacity to remain calm and relaxed even in the most difficult circumstances was really unbelievable. In August, 1965 I accompanied Yashwantraoji to a visit to Vishakhapatnam. As soon as we landed, there was a message that the Prime Minister wanted to talk to him immediately. A large scale infiltration



Monitoring border with army officers

by Pakistanis had taken place in Jammu & Kashmir. However, it took more than half an hour before the Defence Minister of the country could speak to the Prime Minister. The Air Force and the Army lines were down and even after booking the highest priority call which had to go via Madras, Bombay to Delhi, it took considerable persuasion and shouting to get the call through. The reason was simple. Some senior officials at Madras



and Bombay were talking through the same priority booking and they had to be literally driven off the line by explaining the urgency. After curtailing the visit, we took off for Delhi at 7.00 pm. The Defence Minister was to attend the emergency Cabinet meeting at 11.00 pm. Yashwantraoji sat quiet, thinking about the whole situation for about half an hour. Once that was done, he stretched out on his bed in the VIP cabin of the Air Force plane and immediately went to sleep. He had to be awakened for fastening the seat belt when we approached Delhi. But thanks to this rest, he was fit and alert for the Cabinet meeting which incidentally went on till 3 O'clock in the morning. I am also reminded

of another incident in April, 1967 when Yashwantraoji was Home Minister. The Delhi Armed Police constabulary had gone on strike and had also carried their weapons with them. A mob of 1,000 Police men surrounded 1. Race Course Road, the house of Shri Chavan by 8.00 pm. Many had guns with them. By 10.00 pm the situation had become very critical. There was no police-man left in the barracks or, the Police stations who could be brought to deal with the situation. (Incidentally, this night was later found to be one of the most crime-free night in the capital). Army was called out who took their positions in the house early in the morning. The whole situation could be controlled only in the afternoon of the next day when two Battalions of the Border Security Force arrived and literally grabbed the Armed Policemen – three BSF men for one Armed Police man. Fortunately there was no blood-shed. However, Yashwantraoji was fast asleep by 11.00 pm. He made it clear to the senior officers in the house that handling of the law and order was their job and he did not want to interfere in tactical matters. Both the incidents show his mental discipline and capacity to relax at the right time so that he remained fit and alert when his turn came.

My years with Yashwantraoji formed a unique experience. This was not only exhilarating action-packed period but also a complete education in management. If I am asked what is the most important quality in a leader, I would say, after watching Yashwantraoji at close quarters, that it is his capacity to make big man out of a small one. The magic of Yashwantraoji was to develop every follower into a significant person through strengthening his good qualities and giving him confidence in life. Finding a large number of able persons among Yashwantraoji's followers is not an accident – it is the contribution made by the gifted leader to the country. ■

- S. M. Kelkar

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Swearing-In of Cabinet

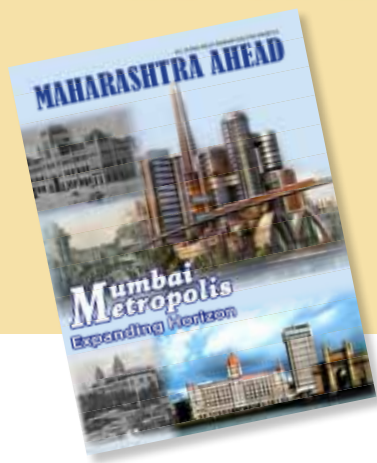
The first Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Shri Y.B. Chavan, signing the oath of office at the swearing-in ceremony held in the Sachivalaya Quadrangle.





Birth Centenary Year

March 13, 2012 - March 12, 2013



O.I.G.S. Presented by The Government of India

MAHARASHTRA AHEAD

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