

Documenting Delhi in pictures - past to present

56-year old Madan Mahatta showcases his work that has captured Delhi and its architectural marvels

With Delhi modifying at a superfast pace, it's almost impossible to imagine how it looked three to four decades ago. How did the city look before today's sky-

scrapers and architectural wonders were built? To revive the mood of that time, Photo Ink gallery has put on display 'Delhi Modern: The Architectural Photographs' - a collection of photographs by Madan Mahatta on till June 21.

Madan studied photography in England in the early 1950s. Being a prolific photographer, Madan has worked across all genres - portraiture, dance, theatre as well as industrial and architectural photography. Mahatta belongs to a family of photographers, whose Mahatta Studios has a distinguished history as one of the biggest and most well-known family-run studios in

North India.

The exhibition is curated by Ram Rahman, a Delhi-based photographer and son of the architect Habib Rahman. His love for architecture can be linked with his early days. As the son of an architect, the 56-year old photographer has seen Delhi being built in front of his eyes. Ram has lectured on the history of contemporary Indian photography, as well as curated several exhibitions.

The current exhibition of Delhi's architectural gems, presents a remarkable record of the building of New Delhi at the height of Nehruvian modernism. All the images on dis-

play are some of the finest works by Mahatta, who photographed them between the late 1950s and mid-1980s.

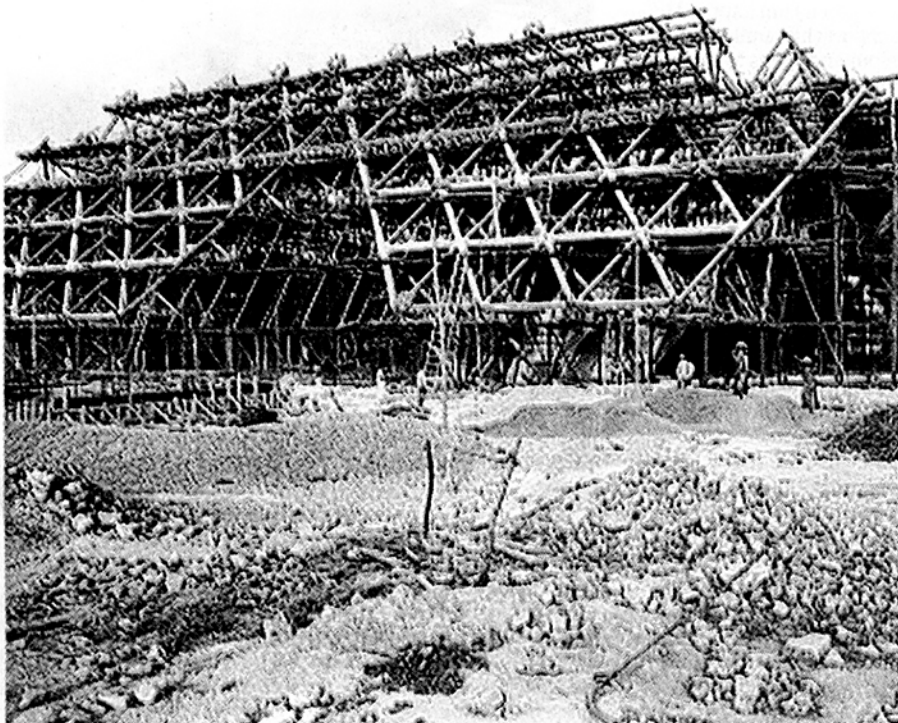
Madan worked closely with two generations of India's best known modern architects including Achyut Kanvinde, Ajoy Choudhury, Charles Correa, Habib Rahman, Jasbir Sawhney, J.K. Chowdhury, Joseph Allen Stein, Kuldip Singh, Raj Rewal, Ram Sharma, Ranjit Sabhiki and designers Mini Boga and Riten Mozumdar. A glimpse of these architects can also be observed in his photography, which takes these images to another level.

Describing his photographic style as 'Khichdi', Mahatta's photography carries a feeling of legacy which that we carry of early modern period in India. Having a perfect sense of framing and lighting, the black and white pictures used in the exhibition, give an ideal finishing touch.

The exhibition proves to be an amazing treat for those who have seen and grown with the city over time. More than just pictures, they identify themselves as a symbol of architectural revolution, which came in India a long time ago, creating a feeling of nostalgia.

For the young audiences it proves to be an amazing journey, to which they can connect by comparing these gems with the present scenario and contemporary state of the city.

The exhibition comprises images of Sapru House, India International Centre, British Council, LIC, NDMC, Syrian Orthodox Church, Ford Foundation, Bahai Temple, Asian Games Village and the Nehru Pavilion at Pragati Maidan. **Raghav Jaitly**



HISTORY AT WORK Pragati Maidan under construction.