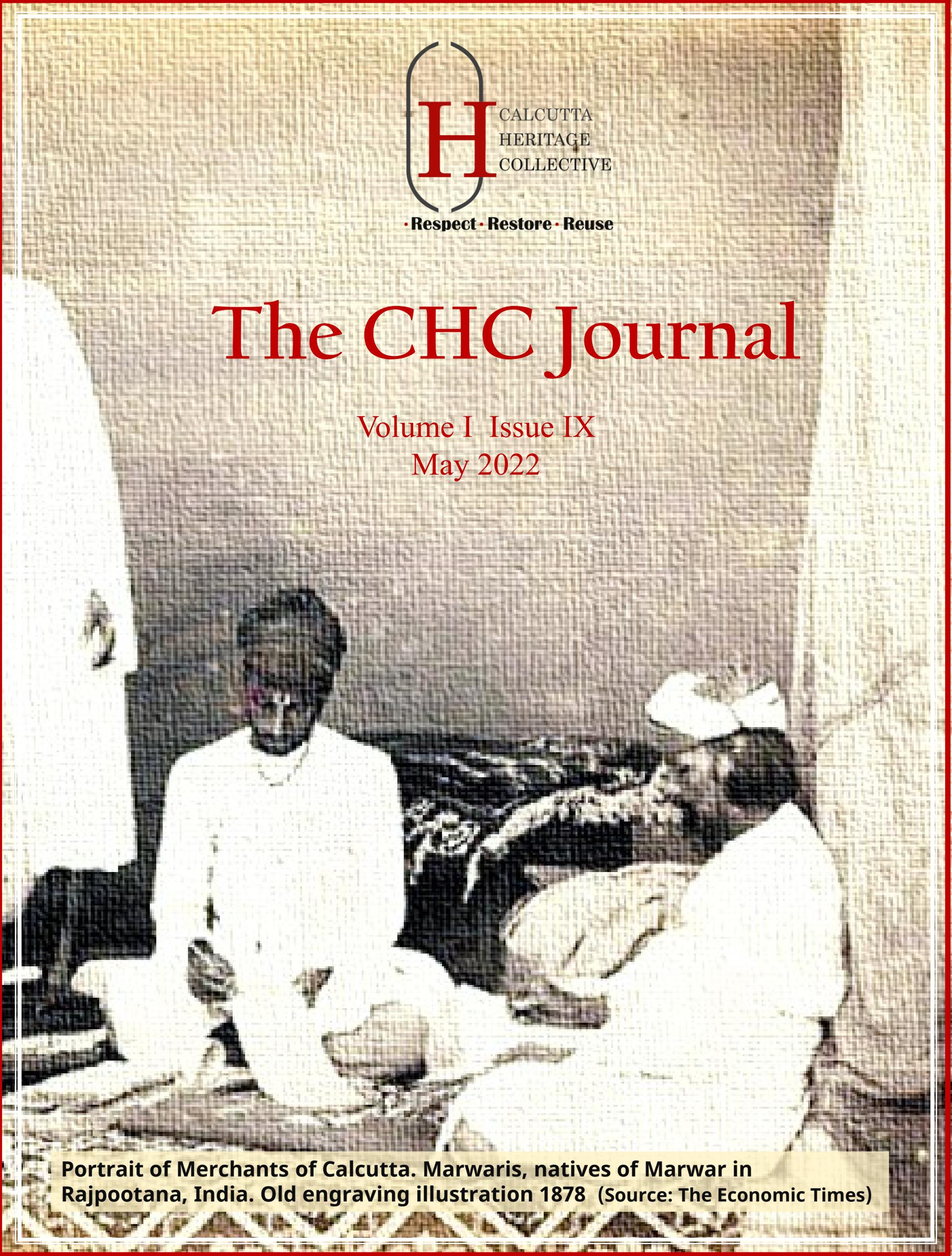




The CHC Journal

Volume I Issue IX
May 2022



Portrait of Merchants of Calcutta. Marwaris, natives of Marwar in Rajpootana, India. Old engraving illustration 1878 (Source: The Economic Times)

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Point of View

Nah. Contrary to the popular and often repeated assumption and belief, the word 'heritage' is not all about dilapidated buildings of some distant past! In that case isn't Chhou nach of Puruliya 'Heritage'? Or Kumartuli? Or Rosogolla, the sweet that defines Bengal to the world community? Or for that matter, Durga Puja, freshly basking in Unesco glory tag? Heritage is what connects us to our past, and partly serves as a guide to the future. It is what history has left behind, but not just in past tense. It is present continuous too. Both tangible and intangible, both architectural and living, the Legacies of History are carried forward as what we call 'heritage'. Summing up the glories and mistakes of the past in the relics of history should therefore be an objective matter. In that way it is a science, an objective assessment. At the same time it is an art, because as I see it, heritage is an integral part of culture as culture is an inseparable part of heritage. Hence, when we tag something as 'heritage' it is not just to protect something like an endangered animal. Rather a softer and deeper understanding will reveal, how studying heritage around us we could enrich ourselves, mentally, emotionally and intellectually. How we could leave a roadmap for our successive generations to follow, give them what they could call 'their own', shape their identity in this big world and make them feel proud and complete. Its not just about promoters breaking up historic cinema halls, its rather about thousands of memories getting wiped out in a bit, of which we all had a share. Its about giving our children a reason to return to their roots. A rootless species with no memories, no objective recorded history and no glory, cant just survive on trade and commerce alone in a fiercely globalised world. In that sense, heritage is the seatbelt when a fast moving civilisation crashes while moving in an unknown path, and saves it from impending disaster.



~ **Dr Partha Sarathi Mukherjee** is a Nephrologist, Formerly settled in London, Cultural Commentator, Director of Bengal Forum for Intellect and Culture, Core Member of Sutanuti Parishad and is a Current Rotary President. He is the recipient of the Prestigious 'Shrestha Bangali Samman' 2021

Heritage News

The Bengali Calendar <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/bangla-calendars-live-through-ages-evolve-to-welcome-1429/articleshow/90831312.cms>

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/my-kolkata/lifestyle/gupta-press-panjika-the-story-of-a-bangali-almanac-essential-for-poila-baisakh-the-bengali-new-year/cid/1860756>

The Indus Valley School organised a visual arts exposition with the kids adapting historic works with a newer perspective <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/tryst-with-history-through-visual-arts-at-school-expo/articleshow/90922997.cms>

The Bengal Story

The diversity of India's corporate history, is peppered with names such as The Assam Company, Andrew Yule, Williamson Magor, Harrisons Malayalam, Bengal Chemicals, and His Master's Voice were based in Calcutta. The biggest were managing agencies, holding companies that ran dozens of businesses.

Andrew Yule, founded in 1863, managed 37 companies, including tea gardens, power utilities, jute mills, coal mines, a railway, and a steamship company. The first copy of independent India's Constitution was printed on paper specially made by **India Paper Pulp**, a Yule subsidiary. In 1902, Andrew Yule even took over the zamindari of Midnapore, spread over 6,216 sq km, promoting forests, fisheries and agriculture. Andrew Yule lost its zamindari after Independence, but remains a thriving government-owned company. It was not nationalised the usual way: the government bought out the British shareholders in 1974. **The Tatas** ran **Tata Iron & Steel** as agents till the concept was abolished in 1969. In 1913, on the eve of World War I, there were at least a dozen such agencies, including **Shaw Wallace, Duncan, Octavius Steel, Williamson Magor, Balmer Lawrie, and Gillanders**.

While many managing agencies ran tea estates, the world's oldest commercial tea company, **The Assam Company**, was founded in London in 1839, based on the success of a Briton who brought the tea plant to Assam. While the initial focus was on tea, its founders knew Assam also had lime, coal, and oil, and did not want to limit their business options. So the word "tea" was kept out of the name. Today, its registered office is in a modern building on Kolkata's Chowringhee, next to Bishop's House, a building even older than the company (it was built in 1814).

Many foreign companies and managing agencies were taken over by Marwaris who had made Calcutta their home since the early 19th century. **Ghanshyam Das Birla** took on the Scots who ruled the jute business. **Brij Mohan Khaitan**, partnered **Williamson Magor**, the largest tea group, and came to control it. The **Khaitans** own **Eveready Industries**, maker of tea and batteries.

The freedom struggle spurred Indian entrepreneurs, who wanted to prove that business success was not just a western domain. **Bengal Chemical & Pharmaceutical Works**, India's first drugs company, started in 1893, has faded into obscurity. Bengal, the crucible of India's pharmaceutical industry, today has no big names in the field.

As for Music legend **HMV**, now **Saregama** and part of the **RPG Group**, technology shifts have almost killed the business - but not the name. The audio recording studio can still be hired for a song, and for the chance to play the piano that iconic director **Satyajit Ray** used to compose music for his movies.

Incorporated in 1850 as the **Bengal Chamber of Commerce**, added "industry" to its name in 1950, as the shift to manufacturing changed the character of its membership. Its origins, in the **Calcutta Chamber of Commerce**, a traders' body started in 1834, makes it India's oldest such organisation.

The shift away from Calcutta is clear. Mumbai is India's commercial capital. Delhi houses the major industry lobbies and attracts more migrants than Mumbai did in the 20th century.

Down Memory Lane

The teakwood recliner on which my grandfather relaxed and consumed the world from his verandah has been passed down from generation to generation. The patterned cane weave over the curvilinear teak frame is steeped in artisanal heritage. Expressive of plantation culture from a bygone era, it has timeless appeal and like anything that's old, it evokes memories as well as different interpretations. There's intrigue: Who carved the elaborate scroll armrests? There's craftsmanship: The mortise and tenon joints with dowels is period carpentry. There's nostalgia: Of sitting on my grandmother's lap with her weaving stories for me. There's comfort: The go to spot for my morning coffee or to catch up on a good book. We string together memories to create stories. Often there are gaps in our recollections as we pass on these stories to others. Reconceived stories are like the caning on the recliner - rewoven several times over the years; but the recliner lives on ~ **D K Guha**



Respect . Restore . Reuse

5000 year artefacts from Harappa displayed – A connect with excellence of the past

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/museum-to-display-5000-yr-old-harappan-artefacts-on-rakhdass-birth-anniversary/articleshow/90694802.cms>

Transfer of Development Rights TDR – An initiative to save

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/culture/transfer-development-right-w-policy-that-if-embraced-can-save-bengals-heritage/cid/1859918>

The College Street Café has a terrace which is reused as a sports area

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/college-st-now-a-mix-of-the-new-the-traditional/articleshow/90787684.cms>

Ramchandra Goenka Ladies Ghat with the beautiful domes and tiles to be torn down. We cant let it go

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/my-kolkata/news/ramchandra-goenka-ladies-bathing-ghat-under-threat/cid/1860988>

Respect the luminaries whose names adorn the parks. Lets remember and respect their rich legacy and contribution

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/my-kolkata/news/heritage-plaques-with-history-note-for-parks-in-kolkata/cid/1861293>

Know your CHC Members



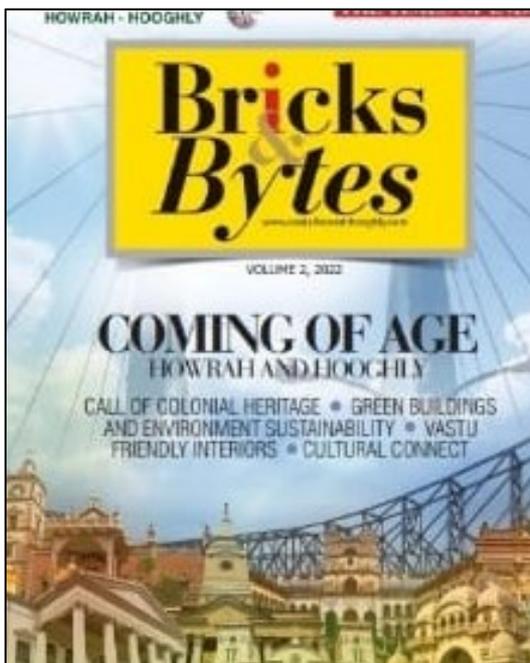
Dolly Dabriwal is an accidental art curator. She has a keen eye for spotting young talent and provides platform for promoting budding artists. While in her

early years she was immersed in academics and sports, she found great comfort & joy in visiting art museums and exhibitions frequently . It is on these numerous visits to The Academy of Fine Arts that the seeds were sown for launching DD ARTSPACE two decades later. Dolly works with artists from different corners in the country who specialise in many different mediums . She is able to curate & commission exceptional art that is both captivating and affordable. She appreciates classical music and enjoys the arts & crafts of our Indian heritage and is passionate about her work .



Anuradha Kanoria is a Calcuttan by marriage. After completing high school from St Mary's Convent, Nainital, she graduated in Political Science (Hons) from

Ladies Shri Ram College, New Delhi. She works with her husband in running the family tea estates, wherein she is involved in tea tasting and marketing. A past president of the Ladies Study Group, she continues to serve the organisation as a governing body member and is also actively involved with Millennium Mams. She is a partner at a free coaching centre in rural Bengal where 300 children are taught Maths and English. Her interests lie in travelling and photography. She is an avid reader and is a founding member of Erudites, an active and vibrant book club. She joined CHC a few years back and is looking forward to participating in all its activities once things are back to pre Covid times.



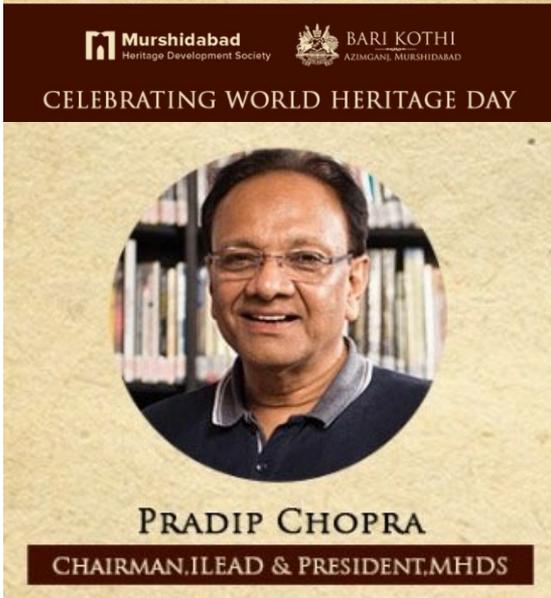
Vibha Mitra's article was published in Credai Bengal Vol 2022

<https://vibhamitra.com/hooghly-a-blend-of-cultures-credai-bengal-volume-2/>



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

The CHC Connect



Pradip Chopra was part of the panel Celebrating World Heritage Day

Basabi Pal inaugurated The 'Centre for Heritage Studies' on World Heritage Day observed by the Chandernagore College on 18th April. She also led the Heritage Walk



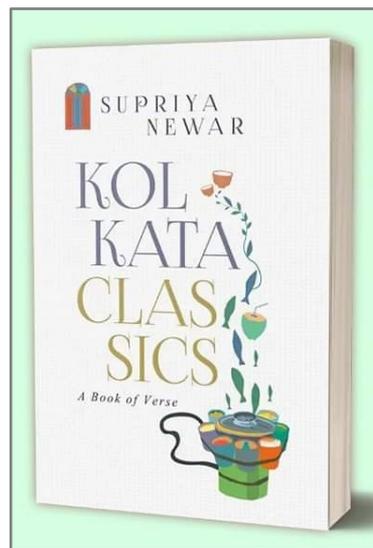
Navpreet Arora was invited to Bengal Global Business Summit for the Tourism in Bengal conference



Rupali Basu at #BengalConclave organised by TV News18 Bangla



Sandip Nowlakha gave a motivational talk on heritage to people from 61 countries. He also gave a motivational talk to the teachers and students of Chandernagore College. He participated in BGS as well as Creative Round Table Economy



Supriya Newar's Book release at Starmark



Kounteya Sinha hosted and scripted The Pride of Bengal Awards 2022 by the ICC YLF



Kounteya Sinha
<https://www.facebook.com/502638692/posts/10158949227448693/>



Ipsita Ganguli continues her journey with Performance Poetry with readings from her books *Of Love Longing*; *Random Pondering*; and *Rooted India 75 and We the People*. She was also Master of Ceremonies at the Poila Baisakh show at Calcutta Club

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Visit for additional information



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Rajiv Soni: Advisor
Vibha Mitra: Editor
Ipsita Ganguli : Co-Editor
Nikita Kejriwal : Creatives