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THE QUESTIONING HYDERABADI MIND

HYDERABADI CITIZENS TEND TO HAVE A MIND AND PERSPECTIVE OF THEIR OWN, AND LIKE TO HAVE FIRST-HAND INFORMATION ON MATTERS AS DIVERSE AS POLITICS AND ORGANIC FOOD



ease with which we talk of differences in our states would not happen if we knew intimately how much effort this impossible task to create India took," he says.

The talk brought to light the complexity of relationships between all the greats – Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Ambedkar. How history put up so many great people together around the time of Independence, and how the princely state of Hyderabad was convinced to join India also were also interesting historical aspects to understand.

The privilege of having a rarefied mind talk about his work and the freedom to ask



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Celebrating its 250th talk, Manthan is Hyderabad's modern, intellectual answer to the openness and tolerance for diverse contradicting views from thought leaders in all walks of life. A forum like Manthan would be possible only in a city like Hyderabad where people take out the time to listen, appreciate, absorb the nuances of diverse views, and find common ground. A typical session would host famous or even radically new voices, but voices with distinction

and original thought.

The forum believes that vibrant, vigorous, open public discourse is an absolute essential for a healthy India and that ideas and thoughts, so critical for progress, should be accessible to everyone. Hence all its talks are free for everyone.

The 250 th Manthan had Hindol Sengupta share his learning from his book 'The Man who saved India' on Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel. What one would have expected was a life summary of the freedom fighter and statesman, but much like it always is, *Hyderabadis* questioned him on many aspects, including why the wisdom of those times did

not percolate to these times.

"A nation is created in popular imagination first, and we have had three stalwarts shape that initially, Gandhi and Nehru, and Patel. The very cartographic imagination of India was done by Sardar Patel. He knew that more than 500 princely states of India would end up in strife if not joined in one nation. Nations around the world still wonder how rulers could join a democratic framework, and do so only on the basis of persuasion."

Patel, unlike Gandhi and Nehru did not write much, and we do not have enough in the popular works to know him. But that is no excuse. "The

questions in the simple tree-sheltered environment of Vidyaranya, where most of the Manthan talks are held, is a throwback to what really matters in being good citizens of India – to be aware, informed, and empowered.

Arun Shourie, Jairam Ramesh, Aruna Roy, P Chidambaram, Arvind Subramaniam all have recently spoken at the forum. Hindol Sengupta expected a lot of agitated questioning, there wasn't any. Hyderabadis ask the most difficult questions peacefully. "Sardar Patel had a great perspective which we really need to imbibe to understand India better, and no one has really paid it the attention due," says Hindol.

Hyderabadis would agree.

See this article in the e-Edition [Here](#)