THE KOTWALS

Delhi has a long history of policing through the famed institution of the Kotwal. Malikul Umara Faqruddin is said to be the first Kotwal of Delhi. He became the Kotwal at the age of 40 in 1237 A.D. and was also simultaneously appointed as the Naibe-Ghibat (Regent in absence). Because of his integrity and sagacity he had a very long tenure, holding the post through the reigns of three Sultans Balban, Kaikobad and Kaikhursrau. On one occasion when some Turkish nobles had approached him to secure the withdrawal of Balban's order, confiscating their estates, the Kotwal is recorded to have said, "My words will carry no weight if I accept any bribe from you. It is presumed that the Kotwal, or Police Headquarters was then located at Qila Rai Pithora or today's Mehrauli.

Another Kotwal mentioned in history books is Malik Alaul Mulk, who was appointed by Sultan Allauddin Khilji in 1297 AD. Sultan Allauddin Khilji once said of him, "He deserves the Wizarat (Prime Ministership) but I have appointed him only the Kotwal of Delhi on account of his incapacitating corpulence."

When Emperor Shahjahan shifted his capital from Agra to Delhi, in 1648, he appointed Ghaznavfar Khan as the first Kotwal of the new city, bestowing on him also the very important office of Mir-i-Atish (Chief of Artillery).

The institution of Kotwal came to an end with the crushing of the revolt of 1857, the first war of freedom by the British and, interestingly, the last Kotwal of Delhi, appointed just before the eruption of the first war of freedom, was Gangadhar Nehru, father of Pandit Motilal Nehru and grand father of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister

AN ORGANISED SET-UP

An organised form of policing was established by the British after the first war of freedom of 1857, with the adoption of the Indian Police Act of 1861. Delhi being a part of the Punjab, remained a unit of the Punjab Police even after becoming the Capital of India in 1912. In the same year, the first Chief Commissioner of Delhi was appointed and was vested with the powers and functions of the Inspector General of Police.

According to the 1912 Gazette, Delhi District was under the control of a DIG of Police with his headquarters at Ambala. The police force in the Delhi district, however, was commanded by a
Superintendent and a Deputy Superintendent of Police. The total composition of the force then was two Inspectors, 27 Sub-inspectors, 110 Head Constables, 985 Foot Constables and 28 Sawars. In the city the rural police was in the charge of two Inspectors with their headquarters at Sonepat and Ballabgarh respectively with 10 police stations.

In addition, there were 7 outposts and four 'road posts'.

In the city there were three large police stations of Kotwali, Subzi Mandi and Paharganj. In the Civil Lines, there were spacious police barracks where the Reserve, Armed Reserve and recruits were accommodated.

**POST-INDEPENDENCE**

Delhi Police was reorganised in 1946 when its strength was almost doubled. In the wake of partition, a large influx of refugee population rolled in and there was a sharp rise in crime in 1948. It was on February 16, 1948 that the first IGP of Delhi was appointed and the total strength of Delhi Police was increased by 1951 to about 8,000 with one Inspector General of Police and eight Superintendents of Police. A post of Deputy Inspector General of Police was created in 1956. With the rise in the population of Delhi, the strength of Delhi Police kept on increasing and in the year 1961, it was over 12,000. Presently, the sanctioned strength of Delhi Police is 83,762.

In the year 1966, the Government of India constituted the Delhi Police Commission headed by Justice G.D. Khosla to go into the Problems faced by Delhi Police and it was on the basis of the Khosla Commission Report that the Delhi Police was once again reorganised. Four Police districts, namely, North, Central, South and New Delhi were constituted. The Delhi Police Commission also recommended the introduction of Police Commissioner System which was eventually adopted from July 1, 1978.

The population of Delhi and the attendant problems of policing kept on multiplying and following the recommendations of the Srivastava Committee, the strength of Delhi Police was increased to the present level of above 76,000. At present, there are 6 ranges, 11 districts and 184 police stations in Delhi. Today, Delhi Police is perhaps the largest metropolitan police in the world, larger than London, Paris, New York and Tokyo.