

#J.F. MADAN

His Father's Business Collapsed
He Made A Cine Empire

He made India's first purpose-built cinema hall = the Elphinstone Picture Palace (1907, later Chaplin Cinema)



The Parsi pioneer who built India's first cinema empire was Jamshejji Framji Madan (J.F. Madan), born into a Parsi family, and rose from humble beginnings to become one of the founding fathers of Indian cinema. A theatre magnate, film producer, exhibitor, and distributor, he created India's first corporate film production company and dominated the industry in the silent era. His Madan Theatres empire controlled half of India's box office at its peak.

After his father's business collapsed due to the Bombay Reclamation Bank failure, young J.F. dropped out of school. In 1868, at age 11, he joined Bombay's Elphinstone Dramatic Club as a prop boy and curtain-puller, later becoming an actor. By 1875, the amateur group had turned professional, touring India with grand Parsi theatre productions. He built wealth in the booming Parsi theatre scene of the 1890s, owning two companies and acquiring venues like Calcutta's Corinthian Theatre.

Entry into Cinema:
From Bioscope Tent to Empire (1900s-1910s)

In 1902, Madan founded the Elphinstone Bioscope Company in Calcutta, starting with film shows in a tent on the Maidan. He quickly scaled up: acquiring exclusive Indian subcontinent rights to Pathé Frères films (1908), building India's first purpose-built cinema hall – the Elphinstone Picture Palace (1907, later Chaplin Cinema) and producing early shorts.

1905: Financed Bengal Partition Movement (directed by Jyotish Sarkar).

1911: Filmed the historic IFA Shield football final (Mohun Bagan's win over an English team), India's first filmed sporting event.

1917: Produced Satyawadi Raja Harishchandra, the first feature film shot in Calcutta and a remake of Dadasaheb Phalke's landmark.

Madan Theatres Ltd.: India's Cinema Powerhouse (1919 Onwards)

In 1919, he incorporated Madan Theatres Limited, India's first corporate film



Kanneganti Hanumanthu.

Anjali Sharma
Senior Journalist & Wildlife Enthusiast

By the end of the 19th century, India was being steadily drained under British colonial rule. Taxes tightened around everyday life, reaching even the most basic necessities, salt, forests, land. While grain was exported abroad, millions at home struggled with hunger. Forests that once sustained rural communities were seized, and traditional rights were stripped away. It was not just economic exploitation; it was an assault on dignity, enforced through silence and the crack of the whip.

In a small village called Chilakaluripet, a boy named Kannagani Hanumanthu was born into a humble farming family. His life began like many others in rural India, close to the land, shaped by seasons, and rooted in community.

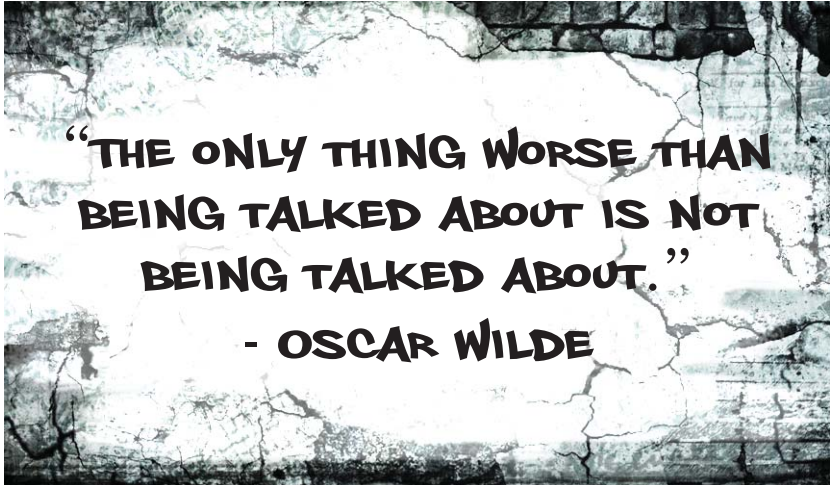
#HOYSALA SCULPTURES

World record:
Indra Sabha with 71 songs in one film

However, like many elite Parsis of the era, he thrived within the colonial system. He built a major part of his fortune supplying provisions, wine, liquor, and goods to the British Indian Army, including contracts with the Supply and Transport Corps (8th Lucknow Division) during World War I. For these services, he was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the 1918 Birthday Honours and promoted to Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 1923. His funeral in June 1923 drew condolences from the Viceroy and high British officials.

J.F. Madan passed away on 28 June 1923 in Calcutta. The empire peaked in the late 1920s but faced challenges post-Wall Street Crash (1929) and talkie transition; it wound down by 1937 after producing its last film.

THE WALL



The Farmer Who Refused to Bow

The British introduced the Pullari tax, a levy imposed on villagers for grazing their cattle on forest lands that had once been freely accessible. For farming communities, this was devastating. Cattle were not just animals; they were survival itself. To tax grazing was to tax existence.

#THE BRAVE

She spends hundreds of thousands to marry idols
Yet Mother India doesn't let a single grain of rice fall
To the miserable poor, the destitute,
and those naked like fakirs
In a country chasing after 330 million gods
Will the hunger of the unfortunate ever be quenched?

- Gurram Jashuva
Translated by Gautham Reddy

What followed was a powerful act of mass defiance. Villagers stood together, refusing to submit. The movement spread, and with it grew the determination of people who had long been pushed into silence. As a part of the non-cooperation movement, Pullari Satyagraha was organized in the Palnadu region. Hanumanthu mobilised the people to not pay the tax. Hanumanthu tried bribing Hanumanthu. Rutherford offered to make Hanumanthu a zamindar for 45 villages in the Durgi region, but he refused.

The following rebellion cry is attributed to Hanumanthu:
Neeru pettava, Naatu vesava? Kotha kosava, Kuppa nurchava? Endhuku kattali ra sisthu?
(Translation: Have you ever irrigated any land, or planted a seedling? Ever harvested or trashed any field?)

The temples of the Hoysala dynasty are celebrated for their breathtaking sculptures, intricate carvings, and astonishing attention to detail. Yet, beyond their artistic beauty lies another remarkable feature: the distinctive mirror-like finish that can still be seen on many surfaces, more than 800 years after they were created.

The Hoysalas were not only master sculptors but also keen observers of the properties of stone. Their preferred material, a fine-grained chloritic schist, commonly known as soapstone, was soft when freshly quarried but hardened over time when exposed to air. This unique quality allowed artisans to carve extraordinarily delicate details while also achieving highly polished surfaces. According to traditional accounts and observations by scholars, Hoysala craftsmen employed a sophisticated finishing

process that went far beyond ordinary stone carving. The surface was gradually smoothed layer by layer using abrasives, producing an exceptionally refined finish. A naturally occurring corundum-rich abrasive, associated with aluminium oxide, is believed to have played a role in the polishing process. Corundum, one of the hardest known minerals, would have enabled craftsmen to achieve an

BABY BLUES



Gurram Jashuva.

the cattle, forcibly beating up the elder and women with their rifle butts when they tried to protest.

In 1922, during the sacred festival of Maha Shivaratri, when the village should have been filled with prayer and celebration, colonial forces descended upon it. Their aim was clear: crush the rebellion.

They stormed the village, confiscating property, seizing cattle, and beating villagers, including women. Fear was meant to replace defiance. Hanumanthu stood his ground. Unarmed and unyielding, he faced the force of an empire. The British demanded compliance, demanded payment, demanded submission. He refused.

They spent fire. He was shot mercilessly, his defiance answered with brutality. The British treated him with cruelty by shooting him 24 to 26 times and preventing the villagers from even offering him water. He shouted the *Vande Mataram* slogan for nearly six hours and died. After four days, Hanumanthu's last rites were performed by his wife and relatives at Minchalapadu. But even in death, the violence did not end. His body was tied and dragged through the village, a cruel warning to others

ering, a testament to the technical skill of Hoysala artisans.

One of the finest places to witness this phenomenon is the Jain temple of Parshvanatha Basadi in Halebidu. Visitors are often astonished by the reflective quality of the stone surfaces, which continue to gleam despite the passage of time. The effect is not limited to sculptures alone; even sections of the temple flooring display the same lustrous finish, revealing the meticulous care devoted to every element of construction.

The mirror-like surfaces of Hoysala monuments remind us that these temples were not merely places of worship. They were laboratories of artistic innovation where sculptors, stoneworkers, and craftsmen pushed the limits of material science centuries before the term existed. Their achievements continue to inspire admiration today, standing as enduring evidence of one of India's greatest artistic traditions.

By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



#FAIZ AHMED FAIZ

"Aaj Bazar Mein Pa-Ba-Jaulan Chalo"

Tears alone are not enough. Hidden love, concealed resistance, it is no longer sufficient. The call is clear: step into the open, even in chains

There are poems that are written in quiet rooms, and then, there are poems born in motion, in pain, in public gaze. "Aaj Bazar Mein Pa-Ba-Jaulan Chalo" by Faiz Ahmed Faiz belongs to the latter. It carries within it not just words, but a lived moment, one that unfolded on the streets of Lahore under the shadow of authority and resistance.

The story often retold is simple, yet powerful. Faiz, imprisoned for his political beliefs, was once being taken from jail to a dentist's appointment. He was not transported quietly or with dignity. Instead, he was placed in chains and carried in a horse-drawn cart, a tongue, through the very streets he knew so well.

But what the authorities intended as humiliation turned into something else entirely. As the tonga moved through Lahore, people began to recognize him. A poet. A voice. A man who had spoken for them. Slowly, quietly at first, they began to follow. The crowd grew, not loud, not violent, but present. Watching. Witnessing. In that moment, something shifted.

The chains remained, but they no longer symbolized defeat. The public gaze transformed them into a sign of defiance. Faiz was not hidden away; he was visible, carried through the heart of the city, accompanied by the silent solidarity of its people.

It is from this emotional and political moment that the poem draws its force. *chashm-e-nam jan-e-shoridah kaafi nahin tohmat-e-ishq-e-noshidah kaafi nahin*

aaj bazar mein pa-ba-jaulan chalo

Here, Faiz transforms the imagery of disgrace into one of power. Walk with abandon.



hakim-e-shahr bhi majma-e-am bhi tir-e-ilzam bhi sang-e-dushnam bhi

Both the rulers and the public are present. Accusations will come. Stones of insult will be thrown. Yet, the act of walking, of showing up, remains central. The poem does not promise victory. It does not soften the reality of repression. *sub-h-e-nashad bhi roz-e-nakam bhi*

There will be joyless mornings and failed days. But even in that bleakness, Faiz asks a deeper question: *un ka dam-saz apne siva kaun hai*

shahr-e-janaan mein ab ba-safa kaun hai

Who stands with the people, if not the people themselves? Who remains pure in a city shaped by fear and compromise?

By the final lines, the poem becomes almost prophetic: *rakht-e-dil bahish to dil-figaro chalo*

phir hamein qatl ho aa-ein yaaro chalo

Gather your wounded hearts. Come, friends, perhaps, it is us who will be sacrificed again.

There is no illusion here. Resistance carries a cost. But there is also no retreat.

What makes this poem enduring is not just its language, but its origin. A man in chains, moving through familiar streets, watched by his people, and turning that moment into a timeless call for dignity.

The tonga ride ended. The chains, eventually, were removed.

But the image remained: a poet in public, unbroken.

And through his words, that walk through the marketplace continues, every time the poem is read, spoken, or remembered.

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman