Twitter Thread by Aanchal Malhotra

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It really breaks my heart to write this, but Nazmuddin Khan sahib, on whom I wrote a chapter (probably my favourite one) in Remnants, is no more. Born in 1929 in Delhi's Hauz Rani, he passed away just short of 92 years. 1/



We didn't meet often, but when we did, he called me Munni. He was the first person to make me realize that my work was not merely on objects or Partition, but rather on identity and belonging. True belonging to land and home and soil; a belonging for the living and the dead. 2/

While working on his chapter, there were things I was confronted with that I'd never thought of before - things that made me feel small, made me question my privilege, my safety, and the lived difference between nationalism, patriotism and fanaticism. 3/

He may have been an ordinary person who lived an ordinary life, but the lessons from that life were extraordinary and I hope his words reach the far corners of the world to help us become more empathetic and accepting humans. This is his legacy, his hopeful heart. 4/

If you've read his chapter in Remnants -This Bird of Gold, My Land -The Hopeful Heart of Nazmuddin Khan- then you know he was masterful in his memories. If you haven't, then I will tell you that he peppers our conversation with his childhood, stories of going to Viceroy House 5/

. . . where his father worked, watching Jinnah sahib cruise through the streets in his convertible, how Partition riots engulfed Delhi, and why his family decided not to leave India. But what has stayed me the most is this short excerpt on a land for all its people - 6/

"'Our Hindu brothers,' he began, 'are born in Hindustan, they grow up here, live their lives here, they die here. And when they die, they are cremated and their ashes are immersed into holy waters of the river Ganga. Within her tides they flow, even if it is eventually into.." 7/

"...foreign waters. But look at us Musalmaans...we are born in Hindustan, we grow up here, we live here and we die here. And when we die, we are buried deep into the ground and, eventually, when our bodies decompose, we become one with the land. We become Hindustan.'" 8/

This is the hopeful heart of Nazmuddin Khan sahib, and how he will forever be remembered by me. 9/9