

## #CHRONICLE

# The English Calendar Riots of 1752

How our calendars lost 11 days in September 1752



People who were living in Britain or any other English colonies went to bed on 2 September 1752 and woke up on 14 September 1752. The reason? The Calendar (New Style) Act, 1752.

People at that time thought that the government cheated them and mistakenly believed that their lives would be shortened by 11 days. This led to civil unrest and rioters demanded their eleven days back from the government.

### Introduction of the Gregorian Calendar

In 1528, reigning as leader of the Catholic Church for 10 years, Pope Gregory XIII had a problem with Easter due to an inbuilt error in the Julian calendar. To fix this, he released a papal bull decreeing that people under the dominionship of his church would have to accept the Gregorian calendar and skip some days.

In 1582, France, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain adopted the Gregorian calendar while Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Hungary and Prussia in the next 50 years.

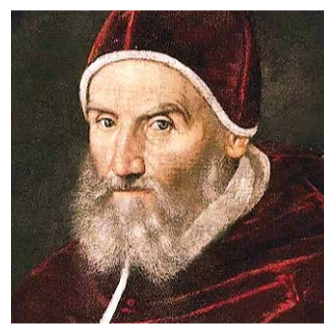
### 11-day skip in September 1752

September 1752							
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	
		1	2	4	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
25	26	27	28	29	30		

Gregorian calendar is today's internationally accepted calendar but that wasn't always the case. Before 1752, Britain and its Empire followed the Julian calendar, implemented by Julius Caesar in 46 B.C.

With the adoption of Gregory's bull by several nations, the people in Britain wrote letters with two different dates—using the Gregorian calendar (used in mainland Europe) and the Julian calendar.

Eventually, the British Government instigated the Calendar (New Style) Act of 1752. The government admitted that the Julian calendar caused divers inconveniences, not only as it differs from the usage of neighbouring nations, but also from the legal method of computation



Pope Gregory XIII

in Scotland, and from the common usage throughout the whole kingdom, thereby leading to frequent mistakes in the dates of deeds and other writings, and disputes arising therefrom.

As a result, eleven days (September 3-13) were deleted forever from the calendar by the British Government to align it with the one used in Europe, a shift from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar. This led to widespread riots and people demanded, "Give us our eleven days." Most historians, however, are of the view that the protests over lost calendar days never happened and it was a myth.

### How calendar change happened?

- 31 December 1750 was followed by 1 January 1750 (under the Julian calendar, December was the 10th month and January the 11th)
- 24 March 1750 was followed by 25 March 1751 (March 25 was the first day of the Julian calendar year)
- 31 December 1751 was followed by 1 January 1752 (the switch from March 25 to January 1 as the first day of the year)
- 2 September, 1752 was followed by 14 September 1752 (a drop of 11 days to align with the Gregorian calendar)

W.M. Jamieson narrated a tale about William Willett of Eton in his book 'Murders Myths and Monuments of North Staffordshire'. William Willett wagered that he could dance non-stop for 12 days and 12 nights. On the evening of 2 September 1752, he started to jig around the village and continued all through the night. The next morning, September 14th by the new calendar, he stopped dancing and claimed his bet!



# Satyjit Roy Will Get A Statue In Rajasthan

## #RAY'S RAJASTHAN



### A Bengali movie's impact on Jaisalmer

Before its iconic climax in the Jaisalmer Fort, Sonar Kella makes its way through several other mesmerising forts. Aside from the Red Fort in Delhi, every other one featured in the film were in Rajasthan—the Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur (where the characters begin their journey to find 'sonar kella'), the Junagarh Fort in Bikaner (which can be spotted right after the scene where Mukul is listening to a folk singer perform on the streets), and the Nahargarh Fort in Jaipur (where fraudster Mandar Bose, played by Kamu Mukherjee, presumably kills Dr Hemanga Hajra, played by Shailen Mukherjee). Interestingly, Satyjit Ray is said to have chosen the Nahargarh Fort for this particular scene after he discovered that from this vantage point on its summit, one could see almost the entire stretch of Jaipur.

However, while these spots have their own significance, the Jaisalmer Fort has its own special part in the hearts of Feluda fans. In an interview, Satyjit Ray's son Sandip Ray (who directed several Feluda movies himself) called the

was not quite prepared infrastructure-wise to handle large number of tourists. But the locals, who must have been in search of fresh ways to make a living, seemingly used this opportunity to make a headway into new professions.

As Jaisalmer continued to see a flow of tourists looking to catch a glimpse of the 'golden fortress' over the years, the city became better equipped as well. Homes turned into homestays, resources became much more accessible, and new businesses like restaurants, hotels, tour guide agencies, etc. grew like mushrooms around the city to accommodate the visiting Feluda fans.

### Still a Pilgrim Spot for Bengalis

Bengali tourists have become such a big part of the locals' livelihood in Jaisalmer that it is not that rare to come across guides and business people who can easily chat you up in Bengali.

Many tour guides are even said to have a formulated route that takes visitors categorically through the locations where Sonar Kella was shot nearly 50 years ago. Fans

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Jaisalmer Fort "a pilgrimage centre for Bengali tourists". This tourism trend, however, is not just a nerd moment for Bengalis and Feluda fans. It actually has had quite an intense and lasting economic relevance to the locals of Jaisalmer. But we might need to take a brief look at history to understand this point better.

In 1971, then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi passed an amendment which abolished the special privileges that the princely rulers of the country had enjoyed since the Independence. This included the end of privy purses, which was basically an amount of money that the Indian government paid annually to the erstwhile princely rulers who had acceded to India.

Residents of Jaisalmer, many if not all, relied on the royal family to make a living. But as the Jaisalmer royal family took a financial hit after the privy purse ended, so did the livelihoods of many common people.

Few years into this struggle, Sonar Kella was released in the theatres, triggering an influx of tourists in Jaisalmer. This was still the 70s; the city, as per the reports,

Bengalis who come to Rajasthan make it a point to visit the 'Sonar Kella' of Jaisalmer.

A number of movies have since been shot in the area, including the Dimple Kapadia-starrer Rudaali and Jackie Chan's 2020 action-adventure film Vanguard. But nothing has had quite the same impact as Sonar Kella.

Sonar Kella is, by far, Satyjit Ray's most popular connection to Rajasthan. However, this is only the tip of the iceberg. Ray's love for the sandy state ran deep enough to make him come back for more, time and again. Not only did he shoot quite a few more movies here, but an avid reader of his works would know that the writer in him also based many of his short stories in different corners of Rajasthan.

### Goopy and Bagha's Jaisalmer

Satyjit Ray's rendezvous with Jaisalmer began not with Sonar Kella, but with Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne in 1968.

Ray immortalized his grandfather Upendrakishore Ray

once? Once these powers are bestowed upon them, the story deep dives into a musical adventure where the two end up entertaining its readers/viewers with thrilling twists, fight scenes, more magic, and more songs.

I was perhaps four or five years old when I first saw this movie. And the impact it had on me was so strong that, for the next few years, I earnestly looked for any signs of bamboo woods in the thick concrete jungle of Calcutta so that I too could impress the Bhootee Raja and earn a few boons in return. The heartbreak of learning that a king of ghosts does not really exist (and was actually voiced by Ray himself in the movie) was honestly bigger than learning about the truth about Santa Claus.

The fantasy musical, which has also aged into a cult film along with its sequel, culminated in a classic climax scene that was shot with hundreds of extras and camels to recreate a war sequence. The animals, as per some accounts, were provided by the royal family of Jaisalmer.

Along with the hospitality of the locals, the picturesque beauty of

justice to the image of a Ray character who loves to travel if at least one of his adventures did not take place in Rajasthan. And so, we have Seth Gangaramer Dhan Daulat (The Treasures of Seth Gangaram), where a young Tarini heads to work in Rajasthan's Ajmer as Gangaram's secretary, only to realise that he is the doppelgänger of a dangerous local dacoit who is in the police's radar.

Speaking of Ajmer, Ray's short story 'Mastani'—Angshumanis also based in this city, where a young boy arrives as a part of a film crew only to get into real trouble with kidnappers.

### Haunting Tale of Khagam in Bharatpur

In 1972, Sandesh—the Bengali magazine started by Upendra Kishore Ray Chowdhury's publishing company, M/s U Ray and Sons, in 1913—published a bone-chilling short story by Satyjit Ray that, to this day, sends shivers slithering down the spine of any reader. Khagam, a story about arrogance, karma and curiosity getting the figurative cat, swings between the settings of a forest guesthouse and a sadhu's camp

More than 40 years after that plot germinated into a story, Khagam has now hit the shelves as a chilling graphic novel. And while it makes the maestro's story-writing genius even more exciting for a whole new generation of readers, it also stands as a reminder of Ray's affinity with Rajasthan.

the desert and the mesmerising architecture of Jaisalmer seemingly had a lasting effect on Ray's creative genius. In particular, though, the story goes that it was the striking yellow colour of the Jaisalmer Fort, which gave of a golden hue in bright sunlight, that impressed him the most. But as much as he wanted to encapsulate this colourful sight in his film, financial reasons restrained him. Unfortunately, due to a tight production budget, he could only afford to make Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne a black and white movie.

But the magnificence of the Jaisalmer Fort seemed to have inspired Ray enough to not only spin an entire novel around its unique characteristic and history but also to make him return a few years later in 1973, with a bigger budget, to capture all its glory of a colour film.

### Tarini Khuro's Ajmer

While the list of Ray's most popular works may be topped by the Feluda series or the Apu Trilogy, it is his Tarini Khuro stories that I adore the most. But Tarini Charan Bandopadhyay would not have done

stumbled upon the idea for the horror short story during his visit to Bharatpur, Rajasthan, in the 1960s.

Ray was supposedly in the city to confirm the location for Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne. While the site did not pan out for the film, the writer-cum-filmmaker walked away with kernels for a plot after he heard stories about a sadhu and his pet kraik during his stay at the Circuit House in Bharatpur.

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### Fritz's Resurrection in Bundi

Ray published yet another horror short story in Sandesh magazine in the year 1970 (first publication). This one revolved around narrator Jayanta's miniature figurine of an old Swiss man named Fritz, which he had buried at a circuit house in Rajasthan's Bundi village as a child.

The story begins with an adult Jayanta returning to the same guesthouse in Bundi with a friend, Shankar. What was supposed to be a fun visit turns eerie after Jayanta starts getting flashbacks from his childhood, including the one where he remembers abandoning his beloved doll as 'dead' and entombing it under a deodar tree in the circuit house's backyard after some stray dogs had ravaged it. Things get even creepier when 12-inch-long Fritz seemingly pulls—what can only be described as—a Urated Chucky movie.

With the backdrop of a sweltering Rajasthan village in the 70s, the story winds up with the lead characters standing under the deodar tree as a gardener digs up Fritz's grave for Jayanta's reassurance. What they find is what makes the horror story another Ray masterpiece.

Earlier this year, it was announced that Khagam will become the first of Satyjit Ray's short stories ever to be made into a Bengali graphic novel. At its launch party in January 2023, Sandip Ray recalled how his genius father

Ray's work in Rajasthan, including the masses of tourists the novel/movie Sonar Kella brings to the Jaisalmer Fort every year, that the state government has decided to pay homage to the Oscar-winning director with a statue of his own.

### Satyjit Ray Beyond Rajasthan

If after reading all of this, you begin to think that Satyjit Ray's works revolved only around just Bengal and Rajasthan, you would be mistaken.

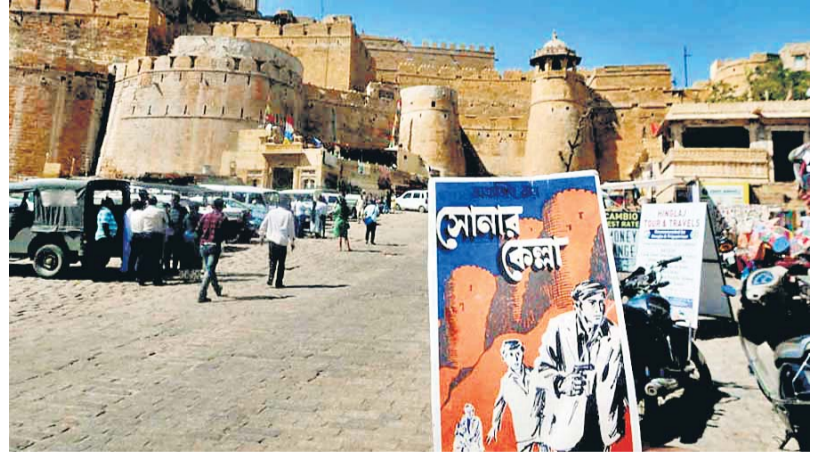
For instance, Ray's iconic and only feature-length film in Hindi, Shatrangh Ke Kiliari, took place in the erstwhile princely state of Awadh in North India. The 1977 film based on a Munshi Premchand short story went on to become India's entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 51st Academy Awards and, over the years, aged into a masterpiece lauded and looked up to by big-time filmmakers like Martin Scorsese.

Then, there's Sadgati, a short film in Hindi that was based on a Premchand short story as well and was shot in a village near Chhattisgarh's Raipur, which is now in Mahasamund district. Also, there are Ray's other short stories based across India—Brown Sahab' Bari (The House of Mr Brown) in Bengaluru, Professor Hijibibi in Odisha, Brihad chonchu (The Big Bird) in Jaisalmer, and so on. As for the many series, the fictitious, first-hand accounts of the aged scientist, Professor Trilokeshwar Shonku, take you everywhere from Nazi Germany to the magical land of El Dorado to even Mars. Feluda's thrillers take place amid film shootings in Mumbai, snowfall in Shimla, vacations in Puri, pilgrimage to Kedarnath, and much more.

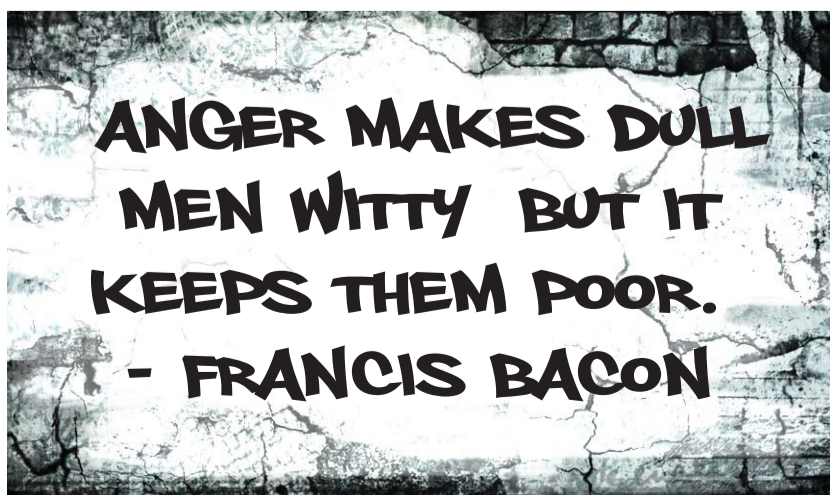
Tarini Khuro, described as someone who has had 55 different jobs across 33 cities in India, has spooky stories from castles in Pune, duels in Lucknow, palaces in Mysore, etc.

The movies and fictional literature that Satyjit Ray has left behind can take an attentive viewer or reader on a tour around India and beyond. But his stories about Rajasthan will always have a bit of his especially encased in them.

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## THE WALL

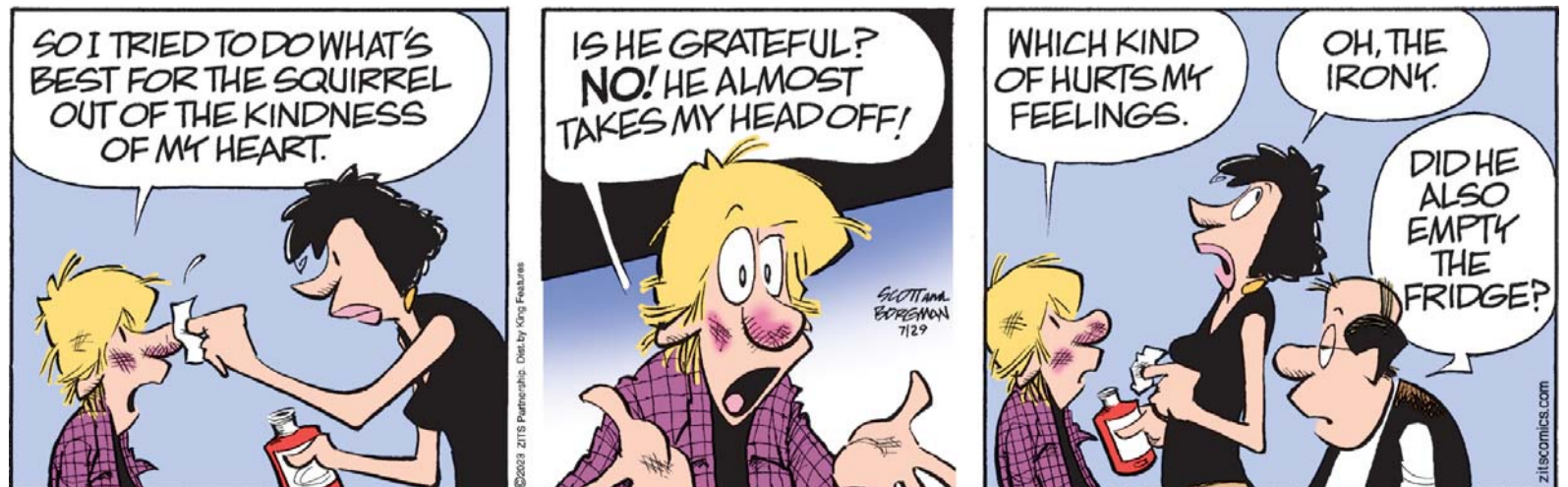


## BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

## ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman