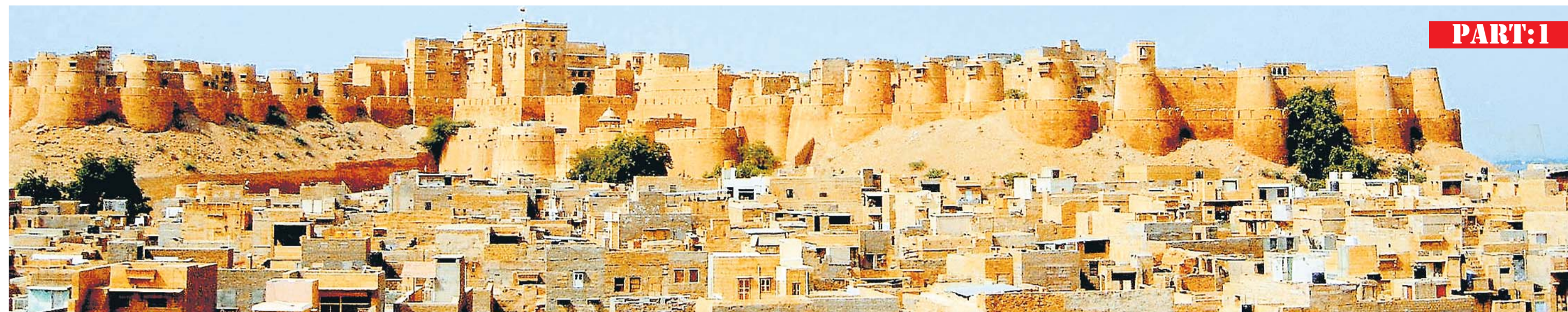




International Lefthanders Day

From scissors to knives, from can openers to cork screws, *Left Handers* (also sometimes called Southpaws) can be the brunt of jokes all year long due to their unique hand dominance. But this is the day to ignore all of that and bring awareness to all of those right-handed folks around the globe in celebration of *Left Handers Day*. After all, as the old saying goes, right-handed people operate on the left side of the brain, which means that left-handed people are functioning on the right side. Therefore, only left-handed people are in their right mind!



PART: I

FREEDOM OF JAISALMER

The first murmur of opposition to the Maharawal was by the traders. They had an old tradition of gifting sugar and *misri* amongst each other on ceremonial occasions in brass vessels. This custom was known as *Lani*. Maharawal Shalivahan II imposed a tax of Rs. 1000 on it in 1896 AD. There was a lot of opposition to this step and the traders went on a strike also, but the Maharawal did not withdraw it. It resulted in several traders and business families migrating from Jaisalmer. This resulted in a tremendous economic decline of the state.



Dr. Sudhir Varma, IAS (Retd.)
(Former Collector, Jaisalmer)

When the country under Mahatma Gandhi was fighting against the British rule, Jaisalmer and a few other Princely States were fighting a grim battle against their own rulers, some of them were as cruel as the British. The ruler, called the *Maharawal*, was not only cruel but also was not allowing any information to the local people about what the country was going through.

The Princely State of Jaisalmer, entitled to a 15-gun salute, with an area of 41, 600 sq. kms, is located in southwestern boundary of Rajasthan. In 1901, it had a population of 73,370 and a revenue of Rs. 1,20,000. It was a part of the western *Rajputana States Residency* since 1880. For a long time, it had been ruled by the Bhati dynasty, which claimed its origin from Lord Krishna. During the 20th century, Sir Jawahar Singh KCSI, educated at Mayo College, was the ruler, from 1914 till 1949, when Girdhar Singh took over but he could rule for only one year, after whom Raghunath Singh took over.

Compared to other regions of India, we must concede that *Rajputana's* participation in freedom struggle for the country was limited to a few illustrious freedom fighters, who never got the commendation that martyrs got in other parts of India.

It should also be realized that the first people in India to realize the true nature of British oppression were those who had travelled abroad and were the first to rebel, *Rajasthanis*, who went abroad, were Princess and the representatives of the Princess. Also, those who were able to get higher education were belonging to the aristocracy. Almer, probably, was the only part of *Rajputana* which was directly under the British rule and the repression of the British was visible because of the means of transportation like railways. Schools of higher learning, like the Mayo College, were also there.

That is why it had fighters like Hemu Kalani, who fought for the independence struggle.

In order to understand the reasons for lack of participation of *Rajputana* in freedom struggle, we need to understand the administrative setup of *Rajputana* during the British rule, which suited both, the British and the Rulers of such states.

At the time of independence, *Rajputana* had 19 princely states. 16 had Rajput Princes, including the larger states of Mewar, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Jaipur, two had *Jat* Princes, Bharatpur and Dholpur, and one had a *Muslim Nawab* at Tonk. Almer Merwara was under the direct British rule, headquartered at Mount Abu under an Agent. He had a representative in each State called the *Resident*

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There was a lack of direct contact of the public of the Princely states with the British rulers. The local rulers from *thakurs* or *zamindars* to *Maharajas* were all Indians and they continued with their old feudal system of governance, with a good balance of benevolence and suppression.

Rajputana, who did not participate in Indian independence movement because of several reasons. There was a lack of direct contact of the public of the Princely states with the British rulers. The local rulers from *thakurs* or *zamindars* to *Maharajas* were all Indians and they continued with their old feudal system of governance, with a good balance of benevolence and suppression. Local administration was run with the help of the Prime Minister, police, ministers and armed forces with administrative officers at the lower level also.

There were well-entrenched feudal conditions which were difficult to fight by the public. Whether their states were under the Mughals, Marathas or the British, the same motley bunch of Princely Rulers managed to hang on, providing a relative stability compared to other states or provinces like Mysore, Bengal, Bombay or Punjab, which were uprooted every time a new power swept through India. The people of *Rajputana* had a generational conditioning of accepting *superiority* of any super power, as long as their local rulers remained, whom they found no reason to resist.

Lack of formal education in the Princely states was a big reason for ignorance about the outside world. By 1900 AD, almost all areas under the princely states

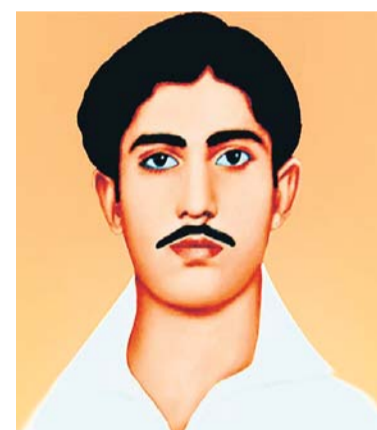
#HISTORY



Maharawal Shri Jawahar Singh.



Sagarmal Gopa.



Hemu Kalani.



made little effort to set up institutes of primary and secondary education, based on western system of education, because they were run by religious institutions, far away from concepts of democracy. Most of *Rajputana* was badly intransected because the level of road infrastructure was far worse than the area under the British rule. Most of the roads were not metalled. The result was most of the people felt isolated in their own locations. Surprisingly, the local trains could be used only for the Princes and not for common people. Lack of communication was a major reason for lack of spread of independence ideas in *Rajputana*.

While the printing press was used across the rest of India to propagate new ideas of revolt, like the newspapers in Punjab or Bombay, *Rajputana* had no significant press movement. The printing presses were subservient to the local *Maharawal* and all flow of information was controlled. Indian independence struggle was initiated by people who had exposure to western democracies through education or through travel. The facility was lacking in *Rajputana*.

Darzi Satyagraha

Another incident, (not directly related with freedom struggle) is that there was a kind of disobedience of *Maharawal's* orders by the ordinary public, known as *Darzi Satyagraha*. According to an old tradition, the tailors were going from house to house to stitch the clothes of the powerful *Maheshwaris* and were getting paid four *annas*. In addition to that, they were also given

lunch, free of cost. The tradition was not liked by the young tailors. One day, one of them told the client that it was like being treated as a bridegroom. The *Maheshwaris* took objection to it and prohibited them to stitch their clothes. They also stopped the grain merchants to give them ration. The tailors started starving and complained to the *Maharawal*, who ordered the

They were also scared of sedition laws, which were used at the drop of a hat. The struggle for independence began in *Jaisalmer* much later than the other parts of the country. A part of *Rajputana* in pre-independent India and ruled by the powerful Bhati rulers, the region had faced tough times and turmoil in its history. As this region did not have a good network of railroads, most of the goods and travellers used roads between Punjab and Sindh, on one side, and Bahawalpur, Afghanistan and Baluchistan, on the other as the famous silk route which made *Jaisalmer* an important Trade Center. The rulers of India, from times immemorial, wanted to capture it. Alauddin kept it under his control for many years after the siege of the Fort. As its location was of strategic interest to them, the East India Company also had made a treaty with the state in 1818

The First Sign of Unrest against the Maharawal

In 1915, some young men, under the leadership of Sagarmal Gopa, a *Brahmin* from a prosperous family, tried to set up a *Sarva Hitkari* reading room. As it also kept the state officials happy through some of its actions, it remained in existence for some time. In 1918, it organized a public function, in which it invited some good teachers, who demanded a middle school, probably, the first

AD. With British protection, the *Maharawal* had become more dictatorial, old-fashioned and superstitious. He did not allow the public any role in running the administration. No attempts were made by him to spread education. Most of the funds were used on the royalty. In one of the annual budgets, out of a total revenue of Rs. 40000, Rs. 10000 was spent on the jewellery of the wives of the *Maharawal*. Under these circumstances, any struggle for independence was difficult. Any powerful person who raised his voice was assured of *jaigirs* or other lucrative offers, and was forced to sit quiet. The result was that for 125 years, the public remained ignorant of the rise of freedom struggle in the country. However, with growing facilities for communications, the desire for freedom grew. But there was a

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public demand. This raised the heckles of the *Maharawal* and the public reading room was forced to close.

The second attempt at raising awareness about a public issue was made by a renowned scholar of Economics and Political Science, who belonged to *Jaisalmer* but lived outside. He came to *Jaisalmer*, met the *Maharawal* and submitted a memorandum about the need for improving education, health, roads, etc. No attention was paid to the memorandum. On the other hand, the mention of those issues was also disliked. It also did not get any support from the public, which favoured the decision of the royalty.

During the 1920-21's non-cooperation movement, there was no visible impact in *Jaisalmer*, although, both, Gopa from Nagpur and Naraindas Bhatia from Calcutta, had visited *Jaisalmer* from time to time to spread the message of Gandhi and *Khadi*. Both took interest in the library also. Bhatia worked for *Khadi* and Gopa for political reforms. Because of their modern views and work, both of them fell foul of the *Maharawal*, caught and harassed, but neither of them complained to the public.

In 1920, the first seeds of nationalism started germinating. In February 1920, some residents of *Jaisalmer* living outside the state, with some locals, gave a memorandum to the *Maharawal* with the following demands.

1. Educational institutes should be given government aid.
2. Newspapers should be allowed to be published.
3. Newspapers coming from outside the state should be permitted.
4. Elections to the local bodies should be held and their members should be from the public.
5. Arrangements should be made to clean the city.
6. Arrangements for transport and communications should be made. Surprisingly, the *Maharawal* accepted all the demands.

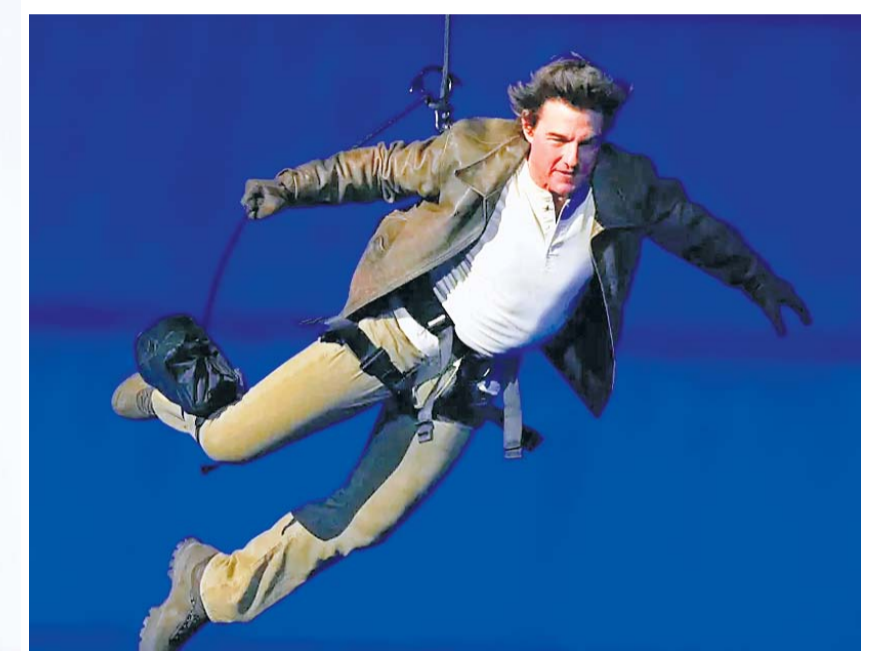
Sagarmal Gopa, a *Pushkarna Brahmin*, whose father was in the employment of the *Maharawal*, published the agreement in the form of a booklet and distributed in the public. This was disliked by the *Maharawal* because it looked like his defeat. It also exposed the dictatorial manner of his working. The publication was banned and Sagarmal Gopa, along with his colleagues, Raghunath Singh Mehta and Aidan Singh, were arrested.

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"Au revoir" The French Way

Yseult dressed in *Dior Haute Couture* ensemble that paid homage to the iconic fashion house's rich history. The outfit, crafted by Maria Grazia Chiuri, featured a black silk New Bar jacket, a modern reinterpretation of the signature Bar jacket, that debuted in the 1940s as part of Christian Dior's revolutionary "New Look."



Prakash Bhandari
The writer is a senior journalist

#OLYMPICS



olywood superstar, Tom Cruise, played a role, more glamorous, than he has ever played before. Sunday night at Paris, Olympics closing ceremony saw him descending on a wire from the Stade de France roof.

Spectators shrieked in delight as the Mission, Impossible star, dressed in leather jacket and gloves, lowered himself into the stadium while his compatriot performed on guitar. To mark the handover to Los Angeles, which will host the Olympics in 2028, Cruise was seen in a pre-recorded film, travelling through Paris and onto the US. There, he journeyed to the legendary Hollywood sign and unfurled the Olympic colours.

The ceremony in Paris marked a formal 'au revoir' to this year's host city. Cruise proceeded to take the Olympic flag from one of the stars of Paris, American gymnast Simone Biles, before the thrilled audience watched him zip away on a motorbike. The pre-recorded clip showed his journey to LA was soundtracked by California natives Hot Chili Peppers. The funk-rock hitmakers, then, delivered a live performance of their classic track 'Can't Stop on a palm-fringed beach in Los Angeles.'

Other acts included Billie Eilish and Snoop Dogg, who performed with Dr. Dre Snoop, who is from LA himself, was a regular fixture at the Games, which culminated with the US topping the medals table after a dramatic win in Sunday's final event, the women's basketball final. Antoine Dupont, the French rugby star and one of the two flagbearers for France, during the closing ceremony, passed the French flag to Nantenin Keita, a Paralympic track and field runner. This handover symbolizes the transition from the Olympics to the Paralympics.

et with a flowing black silk skirt, adding a contemporary twist to the classic ensemble. Her look was completed with a *Dior* hat, gloves, and shoes, embodying the epitome of *French haute couture*. Her performance, as stunning as her attire, was a fitting finale to the Paris 2024 Olympics Games, blending high fashion with a powerful musical presence. Olympic torch was carefully brought on stage by Léon Merchant, as athletes rushed back towards the center of the stadium.

Other Hollywood luminaries have teased what LA 2028 may have in store by offering their services to this summer's games. Steven Spielberg starred in and narrated a special introduction that welcomed us to the games and even Beyoncé helped out with a music video hyping up Team USA. In addition, figures like Lady Gaga and Celine Dion made the streets of Paris cry out with joy over their performances during the opening ceremony.

French singer, Yseult, delivered a breathtaking performance at the closing ceremony, dressed in an exquisite *Dior Haute Couture* ensemble that paid homage to the iconic fashion house's rich history. The outfit, crafted by Maria Grazia Chiuri, featured a black silk New Bar jacket, a modern reinterpretation of the signature Bar jacket that debuted in the 1940s as part of Christian Dior's revolutionary "New Look." Yseult paired the jack-

et with a flowing black silk skirt, adding a contemporary twist to the classic ensemble. Her look was completed with a *Dior* hat, gloves, and shoes, embodying the epitome of *French haute couture*. Her performance, as stunning as her attire, was a fitting finale to the Paris 2024 Olympics Games, blending high fashion with a powerful musical presence. Olympic torch was carefully brought on stage by Léon Merchant, as athletes rushed back towards the center of the stadium.

Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee,

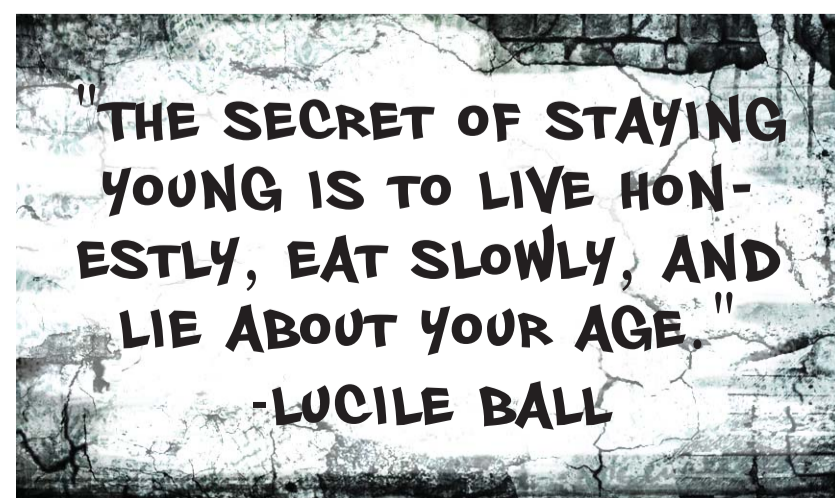
said that the Paris Games had been "sensational." In his closing speech, he praised athletes for their "simply amazing" performances, saying that they showed "what greatness humans are capable of." He continued, "During all this time, you lived peacefully together under one roof in the Olympic Village. You embraced each other. You respected each other, even if your countries are divided by war and conflict. You created a culture of peace. This inspired all of us and billions of people around the globe. Thank you for making us dream."

Olympic torch was carefully brought on stage by Léon Merchant, as athletes rushed back towards the center of the stadium. The focus now shifts to Los Angeles, which will host the 2028 Games. Beyond that, Brisbane, Australia will take the stage in 2032, bringing the Olympics back down under. As for 2036, the host city remains undecided, with contenders like Ahmedabad in India, Berlin, potentially marking 100 years since the 1936 Games, and even Santiago in Chile. About half-an-hour after the closing ceremony ended, the Olympic rings were lowered, marking the final moments of the Games. Confetti still covered the floor, while the once-crowded stands were now completely empty.

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THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman