

#RARE BLUE WONDER

Saving the Peacock Tarantula

Wildlife experts stress that the Peacock Tarantula is more than just a rare spider, it is an important indicator of forest health in the Eastern Ghats



Deep within the forests of the Eastern Ghats lies one of the world's rarest and most visually stunning spiders, the Peacock Tarantula. Famous for its brilliant metallic blue colour and striking appearance, this extraordinary species has once again become the focus of conservation efforts in Andhra Pradesh.

The Andhra Pradesh Forest Department, together with the Eastern Ghats Wildlife Society, has launched a special conservation survey inside the Nagarjunasagar Srisaillam Tiger Reserve. The initiative aims to study the spider's population, habitat conditions and long-term survival needs before the species faces further decline.

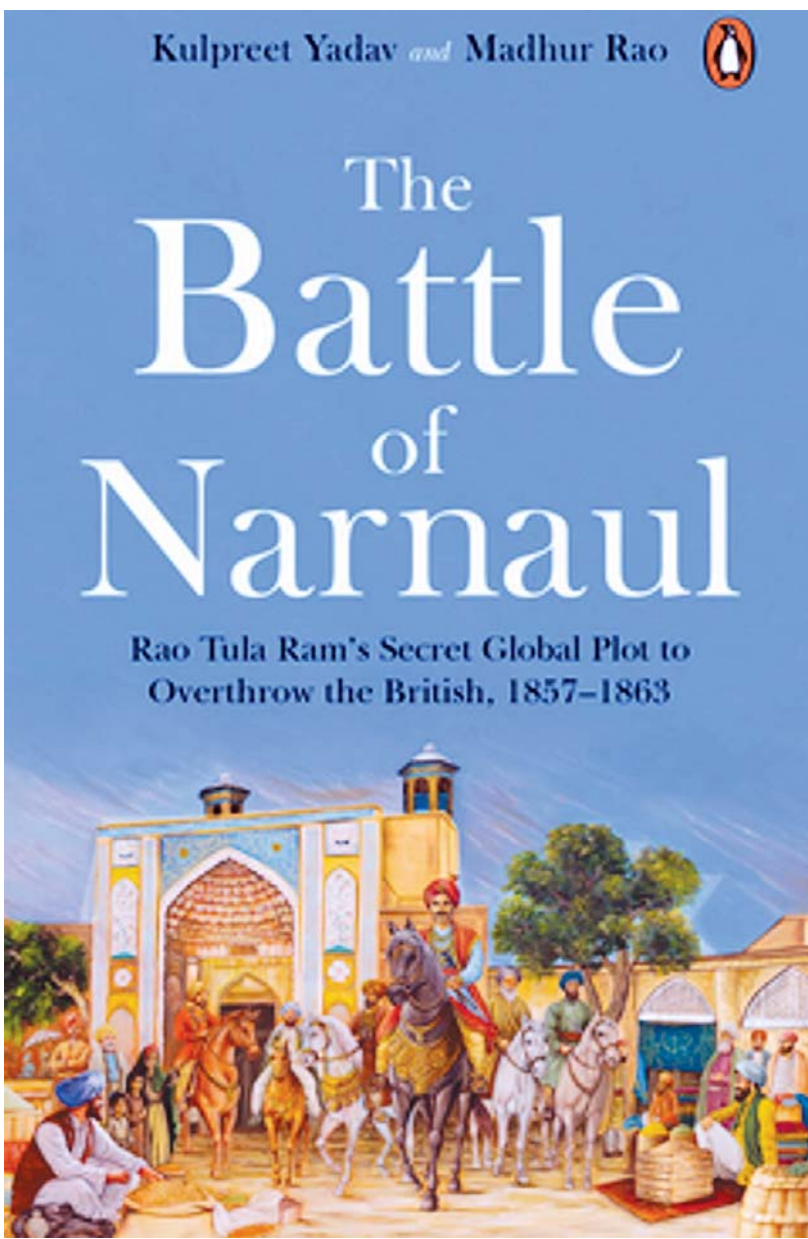
Also known as the Gooty Sapphire Tarantula, the Peacock Tarantula is considered critically endangered due to its extremely limited habitat. Unlike many other spider species that are spread across wide regions, this rare tarantula is found only in a small stretch of forest in the Eastern Ghats. Its dependence on old-growth trees, bark cavities and rocky crevices makes it especially vulnerable to habitat destruction, deforestation and environmental disturbance.

The species was first scientifically recorded in the late nineteenth century and quickly attracted global attention because of its dazzling blue colour. Despite its beauty and scientific importance, very little is known about its population in the wild. Experts believe that habitat loss and illegal wildlife trade pose serious threats to the spider's survival.

Forest officials involved in the survey say that the project is designed to gather detailed information about the spider's current distribution and breeding habitats. Researchers will examine forest conditions, identify areas where the species still survives and assess what conservation measures may be necessary in the future. The study is expected to provide valuable scientific data that could guide long-term protection strategies.

Wildlife experts also stress that the Peacock Tarantula is one of forest health in the Eastern Ghats ecosystem. Because the species survives only in undisturbed habitats, its presence reflects the ecological stability of the region. Protecting the tarantula could therefore help preserve many other lesser-known plants and animals that depend on the same fragile environment.

Conservationists believe the new survey represents an important step towards safeguarding one of India's hidden natural treasures. While large mammals such as tigers and elephants often receive greater public attention, smaller species like the Peacock Tarantula also play a vital role in maintaining ecological balance. The effort in Andhra Pradesh highlights the growing recognition that biodiversity conservation must include even the most overlooked creatures. By protecting the Peacock Tarantula and its habitat, authorities hope to strengthen the long-term survival of the Eastern Ghats' rich and delicate ecosystem for future generations.



• Toshi Vijay

History often remembers the loudest victories, yet, many stories of courage remain quietly buried in its pages. One such story of resistance, sacrifice, and strategic brilliance came alive during a thoughtful literary gathering centred around the book *The Battle of Narnaul*. Organised by 2-Pages Book Club at Clock Tower in collaboration with Penguin Random House, the session unfolded as more than a book discussion; it became a moment of collective remembrance of a forgotten chapter of India's past.

At the heart of the conversation was the valiant legacy of Rao Tula Ram, a warrior whose courage and foresight formed a remarkable yet often overlooked part of the Indian Rebellion of 1857. Through the chapter of *The Battle of Narnaul*, authors Kulpreet Yadav and Madhur Rao invite readers to step into one of the fiercest battles of the uprising, where determination clashed with imperial might and where the spirit of resistance refused to be subdued.

On 17 May 1857, he along with his cousin, Rao Gopal Dev, and four to five hundred followers, deposed the local tahsildar and occupied Rewari. He raised a force of about 5000 soldiers and set up a workshop for manufacturing the guns and other ammunition. Rao Tula Ram helped Emperor Bahadur Shah and other rebel forces who were waging war against British in Delhi. He sent Rs. 45000/- through General Bakht Khan, ten days before the fall of



Rao Tula Ram Chowk in Hajaraj.

Delhi and supplied large quantities of necessary commodities and supplied two thousand sacks of wheat.

THE BATTLE

During the Battle of Narnaul at Nasibpur on 16 November 1857, British lost 2000 British soldiers and their commanders Colonel Gerrard and Captain Wallace, 5000 British soldiers and officers Captain Craige, Captain Kennedy and Captain Pearse were wounded.

THE BATTLE

Rao's forces, which were led by his cousin Rao Kirshan Singh, fought against the British on 16 November 1857 in the field of Nasibpur on outskirts of Narnaul. The first charge of Rao Tularam's forces was irresistible and the British forces scattered before them; several British officers were killed or wounded. The British successfully retaliated, and after the battle of Narnaul, Rao Tularam moved in to Rajasthan and joined the force of Tantia Tope for one year but the forces of the Tantia Tope were defeated by British forces in the battle of Sikar in Rajasthan, after which Rao Tularam left India to seek help from the Shah of Iran (also see Anglo-Persian War) but November 1856 to April 1857), Dost Mohammad Khan, ruler of Emirate of Afghanistan (also see First Anglo-Afghan War from 1838 to 1842) and Alexander II Emperor of All Russia against British colonial empire. Rao Tularam's estates were confiscated by the British in 1859, though proprietary rights of his two wives were retained. In 1877, his title was restored to his son Rao Yudhister Singh, who was made head of the Ahirwal area. On 23 September 1883, he died in Kabul in Afghanistan at the age of 38 due to an infection.

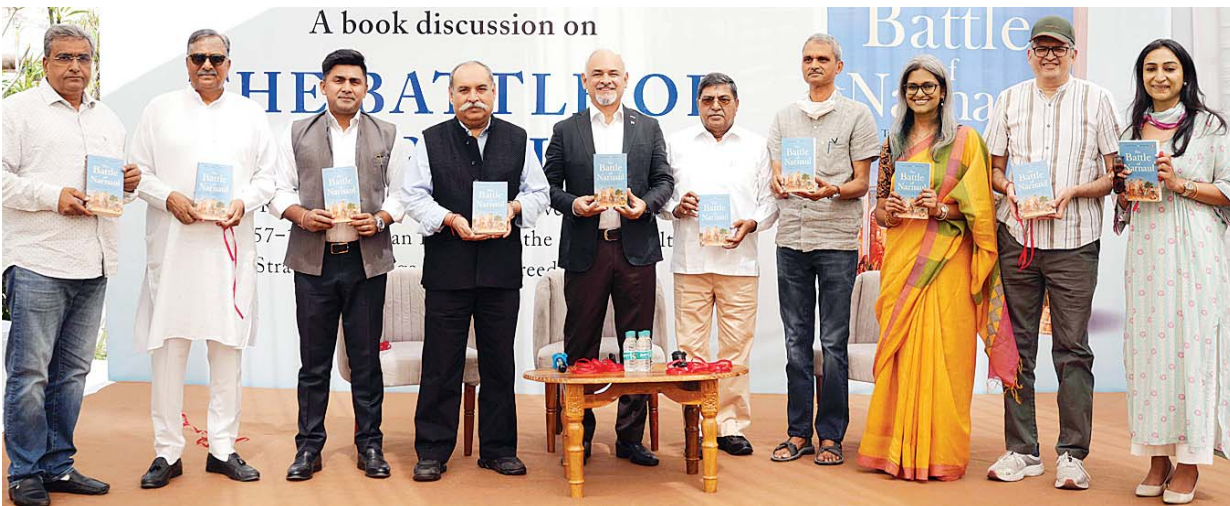
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The Story of The Battle of Narnaul

The Battle of Narnaul (also called Battle of Nasibpur) was fought on 16 November 1857, between the British Raj and Aheer forces during the Indian Rebellion of 1857. In 1857, Aheer leader Pran Sukh Yadav of Behror, along with Rao Tula Ram, the King of Rewari and Rao Dhan Singh of Charkhi Dadri, fought with the British at Nasibpur village near Narnaul. The battle was one of the most ferocious battles of the Indian Rebellion of 1857.



#BOOK REVIEW



Jal Mahal of Narnaul, Haryana.

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During the Battle of Narnaul at Nasibpur on 16 November 1857, British lost 2000 British soldiers and their commanders Colonel Gerrard and Captain Wallace, 5000 British soldiers and officers Captain Craige, Captain Kennedy and Captain Pearse were wounded. Colonel Gerrard died after getting mortally wounded in a military engagement against Rao Kishan Singh. When Pran Sukh Yadav took aim at the Colonel Gerrard wearing a red coat, whose rest of the soldiers were in

khaki uniform, he missed his aim the first time but hit it right the second time and Colonel Gerrard was killed in Narnaul.

The discussion moved beyond the battlefield, tracing the life and vision of Rao Tula Ram. As the authors explained, he was not merely a warrior who fought with the sword but also a strategist who fought with foresight. Over the years, he quietly amassed resources, forged discreet alliances across Rajputana, and even sought support from distant powers, including Persia, Afghanistan, and Russia. His relentless pursuit of resistance continued long after the battle itself, forming part of a six-year struggle that deserves far greater space in the narrative of India's freedom movement.

Adding a deeply personal note to the evening was the presence of Rao Raghvendra Singh, the great-great-grandson of Rao Tula Ram. Reflecting on the enduring legacy of his ancestor, he spoke about how courage and leadership transcend



Refreshing Vibes on National Lemon Juice Day

celebrated on August 29, National Lemon Juice Day honours the zesty, tangy essence of one of nature's most versatile fruits. Whether used in refreshing summer drinks, salad dressings, marinades, or detox routines, lemon juice adds a vibrant kick to everyday life. This day encourages people to celebrate the simple power of citrus, packed with vitamin C and natural cleansing properties. From a chilled lemonade to a warm honey-lemon tea, it's a reminder of how one small fruit can bring big flavour and health benefits. Raise a glass of something citrusy and toast to the zing of lemon!



Rao Kishan Singh.



Rao Tula Ram.

time, reminding the audience that history is not merely about events; it is about values that continue to

THE BATTLE

Co-author Madhur Rao, whose passion for history is shaped by a deep connection with India's cultural roots, spoke about the responsibility of remembering. According to him, stories like that of Narnaul risk fading into silence unless they are actively preserved and retold.

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inspire generations.

The conversation was gracefully steered by Nishitha Agarwal, whose moderation wove together history, storytelling, and contemporary relevance. The gathering was also attended by several distinguished guests, including Rajendra Singh Yadav, former State Home Minister of Rajasthan and father of Madhur Rao, Lalchand Kataria, former Cabinet Minister of Rajasthan; and



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#FAMOUS PHRASE

Born With a Silver Spoon

Godparents were expected to present expensive gifts at a child's christening. Among the most prestigious gifts was a silver spoon



The phrase "born with a silver spoon in one's mouth" has long been used to describe someone born into privilege, wealth, and social advantage. Today, it usually refers to people who inherit status rather than earning it. Yet, behind this familiar expression lies a fascinating blend of literature, religion, naval history, chemistry, and medieval customs.

Its origins are older and richer than most people realize.

The Earliest Literary Appearance

One of the earliest known appearances of the phrase in English is connected to the English translation of Don Quixote by Miguel de Cervantes. The expression entered English literary culture during the 17th century, where it was associated with children born into comfort and fortune.

Although the idea itself was already circulating in Europe, the popularity of Don Quixote helped cement the image of the "silver spoon" as a symbol of inherited privilege.

The Baptism Tradition and Christening Spoons

The strongest historical explanation for the phrase comes from European baptism traditions dating back to the 16th century.

In many wealthy Christian families, godparents were expected to present expensive gifts at a child's christening. This meant wealthy families who could afford silver utensils, cups, and plates often enjoyed cleaner food and safer drinking water than ordinary people. A silver cup was not just a symbol of luxury; it could also quietly reduce exposure to disease. In eras when stomach infections and contaminated water killed countless people, this advantage mattered enormously.

Medicine and Silver

Silver's medicinal use continued into modern times. Doctors later used silver nitrate in newborn care because of its antibacterial properties. For many



years, silver nitrate drops were routinely placed in the eyes of newborn infants to prevent dangerous infections. Even today, silver compounds are used in wound dressings, burn treatments, and antimicrobial medical coatings. Thus, the association between silver and protection was not simply symbolic. People born into wealthy households often had better health outcomes partly because silver utensils and containers reduced microbial contamination.

The British Navy Theory

Another intriguing explanation connects the phrase to the Royal Navy during the age of the British Empire. Young boys from aristocratic families could enter naval service with powerful social connections and rise rapidly through the ranks with relatively little hardship compared to ordinary sailors. These privileged officers often dined separately from common crew members and ate using fine silver cutlery aboard ships.

According to this theory, sailors began associating silver spoons with inherited privilege and effortless advancement. While historians generally consider the baptism tradition the older and stronger origin, the naval connection likely reinforced the phrase's meaning in British culture.

More Than a Metaphor

What makes the expression remarkable is that it combines symbolism with reality. A silver spoon represented wealth, social rank, religious custom, and even better health. Those born into affluent families often did begin life with genuine advantages, cleaner food, safer water, stronger social networks, and greater opportunities. When people said someone was "born with a silver spoon in their mouth," they were not speaking only metaphorically. In many ways, they meant it quite literally.



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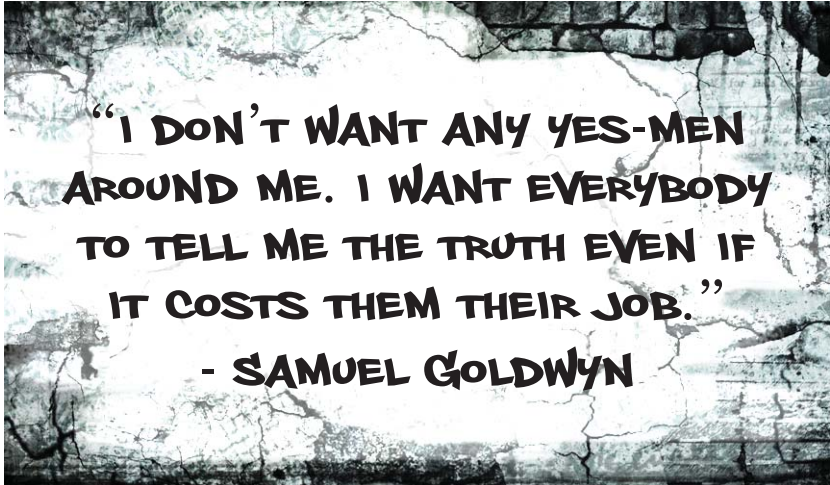
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THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman