

## #SPACE

### Super-Earths

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Astronomers now routinely discover planets orbiting stars outside of the solar system – they're called exoplanets. But in summer 2022, teams working on NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite found a few particularly interesting planets orbiting in the habitable zones of their parent stars. One planet is 30% larger than Earth (opens in new tab) and orbits its star in less than three days. The other is 70% larger than the Earth (opens in new tab) and might host a deep ocean. These two exoplanets are super-Earths – more massive than the Earth but smaller than ice giants like Uranus and Neptune.

Earth is still the only place in the universe scientists know to be home to life. It would seem logical to focus the search for life on Earth clones – planets with properties close to Earth's. But research has shown that the best chance astronomers have of finding life on another planet is likely to



be on a super-Earth similar to the ones found recently. Common & Easy To Find

Most super-Earths orbit cool dwarf stars, which are lower in mass and live much longer than the sun. There are hundreds of cool dwarf stars for every star like the Sun, and scientists have found super-Earths orbiting 40% of cool dwarfs (opens in new tab) they have looked at. Using that number, astronomers estimate that there are tens of billions (opens in new tab) of super-Earths in habitable zones where liquid water can exist in the Milky Way alone. Since all life on Earth uses water, water is thought to be critical for habitability.

Based on current projections, about a third of all exoplanets (opens in new tab) are super-Earths, making them the most common type of exoplanet in the Milky Way. The nearest is only 6 light-years away (opens in new tab) from Earth. You might even say that our solar system is unusual since it does not have a planet with a mass between that of Earth and Neptune.

Another reason super-Earths are ideal targets in the search for life is that they're much easier to detect and study (opens in new tab) than Earth-sized planets. There are two methods astronomers use to detect exoplanets. One looks for the gravitational effect of a



## #INDEPENDENCE



Maj Chandrakant Singh Vrc, (Retd) Military Historian

Delhi is not a place for pleasure driving, the traffic is unruly and drivers, mainly first generation car owners and more familiar with camel and bullock carts or at best farm tractors. But driving along the Rajpath from the India Gate Hexagon is something else, the majestic sight of the imperial buildings at the top end (Raisina Hill named after Raja Singh of Jaipur) of the Central Vista have few equals. In the last few years I have had to drive frequently around the Hexagon to meet friends like Gen Katoch and Capt. Alok Bansal at the India Foundation and Nazneen Rouhani General Secretary of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of India, at the Bahai House or to have authentic French food at another friend Kazem Samadri's classy L'Opera restaurant at the back of Bikaner House. The only thing glaring to the view was the empty space below the canopy which once housed the statue of George V one time King Emperor of India. In honour of whose visit to India, the hymn which is now our national anthem was composed by Tagore. Some people may want to deny this, but facts are facts and we as a nation are mature enough to face reality.

On 9th September 2022 the statue of Subhash Chandra Bose was installed with much fanfare and ceremony under the canopy where earlier the statue of the king emperor George V once stood before it was relocated to a more modest surrounding in the backwaters of Delhi on 8 September 1968. After the removal of George V, there was a proposal to install the statue of Gandhi, but this did not happen because some people felt that Gandhi himself would never have wanted it at a place so symbolic of the British Raj. However, the same group which had opposed the installation of Gandhi's statue earlier, after a gap of three or four years now proposed that as there was no statue of Nehru in a prominent place in New Delhi, one should be installed under the canopy near India Gate Hexagon. But the government and the public's attention being drawn to the happenings in East Pakistan, further discussion was postponed till after the Bangladesh Liberation War. When it was revived again sometime in 1972/73 a revised proposal was floated of having Gandhi's statue installed at Vijay Chowk, and the canopy under which George V statue had earlier been placed to be shifted to the Coronation Ground and be now for a statue of Nehru.

The proposal was still being discussed within the ruling establishment but by then the Jai Prakash Narain's movement started which was followed by declaration of



RK Dourendra Singh meeting Baden Powell at the Scout Jumboree in Sydney.



Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose with Hitler.

Today if Netaji is such a revered figure, it is not so much for, what he had done earlier, but because of his escape and what he did after his escape. However, little is known of the people who made his escape happen and who first put the idea in his head to escape from India and pursue the cause of India's freedom from Germany and Japan. They were Maharajah Shankar Pratap Singhdeo and his brother Rajkumar Gourendra Singhdeo of Dhenkanal a princely state of Orissa situated a little North of Cuttack. These two princes aided his escape and one of the most enigmatic women of her time, a woman of foreign decent and nationality, more Indian and Hindu than anyone by birth, she was Julia Portaz better known in India as Savitri Devi a name given to her by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore.

# The Great Escape Helped by a Maharajah, A Prince & A Nazi

Emergency and Indira Gandhi losing the elections, resulting in further discussions once again being put on hold and not revived again till after Indira Gandhi's assassination and Rajiv becoming the Prime Minister. This time it started off with a statement by a senior minister and party functionary who was a relative of Rajeev, that Gandhi would never have wanted a memorial or statue to him anywhere near any symbol of British Colonial History. This therefore ruled out Vijay Chowk and a more appropriate place befitting Gandhi's principles and views should be found for his statue and that in its place Indira Gandhi's statue at Vijay Chowk would be more appropriate as her name was associated with India's victory in the Bangladesh

War. This proposal received widespread acceptance within the ruling establishment. But once again the proposal was jinxed. Like Indira Gandhi before him, Rajiv Gandhi found himself at the centre of the Bofors Gun scandal and subsequent loss of elections and then a few years later his assassination.

### The Canopy Occupied

From then onwards no serious plans to fill the empty space beneath the canopy were discussed till Modi pulled Subhash Chandra Bose out of the hat and had his statue installed. By doing so Modi ensured that this coveted space would not be available for a memorial to any one in future, most of all to his political rivals and secondly by installing Netaji's statue at the most prized and prominent real estate in the National Capital he would be displacing Gandhi and Nehru with Netaji from centre-stage of India's freedom struggle, he would also win brownie points in Bengal and with some other elements. Something that is very much a part of his party's ideology.

Today if Netaji is such a revered figure, it is not so much for, what he had done earlier, but because of his escape and what he did after his escape. However, little is known of the people who made his escape happen and who first put the idea in his head to escape from India and pursue the cause of India's freedom from Germany and Japan. They were Maharajah Shankar Pratap Singhdeo and his brother Rajkumar Gourendra Singhdeo of Dhenkanal a princely state of Orissa situated a

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The story of Netaji's great escape aided and abetted by the two Dhenkanal princes is best told by my friend and kinsman Wing Commander Binoy Kumar Singhdeo a helicopter pilot and veteran of the 1971 War. He is the son of Raj Kumar Gourendra Singhdeo so very much a part of his family lore. Binoy in the 1971 War played a stellar role as a helicopter pilot when for an extended period he operated deep in enemy territory in Sindh in support of our troops. Many of his operations were in support of a fellow Maharajah Bhawani Singh MVC of Jaipur who as commanding officer of 10 Paras occupied almost six thousand square kilometres of enemy territory.

### Wing Commander BK Singhdeo

"The Maharajah of Dhenkanal, Raja Shankar Pratap Singhdeo Bahadur and his brother Rajkumar Gourendra Pratap Singhdeo were well known to the Bose family in Cuttack. Subhash's father Janki Nath Bose was their local guardian and tutor when they were in school in Cuttack. Janki Nath Bose's house in Cuttack was next to the house of the Maharajah of Dhenkanal and the children of the two had grown



Maharajah and Maharani of Dhenkanal parents of Maharajah Brig KP Singhdeo.



Asit Mukherji- Savitri Devi's husband.



Savitri Devi.

up together and were friends. On 5 December 1940 Netaji was put under house arrest in his own residence in Elgin Road in Calcutta. His older brother Sarat Chandra Bose fearing for the life of Subhash Chandra Bose wrote to Raja Shankar Pratap Singhdeo asking for his help in letting Netaji escape. My uncle Raja Shankar Pratap Singhdeo who was residence in his own house in Elgin Road quickly drew up an escape plan. Rajkumar Gourendra Singhdeo (my father) who knew Netaji and his family since childhood, made a number of trips to Netaji's residence to discuss the escape plan and fool the police into believing that their comings and goings were a routine affair. The car they used was a Dhenkanal State car with red number plates which like government VIP cars today was exempt from routine police checks and searches. Finally, one day my father GP Singhdeo handed over an envelope with false identity papers and travel documents and money to Netaji and returned back. Initially the police personnel posted at Netaji's house did not suspect anything untoward was happening. Finally, Raja Shankar Pratap Singh's car driven by the Maharajah's driver, came to Netaji's house. Netaji and a few others got into the car and quickly sped away before the police realized what was happening and could react. It is only when the car returned to drop the others who had accompanied Netaji that the police got suspicious.



Raja & Rani Dourendra Singh of Dhenkanal.

### The British Suspected

The British rightfully suspected the involvement of the Dhenkanal Royal Family in Netaji's escape but did not have any proof. In early 1942 a Devi Puja was being organized in the Dhenkanal Palace and the British made out a case that the Puja is being made to incite the public to rise against the British rule, a warrant of Arrest under Defence of India Rules was issued against my father for organizing public support against the British king. Some Indian civil and police officials tipped my father who along with my mother and elder brother the Maharajah escaped from Dhenkanal to Kashmir and went into hiding on a houseboat in Srinagar. My second brother was born on the houseboat. There were complications at his birth but no hospitalization or medical help

### Julia Portaz Aka Savitri Devi Mukherji

30th September 2022 is the 127th birth anniversary of Savitri Devi Mukherji born Maximiani Julia Portaz (1905-1982), the daughter of French citizen of Greek descent and an English mother of Italian descent. She was a believer in the racist theory of the superiority of the Aryans and their God given right to rule the world and all the human races on Earth. She was a staunch Nazi sympathizer and friend of Hitler. She was also a strong advocate of animal rights. Even after the defeat of Hitler and defeat of Germany her views and beliefs remained unchanged and till her death in 1982 in Delhi and even



## International Day of the Girl Child

Known as the Day of Girls, for short, the International Day of the Girl Child is a day that's observed all over the world to bring a light to and fight the injustices and inequalities faced by girls based on their gender. The day is marked by efforts both to raise awareness and to offer opportunities to girls and young women, addressing issues like access to education, healthcare rights, career and employment and much more.

could be sought to maintain secrecy, should the authorities have learnt of their true identity, they would have arrested the family. Our family went through a very tough time and my brother was differently abled for the rest of his life. The family could only return to Orissa in late 1946.

Whilst my parents and my siblings were in hiding, my uncle the Maharajah Shankar Pratap Singh was having a difficult time too. The Viceroy Lord Linlithgow wanted to arrest him for sedition and resume Dhenkanal State. Linlithgow had an arrest warrant issued against him, but an appeal made directly to King George VI, was received favourably by him and the Viceroy's order rescinded. However, Linlithgow did not give up easily and my uncle was exiled from Dhenkanal had to go into hiding. The King on learning of Linlithgow's actions was displeased and conveyed his displeasure to the Secretary of State for India. The King said: "Linlithgow as a viceroy is a servant of the state which I represent, Maharajah Shankar Pratap Singh of Dhenkanal is my brother and fellow prince as such the viceroy has no authority to arrest my fellow prince. The Maharajah's son is the present Maharajah Brig KP Singhdeo AVSM a person I hold in higher esteem than almost anyone else. He is a soldier, who as a sitting Member of Parliament took part in the 1971 War As a parliamentarian, leader of opinion and sports administrator has contributed to our country has been immense. Someday I hope to write his biography."

King George VI was known to be a mild tempered monarch, but here he stood up for his prerogatives and Linlithgow was replaced as viceroy by Field Marshal Wavel. Here I think George VI was following the example set fifty years earlier by his great grandmother Queen Victoria in dealing with the Manipuri Princes after the Manipur war of 1891. Victoria expressed her strong displeasure to Lord Lansdowne on the treatment of Manipur Princes: "Trust the Senapati will not be executed. He is not guilty of murder and the effort is sure to be bad in India. That harsh crushing policy will not do now....I cannot consider that the Senapati was not aware of our intention to seize him and thus had cause for resistance....the principle of governing India by fear and crushing them, instead of by conciliation is one which will answer in the end and which I wish to see more and more altered...Hanging a prince has something, cruel and cold blooded about it."

Julia Portaz Aka Savitri Devi Mukherji 30th September 2022 is the 127th birth anniversary of Savitri Devi Mukherji born Maximiani Julia Portaz (1905-1982), the daughter of French citizen of Greek descent and an English mother of Italian descent. She was a believer in the racist theory of the superiority of the Aryans and their God given right to rule the world and all the human races on Earth. She was a staunch Nazi sympathizer and friend of Hitler. She was also a strong advocate of animal rights. Even after the defeat of Hitler and defeat of Germany her views and beliefs remained unchanged and till her death in 1982 in Delhi and even

afterwards, she has been an icon and intellectual guide of the far right Neo-Nazis and racial supremacists. But there is one big difference in her racist ideology to her it was not the Europeans and their descendants who are the true and unadulterated Aryans, it is the Indians who are the true Aryans who have remained pure and unaffected by Judeo Christianity, which has corrupted the Europeans. The Europeans according to her have committed the cardinal sin of disowning their true Greco-Roman heritage in favour of Judeo-Christianity which is alien to Aryan civilisation and philosophy. She studied philosophy and chemistry at the Lyons University earning two masters and a Ph.D. in philosophy. She travelled to Greece and Turkey and surveyed the legendary ruins of ancient Troy and found the 'swastika' amongst Schliemann's discoveries at Troy. In 1932 she travelled to India which she considered the homeland of the Aryans and Indians to be the only true Aryans. In 1940 she met and married a Bengali Asit Krishna Mukherji the editor of a pro-Nazi

newspaper 'New Mercury' and came into contact with Tagore and Subhash Chandra Bose. Mukherji edited a pro-Nazi newspaper 'New Mercury'. She volunteered to work at the Hindu Mission and became a strong supporter of Indian independence and Hindu nationalism and took the name Savitri Devi. She wrote a book 'A Warning to the Hindus' in order to offer her support for Hindu nationalism and independence, and rally resistance to the spread of Christianity and Islam in India. She also distributed Nazi propaganda and passed military intelligence to the Germans. A couple of years before the start of the Second World War she enabled Bose to contact representatives of Germany and Japan, including Hitler whom she had known and befriended before coming to India. It is at her persuasion that Netaji decided to escape to Germany to continue the war for independence against Britain.



Maharajah of Japur and Wg Comdr Singhdeo on the right in Sindh 1971.

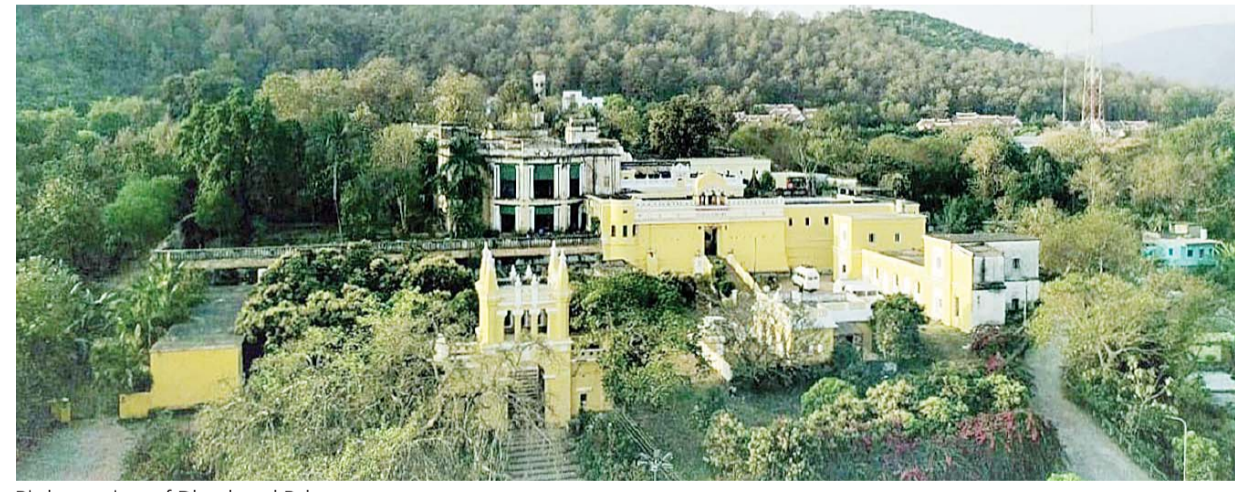
Savitri was a proponent of a synthesis of Hinduism and Nazism proclaiming Adolf Hitler to have been an avatar of Vishnu. After the War she travelled to Europe under the name Savitri Devi Mukherji as the wife of a British subject on a British Indian Passport. She travelled to several countries to promote the cause of Neo-Nazis and was also arrested and spent some time in prison. In 1960 she returned

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to India, making it her permanent home but she continued to travel widely all over the world writing and espousing far right causes. She died in 1982 in Essex England and her ashes are interred in the headquarters of the American Nazi Party in Arlington Virginia, not far from the Arlington Cemetery were all American Military Heroes and former Presidents are buried.

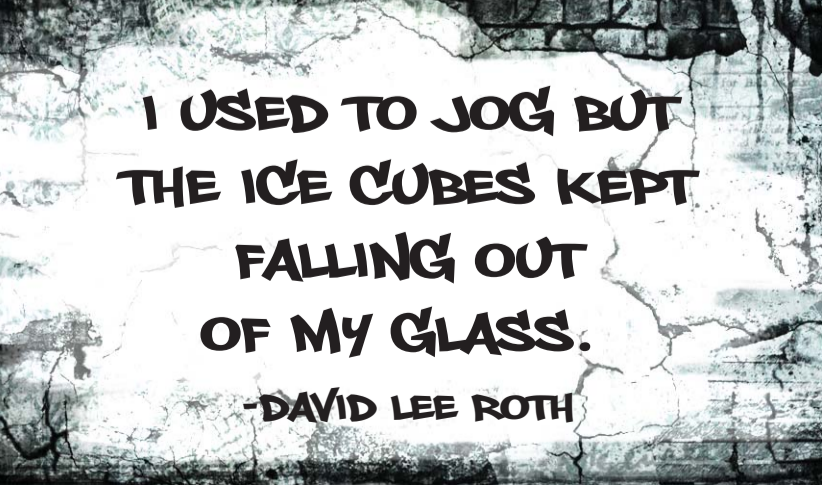
It would be foolish to dismiss Savitri Devi as a past and aberrant phenomena. She may be forgotten in India but as her nephew the left wing journalist Sumanta Banerjee

says, it is only a matter of time before she becomes an icon for our right wing groups. In Europe it has already happened. The re-emergence of far right parties in the political scene is testimony to the appeal of her ideology to a large section of society as the recent elections in European countries has shown. In Italy the far right nationalist party has won the election and Georgia Meloni who once praised Mussolini and the fascists is the new prime minister. In France Marine Le Pen another ultra-right wing neo fascist is a close runner up for the presidency. Margaret Thatcher and Trust too can be called Ultra-nationalist and authoritarian the two qualities that are attributed to Nazis and fascists. And if these two qualities of ultra-nationalism and authoritarianism are accepted as markers for fascists then our own Indira Gandhi and Mamma Banerjee and Jayalalita, Ceylon's Bandarnaike, Israel's Golda Meir and Burma's Aung San Sui Kyi may also have to be included in the list. Like it or not the legacy of Savitri Devi earlier known as Maximiani Julia Portaz is alive and kicking and we are likely to see more of it in the years ahead. Her statue or photograph may someday find a place next to that of some of the world's greats of Fame. (1111) writetoarbit@rashtradoot.com



Birds eye view of Dhenkanal Palace.

## THE WALL



## BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

## ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman