

Books / What A Raja Has To Do

What A Raja Has To Do



Good for a long train or air journey. The tale is interesting and amusing, and describes a period which, thank God, can never be again.



M.S. Gill

18 September 2006

Trending

Ride The Bullish Run Of
Cryptocurrency

Once A Jewel In India's
Football Crown, Why Poor
Organisation Has Tarnished
Durand Cup's Image

Arunachal Women's Dilemma:
Marry 'Outsider', Lose
Property Rights

Data Jihad? It's Not Just
Weaponry That Has Fallen
Into Taliban Hands

Separatist Call For A
'Sovereign Kamatapur' Rises In
North Bengal

When they took over India, the British strangely allowed 600 oddballs to rule with absolute authority, and total irresponsibility, over principalities from a few villages, to Hyderabad and Kashmir, the size of France. Since the British looked after their security, these rajas had nothing to do but gorge themselves on every indulgence. Most spent years in Europe in the flesh pots, looking for new floosies. The money extracted from their subjects was spent without restraint on themselves. The Raja of Kapurthala spent half his income on one marriage, and, during his long life, a quarter of it regularly on his European holidays lasting a year sometimes.

No wonder then that you have some of the most amazing stories of their lives. Passion India is one more, of the Raja of Kapurthala in the Punjab. A small principality of some hundreds of villages, in two separate pockets, it had also been gifted a big estate in Oudh, after the 1857 rising. The raja was the fattest of Billy Bunters. They married him at 14, and waited for an heir with great anxiety. The problem was copulation. A British engineer devised a mechanical device, based on a study of elephant doings, to help him succeed. Oh, what have we not done, in the service of England. By 30, he had become a slim, tall man, with four marriages. He shaved off his beard, but did sport a turban as and when he felt like it. He mastered French, and spent most of his time in Europe.

In 1908, he fell for a 17-year-old bar girl in Madrid. She was poor, and he prevailed over her family. He took her to Paris, educated her in the graces, and took her around Kapurthala on an elephant. Harbans Kaur, his senior wife, and the other Sikh ladies, resisted this madness. He already had four sons, some her age. The class-conscious British refused to treat her as a maharani.

Imagine a young Spanish girl, in lonely isolation in the Punjab, no phones, no aeroplanes, no nothing. He supported her, but it could not work. After a son by her, like any good raja, he drifted to other women. His Spanish rani too got restless and fell for the youngest foster-son. The relationship was discovered, the raja eventually packed her back to Spain, with a good pension, where she lived a long life in comfort. Then he started a long line of white replacements, the last a Czech, who committed suicide jumping from the Qutab.

The first book on this titillating tale was published by Diwan Jarmani Das, a Kapurthala minister, in the 1970s. Since then, there have been more. In fact, having lost the empire, Westerners are now mining this lucrative subject. Moro's book is good for a long train or air journey. The tale is interesting and amusing, and describes a period which, thank God, can never be again.

The funny thing is that Indians seem to love being ruled over and bullied by rajas. Their peccadilloes do not bother them. Sardar Patel blew them away in 1950 but I still read with amusement of individuals, some just small zamindars, referred to in politics, as raja of this and raja of that. What raja and what kingdom. But what's in a title?

[« PREVIOUS STORY](#)



**The Advantages
Of A Long Nose**

[NEXT STORY »](#)

Bibliofile



TAGS

M.S. GILL

BOOKS

REVIEWS

OUTLOOK NEWSLETTERS



Ent. AR

Tired of the unceasing, ungainly internet entertainment updates? Walk dazzling lanes and by lanes with Outlook.



Tech in style

The right tech that defines you. Your aspirations. Your styles. Right in time.



The Smart Surfer

Stay on top of the market moves. Analysis and information for you to take smart decisions.



Ambit

Know what's behind the apparent and what doesn't show. Your journey into the myriad shades of truth with Outlook.



The Coffer

Money market essentials, analysis and data delivered to your mailbox with precision timing.

Enter your Email

SUBSCRIBE NOW

MORE FROM BOOKS



Eastern Disturbances

Author Paul Pickering's Elephant: Felt With A Trunk

Algorithms Of Eternity

Deception: The Face Value

Characters In Mandarin

A Miniature's Hidden Figures

Call Them Geniuses

Jhumpa Lahiri's New Novel Is A Journey Across Time And Countries



Met Gala 2021: All the Red Carpet Looks

Bhupendra Patel Takes Oath As Gujarat CM

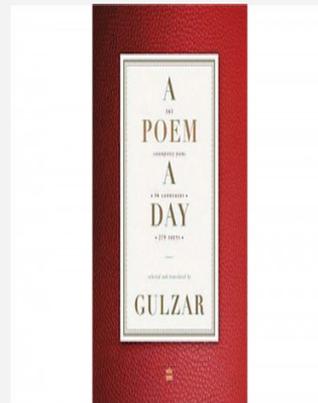
MORE FROM BOOKS



No Land's People Is An Important Document On Assam's NRC Mess



MJ Akbar's Twin Biography Of Gandhi And Jinnah Busts A Few Myths



Poem A Day: Gulzar's Epic Is A Tribute To Poets In Indian Languages



Emergency And Its Eager Converts

READ MORE FROM OUTLOOK

UP Polls: 'Ram Rajya', Nationalism In Focus As AAP Kicks Off Tiranga Yatra

Outlook Web Desk / AAP leaders Manish Sisodia and Sanjay Singh offered special prayers at the Ram Janmabhoomi and Hanumangarhi temple in Ayodhya before kicking off the Tiranga Yatra in Faizabad.



Pak-Trained Terror Module Planning Serial Blasts During Festivals Busted, Six Held In UP

A Special Cell of Delhi Police in collaboration with the UP ATS said it had arrested six terrorists from a terror module which had alleged links to Pakistan's ISI as well as Dawood.

Exports rise 45.8% in August 2021

Exports rose 45.8% to touch US\$33.28 Billion in August 2021, trade deficit widened to touch US\$13.8 billion

Mahatma Gandhi To LK Advani To AAP; The Appeal Of Political Yatras

Bhavna Vij-Aurora / It started with Mahatma Gandhi marching to Dandi and mobilising the masses against the colonial government. Now every party takes the - roadshow route to the election ring.

/

Main Stories	Traveller	Money	Business	Social Media
CURRENT ISSUE	TRAVELOGUES	Mutual Funds	THE BIG STORY	Facebook 
COVER STORY	WEEKEND BREAKS	Insurance	SPECIALS	Twitter 
NATIONAL	HOLIDAYS WITH OT	Equity	PERSPECTIVE	Instagram 
INTERNATIONAL	PHOTO FEATURES	Fixed Assets	PIXSTORY	Youtube 
BUSINESS	HOTELS	Banking	ENTERPRISE	
BOOK REVIEWS	GUIDEBOOKS	ASK	STRATEGY	
DOCUMENTS			MARKETS	
ESSAYS			C'EST LA VIE	
EXTRACTS				

[INTERVIEWS](#)

[OPINIONS](#)

[PORTRAITS](#)

[PROFILES](#)

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[Advertising Rates](#)

[Copyright & Disclaimer](#)

© 2020-2021 Outlook Digital

[Osm Awards](#)

[Compliance](#)

[Newscroll](#)

[Poshan](#)