

UDAIPUR PLUS

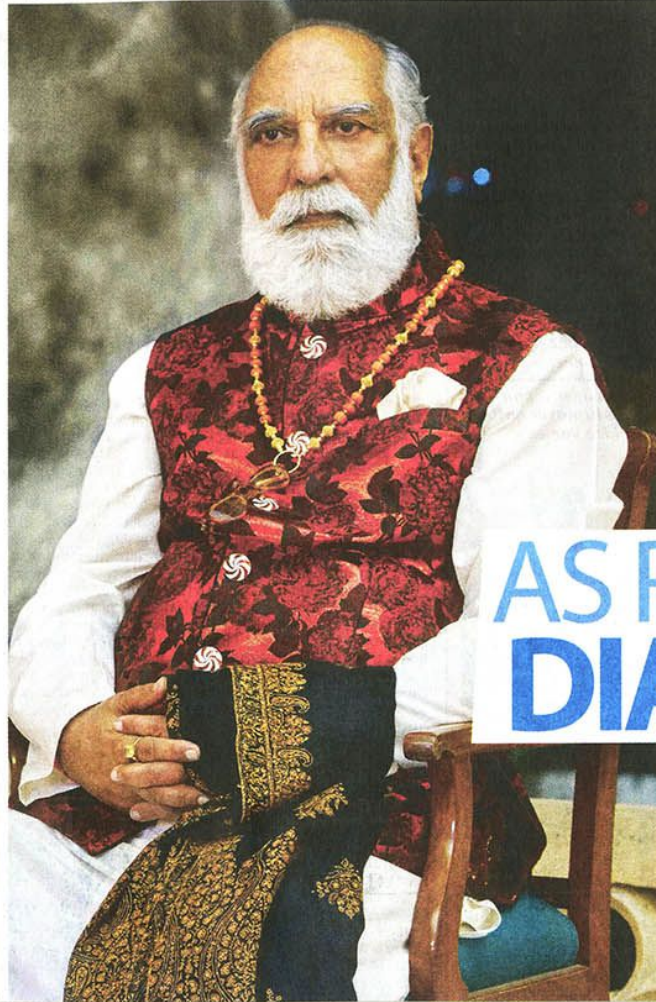
Friday

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~ Make the most of where you live ~

COMPLIMENTARY TO THE READERS OF THE TIMES OF INDIA, JAIPUR AND THE ECONOMIC TIMES, AHMEDABAD IN UDAIPUR CITY

SHRIJI ARVIND SINGH MEWAR CELEBRATES HIS 75TH BIRTHDAY TODAY. A MAN OF STRONG RESOLVE, WHO SINGLE HANDEDLY KEPT THE MANTLE OF ETERNAL MEWAR ALIVE, SHRIJI SHARES WITH UDAIPUR PLUS HIS JOURNEY ALONG THE WAY AND HIS VISION FOR THE CITY AND ITS PEOPLE...



AS RARE AS A DIAMOND

“ You have always been a sportsman at heart. Is cricket still the passion it was 50 years ago? ”

Once a cricketer always a cricketer. Yes, like my father, I was a passionate cricketer and my youth was focused on battling it out on those 22 yards in the field. I thoroughly enjoyed the cricketing years, made friends that have lasted till date. The only regret is I could never play for the country because I was not talented enough, but as a patron, I have tried to do my best for talented youngsters in every which way. Sports teaches you humility, never to give up and to take in your losses without guilt or shame.

? On this 75th birthday, do share the thoughts going through your mind and your experiences as you look back over this span of time.

Thank you for your best wishes! Yes, 75th is just another number. I am grateful to the Almighty for His blessings. There is enormous satisfaction that our city of Udaipur has grown exponentially, become a 'destination' on the world map. In October 2019, Udaipur was host to the Family Business Network 30th Global Summit, with over 500 business families from around the world attending the conference. What an achievement it was. Today in the domain of education our city is becoming a major hub. It is a tribute to several stakeholders who are striving to put Udaipur on par with Ahmedabad, Pune or Manipal. What is a cause for concern is the unplanned urban growth, the 'over tourism' which is straining the city's infrastructure and resources.

? What were the major transformations you witnessed in the growing up years in Udaipur?

From the 1940s to 1970s everything changed. The princely state of Udaipur was merged into the State of Rajasthan; in 1971, the 26th Constitutional Amendment was passed and the rulers ceased to be recognised as rulers. My esteemed father, his late highness Maharana Bhagwat Singh Mewar, had the vision to foresee the challenges for the House of Mewar. In 1969, he established the Maharana of Mewar Charitable Foundation; in 1971, he collaborated with Taj Hotels for the management of Lake Palace Hotel. These were pioneering futuristic decisions which became two major platforms of future growth for the philanthropic and commercial initiatives of the House of Mewar. There was a considerable resistance from the family and the community to the decisions of my father. But

he proved everyone wrong: the seeds of heritage tourism were sown. We are reaping the harvest in Rajasthan.

? HRH Group of Hotels is one of India's largest privately-owned chain of palace-hotels. What led to this success?

At HRH Group, our marketing strategy is built around making guests' Experience the Original in the Abode of Kings'. Our 'regal experiences' are offered in historic island-palaces, museums, galleries, car collections, desert safaris and wildlife sanctuaries. Whether it is a film-shoot on Jagmandir island palace or a high-profile conference in The Durbar Hall, Fateh Prakash Palace we are able to cater to requirements of Indian and global guests. I submit most humbly that HRH Group has been the pioneer and role model in spreading 'heritage tourism' in India. The city of Udaipur as a 'wedding destination' and our historic venues are the most sought-after among global and Indians alike. It has been a landmark achievement to develop The Zenana Mahal, Manek Chowk and Shiv Niwas Palace as incomparable venues.

? The City Palace Museum of Udaipur is going through a major developmental phase. Do share some of its growth plans.

Our City Palace Museum is a 'work in progress'. There is no



beginning or end to it. Our focus on tangible and intangible heritage is defined as the 'living heritage' of Mewar. It is a holistic, integrated and sustainable development at the museum that is bringing together professionals, state-of-the-art technology, traditional craftsmen and ancient skills to preserve this heritage whether it is textiles and costumes, arms and armouries, sculptures, paintings, ancient photographs or the series of palaces which make Udaipur an iconic city of our continent. 2020 will witness the unveiling of new galleries and I am looking forward to the completion of these planned tasks which will make The City Palace Museum a world-class institution.

? Share something about Eternal Mewar...

Since 2006-07, we have been unfolding the vision of Eternal Mewar. It can be summed up as a critical lesson on holistic heritage management and its perpetuation in our globalized world. I have always maintained that it is not the perpetuation of the family-name that is paramount: it is equally important to perpetuate the sustainable values and principles for 1400 years of the House of Mewar so that people can internalize them. In our iconic palace-hotels and retreats, through our museums and collections, we are continuing with the traditions of the regal past yet making them contemporary and relevant for a global audience. This is our living heritage; Eternal Mewar is our vision for the decades ahead.

? Your passion for flying and cooking is well-known...

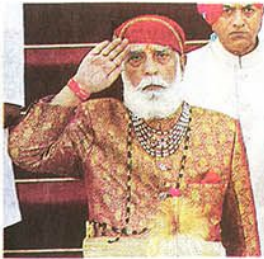
The passion for flying is there but often the 'time' is missing! I do miss the hours spent at Shikarbagi hangar. Flying is certainly a thrill and a great stress-reliever. I remember how delighted I was to get my pilots' license almost 15 years ago. Slow and open-fire cooking is another great way to unwind. With friends and family around, it adds to the magic of preparing a sumptuous dish.

? How does it feel to be a grandfather?

I feel blessed to have these grandchildren in the palace; each one of my grand-daughters is special for me. Though I was particularly happy when Lokavia, my eldest granddaughter (Bhargavi Kumari Mewar's daughter), took charge of The Aodhi at Kumbhalgarh after completing her hotel management degree in Switzerland. We are now three generations of the House of Mewar working together at HRH Group.

? You ever think about other personal goals you would like to achieve...

My mission had always been that the city of Udaipur should be remembered as a 'centre of excellence' than what it is today. I hope through all our collective efforts we can go on adding 'holistic sustainable value' to this 'city of lakes' built by my forefathers more than 450 years ago.



Through the ages...

HERE ARE A FEW PRECIOUS MOMENTS FROM A 75 YEAR LONG JOURNEY OF SHRIJI ARVIND SINGH MEWAR. HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A LEGEND AND THE CUSTODIAN OF THE HOUSE OF MEWAR



Arvind Singh Mewar, was born on December 13 and is the 76th custodian of the Mewar dynasty. The Maharanas are considered not rulers but custodians of the kingdom on behalf of Shree Eklingji (Lord Siva).

A graduate of the Mayo College, Ajmer he did a hotel management course in the UK and then went on to Chicago, USA where he learnt the job thoroughly even washing dishes, changing linen and serving the guests. Married to Princess Vijayaraj of Kutch, Gujarat, they have been blessed with three children: Princess Bhargavi Mewar, Princess Padmaja Mewar and Prince Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar. Arvind Singh Mewar is the chairman and managing trustee for the Maharana of Mewar Charitable Foundation and chairman and managing director of the HRH Group of Hotels.

Like his illustrious predecessors, Arvind Singh Mewar is the 76th Diwan of Parmeshwarji Maharaj Shree Ekling Nathji. As the Custodian of the House of Mewar, he is a transient regent representing the people before God and is not a ruler by personal right.

