

477th Birth Anniversary of Maharana Pratap

- A brave warrior, caring king and valiant leader

This is a transcript of the keynote address by *Commander Pratap Singh Mehta, Veteran, Indian Navy*, on June 11, 2017 at Mauritius to Gahlot Rajput Maha Sabha in the august presence of Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers and dignitaries.



Cdr Pratap Singh Mehta, Veteran, IN, delivering keynote address at Mauritius

The video of the speech can be viewed on You Tube:

<https://youtu.be/0DbUOsOYWQU>

राजपुताना - जन्मभूमि शेरों की ... कर्मभूमि ... रणभूमि। वो माटी जिसके एक एक ज़र्रे में, रेत के हर एक कण में सदियों-सदियों का इतिहास छुपा है। इतिहास जो भरा है कहानियों से, किवदंतियों से। जैसा की अंग्रेजी में कहा जाता है -

HISTORY THAT BECAME LEGEND. LEGEND THAT BECAME MYTH.
AND WHEN IT COMES TO RAJPUTANA NO LEGEND, NO MYTHOLOGY IS BIGGER THAN THAT OF THE GREAT MAHARANA.

THE MAHARANA PRATAP.

महाराणा प्रताप की कहानी... शौर्य , पराक्रम , और बलिदान का एक अद्भुत मिश्रण है। सच कहें तो उनकी कहानी कभी किसी कलम या किसी भाषा की मोहताज नहीं रही है। इसके लेखक तो वो महान योद्धा खुद थे जिन्होंने गुलामी से जकड़े हुए हिंदुस्तान में मरते दम तक वीरता और स्वाभिमान का परचम लहराया .



Cdr Pratap Singh Mehta is being received by Hon'ble Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Ivan Collendavelloo (second from left) of Mauritius at Indira Gandhi Centre for Culture

स्याही से लिखी हुई कहानियां मिट सकती हैं, खून से नहीं ! Stories written in ink may fade away, but not the ones that are written in Blood.

I thank you all for inviting me as keynote speaker to this handsome gathering which begins the celebration of 477th Birth Anniversary of Maharana Pratap by the Gahlot Rajput Maha Sabha, a socio-cultural group of the Rajput Community in Mauritius. Thank you for giving me this privilege. I am pleased by the strong attendance. I am particularly delighted to see so many young people in this gathering.

It's an absolute honour for us to be taking part in the pageant for the celebration of 477th birth anniversary of legendary warrior and a son of the soil, Maharana Pratap Singhji. This is once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and honour that will always be remembered by me and my wife, Shail Mehta, who is present here today. Thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen,!



The painting of Maharana Pratap by artist Raja Ravi Varma (1901)

आज से कई पीढ़ियों पहले भारत के कुछ लोग एक नये जीवन, एक नयी राह, एक नए बसेरे की तलाश में मॉरिशस आये थे. उन सभी के लिए हम भारत से ढेर सारा प्यार, सद्भावना और बधाई लेकर आये हैं. आज के इस समारोह में मेवाड़ और मॉरिशस के इस अद्भुत संगम को देख कर बहुत अच्छा लग रहा है.

दोस्तों,... मेवाड़ के आकाश में यूँ तो कई महान योद्धा पैदा हुए जो सितारों की तरह चमके. लेकिन सूरज तो सिर्फ एक था... एक है... महाराणा प्रताप ...!

Maharana Pratap, a Hindu Rajput King from the Sisodiya clan, ruled Mewar from the year 1572 to 1597 AD, He is revered and worshipped by many in India and overseas for his bravery and courage... for leadership and management. A true patriot who initiated the first war of independence from the Islamic invaders in India.

Someone who ruled Mewar for only 25 years but within that comparatively short period, earned so much glory and fame that it

crossed the boundaries of country and he became immortal. He and his kingdom have become synonymous with bravery, sacrifice and pride in one's country.

Perish but DO NOT SURRENDER.... "नष्ट हो जाओ; लेकिन समर्पण न करो".

यह राजपुताना की सदियों से चली आ रही परंपरा थी जिसे महाराणा प्रताप के पिता महाराणा उदय सिंह जी ने तोड़ा था. उन्होंने भगवान श्री कृष्णा की नीति अपनाई - न नष्ट होना; न समर्पण करना...
NEITHER PARISH NOR SURRENDER.

"That if you must LEAVE the battle to win the war, THEN DO IT".

Maharana Pratap was the sharpest, the shrewdest exponent of this war strategy. The same strategy that gave Lord Krishna himself the name -
RANCHHOD.



Lord Krishan as Ranchod-Rai in Dakor, Gujarat

Link for story about Lord Krishna:

https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKewi0oen12fvVAhWLK48KHRCXCJwQFggsMAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fsamharshbangalore.blogspot.com%2F2013%2F01%2Fwhen-krishna-was-called-ranchod.html&usg=AFQjCNFvdsp_1Db4OZpE43DxknehNdi8jA

जब महाराणा प्रताप का जन्म हुआ, तब दिल्ली के तख्त पर बादशाह अकबर का शासन था और उनकी रणनीति थी, कि सभी राजा-महाराजाओं को अपने आधीन कर राजपूतना पर मुगल साम्राज्य का ध्वज फहराना. निश्चित तौर पर मेवाड़ को जीतना उनकी इस योजना का सबसे बड़ा हिस्सा था.

अकबर ने कई बार महाराणा प्रताप को अपने साथ आने का न्योता दिया, लेकिन महाराणा प्रताप ने उनकी गुलामी स्वीकार नहीं की। Infact among all the Rajput rulers of 16th century, Maharana Pratap was the only one who didn't surrender to Akbar.



Horse 'Chetak' of Maharana Pratap breathing his last at Haldighati battle field

It was the battle of Haldighati that made History. And it is still remembered by people. It's alive in the songs of bards. So much so that Not just Maharana Pratap, his horse Chetak also became immortalised. There are poems that are taught to school children in India even to this day. Here are two lines from the poem written by Kavi Shyam Narayan Pandey – 'Chetak ki Veerta'

रण बीच चौकड़ी भर-भर कर
चेतक बन गया निराला था
राणा प्रताप के घोड़े से
पड़ गया हवा का पाला था

In the battle field Chetak, the horse of Rana Pratap was unique as he was swifter than the wind

जो तनिक हवा से बाग हिली
लेकर सवार उड़ जाता था
राणा की पुतली फिरी नहीं
तब तक चेतक मुड़ जाता था

Chetak would take-off with the mere thoughts of his master; he would turn around before Rana would turn his head.

वीर रस से भरी यह कविता सिर्फ महाराणा प्रताप के घोड़े के बारे में हो सकती है.

हल्दीघाटी की लड़ाई कई मायनों में अनूठी थी. The strangest battle in history. सिर्फ चार घंटे चली थी, लेकिन उन चार घंटों में भी राणा प्रताप ने अकबर की विशालकाय सेना को नाको चने चबवा दिए !



Battle of Haldighati – Maharana Pratap takes on Asaf Khan, commander of Mughal army

सोचो, एक तरफ अकबर की 200,000 लोगों की फौज और उसके सामने 22,000 राजपूत योद्धा. मगर वोह डटे रहे. Defeated the Mughals because of their strategy and chivalry.

अंत में भले युद्ध छोड़कर जाना पड़ा, लेकिन तब तक अपने पराक्रम से वे राजपुताना के इतिहास का सबसे गौरवपूर्ण अध्याय लिख चुके थे.

Maharana Pratap was not just a brave warrior, caring king and valiant leader but also a man of principles. He never tried any unjust means nor transgressed from the rules of warfare to win over his enemies.

I will tell you the story of Kachhawa Raja - **Man Singh** of Jaipur - the Mughal army general in Akbar's times. Once, Maharana got to know Raja Man Singh's whereabouts in the jungle, he could have easily attacked him when the latter was busy hunting, but he did not backstab the latter.

His distinction of being just was a rare leadership trait.

एक और किस्सा है **रहीम-खाने-खान** के बारे में जो की मुगल सेना में अधिकारी था. वो लगातार मेवाड़ के खिलाफ षड़यंत्र रचे जा रहा था. जब महाराणा प्रताप के बेटे कुंवर अमर सिंह, रहीम के घर की कुछ औरतों को उठा लाया, तो महाराणा ने उसे खूब लताड़ा और तुरंत उन महिलाओ को सम्मान के साथ वापस भेजने की हिदायत दी. रहीम उनकी इस दरियादिली से गदगद हो उठा और उसने तय किया की मेवाड़ के खिलाफ मुगल साज़िश में अब वोह हिस्सा नहीं लेगा...!

There are thousands of stories like these....

Maharana Pratap was always concerned about the security of his subjects.

That is why he shifted the capital to Kumbhalgarh in the Aravalli Range to save them from consequences of the battle. Then, he brought all Rajput chieftains under one roof for the sake of Mewar's glory and independence and built a force of tribal people by training them in warfare.

Maharana Pratap's life is also a lesson on how to stand ground against all adversities.

After the battle of Haldighati, when he was wandering in forests to keep away from the Mughal army, his family suffered many hardships. His wives and children had to starve and spend sleepless nights under unfavourable circumstances in forests. Such a catastrophe initially forced him to think of surrendering to Akbar and signing a treaty of peace with the latter. But the very next moment, He discarded such thoughts and gathered courage to fight Akbar once again.

With only a small penniless inheritance, Pratap proved himself, in face of insurmountable difficulties, a great leader of men, a generous enemy, and above all a prince among men. His name will ever have a permanent and prominent niche in the halls of valour, patriotism, and heroism.

जब भी वीरता, देशभक्ति, और आदम्य साहस की बात होगी, महाराणा प्रताप का नाम सबसे पहले और पूरी शान से लिया जायेगा.

It gives me a great sense of pride and honour that Mauritius has a memorial for Maharana Pratap and this nation celebrates HIS birth anniversary every year.

Before concluding I'd once again like to thank everyone for honouring Rajputana's greatest hero in the greatest fashion.

I'd also like to implore and encourage all of you to visit historical Mewar cities like Udaipur – which is also a famous international touristic landmark these days. History, culture, beauty, lakes, festivals, mineral wealth, art and craft, heritage... it's all present in this most glorious of Indian cities. There is a great MAHARANA PRATAP MEMORIAL built in the city and it's one of the must visit places for anyone interested in the story of the great Maharana.



Maharana Pratap Memorial at Udaipur

Finally. Maharana Pratap's story is just a single page of the glorious history of Mewar and Rajasthan. If you book a flight to India and visit Rajasthan, you can turn many such colourful pages of the Rajputana history.... Brave and Majestic.... Two adjectives that will forever define both the Maharana and the Rajputana.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen...!

Jai Maharana Pratap...! Jai Mauritius...! Jai Hind...!

Author:

Commander Pratap Singh Mehta, Indian Navy, is a veteran of 1971 Indo-Pak war, author and life skill coach. He recently authored "Rajputana Chronicles: Guns and Glories, *the thousand-year story of the Bachhawat clan*", a coffee table book. He can be reached at www.pratapmehta.com and captainpsm@gmail.com

