



FOREWORD...

Greetings!

AIL Centre for Research in Social Sciences (ACRSS) was set up with an objective to encourage study and research in Social Sciences and focuses on disseminating ideas related to various social issues and encouraging conjugation of students of law with the community at large through a large network of competent professionals such as social workers, academicians & students and activities that help young people to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.

It engages students in thought-provoking discussions on various social issues, and contemplating solutions, resolutions.

This newsletter presents a compendium on India- often labeled as an amalgamation of various cultures, spanning across the Indian subcontinent, influenced and shaped by a history that is several thousand years old.

We intend to highlight through commentaries and articles on topics like culture, philosophy, family structure and marriage, festivals, greetings, cuisine, clothing, languages and literature, performing arts, visual arts, etc., the beauty of an age old, yet young nation justifiably called, and titled, Incredible India.

Happy reading!

MEET THE TEAM

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Jahnvi Bainsla
2nd Year



Simran Yadav
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Avi Ansh Rathore
1st Year

Incredible India

“India is a place where colour is doubly bright. Pinks that scald your eyes, blues you could drown in.”

– Kiran Millwood Hargrave

What gives INDIA its unique identity or what makes INDIA so incredibly unique? The list is really long; be it its traditions, culture, customs, monuments, languages, food, dances, art, music, literature and so on! Every state is so different yet at the end united. Starting from our Kashmir (also called paradise) which offers us heavenly views and Himachal (Dev Bhoomi) which has all our favourite destinations for vacations, and then Punjab (the Land of the five rivers), well known for its hospitality. Also comprising the well planned city of Chandigarh as its capital. We move on to Uttarakhand which is a famous Hindu pilgrimage site. Delhi (the ‘DIL’ i.e., capital of India) is a famous tourist destination as well!

Move a little further, and you reach Rajasthan well known, and rightly so, for its royal palaces and blue blooded heritage. Then follows our Maharashtra (The gateway of India) which is famous for the Ajanta and Ellora caves, a UNESCO world heritage site¹!

Madhya Pradesh, at the heart of the country, is home to three UNESCO sites; Bhimbetka caves, Khajuraho Temples and Sanchi Stupa.

Uttar Pradesh has Vrindavan (the home of Lord Krishna), which attracts millions of followers all over the world. The southern states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are famous for their art, culture, dance and music. Kerala (God’s Own country)² has the famous backwaters, art forms and spices. We have the famous islands of Andaman and Diu.

Then we have our northeastern states, or the seven sisters as they are popularly called where stranger Sikkim is host to the famous Kanchenjunga, the third highest peak on Earth. Meghalaya is famous for its natural beauty and greenery. These states are home to many wildlife sanctuaries and national parks like Kaziranga. known for the endangered rhinoceros.

Every corner of India has its own unique identity. In addition to this, there are various cuisines of the various places like sarson ka saag from Punjab, Dal Baati Churma from Rajasthan, Hyderabadi Biryani, Dosa Sambar from south, Rosogulla from Bengal, Litti-Chokha from Bihar and much more.

India's celebrations are also noteworthy. Every state has its unique festivities; from the fragrant Onam, a holiday celebrated in Kerala marked by the creation of a floral carpet, to the Pôhela Boishakh, the start of the Bengali calendar's New Year, the celebrations are both vibrant and amazing. On a concluding note, it can be said that yes its **Incredible India!**

-Gungeet Kaur, 2nd Yr



-Jahnvi Bainsla, 2nd Yr

¹ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/in>

² <https://www.keralatourism.org/>

The Hindu Shahis

-Ankit Rana, 2nd Yr

The Hindu Shahis (also known as Hindūshāhs, Odi Shahis, Uḍi Śāhis or Brahman Shahis, 822–1026 CE) were a dynasty that held sway over the Kabul Valley, Gandhara and western Punjab during the early medieval period in the Indian subcontinent, until they were defeated and wiped out by Islamic invasions. Details regarding past rulers can only be assembled from disparate chronicles, coins and stone inscriptions. However, Al Beruni, who came to India in the train of Mahmud Ghaznavi and was a contemporary of these Shahis, paid a touching tribute:

“This Hindu Shahiya dynasty is now extinct, and of the whole there is no longer the slightest remnant in existence. We must say that in all their grandeur, they never slackened in the ardent desire of doing that which is good and right, that they were men of noble sentiment and noble bearing.”

Literature

No literature survives from Hindu Shahi courts. Unlike the case of Turk Shahis, only fragmented information can be obtained from chronicles of neighbouring powers — Kashmir and Ghaznavid Sultanate. Of the former, Kalhana's Rajatarangini (1148-1149) is the only extant source. Of the latter, we have Tārīkh al-Hind by Al-Biruni (c. 1030), Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī by Abu'l-Faḍl Bayhaqī (c. late 11th century), Zayn al-Akhbar by Abu Sa'id Gardezi, and Kitab-i Yamini by al-Utbi (c. 1020).

Coins

The Hindu Shahis issued silver coinage which underwent wide circulation from nearby Sindh to north-eastern Europe. They were first "discovered" by James Tod, a British orientalist in 1822. Coins exhibit progressive debasement with time, with a regular decrease of silver content, allowing for the sequencing of the coinage. Early issues do not mention personal names but only generic titles, thereby not matching with the names found from literature. The characteristic motif of a horseman on the reverse with a bull on the obverse goes back to the Indo-Scythian ruler Azes I.

Inscriptions and Archaeology

Inscriptions remain scarce. Mostly found in Udabhandā, they either commemorate the commissioning of temples or are affixed at the base of idol-pedestals. Of the former kind—Mir Ali Inscription, Dewal Inscription, Dewai Inscription, Ratnamanjari Inscription, Veka Inscription, Hund Stone Inscription, Kamesvaridevi Inscription, Barikot Inscription, and Isvara Inscription—most are disfigured to various extents due to their use as grinding stones in medieval times and are decipherable only in parts. The latter kind is relatively abundant but only provides snippets of trivia. The language is exclusively Sharda. A samvat is mentioned in all of them whose zero year is understood to correspond to 822 C.E. based on the Zalamkot Bilingual Inscription; it has been assumed to be initiated by Kallar on his coronation, as was typically the case for most Hindu dynasties of medieval India. Copper & land grants etc. are yet to be documented.



Art and Architecture

New temples were built inside fortresses while existing ones were extensively refurbished or repurposed. The Gandhar-Nagara style of architecture developed distinct formulations under the Hindu Shahis. Meister, a famous Indologist, notes a typical Hindu Shahi temple to have two ground-level chambers embedded within a tower—leading to a minaret like appearance—with an ambulatory at the top, that is accessible by a stairwell. He dates construction of eight temples to the Hindu Shahis: one of the five temples at Kafir Kot (mid 9th c.), two temples at Amb (late 9th c. and 10th c.), one at Gumbat (10th c.), one at the Katas Raj complex (10th c.), two temples at Bilot (late 10th c.), and one at Nandana (early 11th c.; reuse of a sacred Buddhist site). Besides, there were two sandstone temples at Malot and Shiv-Gangā (10th c.) which exhibited a blend of Shahi and Kashmiri architecture, bearing testimony to the cultural flows between the two polities. All of these structures are in a state of ruin and have fallen into disuse since time immemorial; except for Kafir Kot, excavations need to be carried out to understand the architectural grammar of the Hindu Shahis in more detail.

Forts and Settlements

The archaeology of the Hindu Shahis remains unrecognized and poorly understood. Dani ascribed ruined forts to the Hindu Shahis at Pehur, Kamala, and Bata, but without detailed reasoning. Hund remains the main archaeological site. Fragmentary evidence is located across the Peshawar valley. Excavations by Rahman (and others) documented a Buddhist monastery at Barikot, which was repurposed to a Hindu Shahi fort.

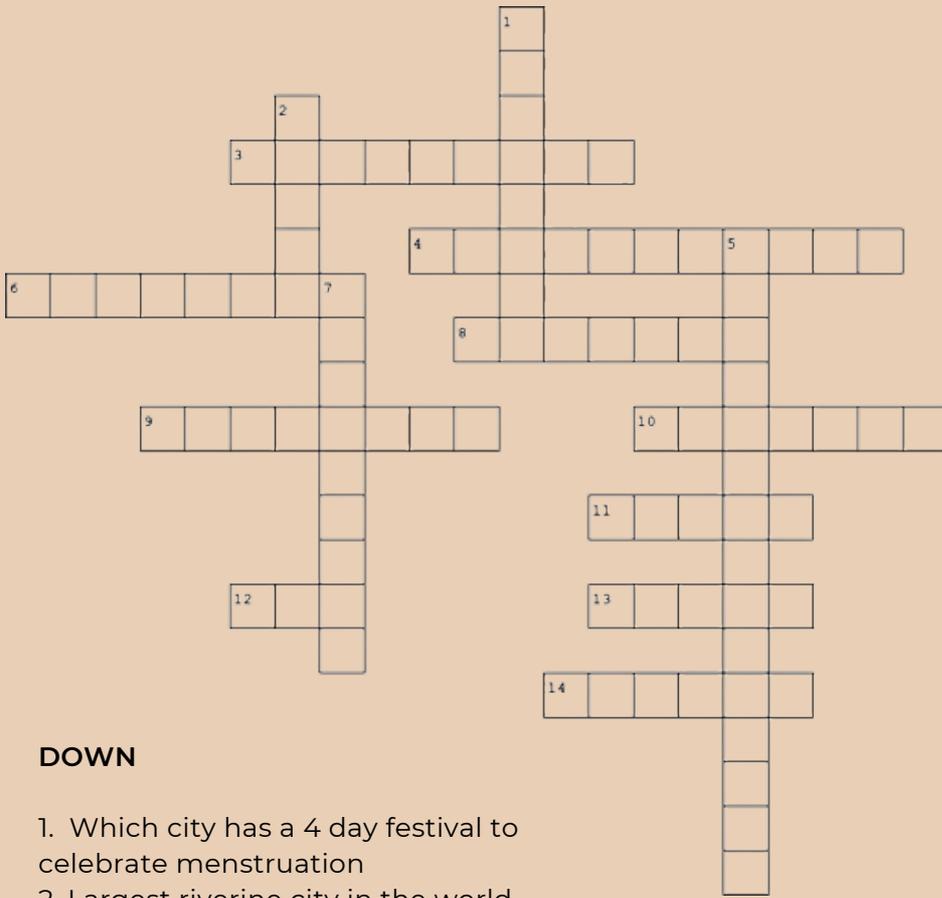
Society and Economy

Shaivism was practiced by the Hindu Shahis and likely, was also the predominant religion; Saura was practiced by some subjects, as were Buddhism and Islam. Kabul exported cotton clothing and indigo. Silver was mined at Panjshir and smelted at Andarab.

Conclusion

The initial Hindu Shahi dynasty was the house of Kallar, but in 964 A D. the ruler was assumed from Bhima upon his death by the Janjua empire Maharaja Jaypal, who celebrated as a hero of his struggle in defeating his kingdom from the Turkic rulers of Ghazni. Jaipal was challenged by the armies of Sultan Subagtagin and later by his son Sultan Mahmood Ghazna. In the wake of the Muslim invasions of Kabul in the second half of the 7th century, the Kabul ruler appealed to the Ksatriyas of the Hind who had gathered there in large numbers for assistance and drove out the Muslim invaders as far as Bost.

In subsequent years, the Muslim armies returned with large reinforcements, and Kabul swept when the Shahi rulers agreed to pay the tribute to the conquerors. For strategic reasons, the Shahis, who continued to offer stubborn resistance to Muslims onslaughts, finally moved their capital from Kapisa to Kabul in about AD 794. Kabul Shahi remained in Kabul until 897 AD when Ya'qub Laith Saffari, the founder of the Saffarid dynasty, conquered the city. Kabul Shahis had built a defensive wall all around Kabul city to protect it against the army of Muslim Saffarid. The remains of this wall are still visible over the mountains which are located inside Kabul city.



DOWN

- 1. Which city has a 4 day festival to celebrate menstruation
- 2. Largest riverine city in the world
- 5. World's highest cricket ground is located in this state
- 7. This state has a temple dedicated to rats



ACROSS

- 3. Thimithi, the fire-walking festival conducted to honour Draupadi is celebrated in this state
- 4. Himachal Pradesh's winter capital
- 6. World's only floating post office is located here
- 8. Land of the Highlanders
- 9. Abode of Guru Drona
- 10. The world's largest school is located here
- 11. State known for its Muga silk
- 12. India's first printing press was established in this state
- 13. Dosa, the south-indian delicacy has its origin from this city
- 14. The oldest man-made lake in India is situated in this city





-Jahnvi Bainsla, 2nd Yr

VIJAYANAGARA: THE EMPIRE OF TEMPLES

-Simran Yadav, 2nd Yr

History is a momentous part of our lives. However, it is such a vast subject, all too often certain portions are skipped over and left out. Vijayanagara and its history seems to have lost in time as so.

The Vijayanagara Empire was the last true Hindu empire of the Indian Subcontinent- It was prosperous and so highly developed that contemporary travellers of the time from Europe and Persia who visited the city were amazed by its beauty, wealth, and splendour. The capital of the Empire, the City of Vijayanagar ('Vijayanagar' translates to 'City of Victory'), was often described as the Constantinople of the Orient and was a highly developed urban centre. At its peak, the City of Vijayanagara was the second largest city in the entire world (~1500 CE) and was the wealthiest city in India.

The Vijayanagara Empire was a bulwark of Hinduism and functioned as a haven for Hindus. It is here where a reconstruction of Hindu Life took place, along with great infrastructural projects and scholarly pursuit of knowledge. The Hindu Emperors of Vijayanagara were renowned for their tolerance of other faiths, especially Jainism and Islam. It is estimated to have a population of ~600,000 people and was teeming with temples, bazaars, public buildings and palaces. The kings used titles such as Gobrahmana Pratipalanacharya (literally, "protector of cows and Brahmins") that testified to their intention of protecting Hinduism, and yet at the same time adopted Islamicate court ceremonies, dress, and political language, as reflected in the title Hindu-rāya-suratrāṇa (lit, "sultan among Hindu kings"). The empire's founders, the Sangama brothers (Harihara I and Bukka Raya I) came from a pastoral cowherd background, possibly the Kuruba people, that claimed Yadava lineage. The founders of the empire were devout Shaivas (worshippers of the Hindu god Shiva) but made grants to Vishnu temples. Their patron saint Vidyanarya was from the Advaita order at Sringeri. The Varaha (the boar avatar of Vishnu) was the emblem of the empire. Over one-fourth of the archaeological dig found an "Islamic Quarter" not far from the "Royal Quarter". Nobles from Central Asia's Timurid kingdoms also came to Vijayanagara. The later Saluva and Tuluva kings were Vaishnava (followers of Vishnu) by faith, but also worshipped Venkateshwara (Vishnu) at Tirupati as well as Virupaksha (Shiva) at Hampi. A Sanskrit work, Jambavati Kalyanam by King Krishnadevaraya, refers to Virupaksha as Karnata Rajya Raksha Mani ("protective jewel of Karnata Empire"). The kings patronised the saints of the dvaita order (philosophy of dualism) of Madhvacharya at Udupi. Endowments were made to temples in the form of land, cash, produce, jewellery and constructions.

Domingo Paes, a famous Portuguese traveller who came to Vijayanagara in 1522 after having visited the Italian cities of the Renaissance. The city of Vijayanagar, he says, is as "large as Rome and very beautiful to the sight; it is full of charm and wonder with its innumerable lakes and waterways and fruit gardens. It is the best-provided city in the world, it is so rich and beautiful that you would hardly find anywhere, another such."

Despite being the most powerful empire in the south of India, the turning point in the history of the Vijayanagara empire came with the defeat at the battle of Talaikota, fought between Vijayanagara and the combined forces of the Deccan Sultanates. The battle was a narrow one, with the Vijayanagara initially having an upper hand until two Muslim contingents led by the Gilani Brothers defected to the side of the Islamic deccan sultanates and capturing and beheading the Vijayanagari Samrat Aliyah Rama Raya.

After three days, enemy troops entered the city. There was no one to stop them. They looted, plundered, and destroyed the city. Around 500,000 civilians were killed. Shops, temples, and houses were burnt and the murtis of Hindu deities were destroyed. This destructive episode continued for six months. And it is believed that the heat of the fire which was set in the city was so intense that it cracked the hills surrounding it. Robert Sewell, in his book The Forgotten Empire, writes "With fire and sword, with crowbars and axes, they carried on day after day their work of destruction. Never perhaps in the history of the world has such havoc been wrought, and wrought so suddenly, on so splendid a city; teeming with a wealthy and industrious population in the full plenitude of prosperity one day, and on the next seized, pillaged, and reduced to ruins, amid scenes of savage massacre and horrors beggaring description." Thus, the Battle of Talikota which is believed as the major reason for the collapse of the majestic empire of the Vijayanagara was because of the huge betrayal in the name of religion, the intolerance of which can still be witnessed after 450 years in the ruins of the city at Hampi.

Today, the empire's legacy includes monuments spread over South India; the best known of which are the ones at Hampi.



A TRIBUTE TO THE SEVEN SISTERS

-Kamakshi Bhandari, 2nd Yr

The Northeast India, fondly known as the land of the seven sisters is home to some of India's most beautiful landscapes, lush green hills, rivers, breathtaking waterfalls, dense forests and abundant flora and fauna. The history of the region is rich and diverse, reflecting the influence of various ethnic and indigenous groups, cultures and religions that have inhabited it over the centuries.

In the early historical period, the region was ruled by various powerful dynasties such as the Ahom dynasty in Assam and the Kachari dynasty in present-day Manipur and Nagaland. During the colonial period, the region was incorporated into the British Indian Empire and was ruled by the British for over a hundred years.

The puranas, as well as the epics of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, are believed to make a mention to the northeast. Numerous tribes living in these states recognise this lineage and still perform the specified ceremonies and adhere to the established traditions. Their view is further solidified by the mythology of these areas. For instance, the Arunachal Pradesh-based Idu Mishmi clan traces its roots back to Rukmini, Lord Krishna's wife. Similar to this, the Assamese Bodo tribe holds that they are descended from Hidimba, Bhima's wife.

After India gained independence from the British in 1947, the Seven Sister States became part of the newly independent nation and since then have developed their own unique identities and cultures. In the post-independence period, the region has faced innumerable challenges including ethnic conflict, insurgencies and underdevelopment. The political instability, internal and external security challenges and growing discontent among the indigenous groups has created a volatile and fragile environment which requires our utmost attention. Despite these problems, the people of Northeast India have made and continue to make significant contributions to Indian society and culture.

In recent years, there have been various efforts made by the government to promote economic development and encourage cultural exchange and integration of the region with the rest of the mainland. It is also being seen as an important gateway between India and Southeast Asia.

North East India is one of the most culturally diverse areas of the world. It is home to over 200 tribes including unique, fascinating tribes like the opium smoking, headhunter tribes in Nagaland and the facially tattooed, sun and moon worshipping Apatani tribe in Ziro Valley, Arunachal Pradesh.

Each tribe has its own distinct custom, cuisine, attire and dialect. One of these tribes is the Konyak, the last remaining headhunter clans of the region. Konyaks were once renowned for decapitating their enemies and proudly displaying them on their return to the village. With time, these age-old customs are vanishing, but this is a testament to the existence of an enormous wealth of cultural experiences hidden within the mystical hills of north-east India.

There are various age-old traditions and practices that continue to be followed in the region such as that of the centuries-old barter system that is seen in practice at Jonbeela Mela in Assam which is held annually in the Morigaon district of Assam. It is organised by the Gobha and Ahom kings in a field slightly bigger than a football field, where buyers and sellers can come and take part. It was started in the 15th century with an aim for the king to interact with the people.

A number of festivals are celebrated by the people which hold a lot of prominence in their culture like the Bihu festival (Assam), Hornbill Festival (Nagaland), Lai Haraoba (Manipur), Ngai Festival (Mizoram), Moatsu Festival (Nagaland) among others.

The challenges and problems faced by Northeast India are complex and interrelated such as insurgencies, ethnic conflicts, poor infrastructure and development, lack of connectivity, environmental degradation and unemployment. Addressing these issues requires a multi-disciplinary approach, involving all stakeholders- the government, civil society, and the private sector. Efforts must be made to ameliorate the above-mentioned challenges so that the region can realize its full potential and contribute to the overall development of India.



bharat: a confluence

-Avi Ansh Rathore, 1st Yr

India is a land of diverse cultures, religions, and languages, which have coexisted and influenced each other over the centuries. With over 1.3 billion people, it is the world's second-most populous country and a melting pot of different communities, traditions, and customs. India is a place where people of different ethnicities, languages, religions, and beliefs live together in harmony, and this diversity has played a major role in shaping the country's unique cultural identity. This article is an attempt to summarize a few aspects of the same.

Culture:

India has a rich cultural heritage that can be traced back to the Indus Valley Civilization. Over the centuries, the country has been invaded and ruled by several different civilizations, including the Mughals and the British, each of which has left its mark on the diversity.

One of the most prominent cultural practices in India is its classical dance forms. These dances, such as Bharatanatyam, Kathak, and Manipuri, are deeply rooted in Hindu mythology and tell stories through intricate hand gestures and movements. Indian classical music is also an important part of the country's cultural heritage, and is characterized by the use of ragas (melodic patterns) and talas (rhythmic patterns).

Diversity:

India is one of the most diverse countries in the world, with over 2,000 ethnic groups and more than 1,600 languages. The country is home to many different communities, each with its own unique cultural identity and traditions. The diversity of Indian society can be seen in the different languages, religions, cuisines, and clothing styles that are practiced and followed across the country.

The diversity of India is also reflected in its geography, with the country being home to a range of different landscapes, from the rugged Himalayas to the lush tropical forests of the south. This diversity in geography has given rise to a wide range of flora and fauna, and has also influenced the country's cultural traditions and practices.

Despite its diversity, India has managed to maintain a sense of unity and national identity. The country's shared history, cultural practices, and beliefs have helped to bring its people together and create a sense of national unity. This is particularly evident in the country's independence movement, where people from different communities, languages, and religions came together to fight for freedom from British rule.

Society:

India is a complex and diverse society that is characterized by a mix of modern and traditional values. The caste system, which is a traditional social hierarchy based on birth and occupation, continues to play a role in Indian society, although it is officially illegal and widely criticized. However, India has also made great strides in promoting social equality and empowering its marginalized communities, and has seen significant progress in areas such as women's rights, education, and healthcare.



Maharana Pratap, born 9 May 1540, was a Mewari folk hero born to Rani Jaivanta Bai and Rana Udai Singh II. He went onto becoming the 13th Rana of Mewar, a kingdom first set up by Bappa Rawal of Sisodiya Dynasty. His name was in much consonance with his character- 'Pratap' meaning 'bravery' or 'dignity'. He is renowned for his military resistance against the expansionism of the Mughal Empire under Akbar via Guerrilla warfare.

During his young years, everything was comparative peaceful against the turmoil in his later life. Mewar had given shelter to Raja Jaimal of Merta which ultimately became the reason for the Siege of Chittor in 1567. After losing it, Maharana Pratap vowed to sleep on beds made of dry grass, and eat food in utensils of leaves until he regained it. Unfortunately, his pledge remained unfulfilled. Surprisingly, even today, the Mewari clan and their followers in Chittor sleep on floor, thus continuing their erstwhile Raja's unfulfilled vow.

Rana Udai Singh II died in 1572, leaving behind 18 sons and 24 children. He had nominated his favourite son Jagmal to the throne of Mewar, in preference to his eldest

"SURAJ KA TEZ BHI PHIKA PADHTA THA,
JAB RANA TU APNA MASTAK UNCHA KARTA THA,
THI RANA TUJHME KOI AISI BAAT NIRALI,
ISLIYE AKBAR BHI TUJHSE DARTA THA"

son Pratap Singh But the maternal uncle of Pratap, Rai Akhai, Raja of Jalore and the ex-
raja of Gwalior, in consultation of few
leading chiefs of Mewar, dethroned Jagmal
and installed Pratap Singh on the throne by
a coup de main.

Post his coronation, Maharana Pratap made
significant contributions to the
development of his Cavalry. The saddle of the
sawar was designed to enable the rider
almost to stand in it so that the greatest
impact might be delivered through the
lance. The cantle (back of the saddle) was
very high to give extra support and
protection. The double girth (leather strap)
was used to support the saddle from impact.
Further he recruited Bandukchi from Kalpi,
gave military training to elephants in his
army, and appointed Bhils as vigilant
watchmen of his forts and outposts during
night. It is here we find mention of Punja
Bhil, who fought alongside the Rana at
Haldighati and was later bestowed with the
title of 'Rana' by the Maharana himself.

Later, Due to the rising influence of Rana
Pratap in the Rajputana, other Rajput
chieftains such as
Chandrasen of
Jodhpur and
Dauda of Bundi
revolted against
Akbar at a large
scale. In fear of
losing Rajputana,
Akbar's forces led
by Raja Man Singh
met the Maharana
at Haldighati.

THE MAKING OF A WARRIOR: MAHARANA PRATAP

-Kashish Kochar, 2nd Yr

**"BALIDAN PAR RANA KE, BHARAT MA NE,
LAAL DESH KA KHOYA THA.
VEER PURUSH KE DEHA VSAN PAR,
AKBAR BHI FAFAK FAFAK KAR ROYA THA"**

With great chivalry the Rajputs dominated the battlefield for a considerable period. Unfortunately, with the rumours of Akbar's arrival in the battlefield himself forced the injured Rana to retreat. It is here we find the great mention of Maharana Pratap's historic horse 'Chetak'.

Once retreated, the Rana became a captive in his own forests. With minimal resources for survival and fight, his future seemed bleak. However, at this critical juncture, his minister Bhamashah brought with him a treasure, which the Rana's predecessors had accumulated with the foresight of such an emergency arising. This treasure was so grand; it could maintain an army of 25,000 soldiers for the next 12 years. With his military strength renewed, the Maharana made one final attack on the day of Vijaydashmi in 1582, thus winning the Battle of Dewair. This led to the utter defeat of 36,000 Mughal soldiers and the closing of all 36 Mughal outposts in Mewar.

After such a success, his efforts were directed to win back Chittor, his home. Unfortunately, the Rana succumbed to injuries he sustained in a boar hunt. He passed away in January 1597.

Maharana Pratap's bravery, morality and patriotism were compared to mythological heroes like Arjun, Lord Ram and Lord Krishna. Duras Adha named him 'Ananami' – He who did not bow his head before the Mughal Emperor. He was credited with defending the 'Khatra' or 'Kshatriya' dharma and given titles of Rao Hindwan, Chittoda and Mewada.

We also find a great mention of him in literature published during the Indian Freedom struggle, few of which are Jaishankar Prasad's poem 'Peshola ki Pratidhwani', Kishorilal Gosawmi's 'Saraswati' and Ramdhari Singh Dinkar's work titled 'Himalaya'

Even the National Book Trust published his biography in the series called 'Rashtriya Charit-Mala.'

In my opinion, as a great warrior of liberty, a devoted lover of noble cause and a hero of moral character, his name is to millions of people even today, a cloud of hope by day and a pillar of fire by night. However the extent of his true contribution to our heritage is up to the contemplation and imagination of my worthy readers.

THE SECRET NINE

-Jahnvi Bainsla, 2nd Yr

Secret societies have always been a feature of advanced civilizations, and the cloud of mystery that has surrounded them can be linked to their description – they are, intended to be secret. Whether it's the Illuminati or the Priory of Sion, there have been several secret organizations that have existed, and many believe they are the ones who have been governing the world behind the scenes, away from the eyes of the general people. When it comes to India, we appear to have had one of the oldest and most powerful secret organizations, known as "The Nine Unknown Men," which was founded by Ashoka the Great about 2000 years ago.

Like most secret societies, The Secret Nine, too, remain hidden somewhere between the lines of truth and myth. However, the society, constituted for a purpose, has made itself known from time to time like a submarine surfacing to fulfill its duties. Since the time it came into existence, the society has inducted nine learned men to be the torchbearers and sole harbingers of the knowledge it strives to protect.

Ashoka, after witnessing and having a change of heart post the Kalinga War, devoted his time and resources to acquiring and consolidating the plethora of advancements ancient Indian society had made by that time. He believed it would be a disaster if such knowledge went to wrong hands and so, he formed a brotherhood of nine men, to whom he imparted the valuable knowledge in the fields of Propaganda, Physiology, Microbiology, Alchemy, Communication, Gravity, Cosmology, Light and Sociology.

Now, this knowledge, being extremely confidential and volatile in nature, was written down extensively in specific books, giving one book to each member to safekeep with their life. On the death of any one member of the society, another was elected by the others and sworn in in complete secrecy. If, at any point, a member was apprehensive of danger, he would inform another member and go into hiding, securing the book before anything else.

The society has involved itself in various matters when need be, and some mysterious matters such as a talking Bronze Head, the cure for Cholera and Plague, it is also suspected to be connected with the purity of the River Ganges. Thus, India has never been far behind in terms of well, anything.

-Jahnvi Bainsla, 2nd Yr



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ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD (PAGE 5).

ACROSS

3. TAMIL NADU
4. DHARAMSHALA
6. SRINAGAR
8. MIZORAM
9. DEHRADUN
10. LUCKNOW
11. ASSAM
12. GOA
13. UDUPI
14. BHOPAL

DOWN

1. GUWAHATI
2. PATNA
5. HIMACHAL PRADESH
7. RAJASTHAN

THANK YOU FOR READING OUR NEWSLETTER!