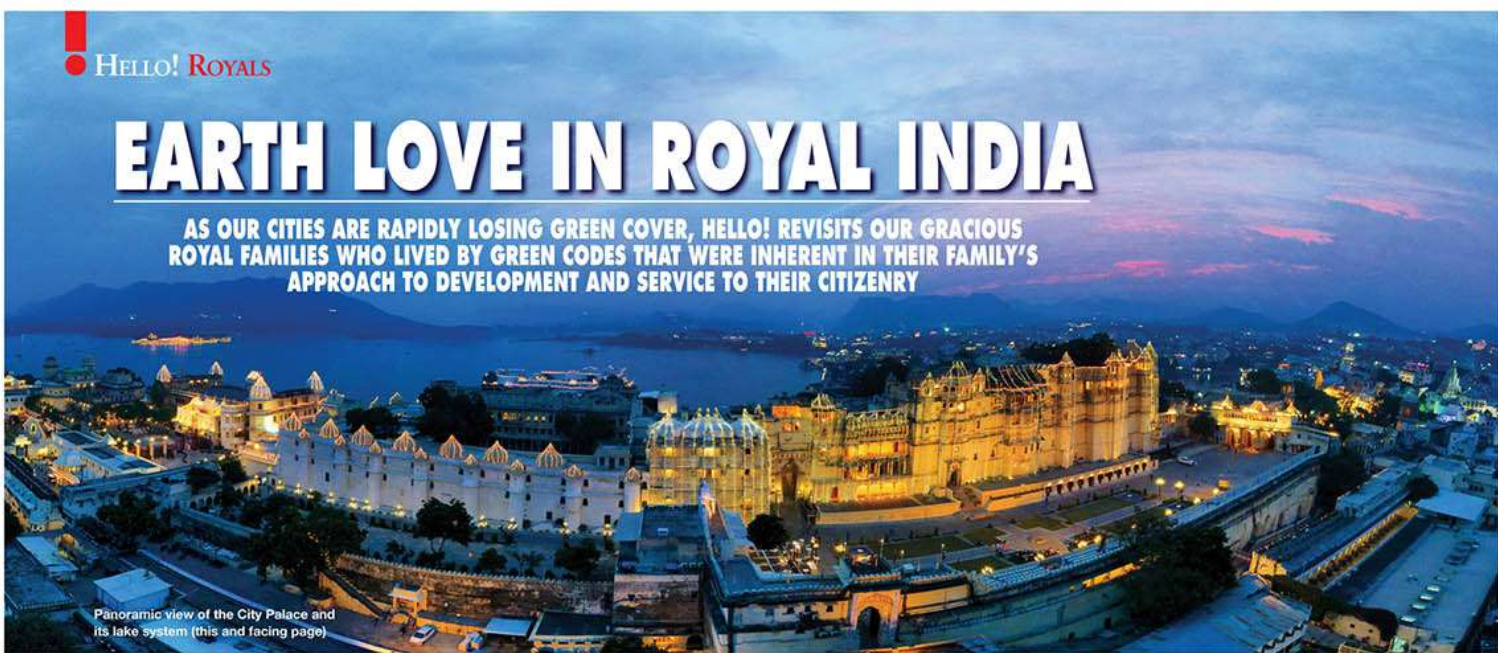


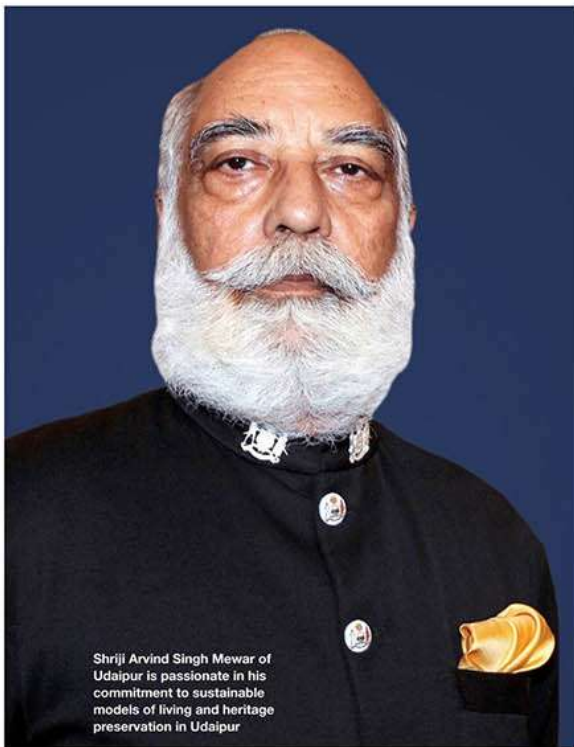
HELLO! ROYALS

EARTH LOVE IN ROYAL INDIA

AS OUR CITIES ARE RAPIDLY LOSING GREEN COVER, HELLO! REVISITS OUR GRACIOUS ROYAL FAMILIES WHO LIVED BY GREEN CODES THAT WERE INHERENT IN THEIR FAMILY'S APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE TO THEIR CITIZENRY



Panoramic view of the City Palace and its lake system (this and facing page)



Shriji Arvind Singh Mewar of Udaipur is passionate in his commitment to sustainable models of living and heritage preservation in Udaipur

ARVIND SINGH MEWAR OF UDAIPUR TALKS ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY AS EMBEDDED IN HIS LEGACY IN A MAN-MADE CITY

Congratulations to HELLO! for raising the subject of sustainability in today's time and age which is defined as VUCA – volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. To answer this 'massive' question would require several volumes to be penned as I would go back 75 generations to do justice to this subject and give a feel of our House of Mewar's commitment to sustainability and holistic development of cities. Here is a summary:

THE MAN-MADE CITY

"Udaipur is just 466 years old. Importantly it is worth noting that Udaipur is a 'man-made' city. Long before my ancestor Maharana Udai Singh II laid the foundations of the city, there was Maharana Lakha who, another 400 years ago, had perfected the civil engineering expertise required to create Lake Pichola in the 1200s. Sustainability was built into the endeavour of these Maharanas and their men. They were creating, what we call, infrastructure for tomorrow. We are the beneficiaries of their visionary work. When Udaipur gets voted,

time and again, as the 'best city in the world to visit', I humbly bow my head and acknowledge their contributions which has made it possible for the city to sustain itself. In 1947, Udaipur had a population of 40,000; today the same water resource is sustaining almost 800,000!"

MAHARANA PRATAP AND THE VISHVA VALLABHA

"Maharana Pratap, whom the world identifies as the hero of the Battle of Haldighati, is a multifaceted personality who commissioned his Court Pandita, Chakrapani Misra, to prepare a treatise on various branches of learning and science. In 1577 CE, Misra compiled *Vishva Vallabha* to focus on science and technology; and its fullest possible utilization through the establishment of several departments across the kingdom. You can see that more than 440 years ago we have in Mewar a repository of knowledge, ideas and concepts on agricultural science, and the technology of our pre-modern age. If you read *Vishva Vallabha* today, it reads like a manual from the



Maharana Lakha 1382 - 1421 CE

Government of India's Ministry of Agriculture! This was knowledge being put to use to develop agriculture and conserve water resources in lakes, ponds and rivers. Needless to say, Misra-ji's knowledge resources were immensely useful when Udaipur was being planned and built. We continue to honour the memories of these heroes of Mewar who are sadly not known for these contributions."

THE WORLD'S FIRST RIVER-LINKING PROJECT

"I would like to share just one more anecdote, this time going back to 1890. On August 13, a delegation led by Prince Arthur, the Duke of Connaught and Strathearn was visiting Udaipur. Prince Arthur, the third son of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, was the Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army. To commemorate his visit, Maharana Singh, the reigning ruler of the State of Udaipur, requested the royal dignitary to lay the foundation stone of a dam at Devali near Udaipur. The Maharana, in honour of Prince Arthur, named the dam as 'Connaught Dam'. A feeder canal called 'Chikalvas feeder' was constructed to divert the surplus rain water of Ahar river towards the Devali Talab now being renovated. Today, 119 years after the historic event, the entire project is referred to as the world's first river-linking project. Geologists and experts have called it a 'unique example of water conservation and management anywhere in the



'All around us, we imbibed the care for plants, trees, horses, elephants, palaces and lakes! Udaipur has been voted, time and again, 'the best city in the world to visit!' In 1947, Udaipur had a population of 40,000; today the same water resources sustain almost 800,000!'



Maharana Fateh Singh 1849-1930

world'. Udaipur the 'city of lakes' is actually a network of eight man-made lakes which have given the city its character and sustainability."

ECOLOGY CODES

"Issues like 'respecting the environment' were never taught to us in a classroom manner. Life itself was the experience, the classroom in which we learnt every minute, every day. All around us we were

seeing, observing and imbibing the care for plants, trees, horses, elephants or cars, palaces and lakes! Yes, what we were taught was to be 'hands-on' in managing the world around us. Whether it was about introducing the first-ever solar boats on Lake Pichola, electric vehicles in The City Palace, or recycling the water for our use, we have been involved at every stage of planning and implementation of these eco-drives. I am happy to state that every anti-pollution measure has been taken by us long before it became mandatory. This voluntary exercise in sustainability evolved holistically and was integrated into our development programme at The City Palace, Udaipur."

ECO-CHALLENGES TODAY

"Eco-sustainability is a continuous challenge, 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 not just about vegetable dyes or organic farming; it is a holistic, integrated and sustainable development at The City Palace, Udaipur, that brings 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, photographs or the series of palaces which make Udaipur an iconic city of our continent. I am delighted to state that at our City Palace Museum we have been able to achieve this *sangam* or confluence of the past and present and stepped into the future, aspiring to create a world-class institution. Our Maharana of Mewar Charitable Foundation is managing this 'living heritage' and has been adequately professionalised to become a sustainable organisation, under the four corners of Indian law."

WORSHIP OF NATURE

"We are Suryavanshi Rajputs, descendants of the Sun God and Shree Ram. Therefore, every prayer at every temple of Mewar begins with an '*archana*' to the rising Sun; for centuries the ancient temples of Chittorgarh, Kumbhalgarh, Kailashpuri and Udaipur have sustained their devotion with prayers, spirituality and ceremonies throughout the year. This is how devotion and worship to the Gods, not just to the Sun God, has become an exercise in continuity and character-building for all the people of Mewar. Yes, you can lose a battle or fail in meeting your sales target, but you cannot afford to fail in the devotion to the almighty. This is our defining character." □