

Profile

PRITHVIRAJ

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FROM the luxurious security of Raj Mahal to a political career is a risky adventure. Maharajkumar Prithviraj, third son of Man Singh, ex-ruler of Jaipur, has learnt this truth the hard way. Had the 33-year-old prince known that unlike in the days of feudal rule, in a democracy the people cannot be taken for granted, he would have taken greater care in agreeing to become a pawn in the ambitious political game of Gayatri Devi, youngest of Man Singh's three wives.

Prithviraj's mother, a princess from Jodhpur State and second wife of Man Singh, was a great lover of music and fine arts.



From her, Prithviraj inherited a quiet temper. Soft-spoken and mild-mannered, Prithviraj was groomed for a business career.

After completing his education at Harrow, he returned to India to receive training in business management. While still in his teens, the Maharajkumar was made a director of Service Parts Ltd. and Sawai Man Singh Investments Corporation, a partner in Amar Corpn. and managing director of Sunshine India Ltd.

He would have remained a shy businessman, had not his step-mother chosen to enter the political fray. Prithviraj and his elder brother, Jai Singh, were dragged into the vortex of her political onslaught against the Congress in 1962.

Prithviraj was elected to the Lok Sabha from the Dausa Parliamentary constituency in the third general election by a margin of about 80,000 over his Congress rival.

While his elder brother learnt quickly that politics was not a game of polo and, therefore, withdrew from the arena quietly, Prithviraj found it difficult to say no to Gayatri Devi. But this time the Dausa by-election proved a costly gamble. Will this defeat make the young prince shy of the uncertain business of politics, or will Gayatri Devi succeed in getting his help for her plans to persuade Man Singh to enter politics after his term as Ambassador to Spain is over?

Raj Mahal sources say Prithviraj is busy preparing a balance-sheet of the political adventures of the Maharani and the family conference, expected to take place some time this month, will prove crucial.