DECCAN Chronicle

Advertisement

Turn market volatility into predictable income from REITs and InvITs

8-9% Target Yield | (T+1) Instant Liquidity | 12-15% Target IRR

Know More

Book Review | An Elephant Fable Asks Us To Be Human

Books and Art

Ratnottama Sengupta

21 May 2026 9:09 PM

We're barely into the third para of Gajraj, still you don't need a thesaurus to understand that "the barely clothed people" are the tribes residing in the deep forest of the land, and the Road Gang represents the Development Brigade which plans to build airports and townships, ports and power plants inside one of the last island rainforests.



Additionally, the author of Gajraj hints at the epithet, "the memory of an elephant". If a pachyderm remembers the decades of life on the island that houses rainforests, should we, God's most intelligent creation, destroy the planet that's our only home in the universe? — DC Image

Listen

"And the barely clothed people of the soil argued passionately — 'Once you lose the trees, you lose everything...'

"Some of the Road Gang had come earlier. They cut down a few road-facing broadleaf trees. The trees weren't many monsoons old, yet they bulk with a thunderous buddrum..."

We're barely into the third para of Gajraj, still you don't need a thesaurus to understand that "the barely clothed people" are the tribes residing in the deep forest of the land, and the Road Gang represents the Development Brigade which plans to build airports and townships, ports and power plants inside one of the last island rainforests.

Also Read - New India Foundation's Coveted Book Fellowship to Go Annual Starting 2026

Who is the author of Gajraj: An Elephant Remembers?

- Avijit Dutt
- Avijit Dutt
- Amitav Ghosh
- Arundhati Roy

Skip

QuizzyAI

Advertisement

HITACHI Inspire the Next

Steering India Towards Next Frontiers of Payment Solutions

LEARN MORE

So what's wrong with development? The fact that it's not planned on an empty land but in a rainforest. Having walked seven miles in and seven miles out over fossilised roots and trunks of trees not messed about with since they sprouted deep inside Brunei, I've learnt that these forests evolve over thousands of years. Nearer home, the rainforests of Nicobar Islands house astounding numbers of Homo sapiens. The waters around are swirling grounds for endangered species of leatherback sea turtles. And the branches of the trees are mangrove fellicia, those feathered species that exist perhaps nowhere in the world.

Also Read - From Hormuz to the Indus: Why Geography Still Shapes Global Politics

Discover more

Wildlife

Books & Literature

Books

Avijit Dutt brings us alive to much of these by establishing an effortless kinship with them. And he does this by looking at the trees, the waters, the mines and the men through the eyes of Gajraj. It is easier to do this — if only like the Six Blind Men of Hindoostan — an elephant than to THINK like one. This I say, though I've been raised on the anthropomorphic fables of Aesop and Panchatantra, studied George Orwell's Animal Farm and translated Nabendu Ghosh's Aranya. All of these feature animals as characters whose activities are scrutinised by quadrupeds. Each of these literary works underscore that "their" world is as vulnerable, as fragile, as in need of protection as "ours".

Also Read - Bridging the Gap Between Academic Theory and Production Engineering

Additionally, the author of Gajraj hints at the epithet, "the memory of an elephant". If a pachyderm remembers the decades of life on the island that houses rainforests, should we, God's most intelligent creation, destroy the planet that's our only home in the universe? Development, yes; but not through irreversible ecological decimation. Avijit Dutt scores by structuring his narrative as the exploits of a grand mammoth and a frolicking mammal who has strayed away from his mamma. Despite this, the lesson at the end of the slim novella is worth meditating on.

Also Read - Book Review | The Horror Of War Through The Prism Of Sci-fi

Post Script: Just the other day a newspaper reported "For the third time this month a leopard entered a housing complex near Borivli National Park, raising fresh safety concerns among residents."

Should I invert the lens to read, "For the nth time humans entered the jungle island, raising fresh alarm among cheetahs, cobras, macaques, dugongs, hornbills..?"

Bless you Gajraj for lending me your glasses.

Gajraj: An Elephant Remembers

By Avijit Dutt

Olympia Publishers, London

pp. 49; Rs 450/-

(Source : Deccan Chronicle)

Book Review 2026

India

Download the Deccan Chronicle Android and iOS app on your phone for news and views from around the world - accurate and immediate.

About the Author

Ratnottama Sengupta

What is your reaction?

Happy 0% | Unmoved 0% | Amused 0% | Excited 0% | Angry 0% | Sad 0%

Advertisement

HITACHI Inspire the Next

Steering India Towards Next Frontiers of Payment Solutions

LEARN MORE

Comments

Write a comment

Sign In

Be the first to comment

TRENDING STORIES

AP BJP Welcomes Centre's Move Against Illegals

Siddaramaiah Announces Resignation, DK...

Sooryavanshi's Bat Swing Was Outstanding: Sachi...

Political Conspiracy Between Dravidian Parties Led To...

In A First In Many Years, Kolkata Eid Namaz Shifts To...

Pradhan, Rahul Clash Over CBSE Evaluation Row

Show more articles

Add Vuukle | Privacy | Vuukle

Advertisement

HITACHI Inspire the Next

Steering India Towards Next Frontiers of Payment Solutions

LEARN MORE

Sponsored

Start Forex Trading. Get a 100% Welcome Bonus

Start Forex Trading. Get a 100% Welcome Bonus

Learn what you know about forex trading and ...

Indians over 70 are switching from hearin...

Rare Photos Show Life On Hawaii's Forbidden...

Don't Risk It: 17 Items That Turn Dangerous When Expired

Open an account today!

New For India: Grammarly Launches Plus Plan

Your Finger Shape Says a Lot About Your Personality, Read Now

Eagle Attempts to Grab Puppy in Yard - Watch...

What is your writing missing?

Mr. Bala's Powerful Intraday Strategy Revealed – No More...

Book Your Daily Profit By 11 AM With This...

Shooter Action MMO

become a millionaire

Select Deccan Chronicle Now

Similar Posts

New India Foundation's Coveted Book Fellowship to Go Annual Starting...

Since its inception, the New India Foundation (NIF) Book Fellowship has been awarded once every...

21 May 2026 5:25 PM

From Hormuz to the Indus: Why Geography Still Shapes Global Politics

Akshay Chavan, author of the book, 'The Wealth Networks: How Roads, Rivers and Seas Shaped...

21 May 2026 4:09 PM

Bridging the Gap Between Academic Theory and Production Engineering

Rather than approaching technical writing from a purely academic standpoint, Thulasi's...

21 May 2026 8:58 PM

Book Review | The Horror Of War Through The Prism Of Sci-fi

The war is fought amid literal fog on a largely monochromatic battlefield. The empire is grey,...

21 May 2026 9:09 PM

You May Like

Sponsored Links

Indians over 70 are switching from hearing aids to this new device.

Rare Photos Show Life On Hawaii's Forbidden Island

Don't Risk It: 17 Items That Turn Dangerous When Expired

Open an account today!

New For India: Grammarly Launches Plus Plan

Your Finger Shape Says a Lot About Your Personality, Read Now

Tips and Tricks

by Taboola