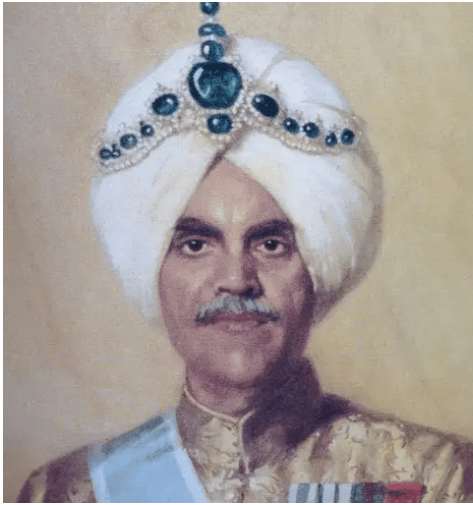


The Maharaja's Emerald Sarpech: A Century-Old Symbol of Regal Splendour

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A century after its creation, the **emerald and diamond turban ornament** commissioned by the **Maharaja of Kapurthala** remains one of the most celebrated jewels in royal Indian history — a glittering testament to the extravagance and cultural fusion of the early 20th-century Indian princely states.

A Jewel of Distinctive Craftsmanship

In **1926**, **Maharaja Sir Jagatjit Singh Sahib Bahadur of Kapurthala** — ruler of the princely state from **1877 to 1947** — commissioned the renowned French jewellery house **Cartier** to design a bespoke **emerald and diamond turban ornament**, also known as a *sarpech*.

The ornament was crafted with a striking **central hexagonal emerald** weighing an estimated **117.40 carats**, sourced from the Maharaja's own collection, and was surrounded by multiple smaller emeralds, **white diamonds** and **pearls** arranged in an Art Deco-inspired design — a unique fusion of European style and Indian royal aesthetics.

Royal Symbolism and Public Appearances

More than a luxury jewel, the ornament became a **symbol of regal presence** for the Maharaja. He was photographed wearing the piece on his turban in official portraits, embodying both his sovereign authority and his taste for opulence.

While detailed documentation is limited, historical accounts note that such turban ornaments were designed to reflect not only wealth but also cultural identity — serving as a visual marker of status within the Indian subcontinent's intricate system of princely hierarchies.

Cultural and Historical Legacy

The Maharaja of Kapurthala's commission came at a time when Indian royalty was increasingly engaging with European artisans, particularly those in **Paris's famed Place Vendôme**, blending Indian gem traditions with European craftsmanship. These unique collaborations helped put Indian elite jewellery on the world's artistic radar.

Today, while many royal treasures have been dispersed or placed in private collections and museums, this **Cartier turban ornament** endures as an emblem of a bygone era — one that blended royal pageantry with global artistic exchange, and that continues to capture the imagination of jewellery connoisseurs and historians alike.

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