

MILESTONES OF FREEDOM STRUGGLE

Unity, strength and determination were the hallmark of the Indian freedom struggle. Therefore, the Amrit Mahotsav of 75 years of independence is not only a celebration of this spirit, but also festival in which every Indian has a stake. People from all walks of life are actively participating in this festival. Every Indian is reiterating his/her resolve to eradicate evils like poverty, inequality, illiteracy, open defecation, terrorism and discrimination with the same gusto which was prevailing during the freedom struggle

The Amrit Mahotsav of Independence is an occasion to realize the unfulfilled dreams and secure the values of life and build a new India. It is not only infusing new energy and consciousness among the citizens, but is also inspiring them to strive for the country. The Indian freedom struggle had the sole aim to protect the pride and honor of Mother India at all costs. There were many sons and daughters who sacrificed their lives to achieve this goal. They died for us so that we could live in a free country. However, along with achieving

independence, they also had the dream of an India where each and every section of society, including the backwards, Dalits, minorities and women, have an equal say in the development of the country. Given our glorious past, it is our responsibility to share the importance of this freedom struggle with our future generations so that they understand the price India had to pay for this freedom. Therefore, in this series of Amrit Mahotsav of Independence, we dig into the lives of some of the heroes who not only sacrificed themselves, but also inspired future generations to put the country above self.

Bhagat Singh dreamt of an independent India even as a child

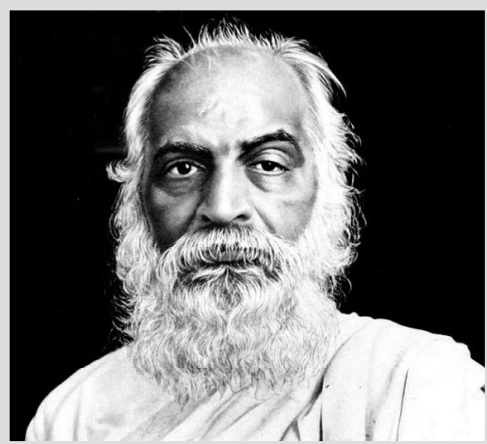
A child was once playing with a mound of sand by planting straws in it. Seeing him do this, his father asked him out of curiosity, "What are you doing?" The child replied, "I am sowing a gun. When I grow up, there will be guns on the tree. Then I will fight these bloody British." The child was none other than a great revolutionary of India, whom the world knows today as Bhagat Singh.

Born on 28th September 1907, Bhagat Singh's love for the country and passion for freedom was amazing. He believed that the British would not leave India on their own and they needed to be taught a lesson. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919 was a turning point in the life of the young Bhagat Singh. Later, Bhagat Singh, barely 12 years old then, went to the site of the massacre where hundreds of innocent people were shot dead in no time. The incident had a deep impact on Bhagat Singh who took the vow at the Jallianwala Bagh to fight against British rule. Gradually, he drew towards revolution. His two acts of dramatic violence against the British in India and execution at the age of 23 made him a folk hero of the Indian independence movement. In December 1928, Bhagat Singh and his associate, Shivaram Rajguru, fatally shot a 21-year-old British police officer, John Saunders, in Lahore, Punjab, in what is today Pakistan. Thereafter, he was on the run for many months. Four months later in April 1929, he and another associate, Batukeshwar Dutt, set off two low-intensity homemade bombs in the empty back-benches of the Central Legislative Assembly in Delhi and surrendered before the authorities. It was during the trial that Bhagat Singh's complicity in the John Saunders case came to light and he was convicted and hanged in March 1931, aged 23, along with his two companions Rajguru and Sukhdev. When they were being taken to the gallows, they were raising slogans 'Inquilab Zindabad' and 'Hindustan Azad Ho'. When his mother came to meet the jailed Bhagat Singh, he told her, "Mother, don't come to take my dead body. Instead, send brother Kuldeep. Because, if you cry after seeing my dead body, people will say look Bhagat Singh's mother is weeping." This is the reason why Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while remembering Bhagat Singh, said, "Can you imagine that the British who ruled a huge part of the world and it is said about them that the sun never sets in their regime... such a powerful regime was scared of a 23-year-old man. Shaheed Bhagat Singh was not only brave but also knowledgeable and a thinker. Without bothering about their lives, Bhagat Singh and his friends accomplished such acts of bravery that played a huge role in the country's freedom. Another beautiful aspect of Shaheed Bhagat Singh's life was that he underscored the importance of teamwork, be it his dedication towards Lala Lajpat Rai, or his association with Chandra Shekhar Azad, Sukhdev and Rajguru and other freedom fighters. Personal glory was never important to Bhagat Singh. He always lived for a mission and made supreme sacrifice for that only. That mission was to get rid of injustice and British rule."



Born: 28th September 1907
Died: 23rd March 1931

Once Bhagat Singh was asked in jail why he didn't defend himself in the case against him? He replied- Revolutionaries have to die, because in their death the campaign becomes forceful, not by appealing in court."



Vithalbhai Patel

A PROMINENT LEADER OF THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

Born: 27 September 1873 | Died: 22nd October 1933

Vithalbhai Patel was born in 1873 in Karamsad village of Kheda district in Gujarat. Vithalbhai Patel was the third of five brothers. He was the elder brother of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who played a leading role in the country's struggle for independence and guided its integration into a united, independent nation. He completed his early education in Karamsad and Nadiad. Both the brothers had a dream to become barristers and they wanted to go to London for further studies. However, Vithalbhai Patel got this opportunity earlier and went to England. Being a brilliant student throughout, Vithalbhai completed a 36-month course in London in 30 months and topped the class. Returning to Gujarat in 1913, Vithalbhai became an important barrister in the courts of Bombay and Ahmedabad. Being a veteran of the law, he established himself in a short span of time. His wife died in 1915, but he did not marry again. Vithalbhai Patel was the first elected president of the Central Constituent Assembly. He also became the Mayor of Mumbai. Despite having ideological differences with Gandhi,

Vithalbhai joined the Congress and the freedom struggle. He was one of the stalwarts of the Congress in the 1920s and onwards. Many times he was also arrested by the British in the freedom movement. However, in 1922, when Gandhiji called off the non-cooperation movement after the Chauri-Chaura incident, Vithalbhai was very disappointed. He left the Congress and formed the Swaraj Party with Chittaranjan Das and Motilal Nehru. Vithalbhai was jailed in 1932. The British released him on health grounds. He left India in March 1932. Vithalbhai died after illness and he bequeathed two-thirds of his will to Subhas Chandra Bose. This, however, led to bitterness in the relationship between Vallabhbhai Patel and Subhas Chandra Bose. When the original copy of the will was shown to Vallabhbhai, he raised many questions on the authentication of the signature in the will. Later Sardar Patel won the case and he formed a trust in the name of Vithalbhai and transferred the entire property in that trust. This trust used to work for social welfare.

"Making of the Constitution" and Virtual Film Poster Exhibition Chitranjali @ 75 under the #IconicWeek initiative which is being celebrated by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. This exhibition is a step towards public participation which will not only encourage the youth of the country to know about the Constitution but also educate them about their rights and make them aware of their sense of duty towards the nation. Chitranjali @75 depicts the journey of the nation by Indian cinema by showcasing the bravery and sacrifice of the freedom fighters. It also represents 75 years of Indian cinema and it brings back sacred memories of the valor of our freedom fighters, our

social reformers and our soldiers. An attempt has been made to include 75 such famous films in this poster exhibition which is an opportunity to see our films as a part of our cultural heritage. On the other hand, the e-book for the making of the constitution depicts the constitution-making process with rare photographs. It also includes links to videos and speeches taken from All India Radio's archives and film division. It is available in 11 regional languages along with Hindi and English. The government will also soon launch a 'Know Your Constitution' program to encourage the youth to partner in the efforts to propagate the founding principles of India's Constitution. ■