

FREEDOM FIGHTERS WHO SACRIFICED THEIR EVERYTHING FOR THE NATION



India suffered from a long period of subjugation. In its quest for independence, many freedom fighters sacrificed a lot and endured many difficulties. Many of our freedom fighters despite their immense contribution remained anonymous. Several of them went to the gallows happily for freedom while others were either shot or executed using canons. In many cases, the heroic saga of these freedom fighters was reduced to only a particular area. Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is an occasion to pay homage to such heroes.

Shyamji Krishna Varma is one such freedom fighter who holds a prominent place in Indian history because of his open defiance against the British empire. Praising Varma, Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak has

written- "Shyamji Krishna Varma defied the British rule at a time when people were afraid of even taking the name of the British." After founding the Indian Home Rule Society on February 18, 1905, he had said- "this society will help in the attainment of home rule status for India and will promote for the unity of the country among the Indians. India House established by him provided refuge to Indian revolutionaries in London. The ashes of such a great revolutionary kept waiting abroad for 55 years. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the Chief Minister of Gujarat he brought the ashes of Shyamji Krishna Varma and his wife from Geneva to India on May 22, 2003. Read the story about some of the great revolutionaries in the series of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.....

REVOLUTIONARY BUDHU BHAGAT, THE ARCHITECT OF 'KOL REBELLION'

Born: 17 February 1792, Death: 13 February 1832

Budhu Bhagat was born in an Oraon family of Silagai village in the Ranchi district of Jharkhand. He fought against the cannons and guns of the British with unconventional weapons like axe. He displayed immense courage and stewardship in initiating the Kol rebellion in 1832 against the brutality of British rule in the tribal areas. He used to practice swordsmanship and archery since childhood. He waged war against the British sycophantic landlords and brokers. He always carried an axe with him. Seeing the organizational ability of Budhu Bhagat, people used to consider him as an incarnation of the deity.



He even organized the masses at Silli, Choreya, Pithoriya, Lohardaga, and Palamu. It is said that Budhu Bhagat had a great influence on the people of Ranchi and the surrounding areas of Chotanagpur

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who were ready to sacrifice their lives for the cause on his appeal. He taught the tribals to fight for their rights against any injustice. He trained the tribals in guerrilla warfare and defeated the English army several times taking advantage of the dense forests and inaccessible hills. His family members including his sons, sisters supported him fiercely in the fight against the British. Budhu Bhagat's military base was amidst dense forests on the top of the Chogari mountain where strategies against the British were made. He became a big threat to the British who announced a reward of one thousand rupees on his head, which was considered a huge amount in those days. To capture Budhu Bhagat and his companions, the British surrounded Silagai village on 13 February 1832 and opened fire. In this firing, Budhu Bhagat was martyred while fighting for the country.

A LEADING FREEDOM FIGHTER WHO WAS ALSO THE ARCHITECT OF 'PANCHYATI RAJ'

Born: 19 February 1900, Death: 19 September 1965

Balwantrai Mehta, who was the second Chief Minister of Gujarat, was born in a middle-class family in Bhavnagar. At the age of just 20, he started participating in the Indian freedom struggle.



He resented the colonial repression and fought tooth and nail against it. Balwantrai Mehta completed his studies in Bachelor of Arts but refused to take a degree from the colonial government. He founded the Bhavnagar Praja Mandal in Gujarat in 1921 to give further impetus to the freedom struggle. He participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement from 1930 to 1932. Along with this, he also took an active part in the famous Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928 against the imposition of unjust taxes after which he emerged as an important leader of this movement. He was sentenced to

Balwant Rai Mehta lost his life in the Pakistani Air Force strike while going from Mithapur to Kutch.

3 years in prison for participating in the Quit India Movement and during British rule, he remained in jail for about 7 years. In 1957, the committee formed under his chairmanship submitted its report on the democratic decentralization of the country which we know today as Panchayati Raj. The three-tier Panchayati Raj system was implemented in India on the basis of the report of the Balwantrai Mehta Committee. The same committee had recommended giving full control over planning and administration to the local bodies. It is because of his far-sighted thinking that today the deprived sections of society are getting their dues. Due to his efforts to make the Panchayati Raj system powerful, Balwantrai Mehta is known as the 'Architect of the Panchayati Raj System'.

JATINDRA MOHAN SENGUPTA DEVOTED HIS LIFE TO THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT, BREATHED HIS LAST IN JAIL

Born: 22 February 1885, Death: 23 July 1933

Jatindra Mohan Sengupta was born in a landlord family of Chittagong (present-day Bangladesh), India. His father Jatra Mohan Sengupta was a lawyer and a member of the Bengal Legislative Council. After passing from Presidency College in Kolkata,



he went to England in 1904 for further studies. However, there was a burning desire in his heart to serve the nation. When Mahatma Gandhi started the non-cooperation movement, Jatindra Mohan left his legal practice to participate in the

movement. Known as 'Deshpriya', Sengupta soon emerged as the pro-labor voice in the country.

Sengupta was one of Bapu's close associates

He also participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement. Jatindra was always there to defend nationalist revolutionaries from the gallows or jails. He also went to England to attend the Round Table Conference in 1931. Jatindra Mohan married an English woman. His wife's real name was Edith Ellen Gray who changed her name to Nelly Sengupta after marriage.

Nelly Sengupta despite being a foreigner, devoted her life to free India from the British. It is said that during the freedom struggle, Nelly sold Khadi from door to door. Nelly was also appointed president of Congress. Jatindra died in Ranchi Jail at the age of 48.

MANIRAM DEWAN: LEFT HIS JOB FROM ASSAM TEA COMPANY, TO JOIN THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT

Born: 17 April 1806, Martyr's Day: 26 February 1858

Maniram Dewan was one of the great freedom fighters from Assam, who laid down his life for the independence of the country. He emerged as an inspiration for many people in the freedom struggle. Born on 17 April 1806, Maniram Dutta, popularly known as Maniram Dewan, was a freedom fighter as well as a big businessman. He was the first to set up tea gardens in Assam and in 1839 the British appointed him as the Dewan of the Assam Tea Company. However, he left this job in 1840 due to differences with the British authorities. Later he opened his own tea garden. During this period resentment was growing against the British. Meanwhile, in the 1850s, Maniram turned against the British, and on May 10, 1857, when Indian soldiers rebelled against the British, he considered it a golden opportunity

Dewan, who fought the British along with the King of Assam, was hanged in Jorhat Jail.

to re-establish the old dynasty of Assam, the Ahom. He immediately urged the king to revolt against the British with the help of the soldiers of Dibrugarh and Golaghat. King Kandarpeswar Singha hatched a plot with his loyal people and also collected a stockpile of weapons, but the British came to know about it. The king, Maniram, and other leaders were taken into custody and kept in Jorhat jail. In this case, the British found Maniram guilty of conspiracy and hanged him along with another freedom fighter, Pyali Barua, in Jorhat jail on 26 February 1858. In a 1963 movie based on the life of Maniram, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika sang the song 'Buku Hoom-Hoom Kare' for it.

RAVISHANKAR MAHARAJ: A FREEDOM FIGHTER AND SOCIAL WORKER

Born: 25 February 1884, Death: 1 July 1984



Ravishankar Maharaj, not only participated in the freedom struggle of India but also took up the cause of social reform throughout his life. Ravi Shankar Maharaj, also known as Ravi Shankar Vyas, worked closely with Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai

Patel to liberate India and dedicated his life to the service of the country. He was born on 25 February 1884 in a village in the Kheda district of Gujarat. He dropped out of school after sixth class to help his father in agricultural work. He met Mahatma Gandhi in 1915 and became attracted to the cause of national independence. He also had to go to jail while participating in the freedom struggle. He also participated in the Bardoli Satyagraha and was also active during the Quit India Movement, due to which the British government again imprisoned him. When India became independent on 15 August 1947,

Ravishankar Maharaj used to take only one meal a day.

following in the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi, Ravi Shankar Maharaj turned towards social work. He devoted himself to the cause of the welfare of the people of Gujarat and worked tirelessly to uplift the backward class people and Dalits. He was also associated with the Bhoodan movement led by Vinoba Bhave. He also brought the bandits into the mainstream. He opposed the Emergency imposed in the country in 1975. He was a man who used to take only one meal a day. He received crores of rupees and plots of land in donation but he did not keep anything for himself, hence he is also called 'crorepati beggar'. He died on 1 July 1984 in Gujarat at the age of 100. The Government of India issued a postage stamp in 1984 in honor of Ravi Shankar Maharaj, who spent his entire life in the service of the country. ■



Amrit Mahotsav, along with learning, inspires us to do something for the country. Now whether it is common people or governments across the country, from Panchayat to Parliament, there is an echo of Amrit Mahotsav and programs related to this festival are going on continuously.

- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Unique Initiative of NCC

Brave jawans are a source of inspiration for our country and future generations to come. With an aim to express their gratitude to them the National Cadet Corps (NCC) has taken a unique initiative as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations. The NCC will honor the kins of the Bravehearts in every part of the country with the 'Shaurya Smriti' plaque. The NCC will felicitate the kins of all 26,466 fallen heroes whose names were etched at the National War Memorial. The programme which was launched on January 26 will continue till August 15.