

FREEDOM

FIGHTERS WHO IGNITED THE FLAME OF REVOLUTION FOR 'SWARAJ'



The custom to oppose tyranny and make sacrifices for liberty and freedom has been part of Indian values. During the freedom movement, many youths went to the gallows, dreaming of 'Swaraj'. The word Swaraj was not limited only to demanding complete self-government but was associated with making the whole of India independent and running it on its own. Many of the freedom fighters spent a significant part in jail fighting for the independence of the country. The ongoing Amrit Mahotsav of Azadi across the country has become the festival of the people. Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is a unique initiative to remember those great personalities, who have made a significant contribution to the independence of the country.

SHEIKH BHIKHARI FORCED THE BRITISH TO RETREAT

Born: 2 October 1819, Death: 8 January 1858

The revolution of 1857 had ignited the spark of independence in the whole country whose flames also reached the mountain plateau of



Chotanagpur. During the revolt, Sheikh Bikhari also played an important role. Sheikh Bikhari was born on October 2, 1819, in Khudia Lota village in Kute Panchayat of Ormanjhi block of Ranchi. From childhood,

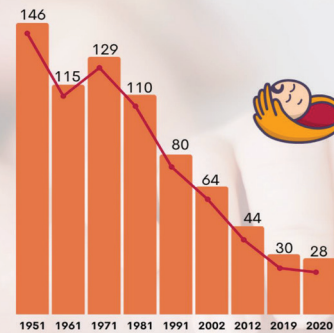
he was clever and fond of hunting. When he was 20 years old, he took a job with King Vishwanathan Shahdev of Barkagarh Jagannathpur. Seeing his talent and bravery, he was appointed to the post of Diwan and handed over the charge of the army of Barkagarh. He continued to lead the army with great responsibility.

SHEIKH BHIKHARI WAS ARRESTED BY BRITISH ON JANUARY 6 AND ON JANUARY 8 HE WAS HANGED

In 1856, when the British made a plan to attack the Indian kings, maharajas, and nawabs, at that time they got a whiff of it. When King Vishwanath Shahdev came to know about this, he discussed it with others including Sheikh Bhikhari, after which it was decided to give a befitting reply to the British. After this, they made correspondence with Raja Babu Kunwar Singh. Meanwhile, Sheikh Bhikhari started recruiting the youth in Ranchi and Chaibasa for the army. When the British suddenly attacked in 1857, Sheikh Bhikhari came to the Chuttupalu valley. When the British army started trying to climb the Paltuwar in Ranchi through the mountainous route of Chuttupalu, Sheikh Bhikhari blocked their way. He broke the bridge used for crossing the valley of Chuttupalu and blocked the road by felling trees on the road. Sheikh Bhikhari's army launched an attack on the British with heavy firing. This fight lasted for several days. When the bullets started running out, he ordered his army to roll stones, due to which the British soldiers were crushed to death. After this British officers found another way to climb the Chuttu Ghati mountain. They climbed the Chuttu Ghati mountain through this secret route. Sheikh Bhikhari could not get the whiff of it and was arrested. He was sentenced to death on 7 January. He was hanged on 8 January 1858. On 15 November 2021, at the inauguration of Bhagwan Birsa Munda Memorial Udyan cum Freedom Fighter Museum in Jharkhand, Prime Minister Narendra Modi remembered Sheikh Bhikhari and said, "There were so many freedom fighters who made supreme sacrifice in quest for freedom. The contribution of these great souls cannot be forgotten. Their glorious saga and their history will give us the energy to make our India a new India." Sheikh Bhikhari Medical College has also been established in Hazaribagh in memory of this brave freedom fighter.

Significant decline in Infant Mortality Rate

IMR reduced from 146 per 1000 live births in 1951 to 28 per 1000 live births in 2020



Community-based care of newborn children, universal immunization and appropriate feeding practices for infants critical to this decline



Mothers' Absolute Affection (MAA) scheme launched in 2016 for early initiation and exclusive breastfeeding for first six months

Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is the number of infant deaths for every 1000 live births.

Source: ES 2002-03, ES 1992-93, ES 2012-13, ES 2007-08, PIR Release

INFANT MORTALITY RATE WAS 146 IN 1951, REDUCED TO 28 IN 2020

Children are essential for the better future of any country. If children are healthy, then they can play an important role in nation-building. This is the reason that the many dreams that the freedom fighters had about independent India included the dreams of every child to survive, thrive, and achieve their full potential. Working in this direction, India has taken a rapid stride to reduce child mortality. As a result of this, there has been a sharp decline in the infant mortality rate. In 1951, for every 1000 children, where the infant mortality rate was 146, which has come down to 30 in 2019 and further down to 28 in 2020. This reduction in infant mortality has been made possible through community care, worldwide immunization, and proper dietary practices. Also, the start of the Mothers Absolute Affection (MAA) program in 2016 has brought revolutionary changes. It aims to encourage infant breastfeeding in the first 6 months of their life. In 2014, India became the first country to launch the Newborn Action Plan (INAP), which is in line with the Global Every Newborn Action Plan to end the problem of preventable neonatal deaths and stillbirths.

MINJUR BHAKTHAVATSALAM WAS A STAUNCH SUPPORTER OF MAHATMA GANDHI

Born: 9 October 1897, Death: 1987



Lawyer, politician, and freedom fighter Minjur Bhakthavatsalam was from South India. He was born on 9 October 1897 in Madras Presidency. A brilliant student since childhood, Bhakthavatsalam could not stay away from the ongoing freedom movement in India and joined the Indian independence movement at a very young age. He was a student when he joined the movement. Later, he joined the Indian National Congress and became a member of the Madras Provincial Congress Committee in 1922. Along with participating in the freedom movement, he studied law and started working as a lawyer in the Madras High Court. He also participated in Annie Besant's Home Rule League movement and also opposed Rowlatt Act. At the same time, he came in contact with Chakravarti Rajagopalachari and, influenced by Mahatma Gandhi, became active in the Indian national movement.

He was also imprisoned during the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1932, the Individual Satyagraha of 1940, and the Quit India Movement. He was a staunch supporter of the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi and his principle of non-violence. Like the Dandi March led by Mahatma Gandhi, he organized and spearheaded the Vedaranyam March in protest

against the salt tax. During Vedaranyam protest he was injured. In 1932, he was arrested by the British for organizing an anti-colonial event. He was also imprisoned by the British for his participation in the Quit India Movement. While participating in the freedom movement, he started a daily newspaper called 'India' which he ran till 1933.

In the municipal elections of 1936, he was elected to the Madras City Corporation and served as the deputy mayor. At the age of 40, he was successfully elected to the Madras Legislative Assembly by winning the Thiruvallur seat. He served as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Local Self-Government in the Chakravarti Rajagopalachari government. However, he resigned along with other office bearers of the Indian National Congress upon the declaration of World War II. He was elected to the Madras Legislative Assembly in 1947 and served as a minister in the Omandur Ramasamy Reddiyar government. After India's independence, he was elected from the Sriperumbudur seat in 1957. He served as the Chief Minister of the present Tamil Nadu, Madras Presidency, from 1963 to 1967. After 1967, Bhaktavatsalam partially retired from politics. He died in 1987 at the age of 89.

PERIN BEN CAPTAIN: FOLLOWER OF MAHATMA GANDHI, WHO SERVED THE NATION THROUGHOUT HER LIFE

Born: 12 October 1888, Death: 1958



the independence of the country. Perin Ben was greatly influenced by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi. She was born on 12 October 1888 in Mandvi, Kutch district in Gujarat. She lost her father in her childhood.

Freedom fighter and social activist Perin Ben Captain was the granddaughter of Dadabhai Naoroji, known as the 'grand old man of India'. Being the granddaughter of Dadabhai Naoroji, Perin Ben got a conducive environment at home in her childhood, due to which she was naturally inclined towards the Indian freedom struggle. She effortlessly worked for

Her early education took place in Bombay but later she went to Paris to study. It was from here that her journey to become a freedom fighter started. While studying in Paris, she came in contact with Madam Bhikaji Cama and started participating in nationalist activities. She also came in contact with revolutionaries like Lala Hardayal, and Shyamji Krishna Varma abroad.

BHULABHAI DESAI: REMEMBERED FOR THE DEFENCE OF AZAD HIND FAUZ COMMANDERS

Born: 13 October, 1877, Died: 6 May 1946



Bhulabhai Desai was an eminent jurist, prominent parliamentarian, and a trusted associate of Mahatma Gandhi. He is remembered for defending three Azad Hind Fauz soldiers, Shahnawaz Khan, Prem Kumar Sehgal, and Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon, who were accused of sedition during the Second World War. The skill and ability with which Bhulabhai Desai supported the soldiers in the case spread his fame not only in the country but also abroad. Bhulabhai Desai was born on October 13, 1877. He started his political career with Annie Besant's All India Home Rule League. He was initially a supporter of British influence in Indian affairs but opposed the Simon Commission consisting only of Europeans.

In the Bardoli Satyagraha led by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in 1928, he led the farmers of Gujarat. He got significant success in this campaign. Desai formally joined the Indian National Congress in 1930. He formed the Swadeshi Sabha and persuaded 80 textile mills to join it. Its purpose was to boycott foreign goods by Indian companies. The British declared the Swadeshi Sabha illegal and arrested Bhulabhai in 1932 for his activities. When the Congress executive was reconstituted, Bhulabhai was included in the executive at the behest of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. In November 1934, Bhulabhai was elected to the Central Legislative Assembly from Gujarat.

Bhulabhai opposed arbitrarily involving India and Indian troops in the Second World War and in his address to the House on 19 November 1940, said that it was impossible to get India's support unless the

war involves the country. He took part in Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha movement and on 10 December he was arrested under the Defense of India Act and sent to Yerawada Central Jail. In September 1941, Desai was released from jail on grounds of ill health and could not participate in the Quit India Movement due to poor health. He was one of the few national leaders whom the British could not arrest during the 1942 movement. During that time Desai started talks with Liaquat Ali Khan for speeding up efforts to construct an ideal alliance to bring independence faster. This pact failed despite the best efforts of Desai. In 1945, when three officers of the Azad Hind Fauj - Shahnawaz, Dhillon, and Sehgal - were arrested and tried for sedition, the Indian National Congress formed a defense committee consisting of 17 lawyers.

Bhulabhai was heading the committee responsible for the defence of the three officers. Despite poor health, Desai argued vigorously in defence of the officers of the Azad Hind Fauj, but the British judges found all three guilty and sentenced them to life imprisonment. They were later released by the Government of India. Despite his deteriorating health, Bhulabhai remained committed to the freedom struggle and nationalist ideals throughout his life. On Chartered Accountants' Day on July 1, 2017, Prime Minister Narendra Modi remembered Bhulabhai Desai as a lawyer who, inspired by patriotism, laid down his life for the country's independence. Bhulabhai Desai died on 6 May 1946.

It is said that when Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was arrested by the British police in London, Perin Ben worked tirelessly to get him released. When she came back to India in 1911, she had a very humiliating experience of British discrimination here. After this, she met Mahatma Gandhi and was very impressed by his ideals. In 1919 she started working with Mahatma Gandhi.

In 1920 she joined the Swadeshi movement and started wearing Khadi. In 1921 she helped establish the Rashtriya Stree Sabha, a women's organization based on Gandhian ideals. In 1925, Perin married

Dhunjisha S. Captain, who was a lawyer by profession. Even after marriage, she remained active in political activities. Not only this, Perin served on several councils of the Indian National Congress and became the first woman president of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee in 1930. She also participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement led by Mahatma Gandhi and went to jail. When the Gandhi Seva Sena was reconstituted in 1930, she was made its Honorary General Secretary. She remained in this position until her death in 1958. ■