

Babu Jagjivan Ram

April 6, 2021

In News: Recently, Prime Minister, Vice President and others paid rich tributes to the freedom fighter and Dalit Icon, Jagjivan Ram, on his 114th birth anniversary.

Early Life and Education

- Jagjivan Ram was born in Chandwa in Bihar to a Dalit family.
- He pursued his schooling at the nearby town of Arrah where he faced discrimination for the first time.
- Considered 'untouchable' and had to drink water from a different pot. But Jagjivan Ram protested against this by breaking the pot. So the principal then had to remove the separate pot from the school.
- A turning point in his life came in 1925, when Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya visited his school, and impressed by his welcome address, invited him to join the Banaras Hindu University. Even at the university, Jagjivan Ram faced discrimination.
- Eventually, Jagjivan left BHU and continued his education at Calcutta University. The incidents in BHU turned him into an atheist.
- He received a B. Sc. degree from the University of Calcutta in 1931, where again he organised conferences to draw attention toward issues of discrimination, and also participated in the anti-untouchability movement started by Mahatma Gandhi.

His Contribution towards Dalits Class during National Movements

- He was noted by Subhas Chandra Bose because of his organisational skills.
- In 1935, he assisted with the formation of the All-India Depressed Classes League.

- He joined the Congress Party where he was appreciated as a brilliant spokesperson for the Depressed Classes.
- In 1935, he proposed at a session of the Hindu Mahasabha that drinking water wells and temples be open to untouchables.
- He took part in the freedom movement as well and was imprisoned during the Quit India Movement.

His Role After independence

- In Jawaharlal Nehru's provisional government, Jagjivan Ram became its youngest minister.
- After independence, he was appointed the country's first labour minister.
- Held various other portfolios including railways, food and agriculture, transport and communications, irrigation and defence.
- The Indo-Pakistan War of 1971 was fought when he was the defence minister.
- He became India's Deputy Prime Minister when Morarji Desai became the Prime Minister after the Emergency.
- He was a member of the Parliament uninterrupted from 1936 to 1986 and this is a world record.
- He was the longest-serving cabinet minister in India (30 years).
- He passed away on 6 July 1986. His memorial at his cremation place is named 'Samata Sthal'.

Samta Sthal

- **Place:** New Delhi
- Famously referred to as 'Place of Equality' located north of Shakti Sthal and Rajghat
- Is the memorial of India's great leader and Deputy Prime Minister, Babu Jagjivan Ram.
- Babu Jagjivan Ram known popularly as Babuji, he was a freedom fighter and a social reformer hailing from the scheduled castes of Bihar in India.

- He worked extremely hard for the upliftment of backward classes in India and that is the reason that his memorial is also named as ' Samta Sthal'.