

Chandra Shekhar Azad

July 23, 2020

India had several freedom fighters who fought to secure the country's independence from British rule, and among the well known personalities was Chandra Shekhar Azad. July 23, marks the birth anniversary of the fearless man who chose to make the supreme sacrifice by taking his own life to escape imprisonment and torture at the hands of the British.

- When Gandhiji launched the **Non-Cooperation Movement** in December 1921, Chandra Shekhar Azad, who was then 15 and still studying, joined the movement.
- After Gandhiji suspended the non-cooperation movement in 1922, Chandra Shekhar Azad joined the **Hindustan Republican Association (HRA)**, a revolutionary organisation formed by Ram Prasad Bismil, Sachindra Nath Sanyal and others.
- Chandra Shekhar Azad took charge of HRA after Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqulla Khan, Rajendra Lahiri and Thankur Roshan Singh were sentenced to death in the Kakori train robbery case.
- **Kakori Conspiracy** refers to **armed robbery** on August 9, 1925, of a train in what is now central Uttar Pradesh state and the subsequent court trial instituted by the government of British India against more than two dozen men accused of involvement, directly or otherwise, in the crime. On board the train was money that had been collected from various railway stations enroute and that was to be deposited at Lucknow. In a well-planned operation, Ramprasad Bismil led a band of 10 revolutionary activists who stopped the train, subdued the train's guard and passengers, and forced open the safe in the guard's quarters before fleeing with the cash found within it.
- After the capture of the main leaders of the HRA,

Chandra Shekhar Azad and Bhagat Singh secretly reorganised the HRA as the **HSRA** (Hindustan Socialist Republic Army) in September 1928.

- When Lala Lajpat Rai died in 1928 due to the grievous injuries he suffered at the hands of superintendent of police James A Scott, members of the HSRA vowed to avenge his death. But due to a case of mistaken identity, Assistant Superintendent of Police John P Saunders was killed.
- Chandra Shekhar Azad's death came about when Virbhadra Tiwari, an old companion who later turned traitor, informed the police of his whereabouts. In the gun fight with the police at what was then known as Alfred Park, Azad was injured as he tried to defend himself. Left with no other way out, 24-year-old Chandra Shekhar Azad shot himself dead to evade being captured by the police.