

Pandurang Khankhoje of Ghadar Party

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In news—Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will travel to Mexico and unveil statues Maharashtra-born freedom fighter and agriculturalist Pandurang Khankhoje (1883-1967).

A brief history of Pandurang Khankhoje-

- **Pandurang Sadashiv Khankhoje was an Indian revolutionary, scholar, agricultural scientist and Statesman who was among the founding fathers of the Ghadar Party.**
- **Born in Wardha, Maharashtra**, in the late 19th century, Pandurang Khankhoje came in contact with other revolutionaries early on.
- **His daughter Savitri Sawhney, who wrote his biography.**
- According to the **biography**, as a student, **Khankhoje was an ardent admirer of the French Revolution and of the American War of Independence.**
- Closer to home, the Hindu reformer Swami Dayanand and his Arya Samaj movement, which called for a spirit of reform and social change, became the hero to a young student group led by Khankhoje.
- Khankhoje decided to go abroad for further training in revolutionary methods and militaristic strategy.
- At this time, the British government's suspicions of him were also growing due to his anti-government activities.
- Before leaving, he **visited Bal Gangadhar Tilak, by whom he was inspired.** Tilak advised him to go to Japan, which was itself a strong, anti-West Asian imperialistic force then.
- **After spending time with nationalists from Japan and**

China, Khankhoje eventually moved to the US, where he enrolled in college as a student of agriculture.

- But a year later, he joined the Mount Tamalpais Military Academy in California to fulfil his original purpose of leaving India.
- **Khankhoje was one of the founding members of the Ghadar Party**, established by Indians living abroad in 1914, mostly belonging to Punjab. Its aim was to lead a revolutionary fight against the British in India.
- **While in the US, Khankhoje met Lala Har Dayal, an Indian intellectual teaching at Stanford University.**
- **At the military academy, Khankhoje met many people from Mexico.** The **Mexican Revolution** of 1910 had led to the overthrow of the dictatorial regime, and this **inspired Khankhoje.**
- He also reached out to Indians working on farms in the US with the aim of discussing the idea of Indian independence with them. There, he met with Mexican workers as well.
- **Along with the Indian workers, militant action was planned by Khankhoje in India**, but the outbreak of the First World War halted these plans.
- He then **reached out to Bhikaji Cama in Paris**, and **met with Vladimir Lenin in Russia** among other leaders, seeking support for the Indian cause.
- However, as he was facing possible deportation from Europe and could not go to India, **he sought shelter in Mexico.**
- Soon, in part due to his prior friendship with Mexican revolutionaries, **he was appointed a professor at the National School of Agriculture in Chapingo, near Mexico City.**
- He **researched corn, wheat, pulses and rubber, developing frost and drought-resistant varieties**, and was part of efforts to bring in the Green Revolution in Mexico.
- Later on, the American agronomist Dr Norman Borlaug, called the Father of the Green Revolution in India,

brought the Mexican wheat variety to Punjab.

- **Khankhoje was revered as an agricultural scientist in Mexico.** The renowned Mexican artist Diego Rivera painted murals that featured Khankhoje, including one titled 'Our Daily Bread' that prominently depicted him breaking bread with people seated around a table.