

Revolutionary heroes of Indian freedom struggle

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In news – In his address from the Red Fort on Independence Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to a range of personalities from India's freedom struggle.

History of revolutionary heroes-

Following are some of the revolutionary heroes who played a pivotal role in India's freedom struggle-

Mangal Pandey-

- A soldier with the British Indian army, Mangal Pandey is believed to have **sparked off the mutiny of Indian soldiers at Meerut that eventually became the great revolt of 1857**, and spread to other parts of North India.
- The **revolt is said to have been sparked by the introduction of the new Enfield rifle**, which required soldiers to bite off the cartridge casing before the weapon could be fired.
- Pandey was court-martialed for his protest and sentenced to death, and the rebellion was put down in some months.
- But the revolt marked the first united Indian challenge to colonial rule and left a deep and long-lasting imprint.

Tantya Tope-

- Born in 1814, Tantya Tope was a **trusted lieutenant of Nana Sahib, the adopted son of Peshwa Baji Rao II of the Maratha empire**.
- Nana Sahib lost his ancestral rights under the 'Doctrine

of Lapse' that disallowed adopted heirs of Indian rulers from ascending to the throne.

- In the summer of **1857, Tantya brought together armed forces to declare Nana Sahib the ruler of Kanpur** and attempted to protect the seat of power for over five months.
- After Kanpur was lost to the British in December 1857, he assisted the Rani of Jhansi, whose adopted son was also a victim of the Doctrine of Lapse, to mobilise an armed force.
- **Tantya Tope was sent to the gallows in April 1859 in Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh**, after a trusted aide betrayed him.

Bhagat Singh-

- Of all the great revolutionary heroes of India's freedom struggle, Bhagat Singh is perhaps the most charismatic and storied.
- Bhagat Singh, who was inspired by communist thought, anti-colonialism, and anti-communalism, was involved in the symbolic bombing of the Central Legislative Assembly.
- He was hanged by the British at the age of 23. Along with Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were also hanged to death.

Rajguru-

- Shivaram Hari Rajguru was an **Indian revolutionary from Maharashtra (then Bombay State)**, known mainly for his involvement in the **assassination of a British police officer named John Saunders**.
- He was an active **member of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA)** and on 23 March 1931.
- He was hanged by the British government along with his associates Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev Thapar.

Chandrashekar Azad-

- **Azad, a comrade and intellectual fellow traveller of Rajguru,** Sukhdev, Bhagat Singh, Ramprasad Bismil, and Ashfaqulla Khan, **was born in Allahabad** and began taking part in revolutionary activities from the age of 15.
- He gave himself the name 'Azad' and vowed never to be held captive; when cornered by police in his final moments, he chose to shoot himself.

Ashfaqulla Khan-

- Born in Shahjahanpur, **Khan helped form the HSRA and was part of the Kakori incident.**
- In September 1926, Khan's close friend Ramprasad Bismil was arrested, and finally, Khan too was arrested.
- The trial continued for about a year and a half, and in April 1927, Bismil, Khan, Rajendra Lahiri, and Roshan Singh were sentenced to death.

Ramprasad Bismil-

- Bismil was **associated with the Arya Samaj** from an early age.
- He started writing powerful **patriotic poems in Urdu and Hindi** under the pen names 'Bismil', 'Ram', and 'Agyat'.
- His autobiography is considered one of the finest works in Hindi literature, and the cult patriotic song "Mera rang de Basanti chola" is attributed to him. He was executed at the age of 30.

Sukhdev Thapar-

- Sukhdev Thapar was an Indian revolutionary who worked to make India independent from the British Raj along with his best friends and partners Bhagat Singh and Shivaram Rajguru.
- **A senior member of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association,** he participated in several actions alongside Singh and Rajguru, and was hanged by the British government on 23 March 1931 at the age of 23.

Maniram Dewan-

- **Maniram Dutta Baruah, popularly known as Maniram Dewan, was an Assamese nobleman** in British India.
- He was **one of the first people to establish tea gardens in Assam**. A loyal ally of the British East India Company in his early years.
- He was hanged by the British for conspiring against them during the 1857 uprising.
- He was **popular among the people of Upper Assam as “Kalita Raja”** (king of the Kalita caste).

Pandurang Sadashiv Sane-

- Pandurang Sadashiv Sane, also **known as Sane Guruji** by his students and followers, was **a Marathi author, teacher,** social activist and freedom fighter from Maharashtra, India.
- He is referred to as the **National Teacher of India**.

Rajendranath Lahiri-

- Rajendra Nath Lahiri, known simply as Rajendra Lahiri, was an Indian revolutionary, who was a **mastermind behind the Kakori conspiracy and Dakshineswar bombing**.
- He was an **active member of Hindustan Republican Association** aimed at ousting the British.