



# COMPILATION HISTORY IN THE NEWS



*by:* **Piyush Kumar**



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# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Bandhavgarh Caves

- The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** has discovered **26 ancient caves**, dating to **2nd-5th century CE**, in Madhya Pradesh's Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve area.
- Other archaeological remains of the **Mahayana sect of Buddhism**, such as **chaitya-shaped doors** and **cells** containing **stone beds**, were also reported by the ASI team.
- The Badi Gufa literally means 'Biggest Cave'. This is one of the oldest caves and is dated back to the 10th century. The cave comprises numerous pillars and nine big rooms.
- Besides the caves, the team also found the remains of 26 temples, two mathas, two stupas, 46 idols and sculptures, 26 fragments and 19 water bodies.
- The temples (especially **Shaiva mathas**) are from more recent times — the **Kalachuri period** (9th-11th century), while the water bodies range between 2nd-15th centuries CE.
- Places names **Kaushambi**, **Mathura**, **Pavata (Parvata)**, **Vejabharada** and **Sapatanaairikaa** are mentioned in the inscriptions
- Important kings who were also mentioned in the inscriptions are **Maharaja Shri Bhimsena**, **Maharaja Pothasiri**, **Maharaja Bhattadeva**.
- Coins belonging to the **Mughal-era** and **Sharqi dynasty** of **Jaunpur Sultanate** have also been found.
- The **ancient Bandhavgarh Fort** is of great importance as it is believed to have been gifted by **Lord Rama** to his **younger brother Lakshmana** to keep a watch on **Lanka**. Therefore this fort is named Bandhavgarh as "Bandhav" means brother and "Garh" means fort.





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# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## 'Caves of Bandhavgarh not Buddhist'

These were created mainly by men of commerce and craftspeople, and very occasionally by kings, says Ashoka University Professor

### INTERVIEW

**Nayanjot Lahiri**

**Sreeparna Chakrabarty**

**T**he Archaeological Survey of India recently announced its findings on exploration in the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve of Madhya Pradesh. The ASI said it documented second century Buddhist caves and eighth and ninth century Hindu temples in the region. Sculptures depicting the 10 avatars of Vishnu were described.

In a statement on September 29, Ashoka University had said that "the work of Nayanjot Lahiri, Professor of History, precedes the claims of ASI as evidenced in a peer-reviewed publication that appeared in *Current Science*". Prof. Lahiri elaborates on the findings.

Can you please explain the significance of the findings at the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve. Both the Buddhist and the Hindu relics.

A better way to put it is to explain the significance of the ancient and medieval relics. The caves are not Buddhist. One only has to compare them with early rock-cut monasteries in India to realise that if these were made for the Buddhist monastic community, there should be memorial stupas and carvings that have an overtly Buddhist character. We documented 81 caves, 50 of which had been mentioned by N.P. Chakravarti in his pioneering publication in 1955-56 – the same one which mentioned names like Mathura and Kausambi figuring in the inscriptions that are there. The significance of the caves is that they are the first dwellings systematically created in this



part of the forest in the 2nd century BCE.

What our work revealed is that they are on the north side of the Bandhavgarh hill and several smaller hills in its vicinity there. There are caves near the Chakradhara meadow, on the hill ridges and near the plateau. These were caves created mainly by men of commerce and craftspeople, and very occasionally by kings. One epigraph describes the cave as a *sarthiku lona* or cave for caravan people. The creators also made tanks near the caves

and one cave was described as a *vijaymala* or gymnasium. This is mentioned by Chakravarti.

How and why did your team decide to explore the Bandhavgarh area? Any particular incident or event which prompted that or was it a purely academic decision?

If you look at the website of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Archaeological Research, it would be evident that we have a long-term project on forests, and exploring Bandhavgarh stems from that interest. The archaeology of historical India has usually been visualised through explorations and excavations of ancient cities and farming settlements, within the overarching presence of states and empires. Forests and wilderness counteract the enclosed spaces of those urban and rural worlds but rarely figure in such ac-

counts. This has meant that large expanses of forests and wild places that carry early markers of human use have not centrally figured in such research. So, in March 2021, we decided to start our field work – by concentrating on Bandhavgarh.

Was there any collaboration between other teams, for example the ASI, and the Ashoka University team while exploring the area?

The ASI was fully aware that we had been exploring Bandhavgarh since March 2021. In fact, they even used the Forest Department staff who we had relied on – asking them to be taken to the places where we had gone. This is what we were told.

Is there any significance of the discovery of second century caves in the area, specially since

Hindu temples and statues are all from the eighth and ninth centuries.

What happens from the 8th century CE onwards is that the nature of the human signature changes. And that is the significance of the medieval relics. If commercial people and their donations were the most conspicuous markers of the 2nd century CE with nothing overtly religious in the caves, a Hindu religious landscape now comes into view. Temples in large numbers, to begin with dedicated to Shiva, were built atop the plateau, on the hill slopes below and in the flatlands. A couple of centuries later, a minister in the court of King Yuvrajadeva got a Vishnu image (the *Seshashay*) and several avatars of Vishnu – Varaha, Matsya and Kasyapa – with inscriptions in their vicinity put up.

(Full interview on [bit.ly/cavehistory](http://bit.ly/cavehistory))



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# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Basaveshwara

- **Basaveshwara**, colloquially known as **Basavanna**, was a 12th-century CE Indian statesman, philosopher, poet, **Lingayat social reformer** in the **Shiva-focussed bhakti movement**, and a Hindu Shaivite, social reformer during the reign of the **Kalyani Chalukya/Kalachuri dynasty**.
- Through his poetry spread social awareness, which were known as **Vachanas**.
- He was against the ideas of **social discrimination, superstitions, rituals**, and promoted **ahimsa (non-violence)**.
- **Basava** championed devotional worship that **rejected temple worship** and **rituals** led by **Brahmins** and **replaced** it with **personalized direct worship** of **Shiva** through practices such as **individually worn icons** and **symbols** like a small linga (**Ishtalinga**).
- He introduced new public institutions such as the **Anubhava Mantapa (Hall of Spiritual Experience)** which welcomed men and women from all socio-economic backgrounds to discuss spiritual and mundane questions of life, openly.
- The **Basavaraj Devara Ragale** by the Kannada poet **Harihara** (c.1180) is the earliest available account on the life of the social reformer.
- **Basaveshwara** became the **chief minister** during the **Kalchuri regime**, after the death of his maternal uncle.
- As chief minister of the kingdom, **Basava** used the **state treasury** to initiate social reforms and religious movement focussed on **reviving Shaivism, recognizing** and **empowering ascetics** who were called **Jangamas**.
- Basaveshwara condemned human and animal sacrifices.
- He was also called Bhakti **Bhandari**, treasurer of devotion.





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## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

### Rahul Gandhi cites Basaveshwara's teachings to target BJP in Karnataka

Idea behind the Bharat Jodo Yatra was inspired by people like the 12th century social reformer, who preached against hate and inequality, says the Congress leader; he also refers to alleged misrepresentation of Basaveshwara in State's textbooks

**The Hindu Bureau**  
MYSURU

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday invoked the teachings of the 12th-century social reformer Basaveshwara against hate and inequality while targeting his alleged misrepresentation in the textbooks by the BJP government in Karnataka.

Addressing a gathering in Bellur town at the end of the day's padayatra, Mr. Gandhi said Basaveshwara preached against hatred and asked people to treat others like their equals. He said the idea behind the Bharat Jodo Yatra was inspired by the teachings of



**Journey continues:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during Bharat Jodo Yatra in Mandya district on Friday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Basaveshwara.

Mr. Gandhi, who had an interaction with a cross-section of educationists at Nagamangala earlier in the day, said he was asked by them why the Kannadigas'

history, culture, and language had come under an attack. "They asked me which force is attacking Basavanna in Karnataka," he said making a veiled attack on the BJP government in

### Bharat Jodo Yatra completes 30 days

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Bharat Jodo Yatra, launched on September 7 at Kanniyakumari, completed 30 days on Friday, having covered a distance of over 700 km across Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. Former party chief Rahul Gandhi, who has been at the yatra centre stage, is expected to address a press conference on Saturday to share his experiences so far.

leg of the padayatra by walking alongside a young girl dressed as *Bharat Mata* [Mother India] at Mandya district, Mr. Gandhi was joined by the late Gauri Lankesh's mother, Indira, and sister on Friday.

In the next 120 days, the party is not only hoping that the padayatra would become a path to its political revival, but also repack-age Mr. Gandhi as a people's politician. It has aimed to bring together different factions in States



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## Hampi

- The austere and grandiose site of **Hampi** comprises mainly the **remnants of the Capital City of Vijayanagara Empire** (14th-16th Cent CE), the last great Hindu Kingdom.
- Hampi's spectacular setting is dominated by **river Tungabhadra, craggy hill ranges** and **open plains**, with widespread physical remains.
- The sophistication of the varied urban, royal and sacred systems is evident from the more than **1600 surviving remains** that include **forts, riverside features, royal and sacred complexes, temples, shrines, pillared halls, mandapas, memorial structures, gateways, defense check posts, stables, water structures**, etc.
- Among these, the **Krishna temple complex, Narasimha, Ganesa, Hemakuta group of temples, Achyutaraya temple complex, Vitthala temple complex, Pattabhirama temple complex, Lotus Mahal complex**, can be highlighted.
- Suburban townships (puris) surrounded the **large Dravidian temple complexes** containing **subsidiary shrines, bazaars, residential areas** and **tanks** applying the **unique hydraulic technologies** and **skilfully** and **harmoniously** integrating the town and **defense architecture** with surrounding landscape.
- The **remains unearthed** in the **site delineate** both the **extent** of the **economic prosperity** and **political status** that once existed indicating a highly developed society.
- **Dravidian architecture** flourished under the **Vijayanagara Empire** and its ultimate form is characterized by their **massive dimensions, cloistered enclosures**, and **lofty towers** over the entrances encased by **decorated pillars**.
- The **Vitthala temple** is the most **exquisitely ornate structure** on the site and represents the **culmination of Vijayanagara temple architecture**. It is a **fully developed temple** with associated buildings like **Kalyana Mandapa** and **Utsava Mandapa** within a cloistered enclosure pierced with **three entrance Gopurams**.
- In addition to the typical spaces present in contemporary temples, it boasts of a **Garuda shrine** fashioned as a **granite ratha** and



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a **grand bazaar street**. This complex also has a large **Pushkarani (stepped tank)** with a **Vasantotsav mandapa (ceremonial pavilion at the center)**, **wells** and a **network of water channels**.

- Another unique feature of temples at Hampi is the **wide chariot streets** flanked by the rows of **pillared mandapas**, introduced when **chariot festivals** became an integral part of the rituals.
- The **stone chariot** in front of the temple is also **testimony to its religious ritual**. Most of the structures at Hampi are constructed from local granite, burnt bricks and lime mortar.
- The **stone masonry and lantern roofed post and lintel system** were the most **favoured construction technique**.
- The **massive fortification walls** have **irregular cut size stones** with **paper joints** by **filling the core with rubble masonry** without **any binding material**.
- The **gopuras over the entrances** and the **sanctum proper** have been **constructed with stone and brick**.
- The **roofs** have been **laid with the heavy thick granite slabs** covered with a **water proof** course of **brick jelly** and **lime mortar**.
- **Vijayanagara architecture** is also known for its **adoption of elements of Indo Islamic Architecture** in **secular buildings** like the **Queen's Bath** and the **Elephant Stables**, representing a **highly evolved multi-religious and multi-ethnic society**.
- **Building activity in Hampi continued over a period of 200 years** reflecting the evolution in the religious and political scenario as well as the advancements in art and architecture.
- The city rose to **metropolitan proportions** and is **immortalized** in the words of many **foreign travelers** as one of the most beautiful cities.
- The **Battle of Talikota (1565 CE)** led to a **massive destruction** of its **physical fabric**.
- **Dravidian architecture** survives in the **rest of Southern India** spread through the **patronage of the Vijayanagara rulers**.
- The **Raya Gopura**, introduced first in the temples attributed to **Raja Krishna Deva Raya**, is a landmark all over South India.
- The city bears **exceptional testimony** to the **vanished civilization** of the kingdom of Vijayanagara, which **reached its apogee** under the **reign of Krishna Deva Raya (1509-1530)**.



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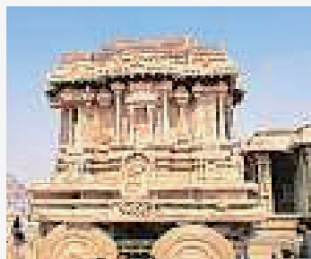
- The constitution of a single heritage authority, Hampi World Heritage Area Management Authority (HWHAMA) ensures the effectiveness of the management system and coordination of works from different agencies while allowing local self Government authorities to continue to exercise the powers as enlisted in the respective Acts.

### Hampi, Khajuraho on list for G20 culture track

**DIVYAA**

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 16

AS PART of India's G20 Presidency between December 2022 and November 2023, the Government is planning to host five key meetings focusing on the "culture track" at Khajuraho, Bhubaneswar, Hampi and Agra, *The Indian Express* has learnt. These cities have been cho-



Five meetings include one at Hampi in Karnataka *Express*

sen mainly for well-known monuments and UNESCO World Heritage Sites such as Taj Mahal and Agra Fort (UP), the Hindu and Jain temples of Khajuraho (Madhya Pradesh), the Konark Sun Temple around 65 km from Bhubaneswar (Odisha), and the sites at Hampi (Karnataka). Agra will host two of the five meetings, it is learnt.

The Government had announced last month that there

will be 215 meetings in all, spread across 55 sites, covering most states during India's G20 presidency. The main summit will be held in September at Delhi's International Exhibition Cum Convention Centre at Pragati Maidan, which is presently under construction and will be ready by mid-2023.

For the culture track, a G20 Secretariat has been set up in the

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## Khajuraho

- The **group of temples** of **Khajuraho** testifies to the **culmination of northern Indian temple art and architecture** of the **Chandella dynasty** who ruled the region in the 10th and 11th centuries CE.
- Distributed over an area of 6 square km in a **picturesque landscape**, the **23 temples** (including one partly excavated structure) that form the **western, eastern, and southern clusters** of the **Khajuraho Group of Monuments** are **rare surviving examples** that display the originality and high quality of Nagara-style temple architecture.
- The **Khajuraho Group of Monuments** demonstrates in **layout and physical form**, the **pinnacle of temple architectural development** in northern India.
- Built in **sandstone**, each temple is **elevated** from its **environs** by a **highly ornate terraced platform**, or **jagati**, on which **stands the body**, or **jangha**, whose **sanctum is topped by a tower**, or **shikhara**, of a **type unique to Nagara**, where the **verticality of the principal spire atop** the sanctum is **accentuated** (make something easier to notice) by a series of miniature spires flanking it, each symbolizing **Mount Kailasa**, the abode of the Gods.
- The plan of the temples shows the **spatial hierarchy** of **axially aligned interconnected spaces**.
- The temples are **entered** through an **ornate entrance porch (ardha mandapa)**, which leads to the **main hall (mandapa)**, through which **one accesses the vestibule (antarala)** before reaching the **sanctum (garbhagriha)**.
- The main halls of the temples were often accompanied by **lateral transepts** with **projecting windows** as well as a **circumambulatory path** around the **sanctum**.
- Larger temples had an **additional pair of transepts** and were accompanied by subsidiary shrines on the four corners of its **jagati**.
- The **temples of Khajuraho** are known for the **harmonious integration of sculptures** with their architecture.
- All surfaces are profusely carved with **anthropomorphic** (having human



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characteristics) and **non-anthropomorphic motifs** depicting sacred and secular themes.

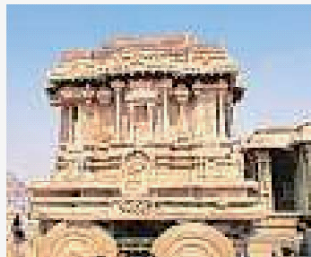
- Sculptures depicting acts of worship, clan and minor deities, and couples in union, all reflect the sacred belief system.
- Other themes **mirror social life** through **depictions of domestic scenes, teachers**
- and **disciples, dancers and musicians**, and **amorous** (showing feeling of sexual desire) **couples**.
- The composition and finesse achieved by the master craftsmen give the stone surfaces of the Khajuraho temples a rare vibrancy and sensitivity to the warmth of human emotions.

### Hampi, Khajuraho on list for G20 culture track

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**Five meetings include one at Hampi in Karnataka.** *Express*

sen mainly for well-known monuments and UNESCO World Heritage Sites such as Taj Mahal and Agra Fort (UP), the Hindu and Jain temples of Khajuraho (Madhya Pradesh), the Konark Sun Temple around 65 km from Bhubaneswar (Odisha), and the sites at Hampi (Karnataka). Agra will host two of the five meetings, it is learnt.

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## Neo-Buddhism

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- **Neo-Buddhism** was proposed as a **mass movement** that would elevate former 'Untouchables' and help them achieve self-respect.
- The **Neo Buddhist Movement** is a **religious** as well as **socio-political movement** among **Dalits in India** which was started by **BR Ambedkar**.
- It radically re-interpreted Buddhism and **created a new school of Buddhism** called **Navayana**.
- **Ambedkar** chose **Buddhism** after **examining various religions** to understand the **suitability of each to liberate socially marginalised communities** from the **exploitative caste order**.
- He found that **Buddhism** is **rooted in India's civilization, supplements modern ethical values** and is averse to social hierarchies and patriarchal domination. He hoped that **Buddhist principles** would **mobilize** them into a **robust community** to **battle the ruling Brahmanical elites**.
- After **publishing a series of books** and articles arguing that **Buddhism** was the only **way** for the **untouchables to gain equality**, **Ambedkar publicly converted** on **14 October 1956**, at **Deekshabhoomi, Nagpur**, over 20 years after he declared his intent to convert. Around 3,65,000 of his followers converted to Buddhism at the same ceremony.
- The Twenty-two vows or twenty-two pledges are the 22 Buddhist vows administered by B. R. Ambedkar, the revivalist of Buddhism in India, to his followers.



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## *The atrophy of the neo-Buddhist movement in India*

Every year in October, thousands of people assemble at Nagpur's Deekshabhoomi to pay homage to B.R. Ambedkar and remember the historic day of October 14, 1956, when he and half a million of his followers embraced Buddhism. Ambedkar chose Buddhism after examining various religions to understand the suitability of each to liberate socially marginalised communities from the exploitative caste order. He found that Buddhism is rooted in India's civilization, supplements modern ethical values and is averse to social hierarchies and patriarchal domination. Neo-Buddhism was proposed as a mass movement that would elevate former 'Untouchables' and help them achieve self-respect. He hoped that Buddhist principles would mobilise them into a robust community to battle the ruling Brahmanical elites.

### Struggles of neo-Buddhism

Neo-Buddhism emerged as a maverick phenomenon that offered strong psychological solace to the struggling Dalit masses. However, Ambedkar's grand hopes remain unfulfilled. Today, the Buddhist population in India is one of the smallest minorities, its ideological challenge against the Hindu social order has not been taken seriously, and even within the Dalit community, conversion to Buddhism is not perceived as a suitable path to achieve social emancipation. Instead, it is the BJP that often fashions itself as the new torchbearer of Buddhist identity.

A large majority (close to 80%) of Indian Buddhists resides in Maharashtra. The neo-Buddhists have established social and educational institutions, initiated cultural movements, and organised popular public festivals to make Buddhism a visible force in



**Harish S. Wankhede**

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Revisiting the ideals of Ambedkar's neo-Buddhist movement can be helpful in building fierce ideological challenges to Hindutva's understanding of history and

mainly the Mahar caste and recently, smaller sections within the Matang and the Maratha castes which have identified themselves as neo-Buddhists. Other socially marginalised groups are still defined by Hindu caste nomenclatures and traditional occupations.

The Dalit sociopolitical movements in States including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have also not promoted conversion to Buddhism. In U.P., during the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)'s regime, cultural symbols related to Buddhism, such as the Rashtriya Dalit Prerna Sthal and Green Garden, were erected in public spaces, but there was still hesitation in suggesting religious conversion as an alternative to fight the battle for social justice. Even in States where the Scheduled Caste population is relatively high, such as in Punjab, West Bengal and Odisha, Dalits have shown restraint in adopting Buddhism to challenge their social location.

Importantly, India's neighbouring Buddhist countries also have not identified neo-Buddhists as significant partners in their theological engagements. Several Buddhist countries have built their own pagodas and temples in Bodhi Gaya and are more concerned with adding new sites in India's Buddhist Circuit. Certain individuals and Buddhist associations from Japan, Thailand and the U.K. have established some close links with the neo-Buddhists of Maharashtra, but this is small support.

### Appropriation by the right wing

Interestingly, it is the Narendra Modi-led government at the Centre that has often presented itself as the promoter of Buddhist cultural heritage at the national and international levels. In overseas diplomatic gatherings, Mr.

Buddhist identity, especially in China, Nepal, Myanmar and Japan. Mr. Modi has made a conscious effort to emphasise shared Buddhist heritage with these countries. He also visited Deekshabhoomi in 2017, paid rich tributes to Ambedkar and announced multiple developmental projects. It is his government that proposed a Buddhist Circuit.

Theoretically, the neo-Buddhist movement is seen as an ideological and intellectual challenge to the dominant social and political ideas of the ruling elites. Interestingly, within the Hindutva discourse, Buddhism has been appropriated as an integral part of greater 'Indic Civilization' and the Buddhist conversion movement has not been seen as antithetical to the Hindu cultural pantheon. Further, Hindutva forces, using assertive cultural strategies, overtly appropriate crucial Dalit-Bahujan icons and underplay the fierce ideological antagonism that the early Dalit movement had against the Hindu social order.

When right-wing forces are asserting their Hindu identity to build a monolithic majoritarian community, a popular deliberation on Ambedkar's logic of conversion to Buddhism would have helped the Opposition, including the popular Dalit political class, to challenge such hegemonic appropriation. Independent cultural and religious strategies are crucial in building a challenge to the dominant narrative of Hindutva.

However, the current Opposition lacks effective cultural strategies to challenge right-wing assertion. Instead, it still uses the same old formal electoral strategies, as we are seeing in Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's current Bharat Jodo Yatra. In this context, revisiting the ideals of Ambedkar's neo-Buddhist movement can be helpful in building fierce ideological challenges to





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## Raja Raja Chola

- The 'king of the kings', **Rajaraja Chola**, ruled **southern India** from **985 CE -1014 CE**.
- Born as **Rajakesari Arulmozhi Varman** to **Parantaka II** (also known as **Sundara Cholan**) and **Vanavan Madevi**, Raja Raja Chola ascended the throne in 985 CE.
- At the time of his ascension, the **Chola kingdom** was **relatively small**, and was still **recovering from the Rashtrakuta invasions** in the preceding years. Rajaraja turned it into an efficiently-administered empire which possessed a powerful army and a strong navy.
- His **extensive empire** included **vast regions** of the **Pandya country**, the **Chera country** and **northern Sri Lanka**. He also **acquired Lakshadweep** and **Thiladhunmadulu atoll**, and **part of the northernmost islands of the Maldives** in the Indian Ocean. Campaigns against the **Western Gangas** and the **Chalukyas** extended the **Chola authority** as far as the **Tungabhadra River**. On the **eastern coast**, he **battled with the Chalukyas** for the **possession of Vengi**.
- Raja Raja Chola was the **first Tamil king** to keep an **official record** of all the **prominent events of his rule and his achievements**.
- During his reign, Raja Raja **launched a project of a land survey**, where he **reorganized** his empire into units known as **valanadus**.
- He was the **first to bag the title** of '**Mummudi Chola Deva**' (for **donning three crowns** of **Chola, Chera** and **Pandya**).
- **Rajaraja Chola** was **more cosmopolitan** in **outlook** and **secular** too. He had **raised temples** for **Lord Shiva, Ganesh** and **Vishnu** during his reign and liberally granted funds to those who sought for the construction of Jain or Buddhist temples.
- **Rajaraja I**, being an **able administrator**, also built the great **Brihadisvara Temple** at the Chola capital **Thanjavur**.
- During his reign, the texts of the Tamil poets **Appar, Sambandar** and **Sundarar** were collected and edited into one compilation called **Thirumurai**.



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- **Rajaraja** strengthened the **local self-government** and **installed a system of audit and control** by which the **village assemblies** and **other public bodies**
- **To promote trade**, he sent the **first Chola mission to China**.

### ‘To say Rajaraja is not a Hindu is akin to saying a Catholic is not a Christian’

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

Former MP and Congress veteran Karan Singh on Friday said it was “absolutely ridiculous” to say that the King Rajaraja I of the Chola dynasty was not a Hindu.

He was reacting to the recent controversy that erupted after film-maker

in a function that there were attempts to give a Hindu identity to Rajaraja Chola. He implied that the Chola king was a Shaivite and Hinduism as a religion did not exist in that era. Actor Kamal Haasan on Thursday had backed this line of argument.

In a statement, Mr. Singh said to say that Rajaraja was a Shaivite and not

that “someone is a Catholic but not a Christian”. “These semantic gymnastics in a way denigrate and confuse our great religion,” he said.

#### **Three main streams**

According to him, though the word ‘Hindu’ may have gained traction only later, deities like Shiva, Vishnu, Hanuman, Ganesha, Maha-

all part of “Sanatan Dharma for millennia”. “One should not try and create a division between Shaivism, Vaishnavism, and Shaktism,” he said, adding they were the three main streams of Hindu religion.

Mr. Singh added that the Brihadeeswara temple built by emperor Rajaraja was an architectural marvel, where he had wor-





by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Azad Hind Sarkar (21st October 1943)

- The **Provisional Government of Free India** or, more simply, **Azad Hind**, was an Indian provisional government established in **Japanese occupied Singapore** during **World War II**.
- The **direct origins** of **Azad Hind** can be linked to **two conferences** of **Indian expatriates** from across **Southeast Asia**, the **first** of which was held in **Tokyo** in **March 1942**. At this conference, convened by **Rash Behari Bose**, an **Indian expatriate** living in **Japan**, the **Indian Independence League** was **established** as the **first move** towards an **independent Indian state** politically aligned with the **Empire of Japan**.
- It was **created** in **October 1943** and **supported** by – as well as largely dependent on – the **Empire of Japan**.
- It was a part of the **political movement** originating in the **1940s** outside **India** with the purpose of **allying** with the **Axis powers** to **liberate India** from **British rule**.
- It was **established** by **Indian nationalists** in **exile** during the **latter part** of the **Second World War** in **Singapore** with **monetary, military and political assistance** from **Imperial Japan**.
- The **government proclaimed authority** over **Indian civilian and military personnel** in **Southeast Asian British colonial territory** and prospective authority over **Indian territory** to **fall** to the **Japanese forces** and the **Indian National Army** during the **Japanese thrust** towards **India**.
- The **government of Azad Hind** had its **own currency, court and civil code**, and in the eyes of some **Indians**, its existence gave a greater importance to the independence struggle against the **British**.
- Its army, the **Indian National Army (Azad Hind Fauj)**, went into **action** against the **British Indian Army** and the **allied forces** as part of the **Imperial Japanese Army** in the **Imphal-Kohima** sector.
- The **INA** had its **first major engagement** at the **Battle of Imphal** where, under the command of the **Japanese Fifteenth Army**, it **breached** the **British defenses** in **Kohima**, reaching the **salient** of **Moirang** before **suffering** a **catastrophic defeat** as the **Allied forces** held, and **Allied air**



by: **Piyush Kumar**

## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

**dominance** and **compromised supply lines** forced both the **Japanese** and the **INA** to **retreat**.

- The existence of **Azad Hind** was **essentially coterminous** with the **existence** of the **Indian National Army**.
- While the **government** itself **continued** until the **civil administration** of the **Andaman Islands** was **returned** to the **jurisdiction** of the **British** towards the **end of the war**, the limited power of **Azad Hind** **effectively ended** with the **surrender** of the **last major contingent** of **INA troops** in **Rangoon**.
- **Azad Hind** had **diplomatic relations** with **nine countries**: **Nazi Germany**, the

**Empire of Japan**, **Italian Social Republic**, **Independent State of Croatia** and **Wang Jingwei Government**, **Thailand**, the **State of Burma**, **Manchukuo** and the **Second Philippine Republic**.

- The **existence** of the **Azad Hind Government** had given **India's independence struggle** against the **British** a **greater legitimacy**.
- The **brave actions** of **Subash Chandra Bose** and his **decision** to set up the **country's first government** had **directly** or **indirectly** triggered a **chain of events** that eventually **forced** the **British government** to **leave India** in **August 1947**.



by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Cuban Missile Crisis

- The **Cuban Missile Crisis** of **October 1962** was a **direct** and **dangerous confrontation** between the **United States** and the **Soviet Union** during the **Cold War** and was the **moment** when the **two superpowers** came closest to **nuclear conflict**.
- The **crisis** was **unique** in a **number of ways**, featuring **calculations** and **miscalculations** as well as **direct** and **secret communications** and **miscommunications** between the two sides.
- After the **failed US attempt** to **overthrow** the **Castro regime** in **Cuba** with the **Bay of Pigs invasion**, and while the **Kennedy administration** planned **Operation Mongoose**, in July 1962 Soviet premier **Nikita Khrushchev** reached a **secret agreement** with **Cuban premier Fidel Castro** to **place Soviet nuclear missiles** in **Cuba** to deter any future invasion attempt.
- **Construction of several missile sites** began in the late summer, but **US intelligence** discovered **evidence** of a **general Soviet arms build-up** on Cuba, including **Soviet IL-28 bombers**, during **routine surveillance flights**.
- On **September 4, 1962**, President **Kennedy** issued a **public warning** against the **introduction of offensive weapons** into Cuba.
- Despite the warning, on **October 14** a **US U-2 aircraft** took **several pictures** clearly **showing sites** for **medium-range** and **intermediate-range ballistic nuclear missiles** (**MRBMs** and **IRBMs**) under construction in Cuba.
- These **images** were **processed** and **presented** to the **White House** the **next day**, thus **precipitating** the **onset** of the **Cuban Missile Crisis**.
- The **President** also went on **national television** that **evening** to **inform** the **public** of the **developments** in **Cuba**, his **decision to initiate** and **enforce** a **"quarantine,"** and the **potential global consequences** if the **crisis continued to escalate**.
- The **Joint Chiefs of Staff** announced a **military readiness status** of **DEFCON 3** as **US naval forces** began **implementation** of the **quarantine** and **plans** accelerated for a **military strike** on Cuba.



by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- On **October 24**, Khrushchev responded to **Kennedy's** message with a statement that the US "**blockade**" was an "**act of aggression**" and that **Soviet ships** bound for Cuba would be ordered to proceed.
- On **October 26**, **Kennedy** told his **advisors** it appeared that only a **US attack** on **Cuba** would **remove the missiles**, but he insisted on giving the **diplomatic channel** a little more time.
- The crisis had **reached a virtual stalemate**.
- **ABC News** correspondent **John Scali** reported to the **White House** that he had been **approached** by a **Soviet agent** suggesting that an **agreement** could be **reached** in which the **Soviets** would **remove their missiles from Cuba** if the **United States** promised **not to invade the island**.
- Although **US experts** were **convinced** the **message** from **Khrushchev** was **authentic**, hope for a resolution was short-lived.
- The next day, **October 27**, **Khrushchev** sent another message indicating that any **proposed deal** must include the **removal of US Jupiter missiles from Turkey**.
- It was a **risky move** to **ignore the second Khrushchev message**.
- **Attorney General Robert Kennedy** then met **secretly** with **Soviet Ambassador** to the **United States**, **Anatoly Dobrynin**, and indicated that the **United States** was **planning to remove the Jupiter missiles from Turkey** anyway, and that it would do so soon, but this **could not be part** of any **public resolution** of the **missile crisis**.
- The **crisis was over** but the **naval quarantine** continued until the **Soviets** agreed to **remove their IL-28 bombers from Cuba** and, on **November 20, 1962**, the **United States** ended its **quarantine**.
- **US Jupiter missiles** were **removed from Turkey** in **April 1963**.







by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

Talking about Putin's possible use of nukes in Ukraine, Joe Biden recalled standoff that almost set off a nuclear war

**RAGHU MALHOTRA**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 19

OCTOBER 1962 witnessed the Cuban missile crisis, a tense 13-day standoff between the Soviet Union and US that almost resulted in nuclear war between the superpowers.

### Build-up of tensions

An important precursor of the Cuban missile crisis was the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961, in which US-backed Cuban counter-revolutionaries attempted to overthrow Fidel Castro's regime. Thereafter, Castro turned increasingly towards the USSR to deter the US. By July 1962, a number of clandestine missile launch facilities began to be constructed in Cuba.

In doing so, apart from helping Cuba, Soviet First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev wanted to place nuclear weapons close to the US, to counter Washington's move of placing nuclear missiles in Turkey and Italy.

### The Cuban missile crisis

On October 14, 1962, a US spy plane took pictures of several ballistic nuclear missile sites being constructed in Cuba.

President John F Kennedy on October 22 ordered a naval "quarantine" of Cuba, stopping short of declaring a blockade, which would indicate war. US destroyers and submarines were placed around Cuba to prevent military supplies being brought in.

### Letters and the standoff

The same day, Kennedy wrote to Khrushchev, stating that the US would not allow offensive weapons to be delivered to Cuba. Two days later, Khrushchev responded saying the US deployment was a "blockade", and that Soviet ships would continue to proceed to Cuba. However, on October 24 and 25, some ships turned back from the blockade line.

### An agreement is reached

The first sign of de-escalation came on



US aircraft flies over a Soviet submarine during the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962. Wikimedia Commons

Kennedy, stating he would stop military shipments and withdraw forces if the US agreed to not invade Cuba. He then announced that the USSR would step back in Cuba if the US removed missiles from Italy and Turkey.

At the same time, US Attorney General Robert Kennedy met Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin secretly. He agreed to not invade Cuba and to remove missiles from Turkey and Italy, but added that the latter could not be part of any public resolutions.

On October 28, Khrushchev announced that Soviet nuclear missile sites would be removed from Cuba, while Kennedy pledged to never invade Cuba and secretly agreed to remove missiles from Turkey and Italy.

### Crises averted on October 27

On October 27, a US U-2 aircraft was shot down over Cuba, but the US chose to not retaliate. On the same day, the US Navy dropped a series of non-lethal depth charges on a Soviet submarine armed with a nuclear torpedo. The submarine assumed it was under attack. Launching the nuclear weapon required the consent of all three senior officers on board, but Vasili Alexandrovich Arkhipov, the chief of staff



by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## India China War (20th October 1962)

- The **Sino-Indian War** between **China** and **India** occurred in **October–November 1962**.
- A **disputed Himalayan border** was the **main cause** of the war.
- The main cause of the war was a **dispute** over the **sovereignty** of the **widely separated Aksai Chin** and **Arunachal Pradesh border regions**. **Aksai Chin**, claimed by **India** to **belong to Ladakh** and by **China** to be part of **Xinjiang**, contains an **important road link** that connects the **Chinese regions of Tibet and Xinjiang**. China's construction of this road was one of the triggers of the conflict.
- In 1826, **British India** gained a **common border** with **China** after the **British wrested** control of **Manipur and Assam** from the **Burmese**, following the **First Anglo-Burmese War of 1824–1826**.
- In 1847, **Major J. Jenkins**, **agent** for the **North East Frontier**, reported that the **Tawang** was part of **Tibet**.
- In 1872, **four monastic officials** from **Tibet** arrived in **Tawang** and **supervised** a **boundary settlement** with **Major R. Graham**, **NEFA official**, which included the **Tawang Tract as part of Tibet**.
- Thus, in the last half of the 19th century, it was clear that the **British treated the Tawang Tract as part of Tibet**. This **boundary** was confirmed in a **1 June 1912** note from the **British General Staff in India**, stating that the “present boundary (demarcated) is **south of Tawang**, **running westwards** along the **foothills** from near **Udalguri, Darrang** to the **southern Bhutanese border** and **Tezpur** claimed by **China**.”
- A **1908 map** of The **Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam** prepared for the **Foreign Department** of the **Government of India**, showed the **international boundary** from **Bhutan** continuing to the **Baroi River**, following the **Himalayas foothill alignment**.
- In 1913, **representatives** of the **UK, China** and **Tibet** attended a **conference** in **Simla** regarding the borders between **Tibet, China** and **British India**.
- Whilst all three representatives initiated the **agreement**, **Beijing** later **objected** to the **proposed boundary** between the **regions of Outer Tibet and Inner Tibet**, and did not ratify it.





by: Piyush Kumar

## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- The details of the **Indo-Tibetan boundary** were not revealed to China at the time. The foreign secretary of the **British Indian government**, **Henry McMahon**, who had drawn up the proposal, decided to **bypass the Chinese** (although instructed not to by his superiors) and settle the border bilaterally by negotiating directly with Tibet.
- According to **later Indian claims**, this **border** was intended to run through the highest ridges of the Himalayas, as the **areas south** of the **Himalayas** were **traditionally Indian**.
- The **McMahon Line** lay **south** of the **boundary India claims**.
- India's government held the view that the **Himalayas** were the **ancient boundaries** of the **Indian subcontinent**, and thus should be the **modern boundaries of India**, while it is the position of the **Chinese government** that the **disputed area** in the **Himalayas** have been **geographically and culturally part** of **Tibet** since **ancient times**.
- Months after the Simla agreement, **China** set up **boundary markers south** of the **McMahon Line**.
- **T. O'Callaghan**, an **official** in the **Eastern Sector** of the **North East Frontier**, relocated all these **markers** to a **location slightly south** of the **McMahon Line**, and then **visited Rima** to confirm with **Tibetan officials** that there was **no Chinese influence** in the area.
- The **British-run Government of India** initially **rejected** the **Simla Agreement** as incompatible with the **Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907**, which **stipulated** that **neither party** was to **negotiate with Tibet** "except through the intermediary of the **Chinese government**".
- The **British** and **Russians** canceled the **1907 agreement** by **joint consent** in **1921**.
- It was **not until the late 1930s** that the **British started** to **use the McMahon Line** on **official maps** of the region.
- There had been a **series** of **violent border skirmishes** between the **two countries** after the **1959 Tibetan uprising**, when **India granted asylum** to the **Dalai Lama**.
- **India** initiated a **defensive Forward Policy** from **1960** to **hinder Chinese military patrols and logistics**, in which it **placed outposts** along the border, including **several north** of the **McMahon Line**, the **eastern portion** of the **Line of Actual Control** proclaimed by **Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai** in **1959**.



by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- Chinese military action grew increasingly aggressive after India rejected proposed Chinese diplomatic settlements throughout 1960–1962, with China recommencing previously-banned “forward patrols” in Ladakh from 30 April 1962
- Much of the fighting took place in harsh mountain conditions, entailing large-scale combat at altitudes of over 4,000 metres (13,000 feet).
- The Sino-Indian War was also notable for the lack of deployment of naval and aerial assets by either China or India.

## Missed chances on the border

The boundary dispute that led to the 1962 war with China remains unresolved 60 years on. Nehru made mistakes that governments after him continued to repeat. A historian of India-China relations takes stock

**EXPERT EXPLAINS**  
A S BHASIN  
From The Indian Express panel of specialists, exclusive insight

SIXTY YEARS ago on this day — October 20, 1962 — Chinese troops came down from the Himalayan heights all along the India-China border and confronted an unprepared India, shredding Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's faith in the Himalayan shield.

But relations with China, whether on the borders or in the political sphere, had long been a cause for concern, Nehru's benign view notwithstanding. As would be seen, there were infirmities in India's boundary with China, both in the east and in the west.

### Uncertainty in east & west

Back in 1950, Nehru had declared in Parliament that in the east, “McMahon Line was our border, map or no map”. In the west, the border in Aksai Chin was marked “undefined” in the Survey of India maps that India inherited on Independence — but Nehru said it was known by custom and usage.

On March 13, 1949, with the civil war in China at its peak, India had rejected a suggestion to demarcate the Aksai Chin border: “In the present disturbed conditions, it is not possible to demarcate an undefined frontier between Kashmir and Sinkiang (Xinjiang).”

Subsequently in 1954, the border along Aksai Chin was defined by Nehru's fiat, dispensing with the mandatory requirement of consulting the other stakeholder, China. The new, unilaterally defined boundary included Aksai Chin within India; however, no effort was made to occupy it or to even plant the Indian flag there as a mark of sovereignty.

India remained unaware that this area was already in use by China. It came to know that the Chinese had built a 220 km long road there only after the completion of the project was announced in 1957.

In the eastern sector, the McMahon Line had been drawn in 1914 without even a survey. Henry McMahon admitted in 1935 that the “want of local accurate knowledge and absence of detailed surveys rendered it impossible to define large portion of it, except in a general term”.

### Unrealistic expectations

While negotiating the Tibet agreement in 1954, India consciously avoided discussions about the border, leaving the boundary question open while giving up all the facilities it had inherited from the British. By



(From left) Prime Minister Nehru, Vice President S Radhakrishnan, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, and President Rajendra Prasad in New Delhi. Express Archive

tion, since the dialogue between the two countries had by then become polemical.

The April 1960 discussions between Nehru and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai in New Delhi failed to bridge their differences. The major stumbling block was in the western sector, involving Aksai Chin. Nehru stonewalled repeated suggestions from China on the need to negotiate and demarcate the

boundary through joint surveys. Having unilaterally defined the western boundary, he contradicted himself repeatedly — maintaining that even if there had been no demarcation, the border was known by usage and custom, and by the watershed principle.

At the same time, Nehru remained unsure of India's position. On December 6, 1959 he told Raja Sabha that “a lingering doubt remained in my mind as to the future, but insisted that the time challenge came, we would be in a much stronger position to face it”.

China, on the other hand, had accepted that its maps were old, and its borders — not only with India but with other neighbours — needed surveys, and discussions before new maps were printed. Zhou specifically told Nehru in Beijing in October 1954 that China “would undertake surveys and hold discussions with the other stakeholders before fi-

Yet, he expected that China should accept the delineations on the Indian maps, and replicate them in its own maps, which was unrealistic.

### War and no settlement

With the Panchsheel agreement (1954) having squeezed India out of Tibet, China found the time right to enforce its territorial claims along the Indian border. Its initial intrusions were dismissed by the Prime Minister as minor incidents, which used to occur “long before Chinese came to Tibet (and) conceded that the frontier was not clearly demarcated”. While the intrusions continued, and became worrying, no serious view was taken until it was too late.

The unfortunate part of Nehru's China's policy was that the differences on the border were kept wrapped in a false veneer, and an uninformed but mesmerised public went hoarse about-

ing “Hindi-Chini bhai bhai”. After the Kongka pass incident (1959), in which nine Indian policemen were killed, love apart the veneer of friendship, the government held China responsible, creating a sense of betrayal in the public. The border problem snowballed into armed conflict in 1962.

Even after the ceasefire, Nehru did not respond positively to Zhou's suggestion to create a demilitarised zone to avoid future conflicts. The two countries were left without an agreed line separating them. A couple of un-

non-aligned countries led by Sri Lanka.

### Prisoners of the past

After Nehru's death, successive governments remained prisoners of the past and stuck to the position taken by him, failing to respond positively to the Chinese offer made in 1960 for a swap between the western and eastern sectors. The offer was available until the mid-eighties, when it was withdrawn. China now claims the eastern sector too as part of any settlement, while holding on to the western sector.

In an interview in 2016, Dai Bingguo, State Councilor and China's Special Representative at 15 rounds of talks with his Indian counterparts between 2003 and 2013, described the eastern sector as “inalienable from China's Tibet in terms of cultural background and administrative jurisdiction”, and called for “meaningful and mutually acceptable adjustment” to reach a “package settlement”. The “package” that Dai demanded: India must “take care of China's concern in the eastern sector”, which is Arunachal Pradesh, a state of the Indian Union, with a population of 1.4 million.

### In for the long haul

Nehru's failure to react positively to Zhou's suggestion for a demilitarised zone after the ceasefire in 1962 has become the bane of relations, with both countries bating on their own perceptions of the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China in 1988, the first by an Indian prime minister since Nehru's favour in return for relationships in various other domains such as trade, science and technology, and culture. It is open to question whether favouring the borders, and promoting relations in other domains benefited India. The Chinese remain in all the territories they had occupied in 1962.

It has created a stalemate in China's favour with little urgency for a settlement. The several agreements between the countries since then — on “Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity” (1993), military CBMs (1996), Political Parameters and Guiding Principles” for the settlement of boundary question (2005), and border defence cooperation (2012) — have failed to lead to a settlement of the border question.

This has primarily been on account of the failure to find a mutually acceptable LAC. It needs to be noted that Dai Bingguo's claim on the eastern sector violated the agreement on political parameters. His demand for adjustment in the east violated Article VII, which called on the two countries to “safeguard due interests of their settled populations in the border areas”.

Since the appointment of the Special Representatives in 2003, 22 meetings at their level and more at higher levels, have not helped to resolve the border issue. If the



by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Lothal

- **Lothal** is a combination of two words; **Loth** and **thal**, which in Gujarati means ‘**the mound of the dead.**’
- **Lothal** was one of the southernmost sites of the ancient Indus Valley civilization, located in the **Bhal region** of the **modern state of Gujarat.**
- The city was **inhabited during 3700 BCE** and was a **thriving trading port.**
- Archaeologists believe that the **city** was a **part of a major river system** on the **ancient trade route** from **Sindh to Saurashtra** in Gujarat.
- **Excavations** here have offered the **greatest number of antiquities** in the archaeology of modern India.
- Lothal had the **world’s earliest known dock**, which connected the **city** to an **ancient course** of the **Sabarmati river** on the trade route.
- This trade route stretched between **Harappan cities** in **Sindh** and the **peninsula** of **Saurashtra** where the **surrounding Kutch desert** of today was a part of the **Arabian Sea.**
- However, this interpretation has been challenged by other archaeologists, who argue **Khufu’s Red Sea harbor at Wadi al-Jarf** is older, dating its construction to between 2580 to 2550 BC and that Lothal was a comparatively small town, and that the “dock” was primarily an irrigation tank.
- **Lothal** was a **vital and thriving trade center** in ancient times, with its **trade of beads, gems and valuable ornaments** reaching the **far corners** of **West Asia and Africa.**
- The **techniques and tools** they **pioneered** for **bead-making** and in **metallurgy** have stood the test of time for over 4000 years.
- A **flood destroyed village foundations and settlements** (c. 2350 BCE).
- Harappans based around **Lothal** and from **Sindh** took this opportunity to **expand their settlement** and **create a planned township** on the **lines of greater cities** in the **Indus valley.**
- Lothal planners engaged themselves to protect the area from consistent floods.



by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## 'Oldest dock' Lothal to get heritage complex: its features, significance

**UIVYAA**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 19

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Tuesday reviewed the construction of the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) site at Gujarat's Lothal via video conferencing. "There are many such tales of our history that have been forgotten," the PM said. "Lothal was not only a major trading centre of the Indus Valley Civilisation, but also a symbol of India's maritime power and prosperity."

### Where is Lothal?

Lothal was one of the southernmost sites of the Indus Valley Civilisation, located in the Bhāl region of what is now Gujarat. The port city is believed to have been flourished around 2,000 BC. It was a thriving centre of commerce, with its trade of beads, gems, and ornaments reaching West Asia and Africa.

'loth' and '(s) thal' means 'the mound of the dead'. Incidentally, the name of the city of Mohenjo-daro (also part of the Indus Valley Civilisation, now in Pakistan) means the same in Sindhi.

Indian archaeologists started the search for cities of the Harappan Civilisation post-1947 in Gujarat's Saurashtra. Archaeologist S.R. Rao led the team that discovered a number of Harappan sites at the time, including the port city of Lothal. Excavation work was carried out in Lothal between February 1955 and May 1960. According to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Lothal had the world's earliest known dock, connecting the city to an ancient course of the Sabarmati river.

The National Institute of Oceanography, Goa, has discovered marine microfossils, salt, and gypsum crystals at the site, indicating that sea water once filled the structure, and that it was definitely a dockyard.

In later excavations, the ASI unearthed a mound, a township, a marketplace, and the dock. Adjacent to the excavated site,



Lothal, which flourished around 2,000 BC, was one of the southernmost sites of the Indus Valley Civilisation, located in what is now Gujarat. [Wikimedia Commons](#)

stands the archaeological site museum, where some of the most prominent collections of Indus-era antiquities in India are displayed.

### Heritage value

Lothal was nominated in April 2014 as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and its application is now listed on the tentative list. It was

the nomination dossier submitted to UNESCO. "The excavated site of Lothal is the only port-town of the Indus Valley Civilisation. A metropolis with an upper and a lower town had on its northern side a basin with vertical wall, inlet and outlet channels which has been identified as a tidal dockyard. Satellite images show that the river channel, now dried, would have brought in considerable volume of water during high tide, which would have filled the basin and facilitated sailing of boats upstream. The remains of stone anchors, marine shells, sealings which trace its source in the Persian Gulf, together with the structure identified as a warehouse further aid the comprehension of the functioning of the port."

Its heritage value is comparable to other ancient port towns around the world, such as Xel Ha (Peru), Ostia (Port of Rome) and Carthage (Port of Tunis) in Italy, Hepu in China, Canopus in Egypt, Gabel (Byblos of the Phoenicians), Jaffa in Israel, Ur in Mesopotamia, and Hoi An in Vietnam, according to the dossier. In the neighbourhood,

it can be compared with other Indus port towns of Isarakot (Pakistan), Khirasa (in Gujarat's Kutch) and Runtasi (in Rajkot).

### The project

The heritage complex project began in March 2022, and is being developed at a cost of Rs 3,500 crore. It will have several innovative features such as a Lothal mini-recreation, which will recreate Harappan architecture and lifestyle through immersive technology, and four theme parks — a Memorial theme park, a Maritime and Navy theme park, a Climate theme park, and an Adventure and Amusement theme park.

It will also house the world's tallest light-house museum, 14 galleries highlighting India's maritime heritage starting from the Harappan time till today, as well as a coastal states pavilion displaying the diverse maritime heritage of Indian states and UTs.

Modi said that the National Maritime Heritage Complex at Lothal will act as a centre for learning and understanding of India's maritime history.





by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Partition of Bengal (16th October 1905)

- The first **Partition of Bengal** (1905) was a **territorial reorganization** of the **Bengal Presidency** implemented by the **authorities** of the **British Raj**.
- The **reorganization** separated the **largely Muslim eastern areas** from the **largely Hindu western areas**.
- Announced on **19 July 1905** by **Lord Curzon**, the then **Viceroy of India**, and implemented on **16 October 1905**, it was **undone** a mere six years later.
- The **nationalists** saw the **partition** as a **challenge to Indian nationalism** and that it was a **deliberate attempt to divide Bengal** on **religious grounds**, with a **Muslim majority** in the **east** and a **Hindu majority** in the **west**.
- The **Hindus of West Bengal** complained that the **division** would **make** them a **minority** in a **province** that **would incorporate** the **province of Bihar and Orissa**.
- **Hindus** were **outraged** at what they saw as a **"divide and rule"** policy, even though **Curzon** stressed it would **produce administrative efficiency**.
- The **partition** animated the **Muslims** to **form** their **own national organization** along **communal lines**.
- To **appease Bengali sentiment**, Bengal was **reunited** by **Lord Hardinge** in **1911**, in **response** to the **Swadeshi movement's riots** in protest against the policy.
- The **English-educated middle class** of **Bengal** saw this as a **vivisection** of their **motherland** as well as a **tactic to diminish** their **authority**.
- In the **six-month period** before the **partition** was to be **effected** the **Congress** arranged **meetings** where **petitions** against the **partition** were **collected** and given to **impassive authorities**.
- **Surendranath Banerjee** had **suggested** that the **non-Bengali states** of **Orissa** and **Bihar** be **separated** from **Bengal** rather than **dividing two parts** of the **Bengali-speaking community**, but **Lord Curzon** did **not agree** to this.
- **Banerjee** admitted that the **petitions** were **ineffective**; as the **date for the partition** drew **closer**, he began **advocating** **tougher approaches** such as **boycotting British goods**.



by: **Piyush Kumar**

## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- He **preferred** to label this move as **swadeshi** instead of a **boycott**.
- The **boycott** was **led** by the **moderates** but **minor rebel groups** also sprouted under its cause.
- **Nationalists** all over **India** **supported** the **Bengali cause**, and **were shocked** at the **British disregard** for **public opinion** and what they perceived as a “**divide and rule**” policy.
- The **protests spread** to **Bombay, Poona, and Punjab**.
- **Lord Curzon** had **believed** that the **Congress** was **no longer** an **effective force** but provided it with a **cause to rally** the **public around** and **gain fresh strength** from.
- The partition also caused **embarrassment** to the **Indian National Congress**.
- When **first announced** in **1903**, **Muslim organizations** the **Moslem chronicle** and The **Central National Muhamedan Association** **condemned** the **proposal**.
- **Muslim leaders** **Chowdhury Kazemuddin Ahmed Siddiky, Delwar Hossain Ahmed** and even **Nawab Khwaja Salimullah** **denounced** the idea.
- Reasons behind their **opposition** included the **threat of partition to Bengali solidarity** as well as fear that the **educational, social and other interests** of **East Bengal** would become **diminished** under a **chief commissioner**.
- In 1904, **Curzon** took an **official tour** to visit the **Muslim-majority districts** of **East Bengal** to **gain buy-in** for the **proposal**. He **hinted** that he was **considering Dacca** as the **new capital of East Bengal** and asserted that the plan “**would invest the Mohamedans in Eastern Bengal with a unity which they have not enjoyed since the old days of old Musalman viceroys and kings.**”





by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Revenue Police System

- **Uttarakhand** is the **only state** in the **country** where **nearly 60%** of the **area** is still under **revenue police**, a **system** introduced by the **British** in **1861**, in which **revenue officials** act as **cops** with the **right to arrest an accused** and **investigate cases**.
- Although regular police is established in the state, yet in **some hill patts**, **jurisdiction of the police** is yet to **be extended to** and the **revenue officials** perform functions of **police** like **arrest of offenders** and investigation.
- In the Hill Pattis of the State, certain revenue officials such as **Kanoongo**, **Lekhpal** and particularly **Patwari** have been **conferred upon the powers and functions of the police officer** to investigate the offenses.
- These three regions are:
  - Hill Pattis of Kumaon and Garhwal Division which once formed part of British India.
  - Hill Pattis of district Tehri and Uttarkashi.
  - Jaunsar-Bawar region of district Dehradun.
- Till 1790, **Kumaon** was ruled by the **Chand dynasty**.
- During the Chand period, the **Thokdars** and **Padhans** used to **perform police functions**.
- **British** who came to **India** as **traders** and **later became rulers**, were **smart enough** to **appreciate** the then **peculiar geographical, demographic** and **socio-economical** features of **hill patts** of **British Kumaon**.
- When **G.W.Trail**, then **second Commissioner of Kumaon** who served as such from **1816 to 1830**, wrote that **no special police** was **required** as **crimes** were very rare in **Kumaon**, it was **decided** that **no regular police** was needed **except in towns** like **Almora, Ranikhet** and **Nainital** etc.
- A **special police system** started **functioning** in **British Kumaon** in which the **revenue officials** with the help of **Thokdars** and **Padhans Revenue Police** had the powers to apprehend offenders, investigate the offenses and do connected functions.



by: Piyush Kumar

## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- Accordingly, in the year 1916, in exercise of **Section 6** of the **Scheduled Districts Act, 1874**, rules were made for **appointing police officers, regulating their procedure** and prescribing the **powers** and **duties** to be **exercised** and **performed** by them in the districts of Almora, Garhwal and hill patts of Nainital.
- The rules known as '**Kumaun Police**' framed in **exercise of powers** conferred by **Section 6** of the **Scheduled Districts Act, 1874** in the **year 1916** are **still in force**.

### Under lens, 'revenue police' in Uttarakhand

AVANEESH MISHRA  
DEHRADUN, OCTOBER 17

AMID THE protests that erupted after the murder of 19-year-old Ankita Bhandari in Uttarakhand last month, a demand was raised to scrap the state's 'revenue police' system.

There were allegations that the revenue police had failed to register a complaint in time, and had even sided with the accused.

On September 24, Uttarakhand Assembly Speaker Ritu Khanduri wrote to Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami requesting him to end the system. The state cabinet has now approved a proposal to replace the revenue police with regular police.

#### The revenue police system

The system was introduced by the British over a century ago when crime in the hilly areas was less. The idea was to save money and resources by not deploying the regular police.

Under this system, civil officials of the rev-



Protests over the Ankita murder have forced the government to take note *PTI*

tions of the police. When a crime takes place, the revenue police files an FIR, investigates the case, arrests the accused, and also files a chargesheet in the local court.

In cases of heinous crimes like murder, rape, or crimes against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the case is transferred to the regular police, but the process often takes long, during which crucial evidence is lost.

does not extend to several hilly areas of the state. The revenue police has jurisdiction over 50 per cent of the state in terms of area, and about 25 per cent in terms of population.

#### Problems with the system

A retired IPS officer who has served in both Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand said the biggest problem with the system is the fact that revenue officials are given the additional task of policing with none to minimal training.

"One of the major tasks of the police, along with investigating and solving a crime, is to prevent criminal activities. The prevention of crime, either by collecting intelligence or by creating a fear of law and order, cannot be done by revenue officials. Being a border state, Uttarakhand is very important strategically, and cannot afford this," the officer said.

Problems also arise in cases involving multiple states. It is difficult for the revenue police to coordinate with other districts or states in ways that the regular police can do. They are also constrained in seeking forensic help.

The Police-Forces (Restriction of Rights) Act, 1966, which restricts certain rights for members of the force to ensure proper discharge of their duties. On several occasions, revenue officials have gone on strike, demanding that they be given adequate resources or be freed from policing responsibilities.

#### Plans to replace it

In 2018, the Uttarakhand High Court had ordered the state government to abolish the "century-old practice" of revenue police. The order came in the backdrop of a woman's alleged murder by her in-laws in a Tehri Garhwal village, which comes under the revenue police system. The state challenged this order in the Supreme Court.

After the Ankita murder, the state cabinet approved a proposal to replace the revenue police with the regular police. In the first phase, the area of existing police stations and police outposts will be increased. Permission has also been granted for six new police stations and 20 police outposts in areas with heightened



by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Akbar (27th October 1605)

- **Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar**, more famously known as **Akbar the Great**, was the **third emperor** of the **Mughal Empire**, after **Babur** and **Humayun**.
- He was the **son** of **Nasiruddin Humayun** and **succeeded** him as the **emperor** in the year **1556**, at the tender **age** of just **13**.
- **Succeeding** his father **Humayun** at a **critical stage**, he slowly **enlarged** the extent of the **Mughal Empire** to include almost all of the **Indian subcontinent**.
- He **extended his power** and **influence** over the **entire country** due to his **military, political, cultural, and economic dominance**.
- He **established a centralized system of administration** and **adopted a policy of marriage alliance and diplomacy**.
- The **Second battle of Panipat** marked the **beginning** of the **glory days** for the **Mughal reign in India**. Akbar sought out to **end Afghan sovereignties**.
- Akbar **dedicated the first decade** of his rule towards **expanding his empire**. Under the **regency** of **Bairam Khan**, **Ajmer**, **Malwa** and **Garha Katanga** were annexed into the Mughal territories.
- He also **captured Lahore and Multan**, major centers of **Punjab**. **Ajmer** brought him to the **doorway to Rajputana**.
- He also **claimed the Gwalior fort** from the **Sur Rulers**. He **conquered Gondwana** in **1564** from the minor ruler **Raja Vir Narayan**.
- In 1567, **Akbar attacked the Chittorgarh fort** in **Mewar** that represented a **key strategic importance** towards **establishing rule in Rajputana**.
- **Udai Singh's chiefs Jaimal and Patta** held off the **Mughal forces** for **four months** in 1568. **Udai Singh** was **banished** to the **Hills of Mewar**.
- Other **Rajput states** like **Ranthambore** fell in the face of **Mughal forces**, but **Rana Pratap**, **Udai Singh's son**, put up a **formidable resistance** to **Akbar's expansion of power**.
- He was the **last** of the **Rajput defenders** and **fought till his heroic end** in the **Battle of Haldighati** in 1576.
- **Following his victory** over the **Rajputana**, **Akbar brought Gujarat** (1584), **Kabul** (1585), **Kashmir** (1586-87), **Sindh** (1591), **Bengal** (1592) and **Kandahar** (1595) within the **Mughal territory**.



by: **Piyush Kumar**

## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- The **Mughal army** led by **General Mir Mausam** also conquered **parts of Balochistan around Quetta and Makran** by 1595.
- After consolidating the empire, **Akbar concentrated on establishing a stable and subject-friendly administration at the center to govern his vast empire.**
- The **principles of Akbar's administration** were based on **moral as well as material welfare** of his **subjects.**
- He **brought about several changes in existing policies to establish an environment of uniform opportunities to people irrespective of religion.**
- The Emperor himself was the **supreme governor of the empire.**
- He retained **ultimate judicial, legislative and administrative power** above anyone else.
- He was **assisted in efficient governance by several ministers – Vakil, chief adviser to the King over all matters; Diwan, minister in charge of finance; Sadar-i-sadur, religious advisor to the King; Mir Bakshi, the one who maintained all records; Daroga-i-Dak Chowki and Muhtasib** were appointed to oversee **proper enforcement of law** as well as the **postal department.**
- The **entire empire was divided into 15 Subas, each province being governed by a Subadar along with other regional posts** mirroring that in the center.
- The **Subas were divided into Sarkars** which were **further divided into Parganas.**
- The **head of the Sarkar was a Faujdar** and that of a **Pargana was a Shikdar.**
- Each **Pargana consisted of several villages** which were **governed by a Muqaddam, a Patwari and a Chowkidar, along with a panchayat.**
- He **introduced the Mansabdari system to effectively organize the military.**
- The **Mansabdars were responsible for maintaining discipline and imparting training to the soldiers.**
- **Land revenue was the chief source of income for the Mughal government and Akbar introduced several reforms in the revenue department. The land was divided into four classes according to their productivity - Polaj, Parauti, Chachar and Banjar.**
- **Akbar introduced reforms in the judicial system as well and for the first time, Hindu customs and laws were referred to in case of Hindu subjects.**
- The **Emperor was the highest authority in law and the power to give capital punishment rested solely with him.**





by: **Piyush Kumar**

## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- **Akbar** and the **Uzbeks** of **Central Asia** entered into a **treaty of mutual respect** under which the **Mughals** were **not to interfere** in **Badakhshan** and **Balkh regions** and the **Uzbeks** would **stay away** from **Kandahar** and **Kabul**.
- **Akbar's rule** was marked by **wide religious tolerance** and **liberal outlook**.
- Akbar was **profoundly religious** himself, yet he never sought to **enforce his own religious** views on anyone; be it **prisoners of war**, or **Hindu wives** or the **common people** in his **kingdom**.
- He gave **great importance** to **choice** and **abolished discriminatory taxes** based on religion.
- Akbar **commissioned** the **building** of **several forts** and **mausoleums** during his reign and **established a distinct architectural style** that has been dubbed as **Mughal architecture** by **connoisseurs**.
- Among the **architectural marvels commissioned** during **his rule** are the **Agra Fort** (1565–1574), the **town of Fatehpur Sikri** (1569–1574) with its **beautiful Jami Masjid** and **Buland Darwaza**, **Humayun's Tomb** (1565-1572), **Ajmer Fort** (1563-1573), **Lahore Fort** (1586-1618) and **Allahabad Fort** (1583-1584).
- Akbar was a **great patron** of **art and culture**. Although he himself **could not read and write**, he would **appoint people** who **read to him** various topics of art, history, philosophy and religion. He appreciated intellectual discourse and offered his patronage to several extraordinarily talented people whom he invited to his court.
- Together these individuals were referred to as the **Nava Ratnas** of the **Nine Gems**. They were **Abul Fazel**, **Faizi**, **Mian Tansen**, **Birbal**, **Raja Todar Mal**, **Raja Man Singh**, **Abdul Rahim Khan-I-Khana**, **Fakir Aziao-Din** and **Mullah Do Piazza**.



by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Banda Singh Bahadur (27th October 1670)

- **Banda Singh Bahadur**, also called **Lachman Das**, **Lachman Dev**, or **Madho Das**, (born 1670, Rajauri —died June 1716, Delhi), **first Sikh military leader to wage an offensive war** against the **Mughal rulers of India**, thereby temporarily extending Sikh territory.
- As a youth, he decided to be a **samana** (ascetic), and **until 1708**, when he became a **disciple of Guru Gobind Singh**, he was known as **Madho Das**.
- He established a **monastery at Nanded**, on the **bank of the river Godavari**.
- After **his initiation** into the **Sikh brotherhood**, he took the name **Banda Singh Bahadur** and became a **respected, if not popular, general**; his **cold and impersonal character** did not endear him to his men.
- His **first major action** was the **sacking of the Mughal provincial capital, Samana**, in November 1709.
- After **establishing his authority and Khalsa rule in Punjab**, **Banda Singh Bahadur abolished the zamindari system**, and **granted property rights to the tillers of the land**.
- Banda Singh was **captured by the Mughals and tortured to death in 1715–1716**.
- **Banda Singh Bahadur** is known to have **halted the Taluqdari system** in the time he was **active** and gave the **farmers ownership** of their own land.
- It seems that **all classes of government officers** were **addicted to extortion and corruption** and the **whole system of regulatory and order was subverted**.
- **Banda Singh** set out in **1709** to **attack the Mughals**, conquering large tracts of territory.
- On 12 May 1710, in the **Battle of Chappar Chiri**, the **Sikhs killed Wazir Khan**, the **Governor of Sirhind** and **Diwan Suchanand**, who were **responsible for the martyrdom of the two youngest sons of Guru Gobind Singh**.
- Two days later, the Sikhs captured Sirhind. **Banda Singh** was now in control of territory from the **Sutlej to the Yamuna**.
- He **ordered that the ownership of the land should be given to the farmers** and to let them **live in dignity and self-respect**.



by: **Piyush Kumar**

## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- The **rule** of the **Sikhs** over the **entire Punjab** east of **Lahore** obstructed the **communication** between **Delhi** and **Lahore**, the **capital** of **Punjab**, and this worried **Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah**.
- He gave up **his plan** to **subdue rebels** in **Rajasthan** and **marched towards Punjab**.
- In 1713 the **Sikhs** left **Lohgarh** and **Sadhaura** and went to the **remote hills of Jammu** and where they **built Dera Baba Banda Singh**.
- During this time **Sikhs** were **being persecuted** especially by **Mughals** in the **Gurdaspur region**.
- **Banda Singh** came out and **captured Kalanaur** and **Batala**(both places in modern Gurdaspur district which rebuked **Farrukh Siyar** to **issue Mughal and Hindu officials** and **chiefs** to **proceed with their troops** to **Lahore** to **reinforce his army**.
- His **pillaging** and **massacring** in the **Deccan** led the **Mughal rulers** finally to **move against** him in force.
- After an **eight-month siege**, the **fortress town** of **Gurdas Nangal** fell to the **Mughals** in 1715.
- **Banda Singh** and **his men** were **taken as prisoners** to **Delhi**, where **every day** for **six months** a few of **his men** were **taken out** and **executed**.
- When his own turn came, **Banda Singh** **stated** to the **Muslim judge** that this **fate** befell him justly because **he had failed his beloved Guru Gobind Singh**. He was **tortured to death** with **red-hot irons**.



by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Dholavira

- **Dholavira** is an archaeological site at **Khadirbet** in **Bhachau Taluka** of **Kutch District**, in the **state of Gujarat** in **western India**, which has taken its name from a modern-day village 1 kilometer (0.62 mi) south of it.
- Some of the **seals** found at **Dholavira**, belonging to **Stage III**, **contained animal only figures**, without any type of script.
- The property comprises two parts: a **walled city** and a **cemetery** to the **west of the city**.
- The **walled city** consists of a **fortified castle** with **attached fortified bailey** and **ceremonial ground**, and a fortified Middle Town and a Lower Town.
- A series of **reservoirs** are found to the **east** and **south** of the **citadel**.
- The **great majority** of the **burials** in the **cemetery** are memorial in nature.
- **Two seasonal streams** provided water, a **scarce resource** in the region, to the **walled city** which comprises a **heavily fortified castle** and **ceremonial ground** as well as **streets** and **houses** of **different proportion quality** which **testify** to a **stratified social order**.
- A **sophisticated water management system** demonstrates the **ingenuity** of the **Dholavira people** in their **struggle to survive** and **thrive** in a **harsh environment**.
- The **site** includes a **large cemetery** with **cenotaphs** of **six types** **testifying** to the **Harappans** unique view of death.
- Unlike other **Harappan antecedent towns** normally located near to rivers and **perennial sources of water**, the **location of Dholavira** in the island of Khadir was strategic to **harness different mineral and raw material sources** (**copper, shell, agate-carnelian, steatite, lead, banded limestone**, among others) and to facilitate internal as well as **external trade to the Magan** (**modern Oman peninsula**) and Mesopotamian regions.
- **Bead processing workshops** and **artifacts** of various kinds such as **copper, shell, stone, jewelry of semi-precious stones, terracotta, gold, ivory** and other materials have been found during archaeological excavations of the site, exhibiting the culture's artistic and technological achievements.





by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- The **configuration** of the city of **Dholavira**, during its heyday, is an outstanding example of **planned city** with **planned** and **segregated urban residential areas** based on possibly differential occupational activities, and a stratified society.

## history HEADLINE

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## India's maritime history runs deep and long here

A LITTLE OVER 70 km from Ahmedabad lies Lothal, one of the prominent cities of the ancient Harappan Civilization, dating to 2600 BCE to 2000 BCE, located close to the Gulf of Khambhat.

Earlier this week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while reviewing the National Maritime Heritage Complex coming up at Lothal, spoke about how Lothal and Dholavira were part of India's rich maritime history.

Lothal and Bet Dwarka, also in Gujarat, were excavated by the late Archaeological Survey of India director Dr Shikaripura Ranganatha Rao. Dating back over 4600 years, the dockyard in Lothal is the oldest man-made dockyard, built of burnt bricks, roughly 240 m long, 37 m wide and 4 m deep, with a warehouse located next to it.

The Lothal site lay on a trade route between the Harappan cities in Sindh and the Saurashtra peninsula, when Kutch was part of the Arabian Sea. Lothal flourished with advanced technological marvels that initiated India's rich maritime history, but declined mysteriously. The evidence from Lothal suggests that the Harappans were highly disciplined people who believed in orderliness, visible in the planning of towns and cities, uniform system of weights and measures, enforcement of trade regulations, efficient administration and standardization of goods and services to facilitate production.

The noteworthy artefacts found in Lothal include models of boats, Persian Gulf seals, bangles, a model of a terracotta mummy, a terracotta pyramid, Sumerian head, precious and semi-precious stones like carnelian, lapis lazuli.

Being a port town, Lothal hosted traders from different parts of the world and civilizations. Along with trade products, their cultural beliefs and values, ideas and innovative techniques also transferred to Lothal, making it the hub of the culture and economy of the world.

Dholavira in Kutch district lies on the Khadir Bet island, surrounded by the salt waste of the Great Rann of Kutch. It is also known locally as *Kotada timba*, and is one of the largest sites where the remains of the Harappan civilization have been



An aerial view of Dholavira archaeological site in Kutch district. UNESCO has declared Dholavira a World Heritage Site. *PTI*

settlement. The ruins, including the cemetery, cover over 70 hectares, half of which is appropriated by the fortified Harappan settlement alone.

The mounds are located less than a kilometre northwest of Dholavira village. The groundwater reserve here in its soft sedimentary limestone deposits did not fail it even during the severest droughts in Gujarat in the '80s.

This Harappan city was discovered in 1968 by former ASI director general Jagat Pati Joshi and excavated for 13 field seasons between 1989 and 2005 led by Ravindra Singh Bisht.

Dholavira is unique because remains of a complete water system have been found here. The people who lived there for an estimated 1,200 years are noted for their water conservation system using rainwater harvesting techniques in an otherwise parched landscape.

Evidence of inter-regional trade with other Harappan cities, as well as with cities in the Mesopotamia region and the Oman peninsula, have also been discovered. Ten large inscriptions, carved in the Harappan Valley script, were found which was billed as the world's earliest signboard.

In 2021 it was on the list of UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites.

There is evidence that the Rann of Kutch was navigable in Harappan times, which would have given Dholavira direct or indirect access to the sea. It flourished during the Mature Harappan phase, between 2600 and 1900 BCE.

Dholavira followed a strict plan, but one of its kind with multiple enclosures. The overall plan has an acropolis or upper town, consisting of a massive "castle" located on the city's high point and an adjacent "bailey"; a middle town, separated from the acropolis by a huge ceremonial ground; and a lower town, part of which was occupied by a series of reservoirs.

The principal building material was stone, although sun-dried bricks were also used. Houses, wells and drains were normally made of local sandstone.

Dholavira had an efficient water management system. Both the monsoon channels were spanned with weirs at certain points, not only for ponding water but also diverting it to the cascading series of reservoirs on the east, south and west.

The reservoir to the east of the castle was the largest among all, ascertained to be 10.6 metres deep with flights of 30 steps.

*The writer is Founding Director General, National Maritime Heritage Complex, Gandhinagar, and CSIR Bhatnagar Fellow*



by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Modhera Sun Temple

- The **Sun Temple of Modhera** is a **Hindu temple** dedicated to the **solar deity Surya** located at **Modhera village** of **Mehsana district, Gujarat, India**.
- It is situated on the **bank of the river Pushpavati**.
- It was built after **1026-27 CE** during the **reign of Bhima I** of the **Chalukya dynasty**.
- Earlier, during 1024–1025, **Mahmud of Ghazni** had **invaded Bhima's kingdom**, and a force of around 20,000 soldiers had **unsuccessfully** tried to **check his advance** at Modhera.
- The place was later known as **Sita ni Chauri** and **Ramkund** locally.
- The **remains** of the **Sun Temples** at **Modhera** dedicated to **sun god** are **relics of times** gone by when **reverence** of the natural elements **fire, air, earth, water** and **sky** were at their **peak sharing space** with **myriad manifestations** of **Vedic gods**.
- The **ancient philosophy** venerating **natural elements** and its **association** with **humans** was considered the prime force and energy of the life cycle.
- The temple complex is built in **Maru-Gurjara style (Chalukya style)**.
- The temple complex has three axially aligned components; the shrine proper (**garbhagriha**) in a hall (**gudhamandapa**), the outer or assembly hall (**sabhamandapa** or **rangamandapa**) and a sacred reservoir (**kunda**).
- The panels on the Gudhamandapa are decorated with **Surya** centrally which **indicates** that the **temple is dedicated to Surya**.
- These images show **peculiar West Asian (Persian) boots and belts**.
- The other corners and niches are decorated with figures of **Shiva** and **Vishnu** in various forms, **Brahma, Naga** and goddesses.
- The depicted scenes on small flat ceilings and lintels of sabhamandap are from epics like Ramayana.
- According to the **Skanda Purana**, after **defeating Ravana**, **Lord Rama** consulted **Muni Vasishta** to show him a **place of pilgrimage** where he could **go** and **purify himself** of the **sin of Brahma hatya** (the **slaying of a Brahman**).



by: Piyush Kumar

## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- The Muni showed him **dharmaranya**. Lord Rama settled at a village called **Modherak** and performed a **yajna** there. Thereafter he established a village and named it Sitapura.
- It is believed that the village **Modherah** mentioned above, later came to be known as **Modhera**.

### How Modhera emerged as the brightest spot on India's solar map

Residents of India's first 24X7 solar-powered village are saving 60 to 100% on electricity bills

AVINASH NAIR  
MODHERA (GUJARAT)

WITH THE festive season at the doorstep, Manjulaben Prajapati wants to buy an electric two-wheeler for her daughters.

Manjulaben lives in Modhera, India's first solar-powered village in Mehsana district of Gujarat, also known for its iconic Sun Temple, built by the rulers of the Chalukya dynasty.

Her house is among the 1,300 dwellings in the village having rooftop mounted solar power systems, or solar rooftops as the villagers call them, which supply electricity to the households during the day. The solar panels are linked to a battery storage plant, which provides power at night. For several Modhera residents, the solar rooftops have helped bring down power bills by 60-100%.

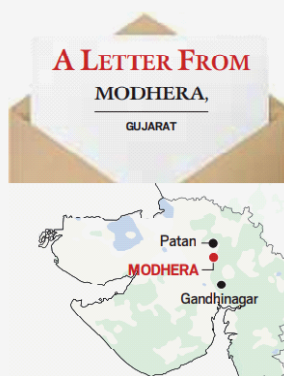
"The last bill shows that I have Rs 800 as credit in my account. This means we have generated more power than we consumed. Earlier, we used to pay about Rs 2,000 every two months," says Manjulaben, adding that she has bought a brand-new refrigerator and a domestic flour mill with the savings.

With electricity freely available, she adds, "I want to replace our Honda Activa scooter with an electric two-wheeler. That way we will save on fuel cost too."

The solar rooftops with 1kw capacity are being installed free of cost by the Gujarat government as part of a "demonstration project" at Modhera, which was declared India's first 24X7 solar-powered village by



Vajaji Solanki displays his bill which shows that he has earned Rs 1,325 selling solar energy from his rooftop at Modhera. Kashiba Solanki (right) needs money to strengthen her roof before panels can be put. Nirmal Harindran



far, with the Centre and state splitting it, with Modhera generating 2 MW of solar power.

them Kailashba Solanki, a neighbour of Manjulaben.

"Our roof is weak and it will not sustain the weight of the solar panels. Strengthening the roof will cost Rs 50,000 and we do not have the money," says Kailashba, who has to support six members in his family.

Inspecting the ongoing work in the village, Rajendra Mistry, an official from Gujarat Power Corporation Limited and the chief project officer of the solar project in Modhera, says: "Seventy-eighty percent of the households are financially very weak. It was not prudent to charge them for the solar rooftops. We are trying to make it more financially viable to replicate in other villages."

The Modhera project is India's first grid-connect battery energy storage system, Mistry says. "It is a net power generator during the daytime. In the evening, when solar panels stop working, it becomes a net power consumer and uses the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at Sujjanpura."

"PM Modi wanted Modhera to draw in-

says Pradeep Gadhvi, an official of Gujarat Energy Research and Management Institute, who is also associated with the project.

The power generated also helps recharge the electric vehicles at the temple. "A bus, a couple of cars as well as two-wheelers can be charged. This is being provided for free now," says Mistry.

The project, which began in the first half of 2020, was delayed due to Covid-19 and then it took time to convince the villagers. In the first phase, only 37 houses were roped in.

The solar panels are connected to a smart meter that sends the data directly to the electricity supply company.

Several villagers too remain wary, and report voltage fluctuations which, they fear, could damage their electrical appliances. Some complain that the solar panels are difficult to clean.

A few complain their bills have not come down, among them Elaben Prajapati, who works as a farm labourer. "We were told the solar panels would reduce our electricity





by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Rani ki Vav

- **Rani-ki-Vav**, on the **banks** of the **Saraswati River**, was initially built as a **memorial** to a **king** in the **11th century AD**.
- **Stepwells** are a **distinctive form** of **subterranean water resource and storage systems** on the **Indian subcontinent**, and have been constructed since the **3rd millennium BC**.
- The **step well** was **built** in **1063** by **Rani Udayamati** of the **Chalukya Dynasty** to **commemorate** her **husband, Bhimdev I**.
- A **1304 composition** of **Jain monk, Merutunga**, mentions that **Udayamati**, the daughter of **Naravaraha Khangara**, built this stepwell at Patan.
- They **evolved over time** from what was basically a **pit in sandy soil** towards **elaborate multi-storey works of art and architecture**.
- **Rani-ki-Vav** was **built** at the **height of craftsmens' ability** in **step well construction** and the **Maru-Gurjara architectural style**, reflecting **mastery** of this **complex technique** and **great beauty** of **detail and proportions**.
- **Rani-ki-Vav** is a **single-component, water management system** divided into **seven levels of stairs** and **sculptural panels** of **high artistic and aesthetic quality**.
- It is **oriented** in an **east-west direction** and combines all of the **principle components** of a **stepwell**, including a **stepped corridor** beginning at **ground level**, a **series of four pavilions** with an **increasing amount of storeys** towards the **west**, the **tank**, and the well in **tunnel shaft form**.
- The **architecture** and **sculptures** are similar to the **Vimala Vasahi temple** on **Mount Abu** and **Sun temple** at **Modhera**.
- The **sculptures** of **deities** with their **families** such as **Brahma-Savitri**, **Uma-Maheshwar** and **Lakshmi-Narayan** are there.
- Notable among other sculptures are **Ardhanarishwara** as well as large number of goddesses such as **Lakshmi, Parvati, Saraswati, Chamunda, Durga/Mahishasura Mardini** with twenty hands, **Kshemankari, Suryani** and **Saptamatrikas**.
- There are images of **Navagraha** (nine planets) as well.





by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Ancient stewardship now stamped on the present

**T**wo pieces of news have had me captive under their spell over the past few days. The first is a promotion video from the film *PSI*, where the lead actor, Chiyyan Vikram, highlights the magnificent deeds of an almost divine king. The second is about a non-descript *samadhi* marked by an oblong Shiva *lingam* in Udayalur, Tamil Nadu. Being the Jal Shakti Minister, what struck me was this king's relationship with water, so much so that the novel this film is based on is called *Ponniyin Selvan* (PS), or 'Son of the Cauvery'. This king's genius shines resplendently in the Brihadisvara temple (Thanjavur district, Tamil Nadu) and his humility seems so endearing in his simple *samadhi*.

The king that we are talking about – radiant as the sun and as majestic as the seas that he had mastered – is Raja-Dhi-Raj, 'Rajakesari' Arulmoli Raja Raja Chola I. The renewed interest in him is yet another instance of the Indic revolution; of our forefathers who ruled by the principles laid down by our *Dharma Shastras* and who considered themselves mere servants of god and his disciples.

Raja Raja Chola I was not the first Chola King to focus on water. The illustrious Karikala Chola created the great anicut of Kallanai (Tamil Nadu), one of the oldest water regulatory structures and a heritage irrigation structure that is still in use today. The great/grand anicut with its multiple channels still ensures that the waters of the Cauvery reach the fields. But what Raja Raja Chola did that stood out against the sheer daring of his ancestors was the establishment of an astute governance model.

In 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the foundation stone laying ceremony of Parliament highlighted "historical evidence in the village of Uttaramerur... in Tamil Nadu" and how "stone inscriptions on the panchayat system prevalent during the Chola empire" explained how "every village was categorized as *Kudumbu*, which we call the ward today. One representative from these *kudumbus* was sent to the General Assembly, as it happens today". The people had



**Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**

is Union Cabinet Minister, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India

There are several examples – in water management for instance – of how our ancestors showed they were part of a super

failed to declare details of his property. The Chola kings granted autonomy to village councils to make decisions about their villages while the kingdom held the power of audit over them. One of the most remarkable strategies of the great king to unify the land under him was to convert landlords into dependent government servants which gave the kingdom stability and made the king and his central cabinet the fulcrum around which the kingdom operated.

### Water management of the highest order

As dictated by Visnu and Vasistha's *Dharma Shastras* as well as Chanakya's *Arthashastra*, instructions on water management were followed by him closely. The king's focus on water conservation and rainwater harvesting were such that his kingdom had thousands of ancient tanks serving communities; there were well-laid down rules for planning and the management of water. These tanks were never large as they were built according to the topography of the Deccan plateau. Surprisingly, every village had a *Neerkatti*, in-charge of irrigation, who supplied water from these tanks to the fields by following a schedule. All these activities were under the watchful eye of the village council which discussed, planned and managed the resources judiciously. The Parakesarivarma inscriptions highlight the punishment for unauthorised withdrawal of water. One of the astounding facts is the parameter for utilisation of water against the capacity of the tank that they tried to maintain. This minimum parameter, of 2.5 times, is still used by the Government when it comes to planning and building dams.

When it came to governance, Raja Raja Chola I was not only a micro manager of the highest order but also an ambitious planner and an executor-par-excellence like his forefathers. In his lifetime, he built over 5,000 dams and set up a water ministry. Some such as the Uyyakondan channel (985-1013 AD) are still functional. During the time of the Cholas, the work of water and flood management was considered to be a pious

descended to strengthen flood banks following the prayers of an old woman. One more aspect of the sophistication of his methods was the provision to effect the cost equivalent to labour for various works of irrigation and water management – which is followed under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. Inscriptions have shown that the government and people used to work together for water conservation – again followed by the Jal Shakti Abhiyan.

### Other examples

We really do not have to look for new theories and practices in water conservation. We just have to revisit the past. Our great kings have been wiser than most of us can even begin to comprehend. When Kempegowda began to work on his dream city of Bengaluru, his mother only had two pieces of advice – '*Keregalam Kattu*, and *Marangalam Nedu* (Build lakes, plant trees)'. The Pallavas had a separate body for lake management called the "*Eri Varyam*". King Rudradaman of Junagadh, Gujarat, spent all of his personal fortune repairing the embankments of lake Sudarshana when it was destroyed in a cloud burst. We all know that Shah Jahan built the Taj Mahal in memory of his wife, but not many know what the *Rani Ki Vav* (or the queen's stepwell) in Gujarat is; it was built by queen Udayamati which some say was in memory of King Bhimdev – also a symbol of love, wherein a heritage structure quenches the thirst of millions.

What does a great kingdom mean? Does being powerful and prosperous count as greatness? Or is it something else? For me, one vital ingredient is empathy – a kingdom having it along with the above is truly great. Be it water or something else, empathy lies at the beating heart of a great empire. And empathy is something that our great ancestors practised. Our ancestors were a super generation ahead of its times, but tightly fastened to the teachings of the past. As the great king's story is retold to a wide-eyed audience, may his life serve as a reminder of the same virtues that



by: **Piyush Kumar**

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Raskhan

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- **Raskhan** (1548-1628) was an **Indian Sufi Muslim poet** who became a **devotee** of the **Hindu deity Krishna**.
- His **original name** was **Syed Ibrahim Khan** and he lived somewhere in Delhi.
- He **accepted Krishna** as the **supreme god (Svayam Bhagavan)** and became a **Vaishnava**.
- **Rachnavali** is the **collection of Raskhan's poetry**.
- His **creations** describe the **beauty of not only Lord Krishna** but also **his relations with his beloved Radha**.
- His poetry is in the form of **Doha, Padawali** and **Savayya**.
- **Raskhan's Khariboli writings** are **numerous**, the **five most important** being the **Sujana Raskhana**, the **Prem Vatika**, the **Danalila**, the **Astayama** and a collection of **Padas** (rhymed couplets).
- Of these the **most well-known** is **Prem Vatika** ("The Forest of Love").
- Apart from **Lilas**, **Raskhan** has also **created poems** on **Lord Shankar**, **Goddess Ganga**, and the **Holi festival**.



by: Piyush Kumar

## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

### U.P. promotes tombs of Muslim devotees of Krishna for tourism

**Sreeparna Chakrabarty**  
MATHIURA

Amid the forested lanes of Gokul in Mathura are the once forgotten tombs of Raskhan and Taj Bibi, arguably the two most famous Muslim devotees of Lord Krishna. With the Uttar Pradesh government focussed on creating Krishna Janmabhoomi as a major pilgrim tourist destination in the State, the redevelopment of these burial sites has been prioritised. A 14-acre complex has been developed around the two hitherto neglected tombs.

A senior official of the State Tourism Department, who did not wish to be named, told *The Hindu* that the decision had been taken “keeping in mind the discussion around communal amity in the country nowadays”. “Here are two widely respected Muslim



**New attraction:** The mausoleum of Taj Bibi at Mahavan in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh. R. V. MOORTHY

poets of repute. We wanted them to be rediscovered,” the source said.

Raskhan, or Syed Ibrahim Khan, was a 16th century Sufi Muslim poet born either in Amroha or Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh. He became a follower of Krishna and spent his life in Vrindavan.

Taj Bibi, also known as the ‘Mughal Mirabai’, was the daughter of a Muslim

the Mughals to protect the Gokul area.

The official said the tomb complex was proposed to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath as one of the first pilgrim tourist sites to be developed in the Braj (Mathura-Vrindavan) area, and the Chief Minister was “excited” about the project, for which funds were released immediately.

the site after its completion, as has Mathura MP Hema Malini. The complex receives around 2,000-3,000 visitors daily.

“The total cost of the project was around ₹10 crore,” Pankaj Verma, Deputy CEO, Braj Teerth Vikas Parishad, said. The Parishad is dedicated to the redevelopment of the Braj region as a pilgrimage destination.

According to local officials, apart from the increase in tourist footfall, the area itself has been resuscitated as it had become a haven for drug addicts and petty criminals. Taj Bibi’s mausoleum, which had been in a state of complete ruin, had been encroached upon.

Officials said there may be many more such historically important sites in Braj, which have to be redeveloped by providing better infrastructure for





by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Taj Bibi

- **Taj Bibi** was an **ardent devotee** of **Shri Krishna**.
- She was **born** in the **17th century**.
- Taj Bibi was **married** to **Emperor Akbar**.
- Taj Bibi had the **opportunity** to **associate** with **Krishna's devotees** and she **used to** **hear** the **pastimes** of **Shri Krishna**, due to which **love towards Shri Krishna** arose in Taj Bibi's heart.
- When **Birbal's daughter Shobhavati** used to come to **meet Taj Bibi**, she often **used** to **talk** about **Vrindavan** and **Gusain Shri Vitthalnath Ji**.
- Shobhavati told Taj Bibi the **glory** of **Braj Dham** and **Gusain Shri Vitthalnath Ji** so much that **Taj Bibi** started **craving** for **Braj Dham** and **Gusain Shri Vitthalnath Ji's** darshan.
- Taj Bibi **visited many places** of **pastimes** and **temples** in **Braj**.
- Taj Bibi did **not feel** like **going out of Braj** after **seeing** the **beautiful forests** and **bowers** of **Braj Dham** but still, she **returned** to **Delhi** after a **few days** as per **Akbar's orders**.
- Taj Bibi came back from Braj but **her mind** was **wandering** in **Braj itself**.
- She started **chanting** the **name** of **Shri Krishna**.
- Taj Bibi had **brought** with **her** a **picture** of **Shri Krishna** from Braj, and she started **serving** him by **offering** **flowers** and **fruits**.
- Taj Bibi also used to **come** to **listen** to **Gusain Ji's** devotional discourses.
- Taj Bibi **came** to **Vrindavan** and **started** **living** in a **hut**.
- Taj Bibi **left** her **body** in **Gokul Mahavan** and **attained** **Shri Radha Krishna's** **pastimes** in the **form** of a **Gopi**. This is where Taj Bibi's samadhi is located.





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# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Armistice Day (11th November 1918)

- **Armistice Day**, also known as **Veterans Day** is **commemorated** every year on **11 November** to mark the **armistice** signed between the **Allies of World War I** and **Germany** at **Compiègne, France**, at **5:45 AM** for the cessation of hostilities on the Western Front of World War I, which took effect at eleven in the morning—the “**eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month**” of 1918.
- The **military situation** for the **Central Powers** had been **deteriorating** rapidly since the **Battle of Amiens** at the beginning of **August 1918**, which precipitated a **German withdrawal** to the **Hindenburg Line** and loss of the gains of the German spring offensive.
- The Allied advance, later known as the **Hundred Days Offensive**, entered a new stage on 28 September, when a massive **United States** and **French attack** opened the **Meuse–Argonne** offensive, while to the north, the British were poised to assault at the **St Quentin Canal**, threatening a giant pincer movement.
- Meanwhile, the **Ottoman Empire** was close to exhaustion, the **Austro-Hungarian Empire** was in chaos, and on the **Macedonian front**, resistance by the **Bulgarian Army** had **collapsed**, leading to the **Armistice of Salonica** on **29 September**.
- In Germany, **chronic food shortages** caused by the **Allied blockade** were increasingly leading to discontent and disorder.
- Although morale on the German front line was **reasonable**, **battlefield casualties**, **starvation rations** and **Spanish flu** had caused a desperate **shortage** of **manpower**, and those recruits that were available were war-weary and disaffected.
- On **29 September 1918**, the **German Supreme Army Command** at **Imperial Army Headquarters** in **Spa** of **occupied Belgium** informed **Kaiser Wilhelm II** and the **Imperial Chancellor, Count Georg von Hertling**, that the military situation facing Germany was hopeless.
- Quartermaster General **Erich Ludendorff**, probably fearing a breakthrough, claimed that he could not guarantee that the front would hold for another two hours and demanded a request be given to the Entente for an immediate ceasefire.



by: **Piyush Kumar**

## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- In addition, he recommended the acceptance of the main demands of US president Woodrow Wilson (**the Fourteen Points**) including putting the **Imperial Government** on a **democratic footing**, hoping for more favorable peace terms.
- The **sailors' revolt** that took place during the night of **29 to 30 October 1918** in the **naval port** of **Wilhelmshaven** spread across the whole country within days and led to the proclamation of a republic on 9 November and to the announcement of the abdication of Wilhelm II.
- In some areas, soldiers challenged the authority of their officers and on occasion established Soldiers' Councils, such as the Brussels Soldiers' Council set up by revolutionary soldiers on 9 November.
- The Armistice was the result of a **hurried and desperate process**.
- The German delegation headed by **Matthias Erzberger** crossed the front line in five cars and was escorted for ten hours across the devastated war zone of Northern France, arriving on the morning of 8 November 1918.
- They were then taken to the **secret destination** aboard **Ferdinand Foch's** private train parked in a railway siding in the Forest of Compiègne.



by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Bipin Chandra Pal (7th November 1858)

- **Bipin Chandra** was an Indian nationalist, writer, orator, social reformer and Indian independence movement freedom fighter.
- **Pal** is known as the **Father of Revolutionary Thoughts in India**.
- Pal became a **major leader** of the **Indian National Congress**.
- At the **Madras session** of **Indian National Congress** held in **1887**, Bipin Chandra Pal made a **strong plea** for **repeal** of the **Arms Act** which was discriminatory in nature.
- Along with **Lala Lajpat Rai** and **Bal Gangadhar Tilak** he belonged to the **Lal-Bal-Pal** trio that was associated with revolutionary activity.
- Sri Aurobindo Ghosh and Pal were recognised as the **chief exponents** of a **new national movement** revolving around the **ideals** of **Purna Swaraj**, **Swadeshi**, **boycott** and **national education**.
- His programme consisted of **Swadeshi**, **boycott** and **national education**.
- He **preached** and **encouraged** the **use** of **Swadeshi** and the **boycott** of **foreign goods** to **eradicate poverty** and **unemployment**.
- He wanted to **remove social evils** and arouse **feelings** of **nationalism** through national criticism.
- He had no faith in mild protests in the form of non-cooperation with the British colonial government.
- A journalist by profession, Pal served as the **founder editor** of **Paridarshak**, before going on to **edit several** other **English** and **Bengali newspapers** from Calcutta, Lahore, Allahabad and London.
- In the wake of the **Bengal partition**, a journal he had founded earlier, **New India**, took a fresh turn as a **political chronicle** meant to **create social awareness**.
- In 1906, Pal started a **daily** called **Vande Mataram**.
- His prominent books include '**Nationality and Empire**', '**Indian Nationalism**', '**Swaraj and the Present Situation**', '**The Soul of India**', '**The Basis of Social Reform**', '**The Hinduism**' and '**The New Spirit**'.
- He also set up a school — **Anushilan Samiti** — and began a tour of the country to propagate his philosophy.
- After his first wife passed away, he married a **widow** and joined the **Brahmo Samaj**, which, among other things, denounced the caste system.
- He was also an **ardent proponent** of **gender equality**.





by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Maulana Azad

- **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad** was one of the **most influential independence activists** during **India's freedom struggle**. He was also a **noted writer, poet and journalist**. He was a **prominent political leader** of the **Indian National Congress** and was elected as **Congress President** in **1923** and **1940**.
- **Maulana Azad** had a **natural inclination** towards **writing** and this **resulted** in the **start of the monthly magazine "Nairang-e-Alam"** in 1899.
- In Egypt, Azad came into **contact** with the **followers of Mustafa Kemal Pasha** who were **publishing a weekly** from Cairo. In **Turkey**, **Maulana Azad** met the **leaders** of the **Young Turks Movement**. After his return to **India** from an **extensive visit of Egypt, Turkey, Syria and France**, **Azad** met **prominent Hindu revolutionaries Sri Aurobindo Ghosh and Shyam Sundar Chakraborty**. They helped in **developing radical political views** and he began to participate in the Indian nationalist movement.
- He also **rejected the theories of communal separatism** advocated by the **All India Muslim League**.
- Azad, inspired by the **passion of Indian** as well as **foreign revolutionary leaders**, started publishing a weekly called "**Al-Hilal**" in 1912. The weekly was a **platform** to **attack the policies** of the **British Government** and **highlight the problems** faced by the **common Indians**. The paper became so popular that its circulation figures went up to 26,000 copies.
- Maulana Azad, a few months later, launched a new weekly, called "**Al-Balagh**". Failing to **put a prohibition** on the **writings of Maulana Azad**, the **British Government** then finally **decided to deport him off Calcutta** in 1916. When Maulana Azad reached Bihar, he was arrested and put under house arrest. This **detention continued till December 31, 1919**.
- He **presided over the special session of Congress** in **September 1923** and was said to be the **youngest man elected as the President of the Congress**.
- In 1928, **Maulana Azad** endorsed the **Nehru Report**, formulated by **Motilal Nehru**. Interestingly, the **Motilal Nehru Report** was **severely criticized** by a **number of Muslim personalities** involved with the freedom movement.



by: Piyush Kumar

## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- As opposed to Muhammad Ali Jinnah, **Azad** also **advocated** for the **ending** of **separate electorates based on religion** and called for a **single nation committed to secularism**.
- In 1930, Maulana Azad was **arrested** for **violation** of the **salt laws** as part of Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha. He was put in Meerut jail for a year and a half.
- During the violence that erupted following partition of India, **Maulana Azad** assured to

take up the **responsibility** for the **security of Muslims in India**. Towards this, **Azad** **toured** the **violence-affected regions** of **borders of Bengal, Assam, and Punjab**. He helped in **establishing** the **refugee camps** and **ensured** **uninterrupted supply of food** and **other basic materials**. It was reported that in the **crucial Cabinet meetings** both **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel** and **Maulana Azad** **clashed** over the **security measures** in **Delhi** and the **Punjab**.

### Kharge pays homage to Ambedkar, Maulana Azad

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Days after taking over as Congress president, Mallikarjun Kharge is making visible efforts to pay tributes to leaders that the party has often been accused of ignoring in the past. On Friday, he visited Bhimrao Ambedkar's memorial and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's *mazaar* (grave) to offer his homage to the two freedom fighters, who were also part of

Cabinet under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

"Bhakti in religion may be a road to the salvation of the soul. But in politics, Bhakti or hero-worship is a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship," quoting India's first Law Minister, Mr. Kharge tweeted, "Visited Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Memorial in Delhi today and paid floral tributes to Babasaheb".

"A revolutionary freedom fighter and India's First Education Minister,

try's democratic and secular credentials and strongly opposed the idea of Partition on religious lines," the newly elected Congress chief said in another tweet.

A senior leader told *The Hindu* that though Friday's visit to the Ambedkar's memorial and Maulana Azad's *mazaar* was pre-planned, it is also aimed at stopping the BJP "from appropriating stalwarts who were associated with Congress".

On Wednesday, ahead of his taking over as the party

ed Mahatma Gandhi's memorial at Rajghat and also visited the memorials of Pandit Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and former Deputy Prime Minister Jagjivan Ram, and paid tributes to the leaders.

Even in his acceptance speech, the newly elected Congress chief had referred to the Congress leadership of Subhash Chandra Bose, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Maulana Azad and Babu Jagjivan

Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi.

"It's not as if the Congress party was not honoring leaders like Sardar Patel ji, Netaji or Lal Bahadur Shastri earlier. The Nehru-Gandhi family often became the target of BJP's attack because of their own family legacy," said another leader, adding, "Kharge's trip on Friday was planned in advance as he couldn't go to these memorials on Wednesday be-



by: Piyush Kumar

# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Sardar Vallabhai Patel

**Context:** Nation celebrated 147th birth anniversary of freedom fighter and 1st Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of independent India, Sardar Vallabhai Patel.

### Childhood and Early Life:

- Sardar Patel was born **Vallabhbhai Jhaverbhai Patel** in 1875, at **Nadiad, Gujarat, British India**, in a **middle-class agricultural family** of **Lewa Patidar community**.
- Growing up in a **traditional Hindu family**, his **early childhood** was spent on the **family's agricultural fields** at **Karamsad**.
- **Patel** aimed to **work** and **collect necessary money** to go to **England** to **study law**.
- In 1902, **Patel** moved to **Borsad** (Kheda district) to **practice law**, where he successfully **handled challenging court cases**.
- As an **eminent barrister in criminal law**, he led a **westernized lifestyle**. Known for his **courteous, well-mannered behavior**, **western clothes**, and **expertise** in the **game of bridge**, he **wasn't interested in politics**.

### Indian National Movement:

- Joining India's independence movement, **Patel** motivated the **people of Borsad** in **September 1917** to join **Gandhi's demand** for **independence**.
- **Patel** joined the **Indian National Congress' Gujarat Sabha** as **secretary** and helped in **Gandhi's campaigns**.
- **Kheda district** faced a **plague epidemic** in **1917**, followed by a **famine** in **1918**. Despite **crop failures**, the **British government** refused to **exempt the land revenue**. **Patel** led the **agitation** of the **farmers** and **zamindars** to **get tax exemption**.
- He started wearing **Indian attire** made of **Khadi** (Indian handloom cotton). He **traveled from place to place** and **recruited 3,00,000 members** and **collected a fund of Rs.1.5 million** for the **Non-Cooperation Movement**.
- In **1923**, while **Gandhi** was in **prison**, **Patel** led the **Satyagraha Movement** in **Nagpur**, when the **British** banned **hoisting** of the **Indian flag**. He **succeeded in obtaining the consent** to **hoist the flag publicly**, and also got the **prisoners released** (arrested for hoisting the flag).



by: Piyush Kumar

## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- From 1924-1928, **Patel** was **chosen** the **President** of the **municipal committee** of **Ahmedabad**. During these years, he implemented **several sanitation, water supply, administration and town planning programs**. He also **worked towards** several **social reforms**, including **prohibition of untouchability, casteism, alcoholism, etc.**
- In 1928, the government raised the **land revenue** at a time when the **farmers** in **Bardoli taluka** of **Surat district** were **already facing famine**. **Patel** **toured** the **villages** to **gauge** the **condition**. Before launching a Satyagraha, he **forewarned** the **villagers** of the **difficulties** and asked them to **maintain non-violence** and **unity**.
- In 1930, **Gandhi** gave the **call** for **Dandi March** and **Salt Satyagraha** to **protest against** the **salt tax**. As one of the leaders, **Patel** was **arrested** before the **Dandi March** on March 7, 1930. He **was tried without any witnesses or lawyers**. After Gandhi's arrest, the **agitation intensified**, demanding **release** of the **leaders**. Patel was released in June and took on the **responsibilities** as the **Congress president** in **absence of Gandhi**. However, he was **arrested** once again.
- **Patel** was **elected** the **President** of the **46th session** of the **Indian National Congress** at **Karachi**, in **March 1931**. **Congress** approved the **Gandhi-Irwin Pact**, though **Nehru** and **Bose** didn't totally agree with the terms of the pact.
- As per the **Government of India Act 1935**, the **Congress** decided to **participate** in the **elections** to **provincial legislatures**. **Patel** played an **important role** in **raising funds** and **selecting candidates** for these elections. The **Indian National Congress** won in **7 out of 11 provinces**. As the **chairman** of the **Congress Parliamentary Sub-committee**, he guided the ministries.
- On August 8, 1942, the **All India Congress Committee** launched the **Quit India Movement**. Many prominent **Congress leaders**, including **Patel**, were **arrested** on **August 9, 1942**. **Patel** was **arrested** and **confined** at the **Ahmednagar Fort** for **3 years**. All Congress leaders were released in 1945, after the end of WWII.
- The **British government** called for **negotiations** with the **Indian National Congress** for the **independence** of **India**. The **Muslim League** leader **Jinah's separatist movement** put a **roadblock** in front of the Congress leaders. Initially, **Patel** was **against** the **partition of India**. However, he **realized** that these **communal conflicts** could lead to a **weak**





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## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

**government** at the **center**, so he **agreed** to create a **separate dominion** (based on **religious preferences**).

- He **discussed** with **Gandhi** at **private meetings**, convinced him that the **Congress-Muslim League alliance government would not work**, and would **lead** to a **civil war** in the **country**.
- At the time of **independence**, the **partition** of **British India** into **India-Pakistan** resulted in **large-scale communal riots**. **Patel worked** tirelessly to **establish peace**, and **provide safety** and **essentials** to the **refugees**. He **went** to **border areas** to **organize relief** and set up **refugee camps**.

### **Work During the Post-Independent India:**

- Patel was the **first Deputy Prime Minister** and the **first Home Minister** of Independent

**India**. As the **home minister**, **Patel** had a **herculean task** to **convince** the **princely states** to join **India**. With his **tactful negotiation**, he **succeeded** in **integrating over 560 states** to the **Indian Union**. There were a **few states** like **Junagadh, Jammu & Kashmir**, and **Hyderabad**, which did not comply. Without these states joining the **Indian Union**, the country would've been **disjointed**, so **Patel used force** to **deal** with them. Because of his efforts, today **India stands** as an **integrated nation**.

- Patel was the **driving force** behind **creating** the **All India Services**, which he knew would be **essential** for **providing a firm infrastructure** to the new nation. He was also an **important part** of the **Constituent Assembly** of **India**. The **Somnath Temple** in **Saurashtra** was **restored** under his **supervision**.



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# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Surendranath Banerjee

- **Surendranath Banerjee** was an **Indian nationalist leader** during the **British Rule**.
- He founded a **nationalist organization** called the **Indian National Association** and was one of the **founding members** of the **Indian National Congress**.
- After graduation from college, he applied in **England** for **admission** to the **Indian Civil Service**, which at that time had only one Hindu.
- Banerjee was rejected on the grounds that he had misrepresented his age.
- **Charging racial discrimination**, he won his **appeal** by arguing that he **calculated** his **age** according to the **Hindu custom** of **reckoning age** from the **date of conception** rather than from **birth**.
- Surendranath was influenced by the writings of **Italian nationalist Giuseppe Mazzini**.
- In 1879, he bought the newspaper, **The Bengalee** (founded in 1862 by **Girish Chandra Ghosh**) and edited it for **40 years**.
- In 1883, when **Banerjee** was arrested for **publishing remarks** in his paper, in **contempt of court, protests** and **hartals** erupted across Bengal, and in Indian cities such as **Agra, Faizabad, Amritsar, Lahore** and **Pune**.
- He became the **first Indian journalist** to be **imprisoned**.
- Surendranath was one of the most important public leaders who protested the partition of the Bengal province in 1905. Bane
- **Banerjee** was in the **forefront** of the **movement** and **organized protests, petitions** and **extensive public support** across **Bengal** and **India**, which finally compelled the British to reverse the bifurcation of Bengal in 1912.
- **Banerjee** became the **patron** of rising Indian leaders like **Gopal Krishna Gokhale** and **Sarojini Naidu**.
- The **declining popularity** of **moderate Indian politicians** affected Banerjee's role in Indian politics.
- Banerjee **supported** the **Morley-Minto reforms 1909** – which were **resented** and **ridiculed** as **insufficient** and **meaningless** by the vast majority of the Indian public and nationalist politicians.
- Banerjee was a **critic** of the **proposed method of civil disobedience** advocated



by: **Piyush Kumar**

## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

by **Mahatma Gandhi**, the rising popular leader of Indian nationalists and the Congress Party.

- **Surendranath Banerjee** was in favor of **accepting** the **Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms**.
- They left the **Congress** and founded the **Indian Liberation Federation**.
- They were termed as Liberals and they lost their relevance in the Indian National Movement thereafter.
- Accepting the **portfolio** of **minister** in the **Bengal government** earned him the **ire** of **nationalists** and much of the public, and he **lost** the election to the **Bengal Legislative Assembly** in 1923 to **Bidhan Chandra Roy**, the candidate of the **Swarajya Party** – ending his political career for all practical purposes.
- He was **knighted** for his **political support** of the **British Empire**.
- Banerjee made the **Calcutta Municipal Corporation** a **more democratic body** while **serving** as a **minister** in the **Bengal government**.



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# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Tipu Sultan

- **Tipu Sultan**, also spelled Tipu Sultan, also called **Tippu Sahib** or **Fateh Ali Tipu**, byname **Tiger of Mysore**, (born 1750, Devanhalli [India]—died May 4, 1799, Seringapatam [now Shrirangapattana]), sultan of Mysore, who won fame in the wars of the late 18th century in southern India.
- Tipu Sultan was the **son of Haider Ali**, an **illiterate soldier of fortune** rising through the ranks of the **Mysorean army** to seize control from the Maharaja and proclaim himself Sultan in 1761.
- A capable ruler, **Haider employed French mercenaries** to help **adopt European military tactics** within his armies, **bolstering** their **efficiency** and **allowing** him to **expand** his **kingdom**, which corresponds to the present-day city of Mysore in the state of Karnataka.
- Haider fought **two wars** with the **British East India Company**, the **second** of which his son **Tipu** proved his **mettle** at the **Battle of Pollilur**, handing the British their severest blow in the subcontinent.
- **Tales of the father and son's triumphs** made their way **across the globe**, from Europe to the founding fathers of the United States, where they became household names.
- **Inheriting the throne** in **1782** during **wartime**, **Tipu** made **short work** of the **British**, capturing **one in five** of their **officers** present in the **subcontinent** and **ending** the war by **becoming** only **one of two men** in **South Asia** to **dictate treaty terms** to the British, who were desperate to sue for peace.
- Like his father, Tipu understood how and why the Western world had advanced much further than the East.
- Topped off with **great ambition**, despite receiving a **hefty inheritance**, including a sprawling 80,000 square-mile kingdom, six million subjects, and the most effective military in the region, Tipu continued building off his father's successes by modelling his administration along European lines.
- He saw his **administration** as **Sarkar-i-Khudadad** (God-given), and his responsibility to improve the lives of his people.
- **Personally supervising** each **department** of his **administration**, Tipu Sultan wore many hats, from chief merchant to commander-in-chief.





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## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- Understanding that manufacture and trade made European economies superior, Tipu propelled the industry of Mysore, importing **silkworms** and **pearl divers**, and establishing over a dozen factories, from **Mysore** to **Jeddah**, producing everything from **armaments**, **cutlery**, **candy**, and **gunpowder** with quality outmatching even the English.
- Tipu's effective administration **maximised land cultivation**, **slashed hereditary land holdings**, and heavily populated cities in one fell swoop.
- The English could not help but comment in awe that Mysore "was the best cultivated and its population the most flourishing in India".
- Compared to his native contemporaries, including the Marathas and enfeebled Mughals (now pensioners of the British), **Mysore** was an **anomaly** –a **thriving state**.
- Well-versed and intelligent, possessing a **library** stocked with **thousands** of **books** (including two he had written on dreams and astrology), **Tipu** was a **great patron** of the **arts**, **commissioning architectural gems** and **attracting intellectuals** and **poets** to court.
- The centrepiece of his reign was the **tiger**, which he **adopted** as the **symbol** of his rule, **embossing tiger imagery** everywhere, from **artillery** and **uniforms** to a solid gold throne.
- Tipu was an **exceptionally devout Muslim**, as a ruler with a large number of Hindu subjects, he maintained a high level of **religious tolerance**, **granting minorities** complete freedom of **worship**, **appointing Hindus to senior posts**, and bestowing land grants and lavish gifts to temples.
- Increasingly isolated by envious neighbours, **Tipu dispatched diplomatic missions** to numerous states.
- From the Ottoman Empire, he received a **legal investiture** to **rule** in the Caliph's name and from France, **engineers** and **tradesmen** to help build his industries and armies, though owing to their own respective conflicts, neither could grant him the military alliance, he desperately required.
- On the battlefield, **Tipu's performance** was **equally notable**.
- A pioneer of rocketry, in 1787, he repelled a **coalition** of his **two immediate neighbours**, the **Marathas** and the military of **Hyderabad**, pushing them to sue for peace, and was noted for serving his prisoners of war with humanity.
- Unlike his contemporaries, the sultan understood the British for the colonisers they were, though his warnings fell on deaf ears.



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## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- Feeling threatened by his existence, the British considered Tipu Sultan as the main obstacle toward dominance.
- In 1792, an **English-led coalition** with the **Marathas** and **Hyderabad overwhelmed** and **defeated Tipu**, taking **half his kingdom** and **restricting** with it his ability to retain his forces, though **Tipu managed** to **recoup** his **financial losses** quickly.
- In 1798 they once more invaded, and with his **armies shrunk** and his **officers betraying** him after being bought by the British, Tipu made his last stand at his fortress in **Srirangapatna**, dying in battle on May 4, 1799. Mysore became a princely state, bowing to the whims of their English masters.



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# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Tughlaq Dynasty

- The **reign of Tughlaq started in the year 1320** and it **continued till 1413**.
- The **dynasty expanded its territorial reach** through a **military campaign** led by **Muhammad bin Tughluq**, and **reached its zenith between 1330 and 1335**. It **ruled most of the Indian subcontinent**.
- **Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq** is also **referred to in scholarly works as Tughlak Shah**.

### Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq:

#### Rising to Power:

- After the **death of Alauddin Khalji**, the **Khaljis were in a declining state**.
- **Khusro Khan**, the **last ruler of the Khalji regime**, **killed Mubarak Khalji** and many **other nobles** due to which a **discontent was getting generated**.
- **Delhi's aristocracy** invited **Ghazi Malik**, then the **governor of Punjab** to organize a **military coup**.
- In 1320, **Ghazi Malik** launched an **attack** with the use of an **army of Khokhar tribesmen** and **killed Khusro Khan** to **assume power**.
- After **assuming power**, **Ghazi Malik** renamed himself **Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq** – thus **starting and naming the Tughlaq dynasty**.
- **Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq rewarded** all those **maliks, amirs and officials of Khalji dynasty** who had **rendered him a service** and **helped him come to power**.
- He **punished** those who had **rendered service to Khusro Khan**, his predecessor.
- He **lowered the tax rate on Muslims** that was **prevalent during Khalji dynasty**, but **raised the taxes on Hindus**, wrote his court **historian Ziauddin Barani**, so that they might **not be blinded by wealth** or **afford to become rebellious**.
- In 1321, he sent his eldest son **Ulugh Khan**, later known as **Muhammad bin Tughlaq**, to **Deogir** to **plunder the Hindu kingdoms of Arangal and Tilang** (now part of **Telangana**). His first attempt was a **failure**.
- Four months later, **Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq** sent **large army reinforcements** for his son **asking him to attempt plundering Arangal and Tilang** again.



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## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- This time **Ulugh Khan** succeeded. **Arangal fell**, was renamed to **Sultanpur**, and all **plundered wealth, state treasury** and **captives** were **transferred** from the **captured kingdom** to **Delhi Sultanate**.
- The **Muslim aristocracy** in **Lukhnauti (Bengal)** invited **Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq** to **extend his coup** and **expand eastwards** into **Bengal** by **attacking Shamsuddin Firoz Shah**, which he did over 1324–1325 AD, after **placing Delhi** under control of his **son Ulugh Khan**, and then leading his army to **Lukhnauti**. **Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq succeeded** in this campaign.
- **Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq** and his **son, Mahmud Khan**, were **killed** by his son, **Ulugh Juna Khan**, inside a **wooden structure** which was **designed to collapse**, called **kushk**.

### **Muhammad bin Tughlaq:**

- During **Muhammad bin Tughlaq's** rule, **Delhi Sultanate temporarily expanded** to most of the **Indian subcontinent**, its **peak** in **terms of geographical reach**.
- He **attacked and plundered Malwa, Gujarat, Mahratta, Tilang, Kampila, Dhur-samundar, Mabar, Lakhnauti, Chittagong, Sunarganow and Tirhut**.
- His **distant campaigns** were **expensive**, although each **raid and attack** on **non-Muslim kingdoms** brought new **looted wealth** and **ransom payments** from **captured people**.
- The **extended empire** was **difficult to retain**, and **rebellions** all over the **Indian subcontinent** became **routine**.
- He **raised taxes** to **levels** where **people refused to pay any**.
- In India's fertile lands between **Ganges** and **Yamuna rivers**, the **Sultan increased the land tax rate** on **non-Muslims** by **tenfold** in **some districts**, and **twentyfold** in others.
- Along with **land taxes**, **dhimmis (non-Muslims)** were required to **pay crop taxes** by **giving up half or more** of their **harvested crop**.
- **Muhammad bin Tughlaq** chose the **city of Deogiri** in present-day Indian state of **Maharashtra** (renaming it to **Daulatabad**), as the **second administrative capital** of the **Dehli Sultanate**.
- He **ordered a forced migration** of the **Muslim population** of **Dehli**, including his **royal family, the nobles, Syeds, Sheikhs and Ulema** to settle in **Daulatabad**.
- The **purpose** of **transferring the entire Muslim elite** to **Daulatabad** was to **enroll** them in his **mission of world conquest**.





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## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- He saw their role as **propagandists** who would **adapt Islamic religious symbolism** to the **rhetoric of empire**, and that the **Sufis** could by **persuasion** bring many of the **inhabitants** of the **Deccan** to **become Muslim**.
- Tughluq cruelly **punished** the **nobles** who were **unwilling** to **move** to **Daulatabad**, seeing their **non-compliance** of his order as **equivalent** to **rebellion**.
- Muhammad bin Tughlaq's adventures in the **Deccan region** also marked **campaigns** of **destruction** and **desecration** of **Hindu** and **Jain temples**, for example the **Swayambhu Shiva Temple** and the **Thousand Pillar Temple**.
- **Revolts** against **Muhammad bin Tughlaq** began in **1327**, continued over his reign, and over time the **geographical reach** of the **Sultanate** **shrunk** particularly **after 1335**.
- The **Vijayanagara Empire** originated in **southern India** as a **direct response** to **attacks** from the **Delhi Sultanate**.
- The **Vijayanagara Empire** **liberated** **southern India** from the **Delhi Sultanate**.
- In **1336** **Kapaya Nayak** of the **Musunuri Nayak** defeated the **Tughlaq army** and **reconquered Warangal** from the **Delhi Sultanate**.
- The **economic experiments** of **Muhammad bin Tughlaq** **resulted** in a **collapsed economy**, and nearly a **decade long famine** followed that **killed numerous people** in the **countryside**.
- **Muhammad bin Tughlaq** planned an **attack** on **Khurasan** and **Irak (Babylon and Persia)** as well as **China** to **bring** these **regions** under **Sunni Islam**.
- For the **Khurasan attack**, a **cavalry** of over **300,000 horses** were **gathered** near **Delhi**, for a **year** at **state treasury's expense**, while **spies** **claiming** to be from **Khurasan** **collected rewards** for **information** on how to **attack** and **subdue** these **lands**.
- However, before he could begin the **attack** on **Persian lands** in the **second year** of **preparations**, the **plunder** he had **collected** from the **Indian subcontinent** had **emptied**, **provinces** were **too poor** to **support** the **large army**, and the **soldiers** **refused** to **remain** in his **service** without **pay**.
- For the **attack** on **China**, **Muhammad bin Tughlaq** sent **100,000 soldiers**, a part of his **army**, over the **Himalayas**. However, **Hindus** closed the **passes** through the **Himalayas** and **blocked** the **passage** for **retreat**.



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## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- **Kangra's Prithvi Chand II** defeated the army of **Muhammad bin Tughluq** which was **not able to fight** in the hills.
- Nearly all his **100,000 soldiers** perished in **1333** and were **forced to retreat**.
- The **high mountain weather** and **lack of retreat** destroyed that army in the **Himalayas**.
- At the time of **Muhammad bin Tughlaq's** death, the **geographic control** of **Delhi Sultanate** had **shrunk** to **Vindhya range** (now in central India).

### Firozshah Tughlaq:

- He **ruled** for **37 years**.
- When he **occupied** the **throne**, the **very first step** taken by him was to **dismiss** or **execute** those **nobles** who **were** in the **service** of **Mohammad bin Tughlaq**.
- The historian **Ziauddin Barani** stated **Firoz** as the **mildest sovereign** since the **rule of Islam** came to India.
- When **Firuz Shah** came to **power**, India was **suffering** from a **collapsed economy**, **abandoned villages** and **towns**, and **frequent famines**.
- He **undertook** many **infrastructure projects** including an **irrigation canal** connecting **Yamuna-Ghaggar** and **Yamuna-Sutlej** rivers, **bridges**, **madrasas** (religious schools), **mosques** and **other Islamic buildings**.
- **Firuz Shah Tughlaq** is credited with **patronizing Indo-Islamic architecture**, including the installation of **lats** (ancient **Hindu** and **Buddhist pillars**) near **mosques**.
- The **irrigation canals** continued to be in **use** through the **19th century**.
- **Firoz Shah Tughlaq** reign was marked by **reduction** in **extreme forms of torture**, **eliminating favours** to **select parts of society**, but an **increased intolerance** and **persecution of targeted groups**.
- **Announced exemption** from **taxes** and **jizya** for those who **convert**, and by **lavishing new converts** with **presents** and **honors**.
- Simultaneously, he **raised taxes** and **jizya**, **assessing** it at **three levels**, and **stopping the practice** of his **predecessors** who had **historically exempted all Hindu Brahmins** from **jizya tax**.
- **Firoz Shah Tughlaq's** death created **anarchy** and **disintegration** of the **kingdom**.
- In the years **preceding** his **death**, **internecine strife** among his **descendants** had already **erupted**.



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## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- The **first civil war** broke out in **1384 AD** four years before the **death** of **aging Firoz Shah Tughlaq**, while the **second civil war** started in **1394 AD** six years after Firoz Shah was dead.
  - The **capture** of the **Delhi Sultanate** was one of **Timur's greatest victories**, as at that time, **Delhi** was **one** of the **richest cities** in the world.
  - After **Delhi fell** to **Timur's army**, **uprisings** by its **citizens** against the **Turkic-Mongols** began to **occur**, causing a **retaliatory bloody massacre** within the city walls.
  - **After three days** of **citizens uprising** within **Delhi**, it was said that the **city reeked** of the **decomposing bodies** of its **citizens** with their **heads** being **erected like structures** and the **bodies left as food** for the **birds** by **Timur's soldiers**.
  - **Timur appointed Khizr Khan**, the **future founder** of the **succeeding Sayyid dynasty**, as his **viceroy** at Delhi.
- Taimur's Invasion:**
- The **lowest point** for the **dynasty** came in **1398**, when **Turco-Mongoli invader, Timur (Tamerlane)** defeated **four armies** of the **Sultanate**.
  - During the **invasion**, **Sultan Mahmud Khan fled** before **Tamerlane** entered **Delhi**. For **eight days** **Delhi** was **plundered**, its **population massacred**, and over **100,000 prisoners** were **killed** as well



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# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

## Vasudev Balwant Phadke (4th November 1845)

- Vasudev Balwant Phadke, one of the first revolutionaries of India, also known as the **Father of the Indian Armed Rebellion**, was born to **Balwantrao** and **Saraswatibai** on 04 November 1845 in Shirdhon (present-day Maharashtra).
- His grandfather, **Anantrao**, was the **Commander** of the **Karnala Fort** before it was taken over by the **British** in **1818**.
- **Phadke** graduated from **Bombay University** in **1862** and then worked with different government institutions.
- In **1865**, he joined the **Military Finance Office** in Pune.
- It is said that despite serving the government for a **few years**, **Phadke** was **denied leave**, when he **sought permission** to be with his **mother**, who was on her **deathbed**.
- In **1872**, **Saibai**, **Phadke's wife**, **passed away** after a brief period of illness.
- A year later, he **married Gopikabai**. Going against the **societal norms** prevalent at the time, he taught **Gopikabai** how to **read** and **write** besides **other skills** like **horse riding** and **sword fighting**.
- Articles in **magazines** and **newspapers** criticizing the **colonial regime** and **speeches** of leaders like **Dadabhai Nauroji** and **M G Ranade** (the latter led the **Poona Sarvajanic Sabha** in the 1870s) inspired Phadke.
- He was the **first Indian leader** to go from **village to village** to **preach** the **mantra** of **swaraj** and to **exhort** the **people** to **rebel** against foreign rule.
- Phadke began **delivering public lectures** and **mobilizing** the **people** across Pune.
- His aim was to **strike** an **emotional chord** with his **audience** and **wake up** their **patriotic spirit**.
- Phadke also **aspired** for **more radical action** against the **British** and was **not** in **favor** of the **petitions** and **prayers** that the **leaders** were **advocating**.
- Other factors like the **Deccan famine** of the **late 1870s**, the government's **increased revenue demands**, and **failed relief measures** that worsened the condition of the **people** further **emboldened Phadke's** **anti-colonial sentiments**.





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## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

- In **1879**, along with his associates **Gopal Hari Karve**, **Vishnu Gadre**, **Ganesh Dedhar**, and others, **Phadke** formed one of the **first revolutionary armies** of India.
- His aim was to **create** a **well-organized band of activists** to **fight** the **British**. It is believed that **Phadke** felt the **need** for an **armed revolution** after seeing the devastation caused by the famine.
- In **1886-87**, during the **great famine** in **Maharashtra**, the **group** issued a **proclamation condemning the economic policies** of the **government** and **warned** the **British** of **strong action**.
- Phadke was **arrested** in **July 1879** from **Devar Navadgi** in **Bijapur district** and was sentenced to **life imprisonment**.
- He attempted to **escape** from **prison**. However, his **plans** went **awry**, and he was arrested again. Phadke died in prison in **1883**.