

1. Shaheed Diwas - History

Shaheed Diwas- Honouring the Architects of Revolution

Shaheed Diwas (Martyrs' Day) is observed annually on March 23 to commemorate the bravery and ultimate sacrifice of three of India's most iconic revolutionaries- Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru, and Sukhdev Thapar. Their execution in 1931 served as a catalyst that intensified the Indian independence movement against British colonial rule.

Historical Background

To understand the weight of this day, one must look at the specific events that led to the martyrdom of these young leaders-

The Simon Commission (1928)- An all-British commission sent to report on political reforms in India. Its lack of Indian representation sparked nationwide protests.

The Death of Lala Lajpat Rai- During a peaceful protest against the Simon Commission in Lahore, veteran leader Lala Lajpat Rai was brutally lathi-charged by the police. He succumbed to his injuries a few weeks later.

The Assassination of J.P. Saunders (1928)- To avenge Rai's death, the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA) plotted to kill the police Chief James Scott. However, in a case of mistaken identity, they shot Assistant Superintendent of Police John P. Saunders.

The Central Assembly Bombing (1929)- Bhagat Singh and Bataeshwar Dutt threw low-intensity smoke bombs into the Central Legislative Assembly to "make the deaf hear" and protest repressive ordinances like the Public Safety Bill. They did not flee but surrendered to use the court as a platform for their ideology.

The Lahore Conspiracy Case (1929-1931)- This was the legal trial conducted by the British authorities following the arrests. It culminated in the death sentences for Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev.

Profiles of the Revolutionaries

While they fought for the same cause, each leader brought a unique strength to the movement.

Feature	Bhagat Singh	Shivaram Rajguru	Sukhdev Thapar
Origin	Punjab (1907)	Maharashtra (1908)	Punjab (1907)
Primary Role	Ideologue, Writer, & Visionary	Marksman & Militant Action	Chief Organizer & Strategist
Key Ideology	Socialist-Marxist; Secularism	Militant Nationalism	Disciplined Youth Mobilization
Major Work	Why I Am an Atheist	Precision shooting in missions	Building HSRA Punjab networks
Legacy	Symbol of intellectual clarity	Symbol of physical bravery	Symbol of organizational grit

Contributions

Bhagat Singh- The Intellectual Revolutionary

Early Influence- Deeply scarred by the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (1919) at a young age, which fuelled his anti-colonial sentiment.

Organizational Prowess- Founded the Naujawan Bharat Sabha in 1926 to foster a spirit of revolution among the youth.

Evolution of HSRA- He was instrumental in re-branding the HRA into the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association in 1928, shifting the focus toward a socialist, egalitarian India.

Literary Impact- A prolific writer, he contributed to journals like *Kirti* and *Akali* in multiple languages (Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, and English), spreading the message of freedom and social justice.

Shivaram Rajguru- The Valiant Marksman

Martial Training- From his early years in Maharashtra, he was obsessed with physical fitness and joined the Seva Dal.

The Execution of Justice- He was the one who fired the first shot at J.P. Saunders in Lahore, acting as the primary marksman in the operation to avenge Lala Lajpat Rai.

Fearlessness- Known for his unwavering nerves, he remained a committed member of the HSRA, participating in various high-risk missions to destabilize British authority.

Sukhdev Thapar- The Master Strategist

Network Building- Sukhdev was the backbone of the HSRA's organizational structure in North India, particularly Punjab.

Educational Activism- He started the Study Circles at National College, Lahore, to educate students about revolutionary history and global politics.

The Brain behind the Trial- During the Lahore Conspiracy Case, his leadership in coordinating with other prisoners and maintaining morale was vital.

Shaheed Diwas 2026- Theme & Significance

The theme for 2026 is "Mera Bharat Meri Zimmedari" (My India, My Responsibility). This year emphasizes that the freedom won by these martyrs must be sustained through active civic duty.

Core Pillars of Significance-

Symbol of Supreme Sacrifice- It marks the day these three men walked to the gallows with a smile, chanting "Inqilab Zindabad," prioritizing the nation over their own lives at the young age of 23-24.

Inspiration for the Youth- It serves as a call to action for the modern generation to participate in "Nation Building"—not necessarily through arms, but through justice, education, and equality.

Strengthening National Consciousness- The day reinforces the idea that India's independence was not a single-faceted event but a result of collective struggles, including the radical movements that challenged the British Empire's moral authority.

Commitment to Constitutional Values- By remembering their socialist and secular ideals, the day encourages citizens to uphold the democratic fabric of India.

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