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INDEPENDENCE DAY SPECIAL ARTICLES

History Of Cellular Jail

- Cellular Jail, often referred to as “**Kala Pani**” (**Black Water**), is situated in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India.
- The construction of this infamous prison began in **1896** and was completed in **1906** under British colonial rule.
- The jail was built primarily to exile and punish political prisoners and revolutionaries who actively opposed British authority.
- The establishment of Cellular Jail was a direct consequence of the **1857 Sepoy Mutiny**, a significant uprising against British rule, which prompted the British to adopt more stringent measures in dealing with dissent.



Important Key Facts About Cellular Jail

- **Location:** Cellular Jail is located in Port Blair, the capital of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, an archipelago in the Bay of Bengal, which was strategically chosen for its remoteness, making escape nearly impossible.
- **Architecture:** The jail’s design features seven wings radiating from a central watchtower, resembling a spider’s web. This unique architectural layout was intended to ensure that no two prisoners could communicate with each other, thus preventing any form of rebellion or solidarity among them.



- **Construction Timeline:** The jail was officially inaugurated in 1906 and operated until India gained independence in 1947. During its operational years, it became a symbol of the inhumanity of colonial rule.
- **Closure:** Following India's independence in 1947, the jail was closed, and in 1969 it was declared a **national memorial**, preserving its history and significance. The site has been developed to educate visitors about the atrocities committed during the colonial era and the heroism of those who suffered within its walls.
- **Architecture:** It was designed by British architect **J. A. H. W. Macpherson** based on the '**Pennsylvania System or Separate System**' theory, which required separate confinement of each inmate for complete isolation from other inmates, with no communication possible between prisoners in the same or different wings.
- Each cell was designed for solitary confinement, measuring approximately 4.5 meters by 2.7 meters.
- They were equipped with thick walls and small windows, limiting light and air, creating a suffocating environment for inmates.
- The design aimed to prevent any form of communication or solidarity among prisoners.
- The **central watchtower**, which rises above the prison wings, was strategically placed to allow guards to monitor the movements of all prisoners. This architectural feature emphasized the oppressive nature of the jail, instilling fear among inmates.

Freedom Fighters Associated With Cellular Jail

- **Vinayak Damodar Savarkar:** Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, a prominent revolutionary, poet, and politician, was a key figure in the Indian independence movement. Known as 'Veer' for his bravery, he was sentenced in 1911 to two life terms (50 years) in the Cellular Jail of the Andamans for his involvement in anti-colonial activities, including opposition to the **Morley-Minto Reforms (Indian Councils Act 1909)**. Savarkar is also credited with popularizing the concept of "Hindutva." He was eventually released in 1924, having played a crucial role in mobilizing support for India's independence.
- **Batukeshwar Dutt:** He was also known as B.K. Dutt, was a revolutionary freedom fighter who, alongside Bhagat Singh, participated in the Central Legislative Assembly bombing in 1929. He was sentenced to life imprisonment and exiled to the Cellular Jail in Port Blair. Dutt passed away on July 20, 1965, at the age of 54.
- **Fazl-E-Haq Khairabadi:** He was arrested on January 30, 1859, for inciting violence following the Indian Rebellion of 1857. He was found guilty of encouraging murder and leading a 'jihad' and was sentenced to life imprisonment in the Cellular Jail on the Andaman Islands. His property was also confiscated by the British authorities.
- **Barindra Kumar Ghose:** He was involved in the **Alipore Bomb Case** following an attempted assassination of Kingsford by revolutionaries Khudiram and Prafulla on April 30, 1908, was arrested alongside his brother Aurobindo Ghosh. Initially sentenced to death,



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Barin's sentence was reduced to life imprisonment, and he was deported to the Cellular Jail in Andaman in 1909.

- **Sushil Dasgupta:** He was a member of the revolutionary Yugantar Dal of Bengal, was involved in the Putiya Mail Robbery case of 1929. After escaping from Medinipur prison, he was eventually captured and sent to the Cellular Jail. His comrades, Sachin Kar Gupta and Dinesh Majumdar, also faced imprisonment, with Dinesh being executed.
- On December 29, 1943, political control of the Andaman Islands was transferred to **Subhas Chandra Bose's Azad Hind government**. Bose visited Port Blair and raised the tricolor flag of the Indian National Army.

