



Khudai Khidmatgar Movement

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Why in News

It is 90 years for Qissa Khwani Bazaar massacre.

Qissa Khwani bazar was the site of a massacre perpetrated by British soldiers against **non-violent protesters of the Khudai Khidmatgar movement on April 23, 1930.**

Key points

- **Khudai Khidmatgar Movement**
 - The Khudai Khidmatgar was a **non-violent movement** against British occupation of the Indian subcontinent led by **Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a Pashtun freedom fighter, in the North-West Frontier Province.**
 - Over time, the movement turned **political**, leading to the British taking notice of its growing prominence in the region.
 - Following the arrest of Khan and other leaders in 1929, the movement formally joined the **Indian National Congress** after they failed to receive support from the All-India Muslim League.
 - Members of the Khudai Khidmatgar were organised and the men stood out because of the bright **red shirts they wore as uniforms**, while the **women wore black garments.**
 - The Khudai Khidmatgar opposed Partition, a stance that many interpreted as the movement not being in favour of the **creation of the independent nation of Pakistan.**

- **Reasons for Qissa Khwani Bazaar massacre:**
 - **Abdul Ghaffar Khan and other leaders of the Khudai Khidmatgar were arrested on April 23, 1930** by British police after he gave a speech at a gathering in the town of Utmanzai in the North-West Frontier Province.
 - Protests spilled into the **Qissa Khwani Bazaar in Peshawar** on the day of Khan's arrest.
 - **British soldiers entered the market area** to disperse crowds that had refused to leave and the British army vehicles drove into the crowds, killing several protesters and bystanders.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan

- Abdul Ghaffar Khan (1890-1988), the foremost 20th-century leader of the Pashtuns (a Muslim ethnic group of Pakistan and Afghanistan) was a follower of Mahatma Gandhi and was **called the “Frontier Gandhi”**.
- **Ghaffar Khan met Gandhi and entered politics in 1919** during agitation over the Rowlatt Acts, which allowed the confinement of political dissidents without trial.
- In 1920 he **joined the Khilafat movement**, which sought to strengthen the spiritual ties of Indian Muslims to the Turkish sultan
- In 1921 he was **elected president of a district Khilafat committee** in his native North-West Frontier Province.
- Soon after attending an Indian National Congress (Congress Party) gathering in 1929, **Ghaffar Khan founded the Red Shirt movement (Khudai Khidmatgar)** among the Pashtuns.
- In **1987 he was awarded the Bharat Ratna Prize**, the highest Indian honour that can be given to civilians. He was the **first non-Indian to receive this honour**.
 - Another non-Indian to receive Bharat Ratna is **Nelson Mandela (1990)**.
 - **Mother Teresa, in 1980**, became the first and only naturalised citizen to be awarded the Bharat Ratna.

Source: IE