



Pagri Sambhal Movement

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Why in News

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) is celebrating **23rd February** as **Pagri Sambhal Diwas**, honouring the **memory of Ajit Singh**-founder of the **Pagri Sambhaal Movement of 1907**.

Farmer unions part of the ongoing protests in Delhi claim that **farm laws** passed by Parliament will ultimately force them to sell their land to corporates. It was a similar complaint that fueled the farm protests in 1907.

Key Points

- **Pagri Sambhal Movement:**

- **About:**

It was a successful farm agitation that **forced the British government to repeal three laws** related to agriculture back in 1907.

- The **Punjab Land Alienation Act** 1900, the **Punjab Land Colonisation Act** 1906 and the **Doab Bari Act** 1907.
- These acts would **reduce farmers from owners to contractors of land**, and **gave the British government the right to take back the allotted land** if the farmer even touched a tree in his field without permission.

- **Slogan:**

The slogan, Pagdi Sambhal Jatta, the name of the movement, was **inspired by the song by Banke Lal, the editor of the Jang Sayal newspaper.**

- **Protest:**

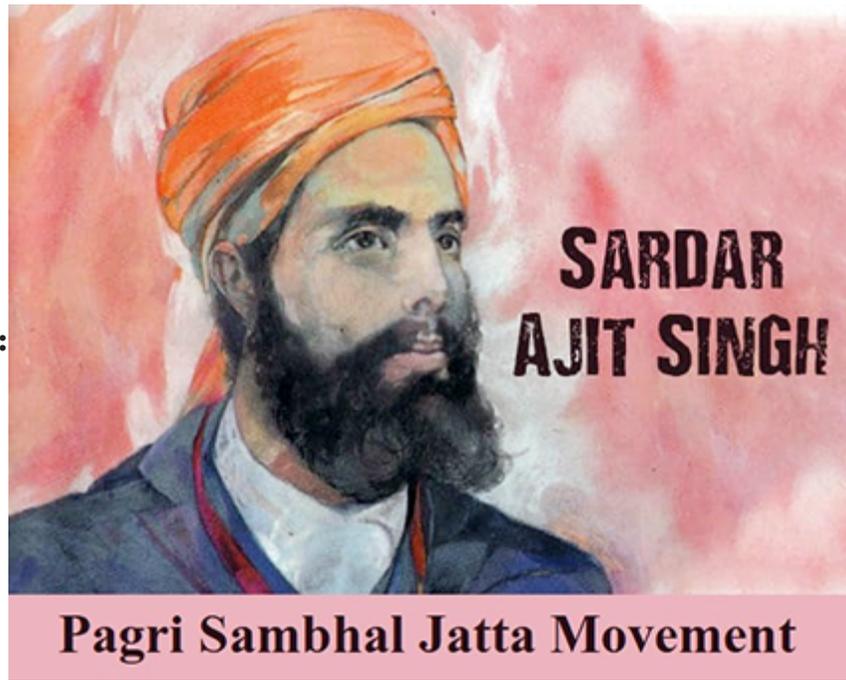
The protests were **violent** and the protestors ransacked government buildings, post offices, banks, overturning telephone poles and pulling down telephone wires.

- **Leader of the Agitation:**

- **Bhagat Singh's** uncle **Ajit Singh** was the force behind this agitation.
- He wanted to **channel people's anger over the farm laws to topple the colonial government.**
- Bhagat Singh's father Kishan Singh and uncle Ajit Singh, with their revolutionary friend Ghasita Ram, formed **Bharat Mata Society**, aiming to mobilise this unrest into a revolt against the British government.

Many young revolutionaries like Sufi Amba Prasad, Zia-ul-Haq, Lal Chand Falak, Din Dayal Banke, Kishan Singh and Lala Ram Saran Das were among the **members of Bharat Mata Society.**

- **Sardar Ajit Singh:**



- **Birth:**

- Born on **23rd February, 1881** he was an **Indian revolutionary**, an Indian dissident and a **nationalist** during the colonial era.
- He was an inspiration to Indian revolutionaries and his nephew Bhagat Singh.

- **Work:**

- He **openly criticised the colonial government** and was amongst the early protests in Punjab.
- With his brother Kishan Singh, **worked among the people** in famine-stricken regions like Barar (Madhya Pradesh) and Ahmedabad and in flood-and-earthquake-affected areas of Srinagar and Kangla in **1905**.
- He launched the **Bharat Mata Book Agency (part of Bharat Mata Society)**, which, because of its strident anti-government, propagandist publications, **attracted the attention of the British government**.
- He built a **network of solidarity** with people who were struggling for India's liberation in different parts of Europe. He also founded in this period the **Indian Revolutionary Association (Bharatiya Krantikari Sangh)**.

- **Exile:**

- In May 1907, Sardar Ajit Singh along with **Lala Lajpat Rai** was **exiled to Mandalay in Burma**.
- However, due to great public pressure and apprehension of unrest in the Indian Army, **both of them were released in October 1907**.

- **Escape:**

In 1909, Sardar Ajit Singh along with Sufi Amba Prasad **escaped to Iran and lived in a self-imposed exile for 38 years**.

- **Death:**

In March 1947, he returned to India and **died on 15th August 1947, the day India gained independence at Dalhousie, Punjab.**

Note:

- During the medieval period, **only noblemen were allowed to wear a turban** but during the **Sikh revolution in the 17th century, Guru Gobind Singh declared it as a symbol of defiance.**
 - He subverted the selectiveness of a turban, providing the common man with a **way to claim and assert their own self-esteem.**
 - Pagri (Turban) represents the dignity of the common man.
- In **1907**, Pagri Sambhal Jatta was a call to not let the Pagri fall, literally and figuratively.

Source:IE