



Babu Jagjivan Ram

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Why in News

Recently, the Prime Minister paid tributes to **freedom fighter and former Deputy Prime Minister Babu Jagjivan Ram** on his **113th birth anniversary**.

Jagjivan Ram, **popularly known as Babuji**, was a national leader, a freedom fighter, a crusader of social justice, a champion of depressed classes and an outstanding Parliamentarian.



Key Points

- **Birth:**
Jagjivan Ram was born on **5th April 1908** in **Chandwa in Bihar** to a Dalit family.

- **Early Life and Education:**

- He pursued his schooling at the **nearby town of Arrah** where he faced discrimination for the first time.

He was considered '**untouchable**' and had to drink water from a different pot. Jagjivan Ram protested against this by breaking the pot. The principal then had to remove the separate pot from the school.

- **In 1925**, Jagjivan Ram met scholar **Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya** and was greatly inspired by him. On Malaviya's invitation, he **joined the Banaras Hindu University**.
 - **Even at the university, Jagjivan Ram faced discrimination**. This inspired him to protest against such social boycotts of a section of society.
 - He also **organised the scheduled castes to protest against injustice**.
- After his stint at BHU, he joined the **University of Calcutta** from where he secured a **B.Sc. degree in 1931**.
- Jagjivan Ram had organized a number of Ravidas Sammelans and had **celebrated Guru Ravidas Jayanti** in different areas of Calcutta (Kolkata).

- **Pre Independence Contributions:**

- **In 1931**, he became a member of the **Indian National Congress** (Congress Party).
- He was instrumental in the foundation of the **All India Depressed Classes League**, an **organisation dedicated to attaining equality for untouchables, in 1934-35**.

He was a champion of **social equality and equal rights for the Depressed Classes**.

- In 1935, he proposed at a session of the **Hindu Mahasabha** that drinking water wells and temples be open to untouchables.
- In 1935, Babuji also **appeared before the Hammond Commission** at Ranchi and demanded, for the first time, **voting rights for the Dalits**.
- He was **jailed twice** in the early 1940s for his political activities associated with the **Quit India movement** against British rule.

- **Post Independence Contributions:**

- When Jawaharlal Nehru formed the provisional government, **Jagjivan Ram became its youngest minister.**
- After independence he held the **labour portfolio until 1952.** Thereafter he served in Nehru's cabinet in the posts of **minister for communications (1952–56), transport and railways (1956–62), and transport and communications (1962–63).**
- He served as **minister for food and agriculture (1967–70),** and in **1970 he was made minister of defence.**

The **Indo-Pakistan War of 1971** was fought when he was the **defence minister.**

- He left Congress in 1977 and joined the Janata Party alliance, along with his Congress for Democracy (new party). He later served as the **Deputy Prime Minister of India (1977–79).**
- Jagjivan Ram was a **member of the Parliament uninterrupted from 1936 to 1986 (40 years) and this is a world record.**
- He also holds another **record for being the longest-serving cabinet minister in India (30 years).**

- **Death:**

- He died on **6th July 1986 at New Delhi.**
- His memorial at his cremation place is named **Samta Sthal (Place of Equality).**

Source:PIB