



Babu Jagjivan Ram

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](#)