



Babu Jagjivan Ram

For Prelims: Babu Jagjivan Ram, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Indian Freedom Movement.

For Mains: Important Personalities, Significance of Babu Jagjivan Ram in Pre and Post Independence.

Why in News?

The Prime Minister paid tributes to freedom fighter **Babu Jagjivan Ram** on his 115th birth anniversary (5th April).

- 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.



Who was Jagjeevan Ram and What are his Contributions?

- **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 organised 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: TH](#)