

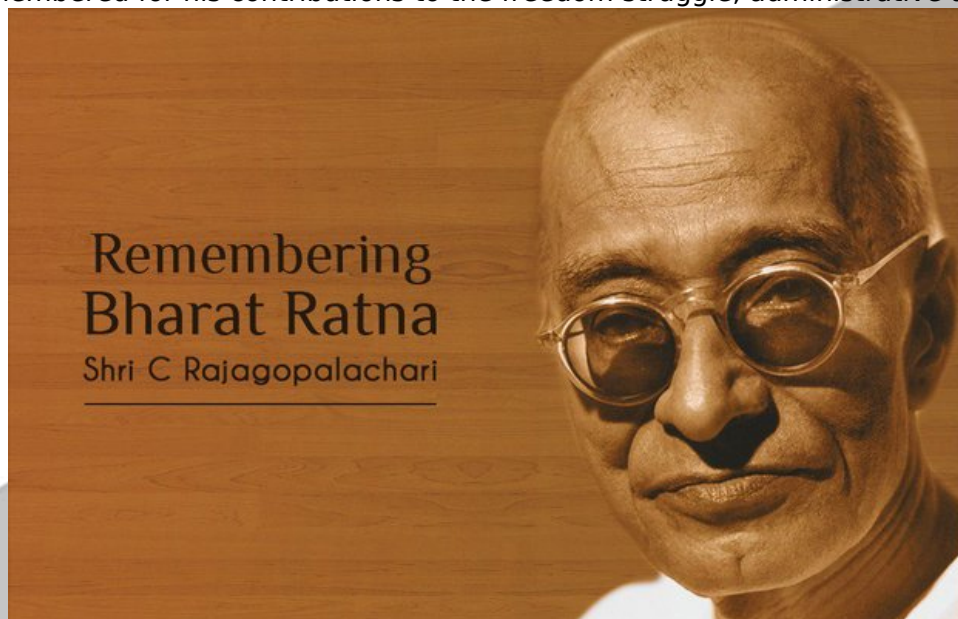


C Rajagopalachari

Why in News

Recently, **C. Rajagopalachari** is remembered on his **143rd birth anniversary**.

- He is remembered for his contributions to the freedom struggle, administrative and intellectual prowess.



Key Points

▪ About:

- **Chakravarti Rajagopalachari**, popularly known as **Rajaji**, was born on **December 10th in 1878**.
- He studied law from the **Presidency College in Madras (now Chennai)**, and began practice in Salem in the year 1900.
- In 1916, he formed the **Tamil Scientific Terms Society**, an organisation that translated scientific terms of chemistry, physics, mathematics, astronomy and biology into simple Tamil words.
- He became the **chairperson of the municipality of Salem** in 1917 and served there for two years.
- In 1955, he was honoured with **India's highest civilian award [Bharat Ratna](#)**.
- He died on **25th December, 1972**.

▪ Political Career:

◦ Pre-independence:

- He **joined the [Indian National Congress](#)** and acted as a **legal advisor**.

- He defended Indian Independence activist, **P. Varadarajulu Naidu** against charges of **sedition** in 1917.
- He was elected as the first **premier of the Madras Presidency** in 1937.
- In **1939**, Rajagopalachari took a **step to abolish untouchability and caste prejudice** and issued the **Madras Temple Entry Authorisation and Indemnity Act**.

- After the Madras Temple Entry Authorisation **Dalits were allowed to enter inside temples**.

- At the time of Partition, he was appointed as the **Governor of West Bengal**.
- In 1947, during the absence of Lord Mountbatten, the last British viceroy and independent **India's first Governor General, Rajagopalachari was temporarily chosen to hold the office**.

- Therefore he was the **last governor general of India**.

◦ **Post-independence:**

- Rajagopalachari took over as the **chief minister of Madras** in April 1952.
- During his tenure as the chief minister of Madras, he actively participated in reforming the education system and bringing changes in the society.
 - He also made Hindi a compulsory language in Tamil schools.
 - His move led to protests against him, following which Rajagopalachari resigned as the CM.
- He was a social conservative but advocated a **free market economy**.
 - He wanted to **reintroduce the Varna system** into society.
 - He believed in the **significance of religion for society**.
- Rajagopalachari was made **Home Affairs Minister** after the death of **Sardar Patel** in 1950.
- In 1959, he resigned from the Indian National Congress and founded the **Swatantra Party**.

▪ **Role in Freedom Struggle:**

- **Non-Cooperation Movement:** He met **Mahatma Gandhi** for the first time in 1919 in Madras (now Chennai) and participated in Gandhi's **Non-Cooperation Movement**.
 - He was also **jailed for two years in Vellore in 1920**.
 - After his release, he opened his own ashram to promote **Gandhi's principles of Hindu-Muslim harmony** and the **abolition of untouchability**.
 - He was also a proponent of khadi.
- **Vaikom Satyagraha:** He was also involved in the **Vaikom Satyagraha** movement against untouchability
- **Dandi March:** When Gandhi led the **Dandi March** to break the salt law in 1930, Rajagopalachari carried out a similar march at **Vedaranyam** in the **Madras Presidency**.
 - He also became the editor of Gandhi's newspaper, **Young India**.
- **Quit India Movement:** During the **Quit India Movement**, Rajagopalachari opposed Gandhi.
 - He was of the view that the British were going to leave the country eventually, so launching another Satyagraha was not a good decision.

▪ **Literary Contributions:**

- He wrote a **Tamil translation of the Ramayana**, which was later published as Chakravarthi Thirumagan.
 - The book won the **Sahitya Akademi Award** in Tamil language in 1958.

[Source: TH](#)

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