



Mahatma Gandhi's 154th Birth Anniversary

For Prelims: [Mahatma Gandhi](#), Indian Banknotes, [Reserve Bank of India](#), Sevagram Ashram, [Swaccha Bharat Abhiyan](#), [Truth, Non-Violence](#)

For Mains: Relevance of Mahatma Gandhi's principles and teachings in the contemporary world

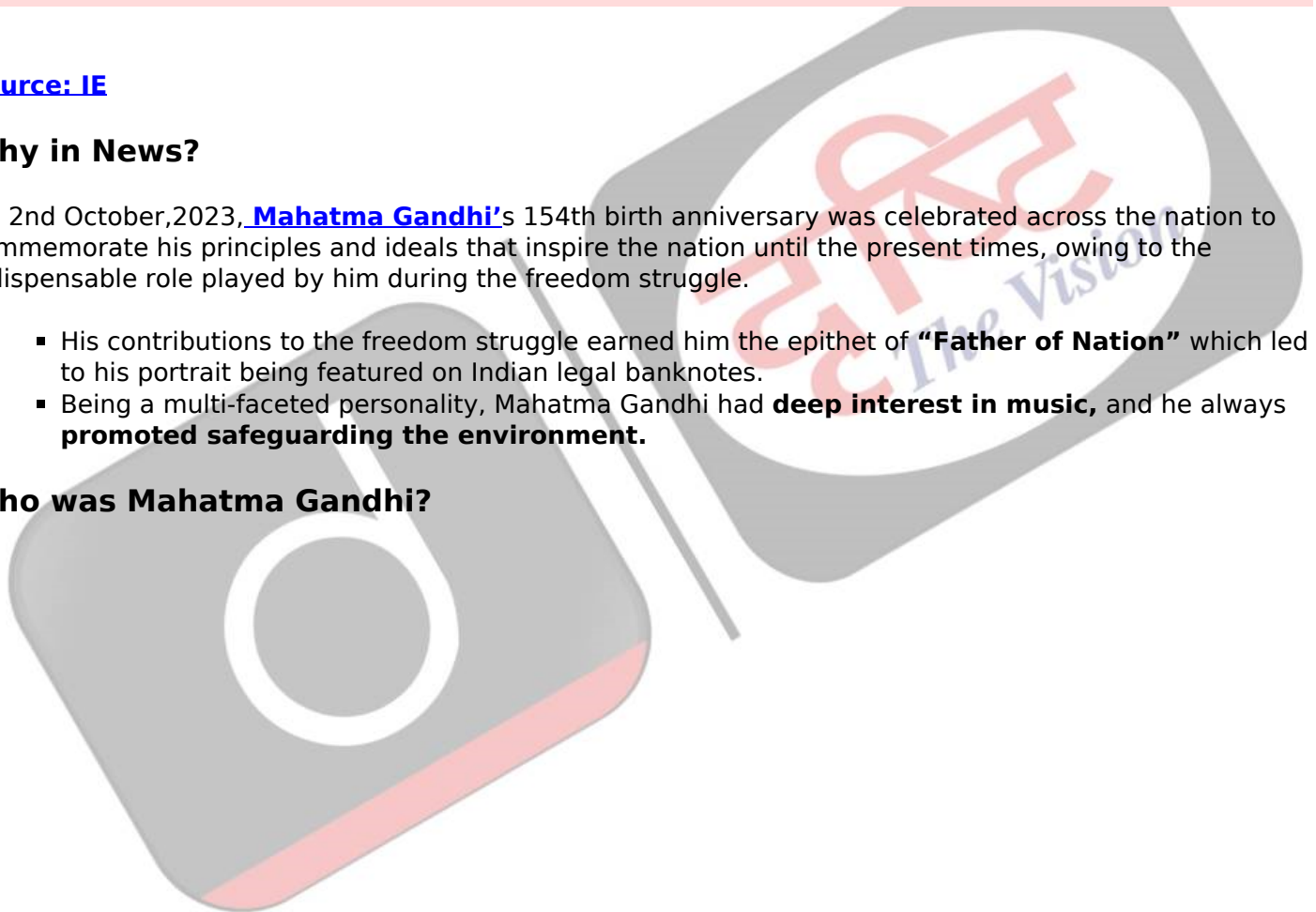
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Why in News?

On 2nd October, 2023, [Mahatma Gandhi's](#) 154th birth anniversary was celebrated across the nation to commemorate his principles and ideals that inspire the nation until the present times, owing to the indispensable role played by him during the freedom struggle.

- His contributions to the freedom struggle earned him the epithet of **"Father of Nation"** which led to his portrait being featured on Indian legal banknotes.
- Being a multi-faceted personality, Mahatma Gandhi had **deep interest in music**, and he always **promoted safeguarding the environment**.

Who was Mahatma Gandhi?



Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi



“The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.”

Brief Description

Birth: 2nd October 1869, Porbandar (Gujarat).

2nd October is observed as **International Day of Non-Violence**.

Profile: Lawyer, Politician, Social activist, Writer and led Nationalist Movement.

Father of the Nation (first called by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose).

Ideology: Believed in the ideas of non-violence, Truth, Honesty, Care for Mother Nature, Compassion, Welfare of Down-trodden etc.

Political Mentor: Gopal Krishna Gokhale

Death: Shot dead by Nathuram Godse (30th January, 1948).

30th January is observed as **Martyrs' Day**

Nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize five times.



Gandhi in South Africa (1893-1915)

Used satyagraha against racist regime (Native Africans and Indians were discriminated).

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated every year on 9th January, to commemorate his return from South Africa.

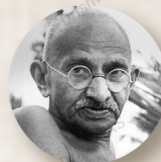
Contribution in India's Freedom Struggle

Small-scale movements like Champaran Satyagraha (1917)–First Civil Disobedience, Ahmedabad Mill Strike (1918)– First Hunger Strike, and Kheda Satyagraha (1918)–First Non-Cooperation.

Nationwide Mass Movements: Against Rowlatt Act (1919), Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22), Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-34), Quit India Movement (1942).

Gandhi-Irwin Pact (1931): Between Gandhi and Lord Irwin that marked the end of a period of civil disobedience.

Poona Pact (1932): Between Gandhi and **B.R. Ambedkar**; this abandoned the idea of separate electorates for the depressed classes (Communal Award).



Books Written

Hind Swaraj, My Experiments with Truth (Autobiography)

Weeklies

Harijan, Navjivan, Young India, Indian Opinion.

Gandhi Peace Prize

is given by India for social, economic, and political transformation through Gandhian methods.

“Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.”

“You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.”

How did Mahatma Gandhi Become a Permanent Feature on Legal Banknotes of India?

▪ The Origins of Gandhi's Image on Indian currency:

- The portrait of Gandhi visible on banknotes is a cut-out of a photograph taken in 1946, where he is standing with **British politician Lord Frederick William Pethick-Lawrence**.
- The photograph was selected as it had the most suitable expression of Gandhi smiling — the portrait is a mirror image of the cut-out.
- According to **Section 25 of the RBI Act, 1934**, “the design, form and material of banknotes” shall be such as may be approved by the central government after consideration of the recommendations made by the central board.

- **Gandhi's First Appearance on INR notes:**
 - Gandhi first featured on Indian currency in **1969**, when a special series was issued to commemorate his **100th birth anniversary**.
 - Then, in October **1987**, a series of Rs **500 currency notes**, featuring Gandhi, was launched.
- **Gandhiji, a Permanent Feature on Banknotes:**
 - Gandhi was chosen because of his national appeal, **and in 1996**, a new 'Mahatma Gandhi Series' was launched by the RBI to replace the former Ashoka Pillar bank notes.
 - Several security features were also introduced, including a windowed security thread, latent image and intaglio features for the visually impaired.

What are Mahatma Gandhi's Lessons on Sustainability?

- **Simplicity and Minimalism:**
 - Gandhi advocated for a simple and minimalist lifestyle. He believed that individuals should live with the bare minimum and avoid excessive consumption.
 - This idea of simple living, or "[Sarovodaya](#)," promotes the conservation of resources and a reduced ecological footprint.
- **Self-Sufficiency:**
 - Gandhi emphasized the importance of self-sufficiency at the community level. He promoted the idea of **villages being self-reliant** in terms of food, clothing, and other basic needs.
 - This approach reduces dependence on external resources and **minimizes environmental impacts** associated with long-distance transportation and trade.
- **Nonviolence (Ahimsa):**
 - Gandhi's principle of nonviolence extends beyond human relations to encompass all living beings and the environment. He believed in the **ethical treatment of animals and was a vegetarian himself**.
 - This reflects his concern for the well-being of all creatures and the importance of coexisting harmoniously with nature.
- **Sustainable Agriculture:**
 - Gandhi supported sustainable and [organic farming practices](#). He advocated for the use of natural fertilizers, crop rotation, and traditional farming methods that preserve soil fertility and reduce the need for chemical inputs.
- **Conservation of Resources:**
 - Gandhi emphasized the **responsible use and conservation of natural resources**, such as water and forests.
 - He believed in protecting and regenerating the environment to ensure that future generations have access to these resources.
- **Localism and Decentralization:**
 - Gandhi was a proponent of **decentralization of power and resources**. He believed in devolving authority to local communities, which can be more attuned to their own environmental and sustainability needs.
- **Swadeshi:**
 - Gandhi promoted the [Swadeshi movement](#), which encouraged the use of locally produced goods and materials.
 - This concept aimed to reduce the ecological impact of long-distance trade and promote local economies.
- **Respect for Nature:**
 - Gandhi believed that humans should have a **deep respect and reverence for nature**.
 - He saw nature as an essential part of human life and called for responsible stewardship of the environment.
- **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam:**
 - His belief in [Vasudev Kutumbakam](#) (the entire world is one family) encourages us to believe that we all are citizens of one world, and that we must remain conscious of global issues.

What is the Relationship of Mahatma Gandhi's Idea of Politics with Music?

- **Bhajans and Religious Music:**

- Gandhi had a strong spiritual side, and he often used devotional music, such as **bhajans (Hindu religious songs)**, as a means of connecting with his inner self and finding solace.
- He believed that **singing hymns and religious songs helped purify the mind** and strengthen one's connection with the divine.
- **Inspirational Songs:**
 - Gandhi encouraged the use of inspirational songs and patriotic songs to unite people in the struggle for independence.
 - Songs like "**Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram**" and "**Vaishnav Jan To**" were among his favorites and were frequently sung during his prayer meetings and public gatherings.
- **Fasting and Silence:**
 - Gandhi sometimes observed **periods of fasting and silence** as a form of protest or self-purification.
 - During these times, he often communicated with others **through written messages and used music to convey his thoughts and feelings.**
- **Community Bonding:**
 - Music played a **crucial role in bringing communities together** during Gandhi's nonviolent movements.
 - Chants, songs, and music **created a sense of unity and solidarity** among the participants in various campaigns, such as the [Salt March](#).
- **Promotion of Folk Music:**
 - Gandhi was a proponent of traditional Indian culture and believed in the preservation of folk music and arts.
 - He encouraged the **use of local languages and music to connect with the masses**, as he believed that they were more relatable and accessible.
- **Role in Nonviolent Resistance:**
 - Music was an integral part of the [nonviolent resistance movements](#) led by Gandhi. It served as a means of inspiring and mobilizing people, **fostering a sense of collective identity, and uplifting spirits** during challenging times.
- **Advocacy for Simplicity:**
 - Gandhi's philosophy of simplicity and minimalism extended to music. He preferred **simple and melodious tunes that could be easily understood and appreciated by the common people.**

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q1. Who among the following is associated with 'Songs from Prison', a translation of ancient Indian religious lyrics in English? (2021)

- (a) Bal Gangadhar Tilak
- (b) Jawaharlal Nehru
- (c) Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi
- (d) Sarojini Naidu

Ans: (c)

Q2. With reference to the British colonial rule in India, consider the following statements: (2019)

1. Mahatma Gandhi was instrumental in the abolition of the system of 'indentured labour'.
2. In Lord Chelmsford's 'War Conference', Mahatma Gandhi did not support the resolution on recruiting Indians for World War.
3. Consequent upon the breaking of Salt Law by Indian people, the Indian National Congress was declared illegal by the colonial rulers.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only

- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

Mains

Q1. Bring out the constructive programmes of Mahatma Gandhi during Non-Cooperation Movement and Civil Disobedience Movement. **(2021)**

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/mahatma-gandhi-154th-birth-anniversary>

