



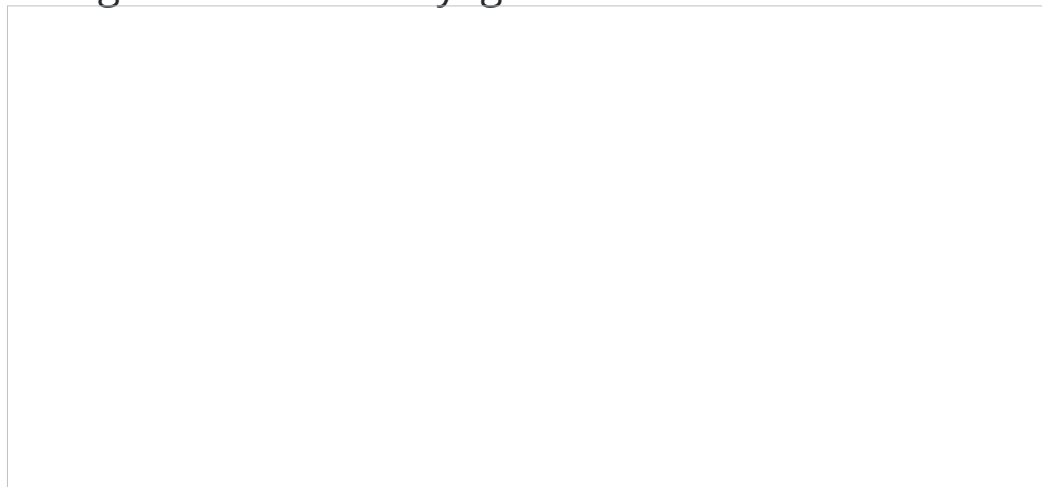
PM Dedicates Salt Satyagraha Memorial to Nation

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The Prime Minister dedicated the National Salt Satyagraha Memorial at Dandi in Navsari district, Gujarat to the nation on Mahatma Gandhi's 71st death anniversary.

At the memorial site, he also unveiled statues of Mahatma Gandhi and Satyagrahis who had marched with him during the historic Dandi Salt March in 1930.

Background of Salt Satyagraha



- For several years after the **Non-cooperation Movement(1920-22)** ended, Gandhiji focused on his social reform work.
- However in 1928, he began to think of re-entering politics. That year there was an all-India campaign in **opposition to the all-White Simon Commission**, sent from England to study constitutional reforms and make recommendations to the Government.
- Gandhiji did not himself participate in this movement, although he gave it his blessings, as he also did to a peasant satyagraha in Bardoli in the year 1928.
- In the end of **December 1929**, the Congress held its **annual session in the city of Lahore**. The meeting was significant for two things:
 - the election of **Jawaharlal Nehru** as President, signifying the passing of the baton of leadership to the younger generation; and the **proclamation of**

commitment to “Purna Swaraj”, or complete independence.

- On **26 January 1930**, “**Independence Day**” was observed, with the national flag being hoisted in different venues, and patriotic songs being sung. Gandhiji himself issued precise instructions as to how the day should be observed.
- The **Lahore Congress of 1929 had authorized the Congress Working Committee (CWC) to launch a programme of civil disobedience** including non-payment of taxes.
- In February, 1930 CWC meeting at Sabarmati Ashram, invested Gandhiji with full powers to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement at a time and place of his choice.
- Gandhiji’s ultimatum to **Lord Irwin, the Viceroy of India (1926-31)**, stating the minimum demands had been ignored and there was only one way out-civil disobedience.

Salt Satyagraha

- On **March 12, 1930**, Gandhiji set out from Sabarmati with 78 followers on a 241-mile march to the coastal town of **Dandi on the Arabian Sea**. There, Gandhi and his supporters were to defy British policy by making salt from seawater.
- At Dandi, thousands more followed his lead, and in the coastal cities of Bombay and Karachi, Indian nationalists led crowds of citizens in making salt.
- Civil disobedience **broke out all across India**, soon involving millions of Indians, and British authorities arrested more than 60,000 people. Gandhiji himself was arrested on May 5, but the satyagraha continued without him.
- On May 21, the poet **Sarojini Naidu** led 2,500 marchers on the Dharasana Salt Works, some 150 miles north of Bombay. The incident, recorded by American journalist Webb Miller, prompted an international outcry against British policy in India.
- In January 1931, Gandhiji was released from prison. He later met with Lord Irwin, the viceroy of India, and agreed to call off the satyagraha in exchange for an equal negotiating role at a London conference on India’s future.
- In August 1931, Gandhiji traveled to the conference as the sole representative of the nationalist Indian National Congress. The meeting was a disappointment, but British leaders had acknowledged him as a force they could not suppress or ignore.

Why Gandhiji chose Salt Satyagraha to start the civil disobedience movement?

- In every Indian household, salt was indispensable, yet people were forbidden from making salt even for domestic use, compelling them to buy it from shops at a high price.
- The state monopoly over salt was deeply unpopular; by making it his target, Gandhiji hoped to mobilise a wider discontent against British rule.
- **Salt was chosen to symbolize the start of civil disobedience movement** because salt was deemed as something on which each Indian had the basic right.

- Mahatma Gandhi declared resistance to British salt policies to be the unifying theme for the civil disobedience movement and thus started Dandi March.

Effect of the movement

- Civil Disobedience in different forms continued in different provinces. Special stress was laid on boycott of foreign good.
- In eastern India, **payment of chowkidari tax was refused**. This **no-tax campaign became very popular in Bihar**.
- In Bengal, **J.N. Sengupta defied Government** laws by reading openly the books banned by the government.
- **Defiance of forest laws** assumed a mass character in Maharashtra.
- The movement had taken a fire hold in provinces of U.P., Orissa. Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Assam.
- The **Gandhi-Irwin Pact (1931)** and the **Second Round Table Conference(1931)** having failed, the movement was resumed with new zeal.

Significance

- The movement marked an **important state in the progress of the freedom struggle**.
- **Imports from Britain had fallen considerably**. For example, imports of cloth from Britain had fallen by half.
- The movement was **more widespread than the previous one**. Mass participation including **women, peasants, workers, students, urban elements like merchants, shopkeepers** provided the Congress a new all-India status.
- The support that the movement had garnered from the **poor and the illiterate both in the town and countryside** was remarkable.
- For **Indian women**, the movement was the most liberating experience to date and can truly be said to have marked their entry into the public space.
- Although the Congress withdrew the Civil Disobedience in 1934 but the movement received **global attention** and marked a critically important stage in the progress of the anti-imperialist struggle.