



Prominent Personalities

Abdul Gaffar Khan He was popularly known as the **frontier Gandhi**; he was a prominent nationalist leader of the North-Western Frontier Province and founded a nationalist organisation, called the **Khudai Khidmatgars** (servants of God), popularly referred to as the Red Shirts. He was awarded with the Bharat Ratna Award posthumously by the Indian Government.

Abdur Rahtm Khan-i-Khanan He was a son of Bairam Khan he became a prominent noble and military commander of Akbar and contributed to literature.

Abul Fazl He was a son of Shaik Mubarak and brother of Faizi (poet) he was the official historian and close advisor of Akbar. He wrote Ain-i-Akbari (a statistical account of Akbar's empire) and Akbar namah (an authoritative account of his reign). He was assassinated by Bir Singh Bundela in 1602 at the instigation of Prince Salim (later Jahangir).

Aga Khan The title of the religious head of the Borah Ismailian community of the Muslims in India. It was first conferred on Hasan Ali Shah, who claimed descent from the prophet through his daughter.

Ahalya Bai The widowed daughter-in-law of Malhar Rao Holkar of Indore, who ruled the state between 1764 and 1795. Famous for her construction of temples like the Annapurna and Vishnu temples at Banaras and Gaya respectively.

Ahmed Shah Abdali He was belonging to the Durrani clan of Afghanistan; he initially worked under Nadir Shah. During his independent rule of Afghanistan (1747-1773), he invaded India 8 times, scoring a spectacular victory over the Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat (1761).

Alberuni He was originally a native of Khiva in Central Asia; he was brought to Ghazni by Mahmud. Abu Rihan Muhammad was his original name, but became famous as Alberuni, meaning the Master. Being a great scholar himself, he learnt Sanskrit and made a thorough study of Indian sciences and philosophy. His famous work, Tariq-i-Hind or Kitab-i-Hind, is a truly scientific treatise and gives us an accurate account of India on the eve of the Turkish conquest of India.

Muhammad Ali A prominent nationalist leader and brother of Shaukat Ali. He was a leader of the Khilafat Movement and the Non-Cooperation Movement. He became the President of the Indian National Congress in 1923.

Muhammad Ruhela Ali He was the founder of the power of the Rohillas or Ruhelas in Rohilkhand lying to the North-West of Awadh. In 1774, they were defeated and their last ruler, Hafiz Rahamat Khan was murdered by the Nawab of Awadh with the help of the British.

Malik Ambar An Abyssinian slave who settled in Ahmednagar and became the Prime Minister of the Nizam Shahi rulers. He introduced a number of revenue reforms, trained the Nizam Shahi forces in the guerrilla tactics of warfare, employed a large number of Marathas in the army and foiled the attempts of Jahangir to complete Mughal annexation of the Nizam Shahi kingdom.

Amir Khusro He was also known as the parrot of India; he was a famous poet, historian and musician of the Delhi Sultanate. He enjoyed the patronage of successive rulers of Delhi from Balban to Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq. He was a prolific Persian poet associated with the royal courts of more than seven rulers of Delhi Sultanate. He was a soldier, composer of poetry in Arabic, Persian, Urdu and a diplomat.

Asanga A prominent Buddhist scholar, saint and author; he belonged to the AD 4th century and was the brother of Vasubandhu (teacher and minister of Samudragupta). He was the author of the Sutralankara (the earliest text of the Yogacara School of Mahayanism).

Asvaghosha A Buddhist (Mahayana) saint and scholar of Kanishka's period, he played an active part in the fourth Buddhist Council. He was the author of Buddhacharita (a biography of the Buddha).

Badauni A prominent historian of Akbar's period; he is the author of Muntakhab-ul-Tawarikh, which contains a rather critical account of Akbar's liberal reign.

Barani, Zia-ud-din A conservative historian of Firuz Shah Tughlaq's period, his Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi gives us information about the rule of the Tughlaqs upto Firoz.

Bhagwan Das Kachhawaha ruler of Amber and son of Raja Bihari Mai (who voluntarily submitted to Akbar). He rose very high in the service of Akbar. Raja Mansingh, who served Akbar with distinction was his son.

Bhasa An early Sanskrit dramatist of ancient India; he is said to have composed 13 dramas, the most famous being Swapnavasavadatta, Charudatta Pratima.

Bhaskaracharya A celebrated Indian astronomer and mathematician of the AD 12th century; he was born at Bijapur and was the author of Siddhanta Siromani, also known as Lilavati.

Bhaskaravarman He was a famous ruler of Kamarupa (Assam); he was a contemporary and close friend of Harshavardhana of Kannauj. His court was visited by the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen-Tsang.

Bilhana The court poet of Vikramaditya VI (1076-1127), the Chalukya ruler of Kalyan; he was the author of Vikramankadevacharita.

Birbal, Raja A Rajput chief in the employment of Akbar; he was the favourite of the emperor who honoured him with titles of Raja and Kavi Priya (for his Hindi poetry). He lost his life in 1586 while campaigning against the Yusufzai tribe in the North-Western India.

Chand Bardai The court poet of Prithviraj Chauhan of Ajmer; he was the author of Prithviraj Raso (also called **Chand Raisa**), which dealt with his patron's marriage with Samyukta, his life and achievements.

Chand Bibi The daughter of Hussain Nizam Shah of Ahmednagar and wife of AN Adil Shah of Bijapur. She acquired fame for her defense of Ahmednagar against Akbar.

Dara Shikoh The eldest son and favourite of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz; he was interested in Sufism and tolerant of all religious faiths. His claim to the throne was contested by his three younger brothers (Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad), which resulted in the war of succession (1656-1658). He was ultimately tried on the charge of apostasy and executed by Aurangzeb in August 1659.

Das, Chittaranjan An eminent lawyer who first distinguished himself by successfully defending Aurobindo Ghosh in the famous Alipore Bomb Case. He gave up his lucrative practice to join the Non-Cooperation Movement. He presided over the 1922 Session of the INC. Alongwith Motilal Nehru, he formed the Swaraj Party within the INC with the declared policy of entering the councils and disrupting their functioning (also known as the **Policy of Responsive Cooperation**). He passed away in 1925. Because of his great contribution, he came to be called **Deshbandhu** (friend of the country).

Dyer, General The military general who was responsible for the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (379 deaths and 1208 wounded) on 13th April, 1919 and the subsequent imposition of martial law and humiliation of the Punjabis. He was censured and removed from service by the government on the basis of the report of an Enquiry Committee under the chairmanship of Lord Hunter.

Gulbadan Begum A daughter of Babur; she was a talented lady and wrote Humayun Namah, an authoritative account of the reign of her brother, Humayun.

Hamida Banu Begam She was a wife of Humayun and mother of Akbar. She exercised a great influence in shaping the personality of Akbar.

Hare, David A watchmaker by profession, he was specially interested in the spread of Western education in India. It was largely due to his efforts that the Hindu College was opened in 1817 at Calcutta.

Hemachandra A prominent Jaina author of the 12th century, he was the author of Trisastisalaka Purushacharita, an enormous work dealing with the lives of 126 Jaina saints. The Parisistaparvan (which deals with, among other things, the conversion of Chandragupta Maurya to Jainism) is its supplement.

Ilbert, Sir Courtney A law member of the Viceroy's Executive council between 1882 and 1886, he sponsored the famous Ilbert bill and steered it with some fundamental modifications (due to European protest) through the legislature. Later, he served as the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University.

Impey, Sir Elijah He was appointed the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in Calcutta by the Regulating Act of 1773. In 1775, he convicted Nanda Kumar for forgery and sentenced him to death, probably under the influence of Warren Hastings (a classmate of Impey).

Jinnah, Muhammed Ali He was the founder of Pakistan and originally was a successful lawyer. He joined Indian politics as a follower of moderate Congress leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji and GK Gokhale, but soon joined the Muslim league (1913) and became its President in 1916 (Lucknow session). After the ascendancy of Gandhiji in the national politics, he completely broke away from the Congress. Later, he reorganised the league and demanded the partition of India on a religious basis (1940). He was known as the Qaid-i-Azam (Great leader), he became the first Governor-General of independent Pakistan.

Jones, Sir William A famous British orientalist and jurist, he founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1789 and served it as its President till his death in Calcutta in 1794.

Kalhana The author of Rajatarangini which is a chronicle of the kings of Kashmir, he lived in the AD 12th century.

Kaudinya According to Cambodian tradition, he was an Indian Brahmin who established the kingdom of Kambuja Desa in modern Cambodia.

Khafi Khan The pen name under which Muhammed Hashim wrote his famous historical work, Muntakhab-ul-Lubab, on the reign of Aurangzeb in total secrecy because of the emperor's opposition to it.

Kumbha The Rana of Mewar, he was one of its greatest rulers. He was also a great builder, being responsible for the construction of about 32 forts within the State of Mewar and the 'Kirtistambha' or victory tower within Chittor.

Liaquat All Khan He was born in Uttar Pradesh and an important leader of the Muslim league. He was the Finance Minister in the Interim Government (1946-1947) and after the partition he became the first Prime Minister of Pakistan. He was assassinated in a public meeting.

Macaulay, Thomas Babington A renowned English scholar, he was the first law member of the Governor-General's Executive council. He drafted the Penal code, which later became the basis of the Indian Criminal Code. He was also responsible for introducing Western education through English.

Mahmud Begarha He was one of the greatest rulers of Gujarat, he ruled for a long period of 52 years (AD 1459-1511) and defeated many of his neighbours. The Italian traveller, Varthima, makes a mention of Mahmud's great appetite in his records.

Malaviya, Madanmohan A leading nationalist leader, he edited three journals (Hindustan, Indian Union and Abhyudaya) between 1885 and 1907, and joined the Indian National Congress becoming its President twice (1909 and 1918). His greatest achievement was the foundation of the Banaras Hindu University in 1915. He was thrice elected President of the Hindu mahasabha.

Minhaj-i-Siraj A famous historian, he was the author of Tabaqat-i-Nasiri, a reliable account of the early period of the Delhi Sultanate.

Mir Jumla Beginning his career in Golconda, later he joined the service of Shah Jahan with the help of Aurangzeb to whom he presented the famous Kohinoor diamond. During the war of succession, he supported Aurangzeb and was rewarded as the Governor of Bengal.

Muhammed Ali Alongwith his brother, Shaukat Ali, he led the Khilafat movement in 1920 and later joined the Non-Cooperation Movement. He was the President of the Gaya Session of the Congress (1922).

Muhammed Reza Khan He was appointed at the instance of the English as the Deputy Nawab of Bengal in 1765 and helped them fully in exploiting Bengal through the System of Dual Government (1765-1772).

Thomas Munro A distinguished British revenue official, he became the Governor of Madras (1820-1827). His greatest achievement was the introduction of the Ryotwari system in the Madras Presidency. »

Mrs Sarojini Naidu A freedom fighter and poet, she presided over the Kanpur Session of the INC in 1925 and was, thus, the first Indian woman President of the Congress (Mrs Annie Besant being the first woman President). She was also the first lady to be appointed as State Governor of Uttar Pradesh between 1947-1949.

Nana Phadnavis A Maratha Brahmin, he became the guardian and Chief Minister of the minor Peshwa, Madhav Rao Narayan and practically, ran the affairs of the Marathas from 1774 till his death in 1800.

Pandit Motilal Nehru, Father of Jawaharlal and a successful lawyer, he joined the Congress party in 1919. He started a journal, Independent, to support the cause of Indian nationalism. Alongwith CR Das, he formed the Swaraj Party in 1922 to carry out the programme of disruption of legislative work.

He became the President of INC twice (1919 Calcutta session and 1928 Amritsar session). He was also the Chairman of the committee which submitted a report, known as the **Nehru report** (1928) on the future Constitution of India.

Nivedita, Sister A famous disciple of Swami Vivekananda, she was an Irish lady and originally known as Margaret noble. Arriving in India at the invitation of Vivekananda, she devoted herself to social service.

Radhakanta Deb Leader of the orthodox Hindu community in the 19th century, he cooperated with David Hare in his educational activities, but was opposed to social reforms (including sati) and the activities of the Brahmo Samaj of Rammohan Roy.

Rahmat Ali Chaudhary An Indian Muslim studying at Cambridge, he coined the term 'Pakistan' in 1933. It was a development of Iqbal's conception of a union of Indian provinces with a majority of Muslims in their population. The idea was later taken up by Jinnah, who made Pakistan a reality.

Ramanand one of the earliest bhakti saints of North India (15th century), he was influenced by Ramanuja. He was a worshipper of Rama and preached to all without distinction of caste and sex. Amongst his disciples, were Kabir, a Muslim weaver and Padmavati.

Salima Begum Daughter of Babur's daughter and cousin of Akbar, she was first married to Bairam Khan and after the latter's death was married by Akbar himself.

Sanga, Rana The ruler of Mewar (**1509-1529**), he was one of the greatest warriors of India. Expecting Babur to imitate Timur, he extended an invitation to him, but his calculations did not materialise. He was defeated by Babur in the Battle of Khanwa (**1527**). Later, Sanga was killed by his own sardars when he wanted to fight Babur for a second time.

Shams-i-Siraj Afif a famous historian as well as an officer during the reign of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, he was the author of Tarikh-i-Firozshahi.

Sinha, Sir Satyendra Prasanna He was the first Indian to be appointed as a Governor of Bihar and Orissa from 1920 to 1924 by the British. He was also the first Indian to be appointed as a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council (1909) and the only Indian to be honoured with a peerage. He also presided over the Bombay session (1915) of the INC.

Tagore, Dwarkanath He was the founder of the famous Tagore family of Jorasanko in Calcutta, he earned a lot of money in business and started the Union Bank, which was the first Bengali venture in the banking line. He was one of the earliest supporters of the Brahmo Samaj.

Upagupta a famous Buddhist monk, he believed to have converted Ashoka to Buddhism. He is also referred to as Moggaliputta Tissa in the contemporary Buddhist texts.

Ustad Isa He was probably the architect, who designed the Taj Mahal at Agra and supervised its construction.

Vijnesvara (Vijnanesvara) A celebrated Hindu jurist, he belonged to the reign of Vikramanka (AD 1076-1126) of the Kalyani Chalukyas. His work, the Mitaksara, is considered as one of the most authoritative expositions of the Hindu Law of Succession.

Wedderburn, Sir William An English ICS Officer of distinction, he took a leading part in the Congress politics after his retirement. He presided over two Congress sessions in 1889 and 1910.

Yajnavalkya a famous upanishadic thinker, he was associated by tradition with the renowned philosopher king, Janaka of Mithila.

Yule, George One of those rare non-official English merchants, who sympathised with the political aspirations of the Indians, he supported the INC and presided over its fourth session held at Allahabad in 1888.

Zain-ul-Abidin The eighth Sultan of Kashmir (1420-1460). He is famous for his religious toleration and patronage of literature. He had the Mahabharata and Rajatarangini translated into Persian.