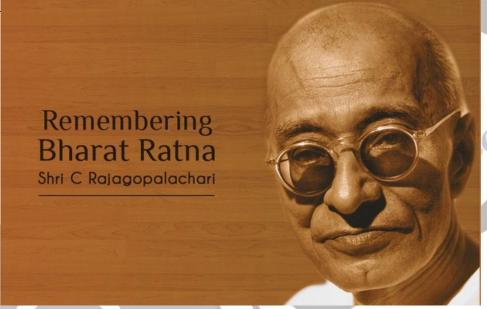


C Rajagopalachari

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 <u>sedition</u> 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 <u>Sardar</u>
 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 <u>Vaikom Satyagraha</u> movement against untouchability
- Dandi March: When Gandhi led the <u>Dandi March</u> 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 <u>Sahitya Akademi Award</u> in Tamil language in 1958.

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