



## Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

**For Prelims:** Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, Rowlatt Act 1919, World War I (1914–18), Non Cooperation Movement (1920–22), Hunter Commission.

**For Mains:** Non Cooperation Movement (1920–22), History of India's struggle

### Why in News?

Recently, the **Prime Minister** paid tributes to people killed in the [Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919](#).

- He asserted that their unparalleled courage and sacrifice will **keep motivating the coming generations**. **13<sup>th</sup> April, 2022** marks the **103 years of the incident**.
- Earlier, the Gujarat government marked 100 years of the [Pal-Dadhvav killings](#), calling it a massacre **“bigger than the Jallianwala Bagh”**.



### What is the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre?

- **About:** The Jallianwala Bagh massacre or the Amritsar massacre of **13<sup>th</sup> April 1919** accounts for the **gruesome execution of hundreds of innocent people** by the **Gurkha British Indian army** on the orders of the then **Anglo-Indian Brigadier R.E.H. Dyer**.

- These people were protesting peacefully against the [Rowlatt Act 1919](#).

## What was the Rowlatt Act 1919?

- During [World War I \(1914-18\)](#) the British government of India enacted a **series of repressive emergency powers** that were intended to combat subversive activities.
  - In this context, this act was passed on the recommendations of the Sedition **Committee chaired by Sir Sidney Rowlatt**.
  - It **gave the government enormous powers to repress political activities** and allowed detention of political prisoners without trial for two years.
- **Background:** [Mahatma Gandhi](#) wanted non-violent civil disobedience against such unjust laws, which would start with a hartal on **6<sup>th</sup> April 1919**.
  - In Punjab, on **9<sup>th</sup> April 1919**, two nationalist leaders, **Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal**, were arrested by the British officials **without any provocation** except that they had addressed protest meetings, and taken to some unknown destination.
  - This caused resentment among the Indian protestors who came out in thousands on **10<sup>th</sup> April** to show their solidarity with their leaders.
  - To curb any future protest, the government put martial law in place and law and order in Punjab was handed over to **Brigadier-General Dyer**.
- **Day of the Incident:** On **13<sup>th</sup> April, Baisakhi day**, a large crowd of people mostly from neighbouring villages, unaware of the prohibitory orders in Amritsar gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh.
  - Brigadier-**General Dyer** arrived on the scene with his men.
  - The troops surrounded the gathering under orders from **General Dyer** and blocked the only exit point and opened fire on the **unarmed crowd killing more than 1000 unarmed men, women, and children**.
- **Aftermath/Significance of the Incident**
  - Jallianwala Bagh became a key point in the **history of India's struggle** for independence and it is now an **important monument in the country**.
  - The Jallianwala Bagh tragedy was one of the causes that led [Mahatma Gandhi](#) to begin organising his first large-scale and sustained nonviolent protest (satyagraha) campaign, the [Non Cooperation Movement \(1920-22\)](#).
  - The Bengali poet and **Nobel laureate** [Rabindranath Tagore](#) renounced the knighthood that he had **received in 1915**.
  - The then government of India ordered an investigation of the incident (**the Hunter Commission**), which in 1920 **censured Dyer** for his actions and ordered him to resign from the military.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

**Q. During the Indian Freedom Struggle, why did Rowlatt Act arouse popular indignation? (2009)**

- (a) It curtailed the freedom of religion
- (b) It suppressed the Indian traditional education
- (c) It authorized the government to imprison people without trial
- (d) It curbed the trade union activities

**Ans: (c)**

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