



Pagri Sambhal Jatta Movement

Why in News?

On 23rd February 2025, farmers protesting at the Punjab and Haryana borders observed [the Pagri Sambhal Diwas](#) to honor **Ajit Singh**, the paternal uncle of [freedom fighter Bhagat Singh](#).



Key Points

- **About Ajit Singh:**
 - **Birth and Early Life:** Ajit Singh was **born on February 23, 1881**, in **Khatkar Kalan village, Punjab** (now part of Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar district).
 - **Freedom Fighter and Revolutionary:** He was a **prominent nationalist leader** and played a key role in inspiring his nephew, Bhagat Singh.
 - **Exile and Struggle:** Due to his role in the Pagri Sambhal Jatta movement, the British targeted him, **forcing him into exile from 1909 to 1947**.
 - **Return and Death:** He **returned to India in March 1947** but succumbed to ill health on August 15, 1947, in Dalhousie, coinciding with India's independence.
- **The Pagri Sambhal Jatta Movement:**
 - **Initiation and Meaning:** Ajit Singh **launched the movement in 1907** to protest against three oppressive agricultural laws imposed by the British.
 - The phrase "Pagri Sambhal Jatta" means "Take care of your turban, O farmer", symbolizing self-respect and honor.
 - **Oppressive Laws:**
 - [Punjab Land Alienation Act, 1900](#) - Restricted farmers' rights to sell or

mortgage land, benefiting landlords and moneylenders.

- **Punjab Land Colonisation Act, 1906** - Transferred land ownership to the British instead of farmers' heirs in the Chenab Colony (now in Pakistan).
- **Doab Bari Act, 1907** - Stripped farmers of land ownership rights, reducing them to contract laborers.

- **Additional Burdens:** The British also increased taxes on agricultural land and irrigation water, leading to widespread debt and land loss among small farmers.

▪ **Impact of the Movement:**

- **Mass Protests:** The movement led to large-scale farmer protests demanding the repeal of unjust laws.
- **Formation of Bharat Mata Society:** Ajit Singh and Kishan Singh (Bhagat Singh's father) founded **the Bharat Mata Society**, a revolutionary group supporting farmers.
- **Slogan:** Nationalist poet **Banke Dayal** coined the slogan "**Pagri Sambhal Jatta**," which became a symbol of defiance.
- **British Response:** The British withdrew some oppressive clauses due to rising pressure.
- **Influence on Future Movements:** The movement laid the foundation for future uprisings, inspiring [the Ghadar Movement](#) and Bhagat Singh's revolutionary activities.
- **Arrests and Exile:** In May 1907, Ajit Singh and [Lala Lajpat Rai](#) were arrested and exiled to Burma (now Myanmar) but were released in November 1907 under public pressure.
 - Ajit Singh later **fled to Persia, Turkey, Brazil, Germany, and Italy**, working with revolutionaries like Lala Hardayal and Madame Cama.

▪ **Pagri Sambhal Diwas:**

- **Observance Since 2021:** Farmers have been **observing February 23 as Pagri Sambhal Diwas since 2021**, coinciding with Ajit Singh's birth anniversary.
- **2021 Farmer Protests:** During the Delhi border protests, farmers marked Pagri Sambhal Diwas while demanding the repeal of the [three farm laws](#) (now scrapped).
- **2024 Protests:** Since February 13, 2024, farmers have been protesting at Punjab and Haryana borders, demanding [Minimum Support Price](#) as a legal guarantee and other rights.

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