

## Short news

### 1. Commemoration Of National Icons

The Government has set up three high-level committees chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to mark the 150th anniversaries of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Birsa Munda, and the centenary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

#### **Birsa Munda**

Birsa Munda was a tribal icon and freedom fighter, revered as Bhagwan by Adivasis. He was born on 15th November 1875 in Ulihatu, Jharkhand. Educated in mission schools but rejected colonial culture, embracing tribal traditions.

#### **Contributions**

Ulgulan Movement (1899–1900): Mobilised tribes against British rule, landlords, and missionaries.

#### **Land Rights**

Opposed alienation of tribal lands; demanded restoration of traditional ownership. This led to Chotanagpur Tenancy Act (CNT) of 1908, which recognized and protected tribal land rights

#### **Social Reformer**

Advocated unity, cultural revival, and spiritual awakening among tribals.

#### **Martyrdom**

while lodged at the Ranchi jail aged just 25.

### Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

He is known as the Iron Man of India, key architect of national unity. Born on 31st October 1875 in Nadiad, Gujarat. He studied law in England; became a successful barrister before joining the freedom struggle.

#### **Contributions**

#### **Kheda Satyagraha (1918)**

Led peasants against unjust taxation during famine.

#### **Bardoli Satyagraha (1928)**

Organised farmers' resistance to increased land revenue. He earned the title "Sardar" during the Bardoli Satyagraha.

#### **Karachi Session in 1931**

He served as President of the Indian National Congress.

#### **Civil Disobedience (1930) & Quit India (1942)**

Played a frontline role in mass struggles.

#### **Post Independence role**

First Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister of India.

#### **Integration of States (1947–49)**

Unified 565 princely states into the Indian Union.

#### **Sardar & Gandhi**

He was a staunch follower of Mahatma Gandhi and supported non-violence throughout his political career.

#### **Legacy**

Commemorated by the Statue of Unity, the tallest statue in the world.

## Atal Bihari Vajpayee

He was a Statesman, poet, and visionary; served as Prime Minister thrice. Born on 25th December 1924 in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. He studied political science and law. He had early involvement in RSS and Jana Sangh.

### Contributions

#### **Pokhran-II Nuclear Tests (1998)**

Declared India's nuclear capability.

#### **Golden Quadrilateral (2001)**

Launched ambitious national highway project.

#### **Governance Reforms**

Promoted economic liberalisation and rural development.

#### **Recognition**

Awarded Bharat Ratna (2015); his birth anniversary marked as Good Governance Day.

## 2. Ganesh Chaturthi

Ganesh Chaturthi in its current public form traces back to 1894 in Poona, shaped by socio-religious tensions during colonial rule. Ganesh Chaturthi is an annual 10-day Hindu festival celebrating the birth of Lord Ganesha, the remover of obstacles and god of wisdom, prosperity, and success. It is one of India's most celebrated community festivals, marked by processions, cultural events, and immersion rituals. Though an ancient tradition, its public observance as a mass festival was reimagined in the 1890s as a fight against colonialism.

### Bal Gangadhar Tilak

Tilak (1856–1920), a key nationalist leader, popularised Ganesh Chaturthi as a means of social and political mobilisation. He believed festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi could supply the missing element of a "united religion", vital for India's national regeneration. The festival became a medium for uniting different Hindu classes, unlike the elitist Congress of the time.

#### **Newspapers**

Through his newspapers, *Kesari* (Marathi) and *The Mahratta* (English), he criticised colonial policies, reported communal issues, and advocated cultural revival.

#### **Other Contributions**

Apart from Ganesh Chaturthi, Tilak promoted Shivaji Jayanti. He wrote *Geeta Rahasya*, and gave the slogan "*Swaraj is my birthright*". He transformed the Congress from an elite forum into a mass movement by appealing to religious and cultural unity.

## 3. Shipki-La

Trade through Shipki-La (Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh), suspended in 2020 due to COVID-19, is likely to resume after China's in-principle agreement during Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to India. Positive response also received for resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra via Shipki-La. Shipki La is a motorable mountain pass located in the Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh. It sits at an elevation

of 3,930 metres and connects India with Tibet (now part of China). The old name of Shipki La was Pema La, or Shared Gate, also known as Shared Pass.

### Historic Significance of Shipki-La

Once part of the Silk Route, Shipki-La was formalised as a trade point under the 1994 India-China bilateral agreement. The route historically enabled trans-Himalayan economic and cultural exchanges.

#### Key Commodities Traded

1. Imports from Tibet – Wool, yaks, turquoise, gold, religious items.
2. Exports from India– Grains, spices, copper tools, timber.

### Advantages of this route for Kailash Mansarovar Yatra

#### Shorter Distance

Reduced travel on the Tibetan side via Gartok → Darchen → Mansarovar.

#### Road Connectivity

Existing roads up to Shipki-La through Rampur Bushahr and Pooh (Himachal Pradesh).

#### Infrastructure Feasibility

Suitable for base camps and other supporting facilities.

