Ashfaqullah Khan

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh cabinet approved a proposal to name a zoological garden in Gorakhpur after the freedom fighter and revolutionary Ashfaqullah Khan.

Who was Ashfaqullah Khan?

- Khan was born on October 22, 1900, in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh.
- He grew up at a time when Mahatma Gandhi had launched the non-cooperation movement and urged Indians not to pay taxes to the government or co-operate with the British.
- **Chauri Chaura incident** - Within about 1.5 years of the movement's launch, in February 1922, the Chauri Chaura incident took place in Gorakhpur.
- In the incident, large number of non-cooperation protestors clashed with the police and set the police station on fire, killing roughly 22 policemen.
- Opposed to violence, Gandhi called off the movement.
- **Youth's reaction** - The youth of the country were greatly disappointed and disillusioned with this. Khan was one among these youths.
- Subsequently, he joined the revolutionaries and became acquainted with Bismil.
- **The HSRA** - In the mid-1920s, Khan and Bismil went on to found the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA), with the aim of winning freedom for the country through an armed revolution.
- HSRA published a manifesto titled "The Revolutionary" in 1925.

What was in the HSRA's manifesto?

- The manifest said that the immediate object of the revolutionary party in the domain of politics is to establish a federal **Republic of United State of India** by an organized and armed revolution.
- The final constitution of this Republic shall be framed and declared at a time when the representatives of India shall have the power to carry out their decision.
- The basic principles of this Republic will be **universal suffrage** and **abolition of all system** which make the **exploitation** of man by man possible.
- For example, the railways and other means of transportation and

communication, the mines and other kinds of very great industries such as the manufacture of steel and ships all these shall be nationalised.

- The manifesto added that the Indian revolutionaries are **neither terrorists nor anarchists**.
    1. They never aim at spreading anarchy in the land and therefore they can never properly be called anarchists.
    2. Terrorism is never their object and they cannot be called terrorists.
    3. They do not believe that terrorism alone can bring independence.
    4. They do not want terrorism for terrorism's sake although they may at times resort to this method as an effective means of retaliation.

What was the Kakori Conspiracy?

- In August 1925, an armed robbery took place on board the Kakori Express which was going from Shahjahanpur to Lucknow.
- It was carrying money that had been collected at various railway stations and was to be deposited in Lucknow.
- In this planned robbery, carried out to fund the activities of the HSRA, Bismil, Khan and over 10 other revolutionaries stopped the train and fled with the cash they found in it.
- Within a month of the robbery, many members of the HSRA were arrested.
- In September 1926, Bismil was arrested but Khan was on the run.
- He hid in a sugarcane field half a mile from his home for some time, before he left for Bihar and then Delhi, where he was finally arrested.
- The trial for the case went on for about 1.5 years.
- It ended in April 1927, with Bismil, Khan, Rajendra Lahiri and Roshan Singh sentenced to death, and the others given life sentences.

Source: Indian Express

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