C. Rajagopalachari

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | History*

Why in News?

Recently, President Droupadi Murmu unveiled a statue of C. Rajagopalachari at Rashtrapati Bhavan, replacing the bust of Edwin Lutyens.

- **Born in –** 10 December 1878, Thorapalli village, Salem district (present-day Krishnagiri), Madras Province.
- **Parents –** Chakravarti Iyengar (also known as Venkata Arya), Munsif of Hosur Taluka.
- **Early Activism – Influence of Tilak –** Inspired by ***Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak's call for complete freedom***, and later joined the Indian National Congress and began active political engagement.
- **Salem Municipality (1917) –** Nominated Chairman; used office to serve the poor and downtrodden.
- **Public Service –** Transitioned from a successful legal career to full-time public life.
- **Ideology –** Ardent Gandhian who combined nationalism with social and economic reform.
- Advocated abolition of Zamindari, promotion of Khadi and village industries, and prohibition.
- Later opposed excessive state control and ***founded the Swatantra Party in 1959,*** supporting a market economy and limited government intervention.
- **Freedom Struggle – Non-Cooperation Movement (1920) –** Gave up lucrative legal practice and adopted Gandhi's call to promote Khadi and asked his sons to leave college for national work.
- **Khilafat Support –** Mobilised people in Madras Presidency by aligning with the Khilafat cause to strengthen mass participation.
- **Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha (1930) –** Led a march from Tiruchi to Vedaranyam and broke the Salt Law.
- **Independent Stand on Quit India (1942) –** Maintained an independent political position based on personal convictions.
- **Social Reform –** ***Inducted a Dalit into the Cabinet in 1937*** and worked towards the removal of caste-based disabilities.
- Established an Ashram in 1925 promoting rural reconstruction, adult education, sanitation, cottage industries, and anti-liquor campaigns.
- **Key Titles & Posts –** Governor of West Bengal (1947).
- Only Indian Governor-General of India (1948–1950).
- Union Home Minister (1950–51).

- Chief Minister of Madras (1952).
- First recipient of Bharat Ratna (1954).

References

1. IE | C. Rajagopalachari
2. INDIAN CULTURE | C. Rajagopalachari
3. SANSAD | C. Rajagopalachari

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