Jallianwala Bagh Massacre & Sir Sankaran Nair

Prelims – *History of India and Current events of national importance.*

Mains (GS I) – *Indian Heritage and Culture.*

Why in News?

Prime Minister Recently recalled Sir Chettur Sankaran Nair, who fought a battle against a senior official of the Raj who had sued Sir Sankaran for holding him responsible for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

- He is a nationalist and jurist and a firm opponent of British colonialism.
- **Born in** - 1857 in an aristocratic family in Malabar's Palakkad district.
- **Graduated from** - Presidency College in Madras and got a degree in law.
- **Hired by -** Sir Horatio Shepherd who later became Chief Justice of Madras High Court.
- **Contributions -** Led the Indian National Congress Session in Amraoti in 1897.
- Sankaran Nair was designated as the public prosecutor in 1899 and later ascended to the position of judge at the Madras High Court in 1908.
- In 1912, he was honored with a knighthood by the British Crown.
- By 1915, he became a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, focusing on educational reforms.
- In 1919, he played an important role in the expansion of provisions in the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms.

  Montagu-Chelmsford reforms introduced a system of dyarchy in the provinces and increased participation of Indians in the administration.

- However, in 1919, he chose to resign in protest against the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.
- Nair believed in India's right to self-government.
- Acted as the chairman of the All-India Committee, which engaged with the Simon Commission in 1928–29, albeit with limited success.
- Held the position of councillor to the ***Secretary of State for India*** from 1920 to 1921.
- In 1922, Nair published Gandhi and Anarchy, a book in which he spelt out his critique of Gandhi's methods of non-violence, civil disobedience, and non-cooperation.
- He also accused Michael O'Dwyer, who was Lieutenant Governor of Punjab at the time of the massacre, of following policies that led to the deaths.
- Nair passed away in 1934 at the age of 77.

Jallianwallah Bagh Massacre

• **Incident happened on** - April 13, 1919. • It coincided with Baisakhi, a widely celebrated harvest festival in Punjab and northern India. • Reason – To protest against the detention of two prominent leaders, ***Satya Pal and Saifuddin Kitchlew***, as well as the enforcement of the Rowlatt Act. • The gathering convened at Jallianwala Bagh; a park surrounded by walls with only a few small entrances. • During the meeting, Brigadier-General Reginald Edward Harry Dyer, who had approached the scene with the intent to reprimand the assembled crowd, commanded the soldiers accompanying him to open fire on the attendees.
Rowlatt Act
• **Passed on** - March 10, 1919. • It authorizes the government to imprison or confine, without a trial, any person associated with seditious activities.

Reference

The Indian Express | Sir Sankaran Nair