Libia Lobo Sardesai, Goan freedom fighter

Why in News?

Goan freedom fighter Libia Lobo Sardesai was honored with the Padma Shri recently for her pivotal role in the state's liberation struggle.

- Libia, a ***Goan nationalist activist***, was born in 1924 in Portuguese-ruled Goa and grew up in Bombay.
- In 1954, after the Portuguese assaulted and arrested satyagrahis who had entered Goa to demand an end to colonial rule, India closed its borders and imposed an economic blockade.
- The Portuguese had imposed ***"total censorship"*** in Goa, instilling fear and feeding people Portuguese propaganda.
- To counter these lies, the nationalists set up an underground radio station, initially called **'Q'.**
- On November 25, 1955, the station began broadcasting hour-long programs in the morning and evening.
- Libia and fellow Goan nationalists *Vaman Sardesai and Nicolau Menezes* worked nearly 18 hours a day, listening to various bulletins and news from India and abroad.
- They also studying reports, collating information, and scanning Indian and foreign newspapers and newsletters to select information about anti-colonial struggles.
- After 6 years in the jungles, just days before ***Operation Vijay*** was launched to liberate Goa, the Indian border police bundled Libia and Vaman in a jeep and took them to a rest-house in Belgaum.
- On December 17, 1961, the station relayed a direct message from V K Krishna Menon addressed to the Portuguese Governor General, asking him to surrender to prevent unnecessary casualties.
- The Portuguese Governor General asked Libia to go into the skies and announce that Goa is free.
- On December 19, 1961, Libia and Vaman flew in an Indian Air Force plane with a radio transmitter aboard and a loudspeaker announcing in Portuguese and Konkani that the Portuguese had surrendered.

Reference

The Indian Express | Libia Lobo Sardesai