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Pictorial book on India's Women Unsung Heroes of Freedom Struggle

- Union Minister of State for Culture Smt. Meenakashi Lekhi released a pictorial book on India's Women Unsung Heroes of Freedom Struggle as part of Azadi ka Mahotsav.
- The book has been released in partnership with Amar Chitra Katha which is a household name in India.
- The book celebrates the lives of some of the women who led the charge and lit the flame of protest and rebellion throughout the country.
- It contains the stories of queens who battled colonial powers in the struggle against imperial rule and women who dedicated and even laid down their lives for the cause of the motherland.
- The idea is to familiarise our youth with the iconic leaders of the freedom struggle and make them feel proud of their history.
- The book seeks to make the youth to understand the history of freedom struggle through an Indian perspective rather than the colonial one.
- The second edition will be on 25 unsung Tribal Freedom Fighters which is under process and will take some time.
- The third and final edition will be of 30 unsung heroes drawn from other areas.

Some of these iconic leaders include

Rani Abakka

- Rani Abakka, the Queen of Ullal, Karnataka fought and defeated the mighty Portuguese in the 16th century.
- Her army consisted of people from various castes, religions and sections of society.
- With this diversity, she ended up mobilizing her people to persistently oppose the Portuguese.
- She was given the name 'The Fearless Queen'.
- Her legacy now lives on in Dakshin Karnataka in the form of folk songs, stories and performances of Yakshagana - a form of local theatre.
- Things in memorial
    - Tulu Baduku Museum.
    - Inshore Patrol Vessel Rani Abakka.
    - Veera Rani Abbakka Utsava is an annual celebration held in her name.
    - Veera Rani Abbakka Prashasti - an award given to distinguished women on that day.

Velu Nachiyar

- Velu Nachiyar, the queen of Sivaganga was the first Indian queen to wage war against the British East India Company.
- She is known by Tamils as Veeramangai.
- Rani Velu Nachiyar was trained in martial arts like Valari, Silambam, horse riding and archery.
- She was proficient in many languages like French, English and Urdu.

- In collaboration with Hyder Ali and Gopala Nayaker, she waged a war against the British and emerged victorious.
- She is known to have produced the first human bomb as well as establish the first army of trained women soldiers in the late 1700s.
- A stamp was released in her remembrance.

Jhalkari Bai

- Jhalkari Bai, was a woman soldier in Rani Lakshmibai's women's army called the *Durga Dal*.
- She grew to become one of the key advisors to the Rani of Jhansi and a prominent figure in the First War of Indian Independence, 1857.
- She was born in a Dalit family and grew up to become a soldier.
- Jhalkari Bai was entrusted with the responsibility of leading the women's wing of the army.
- Jhalkari Bai took on the guise of the Rani and fought the battle. Jhalkari Bai fought fiercely and suggested that Rani leave the palace with her child.
- Many Dalit communities of Bundelkhand look her as an incarnation of God and also celebrate Jhalkaribai Jayanti every year in her honour.

Matangini Hazra

- Matangini Hazra was a brave freedom fighter from Bengal, who laid down her life while agitating against the British during Quit Inida Movement.
- In 1905, she became actively interested in the Indian independence movement as a Gandhian..
- In 1932, she took part in the Non-Cooperation Movement and was arrested for breaking the Salt Act.
- She resorted to spinning khadi (coarse cotton fabric) on her own charkha – despite her failing eyesight and advancing age.
- She was famously known as Gandhiburi.

Gulab Kaur

- Gulab Kaur was a freedom fighter who abandoned her own hopes and dreams of a life abroad to fight for and mobilise the Indian people against the British Raj.
- Gulab Kaur was a freedom fighter with the Ghadar Party.
- She was in charge of the printing and distribution of party literature, and was also known to give speeches on boats to Indian passengers.
- Gadhar di dhee- Gulab Kaur is a book written by S Kesar Singh about **Gulab Kaur.**

Chakali Ilamma

- Chakali Ilamma was a revolutionary woman who fought against the injustice of zamindars during the Telangana rebellion in the mid-1940s.
- She was a member of the Andhra Mahasabha.
- She is one of the first women to dismantle the supremacy of the feudal lords of Telangana and has inspired various women to fight for their land and dignity.

Padmaja Naidu

- Padmaja Naidu, the daughter of Sarojini Naidu and a freedom fighter in her own right, who would later become Governor of West Bengal and a humanitarian after Independence.

- She was also the joint founder of the Indian National Congress in Hyderabad.
- She was associated with the Red Cross, an international humanitarian organisation committed to protect human life and health.
- Miss Naidu was also associated with the Bharat Sevak Samaj, All India Handcrafts Board and Nehru Memorial Board.
- She collected the poems written by Sarojini Naidu and published it as a book titled The Feather of the Dawn in 1961.
- The Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park (also known as the Darjeeling Zoo) in Darjeeling is named after Ms Naidu.

Bishni Devi Shah

- Bishni Devi Shah, is a woman who inspired large number of people in Uttarakhand to join the freedom movement.
- Basanti Devi took part in various movements like the Civil disobedience movement and the Khilafat Movement and also participated in the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress in 1920.

Subhadra Kumari Chauhan

- Subhadra Kumari Chauhan was one of the greatest Hindi poets, who was also a prominent figure in the freedom movement.
- She is known for her evocative patriotic poem 'Jhansi ki Rani'.
- Subhadra's style of writing focused on women who overcame hardships besides fighting for nation's sovereignty through her works.
- She used poetry as a medium to inspire people to join the freedom struggle.
- Chauhan eventually became the first woman satyagrahi in 1923.
- Tej Se Tej (As Effulgence Met Effulgence), a book written by her daughter Sudha, chronicles her mother's life and times, while Prof Alok Rai is translating her memoirs into English.

Durgawati Devi

- Durgawati Devi was the brave woman who provided safe passage to Bhagat Singh after the killing of John Saunders and much more during her revolutionary days.
- When Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were awarded the death sentence, Durga came out openly in the field to oppose it.
- As revenge for the hanging of Bhagat Singh and others, Durga decided to kill Lord Hailey, an ex-Governor of Punjab, who was also a staunch enemy of the revolutionaries.
- Although the Governor escaped, his aides were injured. Durga was arrested and awarded three years imprisonment.
- She was an active member of the
    - Naujawan Bharat Sabha.
    - Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA).

Sucheta Kripalani

- Sucheta Kripalani, a prominent freedom fighter, became independent India's first woman Chief Minister of UP Government.
- She was committed to the Gandhian ideology.
- Sucheta was fearless in mind and spirit and chartered her own independent course.

- As India ushered in its Independence Sucheta was invited to sing Vande Mataram, Saare Jahan Se Acha and Jana Gana Mana before Nehru's "Tryst with Destiny" speech.
- In her book "An Unfinished Autobiography", Sucheta recounts the emotion she felt as a ten-year old after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.
- During her political journey, she founded the All India Mahila Congress. In 1949, she was a delegate to the United Nations General Assembly and led the Indian delegation to the International Labour Organisation in 1961.

Accamma Cherian

- Accamma Cherian, is an inspirational leader of the freedom movement in Travancore, Kerala, she was given the name 'Jhansi Rani of Tranvancore' by Mahatma Gandhi.
- Though a teacher by profession, her actual dream was to see her nation free.
- She quit her well-respected job to join India's freedom movement.
- In October 1938, Accamma was entrusted by the Travancore State Congress to organise the Desasevika Sangh (Female Volunteer Corps).
- Accamma autobiography is Jeevitham: Oru Samaram (Life: A Protest).

Aruna Asaf Ali

- Aruna Asaf Ali was an inspirational freedom fighter who is perhaps best remembered for hoisting the Indian National flag in Mumbai during the Quit India Movement in 1942.
- She is popularly known as the 'Grand Old Lady' of the Independence Movement.
- She was greatly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's ideals and beliefs.
- She was arrested while participating in the Salt Satyagraha in 1930.
- In 1932, she had gone on a hunger strike in Tihar Jail against the mistreatment of the political prisoners, which led to an improvement in their living conditions.
- During Quit-India movement to evade arrest she continued her struggle through underground radio, pamphlets, and magazines such as 'Inquilab' to continue the struggle.
- Post-independence she started a weekly journal 'Weekly' and newspaper 'Patriot' for upliftment of the status of women by encouraging women education.
- She was honoured with the Bharat Ratna in 1997.

Durgabai Deshmukh

- Durgabai Deshmukh, a tireless worker for the emancipation of women in Andhra Pradesh, she was also an eminent freedom fighter and member of the Constituent Assembly.
- She is popularly known as 'Iron Lady'.
- This tough self-disciplined Satyagrahi was ready to sacrifice anything to make her country free from the clutches of colonial rule.
- She was given the title of 'Mother of Social Work in India' by late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

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