Prelim Bits 29-01-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

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 celebrates the lives of some of the women who led the charge and lit the flame of protest and rebellion throughout the country. Some of the iconic leaders listed in the book are as follows

Rani Gaidinliu

- Rani Gaidinliu, (1915-1993) the Naga spiritual and political leader, led an armed uprising against the British in Manipur, Nagaland and Assam.
- She belonged to the Rongmei tribe (also known as Kabui).
- In 1927, at the age of 13 Gaidinliu joined the Heraka movement led by her cousin Haipou Jadonang
- The movement aimed at revival of the Naga tribal religion and establish self-rule of the Nagas (Naga Raj) ending the British rule.
- She was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment.
- After being released in 1947 she continued to work for the betterment of the community.
- **Things in honour -** Nehru described Gaidinliu as the "daughter of the hills" and gave her the title of 'Rani' for her courage.
- She was also awarded Tamra Patra and Padma Bhushan.
- A park along with a statue has been developed in Silchar, Assam.
- In her honour, the Indian government released a postage stamp in 1996, and commemorative coin in 2015

Reference

1. https://www.amritmahotsav.nic.in/unsung-heroes-detail.htm?56
2. https://theprint.in/features/rani-gaidinliu-daughter-of-the-hills-who-spent-14-years-in-jail-for-indias-independence/591570/

Usha Mehta

- Usha Mehta was a freedom fighter is remembered for organizing an underground radio station (Secret Congress Radio) during the Quit India Movement of 1942 to spread Gandhiji's message of 'Do or Die'.
- Mehta was born in in Saras, near Surat. During her childhood she met Mahatma Gandhi and became an ardent follower.
- During Quit India Movement Mehta unfurled the Indian national movement's tricolour flag at Gowalia tank ground when the entire Congress leadership including Mahatma Gandhi was placed under arrest.
- Mehta wrote a number of books, mainly on Gandhiji and his thoughts.
- Her book on great Indian women 'Bharat Ki Mahan Nariyan' is well known.
- She was awarded the prestigious Padma Vibhushan by the government of India.

Reference

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Parbati Giri

- Parbati Giri, one of Odisha's most prominent women freedom fighters, was called the Mother Teresa of Western Odisha for her work in the upliftment of her people.
- At the age of 16 she actively involved in the Quit India Movement.
- She adopted Gandhism as a way of life and her work manifested this virtue.
- During 1940 she started organizing meetings and mobilised people to participate in Gandhiji's Khadi Andolan movement.
- At Bargarh she ordered the lawyers to vacate the Court and stop cooperating with the British officials in legal matters.
- She sat on the chair of the SDO posing as a judge and ordered other boys to bring the SDO tied with a rope for which she was jailed for 2 years.
- She was called "Banhi Kanya" for her resilience and her aggressive nationalistic sentiments and free expression.

Reference

1. https://indianculture.gov.in/node/2790450

Tarkeshwari Sinha

- Tarkeshwari Sinha, a prominent freedom fighter during the Quit India Movement played an active role as a student leader in Patna Women's College, at the age of 16.
- Later she went on to become an eminent politician in the early decades of independent India.
- She served as a member of then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's council of ministers, and was a four-time Member of Parliament.
- Sinha was the first female deputy finance minister of India.

Reference

1. https://theprint.in/theprint-profile/tarkeshwari-prasad-sinha-fiery-freedom-fighter-from-bihar-who-rose-to-top-echelons-of-power/788498/

Snehlata Varma

- Snehlata Varma, a freedom fighter and tireless worker for the education and upliftment of women in Mewar, Rajasthan.

Reference

1. https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1792966

Tileshwari Baruah

- Tileshwari Baruah, one of India's youngest martyrs, she was shot at the age of 12 by the British, during the Quit India Movement, when she and some freedom fighters tried to unfurl the Tricolour atop a police station.
- To honour her, the Assam town of Dhekiajuli observes September 20 as Martyrs' Day.

Reference

1. https://indianexpress.com/article/india/tileswari-barua-martyred-at-12-india-hasnt-heard-of-her-youngest-freedom-hero-even-on-her-75th-anniversary-4852942/

