Rani Velu Nachiyar

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Why in News?

Prime Minister pays tribute to Rani Velu Nachiyar on her birth anniversary.

- Rani Velu Nachiyar was the ***1st queen to fight against the British*** colonial power in India.
- **Birth –** She was born on 3rd January 1730, as the only child of Raja Chellamuthu Vijayaragunatha Sethupathy and Rani Sakandhimuthal of the Ramnad kingdom.
- **Training –** She was trained in war match weapons usage, martial arts like Valari, Silambam (fighting using a stick), horse riding and archery.
- **Skills –** She was a scholar in many languages, and she had proficiency with languages like French, English and Urdu.
- **Marriage & Conflict –** She married Muthuvaduganathaperiya Udaiyathevar, king of Sivagangai, who was killed by British soldiers and the Nawab of Arcot's son.
- **Exile –** She escaped with her daughter, Vellachi, and lived under the protection of ***Palayakaarar Kopaala Naayakkar*** in Dindigul for 8 years.
- **Alliance –** At Dindigul, she met ***Haider Ali of Mysore***, won his support, and he admired her intellect and Urdu skills.
- **Return to Power –** In 1780, with allied forces, she attacked Sivaganga Fort, reclaimed her kingdom.
- She gave administrative powers to the Marudhu Brothers.
- **Title –** She is known by Tamils as Veeramangai (brave woman).
- **Succession –** Vellachi, Velu Nachiyar's daughter, succeeded her to the throne and ruled from 1790 to 1793.
- She died on 25th December 1796 in Sivagangai.
- **Legacy**
  - **Udaiyaal Unit** – She established one of the ***first all-women army units***, named after her adoptive daughter Udaiyaal.
  - She constructed a mosque and church to honour Haider Ali's support and maintained ties with Tipu Sultan.
  - She was honoured with a postage stamp (2008), a memorial statue in Sivagangai (2014), and an annual celebration of her birth anniversary on January 3.

Quick Fact

Kuyuili

• She was Velu Nachiyar's trusted ***military commander***.
• **Historic Act –** On Vijayadashami, Kuyuili drenched herself in ghee, entered the British armoury, and set herself ablaze—destroying all weapons stored inside.
• **Legacy –** She is remembered as ***India's first suicide bomber*** in the context of resistance against colonial rule.

References

1. PIB | PM pays tribute to Rani Velu Nachiyar on her birth anniversary
2. Indian Culture | Velu Nachiyar
3. FII | Velu Nachiyar

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