



November 17th, Death Anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai is celebrated as Martyr's Day in India. On this day Lalaji, sacrificed his life in the hands of British Forces for the cause of India's Freedom. Lala Lajpat Rai was one of the foremost leaders who fought against British rule in India. He was popularly known as *Punjab Kesari* (The Lion of Punjab). Lala Lajpat Rai was born on January 28, 1865 in village Dhudike, Moga District of Punjab. He was the eldest son of Munshi Radha Kishan Azad and Gulab Devi. His father was an Aggarwal Bania by caste.

Lala Lajpat Rai joined the Government College at Lahore in 1880 to study Law where he



came in contact with Lala Hans Raj and Pandit Guru Dutt. After that he joined the Arya Samaj founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati. He passed his Law Degree Examination in 1885 and started his legal practice in Hissar. He was elected to the Hissar Municipality as a member and later as Secretary. He shifted to Lahore in 1892.

Lala Lajpat Rai was one of the three most prominent Hindu Nationalist members of the Indian National Congress. He was part of the Lal-Bal-Pal trio. The other two members of the trio were Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal. Lalaji actively participated in the struggle against partition of Bengal. Along with Surendra Nath Banerjee, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh, he galvanized Bengal and the nation in a vigorous campaign of *Swadeshi*. Lalaji was arrested on 3rd of May, 1907 for his revolution against

British *Raj* in Rawalpindi. He was put in Mandalay jail for six months and was released on November 11, 1907.

Lalaji believed that it was important to organize propaganda in foreign countries to explain India's position because by that time the freedom struggle had taken a revolutionary turn. He left for Britain in April 1914 for this purpose. At this time First World War broke out and he was unable to return to India. He went to USA to galvanize support for India. He laid foundation of the 'Indian Home League Society of America' and wrote a book called "Young India". The book severely indicated British rule in India and was banned in Britain and India even before it was published. He returned to India in 1920 and became Congress President in the same year.

Servants of the People Society (Lok Sevak Mandal) was founded by Lala Lajpat Rai in 1921 at Lahore. The object of the society, as set forth by Lala Lajpat Rai himself is to enlist and train national missionaries for the services of the mother-land

He led the Punjab to protests against the Jalianwala Bagh Massacre and took active participation in Non-Cooperation Movement. He was arrested several times. He disagreed with Gandhiji's suspension of Non-Cooperation Movement due to the *Chauri-Chaura* incident, and formed the Congress Independence Party. It had a pro-Hindu angle. In 1928, British Government decided to send Simon Commission to India to discuss constitutional reforms. In 1929, when the Commission came to India there were protests all over India. Lala Lajpat Rai also led a protest against Simon Commission.



At that time he was brutally *lathicharged* by British Forces and received severe head injuries. This Great Son of the India breathed his last on November 17, 1928.