

Fetters, death warrants kindle reverence for freedom fighters

Collection Of Mementos From Independence Struggle On Display

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Photos: Ajay Kumar

Welcome to the first-of-its-kind museum set up by the prisons department at its headquarters on Jail Road in the state capital.

The museum has a rich collection of mementos since UP jails housed various legends of the freedom struggle and dignitaries including India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

On display at the museum, set up in March 2020, are chains, shackles and fetters weighing over 30kg used to restrain the Kakori train robbery case heroes Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqulla Khan, Thakur Roshan Singh, Rajendra Nath Lahri and Sachindranath Sanyal.

There is also copy of the poetry penned by Bismil during his stay, besides the 1927 death warrants of Khan, Bismil, Lahiri and Singh, in Urdu and Persian, convicted in Kakori case for waging war against government, criminal conspiracy and dacoity with murder.

Bismil's belongings, including books, bedsheet, comb, utensils, a pair of slippers and a kurta used in jail, besides the container in which his mother sent him desi ghee that was allowed by then jailer who was sympathetic towards revolutionaries, are among notable exhibits.

One will be astonished to know that founder of Communist Party of India Manabendra Nath Roy was put in Bareilly Central jail after being sentenced for 12 years for sedition. In jail, he completed his seminal work 'Radical Humanist'.

Prolific Hindi writer Yashpal, who was sentenced on January 22, 1932, for association with revolutionaries, was in Bareilly jail for six years. Later, he also served sentences in Lucknow, Naini and Fatehgarh jails.

The orders of sentences of Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi, who served terms in Lucknow, Hardoi and Kanpur jails for taking part in the Home Rule movement, are on display, as is the order on Veer Chandra Singh Garhwal, sentenced to life imprisonment for Peshawar conspiracy in 1920, and whom Nehru called his 'elder brother'. He served in Bareilly, Lucknow, Nainital and Almora jails.

Manindranath Banerjee, who had attacked a deputy superintendent of CID in Varanasi for executing his uncle Rajendranath Lahiri in the Kakori case, served 10 years' rigorous imprisonment in Fatehgarh jail. His sentence order in English is in collection.



HAUNTING PAST: The first-of-its-kind museum set up by the prisons department is on Jail Road

NEHRU SPENT 3,359 DAYS IN JAIL

India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who was put in jail nine times and stayed in Naini, Lucknow, Kannauj, Almora, Gorakhpur, Bareilly and Allahabad jails, overall served 3,359 days in prison



FETTERS WORN BY REVOLUTIONARIES

Fetters, whose use is prohibited now, of different shapes and sizes, and weighing 5 kg to 35 kg are on display



LETTER SENT BY RASH BEHARI BOSE FROM JAPAN

The letter sent by Rash Behari Bose from Japan to Sachindranath Sanyal in Bareilly Central jail on July 17, 1938. Sanyal was sentenced to life imprisonment in the Kakori case. Bose talks about waging a battle against the British and helping him financially. Bose tells Sanyal to meet Subhas Chandra Bose and Birla for financial help



ROPE USED FOR HANGINGS IN BAREILLY JAIL

The 95-year-old rope used for hanging prisoners awarded death penalty is on exhibit. It was used for hanging over 50 prisoners

UTENSILS USED BY REVOLUTIONARIES

Earlier, food was served in copper vessels, then jails started using aluminum and finally steel. The utensils used by Bismil and other revolutionaries are among the exhibits



HAND FLOUR GRINDER

The hand flour grinder of stone used by prisoners in 1888 is also on display. Its use in prisons was discontinued after independence

