Twitter Thread by Sadaa Shree



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Ahilyabai Holkar, one of the greatest queens of Indian History. Widowed at any early age, went on to become one of the greatest rulers.
Thread on her Jayanti

Known for her wisdom and administrative ability she rebuilt many Hindu temples, offered facilities for pilgrims, and built a new capital at Maheswar on the banks of the Narmada. A true Dharmic ruler, Ahilyabai Holkar, daughter in law of Malhar Rao Holkar.

On the 31st of May, 1725, Ahilyabai was born in the Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra to a Dhangar village patil Malkoji Shinde. Though she did not go to school, nevertheless her father taught her to read and write at home. #AhilyabaiHolkar

Fortune unexpectedly came her way, when the ruler of Malwa, Malharrao Holkar stopped at her village on his way to Pune and saw the 8 year old girl at a temple. Impressed by her piety, he took her home as a bride for his son Khande Rao. #AhilyabaiHolkar

Married in 1733, tragedy struck Ahilyabhai when her husband was killed in the Siege of Kumher fort by a cannonball. It's believed a grief stricken Ahilyabai wanted to commit Sati, but her father in law dissuaded her saying she was more needed than ever, as there was no male heir.

Malhar Rao trained Ahilyabai in administrative and military matters, he had full faith in her ability and she did not let him down. Malhar Rao passed away in 1766, and though her son Malerao, took over he was too weak a ruler and passed away the very next year.

She petitioned the Peshwa to take over the reign of Malwa herself, as she had been trained in military and administration by then. Though some of the nobles objected to this, she had the full support of the Holkar army.

On many occasions Ahilyabai had led the army herself from the front armed with bows and arrows on her elephant. The Peshwa granted her permission to rule in 1767, and she was ably assisted by Tukojirao Holkar, the commander in chief. #AhilyabaiHolkar

With Tukojirao advising her on military matters, Ahilyabai proceeded to rule over Malwa in a wise and sagacious manner. She never let personal rivalries affect her administration, once reinstated a Brahmin who had opposed her earlier. #AhilyabaiHolkar

She never observed purdah, held daily durbars and was always accessible to the public. Her first principle of government appears to have been moderate assessment, and respect for the native rights of village officers and proprietors of land. #AhilyabaiHolkar

Ahilayabai ruled at a time, when the whole of Central India, , was facing power struggles one way or another, as well as intense battles being fought for the throne. To her credit Malwa was never once attacked and remained an oasis of stability and peace. #AhilyabaiHolkar

While Indore developed under Ahilyabhai's reign, into a prosperous trading town, she also developed her own capital at Maheswar on the banks of the Narmada. She built many temples at Maheswar, a fort, a palace, repaired many ghats. #AhilyaBaiHolkarJayanti

She built many temples at Maheswar, a fort, a palace, repaired many ghats. She also built many forts, roads in Malwa, donated to temples and sponsored many Hindu festivals. #AhilyaBaiHolkarJayanti

Maheswar during her time, turned out to be a center for literature and arts. The famous Marathi poet Moropant, the shahir Anatapandhi was patronized by her as well as the Sanskrit scholar Khushali Ram.

The textile industry flourished in Maheshwar during her reign, and the city is home to the famous Maheswari sari. She also patronized many craftsmen, sculptors, artistes who made the city their home. #AhilyaBaiHolkar

Trade was encouraged in the kingdom, and many merchants, farmers, cultivators rose to affluence during her time. Ahilyabai treated her subjects like her own children, and invested a lot of money in public works. #AhilyaBaiHolkar

Trees were planted along roads, wells were dug and rest houses set up for travelers. She reached out to the poor and homeless, gave them shelter and dignity. #AhilyaBaiHolkarJayanti #AhilyaBaiHolkar

When the Bhils were harassing the caravans she talked out with them, persuaded them to give up their nomadic lifestyle granted them land for cultivation.Her daily routine was quite simple, rose an hour before daybreak to say her prayers, read the scriptures, and distributed alms.

After breakfast, she took a short break, and then attended durbar listening to people, settling disputes, taking decisions on administrative matters. A devout Shaivaite, she would mark Shri Shankara on all royal proclamations along with her signature. #AhilyaBaiHolkar

Today when you visit any holy Hindu place in India be it Varanasi, Gaya, Rameswaram, Dwaraka time to remember Ahilyabai Holkar, whose contibution is there in the form of temples, ghats, dharamshalas. #Naman to a great daughter of India.

For thirty years her reign of peace,
The land in blessing did increase;
And she was blessed by every tongue,
By stern and gentle, old and young.
Yea, even the children at their mothers feet
- Joanna Baillie on Ahilyabai Holkar

Incidentally Sumitra Mahajan Tai, former Lok Sabha speaker, and ex MP of Indore, has written a book on Ahilyabai Holkar called Matoshree.
The airport and university at Indore too are named after her.
In fact if ur an Indori, u can never miss her presence. #AhilyaBaiHolkar

My article on #AhilyabaiHolkar do check out and share.
#AhilyabaiHolkarJayanti2022
https://t.co/rC8KWGzO6m

My podcast on #AhilyabaiHolkar do check out and share.
#AhilyabaiHolkarJayanti2022
https://t.co/4PvzzFmxJa
https://t.co/ksL0hTXVwY

Ahilyabai built and also repaired many temples all over India, some of her more famous works are rebuilding the Kashi Viswanath temple after it was destroyed by Aurangzeb, there is also an Ahilya Ghat at Varanasi as well as the Ahilya Dwarkeswar temple.

The Chatri of her father in law Malhar Rao Holkar was built at Alampur in MP as well as many temples here. Also built the Treta Ram temple in Ayodhya. . Apart from that she also repaired the Manikarnika, Dasasvamedh Ghats, built Dharamshalas at Varanasi.

From Badrinath to Dwarka, from Omkareswar to Puri, from Gaya to Rameswaram, every holy pilgrimage site in India, had a contribution in one way or other from Ahilyabhai Holkar be it temples, dharmashalas, bathing ghats, What she did for Dharma is invaluable. #AhilyaBaiHolkar

On 13th August 1795 Ahilyabai Holkar passed away, but her legacy would remain forever, in the form of temples, public works, chattris, dharamshalas. At every major pilgrimage center in India, you would find some memory or other of her work, not to mention Maheshwar itself.