

CURRENT AFFAIRS: 22.05.2026

Who is Veera Pasi, the 'forgotten hero' of the 1857 Revolt whose statue Rahul Gandhi unveiled in Raebareli

While this was not the first attempt by a political party to woo the Pasi community in Uttar Pradesh through an icon from the community, Gandhi's move is significant ahead of the UP Assembly election next year. We explain.

Recently, a statue of **Veera Pasi**, regarded as a "forgotten hero" of the Revolt of 1857, was unveiled in Raebareli, bringing renewed attention to his contribution to India's freedom struggle.

Veera Pasi

- **Birth & Background:** Veera Pasi was a Dalit freedom fighter from the Pasi community, born on 11th November 1835 in a poor family in Lodhwari village of Raebareli district, Uttar Pradesh.
 - Pasis are the **second-largest Dalit group in Uttar Pradesh after Jatavs** and form an important social and electoral bloc.
- **Association:** He became a trusted commander and companion of **Rana Beni Madhav Baksh Singh**, ruler of the **Shankarpur Estate in present-day Raebareli**.
- **Role in 1857 Revolt:** According to local folklore, Veera Pasi showed exceptional courage by **rescuing Rana Beni Madhav Baksh Singh** from British captivity during the **1857 Revolt**.
 - The British reportedly announced a reward of Rs 50,000 for his capture, and Pasi is believed to have died while protecting Singh from British forces.
- **Significance:** The revival of Veera Pasi, along with icons like **Uda Devi and Maharaja Bijli Pasi**, reflects the growing effort to reclaim Dalit and marginalised communities' role in India's freedom struggle.



The Indian Mutiny of 1857-59 was a widespread but unsuccessful rebellion against the rule of British East India Company in India which functioned as a sovereign power on behalf of the British crown.

The Revolt

- It was the first expression of organised resistance against the British East India Company
- It began as a revolt of the sepoys of the British East India Company's army but eventually secured the participation of the masses.

- The revolt is known by several names: **the Sepoy Mutiny** (by the British Historians), **the Indian Mutiny**, **the Great Rebellion** (by the Indian Historians), **the Revolt of 1857**, **the Indian Insurrection**, and **the First War of Independence** (by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar).

Causes of The Revolt

Political Cause

- **British policy of expansion:** The political causes of the revolt were the British policy of expansion through the **Doctrine of Lapse** and direct annexation.
- A large number of Indian rulers and chiefs were dislodged, thus arousing fear in the minds of other ruling families who apprehended a similar fate.
 - **Rani Lakshmi Bai's** adopted son was not permitted to sit on the throne of Jhansi.
 - Satara, Nagpur and Jhansi were annexed under the **Doctrine of Lapse**.
 - Jaitpur, Sambalpur and Udaipur were also annexed.
 - The annexation of Awadh by Lord Dalhousie on the pretext of maladministration left thousands of nobles, officials, retainers and soldiers jobless. This measure converted Awadh, a loyal state, into a hotbed of discontent and intrigue.

Doctrine of lapse:

- The notable British technique called the **Doctrine of Lapse** was first perpetrated by **Lord Dalhousie** in the late 1840s.
- It involved the British prohibiting a Hindu ruler without a natural heir from adopting a successor and, after the ruler died or abdicated, annexing his land.
- To those problems added the growing discontent of the Brahmans, many of whom had been dispossessed of their revenues or had lost lucrative positions.

Social and Religious Cause

- The rapidly **spreading Western Civilisation** in India was alarming concerns all over the country.
 - An act in 1850 changed the Hindu law of inheritance enabling a Hindu who had converted into Christianity to inherit his ancestral properties.
 - The people were convinced that the Government was planning to **convert Indians to Christianity**.
- The **abolition of practices like sati and female infanticide**, and the legislation legalizing widow remarriage, were believed as threats to the established social structure.
- Introducing **western methods of education** was directly challenging the orthodoxy for Hindus as well as Muslims
- Even the introduction of the railways and telegraph was viewed with suspicion.

Economic Cause

- In rural areas, peasants and zamindars were infuriated by the **heavy taxes on land** and the **stringent methods of revenue collection** followed by the Company.
 - Many among these groups were unable to meet the heavy revenue demands and repay their loans to money lenders, eventually losing the lands that they had held for generations.

- Large numbers of **sepoys belonged to the peasantry class** and had family ties in villages, so the grievances of the peasants also affected them.
- After the Industrial Revolution in England, there was an **influx of British manufactured goods** into India, which ruined industries, particularly the textile industry of India.
 - Indian handicraft industries had to compete with cheap machine-made goods from Britain.

Military Causes

- The Revolt of 1857 began as a **sepoy mutiny**:
 - Indian sepoy formed more than 87% of the British troops in India but were considered inferior to British soldiers.
 - An Indian sepoy was paid less than a European sepoy of the same rank.
- They were required to serve in areas far away from their homes.
 - In 1856 Lord Canning issued the General Services Enlistment Act which required that the sepoy must be ready to serve even in British land across the sea.

Lord Canning

- Charles John Canning was the statesman and governor general of India during the Indian Mutiny of 1857.
- He became the **first viceroy of India** in 1858.
- The important events during his tenure include:
 - The Mutiny of 1857, which he was able to suppress successfully
 - Passing of Indian Councils Act, 1861 which **introduced portfolio system** in India
 - **Withdrawal of "Doctrine of Lapse"** which was one of the main reasons of mutiny of 1858
 - Introduction of Code of Criminal Procedure
 - Enactment of Indian High Courts Act
 - Indian Penal Code (1858)

Immediate Cause

- The Revolt of 1857 eventually broke out over the **incident of greased cartridges**.
 - A rumour spread that the cartridges of the new enfield rifles were greased with the fat of cows and pigs.
 - Before loading these rifles the sepoy had to bite off the paper on the cartridges.
 - Both Hindu and Muslim sepoy refused to use them.
- Lord Canning tried to make amends for the error and the offending cartridges were withdrawn but the damage had already been done. There was unrest in several places.
- In March 1857, **Mangal Pandey**, a sepoy in **Barrackpore**, had refused to use the cartridge and attacked his senior officers.
 - He was hanged to death on 8th April.
 - On 9th May, 85 soldiers in Meerut refused to use the new rifle and were sentenced to ten years' imprisonment.

Centres of The Revolt

- The revolt spread over the entire area from the neighbourhood of Patna to the borders of Rajasthan. The main centres of revolt in these regions namely Kanpur, Lucknow, Bareilly, Jhansi, Gwalior and Arrah in Bihar.
 - **Lucknow:** it was the capital of Awadh. **Begum Hazrat Mahal**, one of the begums of the ex-king of Awadh, took up the leadership of the revolt.
 - **Kanpur:** the revolt was led by **Nana Saheb**, the adopted son of Peshwa Baji Rao II.
 - He joined the revolt primarily because he was deprived of his pension by the British.
 - The victory was short-lived. Kanpur was recaptured by the British after fresh reinforcements arrived.
 - The revolt was suppressed with terrible vengeance.
 - Nana Saheb escaped but his brilliant commander **Tantia Tope** continued the struggle.
 - Tantia Tope was finally defeated, arrested and hanged.
 - **Jhansi:** the twenty-two-year-old **Rani Lakshmi Bai** led the rebels when the British refused to accept the claim of her adopted son to the throne of Jhansi.
 - She fought gallantly against the British forces but was ultimately defeated by the English.
 - **Gwalior:** After Rani Lakshmi Bai escaped, she was joined by Tantia Tope and together they marched to Gwalior and captured it.
 - Fierce fighting followed where the Rani of Jhansi fought like a tigress but died, fighting to the very end.
 - Gwalior was recaptured by the British.
 - Bihar: the revolt was led by **Kunwar Singh** who belonged to a royal house of Jagdispur, Bihar.

Places of Revolt	Indian Leaders	British Officials who suppressed the revolt
Delhi	Bahadur Shah II	John Nicholson
Lucknow	Begum Hazrat Mahal	Henry Lawrence
Kanpur	Nana Saheb	Sir Colin Campbell
Jhansi & Gwalior	Lakshmi Bai & Tantia Tope	General Hugh Rose
Bareilly	Khan Bahadur Khan	Sir Colin Campbell
Allahabad and Banaras	Maulvi Liyakat Ali	Colonel Ocell
Bihar	Kunwar Singh	William Taylor

Suppression and The Revolt

- The Revolt of 1857 lasted for more than a year. It was suppressed by the middle of 1858.

- On July 8, 1858, fourteen months after the outbreak at Meerut, peace was finally proclaimed by Lord Canning.

Why did the Revolt Fail?

- **Limited uprising:** although the revolt was fairly widespread, a large part of the country remained unaffected by it.
 - The revolt was mainly confined to the Doab region.
 - The large princely states, **Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore, and Kashmir**, as well as the smaller ones of **Rajputana**, did not join the rebellion
 - The southern provinces did not take part in it.
- **No effective leadership:** the rebels lacked an effective leader. Although Nana Saheb, Tantia Tope and Rani Lakshmi Bai were brave leaders, they could not offer effective leadership to the movement as a whole.
- **Limited resources:** the rebels lacked resources in terms of men and money. The English, on the other hand, received a steady supply of men, money and arms in India.
- **No participation of the middle class:** The English educated middle class, the rich merchants, traders and zamindars of Bengal helped the British to suppress the revolt.

Results of The Revolt

- **End of company rule:** the great uprising of 1857 was an important landmark in the history of modern India.
 - The revolt marked the end of the East India Company's rule in India.
- **Direct rule of the British Crown:** India now came under the direct rule of the British Crown.
 - This was announced by Lord Canning at a **Durbar in Allahabad** in a proclamation issued on 1 November 1858 in the name of the Queen.
 - The Indian administration was taken over by Queen Victoria, which, in effect, meant the British Parliament.
 - The India office was created to handle the governance and the administration of the country.
- **Religious tolerance:** it was promised and due attention was paid to the customs and traditions of India.
- **Administrative change:** the Governor General's office was replaced by that of the Viceroy.
 - The rights of Indian rulers were recognised.
 - The Doctrine of Lapse was abolished.
 - The right to adopt sons as legal heirs was accepted.
- **Military reorganisation:** the ratio of British officers to Indian soldiers increased but the armoury remained in the hands of the English. It was arranged to end the dominance of the Bengal army.

World Metrology Day 2026

World Metrology Day is an annual event celebrated globally on 20th May to mark the anniversary of the signing of the historic **Metre Convention in 1875 in Paris**.

What are the Key Facts About World Metrology Day?

- **World Metrology Day:** The celebration was first initiated in 1999 by the International Committee for Weights and Measures (CIPM).
 - The **International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM)** and the **International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML)** jointly coordinate the celebrations.
 - The 2026 theme, **“Metrology: Building Trust in Policy Making,”** underscores measurements as crucial for public policy, trade, healthcare, environmental protection, and industrial growth.
- **Metre Convention:** It laid the institutional and scientific foundation for a globally uniform metric measurement system and the **International System of Units (SI)**.
- **Metrology:** It is the scientific study of measurement, establishes common standards for units and instruments. It plays a vital role in various fields such as **navigation, construction, product development, environmental monitoring, medicine, and food processing**.
- **Metrology vs. Legal Metrology:** While metrology is the overarching science of measurement, legal metrology focuses on the **mandatory regulations and verification of weighing and measuring instruments** to ensure public protection, fair trade, and accuracy in commercial transactions.

How has India's Metrology Ecosystem Evolved?

Ancient India's Measurement Heritage

- **Indus Valley Civilization:** Highly **standardized measurement systems** drove their advanced urban planning, architecture, and trade.
 - **Cubical Chert Weights (Harappa & Mohenjo-Daro):** Extremely precise, cube-shaped stone weights that followed a dual binary system.
 - **Ivory Scale (Lothal):** An engineered linear scale featuring the smallest known decimal divisions (approx. 1.704 mm) of the ancient world, crucial for their precise brick-laying and dockyard construction.
 - **Shell Scale (Mohenjo-Daro):** A specialized, hollow cylinder-like measuring tool crafted from shell, featuring highly accurate uniform sub-divisions.
 - **Bronze Measuring Rod (Harappa):** A metallic linear measure indicating standardized units of length were enforced across the vast civilization.
- **Mauryan Empire (322–185 BCE):** Organized weights and measures specifically for **administration, systematic taxation, and trade regulation**.
- **Sher Shah Suri:** Standardized metrics across his empire and introduced the **Rupiya** (the precursor to the modern Indian Rupee).
- **Key Commercial Units of Antiquity:**
 - **Rati:** A foundational, seed-based unit primarily used for accurately weighing **gold, gemstones, and other precious items**.
 - **Masha & Tola:** *Masha* was derived from a fixed number of Ratis, while the *Tola* became a widely accepted unit for precious metals and everyday commercial transactions.
 - **Seer:** A standard, larger unit commonly deployed in daily market trade.

- **Maund and Candy:** Large-scale commercial units utilized exclusively for **bulk trade, agricultural transactions, and mass storage**.
- Ancient India developed advanced systems for measuring length, weight, and capacity, using body-based units like cubits and hand spans, along with binary, decimal, and octonary numerical systems.

Evolution of India's Legal Metrology Framework

- **National Physical Laboratory (NPL):** India's modern framework began with the establishment of the **National Physical Laboratory (NPL)** (custodian of the national prototypes of the metre and kilogram) **in 1947**.
- **Regional Reference Standard Laboratories (RRSLs)** were established to verify and standardize measurements used in laboratories and trade activities across states.
- **Standards of Weights and Measures Acts (1956 & 1976):** In 1957–58, India signed the Metre Convention and officially adopted the **International System of Units (SI)**.
 - **1956 Act:** Established a uniform, scientific metric system in India, aligning the nation with global **SI Units** and **OIML** (India became a member in 1956) practices.
 - **1976 Act:** Introduced standardized numeration (international form of Indian numerals).
 - Regulated inter-state trade for packaged commodities, weights, and measures.
 - Facilitated the creation of the **Indian Institute of Legal Metrology (Ranchi)** for training officials.
- **Legal Metrology Act, 2009:** This landmark legislation mandated the **nationwide adoption of the metric system** and prescribed **mandatory declarations for pre-packaged commodities**.
 - It also empowered Legal Metrology Officers with enforcement capabilities like inspections and seizures.
- **Decriminalization via Jan Vishwas Acts:** The **Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2023** and **Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2026** modernized compliance by **decriminalizing seven sections of the Legal Metrology Act**, replacing imprisonment with monetary penalties.
 - Crucially, the 2026 Act introduced an **"improvement notice" mechanism for MSMEs**, allowing them to rectify first-time procedural lapses without immediate penalties to promote ease of doing business.
- **Digital Integration (eMaap Portal):** Launched by the Department of Consumer Affairs, it aims to enhance Ease of Doing Business and G2B service delivery.
 - The **eMaap portal centralizes and integrates the Legal Metrology systems of all States**. It provides a transparent, online registration platform for manufacturers, dealers, and importers.
- **'One Nation, One Time' Initiative:** Implemented collaboratively by the **Department of Consumer Affairs, NPL, and ISRO**, this initiative aims to disseminate **Indian Standard Time (IST) with millisecond-to-microsecond precision**.
 - This precision is critical for securing **telecommunications, AI, power grids, and digital governance**.
- **Global Competitiveness (OIML Certification):** In 2023, India achieved a major milestone by becoming the **13th country globally authorized to issue internationally accepted OIML approval certificates**.
 - This allows Indian manufacturers to export measuring instruments globally without facing redundant international testing costs.
 - India will host the 61st Meeting of the International Committee of Legal Metrology in New Delhi in October 2026.

- **Enhanced Consumer Protection:** The framework is adapting to modern digital trade, notably through the upcoming **country-of-origin disclosure provisions for e-commerce platforms**, which will become effective on **1st July 2027**.
- **Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Standardized metrology directly supports **SDG 1 (No Poverty)**, **SDG 3 (Good Health)**, **SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy)**, **SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation)**, and **SDG 13 (Climate Action)** through reliable measurement systems.

KEY COMMODITIES COVERED UNDER THE LEGAL METROLOGY ACT

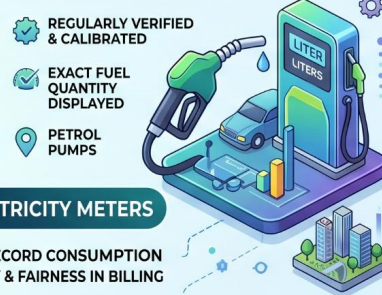
1 WEIGHING INSTRUMENTS



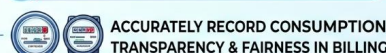
2 PACKAGED COMMODITIES



3 FUEL DISPENSERS



4 WATER AND ELECTRICITY METERS



5 CLINICAL AND MEDICAL INSTRUMENTS



6 TELECOMMUNICATIONS & DIGITAL SERVICES



7 ELECTRONICS & SEMICONDUCTOR MANUFACTURING

