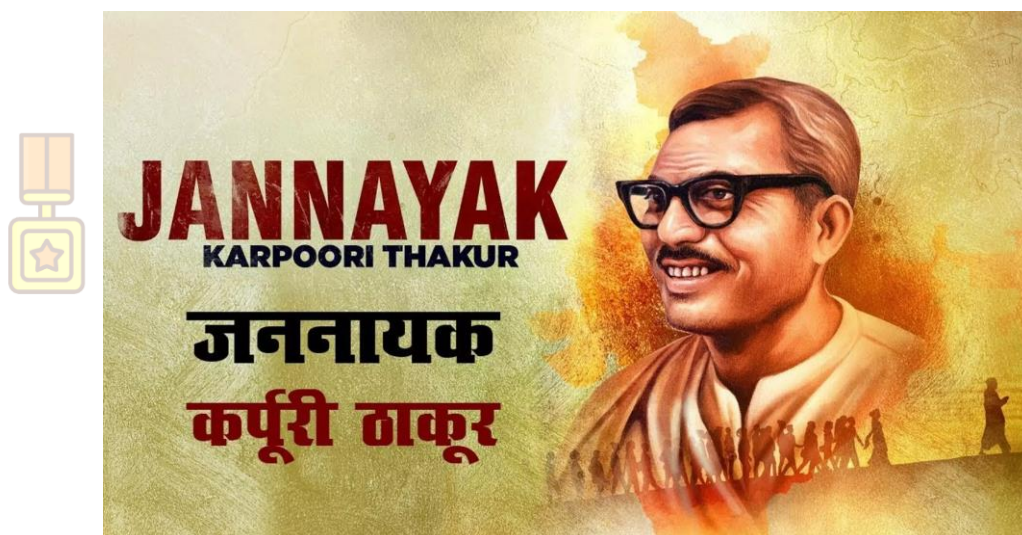


# Karpoori Thakur Awarded Bharat Ratna Posthumously

## Why In News

- **Karpoori Thakur**, a prominent **Gandhian socialist leader and former Bihar chief minister** will be awarded the **'Bharat Ratna' posthumously**. He served as chief minister from **December 1970 to June 1971** and from December 1977 to April 1979. Karpoori Thakur died on February 17, 1988. this "highest honor to late Karpoori Thakur ji on his **100th birth anniversary** will create positive sentiments among the Dalits, deprived and neglected sections".



## Bharat Ratna

- **Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award** in the country, has been granted to **49 individuals** so far, with 17 posthumously.
- **Instituted in 1954**, this award is open to anyone, regardless of race, occupation, position, or gender.
- It is awarded in **recognition of outstanding service or performance** of the highest order in any field of human endeavour.
- The prime minister makes recommendations directly to the President, and no formal recommendations are required.



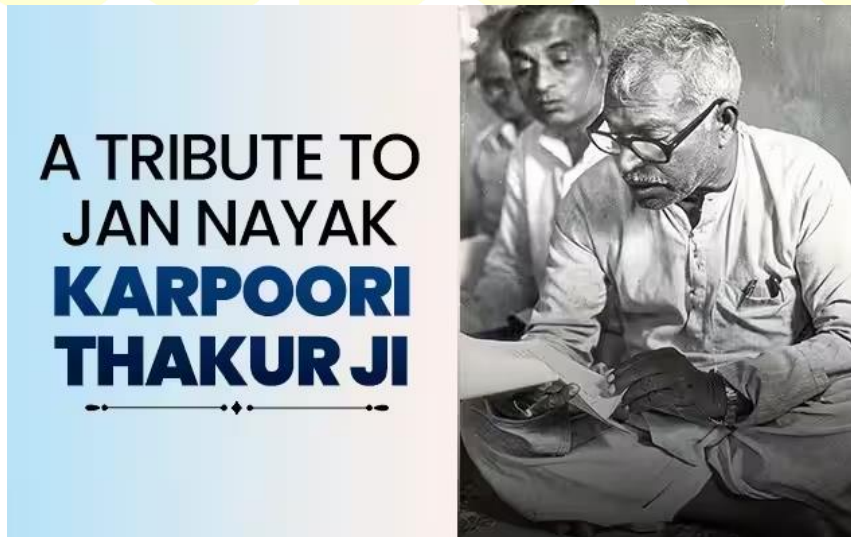
- The annual awards are limited to a **maximum of three per year**. Upon receiving the award, the recipient is **presented with a Sanad** (certificate) signed by the President and a medallion. The Bharat Ratna **does not come with any monetary grant**, according to the ministry of home affairs (MHA).

## Karpoori Thakur

- Thakur was born in **village Pitaunjhia** (now known as **Karpoori Gram**), in the Samastipur district of Bihar. He participated in the freedom struggle and was also jailed for it.
- In independent India, **he was voted in as an MLA in 1952**. He remained an MLA till his death in 1988, except when he became an MP in 1977 and when he lost an Assembly election in 1984, amid the sympathy wave for Congress after Indira Gandhi's assassination.
- Thakur was **education minister of Bihar from March 5 1967** to January 28, 1968. He became **the state's chief minister in December 1970** with the **Samyukta Socialist Party**, but his government fell after six months. He came to the post again in June 1977, but could not finish a full term, losing power in about two years. This happened due to a reservation policy he implemented, on which we'll elaborate later.



- The Centre announced it would **award the Bharat Ratna posthumously** to Karpoori Thakur, former chief minister of Bihar. This is the birth centenary year of Thakur, also known as **'Jannayak', or the leader of the people.**
- Prominent political parties of Bihar, such as the RJD and the JD(U), have regularly demanded the Bharat Ratna for Thakur, known for his struggle to secure dignity, self respect, and development for the most disadvantaged sections of society.



- Thakur's (January 24, 1924-February 17, 1988) **political life was one of contrasts** — he managed to emerge as the tallest backward caste leader in Bihar despite belonging to the **minority nai** (barber) caste himself, but the rise of the leaders he mentored, from numerically stronger castes (Lalu Prasad from the Yadavs, Ram Vilas Paswan among Dalits), took away his pole position. He was chief



minister twice for short tenures, but his radical policy decisions had an outsized impact, and resonate even today.



## Major Policy Decisions

- Thakur is known for **many of his decisions** — removing English as compulsory **subject** for the **matriculation examinations**; prohibition of alcohol; preferential treatment for unemployed engineers in government contracts, through which around 8,000 of them got jobs (this was when unemployed engineers were staging regular protests for jobs).



- In June 1970, the Bihar government appointed the Mungeri Lal Commission, which in its report of February 1976 named 128 “backward” communities, 94 of which were identified as “most backward”.

- The **Janata Party government of Thakur** implemented the recommendations of the Commission.
- The **'Karpoori Thakur Formula'** provided **26% reservation**, of which OBCs got a 12% share, the economically backward classes among the OBCs got 8%, women got 3%, and the poor from the **"upper castes" got 3%**. This was much before the central government came up with the EWS quota. However, The 'Karpoori Thakur Formula' cost him dearly. His government fell, and he witnessed major opposition from upper castes.

<b>Bharat Ratna Recipients</b>					
Name	Birth– Death	Conferred In		Birth– Death	Conferred In
1 C. Rajagopalachari	1878-1972	1954	25	Vallabhbhai Patel*	1875-1950 1991
2 Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan	1888-1975	1954	26	Morarji Desai	1896-1995 1991
3 C. V. Raman	1888-1970	1954	27	Abul Kalam Azad*	1888-1958 1992
4 Bhagwan Das	1869-1958	1955	28	J. R. D. Tata	1904-1993 1992
5 Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya	1861-1962	1955	29	Satyajit Ray	1922-1992 1992
6 Jawaharlal Nehru	1889-1964	1955	30	Gulzarilal Nanda	1898-1998 1997
7 Govind Ballabh Pant	1887-1961	1957	31	Aruna Asaf Ali*	1909-1996 1997
8 Dhondo Keshav Karve	1858-1962	1958	32	A. P. J. Abdul Kalam	1931-2015 1997
9 Bidhan Chandra Roy	1882-1962	1961	33	M. S. Subbulakshmi	1916-2005 1998
10 Purushottam Das Tandon	1882-1962	1961	34	Chidambaram Subramaniam	1910-2000 1998
11 Rajendra Prasad	1884-1963	1962	35	Jayaprakash Narayan*	1902-1979 1999
12 Zakir Husain	1897-1969	1963	36	Amartya Sen	b. 1933 1999
13 Pandurang Vaman Kane	1880-1972	1963	37	Gopinath Bordoloi*	1890-1950 1999
14 Lal Bahadur Shastri*	1904-1966	1966	38	Ravi Shankar	1920-2012 1999
15 Indira Gandhi	1917-1984	1971	39	Lata Mangeshkar	b. 1929 2001
16 V. V. Giri	1894-1980	1975	40	Bismillah Khan	1916-2006 2001
17 K. Kamaraj*	1903-1975	1976	41	Bhimsen Joshi	1922-2011 2009
18 Mother Teresa	1910-1997	1980	42	C. N. R. Rao	b. 1934 2014
19 Vinoba Bhave*	1895-1982	1983	43	Sachin Tendulkar	b. 1973 2014
20 Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan	1890-1988	1987	44	Madan Mohan Malaviya*	1861-1946 2015
21 M. G. Ramachandran*	1917-1987	1988	45	Atal Bihari Vajpayee	1924-2018 2015
22 B. R. Ambedkar*	1891-1956	1990	46	Nanaji Deshmukh*	1916-2010 2019
23 Nelson Mandela	1918-2013	1990	47	Bhupen Hazarika*	1926-2011 2019
24 Rajiv Gandhi*	1944-1991	1991	48	Pranab Mukherjee	b. 1935 2019