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## SIR SAYYID AHMAD KHAN

*This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan". This topic has relevance in the "History and Culture" section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

### For Prelims:

About Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and his contributions

### For Mains:

GS1: Modern History

### Why in the news?

The enactment of the Women's Reservation Bill coincided with the 125th birth anniversary of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, renowned for his efforts in advocating social reforms within the Muslim community.

### About Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (born October 17, 1817, — March 27, 1898) was a Muslim educator, jurist, and author, founder of the Anglo-Mohammedan Oriental College at Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, and the primary driving factor that sparked the resurgence of Indian Islam during the late 19th century.



Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan

## **His Political Contributions:**

### **Vision for Progress:**

Sir Syed was known for his vision of advancing his community and modernising the nation. He was the first Indian Muslim to lay the intellectual and institutional groundwork for Muslim modernisation in South Asia.

### **Literary Endeavors:**

He commenced his literary journey at 23, authoring the notable work "Monuments of the Great" (Athar Assanadid) in 1847, which explored the antiquities of Delhi.

### **Political Approach:**

Sir Syed, a prominent Muslim politician of his time, approached the Indian independence movement cautiously, urging Muslims to serve the British Raj faithfully.

Simultaneously, he critiqued certain aspects of British policy and advocated for reforms.

### **Education for Muslims:**

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was dedicated to improving the educational opportunities for his fellow Muslims.

He recognised the need to dispel British rulers' misconceptions about Muslims.

His essay "Essay on the Causes of the Indian Revolt" demonstrated that various factors, not solely Muslims, contributed to the 1857 rebellion.

## **His Educational Contribution**

### **Educational Reformer:**

Syed Ahmad Khan fought against superstitions and ignorance in Indian Muslim society, recognising their hindrance to progress.

He advocated for modern scientific education.

### **Founding Modern Schools:**

In 1859, he established the Gulshan School, one of the first religious schools with scientific education.

The Victoria School in Ghazipur followed in 1863, emphasising modern education.

### **Promoting Interfaith Relations:**

Syed Ahmad Khan worked on fostering strong interfaith relations between Islam and Christianity.

### **Translation Society and Scientific Society:**

His Translation Society (1862) translated scientific European works into Hindi and Urdu, evolving into the Scientific Society of Aligarh.

It aimed to promote modern education and Western scientific knowledge among Indian Muslims.

### **Urdu Language Advocate:**

In the Hindi-Urdu language controversy in 1867, he championed Urdu as the lingua franca in the United Provinces, opposing Hindi as a second official language.

He also promoted Urdu through his writings.

**Educational Vision in England:**

Inspired by the Renaissance culture during his England trip 1869, he aspired to create a “Muslim Cambridge.”

**Journal and University:**

In 1870, he launched “Tahzib-al-Akhlaq” (Social Reformer) to drive reforms and modern awareness. He founded the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in 1875, later becoming the Aligarh Muslim University in 1920.

**His views on Women Empowerment:****Initial Beliefs:**

Initially, he held conservative views, advocating for women’s education that focused on familial duties.

He believed that educating women might hinder their primary purpose in life, which he saw as marriage.

**Revised Perspective:**

However, after observing the freedom European women enjoyed, his perspective changed.

He believed the rejection of women’s education within the Muslim community contributed to its decline.

**Advocate for Women’s Education:**

Despite his initial conservatism, Sir Syed strongly supported women’s right to education.

He took positions distinct from other Muslim scholars on divorce and women’s rights and vehemently opposed domestic violence against women.

**Impact:**

His efforts significantly influenced India’s education system, emphasising democratising education and aligning it with European standards.

**Sources:**

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan’s 125th birth anniversary: His record on women’s rights

**Q1. With reference to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, consider the following statements:**

He laid the intellectual groundwork for Muslim modernisation in South Asia.

He urged Muslims to serve the British Raj faithfully, avoiding the freedom movement.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) None

**Answer: (c)**

**Q2. Consider the following :**

- 1. Tahzib-al-Akhlaq**
- 2. Causes of the Indian Revolt**
- 3. Athar Assanadid**
- 4. Mirat-u- Akbar**

**How many of the abovementioned are literary works of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan?**

- Only one
- Only two
- Only three
- All Four

**Answer: (c)**

**Q3. Analyse Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's contribution to the socio-religious reform movement in 19th-century India.**

**Gaurav Nikumbh**

## **WHITE PHOSPHORUS**

*This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "White phosphorus". This topic has relevance in the Science and technology section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

**For Prelims:**

*About White Phosphorus?*

**For Mains:**

*GS 3: Science and technology*

*Historical Use in Warfare?*

**Why in the news?**

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, prominent global human rights organizations, have leveled allegations against the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) for the alleged utilization of white phosphorus munitions in the regions of Gaza and Lebanon.

**About White Phosphorus**

White phosphorus is an extremely reactive and waxy solid characterized by its translucent appearance and a distinctive, pungent odor reminiscent of garlic. It is an element denoted by the chemical symbol 'P' and holds the atomic number 15.

**Chemical Properties:**

- **Allotropes:** White phosphorus exists in different allotropes and is the most reactive and least stable among all the elemental forms of phosphorus.
- **Solubility:** It is insoluble in water but soluble in organic solvents.
- **Pyrophoric Nature:** White phosphorus readily catches fire when exposed to air.

### **Industrial Applications:**

- White phosphorus is used in various industrial applications, such as in the manufacturing of phosphoric acid, phosphorus trichloride, and other organic phosphorus compounds.

### **Military Applications:**

- In military contexts, white phosphorus has been used in various ways, including in incendiary weapons, smoke screens, and tracer ammunition, primarily due to its pyrophoric properties.

### **Risks and Hazards:**

Exposure to white phosphorus can lead to severe health hazards, which can be summarized as follows:

- **Skin Injuries:** Contact with white phosphorus can result in burns, necrosis, and other serious skin injuries.
- **Systemic Toxicity:** Ingesting or inhaling white phosphorus can cause systemic toxicity.
- **Respiratory Damage:** The combustion of white phosphorus produces phosphorus pentoxide, which, when inhaled, can damage the respiratory system.

### **Regulations and Control:**

- White phosphorus is subject to strict regulations due to its potential misuse as a weapon and associated health risks.
- International humanitarian law governs its use in warfare to prevent unnecessary harm to civilians and the environment.
- The United Nations in 1972 labeled incendiary weapons, including white phosphorus, as causing horrific and indiscriminate harm, leading to resolutions condemning their use.
- The 1980 international agreement established Protocol III, which restricts the use of incendiary weapons that cause excessive harm to civilians and their property.

### **Environmental Impact:**

- The use of white phosphorus in warfare and industry can lead to environmental contamination and long-term ecological damage, impacting soil and water quality.
- Mitigation efforts focus on proper disposal, containment, and the development of alternative technologies to reduce its environmental impact.

### **Alternative Technologies and Substitutes:**

- Ongoing research and development efforts are centered on finding safer and more environmentally friendly alternatives to white phosphorus in various applications.
- Exploration of alternative materials and technologies is underway to replace white phosphorus in military and industrial contexts, with a specific emphasis on enhancing safety and sustainability.

### **Historical Use in Warfare:**

- White phosphorus has a historical usage in warfare, with instances dating back to the 1800s when it was utilized by Irish nationalists against British forces, referred to as "Fenian fire." During both World Wars, the British army employed white phosphorus as a weapon.
- The United States used white phosphorus during the Iraq War, notably in the city of Fallujah.
- Allegations of the use of white phosphorus by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) in conflicts like the 2006 Lebanon War and the 2008-09 Gaza War have sparked international attention and condemnation.
- The Syrian government, led by Bashar Al-Assad, faced accusations of deploying white phosphorus during the Syrian crisis.
- More recently, the Russian Army was accused of using white phosphorus in the conflict with Ukraine.

**Source:** <https://www.financialexpress.com/business/defence-reports-of-concern-the-use-of-white-phosphorus-in-conflict-zones-3267531/>

**Q.1 Consider the following statements about White Phosphorous:**

1. White phosphorus is highly reactive and characterized by a pungent garlic-like odor.
2. White phosphorus is soluble in water but insoluble in organic solvents.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**ANSWER: C**

**Q.2 Consider the following statements about White Phosphorous:**

1. In military applications, white phosphorus is used primarily due to its non-pyrophoric properties.
2. Exposure to white phosphorus can lead to skin injuries but poses no risks of systemic toxicity or respiratory damage.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**ANSWER: B**

**Q.3 Explore the ethical and humanitarian concerns raised by the use of white phosphorus in modern conflicts, taking into consideration case studies from recent events.**

**Rishabh**

