

India

Tree trunk stands testimony to Azad's visit to a Uttarakhand village

PTI 27 February, 2023 09:06 pm IST

Kotdwar, Feb 27 (PTI) The remains of a Banj oak tree at Nathupur in Uttarakhand's Pauri district stand as a testimony to a visit by revolutionary freedom fighter Chandra Shekhar Azad in 1930, a year before he attained martyrdom.

Azad had fired a bullet at the tree on an associate's request during his stay in a village to leave a mark behind as something to remember him by. The tree bore the mark until it fell in somewhere around 2007-08.

Its trunk has been preserved by the authorities in memory of the martyr who shot himself dead on this day in 1931 as he did not want to fall to a bullet fired by British cops during an encounter. He was 24.

A pedestal with Azad's bust on it has also been erected just a few metres from the tree trunk with a signboard reading "Maun Sakshi", meaning silent witness.

Azad visited Nathupur in Dugadda block at the invitation of a fellow revolutionary Bhawani Singh Rawat who was a resident of the village.

"Azad visited our home on my father's invitation. Accompanied by his friends Ram Chandra, Chail Bihari Lal, Hazari Lal and Vishambhar Dayal, the martyr came from Delhi to Kotdwar by a train. They came to our village secretly in a bullock cart," Bhawani Singh Rawat's younger son Jagmohan Rawat told PTI.

"They arrived at 8 pm in the second week of July, 1930 and introduced him to our grandfather Nathu Singh, a retired captain from the Army, as a range officer and his colleagues who had come for a hunting expedition," he said.

Grandfather was so impressed by them that he made arrangements for their stay on the upper floor of the house, Rawat said.

A day after their arrival, Azad led the pack to the nearby forests to train them in firing revolvers and double-barrel guns.

One day they were nearly caught while target practising when the real range officer of the area accompanied by two forest guards came asking about them after hearing gunshots, Rawat said.

They returned when told that Capt Nathu Singh's son Bhawani Singh Rawat was target practising in the jungle with friends.

Azad and his friends stayed in the village for nearly a week. A day before they left, the martyr's friend Vishambhar Dayal requested him to shoot at a Banj oak tree and leave a mark there for people to remember him by.

The young freedom fighter immediately fired from his revolver and hit the tree that dried and parts of which fell in 2007-2008. However, due to its association with the martyr its remains have been preserved by the forest department.

A memorial of Azad has also been built near its truck. PTI COR ALM RDT

This report is auto-generated from PTI news service. ThePrint holds no responsibility for its content.