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Title: Need to observe 128th birth anniversary of Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh, the founder of All India Freedom Fighters Samittee.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Madam, Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh is a hallowed name in the annals of Freedom Struggle of India. When we deliberate on the struggle for freedom of 20th Century under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, the name of Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh is a glorious example. He was a stalwart in organising people to rise against the British authority, and had declared and formed an independent Government in Afghanistan before Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose formed Azad Hind or Independent India during the Second World War.

He was instrumental to organise the freedom fighters under the aegis of All India Freedom Fighters' Samiti to look after the welfare and interest of the freedom fighters and was the founder of All India Freedom Fighters' Samiti that came into existence in 1969. Later Madam Indira Gandhi gave Samman Pension to the freedom fighters from 1969.

As a college student, I had the occasion of meeting him, when organisations like All India Freedom Fighters' Samiti was organizing freedom fighters' sammelan, as a worker, as a swechchasevi.

He breathed his last in 1979. He was a *raja* by birth, but he gave away everything to the nation, including land to the Aligarh Muslim University. It is in fitness of things that this country should observe his birth anniversary in a befitting manner. An attempt should also be made to explore Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh's deeds and bring to light those that have been forgotten. We should remember that it is our bounden duty to recollect the hoary past and draw inspiration from it.

I urge upon the Government to take up research work on Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh and impress upon Aligarh Muslim University to do so by establishing a chair in his name and bring to light the activities of freedom fighters who have contributed immensely to make this country independent.

Thank you.