

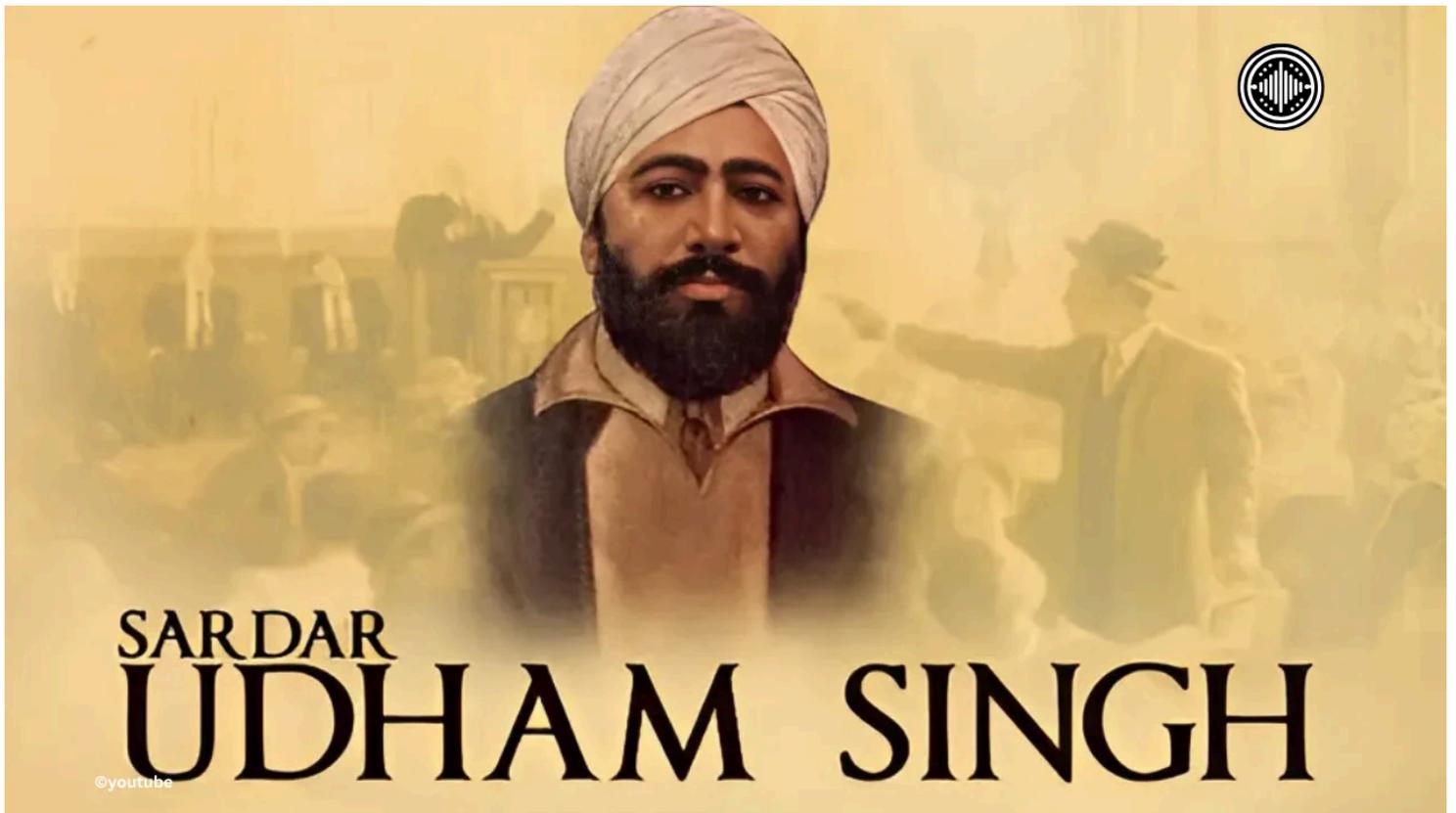
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## Punjab Declares July 31 a Public Holiday to Mark Shaheed Udham Singh's Martyrdom

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The Punjab government has declared July 31 a public holiday in honour of Shaheed Udham Singh, the freedom fighter who avenged the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre. The announcement pays tribute to Singh's sacrifice and his role in India's independence movement.

Udham Singh is remembered for assassinating Michael O'Dwyer, the former Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, in London in 1940. O'Dwyer had endorsed Brigadier General Reginald Dyer's actions during the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, in which hundreds of unarmed civilians were killed. Singh was later tried and executed on July 31, 1940, at Pentonville Prison in London.

The state government said the holiday will be observed across Punjab as a mark of respect for Singh's unwavering commitment to the cause of freedom. Government offices, educational institutions, and most public sector establishments will remain closed on the day.

Officials noted that Singh's life and sacrifice hold a special place in Punjab's history and identity, serving as a reminder of the state's contributions to the struggle for India's independence. The commemoration also aims to educate younger generations about his legacy and the values he stood for.

Political leaders across party lines have often hailed Udham Singh as a symbol of courage and determination. His actions, though controversial at the time, have since been recognised as an act of defiance against colonial injustice.

The decision to mark the day as a state holiday shows Punjab's intent to preserve and promote its historical heritage. It follows a growing trend among Indian states to officially honour prominent freedom fighters through annual observances, public events, and educational initiatives. Public programmes, including floral tributes at statues and memorials, cultural events, and seminars on Singh's life, are expected to be held throughout the state on the occasion.