

Janjatiya Gaurav Divas

November 15, 2021

In news– Recently, the Government of India declared 15th November as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas dedicated to the memory of brave tribal freedom fighters.

About Janjatiya Gaurav Divas–

- It was declared as a part of the year-long celebration of 75 years of India's independence.
- It aims to make the coming generations know about the sacrifices made by tribal freedom fighters for the country.
- It marks the **birth anniversary of iconic tribal leader Birsa Munda**.
- The day will be celebrated every year and would recognize the efforts of the tribals for preservation of cultural heritage and promotion of Indian values of valour, hospitality and national pride.
- As part of this, tribal **Freedom Fighter Museum at Ranchi** where Birsa Munda breathed his last was inaugurated by Hon'ble Prime Minister.

About Birsa Munda–

- He was **born on November 15, 1875, in Ulihatu village in present-day Jharkhand** and **belonged to the Munda tribe** in the Chota Nagpur Plateau area.
- He received his **early education at Salga under the guidance of his teacher Jaipal Nag**.
- During his time, the British raj introduced a feudal **Zamindari system** in the Chhota Nagpur region, **destroying the tribal "Khunt katti" agrarian system**.
- The Raj brought in the outsiders – moneylenders and contractors, as well as feudal landlords – who aided the British in their exploitation.
- During the 1880s, Birsa closely witnessed the **Sardari Larai movement** in the region, which **demanding the**

restoration of tribal rights through non-violent methods like sending petitions to the Raj.

- The feudal setup intensified the **forced labour (Veth bigari) in the forested tribal areas.**
- Having gained awareness of the British colonial rule and the efforts of the missionaries to convert tribals to Christianity, **Birsa started the faith of 'Birsait'.**
- **He impressed upon the Adivasis the importance of "sirmare firun raja jai" or "victory to the ancestral king"** – thus invoking the sovereignty of the tribals' ancestral autonomous control over the land.
- He became a mass leader and began to be **considered as Bhagwan and Dharati Aba by his followers.**
- He declared that "abua raj setar jana, maharani raj tundu jana" (let the kingdom of the Queen end and our kingdom be established).
- **The Mundas, Oraons, other Adivasis and non-Adivasis responded to his call and joined the "Ulgulan" or revolt against the colonial masters** and exploitative dikus.
- **He asked the people not to pay any rent, and attacked the outposts of feudal, missionary and colonial authorities.**
- With traditional bows and arrows, the tribals of Central and Eastern India waged an effective armed resistance against the British.
- **Soon, he was captured by British police and lodged in jail, where he died in captivity on June 9, 1900.**
- Later the British brought **in the Chhota Nagpur Tenancy Act of 1908 for their protection.**
- **This Act restricted the transfer of tribal land to non-tribals,** giving Adivasis a huge relief and became a landmark legislation for the protection of tribal rights.
- The British regime also took steps to abolish Veth Bigari or forced labour.