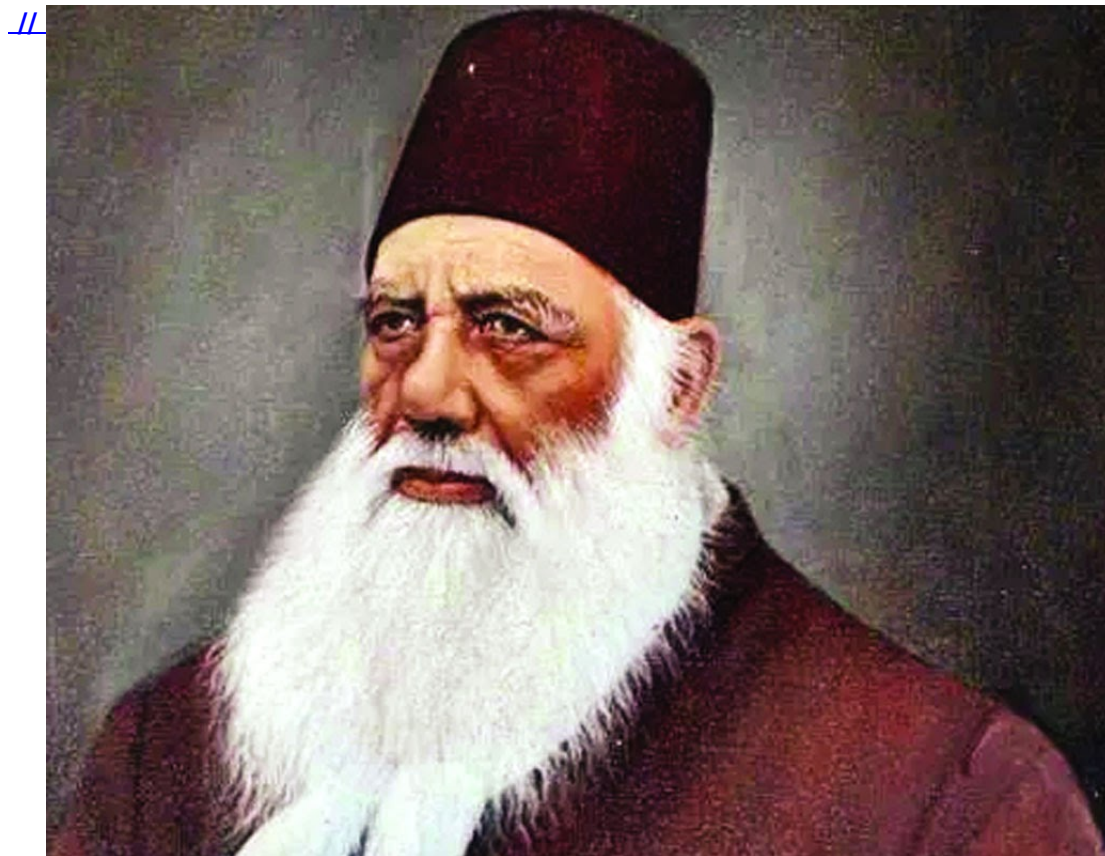




Sir Syed's Day

Why in News

Sir Syed's Day is observed on 17th October to mark the **birth anniversary of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.**



Key Points

- **Early Life:** Sir Syed Ahmad Khan **was born in 1817** in a family that was close to the Mughal court, he was a **man of many distinctions**, a civil servant, journalist, educationist, social reformer and historian among others.
 - He served **the British administration** before the revolt of 1857.
 - He has also written a pamphlet titled **"The Causes of the Indian Revolt"** to explain the reasons for the revolt from **a Indian perspective.**
- **Educationist:** Sir Syed is, first and foremost, known for his **pioneering role in transforming the educational opportunities for Muslims.**
 - Sir Syed realised that Muslims could only make progress if they took to modern education. For this he started **the Aligarh movement.**

- **Social Reformer:** He also pushed for social reforms and was a champion of democratic ideals and freedom of speech.
 - He was **against religious intolerance, ignorance and irrationalism**. He **denounced purdah, polygamy and easy divorce**.
 - **Tahzebul Akhlaq** (Social Reformer in English), a magazine founded by him, tried to awaken **people's consciousness on social and religious issues** in a very expressive prose.
- **Critical of National Movement:**
 - In his later years Sir Syed encouraged the Indian Muslims **not to join the National Movement**. He felt that education and not politics was needed by them.
 - In a way he encouraged the forces of communalism and separatism at this stage.

Aligarh Movement

- It was a **systemic movement aimed at reforming the social, political and educational aspects** of the Muslim community.
- The movement undertook to modernise Muslim's education **by adapting English as a medium of learning and western education** rather than just focusing on traditional teachings.
- Sir Syed **established the Scientific Society in 1864**, in Aligarh to translate Western works into Indian languages to prepare the Muslims to accept Western education and to inculcate scientific temperament among the Muslims.
 - **The Aligarh Institute Gazette**, a magazine published by Sir Syed was an organ of the Scientific Society.
- In 1877, he founded the **Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College** on the pattern of Oxford and Cambridge universities. The college later grew into **Aligarh Muslim University**.
- The Aligarh Movement helped in the Muslim revival. It **gave them a common language— Urdu**.

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