



## Birth Anniversary of Birsa Munda

### Why in News

The Prime Minister paid tributes to **tribal leader Birsa Munda** on his birth anniversary on 15th November.

- The State of **Jharkhand**, carved out of Bihar, officially **came into being on Munda's birth anniversary in 2000**.



### Key Points //

- **Birth:** 15<sup>th</sup> November 1875, belonged to the **Munda tribe** in the **Chotanagpur Plateau** area.
- **Brief Profile:**
  - Also known as **Dharti Aaba** (Father of Earth), Birsa Munda is known to have **mobilised the tribal community against the British** and had also forced the colonial officials to introduce laws protecting the land rights of the tribals.
- **Birsait Sect:**
  - Having gained awareness of the British colonial ruler and the efforts of the missionaries to convert tribals to Christianity, **Birsa started the faith of 'Birsait'**.
  - Members of the **Munda and Oraon community** joined the Birsait sect and it turned into a challenge to British conversion activities.
  - Further, he urged the Mundas to give up drinking liquor, clean their village, and stop believing in witchcraft and sorcery.
- **Munda Rebellion:**
  - It is one of the most important tribal movements.
  - It was led by Birsa Munda in the south of Ranchi in **1899-1900**.
  - The movement **identified following forces as the cause of the misery** the Mundas were suffering:

- The **land policies of the British** were destroying their traditional land system.
- **Hindu landlords and moneylenders** were taking over their land.
- **Missionaries** were criticising their traditional culture.
- The '**Ulgulan**' or the '**Great Tumult**' as the movement came to be called, aimed at establishing Munda Raj by driving out the British.
  - Munda used **traditional symbols and language** to rouse people, urging them to destroy "Ravana" (dikus/outsideers and the Europeans) and establish a kingdom under his leadership.
  - Birsa's followers began **targeting the symbols of diku and European power**. They attacked police stations and churches, and raided the property of moneylenders and zamindars. They raised the **white flag as a symbol of Birsa Raj**.
  - On 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 1900, Birsa Munda was arrested by the British police while he was sleeping with his **tribal guerilla army** at Jamkopai forest in Chakradharpur (Jharkhand).
- **Birsa died of cholera** in the jail and the movement faded out.

#### ▪ **Significance of Munda Rebellion:**

- It forced the colonial government to introduce laws so that the land of the tribals could not be easily taken over by dikus (**Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, 1908**).
- It showed that the **tribal people had the capacity to protest against injustice** and express their anger against colonial rule.

#### **Jharkhand Foundation Day**

- The name "Jharkhand" means "The Land of Forests". The state was brought into existence by the **Bihar reorganization Act** on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2000 - the birth anniversary of the legendary Bhagwan Birsa Munda.
- Jharkhand **shares its border** with the states of Bihar to the north, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh to the west, Odisha to the south, and West Bengal to the east.
- Most of the state lies on the **Chotanagpur Plateau**, which is the source of the Koel, Damodar, Brahmani, Kharkai, and Subarnarekha rivers, whose upper watersheds lie within Jharkhand.
- Forest preserves support **populations of tigers and Asian Elephants (Betla National Park)**.
- Jharkhand boasts of **40% and 29% of India's mineral and coal reserves**, respectively.
- Jharkhand has **32 tribal groups** including Munda, Kol, Santhal, Oraon, Khond, Asur, Gond etc.

[Source: TH](#)

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