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# Birsa Munda

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**Why is in news?** PM pays tributes to Bhagwan Birsa Munda on his punya tithi

- He was born on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1875, belonged to the Munda tribe in the Chotanagpur Plateau area.
- He was 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.
- Bisra wanted to reform the tribal society and so, he **urged them to let go of beliefs in witchcraft and instead, stressed on the importance of prayer, staying away from alcohol, having faith in God and observing a code of conduct.** Based on these, he **started the faith of 'Birsait'**.

## 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/outsiders 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 3rd 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.
- His **struggle against the exploitation and discrimination against tribals** led to a big hit against the British government in the form of the **Chotanagpur Tenancy Act** being passed in 1908. The **act restricted the passing on of land from the tribal people to non-tribals.**

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