

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 15th November 1875, belonged to the Munda tribe in the Chotanagpur Plateaarea.
- 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**, **Hindlandlords 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 dikand 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.