

JIIT NOIDA

Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas 2022 - Birth Anniversary of Birsa Munda

Background

The Government of India has decided to celebrate November 15 as 'Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas' to mark the birth anniversary of Tribal Freedom Fighter "Birsa Munda" from the year 2021 onwards as part of the year-long celebration of the 75th anniversary of Indian independence. He was not only a freedom fighter but also social reformer and led the tribal movement-Ulgulan (Revolt) against exploitative systems of British Colonial Govt. He is also known as Dharti Abba as he encouraged tribals to understand their cultural roots & observe unity

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has dedicated a museum in Ranchi in memory of Birsa Munda. PM Modi has stated that observance of the Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas on Birsa Munda's birth anniversary will serve as an opportunity to celebrate the glorious tribal culture and their contribution to national development.

Several movements by tribal communities such as Santhals, Khasis, Tamars, Kols and Bhils strengthened the freedom struggle of our Country. The revolutionary movements and struggles of the tribal communities were full of immense courage and supreme sacrifice. Tribal movements in different parts of our country got connected with the national freedom struggle and inspired Indians in all other parts. But, the citizens at large are not aware about the tribal leaders and their contributions to the freedom struggle.

The celebrations and events during the conduct of 'Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas' are being planned to acknowledge the sacrifices of tribal leaders in the freedom struggle of the country, inspire future generations, take forward their legacy and lead to the conservation of tribal culture, art and rich heritage.

The contributions of a few leaders are enumerated in succeeding paragraphs.

Tribal Freedom Fighters

Birsa Munda

Birsa Munda, born in 1875, led a rebellious movement against British colonial rule and conversion activities in the areas of the Bengal Presidency (part of Jharkhand today). The rebellion by Munda in the areas of Khunti, Tamar, Sarwada, and Bandgaon helped in the revival of traditional tribal culture. He gave the slogan of 'Abua Raj Ete Jana, Maharani Raj Tundu Jana,' which translates as "Let the queen's kingdom end and our kingdom be established."

Birsa Munda died at the age of 25 under the custody of British in the Ranchi jail. However, his contribution, in this short span, to tribal causes earned him the title of 'Bhagwan' or Lord.

The museum, where the tribal icon had breathed his last is located at the Old Central Jail in Ranchi. A 25-foot tall statue of Munda has been installed at this site.

Budhu Bhagat

He was a freedom fighter who had led guerrilla warfare against the British. He was leader of the Kol rebellion and Larka rebellion in 1831-32 in Chhotanagpur.

In 1832, Buddha Bhagat led a revolt with the tribals of Chhotanagpur against the oppressive rule of the British and Zamindars. This revolt is known as the Lakra rebellion, in which the Oraon, Munda, Bhumij, Ho etc, tribals contributed. The British announced a reward for capturing Budhu Bhagat. The British forces arrived at Silagai village on 13 February 1832 and faced stiff resistance from followers of Budhu Bhagat. They attacked the British forces with bows, arrows, axes and swords. Budhu Bhagat's sons Haldhar Bhagat and Giridhar Bhagat got killed. Budhu Bhagat was captured and killed by the British.

Sidhu-Kanhu

Sidhu Murmu and **Kanhu Murmu** were the leaders of the Santhal rebellion (1855–1856). On 30 June 1855, the two Santal rebel leaders, Sidhu and Kanhu Murmu (related as brothers) along with Chand and Bairab, mobilized about 10,000 Santals and declared a rebellion against British colonists. The Santals initially gained some success but were defeated by the British. Although the revolution was suppressed, it marked a great change in the colonial rule and policy. The day is still celebrated among the Santal community.

Gaya Munda

Gaya Munda was born in Etkedih village of Khunti subdivision of Jharkhand. He dedicated his whole life and family to Birsa Munda and his movement. He was part of the Sardar Movement in 1850, the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857 and the wave of uprising that began in 1890. Birsa Munda's army of tribals were commanded by Gaya Munda, who led freedom fighters on a series of uprisings against the British. He was arrested and hanged secretly by the Empire. The Memorial Day of Sardar Gaya Munda is celebrated on January 6 in his native village Etkedih, a statue of Shaheed Gaya Munda has been made there, in which he holds an axe in one hand and a bow and arrow in the other hand. A complex has been built in the name of Sardar Gaya Munda in Khunti Chowk. His name will always remain immortal in the history of Jharkhand.

Jatra Bhagat

Jatra Bhagat alias Jatra Oraon was born in September 1888 in Chingri Navatoli village of Bishnupur police station in Gumla district of Jharkhand. In 1912-14, he launched a movement of non-violent non-cooperation against the British Raj and landlords and refused to pay rent, government taxes, etc. and to work as a 'coolie'. He was the founder of Tana Bhagat Movement among the Oraon tribe. It was an anti-colonial and anti-feudal religious reformist movement inspired by the 'Ulgulan' led by Birsa Munda in 1900. Adivasi writers claim that Gandhiji took practical understanding of non-violent Satyagraha from the Tana Bhagat movement of Jharkhand. In the 1940s, a large

section of Tana Bhagat agitators joined Gandhi's Satyagraha and joined the national independence movement. He was arrested in 1916 but he died within two months of coming out of jail.

Nilambar-Pitambar

Nilambar and Pitambar, the freedom fighters from Jharkhand in eastern India, were brothers who led a revolt against the East India Company in 1857. They were born in a Chemo-Senyato, a family of Bhogta clan of the Kharwar tribe in Latehar district. Their father, Chemu Singh, was Jagirdar. They decided to declare themselves independent of company rule, inspired by the Doronda Revolt in Ranchi led by Thakur Vishwanath Shahdeo and Pandey Ganpat Rai. Chero Jagirdar Devi Baksh Rai joined them. They were arrested and hanged on 28 March 1859 by British forces in Lesliganj.

Bhagirath Manjhi

Bhagirath Manjhi was born in Taldiha village of Godda district in Jharkhand. He was the leader of the Kherwar movement. The Kherwar movement gained momentum in 1874 with incredible support from Santal tribals after exorbitant rents were imposed on them. The moment is also known as Safahor Movement. This movement had popularised the concept of One God as well as aimed at social reforms. He had adopted a non-cooperative policy towards the British rule and by declaring himself the king of the village of Bounsi, he started the system of collecting rent himself by not paying rent to the landlords and the government. He was known as 'Baba' among the tribals.

Diva-Kisun Soren

Diva Soren was born in 1820 at Matkom Beda village. **Kisun Soren** was born in Gumidpur in the Rajnagar police station area. Kisun Soren and Diva Soren were maternal brothers. His guru's name was Raghunath Bhuiyan. After Raja Abhiram Singh of Podhat accepted the independence of the British, he inspired the people to stand against King Abhiram Singh of Podhat and the British administration. The rebellion began in 1872 under the leadership of Diva-Kisun. This rebellion lasted for a long time, but at last the local people informed the British administration about Diva-Kisun hiding in the mountain. Diva-Kisun were arrested by the British administration and soldiers of Raja Abhiram Singh and hanged in Seraikela jail.

Telanga Khariya

Telanga Kharia was born on 09 February 1806, at Murgu village, Gumla district of modern-day Jharkhand state. He belonged to Kharia tribe Telanga Kharia. He was a great Indian tribal freedom fighter, who belonged to the Kharia tribe and spearheaded a rebellion against the British Raj in Chotanagpur Region during 1850-1860. He started activism in 1849 which eventually led to his arrest for 14 years in Lohardaga, later shifted to Kolkata. This rebellion was mainly against injustice, atrocities and land alienation of tribal people which was a result of the British rule. He was also known as 'Budha Sher' due to his immense strength even after 50 years of age. This Kharia freedom fighter was killed by a fellow Adivasi called Budhan Singh, who used to serve in the British army.

Ganga Narayan Singh

Ganga Narayan Singh born on 25 April 1790 was an Indian revolutionary from Jungle Mahals, known as the leader of Bhumij rebellion. He led a revolt against the East India Company in 1832-33. The British called it "Ganga Narain's Hungama", while some historians have called it the Chuar rebellion. On February 6, 1833, Ganga Narayan Singh attacked the Hindshahar police station with the Kol (Ho) tribes and fought against the forces till the last breath of his life and died on 07 February 1833.
