



Janjatiya Gaurav Divas

Honouring India's Tribal Freedom Fighters

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Key Takeaways

- **November 15 is celebrated as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas (Tribal Pride Day)** to commemorate the birth anniversary of **tribal freedom fighter Birsa Munda**.
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is establishing **11 museums to commemorate various tribal movements and uprisings** against the British rule and promote their cultures and histories.
- The **Ministry of Tribal Affairs promotes tribal art, language, and traditions** through other digital initiatives such as Adi Sanskriti and Adi Vaani.

Introduction

India celebrates Janjatiya Gaurav Divas (Tribal Pride Day) on November 15 every year to commemorate the birth anniversary of the tribal freedom fighter and anti-colonialist Birsa Munda, born in 1874. The year 2024-25 is being celebrated as Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh to commemorate 150 years of his birth. As part of the countrywide, yearlong celebrations, the fortnight November 1-15 is being celebrated in a special way to honour the sacrifices and struggles of Birsa Munda and other Indian tribal leaders in India's anti-colonial struggle and to celebrate the rich diversity of the country's tribal cultures and heritage.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs runs various schemes promoting tribal histories and cultures. As part of the ongoing Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh celebrations, many workshops, events, and cultural performances are being held across the country. One of the major initiatives of the Government is also establishing 11 museums to commemorate the contributions of our historical tribal freedom fighters.

Tribal Freedom Fighters Museum Initiative

Tribal leaders of India played a pivotal role in resisting oppressive British rule and the feudal system. Many of these uprisings, revolts, and movements remain underrepresented in mainstream Indian history even though these movements have gone a long way in shaping the India of today. The Government has decided to set up museums to **preserve, document, and disseminate** information on tribal leaders, and enlighten the public about these movements.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs, under the scheme ***Support to Tribal Research Institutes***, provides funds to state governments for establishing these tribal museums.

Details of the museums are given below:

State	Location	Project Cost (in crore rupees)	Grants approved by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (in crore rupees)
Jharkhand	Ranchi	34.22	25.00
Gujarat	Rajpipla	257.94	50.00
Andhra Pradesh	Lambasingi	45.00	25.00
Chhattisgarh	Raipur	53.13	42.47
Kerala	Wayanad	16.66	15.00
Madhya Pradesh	Chhindwara	40.69	25.69
	Jabalpur	14.39	14.39
Telangana	Hyderabad	34.00	25.00
Manipur	Tamenglong	51.38	15.00
Mizoram	Kelsih	25.59	25.59
Goa	Ponda	27.55	15.00

Four museums have already been inaugurated in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh.

Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Memorial & Tribal Freedom Fighters Museum

The *Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Memorial & Tribal Freedom Fighters Museum* is at Raipur in Chhattisgarh, which was recently inaugurated on 1st November by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, depicts the struggles of Chhattisgarh's tribal communities against colonial rule.

The museum was constructed at a cost of ₹53.13 crore, of which ₹42.47 crore is funded by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and ₹10.66 crore is the state share. It houses 650 sculptures across 16 galleries, along with many digital installations, which include digital screens and displays, topographic projection maps, audio-visual displays, an AI-photo booth a curve screen and an RFID digital screen.

During the inauguration event, Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled a statue of Veer Narayan Singh, released an e-booklet titled *Aadi Shaurya*, and interacted with the martyr's descendants.



Figure 1- Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Memorial-cum-Tribal Freedom Fighters Museum in Chhattisgarh was recently inaugurated on 1st November by Prime Minister Narendra Modi

The museum honours the unsung heroes of India's tribal heritage and:

- Chronicles the movement led by Veer Narayan Singh against British tyranny and his martyrdom
- Covers major tribal uprisings such as the Halba Kranti, Sarguja Kranti, Bhopalpattanam Kranti, Paralkot Kranti, Tarapur Kranti, Meria Kranti, Koi Kranti, Lingagiri Kranti, Muria Kranti, and the iconic Bhumkal Kranti led by Gundadhur and Lal Kalindra Singh
- Showcases tribal village structure, faith and culture
- Highlights Rani Cho-Ris Kranti (1878), who pioneered a women-led protest
- Showcases the Jhanda Satyagraha and Jungle Satyagraha, demonstrating how tribal communities participated in Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent movement



Narayan Singh of the Binjhwar tribe was the *zamindar* of Sonakhan in the Raipur district of Chhattisgarh. In 1856, when a famine struck Odisha due to the hoarding of food grains by the British, he broke open the locks of British grain stores to feed the starving people. The British arrested him and imprisoned him in Raipur Jail. Veer Narayan Singh escaped from there and formed his own army.

On November 29, 1856, British forces were defeated by Narayan Singh's troops. However, the British later returned with a larger force, and Narayan Singh was captured. On December 10, 1857, he was brutally executed at a crossroads.

Bhagwan Birsa Munda Tribal Freedom Fighter Museum



Bhagwan Birsa Munda Tribal Freedom Fighter Museum, Ranchi, Jharkhand, inaugurated on November 15, 2021, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Born in Ulihatu village, Jharkhand, Birsa Munda led the Ulgulan or “Great Tumult” (1899–1900)—a fierce movement for tribal self-rule and the restoration of Khuntkatti (community land rights). As a spiritual reformer and freedom fighter, he united the Munda tribes against British land laws and feudal exploitation. Known as Dharti Aaba (“Father of the Earth”), Birsa Munda envisioned a moral, self-governed society free from colonial influence. He was captured and martyred in Ranchi Jail at the age of 25.

Badal Bhoi State Tribal Freedom Fighters Museum

Badal Bhoi State Tribal Freedom Fighters Museum, inaugurated on November 15, 2024, in Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh.

Badal Bhoi was born in 1845 in Chhindwara district. Under his leadership, thousands of tribals staged a demonstration at the Collector’s bungalow in 1923. The protest was met with a *lathi* charge, and Bhoi was arrested. A few years later, in August 1930, he was again arrested by the British authorities at Ramakona for breaking forest laws. He spent his final years in prison and was reportedly poisoned by the British in 1940.

Raja Shankar Shah and Kunwar Raghunath Shah Tribal Freedom Fighters Museum

Raja Shankar Shah and Kunwar Raghunath Shah Tribal Freedom Fighters Museum, inaugurated on November 15, 2024, in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh.

Raja Shankar Shah and Kunwar Raghunath Shah, descendants of King Nizam Shah of the Gond Kingdom, actively opposed British rule during the events of 1857. Despite their commitment to non-violence, these skilled poets utilised their verses as a powerful means to resist the British influence.

Raja Shah, along with his son Kunwar Raghunath Shah, were captured and executed by the British on September 18, 1858.

Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh Celebrations

This special fortnight of Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh is being celebrated nationwide to showcase tribal identity, indigenous knowledge systems, and raise awareness about government initiatives for tribal empowerment.

Cultural, educational, and community-oriented programmes have been held across the country during this fortnight. These include:

State or Union Territory	Organising Departments or Institutions	Key Activities or Events
Jammu & Kashmir	—	Capacity-building workshops were held on PM JANMAN, Dharti Aaba initiatives, legal empowerment, and National Education Policypedagogy. Financial and digital literacy sessions were also held for ashram school students.
Meghalaya	Department of Art and Culture and the Tribal Research Institute	The Department of Art and Culture and the Tribal Research Institute organised a special event at the State Central Library in Shillong. The event included floral tributes to tribal symbols and captivating cultural performances
Rajasthan	All 31 Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)	EMRS schools participated in the inaugural Tribal Pride Year celebrations. Students showcased their creativity through painting, essay, and speech competitions, celebrating tribal freedom fighters and cultural heritage.
Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh Tribal Research Institute (AP TRI)	AP TRI organised a grand cultural festival to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Birsa Munda. The event showcased art, dance, and unity of tribal communities across the state.

Sikkim	—	The celebrations began with a training-cum-workshop for tribal language teachers. The importance of preserving indigenous languages was emphasised. On day 2, tribal youth enthusiastically participated in indoor and outdoor sporting events such as chess, table tennis, basketball, and sprint races.
Manipur	District Administration, Police, and Tamenglong Autonomous District Council	The authorities jointly paid tribute to the tribal freedom fighters by laying wreaths and carrying out community-driven cleanliness drives at Rani Gaidinliu Tribal Market and HaipouJadonang Park.
Odisha	Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes Development Department	The department organised a special Birsa Munda pavilion showcasing his life and journey, as well as a photo gallery depicting the diverse tribal traditions of Odisha. Live displays of tribal art, student engagement programs, and exhibitions on tribal heritage enhanced the celebrations. On day 2, an attractive photo exhibition was organised at the Odisha State Tribal Museum. It included 80 photographs depicting the vibrant life, art, and culture of Odisha's tribal communities.
Gujarat	Department of Tribal Development and Tribal Research Institute, Gujarat	The department and institute jointly organised a national symposium on the life, struggle, and contributions of Birsa Munda at Ekta Nagar (Narmada District). Inaugurated by Minister of State P.C. Baranda, the symposium was attended by over 600 professors, academics, and tribal leaders. It showcased both academic and cultural solidarity.

Other Initiatives Promoting Tribal Histories and Cultures

The Government of India also promotes the rich cultures and heritage of the Scheduled Tribe communities through various schemes and initiatives, aiming to preserve their unique identities and situate them in mainstream Indian consciousness and history.

These include:

Initiative or Project	Description or Objective	Key Features or Outputs
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Adi Sanskriti Project	A digital learning platform for tribal artforms.	Offers around 100 immersive courses on diverse tribal artforms; includes nearly 5,000 curated documents on India's socio-cultural tribal heritage.
Adi Vaani	An AI-powered translation tool to preserve and promote tribal languages.	Provides real-time text and speech translation between Hindi, English, and tribal languages — <i>Mundari, Bhili, Gondi, Santhali, Garo, and Kui</i> ; helps digitise and preserve folklore, oral traditions, and cultural knowledge .
Tribal Document Repository	A digital archive of tribal-related research and resources.	Accessible at https://repository.tribal.gov.in/ ; serves as a searchable repository of documents related to India's tribal communities.
Varnamala and Oral Literature Initiative	Preservation of tribal linguistic and oral heritage.	Publication of local rhymes and stories in tribal languages; collection and documentation of oral tribal literature, folklore, and folktales for preservation.
Research and Documentation of Indigenous Knowledge	Promotion and protection of tribal knowledge systems and cultural expressions.	Includes studies on indigenous healing practices, medicinal plants, Adivasi languages, agriculture, dance, and paintings ; also supports literary festivals, translation work, and publications by tribal writers.
Aadi Mahotsav	A national festival of tribal culture organised by the Government of India.	Celebrates tribal crafts, cuisine, commerce, culture, and art ; provides a national platform to showcase tribal talent and entrepreneurship.
Tribal Craft Mela & Cultural Events	Government-supported cultural events promoting tribal arts.	Organisation of craft melas, dance festivals, art competitions, and workshops-cum-exhibitions on tribal paintings; financial support is provided to conduct tribal fairs and festivals across states.

Conclusion

Janjatiya Gaurav Divas shines a light on the contributions, history, cultures, and traditions of a largely marginalised section of society—the Scheduled Tribes. By commemorating Birsa Munda's legacy through this day and the Tribal Pride Year, and by establishing the eleven Tribal Freedom Fighters' Museums along with other initiatives, the Government of India strives to embed the community's struggles and achievements within the nation's collective consciousness. Together, these efforts reaffirm the vision of *Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat*—a united nation that honours the strength and spirit of all its communities.

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Press Information Bureau:

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- Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah unveils a grand statue of Bhagwan Birsa Munda in New Delhi on the occasion of his 150th birth anniversary: <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2073620>

Others:

- District Chhindwara: <https://chhindwara.nic.in/en/cultural-tourism/>
- Raja Shankar Shah Museum, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh: <http://architecturalheritage.intach.org/?p=2761>

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