

# 'Birsa present in our faith as God': PM Modi inaugurates memorial in tribal icon's honour

## Synopsis

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday inaugurated a museum in Ranchi in memory of revered tribal freedom fighter Birsa Munda, popularly known as Dharti Aaba.



Paying tributes, Modi said he fought against the ideology that wanted to erase the identity of the tribal society of India.

Birsa **Munda** lived for the society, sacrificed his life for his culture and the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday as he inaugurated a museum in **Ranchi** in memory of the revered tribal freedom fighter, popularly known as Dharti Aaba.

Addressing a gathering virtually, Modi said Dharti Aaba did not live very long but he wrote a complete history for the country and gave direction to the future generations of India.

Paying tributes to Munda on his birth anniversary, the prime minister said he fought against the ideology that wanted to erase the identity of the tribal society of India.

"The country has decided it will give a more meaningful and grand identity to the tribal traditions and its valor stories. For this, a historic decision has been taken -- from today every year, the country will celebrate November 15 as 'Janjatiya Gaurav Divas'," the prime minister said.

"Bhagwan Birsa knew that attacking diversity in the name of modernity, tampering with ancient identity and nature was not the way for the welfare of the society. He was in favour of modern education, he advocated for change, he showed courage to speak against the shortcomings of his own society," he added.

Modi said it was the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led NDA government that created the Union Tribal Ministry, and linked tribal interests with the policies of the country.

He also credited Vajpayee, the former prime minister, for the creation of Jharkhand, which came into being on this day in the year 2000.

Congratulating citizens of the state and the tribal society, Modi dedicated the Birsa Munda Memorial Udyan and Museum to the nation.

"This museum will become a living venue of our tribal culture, which is full of diversity. It will depict the contribution of the tribal heroes in the freedom struggle," Modi said.

"Bhagwan Birsa lived for the society, sacrificed his life for his culture and his country. Therefore, he is still present in our faith, in our spirit as our God," the prime minister said.

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

Chief Minister Hemant Soren, Governor Ramesh Bais, Union Minister Arjun Munda and former chief minister Babulal Marandi were among those present at the function.

The project has been developed in association with the Jharkhand government, the Prime Minister's Office said.

It demonstrates the way tribals struggled to protect their forests, land rights, their culture and shows their valour and sacrifices, which is vital for nation-building, the **PMO** said.

Along with Munda, the museum also highlights contributions of tribal freedom fighters such as Budhu Bhagat, Sidhu-Kanhu, **Nilambar-Pitambar**, Diwa-Kisun, Telanga Khadiya, Gaya Munda, Jatra Bhagat, Poto H, Bhagirath Manjhi and Ganga Narayan Singh.

The memorial park has been developed on adjacent 25 acres of land, and it has a musical fountain, food court, children's park, infinity pool, garden and other entertainment facilities.