

## Sewa Singh Thikriwala

### Why in News?

Recently, January 20 marked the death anniversary of Sewa Singh Thikriwala.

- **Early life** - He was born in late 19<sup>th</sup> century in Thikriwala village, part of princely state Patiala, Punjab.
- His father Dewa Singh was a high-ranking official in the court of Maharaja Rajinder Singh.
- **Revolutionary phase** - He **spearheaded the self-rule movement** against the rulers of Punjab's erstwhile princely states.
- His direct criticism of the Patiala Maharaja's rule led the authorities to imprison him.
- His fellow Akali leader Kharak Singh launched a campaign against the state for demanding his release.

### Praja Mandal Movement

- The Punjab Riyasat Praja Mandal was formed in Punjab.
- **President** - Sewa Singh Thikriwala.
- It was largely run by Akali leaders.
- **Objectives**
  - To protect the civil liberties of the masses.
  - To protest against oppressive taxes.
  - To seek reforms in the peasants' conditions.
  - To open educational institutions.
  - To have a responsible government.
- **Coverage** - It spread over 600 princely states of British India.
- **Important leaders** - Kharak Singh and Master Tara Singh.
- **Significance** - Now part of the Malwa region, with some parts in Haryana, these areas are politically active even today and were hotbeds of the recent farmers' agitations.

- **Meeting with Gandhi** - After his release in 1928, he **met Mahatma Gandhi** in 1931, to discuss the problems faced by the people of Punjab.
- **Negotiation** - Patiala Maharaja initiated negotiation with him but it failed over the demand for an elected assembly.
- **Last phase of his life** - He died in 1935, while he was on a hunger strike in jail over his mistreatment by jail authorities.
- **Memorial** - After his death, a memorial has been held annually in the Thikriwala Village in January.
- Government has announced that Sewa Singh's house would also be turned into a memorial.

### Reference

[The Indian Express | Story of Punjab's Sewa Singh Thikriwala](#)



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