

Editorial of the Day – 15.11.2025

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1. Tepid relief – On the end of the shutdown in the U.S. – (TH)

General Studies 2 – Governance **Topic** – Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries.

Introduction

The recent U.S. government shutdown, the longest in the nation's history, serves as a stark illustration of deep-seated political gridlock and intense partisan rivalry. Although President Donald Trump's eventual decision to end the 43-day standoff brought temporary relief, the episode exposed profound structural tensions in American governance. The ordeal, which created widespread economic disruption and uncertainty, was defined by fiercely contested issues such as health-care subsidies, budgetary control, and the legislative power of the filibuster, highlighting that the end of the shutdown does not resolve these underlying crises.

Shutdown Details and Political Standoff

Record Duration – President Donald Trump presided over the longest federal shutdown in U.S. history, which lasted for 43 days.

Human Impact – The shutdown directly affected approximately 1.4 million federal employees, who were either furloughed (sent home) or forced to work without pay.

Core Partisan Conflict – A central issue was the Republican effort to block an extension of health insurance subsidies for low-income citizens, which were set to expire in 2025.

Democratic Concession – In the political bargain, Democrats received very little, securing only an assurance of a Senate vote on the issue, with no corresponding guarantee of a House vote or any Republican backing.

Legislative Manoeuvring and Party Crossovers

Breaking the Deadlock – The Senate ultimately ended the impasse with a 60–40 vote, which was only made possible by eight Democrats crossing party lines to vote with the Republicans.

Partial Funding – The approved package was a temporary fix, funding some federal agencies for the full fiscal year but others only until January 30, 2026.

Threat to Filibuster – A victorious President Trump subsequently pledged to push for an end to the congressional filibuster, a procedural tool traditionally used to prevent rash legislation by requiring a supermajority.

Filibuster's Role – This was a significant development, as Democrats had been using the filibuster as their primary legislative tool to protect affordable health care provisions for low-income families.

Economic and Social Impact of the Shutdown

Disruption of Public Services – The shutdown caused severe disruptions to daily life, halting critical public services including air travel, IRS operations, and the functioning of national parks.

Setbacks for Social Programs – Key welfare programs supporting food security, early childhood learning, and other social services suffered major setbacks.

Widespread Uncertainty – The prolonged closure hindered all routine government functions and created a climate of widespread economic uncertainty.

Republican Leverage – Despite recent Democratic victories in State-level elections, the Republican control of Congress gave them significantly greater leverage during the political standoff.

The Political Stakes Ahead

The Mid-term Referendum – The true test of power between the Trump administration and the Democrats is slated for the mid-term elections next year.

Key Electoral Issues – These elections will function as a national referendum on the administration's handling of core issues – jobs, health care, education, and immigration.

Republican Risk – Republican's risk alienating voters and being perceived as obstructionist if they refuse all cooperation with liberal and progressive lawmakers.

Future of Economic Policy – The electoral outcome is paramount as it will determine the future direction of economic policies that directly affect every day Americans.

Conclusion – While the end of the historic 43-day shutdown offers temporary relief, it does not resolve the persistent structural tensions and deep partisan divides in American politics. The episode highlights the fragility of governance when basic funding becomes a tool of political warfare. The upcoming mid-term elections will serve as a decisive test of public confidence in President Trump's leadership and the capacity for congressional cooperation. Without genuine bipartisan engagement, both parties risk deepening these divisions and failing to address the critical national policy priorities affecting ordinary Americans.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/tepid-relief-on-the-end-of-the-shut/article70280503.ece>

2. On Birsa Munda's birth anniversary, let's celebrate his fight for dignity

General Studies I – History
Struggle (Tribal Uprisings).

Topic – Modern Indian History – Significant personalities, The Freedom

Introduction

The anniversary of Birsa Munda, celebrated as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas, serves as a powerful reminder of the historical and continuing struggle for tribal dignity, identity, and rights in India. His legacy, the 'Ulgulan' (Great Tumult), was a fight for self-rule, cultural preservation, and land rights against colonial exploitation. Today, this legacy is enshrined in India's Constitution and reflected in a policy shift towards empowerment, yet significant challenges persist in translating these ideals into reality for all tribal communities.

The Historical Significance of Birsa Munda

Context of Adivasi Resistance – Between the late 18th and early 20th centuries, numerous tribal communities rose up against the exploitative policies of the British, compounded by the oppression of moneylenders and landlords.

The 'Ulgulan' (Great Tumult) – Birsa Munda led this definitive movement (1899–1900) with the clear objective of protecting tribal land, culture, and self-rule (Swaraj).

A Cultural and Political Icon – He called for a return to traditional tribal practices and simultaneously fought against both feudal (landlord) oppression and external missionary influences that he felt were eroding tribal identity.

Legislative Impact – His movement was a key catalyst for the British administration enacting laws to protect tribal interests, most notably the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, 1908, which critically restricted the acquisition of tribal land by non-tribals.

Contemporary Recognition and Constitutional Backing

Janjatiya Gaurav Divas – In 2021, the government designated November 15th (Birsa Munda's birth anniversary) as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas to formally honour the contributions of all tribal freedom fighters to India's history.

Constitutional Safeguards – India's Constitution provides a robust legal framework to protect the dignity, autonomy, and rights of Scheduled Tribes –

Fifth and Sixth Schedules – These are designed to protect tribal land, preserve their distinct culture, and ensure rights to self-governance.

Articles 15(4) & 46 – These provisions mandate special protections and call for the promotion of the educational and economic interests of STs.

PESA Act, 1996 – The Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act empowers Gram Sabha's (village assemblies) with significant authority in Scheduled Areas.

Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA) – This landmark law formally recognizes the rights of forest-dwelling tribal communities and other traditional forest dwellers to their ancestral lands and forest resources.

Policy Shifts – From Welfare to Empowerment

Over the last decade, there has been a discernible policy shift from a model of simple welfare distribution to one focused on empowerment-led, infrastructure-based development. The goal is mainstreaming with dignity, not forced assimilation.

PM-JANMAN Mission (2023)

Target – Specifically designed for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

Focus – Aims to provide a comprehensive saturation of basic services, including housing (Pucca houses), clean water supply, electricity, education, healthcare, and road connectivity.

Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)

Scale – Over 740 schools have been sanctioned (with 479 functional) to provide high-quality education to tribal students.

Aim – The program intends to benefit an estimated 3.5 lakh tribal students.

TRIFED (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation)

Role – Promotes tribal entrepreneurship and ensures fair pricing for tribal products.

Mechanism – This is largely achieved through the establishment of Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) for value addition and marketing.

Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan

Objective – Focuses on achieving 100% saturation of basic services and welfare schemes in tribal-majority villages, often aligned with NITI Aayog's Aspirational Blocks Programme.

Cultural Preservation and Digital Heritage

Museums for Tribal Freedom Fighters – 11 state-of-the-art museums have been sanctioned (10 are already inaugurated) across India.

Digital Preservation – These institutions use immersive and digital technology to preserve and narrate the stories of tribal leaders like Birsa Munda, Sidhu-Kanhu, Tantia Bhil, and Alluri Sitarama Raju.

Impact – Such initiatives strengthen national memory, correct historical omissions, and contribute to historical justice.

Challenges That Still Persist

Despite this clear constitutional and policy focus, significant gaps remain in honouring Birsa Munda's legacy –

Land and Forest Rights – Major hurdles include delays in the implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), high rates of rejection for land claims, and persistent conflicts between forest conservation laws and tribal rights.

Socio-economic Gaps – Scheduled Tribe communities continue to lag behind the national average in crucial human development indicators, including literacy rates, healthcare access, and income levels.

Development-Induced Displacement – Tribal populations remain disproportionately affected by displacement due to large-scale mining and infrastructure projects, often leading to loss of land and livelihood.

Conclusion – The Way Forward

Birsa Munda's life was a powerful assertion of tribal dignity (Gaurav), self-rule (Swaraj), and cultural identity. To truly honour his legacy, modern India must translate its constitutional ideals and policy intentions into rights-based, inclusive, and participatory governance.

The way forward requires –

1. Strengthening Local Governance through the effective implementation of PESA and guaranteeing the autonomy of Gram Sabha's.
2. Securing Land and Resource Rights via transparent and speedy recognition of forest rights under the FRA, alongside promoting community-based forest management.
3. Ensuring Inclusive Development by using participatory models to achieve targeted goals in health, nutrition, and education.
4. Actively Preserving Culture by providing robust support for tribal languages, art, and traditions through community-led institutions.

By addressing the persistent gaps and ensuring that development is empowerment-oriented, India can ensure that the values Birsa Munda fought for—justice, dignity, and freedom—continue to guide the nation.

Source - <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/vice-president-c-p-radhakrishnan-writes-on-birsa-mundas-birth-anniversary-lets-celebrate-his-fight-for-dignity-10366425/>