# Sewa Singh Thikriwala

## Why in News?

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

- **Early life –** He was born in late 19th 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** |
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| • **Objectives**<br>- To protect the civil liberties of the masses.<br>- To protest against oppressive taxes.<br>- To seek reforms in the peasants' conditions.<br>- To open educational institutions.<br>- To have a responsible government.<br>• **Coverage –** It spread over 600 princely states of British India.<br>• **Important leaders** - Kharak Singh and Master Tara Singh.<br>•<br>**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.<br>•<br>**Punjab Riyasat Praja Mandal** - Was presided the Sewa Singh Thikriwala.<br>•<br>It was largely run by Akali leaders. |

- **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]