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Basava Jayanti: Birth Anniversary of Guru Basaveshwara

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Why in News

The Prime Minister of India paid tribute to **Jagadguru Basaveshwara** on the occasion of Basava Jayanthi.

In November 2015, the Prime Minister of India inaugurated the **statue of Basaveshwara** along the **bank of the river Thames** at Lambeth in London.



Key Points

- **Birth**
He was born in Karnataka in 1131 CE.

- **About:**

- He was an Indian 12th-century Philosopher, Statesman and a social reformer.
- He was **Lingayat saint** in the Shiva-focussed **Bhakti movement**, and Hindu Shaivite social reformer during the reign of the **Kalyani Chalukya/Kalachuri dynasty**.

The Lingayats are a Hindu sect with a wide following in southern India that worships **Shiva as the only deity**.

- He is also known as **Bhakti Bhandari (literally, the treasurer of devotion), or Basaveswara (Lord Basava)**.

- **Contribution:**

- Basavanna spread social awareness through his poetry known as **Vachanaas**.
- Several important Lingayat works are credited to Basavanna, including Vachana such as the **Shat-sthala-vachana, Kala-jnana-vachana, Mantra-gopya, Ghatna Chakra-vachana and Raja-yoga-vachana**.
- Basavanna, like **Gautama Buddha**, taught people how to live happily in a rational social order which later came to be known as the **Sharana movement**.

The Sharana movement attracted people from all castes, and like most strands of the Bhakti movement, produced a corpus of literature, the vachanas, that unveiled the spiritual universe of the Veerashaiva saints.

- Basava fought against the inhuman practice of the **caste system**, which discriminated against people based on their birth.
- The **Anubhava Mantapa** established by Basava laid down the foundation of social democracy.
- Basava believed that man becomes great not by his birth but by **his conduct** in the society.
- He taught the dignity of manual labour by insisting on work as worship.

- **Death:**

He died in 1167 CE.

Bhakti movement

- The movement probably began in the Tamil region around the **6th and 7th century AD** and achieved a great deal of popularity through the poems of the **Alvars (devotees of Vishnu) and Nayanars (devotees of Shiva)**, the Vaishnavite and Shaivite poets.
- These saints looked upon religion not as a cold formal worship but as a loving bond based upon love between the worshipped and worshipper.
- Originally began in South India in the 9th century with **Shankaracharya** spread over all parts of India and by the 16th century was a great spiritual force to reckon with, especially after the great wave made by Kabir, Nanak and Shri Chaitanya.

Source: PIB