



Chero Archers of Palamau

Why in News?

The Jharkhand franchise in the upcoming **Archery Premier League (APL)** has been named **Chero Archers**, honoring the martial traditions and resistance legacy of the **Chero tribe of Palamau**.

- The APL, scheduled from 2nd-12th October, features teams like Prithviraj Yodhas, Kakatiya Knights, Mighty Marathas, Rajputana Royals, and Chola Chiefs, **blending modern sports with India's martial heritage**.

Key Points

- **Historical Background:** The Cheros rose to prominence in present-day Bihar and Jharkhand after the decline of the [Pala Empire \(12th-13th century\)](#).
 - They later settled in **Palamau (western Jharkhand)**, where their bows became a symbol of tribal resilience.
 - Known for resisting both [Mughal imperial armies](#) and later the [British East India Company](#), the Cheros consistently used guerrilla tactics from their forested strongholds.
- **Key Figures & Events:**
 - **Sahbal Rai (17th century):** A contemporary of **Jahangir**, who disrupted Mughal supply lines along the **Grand Trunk Road (1613)**.
 - Captured and forced to fight a tiger before the Emperor, where he died—earning lasting tribal reverence.
 - **Medini Rai (Chero Napoleon):** The **most celebrated** Chero leader; Medininagar in Jharkhand is named after him.
 - Led resistance against **Aurangzeb's generals** like Daud Khan and Sha'ista Khan in 1660.
 - Praised by historian W.W. Hunter for his hardy archers.
 - **18th Century Resistance:** In 1730, Chero arrows scattered Mughal forces under Muazzam Khan in Palamau.
 - Later, Fakhruddaula settled for an uneasy tributary arrangement with them.
 - **Against the British:** In 1771, **Chitrajit Rai's Cheros defied Captain Jacob Camac** with bows and arrows.
 - Their resistance continued with mini-insurrections between 1817-1857.
 - **Revolt of 1857:** The **Chero brothers Nilamber and Pitamber** spearheaded tribal uprisings against the British alongside the Santals.
- **Cultural Significance of Bows & Arrows:** For the Cheros, archery was not just a skill but a **way of life**, where **both men and women participated in warfare** and cultural practices like hunting and river-diving, with their simple bent bows symbolizing a heroic resistance against the stronger foes.

