

Battle of Saragarhi

September 13, 2021

In news- September 12 marked the 124th anniversary of the Battle of Saragarhi.

About the Battle of Saragarhi-

- The Battle of Saragarhi was a last-stand battle **fought before the Tirah Campaign between the British Raj and Afghan tribesmen.**
- Saragarhi was the communication tower between **Fort Lockhart and Fort Gulistan.**
- The two forts in the rugged North West Frontier Province (NWFP) were **built by Maharaja Ranjit Singh** but renamed by the British.
- Saragarhi helped to link up the two important forts which housed a large number of British troops in the rugged terrain of NWFP.
- On 12 September 1897, an estimated 12,000 – 24,000 Orakzai and Afridi tribesmen attacked the outpost of Saragarhi, cutting off Fort Gulistan from Fort Lockhart.
- Though Saragarhi was usually manned by a platoon of 40 soldiers, on the battle day, it was being held by only 21 soldiers from 36th Sikh (now 4 Sikh) and a non-combatant called Daad, a Pashtun who did odd jobs for the troops.
- Though heavily outnumbered, **the soldiers of 36th Sikh, led by Havildar Ishar Singh,** fought till their last breath, killing 200 tribals and injuring 600.
- The British, who regained control over the fort after a few days, used burnt bricks of Saragarhi to build an obelisk for the martyrs.
- They also commissioned gurdwaras at Amritsar and Ferozepur in their honour.

- In 2017, the Punjab government decided to observe Saragarhi Day on September 12 as a holiday.