

Pal-Dadhvav massacre

March 10, 2022

In news— On 7th March 2022, the Gujarat government marked 100 years of the Pal-Dadhvav killings, calling it a massacre “bigger than the Jallianwala Bagh”.

History of Pal-Dadhvav massacre-

- The Pal-Dadhvav massacre in which **nearly 1,000 tribals (Bhils) were killed, took place on March 7, 1922**, in the Pal-Chitariya and Dadhvaav villages of Sabarkantha district, then part of Idar state(Gujarat).
- **During the Amalki Ekadashi (just before Holi), villagers had gathered on the banks of river Heir** as part of the ‘Eki movement’, led by one Motilal Tejawat.
- The movement was **to protest against the land revenue tax (lagaan) imposed on the peasants by the British** and feudal lords.
- **Tejawat**, who belonged to Koliyari village in the Mewad region of Rajasthan, had also **mobilized Bhils from Kotda Chhavni, Sirohi, and Danta to participate.**
- **The Mewad Bhil Corps (MBC)**, a paramilitary force raised by the British that was on the lookout for Tejawat, heard of this gathering and reached the spot.
- On a command from Tejawat, nearly 2000 Bhils raised their bows and arrows and shouted in unison- ‘We will not pay the tax’.
- The **MBC commanding officer, HG Sutton**, ordered his men to fire upon them. Bullets rained on them that led to a major stamade and killing of more than thousand people.
- **Gujarat has a near 14 per cent tribal population that resides along its northern-eastern stretch, called the ‘poorvi patti’**, bordering the districts of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra.
- The Pal-Dadhvav massacre was brought into focus at the

Republic Day parade of 2022.

- **The R Day tableau featured a seven-ft statue of Tejawat, inspired by the statue at the memorial.**

About Motilal Tejawat-

- **Born into a merchant (Baniya) family in the adivasi-dominated Koliyari village**, Tejawat was **employed by a landlord**, where he worked for eight years.
- During this period he saw closely how the landlords exploited tribals and would threaten to beat them with shoes if they did not pay the tax.
- Outraged by the atrocities and exploitation of the tribal people, Tejawat quit the job in 1920 and devoted himself to social work and reform.
- Motilal Tejawat's immediate **source of inspiration was the Bijolia movement.**
- **Bijolia movement was a peasant movement in the Bijolia jagir of the former Mewar state** (in present-day Rajasthan in India) against excessive land revenue exactions.
- The movement continued till 1941 after a bitter struggle lasting about half a century, gained national attention and resisted state oppression.