

Uda Devi

November 18, 2022

In news– Martyrdom of Uda Devi, a freedom fighter from the Pasi community was observed on 16 November.

History Uda Devi-

- Uda Devi Pasi was an **Indian women freedom fighter who participated in the war on behalf of Indian soldiers against the British East India Company**, during the Indian Rebellion of 1857.
- She was a **member of the women's squad of Wajid Ali Shah, the sixth Nawab of Awadh**.
- Uda Devi is remembered not only for her stories of valour but also for her **skill as a leader who managed to mobilise people, specially Dalit women** to take up arms against the British.
- **Born in Ujirao, Lucknow, she was part of the royal guard of Begum Hazrat Mahal of Awadh**.
- Her husband, Makka Pasi, worked as a foot soldier in the army of Awadh's Nawab, Wajid Ali Shah.
- Hazrat Mahal's palace had several women belonging to marginalised communities, and their occupation was mostly to take care of the needs of the royalty.
- Some of them, who showed promise, were also trained as warriors. Uda Devi was one of them.
- Amid the revolt of 1857, on June 10, at Chinhat near Ismailganj, a battle (**Battle in Sikandar Bagh**) was fought between the army of Lucknow and the British troops led by Henry Lawrence, in which Makka Pasi lost his life. The death of her husband spurred Uda Devi on to take up a more active role in the mutiny.
- On November 16, **1857, Uda Devi was among the soldiers who clashed with the British regiment stationed near the Gomti River**.
- Although not much of the fight has been documented in

history, it is said that Uda Devi killed at least three dozen British soldiers from atop a tree before she could be spotted.

- British commander Campbell and W Gordon-Alexander were left in surprise when their soldiers were picked off one by one but no shooter could be located.
- A battalion shot this mysterious killer down and she landed on the ground, covered in blood. It was only when her helmet was removed that people realised that a woman was responsible for the killings.
- In the account of William Forbes-Mitchell in *Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny, 1857-59*, it is written: "She was armed with a pair of heavy old-pattern cavalry pistols, one of which was in her belt still loaded, and her pouch was still about half full of ammunition, while from her perch in the tree, which had been carefully prepared before the attack, she had killed more than half-a-dozen men."
- Today, a statute of her exists in Sikandar Bagh, Lucknow.