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203rd Anniversary of the Bhima-Koregaon Battle

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Why in News

The **victory pillar (also known as Ranstambh or Jaystambh)** in Bhima-Koregaon village (Pune district of Maharashtra) celebrated the **203rd anniversary of the Bhima-Koregaon battle of 1818** on **1st January, 2021**.

In 2018, **incidents of violent clashes between Dalit and Maratha groups** were registered during the celebration of the **200th anniversary** of the Bhima-Koregaon battle.

Key Points

- **Historical Background:**

- A **battle** was fought in Bhima Koregaon between the **Peshwa forces and the British on 1st January, 1818.**
- The **British army**, which **comprised mainly of Dalit soldiers**, fought the **upper caste-dominated Peshwa army.**
 - The **British troops defeated the Peshwa army.**
- **Peshwa Bajirao II** had **insulted the Mahar community** and terminated them from the service of his army.
 - This caused them to side with the English against the Peshwa's numerically superior army.
 - **Mahar**, caste-cluster, or group of many endogamous castes, living chiefly in Maharashtra state and in adjoining states.
 - They mostly speak Marathi, the official language of Maharashtra.
 - They are officially **designated Scheduled Castes.**
- The defeat of Peshwa army was considered to be a **victory against caste-based discrimination and oppression.**
- It was one of the last battles of the **Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817-18), which ended the Peshwa domination.**
- **Babasaheb Ambedkar's visit to the site on 1st January, 1927**, revitalised the memory of the battle for the Dalit community, making it a rallying point and an assertion of pride.

- **The Victory Pillar Memorial:**

It was **erected by the British** in **Perne village** in the district **for the soldiers killed in the Koregaon Bhima battle.** It has attained **legendary stature in Dalit history.**

Source:IE