Paika Rebellion

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The Government will release the commemorative coin and postage stamp in memory of Paika Rebellion.

- The decision to commemorate the bicentenary of the revolution was announced in the 2017-18 Budget Speech.
- Pre-dating what has been popularly regarded as the first war of independence in 1857, the **Paika Bidroha (Paika Rebellion) of 1817** in Odisha briefly shook the foundations of British rule in the eastern part of India.
- 2017 marked the double centenary of one of the biggest revolts ever seen in eastern India and one which was quelled with great brutality.

Paikas were essentially the **peasant militias of the Gajapati rulers of Odisha** who rendered military service to the king during times of war while taking up cultivation during times of peace.

Brief History

- Till 1803, Odisha was under Maratha rule, however after the second Anglo-Maratha War, the Marathas were forced to cede most of their territory in Odisha to the British East India Company.
- Establishment of **British rule in Odisha was followed by a policy of repression against the Paikas**. They lost their traditional position in the society and their lands were taken away.
- In addition to losing their estates, the Paikas were also heavily exploited by the revenue collectors under the British.

The Rebellion

- Paikas under the **leadership of Baxi Jagabandhu**, the hereditary chief of the militia army of the Gajapati King of **Khurda** (a kingdom near Puri), rose in rebellion in March 1817, taking support of tribals and other sections of society.

- The Paikas **attacked British symbols of power**, setting ablaze police stations, administrative offices and the treasury during their march towards Khurda.
- The Paikas were supported by the rajas, zamindars, village heads and ordinary peasants. The rebellion quickly spread to different parts of the province.
- British were initially taken aback and then tried to regain lost ground but faced stiff resistance from the rebelling Paikas. However, the Paikas were eventually defeated by the British.
- The Paikas retreated into the thick jungles of Odisha and carried out guerrilla warfare for several years. After successive defeats, the Paika leader, Bakshi Jagabandhu, surrendered to the British in 1825 and lived as a prisoner in Cuttack till his death in 1829.