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11th, April, 2022

Topic: Historical Importance

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

What is the news?

- ASI to take over Kaleshwar temple.

Where it is located?

- Kaleshwar Mahadev Temple located on the banks of the Beas in Paragpur of Kangra district is among 19 ancient monuments, identified by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), to be declared as the monument of national importance.

What does it mean?

- It means the temple will be taken over by the ASI for its preservation. The move of the Centre has been welcomed by those who had been lobbying for the protection of the heritage of Himachal.

Malvika Pathania, state convener of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), has said:

- The Kaleshwar Mahadev Temple is revered as the Maha Rudra Temple, which is believed to be the resting place of souls. The temple is about 450-year-old and Shivalingam is located below the ground level.

About Temple:

- The temple is built with sandstone and has beautiful carvings in the typical Shikar style. The temple is a monument linked to many historical sites in Kangra.
- There is a belief that the Beas during monsoons swells and touches the Shivalingam in the temple and then its level recedes.
- The temple was linked to the stories of the Mahabharata and the Pandavas. It's unique aspect was that the Shivalingam in the temple was believed to be 'Ardhnarishwar' (a joint form of Lord Shiva and Parvati). Many locals say the place is as pious as Haridwar.

(Source: HP Tribune)

Topic: Agriculture

Importance: Himachal HPAS Mains

What is the news?

- Farmers in the lower areas of Kangra district are worried over the continued dry spell in April. The valley has experienced no rainfall after the first week of February.

Areas affected:

- This year, several parts of the district have experienced rain below average, adversely affecting the wheat crop.
- In Malan, Nagrota Bagwan, Mehanja, Paror and Sulaha areas of Palampur, farmers are the worst hit because their crops have withered in the absence of sufficient irrigation.
- The rain-fed areas have also been affected badly as over 30 per cent of the crops have been damaged till date. Farmers Suresh Kumar, Vijay, Sher Singh, and Romesh Kumar say that such a dry spell has never been witnessed in the past 30 years.

NK Dhiman, Director, Agriculture, said:

- The possibility of the Kangra valley facing a drought seemed real, as the region had not received adequate rainfall. He says that the government is worried that if the dry spell continues for one more week, the situation

will worsen.

Reason shared:

- Climate change is one of the major reasons for deficient rainfall in the hills for the past five years. “We will have to change the cropping pattern in the state to meet the present challenges being faced by farmers.
- The water in local rivers, too, is not sufficient in the absence of rain and less snowfall this year. Sanjay Thakur, Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Department, says that the department is making all efforts to make all local irrigation channels functional.
- In the absence of sufficient water in local rivers, many of the irrigation channels have already become defunct as water does not reach tail-end fields.
- Sunil Patial, Technical Officer, Tea, says that if drought-like conditions continue, it will also affect tea production in the valley.

(Source: HP Tribune)

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