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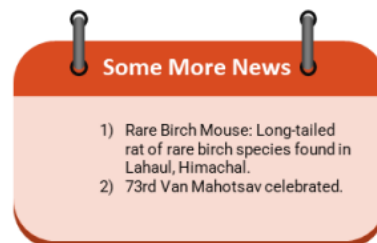
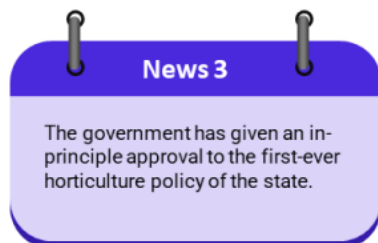
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2nd, August, 2022

Topic's Covered



Topic: Temple in Himachal Pradesh

Important: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

What is the news?

- Despite the fact that the government has notified that no heritage building can be altered without the permission of a DC, many heritage buildings are being changed on the whims of local politicians.
- The recent renovation of the Devi Kothi temple in the Chamba district by government contractors provoked the anger of environmentalists.

Vijay Sharma, a heritage conservationist shared:

- Vijay Sharma, a heritage conservationist and Padma Shri awardee for work in Kangra paintings, while talking to The Tribune, said the Devi Kothi temple was known for its splendid wood carvings and murals. The temple front part had been defaced.
- The facade of the temple had been covered by wooden pillars made by the modern artisans, he said. The ancient shrine was built by Raja Umed Singh of Chamba in the mid 18th century.

The temple front part had been defaced. Some art lovers had raised the matter the year before as well. After they were assured that the ancient structure of the temple would not be altered. ***–Vijay Sharma, Padma Shri awardee***

- Vijay said some art lovers had raised this issue the previous year too. After that they were assured that the old structure of the temple would not be changed.
- Vijay has written a book on the temple. He had raised the issue when the concrete pillars were laid a few months ago around the temple. He had also approached the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) for its intervention. The government had sanctioned Rs 25 lakh for the conservation of the structure. But the amount was not utilized for the

purpose it was sanctioned.

- Sharma has urged the Chief Minister to take notice and issue order to remove such gaudy woodwork from the temple.
- The government had moved to protect the heritage building. As per the notification issued by the Governor for all buildings that are 100-year old or more, permission would have to be sought from the DCs for their renovation.
- The local committee and panchayats would also be informed before any change in heritage buildings or structures. The order will also apply to private buildings.
- The DCs had also been directed to give permission for a change in heritage structures only if they were satisfied that basic nature, architecture and old frescos in the heritage buildings would not be damaged.
- The notification stated that the government had taken the decision as many heritage buildings were being damaged during restructuring due to which the state was losing its heritage.

Malwika Pathania, state convener of INTACH, said:

- Despite the notification, the heritage buildings were being altered without the permission of the government.
- “I will write to the Governor and the Chief Secretary to take action against those who changed the original structure of the Devi Kothi temple,” she said.

About Devi Kothi temple in Chamba district:

- Devi Kothi Temple, in the Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh, was built by Raja Umed Singh in 1754 CE.
- According to the popular story of Chamba, the king ordered the building of the temple, dedicated to the

goddess Chamunda, on the fulfilment of a wish.

- Raja Umed Singh was inclined to Devi (Hindu divine mother) worship as is evident from other goddess temples scattered across the area.
- He was a devout believer in the Shakti cult (which worships Devi and her avatars) and is known to have built another Chamunda temple in Chamba, the capital of the province, that bears striking resemblance to the temple of Devi Kothi.
- The valley of Churah (literally, four ways), where the Devi temple is located, was of strategic importance for the former state of Chamba, as it served as the northwest frontier of the kingdom.
- It may be said here that by establishing a royal temple at such a crucial frontier, the king of Chamba might have intended to strengthen his stronghold over the Churah belt.
- The walls of the temple decorated with wall paintings show strong stylistic similarities to the tradition of miniature painting in Chamba in the middle of the eighteenth century.
- Dedicated to Goddess Chamunda, most of the painted panels in the temple exhibit her triumph over demons. Chamunda, the fearsome form of Durga, finds mention in the Hindu religious text 'Devi Mahatmya' (part of Markandeya Purana) as the warrior goddess who slew the demons Chanda and Munda.
- The rulers of Chamba and Kangra were devotees of Chamunda, who served as their inspiration on the battlefield. Episodes from 'Devi Mahatmya', illustrated on the temple walls, either show the goddess slaying demons or her being adorned by other gods.
- Raja Umed Singh had commissioned artists to undertake the mural works to decorate the walls of the temple as well as provide visitors with a glance of the Devi's extraordinary powers and combative strengths.
- Otherwise dominated by impressions of the Shakti cult,

the eastern wall of the temple is the only part dedicated to the legend of Krishna, influenced by the Vaishnavite Bhakti movement prevalent all over north India during the time.

A Brief History of Chamba Miniature Painting:



- The tradition of miniature painting of Chamba, a sub-school of the largest painting of Pahari (hill), which inspired the mural paintings of the temple of Devi Kothi, had its beginnings in the middle of the seventeenth century.
- Together with Chamba, Nurpur and Basohli were the first centers that practiced the tradition of Pahari painting.
- Among the gharanas that practised Chamba miniature painting, especially influential was the Gujarati Manikant family, which was active during the eighteenth century.
- The family migrated to the royal court from a Mughal workshop, most probably from Lahore, which was a

cultural centre as the capital of the Mughal Empire since the third quarter of the sixteenth century.

- The Manikantth painters were instrumental in shaping the landscape the Chamba miniature painting, and the most significant of them, perhaps was Laharu, who was active during the reign of Raja Umed Singh.
- Laharu's approach became the favoured painting style in the Chamba court, and he shaped the perceptions of generations of Chamba miniature painters who followed.
- Thus, it is not surprising that his artistic expressions echo on the murals of the Devi Kothi temple.
- The Krishna story illustrated on the eastern wall of the temple, for example, seems directly inspired by Laharu's Bhagavata paintings, now housed at the Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba. It is a thematic as well as a stylistic reinterpretation of miniature paintings.

(Source: The Tribune & Sahapedia)

Topic: Economics of State

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

What is the news?

- The Goods and Service Tax collection (GST) revenue has grown by 44 per cent in the first four months of the current financial year. The GST collection till July 31 was Rs 1,857 crore against Rs 1,285 crore collected during the same period in the last financial year, said Yunus, Commissioner, State Taxes and Excise.



Steps taken to achieve this:

- 1) Continuous improvement in return filing.
- 2) Speedy scrutiny of returns.
- 3) Timely completion of GST audits.
- 4) Strengthened enforcement continue to be the focus areas for the department.

GST in simple terms:

- GST, or Goods and Services Tax, is an indirect tax imposed on the supply of goods and services. It is a multi-stage, destination-oriented tax imposed on every value addition, replacing multiple indirect taxes, including VAT, excise duty, service taxes, etc.

Topic: Smart Classroom

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

What is the news?

- Himachal Government, NGO to make classrooms smart.

Purpose:

- To transform government school classrooms into smart ones, the Sampark Foundation, an NGO, has launched Sampark FLN (Foundational Literacy and Numeracy) TV for schools. The government and the foundation are jointly implementing the program.
- The program will help teachers use lesson plans, content, videos, activity videos, gamification of assessments and worksheets to make the classrooms smart, interactive and joyful.

Already initiative taken by the NGO:

- Till now, the NGO has provided the Sampark FLN TV device for 111 schools in 12 districts, impacting 3,500 children. The TV sets for the programme are being provided by the state government.
- “Going forward, the plan is to install Sampark FLN TV devices in 800 government schools, impacting more than 40,000 children.
- In the next few years, Sampark FLN TV will be installed in all schools of the state.
- In 2018, the Sampark Foundation and the state government

had signed a non-financial MoU to improve learning outcomes in government primary schools. Earlier this year, the MoU was renewed for another 3 years to deliver the Sampark's learning programme to all government schools in the state.

(Source: The Tribune)

Topic: Horticulture Policy

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

What is the news?

- The government has given an in-principle approval to the first-ever horticulture policy of the state.
- "The government has approved the draft and sent it back to the Horticulture Department. The draft will be soon laid in public domain to seek suggestions/objections from stakeholders," said Horticulture Secretary Amitabh Avasthi.

About Policy:

1. As one of its major objectives, the policy aims to diversify fruit production in the state. At the moment, apple accounts for more than 80 per cent of the fruit production.
2. The policy aims at converting Himachal from the apple state to a fruit state," said a horticulture official. To achieve this objective, the department will adopt a

cluster approach to boost the cultivation of other fruits along with apple.

3. Just as apple clusters have been formed under the World Bank-funded horticulture development project, areas will be identified where there is a potential for growing other fruits. These areas will then be put under cluster cultivation.
4. Efforts are already afoot to boost the cultivation of sub-tropical fruits at lower elevations in the state through project SHIVA, which is funded by the Asian Development Bank.
5. The policy stresses on the use of latest technology and techniques like drip irrigation, high density plantation, etc for better quality and yield of the fruit.
6. Compared to the developed horticulture nations, the per-hectare production of fruit in the state is very low and the policy aims at addressing this huge gap in production.
7. Also, technology will be used to make the entire system transparent and accessible to all fruit growers. Relevant information would be put up on the department's website, ensuring prompt, transparent and impartial services to the growers.
8. According to the official, the policy will look to create infrastructure like marketing yards, CA stores, processing units, proper roads in rural areas etc to help growers get better value for their produce. "Besides, foreign markets will be explored for exporting fruit.

(Source: The Tribune)

Topic: Van Mahostav

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

What is the news?

- Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Jai Ram Thakur during the 73rd Van Mahotsav celebrated at Chowari in Bhatiyat Vidhan Sabha area of Chamba district on 2-8-2022.
- He also planted a sapling of 'Punica granatum' on the occasion.

About Punica granatum:

- Pomegranate, (Punica granatum), bush or small tree of the family Lythraceae and its fruit.
- The juicy arils of the fruit are eaten fresh, and the juice is the source of grenadine syrup, used in flavorings and liqueurs.
- Pomegranate is high in dietary fibre, folic acid, vitamin C, and vitamin K.

(Source: HP Government)

Topic: Rare Species of Mouse

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

What is the news?

- Rare Birch Mouse: Long-tailed rat of rare birch species found in Lahaul, Himachal.



About this Species:

- This rat has been seen between Granfu and Chhatru. Solan's team of Geological Survey of India has got this success. Such rats are found only in areas like Gilgit, Ladakh and North America.

Why important?

- For the first time in Himachal Pradesh, the long-tailed rat (*Cicista concolor lathemi*) of a rare birch species has been found in the Lahaul Valley.
- Recently, the team that went to Lahaul Valley for survey, the place where this rat was seen is in the Trans-Himalayan region. It has dry, rocky and sandy land. This rat comes out at night.

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