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MENU

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1st, February, 2023

Today's Topics Covered

- 1) Demand to make the Kathgarh Shivratri festival a state-level event.....Read in detail
- 2) Specially abled students' enrollment for higher education dips.....Read in detail



Topic: Demand to make the Kathgarh Shivratri festival a state-level event.

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

Importance for Prelims: History, geography, political, art & culture and socio-economic development of Himachal Pradesh.

Importance for Mains Exam:

- *PAPER-IV: GENERAL STUDIES-I : UNIT II: Topic: Society and Culture in Himachal Pradesh: Culture, customs, fairs and festivals, and religious beliefs and practices, recreation and amusement.*

What is the news?

- The Kathgarh temple committee and the Indora Social Welfare Club have petitioned the state government to make the Shivratri festival a state-level event.



Indora club president Sudhir Katoch stated:

- During his recent visit, Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri was asked about the matter, and he assured the residents that he would look into it.
- He also stated that the historical temple in Kathgarh was a part of the state's heritage. Many people believe

that after reaching the temple, Alexander the Great's army became demoralised and returned to Macedonia.

- According to another reference from the Ramayana, Bharat, brother of Lord Rama, used to pay obeisance to Lord Shiva at this temple on the way to his grandparents home in Kashmir.

About Kathgarh Temple:

- Kathgarh Mahadev Temple is located in Himachal Pradesh's Kangra district. This is the only Shiv temple in the world where the Shivling is divided into two parts, and it is located on the border of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh.
- The Ardhnarishwar form of Mahadev is worshipped here, and it is believed that these two forms of Shiva separate and then merge. One part is worshipped as Bhagwan Shiva, and the other as Devi Parvati. The distance between Shivling's two halves grows automatically as the planetary constellations change. This form divides into two parts in the summer and returns to a single form in the winter.

A story is also associated with this special form of Mahadev:

- The height of the Shivling worshipped in the form of Shiva is approximately 7 to 8 feet in both parts of the Shivling, and the height of the Shivling worshipped in the form of Parvati is approximately 5 to 6 feet. The gap between them gradually widens after Shivratri. Legend has it that Bhagwan Ram's brother Bharat used to come here to worship Bhagwan Shiva whenever he visited his maternal grandmother's house.

History of Kathgarh Shiva Temple:

- According to the Shiva Puran's Videshwar Samhita, at the beginning of Padma Kalpa, a dispute of superiority arose between Brahma and Vishnu, and both prepared for war with divine weapons. When Shiva saw the terrible situation, he appeared in the form of an infinite luminous pillar, causing the divine weapons of both deities to automatically calm down. Both Brahma and Vishnu gathered to discover the beginning and end of that pillar. Vishnu assumed the form of Venus and travelled to Hades, but he was unable to find the end.
- 'I have come to find the end of the pillar, on which this Ketki flower is on top,' Brahma said as he approached Vishnu with a Ketki flower from the sky. When Shankar saw Brahma's deception, he appeared and Vishnu grabbed his feet. Shankar then stated that you are both equal. Kathgarh was named after this fire-like pillar. This Shivling appeared on the night of Chaturdashi in the Krishna Paksha of the Falgun month, according to the Ishan Samhita.

Major Festivals of Kathgarh Shiva Temple:

- Every year during the Shivratri festival, a three-day fair is held. A large number of devotees come to pay their respects on these days.

Important to know:

- Here a Shivalinga divided into two parts is worshiped. Not only this, the size of the two parts is also not the same. By the way, it is also called Ardhanarishwar

Shivlinga.

- Located in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh, this temple of Kathgarh Mahadev is the only temple in the world, where there is a Shivalinga divided into two parts.

(News Source: The Tribune)



Topic: Specially abled students' enrollment for higher education dips

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

Importance for Prelims: Economic and social development – sustainable development poverty, inclusion, demographics, social sector initiatives, etc.

Importance for Mains Exam:

- *PAPER-V: GENERAL STUDIES-II : UNIT II: Topic: Bodies constituted, Policies, Programmes and Schemes for welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Women, Minorities, Backward classes, Differently-abled persons, and children in India.*

What is the news?

- Enrollment of students with disabilities (PwD) in higher education has decreased significantly in the state over the last five years.



Who made the data public?

- According to the recently released All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) report, 283 students (nearly half) enrolled in the 2020-21 academic session, compared to 578 students (both male and female) who enrolled in the 2016-17 academic session.
- The figures for male students with disabilities are even more depressing: compared to 438 students enrolled in higher education in 2016-17, only 192 (a more than 100 percent decrease) students opted for higher education in 2020-21.
- An analysis of the data reveals that while the enrolment of students with disability has increased in a majority of the states in the country, it has registered a

substantial decline in Himachal, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab in the past five years.

Reasons shared for this:

Ajai Srivastava, chairman, Umang Foundation shared:

- As an activist working in the field, I've noticed a significant increase in the number of people with disabilities pursuing higher education, or education in general, over the last five to seven years. I do not want to contradict the report's findings, but the number of disabled students pursuing higher education has increased significantly since increased awareness, free education decisions, monthly scholarship increases, and easy access to education a decade and a half ago. In the last six years, the number of PhD students at Himachal Pradesh University has increased.

Ashith Mishra, Joint Director, Department of Higher Education, said:

- Students with disabilities have been dropping out of school because there are no special teachers or colleges dedicated to higher education. Special teachers must be recruited at higher education institutions so that people with disabilities can be encouraged to continue their education.

(News Source: The Tribune)

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