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## 5th, March, 2023

### Today's Topics Covered

- 1) The three-day Fagli festival comes to an end at Manikaran.....Read in detail
- 2) Masterpieces of finesse, Himachali shawls gaining global prominence....Read in detail
- 3) Four-day National Sujampur Holi Utsav begins ....Read in detail



***Topic: The three-day Fagli festival comes to an end at Manikaran.***

***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: Society and Culture in Himachal Pradesh: Culture, customs, fairs and festivals, and religious beliefs and practices, recreation and amusement.*

### ***What is the news?***

- On the final day of the Fagli festival, which concluded today in Manikaran, the traditional 'Kanash' dance was the main attraction.
- The third and final day of the three-day festival is dedicated to Naina Mata. Raval Rishi, Kyani Nag, and Kudi Narayan are among the other deities who attend the festivities. Villagers seek the blessings of all the deities, while 'Devalus,' deity volunteers, greet everyone. Villagers also serve a wide range of cuisines to guests in their homes.
- During the festival, the deities' oracles also predict the future, and the 'Haryans,' residents of the deities' area, come in large numbers to wish the host villagers happiness and peace.
- It is a traditional 'Sharani' song that is only sung during the Manikaran Fagli festival. It is an ancient Goddess Parvati dance. According to local custom, women dressed in traditional attire dance in a circle around the deities' palanquins in the courtyard.



### ***About the 'Kanash' dance:***

- It is an ancient Goddess Parvati dance performed on traditional 'Sharani' songs that are only sung during the Manikaran Fagli festival. Women dressed in traditional attire dance in a circle around the deities' palanquins in the courtyard, according to local custom.

### ***About Fagli festival:***

#### ***When and where is it celebrated?***

- Faguli is a Himachal Pradesh custom that can be seen in villages throughout the districts of Lahaul Spiti, Kullu, Manali, and Kinnaur. This festival is associated with a variety of customs and colourful stories. Based on those beliefs, it appears that this festival is celebrated differently in each of the aforementioned locations.

## ***Faguli in Kinnaur:***

- Faguli is connected to Basant Panchami in Kinnaur. People shoot arrows at a paper portrait of Ravana. The Monsoon Gods are welcomed, and the houses are cleaned. It is said that if an arrow hits home, it is a sign of gods' victory over demons. Certain families bring the Suskar Horing wood in the morning. This is burned inside a cave at night. This wood is also used in the roasting of barley. If grains of barley jump up and cling to the cave's roof, it is regarded as a sign of good fortune.
- Following this, the villagers return to their village, led by man Huri, who is followed by the Lankawalla, who is followed by the Kittewalla carrying. After all this, the villagers head back to their village led by man Huri followed by the Lankawalla who is followed by the Kittewalla carrying the 'Doo'. They make three rounds of the temple as soon as they arrive in the village, and people try to snag the Doo, which they feed to their animals.

## ***Kullu's Faguli:***

- The Faguli, or Mask Festival, is mostly observed in remote villages of the Kullu district, Tirthan Valley, and Jibhi. And this year's festival will be held in Tirthan Valley from the 13th to the 15th of February.
- Wait! Don't be misled by the face masks that the entire world wears every time they leave their house. This is the Devil Mask. This festival was originally held in the month of Falgun, hence the names Faguli or Fagli festival. Falgun occurs from mid-February to mid-March. It heralds the start of Spring.



## *The Outfit of the Day:*

- This festival is primarily for men. Only men get dressed, so it's a leisurely fun time for women to enjoy the ceremony. They wear a brass skirt, colourful headgear with yellow garland flowers, and a wooden mask. The mask is associated with numerous stories. Some claim that people call out names behind these masks to frighten away evil spirits.

## *Masks that are uncommon:*



- Without these wooden masks, the festival is incomplete. Men wear them while dancing to psychedelic music. Some people simply hold the masks up to their faces while others hold them up in the air, occasionally bringing them down to their faces to dance. In most places, the performances are not organised, but let's say it's more like a carnival, with men dressed in tribal garb and wearing masks to celebrate.

- There are two types of masks: Haduman, which is the main mask, and other large masks known as Tantrik and Demons, which are also present.

## *What Takes Place at the Festival?*

- For the locals, the mask festival is a much-anticipated opportunity to reconnect with their history, traditions, and people. People flock in large numbers to attend the ceremony, while the chosen people (men) dress up in traditional attire to entertain the crowd.
- The procession begins in full swing as the men prepare. During the day, people perform 'Nati,' one of Himachal's folk dances, and the person wearing those dresses dances and twirls constantly on the folk numbers while wearing the rare masks. The atmosphere is brimming with joy and energy. The festival is not about individualism; it is all about community.
- A person abruptly changes his behaviour and begins moving erratically while dancing and singing. According to legend, the person is possessed and transforms into a Shaman (the one who can talk to the spirits as they enter a trance state during a ritual). He speaks on behalf of the Deity, relating with a specific energy and then predicting what disasters may occur in the near future in that specific area. It is believed that even those who hold or control him enter a trance state.
- After receiving a blessing from the ceremony's chief, the procession is led to the temple, where they encircle the Deity while dancing and twirling to the beat of the drums.
- Finally, the beeth (the chariot of Faguli Devta) is thrown, and whoever catches it must feast on the entire community, which is a source of pride for an individual. The Beeth is prepared by the locals early in the morning of the same day.

- People in some parts of Kullu light fires in wooden sticks at night and continue to dance and sing songs because they believe that fire removes all negative energies and replaces them with positive energies.
- When new grain sprouts, it is given to God. This tradition is practised in various parts of India. This is also one of the festival's significances.
- Furthermore, the coolness of Himachal Pradesh, the dance, music, food, and natural beauty are enough to captivate your mind.
- As we all know, the festival's attire, rituals, and traditions are centuries old, and nothing is more beautiful than following in the footsteps of our forefathers and keeping alive the ideas of who we are. Although modern technologies are causing us to evolve, many people may find it difficult to consider where our forefathers' theories stand in practise. Surely, our forefathers were very thoughtful in bringing these to light; does this imply that there are some inexplicable miracles beyond the boundaries of science and logic?
- When it comes to Himachal's mythology and mysteries, many remain unsolved. So, if you want to see the true soul of this valley, don't miss out on this festival this year. Let yourself be indulged in the culture and traditions and most importantly respect the culture as it's our culture that mirrors our behaviour.

*(Source: The Tribune)*

***Topic: Masterpieces of finesse, Himachali shawls gaining global prominence***

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

### ***What is the news?***

- With expertise in handloom and handicraft, the traditional weavers have kept the handloom heritage alive and have earned name for Himachal Pradesh far and wide. The Kullu and Kinnauri Shawls, all are rare masterpieces of embroidery in the field of handloom industry having made their International presence.



## ***Steps taken by State Government to support:***

- The State Government was also organizing awareness camps and training classes for weavers who are also being directly benefited through various components of the cluster development programme. Equipment related to handlooms are being made available to the weavers. Marketing facility is being provided through the Industries Department in fairs and exhibitions organized in the state and outside states. Their products are widely sold in national level events like Trade Fair, Dilli Haat, Surajkund etc.
- The Himachal Pradesh State Handloom & Handicrafts Development Cooperative Federation Ltd. known as "HIMBUNKAR" is a state level apex organization of primary cooperative societies consisting of weavers and artisans engaged in production of handicraft woven on handloom and are promoting the Kullu Shawl and caps since many years.
- The state government has also started various schemes for encouraging weavers and incorporating the latest techniques of textile production.
- Earlier, the Kullvi people used to weave plain shawls but after the arrival of Bushehari craftsman from Rampur, Shimla district, the trend of patterned handloom came into existence. Typical Kullu shawls have geometrical designs on both ends. Besides geometrical designs, the shawls are also woven in floral designs, which may run all over, on the corners or on the borders only. Each design may have one to 8 colours. Traditionally, bright colours, viz. red, yellow, magenta pink, green, orange, blue, black and white were used for patterning and white, black and natural grey or brown were used as the base in these shawls. But in the present, these bright colours are being replaced gradually by pastel colours.
- Much renowned for the convolution and finesse in

weaving, Kinnauri Shawls are unique. In October 2010, these intricately patterned woolen shawls hand-woven by the indigenous community of Kinnaur district, was granted a patent under the Geographical Indications (GIs) of Goods Act. Their elaborate geometrical designs have a strong Central Asian influence. The motifs woven have a very special symbolic and religious significance. Its designing techniques are greatly influenced by Central Asia and Tibet.

### ***Historical Background:***

- It was Devika Rani, the Indian film star and daughter in law of the famous painter, Nicholas Roerich who came to Kullu in 1942. It was on her request that Sheru Ram of Banontar village weaved the earliest urban size shawl on his pit loom. Later, inspired by his handicraft work, Pandit Urvi Dhar, stepped into the manufacturing of the Shawls commercially.
- Around 1944, the Bhutti weaver co-operative society was registered under Punjab Cooperative Society, Lahore, presently known as Bhuttico, and trained thousands of Kullu women to fashion the Kullu Shawl. In 1956 Thakur Ved Ram became a member of this society and revived it again and since thereafter, Satya Prakash Thakur, the Chairman of Bhuttico has been running Bhuttico all over Himachal and is providing employment to thousands in this cottage industry and others as well who are directly or indirectly associated with it. We cannot forget the contribution of Devi Prakash Sharma, a technician in Kullu Shawl Improvement Center, who introduced many new designs during the 1960s. Today the annual sale of Bhuttico is around Rs 13.50 crore.

## ***Acknowledgement:***

- Few textile engines have been working as motivators by their innovative skills and ideas giving new dimensions to the handloom industry. One such young textile engineer, Mrs. Anshul Malhotra from Mandi district is working as a motivator for the weavers.
- Honoured with Nari Shakti Samman by the President on International Women's Day last year and the Kalanidhi Award twice at the Surajkund fair, she is engaged in giving new dimensions to the handloom industry with the skill inherited from her grandfather and father. She is using her skills to create new designs according to the market. Apart from Mandi, the weavers of Lahaul-Spiti, Kullu and Kinnaur districts have also been associated with her. She has been providing training facilities to the weavers for weaving as per the market demand. Designed and made in Himachal by her, the Kano saree gained immense popularity last year and was also a part of many fashion shows.

*(Source: HP Government)*



***Topic: Four-day National Sujanpur Holi Utsav begins***

## ***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: Society and Culture in Himachal Pradesh: Culture, customs, fairs and festivals, and religious beliefs and practices, recreation and amusement.*

### ***What is the news?***

- The four-day National-level Sujampur Holi Utsav (fair) began today with great fanfare and was inaugurated by Chief Minister, Thakur Sukhvinder Singh at Sujampur today. He also performed pooja at the historic Murali-Manohar Temple in Sujampur Tihra and wished for the peace, prosperity and happiness of the people of the state.
- Adorned in a colourful turban, the Chief Minister also participated in the Shobha yatra (procession) along with hundreds of people in their traditional attire who danced their way from near the old bus stand to the Murali-Manohar Temple.
- The Chief Minister inaugurated the Saras fair, displaying handloom and handicrafts from over 14 states. 'Botis' (Cooks) from different part of the State have also set up their stalls of Himachali cuisine in the fair.





- Sh. Sukhu said that the Saras fair would provide an appropriate platform to celebrate the rich cultural diversity of Himachal Pradesh and to promote the traditional handicrafts and cuisines of the state.
- He also inaugurated various exhibitions set up by different departments on the occasion.
- Earlier, the Chief Minister was given a rousing welcome on reaching Sujampur. While talking to the media persons at Jungalberi helipad, the Chief Minister congratulated the people of the state on occasion of Holi utsav and said that the festival of colors symbolizes mutual harmony, and fraternity.

### ***Why important?***

- Sujampur Holi Fair is a perfect example of the rich cultural heritage that goes back to history.

## ***About Sujanpur Holi Fair:***

- Sujanpur is located in the Himachal Pradesh district of Hamirpur. Sujanpur is a district.
- Sujanpur is well-known for its Holi mela. Holi fair is state level fair of himachal pradesh.
- This fair in Sujanpur begins on Holi and lasts approximately one month.
- Every year, it begins in the month of March.
- It is held on Sujanpur's sprawling grounds. Shopkeepers from Himachal Pradesh and other states attend this fair to sell various materials. For the first three days, cultural programmes are planned. Local and international artists are not invited to participate in cultural programmes. Children participate in a variety of cultural activities.
- You can get a good deal on various household items. People travel long distances to see and enjoy this fair.

*(Source: HP Government)*



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