



CURRENT AFFAIRS



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Date – 7 November 2022

Gurdwara Panja Sahib

Railway station in Pakistan holds significance in Sikh history

Prelims: historical events of Modern India

Mains: Pakistan and India History, Indian freedom fight

Significance of Prelims: Saka Panja Sahib, Bhai Karam Singh and Bhai Partap Singh

Significance of Mains: Pakistan and India relationship

Context:

- The management bodies of Gurudwara from both sides of the border which are the Amritsar-based Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee(SGPC) and Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (PSGPC), together they will observe the centenary of Shaheedi Saka Panja Sahib (martyrdom massacre) at Hasan Abdal city, Punjab province of Pakistan.

Saka Panja Sahib

- is a heroic event that took place, at Hassan Abdul railway station in Punjab province of Pakistan on 30th October 1922
- On this day two Sikhs died and several other Sikh protesters, including women, were injured at Hasan Abdal railway station when the railway authorities under the then British government did not agree to stop the train carrying Sikh prisoners from Amritsar to Attock.
- The Sikhs wanted to provide (community kitchen food) to the Sikh prisoners, who were from the nearby Panja Sahib.

- However, when they approached the station master at the railway station told the Sikh Villagers that the train would not stop at the station
- To register a protest against this, the Sikhs led by Bhai Pratap Singh and Bhai Karam Singh lay down on the railway tracks and as the train approached,
- the Sikhs were determined to halt the train, continued to protest,
- Committed to their right to provide langar to the Sikh prisoners.
- At last, the train finally came to a screeching halt, but only after crushing many Sikh protesters Bhai Karam Singh and Bhai Partap Singh died after sustaining severe injuries the next day.
- Since then, both Sikhs are eulogised as martyrs of Saka Panja Sahib who sacrificed their lives fighting for the rights of Sikhs against the then British Government of India

Who are these prisoners?

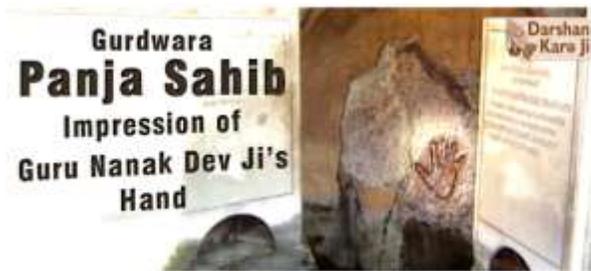
- The original cause of the Hasan Abdal rail massacre lies in another Sikh movement against the then British Government of India which is Guru Ka Bagh Morcha of Amritsar.
- Hundreds of Sikhs were arrested by the then British Government of India after they had initiated a peaceful campaign against the arrest of five Sikhs who had cut the trees from the land of Gurdwara Guru Ka Bagh to use as wood for cooking langar in August 1922.
- But the then British Government accused them of stealing wood from gurdwara land and arrested them

Gurdwara Panja Sahib



- The history of the shrine Gurdwara Panja Sahib, in Hasan Abdal of Pakistan, is much older than the Saka Panja Sahib incident.
- It was believed that Sikhism's Founder Guru Nanak Dev, along with his companion Bhai Mardana visited the particular place, and later based on this belief, the Sikh community build the Gurudwara there.

- The Saka Panja Sahib which happened later in 1922 put highlighted Sikh history and made the British rule realize that Sikhs cannot be crushed in the fight for the right over their gurdwaras and Guru's langar.



What is the Visa controversy?

Unfortunately, a controversy flared up before the 100th year of the incident.

It reported that 40 of 157 members of the Sikh jatha of the SGPC were denied visas by Pakistan including

- Three SGPC members (Satwinder Singh Tohra, Khuswant Singh Pannu and Ajmer Singh Khera)
- Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) granthi Giani Gurminder Singh
- Heads of two Darbar Sahib Hazoori Ragi jathas (group of traditional Gurbani musicians)
- SGPC additional secretary (Dharam parchar) Balwinder Singh Kahlwan
- Additional secretary Bijay Singh.
- Pilgrimage department in-charge Rajinder Singh Rubi
- Dhadis (ballad singers).
- Kavishers (Sikh preachers who recite historic poems) and
- Two Sikh preachers.

Sources

The Indian Express

The Hindu

Picture credit

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