

Jain Community Protests

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Why in news?

- Members of [the Jain community have been staging protests](#) in different parts of the country for the past two weeks over demands related to two holy sites:
 - Sammed Shikhar on Parasnath hill in Jharkhand; and
 - Shetrunjay hill in Palitana of Gujarat.

Where is Sammed Shikharji located?

- Sammed Shikharji is situated on Parasnath Hills in Giridih district, Jharkhand.
 - Parasnath is the highest mountain in the state of Jharkhand.
- It is the biggest pilgrimage destination for people of Jainism faith, for both its sects — the Digambaras and the Svetambaras.
 - Shikharji Temple is perched atop Parasnath Mountain.
- It is believed that this is the place where 20 of the 24 Jain tirthankaras attained “moksha” or salvation after meditating.

What is the significance of Sammed Shikharji?

- Shikharji along with Ashtapad, Girnar, Dilwara Temples of Mount Abu and Shatrunjaya are known as Śvētāmbara Pancha Tirth (five principal pilgrimage shrine).
 - Every year, thousands of Jains undertake the 27 km long trek of climbing the hills to see the houses of salvation shrines of 20 Tirthankaras.
- The region is also considered holy by the members of the Santhal tribe, who regard it as ‘**Marang Buru**’ (hill deity of the Santhal) and hold an annual festival here in mid-April.

Where is Shatrunjaya Hill located?

- One of the largest and the most sacred temples for the Jain community is the Shatrunjay temple located at the Shatrunjay Hills – located by the city of Palitana, in Bhavnagar district, Gujarat.
- The sacred site contains hundreds of shrines that were sanctified when **Rishabha**, the first Tirthankara of Jainism, gave his first sermon in the temple on the hilltop.
 - It is said that Adinath (also known as Rishabha), the founder of Jainism, meditated beneath the rayan tree at the summit.
- The Palitana temples on Shatrunjaya Hill were built over a period of 900 years starting from the 11th century.
 - It was Kumarpal Solanki, a great Jain patron, who built the first temples on this site.
 - The temple is particularly crowded on the holy day of Kartik Purnima, which falls sometime around November-December.

News Summary related to Jain Protests

- Members of Jain community are protesting in masses in various parts of the country over demands related to two Jain holy sites:
 - Sammed Shikhar on Parasnath hill in Jharkhand and
 - Shetrunjay hill in Palitana of Gujarat.

What is the Jharkhand issue?

- In February 2019, the Jharkhand government notified the Parasnath area, in Giridih district, as a 'tourist spot'.
- In August 2019, the Union environment ministry declared the hill an eco-sensitive zone and added that the area had tremendous potential to support thriving eco-tourism.
- Members of Jain community contend that neither the Centre nor the state consulted them while declaring the hill an eco-sensitive zone and a tourist spot.
- They are opposing these moves on following grounds:
 - The decision to convert the site into a tourist spot will impact the sanctity of the site as a person coming here as a tourist will be looking for fun.
 - Various tourist promoting activities such as selling of meat, alcohol etc. in the region will hurt the religious sentiments of the community.
 - Declaring the hill as an eco-sensitive zone is also a problem, as locals will be given employment through poultry farms etc., which Jains don't want at their holy site.

What happened in Gujarat?

- In Gujarat, the Jain community took out a rally seeking action against anti-social elements allegedly desecrating the sacred Shetrunjaya Hills.
- CCTV TV footage emerged of miscreants vandalising the steps and pole of a temple in Palitana, Shatrunjaya Hills.
- The Jains are demanding that Shetrunjay hill and the area around it be protected so as to maintain its holiness. They also want further probe in the vandalism case.

Q1) What are the famous Jain pilgrimages in India?

Shikharji along with Ashtapad, Girnar, Dilwara Temples of Mount Abu and Shatrunjaya are known as Śvētāmbara Pancha Tirth (five principal pilgrimage shrine).

Q2) What are the three jewels of Jainism?

In Jainism the three jewels (also referred to as ratnatraya) are understood as samyagdarshana (“right faith”), samyagjnana (“right knowledge”), and samyakcharitra (“right conduct”).

Source: [Jain community protests: What are the issues linked to Jharkhand, Gujarat shrines](#) | [Why is the Jain community protesting across the country?](#) | [Sammed Shikharji](#) | [Gujrat Tourism](#)

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