

Holy City status - 3 cities of Punjab

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | History

Why in News?

The Punjab government has granted the "Holy City" status to Amritsar, Anandpur Sahib, and Talwandi Sabo through a recent official notification.

- **Holy City status** - The sale of liquor, tobacco, cigarettes, and meat will be **prohibited within the city limits**.
- To promote religious tourism, devotees will be offered additional transport facilities such as mini buses and e-rickshaws.
- **3 Holy Cities** - Amritsar, Anandpur Sahib, and Talwandi Sabo, these are part of the 5 Sikh Takhts.

"Takht" in Persian means an imperial throne.

- **5 Sikh Takhts** -
 - Akal Takht (Amritsar),
 - Takht Keshgarh Sahib (Anandpur Sahib),
 - Takht Damdama Sahib (Talwandi Sabo)
 - Takht Patna Sahib is in Bihar,
 - Takht Hazur Sahib is in Nanded, Maharashtra.

Significance

- **Akal Takht** - It is considered the supreme among the five.
 - It was set up in 1606 by **Guru Hargobind**, who became the 6th Guru after the execution of his father, Guru Arjan Dev.
 - He built the Akal Takht as a raised platform in front of the **Golden Temple in Amritsar**.
 - It represented the **union of two powers** - *miri* (temporal and political authority) and *piri* (spiritual authority).
 - Takhts issue hukumnamas (edicts) on matters affecting the Sikh community.
 - However, **only the Akal Takht can issue orders** that apply to the entire community, including disciplinary actions against those who violate Sikh doctrine.
- **Other 4 takhts** -
 - They are linked to the **life of Guru Gobind Singh**, the 10th Guru.

- **Keshgarh Sahib** – He raised the Khalsa, the initiated Sikh warriors, in 1699.
- **Patna Sahib** – His Birthplace.
- **Damdama Sahib** – He spent several months preparing the revised version of the Guru Granth Sahib (holy book of the Sikhs).
- **Hazur Sahib** – He spent his final days here, and he was cremated in 1708.
- **Concerns** – Holy City status has led to discussions on restricting jhatka meat, the impact on shopkeepers who sold liquor, tobacco, and meat, and possible rehabilitation policies.

***Jhatka** meat is part of Sikh tradition, especially among the **Nihangs**, warrior Sikhs known for wearing deep blue.*

Reference

[Indian Express | Punjab's 3 new 'Holy Cities'](#)

