Sant Niranjan Dass

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance*

Why in News?

The Prime Minister recently visited Dera Sachkhand Ballan to seek his blessings and congratulate him on the Padma Shri award during the 649th birth anniversary celebrations of Guru Ravidass.

- Sant Niranjan Dass Ji is the spiritual head (Gaddi Nashin) of ***Dera Sachkhand Ballan***, a prominent religious institution for the Ravidassia community located in **Jalandhar, Punjab.**
- He revered as a saint of the masses, Sant Niranjan Dass has combined faith with service, guiding one of India's largest Dalit religious communities through transformation, crisis, and self-assertion.
- **Early Life -** Born on 6 January 1942 in village Ramdass Pur, Jalandhar.
- At the age of 8, he began living with Swami Sarwan Dass, who famously renamed him "Hawai Gar" (speedy man), foretelling his speed, discipline, and sense of responsibility.
- **Ascension -** When he assumed the gaddi on July 25, 1994, he inherited not just a religious seat, but a legacy of reform rooted in dignity, equality, and fearlessness.
- **Religious Identity -** Under his leadership in 2010, the Dera formally announced a distinct religious identity for the community, known as the ***Ravidassia religion.***
- He introduced a separate sacred scripture, the Amritbani Satguru Ravidass Maharaj Ji.
- **Vienna Attack -** In May 2009, he was seriously injured in an armed attack at a temple in Vienna, Austria, which tragically claimed the life of his companion, Sant Ramanand Ji.
- **Social Work -** He has overseen the establishment of several charitable institutions, including the Sarwan Dass Model School and the Sarwan Dass Charitable Eye Hospital.

References

1. PIB | Sant Niranjan Dass Ji
2. The Indian Express | Sant Niranjan Dass

