Shani Shingnapur Temple

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance*

Why in News?

Ahilyanagar police cyber cell recently arrested two Shani Shingnapur Temple Trust employees for allegedly diverting over Rs.50 lakh each into their personal accounts by manipulating online applications used for booking pooja services.

- The temple is located in the village Shani Shingnapur in ***Ahmednagar district, Maharashtra.***
- **Associated Deity -** It is dedicated to Shani (Saturn), a celestial deity in Hindu tradition associated with justice, karma and cosmic discipline.
- **Unique sanctum -** The idol of Shani is a large black stone believed to be self-manifested (Swayambhu), placed on a raised platform, but there's ***no roof, no enclosed sanctum***.
- The god is worshipped under the sky itself.
- **"Doorless Village" tradition -** Unusually, houses (and many shops) in the village historically had no doors or locks just doorframes or curtains as villagers believed that under Shani's watch, thefts or crime would not occur.
- **Rituals & beliefs-** Devotees often offer oil to the idol (a way to pacify Shani), and special worship happens on Saturdays and on new-moon days (Amavasya), considered particularly auspicious.
- **Popularity & Significance -** Over time, what was once a small village shrine has become a major pilgrimage centre, drawing thousands of devotees every day.
- On peak days (e.g. Amavasya), tens or even hundreds of thousands may visit.
- **Significance -** The belief in the temple's protective power (especially against theft or misfortune) and the legends surrounding the idol have given the place a unique aura of faith, devotion, and mysticism among worshippers and visitors.

The premises also contain a tomb of Saint Udasi Baba and a temple dedicated to Dattatreya.

Reference

Hindustan Times | Shani Shingnapur temple

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