

Bumchu festival of Sikkim

March 17, 2023

In news— Bumchu festival is celebrated at Tashiding Monastery, West Sikkim on the 15th day of the first month of the Lunar calendar corresponding to the month of February/March.

About the festival-

- Bumchu, the Tashiding **holy water vase ritual**, is a unique and important occasion that draws travellers from all over the world.
- **Bumchu means “pot of sacred water” in Tibetan.**
- Annual performances of this ancient ceremony are held at the Tashiding Monastery, located in the western part of Sikkim. The fascinating history behind Bumchu’s roots can be traced back several centuries ago.
- The **Tashiding Monastery** is one of the most sacred Buddhist pilgrimage sites, **located** on a hilltop overlooking the **Rangit River in Sikkim.**
- Legend has it that during his journey to Sikkim in the eighth century, **Guru Padmasambhava, better known as Guru Rinpoche**, the great Buddhist guru who brought Buddhism to Tibet, blessed the location of the monastery.
- A Nyingma teacher named **Ngadak Sempa Chempo Phunshok Rigzing** later founded the monastery in the 17th century.
- The **Bumchu festival commemorates a supernatural occurrence that took place in the 18th century under Chogyal Chakdor Namgyal.**
- A legend says that a Lama was told by a deity to visit a nearby spring and gather water in a vase. The Lama followed the instructions and found that no matter how much water was used, the water level in the vase never dropped.
- The Lama understood that the vase was scary and that its water had healing properties. The vase was delivered to the Tashiding Monastery, where it was revered as a holy

object and served as the centrepiece of the Bumchu festival.

- The vase is opened during the event, and the water inside is shared among the worshippers. The water is thought to have healing qualities and to grant luck and riches to those who drink it.
- In Sikkim, the Bumchu festival is a time of intense delight and celebration. At the event, pilgrims travel to Tashiding from all around India as well as from close by nations like Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.
- Sacred rituals are carried out by monks and nuns, who also recite prayers and offer gifts to the gods.
- The Bumchu festival is a significant cultural celebration that showcases Sikkim's distinctive cultural heritage in addition to being a religious occasion.