

Guru Ravidas

January 19, 2022

In news- Recently, the Election Commission has postponed Punjab elections 2022 by a week to February 20 in view of Guru Ravidas Jayanti which falls on February 16.

A brief note on Guru Ravidas-

- Ravidas, also called Raidas, of the 15th or 16th century, was a mystic, poet, **saint of North Indian Bhakti movement** and **founded the Ravidassia religion.**
- He **was born in Varanasi as a member of an untouchable leather-working Chamar caste.**
- He was born in Magha Purnima, the full moon day in the month of Magh month.
- His birth anniversary is celebrated as per the Hindu lunar calendar and therefore has no fixed date attached to it.
- He was a renowned poet of the **nirgun bhakti tradition** that valued the worship of a formless God.
- Along with Kabir, he was one of the most **noted disciples of Bhagat Ramanand.**
- **When the fifth Sikh guru Arjan Dev compiled in 1604 the Adi Granth,** the key religious scripture of the Sikhs, he incorporated **41 verses of Bhakt Ravidas.**
- He was **vocal against the varna (caste) system** and in his poetry, questioned caste hegemony, valued labour of all sorts, as well as a life of simplicity and morality.
- He **imagined an egalitarian society called Begumpura, means "land without sorrow"** where there would be no discrimination or exploitation.
- He **acknowledged Vishnu, Brahma, and Shiva in his poetry as manifestations of God, but rejected celibacy, asceticism, penance,** austerity, rituals, pilgrimage, idol worship and the authority of texts considered sacred.

- Ravidas is considered a symbol of caste assertion, Dalit identity, the resilience of Hinduism, and egalitarianism aspect of Sikhism all at the same time.
- He chose the **middle path between radical separation and assimilation**.
- He formed his distinct identity so his disciples came to be known as **Ravidas-panthis**.
- In the 20th century, Sikh, Hindu, and even Muslims used to follow his teachings and they came to be known as Ravidassias.
- The **Ravidassia religion compiled a new holy book, Amritbani Guru Ravidass Ji** which contains exclusive writings and teachings of Sant Ravidas.
- The **Panch Vani text of the Dadupanthis tradition** within Hinduism also includes numerous poems of Guru Ravidas.
- Many legends link him as the guru of Meera, another major Bhakti movement poet.
- **The songs of Ravidas discuss Nirguna-Saguna themes** and ideas that are at the foundation of Nath Yoga philosophy of Hinduism.
- **He has frequently mentioned the term 'Sahaj', a mystical state** where there is a union of the truths of the many and the one.