

Hemis festival

July 8, 2022

In news– Ladakh celebrated its annual Buddhist festival, Hemis, on July 8 and 9, 2022.

About the festival-

- The annual **Buddhist festival** which celebrates the **victory of good over evil** is observed on the **10th day of the fifth month of the Tibetan calendar**, which falls in June or July as per the Gregorian calendar.
- It **marks the birth anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava**, also called the '**Second Buddha**', and is **celebrated at Hemis Gompa**, a popular monastery in Ladakh.
- Padmasambhava, **also called Guru Rinpoche**, **protected the people by fighting against demons and dark forces**. In this Himalayan kingdom, he introduced tantric Buddhism.
- He is believed to have **been born on the 10th day of the fifth month of the Monkey year** as predicted by the Buddha Shakyamuni.
- It is also believed that **his life mission is was, and remains, to improve the spiritual condition** of all living beings.
- For the festival, **also known as Tse-Chu**, people dress up in traditional ensembles, enjoy local cuisines, and partake in various religious ceremonies.
- One of the **prime highlights of the festival is the 'Cham dance'**, which is **performed by some members of the Tibetan Buddhist community(lamas and monks) wearing vibrant costumes**, masks, and headgears.
- It is believed that each **mask signifies the victory of good over evil**.
- '**Chang**', a **local liquor is also enjoyed during the celebrations**, and exhibitions are organised that display Thangka paintings along with exquisite handicrafts and gemstones.

Hemis Gompa(Monastery) -

- It is a Himalayan Buddhist **monastery of the Drukpa Lineage**, in Hemis, Ladakh, India.
- Situated 45 km from Leh, it was **re-established in 1672 by the Ladakhi king Sengge Namgyal**.
- **The monastery of Hemis is connected with Naropa, the pupil of the yogi Tilopa**, and teacher of the translator Marpa.
- It is believed that Naropa and yogi Tilopa met at Hemis and together from here they proceeded to the ancient kingdom of Magadha.
- **Naropa was the founding father of the Kagyu-lineage** of the Himalayan esoteric Buddhism. Therefore, Hemis Monastery is the main seat of the Kagyu lineage of Buddhism.