

Jaipur's Amargarh fort

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In news

Amargarh fort in Jaipur is at the centre of a conflict between the tribal Meena community and local Hindu groups.

A brief note on the dispute

- The Meena community argue that the Amargarh Fort was built by a Meena ruler predating Rajput rule in Jaipur, and has been their holy site for centuries.
- People from the Meena community used to worship Amba Mata and other deities in the fort.
- In June, a group of Hindus vandalised idols and hoisted a saffron flag at the fort.
- Meena community members accused Hindu groups of changing the name of Amba Mata to Ambika Bhawani.
- Hindu groups have accused Meena community members of tearing the flag.

About Amargarh fort

- As per the local historian Rima Hooja, the present form of the Amargarh Fort was given in the 18th century by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II, founder of Jaipur.
- It has always been believed that there was some construction at the place before Jai Singh II built the fort.
- The historian also points out that prior to Rajput rule by the Kachhwaha dynasty, Jaipur and its nearby regions were ruled by Meenas, who had political control.
- As per a scholar in tribal cultures, the fort was built by a Meena Sardar from the Nadla gotra, now known as Badgoti Meenas.
- Sardars from the Meena community ruled large parts of Rajasthan till around 1100 AD.

Meena tribe

- The Meena is a tribe found mainly in the Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh regions of India.
- The Meena's claim connection to the Matsya avatar of Vishnu, and the ancient Matsya Kingdom.
- They also claim to be descendants of the people of the Matsya Kingdom, which flourished in the 6th century B.C.
- The Meena fall into the Scheduled Tribe category in the state of Rajasthan.
- Of the 25 Assembly seats (out of 200) reserved for Scheduled Tribes, most are represented by Meena MLA in Rajasthan.