

Kheer Bhawani mela

June 8, 2022

In news— Kashmiri Hindus, locally known as Pandits, recently celebrated the Zyestha Ashtami at the Mata Kheerbhawani temple at Tulmulla in central Kashmir's Ganderbal.

About Kheer Bhawani mela-

- Every year, a mela or festival known as Mela Kheerbhawani is held in Kashmir.
- It is the largest gathering of Hindus in Kashmir after the annual Amarnath Yatra.
- Kheer Bhawani is considered to be the Presiding Deity of most of the Kashmiri Brahmins.
- **Kheer Bhawani melas are organised at five shrines across Kashmir** – Ragnya Bhagwati in Ganderbal, Manzgam in Kulgam, Devsar in Kulgam, Logripora in Anantnag and Tikkar in Kupwara.
- Among these temples, the **Tulmulla temple, nestled in the shade of mammoth Chinar trees**, witnesses massive gatherings of Pandits from Kashmir and different parts of the country.
- **The annual mela at the revered temple, also known as the Ragnya Devi temple**, is among the **most significant** religious programmes for the Kashmiri Pandit community.
- **Mata Kheerbhawani temple gets its name from kheer, or milk and rice pudding**, that pilgrims pour into the spring inside the temple complex as an offering to the goddess.
- **Legend has it that the water of the temple's spring changes colour from white to red and black.**
- **The colour of the water is said to predict the impending future.**
- If it changes to black, it is seen as inauspicious or an impending disaster.
- Kashmiri Pandits say that the water had turned black before they were forced to flee Kashmir during the

militancy of 1990.