

Maghi Mela

January 16, 2023

In news– Maghi Mela is held in the holy city of Sri Muktsar Sahib in Punjab every year in January, or on the month of Magh according to the Nanakshahi calendar.

About Maghi Mela-

- Maghi Mela has been celebrated in the city of Sri Muktsar Sahib in Punjab for centuries **in memory of 40 Sikh warriors who were killed fighting the Mughals in the Battle of Khidrana in 1705.**
- It was after this battle that **Khidrana was named Muktsar, or the pool of liberation.**
- The story of the Battle of Khidrana goes like this: **in 1704, during the siege of Anandpur Sahib by the Mughals, 40 Sikh soldiers deserted their posts and fled.**
- Upon arriving at their village near Amritsar, a woman named Mai Bhago scolded them and rallied the fighters to return to Anandpur Sahib in the service of their Guru.
- The freshly motivated soldiers along with Mai Bhago set off towards Anandpur Sahib to help Guru Gobind Singh hold fort against the Mughals.
- They met the Guru at Khidrana where they took on a large Mughal army, sacrificing their lives in the process.
- Interestingly, the actual martyrdom day of 40 Sikh soldiers (Muktas) falls in the month of Vaisakh, approximately in the first week of May – Gurdwaras continue to pay tributes to the martyrs in that month.
- About a century ago, however, due to the scarcity of water in the region, the mela started being organised on the Sankrant of Magh month. This tradition has continued, giving the festival its present name.
- People from different parts of the state and even outside come to Muktsar take a **holy dip in the sarovar**

(lake) of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib and enjoy the festivities.

- Back in the day, people would arrive in the city days before the actual Maghi day. **In the evenings, there would be kavi darbars (poetry sessions) where politicians would speak**
- . This is likely how the political conferences, which can be traced back to the mid-1950s, started.
- Over time, the conferences were increasingly organised in the daytime, during the actual mela. Lengthy, overnight stays became less common due to changing lifestyles and priorities.