

Sammed Shikharji on Parasnath hill

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In news— Members of the Jain community have been protesting in many parts of the country against the Jharkhand government's decision of declaring the hill as a tourist place.

About Sammed Shikharji-

- **Shikharji is one of the Holiest pilgrimage sites for Jains, in Giridih district, Jharkhand.**
- **It is located on Parasnath hill, the highest mountain in the state of Jharkhand.**
- The reason that Sammed Shikharji is so important to the community, and why it does not want the place to turn into an eco-tourism spot, is because it is considered to be the biggest pilgrimage site by both the Digambaras and the Svetambaras.
- **It is believed that it is the place where 20 of the 24 Jain tirthankaras, who are Jain spiritual leaders, along with many other monks attained 'moksha' or salvation after meditating.**
- The **word 'Shikharji' in itself means a 'venerable peak'**. Interestingly, **the word 'Parasnath' comes from 'Parshvanatha', the 23rd Jain tirthankara who attained moksha here.**
- According to beliefs of the Jain community, Shikharji is ranked with Ashtapad, Girnar, Dilwara Temples of Mount Abu and Shatrunjaya as the 'Svetambara Pancha Tirth' or the five principal pilgrimage shrines.
- **If someone wants to do a pilgrimage of Shikharji, they must start with Palganj on Giridih road**, where there is a small shrine dedicated to Parshvanatha.
- Then, they can make some offerings to the temples of Madhuban located at the base of Parasnath hill.
- Pilgrims have to cover a **long trek of about 27 km** while

doing a circumambulation of Shikharji.



About Parshvanatha-

- Parshvanatha, also known as Parshva (Pārśva) and Parasnath, was the 23rd of 24 Tirthankaras (supreme preachers of dharma) of Jainism.
- Parshvanatha was born in Benaras (Varanasi), India.
- He is the only Tirthankara who gained the title of Kalikālkalpataru (Kalpavriksha in this “Kali Yuga”).
- Parshvanatha is one of the earliest Tirthankaras who are acknowledged as historical figures.
- He was the earliest exponent of Karma philosophy in recorded history. The Jain sources place him between the 9th and 8th centuries BCE whereas historians consider that he lived in the 8th or 7th century BCE.
- Parshvanatha was born 273 years before Mahavira. He was

the spiritual successor of 22nd tirthankara Neminatha.

- He is popularly seen as a propagator and reviver of Jainism. Parshvanatha attained moksha on Mount Sammeda (Madhuban, Jharkhand) popular as Parasnath hill in the Ganges basin, an important Jain pilgrimage site.
- His iconography is notable for the serpent hood over his head, and his worship often includes Dharanendra and Padmavati (Jainism's serpent Devtā and Devī).