

Sant Tukaram

June 14, 2022

In news—The Prime Minister of India (first PM to visit the temple in recent years) has recently inaugurated the Sant Tukaram Shila Mandir in the temple town of Dehu in Pune district, Maharashtra.

What is Shila Mandir?

- **Shila refers to a rock that is currently on the Dehu Sansthan temple premises,** and that for centuries has been the starting point of Wari, the annual pilgrimage to Pandharpur.
- **Sant Tukaram had sat on this piece of rock for 13 continuous days when challenged about the authenticity of the Abhyangs he had written.**
- Prior to this, the saint had immersed his entire work in the **Indrayani river** and the work miraculously reappeared after 13 days, proving their authenticity.
- **The very rock** where Sant Tukaram Maharaj sat for 13 days **is pious and a place of pilgrimage for the Warkari sect.**
- On the Dehu Sansthan temple premises, the rock used to be covered by a silver cast with an image of Sant Tukaram, and devotees would pay obeisance.
- In 2008, the silver mask was stolen, and found on the banks of the Indrayani after a few days.
- The Sansthan decided to replace the silver covering with an image of Sant Tukaram Maharaj on the Shila, with a temple housing both.

A brief history of of Sant Tukaram-

- He was a **17th-century Marathi poet, Hindu sant, popularly known as Tuko Baraya** in Maharashtra.
- **His complete name was Tukaram Bolhoba Ambile.**
- He was born to Kanakai and Bolhoba More and scholars consider his family to belong to the **Kunbi caste.**
- He was a **contemporary of Mughal king Jahangir.**

- **His parents were devotees of Vithoba**, an avatar of Hindu deity Vishnu (Vaishnavas).
- **His guru was bhakti movement Saint Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.**
- **He was a Sant of Warkari sampradaya** – that venerates the god Vithoba – in Maharashtra, India.
- Tukaram is best known for **his devotional poetry called Abhanga and community-oriented worship with spiritual songs known as kirtans.**
- He pointed out the evil of wrongdoings of society, social system and Maharajs by his *kirtans* and *abhangs*.
- **In his work of Abhangas, Tukaram repeatedly refers to four other persons** who had a primary influence on his spiritual development, **namely the earlier Bhakti Saints Namdev, Dnyaneshwar, Kabir and Eknath.**

The Warkari sect-

- Sant Tukaram is credited with starting the Wari pilgrimage.
- **The Wari sees lakhs of devotees congregating in the temple towns of Dehu and Alandi to accompany the padukas of Sant Tukaram and Sant Dyaneshwar** respectively as they start for Pandharpur.
- Participants finish their sowing before they set off.
- The pilgrims reach Pandharpur on the day of Ekadashi with the Chief Minister performing the mahapuja.