



Amagarh Fort: Rajasthan

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Why in News

Amagarh Fort of Jaipur, Rajasthan is at the centre of a conflict between the tribal Meena community and local Hindu groups.

- Members of the **Meena community say the Amagarh Fort was built by a Meena ruler predating Rajput rule** in Jaipur, and has been their holy site for centuries.
- They accused Hindu groups of **trying to appropriate tribal symbols** into the Hindutva fold, and of changing the name of **Amba Mata to Ambika Bhawani**.

Meena Community

- The Meenas, also known as the Meos, or Mewati, are a **tribe and caste inhabiting parts of western and northern India**.
- According to Meena tradition, the **Meenas ruled most of what is now eastern Rajasthan, an area they referred to as "mind-esh"** (country of the Meenas). They **subsequently were replaced by Rajput clans**, the most recent being the Kachhwaha Rajputs who founded the state of Amber, later known as Jaipur.
- The community has substantial clout in Rajasthan. Of the 25 Assembly seats (out of 200) reserved for **Scheduled Tribes (ST)**, most are represented by Meena MLAs.
 - The community is also well represented in the bureaucracy. According to **Census 2011**, STs constitute **13.48% of the state's population**.
 - Due to a scattered population across the state, the **community can influence election outcomes in unreserved seats, too**.

Key Points

- **About:**

- 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.**
- Prior to **Rajput rule by the Kachhwaha dynasty**, Jaipur and its nearby regions were **ruled by Meenas**, who had political control.
- And as claimed by the Meena's 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.

- **Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II (1693-1744):**

- He was a great warrior and astronomer. He came to power at the age of 11 on the death of his **father Maharaja Bishan Singh.**
- He was feudatory of the Mughals and **Aurangazab** conferred the title of Sawai to Jai Singh, meaning one and a quarter, a title that all of Jai Singh's descendants kept.
- He was trained by the best teachers and scholars in **art, science, philosophy and military affairs.**
- Jai Singh's lineage can be traced back to the **Kucchwaha Rajput clan who came to power in the 12th century.**
- He built **Astronomy Observatories** at Delhi, Jaipur, Varanasi, Ujjain and Mathura known as the **Jantar Mantar.**

Jaipur gets its name from him. Recently it has been **declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.**

Source: IE