



Worship Rights on Parasnath Hill

Why in News?

After the [Jharkhand High Court](#) ordered a **ban on non-veg food, animal harm, and tourism** at [Parasnath Hill](#), the [Santhal group](#) Marang Buru Sanvta Susaar Baisi (MBSSB) announced to **continue its traditional hunting ritual**, citing the hill's religious importance to Adivasis.

Key Points

- **About the Ritual:**
 - The symbolic hunt takes place in the **forests of Marang Buru**, where **Santhals spend a night symbolically hunting (without killing animals)**, followed by a **two-day tribal assembly** in a nearby village.
 - The event is used to address community-level matters and has **long-standing religious value for the Adivasi community**.
- **The Court Order:**
 - The state High Court directed the State government to enforce a **Union Environment Ministry ban** on certain activities at Parasnath Hill.
 - The hill was declared an **eco-sensitive zone in 2019**, and the Ministry's order prohibits non-vegetarian food, animal harm, and excessive tourism.
 - The Ministry's memorandum **also halted the State government's plans to promote religious eco-tourism in the area**—an initiative strongly opposed by the Jain community.
- **A Century-Old Dispute:**
 - The conflict over **worship rights on Parasnath Hill (Marang Buru)** between the Jain and Adivasi communities has persisted for over a century.
 - The **1911 Census** documented a legal case by a [Swetambar Jain sect](#), which reached the Privy Council, where the customary rights of Adivasis were upheld.

Parasnath Hills

- **Parasnath Hills** are a range of hills located in Giridih district of Jharkhand.
- The **highest peak is 1350 metres**. It is one of the most important pilgrimage centre for Jains. They call it Sammed Sikhar.
- The hill is named after **Parasnath, the 23rd Tirthankara**.
- Twenty of Jain Tirthankaras **attained salvation on this hill. For each of them there is a shrine (gumti or tuk)** on the hill.
- Some of the temples on the hill are believed to be more than 2,000 years old.
- The Santhals call it **Marang Buru, the hill of the deity**. They celebrate a **hunting festival on the full moon day in Baisakh (mid-April)**.
- Every year, thousands of Jains from across the world undertake the 27 km long trek of climbing the hills to reach the summit.

Santhal Tribe

- It is the **third largest scheduled tribe in India after the Gonds and Bhils**, known for their calm and peaceful nature. They originally led a **nomadic life but settled in Chota Nagpur plateau** and migrated to Santhal Parganas in Bihar and Odisha.
 - They are located in Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal, and are involved in cultivation, industrial labour, mining, and quarrying.
- They follow an autonomous tribal religion and worship nature at sacred groves. Their language is **Santhali** and they have their own script called '**OL chiki**' is recognised as one of the **scheduled languages in the Eighth Schedule**.
- Their artforms like the **Phuta Katcha pattern saree and dress are popular**. They celebrate various festivals and rituals related to agriculture and worship. Santhal houses, known as '**Olah**', are easily recognizable due to their large, neat, and attractive appearance, adorned with multi-coloured paintings on the exterior walls.

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