

Kushinagar international airport

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated the Kushinagar international airport.
- The airport in eastern UP, the third international airport in the election-bound state, will mainly service the Buddhist tourism circuit.
- The Sri Lankan Airlines flight carrying monks and dignitaries was the first to land at the airport.

Historical significance of Kushinagar:

- Among the most important of Buddhist pilgrimages, Kushinagar was where The Buddha attained Mahaparinirvana (ultimate salvation) in c. 483 BC.
- Today's Kushinagar is identified with Kushinara, capital of the ancient Malla republic, which was one of the 16 Mahajanapadas of the 6th-4th centuries BC.
- The area went on to be part of the kingdoms of the Mauryas, Shungas, Kushanas, Guptas, Harshvardhana, and the Palas.
- The first excavations in Kushinagar were carried out by Alexander Cunningham and ACL Carlleyle, who unearthed the main stupa and the 6-metre-long statue of the Reclining Buddha in 1876.
- Kushinagar is among the very few places in India where The Buddha is depicted in reclining form.

Significance of the move:

- While Buddhism originated in India and seven of the eight main Buddhist pilgrimage sites are in India, our country gets not even 1 percent of Buddhist pilgrims in the world.
- There is an awareness in the government that the absence of tourist infrastructure is a major reason why India loses out to Southeast Asian nations such as Indonesia and Thailand.
- The hope is that world-class facilities will be able to attract Buddhist tourists to India, and boost revenues and employment generation.
- Therefore, the latest move helps India promote important Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the country.

Buddhist Circuit:

- In 2016, the Ministry of Tourism announced the Buddhist Circuit as the country's first transnational tourism circuit, covering sites in Nepal and Sri Lanka alongside those in India.
- The ministry's map of the Buddhist Circuit includes Bodh Gaya, Vaishali, and Rajgir in Bihar, Kushinagar, Sarnath, and Shravasti in UP, and Lumbini in Nepal.
- Share:



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Mount Harriet Renamed Mount Manipur'

- The Centre has rechristened Mount Harriet, a historical tourist spot in the Andaman and Nicobar islands, as 'Mount Manipur'.

What is Manipur's connection to Mount Harriet?

- After the Anglo-Manipur War of 1891, several Manipuris who had fought the British in the war, including Maharaja Kulachandra Dhwaja Singh, were exiled to the British penal colony in the Andaman Islands.
- Since the cellular jail (Kalapani) was yet to be built, Kulachandra and the prisoners were kept on Mount Harriet, a hillock in what is now the Ferragunj tehsil of South Andaman district.

Anglo-Manipur War of 1891- Causes:

- Considered an epoch in the history of Manipur, the Anglo-Manipur War was fought between the kingdom of Manipur and the British over a month in 1891.

- The battle was triggered by a coup in the palace of Manipur, which had been marked by internal factionalism in the years leading up to 1891.
- The British government took advantage of the “internal dissension” among the princes of the royal family.

Significance of the war:

- Many say the war was described as a “blow to British prestige”. Despite their victory, it had led to the death of five important officers.
- In India, it was viewed as being part of the general uprising against British rule in the country, soon after the Revolt of 1857.
- The war led to Manipur officially becoming a princely state under the indirect rule of the British crown.

About Mount Harriet:

- Mount Harriet is the third highest peak in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and served as the summer headquarters of the Chief Commissioner during British Raj.
- It is believed to be named after British artist and photographer, Harriet Christina Tytler, who was the wife of Robert Christopher Tytler, a soldier who served in the British Indian Army.



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Bhumiputra Bill

- Goa CM has clarified that the Bhumiputra Bill won't be sent to Governor.

What's the issue?

- The Goa Bhumiputra Adhikarini Bill, 2021 that was passed in the Goa Assembly on July 30 had since been at the centre of a political storm.
- The Bill was aimed at giving the status of 'Bhumiputra' to a person residing in Goa for at least 30 years and to enable him or her to stake claim to ownership of their house of up to 250 sq m built before April 1, 2019.
- However, activists said that it had hurt the sentiments of the state's tribal population.

Highlights of the Bill:

- It recognises anyone living in the state for 30 years or more as a 'Bhumiputra (son of the soil)' and gives such a person the right to own his or her 'small dwelling unit' if ownership was undetermined so far.
- Once recognised as a Bhumiiputra, an individual can stake claim to ownership of their house of not more than 250 sq m, built before April 1, 2019.

Implementation:

- The Bill provides for the constitution of the Bhumiiputra Adhikarini a committee consisting of the Deputy Collector as its Chairperson, and officials from the departments of Town and Country Planning, Forest and Environment , and Mamlatdars of respective talukas as its members.
- The Bhumiiputra may apply to the committee if his house has been built before the cut-off date.
- The committee will invite objections within 30 days, including from the land owner which could also be a local body, and then take a decision of granting ownership to the Bhumiiputra.
- An appeal against the Bhumiiputra Adhikarini's decision can be filed before the Administrative Tribunal within 30 days.

Can the courts intervene?

- No court shall have jurisdiction "to entertain, decide or deal with
- any question which is to be decided by the Bhumiiputra Adhikarini and Administrative Tribunal under this Act".

Need for these measures:

- In the last so many years there have been cases of homes built by a person or his parents but the land is not in his name. There is always a sword dangling over their head that someone will file a case against them (over ownership).
- Therefore, the objective of the Bill is to give ownership right to the self-occupied dweller of a small housing unit to enable him to live with dignity and self-respect and exercise his right to life.

Concerns:

- The biggest concern is that the bill may give rise to regularisation of illegal structures.
- This might also open the floodgates for the migrant population that has been staying in densely populated areas in Goa and has no legality.



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