



Shah Jahan's Daughter-in-law's Tomb Not Waqf Property

Why in News?

Recently, **Madhya Pradesh High Court** ruled that three ancient monuments in Burhanpur, including the **tomb of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan's daughter-in-law, Begum Bilqis**, are not **Waqf property**.

Key Points

- **Archaeological Survey of India's (ASI) Argument:** The ASI argued that these sites - **Shah Shuja monument, Tomb of Nadir Shah, and Bibi Sahiba's Masjid** are ancient and protected monuments under the **Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904**.
- **Court's Observation:**
 - Justice **GS Ahluwalia** noted that the properties are ancient and protected monuments, and the CEO of the M.P. Waqf Board committed material illegality by declaring them as Waqf property.
 - The ASI submitted that "as per **section 11 of Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904**, Commissioner would be a guardian of the monument and for the purposes of maintaining such monument shall have access to the monument at all reasonable times by himself and by his agents.
 - "Unless and until guardianship is relinquished under Section 14 of Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904, the same cannot be declared as a waqf property."
- **Details of the Monuments:**
 - **Shah Shuja Monument:**
 - The Shah Shuja monument houses the **tomb of Begum Bilqis, wife of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan's son, Shah Shuja**.
 - She was buried in **Burhanpur** after she died giving birth to her daughter.
 - The tomb also known as **Kharbuza Mahal** is "crowned with a dome." The site "stands on a raised **fluted circular plinth**" and "**built of stone and plastered with shell mortar and decorated with paintings.**"
 - **Tomb of Nadir Shah:**
 - The **tomb of Nadir Shah** is a "**massive tomb**, built on a raised platform" and "supported on eight archways." The chamber is occupied by three graves.
 - **Bibi Sahiba's Masjid:**
 - **Bibi Saheba's mosque** alias **Bibi ki Masjid** was completed by **queen Begum Rokeya**, daughter of **Gujarat Sultan Muzaffar Shah II**, around **1529**.