

27

THEMATIC CURRENT AFFAIRS

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THEME #4

FESTIVALS



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THEMATIC CURRENT AFFAIRS

UPSC CSE Prelims exam requires a candidate to link and interlink Current Affairs with the syllabus and the static concepts.

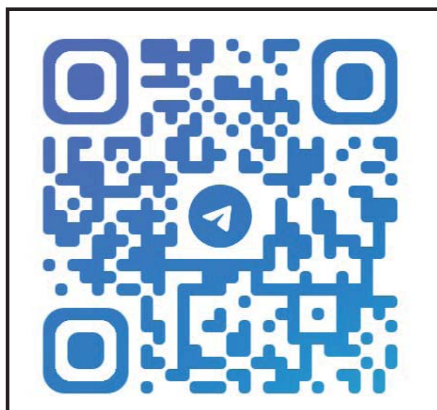
It's important to note that simply compiling current affairs won't suffice; it's crucial to learn how to utilize and link them effectively.

To aid in this process, we have categorized the entire UPSC prelims syllabus into actionable and easy-to-understand themes, and current affairs have been blended into these themes.

Thematic Current Affairs will help you in:

- Division of entire syllabus- theme wise
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Prelims Sampoorna 2024



UPSC CSE Current Affairs

Festivals

1. JAGANNATH PURI RATH YATRA 2023

- ⦿ Rathajatra, the Festival of Chariots of Lord Jagannatha, is celebrated every year at Puri, the temple town in Orissa, on the east coast of India.
- ⦿ **Other names:** Gundicha Jatra, Ghosa Jatra, Navadina Jatra, Dasavatara Jatra, etc.
- ⦿ It is held at one of the Char Dhams – Jagannath Temple in Puri, Odisha.
- ⦿ **Deities:** Lord Jagannath, Lord Balbhadra and Lordess Subhadra.

Jagannath

- ⦿ Jagannath is considered a non-sectarian deity.
- ⦿ He is significant regionally in the Indian states of Odisha, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, Gujarat, Assam, Manipur and Tripura.
- ⦿ The Jagannath temple in Puri, Odisha is particularly significant in Vaishnavism, and is regarded as one of the Char Dham pilgrimage sites in India.
- ⦿ The Jagannath temple is built in the Nagara style.
- ⦿ It is one of the best surviving specimens of Kalinga architecture, namely Odisha art and architecture.



Jagannath Temple:

- ⦿ The Jagannath Temple of Puri is an important Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Jagannath (a form of Vishnu), located on the eastern coast of India, in the state of Odisha.
- ⦿ It is believed to have been constructed in the **12th century by King Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva** of the **Eastern Ganga Dynasty**.
- ⦿ Anantavarma Chodagangadeva is also known for building the **Sun temple of Konark** and Puri is considered the cultural capital of Odisha.
- ⦿ Jagannath Puri temple is called '**Yamanika Tirtha**' where, according to Hindu beliefs, the power of 'Yama', the god of death, has been nullified due to the presence of Lord Jagannath.

- ⦿ This temple was called the **“White Pagoda”** and is a part of **Char Dham pilgrimages**.
 - Badrinath
 - Dwaraka
 - Puri
 - Rameswaram
- ⦿ **There are four gates to the temple-**
 - Eastern ‘Singhdwara’ which is the main gate with two crouching lions
 - Southern ‘Ashwadwara’
 - Western ‘Vyaghra Dwara’
 - Northern ‘Hastidwara’
 - There is a carving of each form at each gate.
 - In front of the entrance stands the Aruna stambha or sun pillar, which was originally at the Sun Temple in Konark.

2. AADI MAHOTSAV

CONTEXT

PM Narendra Modi inaugurated AadiMahotsav, a mega national tribal festival, at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium in Delhi.

What is AadiMahotsav?

- ⦿ The **Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation Limited (TRIFED)**, which is part of the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**, organises the annual ‘AadiMahotsav’, which honours the spirit of tribal culture, crafts, gastronomy, trade, and traditional art.

Key-highlights of 2023 Edition

- ⦿ In nearly 200 stalls at the venue, the programme will present the rich and varied legacy of tribes from all around the nation, according to an official announcement.
- ⦿ At the Mahotsav, almost 1000 tribal artisans will take part.
- ⦿ Along with the customary attractions like handicrafts, handloom, ceramics, jewellery, etc., the Mahotsav will place a special emphasis on exhibiting Shree Anna grown by tribal people because 2023 is being observed as the International Year of Millets.

Tribals in India

India has the second-largest tribal population in the world. As per the Census 2011, the tribal population constitutes about 8.9% of the total population in India.

3. NAGALAND'S HORNBILL FESTIVAL

CONTEXT

On the same day as India assumed presidency of G20 on December 1, the 23rd Hornbill Festival 2022 also began.

The Hornbill Festival:

- ⦿ The Hornbill Festival is celebrated in **Nagaland** to encourage **inter-tribal interaction**.
- ⦿ It is one of the largest **indigenous festivals organized** by the **State government of Nagaland** to **promote tourism** in the state.
- ⦿ The festival is celebrated **annually** in the **first week of December** in order to preserve, protect and revive the uniqueness and richness of the Naga heritage.
- ⦿ The festival is considered the **"Festival of Festivals"** in Nagaland.
- ⦿ The festival is named after the bird – **Hornbill** which is the most **revered and admired** bird for the Nagas.

About the Hornbill Species:

- ⦿ They are a family of birds found in **tropical and subtropical** Africa, Asia, and Melanesia.
- ⦿ They are characterized by a **long, down-curved bill** which is frequently brightly colored and sometimes has a casque on the upper mandible.
- ⦿ They are the only birds in which the first and second neck vertebrae (the atlas and axis respectively) are fused together.
- ⦿ **Protection Status:**
 - Threatened in India
 - Extinct in South Asia

4. PONGAL 2023

CONTEXT

The Pongal for the year 2023 was celebrated on January 15.

About

- ⦿ Pongal is observed by **the Tamil community** across the world in mid-January every year.
- ⦿ It is one of the biggest harvest festivals in India **along with Makar Sankranti**.

According to the **Gregorian calendar**, the Pongal festival is a four-day festival; therefore, it will be celebrated from **15 January to 18 January 2023**.

- ◎ The Pongal festival is a four-day celebration affair.
- ◎ Each day is marked by different festivities-
 - First day is called the **Bhogi festival**
 - Second day is called **Thai Pongal**
 - Third day is called **Mattu Pongal**
 - Fourth day is called **Kaanum Pongal**

Culture associated:

- ◎ The preparation of the traditional “Pongal” dish is the festival’s most important custom.
- ◎ Rice that has just been harvested is used, and it is cooked by boiling it with milk and raw cane sugar (jaggery).
- ◎ The sweet dish occasionally includes extra ingredients like cardamom, raisins, split green gramme, and cashew nuts.
- ◎ Other components include ghee and coconut (clarified butter from cow milk).
- ◎ Some people prepare the Pongal dish in addition to the sweet version, such as the salty and savoury varieties (venpongal).

5. PULIKALI FESTIVAL

CONTEXT

As part of the **Onam 2023** celebration in Kerala, people across state performed **Pulikali (tiger dance)**.

Pulikali festival:

- ◎ Pulikali is a **traditional folk art form** and festival celebrated in the southern Indian state of Kerala.
- ◎ The word “Pulikali” translates to “**Tiger Play**” in **Malayalam**, the local language. It involves participants painting their bodies to resemble tigers.
- ◎ Participants, known as “**Pulikali artists**,” wear colorful costumes resembling tigers and dance through the streets of Kerala’s cities and towns.



- ⦿ The festival is usually part of **Onam celebrations**, Kerala’s harvest festival, and is performed to entertain people and showcase the **rich cultural heritage of the state**.
- ⦿ Pulikali involves lively and energetic performances, with drummers accompanying the artists, creating a vibrant and captivating spectacle that attracts both locals and tourists.

About Onam:

- ⦿ Onam is the most important and widely celebrated harvest festival in the **southern Indian state of Kerala**.
- ⦿ The festival typically lasts for **ten days**, with the main celebrations taking place in the **month of Chingam**, which falls in **August or September** of the Gregorian calendar.
- ⦿ Onam is associated with the mythological **King Mahabali**, who is believed to have been a wise and benevolent ruler. People celebrate his return to Kerala during Onam.
- ⦿ During Onam, people wear traditional clothing known as “Mundu” for men and “Kasavu saree” for women. These outfits are elegant and white with gold borders.
- ⦿ Onam is known for its grand feasts called “**Onasadya**,” which includes a variety of vegetarian dishes served on banana leaves.
- ⦿ Folk dance forms like “**Kathakali**” and “**Pulikali**” are performed during Onam, along with other cultural events and competitions.
- ⦿ The “**Vallamkali**” or **snake boat races** are a major highlight of Onam, with beautifully decorated long boats competing in thrilling races.
- ⦿ Onam is often referred to as the “**State Festival of Kerala**” and holds a special place in the hearts of Keralites. It reflects the state’s cultural diversity and traditions.

6. THRISSUR POORAM 2023

CONTEXT

Kerala celebrated the 36-hour-long **Thrissur Pooram temple festival**, known as the mother of all poorams.

About

- ⦿ Thrissur Pooram is an important temple festival in Kerala that dates back over 200 years.
- ⦿ The festival was founded by **Shakthan Thampuran**, the ruler of the **Kingdom of Cochin** from 1790 to 1805.
- ⦿ It is an impressive exhibition of cultural customs and traditions, featuring adorned elephants, colourful umbrellas, and percussion music.
- ⦿ The festival is a splendid blend of Kerala’s spiritual and cultural heritage and is held in the **Thekkinkadu Maidanam** in Thrissur during the Malayalam month of **medam**, which falls in April-May.

Prior to Thrissur Pooram, Arattupuzha Pooram was the most significant temple festival in Kerala.

Historical Belief

- ⦿ The festival's origin dates back to 1796, when a group of temples was prohibited from attending the **Arattupuzha Pooram festival** due to heavy rainfall.
- ⦿ Upon hearing their grievances, **Shakthan Thampuran** decided to organise his own festival, which eventually became the **Thrissur Pooram** celebrated on the same day in May.

7. GOA'S SAO JOAO FESTIVAL

CONTEXT

The Catholic community in the state of Goa celebrates **Sao Jao**, the feast of St. John the Baptist every monsoon.

About Sao Joao festival:

- ⦿ Sao Joao festival is a Catholic festival, **immensely popular in North Goa**.
- ⦿ The celebrations include **revellers sporting crowns made of fruits, flowers and leaves**, and the major draw of the feast is the water bodies – wells, ponds, fountains, rivers – in which the revellers take the **“leap of joy”**.
- ⦿ The festival also includes playing the **traditional gumott (percussion instrument)**, a boat festival, servings of feni, and a place of pride for new sons-in-law.
- ⦿ This festival is marked by young men jumping into wells to retrieve the gifts thrown in by the villagers.

- ⦿ **Catholics in Goa** celebrate various religious festivals at the Roman Catholic Church.
- ⦿ One of these is the feast of St. John the Baptist, which is celebrated on June 24.
- ⦿ **John the Baptist** baptised Jesus Christ on the **river Jordan**.

8. ANAYOOTTU

CONTEXT

Anayoottu is an annual ritual celebrated at **SreeVadakkunnathan Temple** at Thrissur.

Asiad Appu

- ⦿ The elephants included Kuttinarayanan of Guruvayur Devaswom, later came to be known as **'Asiad Appu'**
- ⦿ They are now **the mascot of the Asian Games**.

About Anayoottu

- ⦿ The Anayoottu (feeding of elephants) is a festival held in the precincts of the Vadakkunnathan temple in City of Thrissur, in **Kerala**.
- ⦿ The festival falls on the first day of the month of Karkkidakam (timed against the Malayalam calendar), which coincides with the month of July.
- ⦿ It involves a number of unadorned elephants being positioned amid a multitude of people for being worshipped and fed.
- ⦿ Anayoottu, gajapooja, is conducted every year.
- ⦿ It is believed that offering poojas and delicious feed to the elephants is a way to satisfy Lord **Ganesha**—the god of wealth and of the fulfilment of wishes.
- ⦿ The **Vadakkunnathan temple**, which is considered to be one of the oldest Shiva temples in southern India, has hosted the Anayoottu event for the past few years.

9. MEDARAM JATRA

CONTEXT

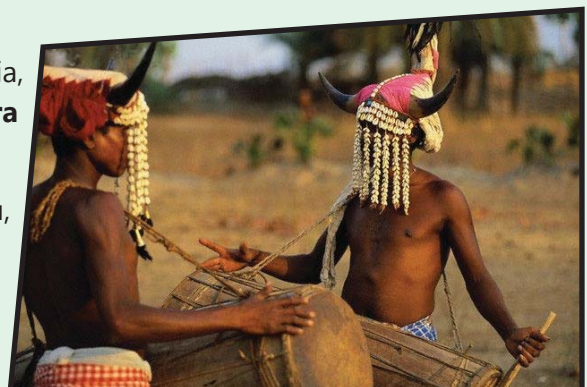
Recently, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has approved a budget of Rs 2.26 crores for India's second-largest fair- "Medaram Jathara 2022 Festivals".

About

- ⦿ Medaram Jathara is the **second-largest fair of India, after the Kumbh Mela**, celebrated by the second-largest Tribal Community of Telangana- the Koya tribe for four days.
- ⦿ As the largest tribal fair in Asia, Medaram Jathara is conducted in honour of the Goddesses Sammakka and Saralamma.
- ⦿ It is celebrated once in two years in the month of 'Magha' (February) on the full moon day. Saralamma was the daughter of Sammakka.
- ⦿ Her idol, according to the rituals, is installed in a temple at Kannepalli, a small village near Medaram.

Koya Tribe

- ⦿ **Koya** is a tribal group found in southern India, especially **Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh**.
- ⦿ Koyas are commonly referred to as Koi, Koyalu, Koyollu, KoyaDoralu, Doralu Sattam, etc.
- ⦿ Koyas call themselves "Koitur" in their dialect.
- ⦿ Koyas speak Koya language, also known as Koya Basha, and is a member of the **Dravidian language family**.



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- ◎ The Koya are mainly settled cultivators and artisans, expertise in making bamboo furniture including mats for fencing, dustpans, and baskets.
- ◎ They grow **Jowar, Ragi, Bajra** and other millets.

About Medaram Jatara

- ◎ **Medaram Jatara is the second-largest fair of India, after the Kumbh Mela.**
- ◎ It is celebrated by the **second-largest Tribal Community of Telangana- the Koya tribe for four days.**
- ◎ Considering the footfall of the festival and its auspicious significance, **the Jathara was declared a State Festival in 1996.**
- ◎ Medaram Jathara is conducted in honour of the **Goddesses Sammakka and Saralamma.**
- ◎ It is celebrated **once in two years in the month of "Magha" (February) on the full moon day.**
- ◎ It is also an embodiment of the **spirit of Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat.**



10. BALIYATRA: CELEBRATING ODISHA'S ANCIENT LINKS WITH INDONESIA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

CONTEXT

Bali Yatra, one of the biggest trade fairs in Odisha, was held on November 12 for eight days.

About

- ◎ Bali Jatra (also known as Bali Yatra and Boita Banda) literally means '**A Voyage to Bali**'.
- ◎ This festival is held in **Odisha**, in the city of **Cuttack at Gadagadia Ghata** of the **Mahanadi River**.
- ◎ **Organized every year to commemorate the 2,000-year-old** maritime and cultural links between ancient **Kalinga (today's Odisha)** and **Bali** and **other South and Southeast Asian regions** like Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Burma (Myanmar), and Ceylon (Sri Lanka).
- ◎ The festival is celebrated from the **day of Kartika Purnima (full moon night in the month of Kartik)** can **according to the Odia Calendar**, which comes around the end of October and November.

The festival is similar to the '**Masakapan Ke Tukad**' festival of Bali, the '**Loi Krathong**' festival of Thailand (ritualistic floating of model boats), the '**Bon Om Touk**' Water Festival of Cambodia, and the '**That Luang**' Festival of Laos all of which involve around the same time of the year.

- ⦿ **People of Odisha gather near the banks of Mahanadi, Brahmani River**, other river banks, and ponds **to float miniature toy boats**, made of colored paper as **a symbolic gesture of their ancestors' voyage**.

Odisha and Bali connection:

- ⦿ Odhisha was known as **Kalinga in ancient times** and was commanded by a very high position in the maritime activities of India in the past.
- ⦿ The **heroic and ever-agile merchants** of the ancient Kalinga kingdom were making daring voyages to different far-off lands of the world.

11. SANGAI FESTIVAL

CONTEXT

Prime Minister Modi addressed **the Manipur Sangai Festival**.

Details

- ⦿ Every year, the State of Manipur celebrates the **"Manipur Sangai Festival"** from 21st to 30th November.
- ⦿ It **started in the year 2010** and has grown over the years into a big platform for Manipur to showcase its rich tradition and culture to the world.
- ⦿ The festival is being celebrated across 13 venues in six districts of Manipur.
- ⦿ **The theme for the event is "Festival of Oneness"**. It promotes a sense of belonging and creates pride in ownership of land among people.



Sangai Deer:

- ⦿ The sangai is **an endemic and endangered subspecies of brow-antlered deer found only in Manipur, India**.
- ⦿ It is found in its natural habitat only at **Keibul Lamjao National Park** over the floating biomass locally called "phumdi" in the south eastern part of Loktak Lake.
- ⦿ **Its IUCN status is 'Endangered'**.

12. WANGALA FESTIVAL

CONTEXT

Wangala Festival, also known as the festival of '**100 drums**', is a harvest festival celebrated by the '**Garó Tribes**' in Meghalaya.

About

- ⦿ The Wangala Festival is usually celebrated for two days but sometimes it can also go up to a week.
- ⦿ The celebrations include serving **local rice beer to the Sun God**, dressing up in colourful traditional attires and dancing to the beat of 100 drums.
- ⦿ The dance form has a popular pattern where **two parallel lines** are formed, one of the women, and the other of the men. With the beating of the drums, the lines move in rhythm.



History of Wangala Festival

- ⦿ Wangala Festival is the **winter harvesting festival** for the people of the **Garó Tribe in Meghalaya**. During this festival, people pay their respects to '**Misi Sanljong**' or '**Pattigipa Ra'rongipa**' or the Sun God!
- ⦿ The popular belief is that the dance form performed during the **Wangala festival** was initially performed by **water creatures**.

13. JALLIKATTU

CONTEXT

Various petition have been filed in the Supreme Court over **Tamil Nadu law** that protects the practice of **Jallikattu**.

History:

- ⦿ Jallikattu has been known to be practiced during the **Tamil** classical period (400-100 BCE).
- ⦿ It was common among the Ayar people who lived in the 'Mullai' geographical division of ancient Tamil Nadu.

About:

- ⦿ Jallikattu is a **bull-taming sport**.
- ⦿ The festival is a celebration of nature, and **thanksgiving** for a bountiful harvest, of which cattle-worship is part.
- ⦿ It is a **violent** sport: and there is only one winner, man or bull.
- ⦿ **Traditional event** in which a bull such as the Pulikulam or Kangayam breeds is released into a crowd of people, and multiple human participants attempt to grab the large hump on the bull's back with both arms and hang on to it while the bull attempts to escape.
- ⦿ Participants hold the hump for as long as possible, attempting to bring the bull to a stop.
- ⦿ In some cases, participants must ride long enough to remove flags on the bull's horns.



14. BALIYATRA

CONTEXT

Bali Yatra, one of the biggest trade fairs in Odisha, has been held.

Historical significance:-

- ⦿ Bali Jatra (also known as Bali Yatra and Boita Banda) literally means '**A Voyage to Bali**'.
- ⦿ **This festival is held in Odisha**, in the city **of Cuttack at Gadagadia Ghata** of the **Mahanadi River**.
- ⦿ It is **organized every year to commemorate the 2,000-year-old** maritime and cultural links between ancient **Kalinga (today's Odisha)** and **Bali** and **other South and Southeast Asian regions** like Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Burma (Myanmar), and Ceylon (Sri Lanka).
- ⦿ The festival is celebrated from the **day of Kartika Purnima (full moon night in the month of Kartik)** can **according to the Odia Calendar**, which comes around the end of October and November.
- ⦿ **People of Odisha gather near the banks of Mahanadi, Brahmani River**, other river banks, and ponds **to float miniature toy boats**, made of colored paper as **a symbolic gesture of their ancestors' voyage**.

The festival is similar to the '**Masakapan KeTukad**' festival of Bali, the '**LoiKrathong**' festival of Thailand (ritualistic floating of model boats), the '**Bon Om Touk**' Water Festival of Cambodia, and the '**That Luang**' Festival of Laos all of which involve around the same time of the year.

Origins of the festival:

- ⦿ It begins on Kartik Purnima (full moon night in the month of Kartik) and can be traced back more than 1,000 years.
- ⦿ According to historians, **popular items of trade between Kalinga and Southeast Asia** included pepper, cinnamon, cardamom, silk, camphor, gold, and jewellery.
- ⦿ The **Bay of Bengal** region had several ports, and sadhavas (traders) traditionally began their voyage across the sea on this auspicious day, when the winds were favourable for the boats, known as **boita**, to sail.

Odisha and Bali connection:

- ⦿ Odisha played a significant role in the evolution of Hindu culture in Bali.
- ⦿ A section of Brahmanas in the Karangasem district of Bali styled themselves as **Brahmana - Bouddha – Kalinga**.
- ⦿ It seems very likely that their ancestors were immigrants from Kalinga.
- ⦿ Some words and usages concerning vocabulary, crafts, religious practices, forms of worship, food habits, and manners prevalent in Bali are Odia in origin.
- ⦿ There are linguistic parallels between Odisha and the island of Bali.

15. PUSHKARALU FESTIVAL RETURNS TO THE GANGA

CONTEXT

The 12-day Pushkaralu festival of Telugu-speaking people commenced recently in Varanasi.

About the festival

- ⦿ The festival is being organised in Kashi this year after a gap of 12 years due to a special combination of planetary transits.
- ⦿ Godavari Pushkaralu is celebrated once in every 12 years when Brihaspati enters Simha Raasi.
- ⦿ In this festival, pilgrims worship their ancestors and the river Ganga.

It is the second event of the recent past to be organised in Varanasi, after the Kashi-Tamil Sangamam.

The story behind

- ⦿ As per the legend, after severe penance, the devotee Pushkara was blessed by Lord Shiva with the ability to live in water, and purify holy rivers.

- ⦿ On a request from Brihaspati (Jupiter), Pushkara decided to enter one of the 12 sacred rivers — Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri, Bhima, Tapti, Narmada, Saraswati, Tungbhadra, Sindhu, and Pranhita.
- ⦿ Each river has its zodiac sign.
- ⦿ The river for each year's festival is decided in accordance with Brihaspati travel from one zodiac sign to another.

Pushkaram of these rivers is celebrated when Jupiter / Brihaspati transits from one Raasi (zodiac sign) to the other:

- ⦿ The cycle of **Pushkaraulu** begins with River Ganga when Brihaspati enters Mesha Raasi (Aries). It is celebrated as **Ganga Pushkaram**.
- ⦿ **Narmada Pushkaram** when Jupiter enters Vrishabha Raasi (Taurus).
- ⦿ **Saraswati Pushkaram** when Brihaspati enters Mithuna Raasi (Gemini).
- ⦿ **Yamuna Pushkaram** is celebrated when Jupiter enters Karkataka Raasi (Cancer).
- ⦿ **Godavari Pushkaram** when Brihaspati enters Simha Raasi (Leo).
- ⦿ **Krishna Pushkaram** when Jupiter enters Kanya Raasi (Virgo).
- ⦿ **Kaveri Pushkaram** when Brihaspati enters Thula Raasi (Libra).
- ⦿ **Bheema Pushkaram** when Jupiter enters Thula Raasi (Libra).
- ⦿ **Pushkara Vahini** when Brihaspati enters Dhanur Raasi (Sagittarius).
- ⦿ **Tungabhadra Pushkaram** when Jupiter enters Makara Raasi (Capricorn).
- ⦿ **Sindhu Pushkaram** when Brihaspati enters Kumbha Raasi (Aquarius).
- ⦿ And when Jupiter enters Meena Raasi (Pisces), **Pranhita Pushkaram** is celebrated.

16. SAURASHTRA-TAMIL SANGAM

CONTEXT

Overwhelmed by the 'success' of the **Kashi-Tamil Sangamam**, the Union government is set to hold the **Saurashtra-Tamil Sangam** in Gujarat which will be followed by the **Kedarnath-Tamil Sangamam**.

About Saurashtra-Tamil Sangam (STS):

- ⦿ The Saurashtra Tamil Sangam aims to rediscover, reaffirm and celebrate the over 1,000-year-old emigration and contribution of **Saurashtrian Tamils**.
- ⦿ It is a program that highlights the oneness of India's culture by narrating untold histories of how a community emigrated to Tamil Nadu and their contributions to the country.
- ⦿ The Saurashtra Tamil Sangam will be held at Somnath, Dwarka and other places in Gujarat to connect Tamil Nadu and Saurashtra.

- ⦿ It will celebrate the civilisational links between people from the southern part of the country and the People from the Saurashtra and Kedarnath in the north.
- ⦿ It is a unique attempt where States shared their culture, civilisation and heritage with each other, and the country united in soft power.
- ⦿ The STS is the second such programme under the 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' initiative.
- ⦿ The firstone was the '**Kashi Tamil Sangamam**', a month-long event held last year to "rediscover" links between Varanasi and Tamil Nadu.



Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

- ⦿ The initiative '**Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat**' was announced in 2015.
- ⦿ The program aims to actively enhance interaction between people of diverse cultures living in different States and UTs in India, with the objective of promoting greater mutual understanding among them.
- ⦿ **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Education

Background

- ⦿ Originally from the Gujarat region, the **Saurashtrian community** now mostly resides in the southern states of **Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka**.
- ⦿ Their migration to the southern parts of the country is believed to be primarily a result of the desecration of the **Somnath Temple**, their religious centre, by **Mahmud Ghazni** in 1024.
- ⦿ Many **Saurashtrians** also came to Tamil Nadu in the 17th century as royal silk weaversto the **Nayak kings**.

- According to reports, there are about 25 lakh people of Gujarati origin living in Tamil Nadu and over 12 lakh Saurashtrians in the state with a majority of them settled in Madurai, Thanjavur, and Salem.

Kedarnath-Tamil Sangamam

- Kedarnath is one of the four sacred shrines of Shiva among the Char Dham (four shrines).
- The Char Dham also comprises **Badrinath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri temples**.
- It is situated on the banks of Mandakini, 3,583 metres above sea level.
- It is the eleventh out of 12 *jyotirlingas* (shrines dedicated to Shiva) of India.
- Tamilians were ardent Shiva worshippers, and every year thousands of people from TN and other southern States, including Karnataka and Kerala visited Kedarnath during the yatra.
- People from the south also visited the Badrinath shrine in large numbers, to perform Pind Daan and Tarpan (part of the last rites in Hinduism), at the Brahm Kapal temple situated in Badrinath.

17. BUMCHU FESTIVAL

CONTEXT

Recently, the Bumchu Festival was celebrated in the **Tashiding Monastery**, located in the **state of Sikkim**.

About the Festival:

- Bumchu Festival is the Tashiding **holy water vase ritual** which is a unique and important occasion that draws travellers from all over the world.
- Annual performances of this ancient ceremony are held at the **Tashiding Monastery**, located in the **western part of Sikkim**.
- The Bumchu festival commemorates a **supernatural occurrence** that took place in the **18th century under Chogyal Chakdor Namgyal**.
- Bumchu means **"pot of sacred water" in Tibetan**. The vase is opened during the event, and the water inside is shared among the worshippers.
- The water is thought to **have healing qualities** and to grant luck and riches to those who drink it.
- The celebration takes place on the **14th and 15th of the first lunar month**, which often **falls in February or March**.
- In Sikkim, the Bumchu festival is a time of intense delight and celebration.
- At the event, pilgrims travel to Tashiding from all around India as well as from close by nations like **Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka**.



Tashiding Monastery:

- ⦿ It is one of the most sacred Buddhist pilgrimage sites, located on a hilltop overlooking the **Rangit River in Sikkim**.
- ⦿ **Guru Padmasambhava**, better known as **Guru Rinpoche**, the great Buddhist guru who brought Buddhism to Tibet, blessed the location of the monastery.
- ⦿ A Nyingma teacher named Ngadak Sempa Chempo Phunshok Rigzing later founded the monastery in the **17th century**.

18. BIHU FESTIVAL

- ⦿ Bihu is an Assamese festival.
- ⦿ The festival occurs three times a year and marks different occasions. The festivities come complete with traditional delicacies, music and the popular Bihu dance, along with meeting each other and celebrating the day together.

19. TUSU PARAB, JHARKHAND

- ⦿ Tusu is the harvest festival known as Tusu, which takes place across West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Odisha.
- ⦿ It is one of the three main celebrations of the Kudmi tribe honouring the deity Tusu.
- ⦿ The majority of the other indigenous communities in the area also celebrate it.

20. NAGOBA JATARA

- ⦿ Nagoba Jatara, Telangana In Keslapur village, Adilabad district, Telangana, India, this tribal festival called Nagoba Jatara takes place in January or February.
- ⦿ It is devoted to Nagoba, a serpent god revered by the tribal groups.
- ⦿ The Gusadi dance, performed by tribe members wearing peacock feather headdresses, is the festival's centerpiece despite the fact that several ceremonies are conducted during it.

21. PUTTARI

- ⦿ Also called Huttari, it is one of the biggest celebrations held in Coorg (Kodagu).
- ⦿ The Huttari rice harvest is commemorated on the full moon day of Rohini Nakshatram in October or November corresponding to Kartika or Margashira Poornima.
- ⦿ This festival celebration lasts for two days. According to legend, the name Puttari was derived from the words Pudiya Arisi, which meant "the new rice."
- ⦿ Kodava people gather in Kodagu from all over.

22. LOSAR FESTIVAL

- ⦿ Losar Festival is set according to the **lunisolar Tibetan calendar**.
- ⦿ It usually falls in February and lasts around 15 days.
- ⦿ The main celebrations happen during the first week.
- ⦿ In India, it is celebrated in regions with a focus on Tibetan Buddhism, such as **Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Spiti, Kinnaur**, and other Buddhist Himalayan regions.



23. KONARK FESTIVAL- ODISHA

- ⦿ Konark Festival is a sand art festival related to the Sun Temple in Konark, Odisha.
- ⦿ This festival is organized to spread awareness about the magnificent UNESCO World Heritage monument.
- ⦿ Organized for the first time in 1989, the festival has tremendous cultural and traditional values.

24. KILA RAIPUR SPORTS FESTIVAL- PUNJAB

- ⦿ Kila Raipur Sports Festival is a cultural festival of Punjab.
- ⦿ The festival is also known as the 'Rural Olympics', this festival of sports takes place in Punjab and covers a wide variety of sports.

25. SANGAI FESTIVAL, MANIPUR

- ⦿ The Sangai Festival is a celebration of the indigenous culture of Manipur.
- ⦿ The festival is named after the Sangai deer, which is found only in the state.

26. BHAGORIA FESTIVAL

- ⦿ Bhagoria is a tribal festival celebrated by the Bhil and Bhilala tribes of the Jhabua and Alirajpur districts in the state of Madhya Pradesh, India.
- ⦿ The festival usually takes place in the month of March and is a celebration of the spring season and the harvest.

27. SARHUL, JHARKHAND

- ⦿ Sarhul is a spring festival celebrated by the Ho tribe in Jharkhand.
- ⦿ The festival is marked by the worship of the Sal tree, which is considered sacred by the Ho people.

28. THISAM, MANIPUR

- ⦿ Thisam festival is observed for **twelve days in January**.
- ⦿ There is a strong belief that the souls of the dead do not leave the world until a farewell ceremony is performed.
- ⦿ From the day of their death till the farewell ceremony, it is believed that the dead soul joins the family at every meal.
- ⦿ For that purpose '**Thikhong**', meaning plate for the dead, is placed with a clean sheet of cloth on the Naga stool as on a raised wooden platform.
- ⦿ When all these formalities are performed, the dead are seen off, known as '**kazei kata**'.

29. BHORAMDEO MAHOTSAV, CHHATTISGARH

- ⦿ This festival is celebrated each year in the last week of March within the premises of the Boramdeo temples located at a distance of about 135 km from Raipur.
- ⦿ The famous king Ramachandra of the **Nag dynasty**, who married Princess Ambika Devi of the **Haiya dynasty**, is credited with the construction of this beautiful temple.
- ⦿ The festival is held to honour the King.

30. KARAMA FESTIVAL, ODHISA

- ⦿ In this festival the presiding deity is either 'Karam', a God, or 'Karamsani', a Goddess, who is represented with a branch of the Karam tree.
- ⦿ It is celebrated sometime between the months of August and September, on the eleventh day of the bright fortnight. In the ritual, people go to the jungle and cut a few branches of the Karam tree.
- ⦿ The branches are carried by unmarried girls who bring them to the village and plant them on the ground decorated with flowers.
- ⦿ A tribal-priest (Jhankar or Dehuri) offers germinated grams and liquor in propitiation to the deity, who grants wealth and children.



31. FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL, DAMAN AND DIU

- ⦿ The festival is a significant part of the cultural life of Daman and Diu.
- ⦿ Drawing inspiration from the neighbouring state of Gujarat, the colourful attires come out for the Folk Dance Festival of Daman.
- ⦿ The dance forms associated with the Folk Dance Festival in Daman and Diu are Mando Dance, Verdigao Dance and Vira Dance.
- ⦿ People of all age-groups take part in the Folk Dance Festival.

32. MARRIAMMAN THIRUVIZHA, ANDAMAN ISLANDS

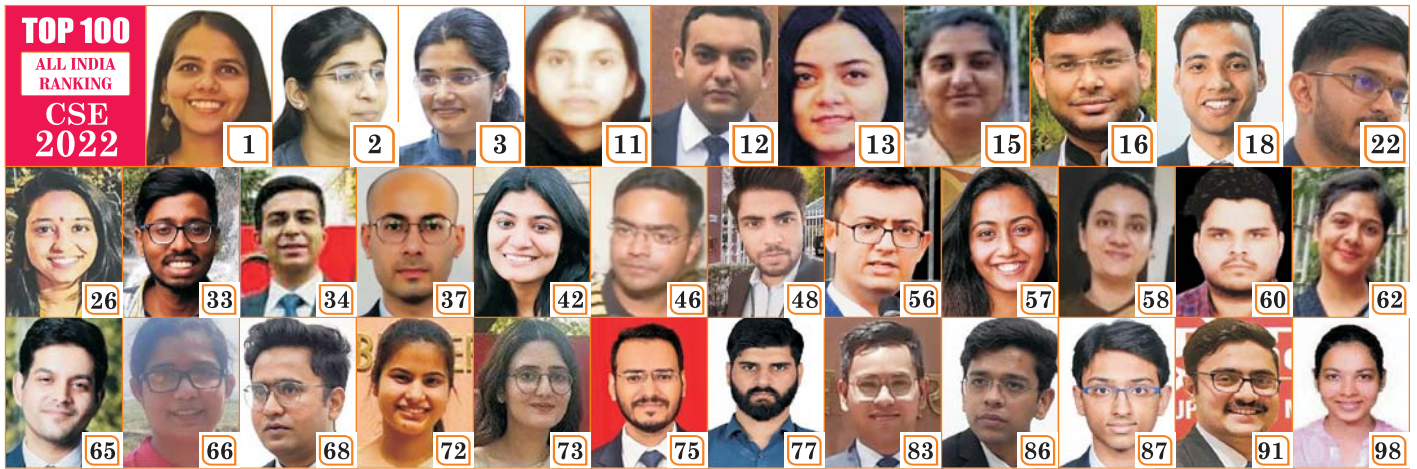
- ⦿ The festival is to celebrate the Goddess Arulmigu Mariamman who is believed to be the guardian of these islands.
- ⦿ Her temple is located at Astinabad village, which is approximately six kms from Port Blair bus terminus.
- ⦿ A famous lore is that when the Dhannikari Dam was being constructed, it could not be completed successfully until the project in-charge prayed to Goddess Mariamman.
- ⦿ After the completion of the dam, he constructed a temple and left money for the daily conduct of pooja and maintenance.
- ⦿ Apart from the locals, even tourists are advised to pay their respects to the Goddess before leaving.

IMPORTANT TRIBES IN INDIA

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Andhra Pradesh | Andh And Sadhu Andh, Bhil, Bhaghata, Dhulia, rona, Kolam, Gond, Thoti, Goundu, Kammara, Savaras, Dabba Yerukula, Sugalis, Nakkala, Pardhan, Gadabas, Chenchus A.k.a Chenchawar, Kattunayakan, Jatapus, Manna Dhora |
| Arunachal Pradesh | Singpho, Monpa, Abor, Sherdukpen, Galo, Apatanis |
| Assam | Khasis, Chakma, Dimasa, Gangte, Garos, Hajong, Chutiya |
| Bihar | Gond, Birjia, Asur, Savar, Parhaiya, Chero, Birhor, Santhals, Baiga |
| Chhattisgarh | Nagasia, Biar, Khond, Agariya, Bhattra, Mawasi, Bhaina, |
| Goa | Varli, Dubia, Siddi, Dhodia, Naikda |
| Gujarat | Patelia, Bhil, Dhodia, Bamcha, Barda, Paradhi, Charan, Gamta |
| Himachal Pradesh | Swangal, Gujjars, Lahaulas, Khas, Pangwala, Lamba, Gaddis |
| Jammu and Kashmir | Balti, Garra, Sippi, Bakarwal, Mon, Gaddi, Purigpa, Beda |
| Jharkhand | Gonds, Birhors, Savar, Mundas, Santhals, Khaira, Bhumji |
| Karnataka | Gond, Patelia, Barda, Yerava, Bhil, Koraga, Adiyani, Iruliga, |
| Kerala | Malai, Aarayan, Arandan, Uralis, Kurumbas, Arandan, Eranvallen |
| Madhya Pradesh | Kharia, Bhils, Murias, Birhors, Baigas, Katkari, Kol, Bharia, Khond, Gonds, |
| Maharashtra | Warlis, Khond, Bhaina, Katkari, Bhunjia, Rathawa, Dhodia. |
| Manipur | Thadou, Aimol, Maram, Paite, Chiru, Purum, Kuki, Monsang, Angami |
| Meghalaya | Pawai, Chakma, Raba, Hajong, Lakher, Garos, Jaintias Khasis |

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Mizoram | Dimasa, Raba, Chakma, Lakher, Khasi, Synteng, Kuki, Pawai. |
| Nagaland | Nagas, Angami, Sema, Garo, Kuki, Kachari, Mikir |
| Odisha | Gadaba, Ghara, Kharia, Khond, Matya, Oraons, Rajuar, Santhals. |
| Rajasthan | Bhils, Damaria, Dhanka, Meenas(Minas), Patelia, Sahariya. |
| Sikkim | Bhutia, Khas, Lepchas. |
| Tamil Nadu | Adiyan, Aranadan, Eravallan, Irular, Kadar, Kanikar, Kotas, Todas. |
| Telangana | Chenchus. |
| Tripura | Bhil, Bhutia, Chaimal, Chakma, Halam, Khasia, Lushai, Mizel, Namte. |
| Uttarakhand | Bhotias, Buksa, Jannsari, Khas, Raji, Tharu. |
| Uttar Pradesh | Bhotia, Buksa, Jaunsari, Kol, Raji, Tharu. |
| West Bengal | Asur, Khond, Hajong, Ho, Parhaiya, Rabha, Santhals, Savar. |
| Andaman and Nicobar | Oraons, Onges, Sentinelese, Shompens. |
| Little Andaman | Jarawa |
| North-East | Abhors, Chang, Galaong, Mishimi, Singpho, Wancho. |

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