

Jagannatha Rath Yatra 2024

Why In News

- **Jagannatha Rath Yatra** is a popular Hindu festival which is celebrated annually in the city of Odisha. It falls on the **Dwitiya Tithi**, the second day of the bright fortnight of the Sharad Paksha, a fortnight of the Hindu lunar month of Asadh. **The Sharad Paksha** is a period of **increasing moonlight** and is considered auspicious for spiritual activities. The Asadh month, according to the Hindu Lunar calendar, typically falls in the month of June or July in the Gregorian calendar.



- This elaborate procession, featuring colossal chariots carrying revered deities, pulsates with energy and devotion. The rhythmic chanting of hymns, the collective fervour of devotees pulling the chariots, and the sheer scale of the event create an unforgettable experience.

Jagannatha Rath Yatra

- **Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi** expressed grief over the death of a devotee during the Lord Jagannath Rath Yatra procession in Puri on June 7 and announced Rs 4 lakh ex-gratia to the next kin of deceased.
- **“Chief Minister Majhi** expressed deep grief over the death of a devotee named Lalitha Bagarti of Saitala block of Balangir district due to the crowd during the procession today and expressed his condolences to the bereaved family,” read the post by the Chief Minister’s Office (CMO).



- In a tragic incident, **one devotee died while 15 others were injured** following a stampede during the Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath in Puri, Odisha. The injured devotees were immediately admitted to the hospital, however, most of them suffered minor injuries and were subsequently discharged from the hospital after primary treatment. Meanwhile, the treatment of seriously injured devotees was underway.

Jagannatha Rath Yatra 2024: History And Significance

- Jagannatha Rath Yatra festival began with estimates ranging from the **12th to 16th centuries**. Stories and myths surround its origins. Some say it represents **Lord Krishna's visit to his mother's birthplace**. Others believe it started with **King Indradyumna**, who supposedly set up the rituals.



- Historical documents show the festival became more important during the rule of **Odisha's Gajapati kings**. Over the centuries, the Jagannath Rath Yatra has changed and grown, but its core purpose has remained the same. It's a powerful symbol of Odisha's rich culture and the deep faith of millions.
- At the heart of the **Jagannatha Rath Yatra** lies the symbolic journey of three deities: **Lord Jagannath, his elder brother Balabhadra, and their sister Subhadra**. These deities are believed to emerge from the confines of the Jagannath Temple in Puri and embark on a nine-day sojourn to the Gundicha Temple, about 3 kilometres away.



Jagannatha Rath Yatra 2024: Rituals

- **Jagannatha Rath Yatra unfolds** in captivating rituals, each steeped in symbolism and tradition. A day before the grand procession, the deities undergo a **ceremonial bath (Rath Snana)** involving 108 pots of aromatic water and sacred items, signifying their purification before the journey.



- This is followed by the **Rath Pratistha (Consecration of the Chariots)**, where priests chant mantras and bless the newly built chariots, transforming them into vessels for the divine journey.



- The pinnacle of the Yatra arrives with the **Rath Yatra (Chariot Procession)**.
- Thousands of devotees throng the streets, chanting hymns and brimming with fervour as they pull the majestic chariots towards the Gundicha Temple. Here, the **deities reside for nine days**, allowing devotees to seek their blessings. After this sojourn, the **Bahuda Yatra (Return Journey)** sees the deities return to the Jagannath Temple in a similar procession filled with joyous celebration.
- The **Yatra culminates with Niladri Vijaya**, the dismantling of the chariots, symbolising the conclusion of the divine journey and the promise of its renewal in the year to come.

