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1. Military Tattoo & Tribal Dance Festival to be held in New Delhi on 23rd & 24th January (Jan. 7, 2023)

As part of the Republic Day celebrations 2023 and to mark the **126th birth anniversary (Parakram Diwas)** of **Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose**, a **military tattoo and tribal dance festival 'Adi Shaurya - Parv Parakram Ka'** will organise at the **Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium** in New Delhi.

An overview of the news

- The two-day festival will showcase the might of the **Armed Forces and the ethnic beauty of India's tribal culture.**
- The program included a **military tattoo** (paramotor gliding, hot air balloon, horse show, motorcycle display, air warrior drill, navy band) and an hour long **traditional dance performance** (khukri dance, gatka, mallakhamb, kalaripayattu, thangata) by tribal artistes.
- The grand finale includes a performance by renowned singer **Kailash Kher.**
- The festival aims to remember the sacrifices of the country's bravehearts and celebrate the rich cultural heritage that makes India unique and diverse.
- It aims to celebrate the bravery of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, embrace the true spirit of India and renew the commitment to build a strong and prosperous '**New India**'.
- The Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs are jointly organising the event, with the Indian Coast Guard as the coordinating agency.

2. 10th edition of Dhaka Literary Festival (Jan. 2, 2023)

After being cancelled for three consecutive years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the **10th edition of Dhaka Lit Fest (DLF)**, Bangladesh's biggest international literary festival, is all set to take place on **January 5-8, 2023.**

Important facts

- The event will be held on the historic grounds of the **Bangla Academy in Dhaka.**
- More than 500 literary personalities across the globe including Nobel Prize Winner **Abdulrazak Gurnah** will be taking part in the festival.
- The four-day event will feature internationally acclaimed authors including Amitav Ghosh, Hanif Qureshi, Alexandra Pringle, Gitanjali Shree, Daisy Rockwell, Esther Freud, Joy Goswami, Kaiser Haque, among others.
- It will feature over **175 sessions** with discussions on science and technology, activities for children and young adults, film screenings, theatre, music and cultural performances.
- The organisers of DLF have termed it as a '**festival of ideas**'.

- Films, OTT, science and other topics of public interest will also be discussed in this programme.
- There will be performances for children as well as for women. The Dhaka Lit Fest will also host discussions on health, food and cooking, among other topics.

About Dhaka Lit Fest

- **Sadaf Saaz, Ahsan Akbar and Kazi Anis Ahmed** are the directors of the Dhaka Lit Fest (DLF).
- It began in **2011** with the commitment to promote Dhaka, and Bangladeshi literature and culture to the world.
- Dhaka Lit Fest has been a popular annual event in the winter calendar of Bangladesh.
- **About 30,000** people participated in the ninth Dhaka Lit Fest last held in 2019.

3. Gurung community in Sikkim celebrates its New Year festival Tamu Lhosar (Dec. 30, 2022)

Gurung community in Sikkim celebrates its New Year festival Tamu Lhosar

The Nepalese Gurung community of Sikkim celebrated their new year **Tamu Lhosar on 30 December 2022** with joy and gaiety. The Tamu Lhosar marks the beginning of the Gurung New Year which falls on the 15th day of Pusa, according to Vikram Samvat and 30th December in the English Calendar. The festival is celebrated with the family and community as a whole.

In Nepal, Tamu Lhosar is celebrated grandly with cultural tableaux in Gurung dominated districts.

The Gurungs are a hill people living on the southern slopes of the Himalayan Mountains in central Nepal. Their origins are uncertain, although they are of Mongoloid stock and their ancestors may have migrated to their current location from Tibet around 2,000 years ago. They have a sizeable population in Sikkim.

Important festivals of Sikkim

Losar

Losar is the Tibetan New Year which falls in the month of February and is likewise celebrated by inviting friends and relatives for family gatherings.

Sonam Lochar

Sonam Lochar is an important festival of the Tamang community. The festival falls in the month January - February Spring season.

Ramnavami (Chaite Dasain)

'Chaite Dashain' makes for one of the most important religious festivals for the Nepali community inhabiting the Himalayan state of Sikkim in India. The festival, also known as 'Small Dashain' is commonly celebrated as 'Ram Navami' in other parts of the country, commemorating the birth of Lord Rama

Saga Dawa

Saga Dawa or the Triple Blessed Festival is an auspicious month for the Sikkimese Buddhists with prayers held throughout the month in various monasteries. On the full moon of this 4th month of the Tibetan calendar [celebrated as Buddha Purnima in the rest of India] is the main celebration.

Tendong Lho Rum Faat

Tendong Lho Rum Faat is one of the oldest festivals of the Lepchas and is usually held in August. The 3 day celebrations begin with the offering of prayers to Mount Tendong in South Sikkim. **Guru Rimpoche's Thunkar Tshechu**

The birth anniversary of **Guru Padmasambhava**, the patron saint of Sikkim is celebrated with great pomp in the state. It falls on the tenth day of the fifth Tibetan month.

Pang-Lhabsol

This festival is unique to Sikkim and commemorates the consecration of **Mount Khangchendzonga as the guardian deity of Sikkim**. To this day the mountain god is invoked and prayed upon at Pang Lhabsol to continue protecting Sikkim. The festival is celebrated on the 15th day of the 7th month of the Tibetan calendar corresponding to late August/early September.

Kagyed Dance

One of the most popular Buddhist festivals, Kagyed Chaam, is a celebration that is marked by masked monks and lamas performing some rigorous dance moves, symbolizing destruction of all the evil and negative forces.

Losoong/Namsoong

Losoong, also called Namsoong by the Lepchas and Bhutias, is usually the time when the farmers rejoice and celebrate their harvest. The festival of Losoong is mostly celebrated in the month of December every year.

Ethnic Composition of Sikkim

There are three ethnic groups in Sikkim- Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalese. Due to a century-long population migration from Nepal, the majority of Sikkim's residents are of Nepali ethnic origin.

Lepchas are considered as the primitive inhabitants of Sikkim much before the settlement of Bhutias and Nepalese. The Lepchas are basically Buddhist and Christian. **Bhutias** are the people originally from Kham area in Eastern Tibet who follow Lamanism.

Amongst the Nepalese population, except **Sherpas** and **Tamangs** who are Buddhists, other people are basically Hindu.

4. 'Dhanu Yatra' begins in Odisha's Bargarh (Dec. 30, 2022)

'Dhanu Yatra' begins in Odisha's Bargarh

The '**Dhanu Yatra**' festival, considered to be the **world's largest open-air theatre**, began on 27th December in the **Western Odisha town of Bargarh**.

Important facts

- President **Draupadi Murmu** and Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** greeted the people of the eastern state as the 11-day festival began. The festival began after a gap of two years.
- In this festival, events related to **Lord Shri Krishna** will be presented through folk arts that touch the hearts of millions of people.

About 'Dhanu Yatra'

- The 'Dhanu Yatra', which symbolises the **victory of good over evil**, came into being in **Bargarh** as part of the country's independence celebrations in **1947-48** and is held annually.
- 'Dhanu Yatra' is associated with the **culture of Odisha**.
- It is an open-air theatre festival which is spread over more than 5 square kilometres and includes a village and a town.
- As per tradition, for the whole eleven days, the people of Bargarh obey the orders of **Raja Kansa** and not the district administration.

Background of the festival

- Dhanu Yatra was started after the harvest season of the **year 1947-48**, just after the independence of India as a reflection of the atmosphere of joy in the society for the end of British misrule.
- Since then it is performed every year at the end of the harvesting of **paddy**, the main crop of the area.
- It starts from the 5th day of '**Pousasukla**' to end on '**Pousapurnima**'.
- During 11 days the entire area of Bargarh city and sub-urban areas around Bargarh block turns into '**Mathura Nagari**', the kingdom of Kansa.
- The festival begins with a drama depicting the downfall of **Ugrasena**, the emperor of Mathura, by Kansa, enraged at the marriage of his sister **Devaki with Vasudeva**.
- The festival ends with the death of the demon king Kansa and the restoration of the throne to **Ugrasena**.

5. 'Bijli Utsav' organised by REC in Assam as a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (Dec. 29, 2022)

'Bijli Utsav' organised by REC in Assam as a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

As a part of '**Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**', **REC Limited**, a Maharatna Company under the Ministry of Power, Govt of India organised '**Bijli Utsav**' in **Anandapur Gaon of Baksa district** and adjoining villages in **Assam** on 28th December.

Important facts

- The event highlighted the consumer rights of electricity, benefits of electricity and challenges faced during electrification in remote areas and improving the quality of life with access to electricity by utility officials.
- Quiz competition and **Nukkad Natak** were organised to provide information on topics like consumer rights of electricity, energy conservation and benefits of electricity.
- Event concluded with distribution of **LED bulbs** as prizes to the winners of the competitions.

About REC Limited

- It is an NBFC focusing on Power Sector Financing and Development across India.
- **Established in 1969**, REC Limited has completed fifty years in its field of operations.
- It provides financial assistance to State Electricity Boards, State Governments, Central/ State Power Utilities, Independent Power Producers, Rural Electric Cooperative Societies and Private Sector Utilities.

6. First International Beach Festival in Kerala (Dec. 28, 2022)

First International Beach Festival in Kerala

The '**Spice Coast**' in the far north of Kerala, popularly known as **North Malabar**, is celebrating myriad colours and the '**Bekal International Beach Festival**' from 24 December.

Important facts

- Chief Minister **Pinarayi Vijayan** inaugurated the 10-day first International Beach Festival.
- The festival reflects the entirety and essence of the cultural and artistic uniqueness of the state.
- It showcases the country's rich cultural diversity and magnificence in the majestic **Bekal Beach Park**.
- Around five lakh people from all over the world enjoy this festival at three places of **Chandragiri, Tejaswini and Payaswini**.
- The festival reflects a cross-section of culture and the unique identity of the land.
- More than 1,000 international, national and local artists performed at the Beach Festival.

Bekal International Beach festival

- It is organised by **Bekal Resorts Development Corporation (BRDC)** in association with the **District Tourism Promotion Council**, Kudumbashree, Asmi Holidays, and the local self-government bodies in the district.

7. Losar Festival celebrated in Ladakh to mark the Ladakhi New Year (Dec. 26, 2022)

Losar Festival celebrated in Ladakh to mark the Ladakhi New Year

Losar Festival was celebrated in **Ladakh** on 24 December 2022 to mark the **Ladakhi New Year**.

About Losar Festival

- The Losar Festival or the Ladakhi New year is a major **socio-religious festival of Ladakh** celebrated during **winter**.
- Prayer lamps are lit and buildings, homes, places of worship, stupas and business places are decorated during this festival which is held for **15 days** from 24 December every year.
- **Khura and Kabse** are served to the guests on this occasion.
- During this time, in the memory of the departed relatives, on the eve of the Losar festival, people offer delicious food at their graves and offer prayers.
- For the next nine days from January 1, people dance and sing in honour of **ibex and travel to Mount Kailash**.
- The new year is welcomed by drawing the ibex sun and moon and by drawing auspicious flour symbols on the walls of the kitchen.
- The festival marks the Ladakhi New Year and is an important time for Buddhists in Ladakh to come together and celebrate their culture and heritage.

Other Famous Festivals in Ladakh

- **Hemis Tsechu** - Late June and early July
- **Sindhu Darshan Festival** - June
- **Ladakh Harvest Festival** - September
- **Saka Dawa** Festival - June

8. 10th Edition of North East Festival begins at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi (Dec. 24, 2022)

10th Edition of the North East Festival began at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi on December 23

The **10th Edition of the North East Festival** began at the **Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi** on December 23.

Important facts

- Union Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) **Narayan Rane** inaugurated the **four-day Festival** at the Jawaharlal Nehru stadium in Delhi.
- **The objective** of the festival is to promote the diverse life, culture, traditions and tourism of the North East region.
- The 2022 edition will host colorful dance dramas, musical performances, fashion shows, open-mic sessions, interactive sessions, art and photography exhibitions.
- An exhibition showcasing '**Made in North East**' products will have an MSME zone, wherein over 100 MSME entrepreneurs from North East India will display agro-horticulture products, handlooms, handicrafts, processed food products etc.
- A booklet titled '**Know Your North East**' will be released by the Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways and AYUSH, Sarbananda Sonowal.
- The first seven editions were held at IGNSA, **Janpath, New Delhi** from **2013 to 2019** respectively.
- The last two editions were held in **Guwahati** in a hybrid model due to rising Covid in the national capital.
- Since its inception in 2013, this festival has contributed a lot in promoting tourism in the North Eastern states.

9. PM Modi addressed the 75th 'Amrut Mahotsav' of Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul Sansthan (Dec. 24, 2022)

75th Amrut Mahotsav of Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul Rajkot Sansthan

75th

Amrut

Mahotsav

of

Shree

Swaminarayan

Gurukul

Rajkot

Sansthan

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** addressed the **75th Amrut Mahotsav of Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul Rajkot Sansthan** via video-conferencing on December 24.

Important facts

- The five-day Amrit Mahotsav celebrations were inaugurated by Chief Minister **Bhupendra Patel at Sahajanand nagar in Rajkot** on 22 December.
- Spiritual leaders, saints and devotees from across the world are participating in large numbers in the grand Amrit Mahotsav celebrations to be held at **Sahajanand Nagar** in Rajkot.
- Mega blood donation camps, free medical check-up camps are being organized during Amrit Mahotsav celebrations, where renowned doctors are providing free medical services and free medicines to the people.

About Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul Rajkot Sansthan

- It was established at Rajkot in **1948** by seer **Shri Dharmajivandasji Swami**.
- It has expanded significantly and currently has more than 40 branches across the world, providing school, undergraduate and postgraduate education to more than 25,000 students.

10. Tamil Nadu government announces Rs 1000, rice and sugar to ration holders on the occasion of Pongal (Dec. 23, 2022)

Tamil Nadu government announces Rs 1000, rice and sugar to ration holders on the occasion of Pongal

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister **M K Stalin** has announced that the ration card holders in the state will get **Rs 1000**, one **kg of rice and sugar each** on the occasion of pongal harvest festival to be held in January 2023.

According to the state government all 'Rice' ration card holders will be eligible for including the families residing in Sri Lankan Rehabilitation Camps.

It is expected to benefit 2.19 crore ration card holders and the government will entail an additional expenditure of Rs 2,356.67 crore.

The chief minister will launch the Pongal Gift scheme on January 2. The festival will be celebrated on 15 January 2023.

Pongal festival

Pongal is a harvest festival celebrated by the Tamil community. It is a celebration to thank the Sun, Mother Nature and the various farm animals that help to contribute to a bountiful harvest. Celebrated over four days, Pongal also marks the beginning of the Tamil month called *Thai*, which is considered an auspicious month. It usually falls on the 14th or 15th of January each year.

Pongal is also the name of the dish made and eaten during this festival. It is a mixture of boiled sweet rice. It is derived from the Tamil word *pongu*, which means “to boil over”.

First day of pongal is called **Bhogi Pongal**. The second day is called **Surya Pongal where Sun god is worshiped**. The third day is called **Maatu pongal** where the cattles (Maatu) are worshiped **and** the 4th day is observed as **Kaanum Pongal**.