Ambubachi Mela

Prelims : Current events of national and international importance

Why in News?

Thousands of devotees have arrived in Assam for the Kamakhya Temple's annual Ambubachi Mela.

- It is one of the largest religious gatherings in ***Northeast India.***
- The festival is held during the monsoon, generally in June, at the Kamakhya Temple in Nilachal hills in ***Guwahati, Assam.***
- It is a shrine to the ***Goddess Kamakhya*** and one of the most important centres of ***Tantrik Shaktism.***
- The period of Ambubachi is believed to be the period of the goddess's annual menstruation, and the shrine is closed for this.
- At the end of the period, the shrine's doors are opened ceremonially, and devotees flock for darshan of the deity.
- The festival is *associated with fertility*, with the onset of monsoon, and the common historical association across cultures of the Earth as a fertile woman.
- The name 'Ambubachi' itself translates to *water flowing.*
- Ambubachi Mela is not an image of the Goddess but rather a process, a formal process of menstruation.
- It is believed that during monsoon rain the creative and nurturing power of the menses of mother Earth becomes accessible to devotees at this site during Ambubachi.
- During this period, there is an entire cessation of all ploughing, sowing and other agricultural activities.
- Fragments of cloth stained with the blood-mark of the Goddess are distributed to the devotees and pilgrims preserve these in their houses as protective amulets.

Reference

The Indian Express | Ambubachi Mela