

## Attukal Pongala

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### Why in News?

Recently, the Union Home Minister extended greetings on the occasion of Attukal Pongala.

- **Deity** - Dedicated to Attukal Amma, an incarnation of Goddess Bhadrakali.
- **Held in** - It is an annual Hindu festival held at the Attukal Bhagavathy Temple, in Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum).
- Considered the **world's largest congregation of women** for a religious festival (over 3 million participants).
- **Ritual Duration** - A 10-day festival commencing on the *Karthigai star* in the Malayalam month of Makaram or Kumbham.
- The main ritual, Attukal Pongala Mahotsavam, is held on the 9th day.
- The festival concludes with the ritual sacrifice known as Kuruthitharpanam at night.
- **Belief** - The presiding deity, Attukal Bhagavathy, is believed to be an incarnation of **Kannaki, the central character of the Tamil epic Silappathikaaram**.
- It is believed that after burning Madurai, Kannaki (Kannagi) travelled to Kerala and passed through the Attukal area on her way to Kodungallur.
- **Significance** - Recognised globally for its massive women's participation.
- Popularly known as the **"Sabarimala of Women."**

### Reference

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