Kailash Mansarovar Yatra

Prelims (GS I) – *Current events of National Importance*

Mains (GS I) – *Indian History and Culture*

Why in News?

The resumption of the yatra was formally discussed for the first time at the Special Representatives meeting in Beijing, which has been suspended since 2020.

- **Location -** Lake Mansarovar, known locally as Mapam Yumtso, is a high-altitude freshwater lake near Mount Kailash in the Ngari Prefecture of the ***Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).***
- Both the lake and the adjacent high mountain are believed to be the home of **Lord Shiva**, are sacred in ***Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and the Tibetan Bon religion.***
- **Yatra –** Ministry of External Affairs organized the pilgrimage for Indians between the months of June and September each year.
- Pilgrims usually trek to Lake Manasarovar, and then circumambulate the nearby Mount Kailash.
- **Eligibility -** The journey usually took between 23 and 25 days, and was *open to anyone holding Indian passports,* displaying medical and physical fitness.
- **Age -** Between 18 - 70.
- The total cost of the yatra would be upwards of Rs 2 lakh.
- **The two routes -** There are two primary routes to reach Lake Mansarovar from India.
- **Lipulekh Pass Route -** Lipulekh pass lies at an altitude of 5,115 metres, on the border between ***Uttarakhand and TAR***, near the trijunction with Nepal.
- It is an ancient passageway between the Indian subcontinent and the Tibetan Plateau, frequented by traders and pilgrims alike.
- While the Lipulekh pass route is the most direct way to get to Mansarovar from India, the lake is roughly 50 km from the border, the terrain makes the journey very challenging.
- Currently, this route entails roughly 200 km of hard trekking. Before 2020, it had been operational since 1981.
- **Nathu La Pass Route -** Nathu La pass lies at an altitude of 4,310 metres on the border between Sikkim and TAR.
- It is one of two mountain passes in the region, the other being **Jelep La** that have connected Sikkim and Tibet since ancient times.
- The route to Mansarovar from Nathu La is much longer in terms of distance lose to 1,500 km.
- But it is fully motorable, meaning pilgrims can make it all the way to the lake without any trekking. (They would only need to trekk 35-40 km for the circumambulation of

Mount Kailash).

- This route became operational in 2015.
- On the Indian side, logistics were arranged by the *Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam* on the Lipulekh route, and the Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation on the Nathu La route.
- TAR authorities provided accommodation and logistics on the other side of the border.
- One could provide the preference of route during the registration process on the MEA portal.

Reference

The Indian Express | Kailash Mansarovar Yatra

