Prelim Bits 05-07-2019

Ashadhi Beej

- **Ashadhi Beej** or **Ashadhi Duj** is considered as an **auspicious day for farming communities** in North India especially Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and some other places.
- **Kutchhi community** celebrate **new year** on this day.
- New Year is celebrated in a traditional way by organizing satsangs, musical competitions and other cultural programmes.
- Ganesha, Goddess Lakshmi and other regional deities are worshipped on the day.
- As for the people of Kutch Region, this day is associated with **beginning of rains in Kutch**, which is largely a desert area.
- On this day, monsoon is being predicated and people check the moisture in the atmosphere to help predict which crop would do best in coming monsoon.
- If the pre-monsoon air has a lot of moisture in it, that is a fairly good indication that the season will be well.

Rath Yatra - Puri

- Ratha Jatra or Rath Yatra is the **Festival of Chariots** of **Lord Jagannatha** is celebrated every year at **Puri**, the temple town in **Odisha**.
- It is associated with **Lord Jagannath** or **Lord Krishna's** annual journey to his aunt's residence along with his brother and sister.
- The festival is also known as Gundicha Jatra, Ghosa Jatra, Navadina Jatra, Dasavatara Jatra and by a variety of other names.
- It is the **oldest Ratha Yatra**, whose descriptions can be found in Brahma Purana, Padma Purana, Skanda Purana and Kapila Samhita.
- The temple of Puri is dedicated to **Lord Jagannath**, his elder brother **Balabhadra** or **Balaram** and their sister **Subhadra.**
- Before the Ratha Yatra starts, the three idols are given a ceremonial bath with 108 pitchers of water. This is known as **Snana Yatra.**
- The **chariot** of **Lord Jagannath** is named as **Nandighosha** or **Garudadhwaja** or **Kapiladhwaja**.
- Lord Krishna is the eighth avatar (incarnation) of Lord Vishnu. He is worshipped as Jagannath.

- The name comes from the conjugation of two Sanskrit words - **Jagat (world)** and **natha (master)**. Hence, the word "**Jagannath**" means '**Master of the world'.**
- Ratha Yatra transcends all religious boundaries and is not only celebrated by Hindus but also draws Muslims, Buddhists and members from many other communities.

Rath Yatra - Ahmedabad

- The Ahmedabad Rath Yatra turns into its 142nd year.
- A **sadhu** by the name of **Hanumandasji** settled down in this forest area of Ahmedabad on the banks of the Sabarmati river.
- It is said that his successor, **Sarangdasji**, was a devotee of Lord Jagannath.
- On one of his visits to the Puri Jagannath in Odisha, he had a dream where the Lord directed him to go back to Ahmedabad to install the idols of the holy trinity of Lord Jagannath.
- The temple was thus founded and a cowshed was built alongside.
- In 1878, the fourth successor **Mahant Narsinhdasji introduced** the **Rath Yatra** on the lines of Puri.
- The yatra is conducted on the day of **Ashaadi beej,** which also marks the **Kutchhi new year**.
- It is believed that this is the only time of the year when the Lord goes out to meet devotees on his chariot (rath), especially those who are physically challenged and unable to come to the temple.
- In Ahmedabad, the yatra returns from the maternal aunt's place the same evening unlike in Puri the siblings spend at least seven days at their aunt's and return to the main temple.

Kerala Champions Boat League

- The **Champions Boat League (CBL)** has been conceived by **tourism department** in **Kerala** on the model of the Indian Premier League (IPL) as an annual event.
- It will get under way with the **Nehru Trophy Boat Race** during August-November period in Alappuzha.
- It is to transform the state's legendary and historically-significant **"Vallamkali"** (snake boat races) into a world-class sporting event.
- **Vallamkali** owe their origins as far back as the **13th century**.
- A **special purpose vehicle** (SPV) will be set up to conduct the league.
- Kerala government plans to spend Rs 40 crores on the event which will help fetch a revenue of Rs 20 crores through ticket sales and sponsorships.
- The **Tourism Department** will form the **CBL company**, envisaged as a

'**Public-sector undertaking'** (PSU).

- **CBL** members will includes 'Nehru Trophy Boat Race'(**NTBR**) society members, leaders of boat clubs and owners of snake boats.
- It will keep alive regional boat races which struggle for financial aid.
- The **snake boat** or **'chundam vallam'** is essentially a long canoe which is entirely wooden structure resembling a snake with its raised hood, hence the name.

Source: Indian Express, PIB

