

Raulane Festival

***Prelims:** Current events of national and international importance*

Why in News?

Bright, colourful, and quite fascinating photos from Himachal Pradesh went viral on social media, with users discussing the unique ritual and culture of a centuries-old tradition.

- The Raulane Festival is a unique and sacred winter festival celebrated in **Himachal Pradesh's** Kinnaur district.
- This ancient festival honours **celestial fairies, known as Saunis**, said to be radiant and gentle beings.
- **Faith** - Locals believe that the Saunis protect villagers during harsh winters by offering warmth and guidance.
- **Symbolic Marriage** - During the festival, two men symbolically "marry" and become vessels for the Saunis, embodying a divine couple, the Raula (groom) and the Raulane (bride).
- **Costume & Appearance** - They wear traditional woollen garments (to cope with the Himalayan cold), and masks completely cover their faces; their hands are often gloved.
- The Raulane (bride) wears elaborate headgear, jewellery, and decorative attire turning into a ritual figure rather than just a costumed person.



- **Ritual Dance** - They also perform a slow, meditative dance at the ***Nagin Narayan Temple***, and the whole village joins in.
- The festival is a celebration of faith and community.
- The Raulane festival preserves ancient Himalayan culture and traditions, with villagers coming together to honour their protectors.
- **Cultural Significance** - Raulane is considered extremely old — local belief and some sources suggest it may be around 5,000 years old.

Reference

[NDTV | Raulane Festival](#)

