

Aanayoottu festival

July 19, 2022

In news— Aanayoottu festival, a mass feast for elephants was conducted at Vadakkunnathan temple in Kerala recently.

What is Aanayoottu festival?

- During the festival, several elephants across the state take part in it where Elephants are fed with a special meal made of sugarcane, rice, ghee, coconut, jaggery and ayurvedic medicines.
- According to the Malayalam calendar, the Aanayoottu Festival in Kerala is held on the first day of the month of Karkkidakam. This coincides with the month of July.
- A large number of people throng the temple to feed the elephants.
- Every fourth year of `Aanayoottu,' `**Gaja pooja**,' is conducted.
- It is believed that offering poojas and delicious feed to the elephants are a way to satisfy Lord Ganesha, the god of wealth and wish fulfilment.

About Vadakkunnathan temple-

- It is an ancient Hindu **temple dedicated to Shiva at the city of Thrissur, of Kerala** state in India.
- This temple is a classical example of the **architectural style of Kerala** and has one monumental tower on each of the four sides in addition to a koothambalam.
- The feeding session here begins with the temple's chief priest offering the first feed, usually to a cub elephant.
- **Mural paintings depicting various scenes from the Mahabharata** can be seen inside the temple.
- The temple, along with the mural paintings, has been **declared as a National Monument by India under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains**

(AMASR) Act.

- According to popular local lore, this **is the first temple built by Parasurama, the sixth avatara of Vishnu.**
- Thekkinkadu Maidan, encircling the Vadakkumnathan Temple, is the main venue of the renowned Thrissur Pooram festival.
- In the year 2012, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) recommended 14 sites, including Vadakkumnathan Temple and palaces, from Kerala to be included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.