

# Chatar festival

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In news

The Chatar Yatra of Goddess Manikeshwari was held without devotees amidst tight security due to COVID-19 pandemic

## About Chatar Yatra festival

- Chatar festival in the Bhawanipatna town of Odisha's Kalahandi district, which is usually marked by the sacrifice of thousands of animals and birds, passed off without much bloodshed.
- Goddess of Manikeshwari is the family goddess of the Kalahandi Kings
- **Chhatra Jatra** or **Chatar Jatra** or **Chatar Yatra** are meant to celebrate the Vijaya utsav with cheerful heart and splendid display.
- The festival is being celebrated during the Mahastami of Durga puja festival.
- The ritual practice of Khonds (Adivasis of Kalahandi Districts) Nabakalevar (the renewal of post-worship) is also performed during the festival
- During this festival, the idol of Goddess Manikeshwari is taken to Jena Khal on the outskirts of the town, and after the performance of secret rituals, the deity returns to her abode. **The return journey is known as Chatar Yatra.**
- Lakhs of devotees from Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and West Bengal participate in the festival.
- A three kilometre main thoroughfare, and nearby lanes and by-lanes, turn red with animal blood. On this occasion, almost every family has an animal or bird to sacrifice.

Odisha High Court order on animal sacrifice

This year, the Orissa High Court had ordered a **ban on animal sacrifice**. “No person including the State shall be allowed to sacrifice any animal or bird during ‘Chatar Yatra’ festival on the public road or in and around the precincts of the temple,” the Orissa HC had ordered while acting on a public interest litigation.

“God is the creator of the universe. He has created the human beings, animals, birds and all the species on this earth. The animals and birds breathe like us. They also have a right to live in harmony with human beings and nature. Like the parents cannot tolerate to see the blood of their children, deity cannot be pleased by sacrificing the animals,” it observed.