

Kashi Tamil Sangamam

November 16, 2022

In news– A month-long Kashi-Tamil Sangamam in Varanasi has begun recently.

What is the Kashi Tamil Sangamam event?

- The month-long Kashi Tamil Sangamam, which began in Varanasi recently **celebrates the many aspects of the historical and civilisational connection between India's North and South.**
- Some 2,400 people from Tamil Nadu will be taken to Varanasi in groups for visits that will last eight days and will include, besides an immersive local experience, trips to Ayodhya and Prayagraj.
- **The broader objective is to bring the two knowledge and cultural traditions (of the North and South) closer,** create an understanding of our shared heritage and deepen the people-to-people bond between the regions.
- **This is in sync with the National Education Policy, 2020** which emphasises on nurturing a generation that is modern and in sync with the 21st-century mindset, while being rooted in the Indian culture and ethos.
- **BHU and IIT-Madras are knowledge partners for the event, and the Ministries of Culture, Tourism, Railways, Textiles and Food Processing have been roped in as stakeholders,** besides the government of Uttar Pradesh and the Varanasi administration.
- Educationist Chamu Krishna Shastry, chairman of the Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti under the Ministry of Education that proposed the Sangamam.
- The connection between the traders dealing in silk saris and textiles from Banaras and Kanchipuram, and architectural, culinary, and other kinds of connections are evident.

History of ties between Kashi and Tamil Nadu-

- The connection between Kashi and the Tamil region is deep and old.
- Legend has it that King Parakrama Pandya, who ruled over the region around Madurai in the 15th century, wanted to build a temple to Lord Shiva, and he travelled to Kashi to bring back a lingam.
- While returning, he stopped to rest under a tree – but when he tried to continue his journey, the cow carrying the lingam refused to move.
- Parakrama Pandya understood this to be the Lord's wish, and installed the lingam there, a place that came to be known as Sivakasi.
- For devotees who could not visit Kashi, the Pandyas had built the Kasi Viswanathar Temple in what is today Tenkasi in southwestern Tamil Nadu, close to the state's border with Kerala.
- Much later, another king, Adhivir Ram Pandyan, after returning from a pilgrimage to Kashi, constructed another Shiva temple in Tenkasi in the 19th century
- Sant Kumara Gurupara from Thoothukudi district had negotiated with the princely state of Kashi to get a place for the consecration of Kedarghat and Vishvesvaralingam in Varanasi. He also composed Kashi Kalambagam, a collection of grammar poems on Kashi.
- People from Rameswaram would take a dip in the Koti teertha (in the temple) before visiting Kashi for darshan; and they would bring back (Ganga) water from Kashi for abhiseka at the temple in Rameswaram.
- Only this would complete their pilgrimage at a time when it took six months to travel between Kashi and Rameswaram.