

Kumbh Mela at Haridwar

March 23, 2021

In news : Recently, the Union government warned of upsurge in the number of cases of Covid-19 following Kumbh Mela at Haridwar

What is Kumbhmela?

- Kumbh Mela is made up of two-words Kumbh and Mela. The name Kumbh is derived from the immortal pot of nectar which the Devatas and the demons fought over (Samudra Manthan) as described in ancient Vedic scriptures.
- Mela, as we all are familiar, is a Sanskrit word meaning 'gathering' or 'to meet'.
- It is believed that a few drops from the Kumbh fell at four places: Prayag, Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nasik.
- Kumbh Mela (the festival of the sacred Pitcher) is the largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims on earth, during which participants bathe or take a dip in a sacred river.
- Devotees believe that by bathing in the Ganges one is freed from sins liberating her/him from the cycle of birth and death.
- According to Hindu mythology, Kumbh Mela is an important and religious festival which is celebrated four times over the course of 12 years

Name of the places where it is held on rotation basis

Kumbh Mela is held every 12 years in rotation at the four holy places namely:

1. Haridwar (river Ganga)
2. Prayag (Triveni sangam of Yamuna, Ganga and Saraswati)
3. Ujjain (river Kshipra)and
4. Nasik (river Godavari).

The mela returns to each location after a span of 12 years.

A brief note on Haridwar Kumbh Mela

- It is the largest religious congregation of pilgrims on earth witness millions of people including ascetics, saints, sadhus, kalpavasis and visitors irrespective of their caste, creed and gender.
- Kumbh 2021 is unique due to its astrological significance and will be organized a year earlier in Haridwar as sun would enter in Aries and Jupiter in Aquarius in 2021 instead of 2022 making this mega event unique and auspicious.
- Kumbh 2021 is planned to cover four districts of Uttarakhand; Haridwar, Dehradun, Tehri Garhwal and Pauri Garhwal
- The last Kumbh Mela organized in Haridwar in 2010

Ceremonies during Kumbh Mela

During the Kumbh Mela, a number of ceremonies take place; the traditional procession of **Akharas called 'Peshwai'** on elephant backs, horses and chariots, the shining swords and rituals of Naga Sadhus during '**Shahi Snaan'**', and many other cultural activities that attract millions of pilgrims to attend the Kumbh Mela.

UNESCO recognition

The Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage under UNESCO has inscribed 'Kumbhmela' on the representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity during its 12th session held at Jeju, South Korea from 4-9 December 2017.

Other types of Kumbh Mela

Apart from the above, there are three other types of Kumbh they are:

1. The Ardha Kumbh Mela: This is held in Haridwar and Prayagraj once in 6 years.
2. The Purna Kumbh Mela: This is held only at Prayagraj once in every 12 years.
3. The Maha Kumbh Mela: This is held only in Prayagraj once in every 144 years.