

Onam festival

September 10, 2022

In news- Ten day harvest festival Onam was observed from August 30 to September 8 2022.

History of Onam-

- As per the Malayalam calendar, Onam is celebrated on the day of Thiruvonam nakshatram (Shravana asterism) in the month of Chingam.
- **The festival is celebrated with much enthusiasm with music, feasting, and the most famous being the boat races(Vallamkali or the snake boat race is organized in Alappuzha) in the backwaters of Kerala.**
- According to Vaishnava mythology, **it is believed that King Mahabali established his rule over the three worlds after defeating the Gods.**
- **Though a demon, King Mahabali** was known to be generous and kind to his subjects, and **his reign is regarded as the golden era in Kerala.**
- The king's popularity made other Gods unhappy and they sought Lord Vishnu's help in a battle against him.
- **Lord Vishnu agreed to help and took the form of a poor dwarf Brahmin** (his Vamana avatar from the Dasavatara) and tricked King Mahabali and visited Mahabali, asking the king to grant him three wishes.
- The Brahmin requested the property right over a piece of land that measures "three paces", to which Mahabali agreed.
- The dwarf suddenly grew in size and covered everything Mahabali ruled over in just two steps. For the third step, Mahabali offered his head.
- **Impressed by Mahabali's devotion and good deeds, Vishnu allowed him to return to earth once a year – it is this annual visit that is celebrated with much fanfare as Onam.**

- It is also a rice harvest festival.
- **Grand feasts are prepared on this occasion, known as 'onasadya'**, and are hugely popular among non-Malayalees. It comprises 13 dishes.
- A characteristic sweet dish called 'payasam' is a must during Onam.
- Celebrations are marked by various cultural programmes that include traditional dance, music, and games that are collectively called Onakalikal.
- All this is done to show King Mahabali that his people are prosperous and happy.