

Puri Jagannath Rath Yatra

July 13, 2021

In news

The 144th Rath Yatra of Puri Jagannath was held recently.

About Rath Yatra of Puri Jagannath

- Rath Yatra is a festival associated with Lord Jagannath held at Puri annually in the state of Odisha.
- Rath Yatra is **celebrated on Dwitiya Tithi during Shukla Paksha of Ashada** month (June-July).
- This is the second time that Rath Yatra is being held devotee-less.
- The celebrations for Lord Jagannath's annual Ratha Yatra began in Puri recently with the **'Naba Jauban Darshan' of the sibling deities**, during which they are worshipped after spending 14 days in 'Anasara Ghara' or quarantine.
- **The Trinity – Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra(sister of both)** – during the 'Naba Jouban Darshan' reappeared after spending 14 days in the 'Aasara Ghara'
- During the festival, Majestic chariots of sibling deities Lord Balabhadra, Lord Jagannath and Devi Subhadra were towed by 'sevayatas' (traditional priests).
- Hordes of servitors carry the huge wooden idols from the temple swaying them rhythmically in a ritual described as 'pahandi'
- Lord Jagannatha is considered as a form of Lord Vishnu. Jagannatha literally means Lord of the Universe.
- Every year the **Ratha Yatra begins with a visit to Gundicha Mata Temple** to honour the devotion of Queen Gundicha, wife of the **legendary King Indradyumna** who **built the Puri Jagannatha temple.**

- The fourth day after Ratha Yatra is celebrated as Hera Panchami when Goddess Lakshmi, the consort of Lord Jagannatha, visits Gundicha temple in search of Lord Jagannatha.
- After resting eight days in Gundicha temple Lord Jagannatha returns to his main abode.
- This day is known as **Bahuda Yatra or Return Yatra**.
- Lord Jagannatha returns to his main abode just before Devshayani Ekadashi when Lord Jagannatha goes to sleep for four months.

Unique features the Puri chariots

- The three chariots of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhdra are newly constructed every year with wood of specified trees like phassi, dhausa, etc.
- They are customarily brought from the ex-princely state of Dasapalla by a specialist team of carpenters who have hereditary rights and privileges for the same.
- The logs are traditionally set afloat as rafts in the river Mahanadi.
- The three chariots are decorated as per the unique scheme prescribed and followed for centuries stand on the Bada Danda, the Grand Avenue.
- The chariots are lined across the wide avenue in front of the temple close to its eastern entrance, which is also known as the Sinhadwara or the Lion's Gate.
- Around each of the chariots are nine Parsva devatas, painted wooden images representing different deities on the chariots' sides. Each chariot has a charioteer (Sarathi) and four horses.

Sri Jagannath temple

- The Jagannath Temple in Puri was called the "White Pagoda".
- The temple is a part of Char Dham (Badrinath, Dwaraka, Puri, Rameswaram) pilgrimages that a Hindu is expected

to make in one's lifetime.

- The idol of Jagannatha is made of wood which is ceremoniously replaced in every twelve or nineteen years by using sacred trees.
- The temple is believed to be constructed in the 12th century by King Anatavarman Chodaganga Deva of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty.
- Jagannath Puri temple is called 'Yamanika Tirtha' where, according to the Hindu beliefs, the power of 'Yama', the god of death has been nullified in Puri due to the presence of Lord Jagannath.

Extra

reading:

<https://journalsofindia.com/sri-jagannath-temple/>