

Raja Parba Festival, Odisha

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In news

The Prime Minister has greeted the people of Odisha on the special festival of Raja Parba which is observed from June 15th to 18.

About Raja Parba festival

- Also called as Mithuna Sankranti, it's a three-day-long festival of womanhood celebrated in Odisha
- The second day of the festival signifies beginning of the solar month of Mithuna from, which the season of rains start
- On this day, unmarried girls wear new dresses, play cards and make merry
- During this period, it is believed that Mother Earth menstruates first three days and prepares herself for future agricultural activities with the arrival of monsoon
- The people of Odisha don't do any kind of agricultural activity like ploughing or sowing as it is believed mother earth goes through rejuvenation.
- Four days and their names:
 1. The first day is called Pahili Raja.
 2. The second day is Mithuna Sankranti.
 3. The third day is Bhudaaha or Basi Raja.
 4. The fourth day is called Vasumati gadhua/snana(ceremonial bath of Bhudevi), in which ladies bathe the grinding stone as a symbol of Bhumi with turmeric paste and adore on flower sindoor etc.
- The term Raja has come from Rajaswala (meaning a menstruating woman) and during the medieval period the festival became more popular as an agricultural holiday

remarking the worship of Bhudevi, who is the wife of Lord Jagannath

- During the three days, women are given a break from household work and time to play indoor games.
- Girls adorn traditional saree and apply alatha on foot. All people abstain from walking barefoot on the earth.

Pitha on Wheels

- Mithuna Sankranti festival is synonymous with varieties of cakes (pithas).
- Keeping this in view, Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) launched a special programme named 'Pitha on Wheels'.
- During this festival, Pitha on wheels will reach every house in Bhubaneswar.
- Different kinds of pithas such as 'Poda Pitha', 'Manda', 'Kakara', 'Arisha', 'Chakuli' and 'Chandrakala' have been made available on 'Pitha on Wheels' (kiosks on wheels).
- These vehicles selling traditional cakes have been stationed in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Sambalpur.