



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Ratha Saptami

Published On: 30-01-2023

Why is in news? Participants at a mass Surya Namaskar organised to mark Ratha Saptami in Mysuru

It was celebrated on **28 January** across the country.

Ratha Saptami or Rathasapthami is a **Hindu festival** that falls on the seventh day (Saptami) in the bright half (Shukla Paksha) of the Hindu month Maagha.

It is symbolically represented in the **form of the Sun God Surya** turning his Ratha (Chariot) drawn by seven horses (representing seven colours) towards the northern hemisphere, in a north-easterly direction.

It **also marks the birth of Surya** and hence celebrated as **Surya Jayanti** (the Sun-god's birthday).

Ratha Saptami is **symbolic of the change of season to spring** and the **start of the harvesting season**.

For most Indian farmers, it is an auspicious beginning of the New Year.

The festival is observed **by all Hindus in their houses and in innumerable temples** dedicated to Surya, across India.

Ratha Saptami **also marks the gradual increase in temperature across South India** and awaits the arrival of spring, which is later heralded by the **festival of Gudi Padwa, Ugadi or the Hindu lunar New Year day** in the month of Chaitra.

There are **Surya temples all across India** where Ratha Saptami is fervently celebrated. However, the most famous one is the **World Heritage Site of the Konarak Sun Temple, in Konark, Odisha**.

Besides Konark, there is another sun temple in Odisha, the **Biranchinarayan Temple, Buguda, Ganjam District**.

There are **sun temples in Modhera, Gujarat**, created by **king Bhimdev of the Chaulukya dynasty**, in Arasavalli, **Andhra Pradesh** and in **clusters of Navagraha temples in Tamil Nadu and Assam**.

The **Sun Temple at Martand (Jammu and Kashmir)** and **Sun Temple of Multan** are temples, which were destroyed during Muslim conflicts in the past.

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