

BRIEF PROFILE OF DR. A.S. VISHNU BHARATH PRESENT :

- * Practicing Senior Chartered Accountant from past 40 years.
- * Managing Committee Member of FKCCI from 15 years.
- * Chairman - PHF Co. (P) Ltd - Transit Living Service Apartments
- * President - Karnataka Federation of United Nations UNESCO
- * President: Vasavi VedhaNidhi Trust & Sanskrit School.
- * President - Karnataka Service Apartment Providers Association
- * President - Paraspara Charitable Trust.
- * President- Vasavi C.A. Charitable Trust - VCAT
- * Chairman: ADR Committee, FKCCI, Bangalore.
- * Chairman - NMKRV Degree College of RV Trust.
- * Trustee: RSS Trust - RV Institutions.
- * Trustee: GMR Infra Welfare Trust.
- * Trustee: RSS Trust - RV Institutions.
- * Donor Trustee - Vasavi Sarada Ladies Hostel
- * Trustee - AcharyaPatashala Trust (APS Trust)
- * Member - Tax Advisory Committee of Southern India
- * Member - Fiscal Laws Committee (FICCI), New Delhi

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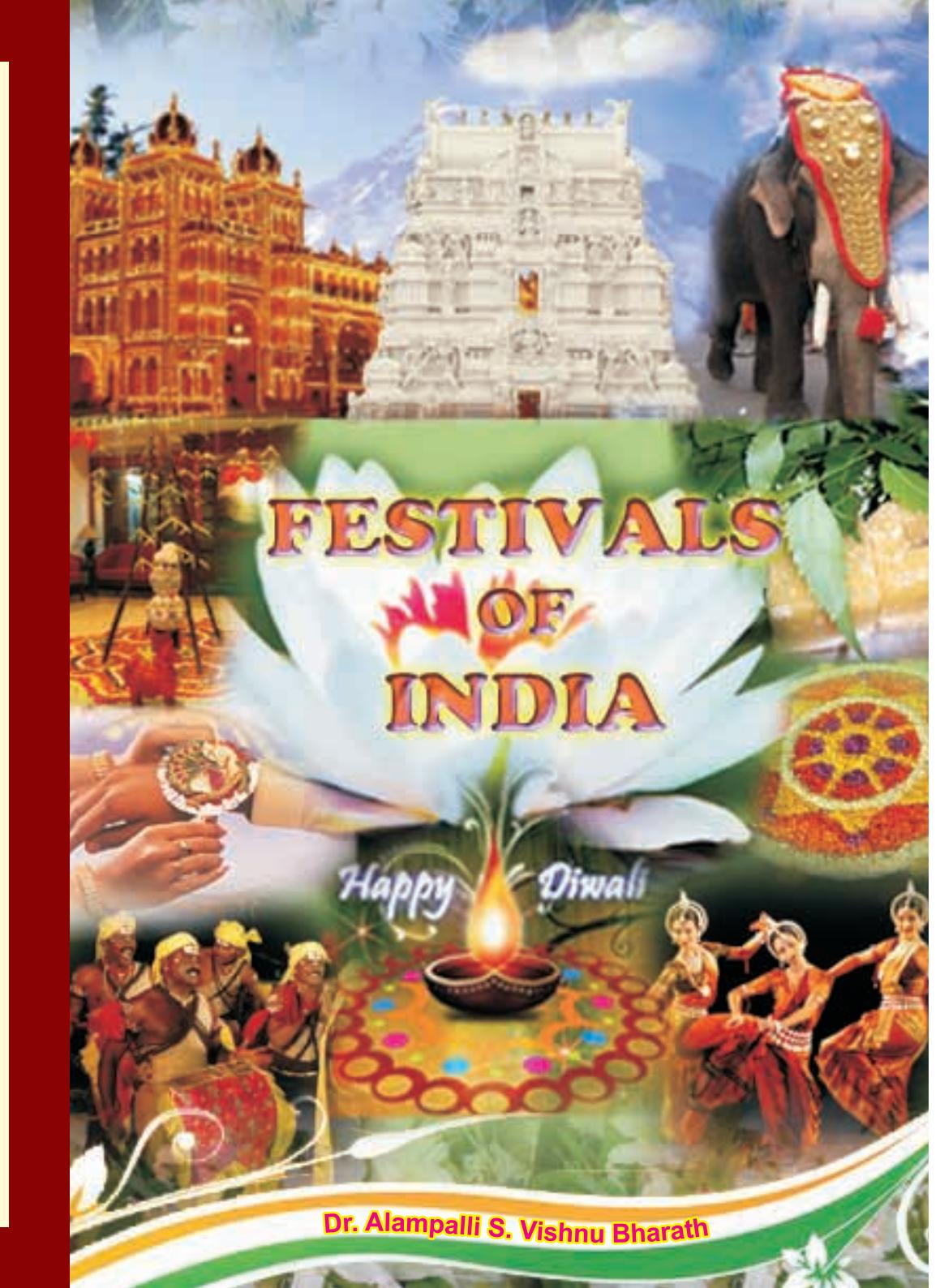
- * Chairman - Southern India Regional Council of Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. Recipient of Best Region Award of ICAI.
- * President - Karnataka State Chartered Accountants Association
- * Chairman - Bangalore Branch of SIRC of ICAI. Received Best Branch **Award of ICAI.**
- * Chairman - Central Taxes Committee of FKCCI
- * Member - Tax Payers Committee, CCIT, Bangalore
- * Member - Board of Studies, ICAI, New Delhi - participated for change in subjects and introducing new schemes.

AWARDS :

- * RASHTREEYA UDYOG Award from International Economic Forum
- * VIKAS JYOTI Award from All India National Unity Organization
- * VASAVI SIRI Award from Vysya Community Association (Okkoota)
- * Kannada Siri: Karnataka Sahitya Parishath.
- * MANGALORE UNIVERSITY has conferred HONORARY DOCTORATE For Social Service & Contribution to Society.

AUTHORED :

- * PERSONAL GUIDE TO INCOME TAX Published by FKCCI, Bangalore
- * A WOMAN'S WORLD - Released by Her Excellency Smt V.S. RAMADEVI, Governor of Karnataka
- * A MAN'S WORLD - All about how to achieve success
- * KNOW MORE - KNOWLEDGE IS STRENGTH
- * 'ARYA VYSYA' - a book dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi
- * LIFE IS PRECIOUS - All about Life and how to lead Life.



Dr. Alampalli S. Vishnu Bharath



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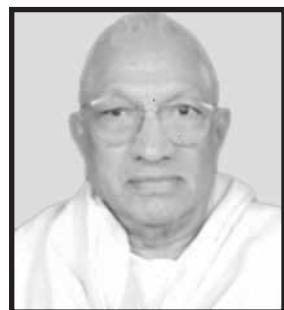
-: FOREWORD :-

Dr.A.S.Vishnu Bharath, who recently received an honorary doctorate from Mangalore University for social service and contribution to society, is known to me from his childhood. I found him very promising from his very early days. Though a chartered accountant by profession his interests are diverse and he has involved himself in several social and religious organizations. He is ever active and keeps himself busy in one or the other constructive works. He is also a good orator and a writer. He has nine little books, written on diverse subjects, to his credit. These require lot of interest and patience to research on the subject and also a talent to project the information in an interesting way.

Now the 10th book of his is on hand and the subject is “Festivals of India”. I have gone through the book at random and found it to be informative and also interesting. Why and how the festivals are celebrated is the main theme, dealt by him and definitely any one going through this book will get a host of information which will give reason and rhyme in celebrating the festivals.

I wish the writer would give many more such informative books on various subjects to enlighten the minds of the modern youth. I wish him good health, peace and prosperity so that he can continue his services to the society at large.

Sakala Narasimhulu Chetty
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FESTIVLAS OF INDIA:

PREFACE:

FESTIVALS make us rejoice and celebrate with great enthusiasm. Many a times we do not know the purpose and the history as to why and how it is celebrated.

Knowing the purpose and making others know gives immense joy. Festivals not only break routine work but also an occasion to be with family and meet friends, relatives & Well wishers. Festivals help every one in one or other way. Festivals help progress in multiple ways - economically, socially, politically etc., No other country in the entire world has such a wonderful culture as India. Indians should be proud and be grateful to the elders who made this kind of life which is very interesting, precious and enjoyable. I have made a sincere attempt in this book to bring out as much information as I could gather but I am sure there is lot more to add.

I am indeed very grateful to Sri Sakala Narashimalu Chetty, who is a godly person and a man who knows everything about our Indian Festivals, for forwarding this book to your hand.

Regards,

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FESTIVALS: India is a land of great diversity. It described as a land of many religions and innumerable languages, it might well be described as a land of festivals as well. Indians love celebrating. Every little occasion from the harvesting of crops, welcoming the spring or rain, to seeing the full moon lends itself to joyous celebrations splashed with colors, music, folk dances and songs. Even the birthdays of divine beings are celebrated by connecting them with particular festivals.

The Indian calendar is one long procession of festivals. These are as varied in origin as they are large in number. India is a multilingual, multi-religious, multi-cultural nation.

The homes are neatly decorated, new dresses are worn for every occasion, prayers offered to Gods, and lot of sweets and goodies are cooked. Most of these festivals are common to most parts of India however they may be known by different names in different parts of the country. Different cultures also mean that different rituals are followed.

Indian festivals are celebrated according to the solar and lunar calendars. Consequently, dates & months may vary accordingly.

Being a highly spiritual country, festivals are at the heart of people's lives in India. The numerous and varied festivals that are held throughout the year offer a unique way of seeing Indian culture at its best. The popular festivals in India will provide you with a truly memorable experience.

Festivals are celebration of life, festivals for the general public to bring peace and happiness. They break the monotony of life. Festivals also bring co-operation and unity among the people. As life has become more complex, festivals help us come together with family, friends, and well wishers.

festival submerged in the spirit of unity and harmony. It is a custom to send wishes to your relatives and associates on the occasion of the festival. This brings people closer and gives them an opportunity to share their feelings with each other. The traditional method of greeting someone is through a hug and

exchange of sweets. Apart from this, there are a number of ways through which you can send wishes. People send messages through greeting cards, e-mail, mobile phones as well as online forums to greet each other. It has become an ideal means of connecting and relating to each other for most of the people who are staying out of their home towns.

Public holidays in India tend to be observed on a strictly regional basis. The only holidays to be observed throughout India are Republic Day, Independence Day and Gandhi Jayanti. In addition, there are a number of festivals and fairs that are also observed in some States as holidays. India presents a cultural potpourri of number of religions with their own festivals and celebrations but the four major religions followed in India are Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Sikhism in the descending order. There are a number of regional festivals which are celebrated in particular areas only. Bright colors, brightly lit religious places, illuminated houses, sweets and traditional dresses and dances and unwavering enthusiasm are the characteristics of all the festival holidays in India. Cuisine, dresses and ornaments, especially of the Indian women, with the profusion of golden, red and yellow colors, cultural and traditional performances and music, chariot and car procession of the deities and interesting folklores give the Indian festivals their universal appeal. The concept of universal brotherhood encompasses all the festivals of India and the vibrant colors, warm hospitality and infectious buoyant spirit of the Indians attract people from all over the world to take part in the Indian fairs and festivals.

The tradition of festivals evolved from the yagna ceremonies performed by rishis in Vedic times. They retained the same fundamental sentiments of appeasing and honoring God.

As said, India is a land of festivals and fairs and also a land of great diversity. It described as a land of many religions and innumerable languages,

HINDUISM, ISLAM, CRISTANITY, SIKHISM, JAINISAM & BUDDISM

HINDUISM : Hinduism is often described as a religion of fasts, feasts and festivals. A Hindu is a follower of Hinduism. Hinduism is believed to be one of the world's oldest organized religions. Hinduism is the world's third largest religion with more than a billion followers. Majority of Hindu people live in India and Nepal. Nowadays large Hindu populations can be found in various parts of the world, also hinduism has no single prophet, no single scripture, and not any one set of religious rites. Most Hindus worship one or more deities, believe in rebirth and value the practice of meditation.

Hindu sacred texts are regarded as the most ancient religious texts. The primary sacred texts of Hinduism are the Vedas: Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda. Most popular Hindu scriptures are the Mahabharata, Bhagavad Gita and Ramayan.

"When you hear about the Self, meditate upon the Self,
and finally realize the Self...
you come to understand everything in life."

All Hindu festivals have a deep spiritual import or high religious significance. All great Hindu festivals have religious, social and hygienic elements in them. In every festival there is bathing in the morning before sunrise in the river or tank or well. Every individual will have to do some Japa, prayer, Kirtan, recitation of Sanskrit verses and meditation.

VISHNU : One of the 'trinity' known as the preserver, bluish in complexion symbolising 'Infinity' having taken Ten avatars (incarnations) – Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parashuram, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, and Kalki, the yet to appear. Important Temples – Bhadrinath, Dwaarka, Jaggannath, Tirupathi etc.,

SHIVA : One of the trinity, the destroyer and the rejuvenator of the Cosmos, known as Mahadev. There exists 12 Jyothirlingas (Swayambhu). The information would be incomplete without the existence of Ganesh and Karthikeya as they are inseparable form of Shiva Shakti. Important Jyothirlingas – Kedarnath, Ramashwar, Somnath, Vishwanath etc.,

SHAKTI : The Supreme power that arose when all the Gods pooled in their energies and elements at one place, more popularly known as Mata. There are 52 Shakti Peets. Important Temples – Kali, Kamakya, Meenakshi, Vaishnodevi etc.

SIKH : Founded by Gurunanak in the Fifteenth Century, preached that all religions taught the same truth. Important Temples – Damdama Saheb, Golden Temple, Harmandir Takht, Hemkunt Saheb, Nanak Zeera etc.,

JAIN : Jainism started by Adinath. Further popularised by Vardhaman Mahavira in the sixth Century, spread the message of Ahimsa, Satya, Astheya and Aparigraha. This sect is divided into two, the Digambaras – monks living nude and the Shvetambaras, clad in white. Important Temples – Dilwara, Dharmasthal, Girnar, Palithana, Pawapuri etc.,

BUDH :Gautam Buddha, born as a Prince, renounced worldly life in search of eternal peace, attained enlightenment after six years of meditation, realised and taught that the great peace is within one's own heart and spread Buddhism all over the world. Important Temples – Amaravathi, Bodhgaya, Sarnath, Vaishali etc.,

ISLAM : Founded by Prophet Mohammad in 570-632 AD. The second largest religion in the world. Islam was spread in India in the Eighth century. The Quran is the sacred book. Important Mosques, Dargah– Jama Masjid, Macca Masjid, Bande Nawaz Darga, Haji Ali Darga etc., The world Islam means Submitting one's will to asmitting god has sent about 1,24,000

prophets to the world to guide the people at different period of time and different area of the world. All of them professed the same Islamic principle. “The creator of all the universe is only one and he has got no images, no parallel, no father, no mother, he is no created nor begotten. Nothing is equal to him. He is eternal and no death to him.

CHRISTIANS : Historically Christianity came to India with the arrival of St. Francis Xavier in 1542. There are two sects, the Catholics and the Protestants. Bible is the sacred book. Important Churches – St. Francis Xaviers at Goa, Medak, Mother Mary at Vellankanni, etc.

OTHERS : Religious sects like Parsis, Jews, Ismailis etc., Temples of Navagrugas, Sai Baba, Shyam Baba, Raghavendraswamy, Sun and Shani etc.

Festivals are special times of celebrations. Most of them takes place once a year and many last one or more days. Many feasts and festivals are in honor of great leaders, saints or God's or spirits. Others celebrate harvest, the beginning of a season or of a year or the anniversary of historical events. Every day of the year there is a festival celebrated in some part of the country. Most of the feasts and festivals are joyous occasions, but some involve prayers, Pujas, meditation, mourning, repentance, fast etc.,

Most of the important festivals, the adults take off from work, holiday for children, houses are decorated, new clothes are worn, wearing traditional dresses, exchange gifts, exchange greetings, exchange Compliments, special meals with sweets, dancing and parades,

The festivals are not only religious but also non-religious events. A number of these festivals are common to most parts of India. However, they may be called by different names in various parts of the country or may be celebrated in a different fashion.

The festivals of India rebound the culture and mythology of its great historical past. The country comes to life with its oscillating colors, music, dance and festivity through out the year.

Indian fairs and festivals invariably are the center of attraction when it comes to tourism. Often tourists synchronize their visit to India with the popular Indian fairs and festivals. Due to heritage and traditions in the country the festivals have become the spirits of Indian edification and society India has grand celebrations in its store for every religious occasion. The festivals are celebrated for many reasons either for rejuvenating the legend and the morality tales or welcoming the change of seasons or for meditating to the almighty.

The festival celebration in India never ends and it is around the corner in every season. There is an incessant festivity, delight and bonhomie in this land. Being a multi religious country all the festivals are celebrated with same enthusiasm and spirit. If there is Diwali for the Hindus then there is Eid for the Muslims and Christmas for the Christians. Tourists are wonder struck with the sovereignty of Indian festivals.

Indian festivals mainly have a religious message. Apart from rituals and prayers, festivals are convoy with fasts or feasts. In urban areas, festivals attract large crowds from neighboring towns and villages.

In India, festivals are marked by warmth of participation. Color and festivity also provide an occasion for shopping when overnight small markets appear from nowhere. These sell trinkets, local souvenirs and colourful apparel. Dance and music are essential ingredients. Exotic delicacies are a culinary delight.

Historically : it makes the people know more about their history.

Religiously : The people believe in the existence of the ancestral spirit, hence they ask for forgiveness of offence

committed, petition the supernatural powers for material prosperity, peace and long life. There is continuity between the dead and the living.

Socially : It serves as reunion of family members, relatives and love ones. At this time, quarrels and misunderstandings are settled. It provides a forum where marriages among people within a particular geographical area can be arranged.

The youth at this stage get the chance of arranging marriages, besides, the period is characterised by merry making and entertainments

Economically : It brings most of the citizens together. This helps them to initiate development projects and to contribute financially towards these projects. Visitors who also come to witness the festival contribute economically to the locality.

Politically : It gives the people chance to assess the efficiency of their chiefs. Most citizens who left the town for so long a time return to see whether the traditional ruler (the chief) had implemented development projects agreed upon. Homage is paid to the chiefs. Sub-chiefs also renew their allegiance to their immediate boss.

Government ministers even take advantage of the festival which has brought a lot of people (Citizens) together to announce development projects, government policies to the people and to educate them on important issues affecting the locality, town or an area.

Culturally : The rich cultural heritage of the people is usually being manifested during festivals. Ghanaian hospitality can also be seen in this regard. The way the people speak and relate to others portray their culture of friendliness.

Morally : It strengthens all to play their roles as good citizens. It provides a forum where the one must be more effective, morally upright, and accountable to the people. It again reminds

the youth to lead morally acceptable life so that, they may grow to become good people, whose lives are worthy of emulation by the future generation.

Indian Festivals are much more than celebrations. They are windows into the history of rich Hindu legends. They reveal the mind and philosophy of a nation through the different ages. Festivals have a cultural and social aspect which many feel transcends even their spiritual significance. They bring people together in friendship and love, and help heal broken relationships.

Festivals in January:

NEW YEAR : As done all over the world, New year is celebrated in a very grand scale, the previous night which is closeing day of the year, the celebrations begin and end up in new year. The people greet each other and it is celebrated like a festival and all round there will be a festive atmosphere.

LOHRI : Lohri marks the culmination of winter, and is celebrated on the 13th day of January in the month of Paush or Magh, a day before Makar Sankranti. Lohri celebrates fertility and the spark of life. People gather round the bonfires, throw sweets, puffed rice and popcorn into the flames, sing popular songs and exchange greetings.



Makar Sankranti / Pongal :

The day it changes from **Dhanurasi to Makara Rasi**. These are celebrated predominantly in the southern part of India. This harvest festival marks the commencement of the sun's journey from the Northern Hemisphere to Southern hemisphere. Popularly known as **UTHRAYANA**. People take dips in rivers and worship the sun. Makar Sankranti is also celebrated by the flying of kites. People wear new clothes, visit temples, do charity and visit friends and family to distribute sweets. Pongal is a three day winter harvest

festival and one of the major events. This festival started from the month of Thai, the name of the festival is ensuing from Pongal, reaping of paddy is done. Using the new rice, the recipe "pongal" is made and offered to God. A picture of the chariot is drawn in an open space when the sun arrives. And a small sun is drawn at the center of the chariot. Turmeric sprigs and sugarcane are placed in the pooja, and pooja is done on the chariot. Then the dishes are offered to God. Once the pooja is over, every one in the house takes a small amount of Pongal and sprinkles all over the house. Pongal is a festival when god is praised with a simple faith and honesty. Old vices are all washed out and all that is good is welcomed in this New Year.

※ **Greetings** : "Warm thoughts reach out, to all those who are held dear, as the auspicious festival that marks the beginning of the harvest season, draws near. As the festival of Pongal is here, hoping it ushers in good days, that are filled with happiness and cheer, and the fervor it symbolizes, stays with you throughout the year. With best wishes."

※ "As you celebrate the festival of Pongal, with a lot of fervor and cheer, this warm greeting comes your way, with a world of good wishes for every joy and happiness."

※ "Hope this festival marks the beginning of a harvest season, that is happy and cheerful and one which brings with it good luck and prosperity for always. Greetings on Pongal"

※ "Sending your way, warm greetings on the auspicious occasion of Pongal and wishing you life's best now and in all the days to come. As you joyfully celebrate the festival of Pongal and welcome the harvest season, this greeting is being sent your way, to wish you everything, that the occasion is meant to bring. Have a happy Pongal"

※ "Wishing that this festival is one, which brings good luck and prosperity and hoping that it is joyous, and fills your days

ahead with happiness. Have a wonderful Pongal."

❖ "Wishing you a prosperous and joy, to last forever. Hope this special day marks, the start of a harvest season, that a happy and successful in every way and brings with it prosperity, good luck and moments to cherish."

❖ "Pongal is here, an occasion that marks joy and cheer, and brings along everything that's best. May the festival of the harvest season, be one that brings along with it, all that's best and everything you're so deserving of. Have a memorable Pongal."

Republic Day : Celebrating the anniversary of India's establishment as a Republic 26th January 1950, the capital city New Delhi and all the state capitals resound with the beating of drums, grandest parades, displaying India's strength in terms of the armed forces, Air, Navy, weapons, Cultural, Art, Tradition etc., These are followed by floats and dancers from all parts of the country in Capital city and from all Districts in State capitals.

Festivals in February :



Maha Shivratri : Maha Shivaratri is always a moonless night in the month of February. The Lord Shiva who is destroyer, has performed the Tandava also called the dance of creation, preservation and destruction. This is a day of fasting dedicated to Lord Shiva, the third deity of the Hindu trinity. Religious people stay awake and chant prayers the whole night. In temples all across the country, bells ring, and sacred texts are chanted, traditional offerings of bellapatra, Ganga water and milk are offered to the Shiva lingam, which is phallic symbol of Lord Shiva.

According to ancient scriptures, Shiva manifests himself in the form of a huge flaming lingam known as Jyotirlinga on Shivratri. It is the duty of every worshipper to worship this lingam with at least one bilwa leaf.

To help the devotees to keep awake, stories or katha expounding the greatness of Shiva are organised, devotional hymns and songs sung and sacred texts recited. Shiva is worshipped to release the worshipper from the cycle of birth and rebirth. In certain parts, the festival is held for 15 days; the thirteenth day is observed as Herath, a day of fast followed by a family feast.

VALENTINE'S DAY : Saint Valentine Day is celebrated on the 14th of February. Celebrating love and affection between intimate companions. The people who are in love have a great day. Indians have also started following the western celebrations apart from their own which are very unique.

Festivals in March/ April:

MAHAVIR JAYANTHI : Jain festival in India, where the faithful pour coconut; sugar cane juice and other offerings on a huge statue of their ancient saint Bahubali: The Jains are known for their pacifism, which has deeply influenced other religions of India as well as the world.

Both the Digambara and the Shvetambara Jains observe the birthday of Lord Mahavir, the Jain Teerthankar, on 13th day of the bright half of the Chaithra month as Mahavir Jayanthi.

Though it is celebrated by Jains throughout the country, it is celebrated with great style and fervor in Rajasthan and Gujarat where the Jains are settled in large numbers. On this day Jain pilgrims from all over the country congregate at the ancient Jain shrines at Girnar and Palitana in Gujarat and at Mahavirji in Rajasthan, and Pawapuri, Vaishali in Bihar. Vaishali being the birthplace of Lord Mahavir, a grand festival is held here and it is known as Vaishali Mahotsava.

On this auspicious and holy day, grand chariot processions with the images of Mahavir are taken out. Rich ceremonies are held in the temples and fast and charities to the poor and the

needy are done. On this day the Jain scriptures are devotedly read and in some places big fairs are held.



HANUMAN JAYANTHI : Lord Hanuman is known to give quick solutions to problems. He is also known as Sankat Mochan or the remover of distress and affliction. There is hardly any place in North India where there is no temple for the Lord Hanuman. So, his birthday is celebrated with great devotion. On chaithra Shukla Purnima- full moon day, generally falling between 15th March and 15th April, Hanuman Jayanthi is celebrated all over the country.

Hanuman is believed to be the son of the monkey chieftain, Kesri and his wife Anjaani. He is also called Shankar- Suvan. It is widely held that during the great churning of the Oceans, the gods and the Demons began to fight over the ownership of the great "Amrita".

Lord Vishnu came in the form of a beautiful Lady to deviate the demons and let the gods have the Amrita. Lord Shankar was so much attracted to the Lady that he chased her and prematurely ejaculated. The sages and seers did not want to waste the seed of shankar that they collected it and implanted it in the womb of Anjani and thus Lord Hanuman was born.

The birth anniversary of Hanuman is celebrated with great devotion. Devotees visit Hanuman shrines, observe fasts, offer prayers and puja and read the Ramayana. On this day the idols of Hanuman are given a special coating of vermillion mixed with clarified butter. People offer "besan Ladoo" or "Boondi" as prasad and chant various hymns eulogizing his glory.



UGADHI : Yugadi or Ugadi is the first day of the Hindu calendar (first day of the first month, the Chaitra). It is believed that the creator Lord Brahma started creation on this day - "Chaitra Sudha Padhyami" or the Ugadi day. Also the

calculations of the great Indian Mathematician Bhaskaracharya proclaim the Ugadi day as the beginning of the New Year, New month and New day. The onset of spring also marks a beginning of new life with plants acquiring new life, shoots and leaves. The vibrancy of life and verdant fields, meadows full of colourful blossoms signify growth, prosperity and well-being.

With the coming of Ugadi, the naturally perfumed Jasmine's spread a sweet fragrance, which is perhaps unmatched by any other in nature's own creation. While large garlands of Jasmine are offered to Gods in homes and temples, Jasmine flowers woven in clusters adorn the braids of women. All over India, on this special occasions, the idol of a favorite deity in a chariot taken out in a grand procession. The festival is celebrated in different names in different places, Ugadhi, Padwa, Cheti Chand, Baisakhi, Pathandu etc.,

The tender leaves of neem mixed with jaggery are distributed on the occasion. The neem, extremely bitter in taste, and jaggery sweet and delicious, signify the two conflicting aspects of human life - joy and sorrow, called as 'Bevu-Bella' (a mixture of neem and jaggery in equal measure). This denotes the acceptance by man of all the sweet (jaggery) and bitter (neem) things that are in store for him in the coming year, with gratitude.

People look forward on this occasion to the Obattu, a sweet prepared, which comes in various varieties like Kai Obbattu, Bele Obbattu, Sakkare Obbattu etc.

yuga yugAdi kaLedarU yugAdi maraLi barutidehosa
varushake hisa harushava hosatu hosatu tarutide

✿ **GREETINGS:** On this Gudi Padwa, I sincerely wish that may all your dreams come true.

✿ Celebrate UGADHI with good spirits and Joy.

✿ Warm wishes for a very happy UGADHI

✿ Wishing you a very happy Gudi Padwa.

* Wishing you a happy and prosperous UGADHI

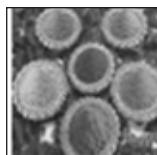
* Have a wonderful Gu di Padwa



BAISAKHI : Baisakhi, celebrated with joyous music and dancing, is New Year's Day in Punjab. It falls on April 13, though once in 36 years it occurs on 14th April. It was on this day that the tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, founded the Khalsa (the Sikh brotherhood) in 1699.

The Sikhs, therefore, celebrate this festival as a collective birthday.

Naba Barsha begins with prabhat pheris (early morning processions), songs and dance to welcome the New Year. A dip in a river or tank is another essential feature of the day's ritual. With powdered rice, housewives make beautiful designs called Alpana on the floor of their houses.



Holi : This is one of the most exuberant festivals and also the most colorful. The festival of Holi is celebrated on the last full moon day of the Lunar month. In Mathra, Brindavan, the festive season of Holi lasts upto 16 days. It heralds the advent of spring and the end of winters. It is celebrated with full excitement and fun by throwing colored water and powder at each other. It's a festival of colors epitomizing unity and harmony among the people. On this auspicious day of the Holi, men, women, children irrespective of caste and creed socialize and greet each other. The festival is also associated with the celebration of good harvest and fertility of the land. Holi is also associated with a special drink called Thandai which is made of almonds, pista, rose petals etc., On the eve of Holi, bonfires are built to symbolize the destruction of the evil demon Holika. Bonfires are also lit in memory of the miraculous escape that young Prahlad accomplished when demoness Holika carried him into the fire. Holika was burnt but Prahlad, a staunch devotee of Lord Vishnu, escaped without any injuries due to his unshakable devotion.



✿ **Greetings** : Red, Yellow, Green & Blue remind me that you are colourful & Vibrant, Happy Holi.

✿ My good wishes to add color to your Holi.

✿ May your prosperity dazzle like colourful flowers in full bloom.

✿ May Joy & Laughter brighten your every day, Happy Holi.

✿ Dipped in hues of love and trust has come the festival of Holi. Happy Holi!!

✿ Bright colors, water balloons, lavish gujiyas and melodious songs are the ingredients of perfect Holi. Wish you a very happy and wonderful Holi!

✿ May God gift you all the colors of life; colors of joy, colors of happiness, colors of friendship, colors of love and all the other colors, you want to paint your life with. Happy Holi!

✿ If wishes came in rainbow colors, then I would send the brightest one to say Happy Holi to You. Have a nice Day!

✿ A true and caring relation doesn't have to speak loud, a soft SMS is just enough to express the heartiest feelings. Enjoy the festival of Holi with lots of fun!

✿ Best wishes to you for a Holi filled with sweet moments and memories, to cherish for long. Happy Holi!

✿ A true and caring relation doesn't have to speak loud, a soft SMS is just enough to express the heartiest feelings. Enjoy the Indian festival of Holi with lots of fun.



KUMBH MELA : Millions of Hindus pilgrims and people from around the world converged for the Mahakumbh Mela - the great Indian bathing festival, to take a holy dip in the holy Ganges to wash away their sins. The Kumbh Mela takes place every March. However, the major Kumbh Mela occurs once in 12 years. Legend has it that Lord Vishnu saved the elixir (Amruth) from the demons and gave it to the vassal gods, called Devas, in a pot. The Devas rested the pot at each of the four cities of Allahabad, Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nasik. This is the reason why this festival is celebrated only at these four places.

Kumbh Mela is the greatest riverside religious festival of Hindus. It attracts millions of devotees and visitors from all backgrounds. Scores of ash-covered holy men and sages known as rishis and sadhus, in all shapes and sizes, flock to the centre of the Mela. The festival is rotated between four holy places of Hindus. The Sangam at Allahabad is the holiest as three rivers - Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati converge there. Thousands of devotees take a holy dip in the river that is believed to purge them of their sin.

GANGUR: This spring festival is held in March-April in honour of Gauri, the goddess of abundance.

Gauri or Parvati is the wife of Shiva or the destroyer in the Hindu trinity. She is the symbol of virtue and fidelity and as such is the mythological role model of married women.

Girls dress up in their finest clothes and pray for a good spouse of their choice, while married women do the same for the happiness and long life of their husbands. Girls worship the goddess throughout the preceding fortnight. Colourful images of Gauri, beautifully dressed and be jewelled are taken out in procession accompanied by the town band. A boat procession in Pichola is also taken out. Women balance brass pitchers on their heads and the lake adds to the gaiety of Udaipur celebrations. Thousands of people from the countryside come to take part in the procession of the Gangaur image from village to village. The tribal men and women have an opportunity to meet and interact freely and during this time, they select partners and marry by eloping. An unusual, romantic custom, which is sanctioned by the community.



RAMANAVAMI : Rama's birth day is celebrated as a day of great piety, with the chanting of prayers and the singing of bajans.

Lord Vishnu is worshipped in his human incarnation as Ram, the divine ruler of Ayodhya, on his birth anniversary known as Ram Navmi. It is widely celebrated in Ayodhya and Pondicherry, two places closely connected with the events of the Ramayana, to participate in Ram Navmi festivities. In Ayodhya, thousands of pilgrims converge at the Kanaka Bhawan Temple.

Colourful processions are held, which comprise brilliant floats of Ram, his wife Sita, Ram's loyal brother Lakshmana and Hanuman, Ram's monkey-general. Plays based on the Ramayana are also enacted. As the sun rises, a coconut is placed in a cradle and at midday (when Ram is said to have been born), a priest announces his birth.

Ram Navami, the birthday of Lord Rama is a major Hindu festival celebrated all over the country by all sects of the Hindu fold. Ram, the seventh incarnation of Lord Vishnu was born on the ninth day of the bright half of the lunar month chaitra.

The festival preparations start early in the morning with people taking bath in the holy waters and coming to the temple of Lord Ram. They keep fast till 12, noon, when the avatar is supposed to have taken place. People take "Phalagar" only in the afternoon. It consists of a sweet made of khoya, potatoes or calacosia made in any form without the use of Haldi, garlic and onion. All kinds of root vegetables are consumed and no green vegetables. Fruits are allowed. The puja is done in the noon by singing various slokas, hymns and ending with the distribution of Panjeeree, chranamrita, fruits and sweets.

In Ayodhya, the birthplace of Sri Ram, the temples are heavily decorated and great festivities take place. Ramayana is read and recited and great fairs are held here on that day. Ram Navami is also celebrated as the Vasanta Navarathri festival with the celebrations starting from the first lunar day of the bright half of the chithrai month.

Mahavir Jayanti : is a major Jain festival and commemorates the birth anniversary of Mahavira, the 24th and last Jain Tirthankar. It is a day of prayer. There are celebrations in all Jain temples and pilgrimages to Jain shrines.

Festivals in April/May :

Easter and Good Friday : Good Friday is observed in India in April every year, broadly on the pattern adopted worldwide. Christians from all stratas of society visit the Church to attend the Mass held on this occasion. Easter Sunday, which follows Good Friday is celebrated with much joy and gaiety. Processions are taken out in some parts of the country. Easter is a

prime event for the Christians, and Easter is antecedent by a 40 days. Fast, Easter eggs and Easter bunnies are the prime temptations of this holy event

Id-ul-Fitr or Ramazan Id : is a day of feasting and rejoicing as it marks the end of the Ramazan (Ramadan), the Muslim time of fasting.

VISHU : Denotes harvest season and also beginning of the New year. Vishukkani is an arrangement of vegetables, fruits, idols of Gods, jewellery, clothes etc.

MOTHERS DAY : on 2nd Sunday of the month of May, the mothers day is celebrated to express gratitude, love and affection to mother, motherhood, and maternal bonds. The mothers are given gifts and make them happy, spend the day with mother.

May - June :

Buddha Purnima : The Buddha's birth, enlightenment and his reaching nirvana are all celebrated on this day. It falls on the full moon night in the month of Vaisakha. It is also considered as the Birth, Nirvana(Enlightenment) and Parinirvana (Death). The Buddha is supposed to have gone through each of these experiences on the same day, but of different years. Pilgrims come from all over the world to Buddh Gaya to attend the Buddha Poornima Celebrations. The day is marked with prayer meets, sermons on the life of Gautham Buddha, religious discourses, continuous recitation of Buddhist scriptures, group meditation, processions, worship of the statue of Buddha and symposia. The Mahabodhi temple wears a festive look and it is decorated with colorful flags, and flowers. Gifts are distributed to the poor and needy symbolizing efforts to bring happiness.

SITALSASTHI : Sixth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Jyestha (Hindu Calender) Jun The marriage of Shiva and Parvati is celebrated as Sitalsasthi. It is celebrated as a carnival, in which people and artists from different walks of life participate, making it more beautiful and bringing out the true colour of life. Hindu's believe "Trinity" Brahman, Vishnu & Shiva.

NRIJALA EKADASHI : Ekadashi is believed to be the most pious day in a month in general for the devout Hindu. It

comes twice in a month according to the Hindu calendar. It falls on the eleventh day of the waxing of the moon and again on the eleventh day of the waning of the moon. The observance of the rituals connected with this day are said to wipe away the sins that may have been done in the past fortnight. The very religious observe a fast on both the Ekadashis. The regulations for the fasts are not very strict. Fruits, milk, sweets, tea and coffee can be taken along with water and a full meal can be taken in the night.

"Nirjala Ekadashi" comes in the Hindu month of Jyeshta, the 11th day of "Sukul Paksh" and comes sometimes in the month of June. The origin behind this festival goes like this; Bhim, the son of Kunti, was a great Gourmet. He hated the idea of fasting on every Ekadashi. So his mentors felt that atleast he should absolve of his sins and that it should be a total "Vrat".

In the morning of this day people get up early, take bath and wear ordinary clothes and perform puja. It is not a festive occasion but a sober one, where one is supposed to think of the humble and the poor. Everyone does the puja with water first and then with aipun and roli and lastly with rice, worshipping Ganesh and the appropriate deities.

FATHERS DAY : On 3rd Sunday of the month of June, the fathers day is celebrated, honoring father and celebrating fatherhood. Children express their respect and give gift and make father happy.

July/August:

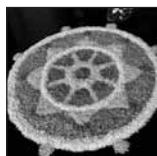


Naga Panchami : This festival is dedicated to Ananata, the serpent whose coils Lord Vishnu rests between universes. Offerings are made to snake images. Snakes are supposed to have the power over the monsoon rainfall and keep evil from homes.

The fifth day of Shravan, is dedicated to snake worship.

The Naag culture is quite common in India. Snake charmers start gathering snakes, thereby saving the lives of the young serpents. Live cobras or their images are worshipped.

Women worship Ananta the cosmic snake in temples. In Bengal, Manasa is worshipped as the goddess of snakes. Shiva is also worshipped since he wears snakes as ornaments. Snakes are fed milk and sweets, and released into the forests.



ONAM : Celebrated in the month of August / September, Onam is an important festival of Kerala. It celebrates the bounties of nature and a year of good harvest. Ten days of feasting, boat races,



song and dance are a part of the festivities. Kerala's most colourful festival, Onam celebrates the mythical King Mahabali and his golden rule. It welcomes the spirit of King Mahabali, and assures him that his people are happy and wish him well. The story says that gods feared the wise and good rule of Mahabali, the asura (demon) king, thinking that he might become too powerful. They sought the help of Vishnu or the preserver in the Hindu trinity, to curb Mahabali's power. Vishnu took the form of a dwarf called Vamana and approached Mahabali. Pleased with the dwarf brahmin's wisdom, Mahabali granted him a wish. The Vamana asked for three paces of land and the king agreed to it. Vishnu as the dwarf increased his size and with the first step covered the sky, blotting out the stars, and with the second, straddled the nether world. Realising that Vamana's third step will destroy the earth, Mahabali offered his head as the last step. He was pushed to the nether world but as Mahabali was so attached to his kingdom and the loved by his subjects, he was allowed by the gods to return once a year. Onam (Thiruonam) is celebrated on the day when King Mahabali comes from exile to visit his people.

The festivities begin ten days in advance and floral decorations (Pookkalam) adorn every home. Caparisoned elephants in a spectacular procession, fireworks and the Kathakali dances, are an integral part of the festivities. The Vallamkali (boat race) is one of the main attractions of Onam, and is best seen at Aranmulai and Kottayam. About a hundred oarsmen row huge and graceful odee (boats) with scarlet silk umbrellas. Their number denotes the affluence of the family owning the boat. Gold coins and tassels hang from the umbrellas. Oars dip and flash to the rhythm of drums and cymbals in each

boat. In the evening girls perform the Kaikottikkali

The south Indian state of Kerala is filled with temples that are renowned for their exotic temple festivals. The large processions of elephants, resplendent in ornaments, are the main attractions of these festivals. The processions are accompanied by colorful floats, drummers and other musicians.



Raksha Bandhan : This festival is devoted to the love and affection between brothers and sisters. Out of all the festivals celebrated in India Rakhi Festival is a unique festival. It is yet another festival that portrays the brightness of Indian culture. The sacred bond of brother and sister is symbolized in the simple yet elegant thread of Rakhi. With the sentiments of brother getting all the happiness of live a sister ties a Rakhi on her brother's wrist. Its not that only the sister who thinks for her brother but even the brother vows of protecting his sister's honor in every circumstances. In an integral part of the Hindu family structure whereby a woman ties a rakhi or decorative thread on the wrist of her brother after worshipping Gods, to remind him to protect her if the need arises. Brothers do give gift on this occasion and also assures them to protect and take care for the entire life. This festival is now followed by woman folk except wife and mother tying the thread to men folk so they are treated as brothers and this also help to have good relationships. On this auspicious day the Sacred thread is changed to new one. Raksha Bandhan is celebrated in some parts of India as a festival to honour the sea god Varuna, where coconuts are offered to the sea because of its three yees, the coconut represents the three eyes of shiva. As a mark of auspiciousness, coconuts are also broken at shrines and temples.

Raksha Bandhan is celebrated on the fifteenth day of Shravan, In the days when gods warred with the demons, the consort of Indra (the Puranic King of the Heavens) tied a rakhi (a silken amulet) around his wrist, by virtue of which, it is said, the god won back his celestial abode from his enemies.

Raksha Bandhan is celebrated in some parts of India as a festival to honour the sea god Varuna, where coconuts are offered to the sea Because of its three eyes, the coconut represents the three eyes of Shiva. As a mark of auspiciousness, coconuts are

also broken at shrines and temples.

However, at most places, it celebrates the love of a brother for his sister. On this day, sisters tie rakhi on the wrists of their brothers to protect them against evil influences. In some places, before tying the rakhi, barley saplings are placed on the ears of the brother.

This is also the day set apart for Brahmins to change their sacred thread they wear.

This is the day that God warred with the demons, Lord Indira tied a rakhi around his wrist, by virtue of which, it is said, the god won back his celestial abode and his enemies.

Guru Purnima : is the day devotees offer puja (worship) to their Guru. This was also the day when Vyasa, author of the Mahabharata was born.



Independence Day : The anniversary of India's independence commemorates the day on August 15th. The prime Minister delivers an address from the ramparts of Delhi's Red Fort. It is celebrated all over the country with meetings and flag-hosting ceremonies. In the capital cities of States and District Head quarters also, the Indian flag is hoisted and various cultural programs are held. This celebration also enhances the patriotism and love to country.

September - October - November :



Janamashtami : The birthday of lord Krishna, the eighth incarnation on earth of Lord Vishnu, is celebrated throughout India. Lord Krishna takes a birth in jail where his maternal uncle kept his parents captive, as Kansa the uncle of Krishna was afraid that he will be killed by the birth of Krishna. The celebrations usually take place at midnight, the time when Krishna was born. The image of the infant Krishna is bathed at midnight and is placed in a cradle, amidst the blowing of conch shells and the ringing of

bells. Devotees celebrate it by devotional songs and dances mark the celebrations, also fasting and prayers, which is followed by feasting and merriment. Janmashtami witness the exuberant enactment of the god's childhood attempts to steal butter and curd from earthen pots beyond his reach. A matka or pot containing these is suspended high above the ground and groups of young men and children form human pyramids to try and reach the pot and eventually break it. No other God in the Hindu pantheon, or for that matter in any other religion, is woven with the romantic tales that Lord Krishna does.

Janmashtami takes place on eight day of the waning moon, in the month of Shravan, Krishna is believed to have been born at midnight, and hence celebrations begin at this hour.

Lord Vishnu is invoked in his human incarnation as Krishna on his birth anniversary in the festival of Janmashtami. The temples of Vrindavan witness an extravagant and colourful celebration on this occasion. Raslila is performed to recreate incidents from the life of Krishna and to commemorate his love for Radha. The image of the infant Krishna is bathed at midnight and is placed in a cradle, amidst the blowing of conch shells and the ringing of bells. The place of pride in the jhanki is an idol of baby Krishna. This is placed on a cradle, which is rocked to recreate scenes from Krishna's infancy. Devotional songs and dances mark the celebration of this festive occasion all over Northern India.



Id-ul-Zuha or Bakrid : is celebrated in rememberance of hazaru Ebrahim who was ordered to sacrifice his son hazarath imal by Alimify allah. When both the father and son determined to obey the command of Allah, the father was trying to cut the throat of his son but the knife couldn't penetrate his throat. Finally a message came from Alimify allah through Arch Angel Gibrael who said Allah has accepted your sacrifice and brought carrying on his shoulder one goat and asked Hazarath Ebrahim to give the goat as qurban(sacrifice) to attach. Allah says in his holy book that neither the flesh nor the blood of animal sacrificed will reach us but only you'r faith will reach him. Muslims on this occasion of Eid-ul-adha give goats, bulls camels as qurban and eat the same after

distributing the same to family, relatives and poor in equal proportion of 1:1:1. There are prayers in mosques, feasting, and rejoicing. New clothes are worn and visits and greetings are exchanged.

Ganesh Chaturthi : This festival is dedicated to the popular elephant headed God, Ganesha's. huge images of Ganesha are carried in procession. On specific dates in the following ten days, these images are immersed in the sea or rivers with thousands of worshippers dancing and singing after them. All over India, the idol of Lord Ganesh, in a chariot taken out in a grand procession to immerse in Lake/River/Sea.

The bounteous god of wisdom the God Ganesha with an elephant head, son of Shiva and Parvati is worship all over the country. Ganesh Chaturthi is dedicated to Ganesha and is celebrated



It is celebrated as a mark of Lord Ganesha's birthday on the fourth day (Chaturthi) of the bright fortnight of Bhadrapada month of Hindu calendar. The festivity end when the idol of Ganesha is

submerged in water (visarjan), with the loud chants of Ganapati Bappa Moraya.

More Hindu festivals follow with the beginning of Bhadrapada. The first of such celebrations is Ganesh Chaturthi, this is preceded by Gowri festival (on Saturday). It is a day dedicated to Goddess Parvati or Gowri.

The following day is the main Ganesha Chaturthi puja. After formal consecration, elaborate pujas are performed by offering Ganesha varieties of flowers and leaves.

The main food offering is Modaka, a sweet pudding, besides fruits. The pujas range from one day to 10 days. At the end of the festival, the images are taken to lakes, tanks or sea and immersed amid religious fervour.

Ganesha is the most beloved and popular deity among the Hindus. He is propitiated first on all occasions – pujas in temples and homes, festivals, marriages, religious functions, starting of business ventures, initiation into studies.

He is Vigneshwara, the God who removes obstacles. He is the Lord of Harmony and Peace and the Master of Scribes. This eminence of Ganesha, it is believed, led even Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva to worship Him first. Puranic legends have it that Ganesha showed them the way to creation, preservation and destruction.

He is the most unassuming God, worshipped in homes, temples, offices, business premises and educational institutions, on roadsides, on riverbanks and under peepal trees. His image is an artist's delight.

He is not found of any formal form. Before Hindu rituals start off, He is given the form of a tiny pyramidal block of turmeric powder and Vigneshwara puja is first performed.

He is a Pranava Swaroopi (Personification of the Pranava Mantra Om or Aum), from the sound of which the world is said to have originated.

His curved trunk resembles the sacred sign Om. It also represents the power of reasoning and understanding. Ganesha's

portly frame symbolises the Universe, signifying the major role He plays in the lives of His devotees. His elephant head represents wisdom, strength, affection, loyalty, gentleness and auspiciousness. His broad ears denote the role He plays in sifting the bad from the good.

The broken tusk connotes knowledge and the sacrifice gods make for the good of the world. It is with this tusk that Ganesha took down notes when sage Veda Vyasa dictated Mahabharata in one go.

The pot belly indicates that God is never appeased or pleased by show of wealth.

It also proclaims that the Lord absorbs all that is bad and hands out good things to His devotees.

Ganesha is commonly depicted with four hands, each holding a symbolic item.

The two front hands show Abhaya (Protective) and Varada (boon giving) mudras or poses. In many images, He is seen holding His favourite modaka in one hand and His broken tusk in the other.

Of the two hands behind, one holds a paasa (noose) and the other an ankusha (elephant goad).

The noose and the goad are symbolic of the fact that the Lord drags troublesome people towards Him with the noose, punishes them with the goad and puts them on the path of Dharma (righteousness).

Like Lord Shiva, Ganesha has three eyes – the two normal eyes represent the power of Surya (sun) and Chandra (Moon) and the third eye symbolizes Agni (Fire). The crescent moon on His head indicates the path to pure knowledge. The snake tied around His belly connotes cosmic energy.

In His 'huge' form, Ganesha is seated on a 'little' mouse.

This is symbolic of the fact that in front of God, all devotees are equal.

Ganesha is generally considered the Lord of Brahmacharis. In some regions, however, He is depicted as Shakti Ganapati with His two consorts Siddhi and Buddhi. They symbolize Achievement and Wisdom.

He is depicted even as a child (Bala Ganapati) or as a graceful dancer (Nritya Ganapati).

PARENTS DAY : In every culture, family stood as the most fundamental human institution. The most powerful bonds is the parent and child relationship. The children to express unconditional true love, affection, gratitude towards parents, this day of 21st September every year is celebrated as parents day.

BOSS's DAY : Bosses' Day, is a secular holiday celebrated on October 16. It has traditionally been a day for employees to thank their bosses for being kind and fair throughout the year. Also to express their gratitude, for paying their salary month after month and to keep them in good humor.



Navaratri/Dussehra/Durga Pooja. : The first nine days of this festival are known as Navaratri, and are filled with dance in honor of the Mother Goddess. The tenth day, called Dussehra, is devoted to celebrating the defeat of the demon king Ravana by Lord Rama. It also coincides with the victory of the revered warrior Goddess Durga over the evil buffalo demon Mahishasura.

In eastern India, the festival is observed as Durga Puja. Huge statues of the Goddess are made and immersed in the holy Ganges River. The festival is an extremely social and theatrical event, with drama, dance, and cultural performances held throughout the country.

Navaratri, the Festival of Nine Nights, is celebrated in honor of goddesses Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati. It too owes its roots to the Ramayana. It celebrates Lord Rama's victory over Ravana and has sermonic essence. Rama's victory is seen as the

victory of good over evil. The nine nights are divided into three sets of three nights each to adore three different aspects of the Goddess. On the first three nights the Goddess Durga is invoked as a spiritual force to destroy all impurities, vices and defects. On the second set of three nights the Goddess Lakshmi is adored as the giver of spiritual wealth. The final set of three nights is spent in worship of the Goddess Sarasvati, who is the embodiment of wisdom. In order to have full success in life, believers seek the blessings of all three aspects of the Goddess, who first destroys impurities from the heart, then endows the worshipper with spiritual powers, and finally gives the maturity of wisdom to know how to employ these great powers. Hence the nine nights of worship. Most common of all is the traditional Ras Garba dances that are performed during these Nava Ratri. This dance is traditionally a Gujarati custom, but it is quickly becoming the main focus of the Nava Ratri celebrations in the West.

The tenth day, Dussehra, commemorates the victory of Rama, of the epic Ramayana, over Ravana. In many places it culminates with the burning of huge images of Ravana and his accomplices, celebrating the victory of the good over evil. Re-enactments of the epic Ramayana takes place in various places. The effigies are burned enlightening people to burn the evil within them, and thus follow the path of integrity and righteousness.

Navratri or the nine nights sacred to the Mother Goddess are celebrated in the month of October / November.

It commemorates the victory of Goddess Durga over a demon, Mahishasur. Endowed with power, by the blessing of Lord Shiva the demon started destroying innocent people. The gods invoked Goddess Durga and asked for her help. The goddess, astride a lion fought with the demon and cut off his head.

It is an occasion for vibrant festivities throughout the country.

During Navratri, devotees of Durga fast and pray for health and prosperity. Different manifestations of Durga or Shakti are worshipped every night. Devotees and young enthusiasts dance the Garba or Dandiya-Raas throughout the night, in keeping with the exuberant nature of this festival.

Basant Panchami: This unique festival is associated with Goddess Saraswathi, the goddess of Knowledge. Students keep their books and note books at the goddess feet and seek her blessings to acquire good knowledge. Children are thought to write their first words. People wear yellow garments, yellow jewellery and eat yellow sweets and also distribute with friends/relatives/wellwavers.

Greetings: May the Devine powers of Goddess remove all the obstacles and brighten up life with sweet memories.

May Goddess Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi, better your life. Happy Navarathri.



Eid-ul-Fitr : Its the most significant festival of Muslims and is celebrated on the day of the holy month of Ramzan. It is anteceded by a month long fasting and expiation. It's believed that all the prayers offered during this month is replied by the heavens and all desires are satisfied. The festival is also associated by the birth of the prophet (Id-e-Milad - Milad-un-Nabi). Eid is celebrated with a Namaz a holy prayer in a mosque, distributing sweets, gifts and spraying of attar - rose essence. Muslims perform Zakat- Charity to the poor and needy. People pass on Eid-Ul-Fitr greetings to their friends and relatives and visit them, to strengthen the bondage.



This festival is also the test of strong faith of the devotees to Islam. The annual pilgrimage of muslims to Mecca the holy place, in Saudi Arabia.



Gandhi Jayanthi : A solemn celebration marking the birth date of Gandhiji, the father of the nation, includes prayer meetings at the Raj Ghat where he was cremated.

TEACHERS DAY:

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan a renowned Teacher his Birth day is celebrated as teacher's day. On every 5th of October, the Teachers day is celebrated. Ever since, the importance of Teacher is recognized, in



order to express the gratitude and love, teachers day is celebrated by giving flowers, fruits & Gifts to teacher and take his blessings.

DHANTERAS/DIWALI / DEEPAWALI / FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS : Dhan Teras takes place two days before Diwali, honour of Dhanavantri, the physician of the gods and an incarnation of Vishnu. when the gods and demons churned the ocean for Amrut or nectar, Dhanavantri emerged carrying a jar of the elixir. On this day, new utensils are used. New dhan or some form of precious metal is bought as a sign of good luck. This is known as Lakshmi after the goddess, and is worshipped



Diwali or Deepawali : This is perhaps the happiest of Hindu festivals. Of all the festivals celebrated in India, Diwali is by far the most glamorous and important. is a festival of lights symbolizing the victory of righteousness and the lifting of spiritual darkness. Countless number of lamps are lighted at night, giving the impression that the stars have descended on earth.

A family festival, it is celebrated 20 days after Dussehra, on the 13th day of the dark fortnight of the month of Ashwin. Diwali begins on Aswayuja Bahula Chaturdashi and concludes on Karthika Shudha Vijaya. The first day of this festival begins with "Dhan Trayodashi" or 'Dhanteras', second day of Diwali is 'Narak Chaturdashi', which is popular as Chhoti Diwali'. The third day of Diwali, which is also called 'Badi Diwali' is the main day of celebrations of the festival of Diwali. People perform Lakshmi Puja, on this day and pray for their prosperity and wealth. The fourth day is devoted to Govardhan Pooja(worship of Lord Govardhan Parvat). This day is dedicated to the holiest of animals, The Cow and puja is done to cow. The fifth day of Diwali is Bhai Dooj, the time to honor the brother by the sister.

Deepawali or Diwali, the most pan-Indian of all Hindu festivals, is a festival of lights symbolising the victory of righteousness and the lifting of spiritual darkness. The word Deepawali literally means rows of diyas (clay lamps).

This festival commemorates Lord Rama's return to his kingdom Ayodhya after completing his 14-year exile. Another view is that Deepawali is meant to celebrate the destruction of the

arrogant tyrant Bali at the hands of Vishnu when the latter appeared in his Vamana avatar.

Twinkling oil lamps or diyas light up every home and firework displays are common all across the country. The goddess Lakshmi (consort of Vishnu), who is the symbol of wealth and prosperity, is also worshipped on this day. This festive occasion also marks the beginning of the Hindu New Year and Lord Ganesha, the elephant-headed god, the symbol of auspiciousness and wisdom, is worshipped in most Hindu homes. Houses across the country are scrubbed till they are spotlessly clean, and whitewashed with fresh white paint. To enhance their new look, they are decorated with bright paper lanterns, diyas and flowers, while the girls of the house embellish the aangan (courtyard) and walls with traditional aesthetic designs and patterns called rangolis. New clothes are bought and the family gathers together to offer prayers, distribute sweets and light up their homes. Crackers and fireworks illuminate the sky and people pray for a prosperous coming year. The Deepawali festival is also celebrated as Kali Pooja and Kali, Shiva's consort is worshipped on this day.

Small oil lamps or candles are customarily placed around the house. Sweet treats are exchanged, houses are whitewashed, new clothes worn, there's gambling, and fireworks highlight the bright light theme.

The festival of Diwali has been celebrated for ages. Everyone enjoys the goodies, the shine, glamour, and the endless enthusiasm for living that suddenly grips people around this time. But there is much more to Diwali than feasting and merrymaking. Diwali is a holy tradition, not to be put in the shade by the lights. Deepawali symbolizes the victory of light over darkness. Celebrated joyously all over the country, it is a festival of wealth and prosperity. Dipawali is essentially a festival for householders. The preparations, the rituals, the entire celebration focuses on the home and family, spanning out to cover the community as a natural extension. Diwali is a festival synonymous with celebrations in India and among Indians all over the world, is an occasion for jubilation and togetherness. This is an occasion for young and the old, men and women, rich and poor - for everyone.

Irrespective of their religious and economic background, the festival is celebrated throughout the country to ward off the darkness and welcome the light into their lives. At a metaphysical level, Deepawali is a festival signifying the victory of good over evil; the latter is destroyed and reduced to ashes by fireworks is the belief of the people. This festival is celebrated on a grand scale in almost all the regions of India and is looked upon mainly as the beginning of New Year. As such the blessings of Lakshmi, the celestial consort of Lord Vishnu are invoked with prayers.

The Festival of Lights is for All

There are 10 mythical and historical reasons why Diwali is a great time to celebrate. And there are good reasons not just for Hindus but also for all others to celebrate this great Festival of Lights.

1. Goddess Lakshmi's Birthday: The Goddess of wealth, Lakshmi incarnated on the new moon day (amaavasyaa) of the Kartik month during the churning of the ocean (samudra-manthan), hence the association of Diwali with Lakshmi.

2. Vishnu Rescued Lakshmi: On this very day (Diwali day), Lord Vishnu in his fifth incarnation as Vaman-avtaara rescued Lakshmi from the prison of King Bali and this is another reason of worshipping Ma Larkshmi on Diwali.

3. Krishna Killed Narakaasur: On the day preceding Diwali, Lord Krishna killed the demon king Narakaasur and rescued 16,000 women from his captivity. The celebration of this freedom went on for two days including the Diwali day as a victory festival.

4. The Return of the Pandavas: According to the great epic 'Mahabharata', it was 'Kartik Amavashya' when the Pandavas appeared from their 12 years of banishment as a result of their defeat in the hands of the Kauravas at the game of dice (gambling). The subjects who loved the Pandavas celebrated the day by lighting the earthen lamps.

5. The Victory of Rama: According to the epic 'Ramayana', it was the new moon day of Kartik when Lord Ram, Ma Sita and Lakshman returned to Ayodhya after vanquishing Ravana and conquering Lanka. The citizens of Ayodhya decorated the entire

city with the earthen lamps and illuminated it like never before.

6. Coronation of Vikramaditya: One of the greatest Hindu King Vikramaditya was coroneted on the Diwali day, hence Diwali became a historical event as well.

7. Special Day for the Arya Samaj: It was the new moon day of Kartik (Diwali day) when Maharshi Dayananda, one of the greatest reformers of Hinduism and the founder of Arya Samaj attained his nirvana.

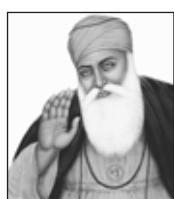
8. Special Day for the Jains: Mahavir Tirthankar, considered to be the founder of modern Jainism also attained his nirvana on Diwali day.

9. Special Day for the Sikhs: The third Sikh Guru Amar Das institutionalized Diwali as a Red-Letter Day when all Sikhs would gather to receive the Gurus blessings. In 1577, the foundation stone of the Golden Temple at Amritsar was laid on Diwali. In 1619, the sixth Sikh Guru Hargobind, who was held by the Mughal Emperor Jahengir, was released from the Gwalior fort along with 52 kings.

10. The Pope's Diwali Speech: Indian church where the altar was decorated with Diwali lamps, the Pope had a 'tilak' marked on his forehead and his speech was bristled with references to the festival of light.

Govardhan Pooja : A Hindu festival dedicated to the holiest of animals for the Hindus, the cow.

Bhai Dhuj : Lord Krishna visits his sister Subhadra, after killing the demon Narakasura, His sister welcomes him with the flowers and sweets. Bhai Duj became a celebration since then. Sisters invite their brothers home and prepare grand meals for them. They put Tilak on forehead of the brother, praying for their long life and brother's in return give them good gifts.



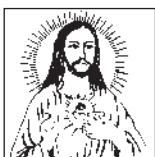
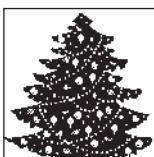
Gurpurab : Guru Nanak Jayanthi is celebrated as the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion and of Guru Gobind Singh, the last Guru (December-January), are important festivals of the Sikhs. In addition to the reading of the holy verses, the Guru Granth Sahib, All over India, on this

special occasions, the Sikh holy book is taken in a chariot in a grand procession.



CHILDRENS DAY : Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the freedom fighter and the first Prime minister was very fond of children. On his birthday the Childrens day is celebrated. Today's children are tomorrow's potential citizen, in order to encourage them and also to motivate, the children's day is celebrated all over India.

December :



Christmas is celebrated, all over the world. Though it is true that Christmas is celebrated as the day of the Birth of Christ into this world, yet it also symbolizes a very deeply significant truth of the spiritual life. Jesus Christ is the very personification of Divinity. He was born at a time when ignorance, superstition, greed, hatred and hypocrisy prevailed upon the land. Purity was forgotten and morality was neglected.

In the midst of these conditions, Christ was born and He worked a transformation in the lives of people. He gave a new and a spiritual turn to the lives of man. There came a change upon the land. People started upon a new way of life. Thus a new era dawned for the world.

In that period the seeker has no thought of God or higher spiritual life. He lives a life of lust, anger, greed, deluded attachment, pride and jealousy. If the seeker must enter into a new life of spiritual aspiration, purity and devotion, then the Christ-spirit must take its birth within his heart. That is the real Christmas when the Divine element begins to express itself in the heart of the man. From then onward, light begins to shine where darkness was before.

A very small, but very beautiful, point of deep significance is attached to Christmas. It is the time and the manner of the birth of the Lord upon the holy Christmas day. Jesus Christ was not born in a grand palace. He was not born to very wealthy or learned parents. Jesus Christ was born in a simple lowly place, a corner of a stable. He was born to humble and poor parents, who had nothing to boast about, except their own spotless character and holiness.

Holy Spirit : wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord.

The above point of deep significance tells that the spiritual awakening comes to the seeker, who is perfectly humble and "meek" and "poor in spirit." The quality of true humility is one of the indispensable fundamentals. Then we find simplicity, holiness and the renunciation of all desire for worldly wealth and pride of learning. Thirdly, even as Christ was born unknown to the world and in the obscurity of darkness, even so, the advent of the Christ-spirit takes place in the inwardness of man when there is total self-effacement self-abnegation.

The twelve days of Christmas begins on December 25 and end just before Epiphany, that falls on January 6. Epiphany is a Christian feast intended to celebrate the 'shining forth' or revelation of God to mankind in human form, in the person of Jesus Christ. The observance originally included the birth of Jesus Christ; the visit of the three Magi (Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar) who arrived in Bethlehem; and all of Jesus' childhood events, up to his baptism in the Jordan by John the Baptist.

Holy Spirit found in Galatians: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.

Christmas is most renowned festival of the Christian community. In India Christmas celebrations are held with same enthusiasm and fun like any other Hindu festival. The festival symbolizes the birth of Jesus Christ. The enchanting decoration of Christmas tree, Santa Claus, gifts, sweets, cakes all depicts the dawning of Christmas. One can see Catholic Goa come to life during the Christmas Eve and also in Kerela Christmas festival is worth seeing.

Time of Celebration : 25th December. Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord.



MARRIAGES : In India, the marriages are also celebrated as festivals, in fact more than a festival and it will be eventful, colorful and done in very grand scale. It is worth watching the marriage rituals as it is not only interesting but also meaningful and educative. Marriage is the relationship between a man and woman who have made a legal agreement to live together. When a man and a woman marry, they become husband and wife. Marriage is also an important religious ceremony in many of the world's religions.

Most couples decide to marry because they love each other and want to spend the rest of their lives together. A man and woman who marry hope to share a special relationship and a permanent romantic attraction. But each hopes the other will always be a close friend as well. Each also expects the other to help with many problems and to share certain responsibilities. These responsibilities include earning a living, budgeting money, paying bills preparing meals, and taking care of a home.

Most couples who marry, plan to have children and to raise them together. A husband and wife are required by law to protect and care for their children. Marriage thus serves as the basis of family life.

Series of functions of marriage and their significance:

Muhurtham is a most auspicious and a sacred ceremony in one's life. In a very auspicious time the muhurtham is kept, when the Bride groom ties thali, the yellow thread with black beads round the neck of the Bride, as the pandith chants, Artechā, Dharmechā, Kamechā, Nathicharami, the sacred vows.

Kanya Dhana : The Bride is given to the Bridegroom in presence of gods, gurus and elders. The girl is given in the hands of a boy and the parents of boy assure the girls parents that they will take care of her, henceforth.

Akshatha Ropana : To pray and wish for Shanthi, Pusthi, Dhrushti, Vridhi(Health, Welath and Happiness) Akshate is showered on the pair, on this occasion.

Pradhana Homa : The marriage is performed in the presence of Lord Agni, who will be the witness for the marriage.

Laja Homa : It is done to pray for dheerga Auyusu, Shantha bhagya, Suka and Sampathtu(Lone life, happiness, family and wealth)

Sapta Padi : The bride groom takes the bride seven steps by assuring in each step, First step To share food and to adjust to each other. Second, To gain strength from their union. Third, To share Prosperity and Wealth. Fourth, To have mutual understanding and Co-operate each other to attain happiness. Fifth, To start a family and nurture children, Sixth, To co-operate and live happily irrespective of all differences. And seventh, To be the perfect couple and be good friends.

Kalagura : The bridegroom adorns the toes of a bride with silver rings indicating that both are equal and there is no difference in between them.

Viewing Arundathi Star : The best couple was Arundathi and Vasishta. By viewing the star, the couple pray for Santhana Bhagya, Longevity and an ever lasting marriage/bondage.

Muthaidethana : The biggest assets of a married woman are 1. Arishna 2.Kumkuma, 3.Bale(Bangles)4. Pushpa, 5.Kalungura, 6.Mangalya, 7.Bindhi. These are few things the Muthaide, enjoys during the life time of the husband.

After marriage, living together is called a family which is one of the oldest and most common human institutions. Family means a group of related persons who share a home. A family is a social unit into which children are born, protected and trained. It provides economic support for its members. Normally woman takes care of the welfare of their children and men. Men will earn for the wellbeing of the family.



LORD SATYANARAYAN SWAMY

VRATHAM : Other then the festivals, there are certain vratha which could be done as and when one desires or pray and to do the vratha. The Lord Satyanarayan Vrtha is one of them and it is done mostly on Pournima day which is very auspicious. As and when, one wants to please the almighty and pray for his wellbeing and have any wish to be fulfilled, for improving their prosperity/wealth, happiness etc., a elaborate puja is done as vrtha. This puja is done by couples, to Lord Satyanarayan who is none other then Narayana/Vishnu, and by inviting all their well wishers, friends and after puja the Prasad is distributed with the lunch.



Grahapravesh : On the occasion of inaugurating a new house, the grahapravesh a very elaborate pujas is done praying for the happy living, prosperity, health and wealth and also to destroy all evils in the house.

Bumi Puja : Before construction of any building/house, the bumi puja is done praying the goddess to shower all her blessings for smooth construction and prosperity in the building.

TOURIST PLACES OF INDIA

TAJ MAHAL – Agra : 4 small domes surrounded by Central dome, tombs of Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan are in basement. Entire structure appears different in different shades and different angles. Work started in 1632 and Completed in 1653.

CHARMINAR – Hyderabad : 49 Meters high, Four Pillars - Construction started in 1614 and completed in 1687.

KANYAKUMARI – Southern tip of India in Kerala : Temple only Hindus are allowed. Swami Vivekananda Memorial is main attraction. You can see Sun Rise and Sun Sets.

RAMESHWARAM – Tamil Nadu : Rama worshipped Lord Shiva after killing Ravana in this place i.e., why called Rameshwaram. Main Temples and 1220 Meters Corridors.

KODAI KANAL : Kodai Kanal is a Hill Resort. Beautiful Park and Chanting Lake. Tamil Nadu weather is pleasant all round the year.

SRI RANGAM – Tamil Nadu : Lord Vishnu Temple built in 13th/14th century. Temple is surrounded by 7 walls, within these walls the town is located. 1000 Pillar Hall is there.

JOG FALLS : 100 k.m. from Shimoga. Karnataka's mighty river Sharavathy spreads into four streams and Falls as Raja, Rani, Rocket & Roarer.

SHRINGERI – Chikka Mangalore, Karnataka : Shankaracharya founded a Mutt here. Sharada Temple, Thunga River are key attraction.

CHITRADURGA : 200 kms from Bangalore. Famous History Fort. Obavva fought against Hyder Ali to Safeguard Madakari Nayaka.

HAMPI – Bellary, Karnataka : Erstwhile Capital of Vijayanagar Kingdom. Veerupaksha, Vijaya Vittal Temple, Stone Chariot, Ugra Nagasimha Idol, Lotus Mahal, Elephants Stable are attraction.

BELUR, HALEBEEDU, SHRAVANABELAGOLA : Near Hassan, Karnataka: Jakkanachari's art work, Bahubali Statue is 57 feet high. World's tallest monolithic statue.

NANDI HILLS – Near Bangalore, Kolar District : Hill Station, very popular with British favourite weekend spot. Yoga Nandeeshwara Temple, Tippu Drop, Gardens are main attraction.

NANJANGUD – Near Mysore : Srikanteshwara Temple, Biligiri Ranga Hills, Cauvery River flows, Bandipur Wild Life Sanctuary are nearby places.

SIRANGAPATTANA – Near Mysore : Bangalore Mysore Road, River Cauvery flows, three rivers Sangama, Rangana Thittu – A Birds sanctuary, Ranganatha Swamy Temple, Tippu's tomb are main attraction.

BANGALORE : Capital City of Karnataka, Vidhana Soudha, Lalbagh, Cubbon Park, Bull Temple, Iskon Temple, full of Gardens, Lakes, Safe place – pleasant weather, good people,

clean city, greenery all round, excellent infrastructure, Bharat Farms are main attraction.

mysore : It was Capital of Wodeyar Kings. Maharaja Palace, Jaganmohan Palace, Chamundi Hills, Brindavan Garden, St. Philomena Church, Massive Nandi are main attraction.

Chennai : Capital of Tamil Nadu, further biggest City in India, earlier known as Madras. Mahabalipuram is a seaport, many temples, parks, famous beach are main attraction.

Madurai : Great Historic town, centrally located, Meenakshi Temple, 1000 Pillared Hall. It is a junction to connect all important places.

Ooty : Queen of Hill Station. 7300 above the sea level. Botanical Garden is spread over 50 acres. Doddabetta, Kalhatti Water Falls, Lady Canning Seat, Dolphin Nose, Kelti Valley View, Lamb's Rock are the important view points.

Pondicherry : Coastal town, a union territory ruled by French, known for Aurobindo Ashram, good Temples, Churches, Botanical Garden are main attraction.

Thekkady : Kerala, Tamil Nadu Border, also called Periyar Wild Life Sanctuary, a natural Place for Elephants, Wild bears, tigers and a wide variety of Birds are main attraction.

Shabari Malai : This is the abode of Lord Ayyappa. Shabari Malai is a hill place. Lakhs of pilgrims visit this holy place.

Hyderabad : Capital of Andhra Pradesh, Fifth largest state in India. City of rich cultural heritage. Ramoji Studio, Lake, Good Roads, Climate are the main attraction. Charminar, Birla Mandir, Nagarjuna Konda, Gol Konda Fort are other attraction.

Thirupathi : Lord Sri. Venkateshwara Temple. Seven Feet high idol of Lord, also called Kaliyuga Lord, attract highest pilgrims in the world next to it is Vatican City.

Simhachalam : A Natural Harbour. 20 kms from Vishakapatnam, a modern Ship building Yard. Very ancient Vishnu Temple in Simhachalam. The peculiarity is that deity is the combination of Varaha and Narasimha.

VIJAYAWADA : A river Krishna flows into City, Durga Temple on the hill and on the bed of river. This is also very important Buddhist Centre.

PUTTAPARTHI : Sri Satya Sai Baba Ashram. Most of the time Satya Sai Baba lives here a very holy place with lot of improvement. It has Railway station, Aerodrum. Ashram has converted a remote village to most modern place of the world.

GOA : 105 kms of Coastal line. Beautiful beaches. Goa was ruled by several rulers like Portuguese, British, Kadambas. It is one of the biggest tourist attraction. Panaji, Margao are big places. Goa is full of Hotels and tourist spots.

MUMBAI : Capital of Maharashtra, stands on Deccan plateau. Biggest business center of India, Gateway of India, Marine Drive, Mahalakshmi Temple, Victoria Gardens.

AJANTRA – ELLORA : in Maharashtra. Ajantha Caves are temples built out of rock. Main Shrine is the Buddha. Best of Sculpture work. Ellora Caves are situated about 48 kms of Aurangabad.