



Bihar's Punaura Dham project

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Why in News?

The Bihar state government recently approved a project to develop **Punaura Dham, a temple complex in Sitamarhi district**, as a major tourist attraction.

- Punaura Dham is believed to be the birthplace of Goddess **Sita**, wife of Lord Rama and a revered figure in [Hinduism](#).
- The initiative aims to promote the culture and heritage of **Mithila**, the region where Sita was born and raised.

Note:

- According to the **Valmiki Ramayana**, Sita emerged from a furrow when King Janaka, the ruler of Mithila, was ploughing the land.
 - He adopted her as his daughter and named her Sita, which means “furrow” in Sanskrit. He also gave her the name Janaki, meaning “daughter of Janaka”.

What are the Key Cultural Aspects of Mithila?

- **Historical Significance:**
 - Mithila has a rich and ancient history, dating back to the [Vedic period \(1500-500 BCE\)](#) when it was one of the **16 Mahajanapadas of India**.
 - Mithila, also known as **Tirhut or Tirabhukti**, is a historically and culturally significant region encompassing Darbhanga, Madhubani, Sitamarhi, Supaul, Saharsa, Madhepura, and adjacent areas of Bihar and Nepal.
 - It is bounded by the [Himalayas in the north](#), the [Ganges in the south](#), the [Gandaki River in the west](#), and the [Mahananda River in the east](#).
 - It is also known as Mahla and mentioned in revenue records of the United Provinces of Bihar, Bengal, and Orissa.
 - It was ruled by the **Videha Janak dynasty**.
- **Language and Literature:**
 - The main language of **Mithila is Maithili** which belongs to the Indo-Aryan family.
 - Maithili has a rich literary tradition, the **poet Vidyapati(1352-1448 AD)**, wrote famous songs of love and devotion in this language.
 - Maithili literature also includes epics, dramas, folktales, and biographies of saints and heroes.
- **Cultural Heritage:**
 - Mithila is famous for its unique style of painting, known as [Madhubani or Mithila painting](#), which is done using bright earthy natural colours and geometric patterns.
 - The paintings depict scenes from Hindu mythology, especially the Ramayana, as well as flora, fauna, and social events.

▪ **GI Tag:**

- **Mithila Makhana or Makhan (botanical name: Euryale ferox Salisb.)** is a special variety of aquatic fox nut cultivated in Mithila region of Bihar and Nepal. It is also recognised with the [GI \(geographical indication\) tag](#).

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