



Construction of Rath Yatra Chariots Allowed

Why in News

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has allowed the construction of chariots for the annual Rath Yatra at Jagannath Puri in Odisha.

- It has also said that the complete segregation of the construction site should be ensured and **social-distancing norms be followed**.
- The Rath Yatra is expected to be held on 23rd June 2020.

Jagannath Rath Yatra

- Ratha Jatra, also called as **Chariot Festival**, is a Hindu festival associated with **Lord Jagannath** held at **Puri, Odisha**.
- The festival is celebrated on the **2nd day** of **Shukla Paksha of Ashadh**, the third month, according to the traditional Oriya calendar.
- It is a **9 day-long event** and marks the **return of Lord Krishna to Vrindavan** with his brother **Balabhadra** and sister **Subhadra** to **Gundicha Temple** via Mausī Maa Temple (maternal aunt's home) near Saradha Bali, Puri.
- During the festival, the three holy chariots carrying idols of Lord Jagannath, his brother Balaram (Balabhadra) and sister Subhadra are pulled by thousands of devotees from India and abroad.

Jagannath Temple

- 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.
- This temple was called the "**White Pagoda**" and is a **part of Char Dham** pilgrimages (Badrinath, Dwaraka, Puri, Rameswaram).
- There are four gates to the temple- Eastern 'Singhdwara' which is the main gate with two crouching lions, Southern 'Ashwadwara', Western 'Vyaghra Dwara and Northern 'Hastidwara'. There is a carving of each form at each gate.
- In front of the entrance stands the Aruna stambha or sun pillar, which was originally at the **Sun Temple in Konark**.

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