



Chhath Puja | Bihar | 09 Nov 2024

Why in News?

The third day of the [Chhath festival](#), known as the **sanjhka arag** or the **evening offering**, was observed on **7th November**. Chhath has been **celebrated for centuries in Bihar, eastern Uttar Pradesh, and Nepal**.

Key Points

▪ About Chhath:

- Chhath Puja is a **four-day festival dedicated to the worship of the Sun**.
- It involves **strict fasting without water** and making offerings to Usha (the rising Sun) and Pratyusha (the setting Sun), while standing in a water body.
- The festival **starts on the sixth day of [Kartik Shukla Paksha](#)**, the waxing-moon fortnight of the month of Kartik.

▪ Origins and Beliefs:

- It is believed to be an **ancient tradition rooted in nature worship**.
 - In the [Ramayana](#), Lord Ram and Goddess Sita fasted and performed a yagna for the Sun after returning victorious to Ayodhya.
 - In the [Mahabharata](#), Draupadi observed a fast and prayed to the Sun, while Karna held a ceremony in honor of Surya.

▪ Chhath Rituals:

- **First Day (Naha Kha):** Devotees take a ceremonial bath in a river or pond before having their first meal.
- **Second Day (Kharna):** Fasters **eat only one meal**. The preparation of thekuas begins, and a 36-hour fast begins after the meal.
- **Third Day (Sanjhka Arghya):** Devotees go to the riverbanks to offer fruits and light diyas while performing the Sanjhka Arghya (evening offering) to the setting Sun. Offerings include seasonal fruits like sweet potato, water chestnuts, pomelo, and bananas.
- **Fourth Day (Bhor ka Arghya):** The same ritual is repeated at dawn for the rising Sun. After the offering, devotees return home, marking the conclusion of the festival.

▪ Underlying Message of Chhath:

- The festival conveys the message that **all people are equal in the eyes of God and that nature is sacred and should be honored**.
- It highlights the **cyclical nature of life**, where both dusk and dawn are important. The **setting Sun represents the promise of a new rise**.