



Igas Bagwal Festival | Uttarakhand | 13 Nov 2024

Why in News?

Igas Bagwal, also known as **Budhi Diwali** or **Harbodhni Ekadashi**, is a traditional festival **celebrated in Uttarakhand 11 days after Diwali**. The festival reflects the **cultural heritage** of the state, uniting communities through shared traditions and festivities.

Key Points

▪ Origins and Significance:

- Igas Bagwal is celebrated on **Kartik Shukla Ekadashi** and **marks the end of Lord Vishnu's four-month rest period**, an auspicious time for new beginnings.
- The term "Igas" resonates with cultural pride and mythological reverence in Uttarakhand.
- It is believed that when **news of Lord Rama's return to Ayodhya** reached **Uttarakhand 11 days after Diwali**, locals celebrated their version of Diwali.
- Another legend celebrates the **victory of Garhwali warrior Madhav Singh Bhandari over Tibet at Dapaghati**, commemorated by the community as a symbol of unity and valor.

▪ Bhailo- The Torch Tradition:

- Villagers create **large torches** called **Bhailo or Andhaya by binding pinewood sticks**, which are **lit and swung overhead, symbolizing the banishment of darkness**.
- This torch ritual is also believed to **invoke blessings of prosperity from Goddess Lakshmi**.

▪ Festival Rituals and Cattle Honoring:

- Cattle, essential to Uttarakhand's **agrarian lifestyle**, are honored during Igas Bagwal. Villagers wash and decorate them with turmeric and mustard oil.
- Special **meals are prepared for the animals**, and traditional delicacies are shared among villagers to celebrate communal harmony.

▪ Efforts to Preserve Igas Bagwal:

- Local authorities and cultural organizations promote Igas Bagwal through programs and awareness campaigns, aiming to **preserve the festival's heritage**.
- Youth-focused initiatives emphasize the cultural significance of Igas Bagwal, ensuring its legacy endures for future generations.