

Makar Sankranti and Amrit Snan (Shahi Snan)

Why in News?

The <u>Mahakumbh Mela 2025</u>, currently underway in **Prayagraj**, witnessed its first **amrit snan or shahi snan** on 14th January, coinciding with the auspicious occasion of <u>Makar Sankranti</u>.

 This ritual bath marked the beginning of a series of sacred dips in the confluence of the <u>Ganga, Yamuna</u>, and the mythical **Saraswati rivers**.

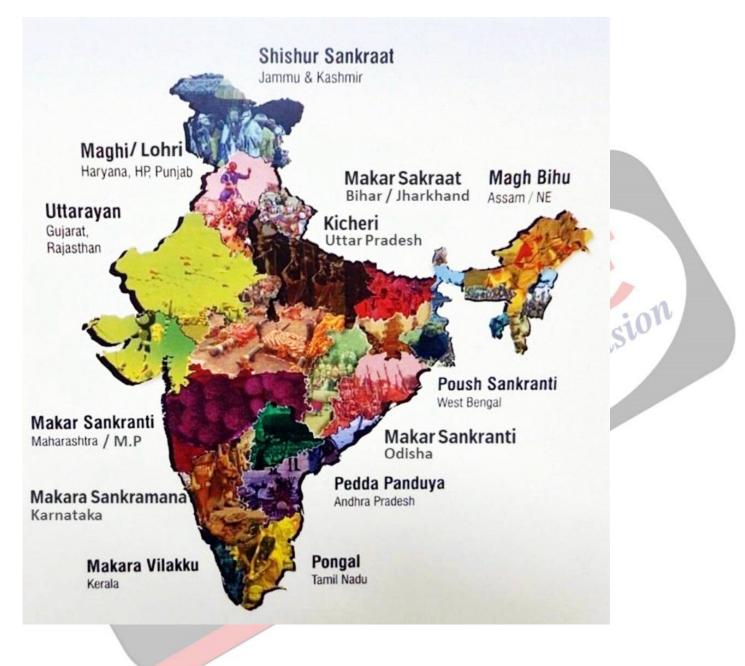
Key Points

- Significance of Makar Sankranti:
 - Celebrated on 14th January, the festival marks the Sun's transition into Makar raashi (Capricorn). This transition, known as Sankranti, is particularly special as it signals the Sun's northward journey, known as Uttarayan.
 - This movement heralds the end of the harsh winter months and the onset of warmer, longer days.
 - In Hindu mythology, **Uttarayan** is regarded as the **gods' daytime**, signifying an auspicious period for celebrations and spiritual endeavors.
 - **Bhishma Pitamah** of the **Mahabharata** chose to pass away during Uttarayan to attain spiritual liberation.
 - The festival is also significant as it ends the kharmas, a month-long period during which auspicious events are avoided.
 - The Sun's entry into Capricorn, the house ruled by Shani (Saturn), who is considered the Sun's son, is celebrated as a familial reunion, a key theme in Hindu traditions.
- The festivities associated with the day is known by different names in different parts of the country:
 - Lohri by north Indian Hindus and Sikhs.
 - · Sukarat in central India.
 - Bhogali Bihu by Assamese Hindus, and
 - Pongal by Tamil Hindu and other South Indian Hindus.



Other Significant Dates for Ritual Bathing Include:

- **Mauni Amavasya (29 January):** A day of silence and introspection, considered highly auspicious for spiritual purification.
- **Vasant Panchami (3 February):** Celebrated as a festival of learning and wisdom, marking the arrival of spring.
- **Maha Shivratri (February 26):** The concluding day of the Kumbh Mela, dedicated to Lord Shiva, symbolizing the union of divine energy.



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