



Harvest Festivals

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

- The [President of India](#) has greeted citizens on the eve of [Lohri, Makar Sankranti, Pongal and Magh Bihu](#).
- These are [harvest festivals](#) celebrated in **diverse forms** across the **various regions of India**.

What are the Harvest Festivals in India?

- **About:** They are celebrated to mark the end of the **harvesting season** across India under various names e.g., **Makar Sankranti, Pongal, Magh Bihu, Lohri**, etc.
- **Astronomical Significance:** It marks the **transition of the Sun into the Capricorn (Makara) zodiac sign** and the **start of the Sun's northward journey (Uttarayan)**.
 - It represents the shift from **winter to warmer months**, symbolizing the end of inactivity.
 - Unlike festivals based on the lunar cycle, it follows the **solar cycle**, resulting in a fixed date of **14th January**.
- **Cultural Significance:** Sankranti rituals, including **bathing, offering Naivedhya (food) to Lord Surya, giving charity, performing Shraddha, and breaking fast**, are performed during the day.
 - Devotees often bathe in sacred rivers like the **Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Krishna, and Cauvery**.
- **Regional Celebrations:**
 - **Tamil Nadu (Pongal):** The **four-day festival** marks the **rice harvest**, with **Tamilians** decorating their homes with traditional **kolams** made from **rice powder**.
 - **Karnataka:** Locals have a tradition of sharing **sesame and jaggery mixture** symbolising harmony and goodwill.
 - Farming communities dress their **cattle in colorful costumes and jewels**, making them jump over a fire pit in a display called '**Kicchu Haisodu**'.
 - **Punjab (Lohri):** Lohri involves **bonfires, folk songs**, and offerings like groundnuts and popcorn to the fire.
 - **Bihar:** A festival called '**Khichdi**' is celebrated and a dish of the **same name (rice and lentils)** is prepared. **Sesame and jaggery ladoos** or chikkis are distributed.
 - **Rajasthan and Gujarat:** Celebrated with **kite-flying** competitions and festivals, including the [International Kite Festival in Ahmedabad](#).
 - In the evening, **sky lanterns** light up the skies.
 - **Assam (Magh Bihu):** Magh Bihu in Assam celebrates the **annual harvest** and marks the beginning of the **Assamese new year**.

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