



## Bihar's Punaura Dham project

[Source: IE](#)

### Why in News?

The Bihar state government recently approved a project to develop **Punaura Dham, a temple complex in Sitamarhi district**, as a major tourist attraction.

- Punaura Dham is believed to be the birthplace of Goddess **Sita**, wife of Lord Rama and a revered figure in [Hinduism](#).
- The initiative aims to promote the culture and heritage of **Mithila**, the region where Sita was born and raised.

### Note:

- According to the **Valmiki Ramayana**, Sita emerged from a furrow when King Janaka, the ruler of Mithila, was ploughing the land.
  - He adopted her as his daughter and named her Sita, which means “furrow” in Sanskrit. He also gave her the name Janaki, meaning “daughter of Janaka”.

### What are the Key Cultural Aspects of Mithila?

- **Historical Significance:**
  - Mithila has a rich and ancient history, dating back to the [Vedic period \(1500-500 BCE\)](#) when it was one of the **16 Mahajanapadas of India**.
  - Mithila, also known as **Tirhut or Tirabhukti**, is a historically and culturally significant region encompassing Darbhanga, Madhubani, Sitamarhi, Supaul, Saharsa, Madhepura, and adjacent areas of Bihar and Nepal.
    - It is bounded by the [Himalayas in the north](#), the [Ganges in the south](#), the [Gandaki River in the west](#), and the [Mahananda River in the east](#).
    - It is also known as Mahla and mentioned in revenue records of the United Provinces of Bihar, Bengal, and Orissa.
  - It was ruled by the **Videha Janak dynasty**.
- **Language and Literature:**
  - The main language of **Mithila is Maithili** which belongs to the Indo-Aryan family.
    - Maithili has a rich literary tradition, the **poet Vidyapati(1352-1448 AD)**, wrote famous songs of love and devotion in this language.
    - Maithili literature also includes epics, dramas, folktales, and biographies of saints and heroes.
- **Cultural Heritage:**
  - Mithila is famous for its unique style of painting, known as [Madhubani or Mithila painting](#), which is done using bright earthy natural colours and geometric patterns.
    - The paintings depict scenes from Hindu mythology, especially the Ramayana, as well as flora, fauna, and social events.

▪ **GI Tag:**

- **Mithila Makhana or Makhan (botanical name: Euryale ferox Salisb.)** is a special variety of aquatic fox nut cultivated in Mithila region of Bihar and Nepal. It is also recognised with the [GI \(geographical indication\) tag](#).

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