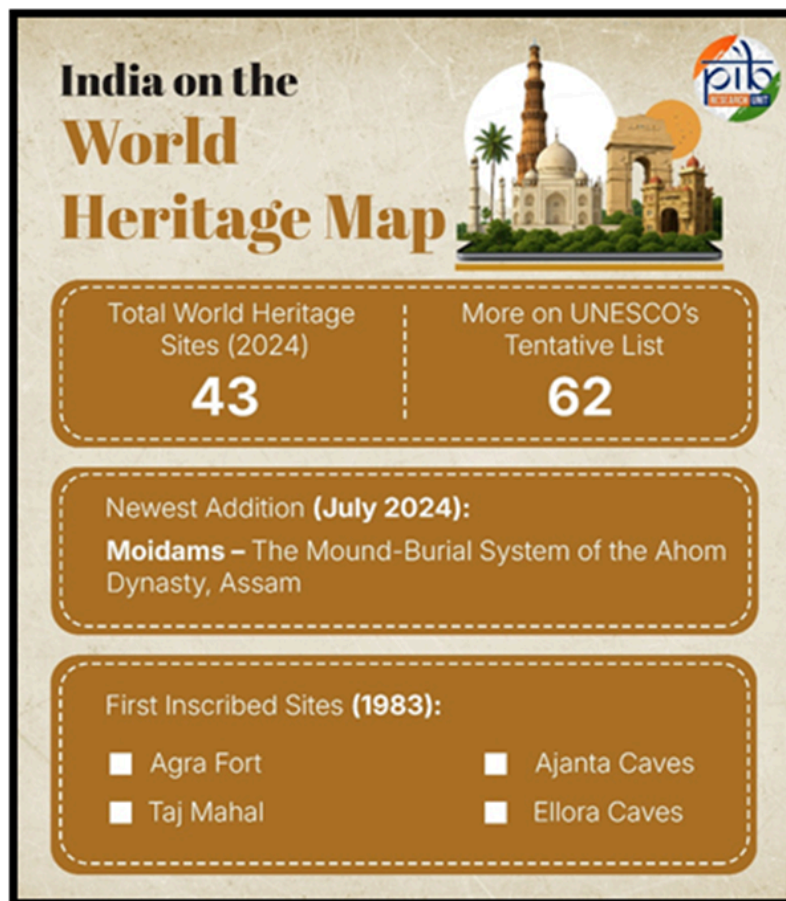


## Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage

### Tangible Cultural Heritage

A World Heritage site is a landmark or area with legal protection by an international convention administered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). World Heritage sites are designated by UNESCO for having cultural, historical, scientific or other forms of significance. The sites are judged to contain “cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity (OUV)”.

India has been blessed with a rich history and natural diversity, which is exemplified by its **43 UNESCO World Heritage Sites (as of May 13, 2025)**. These include **35 Cultural sites, 7 Natural sites and 1 mixed site** recognised for their outstanding universal value to humanity.



### CULTURAL SITES (35 Sites)

#### Agra Fort (Uttar Pradesh)

- It is also known as “Agra Quila”, located in Agra, India.
- It was **designed and built by the Mughal Emperor Akbar** in the year **1565 A.D.**
- This fort is built alongside **Yamuna River**.
- It comprises many palaces, such as the **Jahangir Palace and the Khas Mahal**, built by **Shah Jahan**; audience halls, such as the **Diwan-i-Khas etc.**
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1983**.

### Ajanta Caves

- Located in Aurangabad district of Maharashtra state of India.
- These are about 30 rock-cut Buddhist cave monuments which were constructed from the 2nd century BCE to about 480 or 650 CE.
- These paintings are magnum opus of Buddhist religious art, with figures of the Buddha and depictions of the Jataka tales (stories related to the life of Lord Buddha).
- The Ajanta Caves were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983.

### Ellora Caves

- It is an archaeological site 29 km north-west of the city of **Aurangabad in Maharashtra**, built by **Kalachuri, Chalukya and Rashtrakuta dynasties** during the 6th and 9th centuries.
- The **34 "caves"** are actually structures excavated out of the **vertical face of the Charanandri hills**.
- These caves are dedicated to **Hindu, Buddhist and Jain religions**.
- The Ellora Caves were designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1983**.

### The Taj Mahal

- It is located on the right bank of the **Yamuna River in a vast Mughal garden** that encompasses nearly 17 hectares, in the Agra District in Uttar Pradesh.
- It was built by **Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan** in memory of his wife **Mumtaz Mahal** with construction starting in **1632 AD** and completed in **1648 AD**.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1983**.

### Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram

- This group of sanctuaries, **founded by the Pallava kings**, was carved out of rock along the Coromandel Coast in the 7th and 8th centuries.
- It is known especially for its **rathas** (temples in the form of chariots), **mandapas** (cave sanctuaries), giant open-air reliefs such as the famous '**Descent of the Ganges**', and the temple of **Rivage**, with thousands of sculptures to the glory of Shiva.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1984**.

### Churches and Convents of Goa

- They owe their existence to Portuguese **rule** in this part of the western coast of India.
- The most comprehensive group of churches and cathedrals built during **16th to 17th century AD** at Old Goa comprise the following: **Se' Cathedral, Church and Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, Chapel of St. Catherine, Basilica of Bom Jesus; Church of Lady of Rosary; Church of St. Augustine.**
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1986**.

### **Fatehpur Sikri**

- It was built during the **second half of the 16th century** by Emperor **Akbar**.
- Fatehpur Sikri (the City of Victory) was the **capital** of the Mughal Empire for only some 10 years.
- Akbar shifted his residence and court from Agra to Sikri **to honour the Sufi Saint Sheikh Salim Chishti, who resided here.**
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1986**.

### **Group of Monuments at Hampi**

- The site of Hampi comprises mainly the remnants of the **Capital City of Vijayanagara Empire** (14th-16th Cent CE), the last **great Hindu Kingdom**.
- The property is located in the **Tungabhadra basin** in Central Karnataka, **Bellary District**.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1986**.

### **Khajuraho Group of Monuments (Madhya Pradesh)**

- Khajuraho Temples in **Madhya Pradesh** are among the most beautiful medieval monuments in the country.
- These temples were built by the Chandella rulers between AD 900 and 1130.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1986.

### **Elephanta Caves( Maharashtra)**

- They are natively known as **Gharapurichi Leni**, basically Gharapuri.
- They are a network of sculpted caves located on **Elephanta Island, or Gharapuri** (literally "the city of caves") in **(Mumbai) Maharashtra**.
- The island, located in the **lap of the Arabian Sea**, consists of **two groups of caves** –
  - the first is a large group **of five Hindu caves**
  - the second, a smaller group of **two Buddhist caves**
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1987**.

### **Great Living Chola Temples (Tamil Nadu)**

- These temples were built by kings of the **Chola Empire**, which stretched over all of **south India and the neighbouring islands**.

- The site includes **three great 11 and 12th-century Temples**:
  - the **Brihadisvara** Temple at **Thanjavur**
  - the **Brihadisvara** Temple at **Gangaikondacholisvaram**
  - the **Airavatesvara** Temple at **Darasuram**.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1987**.

#### Group of Monuments at Pattadakal (Karnataka)

- Pattadakal, in **Karnataka**, represents the high point of an eclectic art which, in the **7th and 8th centuries under the Chalukya dynasty**, achieved a harmonious blend of architectural forms from northern and southern India.
- An impressive series of **nine Hindu temples**, as well as a **Jain sanctuary**, can be seen there.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1987**.

#### Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi (Madhya Pradesh)

- Sanchi is a hot spot for **Buddhist tourist** in India.
- It is situated at **Sanchi in Raisen district of Madhya Pradesh**.
- The **Great Stupa at Sanchi** is the **oldest stone structure in India** and was originally commissioned by the emperor **Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE**.
- The stupa is **located on a hill** whose height is 91m
- It was tagged as a World Heritage site by UNESCO in **1989**.

#### Humayun's Tomb, Delhi

- It is the first of the grand dynastic mausoleums that were to become synonyms of Mughal architecture with the architectural style reaching its zenith 80 years later at the later Taj Mahal.
- It stands within a **complex** of 21.60 ha. that includes other contemporary, **16th century Mughal garden-tombs** such as **Nila Gumbad, Isa Khan, Bu Halima, Afsarwala, Barber's Tomb** and the complex where the craftsmen employed for the Building of Humayun's Tomb stayed, **the Arab Serai**.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1993**.

#### Qutb Minar and its Monuments, Delhi

- Qutb Minar was built in the early **13th century** a few kilometres south of **Delhi**.
- The **red sandstone tower** of Qutb Minar is **72.5 m** high.
- Its surroundings contain the **Alai-Darwaza Gate**, the masterpiece of Indo-Muslim art (built in **1311**).
- Its construction was started by **Qutub-ud-din Aibak in 1193** and finished by **Iltutmish**.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1993**.

### Mountain Railways of India

- It consists of **three railways**:
  - **Darjeeling Himalayan Railway** located in the foothills of the Himalayas in West Bengal (Northeast India),
  - **Nilgiri Mountain Railways** located in the Nilgiri Hills of Tamil Nadu (South India)
  - **Kalka Shimla Railway** located in the Himalayan foothills of Himachal Pradesh (Northwest India).
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1999**.

### Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodh Gaya (Bihar)

- It is the **first temple built** by **Emperor Ashoka** in the 3rd century B.C., and the **present** temple dates from the **5th–6th centuries**.
- It is **one of the earliest Buddhist temples** built entirely in brick, still standing, from the late Gupta period and it is considered to have had significant influence in the development of brick architecture over the centuries.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **2002**.

### Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka (Madhya Pradesh)

- It is a group of "**five clusters of rock shelters**".
- The Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka are in the **foothills of the Vindhyan Mountains** on the southern edge of the **central Indian plateau**.
- Within massive sandstone outcrops, above comparatively dense forest, are **five clusters of natural rock shelters**, displaying **paintings** that appear to date from the **Mesolithic Period right through to the historical period**.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **2003**.

### Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park (Gujarat)

- A concentration of largely **unexcavated archaeological, historic and living cultural heritage properties** stand in an impressive landscape which includes prehistoric (chalcolithic) sites, a hill fortress of an **early Hindu capital**, and remains of the **16th-century capital of the state of Gujarat**.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **2004**.

### Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (formerly Victoria Terminus) (Mumbai, Maharashtra)

- It is located in **Mumbai** on the Western Part of India touching the shores of the Arabian Sea.
- The building is designed by **F.W. Stevens** became the symbol of the '**Gothic City**'.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **2004**.

### The Red Fort Complex (Delhi)

- In **1638**, **Shahjahan** transferred his **capital from Agra to Delhi** and laid the foundations of **Shahjahanabad, the seventh city** of Delhi.
- It is enclosed by a rubble stone wall, with bastions, gates and wickets at intervals.
- **Red Fort** has **fourteen gates**, with **Lahori Gate as its main gate**.
- Its construction **started on 13 May 1638** in the sacred month of Muharam and was completed in the next **nine years**.
- It was tagged a world heritage site by UNESCO in **2007**.

### The Jantar Mantar, Jaipur

- It is an **astronomical observation site** built in the early **18th century**.
- It includes a set of some **20 main fixed instruments**.
- Designed for the **observation of astronomical positions** with the naked eye, they embody several architectural and instrumental innovations.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **2010**.

### Hill forts of Rajasthan

- The serial site includes **six majestic forts** in **Chittorgarh; Kumbhalgarh; SawaiMadhopur; Jhalawar; Jaipur, and Jaisalmer**.
- The eclectic architecture of the forts, some up to 20 kilometres in circumference, bears testimony to the power of the **Rajput princely states** that flourished in the region from the 8th to the 18th centuries.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **2013**.

### Rani-ki-Vav (the Queen's Stepwell) at Patan, Gujarat

- It is located on the banks of the **Saraswati River**.
- It was initially built as a **memorial to a king in the 11th century AD**.
- **Stepwells** are a **distinctive form of subterranean water resource** and **storage systems** on the Indian subcontinent, and have been constructed since **the 3rd millennium BC**.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **2014**.

### Historic City of Ahmadabad (Gujarat)

- It was **founded by Sultan Ahmad Shah** in the **15th century**, on the eastern bank of the **Sabarmati river**.
- It presents a **rich architectural heritage** from the sultanate period, notably the **Bhadra citadel**, the **walls and gates of** the Fort city and numerous mosques and tombs as well as important Hindu and Jain temples of later periods.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **2017**.

### Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai

- Having become a **global trading centre**, the city of Mumbai implemented an ambitious urban **planning project** in the **second half of the 19th** century.
- It led to the construction of ensembles of public buildings bordering the **Oval Maidan open space, first in the Victorian Neo-Gothic style** and then, in the early 20th century, in the **Art Deco idiom**.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **2018**.

### Jaipur City, Rajasthan

- The walled city of Jaipur was **founded in 1727 by Sawai Jai Singh II**.
- Unlike other cities in the region located in hilly terrain, **Jaipur was established on the plain and** built according to a grid plan interpreted in the light of **Vedic architecture**.
- The streets feature continuous **colonnaded businesses** that intersect in the centre, creating large public squares called **chaupars**.
- Markets, shops, residences and temples built along the main streets have **uniform facades**.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **2019**.

### Kakatiya Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple, Telangana

- Rudreshwara, popularly known as **Ramappa Temple**, is located in the village of Palampet approximately 200 km northeast of Hyderabad, in the State of Telangana.
- It is the **main Shiva temple** in a walled complex built during the **Kakatiyan period (1123–1323 CE)** under rulers **Rudradeva and Recharla Rudra**.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **2021**.

### The Nalanda Mahavihara (Bihar)

- It comprises the archaeological **remains of a monastic and scholastic institution** dating from the 3rd century BCE to the 13th century CE.
- It includes **stupas, shrines, viharas** (residential and educational buildings) and important art works in stucco, stone and metal.
- Nalanda stands out as the **most ancient university of the Indian Subcontinent**.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **2016**.

### Sun Temple (Odisha)

- The temple at Konarak is a monumental representation of the sun god **Surya's chariot**; its **24 wheels** are decorated with symbolic designs and it is led by a **team of six horses**.
- Built in the **13th century**, it is one of India's **most famous Brahman sanctuaries**.

- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1984**.

### **The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier (Chandigarh)**

- The **collection of 17 sites** comprising this **transnational serial property** are spread over **seven countries** and are a testimonial to the invention of a new architectural language that made a break with the past.
- The notable sites include the **Chandigarh Capital Complex in India**.
- They were built over a period of a half-century, in the course of what Le Corbusier described as "**patient research**".
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2016.

### **Dholavira - A Harappan City (Gujarat)**

- The ancient city of Dholavira, the **southern centre of the Harappan Civilization**, is sited on the **arid island of Khadir** in the State of **Gujarat**.
- Occupied between ca. **3000-1500 BCE**, the archaeological site, one of the **best preserved urban settlements** from the period in Southeast Asia.
- It comprises a **fortified city and a cemetery**.
- India got Dholavira inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in the year **2021**.

### **Santiniketan (West Bengal)**

- Santiniketan is a university town in West Bengal.
- It was founded by **Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore in 1901** as a residential school and center for art, later evolving into **Visva-Bharati University in 1921**.
- It is renowned for its **blend of traditional Indian and Western educational philosophies** and its role as a center for art.
- It was officially inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in **2023**.

### **The Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysala (Karnataka)**

- The famed Hoysala temples of Belur, Halebid and Somananthpura in Karnataka were constructed during the 12th and 13th centuries.
- Hoysala temples maintain a fundamental **Dravidian morphology**,
  - they exhibit substantial influences from the Bhumija style prevalent in Central India,
  - the Nagara traditions of northern and western India, and
  - the Karnataka Dravida modes favoured by the Kalyani Chalukyas
- It was designated a WHS in **2023**.

### **Moidams – the Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty (Assam)**

- Moidams, a **royal mound burial site** created by the **Tai-Ahom** in northeastern India, is situated in the **foothills of the Patkai Ranges** in eastern Assam.
- It is the unique **700-year-old mound burial system of the Ahom Kings at Charaideo**, highlighting the rich cultural heritage of Assam and Bharat.
- It was officially inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in **2024**.

## NATURAL SITES (7 SITES)

### Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (Himachal Pradesh)

- It is located in the **Kullu District** of Himachal Pradesh, India.
- GHNP was formally declared a **National Park in 1999**.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **2014**.

### Kaziranga National Park (Assam)

- It is located within **two districts** in Assam -the Kaliabor subdivision of **Nagaon** district and the Bokakhat subdivision of **Golaghat** district.
- Kaziranga covers an area of 378 km sq. and hosts **two-thirds of the world's Great One-horned rhinoceros population**.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1985**.

### Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan)

- Formerly known as the **Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary**, it lies between two of India's most historic cities, Agra and Jaipur.
- The park is home to over 370 species of birds and animals such as the **basking python, painted storks, deer, nilgai and more**.
- It was declared a **national park in 1982** and later tagged as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in **1985**.

### Manas Wildlife Sanctuary

#### Kutiyattam (Kerala)

### (Assam)

- It is located at the base of foothills of the Bhutan-Himalayas in the state of Assam.
- It is the **first reserve** included in the network of **tiger reserve under Project tiger in 1973**.

- In **1989**, Manas acquired the status of a **Biosphere reserve**.
- It extends over an area of 2837 Sq. Km from **Sankosh River in the west to Dhansiri River** in the east.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1985**.

#### **Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Park (Uttarakhand)**

- It was established in 1982, is situated around the **peak of Nanda Devi (7816 m)** in the state of Uttarakhand.
- The Park was established as **Sanjay Gandhi National Park** by Notification in **1982** but was later renamed Nanda Devi National Park.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1988**.

#### **Sundarbans National Park (West Bengal)**

- Sundarbans are the **largest delta** in the world.
- They consist of 10,200 sq km of **mangrove forest**, spread over **India and Bangladesh**.
- The part of the forest within Indian Territory is called **Sundarbans National Park** and is in the southern part of West Bengal.
- The Sundarbans cover an area of 38,500 sq km, of which about **one-third is covered by water/marsh**.
- The forest has a large number of **Sundari trees**.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1987**.

#### **Western Ghats**

- The Western Ghats is spread across an area from the mouth of the **river Tapi to the cape of Kanyakumari** for a distance of 1600 kms.
- Its average height is **1200 metres**.
- It is a **rift side** in the peninsular plateau.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **2012**.

#### **Mixed Sites (Sites 1)**

##### **Khangchendzonga National Park (Sikkim)**

- The park is also known as **Kanchenjunga Biosphere Reserve**.
- It is a **national park and a biosphere reserve** located in **Sikkim**.
- It became **the first "Mixed Heritage" site of India**.
- It was included in the **UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB)**.
- It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **2006**.

#### **Intangible Cultural Heritage of India**

Intangible Cultural Heritage refers to the traditions, skills, knowledge, and expressions that are passed down through generations and are valued by communities as part of their cultural identity. It includes not just practices and customs, but also the tools, objects, and places linked to them.

UNESCO's 2003 **Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage** proposes five broad 'domains' in which intangible cultural heritage is manifested:

- Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
- Performing arts;
- Social practices, rituals and festive events;
- Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- Traditional craftsmanship.

With the recent addition of Garba of Gujarat to UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2023, India now has a total of 15 cultural traditions recognized on this important international list

<b>Intangible Cultural Heritage Element on UNESCO's list</b>	<b>Year of Inscription</b>
Tradition of Vedic Chanting	<b>2008</b>
Ramlila (North India)	<b>2008</b>
Kutiyattam (Kerala)	<b>2008</b>
Ramman (Uttarakhand)	<b>2009</b>
Chhau Dance (Eastern India)	<b>2010</b>
Kalbelia Folk Songs and Dances (Rajasthan)	<b>2010</b>
Mudiyettu (Kerala)	<b>2010</b>
Buddhist Chanting (Ladakh)	<b>2012</b>
Sankirtana (Manipur)	<b>2013</b>

Traditional Brass and Copper Craft (Punjab)	<b>2014</b>
Navroz (India)	<b>2016</b>
Yoga	<b>2016</b>
Kumbh Mela	<b>2017</b>
Durga Puja (Kolkata)	<b>2021</b>
Garba (Gujarat)	<b>2023</b>

### Tradition of Vedic Chanting

- Vedas are over **3500 years old**, forming a large corpus of **Sanskrit poetry, dialogue, myth, and ritual**.
- Transmitted **orally**, embodying one of the **oldest surviving cultural traditions**.
- Only **13 of 1000+ recitation branches** survive today.
- Noted for **ingenious oral preservation techniques** by Brahmin priests.
- **Main texts**- Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda, and Atharva Veda

### Ramlila (North India)

- Dramatic enactment of the **Ramayana**, focusing on Rama's return from exile and his battle with Ravana, incorporating song, narration, and dialogue..
- Based on **Ramcharitmanas** by **Tulsidas (16th century)**.
- Performed during **Dussehra** across northern India.
- Major centres: **Ayodhya, Ramnagar etc.**

### Kutiyattam (Kerala)

- One of India's **oldest living theatrical traditions**.
- Combines **Sanskrit classicism** with **local Kerala traditions**.
- Features **neta abhinaya** (eye expressions) and **hasta abhinaya** (gestures) to convey the main character's emotions.
- **Single act** may take several days; full performance can last **up to 40 days**.
- Performed in **Kuttampalams** (temple theatres).

### Ramman (Uttarakhand)

- Annual **religious festival** in **Saloor-Dungra villages**, celebrated in **late April**.
- Honours **Bhumiyal Devta**, the local deity.
- Involves **rituals, epic Rama recitations, songs, and masked dances**.
- Only **Bhandaris (Kshatriya caste)** may wear the sacred **Narasimha mask**.

### Chhau Dance (Eastern India)

- Depicts stories from **Mahabharata, Ramayana**, and local folklore.
- Three regional styles: **Seraikella (Jharkhand), Purulia (West Bengal), Mayurbhanj (Odisha)**.
- Its movement includes mock combat techniques, stylized gaits of birds and animals and movements modeled on the chores of village housewives.
- Performed at **night** with **mohuri** and **shehnai**.

### Kalbelia Folk Songs and Dances (Rajasthan)

- Associated with the Kalbelia **community**, traditionally **snake handlers**.
- **Women** replicate **serpent movements** in dance, wearing tattooed and embroidered attire.
- **Men** play **khanjari** and **poongi** (snake-catching instruments).
- Entirely **oral tradition** with **no written manuals**.

### Mudi yettu (Kerala)

- **Ritual dance drama** based on **Kali vs. Darika** myth.
- Features **kalam** (powder drawing) of Kali to invoke the goddess.
- Performed annually at **Bhagavati temples**, the temples of the goddess, in different villages along the rivers **Chalakkudy Puzha, Periyar and Moovattupuzha**.
- Narrative includes **Narada, Shiva**, and **Kali's battle** with Darika.

### Buddhist Chanting (Ladakh)

- In Ladakh, Buddhist lamas chant sacred texts based on **Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions**, followed by four main sects: **Nyingma, Kagyud, Shakya, and Geluk**.
- Chanting includes **mudras, ritual instruments**, and is done **indoors or in courtyards**.
- Performed during **rituals, life-cycle events**, and **Buddhist calendar days**.

### Sankirtana (Manipur)

- Encompasses **singing, drumming, and dancing** dedicated to **Krishna**.
- Performed by **two drummers** and **ten singer-dancers**.
- Venue: **halls or courtyards**, with audience participation.
- Acts as a **social and spiritual glue** within **Manipur's Vaishnava community**.

### Traditional Brass and Copper Craft (Punjab)

- Practiced by **Thatheras of Jandiala Guru**.
- Involves **manual shaping** of utensils from **flattened metal plates**.
- Uses **hand-held bellows** and **earthen stoves** for temperature control.
- Finished using **sand and tamarind juice** for polishing.

### Navroz (India)

- Celebrated on **21st March** by **Parsis and Muslims (Shia and Sunni)**.
- Observed in multiple countries across **Central and South Asia**.
- Key ritual: **Decorated table** with symbolic objects and a **communal meal**.

### Yoga

- Involves **asana (poses)**, **pranayama (breathing)**, **dhyana (meditation)**.
- Aims for **self-realization and liberation**.
- Knowledge passed via **Guru-Shishya tradition**.
- Promotes **spiritual, mental, and physical well-being**.

### Kumbh Mela

- World's **largest peaceful religious gathering**.
- Held at **Allahabad, Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nasik** every four years by rotation.
- Main ritual: **bathing in sacred rivers** to cleanse sins.
- Major participants: **Akhadas, ashrams, and mendicants**.

### Durga Puja (Kolkata)

- Annual worship of **Goddess Durga** over **10 days in September or October**.
- Begins with **Mahalaya** (painting eyes on idols), ends with **immersion ritual**.
- Celebrated for **inclusive practices** involving **marginalized groups and women**.

### Garba (Gujarat)

- **Devotional dance** during **Navratri**, centred on **feminine energy (Shakti)**.
- Performed around **lit earthen pot** or **Amba idol**.

- Dancers move in **counter-clockwise circles**, rhythm builds to intense pace.
- Involves **singing, clapping, and synchronized movements**.