



Attukal Pongala Festival

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Why in News

The annual “ Attukal Pongala”, one of the largest all-women religious congregations began recently amid the **COVID-19 virus** threat.

Key Points

- Pongala is a **ten-day- long festival** of **Attukal Bhagavathy Temple**.
- The festival commences with the musical rendering of the story of the **Goddess (Kannaki Charitam) during the "Kappu Kettu ceremony"**.
- The story invokes the presence of Kodungallur Bhagavathy and the **slaying of the Pandyan King**. This festival commemorates the victory of Good over Evil, by the slaying of Pandyan King.
- The event of the Goddess annihilating the Pandyan King is accompanied by much sound and fury of the temple drums and "Vaykurava" by devotees, immediately followed by the lighting of the hearths for the preparation of the offering for the Goddess.

Pongala

- Pongala, which means '**to boil over**', is the ritual in which women prepare sweet payasam (a pudding made from rice, jaggery, coconut and plantains cooked together) and offer it to the Goddess or 'Bhagavathy'.
- The pongala is cooked in pots – preferably earthen.

Attukal Bhagavathy temple

- This temple is dedicated to **Goddess Bhagavathy**.
- Also known as "**the Sabarimala of Women**", this temple attracts the biggest set of women devotees for the annual Attukal Pongala festival.

- Attukal Devi temple and its main festival Attukal Pongala reached **Guinness Book of World Records** of largest annual gathering of women, when 1.5 million (15 Lakhs) women offered pongala on February 23, 1997 and on March 10, 2009, when over 2.5 million people took part in it.
- The temple is built with elements of **Kerala architectural style and Tamil architectural style as well.**
- The main building also comprises Goddess Kali, Goddess Parvathy, Lord Shiva, Goddess Sri Rajarajeswari and several others.

Kerala Architectural Style

- It displays certain variation on plan and elevation from its counterparts on the eastern coast of south India.
- These variations are mainly owing to **distinct climatic conditions** and the employment of different building materials along with the native systems of beliefs and culture.
- Kerala temples have a distinct style of their own by the **lavish use of wood, stone and metals.**
- Wood is used for making Temples because of rich forest cover.
- The base structure of the temple is made using **granite and laterite.**
- The roof may have **one, two or even three stories.**
- The shape of the roof depends on the plan of the sanctum below.
- The steep and needle like roof is made of wood and is covered with copper plates in order **to protect the inner skeletal framework from the vigorous monsoons.**

Source : TH