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Covid-19 Affects Odisha's Art and Festival

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Why in News

Recently, Odisha's Ganjam district administration banned the **Meru Jatra festival** and congregations related to it at temples on the occasion of **Mahavishub Sankranti (13th April, 2020)**, due to Covid-19.

Covid-19 has also affected the sale of **Pattachitra paintings**.

Meru Jatra Festival

- Meru Jatra marks the end of the 21-day-long festival of penance named **'Danda Nata'**.
- Danda Nata is celebrated in the month of **'Chaitra'**.
 - Danda as the name implies, is **self-inflicted pain, which the danduas (people who participate in the festival) undergo** to pay their obeisance to the **lord Kali**. It is also a form of worshipping the lord Shiva and his consort Parvati.
 - The **origin of the festival** is generally traced to **8th and 9th AD** after the decadence of Buddhism in Orissa.
- On the occasion of **Mahavishub Sankranti** thousands of devotees used to gather at the **Tara Tarini hill shrine** and other temples.
 - Tara Tarini hill shrine, located at a hilltop on banks of the **Rushikulya river**, is a major centre of Shakti worship in Odisha.
 - **The twin goddesses Tara and Tarini** represent one Shakti and are the main deity of Ganjam district (Odisha).
- **Mahavishub Sankranti** is the start of the **Odia New Year**.
- Earlier, the administrations had also banned the famous **Chaitra Jatra festival at Tara Tarini hill shrine** as a precautionary measure against Covid-19 infection.

Pattachitra Painting



- Pattachitra style of painting is one of the **oldest and most popular art forms of Odisha**.
- The **name Pattachitra has evolved from the Sanskrit words Patta**, meaning **canvas**, and **Chitra**, meaning **picture**. Pattachitra is done on canvas and is manifested by rich colourful application, creative motifs and designs, and portrayal of simple themes, mostly mythological in depiction.
- Some of the popular themes represented through this art form are **Thia Badhia** - depiction of the temple of Jagannath; **Krishna Lila** - enactment of Jagannath as Lord Krishna displaying his powers as a child; **Dasabatara Patti** - the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu; **Panchamukhi** - depiction of Lord Ganesh as a five-headed deity.
- The Pattachitra, when painted on cloth, follows a traditional process of preparation of the canvas. First, the **base is prepared by coating the cloth with the soft, white, stone powder of chalk and glue made from tamarind seeds**.
- It is a tradition to complete the borders of the painting first. The painter then starts making a rough sketch directly with the brush using light red and yellow. The colours used are normally white, red, yellow, and black.
- When the painting is completed it is held over a charcoal fire and lacquer is applied to the surface. This makes the painting water resistant and durable, besides giving it a shining finish.

Source: TH, TH