



drishti

Asadha Poornima Dhamma Chakra Day

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Why in News

Recently, India in partnership with **International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)**, celebrated **Asadha Poornima Dhamma Chakra Day 2021** on 24th July 2021.

The day is also observed as **Guru Poornima** by both Buddhists and Hindus as a day to mark reverence to their Gurus.

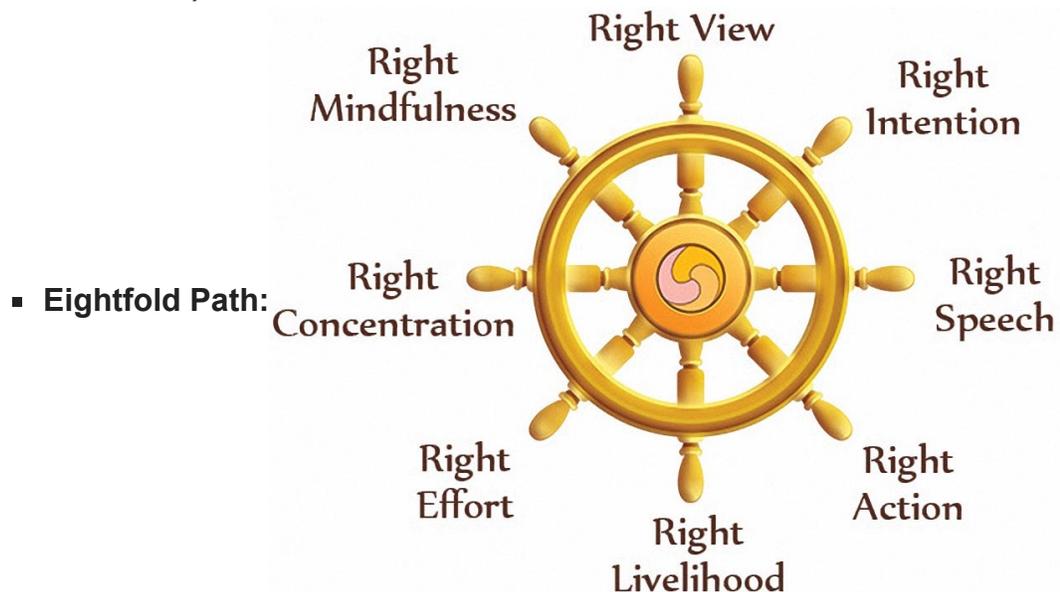
Guru Purnima

- According to the Hindu calendar, Guru Purnima generally **falls on a full-moon day in the Hindu month of Ashadh**.
- It is dedicated to Maharshi Veda Vyasa, the sage **who is believed to have edited the sacred Hindu text, the Vedas and created the 18 Puranas, Mahabharata and the Srimad Bhagavatam**.
- For Buddhists, **the festival marks the first sermon of Lord Buddha**, which is said to have been delivered at Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh, on this very day.
- It is also believed to **mark the onset of monsoons**.

Key Points

- **About:**

- It commemorates **Buddha's first sermon** to his **first five ascetic disciples**. He gave his first knowledge to the world after attaining enlightenment.
- The day marks the establishment of **the Sangha, on a full-moon day of the month of Asadha**, in the Indian Sun calendar at the '**Deer Park**', R̥ṣipatana in the current day **Sarnath, near Varanasi, India**.
 - It is also known as **Esala Poya in Sri Lanka** and Asanha Bucha in Thailand.
 - It is the second most sacred day for Buddhists after the **Buddha Poornima or Vesak**.
- This teaching of **Dhamma Chakka- PavattanaSutta (Pali)** or Dharma chakra Pravartana Sutra (Sanskrit) is also known as the **First Turning of Wheels of Dharma** and comprises the **Four Noble Truths** and **Noble Eightfold Path**.
 - **Four Noble Truths:**
 - Suffering (**dukkha**) is the essence of the world.
 - Every suffering has a cause – **Samudya**.
 - Suffering could be extinguished – **Nirodha**.
 - It can be achieved by following the **Atthanga Magga (Eightfold Path)**.



- The **Rainy Season retreat (Varsha Vassa)** for the Monks and Nuns also starts with this day **lasting for three lunar months from July to October**, during which they remain in a single place, generally in their **temples (Viharas/Chaityas)** dedicated to intensive meditation.

- **Gautam Buddha:**
 - He is believed to be the **eighth of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu** (Dashavatar).
 - He was born as **Siddhartha Gautama in circa 563 BCE**, in Lumbini and belonged to the **Sakya clan**.
 - Gautam attained **Bodhi (enlightenment) under a pipal tree at Bodhgaya, Bihar**.
 - Buddha gave his first sermon in the **village of Sarnath, near Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh**.
 - He died at the age of **80 in 483 BCE at Kushinagara, Uttar Pradesh**. The event is known as **Mahaparinibban or Mahaparinirvana**.
- **Contribution of Buddhism to Indian Culture:**
 - The concept of **ahimsa was its chief contribution**. Later, it became one of the cherished values of our nation.
 - Its contribution to the **art and architecture of India was notable**. The stupas at Sanchi, Bharhut, and Gaya are wonderful pieces of architecture.
 - It **promoted education through residential universities** like those at **Taxila, Nalanda, and Vikramasila**.
 - The language of Pali and other local languages developed through the teachings of **Buddhism**.
 - It had also promoted the spread of Indian culture to other parts of Asia.
- **Buddhism's Relevance in Covid-19:**
 - Buddha's teaching is relevant today when humanity faces the **Covid-19 pandemic** as the biggest challenge before it. **Buddha's principles bind countries together**, strengthening humanity.
 - Today, the nations of the world are also **holding each other's hands and helping each other in the times of pandemic**, following the **path of service to humanity as shown by Buddha**.
 - Buddha's **four noble truths and eightfold path can help understand the doctrine of Karma** and can help in healing the world and make it a better place.
- **UNESCO's Heritage Sites Related to Buddhism:**
 - Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda, Bihar
 - Buddhist Monuments at **Sanchi**, MP
 - **Maha Bodhi Temple** Complex at Bodh Gaya, Bihar
 - **Ajanta Caves** Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

Source: IE