

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF CULTURE  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-1146**  
ANSWERED ON-05/12/2024

**BALI YATRA**

1146. SHRI DEBASHISH SAMANTARAY

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether Government is considering elevating the Bali Yatra of Cuttack to a national festival due to its cultural, historical and social significance;
- (b) if so, the details of the proposal, including the steps being taken to officially recognize and promote Bali Yatra as a national event; and
- (c) the expected benefits of promoting Bali Yatra as a national festival for Odisha's tourism, cultural heritage and local economy?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM

(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

(a)to (c) Bali Yatra is a festival that commemorates the maritime trade and cultural exchange between Odisha and Southeast Asian countries, particularly Bali. The festival is celebrated annually in Cuttack, Odisha, and attracts million of visitors. The term Bali Yatra literally means ‘Voyage to Bali’. Every year Kartika Purnima marks the day that the seafaring traders departed for the Indonesian islands. For this festival, people of Odisha gather in large numbers in colourful attire to celebrate their glorious maritime history. The celebration features grand fairs, elaborate rides, food and dance. Indian women perform ‘Boita Bandana’, they make boats of paper or banana leaf (sholapith) with lighted lamps inside and float them down the Mahanadi as a part of the celebrations. The Bali Yatra celebrates the ingenuity and skill of those expert sailors who made Kalinga, one of the most prosperous empires of its time.

The festival is organized by Department of Culture and Tourism, Govt. of Odisha. Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre (EZCC), Kolkata, an autonomous organization under Ministry of Culture, participates in this event by way of providing cultural troupes during the Yatra for organizing cultural programmes, the details of which are as under:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Name of the programme</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Art form presented</b>
2022-23	Baliyatra Cuttack Utsav – 2022	8 to 16 Nov, 2022	Cuttack	Bihu, Nagara, Kuchipudi, Purulia Chhau, & Jhumar Dance
2023-24	Baliyatra Cuttack Utsav – 2023	27 Nov to 4 Dec, 2023	Cuttack	Purulia Chhau, Paika, Contemporary Dance & Odissi
2024-25	Baliyatra Cuttack Utsav – 2024	15 to 22 Nov, 2024	Cuttack	Bihu, Kathak, Purulia Chhau& Ruff/ Dogri

Under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, a three-day National Dhara event 'Samudramanthan' was organized at the Odisha Maritime Museum at Cuttack to focus on the State's glorious seafaring history, coinciding with the inauguration of the historic Bali Yatra. The event included panel and round-table discussions on the country's maritime history locations, traditions, ship building, navigation, trade and cultural exchange, maritime security and international law.

The Yatra facilitates cultural exchange between Odisha and other States, promoting cross-cultural understanding. The Yatra also provides a platform for traditional Odia artists, craftsmen and musicians to showcase their skills which help to revive and promote Odia Culture.

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