

Ambubachi Mela

Ambubachi Mela is a four-day festival to mark the annual menstruation of the goddess at Kamakhya temple in Guwahati. Ambubachi Mela is one of the biggest congregations of eastern India. It is the most important festival of the Kamakhya temple and is celebrated in the month of June every year.

About Ambubachi Mela

- It is a **four-day fair** to mark the annual menstruation of the goddess at Kamakhya temple, Assam
- There is **no idol in the temple**, the goddess is worshipped in the form of a yoni-like stone over which a natural spring flows
- **"Ambubachi" means spoken with water** and it also implies that the rains expected during this month make the earth fertile and ready for procreation
- The belief is that Kamakhya embodies the mother cult, the Shakti. During the period of Ambubachi **from the seventh to the tenth day of the Hindu month of "Asadha", the doors of the shrine are closed**. On the twelfth day, the doors are opened ceremonially and a big fair held at the temple premises on that day

About Kamakhya Temple, Assam

- It is located atop the Nilachal Hill, by the banks of the Brahmaputra river
- Kamakhya is one of 51 shakti peethas or holy sites for the followers of the Shakti cult, each representing a body part of the Sati, Lord Shiva's companion
- Legends say the temple was built by the demon king Narakasura. But records are available only from 1565 when Koch king Naranarayana had the temple rebuilt

Significance of Ambubachi Mela

The concept of Ambubachi has in its origin, formative influences and elements of agricultural, social and religious ideas that have contributed to the emergence of the phenomenon.

Discussed below are the significant features of the Ambubachi Mela:

- Since the temple celebrates the menstrual period of the goddess, it culturally rejects the various taboo related to menstruation, which makes it **culturally rich**.
- Apparently, the taboo associated with menstruation is less in Assam compared with other parts of India.
- The attainment of the womanhood of girls in Assam is celebrated with a ritual called **Tuloni Biya**, meaning a small wedding. (*Aspirants should note that there are other states in India that too celebrate the first period - 'Manjal Neerattu Vizha' tradition of Tamil Nadu, 'Peddamanishi Pandaga' tradition of Andhra Pradesh/Telangana; etc.)
- It is also known as the **"Mahakumbh of the East"** and experiences heavy footfall from people across the country. Thus, making it a big boost for tourism of the state.