

# 7. Our Festivals

A festival is a day of celebrating an important event. India is a land of festivals. We celebrate many festivals throughout the year. Festivals bring joy to the life and develop a feeling of love and brotherhood. Some festivals remind us about the lives of great men. They encourage us to learn from the lives of these great men. Festivals add to the health, wealth and happiness of everyone. They are a welcome change in our daily life.

**Festivals are of two types :**

1. National festivals
2. Religious festivals

## NATIONAL FESTIVALS

Festivals which are celebrated by the entire nation, are called **national festivals**. We have three national festivals. On these occasions, schools and offices all over the country remain closed to enable people to celebrate these festivals.

The three national festivals are Republic Day, Independence Day and Gandhi Jayanti.

## REPUBLIC DAY

A republic is a country in which the head of the state is elected by the people. India became a republic on 26 January 1950. Since then, we celebrate 26 January as Republic Day.

The main function is held in Delhi at Rajpath. Our President hoists the national flag and takes salute of the parade. A big parade is organised in

**In this lesson, you will learn about :**

- Different types of festivals— religious and national.
- How and when they are celebrated.
- The names of harvest festivals.



Republic Day celebrations on Rajpath

which all the three wings of the armed forces, police forces, schoolchildren, cultural troupes and folk dancers participate. Brave children from all over the country are made to sit on elephants and honoured. Tableaus from different states and ministries make the parade very colourful. All Government buildings are decorated with lights in the evening. Thousands of young and old people come to witness the parade.

### INDEPENDENCE DAY

On 15 August 1947, India got independence from British rule. This important event is celebrated every year on the same day by the entire nation as Independence Day. The main function is held at the Red Fort in Delhi. The Prime Minister hoists the National Flag. We remember our freedom fighters with great pride. The Prime Minister delivers a speech to the nation. Independence Day is celebrated in schools by hoisting the National Flag and singing the National Anthem.



Children celebrating Independence Day at school.

### GANDHI JAYANTI

Mahatma Gandhi was born on 2 October 1869. His birthday is celebrated as Gandhi Jayanti. Mahatma Gandhi led us when we were fighting for independence from British rule. He is affectionately called 'Bapu'.

On this day, the President and the Prime Minister and many others pay homage at his Samadhi at Rajghat in Delhi, on the bank of river Yamuna. Prayers are held all over the country.



Gandhiji's samadhi at Rajghat



## RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

Some festivals are connected with religions. They are called **religious festivals**. India is a land of many religions. So we celebrate many religious festivals every year. Though we call them religious festivals, people belonging to other religions also participate in them. They share the joy and happiness of their friends and wish them on these occasions. These festivals are therefore, important for the unity and integrity of our nation.

### HOLI

It is the festival of colours. It is celebrated during the month of March. People throw colours on each other and exchange greetings. People enjoy sweets and a special dish called *Gujiya*.



Holi is the festival of colours.

### DUSSEHRA

This festival falls in the month of October. It is celebrated in honour of Rama's victory over Ravana. This festival is celebrated for ten days. For the first nine days Ramlila is staged. On the



Dussehra marks the victory of good over evil.

tenth day, the effigies of Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Meghnad are burnt. A big fair is held in every town and city. Thousands of people go to see the fair. Dussehra marks the victory of good over evil.

In Gujarat, Dussehra is celebrated as Navratra. For nine days, people dance round a lighted pot, called the garba. Dussehra of Kullu Valley and Mysore is famous all over the country.

### DURGA PUJA

It is an important festival of West Bengal. It is celebrated at the same time as Dussehra. Goddess Durga is worshipped. On the last day, the idols of Goddess Durga are immersed in a river.



Durga Puja is the main festival of West Bengal.

### Put on Your Thinking Cap

Match the following :

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Holi       | Goddess Durga |
| 2. Dussehra   | Colours       |
| 3. Durga Puja | Ravana        |



### DIWALI

Diwali is the festival of lights. On this day, besides lighting of lamps, people wear new clothes and exchange gifts and sweets with friends and relatives. People paint their houses in new colours.

Diwali night is a colourful night. People, especially businessmen pray to Goddess Laxmi and regard Diwali as the New Year Day. They start new account books on this day. They pray to Goddess Laxmi for good business in the coming year.



Diwali is the festival of lights.



## RAKSHA BANDHAN

On this day, sisters tie *rakhi* (a thread) on the right wrist of their brothers and pray for their safety.

## CHRISTMAS

Christmas is celebrated on 25 December as the birthday of Jesus Christ all over the world. Christmas trees are brought home and decorated. People wear new clothes, offer prayers at Church and wish Merry Christmas to each other. The main attraction for the children is Santa Claus who brings gifts for them.

## ID

Muslims celebrate *Id-ul-Fitr* and *Id-ul-Zuha*. During the month of *Ramzan*, Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. At the end of *Ramzan*, comes *Id-ul-Fitr*. People go to mosques and offer *namaz*. They embrace and wish each other 'Id Mubarak'. A special sweet dish called *sewiyān* is prepared. *Id-ul-Zuha* or *Bakr-Id* is celebrated by sacrificing sheep or goats.



Raksha Bandhan



Christmas is celebrated on 25 December.



Id celebration

## GURUPARV

Guruparvas are the birthdays of the Sikh Gurus. Huge processions are taken out throughout the cities. People go to gurudwaras to listen to Guruvani from the holy book *Guru Granth Sahib*. *Langar* is held to distribute holy food to everyone.

## BUDDHA PURNIMA

The birth of the founder of Buddhism, Lord Gautam Buddha is celebrated as Buddha Purnima. People offer special prayers and exchange greetings on this day.

Birthdays of many national leaders are also celebrated in our country.

The birthday of the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, is celebrated on 14th November. It is also known as **Children's Day**.

The birthday of the former President of India, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, is celebrated on 5 September as **Teacher's Day**.

## HARVEST FESTIVALS

Harvest is an important activity in our country. It is the time when a crop that has been sown earlier is ready for reaping. The festivals that mark the change of seasons are called harvest festivals. These festivals are known by different names and celebrated in different ways across the country.

## BIHU

Bihu is the harvest festival of Assam. Special Bihu dances are organised across the state. Young girls wearing typical Assamese clothes are seen dancing in many places.



Guruparva



A statue of Lord Buddha



Bihu Dance of Assam



## PONGAL

Pongal is the harvest festival of Tamil Nadu. It is a three-day festival. On the first day, the Rain-god is worshipped, on the second day, the Sun-god is worshipped, and on the third day the cattle are worshipped. Special Pongal rice is prepared. In Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, this festival is called Sankranti. It marks the change of season from winter to summer.

## ONAM

Onam marks the celebration of harvest season in Kerala. Special dishes are prepared and served on banana leaves. Snake-boat races are one of the highlights of Onam.

## BAISAKHI

It is celebrated on 13th April every year. This festival is mainly celebrated in North India, particularly in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. People in Bengal observe this day as New Year.

### Festivals of North-East

**Wangala** festival of Meghalaya is associated with jhuming, or shifting cultivation. Its celebration is held at the Rongram Development Block in Asanang. It is also known as Hundred Drums Festival because dancers with 100 drums participate in it.

**Hornbill** festival of Nagaland is celebrated from 1 December to 5 December each year. It is held at Naga Heritage Complex in Kisama. All the sixteen tribes of Nagaland participate in it. During this festival, the whole Naga culture is displayed at one place.



Hornbill

**Chapchar Kut** is a spring festival of Mizoram. People wear colourful costumes, distinctive headgears and jewellery. They perform various folk dances.

A. Answer these questions.

Q.1 Why do we celebrate festivals?

Ans We celebrate festivals to joy and happiness.

Q.2. What is the difference between religious and national festivals?

Ans Festivals which are connected with religious are called religious festivals and festivals which are celebrated by the entire nation are called national festivals.

Q.3. When did India become a republic?

Ans India became a republic on 26 January 1950.

Q.4. How do we celebrate Christmas?

Ans Christmas trees are brought and home decorated people wear new clothes offer prayers at church and wish merry Christmas to each other.

Q.5. How do we celebrate Id?

Ans This day people go to mosques and offer namaz muslim eat sewiyan and wish each other Id mubarak.



Q.6.

What is a harvest festivals ?

Ans

The festivals that mark the change of seasons are called Harvest festivals.

B.

Write the dates on which these festivals are celebrated ?

Ans

- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Independence Day | <u>15 August</u>   |
| 2. Republic Day     | <u>26 January</u>  |
| 3. Gandhi Jayanti   | <u>2 October</u>   |
| 4. Christmas        | <u>25 December</u> |

C.

Fill in the blanks, choose words from the box.

|        |          |      |          |        |       |
|--------|----------|------|----------|--------|-------|
| Diwali | Red fort | Bapu | national | Mysore | Kullu |
|--------|----------|------|----------|--------|-------|

1. A national festival is a festival celebrated by the whole country.
2. Independence Day is celebrated at Red fort in Delhi.
3. Mahatma Gandhi is also known as Bapu

4. Dusshera of Kullu and Mysore is famous all over the country.

5. Diwali is the festival of lights.

D. Fill in the blanks.

1. Festivals are of two types.

2. National festivals are celebrated by the entire nation.

3. Republic Day is celebrated at Rajpath in Delhi.

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6. Gandhiji's Samadhi is at Rajghat in Delhi.

E. Match the following

1. Holi

Goddess Durga

2. Dussehra

Colours

3. Durga Puja

Ravana



III

## Lesson-7 Our festivals

Page No.:

Date:

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