

## History (Optional) By **MANIKANT SINGH**

### Kamakhya Temple

#### Why in News?

- Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) is planning to build a ropeway from Kamakhya Railway Station to Kamakhya Temple in Guwahati.
- The aerial distance between the railway station and the temple is approximately 1.5 km. The temple is situated atop the Nilachal hills on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra river.

#### About Kamakhya Temple

- This temple is dedicated to Sati, the goddess of power.
- It is one of the oldest 51 Shaktipeeths in India.
- The main temple is surrounded by 10 separate temples which are dedicated to ten Goddesses- Kali, Tara, Shodashi, Bhuvaneshwari, Bhairavi, Chhinnamasta, Dhumavati, Baglamukhi, Matangi and Kamalatmika.
- This is the epicentre of Tantric Shakta cult in India. There is no idol in this temple. The goddess is worshiped in the form of a yoni.
- Being centre of Tantra worship, the temple attracts thousands of Tantra devotees to the annual festival known as Ambubachi Mela. Another annual festival celebrated here is Manasha worship.



## Temple Architecture

➤ It was built with a combination of two different styles i.e. the Nagara (North Indian style) and the Sarasenic style. Thus, having an unusual combination, which is seen in this famous Shakti temple of India, it is named as 'Nilachal style' of architecture.

➤ The reason behind the development of this new type of style was the violation of the orthodox Nagara style. It is

mentioned in 'Darrang-Raj Vanishaa', an important text which was compiled in the 17th century AD.



## Ambubachi Mela

- This festival is the menstruation festival of Goddess Kamakhya (Sati).
- This festival is celebrated every year between 21 to 25 June. It is believed that Goddess Kamakhya undergoes menstrual cycles during this period. During this time-interval, the gates of Kamakhya temple remain closed for the devotees.
- Goddess Kamakhya also known as 'Siddha Kubjika' is a Hindu tantric goddess of desire and who originated in the Himalayan hills. She is also known as 'Kali' and 'Maha Tripura'.
- This festival is also known as the 'Maha Kumbh of the East' as it attracts millions of pilgrims and devotees from all over the world.

## Social Significance of this Festival

- As compared to other parts of India, Assam has less conservative outlook regarding menstrual dogma. The reason is the menstruation festival of Goddess Kamakhya.
- The attainment of womanhood of girls in Assam is celebrated with a ritual called 'Tuloni Biya', which means small marriage. Ambubachi Mela promotes awareness on menstrual hygiene.