



**NARALI  
POURNIMA,  
MAHARASHTRA**

As the monsoon begins its gradual retreat after heavy showers, the land is rife with a spirit of rejuvenation



accompanied by a promise of prosperity. In Maharashtra, the Narali Pournima, or the coconut festival, marks

practices. Celebrating harvest and plenitude, the festival also marks the return of King Mahabali to meet his praja (subjects). The legend goes that every year, the righteous king returns from the nether world to pay the land a visit and people across social and economic strata unite in festivities to welcome him. Beginning on Atham and ending on Thiruvonam in the Malayalam month of Chingam, the 10 days see the front yards

of houses, offices and other public places being elaborately decorated with floral arrangements called Athapookkalam. On Thiruvonam, also considered the most auspicious day of the festival, new clothes, known as onakkodi, are distributed, a special traditional feast known as onasadhya comprising a minimum of 11 dishes is laid out, and traditional games are played alongside a display of traditional music and dance. Onam culminates in the iconic boat race at Aranmula, with oarsmen rowing magnificent snake boats along River Pamba.

the end of the season on Shraavan Purnima, the first full moon during the Hindu month of Shraavan. Also known as Shravani Pournima, Rakhi Pournima or Raksha Bandhan, the occasion also marks the beginning of a new fishing season. This is why the state's fishing community, known as Koli, celebrates Narali Pournima with special zest every year by appeasing the sea god before venturing out on vibrantly painted and decorated boats. An offering of coconuts is made and prayers are chanted to seek a large bounty of fish as well as protection from natural calamities. Sweet coconut rice, a special delicacy prepared during the festival, is savoured by one and all.

Source: Nandini D Tripathy  
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## Cultural Calendar - December 2017

**8**  
Friday  
6.00 pm

**Uma- An evening of Kathak**

By Nrithya Visharadha Umesha Samarasooriya and her disciples of Uma creations and students of Leluma Kalayathanaya

Venue: ICC Auditorium

**12**  
Tuesday  
6.00pm

**Sitar Recital**

by W. Y. R. Devpahan Perera, (M. Mus)  
Benaras Hindu University and ICCR scholar

Venue: ICC Auditorium

**15**  
Friday  
6.00 pm

**Bharatanatyam Recital**

By Sahana Balasubramanya,  
Renowned danseuse from India  
Disciple of Guru Saroja Vaidyanathan

Venue: ICC Auditorium

**18**  
Monday  
4.00pm

**Kavi Sammelan**

by Indian and Sri Lankan Hindi Poets  
Organized by Hindi section of ICC

Venue: ICC Auditorium

**22**  
Friday  
6.00 pm

**Sitar Recital**

Ramprampanna Bhattacharya,  
Renowned Sitarist (Etahwa Gharana) from India

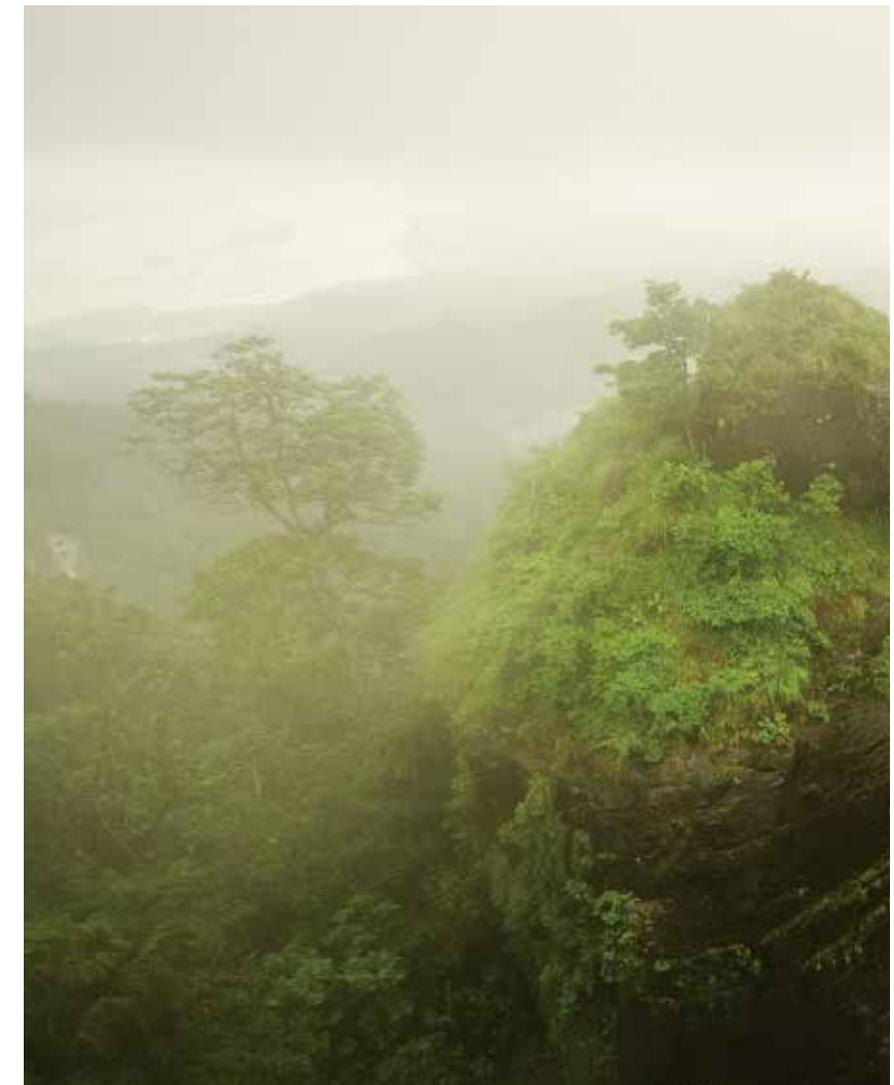
Venue: ICC Auditorium



Indian Council for Cultural Relations  
संस्कृत विदेश सम्बन्धन परिषद्

# Sanskarika

Newsletter of the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo December 2017



## Cultural Tapestry

### The Great Indian Monsoon

Greeting the rain god with music, dance and traditional rituals, India celebrates the season with a spirit of thanksgiving through its various monsoon festivals. We list eight such celebrations you must experience on your next visit



The harbinger of rejuvenation and plenitude, monsoon holds a special place in India's heart as a season of celebration. From Himachal Pradesh in the north to Kerala in the south, and from Meghalaya in the east to Maharashtra in the west, every part of the country has its own way of greeting the rain gods and expressing how grateful it is to nature as it partakes of its bounty. Elaborate rituals accompany joyful singing and dancing as the season arrives and retreats with equal grandeur. Take a peek into eight of India's most vibrant monsoon festivals and create your own travel path to follow the rain clouds!



#### SAO JOAO, GOA

Begin your monsoon trail in Goa as the state ushers in the first rains of the season with Sao Joao. Held towards the end of June, this festival will have you taking a leap of faith, or several, quite literally. With the feast of St John the Baptist at its heart, it has people singing, dancing, feasting and jumping into wells, streams and ponds around the state. The display of Sangodds, decorated floating platforms made by tying two boats or banana tree trunks together, is also an important part of the vibrant and energetic celebrations.



#### HARELI, CHHATTISGARH

As the name suggests, the Hareli festival is an ode to nature. Among the most

unique festivals in India, it is meant to seek Mother Nature's blessings during the monsoon as the rains quench the thirst of the land. As a part of the festivities, farmers worship cows and agricultural equipment as they pray for a bountiful harvest. Another interesting ritual involves the stringing together of neem leaves, which are then hung at the doors of households to ward off diseases.



#### BEHDEINKHLAM, MEGHALAYA

This colourful festival is celebrated for three days at Jowai and sees men dance on the street to the accompaniment of traditional pipes and drums. Although the women do not participate in the dancing, they have a significant role to play within the space of the home, offering a sacrificial spread to the spirits of the ancestors. A tower-like structure called a rath is built and decorated by localities across the state, to be carried by 30 to 40 men to a small lake at Aitnar for immersion.



#### TEEJ, RAJASTHAN

Celebrating the arrival of the rains in Rajasthan, Teej refers to an entire set of monsoon festivals celebrated



across western and northern India and is dedicated, in many parts of the country, to Goddess Parvati who is also known as Teej Mata. Paying homage to the bounty of nature, greenery and birds with traditional social activities, rituals and customs, the festival is primarily for women and includes dancing, singing, storytelling, applying henna on hands and feet,



Bhavani and Trichy. People from across the state come together in a spirit of thanksgiving as they regale the life-giving properties of water.

#### MINJAR FAIR, HIMACHAL PRADESH

wearing bright lehariya sarees and gorging on festive food. Haryali Teej also sees women playing under trees on swings and praying to Goddess Parvati for their husbands' well-being.

#### ADIPERUKU VIZHA, TAMIL NADU

As the sun's rays become less harsh and cool winds begin to blow, Adiperuku Vizha ushers in the spirit of a new beginning. Also known as Aadi Perukku or Padinettam Perukku, the festival is meant to pay respect to River Kaveri and its tributaries. Held on the 18th day of the Tamil month of Aadi every year, it is celebrated with particular fervour in Hogenakkal,

The western Himalayas echo with songs of the rain as Himachal Pradesh celebrates the bounty of nature during the Minjar Fair. Held in the Chamba district, it begins with an elaborate opening ceremony and is believed to be an extremely auspicious time.

As a part of the celebration, people indulge in traditional sporting and cultural activities, attired in vibrant costumes. As an interesting accompaniment to tradition, the fair now also includes exhibitions on subjects as modern as forensics!



#### ONAM, KERALA

Among the most well known monsoon festivals in India, this 10-day cultural extravaganza brings together mythology and traditional agricultural