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Khajuraho Dance Festival

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Why is in news? Khajuraho Dance Festival to begin in Madhya Pradesh on 20th February

In the 49th Khajuraho Dance Festival, the **spring of art** will blossom in the amphi-theater of Khajuraho from 20th February.

The Khajuraho Dance Festival organised by the Madhya Pradesh Kala Parishad, is a **one-week festival of classical dances** held annually beside the Khajuraho temples in Chhatarpur district of Madhya Pradesh state in central India. The festival is conducted in February from the **20th to the 26th**.

This festival **highlights the richness of the Indian classical dance styles** such as Kathak, Bharathanatyam, Odissi, Kuchipudi, Manipuri, Gaudiya Nritya, and Kathakali with performances of some of the best exponents in the field. Modern Indian dance has been added recently.

The dances are performed in an open-air auditorium, usually in front of the **Chitragupta Temple dedicated to Surya** (the Sun God) and the Vishvanatha Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, belonging to the western group.

Khajuraho Temple:

It is a **group of Hindand Jain Temples** in Madhya Pradesh, **built by Chandela Dynasty** between 950 and 1050 AD.

It is situated **within the Vindhya Mountain range** in Central India. It is a **UNESCO World heritage Site**.

The temples are famous for their **nagara-style architectural symbolism** and their erotic sculptures (about 10% of total sculptures).

The temples at Khajuraho are all **made of Sandstone**.

The temples are categorized into three groups that are Eastern, Western and Southern.

The largest temple at Khajuraho is the **Kandariya Mahadeva temple** which is attributed to king Ganda.

All the towers or shikhara of temple rise high, upward in curved pyramidal fashion, emphasizing temple's vertical thrust ending in horizontal fluted disc called Amalaka topped with Kalasha or vase.

The erotic expression of sculptures in these temples gives equal importance in human experience as a spiritual pursuit, and it is seen as a part of the larger cosmic whole.

The **first documented mention** of Khajuraho was made in **641 by Xuanzang, a Chinese pilgrim**.

Later, Khajuraho temples also found mention by **AbRaihan al Biruni** in AD 1022 and the **Arab traveler Ibn Battuta** in AD 1335.

The Ministry of Tourism included Khajuraho Temples as one of the sites under the **"Iconic Tourist Sites Initiative"**.

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