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# Nuakhai

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**Why is in news?** Odisha celebrates Nuakhai festival with prompt and gaiety

Nuakhai is an **agricultural festival** mainly observed by **people of Western Odisha** in India.

Nuakhai is observed to **welcome the new rice of the season**.

It is also called **Nuakhai Parab or Nuakahi Bhetghat**.

This is the most important social festival of **Western Odisha and adjoining areas of Simdega in Jharkhand**.

Nuakhai is a combination of two words that signifies eating of new rice as 'nua' means new and 'khai' means eat.

According to the calendar it is observed on panchami tithi (the fifth day) of the lunar fortnight of the month of Bhadrapada or Bhadraba (August–September), the day after the Ganesh Chaturthi festival.

Farmers offer the first produce from their lands to **Goddess Samaleswari**, the famous 'Mother Goddess' of Sambalpur district of Odisha.

**Sambalpuri dance forms** like Rasarkeli and Dalkhai can be witnessed.

Nuakhai festival **traces its origin to the Vedic period** in Panchyajna.

The **Nuakhai Juhar** is a significant **ritual** of the festival. It is an exchange of greetings with friends, relatives, and well-wishers.

Being an agrarian festival, the eldest in each household in rural pockets worshipped their paddy fields, praying for a bumper crop and favourable weather.

The festival is mostly celebrated in Sambalpur, Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Bolangir, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Nabarangpur, Deogarh, and Sundergarh.

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