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STUDENT EDITION

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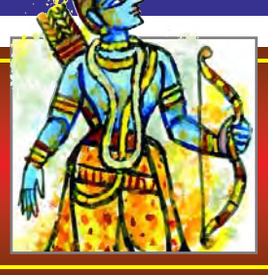
Happy Diwali

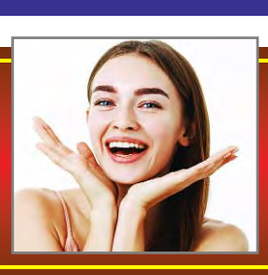
TODAY'S EDITION

➤ ON RAM'S FOOT TRAIL: Let's revisit the places made famous by the legend of Ram PAGE 2

➤ Who is the light of your life? PLUS: Tips to stay calm during tough times PAGE 3

➤ DIY DIWALI: Tips & tricks for a handmade Diwali – from food, decor, gifts & MORE PAGE 4





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Sparkle! Shimmer! Shine! But Sustainably

10 WAYS TO A CONSCIOUS DIWALI

Everywhere there's a hustle of happiness and a bustle of busyness. The shops are kitted out with new wares, moms are on a short shrift courtesy the Diwali cleaning, while dads are making budgets, and shopping lists are being drawn out. Before you revert to type, remember the lessons of last year – of intimate celebrations, handmade goodies and a conscious mindset. Celebrate the festival of lights that brings the glow, not just to your home but journeys within as a glow of goodness – via an ECO-FRIENDLY Diwali

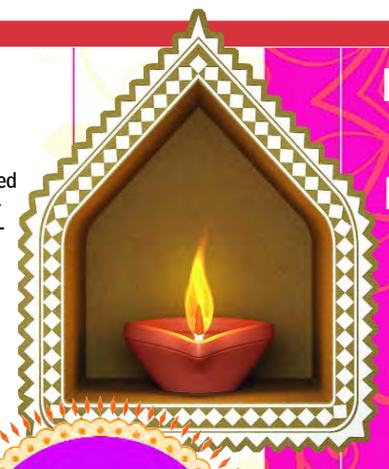
PICS: ISTOCK

1 Light up

Heard of light pollution? It is caused by excessive use of artificial outdoor light and it disrupts the natural patterns of wildlife, affects tree growth, contributes to the increase in carbon dioxide, disrupts human sleep, and obscures the stars. Plus, cheap and easily available fairy lights are the light equivalent of 100-ladi patakhas.

GO GREEN

- Replace fairy lights with longer-lasting LEDs that use less energy
- Use beeswax-fuelled diyas and candles instead of paraffin candles, as they are not biodegradable
- Avoid tealights as the metal container is not recyclable
- Stick to clay diyas
- If you are putting up outdoor lights, keep for a shorter duration. Don't buy new ones



Students of IIT Delhi innovated on cow-dung diyas that are made minus a pottery furnace, reducing 173 ton of harmful emissions that happen because of it. The diyas can later be used as manure

2 Green clean

Diwali involves a lot of house cleaning in order to appease Goddess Laxmi. But did you know that household cleaners are the major cause of indoor air pollution? Most contain some or the other form of alcohol, ammonia, chlorine, petroleum-based solvents and when they go into the water stream it can create disruption in life forms in the water.

GO GREEN

- Use water, white vinegar, lemon to make your own multipurpose cleaner
- Trawl the net for an eco-friendly recipe for cleaners
- Use citrus waste to start your BioEnzymes project
- Switch to cloth dusters and/or coconut coir scrubs to clean surfaces
- Buy eco-friendly products that are now easily available online

3 Manage e-waste

According to Central Pollution Control Board report 2019-20, India generated 10lakh+ ton of e-waste, third-largest after China and US

This is the time when most people invest in new electronic goods – mostly as an indulgence than as a need.

GO GREEN

- First check if your device can be repaired
- Look for a local e-waste recycler to discard it in a safe and responsible manner
- Buy from a company that follows good practices
- Always question your purchases. Do you really need a new phone? Do you need a smartwatch just because your friend has?

4 Decor dilemma

Companies like 21 Fools and Phool (top) have fashioned seed crackers that look like patakhas but have to be planted not burst

Did you know only 9 per cent of all the plastics ever created have been recycled? All the more reason to skip plastic decorations this Diwali.

GO GREEN

- Choose flowers
- Instead of plastic lanterns, opt for bamboo or earthen ones
- Don't use any disposable decorations like tinsel bunting – neither compostable nor recyclable, tinsel is one of the most hazardous decorations since it is made out of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) film
- Choose paper or fabric buntings
- Use an old silk dupatta as a table cloth or an interesting fabric as a wall hanging

5 Colour capers

Rangoli has become par for course for Diwali. Most rangoli colours use structured polymers like acid, mica, and glass powder. These chemicals are non-biodegradable and cannot be removed from waste water using traditional procedures.

GO GREEN

- Use natural colours and dyes like rice flour, turmeric powder, kumkum, lime, flower petals and leaves which are biodegradable
- Avoid glitter in any form. It is made using plastic sheets and creates microplastics
- Avoid stick-on rangoli as that uses plastic sheets

6 Gift green

This is an emerging trend that results in a lower environmental impact as well as a lower impact on personal budgets!

GO GREEN

- Use recycled wrapping paper and bags. Use newspaper or cloth if you have to. People are not judging a gift by its cover any longer!
- Gift handmade products or re-gift something that you have never used but know the other person will appreciate it
- Give a gift card or vouchers to a store so that they can get anything of their choice
- Gift a plant, a trend that is really catching on

7 Clothes call

Did you know that the fashion industry contributes to 10% of global CO2 emissions – more than international flights and maritime shipping combined? Nine billion pieces of clothing are hardly worn or stay idle in customers' closets. While Diwali is all about new clothes, there are ways to add a green sheen to your sartorial choices this time.

A 2016 Euromonitor report says that clothing use is massively underutilised with most women wearing 20% of their wardrobe 80% of the time

GO GREEN

- Buy pre-loved. It's not second-hand anymore. Pre-loved, resale, thrift whatever you call it is as legit as first-hand shopping. Most occasion wear is only worn 3-4 times a year and that's probably overstating it. Buying pre-loved saves 6 times its weight in CO2
- Swap. Get with your cousins and create a swap pool for your Diwali dress
- Restyle. Take that lehenga from last year and wear the skirt with a crisp white shirt or a body-hugging skivvy. Or fashion a cape out of a festive dupatta. Restyling old favourites is the best way to recreate a new look
- Repurpose. Check your mom's closet for an old festive sari and make a skirt out of it. Or if you have a good tailor, get a blazer made. Reusing already existing stuff lowers your carbon footprint considerably
- Buy from a sustainable brand, if you have to buy. At least they would have followed eco-friendly manufacturing practices

8 Shop smart

Diwali is an endless cycle of buying – gifts, clothes, food, etc. While not all of it can be avoided, there's always a way to shop mindfully.

GO GREEN

- Make a careful shopping list. Or set a challenge like only 10-item shopping lists
- Support local. It also cuts down on packaging
- Make a list of 4-5 'green' brands to shop from
- Avoid last minute shopping. Unplanned shopping is wasteful shopping
- Carry your own bags to carry the spoils home

9 Noise cancellation

With growing awareness, crackers and loud parties are out. If you have a stay-at-home Diwali this year (like most of us), we have got you covered.

Anyone exposed to sounds above 85 dB requires hearing protection. According to a CPCB report, noise levels during Diwali day range from 60-120 dB

GO GREEN

- Play board games. Some exciting new games to try are Star Trek Scrabble, Farscape – The Unofficial Board Game, Doctor Who: Time of the Dalek, The Big Bang Theory: The Party Game
- Try Dominoes that also earn you bragging rights on social media
- Go for green crackers that are designed to have only 30% less particulate matter pollution

10 Trash it well

During festivals, it is observed, there's a two-fold increase in the quantum of garbage generated.

GO GREEN

- Consume mindfully. You can halve your waste generation at the inception, so plan carefully.
- Segregate carefully to make it easier for the garbage pickers to figure out disposal
- Compost what you can

A 2018 report found that Diwali Day generated 1,000 tons of garbage in Coimbatore alone

EXPERT SPEAK
MRUDULA JOSHI, founder, Ullisu

"Pause, and ask yourself...Why?"

TAPER OFF: If you're having difficulty letting go of crackers completely or it feels like a drastic change to you, create levels where you can taper off.

GIFT HOMEMADE: Gift giving is a huge source of plastic trash during festivities. Keep things in reusable containers, or look for brands with better packaging practices. Gifting homemade is the best.

SHOP RIGHT: Buying and shopping brand new during Diwali was a tradition that made sense when we lived in an era where we only shopped 1-2 times a year. But in today's times of excess, there is no shame in skipping and using something you already have.

Joshi is a zero-waste advocate

"Diwali shopping as a tradition needs to be rethought in this day and age of over-consumption"

EXPERT SPEAK
SWATI SOHARIA, founder, Katran

"Small changes, big impact"

1 Decorate your home using fabric buntings and torans, flowers, soy candles, traditional terracotta diyas etc. Spend time with family and friends.

2 Using recycled and reusable decoration elements are the key. Like Katran washable torans, washable rugs, natural flower rangolis, which can be composted after use.

3 Wrap your gifts in reusable gift wrappers like fabric wraps, or recycled paper wraps, or single paper/fabric bags which could very easily be repurposed or reused for various applications.

Soharia is a professional upcycler

"It's the season to spread love and happiness, not plastic"

EXPERT SPEAK
SAHAR MANSOOR, CEO, Bare Necessities

"Be more mindful"

BUY LOCAL: Support small social enterprises. Supporting those who are truly trying to help local communities or businesses attempting to make positive changes is a major way we can all decrease our impact this Diwali. Tip: Buy jam/pickle from neighbourhood aunty.

GIFT A PLANT: Bringing nature into your home can bring happiness and prosperity.

DON'T HAVE A BLAST: If you have to burst crackers, opt for less polluting ones and burst them in open areas away from residences. But we need to be mindful of the negative implications of such actions especially if we want our children to enjoy the same Diwali we did!

THINK REUSABLES: Greenify Diwali dinners and parties with reusable cutlery and plates. Not only does it divert waste from our landfills, but also creates a warm atmosphere for your get-togethers.

SEGREGATE YOUR WASTE: This is quite self-explanatory. Visit sites like Daily Dump to understand more.

Diwali is about showing gratitude and appreciation to our homes, families and friends. All this wouldn't be possible without the environment that surrounds us. So, let's keep our cities and oceans clean like the way we clean our homes.

Mansoor is the author of 'Bare Necessities: How to live a zero-waste life'

"Whether it's the packaging, the ingredients or how it was sourced – we need to become mindful to support our environment"

EXPERT SPEAK
KAVERI VIJ & AKSHAY CHOPRA, founders, Designer Events

"Low-waste if not zero-waste Diwali"

REPURPOSE: Using less plastic may seem unavoidable, so the smart move would be to use the plastic that can be repurposed for home utility or as a decor item.

SIMPLE SHIFTS: The pandemic has taught us how we can be a conscious citizen of the world by taking care of everyone around us, so why leave the environment behind? Make simple shifts like using earthern diyas instead of glittery ones, finding out and donating all the marigolds used in the puja to NGOs that make incense sticks and rangoli colours out of them; making homemade mithai and passing them on in re-usable boxes. Gift plants and write your wishes on seed paper that can be planted.

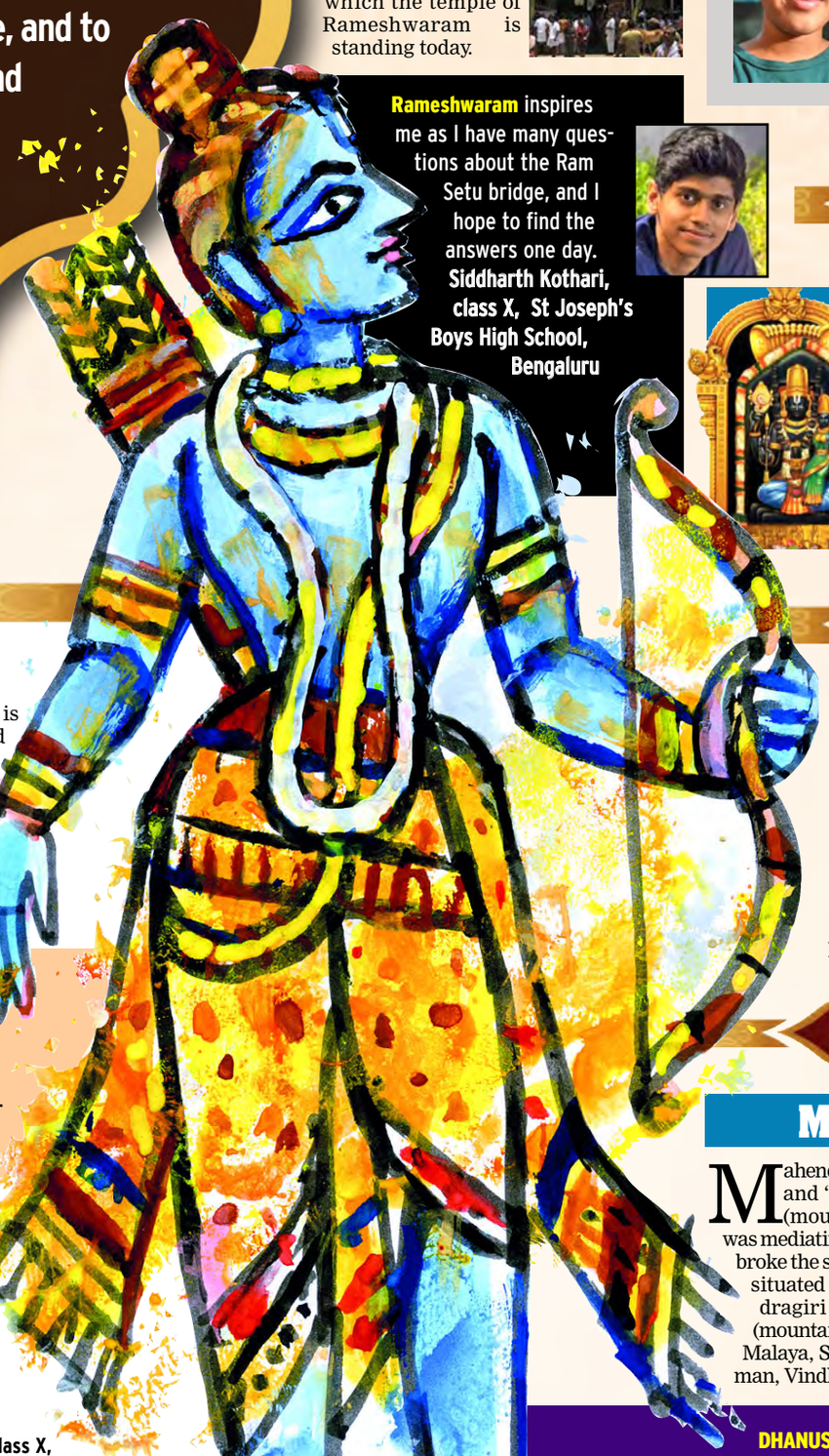
The duo are wedding planners

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that." — **Martin Luther King Jr.**

HAPPY *Diwali*

ON Ram's FOOT TRAIL....

In a bid to enlighten people about India's deep-rooted culture, and to integrate mythology with science, President Ramnath Kovind inaugurated the Ramayana Circuit this year. This stretch comprises cities across the country – from Ayodhya to Rameshwaram – that are believed to carry Lord Ram's footprints. This Diwali, let's revisit the places mentioned in scriptures



Uttar Pradesh

AYODHYA

The birthplace of Lord Ram, Ayodhya is said to be one of the oldest civilised cities in the world. According to scholars, **AYODHYA WAS THE CAPITAL OF THE KINGDOM OF KOSALA.** The capital city of Kosaldesh was ruled by various eminent kings such as Ikshvaku, Prithu, Mandhata, Harishchandra, Sagar, Bhagirath, Raghu, Dileep, Dashrath and Ram.

DID YOU KNOW? The ghats on River Saryu was constructed by Raja Darshan Singh in the first part of the 19th century. As recorded in the 'Ramayana', Manu, a mythic man, founded Ayodhya

I am interested in exploring **AYODHYA**, as there are so many stories unfolding within the city - be it Hanuman Garhi, the Saryu River, Nageshwar Nath Temple, Kanak Bhawan (where Goddess Sita lived) and Sita Rasoi (where Goddess Sita cooked food).

UDISHA TIWARI, class XI, CMS GN2, Lucknow

I'd love to explore **AYODHYA**, capital of the ancient Kosala Kingdom. It fascinates me as I am interested in knowing about that era, and study the town's complex architecture replete with cultural history.

RAKSHIT DUBEY, class X, Zebar School, Ahmedabad

JANAKPUR/SITAMARHI

Janakpur is said to be the birthplace of Goddess Sita, who was the daughter of King Janak. **JANAKPUR WAS WHERE LORD RAM GOT MARRIED TO GODDESS SITA.** In the present time, Janakpur is in Nepal, around 20 km from the Indian border. Devotees visit Sitamarhi, in Bihar, Sita's native place, on the occasion of Vivah Panchami, and then head towards Janakpur.

Madhya Pradesh

CHITRAKOOT

Chitrakoot is mentioned in Ramayana as the place where **BHARAT CAME TO INFORM LORD RAM ABOUT THE DEMISE OF KING DASHRATH AND TO ASK HIM TO RETURN TO AYODHYA.** This sequence in 'Ramayana' was stated as Bharat Milap. In the present time, Chitrakoot lies between the states of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. This town is full of temples dedicated to Lord Ram.

In the epic 'Ramayana', the Kingdom of Mithila fascinates me a lot. Mithila does not boast of grandeur or magnificence, but it has a charm of its own, historical value and arts of that time.

SHRIYAA GANGOLI, Class XII, The Heritage School, Kolkata

Tamil Nadu

RAMESHWARAM

Rameshwaram is the place where Hanuman and his army built a stone bridge called Ram Setu. According to legends, after returning from Lanka, Sita built a Shiv Lingam here on which the temple of Rameshwaram is standing today.

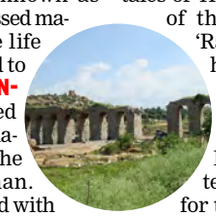
Rameshwaram inspires me as I have many questions about the Ram Setu bridge, and I hope to find the answers one day.

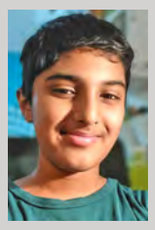
Siddharth Kothari, class X, St Joseph's Boys High School, Bengaluru

Karnataka

KISHKINDHA/ HAMPI

Kishkindha,also known as Anegundi, witnessed major events in the life of Lord Ram. It was said to be the **'KINGDOM OF MONKEYS'**. They later helped Lord Ram in defeating Ravana. It is near Hampi, the birthplace of Hanuman. Temples here are adorned with tales of Hanuman and Ram. Most of the events mentioned in 'Ramayana' are believed to have happened around Hampi and Anegundi. Rishimukh Mountain is a significant place where Lord Ram met his devotee and friend, Hanuman, for the first time.



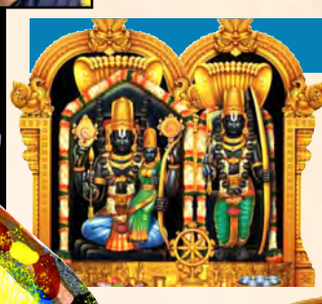


I am interested in exploring **KISHKINDHA** and **RISHIMUKHA PARVAT** because Vali and Sugriva's ulitmate fight happened there. Kishkinda was the kingdom of Vanara King Sugriva, the younger brother of Vali. After Vali had been slain by Lord Ram, Sugriva took charge of Kishkindha. He and his friend Hanuman then worshipped Lord Ram.

AADI VASUDEVAN, Class IX, Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, New Delhi

Telangana

BHADRACHALAM



Parnashala village, near Bhadrachalam, is said to be where **RAM KILLED DEMON MARECHA**, who came disguised as a golden deer to deceive Sita. As per mythology, Ravana abducted Sita from Paranashala and took her to Lanka in a Pushpaka Vahanam. Devotees visit Seethamma Vagu, where Sita used to bathe and dry her clothes.

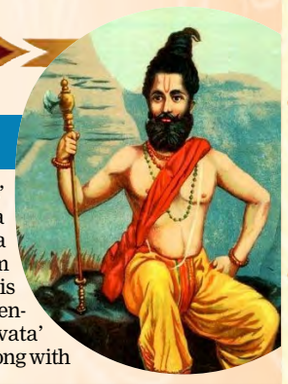
Chhattisgarh

JAGDALPUR/DANDAKARANYA

It is believed that this region used to be the maternal home of Lord Ram and the birthplace of Mata Kaushalya. According to mythology, Lord Ram, Sita and Lakshman, had spent 10 years of exile in the Dandakaranya region of Bastar, the name of a forest mentioned in Ramayana. **IT WAS RULED BY THE DANDA KINGDOM, A STRONGHOLD OF THE RAKSHASA TRIBES.** Apparently, it was a state of Lanka Kingdom, ruled by Ravana's man, Khar.

Odisha

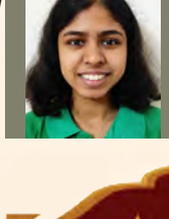
MAHENDRAGIRI



Mahendragiri is mentioned in the 'Puranas' and 'Ramayana' as Mahendra Parvata (mountain). It's said that Parashurama was mediating on Mahendragiri when Lord Ram broke the sacred bow of Shiva. Mahendragiri is situated in Gajapati district, Odisha. Mahendragiri is also considered as a 'Kula Parvata' (mountain associated with a certain tribe) along with Malaya, Sahyadri, Parijatra, Shuktiman, Vindhya and Malyavaan.

DHANUSADHAM, near Janakpur, the disputed birthplace of Sita, fascinates me. It is believed that fossilised fragments of lord Shiva's bow, which was broken by Lord Ram during Swayamvar is worshipped here. Also, it's just a few kilometres away from Janaki Mandir, where the Swayamvar took place.

SAI KRISHNA PRIYA R, class X, GTA VM, Chennai



ASHOK VATIKA in Sri Lanka is a place that fascinates me as it narrates the story how Sita, after being captured by Ravana, waited anxiously for Lord Ram. Also, Hanuman visited the place ressuring Sita with Ram's ring.

SAMYUKTA SIVAKUMAR, Class XII, Ryan Int'l School, Kandivali, Mumbai

West Bengal

NANDIGRAM

During the exile of Lord Ram, King Bharat ruled from Nandigram instead of the capital Ayodhya. According to 'Tulsi Ramayana', it was Nandigram and not Ayodhya, that first received Lord Ram when he returned from exile.

SHRINGVERPUR

Shringverpur, near Allahabad, is known as the Kingdom of Nishadraj (boatmen). Ramchaura is said to be the place where Lord Ram stayed overnight before heading to forests. Nishadraj washed his feet here before steering Ram across the Ganga in his boat.

PRAYAGRAJ

Prayagraj, renowned as the greatest pilgrimage, is where Lord Ram, Sita and Lakshman, spent some time before proceeding to Chitrakoot during their exile. Mythology claims Lord Brahma performed 'yajna' to purify the atmosphere when he created the universe. Hence, the name Prayag,the place of 'purification'.

Bihar

BUXAR

According to mythology, sage Vishwamitra the family guru of Lord Ram, had his ashram here. It is believed that here, the sage was disturbed during a yagna by the demons. Buxar is the place where Rakshasi Tadika was killed by Lord Ram.

DARBHANGA (AHALYA ASTHAN)

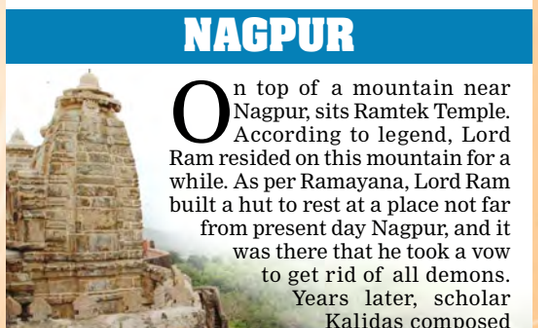
Ahalya Asthan, a temple in Ahiari village near Darbhanga city, is also known as Ahilya Gram. The temple is dedicated to Ahalya, wife of Sage Gautam. According to 'Ramayana', Indra, the lord of the celestials, one day, entered Ahalya's cottage impersonating as sage and urged her for solicitation. As fate would have it, the untimely return of the sage Gautam led to Ahalya being cursed and turned into a stone. After years of penance, Lord Ram freed her and helped her reunite with the sage.

Maharashtra

PANCHVATI

Nashik was known as Panchavati before Ramayana period. Legend states that the name 'Nashik' is derived as **SURPANAKHA'S NOSE (NASHIKA) WAS CUT OFF BY LAKSHMAN HERE.**

NAGPUR



On top of a mountain near Nagpur, sits Ramtek Temple. According to legend, Lord Ram resided on this mountain for a while. As per Ramayana, Lord Ram built a hut to rest at a place not far from present day Nagpur, and it was there that he took a vow to get rid of all demons. Years later, scholar Kalidas composed 'Meghduta' at Ramgiri here.

Source: TNN/ Agencies/ nic/govt tourism sites