

Rath Jatra Celebrated in Myanmar's Maungdaw Under Arakan Army Administration



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GUWAHATI, July 20, 2026 — The annual Rath Jatra (Festival of Chariots) commenced with religious fervour in Maungdaw, western Myanmar's Rakhine State, on July 16, drawing tens of thousands of Hindu devotees from across the region.

According to regional news outlet Narinjara, the nine-day festival is being held in Maungdaw, one of the townships currently administered by the Arakan Army (AA), which has taken control of much of Rakhine State during the ongoing conflict with Myanmar's military junta.

The report said the event marks the 24th annual Rath Jatra organised by the local Hindu community. Devotees offered prayers to Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra, while the celebrations include a traditional chariot procession, religious ceremonies, cultural performances and free community meals.

Rath Jatra, one of Hinduism's most celebrated festivals, is observed worldwide, with the largest and most renowned celebrations taking place in Puri, Odisha, where millions of devotees participate in the annual procession of the deities from the Jagannath Temple to the Gundicha Temple.

According to Narinjara, the Arakan People's Revolutionary Government has encouraged the observance of religious festivals by minority communities in areas under its administration. Local residents were quoted as saying that such cultural events help preserve the heritage of the Hindu community while promoting mutual respect and understanding among different ethnic and religious groups.

The report also noted that previous Myanmar administrations had prohibited the celebration of Rath Jatra in the area, whereas the current AA-led administration has permitted the festival to be organised publicly.

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Assam Times Staff. editor@assamtimes.org

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