

dressed in white and red sarees as a sendoff. A procession with the Goddess happens in the locality where the pandal is located and the idol is finally immersed in the river.

Every state in India celebrates the festival with a unique touch and subtle nuances that add to the flavour of Dussehra. The Mysore Dasara which has now become a huge annual affair includes a grandiose procession called Jumbo Savari where elephants are paraded and the Goddess is carried in a golden hoodah on one of the oldest elephants. Mysore is home to the Chamundi Hills where Goddess Durga is supposed to have killed Mahishasura and gives the city its name.

Being the principal deity of worship of the royal family, the celebrations include a special durbar at the Mysuru Palace that is lit during the evenings as well as cultural events and exhibitions

held across the city. In West Bengal, Durga Puja or Pujo, as it is referred to colloquially, is the time when the city is swathed in colourful festivities. Hopping between pandals each of which is done up in a unique way with large idols of Goddess Durga is a favourite activity at this time.

If you are here head to the old mansions like Sovabazar Raj Bari and Rani Rashmoni Bari to witness the traditional Bonedi Bari pujas too. Himachal Pradesh celebrates Kullu Dussehra that sees a congregation of 200 plus local deities from neighbouring villages to participate in Lord Raghunath's Rath Yatra to Dhalpur Maidan. Interestingly these celebrations begin on Vijayadashami the last day when the Dussehra festivities is on in the rest of the country.

The festival concludes with the

**THE MYSORE DASARA WHICH HAS NOW
BECOME A HUGE AFFAIR INCLUDES A GRAND
PROCESSION CALLED JUMBO SAVARI**

