

PSC

Important Temples in India

Both Current + Static

StudyLab

25/06/22

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StudyLab

Lord Venkateswara Temple (Andhra Pradesh)

- The temple on **Tirumala hills** is also known as **Tirupathi Balaji temple**. It is also called a temple of seven hills.
 - Tirumala Hills are part of **Seshachalam Hills** range (remember Pushpa movie)
- Dedicated to Venkateswara a **form of Vishnu**.
- The temple is in Dravidian Architecture style.

Mahabodhi Temple (Bihar)

- It is a **Buddhist temple**.
- The Central Tower Of Mahabodhi is 180 feet tall i.e. 54 metres.
- It is one of the oldest brick structures. The brickwork depicts the life of Buddha.
- It is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

Somnath Temple [Gujarat]

- It is also known as Deo Patan.
- It is one of the 12 jyotirlinga shrines of Lord Shiva.
- Constructed in Chalukyan style.
- **In 1026, Mahmud Ghazni** lent the precious jewels and property of Somnath temple & destroys it.
- Somnath was destroyed when Delhi Sultanate occupied Gujarat in 1299. **Afzal Khan, the commander of Ala-ud-din Khilji**, plundered it.
- In 1394 it was destroyed again.
- **In 1706, Mughal ruler Aurangzeb again demolished the temple.**
- 1947 – **Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel** ordered the reconstruction of the temple that completed in 1951.

- The first President of India Dr Rajendra Prasad installed the Jyotirling in the new temple on May 11, 1951.
- He was criticised by the then Prime Minister for displaying personal faith in public while being on the highest constitutional post of a secular nation.

Dwarkadhish Temple [Gujarat]

- It is also known as Jagat Mandir.
- Dedicated to the **god Krishna**,
- It is one of the four Hindu pilgrimages (Char Dham).
- The original structure was destroyed by Mahmud Brgada in 1472.
- Presently, in the Chalukya architecture style.

Vaishno Devi Temple [Jammu & Kashmir]

- Formed from the **combined energies** of Parvati, Lakshmi, and Saraswati.

- it is 5200 feet above sea level atop **Trikuta Hills**.
- It is a Cave temple.

Amarnath Temple [Jammu & Kashmir]

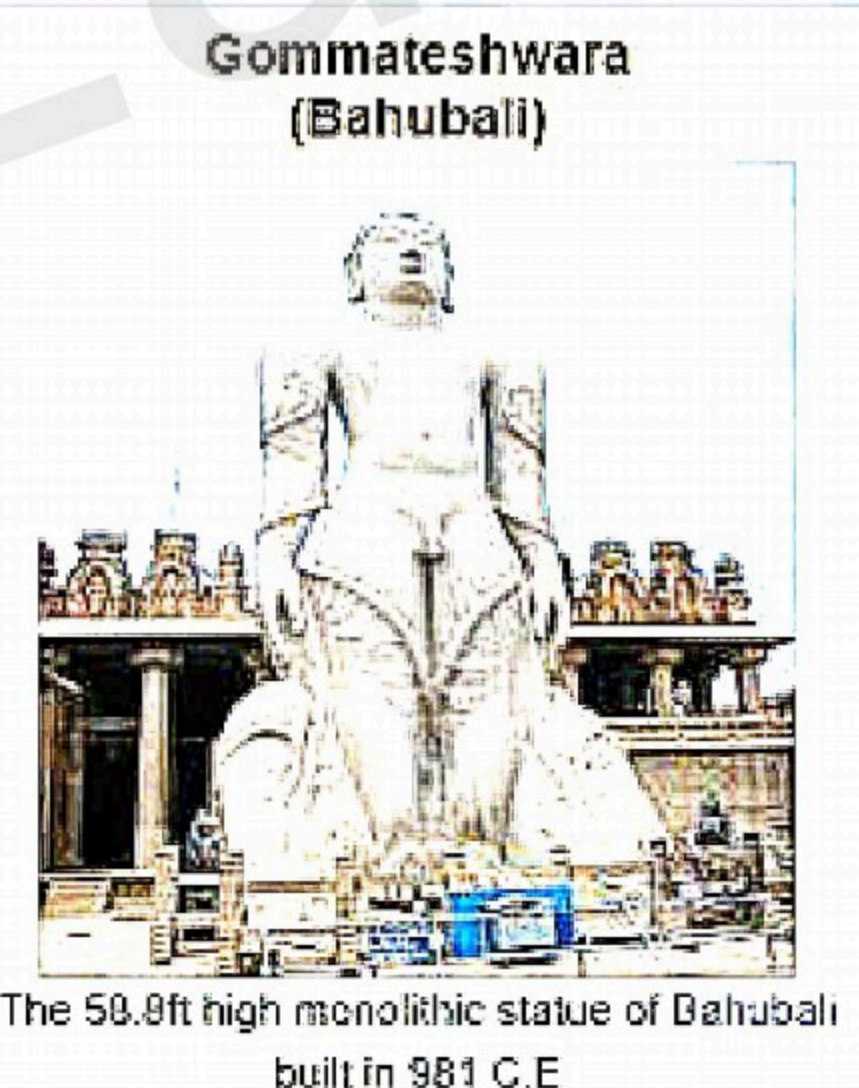
- A **cave temple** situated at an altitude of 3888 metres.
- Deity: Shiva as in Lingam form
- It is one of the 51 **Shakti Peeths**.
 - o Temples throughout South Asia that commemorate the location of **fallen body parts** of the Hindu deity Sati.
- It is believed that **Bhrigu Muni** (A great sage) was the first to have discovered Amarnath.

Virupaksha Temple [Karnataka]

- Built by **Lakkana Dandesha**, a chieftain under the ruler **Deva Raya II** of the Vijayanagara Empire.
- Dedicated to Lord Virupaksha, a form of **Shiva**.
- Located on the Bank of the river **Tungabhadra**
- It forms a part of **Group of Monuments at Hampi** that is designated as **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

Gomateshwara Temple [Karnataka]

- It is also known as **Bahubali temple**.
- The **tallest monolithic statue** (Of Gomateshwara son of lord Rishabhanatha) in the world carved out of a single block of granite.
- It is a **Jain temple** that is 57 feet high.
- Bahubali statue is one of the largest free-standing statues in the world depicting the prolonged meditation of Bahubali.
- The **Mahamastakabhisheka Mahotsava** is an anointing [Abhisheka] ceremony of the statue of Lord Bahubali.
Only once in 12 years



Temple in News

Current (YiN: The proposal of the Pakistan Hindu Council to allow pilgrims of both countries to travel by air has been forwarded to India by Pakistan)

- Hinglaj Mata Mandir in Balochistan
- Paramhans Mandir in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,
- Ajmer Sharif dargah in Rajasthan,
- Nizamuddin Aulia in Delhi

Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple

- **Location-** Thiruvananthapuram, **Kerala**, India
- **History** - The temple dates back to the **8th century** but the **present structure** was built in the **18th century** by the then **Travancore Maharaja Marthanda Varma**.
- The temple was initially made of wood but later it was constructed with granite.
- **Feature-** unique **Chera style** of architecture
- **Deity** - **Lord Vishnu** who is found in the Anantha Shayana posture (reclined posture of eternal yoga) on Adishesha or king of all serpents.
- **Significance** - It is known to be one of the 108 holy temples associated with Vaishnavism in India

Khajuraho Temple → Madhya Pradesh

- They are a **group of temples** built by the rulers of **Chandela Dynasty (950-1050 AD)**. • **Hindu** and **Jain** temples.
- Famous for **nagara style** architecture and known for extensive **erotic sculptures**.
- UNESCO World Heritage Site
- The first **recorded mention** of the Khajuraho temples is in the accounts of Abu **Rihan al Biruni in AD 1022** and the Arab 5traveller **Ibn Battuta** in AD 1335.
- Architecture style - Nagara-style



Lingaraja Temple

- Lingaraja Temple is a temple **DEDICATED TO SHIVA**.
- Built in 7th C. by King **Jajati Keshari** of Soma Vansh.
- It is built in **RED STONE** and is a classic example of **KALINGA STYLE** of architecture. • It signifies the syncretisation of Shaivism and Vaishnavism sects in Odisha
- Bhubaneswar is called the **Ekamra Kshetra** as the deity of Lingaraja was originally under a mango tree (Ekamra) as noted in Ekamra Purana, a 13th-century Sanskrit treatise.
- **Located** to the north of the temple is **Bindusagar Lake**



Siddhivinayak Temple → Maharashtra

- It is one of the **richest temples** in India.
- Dedicated to Lord **Shri Ganesh**.
- It was constructed by Laxman Vithu & Dubai Patil in 1801.

Konark Sun Temple

- Konark Sun Temple, located in **East Odisha near the sacred city of Puri**.
- Built in the 13th century by **King Narasimhadeva I (AD 1238-1264)** and is dedicated to the **Sun God**.
- It marks the highest point of achievement of **Kalinga architecture**.
- It was declared a **UNESCO world heritage site** in 1984.
- The temple is designed in the shape of a **colossal chariot**.
- There are two rows of **12 wheels on each side of the Konark sun temple**.

Some say the wheels represent the **24 hours in a day** and others say the 12 months.

The seven horses are said to **symbolise the seven days of the week**.

- Sailors once called this Sun Temple of Konark, the **Black Pagoda** because it was supposed to draw ships into the shore and cause shipwrecks.
- **Great poet Rabindranath Tagore wrote of Konark:** "Here the language of stone surpasses the language of man."

Jagannath Temple → Odisha

- Dedicated to **Jagannath**, a **form of Sri Krishna**
- The temple is believed to have been **constructed in the 12th century by King Anatarman Chodaganga Deva of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty**.
- Jagannath Puri temple is called „**Yamanika Tirtha**“ where, according to the Hindu beliefs, the **power of „Yama“**, the god of death has been nullified in Puri due to the presence of Lord Jagannath.
- This temple was called the „**White Pagoda**“ and is a part of **Char Dham pilgrimages** (Badrinath, Dwaraka, Puri, Rameswaram).

- This temple in Puri is **famous for** its annual chariot festival, **Ratha Yatra**, where **Jagannath**, **Balabhadra** and **Subhadra** are a trio of deities worshipped.

Golden Temple → Punjab

- It is a gurudwara, built in the 15th century. It is also known as **Harmindar Sahib**.
- Temple was **plated in Gold** in 1980 from the wealth and material **donated by Maharaja Ranjit Singh**.
- **Guru Ram Das**, fourth of the 10 gurus, **founded the city of Amritsar**. He **started the construction** of the **Golden Temple at Amritsar**, the holy city of the Sikhs. He requested the Muslim Sufi, Mian Mir to lay the cornerstone of the Harmandir Sahib

Ramanathaswamy Temple (Tamil Nadu)

- **One of the twelve Jyotirlinga temples** built in the 12th Century.
- Dedicated to the god **shiva**
- It has the **longest corridor** among all Hindu temples in India.
- It is built in the Dravidian style of architecture.
- **Creators** – Pandyas and Jaffna Kings
- There are 64 Tirthas i.e. holy water bodies in and around the island of Rameswaram. • It is also one of the **Char Dhams**.

Meenakshi Temple (Tamil Nadu)

- southern bank of the **Vaigai River** in the temple city of Madurai
- Dedicated to **Meenakshi, a form of Parvati**, and her consort, Sundareswar, a form of Shiva.
- It is famous for its **3 storied Gopuram** at the main entrance.
- **Chithirai Festival**: It is an annual festival celebrated at Meenakshi Temple



HOYSALA Temples

Chennakeshava Temple, Belur (Karnataka)

- Construction of the temple commenced in 1117 AD and took 103 years to complete.
- Dedicated to **Lord Vishnu known as Chennakesava**, which means beautiful (chenna) Vishnu (Keshava).
- The richly sculptured exterior of the temple **narrates scenes from the life of Vishnu and his reincarnations and the epics, Ramayana, and**

- However, some of the **representations of Shiva** are also included.



Hoysaleswara Temple, Halebidu (Karnataka)

- **Most exemplary architectural ensemble of the Hoysalas extant today.**
- Built in 1121CE during the reign of the **Hoysala King, Vishnuvardhana Hoysaleswara.**
- The temple, **dedicated to Shiva**
- Most **well-known for the more than 240 wall sculptures** that run all along the outer wall.
- Halebidu has a walled complex containing three **Jaina basadi (temples)** of the Hoysala period as well as a stepped well.



Keshava Temple, Somanathapura

- **Magnificent Hoysala monument, perhaps the last.**
- This is a breathtakingly beautiful Trikuta Temple **dedicated to Lord Krishna** in three forms – **Janardhana, Keshava and Venugopala.**
- Unfortunately, the **main Keshava idol is missing**, and the Janardhana and Venugopala idols are damaged.



YiN:

Recently, the Union Ministry of Culture has nominated Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas temples for consideration as a World Heritage site for the year 2022-2023.

The 'Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysala' have been on UNESCO's Tentative list since 15th April, 2014 and stand testimony to the rich historical and cultural heritage of India.

Laxmi Devi Temple: Hoysala

- Built by the Hoysalas in the year **1114 CE** during the rule of king **Vishnuvardhana**.
- Building material is **Chloritic schist**, more commonly known as **soapstone**.
- The main deity is **Goddess Lakshmi** whereas all Hoysala temples are dedicated to either **Lord Vishnu, Lord Shiva** and in **some cases to Jains**.

Ranganathaswamy Temple → Tamil Nadu

- One of the most important of 108 (Divya Desam) **Vishnu Temples**.
- It is built in Dravidian style, constructed in **Vijayanagar Period**.
- It is located on the island formed by twin river- Cauvery & Coleroon.
- 1st temple to be awarded by the UN Body for protecting and conserving cultural heritage.
- Its Gopuram is the **biggest Gopuram in Asia**. Also, it is the largest functioning Hindu temple in the world.

Gavi Gangadhareshwara Temple

- **Location:** Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- The temple derives its name from the combination of topographical features and mythology: **gavi (cave)** and **Gangadhareshwara (shiva)** means the Lord who adorns the **Ganga**.
- It is believed to have been **built by Kempe Gowda I** in its present form.
- **Architecture Features:**
 - o **Celestial Oriented Architecture:** Built in **Vijaynagar style**, it has **unique celestial oriented rock cut architecture** due to which **Surya majjana** occurs on *Sankranti* every year.
 - o **Surya Majjana:** Every year on the **Makar Sankranti**, the sun rays fall on the Shiv linga located in the cave (*gavi*) making it shine for ten minutes.
- **Two Monolithic Structures**
 - o In the forecourt stand two monolithic structures, named **Suryapana and Chandrapana** – each consisting of a **massive disc** atop a supporting pillar.
 - o They have engravings of sitting bulls on the discs face each other.
- **Iconography of Shiva**
 - o The compound of the temple is adorned with monolith structures associated with the iconography of Shiva – the **trishula** (trident) and the **damaru** (an hourglass-shaped, two-headed drum).

Mahamritunjaya Temple

- **Location:** Nagaon, Assam is the **world's largest Shivalinga**.
- The construction of the temple started in 2003 with the help of Acharya Bhrigu Giri Maharaj.
- Bhrigu Giri Maharaj chose this place after performing meditation.
- According to the Maharaj, in ancient times, demon guru Shukracharya performed Yagna at the site of the temple.

Sri Govindarajaswamy Temple

- Sri Govindarajaswamy Temple is an ancient **Hindu-Vaishnavite temple** situated at the heart of the **Tirupati city in Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh**
- The temple was **built during 12 century** and was consecrated in the year 1130 AD **by Saint Ramanujacharya**.
- The temple is one of the earliest structures in Tirupati and also one of the biggest temple complex in Chittoor district. The Tirupati (down hill) city is built around this temple.
- The temple is **dedicated to Lord Vishnu**, who is referred to as Govindarajaswamy.

Govindaraja Perumal Temple

- Govindaraja Perumal Temple or Thiruchitrakoodam in Chidambaram in the South Indian **state of Tamil Nadu**, is **dedicated to the Vishnu**.
- The temple is **inside the premises of Thillai Nataraja Temple**, constructed in the Tamil architecture.
- The temple is glorified in the **Divya Prabandha**, the early medieval Tamil canon of the Azhwar saints from the 6th–9th centuries AD.
- It is one of the **108 Divyadesam** dedicated to Vishnu, who is worshipped as Govindaraja Perumal and his consort Lakshmi as Pundarikavalli Thayar.
- The Govindaraja **idol is believed to have been uprooted** outside the temple complex during the period of **Kulothunga Chola II**. The Govindaraja idol was later found and **reinstated** later **by king Krishnappa Nayak** (1564– 1572).

Brihadeeswara Temple → Tamil Nadu

- Also known as Raja **Rajeswara Temple** located at Thanjavur.
- Dedicated to **Shiva**
- This Dravidian style temple was **built by the Chola emperor Raja Raja Chola I**.
- One of the tallest temples in India that is **completely made of Granite**.
- It is one of the **Great Living Chola Temples**, along with **Gangaikonda Cholapuram** temple and **Airavatesvara**



temple.

- It is also called **Dakshin Meru** and is situated on the bank of Cauvery river.
- It is a part of **UNESCO World Heritage Sites**.

Rajagopalaswamy Temple

- Tamil Nadu
- Dedicated to **Vishnu**
- It is created in Dravidian style; it is also called **Dakshina Dwaraka**.
- It has one of the **largest temple tanks in India** called **Haridra Nadhi**.

Martand Sun Temple

- **Location**- Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Martand Sun Temple, also known as **Pandou Laidan** is a **Hindu temple dedicated to Surya** (the chief solar deity in Hinduism) and built during the 8th century CE.
- **Timeline**- built by the third ruler of the **Karkota Dynasty, Lalitaditya Muktapida**, in the 8th century CE. It is said to have been built during 725-756 CE.
- **Deity**- Sun God, Martand is another Sanskrit synonym for Surya.
- It is now in ruins, as it was destroyed by the orders of Muslim ruler Sikandar Shah Miri.

Nataraja Temple → Tamil Nadu

- Also referred as the **Chidambaram Nataraja temple**.
- Temple **dedicated to Lord Nataraja** is one of the **form of Lord Shiva** as the lord of dance and his consort Parvati as Shivakama Sundari (also called as Shivagama Sundari).
- The temple wall carvings **display all the 108 karanas** from the **Natya Shastra by Bharata Muni**, and these postures form a **foundation of Bharatanatyam**, a classical Indian dance.
- Temple was **built in the 10th century** when Chidambaram was the capital of the Chola dynasty, making it one of the oldest surviving active temple complexes in South India

Thillai Nataraja Temple

Chidambaram Nataraja Temple



Kashi Vishwanath Temple → Uttar Pradesh

- Dedicated to **Lord Shiva**.
- On the **western bank of the holy river Ganga**, and is one of the **twelve Jyotirlingas**, the holiest of Shiva temples.
- The temple is considered a central part of worship in the Shaiva philosophy by Hindu scriptures.
- It had been **demolished by many Muslim rulers** many times, most recently by **Aurangzeb**, the sixth Mughal emperor who

Kashi Vishwanath Temple



constructed the **Gyanvapi Mosque** on its site.

- The **current structure was built** on an adjacent site by the Maratha ruler, **Ahilya Bai Holkar** of Indore in the year 1780.
- Since 1983, the temple has been managed by the government of Uttar Pradesh.

Hampi Chariot

- It is **among three famous stone chariots in India**, the other two being in **Konark (Odisha)** and **Mahabalipuram (Tamil Nadu)**.
- It was **built in the 16th century** by the orders of **King Krishnadevaraya**, a Vijayanagara ruler.
- It is a **shrine dedicated to Garuda**, the official vehicle of Lord Vishnu.

Vittala Temple

- It was built in the **15th century** during the rule of **Devaraya II**, one of the rulers of the **Vijayanagara Empire**.
- It is **dedicated to Vittala** and is also called **Vijaya Vittala Temple**.
- Vittala is said to be **an incarnation of Lord Vishnu**.

Kamakhya Temple

- It is located atop the **Nilachal Hills**, in outskirts of **Guwahati, Assam**.
- It is **one of 51 shaktipeeths** or seat of Shakti followers.
 - Shakti peeth is originated based on the story of the death of goddess Sati.
 - God Shiva who held her dead body, then started his dance of destruction, causing Sati's body to disintegrate and fall into pieces.
 - The sites where these portions of Sati goddess fell, are the Shakti peeth.

Kamakhya temple's sanctum sanctorum houses the yoni - female genital symbolised by a rock.

- Four Major Shakthi Peeths in India
 1. Jagannath Temple, Puri
 2. Kamakhya Temple near Guwahati
 3. Dakshina Kalika in Kolkata
 4. Tara Tarini near Brahmapur, Odisha.

Vishwa Shanti Stupa (World peace pagoda)

- **Location** : Rajgir, Nalanda District, Bihar
- Constructed atop **the Ratnagiri Hill**, it is **the world's highest peace pagoda**.
Conceptualised by renowned Buddhist monk **Nipponzan Myohoji** and built by Japanese monk **Fujii Guruji**.
- Built completely with marble, **the stupa comprises four golden statues of Lord Buddha** with each representing his life periods of birth, enlightenment, preaching and death.

- **There are 7 Peace Pagoda or Shanti Stupas in India**, other Stupas are Global Vipassana Pagoda Mumbai, Deekshabhoomi Stupa Nagpur and Buddha Smriti Park Stupa Patna.

Markandeshwar temple

- Known as the “**Khajuraho of Vidarbha**”, the temple of Markandadeo is situated on the **bank of River Wainganga** in district Gadchiroli of **Maharashtra**.
- The temples belong to the **Nagara group of temples** of North India.
- On stylistic grounds, their date ranges in between 9- 12th centuries CE.
- The temples belong to **saiva, vaishnava** and **sakta** faith. Most of the temples have a simple plan, with ardhamandapa, mandapa, antarala and garbhagriha forming the component of the entire set up.

Badrinath Temple → Uttarakhand

- It is located in Garhwal hill along the **banks of Alaknanda River**.
- It is at an elevation of 3,133 metres i.e. 10,279 ft above the mean sea level.
- The temple is mentioned in ancient religious texts like Vishnu Purana and Skanda Purana.

Yamunotri Temple → Uttarakhand

- Situated at an altitude of 3,291 metres i.e. 10,797 ft.
- It is located on the **backdrop of Bandarpunch**
- It is dedicated to **goddess Yamuna**.

Gangotri Temple → Uttarakhand

- It is located on the banks of the **river Bhagirathi** at an altitude of 3,415 m (11,204 ft).