



drishti

Consecration at the Brihadeshwara Temple

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Why in News

Recently, the consecration (Kumbhabhishekam) ceremony was held at the Brihadeshwara Temple after 23 years in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.

- The ceremony was held after the Madras High Court settled an old argument over the ritual.
- The ceremony got embroiled in the struggle for supremacy between the Sanskrit and Tamil traditions.
- The court **allowed** the consecration to be performed in **both Tamil and Sanskrit**.
- It argued that there is nothing either in the **Agamas (canonical texts)** or in any other religious script to prohibit the chanting of Tamil mantras in the temples.

Brihadeshwara Temple

- Brihadeshwara Temple, also known as Raja Rajeswara Temple, is dedicated to Shiva and is located in Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu).
Thanjavur lies in the delta of the Cauvery River.
- It is one of the best examples of the **Dravidian style** of temple architecture built by Chola emperor **Raja Raja Chola I** (985-1014 AD) between 1003 AD and 1010 AD.
The Dravidian style of temple architecture flourished roughly from the **8th century to about the 13-14 century AD**.
- The temple consists of a **pyramidal spire** and is adorned with sculptures and paintings inside as well as outside.

- The temple entered the **UNESCO World Heritage Site** list in **1987** and is also a part of "**Great Living Chola Temples**" along with the **Brihadisvara Temple** at **Gangaikondacholapuram** and the **Airavatesvara Temple** at **Darasuram**.
 - **Brihadisvara Temple (Gangaikondacholapuram, Tamil Nadu)**.
 - It was built for Shiva by **Rajendra I** (1014-1044 CE).
 - The temple has sculptures of exceptional quality.
 - The **bronze sculptures** of **Bhogasakti** and **Subrahmanya** are masterpieces of Chola metal icons.
 - **Airavatesvara Temple (Darasuram)**
 - It was built by the **Chola king Rajaraja II** (1144-1173 CE):
 - It is much smaller in size as compared to the Brihadisvara temple at Thanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram.
 - The temple consists of a sanctum **without a circumambulatory path** and axial mandapas.
 - The front mandapa is **unique** as it was conceptualized as a chariot with wheels.
- **Special Features:**
 - The temple, which is one of the tallest temples in India, still remains an engineering mystery as it is **completely made of granite** and archaeologists still don't know how the builders got such huge pieces of granite for construction at this height.
 - The apex structure on **top of the temple** is believed to be carved out of a **single stone carving**.
 - It is so designed that the **Vimana does not cast a shadow at noon during any part of the year**.
 - **Vimana:** Vimana is the structure over the garbhagriha or inner sanctum in the Hindu temples of South India and Odisha.
 - It is like a stepped pyramid that rises up geometrically rather than the curving **Shikhara** of North India.



Source: IE