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## Revamp of Lingaraj Temple: Odisha

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### Why in News

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The Odisha government has decided to give a facelift to the 11<sup>th</sup> century Lingaraj Temple, akin to its pre-350-year structural status.

This announcement has come despite the massive financial burden on the State economy in the wake of **Covid-19 pandemic**.

### Key Points

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- The efforts will be to create a **spiritual and ecological ambience** in and around the Lingaraj Temple.
- The **redevelopment plan of the peripheral area of the temple**, known as 'Ekamravan Kshetra', in Bhubaneswar, has been approved.
- Further, the government is planning a **barrier-free access between the Temple and Bindusagar lake**.
  - After the Lingaraj Temple, the Bindusagar (a sprawling pond) is the second major attraction for devotees. The pond has a religious relationship with the main temple.
  - Historical records suggest that about 350 years ago, there was nothing between the Temple and the Lake except some temples.
  - **Bindhyabasini, Bhabani Shankar, Shukasari and Mohini temples** will be part of the redevelopment plan.
- This is a part of the **Lingaraj Temple Heritage Development Project** under **Ekamra plan**.

Through Ekamra plan, it is expected that heritage redevelopment will enhance the attraction of **Bhubaneswar** as a tourist site and **claim for a UNESCO heritage site will be stronger**.



## Lingaraj Temple

- Lingaraj Temple, built in **11<sup>th</sup> century AD**, is dedicated to **Lord Shiva** and is considered as the largest temple of the city **Bhubaneswar**.
- It is **believed** to have been **built by the Somvanshi King Yayati I**.
- The main tower of this temple measures **180-feet in height**.
- It is built in **red stone** and is a classic example of **Kalinga style of architecture**.
- The temple is divided into **four sections**—Garbh Griha (sanctum sanctorum), Yajna Shala (the hall for prayers), Bhoga Mandap (the hall of offering) and the Natya Shala (hall of dance).
- The sprawling temple complex has **one hundred and fifty subsidiary shrines**.
- Lingaraj is referred to as **‘Swayambhu’** – self-originated Shivling.
- Another important aspect of the temple is that it signifies the **syncretisation of Shaivism and Vaishnavism sects in Odisha**.
  - Perhaps the rising cult of Lord Jagannath (considered an incarnation of Lord Vishnu) which coincided with the completion of the Lingaraja Temple had a role to play.
  - The presiding deity in the Temple is known as Hari-Hara; Hari denotes Lord Vishnu and Hara meaning Lord Shiva.
- The temple is **out of bounds for non-Hindus**.
- The other attraction of the temple is the **Bindusagar Lake**, located in the north side of the temple.

- On the western banks of Bindusagar, lies the **garden of Ekamra Van** named after the Hindu mythological texts where Bhubaneswar the capital city of Odisha was referred as Ekamra Van or a forest of a single mango tree.

### **Other Important Monuments in Odisha**

**Source: TH**