Hampi Stone Chariot

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Why in News

The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** has taken steps to protect the **stone chariot** inside **Vittala Temple complex** at the **UNESCO World Heritage site of Hampi.**

> **ASI,** under the **Ministry of Culture,** is the premier organization for the archaeological research and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.

Key Points

- **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.
    - **Vijayanagara rulers** reigned from **14th to 17th century CE.**
  - It is a **shrine dedicated to Garuda,** the official vehicle of Lord Vishnu.

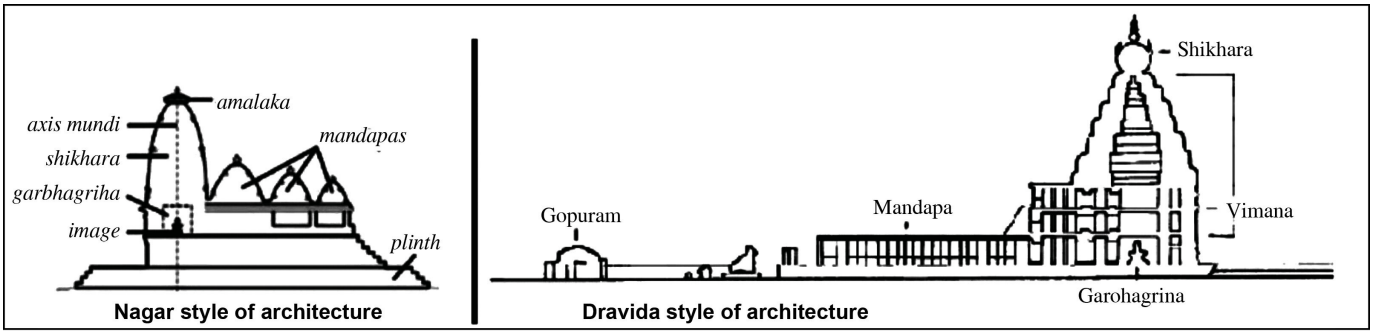
- **Vittala Temple:**
  - It was built in the **15th century** during the rule of **Devaraya II,** one of the rulers of the **Vijayanagara Empire.**
  - It is **dedicated to Vittala** and is also called **Vijaya Vittala Temple.**
    Vittala is said to be **an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.**
  - **Dravidian style** adorns the built of the complex, which is further enhanced with elaborate carvings.
- **Hampi:**
  - It comprises mainly the **remnants of the Capital City of Vijayanagara Empire.** It is located in the **Tungabhadra basin** in central **Karnataka.**
  - It was **founded by Harihara and Bukka in 1336.**
  - Classified as a **World Heritage Site by UNESCO** (1986), it is also the **"World's Largest Open-air Museum".**
  - **Famous places** include Krishna temple complex, Narasimha, Ganesa, Hemakuta group of temples, Achyutaraya temple complex, Vitthala temple complex, Pattabhirama temple complex, Lotus Mahal complex, etc.
  - The **Battle of Talikota** (1565 CE) led to a massive destruction of its physical fabric.
    Battle of Talikota, **confrontation in the Deccan region** of southern India between the forces of the **Hindu King of Vijayanagar** and the **four allied Muslim sultans** of Bijapur, Bidar, Ahmadnagar, and Golconda.

Vijayanagara Empire

- Vijayanagara or "city of victory" was the name of both a city and an empire.
- The empire **was founded in the fourteenth century (1336 AD)** by **Harihara and Bukka** of the **Sangama dynasty.**
- It **stretched** from the river Krishna in the north to the extreme south of the peninsula.
- Vijayanagar Empire was ruled by **four important dynasties** and they are:
  - Sangama
  - Saluva
  - Tuluva
  - Aravidu
- **Krishnadevaraya** (ruled 1509-29) of the **Tuluva dynasty** was the most famous ruler of Vijayanagar. His rule was characterised by expansion and consolidation.
  - He is credited with building some fine temples and adding impressive **gopurams** to many important south Indian temples. He also founded a suburban township near Vijayanagar called **Nagalapuram** after his mother.
  - He composed a work on statecraft in Telugu known as the **Amuktamalyada.**
- **Dravidian architecture** survives in the rest of Southern India spread through the patronage of the Vijayanagara rulers.
- Vijayanagara architecture **is also known** for its adoption of elements of **Indo Islamic Architecture** in secular buildings like the Queen's Bath and the Elephant Stables, representing a highly evolved multi-religious and multi-ethnic society.

Dravidian Architecture

- **Two broad orders** of temples in the country are known - **Nagara in the north** and **Dravida in the south.** At times, the **Vesara style of temples** as an independent style created through the selective mixing of the Nagara and Dravida orders is mentioned by some scholars.
- **Features of Nagara and Dravida Orders of Temples:**
    - Unlike the nagara temple, the dravida temple is **enclosed within a compound wall.** The front wall has an entrance gateway in its centre, which is known as a **gopuram.**
    - The shape of the main temple tower known as **vimana** in Tamil Nadu is like a stepped pyramid that rises up geometrically **rather than the curving shikhara of North India.**
        In the South Indian temple, the word 'shikhara' is used only for the crowning element at the top of the temple which is usually shaped like a small stupika or an octagonal cupola - this is equivalent to the **amlak and kalasha of North Indian temples.**
    - Whereas at the entrance to the **North Indian temple's garbhagriha,** it would be usual to find images such as mithunas and the river goddesses, Ganga and Yamuna, in the **south** one will generally find sculptures of fierce **dvarapalas or the door-keepers** guarding the temple. It is common to find **a large water reservoir, or a temple tank,** enclosed within the complex.
- **Examples:**
    - **Nagara Style:** Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (Khajuraho), Madhya Pradesh
    - **Dravidian Style:** Brihadeshwara Temple and Mahabalipuram Temple, Tamil Nadu



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