



Revamp of Lingaraj Temple: Odisha

Why in News

The Odisha government has decided to give a facelift to the 11th 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

- 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 **11th 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

- **Konark Sun Temple** (UNESCO World Heritage Site)
- **Jagannath Temple**
- **Tara Tarini Temple**
- Udaygiri and Khandagiri Caves

Source: TH

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