



Conservation of Konark Sun Temple: Odisha

For Prelims: Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Konark Sun Temple, King Narasimhadeva I, Kalinga Architecture, UNESCO world heritage site

For Mains: Konark Sun Temple, Kalinga Architecture, Ganga Empire, Indian Culture - Salient aspects of Art Forms, Architecture from ancient to modern times.

Why in News

Recently, the [Archeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#) has revealed it is working on a preliminary roadmap to **safely remove sand** from the interiors of [Konark Sun Temple](#).

- The sand was filled over a century ago by the **British in Jaga Mohan (assembly hall)** of the Sun Temple for the stability of the temple.



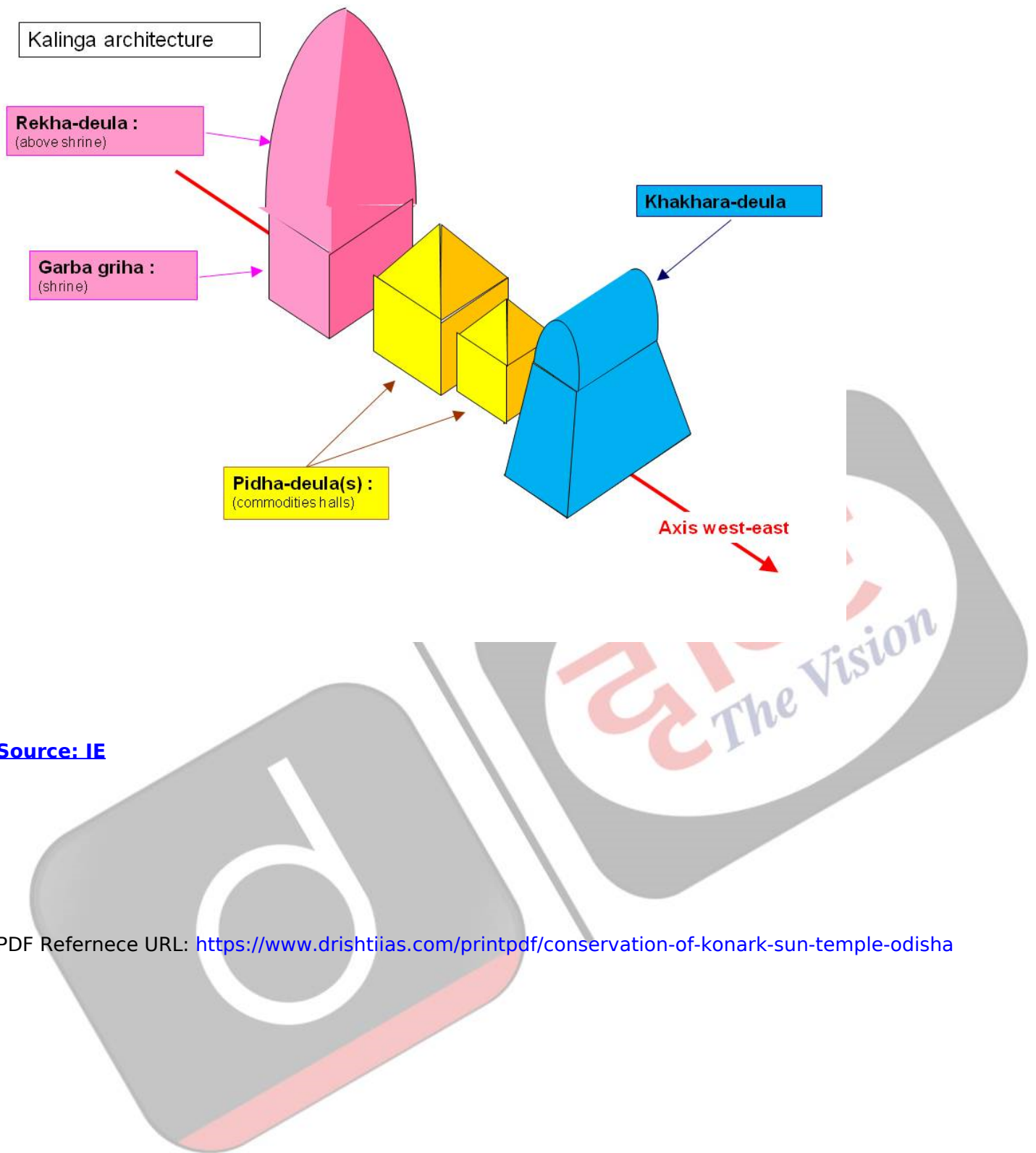
Key Points

- **Conservation Process:**
 - The **British administration in 1903** had filled the hall with sand and sealed it in order to maintain the durability of the **thirteenth-century world heritage site**.
 - They had made hole on the top portion of the **Jaga Mohan and poured the sand through that**.

- The need to remove the sand was felt after a study **warned of possible damage caused by the sand settling down** — resulting in a **gap of 17 feet** between the sand layer and the structure.
- To carry out the sand-removing process, ASI is going to be assisted by the **Central Building Research Institute (CBRI) at Roorkee**, which had done a scientific study on the temple's structural stability between 2013 and 2018.
- **About Konark Temple:**
 - Konark Sun Temple, located in the **East Odisha near the sacred city of Puri**.
 - Built in the 13th century by **King Narasimhadeva I (AD 1238-1264)**. Its scale, refinement and conception represent the strength and stability of the **Eastern Ganga Empire** as well as the value systems of the historic milieu.
 - The Eastern Ganga dynasty also known as Rudhi Gangas or Prachya Gangas.
 - It was the large Indian royal dynasty in the medieval era that reigned from Kalinga from as early as the **5th century to the early 15th century**.
 - The beginnings of what became the **Eastern Ganga dynasty** came about when **Indravarma I** defeated the Vishnukundin king.
 - The temple is designed in the shape of a **colossal chariot**.
 - It is dedicated to the **sun God**.
 - The Konark temple is widely known not only for its **architectural grandeur** but also for the **intricacy and profusion of sculptural work**.
 - It marks the highest point of achievement of Kalinga architecture depicting the grace, the joy and the rhythm of life in all its wondrous variety.
 - It was declared a **UNESCO world heritage site** in 1984.
 - 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.
 - Konark is the invaluable link in the history of the diffusion of the **cult of Surya**, which originating in Kashmir during the 8th century, finally reached the shores of Eastern India.
- **Other Important Monuments in Odisha:**
 - [Jagannath Temple](#)
 - [Tara Tarini Temple](#)
 - [Udaygiri and Khandagiri Caves](#)
 - [Lingaraja Temple](#)

Kalinga Architecture

- **About:**
 - The Indian temples are broadly divided into **Nagara, Vesara, Dravida** and **Gadag** styles of architecture.
 - However, the temple architecture of Odisha corresponds altogether to a different category for their unique representations called Kalinga style of temple architecture.
 - This style **broadly comes under the Nagara style**.
- **The Architecture:**
 - In Kalinga Architecture, basically a temple is **made in two parts**, a tower and a hall. The tower is called deula and the hall is called jagmohan.
 - The walls of both the **deula** and the **jagmohan** are lavishly sculpted with architectural motifs and a profusion of figures.
 - The most repeated form is the **horseshoe shape**, which has come from the earliest times, starting with the large windows of the chaitya-grihas.
 - It is the deula which makes three **distinct types of temples in Kalinga Architecture:**
 - Rekha Deula.
 - Pidha Deula.
 - Khakhara Deula.
 - The former two are associated with **Vishnu, Surya and Shiva temples** while the third is mainly with Chamunda and Durga temples.
 - The Rekha Deula and Khakhara Deula houses the sanctum sanctorum while the Pidha Deula constitutes outer dancing and offering halls.



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