



Puri Heritage Corridor Project

For Prelims: Jagannath temple, Puri Heritage Corridor Project, ABADHA Scheme, AMSAR Act

For Mains: Preservation of Heritage sites, Controversies in the Excavation Projects, Temple Architecture of India, AMSAR Act

Why in News?

The Odisha government's ambitious temple corridor project in Puri has become a subject of political controversy.

What is the Puri Heritage Corridor Project?

- It is a **redevelopment project of the Odisha government in Puri to create an international heritage site, including the Jagannath temple**. Though conceived in 2016, it was unveiled in December 2019.
- Under the umbrella project falls the **Shree Jagannatha Heritage Corridor (SJHC) or the Shree Mandira Parikrama Project**, for the revamp of the area around the temple.
- The project includes Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) building redevelopment, a 600-capacity Srimandir reception centre, Puri Lake, Musa River revival plan, etc.
- The Odisha government has listed **three objectives** for the revamp of the area around the temple- the security of the temple, the safety of devotees, and the creation of a religious atmosphere for devotees.
- The government allotted funds for the Project from its Augmentation of Basic Amenities and Development of Heritage and Architecture at Puri (**ABADHA**) scheme.
 - The ABADHA scheme includes Land Acquisition Charges/Re-habitation & Resettlement/ Road Improvement for providing better facilities in & around Shree Jagannath Temple.

Why has the Project become a Subject of Controversy?

- Experts and members of civil society objected to the use of heavy machinery for digging, citing the **possibility of an adverse impact on the 12th Century temple**.
- Questions started being raised about whether the construction around the temple had the due permissions and clearances.
- The **Jagannath temple has been designated a monument of national importance by the Archaeological Survey of India** and is a centrally protected monument.
- Massive demolition and construction works are taking place within a 100 and 200-meter area of the temple which is **prohibited by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment and Validation) Act (AMSAR) 2010**.

What is the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment and Validation) Act (AMSAR) 2010?

- As per the AMSAR (Amendment and Validation) Act, **construction is prohibited within a**

100-meter periphery of a protected area.

- The area extending to 200 meters around the monument in all directions is called a **regulated area**.
- As per the provisions of the AMSAR Act, the **National Monuments Authority (NMA)**, set up in **2011 under the Ministry of Culture**, is charged with protecting and preserving ASI-protected sites by managing the prohibited and regulated area in the periphery of such a site.
- If construction has to be undertaken in a regulated or prohibited area, permission from the NMA is required.
- The term **“construction”** as defined in the AMSAR Act **does not include the construction of public toilets, urinals, and “similar conveniences”**.
 - It also does not include works for the supply of water, electricity or “provision of similar facilities for publicity”.
- Besides, an impact assessment is also required to be done by the NMA before development around a monument if the built-up area of the monument is beyond 5,000 square meters.

What are the Features of Jagannath Temple?

- The temple is believed to be **constructed in the 12th century by King Anatavarman Chodaganga Deva of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty**.
- Jagannath Puri temple **is called ‘Yamanika Tirtha’** where, according to the Hindu beliefs, the power of ‘Yama’, the god of death has been nullified in Puri due to the presence of Lord Jagannath.
- This temple was **called the “White Pagoda”** and is a **part of Char Dham pilgrimages** (Badrinath, Dwaraka, Puri, Rameswaram).
- There are **four gates to the temple**- Eastern ‘Singhdwara’ which is the main gate with two crouching lions, Southern ‘Ashwadwara’, Western ‘Vyaghra Dwara and Northern ‘Hastidwara’. There is a carving of each form at each gate.
- In front of the entrance **stands the Aruna stambha or sun pillar**, which was originally at the Sun Temple in Konark.



Other Important Monuments of Odisha

- **Konark Sun Temple** ([UNESCO World Heritage Site](#))
- [Lingaraj Temple](#)
- [Tara Tarini Temple](#)
- [Udaygiri and Khandagiri Caves](#)

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions

Q. Match List I with List II and select the correct answer using the code given below the lists: (2009)

List I	List II
(Famous Temple)	(State)
A. Vidyashankara temple	1. Andhra Pradesh
B. Rajarani temple	2. Karnataka
C. Kandariya Mahadeo	3. Madhya Pradesh
D. Bhimesvara temple	4. Orissa

Code: A B C D

- (a) 2 4 3 1
- (b) 2 3 4 1
- (c) 1 4 3 2
- (d) 1 3 4 2

Ans: (a)

Source: TH

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