

THEMATIC **36**
**CURRENT
AFFAIRS**
for **IAS PRELIMS 2024**

**ART &
CULTURE**

THEME #6

**INDIAN TEMPLE &
ARCHITECTURE STYLE**

◉ **TEMPLE**

◉ **ARCHITECTURE**



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THEMATIC CURRENT AFFAIRS

UPSC CSE Prelims exam requires a candidate to link and interlink Current Affairs with the syllabus and the static concepts.

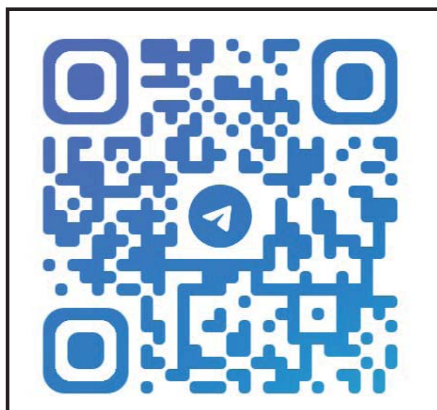
It's important to note that simply compiling current affairs won't suffice; it's crucial to learn how to utilize and link them effectively.

To aid in this process, we have categorized the entire UPSC prelims syllabus into actionable and easy-to-understand themes, and current affairs have been blended into these themes.

Thematic Current Affairs will help you in:

- Division of entire syllabus- theme wise
- Revision of concepts and current affairs together
- developing the skill to interlink theory and contemporary developments
- Concise and precise information for quick coverage

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UPSC CSE Current Affairs



Temple

1. RAM TEMPLE, AYODHYA

CONTEXT

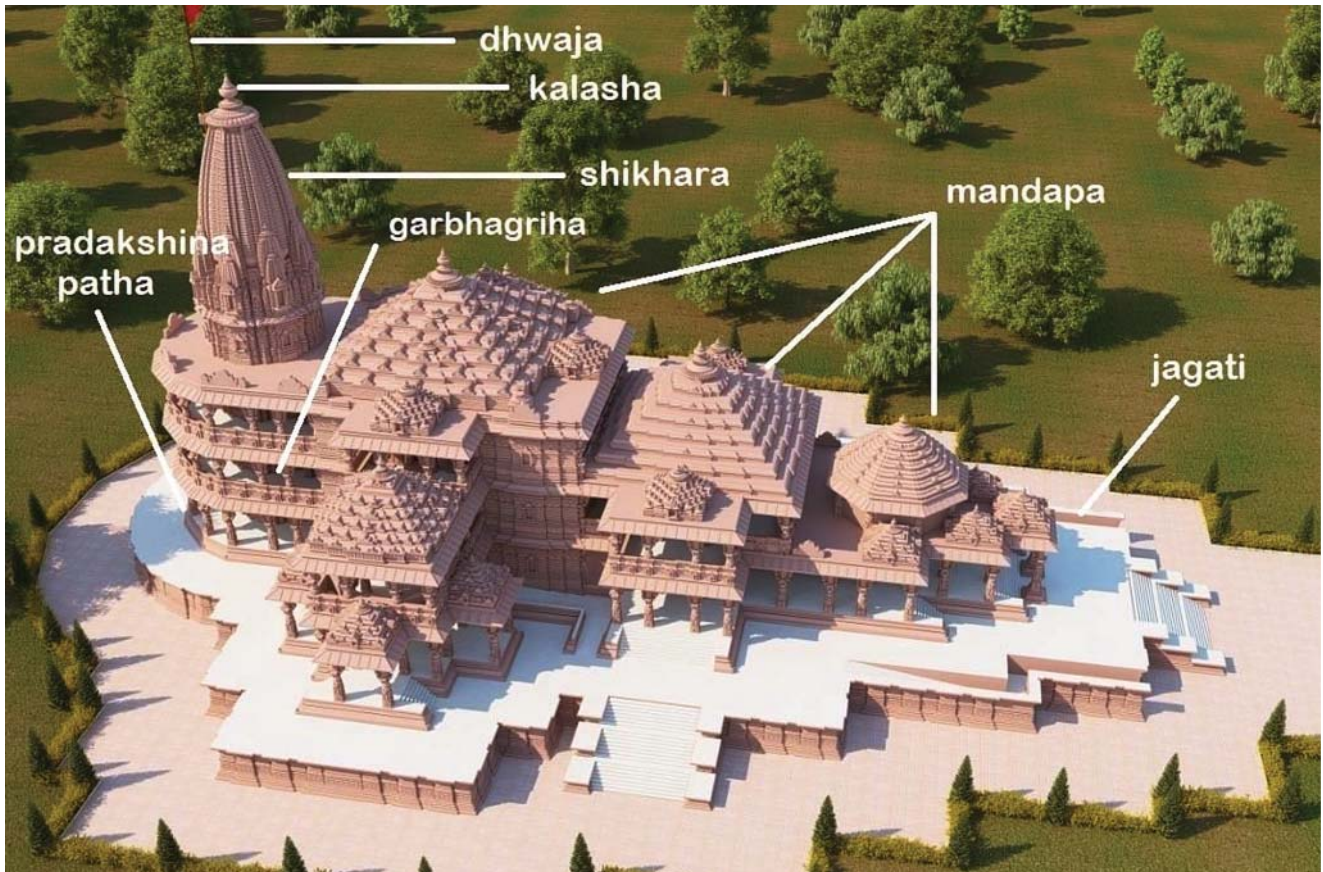
The grand temple at Rama Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya will follow the Nagara style of temple architecture.

About Ram Mandir

- ⦿ The Ram Mandir, constructed in the **traditional Nagara style**, is a three-storied shrine, measuring 380 feet in length (east-west direction), 250 feet in width, and 161 feet in height.
- ⦿ It has a total of 392 pillars and 44 doors.
- ⦿ It features five Mandaps (halls) –
 - Nritya Mandap
 - Rang Mandap
 - Sabha Mandap
 - Prarthna
 - Kirtan Mandaps
- ⦿ Idols of elephants, lions, Lord Hanuman and Garuda, 'vahana' of Lord Vishnu, have been installed at the entrance gate of the Ram Temple.

The Nagara or North Indian Temple Architecture:

- ⦿ **Origin:** 5th century AD.
- ⦿ **Region:** From Northern India to Karnataka to parts of Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Gujarat, giving it its pan-India appeal.
- ⦿ The Nagara style is mainly associated with the land between the **Himalayas and Vindhyas**.
- ⦿ The basic plan of Nagara temple is square, with a number of **graduated projections (rathakas)** in the middle of each face which gives it a **cruciform shape** in the exterior.

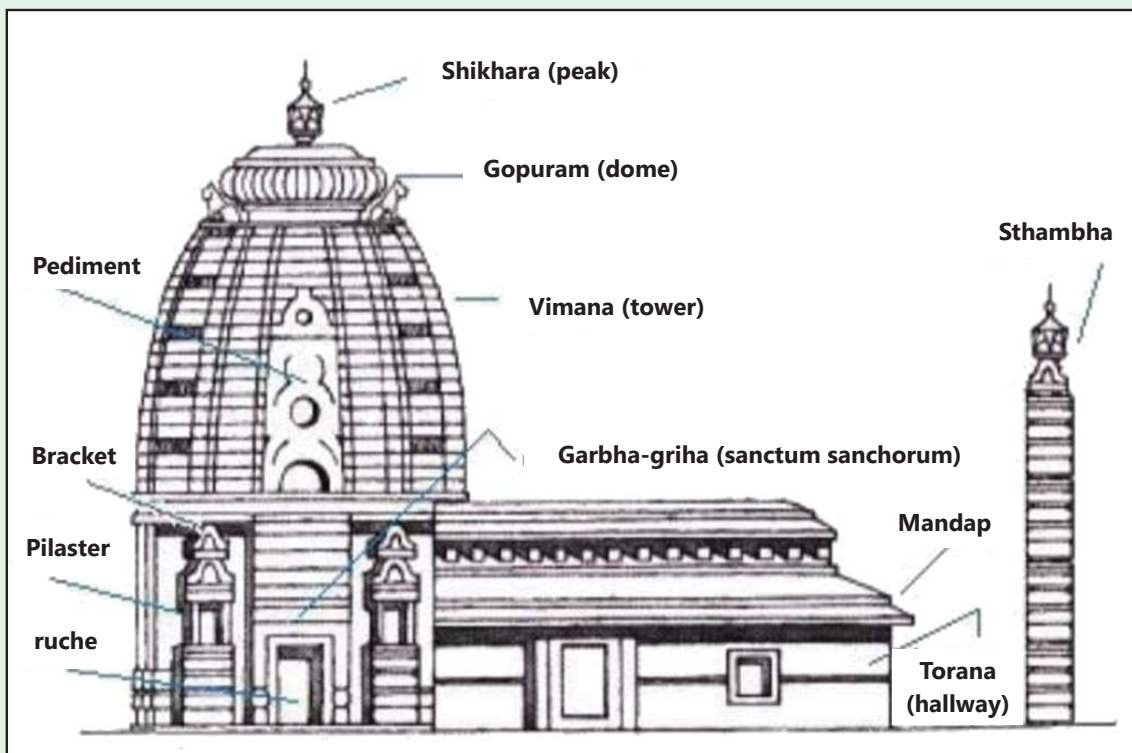


- ⦿ A temple tower or a conical or convex shikhara marks the elevation of the temples.
- ⦿ The shikhara consists of several layers of carved courses usually crowned by an **amalaka (notched ring stone)**.
- ⦿ Earlier temples began with a single projection on each face and the plan came to be known as **triratha**. Later in the course of time, the number of projection was increased.
- ⦿ The temple's architecture is characterised by its tower-like structures, known as '**shikhara**' or **spires**, which rise vertically, symbolising the sacred mountain, **Mount Meru**, considered to be the centre of the physical, metaphysical and spiritual dimensions in Hindu, Jain and Buddhist cosmology.
- ⦿ This temple architecture is also closely associated with both the **Shaivite and Vaishnavite sects of Hinduism** and known for its sculptural elements that echo scenes from Hindu epics like **Ramayana and Mahabharata**.
- ⦿ **Examples: Dashavatara temple at Deogarh, UP, and the brick temple at Bhitargaon, UP.**

Basic components of a temple:

Garbhagriha (Sanctum)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Earlier, it was just a small cubicle with a small entrance but as time passed, it grew into a large chamber. It houses the idol or image of the deity.
Mandapa (Congregation Hall)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ The entrance to the temple and it features space for a large number of worshippers to gather at this place. It can be described as a hall which has a roof supported by a number of pillars.

Shikhar or Vimana (Tower)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a mountain-like spire which is generally seen in the temples that were constructed after fifth century AD. In North India style, it is called Shikhar while in South India it is called Vimana. Shikhar has a curved shape while Vimana has a pyramidal tower-like shape.
Antrala (Vestibule)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mandapa in front of garbhagriha is called as Antrala or vestibule.
Mahamandapa or Gudhamandapa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The large wall in front of Antarala is called Mahamandapa or Gudhamandapa.
Ardhamandapa (Entrance Porch)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is also a smaller mandapa in front of Mahamandapa which is called as Ardhamandapa or half porch. This is followed by Dwara or doorways.
Pradakshinapath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The garbhagriha is surrounded by a corridor or circulatory path called Pradakshinapath.



2. ODISHA'S KONARK WHEEL

CONTEXT

At the **G20 Summit venue** in Delhi, the historic **Konark Wheel from Odisha's Sun Temple** emerged as a focal point of attention. Prime Minister has selected a wall adorned with a depiction of this **ancient architecture** as the backdrop for his warm welcome **to world leaders**.

About Konark Wheel:

- ⦿ The Konark Wheel is an integral part of the **Sun Temple**, dedicated to the sun god '**Surya**'.
- ⦿ Resembling a **large chariot with 7 horses and 12 pairs of exquisitely decorated wheels**.
- ⦿ The size of the wheel is of **9 feet 9 inches** in diameter and each one of them having **8 wider spokes and 8 thinner spokes**.
- ⦿ Out of these **24 wheels 6** are in either side of the main temple, 4 wheels are on each side of the Mukhasala and 2 wheels on each side of steps at eastern front.
- ⦿ The **huge wheels** of the **Konark Temple** are one of the major attractions in the Temple.



Significance:

- ⦿ The wheels of the chariot have been interpreted as the '**Wheel of Life**'.
- ⦿ They portray the **cycle of creation, preservation and achievement of realisation**.
- ⦿ These 12 pairs of wheels may also possibly represent the **12 zodiac signs**.
- ⦿ Some also believe that the Wheel of Konark is the same as the **Dharmachakra of the Buddhists – "The Wheel of Karma, The Wheel of the Law."**

Konark wheels are used as **Sun dials** in ancient times to know the **time of the day**.

The Sun Temple:

- ⦿ The Sun Temple at **Konârak**, located on the eastern shores of the Indian subcontinent.
- ⦿ It is built in 13th Century by **King Narasimhadeva-I (AD 1238-1264)**.
- ⦿ The Sun Temple is the culmination of **Kalingan temple architecture**, with all its defining elements in complete and perfect form.
- ⦿ **Components of the Temple:**
 - **The vimana** (principal sanctuary) was surmounted by a high tower with a **shikhara (crowning cap)**, which was razed in the **19th century**.
 - To the east, the **jahamogana (audience hall)** dominates the ruins with its pyramidal mass.
 - Farther to the east, **the natmandir (dance hall)**, today unroofed, rises on a high platform.
 - The Sun Temple is directly associated with the idea and belief of the personification of **the Sun God**, which is adumbrated in the **Vedas and classical texts**.

3. LARGEST HINDU TEMPLE IN US

CONTEXT

The largest Hindu temple in the US (New Jersey) opened its doors. The temple in Robbinsville city is said to be the largest Hindu temple outside India in the modern era.

About

- ⦿ This majestic Mahamandir (grand temple) is dedicated to **Bhagwan Swaminarayan**.
 - Bhagwan Swaminarayan is a Hindu spiritual leader of the **19th century** and was inspired by his **5th spiritual successor Pramukh Swami Maharaj**.
- ⦿ The temple is built in the small township of Robbinsville, New Jersey. The 183-acre temple complex rivals major Hindu temples on the subcontinent.
- ⦿ There are 10,000 statues in the temple and elements from Indian architecture and culture have been used to construct the temple.
- ⦿ The temple is possibly the second largest after **Angkor Wat in Cambodia**.

Akshardham

- ⦿ Akshardham in New Jersey marks the third such cultural complex globally.
- ⦿ The first Akshardham was created in Gandhinagar, the capital of Gujarat, India, in 1992, followed by Akshardham in New Delhi in 2005.

4. BAPS HINDU MANDIR

CONTEXT

The BAPS Hindu Mandir is expected to be one of the largest and most beautiful Hindu temples outside of India and the largest Hindu temple in West Asia

About

- ⦿ The BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi is the **first Hindu temple in UAE**, situated in the capital's **Abu Mureikha area**.
- ⦿ The vast complex will include a **large amphitheatre, a gallery, a library, a food court, a majlis and two community halls** with space for 5,000 people.
- ⦿ It will incorporate **intricately designed pink sandstone** and **marble façade** with **seven spires** that represent each of the Emirates of the country.
- ⦿ The temple has been made of 40,000 cubic metres of marble, 1,80,000 cubic metres of sandstone and over 1.8 million bricks.

- ⦿ The temple's design draws inspiration from **Vedic architecture and sculptures**.
- ⦿ Many of the statues and carvings have been done by artisans in India and have been shipped to Abu Dhabi.

What is BAPS?

- ⦿ BAPS stands for the **Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS)**.
- ⦿ The organisation is named after **Bhagwan Swaminarayan**, a religious leader who lived in the late 1700s.
- ⦿ It is a socio-spiritual Hindu faith with its roots in the **vedas** and was pioneered by Bhagwan Swaminarayan (1781-1830) in the late 18th century and established in 1907 by **Shastriji Maharaj (1865-1951)**.
- ⦿ The Akshardham temples in Delhi and Gujarat are also run by BAPS.

5. HOYSALA-ERA TEMPLES IN KARNATAKA IN UNESCO'S WORLD HERITAGE LIST

CONTEXT

Three Hoysala-era temples in Karnataka (built in the 12th & 13th century) recently made it to UNESCO's World Heritage List, under the collective entry of 'Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas'.

The selected Temples

- ⦿ The three temples include the
 - Chennakeshava temple in Belur
 - Hoysaleswara Temple in Halebidu
 - Keshava Temple in Somanathapura

About

Chennakeshava temple

- ⦿ Chennakeshava Temple is also known **Vijaya Narayana Temple**.
- ⦿ **Built by: Hoysala King Vishnuvardhana** to commemorate his victory over the Cholas in 1116 AD.
 - It is believed that the temple is built by— **Dasoja and Chavana**, a father and son duo.



- ⦿ **Belief:** This star shaped temple is located in Belur and is dedicated to **Lord Vishnu**
- ⦿ Beluru (also known earlier as Velapuri, Velur and Belapur in olden times) is situated on the banks of **Yagachi River** and was one of the capitals of the **Hoysala Empire**.

Hoysalesvara Temple

- ⦿ The Hoysaleswara temple in Halebidu is believed to be the largest Shiva temple built by the Hoysalas, and is dated to the **12th century**.
- ⦿ **The temple** is located on the banks of Dorasamudra tank, in Halebidu.
- ⦿ The town has many protected and unprotected temples, archaeological ruins and mounds. There are remnants of the fort and gateways that once protected the town.
- ⦿ The area of the temple complex is 7 hectares.
- ⦿ Halebidu was raided by Malik Kafur, a general of the then Delhi Sultan Alauddin Khalji.

Kesava temple

- ⦿ The Kesava temple, Vaishnava shrine, was built in Somanathapura around 1260 by Somanatha, a general of Hoysala King Narasimha III.
- ⦿ The Kesava temple in Somanathapura is built in the shape of a 16-point star, and has three shrines, dedicated to Keshava, Janardhana and Venugopala. The Keshava statute, however, is missing now.
- ⦿ The temple is enclosed by a multi-celled prakara. Several artefacts are displayed in the open ground. The area of the temple complex is 1.88 hectares.

About Hoysala Temple

- ⦿ Hoysala architecture is an amalgamation of three distinctive styles—
 - **the mainstream Dravidian architecture** as represented in the Pallava and Chola temples
 - **the Vesara style**, the variant of the Dravida style that emerged in the Chalukya and Rashtrakuta temples
 - **the North Indian Nagara style**
- ⦿ **Features:**
 - use of soapstone, a malleable stone that is easy to carve
 - unique confluence of styles
 - they are 'signed' — the sculptors, masons leave behind their names, and sometimes a few more details
- ⦿ **Hoysalas Dynasty:** The Hoysalas held power in Karnataka from the 10th century to the 14th century.
 - The dynasty began as provincial governors under the Western Chalukyas, but as the two dominant empires of the South, the Western Chalukyas and the Cholas, crumbled, the Hoysalas established themselves as rulers.

6. MANDYA'S HOYSALA LEGACY

CONTEXT

There are a number of **Hoysala temples** scattered across the Mandya district. Some of these temples are located in Maddur, Basaralu, Hosaholalu, Kikkeri, Nagamangala and Thonnur.

About

- ◎ **Lakshminarayana Temple** at Hosaholalu, built by the Hoysala King Vira Someshwara, which dates back to 1250 AD.
 - It is a trikuta structure (three shrines) and its central shrine has an imposing shikara (superstructure).
 - The main deity is Nambi Narayana, believed to be consecrated by the great saint Ramanuja himself.
 - To the left of the main deity is a north-facing shrine of Lakshmi Narasimha. The peculiarity of this idol is that Prahalada is depicted near the feet of Narasimha.
- ◎ **Mallikarjuna Temple:** The temple was consecrated in 1235 by **Harihara Nayaka** under the rule of the **Hoysala King Veera Narasimha II**.
 - This Temple is a **small trikuta structure** but houses numerous sculptures of excellent quality.
 - It is one of the few temples in which the Hoysala crest of Sala slaying the lion is preserved on top of the tower (sukhanasi).
 - Even the kalasa on top of the shrine is intact. A beautiful pillared-entrance on the south leads to the Temple.
- ◎ **Saumyakeshava Temple at Nagamangala:** Built on a four-feet-high star-shaped jagati, this Temple is also a trikuta structure. The main shrine, facing the east, houses a beautifully carved idol of Saumyakeshava, a form of Vishnu.

Hoysala Empire

- ◎ The Hoysala Empire ruled parts of southern India between the 10th and 14th centuries.
- ◎ The capital of the Hoysalas was initially located at **Belur** but was later moved to **Halebidu**.
- ◎ The reign of the Hoysala Empire led to the development of **South Indian art, architecture, and religion**, and its legacy lies mainly in the **Hoysala architecture**.
- ◎ Numerous temples have survived the ravages of times to give testament to Hoysala art and culture.
 - Some of the notable temples built during the Hoysala Empire are the **Chennakesava Temple at Belur, the Hoysaleswara Temple at Halebidu, the Chennakesava Temple at Somanathapura, the temples at Arasikere, Amruthapura, Belavadi, Nuggehalli, Hosaholalu, Aralaguppe, Korvangla, Haranhalli, Mosale and Basaralu**

7. STRUGGLE FOR TEMPLE ENTRY IN TAMIL NADU

CONTEXT

People from the Dalit community entered the **local Mariamman temple** at Chellankuppam village in **Tamil Nadu's Tiruvannamalai district** for the first time in more than half a century.

The case of Tamil Nadu

- In the case of Tamil Nadu, most of the major temples became accessible to **Scheduled Castes** around Independence, the struggle for entry into several **smaller temples** in the State continues to date.
 - The **Tamil Nadu Temple Entry Authorisation Act of 1947** allows all Hindu castes and classes to enter Hindu temples and worship.
- In a similar case, dalits of Eduthavainatham village in Kallakurichi district also entered **the Sri VaradarajaPerumal Temple** for the first time in this year.

About the Marimman Temple:

- The temple dates back to 1827, when it was known as **MariammanKovil or Kling Chapel**.
- Established by Indian pioneer **Naraina Pillai**, the original **wood-and-attap structure** was built by immigrants from the **Nagapatnam and Cuddalore districts** of South India.
- It is dedicated to the **goddess Mariamman**, known for her power to **cure illnesses and diseases**.
- **Mariamman temple** issue is in between the **Dalit community** and the **Vanniyar community**.

8. KAILASA TEMPLE

CONTEXT

The Kailasa Temple serves as a powerful symbol of India's vibrant cultural heritage, showcasing the architectural and artistic brilliance of centuries past.

About Kailasa Temple

- The Kailasa Temple, representing **Mount Kailash**, is a remarkable **monolithic structure** crafted from a **single rock**.
- Constructed in the **8th century** during the **Rashtrakuta dynasty**, this temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva – one of the main deities of **Hinduism**.
- The Kailasa Temple is renowned for its intricate carvings, showcasing scenes from Hindu mythology.
- The walls depict tales from the **Ramayana** and the **Mahabharata**, offering a visual narrative.



9. KAPILESWAR TEMPLE

CONTEXT

The Centre has declared the Kapileswar Temple, Odisha, as an ancient monument of national importance.

About

- ◎ The **5th-century-old Kapileshwar temple** was renovated by **Gajapati Kapilendra Dev** in the **14th Century**.
- ◎ It is well known for its exquisite carvings and gorgeous architecture, which are examples of the centuries-old custom of Indian temple buildings.
- ◎ The Kapileswara Temple is a fine example of the **Kalinga style of architecture**, which is known for its elegance and simplicity.
- ◎ Kapileswara Siva temple, commonly referred to as 'Kapileswar temple', is one of the oldest still-existing temples in the state of Odisha.
- ◎ Lord Shiva is worshipped at this temple under the name Kapileswara which is situated in the Kapilprasad area about 1 km from the **11th-century-old Lingraj Temple of Bhubaneswar**.



10. PRESIDENT INAUGURATES 'PRASAD' PROJECT AT SRISAILAM

CONTEXT

President of India Droupadi Murmu inaugurated '**PRASAD**' project at the tourism facilitation centre in the pilgrim town of Srisailam in Andhra Pradesh.

About the Project:

- ◎ PRASAD is a global charitable organization committed to uplifting the lives of economically disadvantaged people around the world. Our programs in India, Mexico, and the United State impact thousands of people annually.
- ◎ PRASAD (**Philanthropic Relief, Altruistic Service and Development**) takes a holistic approach. Because the most vulnerable people face numerous hardships, addressing just one area of need isn't adequate.

Srisailam Temple

- ◎ **Srisailam Temple** also known as Bhramaramba Mallikarjuna Temple is situated in the Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh.
- ◎ The temple is on the top of the Nallamala hills, on the banks of River Krishna.
- ◎ The Lingam of the presiding deity Lord Mallikarjuna Swamy is one of the 12 Jyotirlingas dedicated to Lord Shiva.
- ◎ It is also one of the most important **Shaivite** pilgrimage sites in India.
- ◎ There are two separate temple complexes present inside – one is in dedication to Lord Mallikarjuna while the other one is for **Goddess Bhramarambha**.
- ◎ Mention of Srisailam hills can be traced to the Nasik inscription of the Satavahana King Vasisthiputra Pulumavi in the 1st century AD.
- ◎ The **Ikshvakus** Kingdom ruled Srisailam from AD200 – 300.



11. 'STATUE OF ONENESS'

CONTEXT

A **108-foot-tall statue** of the 8th-century spiritual leader **Adi Shankaracharya 'Statue of Oneness'** has been recently unveiled in Omkareshwar.

About the Statue:

- ◎ The 'Statue of Oneness', depicts Shankaracharya as a **12-year-old child** when he is said to have visited Omkareshwar, which is one among the **twelve Jyotirlinga shrines**.
- ◎ The statue weighs 100 tonnes and was conceptualised by an Indian team of artists, a sculptor and engineers.
- ◎ The metal casting was done in **China's Nanchang city** and shipped to Mumbai in several batches.
- ◎ The idol, installed on a **75-foot platform**, is made up of bronze that contains **88% copper, 4% zinc and 8% tin**.
- ◎ Its internal structure is made-up of **high-quality steel**.
- ◎ The design for the statue was conceptualised founding inspiration in **Raja Ravi Verma's** depiction of Shankaracharya.



Who was Adi Shankaracharya?

- ⦿ Adi Shankaracharya is generally considered an **eighth-century** religious teacher.
- ⦿ According to a commonly held view, Adi Shankaracharya was born **in 788 AD**.
- ⦿ Adi Shankara, as he is popularly known among his followers, was born in Kalady village -now a small town in the **Ernakulam district** - situated on the bank of a river of the same name in Kerala.
- ⦿ He was an exceptional child as Adi Shankara had become fluent in Sanskrit by the age of two. By four, he was comfortably reciting scriptures including Vedas.
- ⦿ The burning quest for attaining superior knowledge from an early age pushed Adi Shankara to leave his home and set on the search for a guru.
- ⦿ His quest ended with **Govind Bhagvatpad at Omkareshwar** (Madhya Pradesh) on the bank of the **Narmada River**.
- ⦿ Adi Shankara excelled under the tutelage of Govind Bhagvatpad, who instructed him to write commentaries on scriptures on completion of his learning. **Adi Shankara was just 12** at the time.
- ⦿ Following his guru's command, Adi Shankara wrote commentaries explaining the subtle meanings hidden in scriptures.
- ⦿ To his ardent followers, Adi Shankaracharya was an **incarnation of Lord Shiva**, who came to the earth for 32 years.

S.No.	Jyotirlinga	Location	State
1	Somnath	Veraval, Saurashtra	Gujarat
2	Mallikarjuna	Srisailam	Madhya Pradesh
3	Mahakaleshwar	Ujjain	Madhya Pradesh
4	Omkareshwara	Khandwa	Madhya Pradesh
5	Kedarnath	Kedarnath	Uttarakhand
6	Bhimashankar	Khed Taluka, Pune	Maharashtra
7	Vishweshwara	Varanasi	Uttar Pradesh
8	Trayambakeshwar	Trimbak	Maharashtra
9	Nageshwara	Jamnagar	Gujarat
10	Baidyanath	Deoghar	Jharkhand
11	Rameshwaram	Rameshwaram	Tamil Nadu
12	Grishneshwar	Ellora	Maharashtra

12. FIRST PHASE OF THE 'SHRI MAHAKALESWAR CORRIDOR' INAUGURATED

CONTEXT

The second phase of the 'Shri Mahakal Mahalok' temple corridor has been inaugurated in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh.

About Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga

- ⦿ The temple is located in the historical city of **Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh, India**. It is situated on the banks of the holy river, **Shipra**.
- ⦿ Mahakal is the **only Jyotirlinga facing south**; the rest face east. That is because the south is believed to be the **direction of death**.
- ⦿ The Jyotirlingas, or shrines, are believed to be the most sacred abodes of Shiva.
- ⦿ **Style**:-The Mahakaleshwar temple has been built in **Maratha, Bhumija and Chalukya** architectural styles.
- ⦿ **Origin**: The time of origin of the temple may be assigned to the pre-historic period as the Puranas say it was first established by **Prajapita Brahma**.



What are Jyotirlingas?

- ⦿ '**Jyotirlinga**' means 'column or pillar of light'.
- ⦿ '**Stambha**' symbol represents that there is no beginning or end.

About Ujjain:

- ⦿ The city of Ujjain was also one of the primary centres of learning for Hindu scriptures, called **Avantika in the 6th and 7th centuries BC**.
- ⦿ Astronomers and mathematicians such as **Brahmagupta** and **Bhaskaracharya** also made Ujjain their home.
- ⦿ According to **Surya Siddhanta (4th century)**, which is one of the earliest available texts on Indian astronomy, Ujjain is geographically situated at the **intersection of zero meridians of longitude (Madhyarekha) and the Tropic of Cancer (Karkavrutta) intersect**.

13. ANGKOR WAT TEMPLE

CONTEXT

The **ancient Angkor Wat temple complex** is gaining popularity. Recently, it has surpassed Italy's Pompeii and claimed the prestigious title of the **world's eighth wonder**.

About Angkor Wat:

- ⦿ Angkor Wat, temple complex at Angkor, Cambodia, is a vast religious complex comprising more than a thousand buildings.
- ⦿ **Built by: King Suryavarman II** (reigned 1113–c. 1150) in the 12th century.
- ⦿ **Type:** Buddhist temple complex
 - It was originally dedicated to the **Hindu god Vishnu** before becoming a Buddhist temple by the end of the 12th century.
- ⦿ **Architecture:** -Angkor Wat is the world's largest religious structure, covering some 400 acres (160 hectares), and marks the high point of Khmer architecture.
- ⦿ **Stylistic elements:** The original, lotus bud-shaped towers, half-galleries, axial galleries, connecting enclosures and cruciform terraces.



14. HERITAGE CAMP AT RAMAPPA TEMPLE

CONTEXT

Ramappa Temple, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** located in Palampet village of Mulugu district is going to be restored.

About Ramappa Temple

- ⦿ **Ramappa Temple, also known as the Rudreshwara (Lord Siva) temple**, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in the state of **Telangana**.
- ⦿ It lies in a **valley in Palampet village of Venkatapur Mandal of Mulugu district**, a tiny village long past its days of glory in the **13th and 14th centuries**.
- ⦿ An inscription in the temple dates it to the **year 1213 CE** and says it was built by a **Kakatiya General Recharla Rudra Deva**, during the period of the **Kakatiya ruler Ganapati Deva**.



- ⦿ This temple was constructed by **Kakatiya king Ganapati Deva's general Recharla Rudra**.
- ⦿ Kakatiya Dynasty was the South Indian dynasty that ruled Andhra Pradesh in India from 1083 CE to 1323 CE.
- ⦿ **Ramalingeswara Swamy** is the presiding deity of this temple.
- ⦿ **Marco Polo**, during his visit to the Kakatiya Empire, allegedly called the temple "**the brightest star in the galaxy of temples**".

Architecture

- ⦿ The temple complexes of **Kakatiyas** have a distinct style, technology, and decoration exhibiting the influence of the **Kakatiyan sculptor**.
- ⦿ The foundation is built with the "**Sandbox technique**", the flooring is granite, and the pillars are basalt.
- ⦿ The lower part of the temple is **red sandstone** while the **white Gopuram** is built with light bricks that reportedly float on water.
- ⦿ The Kakatiya temples, **dedicated mostly to Shiva**, reveal in their construction a happy blending of the styles of North India and South India which influenced the political life of the Deccan.
- ⦿ They adopted both the **North Indian Nagara Bhumija style and the South Indian Dravida style**.
- ⦿ The most important of these temples are those at **Palampet (Ramappa temple), Hanamkonda (Thousand Pillared temple)** and the temples in the Warangal fort including the big ruined temple complex — **Swayambhunadha temple**.

15. ASI FINDS BUDDHIST CAVES, AND TEMPLES IN MP

CONTEXT

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has reported 20 Buddhist caves, ranging from the 2nd Century BC to 5th Century BC, at **Madhya Pradesh's Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve**.

About

- ⦿ The Buddhist religious artefacts found in the **region of Baghelkhand** are of the **Mahayana sect** of Buddhism.
- ⦿ This is also the **first time Bandhavgarh has been explored** since archaeologist NP Chakravarti **last explored it in 1938**.
- ⦿ **Key Findings:** Some of the **key findings** are:
 - board games
 - monolith depicting the ten avatars of Vishnu
 - a votive stupa

- **Two Shaiva Math belonging to the Kalachuri period**
- Chaitya-shaped doors, coins, stampage and as many as 46 new sculptures which were never seen before
- Fragments of a Buddhist pillar dating to the 2nd or 3rd Century BC were found at the site as well
- Over 24 Brahmi inscriptions, dating to 2nd Century to 5th Century BC, were also found.
- ⊙ The inscriptions mention sites such as **Mathura and Kaushambi, and Pavata, Vejabharada and Sapatanaairikaa.**
 - The kings they mention include **Bhimsena, Pothasiri and Bhattadeva.**
 - Also part of the findings is 26 ancient temples and remains from the Kalachuri period.
 - The team also found evidence of 19 water bodies.
 - Remains of the Gupta period, such as door jambs and carvings from 4th to 5th century BC were documented during the exploration.

The **Kalachuri dynasty**, which spread over parts of **Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh**, is also associated with the earliest **Ellora and Elephanta cave monuments.**

About Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve:-

- ⊙ Bandhavgarh National Park is located in the **Umaria district of Madhya Pradesh.**
- ⊙ Bandhavgarh was declared a **national park in 1968** and then became **Tiger Reserve in 1993.**
- ⊙ **Historical Significance:** Its mention can be found in the ancient books of the '**Narad Pancharatra**' and the '**Shiv Purana**' that this place is being associated with Ramayana.
- ⊙ The park derives its name from the most prominent hillock of the area, which was said to be given by **Hindu Lord Rama to his brother Lakshmana** to keep a watch on Lanka. Hence the name Bandhavgarh (Sanskrit: Brother's Fort).
- ⊙ The Bandhavgarh Fort is a **great masterpiece** of "**Treta Yuga**" (one of the ages of mankind in Hinduism).
- ⊙ It was ruled by major dynasties including **Sengars**, the **Kalchuris**, and the **Baghels** (believed to rule the regions for the longer period).

16. KASHI- TAMIL SANGAM

CONTEXT

Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the Kashi Tamil Sangamam at Namoo Ghat, Varanasi.

- ⊙ This programme is an initiative by Government of India as a part of "**Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav**" and to uphold the Spirit of **Ek Bharat Sreshtha Bharat.**

Kashi in Hindu mythology

- ⦿ Kashi is known to be derived from 'Kasha', the name of an ancient king, whose dynasty later produced the famous legendary **king Dividasa** of **Kashi**.
- ⦿ The Kashi Khand of the **Skanda Purana** explains Kashi to be the name of the place where the light of Shiva shines most brilliantly.

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

- ⦿ **Announced in:** 2015.
- ⦿ **Aim:** to actively enhance interaction between people of diverse cultures living in different States and UTs in India, with the objective of promoting greater mutual understanding among them.
- ⦿ **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Education

Kashi Tamil Sangamam

- ⦿ **Background:** Civilisational connection between India's North and South.
- ⦿ **Aim:** To bring the two knowledge and cultural traditions (of the North and South) closer,
- ⦿ Create an understanding of our shared heritage and deepen the people-to-people bond between the regions.
- ⦿ Organized by the **Ministry of Education** in collaboration with other ministries like Culture, Textiles, Railways, Tourism, Food Processing, Information & Broadcasting etc. and the Government of Uttar Pradesh.
- ⦿ Sync with **National Education Policy (NEP), 2020's** emphasis on integrating the wealth of Indian Knowledge Systems with modern systems of knowledge.
- ⦿ **Implementing agencies** :-IIT Madras and Banaras Hindu University (BHU)

17. SANT TUKARAM SHILA MANDIR

CONTEXT

Sant Tukaram Shila Mandir was recently inaugurated in the temple town of Dehu in Pune district.

About

- ⦿ Sant Tukaram was a **17th-century Marathi** poet, Hindu saint, popularly known as Tuka, Tukobaraya, Tukoba in Maharashtra.
- ⦿ He was a Sant of **Varkari sampradaya** (Marathi-Vaishnav tradition) - that venerates the god **Vithoba** in Maharashtra.
- ⦿ He was part of the egalitarian, personalized Varkari devotionalism tradition.
- ⦿ Tukaram is best known for his devotional poetry **called Abhanga**.
- ⦿ He also organise community-oriented worship with spiritual songs known as
- ⦿ Tukaram pointed out the **evil of wrongdoings of society, social system and Maharajs** by his kiratansand
- ⦿ He faced some opposition because of this, by society from some peoples.
- ⦿ According to some scholars, Tukaram met **Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj**-and founded the Maratha kingdom.

His Teachings

- ⦿ **Promoted Vedanta:** Late 20th-century scholarship of Tukaram, and translations of his Abhangapoem, affirm his pantheistic Vedantic view.
- ⦿ **Literary works:** Numerous inconsistent manuscripts of Tukaram Gathaare known. Gatha temple in Dehu, near Pune Maharashtra, is one of two local temples that mark the legacy of Tukaram.

Who are Warkaris?

- ⦿ Warkari is a **sampradaya (religious movement)** within the bhakti spiritual tradition of Hinduism, geographically associated with the Indian state of Maharashtra.
- ⦿ Warkaris worship **Vitthal (also known as Vithoba)**, the presiding deity of **Pandharpur**, regarded as a form of Krishna.
- ⦿ Saints and gurus of the bhakti movement associated with the **Warkaris** include **Dnyaneshwar, Namdev, Chokhamela, Eknath, and Tukaram, Gadge Maharaj** all of whom are accorded the title of Sant.

18. KERALA'S THIRUNELLY TEMPLE'S STRUCTURES NEED PROTECTION

CONTEXT

The **Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)** has urged the government to conserve the historically significant structures, including the 600-year-old 'Vilakkumadom', an exquisite granite structure, at the Sree Mahavishnu Temple at Thirunelly in Wayanad district during the on-going renovation of the temple.

About the temple

- ⦿ Thirunelli Temple is an **ancient temple** dedicated to **Lord Maha Vishnu** on the side of **Brahmagiri hill** in Kerala.
- ⦿ **East:** The Tirunelli temple faces east where the sun rises over the Udayagiri range.
- ⦿ **North:** At the north is the formidable Brahmagiri Range which appears so close to the temple.
- ⦿ **West and South:** At the west and south are Karimala and Narinirangimala respectively.
- ⦿ **Style:** The **15th century structure** is built in the typical Kerala style, with tiled roofs.
 - A local ruler began building a stone structure, but he was interrupted by a war, and a few pillars stand in solitude in memory of the attempt.
 - An impressive structure from that period is an aqueduct, bringing water from the hill streams to the temple.
- ⦿ Thirunelli Temple is the only temple in the world where the devotees can perform all the rituals related to one's life, starting from birth to death and life after death. Panchatheertham is the temple holy pond.
- ⦿ **Kashi of the South:** It is believed that here the prathishta of Lord Vishnu was performed by Lord Brahma. It is also known as "Sahyamala Kshetram" and "Kashi of the South".

Vilakkumadom

The Vilakkumadom at Thirunelly temple, an exquisite granite structure, is incomplete and its incompleteness is a part of history. It is said that the work was initiated by the King of Coorg without the knowledge of the temple's custodian, the Kottayam Raja. The Kottayam Raja later stopped the works and the structure remained untouched afterwards.

19. GLITTER ATTAINS DIVINITY AT YADADRI

CONTEXT

The restored Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple was inaugurated at Yadadri in 2022.

About Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swami temple in Yadadri:

- ⦿ The **Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple**, also known as **Yadadri** or **Yadagirigutta temple**, is a Hindu temple located on a hill in the remote town of **Yadagirigutta** in the Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district.
- ⦿ The temple's Gopuram is covered with 125 kg of gold.
- ⦿ There are Purana and traditional accounts of this Shrine, which are widely popular among the devotees.
- ⦿ There is mention about the origin of this temple in the **Skanda Purana**, one of the famous 18 puranas.
- ⦿ **Style:** It is a **blend of Dravidian, Pallava, and Kakatiyan temple** architecture styles.

Skanda Purana

- ⦿ Skanda Purana is the largest of the eighteen major puranas containing over 81,000 Sanskrit metrical verses.
 - ⦿ The earliest version of the Skanda Purana probably existed before the 5th century CE
- ⦿ The temple, which is 65 kilometres from Hyderabad, was rebuilt using **black granite**.
 - The black granite used in construction, **Krushna Sila**, was acquired from Gurujapally in the Guntur district.

About Nano Tech Gold Deposition (NTGD):

- ⦿ In the newly inaugurated temple, '**kalashams**' (50-year warranty) has been designed using **Nano Tech Gold Deposition (NTGD)**.
- ⦿ NTGD (Nano Tech Gold Deposition) is a patented Nano technology that allows for **lesser consumption of gold in Gold plating**.





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Architecture

1. BUDDHIST MONASTERY COMPLEX

CONTEXT

Recent excavations at Bharatpur in **West Bengal's Paschim Bardhaman district** have revealed the presence of a **Buddhist monastery**.

About the site:

- ⦿ The last excavation at the site was taken place **about fifty years** back in the 1970s.
- ⦿ At that time black and red ware pottery belonging to the **Chalcolithic Age** was recovered with a Buddhist stupa.
- ⦿ The recent excavations have revealed the presence of an extended monastery complex at the site.

Key findings:

- ⦿ Recent excavations have revealed the presence of a Buddhist monastery.
- ⦿ According to experts, the Buddhist sites in the State are the presence of a large stupa along with a monastery complex and black and red ware pottery from the Chalcolithic or Copper Age.
- ⦿ In the 1970s, **five beautiful seated sculptures** of the Buddha in **Bhumisparsha Mudra**.
- ⦿ These miniature sculptures, each about 30 cm in height, were most likely used for worship in the monastery.

Bhumisparsa Mudra is the gesture of hand showing five fingers of the right hand towards the earth symbolising the Buddha's enlightenment.

2. MINIATURE STUPAS

CONTEXT

Patna circle of the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** has discovered two 1200-year-old miniature votive stupas during landscaping activities.

About

- ⦿ **Location:** It has been found near **Sarai Tila** mound within the premises of '**Nalanda Mahavihara**', a world heritage site in Nalanda district in the state.
- ⦿ The stupas, carved from stone, depict Buddha figures.

What are stupas?

- ⦿ A Stupa is a hemispherical structure which **symbolizes the burial mound of Buddha**.
- ⦿ It rose to prominence after the advent of Buddhism and peaked during **Ashoka's reign**.
- ⦿ Stupas evolved as **Chorten in Tibet and pagodas in East Asia**.

Nalanda Mahavihara site:

- ⦿ The Nalanda Mahavihara site comprises the archaeological remains of a monastic and scholastic institution dating from the **3rd century BCE to the 13th century CE**.
- ⦿ It includes stupas, shrines, viharas (residential and educational buildings) and important art works in stucco, stone and metal.

Importance of stupas

- ⦿ **Religious importance –**
 - **Relic repository:** In the beginning stupas were built to venerate and safeguard relics and remains of Buddha.
 - **Sacred place:** Along with monasteries (*viharas*) later, stupas were included in chaityas, which is a prayer hall.
 - **Circumambulation path:** an important Buddhist ritual around the path surrounding it.
 - **The object of veneration–** it is believed that relics of buddhas body were buried within the stupas
- ⦿ **Philosophical–**
 - **Meditation:** It is an important place for meditation.
 - **Commemorative:** In the Tibetan tradition, stupas were built to celebrate the life events of the Buddha.
- ⦿ **Symbolic:** The stupas encapsulate the teachings and ideology of Buddha
 - **Dhamek stupa at Sarnath marks the spot** where the Buddha gave his first sermon after attaining enlightenment, revealing his Eightfold Path leading to nirvana.
- ⦿ **Historical:** Provide information about the various dynasties who ruled India. Eg :
 - **Mauryas:** Bairat stupa , Sanchi stupa , Bharhut stupa etc
 - **Sathavahanas:** Amaravati stupa etc
- ⦿ **Architectural –**
 - **Oldest stone structures:** The stupas at Sanchi and Bharhut are one of the oldest stone structures in India.

- **Inclusion of text in narrative panels**– at Bharhut (Queen Maya’s dream)
- **Use of marble**– at Amravati stupa
- **Taxila excavations reveal stupas with Boddhisatva images**, Gandhara influence and patronage of Kanishka.

3. ASHOKAN ARCHITECTURE:

Ashokan architecture is the most popular style of architecture in India. It was developed during the reign of Emperor Ashoka, who ruled from **269 BC to 232 BC**.

The architecture of this period reflects the emperor’s desire for peace and affluence.

The pillars are one of the most distinctive features of this style.

- ⊙ They are usually square or round and have a tapering pole with a capital and an abacus at the top.
- ⊙ The pillars were typically made of stone and used to support the roof and provide stability for the building.
- ⊙ The pillars were often used as gateways to temples or other structures and used inside buildings for decorative purposes.

4. MAURYAN ARCHITECTURE:

- ⊙ **Ruled between:** 322 BC and 185 BC.
- ⊙ Mauryan Architecture was based on Ashoka’s edicts, a collection of more than thirty inscriptions on the **pillars, boulders, and cave walls**, attributed to **Emperor Ashoka** of the **Mauryan Empire**.
- ⊙ The major attraction of Mauryan architecture was its use of large staircases, which were designed with sculptures depicting scenes from the life of the Buddha.
- ⊙ Another significant feature was the use of **columns for the support of arches**.

5. KUSHAN ARCHITECTURE:

- ⊙ **Established by:** King Kujula Kadphises in the 1st century C.E.
- ⊙ The Kushan Empire is known for its unique architecture that was characterized by a strong influence on Greek art.
- ⊙ It was also marked by **high columns, round arches, and a lotus capital**.
- ⊙ The most famous structures are the stupa at **Sanchi** and the temple at **Jaugada**.

6. GUPTA ARCHITECTURE:

- ⊙ **Ruled from:** late 3rd to the 6th century A.D.
- ⊙ The period was marked by the flourishing Hindu culture that borrowed elements from **Buddhism, Jainism**, and other Indian religions.

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- ⦿ During this period, Indian architecture peaked with the temples' rise, and the building style development marked a departure from the traditional architectural norms.
- ⦿ This building style consists of a **square plan**, with an elaborately **decorated entrance and walls decorated with detailed carvings**.
- ⦿ Temples of this period were also known for their **use of towers, domes, and minarets**.

7. ISLAMIC AND MUGHAL STYLES

- ⦿ Around the **7th century AD**, monuments began to reflect native **Indic, Persian, central Asian, Arabic, and Ottoman Turkish**.
- ⦿ Aspects range from **scalloped arches, domes, Iranian columns with Indian corbelled arches, minarets, cusped screen arches, bold contrasting colors, white marble, large halls, vaulted gateways** that are delicately ornamented and Buddhist pagodas.
- ⦿ **Example:** Taj Mahal in Agra, the Red Fort in Delhi, Akbar's Tomb, Fatehpur Sikri, and the Red Fort.

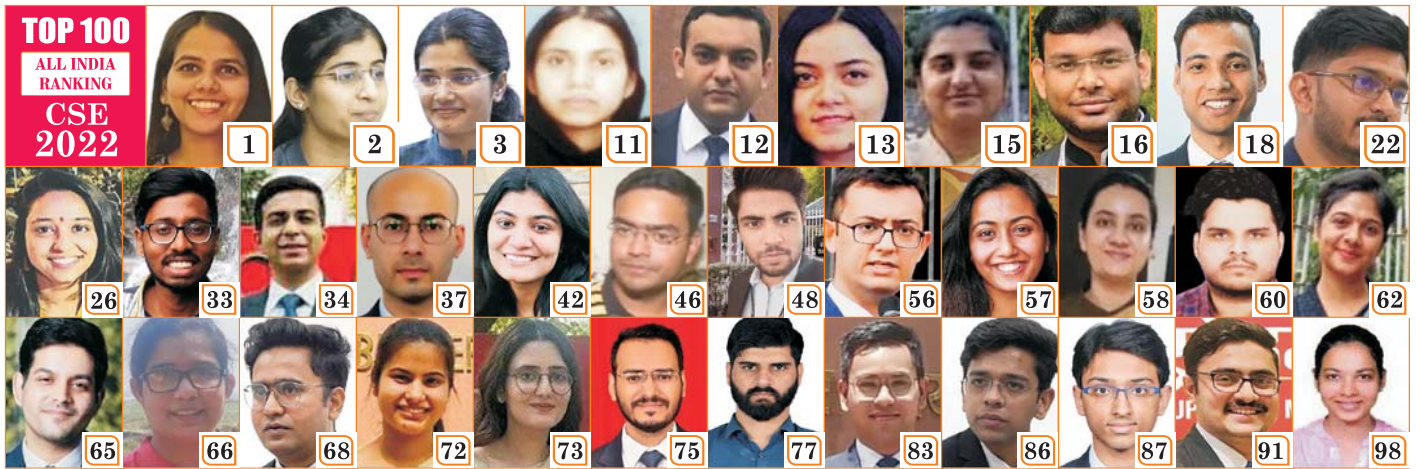
8. REGIONAL STYLES

- ⦿ **Rajput architecture** also got influenced by Mughal styles, *Solanki* styles, ornate *havelis, chhatris, jharokhas*, and step-wells.
- ⦿ **Sikh Architecture** got influenced by Islamic and Mughal styles, with **frescoes and onion domes** like at the **Golden Temple**.
- ⦿ **Maratha Architecture** shows through brick and mortar elements, minimal forts, with decorated Deccan style pointed arches.
- ⦿ **Dzong Architecture** is way up in the Northeastern part of India, with inward sloping walls, flared roofs, massive wood and iron doors, courtyards and temples decorated in art motives.

9. COLONIAL STYLES

- ⦿ **British Gothic architecture:** Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, Bombay High Court, Gateway of India, and Taj Mahal Palace Hotel.
- ⦿ **Art Deco movements:** Eros Cinema building
- ⦿ **Portuguese churches:** Danish forts, Dutch Tombs, French Settlements and others.

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