

Bobbili Veena

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In news— The famous Bobbili Veena is likely to get global attention as the Andhra Pradesh government is preparing to present its replicas as part of cultural exchange to the delegates of G-20 conference.

About Bobbili Veena-

- **Bobbili Veena, popularly known as Saraswati Veena**, a large plucked string instrument is used in Carnatic music.
- The **making of the veena began in the 17th century during the reign of Pedda Rayudu**, the king of Bobbili Samsthanam who was a great patron of music.
- It was the result of Vizianagaram-Bobbili rivalry! A craftsman named Musanna Chinayya from Vizianagaram urged and challenged artisans of Bobbili to make veena showing their best craftsmanship.
- The zamindar of Bobbili Raja Ravu Vankata Kumar Krishna Ranga Rao, who was also a musician, accepted the challenge.
- He asked Sarvasiddhi Acchanna (of Viswa Brahmin community) to make an exceptional veena and he did so in a span of two months.
- The potti veena which preceded the bobbili veena was comparatively smaller (about 42 inches long). The bobbili veena is 54 inches long, with diameter 14.5 inches and are very durable. Frets in other veenas are made of brass and not bell metal as in the case of bobbili veena.
- Bobbili Veena **is carved from a single piece of jackwood by Sarwasiddhi community** artisans of Gollapalli under Bobbili Samsthanam.
- Sarwasiddhi hereditary artisans from Gollapalli have been continuing the tradition of making these veenas over the

past three centuries.

- The artisans of Gollapalli have made the veenas by using elephant tusks, stag horns and strings to get 'Sapta Swaras' during Bobbili Raja's regime.
- They toiled at least 30 days for making of the veena. Later, they replaced the elephant tusks and stag horns with plastic material imported from Mumbai.
- It has **earned a GI tag in 2012** for its unique design and high-quality craftsmanship.
- However, it is gasping for its survival due to lack of artisans. Only 40 families of Sarwasiddi artisans from Gollapalli and Vadada are into the business.