

Gyanvapi Mosque

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In News: The court, headed by judge Ashutosh Tiwari, allowed a civil suit seeking an Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) study of the Gyanvapi Mosque site to determine if it had been “superimposed” after demolishing the Kashi Vishwanath Temple that might have originally stood there.

Gyanvapi Mosque

- **Located:** Varanasi near Lalita Ghat along the river Ganga, Uttar Pradesh.
- **Emperor:** It was constructed by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in 1696.
- **Architecture:** The façade is modeled partially on the Taj Mahal’s entrance. The remains of the erstwhile temple can be seen in the foundation, the columns and at the rear part of the mosque

History

- The mosque was built by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in 1669 CE, after destroying a Hindu temple.
- The remnants of the Hindu temple can be seen on the walls of the Gyanvapi mosque.
- The demolished temple is believed by Hindus to be an earlier restoration of the original Kashi Vishwanath temple. The original temple had been destroyed and rebuilt a number of times.
- Aurangzeb’s demolition of the temple was also attributed to the escape of the Maratha king Shivaji and the rebellion of local zamindars (landowners). Jai Singh I, the grandson of Raja Man Singh, is alleged to have facilitated Shivaji’s escape from Agra.
- The temple’s demolition was intended as a warning to the anti-Mughal factions and Hindu religious leaders in the city.

Kashi Vishwanath Temple

- Hindu temples dedicated to Lord Shiva.
- It is located in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
- The Temple stands on the western bank of the holy river Ganga, and is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas, or Jyotirlingams, the holiest of Shiva Temples.
- The main deity is known by the names Shri Vishwanath and Vishweshwara literally meaning Lord of the Universe.
- Varanasi city was called Kashi in ancient times, and hence the temple is popularly called Kashi Vishwanath Temple.
- The etymology of the name Vishveshwara is Vishva: Universe, Ishvara: lord, one who has dominion.
- The last structure was demolished by Aurangzeb, the sixth Mughal emperor who constructed the Gyanvapi Mosque on its site.