

Jagannath Temple Act

January 8, 2022

In news- Recently the state government of Odisha has approved amendments to the Sri Jagannath Temple Act of 1954, simplifying issues pertaining to land owned by the Jagannath Temple.

Jagannath Temple Act & proposed amendment to it-

- The Act contains provision on land rights of the temple, duties of the sevayat, administrative powers of the Shri Jagannath Temple Managing Committee, rights and privileges of the Raja of Puri and other persons connected with the management and administration of the temple.
- Prior to the act, management of the temple was governed by regulations issued by the British in 1806.
- Later, the powers of management of the temple were passed on to the King of Khordha while the colonial government continued to retain some control.
- Earlier, people who had occupied or were in possession of the temple land for a long period of time had to approach the state government for sale or transfer of the land.
- As per the amendment, the **temple administration and concerned officials now have the power to sell or lease out temple land, without any approval from the state government.**
- The temple managing committee, administrative officials and Collectors of respective districts can take decisions in this regard from now onwards.

About Jagannath Temple-

- The temple is famous for its annual Ratha Yatra, or chariot festival, in which the three principal deities are pulled on huge and elaborately decorated temple

cars.

- It is called the “White Pagoda” (Konark Sun temple of Odisha is called Black pagoda).
- The temple is a part of Char Dham (Badrinath, Dwaraka, Puri, Rameswaram) pilgrimages that a Hindu is expected to make in one’s lifetime.
- The idol of Jagannatha is made of wood which is ceremoniously replaced every twelve or nineteen years by using sacred trees.
- The temple is believed to have been 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.
- It was referred to as the **Juggernaut temple** (name got from Jagannath) by the colonial rulers.