

Somnath Temple

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In News

- Prime minister recently virtually inaugurated the Circuit House near Somnath Temple in Gujarat.

Concept:

- Somnath, literally translated as the **Lord of Moon (Soma)** houses the first of the 12 Jyotirlingas or the symbolic representation of Lord Shiva.
- This highly famed pilgrim destination is **located at the Veraval Port or Prabhas Patan in Saurashtra, Gujarat.**
- The temple is positioned in such a way that **not a single piece of land is visible from the Somnath seashore until Antarctica.**
- Recently Prime minister was elected new chairman of the Shree Somnath Trust (SKT), the religious body which manages and maintains the temple.

History of Somnath Temple

- It is said the **first version** of the temple came into being even before the start of Christian era.
- The **second version** of the temple came into being under the initiative of the Vallabhi king around 408 AD-768 AD.
- This temple is often referred to as the '**eternal shrine**' because historical records say that this temple has been **destroyed several times** by invaders and have been resurrected several times too.
- Archaeological investigations point out that the temple of Somnath had been **rebuilt nearly thrice before the raid of Muhammad Ghazni in the year 1026** (It is said that the temple was looted and destroyed as many as seventeen times).

- **The latest rebuilding of Somnath temple was done in 1947 under the initiative of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**, the then deputy PM.
- Renowned temple architect Prabhaschandar designed it and the first President of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad installed the Jyotirlinga in the new temple on May 11, 1951.
- Today's temple is the 7th version.
- Some of the **ancient texts tell that the temple was built for the first time in gold by king Somraj during Satya Yuga.**
- In Treta Yuga, Ravana had built it out of silver while in Dwapara yuga lord Krishna had built it out of wood.
- Later King Bhimadev had built the temple out of stone.

Architecture of Somnath Temple

- The present structure is built in the **Chalukyan style.**
- The main spire of the temple is 150 foot high and has a flag post of 27 foot tall.
- A Kalash of weight 10 tons was put on the top of the spire.
- The Baan-Stambh or the arrow-pillar located on the sea-protection wall indicates that the point is the first point on land in the north to the south-pole on that particular longitude.
- The Tirsthambh located at the temple indicates that the nearest landmark (South Pole or the Antarctica) is located at about 9936 km away indicating the geographical wisdom of ancient India.
- The temple has a Grabha griha with Jyothirlingam enshrined on it and a Sabha mantapa and Nrithya mantapa.