

Stone chariot of Hampi

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In news

The iconic stone chariot of Hampi gets a protective ring

About the stone chariot

- The chariot is a shrine dedicated to Garuda, built inside the Vittala Temple Complex.
- The massive sculpture of Garuda, Lord Vishnu's escort once was seated atop the chariot but it is empty at the present date.
- It was built by King Krishnadevaraya of the Vijayanagara Empire during the 16th century, who got fascinated with the Konark Sun temple chariot while fighting a battle in Odisha
- Architecture: It is inspired by Dravidian style of architecture, the chariot is a colossal structure which shows the skill of the earlier craftsmen and architects.
- The base on which the chariot rests depicts beautiful mythical battle scenes in intricate details. There were sculptures of horses where presently elephants are seated.
- The Hampi Chariot has earned its name among the other three famous stone chariots in India- One in Konark, Odisha, and the other in Mahabalipuram (Tamil Nadu).

About Hampi

- Hampi a UNESCO World Heritage site is one of the finest historical sites of the medieval age in India.
- It was the initial capital city of the famous historical Vijayanagara Empire(14th century) located on the bank of Tungabhadra River about 11 km away from Hospet City.
- It is a small location covering an area of 25 sq. km. and it is totally bounded by mountains (Anjaneya,

Malyavanta and Matanga Hills) by the three sites and rest one site is bordered by Tungabhadra River.

- As estimated by the archaeologists the city had as many as 7 concentric layers of walls around it.

Prominent temples and architecture of Hampi

- **Vittala Temple** is one of the prime attractions of Hampi dedicated to Hindu God Vittala who is a form of Lord Vishnu. A stone made chariot in front of the entry of the temple gives extra beauty to the temple.
- **Virupaksha Temple** is dedicated to the Hindu Lord Shiva. It is believed to be one of the oldest temples in India where people have been doing continuous worship to god for the last 7th century to till today.
- **Hemakuta** is a rocky hill especially famous for several temples situated on the top of it. Among these, the Virupaksha Temple of this hill is most famous. This hilltop offers a lovely scenic view of Hampi.
- **Kadalekalu Ganesha** is an enormous statue about 14 ft high of Lord Ganesha. Some big slender stone pillars with many mythological themes carved decorated the front hall of this Statue. Sasivekalu Ganesha is another big statue of Lord Ganesha located inside an open pavilion.
- **Krishna Temple** was constructed by the Krishnadevaraya in 1513 honour to Lord Krishna. This temple is one of the best attractions in Hampi. The temple ground is decorated with several stunning Yalis designed pillars and impressive carvings of elephant balustrades.
- **Lakshmi Narasimha** is a fantastic big statue of Lord Narasimha (Nara – man and Simha – lion, a lord combined with a man and lion's figure) who was the 10th avatars of Lord Vishnu. This statue is the biggest in Hampi.
- **Queen's bath** is an indoor aquatic complex especially used for royal family bathing. It is the first ruined structure in the Royal Palace.
- **Lotus Mahal** is an example of complex ancient

Vijayanagara architecture. The original reason for the use of this historical palace is still unknown. Most probably it was a cultural place where some regional forms of dances were performed.

- **Hazara Rama Temple** is an inner temple located inside the royal house. It is dedicated to Hindu Lord Rama and still today one can find here some comic scripts on the stone of temple walls that depict the story of Ramayana.