

## Arunachaleswarar Temple

*Prelims: Current events of national and international importance*

### Why in News?

*Encroachments around Arunachaleswarar Temple demolished for Karthigai Deepam.*

- **Location** - Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu
- **Deity** - Lord Shiva (as **Arunachaleswarar / Annamalaiyar**), Goddess Unnamalai Amman.
- **Form of Shiva** - Agni Lingam (Fire)
- **Associated Hill** - Arunachala Hill.
- **Temple type** - Dravidian-style Hindu temple.
- **Religious Significance** - One of the **Pancha Bhoota Sthalams** represents the **Fire (Agni)** elements (*Others represent Earth, Water, Air, and Space*)
- Connected with the legend of Shiva as an endless pillar of fire
- Considered one of the holiest Shiva temples in South India.
- **Architecture** - Famous for its massive **gopurams (temple towers)**.
- Eastern Rajagopuram is about 66 metres tall (one of India's tallest)
- Sprawling temple complex with:
  - Large mandapams (halls)
  - Sacred tanks
  - Intricate sculptures
- Built and expanded mainly by the **Chola, Hoysala, and Vijayanagara dynasties**
- **Festivals - Karthigai Deepam** - the most famous festival
- A huge sacred flame is lit on Arunachala Hill
- Symbolizes divine light removing ignorance
- **Girivalam / Giri Pradakshina** - Devotees walk around the Arunachala Hill (about **14 km**) barefoot, especially on full moon nights.
- **Cultural Importance** - Centre for **Shaivism** and spiritual learning
- Associated with Saint **Ramana Maharshi**.

## Reference

[The Hindu | Arunachaleswarar Temple](#)

