Draksharamam Temple

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Art & Culture*

Why in News?

A man was detained for desecrating the century-old 'Shiva Lingam' at the historic Draksharamam temple in Andhra Pradesh.

- It is known as the ***Lord Bhimeswara Swami Temple,*** dedicated to Lord Shiva.
- **Location –** East Godavari District, ***near the Godavari River***, accessible from Kakinada and Rajahmundry.
- **Main Deity –**
  - Lord Bhimeswara Swamy (Shiva) in the form of a 2.6 m tall ***Spatika Linga (crystal)*** and
  - His consort goddess Manikyamba.
- **Other shrines –** The temple complex also contains several smaller shrines dedicated to deities such as Vishnu, Ganesha, Durga, and others, collectively referred to as ***Daksha Vatika***.
- The Bhimeswara temple, one of the five powerful temples of Lord Shiva (***Pancharama shrines***) and also known as ***Dakshina Kasi Kshetram*** (Southern Varanasi).
- **Construction –** It was built by the ***Eastern Chalukyan King Bhima*** (892–902 A.D.).
- **Patronage** – The temple was patronised by dynasties like Chalukyas, Cholas, Kakatiyas, Reddi Kings, Vijayanagaras, and others.
- **Architecture –** The temple is large, built in ***Dravidian style***, with three concentric compound walls.
  - The temple is in a two-storied complex resembling a fort.
  - It has two main halls—the Mukha Mandapa and the Ardha Mandapa—and is surrounded by tall walls.
  - It has four gateways in cardinal directions, each associated with a goddess (Gogulamma, Nookambika, Moodhambike, Ghattambike).
- **Sacred Water** – The ***Sapta Godavari Kundam*** is a sacred pond, revered for performing religious rituals.
- **Festivals –** Devi Navaratrulu, Kartheeka Masam, Subrahmanya Shasti, Bhisma Ekadasi, Maha Shivaratri, etc.
- **Cultural Significance –**
  - It is mentioned in the Skanda Purana.
  - Celebrated by Telugu poet Srinatha Kavi Sarvabhowmudu in Bhimeswara Puranam.
  - It was associated with Lord Rama, Surya, and Indra, who are believed to have

worshipped here.

References

1. The Hindu | Vandalization on Shiva Lingam at Draksharamam temple in A.P.
2. Jyotirling temples | Bhimeswara Temple
3. East Godavari District | Bhimeswara Temple

