Konark Sun Temple

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Why in News?

Recently, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has begun drilling into the Jagamohan of Konark Sun Temple to remove sand packed inside to stabilise the structure during the British era.

- **Location –** Situated in Konark, Odisha, near the Bay of Bengal, dedicated to the *Hindu god Surya*.
- It is an important pilgrimage site, part of *Odisha's Golden Triangle* (Bhubaneswar–Puri–Konark).
- It is also referred to as the *'Black Pagoda'* due to its dark colour.
- **Construction –** It was built around 1250 CE by the King Narasimhadeva I of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty in the 13th Century.
- **Recognition –** Recognised as a *UNESCO World Heritage Site* in 1984.
- **Architecture –** It belongs to *the Kalinga style (sub-style of Nagara),* characterised by a Deula (sanctum), Nata-Mandira (Dance Hall) and Jagamohana (assembly hall).
    - Originally had a towering shikhara (collapsed in the 19th century).
- **Structural Status –** The main temple tower (deul), along with the shikhara, collapsed; Jagamohan is intact.
- **Construction Material** – Built with *Khond alite stones*; advanced knowledge of astronomy reflected in alignment with sunrise; first rays fall on the entrance.
    - **Khond alite stones** – It is a foliated metamorphic rock (garnetiferous-sillimanite schist/gneiss) found primarily in India's Eastern Ghats, named after the Khond tribe of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh
- **Features**
- **Symbolism** – A giant stone chariot of the Sun God, featuring *24 intricately carved wheels and seven horses*.
    - The 24 wheels represent the hours of the day and the cycle of time.
    - The seven horses symbolise the seven days of the week and the Sun's energy.
- **Artistic Features –** The reliefs of lions, dancers, musicians, and erotic sculptures & also depict scenes from daily life, mythology and cultural practices of that time.

References

1. Indian Express | Sun Temple
2. MSN | Sun Temple



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