Preah Vihear Temple Complex

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

Why in news?

India has expressed concerns over the damage caused to the Preah Vihear temple complex in the disputed border region between Cambodia and Thailand.

- **Temple of Preah Vihear –** It is a ***UNESCO World Heritage Site*** renowned for its exceptional Khmer architecture and dramatic cliff-top setting.
- **Location –** On the edge of the Dangrek Mountains plateau of ***Cambodia,*** near the Thai border.
- **Dedication –** The temple is dedicated to ***Lord Shiva***, reflecting Hindu spiritual traditions.
- **Construction –** It traces its origins in the 9th century when a hermitage (secluded dwelling) was founded, but a major construction in the 11th century.
- **Structure –** A series of sanctuaries connected by pavements and staircases along an 800-metre axis.



- **Preservation –** Its remote location has helped keep the site remarkably well preserved.
- **Significance –** It is an ***exceptional Khmer architecture***, pure in plan and decoration and outstanding stone-carved ornamentation.
- **India's engagement –** Since 1986, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has been working to conserve and restore *Cambodia's ancient Khmer temples.*
- Its projects include the restoration of **Angkor Wat and Ta Prohm**, and the work has now entered its third phase.
- **Khmer Temples –** Cambodia is home to over 4,000 Khmer temples, which were built between the 9^{th} and 15^{th} centuries by Khmer Kings and Khmer people and influenced by both Hinduism and Buddhism.
- The most prominent temples are located near Siem Reap in the **Angkor Archaeological Park**, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

References

1. The Hindu | India expresses concern over damaged Preah Vihear complex
2. UNESCO | Temple of Preah Vihear

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