

Somnath Temple

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

Why in News?

The Prime Minister commemorated the historic milestone of 1000 years since the first attack on Somnath in 1026 AD.

- It is believed to be the first among the **12 Jyotirlinga shrines** of **Shiva**.
- **Located in** - Prabhas Patan near Veraval, Saurashtra, on the western coast of Gujarat.
- **Triveni Sangam** - It lies at the confluence of 3 rivers - **Kapila, Hiran and Sarasvati rivers**.
- **Mythical Origins** - It was built first by Somraj (Moon God) in gold, was later rebuilt by Ravana in silver, by Krishna in wood, and by Bhimdev in stone.
- **Historical Accounts** - Al-Biruni's (Persian scholar) detailed description contributed to its fame across regions.
- **Invasions & Destruction**
 - In **late 1025 or early 1026 CE**, the temple was attacked by **Mahmud of Ghazni**, an invader from present-day Afghanistan.
 - At that time, the shrine was immensely wealthy; Mahmud seized the town and temple after a 2-day battle in which nearly 70,000 defenders lost their lives.
 - Following the conquest, he looted its vast treasures and demolished the structure.
- **Subsequent destructions** - The cycle of devastation and reconstruction that continued for centuries -
 - It was again destroyed in 1297 CE (Alauddin Khilji's forces), 1394, and 1706 by several Muslim rulers and the Portuguese.
- The present form was reconstructed in 1951.

Architectural Features

- The origins of the temple can be traced back to **649 BCE**, though it is believed to be even older.
- The present temple was reconstructed in the **Chaulukya (Solanki) style** of Hindu temple architecture and completed in May 1951, which is the symbol of national revival & cultural pride.
- It is painted in a creamy colour and boasts fine sculpture.
- At its Central sanctum houses a **large, black Shiva lingam**.

- **Other shrines** - Shri Kapardi Vinayak, Hanuman Temple, also Vallabhghat, the scenic sunset point is also present.

References

1. [PIB | PM Pays Tribute to 1000 Years of Somnath's Resilience](#)
2. [Gujarat Tourism | Somnath Temple](#)
3. [Gir Somnath District | Somnath Temple](#)

