

## Somnath Temple

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

### Why in News?

*Somnath Swabhiman Parv marks 1,000 years of resilience since the first attack on the Somnath Temple, celebrating its enduring faith and revival.*

- **Location** - Situated in India's western coast at Prabhas Patan, Gujarat, at the confluence of the Kapila, Hiran, and Saraswati rivers.
- **Deity** - It is dedicated to Lord Shiva. (Somnath - "Protector of the Moon").
- It is revered as the ***first Jyotirling*** among the 12 mentioned in the Dwadasha Jyotirling Stotram.
- **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.
- **History** - Under the ***patronage of Bhima I***, ruler of the Chalukya (Solanki) Dynasty the temple is reconstructed, after its destruction by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1025-1026 CE.
- **Invasion** - It was first attacked in January 1026 by Mahmud of Ghazni.
- It was again destroyed in 1297 CE by Alauddin Khilji's forces, in 1546 by Portuguese and in 1706 by Aurangzeb.
- **Modern Structure** - The temple was reconstructed in May 1951 under the leadership of ***Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel***.
- Reopened in 1951 in the presence of Dr Rajendra Prasad.
- **Architecture** - It is built in the ***Chaulukya (Solanki) style***, a type of Nagara style.
  - **Key Components** - Garbhagriha (sanctum), Sabha Mandapa and Nritya Mandapa.
  - The main shikhara (spire) is around 50m high.
  - It is constructed in sandstone facing east to align with the sunrise.
- **Resilience** - Despite continuous destruction, the temple was rebuilt again

and again by successive generations.

- **Cultural Relevance** - It is an important pilgrimage site associated with the ***Triveni Sangam*** of Kapila, Hiran and Saraswati rivers.
- The Temple is known as “the Shrine Eternal,” symbolizing India’s civilizational continuity, spiritual strength, and national spirit.
- Visited and reflected upon by figures like **Swami Vivekananda**.
- **Historical Accounts** - **Al-Biruni (a Persian scholar)** gave a detailed description of the temple in his historical accounts.



## Reference

[The New Indian Express | Somnath Swabhiman Parv](https://www.indianexpress.com/india/somnath-swabhiman-parv-2023/)