Somnath Temple

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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 Maḥmud 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

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