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Virupaksha temple

A portion of the Virupaksha temple in Karnataka collapsed following torrential rains.

- **Located in** – *__Hampi__*, Karnataka.
- **Establishment** – Originally in 7th *century,* but it gained *prominence in the 14th century* during the Vijayanagara Empire.
- It was constructed in Lakkana Dandesha's assistance who was a commander *under King Deva Raya II.*

> ***The Vijayanagara Empire (1336 to 1646),*** *founded by Harihara I of the Sangama dynasty, expanded from a strategic position on the banks of the Tungabhadra River.*

- **Dravidian temple architecture** – *3 grand gopurams* (towering gateways), the *shikhara* towering over the sanctum sanctorum, its intricate carvings and *pillared halls*.
- **Gopuram** – It depicts various deities, mythological scenes and animals as sculptures and carvings.
- **Sanctum sanctorum** – The *Shiva* lingam is the main deity.

> *Lord Virupaksha, also referred to as Pampapathi is the main deity in Virupaksha Temple. Virupaksha Temple complex also houses shrines of Bhuvaneshwari and Vidyaranya.*

- **Pavilions/ Saalu mantap** – Supported by ***stone pillars***
- **Significance** – It is the *oldest and principle temple in Hampi*.
- A vital centre for the religious and cultural activities of its time.
- **Use of mathematical concepts** – The temple is *triangular* in shape & the repeated patterns depict the concept of fractals.

- **Destruction** – Hampi was ruined by the Bahmani sultanates during Vijanagara-Bahmani rivalry.
- The pillars' condition in the pavilion has deteriorated because of natural phenomena such as _rain over a long period_.
- **Key challenges** – Funding, logistics and human resources are lagging that slows the restoration work of the temple.
- **Recognition** – It belongs to the Group of Monuments at Hampi, declared as a **_UNESCO World Heritage Site_**.

The ASI is responsible for 57 out of the 95 monuments in Hampi that are nationally protected, while the rest are under the state government's control.

Few important sites in Hampi ruins
• The Krishna temple complex, • The Vitthala temple complex • Virupaksha Temple • Stone chariot Garuda shrine • Pattabhirama temple complex • Lotus Mahal complex

References

1. [The Indian Express| Damage of Virupaksha temple](#)
2. [Karnataka| History of Virupaksha Temple](#)

Naming of Cyclones

According to Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), Cyclone Remal will likely make landfall between West Bengal's Sagar Island and Bangladesh's Khepupara.

Cyclone Remal, _the 1st pre-monsoon tropical cyclone in the Bay of Bengal in 2024, whose name means 'sand' in Arabic, was chosen Oman._

- **PTC** – Panel of Tropical Cyclones, established _in 1972_ by _World Meteorological Organisation_ for naming tropical cyclones.
- **13 member countries** – Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Oman & Thailand were the 8 original members
- In 2018, _Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Yemen_ were included.
- **Assigning name** – In _2000_, PTC agreed to assign names, each member to send its recommendations and finalised by PTC.
- **Coverage** – The tropical cyclones in Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea.

Guidelines in naming Cyclone – The proposed name

> • Is _neutral_ to (a) politics and political figures (b) religious believes, (c) cultures and (d) gender;
> • Does _not hurt the sentiments_ of any group of population over the globe or is not very rude and cruel in nature;
> • Is short, easy to pronounce, and not offensive to any PTC member;
> • Is at most _8 letters long_;
> • Is provided with its pronunciation and voice over; and
> • Is _not repeated_ (not before, not after).

The Panel of Tropical Cyclones (PTC) of started naming cyclones in the region in 2004.

- **Name list** – In 2020, a list of **_169 cyclone names_** were released, comprises _13 suggestions each from the 13 countries_.
- The _countries are arranged in alphabetical_ order, all the names suggested by them are placed alongside in different columns with 1 name in each, _totally 13 columns_.

Cyclone Name List (169 names)		
Countries	**Column 1 - Used**	**Column 2 – Used till Ramal**
Bangladesh	Nisarga	Biparjoy
India	Gati	Tej
Iran	Nivar	Hamoon
Maldives	Burevi	Midhili
Myanmar	Tauktae	Michaung
Oman	Yaas	**Remal**
Pakistan	Gulab	Asna
Qatar	Shaheen	Dana
Saudi Arabia	Jawad	Fengal
Sri Lanka	Asani	Shakhti
Thailand	Sitrang	Montha
UAE	Mandous	Senyar
Yemen	Mocha	Ditwah

- **Name allocation** – The name in the _1ˢᵗ column is chosen_
  - **For instance,** the _1ˢᵗ cyclone was named Nisarga_ (by Bangladesh that hit Maharashtra, followed by Gati (India's choice, hit Somalia), Nivar (Iran's choice, hit Tamil Nadu).
- After all the names of 1ˢᵗ column are exhausted, _names from the next column_ are chosen, again starting from Bangladesh (for instance, after Mocha, the next cyclone was named Biparjoy).
- **New list** – After this current list is exhausted, a new list will be submitted by PTC members.
- **Significance of naming** – It is easy to identify individual cyclones, create awareness of its development, rapidly disseminate warnings for disaster mitigation and management.

Reference

Voting Methods in India

India's electoral framework allows certain categories of voters to exercise their franchise even if they are unable to make it to the polling station on the day of voting.

- **Rules** – Under the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RPA).
- **Regular voting method** – A voters must ***vote in person***, at their designated polling station, on the date and hours fixed for the poll and using Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).
- **Alternate voting method** – Certain categories of voters can exercise their franchise in different methods under exception.

Alternate Voting Methods	
By post	Special voters, Service voters and Electors subjected to preventive detention (also through special messenger)
Facilitation Centre	Voters on election duty
Postal Voting Centre	Persons employed in essential services
Home/ hospital	Senior citizens, Persons with disability, Persons affected or suspected of having Covid-19

- **Postal ballot** – Section 60 of the RPA allows voters to <u>vote remotely</u> who cannot be physically present in polling stations.
    - Polling takes place outside the polling station.
    - It takes place without EVMs (EDC voters are an exception).
    - Polling takes place <u>before the designated poll date</u> in the constituency.

Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) *for Service Voters features encrypted ballots sent electronically via a secure portal. While the ballot is transmitted electronically, voters return their completed ballots via post at no cost.*

- **Facilitation Centres** – Located at training venues and designated offices which operate before the election and is <u>videotaped</u>.
- **Postal Voting Centre (PVC)** – Here, voters may come and cast a vote on any of the 3 fixed days from 9 AM to 5 PM.
- **Home voting** – It is <u>for absentee voters</u> where Booth Level Officers (BLOs) deliver <u>Form 12D</u>.
- If the elector opts for the Postal Ballot, then the BLO collects the form for home voting <u>within 5 days</u> of the election's notification.
- **Proxy voting** – Service voters in the <u>Armed and paramilitary forces</u> can vote either by proxy or postal ballot, where the indelible ink is applied to proxy voter's left ***middle***

**finger**.

- **Assisted Voting** – It is for who are _unable to vote due to blindness or other disability_.
- A voter can bring a companion over 18 years of age into the voting booth on their behalf and the indelible ink is applied to the **_companion's right index finger._**
- **Voting in a different polling centre** – It is applicable when a _person on election duty_ is deployed in the same constituency where they are enrolled as a voter.
- **_Election Duty Certificate (EDC)_** can be issued by the Returning Officer to entitle the voter to vote at a polling station through EVM at a different polling centre.
- However, if they are on duty in another constituency, they are entitled only to a postal ballot.

Reference

[The Indian Express| Voting Methods in India](#)

Special Categories of Voters

Special exceptions are made for certain categories of voters to ensure that everyone gets to exercise their franchise.

- **Eligibility** – It is given by 'The Conduct of Election Rules, 1961'.
- **Special voters** – Individuals like _President, Vice President, Governors, Cabinet Ministers_, other high-ranking dignitaries, etc. and their _spouses_ as given under Section 20(4) of RPA.
- **Service voters –** Members and spouses residing with
  - Indian armed forces
  - Paramilitary forces
  - An armed state police serving outside their state or
  - A government employee stationed abroad.
- **Voters on election duty –** The public servants assigned official tasks on polling day
  - All Commission's observers
  - Presiding officers, polling officers and agents
  - Police personnel
- It also includes _private individuals and non-government staff,_ such as videographers, drivers, helpline staff, etc., are also covered.
- **Absentee voters** – Created in 2019, under RPA, 1951.
  - AVSC – Senior citizens aged 85+
  - AVPD – Persons with disabilities having at least 40% disability
  - AVCO – Covid-19 suspect or affected persons
  - AVES – Persons employed in essential services (AVES).
- **Classified Service Voters' (CSVs)** – They are voters who choose the proxy voting method.
- _Service voters in the Armed and paramilitary forces_ can choose this method and they must appoint a local resident as their proxy.

Reference

Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge

A new treaty was adopted at the Diplomatic Conference held under the aegis of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) at its headquarters in Geneva in 2024.

- **Need** – Under current laws inventions developed using genetic resources can be protected but genetic resources themselves cannot be patented.
- **Parent body** – *World Intellectual Property Organization* (WIPO).
- **Course of action** - After adoption, the treaty was opened for signature and the treaty will enter force *after 15 parties ratify it*.
- However, signing the treaty at the end of a diplomatic conference does *not commit a country* to being bound by its provisions.
- **Provision** – Whenever there is a claimed invention on genetic resources, the applicants will have to *disclose the country of origin or source* of the genetic resources.
- imilarly, the applicant would also have to *disclose the Indigenous Peoples or local community* who provided the traditional knowledge, in case the patent is based on traditional knowledge.
- **Significance** – It is the 1ˢᵗ new WIPO Treaty in over a decade.
- It is the 1ˢᵗ one that deals with genetic resources & traditional knowledge held by Indigenous Peoples as well as local communities.
- It will not only safeguard and protect biodiversity but *will increase transparency* in the patent system and strengthen innovation.

India holds 7-8% of global biodiversity and a rich repertoire of knowledge based on these genetic resources.

- **Challenges** – It does not address the problem of the biopiracy of genetic resources & associated traditional knowledge using patents.

The Nagoya Protocol under the Convention on Biological Diversity does ensure that benefits earned through the use of traditional knowledge are shared with the communities that have protected the resource and the associated knowledge for centuries.

References

1. [Down To Earth| New WIPO Treaty on Genetic Resources](#)
2. [PIB| WIPO Treaty, a win for Global South and India](#)