



Quarrying Threatens Hampi

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Why in News?

Recently, **Hampi**, a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) in the [Vijayanagara](#) district of Karnataka, has been experiencing **stone quarrying activities** in its vicinity.

- Environmentalists and tourists have raised alarms about the impact of these activities on the site's historical and ecological integrity.

What are Key Facts About the Vijaynagar Empire and Hampi?

▪ Vijaynagar Empire:

- The Vijayanagar kingdom or “city of victory” was founded in **1336** by **Harihara and Bukka**, two brothers who had previously served in the army of **Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq**.
- They broke away from the **Delhi Sultanate** and established an independent state in Karnataka, with their capital city Vijayanagar located on the banks of the Tungabhadra river.
- The establishment of their kingdom was aided and inspired by the contemporary **scholar and saint Vidyaranya**.
- Vijayanagar Empire was **ruled by four important dynasties named Sangama, Saluva, Tuluva, and Aravidu**.
- **Krishnadevaraya (1509-29)** of the Tuluva dynasty was the most famous ruler of Vijayanagar.
 - He composed a work on statecraft in Telugu known as the **Amuktamalyada**.

▪ Hampi:

- It is located in the **Bellary District** of Karnataka consisting of the remnants of the **Vijayanagara Empire's** capital city (**14th-16th century CE**).
- One of the unique features of the temples at Hampi is the **wide chariot streets** flanked by a row of pillared mandapas.
- Its famous places include the **Krishna temple complex, Narasimha, Ganesa, Hemakuta group of temples, Achyutaraya temple complex, [Vitthala temple complex](#), Pattabhirama temple complex, Lotus Mahal complex, etc.**
- Hampi was declared a **World Heritage Site** by UNESCO in **1986**.
- The Vijayanagara Empire was defeated by a **coalition of Deccan sultanates** in **1565 (Battle of Talikota)**, after which Hampi remained in ruins.

Vittala Temple:

- It was built in the 15th century **during the rule of Devaraya II**, one of the rulers of the Vijayanagara Empire.
- It is **dedicated to Vittala** (Lord Vishnu) and is also called Vijaya Vittala Temple.
- It features notable attractions such as a **stone chariot and musical pillars**, with the stone chariot being depicted on the **Rs 50 currency note**.

Hampi Chariot:

- It is among three famous stone chariots in India, the other two being in [Konark](#) (Odisha) and [Mahabalipuram](#) (Tamil Nadu).
- It was built in the **16th century by the orders of King Krishnadevaraya**, a Vijayanagara ruler.
- It is a shrine **dedicated to Garuda, the official vehicle of Lord Vishnu.**

Virupaksha Temple:

- It is the 7th-century **Shiva temple** in Hampi, Central Karnataka.
- **Lord Virupaksha**, also referred to as **Pampapathi** is the main deity in Virupaksha Temple.
- It was built in the **Vijayanagara style of architecture** and was built by **Lakhan Dandesha, a nayaka** under the ruler **Deva Raya II** of the Vijayanagara Empire.

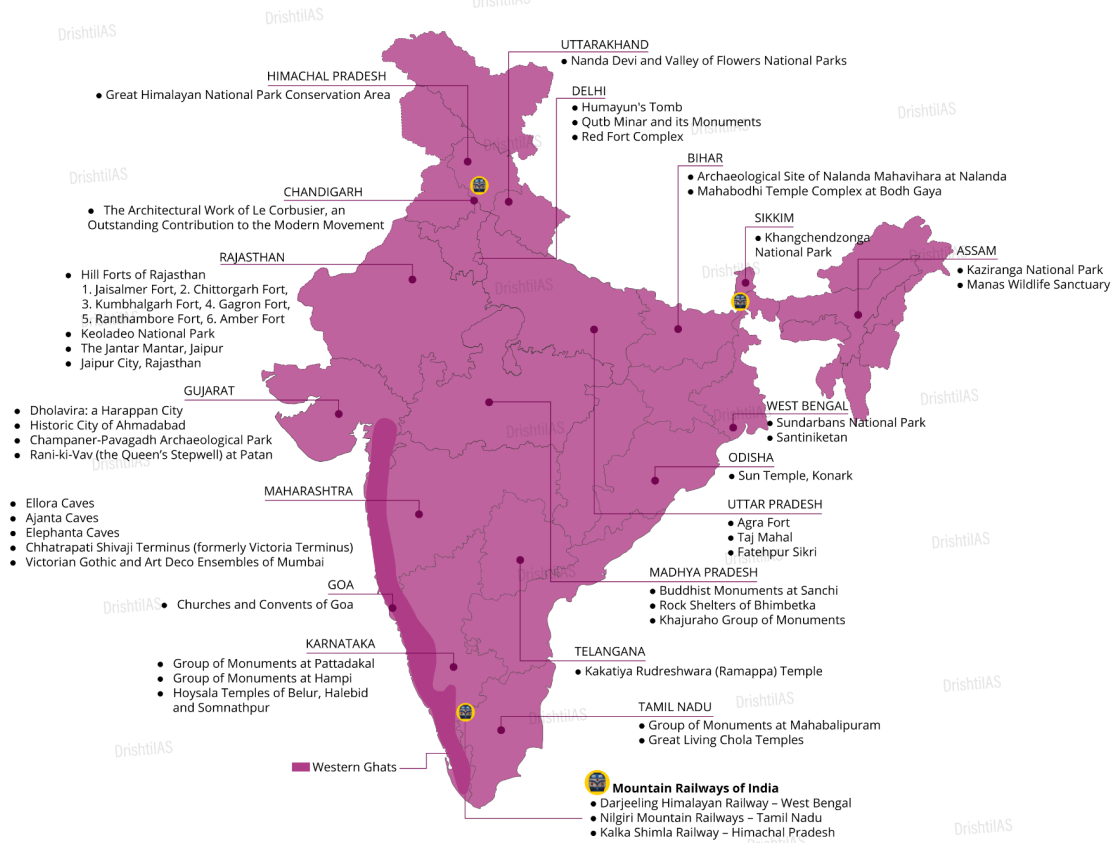
Vijayanagara School of Temple Architecture

- **Diverse Structures:** It encompassed **temples, monolithic sculptures, palaces**, official buildings, cities, irrigation systems, step wells, and tanks.
- **Blend of Styles:** The architecture uniquely **integrated Hindu and Islamic elements.**
- **The features of the temples were:**
 - The **walls of the temples were highly decorated with carvings** and geometrical patterns.
 - **Gopurams** were now built on all sides.
 - Monolithic rock pillars
 - Generally, **temple pillars have a mythical creature Yali (Horse)** engraved in them
 - More than **one mandaps were built in each temple.** The central mandap came to be **known as the Kalyan mandap.**
 - The **concept of secular buildings inside the temple premises** was also introduced during this period.
 - Notable structures include **Mahanavami Tibba, Kalyana Mandapas, and Hazara Ram Temple.** Decorative elements often **featured horses and Raya Gopurams (grand gateway towers).**

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UNESCO World Heritage Sites



FACTS

- Total Number of World Heritage Sites in India: 42
- Total Cultural Heritage Sites: 34
- Total Natural Sites: 7 (Kaziranga National Park, Manas Wildlife Sanctuary, Western Ghats, Sundarbans National Park, Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks, Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area, Keoladeo National Park)
- Mixed Site: 1 (Khangchendzonga National Park)
- World Heritage Sites Listed First: Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Ajanta Caves and Ellora Caves (all in 1983)
- Latest Addition (2023): Hoysala Temples (42nd site) and Santiniketan (41st site)
- Countries With the Most UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Italy (58), China (56), Germany (51), France (49), Spain (49)
- India is 6th in number of World Heritage Sites in the World



UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q1. Which one of the following statements is correct? (2021)

- (a) Ajanta Caves lie in the gorge of Waghora river.
- (b) Sanchi Stupa lies in the gorge of Chambal river.
- (c) Pandu-lena Cave Shrines lie in the gorge of Narmada river.
- (d) Amaravati Stupa lies in the gorge of Godavari river.

Ans: (a)

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