



Corridor Projects for Vishnupad and Mahabodhi Temples

Why in News?

Recently, the [Union Budget 2024-25](#) revealed plans to develop **corridor projects** for the **Vishnupad Temple at Gaya** and the **Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya** in Bihar.

Key Points

▪ Vishnupad Temple at Gaya

- **Location:** It is situated on the banks of the Phalgu river in Gaya district of Bihar, India.
- **Presiding Deity:** The temple is dedicated to **Lord Vishnu**.
- **Legend:** According to local mythology, a demon named Gayasur requested the gods to grant him the power to help others attain moksha (liberation from the cycle of rebirth). However, after misusing this power, Lord Vishnu subdued him, leaving a footprint in the temple, believed to be a mark of that event.
- **Architectural Features:** The temple stands about 100 feet tall and features 44 pillars constructed from **large gray granite blocks** (Munger Black stone) joined with **iron clamps**.
 - The **octagonal shrine** is oriented towards the east.
- **Construction:** It was constructed in **1787** under the orders of **Queen Ahilyabai Holkar** and is located on the banks of the **Falgu River**.
- **Cultural Practices:** The temple is particularly significant during **Pitra Paksha**, a period dedicated to honoring ancestors, attracting many devotees.
 - The **Brahma Kalpit Brahmins**, also referred to as Gayawal Brahmins, have been the traditional priests of the temple since ancient times.

▪ Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya

- **Location:** Bodh Gaya, in the Gaya district of Bihar.
- **Historical Importance:** It is believed to be the **site where Gautam Buddha** attained enlightenment under the Mahabodhi Tree.
- **Built By:** The original temple was built by **Emperor Ashoka** in the 3rd century BC, with the current structure dating back to the **5th-6th centuries**.
- **Architectural Features:** It comprises the **50 m high grand temple**, the **Vajrasana**, sacred **Bodhi Tree** and other six sacred sites of Buddha's enlightenment, surrounded by numerous ancient **Votive stupas**, well maintained and protected by inner, middle and outer circular boundaries.
 - It is one of the earliest **brick temples** from the **Gupta period**, influencing later brick architecture.
 - The **Vajrasana (the Diamond Throne)** was originally installed by **Emperor Asoka** to mark the spot where Buddha sat and meditated.
- **Sacred Parts of Mahabodhi Temple:**
 - **Bodhi Tree:** Believed to be a direct descendant of the tree under which Buddha attained Enlightenment.
 - **Animeshlochan Chaitya:** Where Buddha spent the Second Week.
 - **Ratnachakrama:** Site of Buddha's Third Week walking meditation.
 - **Ratnagar Chaitya:** Site of Buddha's Fourth Week.
 - **Ajapala Nigrodh Tree:** Site of Buddha's Fifth Week.
 - **Lotus Pond:** Site of Buddha's Sixth Week.

- **Rajyatana Tree:** Site of Buddha's Seventh Week.
- **Recognition:** Mahabodhi Temple has been a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) since 2002.
- **Pilgrimage Site:** The Mahabodhi Temple attracts a large number of national and international pilgrims, highlighting its spiritual significance.

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