



# Corridor Projects for Vishnupad and Mahabodhi Temples

[Source: IE](#)

## Why in News?

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.

- Modelled after the **Kashi Vishwanath Corridor**, these projects aim to enhance both temples as major pilgrim and tourist destinations.
- The temples are about **10 kilometres apart** and are culturally significant.

## What are the Key Facts About Vishnupad Temple and the Mahabodhi Temple?

- **Vishnupad Temple at Gaya: It is situated on the banks of the Phalgu/Falgu river in Gaya district of Bihar. 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**.
  - **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.

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- **Mahabodhi Temple at Bodhi Gaya:** It is believed to be the site where [Gautam Buddha](#) attained enlightenment under the Mahabodhi Tree.
  - **Construction of Temple:** 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 **6 sacred sites** of Buddha's enlightenment.
    - It is 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 Sites:**
    - **Bodhi Tree:** Believed to be a direct descendant of the tree under which Buddha attained **Enlightenment**.
    - **Animeshlochan Chaitya:** Where Buddha spent the second week of meditation after attaining enlightenment.
    - **Ratnachakrama:** Site of Buddha's third week after attaining enlightenment.
    - **Ratnagar Chaitya:** Site of Buddha's fourth week after attaining enlightenment.
    - **Ajapala Nigrodh Tree:** Site of Buddha's fifth week after attaining enlightenment.
    - **Lotus Pond:** Site of Buddha's sixth week after attaining enlightenment..
    - **Rajyatana Tree:** Site of Buddha's seventh week after attaining enlightenment..
  - **Recognition:** It 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.



## Note

- **Other famous tourist places in Bihar** are Vishwa Shanti Stupa in Rajgir, Nalanda, Ancient city of Patliputra, [Valmiki Nagar Tiger Reserve](#) in the West Champaran, etc.,

## What is the Pilgrim Corridor Project (PCP)?

- The **Pilgrim Corridor Project (PCP)** involves **upgrading religious sites into world-class destinations** for spiritual and tourism purposes.
- **Key Features:**
  - **Boost to Tourism and Economy:** The expansion of religious tourism is expected to generate foreign exchange and create jobs, with India's tourism revenue rising by **65.7% year-on-year** ([Economic Survey 2023-24](#)).
  - **Preservation and Restoration:** Projects like the [Kashi Vishwanath Corridor](#) expand and restore temple areas, including smaller temples like Sheetla Mata and Shri Ram Temple.
  - **Enhanced Visitor Experience:** Improvements include reducing congestion, offering virtual tours, and providing amenities such as restrooms, shops, and improved accessibility with escalators and ramps.

Read More: [Temple Architecture](#), [Ram Temple](#)

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## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

**Q. The Nagara, the Dravida and the Vesara are the (2012)**

- (a) three main racial groups of the Indian subcontinent
- (b) three main linguistic divisions into which the languages of India can be classified
- (c) three main styles of Indian temple architecture
- (d) three main musical Gharanas prevalent in India

**Ans: c**

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