



Konark Wheels at Rashtrapati Bhavan

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

Recently, four sandstone replicas of the iconic [Konark](#) wheels from the Konark Temple have been installed at the [Rashtrapati Bhavan's](#) Cultural Centre and Amrit Udyan. This initiative is among various efforts to incorporate traditional cultural and historical elements into Rashtrapati Bhavan.

- **Konark temple** was declared a [UNESCO](#) world heritage site in 1984. It is built in Odisha school of temple architecture.

Odisha School of Temple Architecture

- It is a sub-schools of [Nagara School of architecture](#) and comes under **East Indian Temples**.
- The main architectural features of Odisha temples are classified into three orders, i.e., **rekhapida, pidhadeul and khakra**.
- Most of the main temple sites are located in ancient Kalinga—modern Puri District, including Bhubaneswar or ancient Tribhuvanapura, Puri and Konark.
- In general, **the shikhara, called deul in Odisha**, is vertical almost until the top when it suddenly curves sharply inwards.
- **Deuls** are preceded, as usual, by **mandapas called jagamohana** in Odisha.
- Odisha temples usually have boundary walls.
- The ground plan of the main temple is almost always square, which, in the upper reaches of its superstructure, becomes circular in the crowning mastaka.
- Compartments and niches are generally square, the exterior of the temples are lavishly carved, their interiors generally quite bare.

What are Key Facts and Significance of the Konark Sun Temple?

- **About Konark Temple:**
 - The 13th-century Konark Sun Temple, near Puri in Odisha, was built by **King Narasimhadeva I (1238-1264 AD)**. Its grand scale and intricate design symbolise the strength and cultural values of the **Eastern Ganga Empire**.
 - The Eastern Ganga dynasty also known as Rudra Gangas or Prachya Gangas.
 - It was a major Indian royal dynasty that ruled Kalinga from the 5th to early 15th century.
 - **Key Features of Temple:**
 - The **vimana (principal sanctuary)** was surmounted by a high tower with a shikhara (crowning cap) also known as [Rekha deul](#), which was razed in the 19th century.
 - To the east, the jagamohana (audience hall or Mandap) dominates the ruins with its pyramidal mass.
 - Farther to the east, the natmandir (dance hall), today unroofed, rises on a high

platform.



▀ **Architectural Significance:**

- **Chariot Design:** Temple is shaped as a colossal chariot with 7 horses symbolising the days of the week and 24 wheels representing 24 hours in a day.
- **Wheel Construction:** Each wheel, 9 feet 9 inches in diameter, has 8 thick and 8 thin spokes, serving as ancient sundials.
 - The intricate carvings include circular medallions, animals, and foliage on the rims, as well as luxury scenes within the medallions.
- **Symbolic Elements:** The 12 pairs of wheels signify the months of the year, while some interpretations relate the wheel to the 'Wheel of Life'—the cycle of creation, preservation, and realization.

▀ **Cultural Heritage:**

- **Dharma and Karma:** The Konark Wheel is akin to the **Buddhist Dharmachakra**, symbolising the cosmic cycle of Dharma (righteousness) and Karma (action).
- **Zodiac Representation:** Another interpretation suggests the 12 wheels represent the zodiac signs, linking it to astrological and cosmic principles.

▀ **Sundial Functionality:**

- **Time Measurement:** Two of the wheels can determine the time from sunrise to sunset.
- **Spoke Arrangement:** Wider spokes denote 3-hour intervals, thinner spokes represent 1.5-hour periods, and beads between spokes mark 3-minute increments.
- **Midnight Mark:** The top center wider spoke symbolizes midnight, with the dial moving anti-clockwise to display time.

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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