



# Kanyakumari's Vivekananda Rock

[Source: IE](#)

## Why in News?

Recently, the Prime Minister announced his plan to visit and meditate at the **Vivekananda Rock Memorial** in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu marking the culmination of the Lok Sabha election campaign.

## What are the Key Facts Related to Vivekananda Rock Memorial?

- **Swami Vivekananda's Spiritual Experience:**
  - In **1892**, Swami Vivekananda was said to have **swum to the rock from the shores of Kanyakumari** for meditation. He spent three days and nights there, **resulting in his enlightenment**.
  - Swami Vivekananda's letter to Swami Ramkrishnananda in 1894 suggests that his **core philosophy crystallised** after meditation at the **Dhyan Mandapam** on the rock.
- **Location:**
  - The **memorial stands on one of the two rocks located about 500 meters off the mainland of Vavathurai**, Tamil Nadu.
  - The Vivekananda rock is a **small rocky islet**, surrounded by the Laccadive Sea where the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea form a confluence presenting a picturesque view.
  - The **memorial consists of two main structures, viz Vivekananda Mandapam and Shripada Mandapam**.
- **Significance as a Memorial:**
  - The memorial was constructed to honour [Swami Vivekananda](#), a prominent Indian spiritual leader.
  - It was formally inaugurated in **1970 by the then-President of India, V V Giri**.

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## What are the Key Facts About the Swami Vivekananda?

### ▪ Birth and Early Life:

- Swami Vivekananda, originally born as **Narendranath Datta** on 12<sup>th</sup> January 1863, hailed from a **conventional Bengali family** in Calcutta.
- His excessive appetite for knowledge led him to explore various subjects, including philosophy, literature, **Indian scriptures, as well as western philosophies.**

### ▪ Towards Spiritualism:

- He became the **chief disciple** of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century mystic [Ramakrishna Paramhansa](#) in **1881.**
- Initially sceptical of Ramakrishna's teachings, Vivekananda eventually embraced his guru's philosophy, leading to his initiation into **monastic life.**
- In 1893, upon the request of **Maharaja Ajit Singh** of the Khetri State, he took the name '**Vivekananda.**'

### ▪ Associated Organisations:

- The **Ramakrishna movement** (initiated by Vivekananda) had two goals:
  - To train monks dedicated to a life of **renunciation and practical spirituality** to spread Vedanta teachings and
  - To guide lay disciples to carry on **preaching, philanthropic and charitable works.**
- He established the [Ramakrishna Mission](#) in 1897 to fulfil the second objective of the Ramakrishna movement whereas **Paramhansa himself fulfilled the first objective through Ramkrishna Math.**

### ▪ His Contributions:

- He introduced the world to the Indian philosophies of [Vedanta and Yoga.](#)
  - He preached '**neo-Vedanta**', an interpretation of Hinduism through a Western lens, and **believed in combining spirituality with material progress.**
- His powerful speech at the 1893 [World Parliament of Religion](#) in Chicago captivated the audience and placed Hinduism on the global stage.
- His teachings also offered different **paths to spiritual liberation** (moksha) through his writings, outlining the four yogas: **Raja-yoga** (yoga of the mind), **Karma-yoga** (yoga of action), **Jnana-yoga** (yoga of knowledge), and **Bhakti-yoga** (yoga of devotion).
- His famous quote, "**Service of man is the service of God**", is still relevant today.
- [Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose](#) had called Vivekananda the "**Maker of modern India.**"
- [National Youth Day](#) is celebrated every year to observe the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### Prelims

**Q. Annie Besant was: (2013)**

1. Responsible for starting the Home Rule Movement
2. The founder of the Theosophical Society
3. Once the President of the Indian National Congress

**Select the correct statement/statements using the codes given below.**

- (a) 1 only  
(b) 2 and 3 only  
(c) 1 and 3 only  
(d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans (c)**

**Q. Consider the following statements:**

1. Shah Abdul Aziz and Syed Ahmed Khan popularized the ideas of the Wahhabi Movement in India.
2. Wahabi Movement was a revivalist movement which tried to purify Islam by eliminating all the un-Islamic practices.
3. Wahabi's played an important role in the revolt of 1857 in spreading anti-British feelings.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 and 3 only  
(b) 2 and 3 only  
(c) 2 only  
(d) 1 and 2 only

**Ans (b)**

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### Mains

**Q. Several foreigners made India their homeland and participated in various movements. Analyse their role in the Indian struggle for freedom. (2013)**