



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Big Temple of Thanjavur

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Why is in news? The Big Temple in Thanjavur decorated on Thursday to mark the 1037th 'Sathaya Vizha', as part of the commemoration of the birth anniversary of Raja Raja Chola

Brihadeshwara Temple, also known as **Raja Rajeswara Temple**, is **dedicated to Shiva** and is located in Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu).

Thanjavur lies in the **delta of the Cauvery River**.

It is one of the best examples of the **Dravidian style of temple architecture** built by **Chola emperor Raja Raja Chola I** (985-1014 AD) **between 1003 AD and 1010 AD**.

The Dravidian style of temple architecture flourished roughly from the 8th century to about the 13-14 century AD.

The temple consists of a pyramidal spire and is adorned with sculptures and paintings inside as well as outside.

The temple **entered the UNESCO World Heritage Site list in 1987** and is also a part of "**Great Living Chola Temples**" along with the Brihadisvara Temple at Gangaikondacholapuram and the Airavatesvara Temple at Darasuram.

The temple, which is one of the tallest temples in India, still remains an engineering mystery as it is **completely made of granite** and archaeologists still don't know how the builders got such huge pieces of granite for construction at this height.

The **apex structure on top** of the temple is believed to be **carved out of a single stone carving**.

It is so designed that the **Vimana does not cast a shadow at noon** during any part of the year.

Vimana: Vimana is the structure over the garbhagriha or inner sanctum in the Hindu temples of South India and Odisha.

It is like a stepped pyramid that rises up geometrically rather than the curving **Shikhara of North India**.

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