



Preah Vihear Temple

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Why in News?

- Thailand launched **airstrikes on Cambodian military positions** after **two Thai soldiers were killed** along the border.
- The incident has **reignited the long-standing territorial dispute** centred on the historic **Preah Vihear Temple**.

About Preah Vihear Temple

- A Hindtemple dedicated to Lord Shiva**, located in **Cambodia**, on the **Dangrek Mountains** along the Thailand–Cambodia border.
- Built during the **Khmer Empire** by kings **Suryavarman I and Suryavarman II** (11th century).
- Recognised as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site (2008)**.
- Culturally significant for both nations; its strategic hilltop location makes it geopolitically sensitive.

Preah Vihear Border Dispute

Colonial Background

- 1904 Franco–Siamese Treaty**: Placed the area (including the cliff) **under Thailand (then Siam)**.
- 1907 Map by French Surveyors**: Placed **Preah Vihear Temple inside Cambodia** ? basis of modern conflict.

International Court of Justice (ICJ) Judgments

1. 1962 ICJ Judgment

- Ruled that **Preah Vihear Temple belongs to Cambodia**.
- Thailand required to withdraw forces but dispute over **surrounding territory** remained.

1. 2008 Escalation

- Cambodia applied for **UNESCO World Heritage status**, triggering renewed military clashes.

1. 2013 ICJ Clarification

- Reaffirmed Cambodia's sovereignty over the temple.
- Called for a **demilitarised zone**, but **it was never implemented**.

Current Status

- Thailand **rejects ICJ jurisdiction** in the matter.
- Border remains poorly demarcated; periodic flare-ups continue.