

Martand Sun Temple

Why in News?

Recently, a religious ceremony was organized at the ruins of **Martand Sun Temple**, built in 8th century, at Anantnag in Jammu and Kashmir which is a protected monument under the Archaeological Survey of India.

A controversy has erupted over the involvement of Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha in the function premises of Martand Sun Temple without any prior notice. ASI called it a violation of rules.



About Martand Temple:

- It is **one of the oldest Sun temples in India** which is a symbol of incredible ancient spiritual legacy.
- It is a Hindu temple **dedicated to Lord Surya** (prominent deity in Hinduism). Lord Surya is also **known as Martanda in Sanskrit**.
- Built by **Lalitaditya Muktapida** of the Karkota dynasty in the 8th century AD, this temple is a masterpiece of Kashmir architecture.
- Martand Sun Temple is also known as '**Pandau Laidan**'.
- This temple was destroyed by Sikandar Shah Miri in the 14th century AD. Its ruins have been marked as a "Site of National Importance" by the Archaeological Survey of India.

Karkota Dynasty

- According to **Kalhana's 'Rajatarangini'**, the Karkota dynasty was founded by **Duralabhvardhan** in 625 AD. He was a **contemporary of Harshavardhana**, the ruler of Kannauj. At the same time, the **Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang** visited Kashmir. Duralabhvardhan had presented the teeth of Buddha to Harshavardhana.



- Further, Duralabhvardhan was succeeded by Durlabhaka who assumed the title of Pratapaditya and founded Pratappur city. After him, Chandrapida (Vajraditya), Tarapida (Udayaditya) and Muktapida (Lalituditya) became the rulers respectively.
- The rulers of the Karkota dynasty were **Vaishnavites** and they built many Vishnu temples.
- Apart from this, there are evidences of many stupas, chaityas and viharas which hint towards **patronage to Buddhism** by the Karkota dynasty.

Lalituditya Muktapida

- Lalituditya was the most powerful ruler of the Karkota dynasty of Kashmir. He is portrayed as a world conqueror in Kalhana's 'Rajatarangini'.
- He established **Parihaspur city** near Srinagar which had many temples dedicated to Vishnu, Shiva and Buddha.
- With the support of Yashovarman, ruler of Kannauj, He defeated the Tibetans and sent a delegation to China in 733.
- During his eastern campaign, he defeated 5 chieftains of Gaur state. While returning from the campaign, he also defeated Yashovarman of Kanauj and captured Kanauj.
- He brought Yashovarman's court poets **Vakpati** and **Bhavabhuti** to Kashmir.



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