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Jagannath Temple

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Why is in news? The Puri Jagannath Temple built by Kalinga ruler Anantavarman Chodaganga to rival the Brihadeeswara Temple built by the Cholas.

The Jagannath Temple is an important **Hindu temple dedicated to Jagannath, a form of Vishnu**, Puri is in the state of Odisha on the eastern coast of India.

The present temple was **rebuilt from the 12th century**, on the site of pre-existing temples in the compound but not the main Jagannatha temple, and begun by **Anantavarman Chodaganga, the first king of the Eastern Ganga dynasty**.

The Puri temple is **famous for its annual Ratha Yatra or chariot festival**, in which the three principal deities are pulled on huge and elaborately decorated temple cars.

Unlike the stone and metal icons found in most Hindu temples, **the image of Jagannath is made of wood** and is ceremoniously replaced every twelve or 19 years by an exact replica.

This temple was called the "**White Pagoda**" and is a **part of Char Dham pilgrimages** (Badrinath, Dwaraka, Puri, Rameswaram).

Jagannath Puri temple is called '**Yamanika Tirtha**'.

The temple is sacred to all Hindus, and especially in those of the Vaishnava traditions.

Ramanuja established the **Emar Mutt** near the temple and Adi Shankaracharya established the **Govardhan Math**, which is the seat of one of the four Shankaracharyas.

It is also of particular significance to the followers of **Gaudiya Vaishnavism**, whose founder, **Chaitanya Mahaprabhu**, was attracted to the deity, Jagannath, and lived in Puri for many years.

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