

VIRUPAKSHA TEMPLE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA
HAMPI CIRCLE



The Virupaksha or Pampapati temple, a prominent place of worship during the Vijayanagara period is situated on the southern bank of Tungabhadra River. The earliest historical record that refers the area between Hemakuta hill and Tungabhadra River is a copper plate inscription of King Vinayaditya of Badami Chalukya dynasty dating back to 688-689 CE. It refers to this place as Pampa tirtha, after the river Goddess Pampa. Before Virupaksha attaining prominence as the chief deity of the Vijayanagara empire, she presided over the tirtha. According to *Kshetramahatmya*, Virupaksha (form of Shiva) lived at Hemakuta hill and married Pampa, the daughter of Brahma (the God of creation).

The god Virupaksha became a dominant divinity and the primary focus of this religious zone by about 14th century CE as testified in a copper plate inscription of 1346 CE issued by Harihara's brother Marappa. This inscription refers to Virupaksha, the spouse of Goddess Pampa as the family deity of Sangamas. Subsequently, he was also elevated to the status of state deity (*rashtra devata*). Several other historical records also attest that from its inception to till date, Virupaksha temple continues to play an active role in the religious life of the town.

The Virupaksha temple complex is assignable from 7th to 15th century CE. It comprises of two adjoining enclosures, one to the east (outer) and

other to the west (inner) connected by enclosure walls with *gopuras* (gateway with a towering superstructure). Both enclosures are entered through the main *gopura* on the east side of the outer enclosure. Further access to the inner enclosure is provided by a *gopura* on the west.

INNER ENCLOSURE

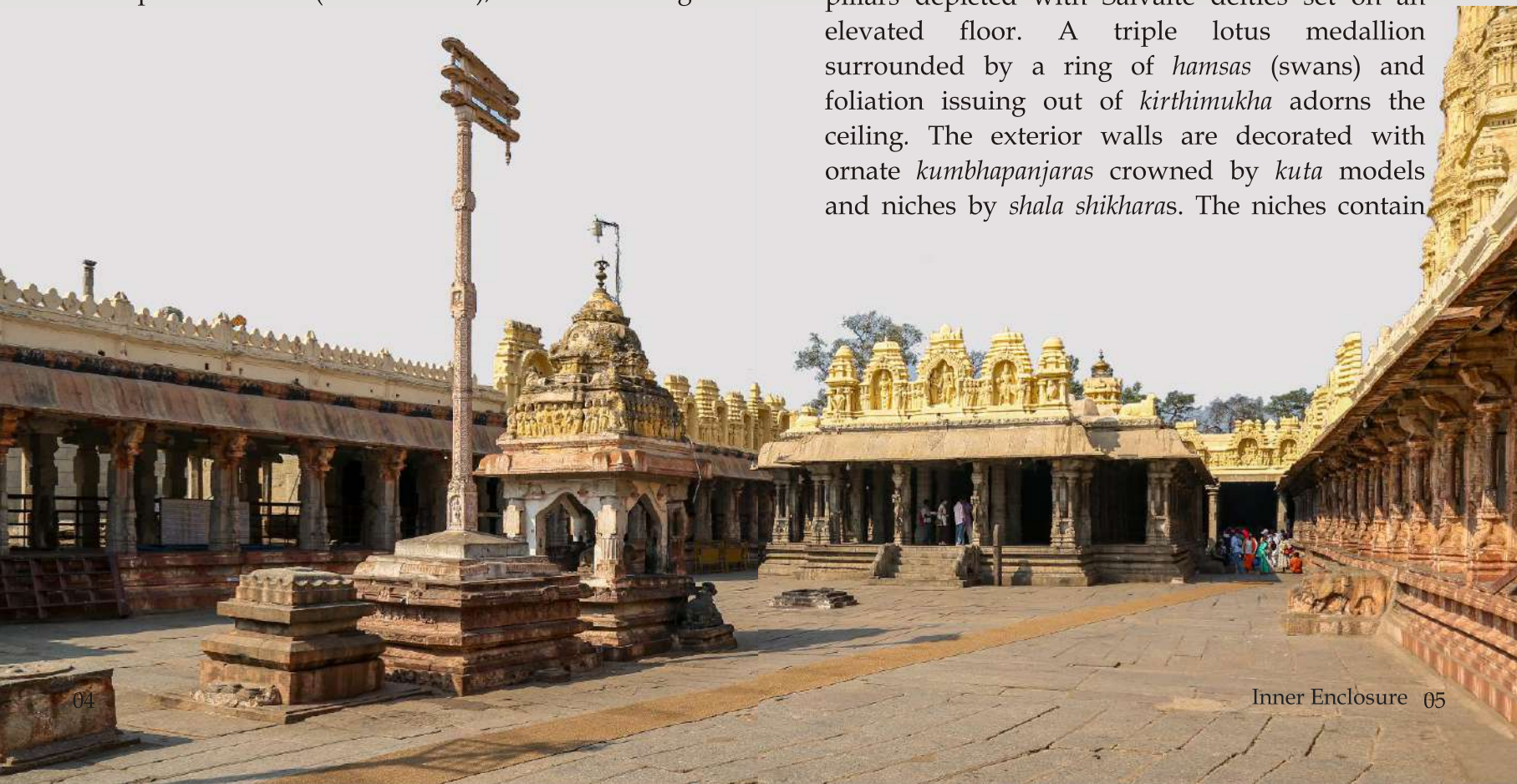
The inner enclosure of the complex, rectangular in shape, is dominated by the main temple consecrated to Virupaksha. The shrines of Goddesses Pampadevi and Bhuvaneshvari and God Gulaganji (Gunji) Madhava are also located in the inner enclosure.

The main temple of Virupaksha faces east and consists of a *garbhagriha* (sanctum) surrounded by *pradakshinapatha* (circumambulatory passage), a square *antarala* (antechamber), a small oblong

chamber, a square *rangamandapa* (pillared mandapa) and a *maharangamandapa* (large pillared hall), all axially interconnected. The *garbhagriha* dates back to pre Vijayanagara times and enshrines a *linga*. The *shikhara* over the *garbhagriha* is in Dravidian style with *shala* (barrel vaulted roof) and *kuta* (square to dome roof), and a *kalasa* (a vase shaped finial) at the top.

The exterior walls of the *garbhagriha* and *antarala* are decorated with pilasters mainly with *kumbhapanjara* (decorative motif - a pot usually with overflowing foliage carrying a miniature vaulted-apsidal shrine) decoration, corner pilasters and niches surmounted by *shikhara* (crowning cupola) and containing sculptures.

The *rangamandapa* is square and has entrances on east, north and south. At the centre are four pillars depicted with Saivaite deities set on an elevated floor. A triple lotus medallion surrounded by a ring of *hamsas* (swans) and foliage issuing out of *kirthemukha* adorns the ceiling. The exterior walls are decorated with ornate *kumbhapanjaras* crowned by *kuta* models and niches by *shala shikharas*. The niches contain



small sized sculptures of Bedara-Kannappa, Naga-Linga, Kalingamardhana, Saiva devotees, Siva-Parvati riding on Nandi, Bhairava, Kiratarjuniya, Linga worshiped by snake and lizard etc.

The *maharangamandapa* was added by the king Krishnadevaraya, as recorded on an inscribed slab set up in front of it. This record dated to 1510 CE gives a genealogical account of the Vijayanagara dynasty and mentions the grant of village of Singanayakanahalli to Virupaksha temple, building of *maharangamandapa* and a *gopura* in front of it and repairs effected to the "big *gopura*". The king also gave a gold lotus set with nine gems, a *nagabharana* (ornament), a gold vessel and 24 silver lamps on the auspicious occasion of celebration of his coronation.

The *maharangamandapa* is entered from the three sides through flight of steps, the steps on the east side have elephant balustrades. This *mandapa* consists of 38 pillars with rearing *yalis*. The pillars contain reliefs from the epics and other mythologies. The ceiling at the centre of the *maharangamandapa* is decorated with paintings of Manmatha Vijaya, Tripurantaka, Shiva-Parvati marriage scene (Girijakalyana), Saint Vidyanarya's



Pillars: Maharangamandapa

procession etc. The space in between the beam and ceiling are decorated with stucco figures depicting Shiva-Parvati Kalyana, Shiva as Kalahari murti, Anantasayana and Mahishasuramardini. The hooks in the ceiling support chains for a wooden swing. A brick and plaster parapet with five deep niches capped by *shikharas* adorn the roof over the east side of the *maharanga-mandapa*. The niches have images of different forms of Shiva and seated figures of Rishis. Seated Nandis adorn the four corners of the roof.



Inscribed slab in front of Maharangamandapa



In the courtyard, on axis with the *maharanga-mandapa* and the *gopura*, there are a square Nandi pavilion containing three small Nandi sculptures



Ceiling: Maharangamandapa

and square altars for *dhvajasthamba* and *deepasthamba*. A diminutive shrine of Chandikeshvara is located on the north side of the main temple. It consists of a rectangular *garbhagriha* with a two storeyed square superstructure.

Colonnades run all along the *prakara* (enclosure) wall and they accommodate various shrines. In the north colonnade there are shrines of Pampadevi, Bhuvaneshvari, Gulaganji (Gunji) Madhava, all datable to pre Vijayanagara period. A structure at the northeast corner contains the shrines of Hanuman and Lakshmi Venkateshvara.

Pampadevi Shrine

This shrine faces east and enshrines a stone image of Pampadevi. It consists of a *garbhagriha* and an *antarala* surrounded by a *pradakshinapatha* on three sides. The *pradakshinapatha* opens directly into a pillared *mandapa*. The access to this shrine is through a doorway on the south. This *mandapa* is connected to the Bhuvaneshwari shrine by steps on the east side. The doorway of the *antarala* has an intricately worked grey green schist doorway, a reused architectural piece dating from later Chalukyan times. Over the *garbhagriha* is a brick and plaster superstructure of Dravidian *shala shikhara* type.



Bhuvaneshvari Shrine

The shrine of Bhuvaneshvari is built on an elevated platform, same as that of the adjacent Pampadevi shrine. This temple built of grey green schist faces south and has a rectangular



garbhagriha and a *sabhamandapa* (pillared hall). The *garbhagriha* enshrines a four-armed Bhuvaneshvari holding *ankusa* (goad) and *pasa* (noose) in upper hands and *abhaya* (gesture of benevolence) and *varada* (gesture of dispensing boons) *mudras* in lower hands. The *garbhagriha* is devoid of superstructure. The doorway of the

garbhagriha consists of *four shakhas* (bands) decorated with flowers, pilasters and creepers. The *stambha shakhas* are depicted with flying *Gandharvas*, *Kirthimukhas*, *Mithunas* etc. The *lalata* carries a figure of Gajalakshmi. There are figures of Ganesha, Hanuman, Brahma, Siva, Ravana, Vishnu etc., on the architrave. The walls on either side of the door are provided with *jalandharas* (pierced stone windows) screens decorated with creepers, scrolls etc. The ceiling is flat and has depiction of Nataraja at the centre and Navagrahas attended by flying Gandharvas. The temple is entered through the granite doorway on the south of the *sabhamandapa*. The south, east and west sides of the *sabhamandapa* are walled in with granite pillars and bricks at a later period. Its central pillars are lathe turned and others have square section. The corbelled ceiling is richly carved with panels depicting Dikpalas.

Gulaganji (Gunji) Madhava Shrine

This shrine is built at a level lower than the platform on which Pampadevi and Bhuvaneshvari shrines are built. The name gunji has its origin to a folk legend in which Madhava was chosen to be an independent judge to decide whether



whether Virupaksha at Hampi or Viswanatha at Varanasi was supreme. Madhava weighed the two *lingas* and found that Virupaksha was heavier by one gunji (a seed of *abrus precatoria*). A doorway, headed by a cusped arched recess, on the east side of the Bhuvaneshvari shrine, leads to a narrow passage and to the shrine. It consists of a *garbhagriha* and an *antarala* which opens directly in to a *mandapa*. The *garbhagriha* contains a *linga* called as Virupakshesvara and also an image of Vishnu. The *garbhagriha* and *antarala* are plain. The ceiling of the *antarala* has lotus medallion. The *mandapa* has four columns in the centre and flat plain ceilings. Being entirely encased on all sides, the exterior features of the shrine cannot be observed.

The south colonnade has shrines of Narasimha, Tarakeshvara, Pataleshvara and Navadurga. The southeast corner of the inner enclosure is occupied by two dilapidated structures that are entered through a large doorway flanked by Shaiva *dwarapalas*.

Narasimha Shrine

This shrine faces north and consists of a *garbhagriha* and a small porch that projects into the court. It enshrines an image of Narasimha. The exterior side walls of the *garbhagriha* have depiction of elephants with riders.

Tarakeshvara Shrine

This is a small square shrine located immediately to the west of the Narasimha shrine and projects slightly into the court. It contains several sculptures including images of Venugopala and Uma Maheshvara.

Pataleshvara Shrine

This is a small square shrine built at a lower level into the west side of the south colonnade. It is reached by a flight of steps in front of which is a small Nandi. The shrine faces to the north and consists of a sanctum enshrining a small *linga*.

Navadurga Shrine

This small shrine faces east and is situated at the western end of the south colonnade, on a rising shelf of granite. It enshrines several sculptures including a Navadurga panel, several *lingas* and a small Nandi. The steps at the northwest corner of the Navadurga shrine ascend to the Sharadadevi and Sarasvati shrines.

The west colonnade has a number of shrines including those of a *linga* and Nandi known as Sudharmeshvara and an image of Mahishasuramardini. It also has a series of steps ascending to the west gateway. The northwest corner of the colonnade is marked by a wall shrine dedicated to Adishesha. The shrine consists of a painted shallow recess framed by an elaborate



North Colonnade (Inner Enclosure)

cusped arch in relief. The ceiling above is also painted.

The *prakara* (enclosure) walls didn't exist at the time of the origin of the temple. It's a later addition probably of the mid-15th century CE. The north *gopura*, also known as the Kanakagiri *gopura* leads from the inner enclosure of the temple to the shrines overlooking Manmatha tank and also to the Tungabhadra River. Two shrines dedicated to Vahini Durga devi and Kalabhairava are built on either side of the north face of the entrance. The central passageway of the *gopura* has two large slabs with two Kannada inscriptions. The inscription on the west side is dated to 1236 CE

and records the visit of Hoysala king Somesvaradeva to this temple to make an important donation. It mentions the gift of certain income to the temple for conducting worship and feeding the Brahmanas in the *satra* attached to the temple. The other inscription on the east side dated to 1379 CE belongs to the period of Vijayanagara king Harihara. It refers to the gift of land made by Mudda-Dandesa to the temple at the king's command.

The east *gopura* was built by Krishnadevaraya as recorded in the inscription dated to 1510 CE. It stands on an *adhithana* and wall, above which rises the brick and plaster tower. The tower consists of two diminishing storeys capped by *shala* roof.

The west gateway, mentioned earlier, is reached by the steps on the west colonnade and leads to the Vidyaranyaswami Matha, Pushkarni and the Hemakuta hills. It stands on *adhithana* and wall above which rises the brick and plaster tower. The tower consists of four diminishing storeys capped by *shala* roof.

OUTER ENCLOSURE

The outer enclosure comprises of various *mandapas*, colonnades and shrines. It has been subjected to substantial renovations and additions in recent years. A well is located near the north

wall, with a rectangular cistern nearby. A partly-covered drain traverses the enclosure from south to north.

There are colonnades on the northeast and west sides of the outer enclosure. The northeast side of the enclosure has four small shrines that were originally free standing and later incorporated in to the colonnade. One of the shrines is facing west and three are facing south. The west facing shrine has a *shikhara* of brick and plaster.

The east side of the outer enclosure has *mandapas*, Tandaveshvara shrine and a *mandapa* with image of Hanuman. The west side has the Hundred Columned Hall, Kitchen, Ganapati and Kumara shrines and *Phalapuja mandapa*. A doorway that leads to the Hemakuta hill is on the south side of enclosure wall.

Mandapa

This *mandapa* on the north side of the outer enclosure faces west. It is raised on 20 pillars carrying *pushpapotika* brackets. A lotus medallion adorns the centre of the corbelled ceiling. On the roof of the *mandapa* is a brick and plaster parapet with merlon motifs. A slab bearing in relief the Vijayanagara royal emblem (boar and sword) is placed between two pillars on the south side of the *mandapa*. The inscribed slab in front of this





Main gopura and other structures on the east side

mandapa, is a copy of Krishnadevaraya's record set up in front of the *maharangamandapa* of the main temple.

Tandaveshvara Shrine

This west-facing temple stands on the eastern end of the enclosure. It consists of a *garbhagriha* enshrining a *linga*, an *antarala* and a pillared *mandapa*. The *mandapa* has four pillars in the middle and pairs of columns built into the walls on three sides. The flight of steps on the west are flanked by elephant balustrades. The *antarala* doorway has Shaiva *dwarapalas* and petalled *shakhas* and a Gajalakshmi on the lintel. A *shala*



Vijayanagara Royal Emblem on the slab

shikhara superstructure of brick and plaster with horse shoe shaped arches at the north and south ends rises on the *garbhagriha*.

Hundred Columned Hall

This spacious *mandapa* occupies the southwest corner of the outer enclosure. The interior of the *mandapa* is arranged on three different levels, ascending to the west. The columns create a wider, central east-west bay that runs from the open end at the east to the rear wall at the west. At the lowest level, the hall consists of 18 columns. At the second and the third levels, the hall is extended northward by one bay. The third level is demarcated by ornamented basement mouldings. A shallow undulating serpent motif is carved on to the ceiling. At many places reused columns that act as props for cracked beams and roof slabs can be seen. A doorway in the south wall leads to the kitchen which is a rectangular structure standing on 120 columns. It projects southward from the outer enclosure and is reached from both the inner and outer enclosures through doorways.



Hundred Columned Hall

Ganapati Shrine

This shrine is built up against the east face of the *gopura*. It consists of a small *garbhagriha* housing an image of Ganapati and adjoins a four columned porch that forms part of the west colonnade.

Kumaraswami Shrine

This is on the northwest side of the outer enclosure. It is built up against the inner *gopura* and the rear (west) wall of the *garbhagriha* is formed by its *adhithana*. It faces east and consists of a *garbhagriha* enshrining a sculpture of Kumara and a porch with four pillars.

Phalapuja Mandapa

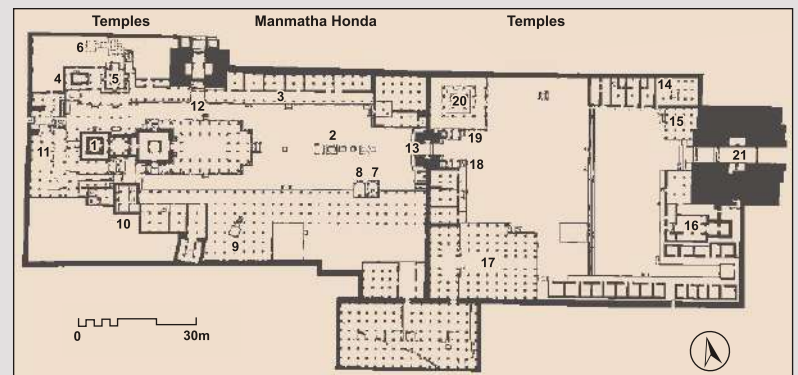
This is built in the northwest corner of the outer enclosure. It consists of 36 columns and the central bay is formed into two platforms of different levels. The *mandapa* is open to the east and south, while the other sides are walled in.

The outer east *gopura* is the principal entrance to the temple complex. It stands on an *adhithana* and wall, above which rises the brick and plaster tower. It is about 52 m high from ground level. The tower consists of nine diminishing storeys capped by *shala* roof with horse-shoe shaped

arches on the north and south sides and pot like finials.

In the Virupaksha temple and other shrines in the complex, daily and additional puja rituals are performed. Apart from this, various festivals are also celebrated annually such as Dolotsava, Kalyanotsava, Ashva Vahanotsava, Rathotsava, Teppotsava and Phalapuja Mahotsava.

A long avenue to the east of the main *gopura* known as Virupaksha temple Rathabidi (Hampi Bazaar) also forms an integral part of this temple. This avenue ends at a two storeyed pillared *mandapa* with a massive monolithic bull facing the Virupaksha temple popularly known as Yeduru Basavanna. This avenue served as an important thoroughfare in the ancient city of Vijayanagara.

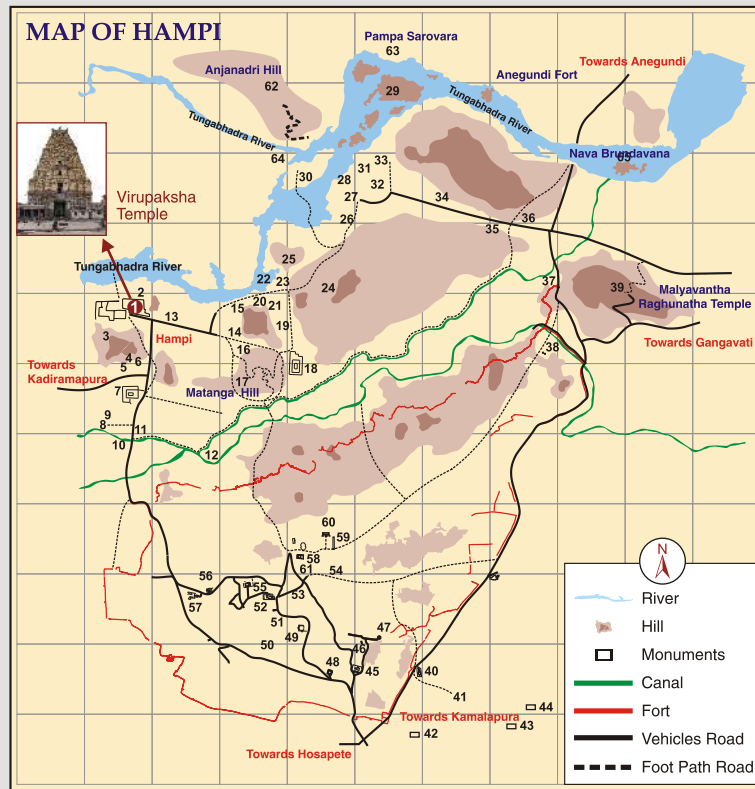


Plan: Virupaksha Temple Complex

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|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Main Shrine | 12. North Gopura |
| 2. Nandi Pavilion | 13. East Gopura |
| 3. North colonnade (inner enclosure) | 14. North colonnade (outer enclosure) |
| 4. Pampadevi Shrine | 15. Mandapa |
| 5. Bhuvaneshvari Shrine | 16. Tandaveshvara Shrine |
| 6. Gulaganji Madhava Shrine | 17. Hundred Columned Hall |
| 7. Narasimha Shrine | 18. Ganapati Shrine |
| 8. Tarakeshvara Shrine | 19. Kumaraswami Shrine |
| 9. Pataleshvara Shrine | 20. Phalapuja Mandapa |
| 10. Navadurga Shrine | 21. Main Gopura |
| 11. West Colonnade (inner enclosure) | |

Virupaksha Temple Rathabidi
(Hampi Bazaar)





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| 1. Virupaksha Temple | 33. Brahma Vitthala Temple |
| 2. Manmatha Honda | 34. Pushkarni |
| 3. Group of monuments at Hemakuta Hill | 35. Kuduregombe Mandapa |
| 4. Two Storeyed Mandapa | 36. Gejjala Mandapa |
| 5. Sasivekalu Ganesha | 37. Talarigatta Gate |
| 6. Kadalekalu Ganesha Temple | 38. Ahmed Khan's Mosque |
| 7. Krishna Temple | 39. Malyavanta Raghunatha Temple |
| 8. Lakshmi Narasimha Temple (Narasimha Statue) | 40. Ganagitti Jaina Temple |
| 9. Badavilinga Temple | 41. Bhima's Gateway |
| 10. Chandikeswara Temple | 42. ASI Museum |
| 11. Uddhana Virabhadra Temple | 43. Pattabhirama Temple |
| 12. Thurtu Kaluve (Canal) | 44. Domed Gate |
| 13. Hampi Bazaar | 45. Chandrasekhara Temple |
| 14. Greenlaw's Photo Gallery | 46. Saraswati Temple |
| 15. Kampa Bhupa Marga | 47. Octagonal Water Pavilion |
| 16. Yeduru Basavanna (Monolithic Bull) | 48. Queen's Bath |
| 17. Matanga Hill | 49. Mahanavami Dibba |
| 18. Achyutaraya (Tiruvengalanatha) Temple | 50. Stepped Tank |
| 19. Soolai Bazaar (Achyutapete) | 51. King's Audience Hall |
| 20. Yantroddharak Anjaneya Temple | 52. Hazara Ramachandra Temple |
| 21. Kodanda Rama Temple | 53. Pan Supari Bazaar |
| 22. Chakratirtha | 54. Pattana Yellamma Temple |
| 23. Varaha Temple | 55. Palace of Vira Harihara |
| 24. Narasimha Temple | 56. Noblemen's Quarter |
| 25. Sri Raghunandanatirtha Brundavana | 57. Prasanna Virupaksha (Underground Shiva) Temple |
| 26. Gateway | 58. Lotus Mahal |
| 27. King's Balance | 59. Elephant's Stable |
| 28. Purandara Mandapa | 60. Guards' House |
| 29. Sri Naraharitirtha Brundavan | 61. Ranga Temple |
| 30. Stone Bridge | 62. Anjanadri Hill |
| 31. Inscribed Vishnu Temple | 63. Pampa Sarovara |
| 32. Vitthala Temple | 64. Chandramouleshwara Temple |
| | 65. Nava Vrindavana |

SUAHAS GRAPHICS | 089453 55509



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA HAMPI CIRCLE

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