



# ANALOG IAS INSTITUTE

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## AMARAVATI

**Amaravati** is a village in Guntur district of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. It is located in Amaravati mandal of Guntur revenue division. It is located on the banks of Krishna River, north of Guntur City. Amaravati translates to *The town lives forever* in the local language. It is also referred as *Amareswaram*, for its famous Amareswara temple dedicated to Lord Siva, one of the famous Pancharamas. It was formerly known as *Andhra Nagar*.

The recorded history of Amaravati and nearby Dharanikota dates to 2nd century BC. It was the capital of Satavahanas who ruled from 2nd century BCE to 3rd century CE. After the decline of Satavahanas, Andhra Ikshvakus and later Pallava kings ruled Krishna river valley. Subsequently, Eastern Chalukyas and Telugu Cholas held sway over the region. Kota Kings were in control of Amaravati during the medieval times. Kota kings were subdued by Kakatiyas in 11th century CE and Amaravati became part of the unified Telugu empire. The Skanda Purana gives a picture of the place and the Siva temple located here.

Amaravati was part of Delhi Sultanate, Musunuri Nayaks, Bahmani Sultanate, Vijayanagara Empire, Sultanate of Golconda and Mughal Empire successively before founding Nizam of Hyderabad in 1724. It was ceded to France in 1750 but was captured by England in 1759 and was ceded to England. Guntur returned to Nizam in 1768 but was ceded to England again in 1788. It was briefly occupied by Hyder Ali. It was part of Madras Presidency during colonial period.

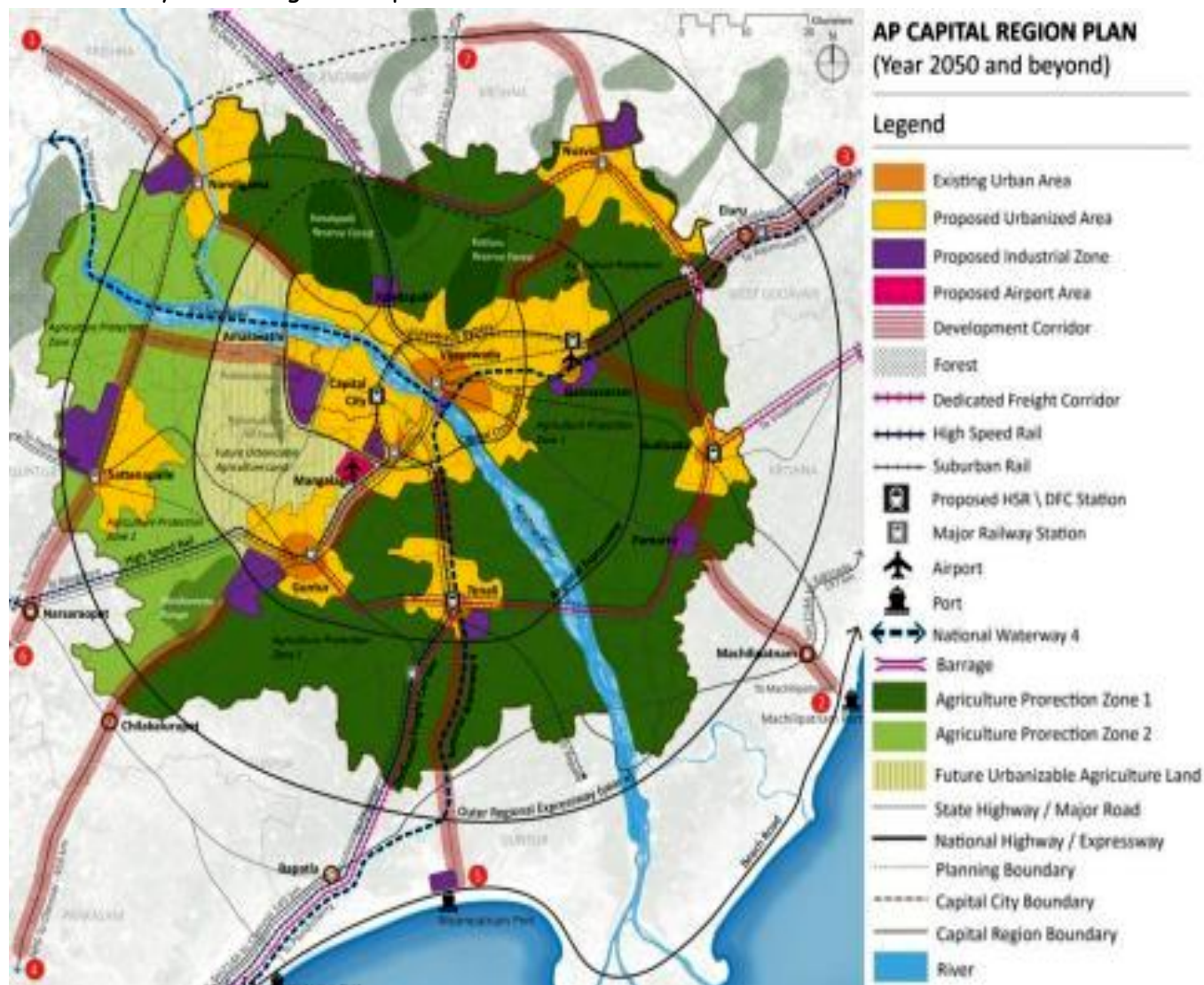
### The stupa

The region between Krishna and Godavari rivers was an important place for Buddhism from the 2nd century BCE with Amaravati being one of them. Buddhist stupa was built during the reign of Ashoka in 200 BCE, was carved with panels that tells the story of Buddha. The discovery, misuse and destruction of the sculptures, preservation, distribution to various museums (Chennai, Calcutta, London, Masulipatnam etc.) have been poignantly described by Shimada. During the period of the decline of Buddhism, this stupa was also neglected and it was buried under rubble. There is a 14th-century inscription in Sri Lanka which mentions repairs made to the stupa and after that it was forgotten.

### Amaravati School

In Amaravati, situated in the eastern Deccan, a different type of art form evolved and flourished for nearly six centuries commencing from 200-100 BC. Patronized first by the Satavahanas and later by the Ikshvakus and also by other groups (feudatories, officials, and merchants), four periods of activity are easily discernible.

The Amaravati school of art occupies a pre-eminent position in the history of Indian Art. With its beginning in 3rd century BC the Amaravati unfolds its chapters through the galaxy of sculptural wealth that once adorned the Mahachaitya the majestic monument of the Buddhists situated here with its history extending over a period of a millennium and a half.



### Plans for the New Capital

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has great plans for the new capital city. He said that the city has both 'vaasthu balam' and 'nama balam', indicating that both the name and the location are auspicious. According to the CM, the government of Singapore has come forward to help construct this new city, which will be "the world's best city". Among the initial plans in place for the new capital is a 200-km highway connecting it with the major cities of Vijayawada and Guntur. Two ring roads and a number of radial roads are likely to be built to connect the city with all the important towns of the state. Amaravati will also have excellent road connectivity with Hyderabad, Chennai, Kakinada, Bangalore, and Kurnool. The New Delhi-Hyderabad freight corridor is likely to be extended to Amaravati. While the master plan for Phase I of the capital's construction will only be ready by mid-May, a number of Japanese companies are already being counted among the aspirants keen to partner up in planning and construction. Mangalagiri is likely to be the site for the nearest airport.

The development of this grand capital may, however, lead the Andhra Pradesh government into much trouble, critics feel. The funds required to build this city are estimated at about INR 20,000 crore. Currently, the state has sanctioned only about INR 1,500 crore with a promise to allocate more after the draft plan is presented.

### **Why a New Capital City?**

Why does Andhra Pradesh need a new city to be constructed as a capital? Why could not a major city such as Vijayawada or Guntur have been chosen as the capital? These are some of the major questions that are now being raised. Some feel that it is an attempt by CM Naidu to avoid alienating the economic and political lobbies in either city. Besides, choosing either city may not have been liked by the influencers of the Rayalaseema region.

The construction of a new capital city also poses a number of challenges. Hundreds and thousands of acres of fertile agricultural land will have to be sacrificed in the effort. This may take a massive toll on Andhra Pradesh's agrarian economy. How much this affects India's rice production is also to be seen, since the state is one of the largest producers of rice. The site chosen for Amaravati is rich in natural resources. Preservation of these resources will decide the ecological harmony of the region in decades to come.

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