Head of the Vishnu Idol at Khajuraho's Javari Temple Found, ASI to Reattach It

News reference: 13 October 2026 (Times of India, interview of the ASI Director General) | Published: 23 October 2026

Culture and Heritage

Why in the News

The Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Yadubir Singh Rawat, has said that the missing head of the 11th-century, seven-foot-tall Vishnu idol of the Javari temple at Khajuraho has been found in the ASI's store; after expert examination it will be reattached to the idol (according to the news detail, restoration is possible by November). According to Rawat, the head was possibly broken in an attempt to steal it, but the attempt failed. The matter had reached the Supreme Court last year, where the petition for the idol's restoration was dismissed.

Khajuraho and the Javari Temple

- Khajuraho, in Chhatarpur district of Madhya Pradesh, is a temple group of the Chandela rulers (mainly 950-1050 CE), famous for Nagara-style architecture (general background).
- Originally there were several dozen temples here, of which about 20-23 survive, divided into western, eastern and southern groups; it entered the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1986 (general background).
- The Javari temple is part of this group; the head of its Vishnu idol had been missing for a long time.

Context and Detailed Explanation

It is right to see the restoration of the Javari temple's idol within Khajuraho's artistic tradition. The Chandela rulers (mainly 950-1050 CE) had Nagara-style temples built here - this style is identified by tall curvilinear shikharas, extensive carving and a sanctum set on a platform. The original group had several dozen temples; today 20-23 survive, divided into the western, eastern and southern groups - the western group includes major temples such as Kandariya Mahadeva and Lakshmana. Inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1986 gave them international recognition of protection. The ASI's role is the maintenance, restoration and archaeological documentation of such protected monuments. Expert examination before rejoining a missing part of an idol is necessary so that the stone material, carving style and period can be confirmed and the restoration done scientifically. The sequence of the petition's dismissal in the Supreme Court and the

head's being found in the ASI's store also shows that in heritage matters the legal and the archaeological sides move together.

From the Exam's Perspective

The Javari temple and the ASI's role, the Chandela period (950-1050 CE), the Nagara style, UNESCO list year 1986 - Prelims culture facts; a Mains note on heritage protection and idol restoration.

Sources and Limits

- Times of India, 13 October 2026 (read): TOI: interview of the ASI chief
- **Limits:** the facts are based on the interview quotes of the ASI Director General; a separate office press-release page of the ASI was not found. Temple history is marked as general background. The news reference is of 13 October, not a re-publication - this is a reference article prepared on 23 October.