

Red Panda is the mascot of Mozilla web browser and 'Firefox' is the other name of red panda only.



Imaging: Pankaj Mallik, GT Network

Mystical architectures of India

Scientific Reasoning or Divine Intervention - What Makes Them So Unique?

Sarrah Samaiyah
AIS Saket, X

Alluring beyond belief, the architecture of India has some mind boggling enigmatic structures to its credit. Let's look at some architectural masterpieces of India and the mysteries that shroud them.

Pillaring highs

Hanging pillar of Veerabhadra Temple, at Lepakshi, Andhra Pradesh is a stupendous example of structural wonder that has left all the archaeologists, geologists, and scientists dumbfounded. **Mystery:** Out of more than 70 pillars in the temple complex, only this pillar does not touch the ground. It is attached firmly to the roof but there is a thin space between the base of the pillar and ground. The space is wide enough though for a piece of paper or cloth or even a small twig to pass through. Still the pillar is able to support the weight of the temple ceiling.

Theory: A popular explanation is that with the passage of time, the stone at the base of the pillar was eroded, leaving an empty space between the pillar and the ground. But this doesn't seem satisfactory because if erosion had occurred

then why only one particular pillar has been affected. Questionable, right?

Boulder move

On the slippery slope of a hill in Mahabalipuram is precariously perched the infamous Krishna's butter ball or the Vaanirai Kal a gigantic stone which hasn't moved an inch in all these years.

Mystery: The stone doesn't move or roll at all. It may look as if it may roll down anytime, but it doesn't. All past attempts to move the boulder have failed. Even the elephants deployed by the Governor of Madras could not move it by an inch.

Theory: Baffled scientists say that it seems to be a natural phenomenon of balancing, where the stone has its centre of balance in place with a crevice in a hill, or a heavy stem stone attached to it. This explanation is unverified though. Spiritual beliefs propose that the stone is a ball of butter pinched by Lord Krishna and is divine, while the

other says that it was put there by the Sky God.

Buoyant riddle

The famous Ram Setu at Rameshwaram believed to be constructed by the 'Vanar sena' of Lord Rama by placing stones on the sea, to cross over to Lanka is an architectural marvel.

Mystery: The catch is that stones being heavier should sink and not float in water. Even today, these stones float on water, and continue to perplex many.

Theory: Scientists proposed that these stones were made of pumice but chemical tests ruled it out. Another study said that the hot flowing lava when solidified, might have got filled with air and water bubbles. But there are no volcanoes in that region. Mythology says that these stones were touched by Nala and Neela, who were given the boon that the stones they would touch will never sink. They wrote the name of Lord Rama on

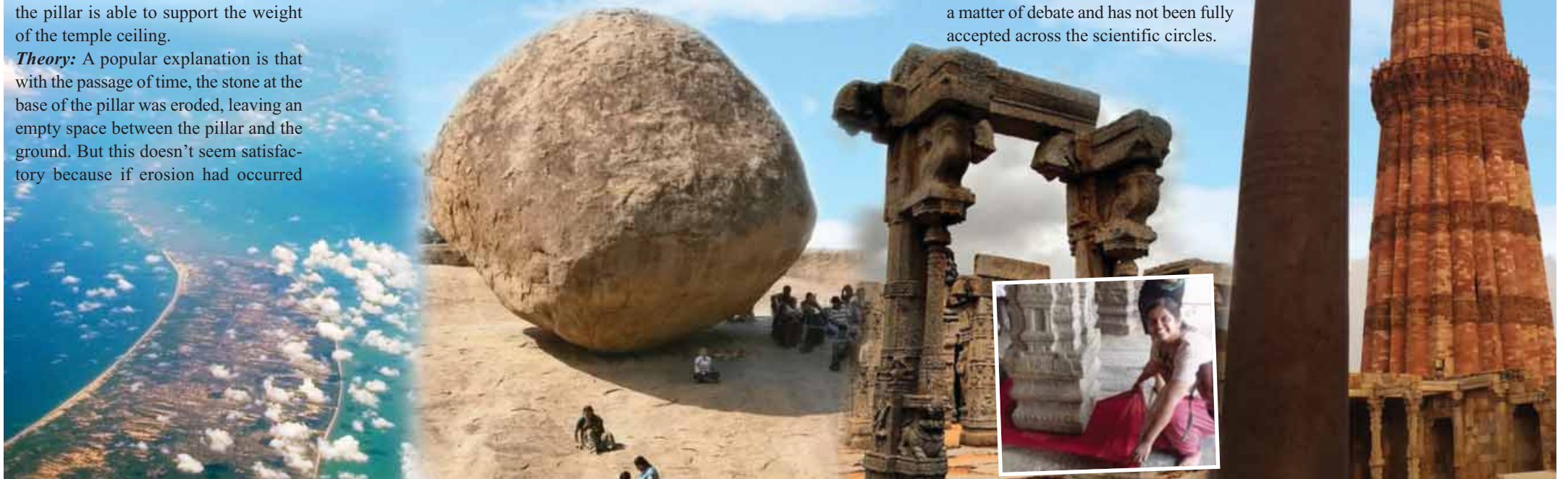
every stone and made the bridge, which keeps them afloat to date.

Unrusted Irony

Iron Pillar, that stands at the centre of the Quwwatal mosque, at Qutub Minar complex, Delhi is a metallurgical wonder of the world. It was built in 4th century AD using forge welding technique by Kumara Gupta of the Gupta dynasty.

Mystery: The pillar has barely rusted all these years; something which has left scientists and architects awestruck. After centuries of rains, storms, rough weathers the pillar truly epitomises the phrase 'standing the test of times'.

Theory: A research conducted by IIT Kanpur has suggested that a thin layer of 'misawite', a compound of iron, oxygen and hydrogen, has protected the cast iron pillar from rust. This unique building technique lead to the formation of a phosphorous rich protective film over the iron metal. The finding is still a matter of debate and has not been fully accepted across the scientific circles.



Choosing The Devil Or The Satan Is Always A Choice That Lies In Your Hands

Eco friendly

- Turn off all the lights and fans when not in use.
- Unplug all the electronic devices once charged.
- Open curtains and use natural light during daytime.
- Print on both sides of the paper and save trees.
- Reuse old and rough papers to write drafts.
- Use soft copies for internal communications.
- Reduce the use of plastic items.
- Use biodegradable plastics.
- Use water optimally and save every drop you can.
- Harvest rainwater & make water channels in garden.
- Take public transport to work.
- Get pollution control check of vehicle done regularly.

Eco destructive

- Use appliances with less than 3 electronic star.
- Keep the plug points on even when not in use.
- Keep using lights and bulbs during daytime.
- Print on one side of the paper and throw it.
- Write drafts on new papers & shred the paper.
- Print every document, needed or not.
- Use plastic when you can use jute and cotton.
- Throw away plastic items irrationally.
- Leave taps open, letting water run waste.
- Let rainwater run off in drains.
- Travel to work in your own vehicle daily.
- Don't service vehicle on time.

Which side do you choose?

Text and illustration
Lakshay Singh
AIS Noida, X