

## **ISIS partially destroys ancient Roman temple in Syria's Palmyra**

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**Damascus:** The Islamic State (IS) militants destroyed parts of a famous ancient Roman temple in the historic city of Palmyra in central Syria, a monitor group reported on Sunday.

The Temple of Bel, an ancient stone ruin that goes back to the Roman era, was partially destroyed by the IS terror group in Palmyra in the countryside of the central province of Homs, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, Xinhua reported.

The Britain-based watchdog group stopped short of giving further details, but the partial destruction of the ancient temple is the latest in a series of systematic destruction of the ruins of Palmyra, which was overrun by the IS last May.

Last week, the IS militants blew up the Temple of Baal Shamin, or "Lord of the Heavens", in Palmyra.

The temple was located just tens of meters from the famous Roman Theatre of Palmyra.

Since capturing Palmyra, the terror group destroyed the city's notorious military prison and several Islamic tombs.

The IS also committed public executions of government soldiers and people accused of working for the government.

Their latest execution was against a Khaled Asaad, a prominent Syrian archeologist, who had lived in Palmyra for most of his life and dedicated his career to study the archeological sites of Palmyra.

Government officials said the IS militants were trying to extract information from Asaad about the "hidden gold" of Palmyra, which, they said, doesn't even exist.

Palmyra contains the monumental ruins of a great city that was one of the most important cultural centres of the ancient world.

Syria has many prehistoric, Greek, Byzantine and Islamic heritages. Before the crisis, Syria had attracted many multinational archaeological missions coming for searching new clues of historical facts on the development of civilizations.

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