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New Circles of Archaeological Survey of India

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Why in News

The Ministry of Culture has announced **7 new circles** of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

Key Points

- The step has been taken in accordance with the Prime Minister's call to **facilitate and strengthen the process of preservation and registration of archaeological monuments**.
- New circles in **Jabalpur** (Madhya Pradesh), **Trichy** (Tamil Nadu), **Jhansi** and **Meerut** (Uttar Pradesh), **Hampi** (Karnataka), **Raiganj** (West Bengal) and **Rajkot** (Gujarat) have been created.
- The Hampi circle has been upgraded from the previous Hampi mini circle, and the Delhi mini circle has been merged with the Delhi circle.
- **ASI Circles:**
 - For the maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance the entire country is divided into **36 Circles**.
 - These carry out archaeological fieldwork, research activities and implement the various provisions of the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958** and Antiquities and Art Treasures Act **1972**.

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

- ASI, under the **Ministry of Culture**, is the premier organization for the **archaeological research and protection** of the cultural heritage of the nation.
- It administers more than 3650 ancient monuments, archaeological sites and remains of national importance.

- Its activities include carrying out surveys of antiquarian remains, **exploration** and **excavation** of archaeological sites, **conservation** and **maintenance** of protected monuments etc.
- It was founded in 1861 by **Alexander Cunningham**- the first Director-General of ASI. Alexander Cunningham is also known as the “**Father of Indian Archaeology**”.

Source: TH