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St. Queen Ketevan's Relics: Georgia

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Why in News

Recently, **India has gifted one part of the holy relics of 17th century St. Queen Ketevan to the Georgian government.**

- These relics were gifted on the **first ever visit of India's External Affairs Minister to independent Georgia.**
- Georgia is a **strategically important country situated at the intersection of Eastern Europe and Western Asia.**

Key Points

About:

- Queen Ketevan was from Kakheti, a **kingdom in eastern Georgia.**
- It is believed that, she was **killed in 1624 in Shiraz (modern day Iran) for not converting to Islam.**
- The parts of her remains were brought to Goa by Augustinian monks in 1627.
- The relics of the martyred Queen Ketevan were found by the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** in 2005 in the ruins of the Church of St. Augustine in Goa.
- Many historical, religious and spiritual sentiments of the Georgian people are attached to St. Queen Ketevan.

Church of St. Augustine

- Church of St. Augustine is a ruined church complex located in Goa.
- The church was completed in 1602 by Augustinian monks who landed in Goa in 1587.
- The church was abandoned in 1835 after the Portuguese government of Goa began evicting many religious orders in Goa under its new repressive policies.
- The subsequent neglect caused the vault of the church to collapse in 1842.
- It is a part of the **Churches and convents of Goa**, which is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site.**

India-Georgia Relations:

- **Historical Background:** Fables from India's Panchtantra are believed to have influenced the Georgian folk legends.
 - Those links were further strengthened in medieval ages by missionaries, travelers, and traders.
- **Recent Visit:** India was willing to do more in terms of investment in Georgia, which ranks highly in the **ease of doing business index**.
 - Georgia has also applied for **EU (European Union)** membership, which, if accepted, would give India another gateway to Europe, and a foothold in the Caucasus.
 - There is also a **political significance** of this visit, **given the hostile relations between Russia and Georgia**.
 - India has given clear signals to Russia that it was not happy with the recent visit of Russia's foreign minister to Pakistan.

Caucasus

Mountain system and region lying between the Black Sea (west) and the Caspian Sea (east) and occupied by Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia.



Source: TH