



## Kesaria Buddha Stupa: Bihar

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### Why in News

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The world-famous **Kesaria Buddha stupa in east Champaran district of Bihar** is waterlogged following floods in some parts of the district.

The **ASI (Archaeological Survey of India)** has declared it a protected monument of national importance.



### Key Points

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- **About:**
  - The stupa is said to be the **tallest and the largest Buddhist stupa** in the world.
  - It is located in Kesariya, at a distance of **110 kilometers from Patna**, in the East Champaran district of Bihar.
  - It has a circumference of almost 400 feet and stands at a height of about 104 feet.

- **History:**

- The **first construction of the Stupa is dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE**. The original Kesaria stupa probably dates to the time of **Ashoka (circa 250 BCE)**, as the remains of a capital of a **Pillar of Ashoka** were discovered there.
- The current stupa dates to the **Gupta Dynasty between 200 AD and 750 AD** and may have been associated with the 4<sup>th</sup> century ruler **Raja Chakravarti**.
- The **stupa mound may even have been inaugurated during the Buddha's time**, as it corresponds in many respects to the description of the stupa erected by the Licchavis of Vaishali to house the alms bowl the Buddha has given them.  
In ancient times, **Kesaria was under the rule of the Mauryas and the Licchavis.**
- **Two great foreign travelers, Faxian (Fahien) and Xuan Zang (Hsuan Tsang)**, had visited this place in ancient times and have left interesting and informative accounts of their travels.
- The **discovery of gold coins bearing the seal of the famous emperor Kanishka of the Kushan dynasty (AD 30 to AD 375)** goes on to further establish the ancient heritage of Kesaria.

- **Exploration:**

- The stupa's exploration **had started in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century** after its discovery led by Colonel Mackenzie in 1814.
- Later, it was **excavated by General Cunningham in 1861-62 and in 1998 an ASI team led by archaeologist K.K. Muhammad** had excavated the site properly.

- **Other Popular in Bihar:**

- **Maha Bodhi Temple**
- Nalanda Mahavihara  
Both are **UNESCO World Heritage Sites.**
- Rohtasgarh Fort

**Source: TH**