



Kesariya Stupa | Bihar | 20 Apr 2024

Why in News?

[Kesariya Stupa](#) is 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**.

Key Points

- The **first construction of the Stupa is dated to the 3rd 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 4th 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.
- Its **exploration had started in the early 19th 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.



Impact of the Forest Rights Act on Land Conflicts | Madhya Pradesh | 20 Apr 2024

Why in News?

Recently, **Land Conflict Watch**, a data research agency, tracking land-related conflicts in India, has noted a significant correlation between land conflicts and the enforcement of the [Forest Rights Act \(FRA\) 2006](#).

Key Points

- **FRA enacted in 2006 recognises the rights of forest-dwelling tribal communities** and other traditional forest dwellers to forest resources on which these communities **were dependent for a variety of needs, including livelihood, habitation** and other sociocultural needs.
- Out of the 781 conflicts documented in the [Land Conflict Watch \(LCW\)](#) database, a subset of 264 conflicts has been closely linked to **parliamentary constituencies** where the Forest Rights Act (FRA) is an important issue.
- These constituencies are commonly referred to as **'FRA constituencies'** based on the **People's Forest report (by Centre for Science and Environment)**.
- Maharashtra, Odisha, and **Madhya Pradesh** have the **highest number of core FRA** constituencies.
- The states with the most forest rights issues in **critical FRA constituencies** are Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Status of Implementation of FRA

- **Titles Accorded:** As of February 2024, approximately **2.45 million titles have been granted to tribal and forest dwellers**.
 - However, out of **five million claims received, about 34% have been rejected**.
- **Recognition Rate:** Despite the vast potential, the actual recognition of forest rights has been limited. As of 31st August 2021, **only 14.75% of the minimum potential forest areas eligible for forest rights have been recognised** since the FRA came into force.
- **State Variations:**
 - **Andhra Pradesh:** Recognized 23% of its minimum potential forest claim.
 - **Jharkhand:** Recognized only 5% of its minimum potential forest area.
 - **Intra-State Variations:** Even within states, recognition rates vary. For instance, in Odisha, while the district of Nabarangapur achieved a 100% IFR recognition rate, Sambalpur's rate stands at 41.34%.

IIT Kanpur to Collaborate with Armed Forces Medical Services | Uttar Pradesh | 20 Apr 2024

Why in News?

Recently, The [Armed Forces Medical Services \(AFMS\)](#) signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** for collaborative research and training with **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur**.

Key Points

- Under this AFMS and IIT Kanpur will collaborate to **undertake research and development of new technologies to address health problems faced by soldiers in difficult terrains.**
- It will also provide technical expertise for developing [AI diagnostic models](#), at the **Armed Forces Centre for Computational Medicine** established in Armed Forces Medical College, which is **first of its kind amongst medical colleges in India.**
 - Under the ambit of this MoU, faculty exchange program, joint academic activities and development of training modules will also be planned.

Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS)

- The Armed Force Medical Services (AFMS) is an **inter services organisation** under the **Ministry of Defense**, covering the Indian Armed Forces.
- It came into **existence in 1948.**

Rakhigarhi Findings | Haryana | 20 Apr 2024

Why in News?

One of the recent changes in school textbooks proposed by the [National Council of Educational Research and Training \(NCERT\)](#) includes adding information about the results of [Deoxyribonucleic acid \(DNA\) analysis on skeletal remains](#) discovered at the **ancient site of Rakhigarhi in Haryana.**

- Additionally, references to the negative impact of the **Narmada Dam project on tribals**, causing displacement and increased poverty, have been removed.

Key Points

- NCERT has stated that study of ancient **DNA from archaeological sources in Rakhigarhi, Haryana** suggests that the genetic roots of the Harappans go back to 10,000 BCE.
- Rakhigarhi is the **largest Harappan site in the Indian subcontinent.** The site is situated in the plains of **Saraswati river, about 27 km from the seasonal Ghaggar river.**
 - To study its evolution from **6000 BC (Pre-Harappan phase) to 2500 BC**, excavations were carried out at Rakhigarhi under the leadership of [Archaeological Survey of India \(ASI\) archaeologist Amarendra Nath.](#)
- Prof. Shinde played an important role in the research related to Rakhigarhi. Prof. Shinde is also writing a book '**History of India**' on these researches related to Indian history.
- Pro. Shinde said-
 - The DNA report of the remains, evidence and skeletons found in the excavations at **Rakhigarhi, Lothal Gilund, Nujat etc. has proved that the [Harappan civilization](#) was the oldest and most developed civilization in the world.**
 - The theory of **Aryan invasion** and coming from outside is **fabricated and false**, which has been confirmed on the **basis of archaeological and scientific verification of DNA.**

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**”.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training

- It is an **autonomous organization** that was **established in 1961 under the Societies Registration Act**.
- It is the **apex body** for advising the central and state governments on matters related to school education.

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