



Vikramshila University

Why in News?

A decade after the revival of Nalanda University in Rajgir, the process of reviving another ancient centre of learning 'Vikramashila University' in Bihar has gained momentum.

- [Archaeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#) is developing this ancient site for the purpose of conservation and promoting tourism.

Key Points

- **Financial support from the central government**
 - Despite sanctioning **Rs 500 crore** in 2015, the project got delayed because of land identification issues.
 - Now the Bihar government has marked **202.14 acres of land** in **Antichak village of Bhagalpur district** for this project.
- **Vikramshila University:**
 - **Location:**
 - Vikramshila University was located on the **banks of the river Ganges** in the **Bhagalpur** district of **Bihar**.
 - **Establishment:**
 - This university was established by **King Dharmapala** of the **Pala dynasty** in the late **8th** and early **9th centuries**.
- **Educational Importance:**
 - Vikramshila University emerged as a major centre of **Tantric Buddhism** and the **Vajrayana Buddhist** tradition and played an important role in the dissemination of these doctrines.
 - The institute was famous for its specialisation in **esoteric** and **tantric studies**, making it distinct from **Nalanda University**.
 - The curriculum included subjects as diverse as **theology, philosophy, grammar, metaphysics, logic** and **tantra**, indicating its academic richness.
 - Around **1,000 students** and **100 teachers** from India and abroad come here for study and teaching, which makes it an internationally renowned educational centre.
- **Features and Structure:**
 - The **centrepiece** of the university was a **magnificent stupa** surrounded by **208 rooms**, where students and monks engaged in **study and meditation**.
 - It had a library equipped with a **unique cooling system**.
 - The administration of the university was headed by a **Vice-Chancellor (Mahasthavira)**, who was responsible for its planned and smooth functioning.
- **Downfall:**
 - Around **1203 AD**, this university **was destroyed** due to the invasion of **Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khilji**.

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

- **ASI**, under the **Ministry of Culture**, is the premier organisation for archaeological research and

conservation of the cultural heritage of the country.

- It oversees all archaeological undertakings within the country under the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958**.

- It manages more than **3,650 ancient monuments, archaeological sites and remains of national importance**.
- Its activities include **surveying archaeological remains, exploration and excavation of archaeological sites, conservation and maintenance of protected monuments**, etc.
- It was established in the **year 1861** by **Alexander Cunningham**, the **first Director General of ASI**. Alexander Cunningham is also known as the **"Father of Indian Archaeology"**.

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