



Madhya Pradesh's Buddhist Circuit | Madhya Pradesh | 24 May 2024

Why in News?

The **Buddhist circuit at Sanchi** in Madhya Pradesh attracted many pilgrims from around the globe for [Buddha Purnima](#), a significant festival celebrated by Buddhists every year on 23rd May 2024.

Key Points

- The [Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board \(MPTB\)](#) is developing a **Buddhist circuit** that will **connect Sanchi and other destinations** in the state with [Bodhgaya](#) and [Sarnath](#), two major centers of Buddhism of the country.
 - The aim is to educate Buddhist pilgrims visiting these places about the Buddhist heritage destinations in MP.
- Under the [Swadesh Darshan Scheme](#), the MPTB has spent Rs 70 crore to develop destinations like Sanchi, Mandasaur, Dhar, Satna, Rewa, Satdhara, Sonari, Murel Khurd and Gyaraspur.
 - The project includes the **enhancement of Marshall House, the foothill, approach roads**, the hilltop, light and sound show, tourist facilitation center in Sanchi, landscaping around **Chaitanya Giri Vihar**, the **development and beautification of Kanak Sagar Lake** located at the base of Sanchi, a Buddhist theme park, beautification of Square Road Junction, improvement of the path from the railway station to the Stupa foothill, and the construction of meditation kiosk and complex in Satdhara, Sonari, Murel Khurda, and Gyaraspur near Sanchi.

Buddha Purnima

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GAUTAM BUDDHA

Believed to be 8th of the 10 incarnations of Lord Vishnu (Dashavatar)

BIRTH

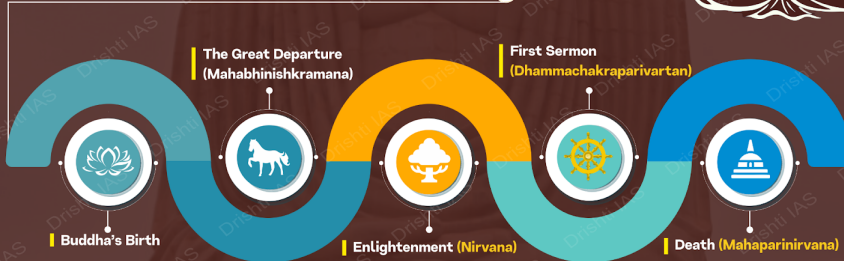
- Born as Siddhartha (563 BC)
- Birthplace - Lumbini (Nepal) near Kapilavastu

PARENTS

- Father - elected ruler of Kapilavastu; headed Shaky republican clan
- Mother - princess from Koshalan dynasty



IMPORTANT EVENTS



Buddha referred to himself as *Tathagata* (one who has thus come/gone) and has been addressed as *Bhagavat* (in Buddhist texts)

CONTEMPORARIES

- Vardhaman Mahavira
- Bimbisara
- Ajatshatru

OTHER IMPORTANT PLACES ASSOCIATED WITH BUDDHA

- Bodh Gaya (Enlightenment) (named Buddha after attaining enlightenment)
- Sarnath (first sermon)
- Vaishali (Last sermon)
- Kushinagara (death place (487 BC))

- Buddha Purnima also known as **Vesak**, commemorates the birth of **Prince Siddhartha Gautama**, who later became known as **Gautama Buddha** and founded **Buddhism**.
 - Celebrated primarily in South, Southeast, and East Asia, it falls on the full moon day of the Hindu month of Vaisakha, typically in April or May.
- It is considered a '**triple-blessed day**' as it marks **Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and Maha Parnirvana**. It has been recognised by the **United Nations** as the 'UN Day of Vesak' since 1999.

Swadesh Darshan Scheme

- It was **launched in 2014-15 for integrated development** of theme-based tourist circuits — Buddhist Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Desert Circuit, Eco Circuit, Heritage Circuit, Northeast Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Sufi Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Tirthankar Circuit, Wildlife Circuit and Tribal Circuit.
- It is **100% centrally funded and efforts** are made to achieve convergence with other schemes of Central and State Governments and also to leverage the voluntary funding available for [Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\)](#) initiatives of Central Public Sector Undertakings and Corporate Sector.

Madhya Pradesh Tourism Sets New Record | Madhya Pradesh | 24 May 2024

Why in News?

According to the sources, **Madhya Pradesh** greeted over **110 million tourists in 2023**, achieving a **historic milestone for the state's** tourism.

Key Points

- The year 2023 witnessed a significant increase in the number of tourists, with a remarkable 112.1 million visitors, compared to 34.1 million in 2022.
 - **Ujjain**, known as one of **India's most sacred cities**, emerged as the most **popular destination**, drawing over 52.8 million pilgrims and travelers.
- **Five of the state's top ten most visited places** were revered religious sites, including **Ujjain, Maihar, Chitrakoot, Omkareshwar, and Salkanpur**, highlighting the growing appeal of **spiritual tourism**.
 - Key initiatives such as **Mahakal Lok in Ujjain** and **Ektma Dham in Omkareshwar** played a **pivotal role in bolstering visitor numbers**.
- The 24th of May, commemorating the foundation day of the **Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation (MPSTDC)**, doubles up as **Madhya Pradesh Tourism Day**, symbolizing the state's commitment to nurturing its tourism sector.

Shri Mahakal Lok

- The temple is believed to be governed by **Mahakaleshwar**, which means the **'Lord of time' i.e., Lord Shiva**. As per Hindu mythology, the temple was **constructed by Lord Brahma** and is presently located alongside the **holy river Kshipra**.
- Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga in Ujjain is **one of the 12 jyotirlingas** considered the most sacred abodes of Shiva. The shrine is revered as **one the 18 Maha Shaktia Peeth** in India.
 - It is the **only jyotirlinga facing the south**, while all the others face east. This is because the direction of death is believed to be the south.
- In fact, people worship Mahakaleshwar to prevent an untimely death.
- According to the Puranas, **Lord Shiva pierced the world as an endless pillar of light, called the jyotirlinga**.
 - Besides Mahakal, these include **Somnath and Nageshwar** in Gujarat, **Mallikarjuna** in Andhra Pradesh, **Omkareshwar** in Madhya Pradesh, **Kedarnath** in Uttarakhand, **Bhimashankar, Triyambakeshwar and Grishneshwar** in Maharashtra, **Viswanath** at Varanasi, **Baidyanath** in Jharkhand, and **Rameswaram** in Tamil Nadu.