



Kesaria Buddha Stupa: Bihar

Why in News

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

▪ 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 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.
- **Exploration:**
 - The stupa's 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.
 - **Other Popular in Bihar:**
 - **Maha Bodhi Temple**
 - Nalanda Mahavihara
 - Both are **UNESCO World Heritage Sites.**
 - Rohtasgarh Fort

Source: TH

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