



Martand Sun temple

For Prelims: Site of National Importance, Karkota Dynasty.

For Mains: Lalitaditya Muktapida, Martand Sun Temple.

Why in News?

The Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor participated in a religious ceremony held in the ruins of the 8th century Martand Sun temple, a protected monument under the Archaeological Survey of India. This temple has been recognised as a “Site of national importance”.



What is the Martand Sun Temple?

- The Martand Sun Temple also known as **Pandou Laidan** is a **Hindu temple dedicated to Surya (the chief solar deity in Hinduism)** and built during the 8th century CE. Martand is another Sanskrit synonym for Surya.
- It was built by the **third ruler of the Karkota Dynasty, Lalitaditya Muktapida.**
- It is now in ruins, as **it was destroyed by the orders of Muslim ruler Sikandar Shah Miri.**
- The temple is **located five miles from Anantnag in the Indian union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.**
- From the ruins and related archaeological findings, it can be said it was an excellent specimen of

Kashmiri architecture, which had blended the Gandharan, Gupta and Chinese forms of architecture.

- The temple **appears in the list of centrally protected monuments** as Kartanda (Sun Temple).

Who was Lalitaditya Muktapida?

- Lalitaditya was born in the year of **699 AD as the third son of Durlabhak-Pratapaditya of Kashmir.**
- He was from the **Nagvanshi Karkota Kayastha Dynasty of Kashmir.**
 - Karkota Kayastha families were mainly serving in the army of the kings of Kashmir since decades. They were known for their remarkable courage in the battlefield.
 - The Kings of Kashmir had given them the title Sakhasena for their immense contribution.
- Lalitaditya's birth name was Muktapida and his older brothers were Chandrapida and Tarapida.
- Muktapida **took over the Kingdom of Kashmir in the year 724 AD.**
- It was the same time, when the **western invasion had begun in India and the Arabs had already occupied the province of swat, multan, peshawar and the Kingdom of Sindh.**
- The Arab king Mohammad Bin Qasim, the Arab ruler was already threatening to occupy Kashmir and central India.
- He fought the **daradas, kabhojas and bhuttas of ladakh who were under Tibetan rule.**
- Lalitaditya **himself led the army into the war defeating all Kings and established control over the regions of Ladakh.**
- The alliance between **Lalitaditya and Yashovarman defeated the Arabs from entering Kashmir.**
- He later invaded Turkestan via Kabul. Lalitaditya acquired most of the places in the west and south of India starting from Rashtrakutas in Maharashtra, Pallavas and Kalinga in the southern part.
- He also extended his kingdom to central China after defeating the Chinese. **After which he was compared with Alexander the great.**
- The **Kashmir Kingdom gained enormous wealth and Lalitaditya utilized the wealth to build massive infrastructure** in Kashmir, construction of temples were taken up and Kashmir saw extensive development under Lalitaditya.
- Lalitaditya was a very liberal King, though **he was a strong follower of Hindu tradition, he respected all religions. He is said to be a very compassionate ruler who responded to people's voices.**
- In the year 760 AD, the Lalitaditya era came to an end by his sudden death.

What are the Key Points of the Karkota Dynasty?

- The Karkota dynasty established their power in Kashmir (early 7th century) and it emerged **as a power in central Asia and northern India.**
- Durlabh Vardhana was the founder of the Karkota dynasty.
- The **Karkota rulers were Hindus and built spectacular Hindu temples at Parihaspur (capital).**
- They also patronised Buddhism as some stupas, chaityas and viharas have been found in the ruins of their capital.

Source: TH