



# Kesariya Stupa

## 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

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