



ASI Response on Sambhal Mosque | Uttar Pradesh | 02 Dec 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the [Archaeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#) has requested the civil court in Sambhal for control and management of the **Mughal-era Shahi Jama Masjid in Sambhal**, citing its status as a [protected heritage site](#). The request follows the court's approval of a survey of the mosque.

Key Points

- **Controversy Around the Sambhal Mosque:**
 - On 19th January, 2018, an [First Information Report \(FIR\)](#) was filed against the mosque's management committee for installing steel railings on the mosque's steps without obtaining proper authorization.
 - The ASI stated that the **Shahi Jama Masjid which was notified as a protected monument in 1920**, under the **Ancient Monuments Preservation Act 1904**, falls under its jurisdiction.
 - The ASI argued that the mosque's management committee made unauthorised structural modifications, which are unlawful and should be restricted.
- **Access and Regulation:**
 - The ASI maintained that public access to the mosque is permissible, but only if it adheres to ASI regulations.
 - The ASI has sought full control and management of the mosque, emphasizing its responsibility for maintaining the monument and regulating any changes to its structure.
- **Violence During Court-Ordered Survey:**
 - [Violence](#) erupted in Sambhal on 24th November 2024, during a court-ordered survey of the Shahi Jama Masjid.
 - Four people were killed, and several others sustained injuries during the clashes.
- **Judicial Commission:**
 - A three-member judicial commission was formed on 28th November 2024, to investigate the violence.
 - The commission will determine whether the violence was spontaneous or part of a premeditated conspiracy.
 - The inquiry will analyze the events leading to the violence and recommend measures to prevent such incidents in the future.
 - It is required to submit its findings within two months, with any extension subject to government approval.
- **Survey and Temple Petition:**
 - The court-ordered survey was linked to a petition claiming that the **Jama Masjid** in Sambhal **was originally a [Hari Har temple](#)** located in mohalla Kot Purvi and was converted into a mosque in 1529.
 - **Historical Context:**
 - The Jama Masjid in Sambhal is one of three mosques **constructed during Babur's reign (1526-1530)**. The others include the mosque at Panipat and the now-demolished Babri Masjid.
 - **Historian Howard Crane** described the mosque's architectural features in his work, ***The Patronage of Babur and the Origins of Mughal Architecture***.
 - Crane noted a **Persian inscription stating that Babur ordered the mosque's construction in December 1526** through his subedar, Jahangir Quli Khan.

Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904

▪ About:

- The Act was passed in 1904, during the tenure of **Lord Curzon in British India**.
- It **aimed at preserving ancient monuments** and objects of historical, archaeological, and artistic significance.

▪ Key Provisions:

- It empowered the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to protect and restore ancient Indian monuments.
- Regulated the movement and trade of [antiquities](#) to **prevent illegal trafficking**.
- Provided for control over archaeological excavations in specified areas.
- Facilitated the acquisition of ancient monuments for preservation in certain cases.

▪ Significance:

- Played a foundational role in protecting India's historical and cultural heritage under a structured legal framework.
- Enhanced the responsibilities of the ASI in monument conservation.

UP Declares Maha Kumbh Area a New District | Uttar Pradesh | 02 Dec 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttar Pradesh government has declared the [Maha Kumbh area in Prayagraj](#) as a **new district**.

- It was made to streamline the management and administration of the upcoming [Kumbh Mela](#) scheduled for **January 2025**.

Key Points

- The notification was issued under Section 2 (th) of the **Uttar Pradesh Prayagraj Mela Authority, Prayagraj Act, 2017**.
 - It officially declares the Mahakumbh Mela District for organizing the Mahakumbh 2025.
 - The **Mela Adhikari** was made the **administrative authority of the new district**.
- Powers and Responsibilities of Mela Adhikari:
 - The Mela Adhikari, Kumbh Mela, Prayagraj, will hold powers of the Executive Magistrate, District Magistrate, and Additional District Magistrate under Section-14 (1) and relevant sections of the [Indian Civil Defense Code, 2023](#).
 - The Mela Adhikari will also possess all the powers of the District Magistrate and Collector under the **Uttar Pradesh Revenue Code, 2006 (amended in 2016)**, for handling all cases.
 - The Mela Adhikari has the authority to appoint an Additional Collector for the district.

Maha Kumbh

- Kumbh Mela comes under [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation \(UNESCO\)'s Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity](#).
- It is the largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims on earth, during which participants bathe or take a dip in a sacred river.
 - It takes place on the banks of the [Godavari river in Nashik](#), the [Shipra river in Ujjain](#), the

[Ganges](#) in Haridwar, and the confluence of the Ganges, [Yamuna](#), and the mythical [Saraswati river](#) in Prayagraj. The confluence is referred to as the 'Sangam'.

- As it is held in four different cities in India, it involves different social and cultural activities, making this a **culturally diverse festival**.
- The **over month-long fair** is marked by the construction of a massive tented township, complete with cottages, huts, platforms, civic facilities, administrative and security measures.
 - It is organised immaculately by the government, the local authorities and the police.
- The mela is especially **renowned for the presence of an extraordinary array of religious ascetics** enticed from remote hideaways in forests, mountains and caves.

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/statepcs/03-12-2024/uttar-pradesh/print>

