

Excavation to Uncover Buddha's Relics

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Minister of State for Finance inaugurated an **archaeological excavation at Ramgram in Maharajganj district** of Uttar Pradesh.

■ The project, spearheaded by **the** <u>Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)</u>, seeks to **uncover evidence of** <u>Lord Buddha's</u> **eighth relic**, which is believed to be buried at the site.

Key Points

- Historical and Spiritual Significance:
 - The site is among the eight places where Lord Buddha's relics were enshrined, holding immense importance in Buddhist traditions.
 - It is situated within the Songibarwa Wildlife Division and is historically associated with the ancient Kolia kingdom.
 - Kolia was an ancient <u>Indo-Aryan clan</u> of north-eastern South Asia whose existence is attested during the <u>Iron Age</u>.
- Potential for Regional Development:
 - The excavation is expected to transform the location into a prominent Buddhist pilgrimage site.
 - This development is anticipated to boost tourism and stimulate economic growth in the region.
- Focus on Global Recognition:
 - The project aims to integrate the site into the global **Buddhist pilgrimage circuit**.
 - Local authorities foresee increased visits from international pilgrims and scholars, enhancing the region's cultural profile.

Sohagi Barwa Wildlife Sanctuary

- About:
 - It is situated in the Maharajganj district of Uttar Pradesh.
 - In the north, the Sanctuary shares the international boundary with Nepal, and in the east shares the border with Bihar's Valmiki Tiger Reserve.
 - It was declared a Wildlife Sanctuary in June 1987.
- Drainage:
 - It is drained by the great Gandak, the little Gandak, Pyas and Rohin rivers.
- Flora:
 - Nearly 75% of the area consists of <u>Sal forest</u>, and other humid areas are covered with Jaamun, Gutal, Semal, KhairTrees, etc.
 - The lower region of the sanctuary, which is water logged during rains, consists of Grasslands and patches of Cane forests.
- Fauna:
 - It is inhabited by a variety of animals which mainly includes <u>Leopard</u>, <u>Tiger</u>, <u>Jungle Cat</u>, <u>Small Indian Civet</u>, <u>Langur</u>, <u>Deer</u>, <u>Blue Bull</u>, <u>Wild boar</u>, <u>Porcupine etc</u>.



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