



# Sambhal Mosque Case

## Why in News?

Recently, the Allahabad [High Court](#) sought responses from the Central and State governments, [the Archaeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#), and local authorities regarding a plea filed by the **Shahi Jama Masjid committee in Sambhal**, challenging a trial court's order.

## Key Points

- **Supreme Court's Stay:**
  - The trial court had directed an Advocate Commissioner to **survey the Shahi Jama Masjid** while handling a suit claiming the mosque was built by destroying a temple.
  - In November 2024, [the Supreme Court](#) stayed the trial court's proceedings and **instructed that the matter should not be heard until the petition against the survey order is addressed in the Allahabad High Court.**
  - The Supreme Court also ordered that **no new suits seeking surveys of any place of worship should be entertained until further notice.**
- **Survey and Clashes:**
  - In 2024, the local court ordered a **survey of the Mughal-era mosque** following a petition claiming the **mosque was built in 1526** after demolishing a temple dedicated to Kalki, Lord Vishnu's last incarnation.
  - The eight plaintiffs in the suit demanded the right to access the mosque.
  - **Violence erupted in Sambhal on 24th November 2024 after clashes between police and protesters** against the survey, resulting in five deaths and multiple injuries.

## Historical Context of the Jama Masjid

- 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.**

## Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

- ASI, under **the Ministry of Culture**, is the premier organisation for the archaeological research and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.
  - **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958** governs the functioning of ASI.
- It administers more than 3650 ancient monuments, archaeological sites and remains of national importance.
- Its activities include carrying out surveys of antiquarian remains, exploration and excavation of archaeological sites, conservation and maintenance of protected monuments etc.
- It was **founded in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham- the first Director-General of ASI.** Alexander Cunningham is also known as the "Father of Indian Archaeology".

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