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Kanheri Caves



- Recently the Ministry of Tourism inaugurated various public facilities at Kanheri Caves on the occasion of Buddha Purnima.

Kanheri Caves:

- The Kanheri Caves are a group of caves and rock-cut monuments located on the western outskirts of Mumbai. These caves are located within the forests of Sanjay Gandhi National Park.
- The name Kanheri is derived from 'Kanhagiri' in Prakrit and its description is found in the Nasik inscription of the Satavahana ruler Vasisthaputra Pulumavi.

- The mention of Kanheri is found in the travelogues of foreign travelers.
- Kanheri is first described by Fahien, who came to India during 399-411 AD and was later described by many other travellers.

Excavation:

- The Kanheri Caves involve excavation of over 110 different monoliths and is one of the largest single excavations in the country.
- The size and extent of the excavation, as well as numerous water reservoirs, inscriptions, one of the oldest dams, a stupa burial gallery and an excellent rainwater harvesting system, attest to its popularity as a monastic and pilgrimage centre.

Architecture:

- These excavations were mainly done during the Hinayana phase of Buddhism but also include some prints of the Vajrayana order, along with many examples of Mahayana stylistic architecture.

Protection:

- It flourished through the patronage of Kanheri Satavahanas, Trikutaks, Vakatakas and Silharas as well as donations made by the wealthy merchants of the region.

Importance:

- Kanheri Caves are part of our ancient heritage as they provide evidence of development and our past.

- The architecture and engineering of heritage sites like Kanheri Caves and Ajanta Ellora Caves reflect the knowledge of the people of that time in terms of art, engineering, management, construction, patience and perseverance etc.
- At that time it took more than 100 years to build many such monuments.
- Its importance is heightened by the fact that it is the only center where the continuous progress of Buddhism and architecture is seen as a lasting legacy from the 2nd century AD to the 9th century AD.

Hinayana and Mahayana:

Hinayana:

- Literally small vehicle, also known as abandoned vehicle or defective vehicle. It believes in the basic teaching of the Buddha or 'the doctrine of the elders'.
- It does not believe in idol worship and tries to attain personal salvation through self-discipline and meditation.
- Theravada is a part of the Hinayana sect.

Mahayana:

- This sect of Buddhism considers Buddha as a deity and believes in idol worship.
- It originated in northern India and Kashmir and from there spread to some areas of Central Asia, East Asia and South-East Asia.
- Believes in Mahayana mantras.
- Its main principles were based on the possibility of universal liberation from suffering for all beings. Therefore, this sect is called Mahayana (Great Vehicle).

- Its doctrines are also based on the existence of ‘incarnations of nature’ of Buddha and Bodhisattvas. It talks about attaining salvation through having faith in Buddha and devoting oneself to him.

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Sedition law 124A



- Recently, the Supreme Court has suspended the sedition law and ordered the central and state governments not to register any sedition case under Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).
- It has also suspended pending trials, appeals and proceedings relating to sedition charges. According to the court, those against whom cases are registered under section 124A of sedition can approach the court for relief.

Current events

- The court has sought an answer from the government on this and IPC to the government. Permission was also given to review the provisions of section 124A. However, till the sedition law is reviewed, no case under section 124A can be registered or investigation can be done in it.

- Editors Guild of India and Major General (Retd) S.G. The petition, filed by Wombatkere, states that the law has a 'negative effect' on freedom of expression and is an unreasonable restriction on freedom of expression, which is a fundamental right.

Sedition law:

Historical background

- This law was drafted in the year 1837 by the British historian and politician Thomas Babington Macaulay. Under this sedition was defined.
- According to this- 'If anyone, by words, either orally or in writing or by means of signs or by visual representation or otherwise, spreads hatred or contempt for the Government established by law in India or causes provocation and dissatisfaction' Abets or attempts to do so, he may be charged with sedition.

British condition

- Originally there was no sedition section in the Indian Penal Code, 1860. Macaulay's draft of 1837 was amended in the year 1870 with the I.P.C. was added in the form of section 124A.
- By amendment in the year 1898, the word 'discontent' was more defined and it also included 'betrayal' and 'feeling of enmity'.
- It was used primarily by the British colonial government to restrict the writings and speeches of prominent Indian freedom fighters.
- Under this, leaders like Mahatma Gandhi (year 1922), Lokmanya Tilak (year 1898) and Jogendra Chandra Bose

(year 1892) were tried under the sedition law for their comments on British rule.

Current status of punishment

- Sedition is a non-bailable offense as per section 124A. It can be punishable with fine from three years to life imprisonment. Under this law, the accused person is also denied a government job and the government confiscates his passport.
- It is noteworthy that the United Kingdom abolished sedition in the year 2010. However, parts of it exist in other laws relating to sedition.

View of law commission on sedition

- According to the 2018 report of the Law Commission of India, the Constituent Assembly opposed the inclusion of sedition as a restriction on freedom of speech and expression under the erstwhile Article 13.
- According to the commission, people should be free to show their affection towards the country in their own way. It also includes exposing the shortcomings of government policies, constructive criticism or debate.
- According to the commission, section 124A should be invoked only in cases where the intention behind an act is to disturb public order or to try to destabilize the government by violence and illegal means.
- The commission has appointed I.P.C. (Sedition) section 124A and to substitute the word 'sedition' with any other appropriate word.

- Simultaneously, the commission has also urged for striking a balance between sedition and freedom of expression and appropriate safeguards against misuse of the sedition law.

Supreme Court's stand

- In the year 2021, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court had said that sedition is a colonial law and it suppresses freedom.
- According to him 'I.P.C. The conviction rate under this section of the U.S. is very low and it is misused by the executive agencies.
- However, the Supreme Court in the 1962 Kedar Nath Singh vs Government of Bihar case I.P.C. The constitutionality of Section 124A was upheld.
- In Balwant Singh vs State of Punjab (1995) the Supreme Court had clarified that mere raising of slogans like 'Khalistan Zindabad' without any malicious intent is not sedition.
- It is worth mentioning that I.P.C. Bills have been introduced in Parliament to remove or amend section 124A of the Act.

Status of sedition cases in the country

- According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)-2020 report, 70 cases of sedition were registered in the year 2018 but no person was convicted.
- In the year 2019, 93 cases were registered, out of which only two were convicted. In the year 2020, none of the 73 cases were found guilty of sedition.
- In the year 2020, the highest number of sedition cases were registered in Manipur (15).

Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary



- Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary in Rajasthan was recently notified as the 52nd tiger reserve of India.
- In April 2020, the Rajasthan government had sent a proposal to develop Ramgarh Poisonous Sanctuary for tigers.
- In July 2021, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) had given in-principle approval to make Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary and surrounding areas a tiger reserve.
- Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary is spread over an area of about 252 square kilometres. It has been declared a sanctuary in 1982 under the Rajasthan Wildlife and Bird Protection Act, 1951.
- Indian wolf, leopard, sloth bear, golden jackal, fox etc. can be seen.
- Ramgarh Vishdhari Sanctuary is the fourth Tiger Reserve. The other three tiger reserves are Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in Sawai Madhopur district, Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve in Kota district and Sariska Tiger Reserve in Alwar district.

What is the significance of declaring Ramgarh Vishdhari Sanctuary as a tiger reserve?

- Ramgarh Poisonous Sanctuary plays an important role in the movement of tigers. It will connect Ranthambore Tiger Reserve with Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve, thus making it an important tiger corridor.
- It will act as a buffer for Ranthambore Tiger Reserve and will facilitate the dispersal of tigers. Thus it prevents the problem of congestion in Ranthambore.
- Presence of sites within the Tiger Reserve like Bhimlat, and Ramgarh Mahal will give a boost to eco-tourism. This will also provide livelihood opportunities to the local people.

What is Tiger Corridor?

- It is a stretch of land connecting tiger habitats, providing a route for movement of tigers and other wildlife.
- India has more than 30 major tiger corridors and many smaller tiger corridors.

What is the importance of Tiger Corridor?

- Corridors will provide more space for tigers and reduce human-wildlife conflicts. They also serve as a habitat for other wildlife like wolves, hyenas, birds, reptiles, etc.

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