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CURRENT AFFAIRS



Date – 20 June 2022

Relics of Mahatma Buddha



- Four sacred relics of Lord Buddha are being taken from India to Mongolia for an 11-day exhibition on the occasion of Mongolian Buddha Purnima celebrations.
- These relics are to be displayed at the Batsagan Temple in the Gandan Monastery Complex in Ulaanbaatar.
- The four relics are among the 22 relics of Buddha, which are currently kept in the National Museum in Delhi.
- Also they are known as 'Kapilvastu relics' because they have been recovered from a place in Bihar which is believed to be the ancient city of Kapilvastu. This place was discovered in 1898.
- Those relics are sacred objects associated with holy persons.
- They can be body parts (teeth, hair, bones) or other objects that the holy person has used or touched.
- In many traditions it is believed that relics have special powers to heal people, bestow grace or drive away demons.

Sacred Relics of Buddha:

- According to Buddhist beliefs, at the age of 80, Buddha attained salvation in Kushinagar district of Uttar Pradesh.

- The Mallas of Kushinagar performed the last rites of his body with ceremonies as a universal king.
- His remains were collected from the funeral pyre and divided into eight parts, namely Ajatashatru of Magadha, Lichchavi of Vaishali, Shakya of Kapilvastu, Malla of Kushinagar, Bullij of Allakappa, Malla of Pava, Kolia of Ramgram and Vethadipa. Distributed among a brahmin.
- Its purpose was to build a stupa over the sacred relics.
- After this two more stupas are found, one of which has been built over the collected Asti Kalash and the other over the ember (wooden unburned coal).
- The stupas (Saririka Stupa) built on the remains of the Buddha's body are the earliest surviving Buddhist temples. Seven of these eight stupas were built by Ashoka (272-232 BC), and he collected the bulk of the remains within the 84,000 stupas he built in an effort to popularize the cult of stupas alongside Buddhism.

Discovery of Kapilvastu Remains:

- The discovery of an excavated coffin at the stupa site at Piprahwa (near Siddharthnagar, UP) in the year 1898 helped identify ancient Kapilavastu.
- The inscription on the cover of the coffin refers to the relics of the Buddha and his community, the Shakyas.
- The excavation of another stupa by the Archaeological Survey of India during the year 1971-77 revealed two rock-cut coffins containing a total of 22 sacred bone relics, which are now under the care of the National Museum.
- After this more than 40 terracotta prints were discovered from different levels and places in the Eastern Monastery of Piprahwa, which proved that Piprahwa was the ancient Kapilavastu.

Security for Mongolia Travel:

- During the 11-day visit, the relics will be accorded 'State Guest' status in Mongolia and will again be taken to the National Museum of India.
- The Indian Air Force has provided a special aircraft, the C-17 Globemaster, for travel, which is one of the largest aircraft available in India.
- In the year 2015, the sacred relics were placed under the 'AA' category of antiquities and art treasures, which should not be taken out of the country for exhibition in view of their fragile nature.

Gautam buddha:

- He was born as Siddhartha in about 563 BC into a royal family at Lumbini, which is located near the Indo-Nepal border.
- His family belonged to the Shakya dynasty, which ruled in Kapilavastu, Lumbini.
- At the age of 29, Gautam renounced home and renounced worldly life and adopted a lifestyle of austerity or extreme self-discipline.

- After 49 consecutive days of meditation, Gautam attained Bodhi (knowledge) under a peepal tree in Bodh Gaya, Bihar.
- Buddha gave his first sermon in Sarnath village near Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. This event is known as turning of the wheel of Dharma.
- He died in 483 BC at the age of 80 in Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh. This event is known as Mahaparinirvana.
- He is considered to be the eighth incarnation of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu (Dashavatar).

Swadeep Kumar

International Literary Festival

Unmesh



- Ministry of Culture and Sahitya Akademi in collaboration with the Department of Art and Culture, Government of Himachal Pradesh are organizing Unmesh, an International Literature Festival as part of the Azaadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations.
- UNMESH is the country's largest literary festival representing over 60 languages and 64 events with over 425 writers, poets, translators, critics and distinguished personalities from different walks of life from 15 countries including India.

Sahitya Akademi:

- Sahitya Akademi was formally inaugurated by the Government of India on 12 March 1954.
- Although it was established by the government but this academy functions as an autonomous organization. It was registered as a society in January 1956 under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

- The Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters, is the central body for literary dialogue, publication and publicity in the country and the only organization to conduct literary activities in 24 Indian languages, including English.
- 24 awards annually for literary works in languages recognized by the Akademi and an equal number of awards for literary translations in the languages of India and in the languages of India are given after a year-long process of scrutiny, discussion and selection.
- It also conducts literary exchange programs with various countries around the world to promote Indian literature.
- The Sahitya Akademi Award is the second highest literary award given by the Government of India after the Jnanpith Award.

Swadeep Kumar

FATF grey list



- The Financial Action Task Force has given great relief to Pakistan in a three-day convention in Berlin, Germany. It decided to remove Pakistan from the 'Grey List'. The FATF is expected to make an official announcement during the plenary session in October.
- Pakistan has been on the FATF grey list continuously since June 2018.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF):

Introduction:

- It is an intergovernmental body that was established in 1989 during the G7 summit in 1989 in Paris.

Mandate:

- In October 2001 after the 9/11 attacks, the FATF expanded its mandate to include efforts to combat terrorist financing.
- In April 2012, it added to efforts to combat the financing of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

- The FATF has developed the FATF Recommendations or Standards, which ensure a coordinated global response to combating organized crime, corruption and terrorism.
- More than 200 jurisdictions around the world have committed to FATF recommendations through a global network of nine regional bodies and FATF membership.

Formation of FATF:

- The FATF currently consists of 37 member jurisdictions and two regional organizations (the European Commission and the Gulf Cooperation Council), representing the most major financial centers in all parts of the world.
- India is a member of FATF since 2010.
- India is also a member of its regional partners, the Asia Pacific Group (APG) and the Eurasian Group (EAG).

The headquarters:

- Its secretariat is located at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) headquarters in Paris.

FATF Lists:

Grey list:

- Countries that are considered safe havens to support terror funding and money laundering have been put on the FATF gray list.
- Being included in this list serves as a warning to the country concerned that it may be included in the black list.

Black List:

- Countries identified as Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs) are included in the Black List. These countries support terrorist funding and money laundering activities.
- The FATF regularly revises this list to include or remove countries.
- Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) are currently on the High Risk Jurisdiction or Black List.

Sessions / Sessions:

- FATF Plenary is the decision-making body of the FATF.
- Its session is organized three times every year.

What is the grey list and the reasons for Pakistan's inclusion in it?

About Grey List:

- Grey listing means that the FATF has placed a country under surveillance to check its progress on measures against money laundering and the financing of terrorism.
- The "Grey List" is also known as the "Enhanced Watch List".

Countries included in the grey list:

- As of March 2022, there are 23 countries on the FATF's increased monitoring list, officially known as "Jurisdictions with Strategic Deficiencies", including Pakistan, Syria, Turkey, Myanmar, the Philippines, South Sudan, Uganda and Yemen is included.

Remove from list:

- To get out of the grey list, a country has to perform tasks recommended by the FATF, for example by confiscating the properties of individuals linked to terrorist groups.
- If the FATF is satisfied with the progress, it removes the country from the list.
- The FATF recently removed Zimbabwe and earlier Botswana and Mauritius from the grey list.
- Zimbabwe has strengthened the effectiveness of its AML/CFT regime and addressed technical deficiencies to meet commitments in its Action Plan on strategic deficiencies identified by the FATF in October 2019.
- AML/CFT stands for "Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Financing of Terrorism".
- In the case of Pakistan, it was first included in the list in the year 2008 and then excluded, after that it was included in the list again from the year 2012 to 2015 and has remained in the list since the year 2018.
- The FATF released a 27-point action plan in June 2018 after placing Pakistan on the 'Grey List'. This action plan is related to curbing money laundering and terrorist financing. In the year 2019, a parallel action plan was submitted by the regional partner of FATF- Asia Pacific Group (APG).

Effect of listing on a country:

- If a country is on the gray list, it indicates an increased risk to the global financial and banking system in dealings with that country.
- Furthermore, given that major financial institutions such as the IMF and WB are affiliated with the FATF as observers, a grey-listed country faces complications in accessing international debt instruments.

- An example from July 2019 is the US\$6 billion IMF loan agreement that stressed the need for Pakistan to comply with FATF action.
- Pakistan's economy is in dire straits and continues to suffer from severely low foreign exchange reserves, despite loan aid from Saudi Arabia and China.

Swadeep Kumar

