

**13-10-2022**

## **Shri Mahakal Lok**

### **Why in Newspapers?**

Recently, the Prime Minister inaugurated the first phase of 'Shri Mahakal Lok' corridor/corridor in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh.

### **Quick Issue?**

- The Mahakal Corridor, to be built at a cost of Rs 800 crore, is four times bigger than the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor.
- The development of Mahakal temple is the third 'Jyotirlinga' site in this series after Vishwanath temple in Varanasi and Kedarnath temple in Uttarakhand.

### **Historical Background?**

- Mahakal Maharaj Temple Complex Expansion Plan is a scheme for expansion, beautification and decongestion of Mahakaleshwar Temple and its surrounding area in Ujjain district.
- Under the scheme, the Mahakaleshwar temple complex of about 2.82 hectares is being increased to 47 hectares, which will be developed by the Ujjain district administration in two phases.
- It will include 17 hectares of Rudrasagar lake.
- The project is expected to increase the annual customer base in the city to around 30 million from the existing 15 million.
- One of the aspects of the first phase of the expansion plan is the visitor plaza which has two entrances or gates namely Nandi Gate and Pinaki Gate.
- The visitor plaza can accommodate up to 20,000 pilgrims at a time.

### **Other Key Facts?**

#### **Significance of Shri Mahakal Lok Corridor**

- **Immense Cultural Beliefs:** The temple is believed to be ruled by Mahakaleshwar, which means 'Lord of Time' i.e. Lord Shiva. According to Hindu mythology, the temple was built by Lord Brahma and is currently situated on the banks of the holy Kshipra River.
- **South facing Jyotirlinga:** Mahakaleshwar Jyotirling in Ujjain is one of the 12 Jyotirlingas considered to be the holiest abode of Shiva. This temple is revered as one of the 18 Maha Shaktipeeths in India.
- This is the only Jyotirlinga facing south, while all others are facing east. This is because the direction of death is considered to be south.
- Actually, people worship Mahakaleshwar to avoid premature death.
- According to the Puranas, Lord Shiva permeated the world in the form of an endless pillar of light, called a Jyotirlinga.
- Apart from Mahakal, these include Somnath and Nageshwar in Gujarat, Mallikarjuna in Andhra Pradesh, Omkareshwar in Madhya Pradesh, Kedarnath in Uttarakhand, Bhimashankar, Trimbakeshwar and Ghrishneshwar temples in Maharashtra, Vishwanath in Varanasi, Baidyanath in Jharkhand and Rameshwaram in Tamil Nadu.



- A movement plan has also been developed to decongest the city keeping in view the entry of visitors and their movement to the temple.
- A 900 meter pedestrian corridor has been constructed, which connects the plaza to the Mahakal temple, which has 108 murals and 93 sculptures depicting stories related to Lord Shiva such as Shiva Vivah, Tripurasura Vadh, Shiva Purana and Shiva Tandava Swaroop .
- This pedestrian corridor is also accompanied by 128 convenience centres, eateries and shopping joints, florists, handicraft stores etc.
- Phase II:- This includes the expansion of the eastern and northern fronts of the temple. It also includes the development of various areas of the city of Ujjain, such as Maharajwada, Mahal Gate, Hari Phatak Bridge, Ramghat Façade and Begum Bagh Road.
- The buildings in Maharajwada will be redeveloped and linked to the Mahakal temple complex, while a heritage Dharamshala and Kumbh museum will be built.
- The second phase is being developed under the Citi Investments to Innovate, Integrate and Sustain (CITIIS) program with funding from the Agence Française de Development (AFD).
- Mention in ancient texts: The mention of the Mahakal temple is found in many ancient Indian poetic texts. Kalidasa gives a description of the Mahakal temple in the early part of the Meghadootam (East Cloud), composed in the 4th century.
- It is described as a temple with shikhara atop a roof built on wooden pillars with a stone foundation. Before the Gupta period, the temples did not have any shikhara or top.
- Temple Destruction and Reconstruction: In medieval times Islamic rulers used to give donations to the priests who worshiped here.
- The temple complex was destroyed by the Ottoman ruler Shams-ud-din Iltutmish during his invasion of Ujjain in the 13th century.
- The present five-storey structure was built in 1734 by Maratha general Ranoji Shinde in Bhumija, Chalukya and Maratha styles of temple architecture.

### **Likely Question Asked In Preliminary Exam**

**Que. With reference to Chausath Yogini Temple near Morena, consider the following statements:**

1. It is a circular temple built during the reign of Kachhapaghat dynasty.
2. It is the only circular temple built in India.
3. This was to promote Vaishnavism in the region.
4. Its design has given rise to a popular belief that it was the inspiration behind the Indian Parliament building.

**Which of the above statements are correct?**

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 4 only

(d) 2, 3 and 4 only

**Answer - (c) 1 and 4 only**

## Biodiversity in Forestry Report

### Why in Newspapers?

According to the "Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Forestry Report" recently released by the Food and Agriculture Organization, integrating biodiversity in 'productive forests' is paramount.

### Quick Issue?

- Mainstreaming biodiversity is the process of applying biodiversity considerations to the policies, strategies and methods of major public and private actors to promote the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

### Historical Background?

- **Forest and Tree Cover:-** According to the India Forest Status Report-2021, the total forest and tree cover is 7,13,789 square kilometer, which is 21.71% of the geographical area of the country, it is higher than 21.67% of the year 2019. States with highest forest area/cover: Madhya Pradesh > Arunachal Pradesh > Chhattisgarh > Odisha > Maharashtra.
- Through the 42nd Amendment Act, 1976, the protection of forests and wild animals and birds along with education, weights and measures and administration of justice were transferred from the state to the concurrent list.
- Under the Directive Principles of State Policy, Article 48A states that the State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and protect the forests and wildlife of the country.
- Article 51A (g) of the Constitution states that it shall be the fundamental duty of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment including forests and wildlife.
- **Challenges to mainstream Biodiversity:-**
  - **Deforestation:-** Deforestation continues at an alarming rate of 10 million hectares per year (mainly for agricultural expansion, especially in low-income tropical countries).

### **Other Key Facts?**

#### Report Recommendations

- Preventing the conversion of natural forests into a specific forest plantation.
- Recognizing forest rights of indigenous peoples and local communities with an emphasis on increasing equitable sharing of benefits.
- Ensure sustainable management of harvesting species to control overharvesting of plants and wildlife.
- Adoption of a multi-sectoral perspective by mainstreaming biodiversity in other land use areas.
- To provide economic incentives such as compensation for low production to promote biodiversity benefits and to invest in knowledge and capacity development.
- Facilitate market-based tools such as engaging in public-private partnerships to take advantage of corporate social responsibility commitments.
- Leveraging the global momentum on restoration to enhance biodiversity conservation.



- **Illegal forest activities:** Illegal timber harvesting is estimated to account for 15-30% of global timber production.
- **Low conservation profile:** Low conservation profile outside protected areas.
- **Inadequate capacity:-** Developing countries struggle to enforce forest and biodiversity regulations.
- **Lack of participation:-** Lack of participation of indigenous people and local community.
- **Weak governance:-** Weak governance and law enforcement are the biggest obstacles to biodiversity conservation in protected areas.
- **Importance of Forest Conservation :-**
  - Forests managed for economic benefits are extremely important for biodiversity conservation.
  - Forests cover 31% of the entire land surface, store an estimated 296 gigatons of carbon and provide habitat for most of the world's terrestrial organisms.
  - The world's forests provide habitat for about 80% of amphibian species, 75% of bird species and 68% of mammal species. In addition, about 60% of all vascular plants are found in tropical forests.
  - The role of forests in maintaining biodiversity is clearly recognized by the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030.
  - In 2019, the FAO adopted a strategy to mainstream biodiversity in agriculture.
- **Policies governing India's forest and biodiversity:-**

○ Indian Forest Act, 1952	○ Biodiversity Act, 2002
○ Forest Conservation Act, 1980	○ Scheduled Tribes and Other
○ National Forest Policy, 1988	Traditional Forest Dwellers
○ National Afforestation Program	(Recognition of Forest Rights) Act,
○ Wildlife Protection Act, 1972	2006
○ Environment Protection Act, 1986	○ Forest (Conservation) Rules, 2022

### Likely Question Asked In Preliminary Exam

**Que. Keeping in view the following:**

1. Gulf of Manari                      2. Nokrek                      3. Western Ghats

**Which of the above has been declared as the Biosphere Reserve of India?**

- (a) 1 only                                      (b) 1 and 2 only  
 (c) 2 and 3 only                              (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Answer - (b) 1 and 2 only**

**Que. Which of the following places comes in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Site?**

- (a) Jim Corbett National Park                      (b) Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Park  
 (c) Rajaji National Park                              (d) None of these

**Answer - (b) Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Park**