

SATAVAHANA DYNASTY

A team of researchers and history enthusiasts recently made a praiseworthy discovery of relics and artefacts which they suggest belong to the Satavahana period from the 1st Century BC to the 3rd Century AD.



About Satavahana Dynasty:

- The Satavahanas, also referred to as the Andhrasin the Puranas, were an ancient Indian dynasty based in the Deccan region.
- Most modern scholars believe that the Satavahana rule began in the late second century BCE and lasted until the early third century CE.
- They ruled from Pune in Maharashtra to Coastal Andhra Pradesh. At its greatest extent, the Satavahana empire covered the whole of the Deccan and spread far into Northern India, perhaps even as far as Magadha.
- They played the most significant role in Indian history in the period between the fall of the Mauryas and the rise of the Gupta Empire.
- **Origin:**
 - Satavahana Dynasty was established in the 1st century BC in the western Deccan Plateau.
 - Satavahana Rulers had emerged from the Andhra region or the delta areas of the Krishna River and Godavari River.
 - The dynasty was built upon the ruins of the Maurya Empire.
- **Rulers of the Satavahana Dynasty:**
 - Simuka was the founder of the Satavahana Dynasty, and he is believed to have destroyed the Sunga Power.
 - The dynasty reached its zenith under the rule of Gautamiputra Satakarni and his successor Vasisthiputra Pulamavi.
 - Gautamiputra Satakarni received wide recognition because of his policy of military expansion.

- Satakarni carried on expansion through the entire country and became famous during that era as a king of great power and valour.
- **Capital:** The dynasty had different capital cities at different times, including Pratihana (Paithan) and Amaravati (Dharanikota).
- **The Decline of the Satavahana Dynasty:**
 - Till the end of the 2nd century, the Satavahana dynasty expanded from western India to the Krishna delta and northern Tamil Nadu, but this expansion did not continue for long.
 - The Satavahanas Dynasty collapsed when Abhiras seized Maharashtra, and Ikshwakus and Pallavas appropriated the eastern province.
 - Their greatest competitors were the Sakas, who had established their power in upper Deccan and Western India.
 - The kingdom had fragmented into smaller states by the early 3rd century CE.
- **Religion and Culture:**
 - The Satavahanas were followers of Hinduism and patronised Maharashtri Prakrit literature.
 - They were influenced by the sacrificial tradition of the Vedic religion.
 - The Satavahana rulers gave liberal patronage to Buddhism as well. Gautamiputra Satakarni, Pulumavi, Yajna Satakarni & some other kings financed the excavation of caves, stupas, chaityas & viharas in the Deccan.
 - They were the first Indian kings to give royal grants of land to those practising Buddhism and Brahmanism.

WHAT IS KOHINOOR DIAMOND?

India will soon begin a diplomatic campaign to reclaim the Kohinoor diamond and thousands of other treasures taken by Britain during their centuries-long colonial exploits in the Indian subcontinent.



About Kohinoor Diamond:

- The Kohinoor/Koh-i-Noor diamond (also Koh-i-Nur or Kūh-e Nūr) is one

of the largest and most famous cut diamonds in the world.

- The name of the stone is Persian, meaning ‘Mountain of Light’ and refers to its astounding size.
- The diamond originally weighed 191 carats, but it was recut to 105.6 carats to enhance its fire and brilliance in 1852 by Garrard of London, the royal jeweller.
- **History:**
 - It is believed that the diamond was first mentioned more than 5000 years ago in a Sanskrit script, where it was called the Syamantaka.
 - After this first written mention, for over 4,000 years, the diamond is not mentioned.
 - Up until 1304, the diamond was in the possession of the Rajas of Malwa.
 - In 1304, it belonged to the Emperor of Delhi, Allaudin Khilji.
 - In 1339, the diamond was taken back to the city of Samarkand, where it stayed for almost 300 years.
 - In 1526 the Mogul ruler Babur mentioned the diamond in his writings, Baburmama. The diamond was gifted to him by Sultan Ibrahim Lodi.
 - From Babur, the diamond passed to Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb before coming into the possession of his grandson, Sultan Mahamad.
 - In 1739, the Persian general Nadir Shah defeated Sultan Mahamad to conquer Delhi – and the diamond. It was Nadir Shah that gave the diamond its current name.
 - In 1747, Nadir Shah was assassinated, and the diamond got to one of his generals, Ahmad Shah Durrani.
 - A descendant of Ahmad Shah, Shah Shuja Durrani brought the Koh-i-noor back to India in 1813 and gave it to Ranjit Singh (the founder of the Sikh Empire). In exchange, Ranjit Singh helped Shah Shuja get back the throne of Afghanistan.
 - In 1849, after the conquest of the Punjab by the British forces, the properties of the Sikh Empire were confiscated.
 - The Koh-i-Noor was transferred to the treasury of the British East India Company in Lahore.
 - Since 1849, the Koh-i-Noor has been part of the British crown jewels.

WHAT IS NOTA (NONE OF THE ABOVE)?

According to the Election Commission (EC) figures, over 2.6 lakh voters opted for NOTA in the recently held Karnataka assembly polls.



About NOTA (None of the Above):

- It is a **ballot option** provided in the elections **to the Indian voter**.
- It is the option which enables **the voter to officially register a vote of rejection for all candidates** who are contesting.
- If a voter chooses to press NOTA, it **indicates that the voter has not chosen to vote for any of the parties**.
- **Objective:** To enable electors who do not wish to vote for any of the candidates to **exercise their right to reject without violation of the secrecy of their decision**.
- **When was it first used?**
 - NOTA was used for the **first time in the 2013 Assembly elections in five states** - Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Delhi, and Madhya Pradesh - and **later in the 2014 General Elections**.
 - It was **introduced** into the electoral process **following the 2013 Supreme Court directive** in the PUCL versus Union of India case.
- **How does a person cast a NOTA vote?**
 - The **NOTA option** in the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) is **given at the bottom of the candidates' list**.
 - **Earlier, in order to cast a negative ballot, a voter had to inform the presiding officer** at the polling booth.
 - **Now the voter has just to press the NOTA option** on the EVM.
- **Does it have any impact on the results?**
 - NOTA has **no electoral value** in the Indian system.
 - **Even if the maximum votes are given in favour of NOTA, the candidate with the largest number of votes, which could theoretically even be just one, will still be declared the winner**.

HOW IS DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (CBI) APPOINTED?

A high-level committee meeting was recently held at the official residence of the Prime Minister in connection to the appointment of the new Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) director.



Appointment of the CBI Director:

- The CBI director is appointed **according to provisions under the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act (1946) and amendments therein brought by the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013.**
- The appointment is made by the Centre on recommendation by a three-member Appointment Committee.
- The appointment committee comprises the Prime Minister as the chairperson, the leader of the opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India, or a Supreme Court judge nominated by him.
- If there is no recognised LoP, then the leader of the single largest party is included in the committee.
- The Central Vigilance Commission Act 2003 fixed the tenure of the CBI director at 2 years.
- **Supreme Court Directions:**
 - The apex court, in a 2019 order, mandated that **no officer with less than six months' tenure remaining can be considered for the post of CBI chief.**
 - The court also ruled that the **director is to remain in office for 'not less than 2 years'** and can be transferred only with the consent of the appointing committee.

About Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI):

- It is the **premier investigative agency of India.**
- The agency was **established in 1963** by the Indian government as a result of the recommendation of the Santhanam Committee.
- CBI is **not a statutory body.** It derives its power to investigate from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act 1946.

- **Control:**
 - It operates under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.
 - However, for investigation of offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act, the CBI vests superintendence to the Central Vigilance Commission.
- **Functions**
 - Initially, it was set up to investigate corruption in government departments and public sector undertakings.
 - However, over the years, its jurisdiction has expanded to cover a wide range of cases, including economic offences, cyber crimes, organized crimes, and special crimes.

UNIQUE IDENTIFICATION AUTHORITY OF INDIA (UIDAI)

Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) recently launched a nationwide capacity-building drive in order to improve the efficiency of thousands of Aadhaar operators across the country.



About Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI):

- It is a statutory authority established under the provisions of the Aadhaar Act 2016 by the Govt. of India under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology.
- **Vision:** To empower residents of India with a unique identity and a digital platform to authenticate anytime, anywhere.
- It is created to issue Unique Identification Numbers (UID), which is also known as ‘Aadhaar number’ to all the residents of India.
- Under the Aadhaar Act 2016, UIDAI is responsible for Aadhaar enrolment and authentication, including operation and management of all stages of the Aadhaar life cycle and the system for issuing Aadhaar numbers to individuals.
- **Composition:** UIDAI consists of a Chairperson, two part-time Members and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who is also the Member-Secretary of the Authority.

What is Aadhar?

- It is a **12-digit individual identification number** issued by the UIDAI to the residents of **India** after a certain verification process.
- To get an Aadhaar number, **individuals have to provide minimal demographic and biometric information**, which include name, date of birth or age, gender, address, mobile number, and e-mail ID (optional), fingerprints, iris scans, and a facial photo.
- It serves as **proof of identity and proof of address** for residents of India.
- The Aadhaar number is **unique for each individual** and will **remain valid for a lifetime**.
- It will **help the residents to avail of various services** provided by banking, mobile phone connections and other Govt and Non-Govt services in due course.

AT G7, A WARNING ABOUT ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AS US DEBT CRISIS LOOMS

Why in news?

- Finance leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) nations gathered recently in the Japanese city of Niigata. Japan is the current chair of G7.
 - G7 is an intergovernmental informal political forum of 7 wealthy democracies formed in 1975.
 - **Members** -Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- The three-day meeting was overshadowed by a **S. debt ceiling stalemate** and fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

What will happen if the U.S. defaults?

- If the debt ceiling is not raised once the government reaches the ceiling and runs out of cash, the S. would be unable to pay its debt-holders, resulting in a default.
- **Domestic payments**
 - In this case, the government would be **unable to pay its bills** including military salaries, benefits to retirees, and interest and **other payments it owes to bondholders**.
- **Global financial crisis**
 - If the government cannot make interest payments to domestic and foreign investors, it could plunge the globe into a financial crisis.

- It would also increase the national debt, in turn causing widespread interest rate hikes for business owners, mortgages, and other sectors.
- A drop in U.S. consumer confidence would translate to **shocks in the financial market, tipping the economy into recession.**
- More than half of the world's foreign currency reserves are held in U.S. dollars. Hence, a US default would affect the treasury markets around the world.
 - A loss of confidence in the U.S. economy could force investors to sell U.S. Treasury bonds, thus weakening the dollar.
 - A sudden decrease in the currency's value could domino across treasury markets as the value of these reserves drops.
- **Downgraded creditworthiness of US**
- A U.S. default could lead to another downgrade of U.S. creditworthiness by agencies which in turn would raise the cost of borrowing for the government.
- **Impact on economy**
- It would result in large-scale job losses, weakening of the dollar, stock sell-offs.

WHAT IS MITOCHONDRIAL REPLACEMENT THERAPY (MRT)?

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), the U.K. fertility regulator, recently confirmed that less than five children have been born using mitochondrial replacement therapy (MRT) as of April 2023.



Why in News?

- In 2015, the United Kingdom became the first country to regulate mitochondrial replacement therapy (MRT).

About Mitochondrial Replacement Therapy (MRT):

- **What is it?** It is a new form of **reproductive in-vitro fertilization (IVF)** which works on the principle of **replacing a women's abnormal mitochondrial DNA (mt-DNA) with the donor's healthy one.**
- **Why is MRT done?**

- **People have two types of DNA** in their cells, **nuclear DNA**, which is **inherited from both parents** and **mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA)**, which is **inherited only from the mother**.
- **MRT is designed to prevent women who are carriers of mitochondrial diseases from passing on these heritable genetic diseases to their children.**
- **How is MRT carried out?**
- **MRT involves using an egg from an egg donor who doesn't have mutations.**
- **The nucleus of the egg is removed and replaced with the nuclear DNA from the woman who has mitochondrial DNA mutations.**
- **The egg is then fertilized** with the father's sperm in the embryology lab.
- **If it grows into an embryo** for transfer during IVF treatment, the embryo would be free of mitochondrial disease.

What is in-vitro fertilization (IVF)?

- It is a type of **assisted reproductive technology (ART)** where **sperm and an egg are fertilized outside of the human body**.
- IVF is a complex process that **involves retrieving eggs from ovaries** and manually **combining them with sperm in a lab for fertilization**.
- Several days after fertilization, the **fertilized egg (now called an embryo)** is **placed inside a uterus**. Pregnancy occurs when this embryo implants itself into the uterine wall.

What is Mitochondria?

- Mitochondria are **membrane-bound cell organelles** that **generate most of the chemical energy** needed to power the cell's biochemical reactions.
- Mitochondria are often **referred to as the powerhouses of the cell**.
- **Chemical energy produced** by the mitochondria is **stored in a small molecule called adenosine triphosphate (ATP)**. ATP is the chemical energy "currency" of the cell that powers the cell's metabolic activities.
- Generally, mitochondria, and therefore mitochondrial DNA, are **inherited only from the mother**.