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TODAY'S ANALYSIS

(24 January 2025)

TOPICS TO BE COVERED

- PRALAY MISSILES
- EVACUATION IN RATNAGIRI
- MCQs



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PRALAY MISSILE

- The **Pralay missile**, an **indigenously developed short-range, quasi-ballistic missile**, will make its **first appearance at the Republic Day Parade in 2025**.
- This marks a significant moment for India's indigenous defense technology.
- This missile showcases **India's growing self-reliance in defense and strategic capabilities**.
 - The inclusion of Pralay signals a leap in strengthening India's deterrent posture.



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KEY FEATURES

- **Range:** 150-500 km.
- **Payload Capacity:** 500-1,000 kg, capable of carrying conventional warheads.
- **Guidance:** Equipped with advanced guidance systems for high precision, offering a **Circular Error Probable (CEP) of less than 10 meters.**
- **Speed:** Reaches terminal **speeds of Mach 6.1.**
- **Mobility:** Can be launched from a **mobile launcher**, enhancing flexibility in deployment, especially along sensitive borders like the **Line of Control (LoC)** and **Line of Actual Control (LAC).**
- **Capabilities:** Can target radar installations, command centers, airstrips, and more. Its ability to alter its path mid-flight adds to its versatility.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF PRALAY MISSILE

- **Development:** The Pralay missile is part of India's ongoing efforts to strengthen its indigenous defense production.
- It was developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**, drawing from technologies developed in the **Prithvi Defense Vehicle.**

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- **Strategic Deployment:** It is designed for use along critical borders, including **LAC** and **LoC**, enhancing India's capability to respond swiftly to regional threats.

OTHER DISPLAYS DURING REPUBLIC DAY

- **Theme:** The parade will **blend military strength with cultural heritage**, emphasizing India's unity and diversity.
- **Cultural Significance:**
 - 2 special **tableaus** will commemorate **75 years of the Indian Constitution**.
 - **5,000 folk and tribal artists will perform**, representing **45 tribal cultures**, including **Indonesian traditions**.
 - **International Representation:** An Indonesian contingent of **160 marchers and 190 band members** will participate, enhancing bilateral relations.
- **Military Display:**
 - Key military assets include **BrahMos missiles, multi-barrel rocket launchers, T-90 tanks**, and **Nag missiles**.
 - The **Pralay missile** will be highlighted for its strategic significance.

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- **Participation:**

- **18 marching contingents**, 15 bands, and 31 tableaux will be featured.
- The parade will be attended by over **1 lakh spectators**, including **10,000 special guests**.
- Marching contingents will represent **various ministries and services**, reflecting **India's diverse** defense and cultural fabric.

TRI SERVICE REPRESENTATION

- **Tri-Service Contingent:** The parade will feature a **joint representation from India's Army, Navy, and Air Force**, symbolizing defense cohesion.
- **Navy Tableau:** For the **first time**, the **Indian Navy will present** its own dedicated tableau.
- **International Contingents:** The **Indonesian contingent's participation** will symbolize strengthening ties between India and **Southeast Asia**, adding a global dimension to the parade.

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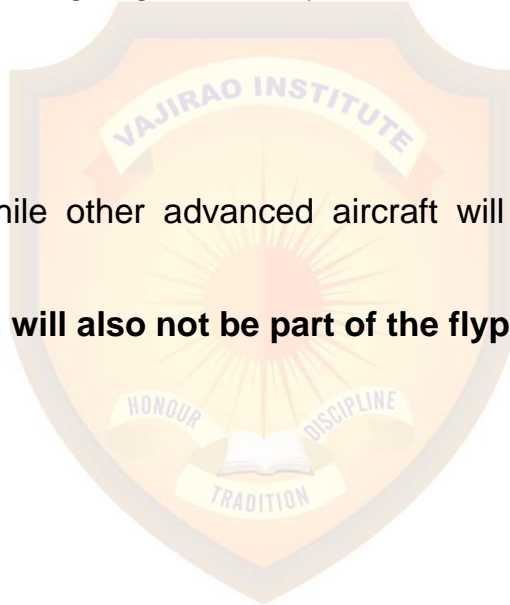
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ABSENCE OF ALH & TEJAS

- **ALH Grounded:** The **Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH)** will be absent due to ongoing safety checks after a recent crash.
- The helicopter is still undergoing necessary evaluations, making it unavailable for the parade.
- **Tejas Fighter Jet:** While other advanced aircraft will be displayed, **Tejas, India's indigenous fighter jet, will also not be part of the flypast this year.**



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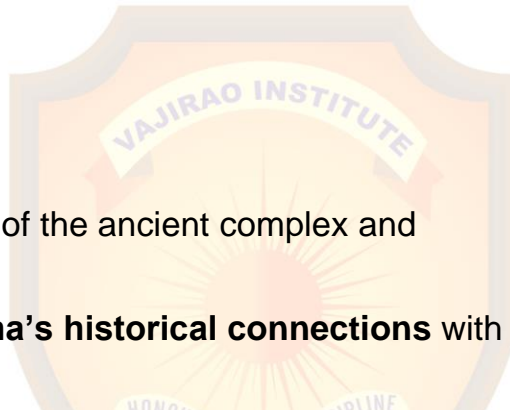
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EXCAVATION IN RATNAGIRI

- **Excavation Site:** The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** resumed excavations at the **Ratnagiri Buddhist Complex** in **Jajpur District**, Odisha, in **December 2024**, after a **60-year gap**.
- The aim was two-fold:
 - to discover more of the ancient complex and
 - to **explore Odisha's historical connections with Southeast Asia**.



**A colossal Buddha head,
a giant palm unearthed during
an ASI excavation in Ratnagiri**

What this means



A view of the excavation site in Ratnagiri, Odisha



KEY FINDINGS

- **Colossal Buddha Head:** Approximately **3-4 feet tall**, this discovery is a significant symbol of **Buddhism's presence and influence in the region.**
- **Massive Palm:** Measuring **5 feet** in length, this **unusual find adds to the mystery and significance of the site.**
- **Ancient Wall and Buddhist Relics:** Remnants of structures and inscribed Buddhist relics dating back to the **8th-9th Century AD** were also discovered.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

- **Location and Background:** Ratnagiri, part of the **Diamond Triangle of Odisha** (along with Udaygiri and Lalitgiri), is located about **100 km northeast of Bhubaneswar**. It has been a prominent Buddhist site for centuries.
- **Previous Excavations:** The last major excavations were between **1958 and 1961** by archaeologist **Debala Mitra**, which unearthed significant structures like a **brick stupa**, **monastic complexes**, and numerous **votive stupas**.
- **Current Goals:** The current excavation focuses on exploring **partially visible structures**, potential **shrine complexes** or **chaitya halls** (Buddhist prayer halls), and the **ceramic assemblage** to further understand the site's cultural context.

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CULTURAL & TRADE LINKS WITH SOUTH EAST ASIA

- **Historical Context:** Odisha, historically known as the kingdom of **Kalinga**, had extensive maritime and trade links with **Southeast Asian countries**.
 - **Trade Goods:** Items such as **pepper, cinnamon, silk, and jewelry** were exchanged between Kalinga and regions like **Bali, Java, Sumatra, and Burma (Myanmar)**.
 - **Baliyatra Festival:** Odisha celebrates an annual festival, **Baliyatra**, to commemorate these ancient maritime links.
- **Role of Kalinga:** While **there is no direct evidence of Buddha visiting Odisha**, Kalinga played a pivotal role in spreading Buddhism across Southeast Asia due to its trade links.
- Notably, **Tapassu and Bhallika**, two merchant brothers from Odisha, are believed to be **among the first disciples of Buddha**.

RATNAGIRI & LEGACY OF BUDDHISM

- **Buddhism in Odisha:** Odisha, particularly during the reign of **Mauryan Emperor Ashoka** (261-232 BCE), saw the rise of Buddhism.

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- Ashoka, after his conquest of Kalinga, embraced Buddhism and helped spread it across his empire, **influencing Southeast Asia, Sri Lanka, and Central Asia.**
- **Flourishing Under the Bhaumakara Dynasty:** Buddhism thrived in Odisha under the **Bhaumakara dynasty** (8th-10th Century), and **Ratnagiri** became a major center of Buddhist learning.
- **Scholarly Significance:** Scholars believe that **Ratnagiri** rivaled **Nalanda** as a center of Buddhist learning.
- The region was significant for the development of **Mahayana** and **Tantrayana (Vajrayana)** sects, which incorporated mystical elements of Buddhism.

RATNAGIRI'S ROLE IN ANCIENT BUDDHIST STUDIES

- **Centers of Learning:** Experts like **Thomas Donaldson** suggest that **Ratnagiri** was comparable to **Nalanda** in its role as a learning hub.
- Some of the texts studied here were related to **Mahayana** and **Tantrayana** Buddhism.
- **Historical Visitors:** The renowned **Chinese monk Xuanzang (Hiuen Tsang)**, who visited India in the 7th century, might have visited Ratnagiri, highlighting its prominence as a Buddhist educational site.

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FOCUS ON SOUTHEAST ASIAN MATERIAL CULTURE

- **Material Evidence:** The current excavation seeks to discover more **material culture** from Southeast Asia, which has been less explored in previous digs.
- This could provide valuable insights into the **cultural exchanges** between India and Southeast Asia, especially through trade and religion.
- **Buddhist Cultural Framework:** ASI officials aim to better understand the **cultural framework** of the site, particularly in relation to the Buddha head and other relics.

FUTURE PROSPECTS OF EXCAVATION

- **Continued Excavation:** The excavation efforts will continue for another **month or two**, with plans for further exploration depending on the findings.
- If the current findings justify it, additional excavation steps will be taken.
- **Further Insights Expected:** Experts hope that the discoveries will provide more information about the **lifestyle, religion, art, and architecture** of the Buddhist community in ancient Odisha.
- The excavations may also reveal whether the site holds even older relics, predating the 5th century.

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MCQs

1. Consider the following statements and mark the correct one:

1. Pralay is a short range ballistic missile.
2. It can be launched from a mobile missile launcher.

- (A) Only 1
- (B) Only 2
- (C) Both 1 & 2
- (D) Neither 1 nor 2



Ans. (B)

2. In which border has the Pralay missile been deployed?

- (A) Indo Bangladesh
- (B) Indo Nepal
- (C) Indo China
- (D) Indo Myanmar

Ans. (C)

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3. Which of these places in Odisha is not part of the Diamond Triangle?

- (A) Ratnagiri
- (B) Udaygiri
- (C) Lalitgiri
- (D) Puri

Ans. (D)

4. Recently, Buddha's head & palm has been excavated from Ratnagiri. What does it signify?

- 1. Odisha as a major Buddhist center in ancient India.
- 2. Links with Southeast Asia

- (A) Only 1
- (B) Only 2
- (C) Both 1 & 2
- (D) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans. (C)

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