

Development of Excavation Sites and Heritage Complexes (DESH) scheme

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Government policies and interventions

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed developing archaeological sites in the Union Budget 2026.

- **Aim** - It is a **heritage-based cultural tourism development scheme** aimed at developing archaeological sites into vibrant experiential cultural destinations.
- **Nodal Ministry** - The Ministry of Culture.
- **Objective** - To place heritage at the centre of cultural tourism.
- To open excavated landscapes for **public engagement and generate local employment**, and strengthen regional economies.
- To disperse tourism from over-crowded destinations to emerging heritage locations.
- **Proposed Sites** - Sites span from 3rd century BC to 19th century, across India.

Period	Site
Indus Valley / Ancient Civilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lothal (Gujarat) • Dholavira (Gujarat) • Rakhigarhi (Haryana) • Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh) • Agroha (Haryana) • Eran (Madhya Pradesh - ancient mint site)
Buddhist / Early Historic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarnath (Uttar Pradesh) • Sannati (Karnataka) • Udayagiri (Odisha)
Iron Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adichanallur (Tamil Nadu - Iron Age urn burial site)

Medieval to Early Modern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jhansi Fort (Uttar Pradesh) • Chittorgarh Fort (Rajasthan) • Purana Qila (New Delhi) • Leh Palace (Ladakh) • Sibasagar - Ahom site (Assam)
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References

[IE | DESH scheme](#)

