Excavations in Mythical towns

Why in news?

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The Department of Science and Technology (DST) is planning to send robotic vehicles into the sea near Dwaraka in Gujarat, and Puhar in Tamil Nadu.

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What the programme is all about?

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- The programme is expected to involve organisations such as the **National Institute of Ocean Technology** and the **National Institute of Oceanography (NIO).**
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- It is aimed to look for submerged structures that may point to evidence on the ancient cities.
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- It is also to test several technologies such as sophisticated imaging technology which helps to map the ocean floor with sonar.
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- It will also help to date old stones and recoverable implements using the latest techniques.
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- Earlier an expert committee had found evidence of the course of the Saraswati, a river mentioned in the Rig Veda and in Hindu mythology.
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History of Dwaraka

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- Excavations at Dwaraka, a coastal town in Jamnagar district of Gujarat, have a long history.
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- Dwaraka, a port city, finds mention in ancient Greek texts from the 1st millennium and, according to legend, was a rich city that sank into the sea.
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- It is on the right bank of the Gomti River.
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- It is one of the foremost Chardhams i.e four sacred Hindu pilgrimage sites
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- Nearly a decade ago, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) found copper coins and segments of granite structures.
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- Pottery found here suggest that the city could be over 3,000 years old.
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- Dwarka is often identified with the Dwarka Kingdom, the ancient kingdom of Krishna, and is believed to have been the first capital of Gujarat.
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History of Puhar

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- Puhar is a town in the Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu.
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- It was once a flourishing ancient port city known as Kaveri poompattinam.
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- It is mentioned in the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea.
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- Tamil and Buddhist literature also have references to Poompuhar, or Puhar, as being the **port capital of the Chola dynasty**.
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- The ancient Tamil poem Manimekalai by the poet Seethalai Saathanar is set in the town of Kaveripattanam.
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Source: The Hindu

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