

## Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi Tree

**Prelims** - *Current events of International Importance*

**Mains (GS II)** - *Bilateral relations*

### Why in News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently visited the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi temple at the historic city of Anuradhapura during his trip to Sri Lanka.

- Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi tree is considered the **oldest living cultivated plant in the world.**
- It is believed to have grown from a branch that an Indian princess carried to **Sri Lanka.**
- This Bo (Ficus religiosa, Pipal in Hindi) tree is believed to have grown from a branch of the tree in Bodhgaya (Bihar) under which Gautam Buddha attained enlightenment.
- The branch was carried to Sri Lanka by **Sanghamitta** (or Sanghamitra), the Mauryan king Ashoka's daughter and Buddhist nun.
- **Spread of Buddhism in Sri Lanka** - During the reign of Ashoka, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Buddhist Council was convened, where it was decided to send missionaries to various regions to propagate the teachings of Buddhism.
- As part of this mission, Mahinda, Ashoka's son, travelled to Sri Lanka.
- There, he met **King Devanampiya Tissa**, who was the ruler of Anuradhapura, and successfully converted him to Buddhism.
- Sanghamitta had travelled to Sri Lanka in response to an invitation from King Devanampiya Tissa, as well as the request of her brother, Mahendra (or Mahinda).
- Her arrival in Sri Lanka with the tree is still celebrated as **Uduvapa Poya**, an annual festival observed on a full moon night in December.
- The tree, along with the other Buddhist shrines in the ancient city of Anuradhapura, is a major pilgrimage centre for Buddhists.
- **Anuradhapura** - It is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site.**
- Anuradhapura was established around the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE by King Pandukabhaya, the first King of Sri Lanka.
- Anuradhapura remained the capital of Lankan rulers from 377 BC to 1017 CE.
- It is known for its ancient monuments, monasteries, and palaces, which have drawn pilgrims and historians alike for centuries.
- **Other Buddhist sites in Anuradhapura** - Jetavanaramaya Stupa, Ruwanwelisaya Dagoba, Isurumuniya Temple, Ranmasu Uyana.

### References

1. [The Indian Express | Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi Tree](#)

2. [Times Now | Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi in Sri Lanka](#)

