Petroglyphs

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance*

Why in News?

Recently, ancient petroglyphs were discovered along the Aravalli Mountains.

- **Petroglyphs** – They are ancient symbolic images, figures, or inscriptions carved into rock surfaces.
- **Methodology –** Created by pecking, incising, drilling, or scratching with a harder tool (usually stones) to expose the lighter rock underneath.
- **Timeline –** Many key petroglyphs in India date back to the Mesolithic Period (~10,000 to 8,000 BCE) and continue into historic periods.
- **Purpose –** Served as early communication, astronomical markers, mapping, and tribal boundary markers.
- **Major Petroglyph Sites in India –** Ladakh (India's first Petroglyph Conservation Park), Konkan Region (Maharashtra), Edakkal Caves (Kerala), Usgalimal (Goa)**.**

Petroglyphs are distinct from ***petrographs*** (which are simply painted or drawn onto rocks) and serve as vital archaeological records of early human life, migrations, and ecological history.

Aravalli Petroglyphs

- **Discovered in –** Bhondsi stretch of the Aravalli forests, Gurugram (Haryana).
- **Discovered Features –** Petroglyphs, cupules (cup-shaped depressions), geometric grids, possible stone game boards, a foot-shaped engraving, and stone tools.
- **Significance of the Discovery**
- The site demonstrates a rare chronological continuity of human activity, linking early stone-tool traditions with later ritualistic, symbolic, and social practices.
- The discovery is important because evidence from multiple prehistoric phases appears to coexist within the same landscape.
- **The Bhondsi cluster** – It lies near the Bhuvneshwari Mata Mandir complex in the Aravalli belt extending from Delhi Ridge through Gurugram and Faridabad.
- **Other distribution** – Similar prehistoric markers have also been documented at *Sanjay Van, JNU Ridge, East of Kailash, Surajkund, Mohabatabad, Dhauj, Kot, and Alwar*, highlighting the archaeological significance of the Aravalli landscape.

Reference

[The Indian Express| Petroglyphs]