Repatriation of Leiden Copper Plates (Anaimangalam Charter)

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Why in News?

Netherlands has returned Chola era Anaimangalam Copper Plates also known as the leiden Copper Plates to India as a gesture of cultural diplomacy & heritage.

Highlights of the Plate

- **Plate Records**- Chola Emperor Raja Raja Chola I (985 – 1014CE) gave land grant of Anaimangalam village (near Nagapattinam) to Buddhist Monastery.
- **Grant**- Was made for Chulamanivarma Vihara (knows as Raja Raja Cholan Perumpalli)
- **Geopolitical Connection –** King Sri Mara Vijayotunga Varman of Saikendra Dynasty of Srivijaya (Java/Indonesia) constructed this vihara in honor of his father Sri Chudamani Varman.
- **Religious Harmony -** The charter stands as an outstanding historical testament to secular statecraft, illustrating how devout Saivite (Hindu) monarchs actively patronized and protected Buddhist institutions.



Chronology of Implementation.

- **Raja Raja Chola I** – Initial Oral Decree for the land grant was issued.
- **Rajandra Chola I (1014 -1044 AD) –** Committed his Fathers oral command in writing. It Constitutes 21 Larger Leiden Plates 5 in Sanskrit & 16 in Tamil.
- **Kulottunga Chola I (1070–1120 CE) –** Issued 3 smaller leiden Plates on appeal by 2 emissaries from Java, Confirming additional grants of land & 4500 Kalam (Traditional Unit of Measurement) of Paddy to the Buddhist Sanga.
- This was in addition to Raja Raja Chola I's grant of 8,943 *kalam* of paddy.

Features of the Plate –

- **Seal –** With a Massive bronze Ring, Plates are strung together with a secured Chola Royal Seal.
- **Dynastic Hegemony** – Seal features Tiger (Emblem of Cholas) Flanked by 2 fish (Emblem of Pandyas) & Bow (Emblem of Cheras). Inclusion of all 3 symbols shows Cholas supremacy over
- **Dynastic Hegemony -** The insignia features the **Tiger** (the dynastic emblem of the Cholas) flanked by **Two Fish** (the emblem of the Pandyas) and a **Bow** (the emblem of the Cheras). The inclusion of all three symbols in one seal, signifies Chola imperial suzerainty over other kingdoms.
- The seal also displays a royal parasol, 2 Chamaras (Fly –Whisks), Lamps, a swastika, the word Anaimangalam in Tamil & Sanskrit Sloka Praising the Monarch.

Future Repatriation

Experts believe in repatriation of Velvikkudi Copper plates from British Museum.

- **Historical Significance -** The Velvikkudi plates belong to the Pandya dynasty, issued by ruler Parantaka Nedunchadaiyan (765–815 CE), and are a vital source for reconstructing land tenure systems.

For reference: The Hindu | IAS Parliament

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