

# Holy relic of St Queen Ketevan

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## In news

Recently, India handed over the Holy relic of St Queen Ketevan to Georgia.

## Background

On the request of Georgian Government the Holy relic was sent to Georgia in 2017 which returned to India in 2018.

Considering the persistent request from the Georgian side for permanent transfer of the Holy Relics and also taking into account the historical, religious and spiritual sentiments that are attached to the St. Queen Ketevan by the Georgian people, Government of India has decided to gift one part of Holy Relics to the Government and people of Georgia.



## About St Queen Ketevan(1560-1624)

- She was the **queen of Kakhети**, a **kingdom located in a region of eastern Georgia** that bears the same name.

- Kakheti was a small kingdom, which was nestled between two mighty Islamic empires: The Ottoman empire (in present-day Turkey) and the Safavid empire (in present-day Iran).
- She was killed in Safavid Iran for refusing to give up her Christian faith and convert to Islam.
- Queen Ketevan was canonised as a saint by the Georgian Orthodox Church shortly after her death.
- Her place as a subject of veneration is attributed to her courageous stand against the demand for forcible conversion.
- From Kakheti, a kingdom in eastern Georgia, she was tortured and killed in 1624 in Shiraz during the rule of the Safavid dynasty.
- Portuguese missionaries were said to have carried the relics to Goa in 1627 and interred in St. Augustine Complex.
- Her relics were found in 2005 at the St. Augustine Convent in Old Goa, India, on the basis of medieval Portuguese records.
- On directions of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad, carried out DNA analysis that confirmed its authenticity.

## **Safavid Dynasty**

- It was one of the most significant ruling dynasties of Iran from 1501 to 1736.
- The Safavid dynasty had its origin in the Safavid order of Sufism, which was established in the city of Ardabil in the Iranian Azerbaijan region.
- It was an Iranian dynasty of Kurdish origin, but during their rule they intermarried with Turkoman, Georgian, Circassian, and Pontic Greek dignitaries.
- The Safavids ruled from 1501 to 1722 (experiencing a brief restoration from 1729 to 1736).