

Pandav Leni Buddhist caves

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In news- Three new small caves have been discovered by an Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) employee at the PandavLeni cave complex in **Nashik**. The age of the new caves may be determined after their study is completed and documentation is carried out.

About the Pandav Leni caves-

- The caves are also known as **Pandu Caves/ Trirashmi Buddhist Caves**.
- It is a group of **25 caves** that were carved out of **Trirashmi Hill between the 2nd century BC and 6th century AD**.
- The name is derived from the word **"Tiranhu"** which is inscribed in the Caves which means **"rays of sunlight"**.
- The caves complex was **documented in 1823 by Captain James Delamaine**.
- These caves were carved and donated by various kings that ruled Nashik – **the Satavahanas, the Nahapanas, the Abhirs** to the **Buddhist monks**.
- Some caves are intricately connected by stone-cut ladders that join them to the other caves.
- These rock-cut caves served as **viharas or monasteries** for the disciples to meet and hear sermons.
- **Chaityas** were used for chanting and meditation.
- The caves have **images of Buddha, Bodhisattva, sculptures representing the King, farmers, merchants** and rich iconography depicting a beautiful amalgamation of **Indo – Greek architecture**.
- The site has an excellent ancient water management system with several attractive water tanks.
- Inscriptions in caves 3, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19 and 20 are legible.
- Since the caves were **inhabited by the Mahayana as well**

as the Hinayana sects of Buddhism, a nice confluence of structural and carvings can be seen.