

Reclining Buddha in India

May 27, 2021

In news- India's largest statue of the Reclining Buddha will be installed at the **Buddha International Welfare Mission temple in Bodh Gaya.**

About the statue-

- The **100-foot fibreglass statue** has been built over three months by a team of 22 artisans in Kolkata.
- The **Buddha died** when he was 80 years old, **in a state of meditation**, in Kushinagar in eastern Uttar Pradesh.
- A reclining Buddha statue or image **represents Buddha during his last illness**, about to enter **Parinirvana**, the stage of great salvation after death.
- It also signifies the **Buddha's last deeksha** – even while on his deathbed, he took a follower into the fold.

More about reclining Buddha-

- Statues and images of the Reclining Buddha show him **lying on his right side, his head resting on a cushion or on his right elbow.**
- It is a popular iconographic depiction in Buddhism meant to show that **all beings have the potential to be awakened and be released from the cycle of death and rebirth.**
- The Reclining Buddha was **first depicted in Gandhara art** (50 BC – 75 AD) and peaked during the **Kushana period** from the first to the fifth centuries AD.
- Since Buddha was against idol worship, in the centuries immediately following his parinirvana (483 BC), his representation was through symbols.
- As the devotional aspect subsequently entered Buddhist practice, iconographic representations of The Buddha began.
- In Sri Lanka and India, the Buddha is mostly shown in

sitting postures, while the **reclining postures are more prevalent in Thailand and other parts of SouthEast Asia.**

- The **Bhamala Buddha Parinirvana in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province** dates back to the 2nd century AD, and is considered the **oldest statue of its kind** in the world.
- In India, **Cave No. 26 of Ajanta** contains a 24-foot-long and nine-foot-tall sculpture of the Reclining Buddha, believed to have been carved in the 5th century AD.
- In the late 15th century, a 70-metre statue of the Reclining Buddha was built at the **Hindu temple site of Baphuon in Cambodia's Angkor.**
- The **largest Reclining Buddha in the world** is the 600-foot Winsein Tawya Buddha **built in 1992 in Mawlamyine, Myanmar.**
- There is a 6-metre-long red sandstone monolith statue of the Reclining Buddha inside the **Parinirvana Stupain Kushinagar.**
- At the **Mahabodhi temple**, the Buddha is sitting in the **Bhoomi-sparsha mudra**, where his hand is pointing towards the ground which **symbolises earth as being witness to his enlightenment.**
- At **Sarnath**, where the Buddha gave his first sermon, the stone statue has a hand gesture called the **dharma-chakra mudra, which signifies preaching.**
- While the Sitting Buddha signifies teaching or meditating, the Standing Buddha signifies rising to teach after reaching nirvana.