Sisupalgarh- a fortified historic city is in danger

March 4, 2023

In news– Land sharks armed with heavy earth-moving equipment have damaged a portion of the wall of the fortified ancient city of Sisupalgarh in Odisha.

A brief history of Sisupalgarh-

- Sisupalgarh or Sisupalagada is s**ituated in Khurda District in Odisha**, India and houses **ruined fortifications.**
- **It used to be the capital of ancient Kalinga**. It is **identified with Kalinganagara of Kharavela and Tosali of Ashoka.**
- It is **one of the largest and best preserved early historic fortifications in India,** with the earliest occupation both inside and outside the later site´s northern rampart around 7th to 6th centuries BCE.

- **This is the only fortified site in India having eight gateways.**

- On the basis of the architectural pattern and artefacts discovered during the early excavations, B.B. Lal concluded that this fort city flourished between 3rd century BC and 4th century AD.
- On the basis of the new findings, M.L. Smith and R. Mohanty claimed in 2001 that the fortified city flourished from around 5th century BC and probably lasted well after the 4th century.
- Thus, this defensive settlement originated prior to the Mauryan empire.
- **The excavation of the Sisupalgarh site was first taken up in 1948,** when it was declared a **Centrally Protected Monument under the provisions of the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904**, involving an area measuring

562.681 acres and covering five villages in 1950.
- During its excavation, archaeologists were surprised to find architectural and engineering marvels of the fortified city.
- The urban centre had an area of 1.2 km by 1 km, and it was **surrounded by a moat.**
- **The water management system of the city was unique.** The fortification was carried out in the 4th to 3rd century BCE, when King Kharavela took up the repair of the city 2,100 years ago.
- **Sisupalgarh is said to be one of very few historical references of the present capital city of Bhubaneswar.**