

St. Francis Xavier

December 4, 2021

In news-Recently, the Prime Minister of India has greeted the people of Goa on the day of the Feast of St. Francis Xavier.

About St. Francis Xavier-

- He was a **Spanish Jesuit who lived as a Roman Catholic missionary** in the 1500s.
- He was **born on 7th April 1506 in the kingdom of Navarre in present day Spain.**
- He was **one of the first seven members of the Jesuit order under the leadership of St. Ignatius of Loyola.**
- He travelled extensively, particularly in India, Southeast Asia, and Japan, to share his faith. Francis was the **first Jesuit to go to Japan as a missionary.**
- He is the patron saint of Roman Catholic missions.
- He was **instrumental in the establishment of Christianity in India,** the Malay Archipelago, and Japan.
- He **brought several novel strategies to missionary work that influenced generations of Roman Catholic missions.**
- **He is credited for the idea that missionaries must adapt to the customs and language of the people they evangelize.**
- He also **advocated for an educated native clergy** to perpetuate the newly formed Christian communities.
- **He died on December 3, 1552 on the island of Sancian** (now Shang-ch'uan Tao, off the Chinese coast) while **trying to gain entrance to China,** which was then closed to foreigners.
- Xavier was first buried on a beach at Shangchuan Island, Taishan, Guangdong.
- His body was taken from the island in February 1553 and temporarily buried in St. Paul's Church in Portuguese Malacca on 22 March 1553.
- An open grave in the church now marks the place of Xavier's burial. Pereira came back from Goa, removed the

corpse shortly after 15 April 1553, and moved it to his house.

- **On 11 December 1553, Xavier's body was shipped to Goa.**
- **The body is now in the Basilica of Bom Jesus in Goa,** where it was placed in a glass container encased in a silver casket on 2 December 1637.
- **The Feast of St Francis is celebrated at the Basilica of Bom Jesus,** which is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site.**
- The Basilica is one of the oldest churches in Goa, which was completed in 1605.
- It is considered the greatest example of Baroque architecture in the whole of India and is one of Goa's popular tourist attractions.
- **The mausoleum was built in the 17th Century by the Florentine sculptor Giovanni Battista Foggini** and took 10 long years to complete.