

# St Thomas shrine

April 18, 2023

**In news**— Kerala BJP Vice President trekked to a hilltop shrine in Malayattoor village of the Ernakulam district, Kerala, on the occasion of a festival held there on the first Sunday after Easter.

## **A brief note on St Thomas-**

- He was **one of Jesus's 12 original followers**. He is believed to have spread Jesus's word far and wide, coming to India in the process.
- However, due to lack of documentary evidence, St Thomas's visit to India is a subject of lively debate.
- **Thomas is commonly known as "Doubting Thomas"** because he initially doubted the resurrection of Jesus Christ when he was told of it (as is related in the Gospel of John); he later confessed his faith ("My Lord and my God") on seeing the wounds left over from the crucifixion.
- According to traditional accounts of the Saint Thomas Christians of modern-day Kerala in India, **Saint Thomas travelled outside the Roman Empire to preach the Gospel**, travelling as far as the Tamilakam which is in South India, and **reached Muziris of Tamilakam** (modern-day North Paravur and Kodungalloor in Kerala State, India) in AD 52.
- In 1258, some of the relics were brought to Ortona, in Abruzzo, Italy, where they have been held in the Church of Saint Thomas the Apostle.
- He is **regarded as the patron saint of India** among its Christian adherents, and the **Feast of Saint Thomas on July 3 is celebrated as Indian Christians' Day**. The name Thomas remains quite popular among the Saint Thomas Christians of the Indian subcontinent.
- Many churches in the Middle East and southern Asia, besides India, also mention Apostle Thomas in their

historical traditions as being the first evangelist to establish those churches, the Assyrian Church of the East, the early church of Sri Lanka.

### **The Malayattoor Church-**

- The **St Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic International Shrine, Malayattoor** (or **Malayattoor Church**) is one of the eight international shrines in the world, situated in Malayattoor Angamaly, Ernakulam district of Kerala.
- The church has been **designated by the Vatican as one of the eight International shrines in the world.**
- It is believed that **St. Thomas held prayer at the place** where the church is situated when he landed in Kerala.
- St. Thomas is believed to have landed at Kodungallur (Cranganore) in Kerala in AD 52.
- In AD 62, St. Thomas returns to Malankara coast via Malayatur where he establishes 'the half church' (a small Christian community dependent on the Church of Maliamkara).