

## **1. Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**

### **Why in News?**

- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has recently discovered a 1,300-year-old stupa right in the middle of a mining site in Odisha's Jajpur district at a Khondalite mining site.

### **Highlights**

- The stupa could be 4.5-metre tall and initial assessment showed it may belong to the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century.
- It was found at Parabhadi which is situated near Lalitagiri, a major Buddhist complex, having a large number of stupas and monasteries.
- Lalitgiri Buddhist site is believed to be the most sacred among the three sites (Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri) as it unearthed a massive stupa where a relic of Buddha was discovered inside a stone casket.
- It is the place from where Khondalite stones were supplied for the beautification project around the 12<sup>th</sup> Century Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri.
- Khondalite is a type of metamorphic rock that is found in the Eastern Ghats region of India, particularly in the state of Odisha. It is named after the Khondalite Group of rocks, which is believed to have formed around 1.6 billion years ago during the Proterozoic era.
- It is primarily composed of feldspar, quartz, and mica, and has a distinct pinkish-grey coloration. It is commonly used as a decorative stone in construction and is particularly prized for its durability and resistance to weathering.
- It stones were widely used in ancient temple complexes. They are proposed to be used widely to maintain aesthetic value of some projects such as heritage security zone, Jagannath Ballav pilgrim centre, etc.