Syllabus subtopic: Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.

Prelims and Mains focus: about the move and its significance; about Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958; about ASI

News: The number of monuments under the Centre’s protection could increase as the government is planning a review of those under the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and the ones protected by the State governments.

Current scenario

- At present, 3,691 monuments nationwide are protected by the ASI, with the highest number, 745, in Uttar Pradesh.

- The list of the Centrally protected monuments had not seen a substantial increase in many years, and important sites under the State governments could be added to the list. On the other hand, there were some monuments that could be removed from the Central list and placed under the State governments.

About the move

- The list of Centrally protected monuments can go up to 10,000. In Tamil Nadu alone, there are about 7,000 temples, many of which are hundreds of years old. On the other hand, there are some monuments under the ASI that can be shifted to the State list.

- There were some sites that could be moved from the Central list, allowing development works in their vicinity. There is a ban on construction within 100 metres of a Centrally protected monument and regulated construction within 100-200 metres under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958. The Act protects
About Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is the premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage of India. It was established in 1861. It works under Ministry of culture.

- The major functions of Archaeological Survey of India include maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance.

- Under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act of 1958, the ASI has declared 3656 monuments to be of national importance in the country.

- ASI has also undertaken major conservation works abroad besides carrying out excavations, explorations, images and other studies in countries like Afghanistan, Nepal, Cambodia and Egypt.