Excavations in Mythical towns

Why in news?

The Department of Science and Technology (DST) is planning to send robotic vehicles into the sea near Dwaraka in Gujarat, and Puhar in Tamil Nadu.

What the programme is all about?

- The programme is expected to involve organisations such as the **National Institute of Ocean Technology** and the **National Institute of Oceanography (NIO).**
- It is aimed to look for submerged structures that may point to evidence on the ancient cities.
- It is also to test several technologies such as sophisticated imaging technology which helps to map the ocean floor with sonar.
- It will also help to date old stones and recoverable implements using the latest techniques.
- Earlier an expert committee had found evidence of the course of the Saraswati, a river mentioned in the Rig Veda and in Hindu mythology.

History of Dwaraka

- Excavations at Dwaraka, a coastal town in Jamnagar district of Gujarat, have a long history.

- Dwaraka, a port city, finds mention in ancient Greek texts from the 1st millennium and, according to legend, was a rich city that sank into the sea.
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- It is on the right bank of the Gomti River.
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- It is one of the foremost Chardhams i.e four sacred Hindu pilgrimage sites
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- Nearly a decade ago, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) found copper coins and segments of granite structures.
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- Pottery found here suggest that the city could be over 3,000 years old.
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- Dwarka is often identified with the Dwarka Kingdom, the ancient kingdom of Krishna, and is believed to have been the first capital of Gujarat.
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History of Puhar

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- Puhar is a town in the Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu.
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- It was once a flourishing ancient port city known as Kaveri poompattinam.
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- It is mentioned in the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea.
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- Tamil and Buddhist literature also have references to Poompuhar, or Puhar, as being the **port capital of the Chola dynasty**.
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- The ancient Tamil poem Manimekalai by the poet Seethalai Saathanar is set in the town of Kaveripattanam.
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Source: The Hindu

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