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Q65

What is/are common to the two historical places known as Ajanta and Mahabalipuram? 1. Both were built in the same period. 2. Both belong to the same religious denomination. 3. Both have rock-cut monuments. Select the correct answer using the code given below (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) None of the statements given above is correct Official key: B.

UPSC Civil Services Prelims 2016 · General Studies · 2 marks · Art and Culture

Indian art, architecture, culture - Prelims GS Paper I.

Explanation**(a)**

Statement 1 (same period) and statement 2 (same religious denomination) are both false. **Ajanta's** principal caves span Satavahana to Vakataka centuries (roughly 2nd century BCE to 5th-6th century CE) and are Buddhist; **Mahabalipuram** is largely Pallava, 7th-8th century CE, and Hindu (with some Jain). 1 and 2 only is not the key.

(b) Official key

- **Statement 3 is correct:** both places have rock-cut monuments - **Ajanta's** chaitya and vihara caves cut into the Waghora scarp, and **Mahabalipuram's** rathas, mandapas and the Descent of the Ganga relief. Statements 1 and 2 fail on date and faith. Hence 3 only is the official key.

(c)

Pairing same period with rock-cut work still fails because the two sites are centuries apart. 1 and 3 only is not the key.

(d)

'None' would deny the shared rock-cut character, which is true. This option is therefore wrong.

Summary

Official key is (b) 3 only. **Ajanta** and **Mahabalipuram** both display rock-cut architecture, which is the only common statement among the three. They do not belong to one period: **Ajanta** is earlier Buddhist cave work; **Mahabalipuram** is Pallava structural-and-cut stone on the Coromandel. They also do not share one religion. UNESCO lists both, but that does not make statements 1 or 2 true.

Related possible facts

These can be asked in a future Prelims paper.

Ajanta

Buddhist caves in Aurangabad district, Maharashtra; UNESCO World Heritage

Mahabalipuram

Pallava port-town monuments, Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu; UNESCO World Heritage

Vakataka patronage

Later Ajanta caves associated with Harishena

Narasimhavarman I

Pallava king linked with early Mamallapuram monuments

Rock-cut vs structural

Mahabalipuram has both cave-temples and free-standing rathas

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