

Rakhigarhi

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In news- The Archaeological Survey of India has revealed new archaeological findings at the Harappan-era site in Haryana's Rakhigarhi village.

Recent findings-

- **The major findings include drainage system, the structure of some houses, lanes, jewellery unit, copper and gold jewellery, terracotta toys,** earthen pots, seals, a burnt-brick wall (possibility of a walled settlement), an aristocratic settlement, semi-precious stones such as agate and carnelian, two female skeletons buried with a plethora of pottery and adorned jewellery etc.
- These discoveries could point to the existence of a **well-planned Harappan city.**
- Archaeologists also said that Rakhigarhi may have been the ancestors of the people of Hastinapur.

About Rakhigarhi-

- The ancient sites of Rakhi-Khas and Rakhi-Shahpur are collectively known as Rakhigarhi.
- It is the **largest Harappan site in the Indian Subcontinent.**
- It is **situated in the Hisar district of Haryana** and is **located in the Ghaggar-Hakra river plain.**
- The site was first **excavated by Amarendra Nath of ASI.**
- Earlier Mohenjodaro that covers 300 hectares (Pakistan) was considered to be the largest Harappan site until Prof. Vasanth Shinde and his team started fresh excavations at Rakhigarhi.
- This site encompasses a set of 11 mounds with a confirmed size in excess of 350 hectares and **according to the Global Heritage Fund Rakhigarhi is the largest and oldest Indus site in the world.**

- The findings confirm **both early and mature phases** of this 5,000-years-old Harappan site.
- An important find from this site is a **cylindrical seal with 5 Harappan characters** on one side and a symbol of an alligator on the other.
- **Ritual system** is signified by an animal sacrificial pit lined with **mud-brick and triangular and circular fire altars on the mud floor.**
- A DNA study from skeletal remains from the cemetery at Rakhigarhi found that the Harappan people had an independent origin.
- The study clearly negates the theory of the Harappans having ancestral links with steppe pastoral or ancient Iranian farmers.
- **Rakhigarhi gives the first evidence of a double burial** where the skeletons are clearly male (38) and female (25).
- Granary that was found here belongs to the mature Harappan phase (2600 BCE to 2000 BCE) and is made up of mud-bricks with a floor of rammed earth plastered with mud and has 7 rectangular or square chambers.
- A cemetery of Mature Harappan period is discovered at Rakhigarhi, with eight graves.

Five Iconic Sites-

- The Union Budget (2020-21) has proposed to develop Rakhigarhi (Hisar district, Haryana) as an Iconic Site.
- The finance minister had then said that these sites would be developed with on-site museums.
- Four other archaeological sites in Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh), Shivsagar (Assam), Dholavira (Gujarat), and Adichanallur (Tamil Nadu) will also be developed as iconic sites with onsite museums.

Hastinapur in Uttar Pradesh:

- Hastinapur, near Meerut, was the site of the **ancient**

kingdom of Kauravas and Pandavas over which the battle of Kurukshetra, described in Mahabharata, was fought.

- Artifacts were found at a nearby village, which archaeologists said belonged to 2000 years before the Common Era.

Sivasagar in Assam:

- Sivasagar was the **capital of the Ahom kings for almost a century from 1699 to 1788** and witnessed some of the major historical events of the state.
- It is home to some of the **key historical monuments from the era including Rang Ghar, Talatal Ghar, Namdang Stone Bridge, Rudrasagar tank and temple,** and Sivasagar Pukhurithers.

Dholavira in Gujarat:

- Dholavira, named after a local village, is the second of the two Harappan cities located in India.
- The city was said to be inhabited over a period of 1,200 years from 3000 BCE through 1800 BCE.
- The site, **unearthed in 1967,** has been systematically excavated since 1990.
- The artifacts found include terracotta pottery, beads, gold and copper ornaments and imported vessels that indicate trade links with ancient Mesopotamia.
- **Besides, 10 large stone inscriptions, carved in Indus Valley script, were found** which was billed as the world's earliest signboard.
- Archaeologists suspect the people abandoned the town and returned to a simpler lifestyle.

Adichanallur in Tamil Nadu:

- Carbon dating of artefacts found at this excavation site in **Thoothukudi district indicates it as a part of the ancient Tamil civilisation.**
- **The artefacts, scientists said, date back to a period**

between 905 BC and 696 BC.