

The five 'iconic' archaeological sites mentioned in the Budget

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The Union government has proposed to set up an Indian Institute of Heritage and Conservation under the Ministry of Culture, and develop five archaeological sites as "iconic sites" with onsite museums in **Rakhigarhi (Haryana), Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh), Sivsagar (Assam), Dholavira (Gujarat) and Adichanallur (Tamil Nadu)**.

The details of the five cities

Rakhigarhi

- It is in Hissar district of Haryana and it is one of the most prominent and largest sites of the Harappan civilisation.
- It is one among the five known townships of the Harappan civilisation in the Indian subcontinent.
- Several excavations were carried out at the cemetery in Rakhigarhi by a team of Indian and South Korean researchers. In one of their excavations, the **skeletal remains of a couple were discovered**.
- Interestingly, of the 62 graves discovered in Rakhigarhi, only this particular grave consisted of more than one skeletal remains and of individuals of the opposite sex together.

Hastinapur

- It is in Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh
- Hastinapur finds mention in the Mahabharata (capital of Kuru Kingdom) and the Puranas.
- One of the most significant discoveries made at this

site was of the **“new ceramic industry”**, which was named the **Painted Grey Ware**, which as per the report represented the **relics of the early Indo-Aryans**.

Sivasagar

- In Sivasagar, excavations at the Karenghar (Talatalghar) complex between 2000 and 2003 led to the discovery of **buried structures** in the north-western and north-eastern side of the complex.
- Among the structural remains found at the site were **ceramic assemblages including vases, vessels, dishes, and bowls, etc. Terracotta smoking pipes** were also found.
- Another excavation site in Sivasagar district is the **Garhgaon Raja’s palace**.
- Excavation at this site was conducted during 2007-2008. A **burnt-brick wall running in north-south orientation was found**, along with the remains of **two huge circular wooden posts**.
- Sivasagar served as the capital of the Ahom Kingdom from 1699 to 1788.

Dholavira

- Dholavira (also known locally as Kotada timba) in Gujarat is **located in the Khadir island of the Rann of Kutch**, and like Rakhigarhi is one of the sites where the remains of the Harappan civilisation have been found.
- Dholavira is unique because remains of a **complete water system have been found here**.
- The people who lived there for an estimated 1,200 years during the Harappan civilisation are noted for their water conservation system using rainwater harvesting techniques in an otherwise parched landscape.

Adichanallur

- Adichnallur lies in the Thoothukudi district of Tamil

Nadu.

- The **urn-burial site was first brought to light during a “haphazard excavation”** by a German archaeologist in 1876.
- Following this, an Englishman Alexander Rae excavated the site between 1889 and 1905.
- Over the years, the site has gained attention because of **three important findings: the discovery of an ancient Tamil-Brahmi script on the inside of an urn containing a full human skeleton, a fragment of a broken earthenware, and the remains of living quarters.**