



Archaeological Site near Varanasi

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Why in News

A nearly **4,000-year-old urban settlement** has been unearthed in Babhaniyav village (13 km from Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh) by a team of surveyors from the Banaras Hindu University (BHU).

- The unearthed site could be one of the **craft villages** mentioned in ancient texts.
 - During the age of Buddha, there were suburban villages which were in the nature of craft villages, for instance, a carpenter's village, or chariot-maker's village in the vicinity of Varanasi.
 - Crafts villages have been earlier unearthed in Sarnath, Tilmapur and Ramnagar - Uttar Pradesh.
- Initial survey of the site in Babhaniyav village had found a temple dating back to the 5th Century AD through 8th Century AD, potteries which are 4000-year-old and walls which are 2000-year-old.
- Surveyors have also found a pillar with a two-line text in the **Kushan-Brahmi script**.
 - The Kushan dynasty ruled over most of the northern Indian subcontinent, Afghanistan, and parts of Central Asia during 1st century AD - 3rd Century AD.
 - The inscriptions issued by the Kushan rulers or in areas under their rule include texts in Bactrian, written in Greek script, and in Prakrit written in Brāhmī or Kharoṣṭhī script.
- The site gains significance because of its proximity to Varanasi, which is said to be 5,000 years old, though modern scholars believe it to be around 3,000 years old.
- According to the experts, the site could be a small sub-centre of Varanasi which grew as an urban town.

- The findings are important as Babhanyav could have been a **satellite town** and feeding centre for the Varanasi-Sarnath region.

A satellite town is a smaller city that is near a large(r) metropolis. It has all the necessary amenities and facilities present within its limits except for a few purposes like employment and sometimes education, it has to depend on the larger city.

Varanasi

- Varanasi is in southeastern Uttar Pradesh state. It is located on the left bank of the Ganges (Ganga) River and is one of the seven sacred cities of Hinduism.
- It is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Its early history is that of the first Aryan settlement in the middle Ganges valley.
- Varanasi was the capital of the kingdom of Kashi during the time of the Buddha (6th century BCE), who gave his first sermon nearby at Sarnath.
- The city remained a centre of religious, educational, and artistic activities as attested by the celebrated Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang, who visited it in about 635 CE.
- Varanasi subsequently declined during three centuries of Muslim occupation, beginning in 1194.
- Varanasi became an independent kingdom in the 18th century, and under subsequent British rule it remained a commercial and religious centre.
- In 1910, the British made Varanasi a new Indian state, with Ramnagar (on the opposite bank) as headquarters but with no jurisdiction over the city of Varanasi.
- In 1947, after Indian independence, the Varanasi state became part of the state of Uttar Pradesh.

Source: TH