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Mains Practice Questions

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Q. Did Harappan civilization have any link to other major civilizations and distant lands? What are the findings that point towards such a possibility? (150 words)

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Approach:

- Explain the link between Harappan civilization and other major civilizations.
- List the findings supporting the link.
- Conclude suitably

Introduction

The Indus River Valley Civilization also known as the Harappan Civilization, extended from modern-day northeast Afghanistan to Pakistan and northwest India.

Important innovations of this civilization include standardized weights and measures, urban planning, seal carving, metallurgy etc. Along with that, evidence shows Harappans participated in a vast maritime sea trade network extending from Central Asia to the Middle East.

Body

These cross-civilizational links can be depicted by:

- Archaeological discoveries claim of a massive, dredged canal, and what is regarded as a docking facility at the **coastal city of Lothal**.
- Harappans also engaged in **shell working**, and shells used in their crafts have origins from as far away as the coast of **modern-day Oman**.
- Trade focused on importing raw materials to be used in Harappan city workshops, including minerals from Iran and Afghanistan, lead and copper from other parts of India, jade from China, and cedarwood floated down rivers from the Himalayas and Kashmir.
- One of the ways historians know about the maritime trade network operating between the **Harappan and Mesopotamian civilizations** is the discovery of Harappan seals and jewellery at archaeological sites in regions of Mesopotamia, which includes most of modern-day Iraq, Kuwait, and parts of Syria.
- Between 4300 and 3200 BCE—part of the **Chalcolithic period**, also known as the **Copper Age**—ceramics from the Indus Valley Civilization area show similarities with southern Turkmenistan and northern Iran.
- During the Early Harappan period—about 3200 to 2600 BCE—there are **cultural similarities** in pottery, seals, figurines, and ornaments that document caravan trade with **Central Asia and the Iranian plateau**.

Conclusion

These findings highlight the well-built network of trade in ancient times. They not only support the existence of different civilizations at the same point in time but also point towards the connectedness between these civilizations.