



ASI's Excavation of Rakhigarhi

For Prelims: Archaeological Survey of India, Indus Valley Civilization.

For Mains: Major Findings of Rakhigarhi, Harappan Civilization.

Why in News?

The recent excavation of Harappan site of Rakhigarhi by [Archaeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#) has revealed the structure of some houses, lanes and drainage system.

- The ASI excavations also revealed pieces of copper and gold jewellery, terracotta toys, besides thousands of earthen pots and seals.
- The idea of this excavation is **to make the archaeological site of Rakhigarhi accessible to people** by exposing the structural remains and conserving them for future viewing, along with providing amenities to the visitors.
- Also, DNA samples were collected from two unearthed human skeletons and sent for scientific examination, the outcome might **tell about the ancestry and food habits of people who lived in the Rakhigarhi region thousands of years ago.**

What is Rakhigarhi?

- [Rakhigarhi](#) is the largest Harappan site in the Indian subcontinent.
 - Other large sites of **Indus valley Civilization (Harappan civilization)** in Indian sub-continent are Harappa, Mohenjodaro and Ganveriwala in Pakistan and Dholavira (Gujarat) in India.
- At Rakhigarhi, the excavations are being done to trace its beginnings and to study its gradual evolution from 6000 BCE (Pre-Harappan phase) to 2500 BCE.
 - The site was **excavated by Amarendra Nath of ASI.**
- Rakhigarhi is among **the five iconic sites announced by Union Finance Minister during Budget Speech in 2020.**
 - The other such sites are Hastinapur in Uttar Pradesh, Sivasagar in Assam, Dholavira in Gujarat and Adichanallur in Tamil Nadu.

What are the Major Findings of the Site?

- **Settlements:**
 - The archaeological excavations revealed the mature Harappan phase represented by planned township having mud-brick as well as burnt-brick houses with a proper drainage system.
- **Seals and Pottery:**

- A cylindrical seal with five Harappan characters on one side and a symbol of an alligator on the other is an important find from this site.
- The ceramic industry was represented by red ware, which included dish-on-stand, vase, perforated jar among others.
- **Rituals and Burials:**
 - Animal sacrificial pits lined with mud-brick and triangular and circular fire altars on the mud floor have also been excavated that signifies the ritual system of Harappans.
 - The excavations have yielded a few extended burials, which certainly belong to a very late stage, maybe the medieval times.
 - Two female skeletons, who were buried with a plethora of pottery and adorned jewellery like jasper, agate beads and shell bangles, have been excavated.
- **Other Antiquities:**
 - Blades; terracotta and shell bangles, beads of semi precious stones, and copper objects; animal figurines, toy cart frame and wheel of terracotta; bone points; inscribed steatite seals and sealings.
- **Study of DNA Samples:**
 - Recently, a study of [DNA](#) from skeletal remains excavated from the Harappan cemetery at Rakhigarhi found that the people in the Harappan Civilization have an independent origin.
 - This study negates the theory of the Harappans having Steppe pastoral or ancient Iranian farmer ancestry.

What is Harappan Civilization?

- It is also known as **Indus Valley Civilization**.
- It flourished **around 2,500 BC**, in the western part of South Asia, in contemporary Pakistan and Western India.
- The **Indus Valley was home to the largest of the four ancient urban civilizations** of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, and China.
- In the 1920s, the Archaeological Department of India carried out **excavations in the Indus valley** wherein the ruins of the two old cities, viz. Mohenjodaro and Harappa were unearthed.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQ)

Q. With reference to the difference between the culture of Rigvedic Aryans and Indus Valley people, which of the following statements is/are correct? (2017)

1. Rigvedic Aryans used the coat of mail and helmet in warfare whereas the people of Indus Valley Civilization did not leave any evidence of using them.
2. Rigvedic Aryans knew gold, silver and copper whereas Indus Valley people knew only copper and iron.
3. Rigvedic Aryans had domesticated the horse whereas there is no evidence of Indus Valley people having been aware of this animal.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: C

Q. Which of the following characterizes/characterize the people of Indus Civilization? (2013)

1. They possessed great palaces and temples.
2. They worshipped both male and female deities.
3. They employed horse-drawn chariots in warfare.

Select the correct statement/statements using the codes given below:

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 only

(c) 1, 2 and 3

(d) None of the statements given above is correct

Ans: (b)

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