



Iron-Age Settlement Discovered in Topra Kalan

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

Evidence of **human settlements** dating back around **1500 BC** has been discovered from **Topra Kalan village** in Haryana.

- This period marks the transition from the **Indus Valley Civilization (Bronze Age)** (3300 BC to 1300 BC), to the **Iron Age in India** (around **1500 BC to 600 BC**).

What are the Key Archaeological Evidences Discovered at Topra Kalan?

- **Topra Kalan village:** Topra Kalan village is the **original site of the Delhi-Topra Ashokan pillar**, which bears the [Mauryan Emperor Ashoka's edicts](#).
 - It was **relocated to the national capital** in the **14th century** by **Firoz Shah Tughlaq**.
 - It is linked to **ancient Buddhist activity** as documented by **Sir Alexander Cunningham** and [Hiuen Tsang](#), highlighting its significance in the **Mauryan period (322- 185 BC)**.
- **Key Archaeological Evidences Discovered:**
 - **Artifacts such as [Painted Grey Ware \(PGW\)](#), stamped pottery, moulded bricks, beads, and various pottery types like Black-and-Red Ware**, reflecting cultural phases of **late Bronze Age** and **early Iron Age** Northern India.
 - Structural remains such as **walls, platforms, and room-like enclosures** were uncovered at **4-5 meters depth**, alongside a **dome-like construction** believed to be a [Buddhist stupa](#).

What are the Key Features of the Iron Age in India?

- **About:** The Iron Age is a **prehistoric period** that followed the [Bronze Age](#) & it was characterized by the **widespread use of iron for tools, weapons, and other implements**.
 - Iron making involved **collecting ore, melting it, and shaping tools**.
- **Iron in India:** The [Rigveda](#) mentioned **ayas** which referred to **copper/alloys** & **iron is not mentioned** in this period.
 - In later texts like the **Atharvaveda**, **ayas/karshnyas** refers to **iron** & other metals mentioned are **rajata** (silver), **trapu** (tin), and **sisā** (lead).
 - But in the **early historic period**, **ironworking** appears in **Buddhist texts** and **Kautilya's Arthashastra**, showing its use became important then.

Iron Age sites

Mayiladumparai in Krishnagiri district of Tamil Nadu threw up a date of 2172 BC in 2022, making it the oldest site for Iron Age in India. But since the date was close to the dates that emerged in Brahmagiri, archaeologists asked the state government to be cautious. But the dates from Sivagalai jumped by over a millennium – 3345 BC.



Uttar Pradesh:
 Atranjikhhera: 1265-1100 BC
 Lahuradewa: 1300 BC
 Dadupur: 1800-1700 BC
 Jhusi Aktha: 1100 BC
 Raja-Nala-Ka-Tila: 1400-1200 BC
 Bihar:
 Abhaipur: 1371-980 BC
 Malhar: 1800-1600 BC
 West Bengal:
 Pandu Rajar Dhibi: 1257-1234 BC
 Mangalkot: 1111-1103 BC

Tamil Nadu
 Sivagalai: 3345-2427 BC
 Adichanallur: 1800-905 BC
 Kilnamandi: 1769-615 BC
 Vallam: 1448-916 BC
 Thelunganur: 1435-1233 BC
 Mayiladumparai: 2172-1569 BC

Karnataka
 Brahmagiri: 2140-1490 BC
 Kadabakele: 820-400 BC
 Kumaranahalli: 1300 BC
 Bukkasagara: 1620-1440 BC
 Watgal: 1519 BC
 Maski: 1895-1756 BC

Telangana/Andhra Pradesh:
 Gachibowli: 2200 BC
 Sanganakallu-Kupgal: 1400-1200 BC
 Veerapuram: 1257 BC
 Ramapuram: 1595-1345 BC

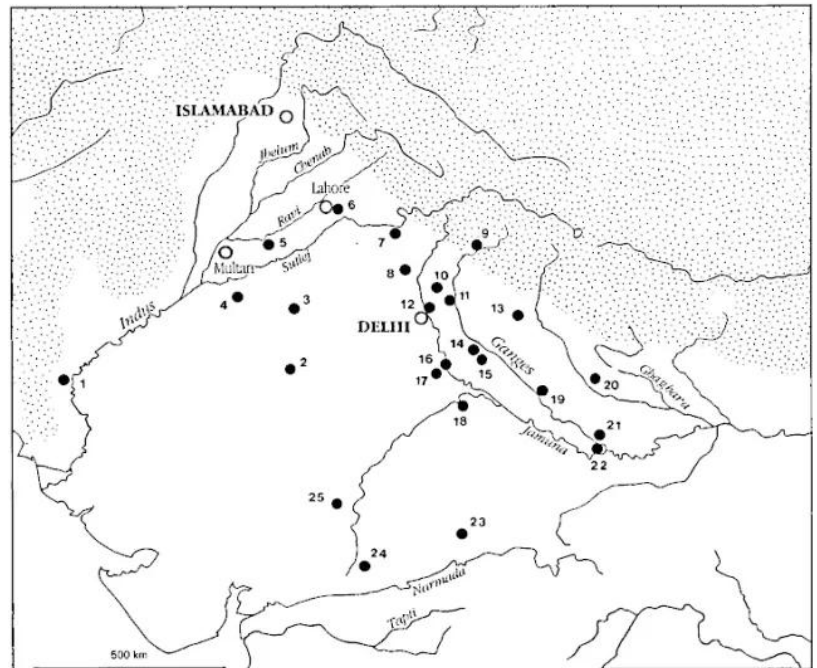
Maharashtra
 Adam: 1614-1011 BC
 Madhya Pradesh:
 Eran: 1400-1300 BC
 Raipura: 1867-1720 BC
 Haryana:
 Ahar: 1300 BC

▪ Associated Cultures:

◦ In North India:

- **Black-and-Red Ware (BRW):** This pottery is distinguished by its **black interiors and red exteriors**, created through an inverted firing technique.

- BRW is found in the **Harappan context** (Gujarat), **Pre-Painted Grey Ware (PGW) context** in northern India, and in **Megalithic contexts** in southern India, marking an important phase during the Iron Age.
- **Painted Grey Ware (PGW) Culture:** PGW culture is known for its **grey pottery decorated with black geometric patterns**.
 - Iron artifacts have been found at PGW sites, especially in the **Ganga valley** and **South Indian Megaliths** during the 1st millennium BCE.
- **Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW) Culture:** The NBPW culture period marked the **widespread use of iron technology** in the **Indian subcontinent**.
 - Characterized by **fine, wheel-made, highly polished black pottery**, NBPW is prominent in northern India.
 - The period from **700 BC to 100 BC** saw the **rise of states and urban centres in the Ganga valley**, marking the **Second Urbanization**. This era also coincided with the **Maurayan empire** & spread of **Buddhism** in the region.



1 Lakhio Pir	10 Hulas	19 Panar
2 Jodhpur	11 Hastinapura	20 Sravasti
3 Sardargarh	12 Alamgirpur	21 Srngaverapura
4 Satwali	13 Ahichchhatra	22 Kausambi
5 Harappa	14 Jakhera	23 Besnagar
6 Gharinda	15 Atranjithera	24 Ujjain
7 Rupar	16 Mathura	25 Gilund
8 Bhagwanpura	17 Noh	
9 Thapli	18 Kotwar	

Distribution of Painted Grey Ware sites.

- The NBPW culture period marked the **widespread use of iron technology** in the **Indian subcontinent**.
- The NBPW culture period marked the **widespread use of iron technology** in the **Indian subcontinent**.
- **Iron Age in South India:** In peninsular India, the Iron Age is represented mainly by the **Megalithic culture** associated with habitation sites like **Naikund** (Vidarbha), where **iron-smelting furnaces** were discovered & **Paiyampalli** (Tamil Nadu), known for abundant **iron slag**.
 - Recent excavations at **Sivagalai, Tamil Nadu** (2019–2022) indicate that iron might have been introduced as early as the **fourth millennium BCE**. Mastery over **fire control technology** was essential for iron extraction in this region.
- **Iron Age in Other Regions:**
 - **Central India (Malwa):** Important sites include Nagda, Eran, and Ahar dating between 750–500 BCE.
 - **Middle and Lower Ganga Valley:** Post-Chalcolithic pre-NBPW sites such

as Pandu Rajar Dhibi, Mahisdal, Chirand, and Sonpur date to around 750–700 BCE.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

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. Regarding the Indus Valley Civilization, consider the following statements: (2011)

1. It was predominantly a secular civilization and the religious element, though present, did not dominate the scene,
2. During this period, cotton was used for manufacturing textiles in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (c)

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

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

Select the correct statements using the codes given below:

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

(c) 1, 2 and 3

(d) None of the above

Ans: (b)

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