

# Gallant IAS Academy

## Gurushishya 3.0 Prelims Telepathy

### Ancient India –Current Affairs

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#### **Revival of the Ancient Stitched Ship Method:**

The Indian Navy, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Hodi Innovations, reconstructed an ancient stitched ship using traditional methods documented in ancient texts and archaeological findings. This shipbuilding technique, involving the stitching of wooden planks, was prevalent in the Harappan period and is a significant part of India's maritime heritage.

#### **Discovery of New Harappan Sites:**

In 2023, archaeologists discovered several new Harappan sites in Haryana (Rakhigarhi region) and Gujarat (near Lothal), revealing advanced urban planning, elaborate drainage systems, and evidence of trade with Mesopotamia. These discoveries include residential complexes, bead-making workshops, and new types of pottery.

#### **UNESCO World Heritage Site Nomination for Dholavira:**

Dholavira, located in the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat, was nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site due to its well-preserved urban infrastructure, including a sophisticated water conservation system and intricate town planning. This site provides critical insights into the social and economic life of the Harappan civilization.

#### **Digitization of Ancient Manuscripts:**

The National Mission for Manuscripts has digitized over 2 million manuscripts, including texts in Sanskrit, Tamil, and Pali. These manuscripts cover various subjects such as philosophy, science, and literature, ensuring the preservation and accessibility of India's rich literary heritage for future generations.

#### **Madras High Court's Heritage Preservation Directive:**

The Madras High Court ordered the Tamil Nadu government to implement the Tamil Nadu Heritage Commission Act, 2012 (amended in 2017). This act mandates the establishment of a commission to oversee the preservation of heritage structures, including ancient temples and monuments, to prevent their deterioration and ensure their maintenance.

#### **Excavation at Keeladi:**

Recent excavations at Keeladi, near Madurai in Tamil Nadu, have uncovered artifacts dating back to the Sangam period (3rd century BCE to 3rd century CE). Finds include pottery with Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions, tools, and beads, suggesting a high level of urbanization and trade activity in early Tamil society.

#### **Restoration of Ancient Temples:**

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has undertaken major restoration projects at ancient temples such as the Hoysaleswara Temple in Karnataka and the Brihadeeswara Temple in Tamil Nadu. These projects aim to restore structural integrity and preserve intricate carvings and frescoes for educational and tourism purposes.

### **India's First Underwater Museum:**

The Gujarat government announced plans to create India's first underwater museum off the coast of Dwarka. This museum will feature submerged artifacts, including ancient shipwrecks and remains of the submerged city of Dwarka, believed to be linked to the Mahabharata epoch. This initiative aims to boost underwater archaeology and tourism.

### **Indus Valley Civilization DNA Analysis:**

A landmark genetic study conducted on skeletal remains from the Rakhigarhi site provided insights into the ancestry of the Harappan people, suggesting a mixture of indigenous South Asian and Iranian farmer lineages. This study helps understand the genetic continuity and migration patterns of ancient populations in the subcontinent.

### **Launch of Digital Archive for Ancient Indian Texts:**

The Ministry of Culture launched the 'Bharatavani Digital Library,' a comprehensive digital archive that includes scanned copies of ancient Indian texts, manuscripts, and rare books. This initiative aims to preserve and promote India's intangible heritage, making these valuable resources accessible to scholars and the public globally.

### **Discovery of a Buddhist Monastery in Andhra Pradesh:**

In the Guntur district, archaeologists discovered a 2,000-year-old Buddhist monastery. Key findings include stupas, viharas (monastic complexes), and inscriptions in Prakrit and Brahmi script. These findings suggest the site was an important center of Buddhist learning and practice during the Satavahana period.

### **Excavation at Sisupalgarh:**

The ancient fortified city of Sisupalgarh in Odisha, believed to be one of the largest and best-preserved urban centers from the early historic period in India, saw renewed excavation efforts. Archaeologists uncovered artifacts such as pottery, beads, and iron tools dating back to the 3rd century BCE. The site is associated with the Kalinga kingdom.

### **UNESCO Recognition for Iconic Sites:**

The Hoysala temples of Belur, Halebidu, and Somanathapura in Karnataka were recognized by UNESCO for their intricate architecture and historical significance. These 12th-century temples are renowned for their detailed sculptures and are prime examples of Hoysala architectural style.

### **Indo-Roman Trade Findings in Tamil Nadu:**

Excavations at the ancient port city of Puhar (Kaveripattinam) in Tamil Nadu revealed Roman amphorae, coins bearing the images of Emperor Augustus and Tiberius, and fine pottery. These artifacts highlight the extensive trade relations between the Sangam-age Tamil kingdoms and the Roman Empire.

### **Restoration of the Ajanta Caves:**

The ASI undertook significant restoration work at the Ajanta Caves in Maharashtra, particularly focusing on Cave 1 and Cave 2, which feature elaborate frescoes depicting the Jataka tales. These caves date back to the 2nd century BCE to 480 CE and are a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### **Maritime Heritage in Gujarat:**

The Maritime Heritage Complex being developed in Lothal, Gujarat, aims to showcase India's ancient maritime history. Lothal was a major port city of the Harappan civilization, known for its dockyard, warehouse, and bead-making industry. The complex will feature replicas of ancient ships and models of Harappan port facilities.

### **Study of Ancient Water Management Systems:**

Researchers have focused on the ancient stepwells of Gujarat and Rajasthan, such as the Rani ki Vav in Patan and Chand Baori in Abhaneri. These stepwells, built between the 8th and 18th centuries, demonstrate advanced engineering and water management techniques in arid regions.

### **Revival of Nalanda University:**

The revival project for Nalanda University includes reconstructing the ancient library, which was one of the largest in the world, and establishing it as a modern center for Buddhist studies. The university, originally founded in the 5th century CE during the Gupta period, was a renowned center of learning until it was destroyed in the 12th century.

### **Genetic Analysis of Indus Valley Remains:**

Genetic studies on skeletal remains from the Harappan site of Rakhigarhi indicated that the population had a mixed ancestry, with components from indigenous South Asian hunter-gatherers and Iranian agriculturalists. This research helps trace the genetic lineage and migration patterns of ancient populations in the subcontinent.

### **Introduction of Ancient Indian Technologies:**

The government has initiated programs to revive ancient agricultural practices such as the use of Vrikshayurveda (ancient Indian plant science) and traditional water harvesting systems like johads and baolis. These practices are being integrated into modern agricultural strategies to improve sustainability and address contemporary environmental challenges.

### **Rediscovery of Ancient Temple in Odisha:**

An ancient temple dating back to the 6th century CE was rediscovered in the Balasore district of Odisha. The temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, features early Kalinga architectural styles and inscriptions in the Odia script, providing insights into early medieval religious practices and temple architecture.

### **Findings from the Berenike Excavations:**

Archaeologists in Egypt's ancient port city of Berenike discovered Tamil Brahmi inscriptions and Indian pottery dating to the 1st century CE, indicating active Indo-Roman trade. These findings include black and red ware pottery and beads, underscoring Tamil Nadu's historical trade links with the Roman Empire.

### **Research on Ancient Indian Metallurgy:**

Studies on ancient Indian metallurgy revealed advanced techniques used in the production of wootz steel, a high-quality steel from Southern India, dating back to the 3rd century BCE. This steel was known for its durability and was traded widely, influencing metallurgical practices globally.

### **Excavation at Adichanallur:**

Recent excavations at Adichanallur in Tamil Nadu, a significant Iron Age site, uncovered burial urns, iron weapons, and pottery dating back to 1000 BCE. These artifacts highlight the advanced material culture and funerary practices of the region's early inhabitants.

### **Reconstruction of the Varaha Temple in Khajuraho:**

The ASI initiated the reconstruction of the Varaha Temple in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh, which dates back to the 10th century CE during the Chandela dynasty.

### **Study on Ancient Indian Maritime Practices:**

Research on ancient Indian maritime practices has highlighted the significance of ports like Muziris (in modern-day Kerala) and their role in facilitating trade with the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Findings include Roman amphorae and Tamil inscriptions, pointing to vibrant trade networks during the Sangam period.

### **Rediscovery of the Gupta Period City of Sarnath:**

Excavations at Sarnath, near Varanasi, have unearthed remains of a Gupta period city, including monasteries, stupas, and residential buildings. Inscriptions in Brahmi script and Gupta coinage found at the site provide valuable information on the region's economic and cultural life during the 4th to 6th centuries CE.

### **Conservation of the Elephanta Caves:**

The ASI has undertaken conservation efforts at the Elephanta Caves in Maharashtra, which feature rock-cut sculptures and temples dedicated to Lord Shiva. These caves, dating back to the 5th to 8th centuries CE, are a UNESCO World Heritage Site and represent significant achievements in rock-cut architecture.

### **Research on the Harappan Script:**

Linguists and archaeologists are collaborating on decoding the Harappan script found on seals and pottery. Recent advances suggest that the script represents an early form of Dravidian language, shedding light on the linguistic landscape of the Indus Valley Civilization

### **Discovery of Ancient Water Management Systems in Hampi:**

Excavations at Hampi, the capital of the Vijayanagara Empire, revealed sophisticated water management systems, including aqueducts, stepwells, and reservoirs. These structures, dating to the 14th century CE, illustrate advanced engineering skills and the importance of water management in sustaining urban centers.

### **Important Subtopics for Ancient India - UPSC Prelims 2024 (STATIC)**

- ✓ **Indus Valley Civilization**
- ✓ Major sites (Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, Dholavira, Lothal)
- ✓ Urban planning and architecture (drainage systems, granaries, Great Bath)
- ✓ Economic activities (trade, agriculture, crafts)
- ✓ Script and seals
- ✓ Social and political organization
- ✓ Decline theories
- ✓ **Rig Vedic Period**
- ✓ Society and economy (tribal polity, pastoralism)
- ✓ Religious practices (Vedic rituals, deities)
- ✓ Rig Vedic texts and their significance
- ✓ Early Aryan settlements
- ✓ **Later Vedic Period**
- ✓ Changes in social structure (varna system, position of women)
- ✓ Political organization (janapadas, kingdoms)
- ✓ Economic developments (agriculture, trade)
- ✓ Religious changes (rituals, emergence of Upanishads)
- ✓ Literature and education (Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads)
- ✓ **Jainism**
- ✓ Life and teachings of Mahavira
- ✓ Major principles (Anekantavada, Syadvada, Aparigraha)
- ✓ Jain Councils and sects (Svetambara and Digambara)
- ✓ Contribution to Indian culture and architecture
- ✓ **Buddhism**
- ✓ Life and teachings of Gautama Buddha
- ✓ Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path
- ✓ Major sects (Hinayana, Mahayana, Sautrantika, Sammitiya)
- ✓ Spread of Buddhism (Ashoka's role, patronage of kings)
- ✓ Buddhist Councils
- ✓ **Mahajanapadas**

- ✓ List of major Mahajanapadas (Magadha, Kosala, Vatsa, Avanti)
- ✓ Political and economic characteristics
- ✓ Important rulers and their contributions
- ✓ Inter-Mahajanapada conflicts
- ✓ **Mauryan Empire**
- ✓ Founding and consolidation by Chandragupta Maurya
- ✓ Administrative structure (central, provincial, local administration)
- ✓ Bindusara's reign
- ✓ Ashoka's Dhamma and his edicts
- ✓ Decline of the Mauryan Empire
- ✓ Arthashastra by Kautilya
- ✓ Post-Mauryan India
- ✓ Satavahanas: important rulers, administration, cultural contributions
- ✓ Sakas: origin, major rulers, cultural impact
- ✓ Kushanas: Kanishka, contributions to art and culture (Gandhara School)
- ✓ Trade and economy during this period
- ✓ **Gupta Period**
- ✓ Political history and important rulers (Chandragupta I, Samudragupta, Chandragupta II)
- ✓ Administration (central, provincial, local)
- ✓ Economic prosperity (trade, coinage)
- ✓ Cultural achievements (art, literature, science)
- ✓ Visit of foreign travelers (Faxian, Xuanzang)
- ✓ Decline of the Gupta Empire
- ✓ **Harshavardhana**
- ✓ Early life and rise to power
- ✓ Administrative setup
- ✓ Patronage of religion and culture
- ✓ Foreign relations and visit of Xuanzang
- ✓ Contribution to Indian literature and learning
- ✓ **Sangam Period**
- ✓ Major kingdoms (Cheras, Cholas, Pandyas)
- ✓ Sangam literature (Tolkappiyam, Ettuthokai, Pathuppattu)
- ✓ Society and economy (trade, agriculture, crafts)
- ✓ Religion and culture
- ✓ Important cities and ports