

# 100 years of Discovery of Harappan Civilisation

## Why in News?

September 20, 2024, marks the 100th anniversary of the announcement regarding the discovery of the Harappan Civilisation.

## What is Harappan Civilisation?

- **Civilization** - It is a **bronze age society** that existed along the river Indus, thus referred to as the Indus Valley civilization (IVC).
- It is also called Harappan civilization, named after *Harappa* which was the *first site unearthed* in the region.

### Three Phases of IVC

Early Phase (3200 BCE to 2600 BCE)	Mature Phase (2600 BCE to 1900 BCE)	Later Phase (1900 BCE to 1500 BCE)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was mainly rural.</li> <li>• Here, the population shifted from the uplands of Baluchistan to the floodplains of the Indus Valley.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is marked by more human settlements &amp; Town planning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was a time of gradual decline for the civilization.</li> <li>• It saw the breakdown of urban centers and the establishment of rural networks.</li> </ul>

*Harappa is an IVC site in located in present-day Pakistan.*

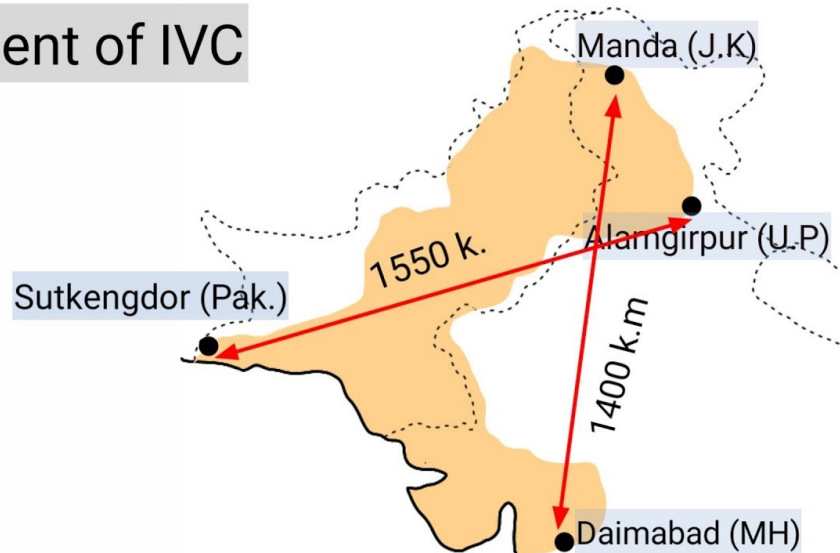
- **Discovery** - In 1921, John Marshall who was then the Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India authorized an Article called "**New Discoveries of an Unknown Prehistoric Past**".
- He termed his discovery as "civilization of the Indus Valley."
- This civilization thrived near the Indus and Saraswati rivers.

Daya Ram Sahni ( Year 1921)	Rakhal Das Banerji (1922)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Excavated</b> - Harappa Site.</li> <li>• <b>Discovered</b> - Uncovering seals, painted pottery, and beads. Described as "industrious, precise, and humble,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Excavated</b> - Mohenjo-daro</li> <li>• <b>Discovered</b> - Seals, pottery, copper artifacts, and crucibles</li> </ul>

## What are its geographical extension?

- **Geographical area** - It spans about 1.5 million sq.km.
- **Coverage** - It is spread across *North West India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.*

## Extent of IVC



Boundaries	Extension
<b>Western boundary</b>	• It reaches up to the coastline of South Baluchistan at Suktagerdor.
<b>Eastern boundary</b>	• Extends up to Alamagirpur in Uttar Pradesh (District Meerut).
<b>Northern Boundary</b>	• It stretched to Manda in Jammu & Kashmir
<b>South Boundary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earlier, it reached Bhagvatrav in the Narmada Estuary of Gujarat.</li> <li>• The discovery at Diamabad, Maharashtra) revealed four Bronze figurines along the Pravara River, indicating further southern expansion of the civilization.</li> </ul>

- **Extension In India** -
  - **Gujarat** - Lothal and Dholavira
  - **Haryana** - Rakhigarhi
  - **Jammu and Kashmir** - Manda
  - **Maharashtra** - Daimabad
  - **Rajasthan** - Kalibangan
  - **Uttar Pradesh** - Alamgirpur
- The *Southernmost extension is Daimabad* on Godavari river basin in Maharashtra.
- **Total sites** - *Around 2,000* within this civilization's expanse.
  - **Five largest sites** - Mohenjo-daro, Harappa, Ganweriwala (all in Pakistan), Rakhigarhi, and Dholavira (both in India).
- **Heart of the civilization** - It was *located in Sind and Punjab* in unpartitioned India, from which it radiated in all directions.

## What are its features?

- **Economy** - They engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry, and also involved in trade.
- **Society** - It was matriarchal in nature as a large number of terracotta female figurines have been found from various sites.
- It represent the worship of the *Great Mother Goddess*.

- **Religion** - They worshipped animals, human figure and trees.
- **Craft** - Development of epigraphy, ceramics, pottery, bead making and *bronze & copper* crafts
- Detailed *lapidary craftsmanship*, particularly in micro-drilling long carnelian beads with chemically stained designs were observed.
- **Seals** - Intricately carved stamp seals made of *steatite*, engraved with life like human and animal motifs along with text or icons were found.

*Remarkable similarities was observed between the artifacts from Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, despite their 640 km separation.*

- **Town Planning** - At its Peak, it was a "technological powerhouse," known for town planning, water management, construction of reservoirs, stadiums, underground drainage systems, fortification walls & boat building.
- **Standardized measures** - It includes cubic weights crafted from *polished chert* using binary and decimal systems.
- Widespread use of *standardized burnt bricks with a 1:2:4 ratio* for bonding.
- **Science & Technology** - They had specialized metallurgists, hydrologists, mathematicians & astronomers.

### How IVC discovery bridges historical gaps in India?

- **Settled life in India** - Historians previously believed that settled life in the region began only around the sixth century BCE, creating a historical void in South Asia.
- **Historical gap** - India transitioned abruptly from the Stone Age to the era of Buddhist stupas.
- **Continuity of settled life** - Discovery of the *Harappan civilisation filled this gap* and significantly *extended the timeline of settled life in* the region by over 3,000 years.
- It introduced another ancient civilization in Asia, alongside those in Egypt and Mesopotamia.
- **Trade links** - It *unveiled the Harappan civilization's maritime links* with West Asia dating back to 3000 BCE alongside those in Egypt and Mesopotamia

### Reference

[The Hindu| 100 years of Discovery of IVC](#)