



Indus Valley Diet

Why in News

As per a study published in the **Journal of Archaeological Science**, the diet of the people of **Indus Valley civilization** had a **dominance of meat**, including extensive eating of beef.

Key Points

- The study, **“Lipid residues in pottery from Indus Civilisation in northwest India”**, looks at the food habits of the people on the basis of **lipid residue analysis found in pottery** from sites such as:
 - Alamgirpur (Meerut), Uttar Pradesh
 - Haryana:
 - Masudpur, LohariRagho, Rakhigarhi city (Hisar)
 - Khanak (Bhiwani), Farmana town(Rohtak)
- **Findings:**
 - The study finds the dominance of animal products such as meat of **pigs, cattle, buffalo, sheep and goat, as well as dairy products**, from rural and urban settlements of Indus Valley civilisation.
 - Out of Domestic Animals, **cattle/buffalo** are the most abundant, averaging between **50-60% of the animal bones found**, with **sheep/goat** accounting for **10%** animal remains.
 - The High Proportions of cattle bones may suggest a **cultural preference for beef consumption** across Indus populations, supplemented by consumption of mutton/lamb.
 - At Harappa, **90% of the cattle were kept alive** until they were **three or three-and-a-half years**, suggesting that **females** were used for **dairy production, whereas males were used for traction**.
 - Previously there have been many studies on the food habit in Indus Valley civilisation before, primarily focusing on **crops**.

Indus Valley Civilization

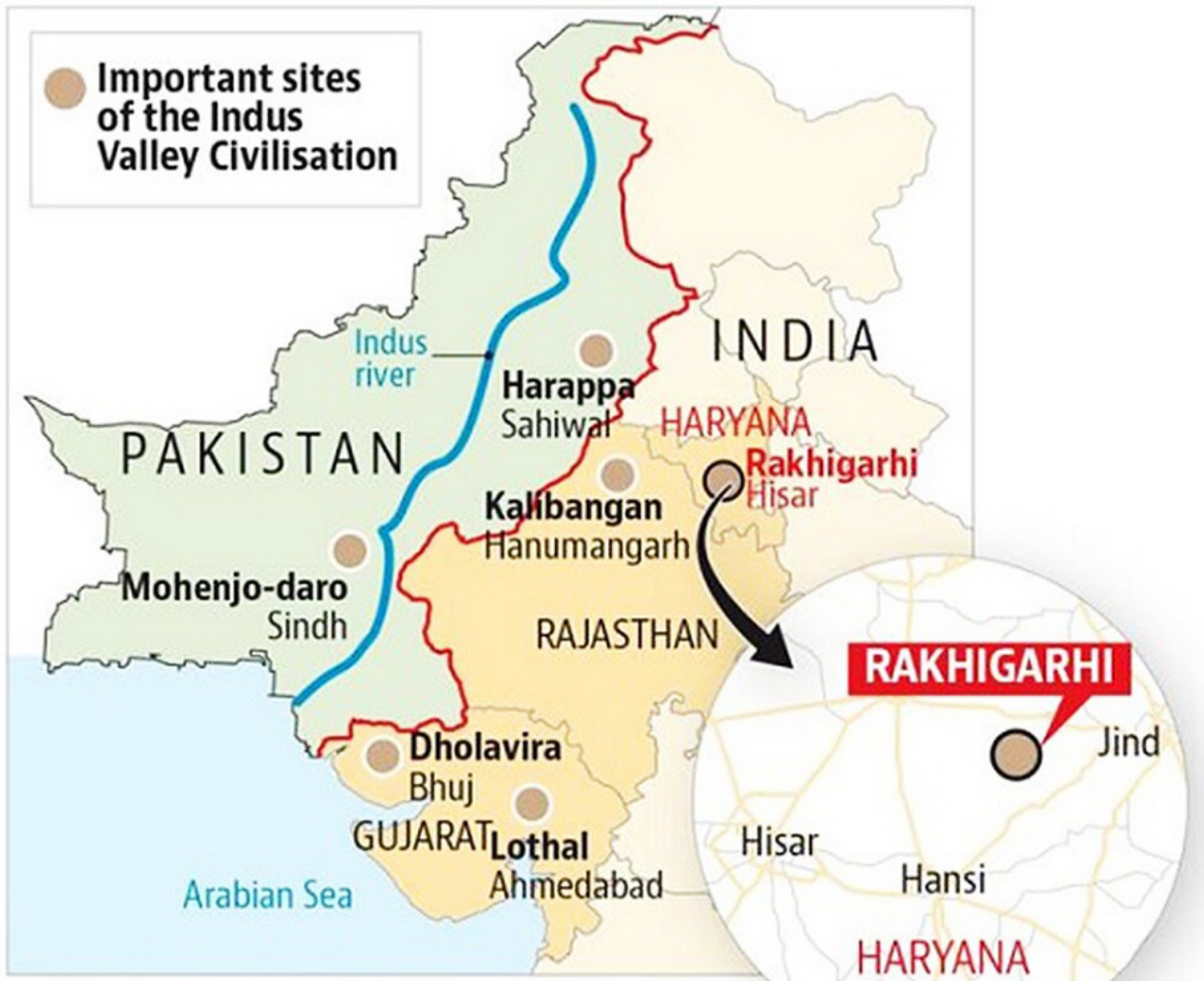
- **Time Period:**
 - The Indus Valley Civilization was established **around 3300 BC**. It flourished between **2600 BC and 1900 BC**. It started declining around **1900 BC** and disappeared around **1400 BC**.
- This is also called **Harappan Civilization** after the first city to be excavated, **Harappa (Punjab, Pakistan)**.
- **Geographical Extent:**
 - Geographically, this civilization covered **Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Western Uttar Pradesh**.

- It extended from **Sutkagengor** (in Baluchistan) in the West to **Alamgirpur** (Western UP) in the East; and from **Mandu** (Jammu) in the North to **Daimabad** (Ahmednagar, Maharashtra) in the South. Some Indus Valley sites have also been found in as far away as Afghanistan.

▪ **Important Sites:**

- **Kalibangan** (Rajasthan), **Lothal**, **Dholavira**, **Rangpur**, **Surkotda** (Gujarat), **Banawali** (Haryana), Ropar (Punjab).
- **In Pakistan: Harappa** (on river Ravi), **Mohenjodaro** (on Indus River in Sindh), **Chanhudaro** (in Sindh).

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▪ **Some Important Features:**

- The Indus Valley cities show a level of sophistication and advancement **not seen in other contemporary civilizations.**
- **Urban Features:**
 - Most cities had **similar patterns**. There were two parts: **a citadel and the lower town** showing presence of hierarchy in society.
 - Most cities had a **Great Bath**.
 - There were also **granaries, 2-storied houses made of burnt bricks, closed drainage lines, excellent stormwater, and wastewater management system, weights for measurements, toys, pots**, etc.
 - A large number of **seals** have been discovered.
- **Agriculture:**

- The first civilization to **cultivate cotton**.
- Animals were domesticated like **sheep, goats, and pigs**.
- Crops were **wheat, barley, cotton, ragi, dates, and peas**.
- **Trade** was conducted with the **Sumerians** (Mesopotamia).
- **Metal Products :**
 - These were produced including those with **copper, bronze, tin, and lead**. **Gold and silver** were also known.
 - **Iron** was not known to them.
- **Religious Beliefs:**
 - **No structures** like temples or palaces have been found.
 - The people worshipped **male and female deities**.
 - A seal which was named '**Pashupati Seal**' has been excavated and it shows an image of a **three-eyed figure**.
- **Pottery:**
 - Excellent pieces of **red pottery designed in black** have been excavated.
 - Faience was used to make **beads, bangles, earrings, and vessels**.
- **Art Forms:**
 - A statuette named '**Dancing Girl**' has been found from **Mohenjodaro** and is believed to be 4000 years old.
 - A figure of a **bearded Priest-King** has also been found from **Mohenjodaro**.
- Lothal was a **dockyard**.
- Disposal of the dead was by **burial in wooden coffins**.
- The Indus Valley script has **not yet been deciphered**.

Source:IE

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