



# Purana Qila Excavation

## Why in News?

The recent excavations by [Archaeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#) at Purana Qila (Old Fort) in Delhi have revealed a continuous history spanning **over 2,500 years**. These excavations are aimed to **establish complete chronology of the site**.

- **Artifacts from various historical periods** have been discovered, which revealed **9 cultural levels** including Pre-Mauryan, Mauryan, Sunga, Kushana, Gupta, Post Gupta, Rajput, Sultanate, and Mughal.
- The plan is to showcase the findings in an **Open Air Site Museum at the fort**.



## What are the Findings of the Excavation?

- **Shards of Painted Gray Ware Pottery:**
  - These pottery pieces are typically dated to the period of 1200 BC to 600 BC, indicating the existence of **human settlements** in the pre-[Mauryan era](#).
- **Vaikuntha Vishnu Sculpture:**
  - A 900-year-old sculpture of **Vaikuntha Vishnu**, belonging to the **Rajput period**, was discovered during the excavation.
- **Terracotta Plaque:**
  - A terracotta plaque depicting the **goddess Gaja Lakshmi**, dating back to the **Gupta period**, was found at the site.
- **Terracotta Ring Well:**
  - The remains of a well dating back 2,500 years from the **Mauryan period** were unearthed.
- **Sunga-Kushan Period Complex:**
  - The excavation revealed a well-defined **four-room complex from the Sunga-Kushan period**, which dates back approximately 2,300 years.
- **Coins, Seals, and Copper Artifacts:**

- More than **136 coins, 35 seals and sealings**, and other copper artifacts were discovered at the site. These findings indicate the site's significance as a **center for trade activities**.

## What is Purana Qila?

- Purana Qila is **one of the oldest forts** belonging to the Mughal era and the site is identified as **ancient settlement of Indraprastha (the capital of Pandavas)**.
- The massive gateway and walls of Purana Qila **were built by Humayun in the 16<sup>th</sup> century** and the foundation was laid **for the new capital, Dinpanah**.
- The work was carried forward by **Sher Shah Suri**, who displaced Humayun.
- The major attractions inside the fort are the **Qila-i-Kuhna mosque** of Sher Shah Suri, **Sher Mandal** (a tower, which is traditionally associated with the death of Humayun), a stepwell and the remains of the extensive rampart, which has three gates.
- The unique features of [Indo-Islamic architecture](#) like horseshoe-shaped arches, bracketed openings, marble inlay, carving etc are very prominent in the structure.
  - The mosque has an inscription which says, 'As long as there are people on this earth, may this edifice be frequented, and people will be happy in it.'

[Source: TH](#)

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