



Preservation of Cultural Heritage of Mahabharata Age

Why in News?

Recently, an update is seen on the conservation and development of the **protected site in Hastinapur, Meerut**, which was designated as **one of the five 'Iconic Sites'** by the Union Government in 2021-22, under the management of the [Archaeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#).

Key Points

- **History:**
 - Hastinapur was the **capital of the Pandavas and Kauravas** during the **time of the Mahabharata**.
 - The site is associated with many places from the Mahabharata, including **Vidurr Tila, Pandaveshwar Temple, Baradri, Draunadeshwar Temple, Karna Temple, Draupadi Ghat, and Kama Ghat**.
- **Excavations:**
 - **B. B. Lal**, the Director General of the ASI, **conducted excavations at Hastinapur in the early 1950s**.
 - He **found correlations between the Mahabharata and the material remains** he unearthed, which led him to historicize some of the traditions in the epic.
- **Iron objects:**
 - The site has many **iron objects** that date **from the 6th century BCE to the 16th century CE**.
 - The excavated slag samples indicate that the site was involved in **crucible carburization activities**.
 - Crucible carburization is a **process that uses a crucible to heat wrought iron with carbon-rich materials to create steel**.
- **Recent work:**
 - The ASI has **conducted excavations at the site in 2021-22 and 2022-23**.
 - The site has also undergone **conservation and development work**, including the **construction of pathways, parking, and gardens**.

Five Iconic Sites

- **Dholavira:**
 - An archaeological site with a water system that was **used for rainwater harvesting**. The people who lived there during the Harappan civilization are known for their water conservation techniques.
- **Hastinapur:**
 - A historical and cultural site in the **Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh**. It was the **capital of the Kuru dynasty** emperors in the Mahabharata.
- **Sivasagar:**
 - A town in **Upper Assam known for its Ahom palaces and monuments**. It was the capital of the **Ahom Kingdom** from 1699 to 1788.
- **Adichanallur:**
 - An archaeological site from south India with a history dating back to 2500 BC-2200 BC. In 2004, **human skeletons of varying ethnicities were unearthed** here.

▪ **Rakhigarhi:**

- Rakhigarhi in Haryana's **Hissar district** is one of the **most prominent and largest sites of the Harappan civilisation**. It is one among the five known townships of the Harappan civilisation in the Indian subcontinent.

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