



## Excavation of Mauryan Empire in Patna | Bihar | 12 Dec 2024

### Why in News?

Recently, the [Archaeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#) initiated the excavation of the '**80-pillared assembly hall**' at Kumhrar, a site regarded as the only surviving evidence of the [architectural achievements of the Mauryan emperors](#) in the Indian subcontinent.

### Key Points

- **Uncovering the Mauryan Palace at Kumhrar:**
  - According to ASI, the excavation began on 1st December 2024 at the **Kumhrar protected site in Patna**, focusing on the **Asokan Sabha Ghar (assembly hall)**.
  - The primary aim is to assess the current condition of the buried **Mauryan stone pillars**.
  - A detailed scientific analysis will be conducted, including collaboration with the [Central Ground Water Board](#) to measure the water table.
  - Based on the findings, the possibility of uncovering all 80 pillars will be considered.
- **Historical Context and Past Excavations:**
  - The Mauryan period hall, believed to have been used by [Emperor Ashoka](#) for the [Third Buddhist Council in the 3rd century BCE](#), was first revealed through excavations between 1912-1915 and 1951-1955.
- **Challenges:**
  - In the late 1990s, the ruins **suffered from waterlogging due to groundwater seepage**, causing damage to the structure.
    - To prevent further deterioration, the **site was covered with soil and sand in 2004**.
  - Initially, a **few pillars will be uncovered for condition assessment**. If the condition permits, more pillars may be revealed to the public.
- **Importance of Kumhrar:**
  - Kumhrar, located in Patna, houses remnants of the **ancient city of Pataliputra**, the Mauryan Empire's capital.
  - Archaeological **discoveries at Kumhrar, dating to 600 BCE**, provide insights into the history of rulers like **Ajatasattu, Chandragupta Maurya, and Ashoka**.
  - The site includes artifacts spanning four historical periods, from 600 BCE to 600 CE, highlighting its historical significance.

### Mauryan Dynasty

- **Chandragupta Maurya (321-297 BCE):** The **founder of the Mauryan Empire**, overthrew the **Nanda dynasty** and expanded the empire by annexing regions such as the [Hindu Kush](#).
  - In 305-303 BCE, he formed a treaty with **Seleucus Nicator**, gaining additional territories. Later in life, **Chandragupta became a disciple of Jainism**.
  - [Chanakya](#), the prime minister under the reign of Chandragupta Maurya (322 BCE - 297 BCE) and his successor Bindusara. Chanakya played a significant role in the empire's success.
- **Bindusara (298-272 BCE):** Expanded the empire to the Deccan, known as "**Amitraghata (slayer of enemies)**". Adopted the **Ajivika sect**. **Deimachus** was a Greek ambassador at his court.
- **Ashoka (272-232 BCE):** After the [Kalinga War](#), which led to massive casualties, he embraced

Buddhism and promoted peace through his **Dhamma (moral laws)**. Organized the 3rd Buddhist Council and spread Buddhism globally.

- **Dasharatha (232-224 BCE):** Last Mauryan ruler to issue imperial inscriptions. Faced territorial losses.
- **Samprati (224-215 BCE):** Re-established Mauryan control over disintegrated territories and promoted Jainism.
- **Shalishuka (215-202 BCE):** Known as a quarrelsome ruler with a negative reputation.
- **Devavarman (202-195 BCE):** Brief reign, mentioned in the Puranas.
- **Shatadhanvan (195-187 BCE):** Lost territories due to external invasions.
- **Brihadratha (187-185 BCE):** The last Mauryan emperor, assassinated by **Pushyamitra Shunga**, marking the end of the Mauryan dynasty.

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