



Discovery of Ancient Maya City

Why in News?

Archaeologists in Mexico have made a significant discovery in the dense jungle of the **Yucatan Peninsula**, uncovering the remains of an **ancient Maya city**.



What are the Major Findings Related to Ancient Maya City?

▪ About:

- The **National Institute for Anthropology and History (INAH)** in [Mexico](#) led the expedition to Ocomtún.
 - The research team used **airborne laser scanning** to identify **pre-Hispanic structures throughout the region**.
- Named Ocomtun, **meaning "stone column" in the Yucatec Maya language**, this newly discovered city is **believed to have been a prominent centre in the central lowland region of the Yucatan Peninsula between 250 and 1000 AD**.
- It also provides invaluable insights into the **advanced societal and religious practices**

of the Maya civilization, known for its **sophisticated mathematical calendars**.

▪ **Major Findings:**

- **Elevated Terrain:** One of the most surprising findings was an **elevated terrain surrounded by wetlands**, suggesting a unique and strategic settlement pattern.
- **Pottery: Pottery fragments** found at the site indicate that Ocomtún was **inhabited during the Late Classic period (600-900 A.D.)**
- **Central Altars:** It was discovered near the **La Riguena river**, possibly used for community rituals.
 - Central altars suggest the **presence of community rituals, highlighting the spiritual and communal aspects of Maya life.**
- **Pre-Hispanic Ball Games:** It was played throughout the Maya region, representing a religious practice.
 - **The game involved passing a rubber ball**, symbolising the sun, through a stone hoop without using hands.
- **Decline of the City:** The site likely underwent significant changes between 800 and 1000 AD.
 - This period coincided with the **decline and collapse of the Lowland Maya civilization**, which was marked by a **decline in population, urban centres, and political instability.**
 - The fall of Ocomtún and other Maya cities was part of a **larger regional collapse, signifying a transformative period in Maya history.**

What is Maya Civilization?

- The Maya are an indigenous people of Mexico and Central America. Originating in the Yucatán, they rose to prominence around A.D. 250 in **present-day southern Mexico, Guatemala, northern Belize and western Honduras.**
- The **rise of the Maya began about 250 CE, and what is known to archaeologists as the Classic Period of Mayan culture lasted until about 900 CE.**
- The Maya civilization was one of the most advanced and influential cultures.
 - They developed complex systems of **writing, astronomy, mathematics, art, architecture, and religion.**
 - They also built impressive cities with **pyramids, palaces, temples, and plazas.** However, many aspects of their history and culture remain mysterious and unknown.

What are the Other Major Ancient Civilizations?

- **The Indus Valley Civilization-** Northeast Afghanistan to Pakistan and northwest India
- The Mesopotamian Civilization- Iraq, Syria, and Turkey
- The Incan Civilization- Ecuador, Peru, and Chile
- The Aztec Civilization- Mexico
- The Persian Civilization- Iran
- The Ancient Greek Civilization- Greece
- The Ancient Egyptian Civilization- Egypt

What are the Key Facts of Mexico?

- Form of Government: Republic of federated states
- Capital: Mexico City
- Official Language: Spanish
- Money: Peso
- Major Mountain Ranges: Sierra Madre
- Major Rivers: Rio Grande, Yaqui



PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/discovery-of-ancient-maya-city>

