



Dark Age Coins Unearthed in Rajasthan

Why in News?

Recently, archaeological sites in Rajasthan have unearthed a wealth of **punch-mark coins from 600 BC-1000 BC**.

- It offers insights into a "dark age" in Indian history that **spanned the decline of the [Indus Valley Civilization](#) to the era of [Lord Buddha](#)**. Historians refer to this period **from 1900 BC to 600 BC, as the Dark Age**.

Key Points

▪ About:

- Rajasthan's archaeological discoveries shed light on its role as a **hub of ancient trade and cultural exchange**.
- The findings underscore the importance of preserving and studying these artifacts to illuminate India's lost historical periods.

▪ Presentation at National Numismatics Conference:

- A retired numismatist from the **Rajasthan Department of Archaeology and Museology**, presented his research on punch-mark coins at the **[National Numismatics Conference in Meerut on 5th December 2024](#)**.
 - Museology is the **study of museums and the activities they undertake**.
 - It includes the **study of museums' history, their role in society, and the activities they engage in**, such as curating, preservation, education, and public programming.
 - A numismatist is a **person who studies, collects, and analyzes currency and other objects used as money**.
- He highlighted discoveries from sites like **Ahar (Udaipur), Kalibanga (Hanumangarh), Viratnagar (Jaipur), and Jankipura (Tonk)**, showcasing evidence of a thriving ancient trade network.

▪ Discoveries and Significance:

◦ Extensive Coin Studies:

- The symbols such as the **Sun, Shadchakra, and Mountains/Meru were identified** on the coins.
- These coins, **crafted from [silver](#) and [copper](#)** with a standard weight of 3.3 grams, display similarities to coins found across India, from Peshawar to Kanyakumari.

◦ Major Findings:

- Notable discoveries include **3,300 coins unearthed in Tonk in 1935** and **2,400 coins in Sikar in 1998**.
- **Metallurgical tools** from these regions resemble those **found in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Peshawar, linking Rajasthan to a wider cultural and trade network**.

▪ Historical Context and Archaeological Evidence:

◦ Documentation by Chinese Travelers:

- **Chinese travelers [Fa-Hien](#) (399-414 CE), [Sunyan](#) (518 CE), and [Hiuen-Tsang](#) (629 CE)** documented ruins in these areas, pointing to their

historical importance.

- Their accounts, combined with archaeological evidence, enrich the understanding of Rajasthan's ancient trade and cultural heritage.
- **Broader Trade Connections:**
 - Rajasthan's trade history parallels the [Silk Route](#) in significance, supported by discoveries of coins from the [Gupta dynasty](#), [Malavas](#), and [Janapadas](#).
 - These findings emphasize Rajasthan's pivotal economic and cultural role in ancient India.
- **Treasure Collection:**
 - The Rajasthan Department of Archaeology has amassed over 2.21 lakh ancient coins, including 7,180 punch-marked examples, curated under the **Rajasthan Treasure Trove Rules, 1961**.
 - These coins provide invaluable insights into the state's historical and economic prominence.

Indus Valley Civilization

- **About:**
 - The **history of India begins with the birth of the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC)**, also known as Harappan Civilization.
 - It flourished around **2,500 BC, in the western part of South Asia**, in contemporary Pakistan and Western India.
 - The Indus Valley was home to the **largest of the four ancient urban civilizations** of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and China.
 - In the 1920s, the Archaeological Department of India carried out excavations in the Indus valley wherein the ruins of the two old cities, viz. [Mohenjodaro and Harappa](#) were unearthed.
 - In 1924, **John Marshall, Director-General of the ASI, announced the discovery** of a new civilisation in the Indus valley to the world.
- **Decline:**
 - The **Indus Valley Civilization declined around 1800 BCE**, primarily due to **climate change and migration**.
 - Its two major cities, Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, disappeared, marking the end of the civilization.
 - Harappa is often associated with the civilization's name as it was the first city discovered by modern archaeologists