



Megalithic Site in Kerala

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Why in News?

Recently, a [rainwater harvesting project](#) in Kerala led to the discovery of a large number of [megalithic urn burials](#).

- These findings were unearthed on **Kundlikkad hill** (also known as Malampalla or **Malappuram hill**) in the **Nenmara forest division**.
- An **urn burial** is a type of burial where the **remains** of a deceased person are placed in a [pottery vessel, or urn](#), and buried.

What are the Key Facts about the Discovery of Megalithic Urn Burials?

- **Classic Urn Burials:** Typically, **hilltop burial sites** feature **cairn heaps** with cists, cairn circles, and stone circles burials.
 - The presence of these urn burials, which date back **over 2,500 years**, is rare for a hilltop site.
- **Urn Characteristics:** The region contained **pot sherds** from different types of pottery, including **black ware, red ware, and black and red ware**.
 - A notable find includes an urn with **fingertip impressions**, and smaller pots featured **cord-impressed designs**, indicating distinct **decorative techniques** used in pottery.
 - **Chisel marks** were found on rocks across the hill, indicating that **circling boulders** were crafted using chisels.
 - This suggests a more **organised** approach to **burial construction** in the area.
- **Importance of the Discovery:** It offers significant **insights** into the links between the **Mesolithic** because of the presence of **microliths** from the site **and Iron Age periods** in Kerala.
 - Archaeologists say that such **combination of mesolithic and iron age remains** is unusual.

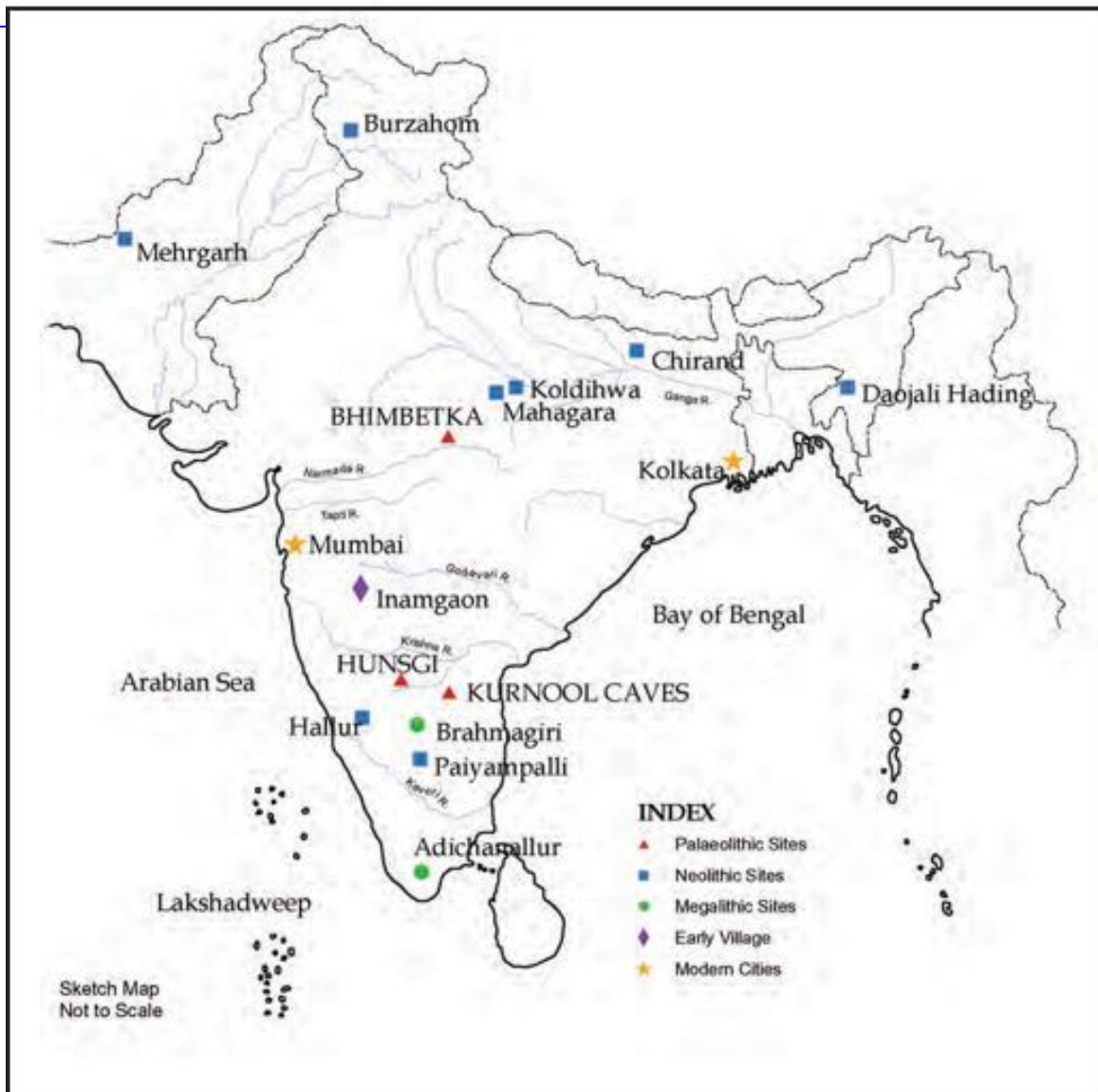
What is Megalithic Culture?

- **About Megalith:** Megaliths refer to **monuments made from large stones**. In most cases, megaliths are **burial sites** located away from habitation areas.
- **Chronology of Megaliths:** Based on the **Brahmagiri excavation**, megalithic cultures in South India are dated to between the **3rd century B.C. and 1st century A.D.**
- **Geographical Distribution of Megaliths in India:** The main concentration of megalithic culture is in **Deccan**, especially **south of the Godavari River**.
 - It has been found across **Punjab Plains, Indo-Gangetic basin, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Burzahom** in Jammu and Kashmir.
 - Important sites include **Seraikala (Bihar), Khera (Uttar Pradesh), Deosa (Rajasthan)** etc.
- **Use of Iron in South India:** The **Megalithic period** in South India was a **full-fledged Iron Age**

culture, where the benefits of **iron technology** were fully realised.

- **Iron objects** such as **weapons** and **agricultural implements** were found from **Junapani** in Vidarbha to **Adichanallur** in Tamil Nadu.

- **Subsistence Pattern:** They lived on a combination of **agriculture, hunting, fishing, and animal husbandry**.
- **Rock Paintings:** **Rock paintings** found at megalithic sites depict scenes of **hunting, cattle raids, and group dancing**.



MAP: Some Important Archaeological Sites

Note:

- **Mesolithic period (middle stone)** began **about 12,000 years ago till about 10,000 years ago**. **Stone tools** found during this period are generally **tiny**, and are called **microliths**.
- Microliths were probably **stuck** on to **handles of bone or wood** to make tools such as **saws and sickles**.

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