

HIDDEN HISTORY

Will Bhagatrav site toss up another Lothal?

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Ahmedabad: After 58 years of primary excavation, Gujarat may unearth its new Harappan-time port in Bhagatrav, about 124 kilometres from another ancient port Lothal. A team of experts and students of Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar, in collaboration with the Gujarat State Archaeology Department (GSAD) are all set to excavate the ancient site. The team of eight members, including the faculty, students and experts, will leave for the site by this month end and spend 45 days looking for a Lothal-like site.



A trial trench was taken in 1960s. ... The site was placed as contemporary to Lothal, but nothing much was investigated since then

PROF AK KANUNGO, field director

Prof Alok Kumar Kanungo, field director, says, "The recent visits to the site alerted us for the need to excavate it with all available scientific technology. At present, only an extant area is available for investigation. The heavily disturbed site is on verge of extinction and under heavy ploughing, but sherds of the Harappan era can be seen."

Kanungo, who has been an excavation director at Indian Archaeological Society, added, "The objectives of the present excavation are to investigate the nature and size of the settlement along with its cultural sequence by excavating the site horizontally."

Bhagatrav is located 124 kilometres south of Lothal and 64 kilometres from Padri,

both of which have yielded early Harappan remains.

YS Rawat, GSAD director, said, "This project is in collaboration with us. The site is near Ankleshwar and long back a small excavation was done. IIT, Gandhinagar, will use its scientific expertise to understand whether it can be developed as Lothal or not."

Kanungo added, "We will collect flora, charcoal and soil samples; investigate the settlement pattern, house plans, growth and transformation of Harappan civilisation; possibility of it being a port site like Lothal; explore climate and vegetation; and, study food habits, etc."

BHAGATRAV lies in Hansot taluka in Bharuch

The site was brought to light by famous archaeologist SR Rao in 1957-58

It measures half-a-mile from southwest to northeast habitations

At present, the site is located about one kilometre away from Jetpor village

The site is near the Arabian Sea

Rao dug a trial trench, which yielded 7 to 8-foot-deep deposits with two cultural periods, Harappan era and the early Medieval era