

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1379
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.12.2015
AGRAHAYANA 16, 1937 (SAKA)**

EXCAVATION WORK BY ASI

† 1379. **SHRI MANSHANKAR NINAMA:**
SHRI RAJU SHETTY:
SHRI C. MAHENDRAN:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has conducted excavation projects in the various States of the country;
- (b) if so, the State/UT-wise and location-wise details of the new discoveries/findings during the last five years and the current year;
- (c) the funds allocated and expenditure incurred on the projects during the last five years, year-wise;
- (d) whether ASI has stopped the work of excavation in various States;
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (f) whether a research can be carried out at all the possible places to find out such treasure-trove by establishing a new research institute and if so, the view of the Government in this regard?

A N S W E R

**MINISTER OF STATE, CULTURE AND TOURISM (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) AND MINISTER
OF STATE, CIVIL AVIATION**

(DR. MAHESH SHARMA)

- (a) Archaeological Survey of India has conducted excavation projects in the various & States/UTs of the country during the last five field seasons. The details are at Annexure-I.
- (b) The permissions of the following sites have been issued to Excavation Branches of ASI for conducting excavations in the current field season 2015-16.
 1. Rukministhan, South-west of Ancient Nalanda University, District Nalanda, Bihar.
 2. Archaeological mound Suabarej, PS Pipilli, District Puri, Orissa
 3. 4 MSR , Locally Binjore, District Ganganagar, Rajasthan
 4. Keeladi, Taluk Tirupvanam, District Sivaganga, Tamil Nadu
 5. Vadnagar, District Mehsana, Gujarat
- (c) Funds allocated and expenditure incurred on the projects during the last five field seasons is at Annexure-II.
- (d) No, Madam. ASI has not stopped the excavation work. However, the excavation work & would be carried out as and when required at different sites of the country for long term
- (e) specific problem-oriented research projects covering various time periods of our past.
- (f) There is no plan to establish research institute to find out treasure-trove.

ANNEXURE REFERREDE TO IN REPLY TO PART (a) OF LOK SABHA QUESTION DAIRY NO. 1379 FOR 07.12.2015

Some of the sites excavated by Archaeological Survey of India which have yielded important finds are mentioned below:

1. Kondapur, District Medak, Andhra Pradesh: 2010-11

Excavation has yielded two apsidal shaped burnt brick shrines adjacent to each other. Noteworthy in this area is the square shaped lead coin of Gotamiputrasatakarni. The other finds include number of copper and lead coins, terracotta medallion of Tiberius (AD 14 to 37 AD) etc. Among other noteworthy antiquities were Positive impress / Sealing - Three types - (1) *Brahmi* letters with crescent in the middle (2) *Srivatsa* & triangular standard with *brahmi* letters (3) lion motif with *brahmi* letters.

2. Kurugodu (Budhikolla), District Bellary, Karnataka: 2010-11, 2011-12

Recent excavation has brought to light Palaeolithic (old stone age) tool made out of quartz and a number of debitage of microliths along with fluted cores. A number of finished and unfinished Neolithic tools were also found. The site was occupied right from the prehistoric period to early historical period. Antiquities recovered were Polished Stone Axes of greenish basalt, dolerite in different stages of manufacture. Hammer stones, stone rubbers or balls, pestles, oval stone discs, Finished and Chalcolithic blades in Chert, jasper and chalcedony.

3. Excavation at Malhar, District Bilaspur, Chattisgarh: 2010-11, 2011-12

The excavation revealed an urban settlement and goods of daily need of contemporary society. The ceramic assemblage comprised of red ware, black and red ware, black slip and stamped pottery. Important antiquities from the site consist of iron objects, stone objects, lead objects, ear studs, dices, antimony rod, kohl sticks, coins and inscribed sealings.

This early historic site has yielded rich collections from Kushan levels. A hoard of 246 copper coins was found from the Kushan level. The preliminary chemical cleaning of these coins shows majority of them being illegible due to constant usage. However those which are a little legible show the coins variety of Kanishka-I and Huvishka.

The second find is that of Elephant teeth (molar) in charred condition along with fragments of rib bones and vertebra. The other finds are terracotta figurines, copper and lead coins, Iron objects, terracotta sealings, beads of semi-precious stones. A couple of circular stone structures and a small well made of stone slabs are other significant finds which are found for the first time at Malhar.

4. Excavation at Khirsara, District Nakhatrana, Gujarat: 2011-12, 2012-13

The Harappan mound at Khirsara, locally known as 'Gadhwali Vadi' was excavated and has yielded rich cultural deposit belonging to the mature Harappan phase. The Harappans developed a well-planned fortified settlement at Khirsara which is roughly rectangular in shape. The evidence shows five structural phases and damage caused by the flood in successive phases. The excavation also revealed that the citadel was raised over the bed rock within the general fortification.

The site has also yielded almost all types of Harappan artefacts which include nine seals of various types and shapes.

5. Bangarh, District South Dinajpur, West Bengal: 2010-11, 2011-12

The ancient mound at Bangarh is located on the left bank of Punarbaba River, a tributary of the Ganga in the South Dinajpur District of West Bengal. The limited excavations carried out at this site brought to light the remains of a massive brick wall with a width of 1.6 m built of various sizes of bricks (14 x 14 x 4.5 cm, 15 x 15 x 5 cm). The other finds include terracotta tiles, iron nails, terracotta plaques and stone beads. The findings can be dated to the medieval period. The pottery remains are represented by glazed and red ware.

6. Excavation at Itkhori, District Chatra, Jharkhand: 2011-12, 2012-13

The archaeological site of Itkhori is situated in Distt. Chatra of Jharkhand. It is about 150km toward north from Ranchi. During the course of excavation the ruins of stupa remains were unearthed. Among the artefacts stone blocks carved with Kirthimukha, purna kumbha, kalasha, mythical figurine, chaitya motives, votive stupas, Buddha idol in sand stone, panels, Buddha head in terracotta, hopscotch, beads, gamesman and number of semi-precious stone beads are the noteworthy antiquities of Itkhori excavation. The unearthed pottery and potsherds are mainly dull red ware, red slipped ware and a few are micacious red ware. These are medium to coarse varieties which are well oxidized and other mostly ill oxidized. In shapes mainly are bowls, knife-edge bowls, lids, vases, jars, handi, spout pots, earthen lamps, incense burner etc.

7. Excavation at Rupnagar, District Rupnagar, Punjab: 2011-12

The excavation brought to the light a five-fold cultural sequence i.e. (i) Harappan/Bara; (ii) Painted Grey Ware (iii) Sunga/Kushan/Gupta; (iv) Post Gupta and (v) Medieval Periods. The prominent finds are bara ware, black on red ware painted grey ware, red ware glazed ware and beads, blades, bangles, bone points, seals figurines (animal and human), coins, copper and iron objects of various cultural periods.

8. Raja Vishal Ka Garh, Vaishali, District Vaishali, Bihar: 2010-11, 2011-12

Remnants of brick fortification wall, human and animal figurines, wheels, beads, skin rubber, sealings, Hopscotch of terracotta, beads of semi-precious stone, bone implements copper antimony rods, copper coins etc. NBPW, black slipped ware, Red Ware, construction of mud rampart & fortification wall in different phases were found. Findings of terracotta objects, skin rubbers, human figurines, pendants etc. are most noteworthy. Mention may be made of gold objects iron objects, copper antimony rods etc. Pot Sherds include NBPW, Grey Ware, Black Slipped Ware, Red Ware. Period of remaining is 3rd century BC to 6th-7th Century A.D.

9. Sisupalgarh, District Khurdha, Orissa: 2011-12

The excavation has revealed the fortification which was originally of mud and subsequently retained by laterite block and in the last phase was superimposed by bricks. This may be datable from 2nd century B.C to 3rd century A.D. Among the important findings, terracotta ear ornaments, balls, hopscotch, two sealings and iron implements are noteworthy. Among the pottery important findings are red polished

ware, dull red ware, buff ware, grey ware and black and red ware all datable between 1st century B.C to century 350 A.D.

10. Karanpura, District Hanumangarh, Rajasthan: 2012-13, 2013-14

The excavation at Karanpura, District Hanumangarh, Rajasthan, has produced early and mature Harappan pottery and house complexes built of mud bricks of both the early and mature Harappan period. The other important artefacts consist of copper arrow heads, mirror, bangle, rings and fish hooks. Beads made of steatite and semi-precious stone of agate, faience, carnelian and terracotta and spindle whorls were also found excavated. Besides a large quantity of animal bone fragments and a few varieties of grains were also unearthed.

11. Piprahwa-Ganwaria Complex, District Siddharthnagar, Uttar Pradesh: 2012-13

The ancient mounds at the site have been excavated in the past and were re-excavated to find out inter-connection of different sites, believed to be parts of ancient Kapilavastu. Another objective was to get the samples collected for radiocarbon dates to know the antiquity of the site. During excavation terracotta human and animal figurines, semi-precious stone beads, copper coins, bone points and terracotta pestles besides ceramics of early historical period were found.

12. Ahichchhatra, Village - Ramnagar, Tehsil - Aonla, District - Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh: 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14

The site is traditionally associated with the story of the great epic Mahabharata when it was believed to have been the capital of Northern Panchala. It is also said that Gautama Buddha have delivered a sermon to the Naga King here while Parshvanath the Jain Tirthankar is also believed to have performed penance here. The ASI had conducted regular excavation at the site and the cultural deposit of the site started from OCP culture followed by Painted Grey Ware culture, NBP culture, Sunga-Kushana, Gupta, Post Gupta and Early Medieval respectively.

13. Lauriya-Arera, District East Champaran, Bihar: 2013-14

A small monastery has been exposed on eastern side of Asokan pillar. It consist of a court yard, having cells on the sides, with a platform in the centre. The central cell on the eastern arm is having a pedestal probably for enshrining any image or stupa.

The ceramic industry as well as other associated cultural remains suggest its construction & continuation from 1st century BC to 3rd century AD. Potteries retrieved are predominantly red ware and red slipped ware while limited quantity of tiny sherds of black slipped ware and grey ware have also been found.

14. Pulicat, District Trivallur, Tamil Nadu: 2013-14

Excavation at Fort Gelderia, Pulicat, District Thiruvallur, Tamil Nadu was conducted from 2013-14. The fort was built in the year 1612 CE by Dutch and named it as Vastel Geldria after Gelderland, one of the states in Holland. The fort is square, with bastions at the corners. The curtain walls are built of brick, laterite with lime mortar. Within the fort, the most impressive structure is the gate to the cemetery. At present the fort area is fully covered with bushes and earth.

Accordingly, the main aim of the excavation is to identify the layout of the fort Geldria and its remains. Six trenches were laid inside the fort on the east and wouthwestern side viz. PLC-XF5, XE5, XE4, F1, F2, and ZF2. The pottery assemblages in Pulicat are distinguished into two categories. Indigenous and imported variety (imported from China, Thai and Arab countries) like Zhangzhou (Blue colour under glaze looks dark gray), Jindzhen (Blue and White), Guangdong and Fujian ware. The antiquities consist of a copper coins (5 nos), Bronze ring, lid knob, bell (bronze), coat button (Bronze), pieces of iron, Iron nail, etc., Important discovery of the excavation is imposed seal impression of foreign origin on the smoking pipes (China Clay). It is very clear from this ceramics and antiquities that it was acted as an important maritime port town on Coramandal coast from the Medieval Period (11th Century CE) to Colonial period (19th Century CE).

15. Raja Bali ka Garh, District Madhubani, Bihar: 2013-14

The excavation at site Raja Bali Ka Garh has revealed antiquities belonging to NBPW Period to Pala Period comprising four folded cultural period viz. Period-I (NBPW); Period-II (Sunga-Kusana); Period-III (Gupta), Period-IV (Pala or contemporary). Among the antiquities are terracotta plaques depicting male and female figurine with highly ornamentation, beads of semiprecious stones, animal figurines, terracotta bangle, beads, sling balls, copper antimony rod, etc. The brick built structure exposed during excavation can be ascribing to Gupta and Pala period. The finding of ceramic assemblage is the NBPW, Black Slip Ware, Grey Ware, Red Ware of varying types and shapes. However, the most noteworthy evidence is chronic deposit of silt notices across all the cuttings in same stratigraphic context which can be identified as flood deposit.

16. Purana Qila, New Delhi : 2013-14

During the excavation, eight squares at the south-eastern slope up to bottom near Sher Mandal have been laid down. The present layout has followed the old layout system as available in previous records. The excavation revealed the eight folded sequence of cultures right from Maurya to Mughal without any break and finds of succeeding culture viz. British period from the surface as Maurya period, Sunga period, Kushan period, Gupta period, Post-Gupta period, Rajput period, Sultanate period, Mughal period.

17. Sarnath, District Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh: 2013-14

After a decade, the protected site of Sarnath was further excavated with the objectives to know the earliest deposit of the site. The important finding of the excavation is a statue of Lord Buddha in Gupta style, an inscribed staircase of Kushana period and a few minor antiquities. Interestingly, as per the objective of the excavation to know what happened between the time after Buddha and before Asoka, an AMS date of 385 B.C. was obtained from charcoal samples dated in BETA laboratory in USA.

18. Rajghat, District Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh: 2013-14

The archaeological mound representing ancient Kasi was excavated to confirm the date of earlier deposits and the dates are awaited from laboratories. However, beautiful terracotta figurines, objects of daily use and painted, plain and

bichroure Northern Black Polished Ware were found besides contemporary ceramics, bricks structures of sunga and Kushana period were also found.

19. Kayar, District Yavatmal, Maharashtra: 2014-15

The archaeological excavation conducted at the site indicates that the site, being a multicultural nature with fortification, was flourishing during the period especially from the Proto-historic to the Early Historical period. The excavations have reported some very important and interesting findings from the site comprising ceramics of various wares, red ware, black and red ware, black slip ware, red slip ware, dull red ware, kaolin local ware, terracotta tiles etc. The artefact assemblage from the excavation includes terracotta seal and sealings, lead, potin and copper coins, bone points, Iron objects like arrow heads, a gold bangle, dice, lajjagouri figurine, animal and human figurines, pendants, semiprecious stone and terracotta beads, etched beads, ear studs, shell and terracotta bangles, hopscotch, legged querns, and miniature potsherds etc. The structural remains of different phases also found during the excavation like house complex with platform storage jar and granary, terracotta ring well or soak pits, brick or stone well, tandoor, earth etc.

20. Binjore, District Gangaganagar Rajasthan: 2014-15

There are two cultural assemblage found during the excavation i.e. Early-Harappan and Mature-Harappan, represented by various antiquities such as fish-hook, arrowheads, knife, celt, bangles, terracotta bangles, faience bangles, shell bangles, beads of carnelian, agate, faience, gold foil and ring, terracotta toy cart frame, cake *mustika* & bull figurine. Harappan seal made of steatite depicting figure of unicorn with five letters on Harappan script. The early Harappan level has revealed pottery similar to the Kot-diji, which includes vase, basin, jar and goblet. Lots of storage pots have been found placed over stand to store the food grains. The structures of Early-Harappan period were made of mud bricks (size of 10:20:30 cm.) In the Early-Harappan phase Hakara ware (incised and mud appliqué design) has also been found.

21. Rukministhan, District Nalanda, Bihar: 2014-15

The mound revealed several structures like votive stupas, brick walls, steps to the north of the temple containing colossal image of Buddha and rammed floors etc. The remains of an enclosure wall were exposed measuring about 25 m towards southern portion of the site. These structures as per their nature and associated antiquities and potteries are ranging from Gupta to Pala period. The important antiquities like terracotta sealings, inscribed tablets, fragments of sculptures of *Ganesh* and *Avalokiteshvara*, beads, sling balls, etc. were found during excavation. The pottery revealed from excavation consists of red ware and red slipped ware.

22. Suabarei, District Puri Odissa: 2014-15

The significant achievement of the excavation at Suabarei is the evidence of a separate Neolithic horizon attested by the presence of gritty handmade potsherds of thin to medium fabric and a chisel of dolerite below chalcolithic level separated by a sterile layer number (11) measuring a maximum thickness of 55 cm in Qdt. 2 of XB1 and about 25 cm in Qdt. 4 of ZB2. Besides, a large number of charred animal

