Harappan Necropolis – Haryana

Why in news?

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A Harappan excavation carried out by Archaeologists in Haryana has unveiled a large burial ground.

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What is the brief account of Harappan studies?

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- Indus Valley Civilization had been spread across a vast area of land in present day India and Pakistan (around 12 lakh sq.km).
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- It is called Harappan civilization after the place (Harappa in Pakistan) where first archaeological evidences for the civilization has been found.
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- Harappan studies are focused primarily on urban design, crafts and trade, funeral customs say a lot about a community, what its people value, its social hierarchy, gender relations, and how it treats its children.
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- There are five big known centres of the Harappan civilisation of which three are in Pakistan namely Harappa and Ganweriwala in Punjab, and Mohenjo Daro in Sindh).
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- The other two important in sites are found in India namely Dholavira and Rakhigarhi.
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- Some important burial grounds have been discovered in Lothal (Gujarat), Kalibangan (Rajasthan), Farmana (Haryana), Sanauli (UP).
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What is the recent excavation about?

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- The excavations has been carried out in place called Rakhigarhi in Haryana by Indian archaeologists, and a South Korean team.
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- The necropolis, dated to between 2,500 BC and 2,000 BC, or the Mature Harappan Period, sprawls under a 1 hectare patch of land that has long been under cultivation by present-day residents of Rakhigarhi.
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- The excavation yielded graves contained full skeletal remains classified as **Primary burials.**
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- The researchers subcategorised the primary burials into “typical” and “atypical” cases.
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1. **Typical cases -** Single bodies buried in supine position inside a plain pit
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2. **Atypical cases -** These have brick-lined graves, multiple bodies, or prone-positioned burials.
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- In others, only a few human bones were found along with votive pots classified as **Secondary burials.**
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- In yet others, only pots were found, **Symbolic burials** that suggest that the person died elsewhere.
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What are the significant findings on Harappan civilization?

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- The Harappan Civilization’s normative form or forms of body disposal remains unclear, since there are possibility of diverse groups following

distinctive mortuary customs.
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- The recent excavations noted pit burials with multiple bodies, and prone (face down) burials as significant departures from other Harappan necropolises.
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- Brick-lined burials (as opposed to plain pits) were among the most elaborately constructed graves, and possibly implied a high social or ritual status.
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- The important feature was that every individual found in a brick-lined pit was determined to be female, leading theory that these women played a special role in the community.
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- However, women in typical burials got fewer votive pots than men, leading the study that if there were any “discriminatory” attitudes toward women in general.
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- In Rakhigarhi, buried individuals seem to have got elaborate burials with numerous grave goods.
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- Two burials had been done on a bed of pottery, which may be indicative of high social status.
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Source: Indian Express

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