

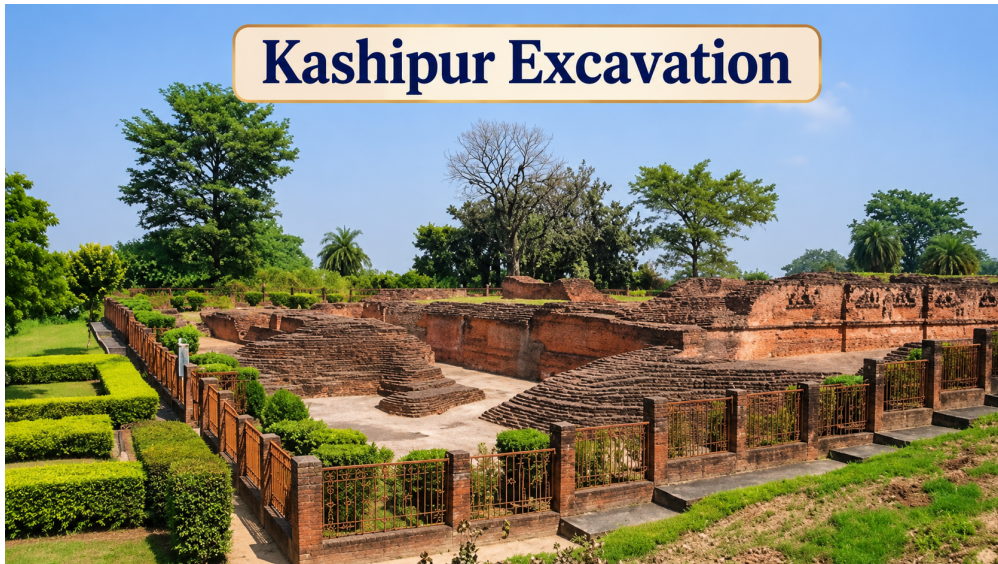
Kashipur Excavation

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Why in news?

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has started a fresh excavation at a 90-acre archaeological mound in Kashipur, Uttarakhand.

- **Kashipur** - A 90-acre mound near Uttarakhand's Rudrapur, a site associated with both the Mahabharata tradition and the account of Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang, who had visited the place in the 6th century.
- **Identified by** - Alexander Cunningham, the founder and first Director-General of the ASI, identified Kashipur with Xuanzang's "Kiu-pi-shwang-na" (Govisana).
- **Mythological link** - The site was the training ground and residence of sage Dronacharya from the Mahabharata, and the Pandavas are said to have built the Drona Sagar Lake as 'guru dakshina' (an offering) to him for imparting battle skills to them.
- **Archaeological Excavations** - The ASI conducted excavations across multiple phases since 1939: 1939-40, 1965-66 and 1970-71.
- Excavations focused on the remains of a large structure at Bhim-Gaja, the highest point of the site.
- **Temple Architecture** - Excavations uncovered a Gupta-to-early-medieval temple complex constructed in three different phases
 - **Gupta period** - A raised platform built of soil and bricks, possibly supporting a sanctum.
 - **6th-7th century AD** - Two additional surrounding walls were constructed around the original structure.
- **Cultural sequence** - Pottery collected from the site revealed that it remained under occupation from the Painted Grey Ware period to the early medieval period.



Painted Grey Ware (PGW) Culture

- **PGW** – It is a distinctive pottery culture associated with early settlements in northern India, especially the Mahabharata era.
- In the 1950s, noted archaeologist and ASI chief B B Lal excavated Hastinapur (near Meerut), where he famously discovered Painted Grey Ware, and associated this with the sites and chronology of the Mahabharata.
- **Features** –
- It is a fine, smooth, grey coloured pottery that's produced by sophisticated firing techniques.
- They contain mostly geometric patterns in black or deep chocolate brown and usually occur in shapes such as open-mouthed bowls and dishes.
- Mostly found in the Indo-Gangetic divide, the Sutlej Basin and the Upper Ganga plains.
- **Dated** – PGW is dated between approximately 1100 BCE and 500/400 BCE – the timeframe that matches some of the wide estimates of when the Mahabharata was composed.
- PGW has been reported from many places such as Salimgarh, Majnu-ka-Tila, Bhorgarh, Mandoli, Kharkhari Nahar, Jhatikra, Gordon Highlanders' Column near Badli ki Sarai, Bankner and Chhansa in Delhi, besides Sihi (Gurgaon), Bisrakh (Greater Noida), Loni (Ghaziabad) and Bhopani (Faridabad).

Reference

[Indian Express| Excavation in Kashipur started this week](#)