Keezhadi Excavation

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Why in News?

Archaeologist K. Amarnath Ramakrishna, whose excavation at Keeladi in Tamil Nadu drew the nation's attention, was transferred yet again, this time from New Delhi to Greater Noida.

- Keeladi is a ***tiny hamlet in the Sivaganga district*** in southern Tamil Nadu.
- It is about 12 km south-east of Madurai and is located ***along the Vaigai River.***
- Archaeologists had initiated excavations at a site known as the *Pallichanthai Tidal* in Keeladi, a place that was originally a coconut grove spanning 100 acres.
- It was in Keeladi that they unearthed over 7,500 ancient artifacts including wall structures, drainage systems and wells, all evidence of ***a sophisticated urban society*** that thrived.
- Carbon dating also revealed that the elements are over 2,160 years old, dating back to the 2nd century BCE, ***Sangam period*** in Tamil history.
- Most importantly, there was ***no evidence of religious symbols*** at the excavation site, which hinted at the secular nature of the civilization.
    - The presence of a vibrant, sophisticated urban society in Keeladi
    - The strong structures oriented in cardinal direction suggesting systematic urban planning
    - Port shreds with Tamil Brahmi inscriptions indicating a highly literate society
    - The graffiti of the sun and moon demonstrated the astronomical sense of the people
    - An ivory dice pointing to the presence of an elite society
- Key discoveries include a plethora of artifacts like pottery, inscribed potsherds, gold ornaments, and weaving tools, suggesting a vibrant and literate culture.
- The Keeladi excavations are crucial for understanding the transition from the Iron Age to the Early Historic Period and the subsequent cultural developments in Tamil Nadu.

Reference

The Hindu | Keeladi excavation