

Prelim Bits 09-04-2018

Proto-historic settlement of artisans

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- Archaeologists of the University of Calcutta excavated microlithic tools, semi-precious bead in Asuralay village in West Bengal's Birbhum district.

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- The excavation on a mound, which is about two metres from the surface of the earth, has revealed a proto historic settlement.

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- The initial estimate tells that the settlement could date to the 2nd millennium BC.

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- Raw materials in the form of bones and stones, finished materials, tools like stone and bone drills used for making these products and several fire places used for making the tools are found.

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- A large amount of black and red ware pottery (BRW) has also been found at the site in large quantities.

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- The pottery signifies a proto historic level of human occupation.

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- Other contemporary pottery such as red ware, black ware and buff ware has also been found.

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- High temperature burning and charcoal deposits at the mud floor of this monocultural site has also been unearthed.

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Kaniyan Koothu

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- Kaniyan Koothu, a folk art with elements of classical music, is performed by the Kaniyan community.

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- It is an invocation to Sudalai Madan, the Lord of the Graveyards.
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- Kaniyans are a Scheduled Tribe whose population is less than 750 and only around 200 persons are currently performing the art.
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- Magudam and mantham are the instruments used by the artists.
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- The main singer of the troupe is called as 'Annavi'.
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- The annavi is usually supported by a second singer.
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- Two artists play the magudam - one plays the bass and the other the sharper version.
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- Two men, dressed as women, dance to the tune with boundless energy.
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- The art is facing a crisis not because of lack of patronage, but because not many come forward to take up it as a profession.
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- In addition, many dancers of the Kaniyan koothu are from the families of paavai koothu (puppetry) artists who hail from Maharashtra.
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8th Regional 3R Forum

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- The Eighth Regional 3R (Reduce, Recycle and Recovery) Forum in Asia and the Pacific is all set to commence in Indore, India.
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- The Forum is hosted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
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- It is co-organized by the Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan, and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development of the Division for Sustainable Development /United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
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- The overall theme of the forum is "Achieving Clean Water, Clean Land and Clean Air through 3R and Resource Efficiency - A 21st Century Vision for Asia-Pacific Communities".
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- Forum will see participation of around 40 mayors of cities around the world and mayors of more than 100 cities across India.

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- The signing and subsequent adoption of the 'Indore 3R Declaration on Achieving Clean Water, Clean Land and Clean Air' in cities by mayors and city authorities is the major expected outcome of the event.

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- The Forum aims to address how 3R and resource efficiency measures can provide complementary benefits in making cities and countries clean, smart, livable and resilient.

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Silent Valley Park

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- Silent Valley Park in Kerala will soon reopen to visitors.
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- It is located in the Northeast corner of Palakkad district.
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- It is a beautiful representation of the last remaining rain forest of Kerala.
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- Silent Valley was declared as National Park in 1984 and formally inaugurated in the year 1985.
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- It constitutes the centerpiece of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, an integral part of the Western Ghats.
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- It was called 'Sairandhrivanam' as it was considered this was where Sairandhiri (the secret identity donned by Panchali, from the epic Mahabharata) hid along with her five husbands.

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- A perennial river named Kunthipuzha is passing through the western side of the park, from north to south direction finally merging in to Bharathapuzha.
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- Species like Elephants, Nilgiri Langur, Nilgiri Tahr, Tiger, Leopard, Sloth Bear, Gaur, etc. are found in this area.
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- The endangered lion tailed macaque is found in this park

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- The indigenous tribal groups that live within park boundaries include Irulas, Kurumbas, Mudugas and Kattunaikkars.

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Advanced Supersonic Parachute Inflation Research Experiment ASPIRE

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- NASA successfully launched a supersonic parachute into the sky that will help missions to land on Mars.

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- The test was meant to mimic the conditions that a spacecraft would experience during a Red Planet entry, descent and landing (EDL).

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- An ambitious NASA Mars rover mission set to launch in 2020 will rely on a special parachute to slow the spacecraft down as it enters the Martian atmosphere.

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- The payload that was launched is a bullet-nosed, cylindrical structure holding a supersonic parachute, the parachute's deployment mechanism, and the test's high-definition instrumentation -- including cameras -- to record data.

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- The Mars rover which is scheduled to launch in two years (2020), on a mission to hunt for signs of ancient life on the Red Planet.

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- The six-wheeled vehicle, whose body is based heavily on NASA's Curiosity Mars rover, will study rocks on site and cache samples for eventual return to Earth.

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Low cost weather modification technology

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- China is experimenting with a new low-cost weather modification system in a bid to increase rainfall on the Tibetan plateau.

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- The Tibetan plateau, Asia's largest freshwater reserve, feeds the continent's biggest rivers including the Yellow River, Yangtze, Mekong, Salween and the Brahmaputra.

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- As it is often called Asia's 'water tower', the rivers serve as a lifeline for almost half the world's population, flowing through India, Nepal, Laos and Myanmar and other countries.
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- China intends on building a network of fuel-burning chambers in select locations across the plateau.
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- The chambers will burn solid fuel to produce **silver iodide**, a cloud seeding agent.
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- The chambers will be built on steep mountain ridges facing the direction of the wind,
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- When the wind hits the chambers, it produces an upward draft and sends particles into the atmosphere to bring rain.
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- The technology has been used by other countries, such as the US, China is attempting to implement it in a large-scale.
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- There are already 500 burners reportedly deployed on the plateau for experimentation.
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Map of the day

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India Brahmaputra

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- Brahmaputra's origin lies near to the Manasarovar Lake in the Tibetan Plateau.
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- It is called as Tsangpo in Tibet, Jamuna in Bangladesh and Yarlung Zangbo Jiang in China.
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- Tsangpo take a southernly plunge at Namcha Barwa entering into Arunachal Pradesh as Dihang.
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- The Dihang River in Arunachal Pradesh meets Lohit and Dibang to form Brahmaputra.
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- Dihang is also called as Siang and Dibang is also called as Sikang.
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- Jamuna (Brahmaputra) joins the Padma River (Ganga), near Goalundo Ghat, in Bangladesh,
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- Then they meet the Meghna River near Chandpur, in Bangladesh.
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- Teesta drains Sikkim and West Bengal before joining Brahmaputra (Jamuna) in Bangladesh.
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- The Teesta Barrage is a major irrigation project in Bangladesh that was completed in 1997-98.
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Source: PIB, The Hindu

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