Virli Khandar Excavation

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | History*

Why in News?

Recent excavation at a megalithic site in Virli Khandar has revealed distinctive burial architecture, rare artefacts and unusual pottery arrangements in Vidarbha.

- **Virli Khandar –** It is a 2,500-year-old *megalithic burial site that* was first reported in 2008.
- **Location** – Pauni tehsil of Bhandara district, in Maharashtra.
- **Key Findings**
- **Distinct Burial Patterns –** Composite Megalithic Structure, stone circles with menhirs (upright stones) inside, forming a composite megalithic structure.
- Different from nearby sites (Pimpalgaon Nipani, Tirota Kheri), which mainly feature dolmen burials.
- **Unique Pottery Arrangement** – The pots were found inverted (upside down) and arranged systematically, with larger bowls covered by smaller ones.
- **Soil Engineering** – The pots were carefully placed on a layer of black cotton soil laid over a *natural lateritic (murum) base*; the soil's sticky nature likely helped stabilise the vessels against the weight of the earth above them
- **Significant artifacts** –
    - Copper objects, such as a necklace
    - Iron implements like axes, chisels, ladles and arrowheads,
    - Semi-precious stone beads, notably etched carnelian beads,
    - A gold earring
    - Fragmentary bone remains.
- **Timeline** – The preliminary observations date the site to *roughly 500 BCE* (2,500 years ago), *radiocarbon dating* of charcoal remains suggests a broader cultural sequence ranging *from 1000 BCE to 300 CE*.

Menhirs

- **Menhirs** – It is a *large, man-made standing stone*, typically sculpted into a tapered shape at the top and intentionally erected by humans as a monumental landmark.
- It can either be found alone or as a part of a larger complex of prehistoric megaliths, simply large stone structures.
- **Largest Surviving Menhir** – The Grand Menhir Brisé or the Great Broken Menhir in Brittany, France, once stood at 20.6 m tall.
- **Tallest surviving menhir in India** – Nartiang Monoliths garden in the West Jaintia

Hills of Meghalaya (Approx 8m).

Reference

[Indian Express | 2,500-year-old burial site discovered in Maharashtra]

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering