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Adichanallur

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Why is in news? Union Finance Minister Tmt. Nirmala Sitharaman lays the foundation stone for the 'Iconic Site Museum' at Adichanallur archaeological site in Tamil Nadu

The Union Finance Minister visited Adichanallur, an ancient and historical Iron-age burial site located in Thoothukudi District Tamil Nadu, set along the banks of the Tamirabarani (Porunai) river.

This archaeological site was **one of five declared to be developed as 'Iconic Sites' in the Union Budget 2020-21.**

The Minister said in her remarks during the ceremony, noted the unique and rich history encapsulated by the Adichanallur site. Various objects dating back to 467 BCE and food grains such as millets and paddy dated 665 BCE have been unearthed here. The upcoming ASI Museum will showcase all these artefacts 'in-situ', providing a world-class experience to visitors and researchers alike.

About the site:

In 1903-04 British archaeologist **Alexander Rea** unearthed a treasure of over 9,000 objects in Adichanallur.

Nearly 100 years later in 2004 and 2005 archaeologists found a **lot of iron objects, and a few copper objects but no bronze or gold**, as they were more focused on habitations.

In October 2021 using the Geological Survey of India (GSI) data and clues discovered from Rea's report, the ASI team zeroed in on the trenches to be dug.

The recent excavations have yielded a **wealth of materials**, including gold, metals and human remains.

Various Materials unearthed include burial urns, 3000 years old Human skull, Bronze artefacts, Headgear, Spear, Arrowheads, Dog toy, Paddy

Gold was an **inland source** from the region located north of the present northern borders of Tamil Nadu.

Several gold workings are reported from the neighbourhood of the **Hutti gold mines**, the present Raichur district of Karnataka. Some of them have been dated to about 3,000 years ago.

Sanganakallu, a **Neolithic and Megalithic site** near Ballari in Karnataka, has yielded gold foils but in small quantities and not from a burial context like at Adichanallur.

From 1,000 BCE onwards since the beginning of the megalithic or Iron Age in south India, gold was a traded commodity. So it is not surprising that it has been found in Adichanallur.

Adichanallur is the **first archaeological site in Tamil Nadu** where **gold was excavated**.

Not far from the Adichanallur lies **Korkai** the ancient port city of the Pandya kings. Archaeologists doubt if Adichanallur was a **satellite village of Korkai** port city.

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Maritime trade - Associated materials yielded vital clues for maritime trade activities at the southern rim of the Indian Ocean.

Recoveries of many Tamil cultural artefacts in Vietnam, Cambodia and other South East and Far East Asian countries right from the Iron Age till the early 17th Century prove that there were aggressive free sea trade activities that flourished for a long time.

Skeletal biological data from the skeletal remains however was insufficient to draw a genuine conclusion on the structure of the ancient community.

But the results on pathological skeletal and dental abnormalities were amazing

Such abnormalities had never been reported from anywhere else so far.

Various efforts of the Central Government to honour, preserve, and showcase India's rich cultural heritage:

Under PM leadership, numerous heritage sites, including the Somnath, Kashi Vishwanath Temple, and more, have been revitalised. In line with this, several tourism circuits under the **Swadesh Darshan Scheme**, such as the Buddhist Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Desert Circuit, and Himalayan Circuit, are being established to promote tourism and bring due recognition to these places.

The ongoing development of five sites, known as '**Panchtheerth**', based on Babasaheb Ambedkar's life, along with the construction of the National War Memorial and National Police Memorial in Delhi, a tribute to India's security forces.

Also the ten new **Tribal Freedom Fighter Museums** are being established across the country.

Union Finance Minister further highlighted that in the realm of knowledge preservation, over 3.3 lakh manuscripts containing 3.4 crore pages have been digitised.

Furthermore, a plan for a new **National Museum** in Delhi, with 950 rooms spread across the North and South Blocks, has been announced. This National Museum will feature **eight thematic segments**, showcasing India's civilizational culture spanning over 5,000 years.

The '**Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya**', another notable project, has been established as a tribute to every Prime Minister of India since Independence. This museum serves as a narrative record of their contributions to the nation's development over the past 75 years.