

Dholavira - India's 40th World Heritage Site

Dholavira, the Harappan City in the Rann of Kutch, Gujarat has become the 40th site from India to get the UNESCO's World Heritage tag. The archaeological site of a Harappan-era city, was added to the heritage site list on July 27th 2021.

Key Highlights about Dholavira:

- It is the first site of the ancient Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC) in India to get the UNESCO world Heritage tag.
- Dholavira became the fourth site from Gujarat to be added to the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India.
- Archaeologist Jagat Pati Joshi discovered Dholavira in 1968.

Dholavira - UNESCO World Heritage Site

1. India submitted the nomination dossier for Dholavira to the World Heritage Centre in January, 2020 and the site has been on UNESCO's tentative list since 2014.
2. With the addition of Dholavira site, India has now entered the Super-40 club for World Heritage Site inscriptions that already includes Italy, Spain, Germany, China and France.
3. The 40 world heritage properties of India include 32 cultural, 7 natural and one mixed property.
 - Since 2014, India has added 10 new world Heritage sites which is the result of the Prime Minister's steadfast commitment in promoting Indian culture, heritage and the Indian way of life.



Dholavira - Gujarat - Overview

1. Dholavira is one of the very few well-preserved urban settlements in South Asia, dating from the 3rd to mid-2nd millennium BCE.
2. It is located on a hillock near present-day Dholavira village in Kutch district, from which it gets its name.
3. It is the 6th largest of more than 1,000 Harappan sites discovered so far, and was occupied for over 1,500 years.
4. Dholavira has witnessed the entire trajectory of the rise and fall of the early civilization of humankind.
5. It demonstrates its multifaceted achievements in terms of urban planning, construction techniques, water management, social governance and development, art and manufacturing, trading, and belief system.
6. Dholavira has two seasonal streams: Mansar in the north, and Manhar in the south.
7. According to an Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) note on Dholavira, excavations at the site have revealed seven cultural stages documenting the rise and fall of the Indus Civilisation.

Features of Dholavira Harappan City

1. Dholavira is an exceptional example of a proto-historic Bronze Age urban settlement pertaining to the Harappan Civilization.
2. With extremely rich artefacts, it depicts a vivid picture of a regional centre with its distinct characteristics and contributes significantly to the existing knowledge of Harappan-era as a whole.
3. Preconceived city planning, multi-layered fortifications, sophisticated water reservoirs and drainage system, and the extensive use of stone as a building material. These characteristics reflect the unique position Dholavira held in the entire gamut of Harappan Civilization.
4. The configuration of the city with segregated urban residential areas based on differential occupational activities, and a stratified society is an outstanding example of a planned city.
5. The property comprises two parts, a walled city and a cemetery to its west -
 - The walled city consists of a fortified Castle with attached fortified Bailey and Ceremonial Ground, and a fortified MiddleTown and a Lower Town. A series of reservoirs are found to the east and south of the Citadel. The great majority of the burials in the Cemetery are memorial in nature. Read in detail about the Indus Valley Civilization Town Planning on the given link.
6. Unlike other Harappan antecedent towns normally located near to rivers and perennial sources of water that facilitated internal as well as external trade to the Magan (modern Oman peninsula) and Mesopotamian regions.
7. The location of Dholavira in the island of Khadir was strategic to harness different mineral and raw material sources such as copper, shell, agate-carnelian, steatite, lead, banded limestone, among others.
8. Water diverted from seasonal streams, scanty precipitation and available ground was sourced, stored, in large stone-cut reservoirs which are extant along the eastern and southern

fortification. To further access water, few rock-cut wells (the most impressive one being located in the citadel) evident in different parts of the city which date as one of the oldest examples.

- The expansive water management system designed to store every drop of water available shows the ingenuity of the people to survive against the rapid geo-climatic transformations.
9. The multi-cultural and stratified society of Dholavira Harappan City flourished for nearly 1,500 years.

Other Harappan Sites in Gujarat

1. Before the excavation of Dholavira site, Lothal, in Saragwala village on the bank of Sabarmati in Dholka taluka of Ahmedabad district, was the most prominent site of IVC in Gujarat.
2. Rangpur on the bank of Bhadar river in Surendranagar district was the first Harappan site in Gujarat to be excavated.
3. Rojdi in Rajkot district, Prabhas near Veraval in Gir Somnath district, Lakhbaval in Jamnagar, and Deshalpar in Bhuj taluka of Kutch are among other Harappan sites in the state.