

RAKHIGARHI SKELETONS' DNA SAMPLES SENT FOR ANALYSIS

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The excavation site at Rakhigarhi where 60 skeletons were found by the Archaeological Survey of India. PTIVIJAY VERMA

DNA samples collected from two human skeletons unearthed at a necropolis of a Harappan-era city site in Haryana have been sent for scientific examination, the outcome of which might tell about the ancestry and food habits of people who lived in the Rakhigarhi region thousands of years ago.

The skeletons of two women were found a couple of months ago at mound number 7 (named RGR 7 by the Archaeological Survey of India or ASI), believed to be nearly 5,000 years old. Pots and other artefacts were also found buried next to them in a pit, part of the funerary rituals back in the Harappan Civilisation era, ASI officials said.

“Seven mounds scattered around two villages (Rakhi Khas and Rakhi Shahpur) in Hisar district are part of the Rakhigarhi archaeological site. RGR 7 is a cemetery site of the Harappan period when this was a well-organised city. The two skeletons were unearthed about two months ago by our team. And DNA samples were collected by experts about two weeks ago,” Joint Director-General, ASI, S.K. Manjul said.

At present RGR 1, RGR 3 and RGR 7 have been taken up for investigation.

Dr. Manjul, who is leading the excavation team at the Rakhigarhi site since it commenced on February 24, 2022, said the DNA analysis will help answer a lot of questions, anthropological or otherwise. The samples will be first examined by the Birbal Sahni Institute of Paleosciences, Lucknow for preliminary investigation and scientific comparison, before being sent further for forensic analysis from an anthropological perspective, he said.

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