

# Encroached, Harappan border port Bhagatrav dying slow death

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**Ahmedabad:** Bhagatrav, the extreme end of Harappan civilization in Bharuch, is steadily 'dying'. The site has been encroached upon by villagers and is under heavy ploughing. Such is the extent of damage that experts fear now they will never get any major leads from the site about life during the bygone era.

Bhagatrav is considered to be an important port of its time. In January this year, a team of professors from Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar, had gone to the site for preliminary investigation and identified 170 metres for excavation. However, when the team revisited the site in April-May, more than one-third of the area had been encroached upon by villagers.

Professor Alok Kumar Kanungo, field director of the excavation, said, "Bhagatrav is located at one of the extremes of Harappan civilization. Recent visits to the site alerted us about the need to excavate it with all available scientific technology. At present, only an extant area is available for investigation. Heavy ploughing has damaged the site, but sherds of the Harappan era can still be seen."

The site was discovered by famous archaeologist SR Rao in 1957-58.

## Experts rue lack of govt intervention, fear destruction of heritage evidences



### FINDINGS

"We found glazed ware, celadon ware and lead at the site. Lead bricks may have been used to balance boats. Stone-beads were also found," Kanungo said.

**DISSENT:** "Government and authorities did not put in effort to get more evidences from Bhagatrav. Villagers have ploughed so much that we can never know how people lived then," Kanungo lamented. He was accompanied by colleagues of IITGN and students from JNU, Tamil University, MSU and Solapur University. RS Bisht who excavated Dholavira was also present then.

### 'Govt should prevent further damage'

"Govt should spend money to protect such sites which can even bring tourism for the state. We have ruined so many sites that we should now focus on awareness programme," said Kanungo.

### Not just govt's job

"The land in Bhagatrav is agriculturally very good. Gujarat has about 600 sites hence it is not possible to protect all of them. People should be conscious to protect heritage," said YS Rawat, ex-director, Gujarat archaeology dept.