



# NEWS ANALYSIS

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BAJIRAO IAS ACADEMY

The implementation of smart governance practices in India has the potential to improve the efficiency and enhance citizen participation in the policymaking process. examine various initiatives taken to promote smart governance in the country.

## Enhancing governance the digital way

In recent years, India has embarked on an ambitious journey toward digital governance – a transformation designed not only to improve citizen services but also to bolster the capabilities of government employees. This effort underscores a critical truth: the efficiency of public service delivery is inextricably linked to the skills and competencies of the workforce behind it. Yet, despite the strides made, the question remains – what more needs to be done to fully realise the potential of this digital shift?

At its core, governance is a complex web of decision-making processes that involves stakeholders, from government bodies and non-governmental organisations to local community leaders and influential citizens. Chanakya's governance principles have left a lasting impact, particularly in South Asia, shaping modern governance theories, public administration, and strategic diplomacy, with the Arthashastra's insights into statecraft, economic policy, and ethical leadership continuing to serve as a framework for political strategy and governance ethics. In this context, building the capacity of participants to integrate digital tools has become essential to reimagining governance at every level.

**Capacity building in digital governance**  
Digital governance represents a paradigm shift in how government employees and associated service providers or intermediaries such as contractors should engage with their work. The adoption of technology in governance facilitates more effective communication, informed decision-making, and streamlined workflows. As public expectations evolve, so too must the skill-set of those in governance roles. The pressing need for government employees to become adept at navigating digital platforms is paramount in a world that is increasingly technology-driven.

Initiatives such as the IGOT Karmayogi



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As public expectations evolve, so too must the skill-set of those in governance roles

platform have taken centre-stage. Launched in 2020, this online training portal aims to equip government officials with essential skills in data analytics, public administration, and digital technologies. The flexibility of personalised learning paths fosters continuous improvement – a vital trait where adaptability defines success.

Equally transformative is the e-Office initiative, which digitises government workflows, drastically reducing reliance on paperwork and enhancing operational efficiency. By automating file management, workflows, and grievance redress, the initiative promotes real-time communication and transparency. Another initiative is the transition of procurement processes to the online sphere, with platforms like the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) playing a crucial role.

The government's commitment to enhancing digital literacy is commendable, with various programmes aimed at familiarising employees with the essential tools of e-governance, cybersecurity, and digital communication. However, as we celebrate these advancements, it is imperative to recognise the challenges that lie ahead in this digital governance journey.

**Taking digital empowerment forward**  
Despite these initiatives, hurdles remain that could undermine progress. The resistance to change among some segments of the workforce presents a tangible challenge. Bureaucratic structures can sometimes be slow to adapt, with varying levels of enthusiasm and readiness among employees. While some quickly embrace new technologies, others may benefit from extra training and support to effectively navigate the digital landscape. The government must foster an environment that encourages innovation while providing the necessary resources for those who may resist or struggle to adapt.

The lack of incentives raises concerns that government initiatives such as the IGOT Karmayogi platform could become merely

attendance trackers. True success should not be measured by participation numbers alone but by the platform's ability to deliver real value to employees. It is worth considering whether these trainings lead to meaningful outcomes – such as opportunities to apply new skills through relevant job postings – rather than just enhancing performance reviews.

Additionally, the digital divide is a pressing issue, especially in rural areas where access to high-speed Internet and digital tools can be limited. Without addressing this disparity, we risk leaving many employees, and by extension, many citizens behind in an increasingly digital world.

Cybersecurity also looms large as a concern in the digital governance landscape. As government operations shift online, the risk of data breaches and cyberattacks escalates. Protecting sensitive information is non-negotiable, and training employees in cybersecurity protocols is critical to fortifying digital governance systems.

Finally, the need for continuous learning cannot be overstated. The rapid evolution of digital tools necessitates ongoing training and upskilling opportunities to ensure that employees remain capable and confident in their roles. Ensuring that capacity-building programmes remain dynamic and adaptable to new developments is crucial.

**A perspective**  
India's digital governance initiatives have laid a strong foundation, but much remains to fully harness the potential of digital transformation. With robust infrastructure, targeted training, and a commitment to building a dynamic workforce, India can set a global benchmark for digital governance. The key lies in ensuring that every employee, regardless of background, rank, or location, is equipped to excel in the digital age. Only then can we achieve a governance model that is accountable, transparent, and inclusive for all.






**Smart governance mechanisms** are becoming more receptive to the potentials of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) to achieve good governance in its implementation. This application of ICTs for governance is covered under the **umbrella term of E-governance**.


India, being the one of the largest countries **democratically, demographically and geographically faces** a huge challenge in the application of **e-governance to empower its citizens and for overall economic development**, more specifically in the rural areas.

- ❑ **Data Driven Governance:** Technology facilitates communication. The Internet and smartphones have enabled instant transmission of high volumes of data .
- ❑ **Costs Saving:** A lot of Government expenditure goes towards the cost of buying stationery for official purposes. o Letters and written records consume a lot of stationery.
- ❑ However, **replacing them with smartphones and the internet** can save crores of money in expenses every year.

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- ❑ **Transparency:** The use of e-governance helps make all functions of the business transparent. All official information can be uploaded onto the internet.
  - ❑ **Accountability:** Transparency directly links to accountability. Once the functions and information of the governance is available to the citizens, the government is more accountable to its actions.

### **Initiatives to promote smart governance**

- ❑ **MyGov:** It aims to establish a link between Government and Citizens towards meeting the goal of good governance. It encourages citizens as well as people abroad to participate in various activities.
- ❑ **DigiLocker:** It serves as a platform to **enable citizens to securely store and share their documents** with service providers who can directly access them electronically.
- ❑ **National Scholarships Portal (NSP):** It provides a centralized platform for application and disbursement of scholarship to students under any scholarship scheme.

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- ❑ **DARPAN:** It is an online tool that can be used to monitor and analyze the implementation of critical and high priority projects of the State.
  - ❑ **PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation):** It has been aimed at starting a culture of Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation.
  - ❑ **Mobile Seva:** It provides government services to the people through mobile phones and tablets.
  - ❑ **Jeevan Pramaan:** It is an Aadhaar based Biometric Authentication System for Pensioners.
  - ❑ **National e-Governance Plan (NeGP):** It takes a holistic view of e-Governance initiatives across the country, integrating them into a collective vision and a shared cause.
  - ❑ It comprises of 31 Mission Mode Projects, approved in 2006, but later it was integrated into **Digital India Program.**



# Human meta-pneumovirus

## What is the human meta-pneumovirus?

Is the unknown pathogen a reason for concern? How does it spread and can it be prevented? What are the symptoms exhibited after being infected by the human metapneumovirus?

**Zubeda Hamid**

### The story so far:

**C**hina's diseases control authority said that it was piloting a monitoring system for pneumonia of unknown origin. The country was already witnessing an upward trend in overall infections as of mid-December, and is expecting to see more respiratory infections in the winter and spring. One of the pathogens that was detected, especially among people under the age of 14, was human metapneumovirus. Subsequently, posts showing crowds of people in what looked like Chinese hospitals appeared on social media along with statements about China declaring an emergency over the virus. So far, there has been no such declaration.

**What is human metapneumovirus?**  
Human metapneumovirus (HMPV) is a

respiratory virus that causes mild infections similar to that caused by a common cold. First identified by scientists in 2001, the virus belongs to the *Pneumoviridae* family, of which respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), measles and mumps are also members. HMPV can cause both upper and lower respiratory tract infections and is generally seen in winter and early spring. Children, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems are more susceptible to the infection and to developing complications from it. The symptoms of HMPV can resemble those caused by a common cold. They include a cough, runny or blocked nose, sore, throat, fever and wheezing. The estimated incubation period is three to six days. In most people, the illness goes away on its own within a few days, with rest and supportive care at home. In a few people however, complications such as

bronchitis or pneumonia may arise, requiring medical care.

### How does HMPV spread?

HMPV spreads through contact with an infected person or touching objects that have the virus on them. This can be through secretions from coughs and sneezes; close contact with someone who has the infection by shaking hands, hugging; touching a doorknob or a phone or a keyboard that may be contaminated with the virus and then touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

### How is HMPV treated?

There is no vaccine and no specific antiviral to treat HMPV. Most people require over-the-counter medications to relieve fever and pain, possibly with a decongestant. Antibiotics will not work for HMPV. However, the virus can be prevented. As with most other respiratory

viruses, the best way to protect yourself from illness is to wash your hands frequently with soap and water, avoid close contact with infected persons, avoid touching your face, nose, eyes and mouth and wear a mask if you think you may be infected, so that you can prevent transmitting it to others. People with lung conditions such as asthma or COPD should be extra cautious and protect themselves from infection.

### What has the Indian govt. said?

In light of the reports from China, the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) under the Union Health Ministry is closely monitoring respiratory and seasonal influenza cases in the country, and is in touch with international agencies. "We will continue to monitor the situation closely, validate information and update accordingly," sources said.

HMPV cases have been confirmed in two infants from Karnataka and one in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. In Chennai too, two children tested positive for the virus. The Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda in a video statement said, "Health experts have clarified that the HMPV is not a new virus. It was first identified in 2001 and it has been circulating in the entire world for many years. HMPV spreads through air, by way of respiration... The health systems and surveillance networks of the country are vigilant and there is no reason to worry."

## THE GIST



Human metapneumovirus (HMPV) is a respiratory virus that causes mild infections similar to that caused by a common cold.



There is no vaccine and there is no specific antiviral to treat HMPV. Most people require over-the-counter medications to relieve fever and pain, possibly with a decongestant.



In light of the reports from China, the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) under the Union Health Ministry is closely monitoring respiratory and seasonal influenza cases in the country.

## Context

- ❖ **Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV)** has recently become a topic of widespread discussion in India, fueled by sensational media reports. These reports claim the emergence of a “**new dangerous virus**” from China, leading to unnecessary public panic and misinformation.

## Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV)

- ❖ Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) is a **respiratory virus** that primarily causes mild to moderate respiratory infections.
- ❖ It belongs to the **Paramyxoviridae family**, the same group of viruses that includes respiratory syncytial virus (**RSV**) and parainfluenza.
- ❖ **HMPV was first identified in 2001** and has been circulating globally for decades.
- ❖ Most infections are mild and self-limiting, but HMPV can **cause severe illness in vulnerable groups** .

## Transmission:

- ❖ Spread primarily through **respiratory droplets, direct contact with contaminated surfaces**, or close contact with infected individuals.

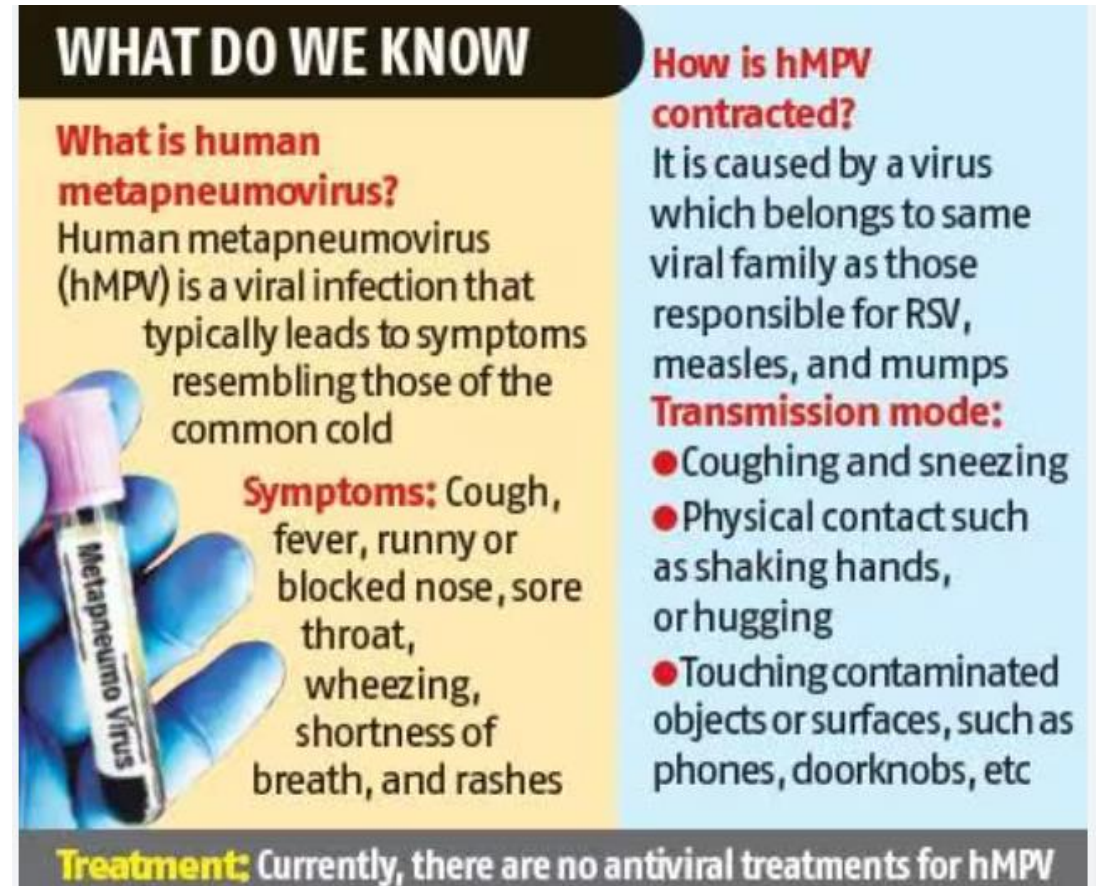
## Symptoms and Treatment for HMPV:

- ❖ HMPV symptoms overlap with those of other respiratory viruses like **influenza and RSV**.
- ❖ **Severe Symptoms (in vulnerable populations)**: Bronchitis; Wheezing; Pneumonia; Difficulty breathing; Hypoxia in extreme cases.
- ❖ **No Specific Antiviral or Vaccine**: Unlike flu and RSV, there is no targeted antiviral therapy or vaccine for HMPV.
- ❖ **Supportive Care**: Rest and hydration; Over-the-counter medications to manage fever and pain (e.g., acetaminophen or ibuprofen).



## Global and national scenario

- ❖ HMPV is one of the **leading causes of respiratory infections worldwide**, following influenza and RSV.
- ❖ Studies indicate **HMPV accounts for 5-10% of respiratory infections** in children and vulnerable adults annually.
- ❖ The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) recently reported two HMPV cases in Karnataka involving babies with a history of **bronchopneumonia**.



### WHAT DO WE KNOW

**What is human metapneumovirus?**  
Human metapneumovirus (hMPV) is a viral infection that typically leads to symptoms resembling those of the common cold

**How is hMPV contracted?**  
It is caused by a virus which belongs to same viral family as those responsible for RSV, measles, and mumps

**Transmission mode:**

- Coughing and sneezing
- Physical contact such as shaking hands, or hugging
- Touching contaminated objects or surfaces, such as phones, doorknobs, etc

**Symptoms:** Cough, fever, runny or blocked nose, sore throat, wheezing, shortness of breath, and rashes

**Treatment:** Currently, there are no antiviral treatments for hMPV

# US Eases Curbs to Advance Indo-US Nuclear Deal

NSA SULLIVAN MEETS PM, JAISHANKAR, DOVAL

## US eases curbs to push N-deal, 3 India entities may be off blacklist

US President to relax norms to allow tech transfer in space

SHUBHAJIT ROY  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

IN AN incremental step towards operationalising the Indo-US nuclear deal, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan announced Monday that Washington is finalizing steps to remove long-standing regulations that have prevented civil nuclear cooperation between India's leading nuclear entities and US companies.

This includes removing Indian government entities from the US entity list. The Indian Express has learnt. Sources said these could include: Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Indira Gandhi Atomic Research Centre (IGCAR) and Indian Rare Earths Limited (IREL) — all government-run institutions.

The US Entity List is a list of foreign individuals, businesses, and organizations that are subject to export restrictions and licensing requirements for certain goods and technologies. The list — compiled by the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) of the US Department of Commerce — is ostensibly used to prevent unauthorized trade in items that

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PM Modi with Sullivan in New Delhi on Monday. PTI

### 2 key hurdles: US law that bars manufacturing here, Indian law on liability

ANIL SASI  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

WHILE US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan did not spell out the details with sources suggesting that three entities may be taken off the blacklist, there are currently two key legal barriers to furthering Indo-US nuclear collaboration.

On the American side, a significant impediment is the '10CFR810' authorisation (Part 810 of Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations (Part 810) of the US



Atomic Energy Act of 1954), which gives US nuclear vendors the ability to export equipment to countries such as India under some strict safeguards, but does not permit them to manufacture any nuclear equipment or perform any nuclear design work here.

This authorisation is a clear impediment from New Delhi's perspective, which wants to participate in the manufacturing value chain and co-produce the nuclear components for atomic power projects being jointly planned to set up in India, sources said.

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## Context

- ❖ US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan announced plans to remove Indian government entities, including Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Indira Gandhi Atomic Research Centre (IGCAR), and Indian Rare Earths Limited (IREL), from the US entity list.
- ❖ This move aims to facilitate collaboration between India's nuclear institutions and US companies.

## What is US Entity List?

- ❖ The US Entity List includes foreign individuals, businesses, and organizations subject to **export restrictions and licensing requirements for specific goods and technologies.**

### Purpose of the List

- ❖ Compiled by the **Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS)** under the **U.S. Department of Commerce**, it aims to prevent unauthorized trade that could support:
  - ❖ Terrorism
  - ❖ Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) programs
  - ❖ Activities against US foreign policy or national security interests.

#### *2008's India-US Civil Nuclear Deal*

was Dr. Singh's main achievement, which enabled India to access nuclear technology without signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. This ended decades of nuclear isolation & opened doors for civil nuclear agreements with the nations like France and Russia among others.



## Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal

- ❖ **The Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal, signed in 2008, marked a watershed moment in India-US relations.**
- ❖ **It allowed India to engage in nuclear trade despite not being a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).**
- ❖ **The agreement granted India access to nuclear fuel, reactors, and technology for civilian purposes while committing to the separation of its civilian and military nuclear programs under IAEA safeguards.**

## Technological Constraints in India's Nuclear Programme

- ❖ **India's civil nuclear programme primarily relies on Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) using heavy water and natural uranium.**
- ❖ **PHWRs are becoming outdated compared to the more widely adopted Light Water Reactors (LWRs), where the US, Russia, and France lead in technology.**

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- ❑ Sullivan acknowledged **challenges in trade, human rights, and rule of law** but emphasized long-term strategic alignment between the two nations.
  - ❑ Sullivan criticized **China's "predatory industrial strategies"** in sectors like chip manufacturing and clean energy.
  - ❑ US companies, including Apple, are **diversifying supply chains and expanding into India**, with over 25% of iPhones expected to be made in India soon.
  - ❑ Sullivan stressed the importance of **India-US collaboration to safeguard critical supply chains** and technologies.
  - ❑ Sullivan highlighted the need to prevent advanced technologies from falling into the wrong hands, referencing **Russia and its S-400 air defence system**.
  - ❑ He underscored **India-US cooperation for peace and stability** in the Indo-Pacific region.



# Indus Valley civilization and deciphering IVC script

## How \$1 million prize for deciphering Indus Valley script is a chapter in Stalin government's 'Dravidian' narrative

ARJUN JANARDHANAN  
CHENNAI, JANUARY 6

TAMIL NADU Chief Minister M.K. Stalin's offer of a \$1 million prize for anyone who deciphers the Indus Valley script serves a purpose beyond solving the lingering mystery regarding the 5,000-year-old civilization.

The announcement on the back of a study by the state Archaeological Department showing many similarities between the signs and graffiti found in Indus Valley and those discovered during digs in Tamil Nadu bolsters attempts by Stalin to recast himself as an upholder of "Dravidian interests" — and to position himself and his party as a staunch opponent of the BJP and its ideology.

Authored by researcher K Rajan, and R Shivananthan of the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology, the study 'Indus Signs And Graffiti Marks of Tamil

Nadu — A Morphological Study' involved documentation, digitisation and categorisation of over 15,000 graffiti-bearing pot shards from 140 archaeological sites across Tamil Nadu. These were then compared against 4,000 artefacts recovered from Indus Valley sites, including seals.

As per the study, 42 'base signs', 544 'variants' and 1,521 'composite forms' were identified at the Tamil Nadu sites. "Out of 42 base signs and their variants, nearly 60% found parallels in the Indus script," the authors wrote. Furthermore, "more than 90% of the graffiti marks of South India and the graffiti marks of the Indus Valley Civilisation had parallels".

The researchers explicitly state that theirs is a "morphological approach" and not linguistic, focusing on physical comparisons, with their observation being that the Indus script may not have disappeared but evolved into different forms. "Extensive

comparative study of graffiti marks and Indus scripts... suggests that both are undeciphered signs," the authors wrote.

The key excavation sites in Tamil Nadu where the researchers focused were Keeladi, Sivagalai and Thulukarpatti. As per the study, Thulukarpatti alone yielded nearly 5,000 graffiti marks, while in Keeladi, just southeast of Madurai, hundreds of inscribed pot shards were found. These included carnelian beads, agate, black and red ware, and high-tin bronze objects.

The occurrence of identical graffiti marks at Indus Valley and South India sites, the study says, suggest a cultural contact between them. The study also says that recent chronometric dates indicate that when the Indus Valley was going through the Copper Age, South India was in the Iron Age (that is, a more ad-

vanced period).

"In this sense, the Iron Age of South India and the Copper Age of Indus are contemporary. If both are contemporary, there is a possibility of cultural exchanges either through direct or intermediate zones," the study says, adding that more material proof and tangible data were needed to support the view.

### How does it fit into Tamil Nadu gov's larger plank?

In 2019, a DMK government-supported advanced carbon dating of Keeladi artefacts concluded that the Tamil Brahmi script dates back to 600 BCE, much earlier than the previously accepted date of 300 BCE. The Stalin government has claimed that the Keeladi excavations hence narrow the gap between the Indus Valley Civilisation and Tamil Nadu settlements.

The dating of the scripts was

surrounded by a row as the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) had earlier not proceeded with the advanced carbon-dating tests, with an ASI researcher who initiated the study transferred out of the state.

T. Udhayachandran, the Tamil Nadu Finance Secretary who is also in-charge of the state Archaeological Department, is a key face behind the Stalin government's push for these digs. However, the preceding AIADMK government had also persisted in this in the face of alleged digging of loot by the ASI.

Proof that civilization developed in the South parallelly with Indus Valley counters the dominant Aryan-centric narrative of the subcontinent's history — particularly when the BJP dispensation has put its weight behind the theory that Aryans were not "outsiders".

Two years ago, before he launched the study that has come out with its findings now,

Stalin said in the Assembly that his party's goal was to establish, through scientific methods, that the history of India be rewritten from the Tamil land. He then announced the state Archaeology Department would begin work on a comparative study of graffiti found in Keeladi and the signs of the Indus Valley Civilisation.

On Sunday, while talking about the findings of the study, he tied it to broader symbols of Tamil identity, particularly linking Indus Valley seals with the image of the bull to the Tamil tradition of bull-taming sports like Jallikattu.

"There were bulls in the Indus Valley. Bulls are Dravidian symbols. Bulls spread from the Indus Valley to Alanganallur (a village near Madurai famous for Jallikattu). Ancient Tamil literature has rich references to bull-taming sport and one of the Indus Valley seals has impressions of a man trying to tame a bull," Stalin said.

- ❑ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has **announced a \$1 million prize for deciphering the Indus Valley script**, sparking interest in a 5,000-year-old mystery.
- ❑ Beyond its scholarly value, the initiative underscores **political and cultural ambitions, particularly positioning Stalin as a champion of Dravidian identity** and a counterpoint to BJP ideologies.

- ❑ Indus valley civilization script-Also known as the **Harappan script**, it is a **collection of symbols created by the Indus Valley Civilization**. It is **one of the oldest writing systems in the Indian subcontinent**.

### **Other facts about the Indus Valley Script:**

- ❑ The script is **boustrophedon, meaning it is written right to left** in one line and then left to right in the next line.
- ❑ The script was used **from about 2,500 BC to about 1,900 BC**.
- ❑ **The language of the Indus script is unknown**, and there are no known bilingual inscriptions to help decipher it.
- ❑ The script may have represented several major language families, including **Dravidian, Mundari, Indo-Aryan, Sino-Tibetan**. **About 400 symbols** are known.
- ❑ The script has been found on many objects, including pottery, seals, bronze and copper tables, bronze tools, bones, and clay tablets.

❑ **60% of Tamil Nadu signs had parallels** in the Indus script, and 90% of graffiti marks in both regions were comparable.

❑ **Significance of similarities:** The study, focused on key Tamil Nadu sites like **Keeladi, Sivagalai, and Thulukarpatti**, suggests:

❑ Evidence of cultural contact between the Indus Valley (Copper Age) and Tamil Nadu (Iron Age).

❑ Possibility of direct or intermediary cultural exchanges, warranting further material evidence.

### **Political and Cultural Implications of TN CM's Attempt**

❑ **Dravidian identity and historical reframing:** Stalin's initiatives aim to **challenge Aryan-centric narratives** by emphasizing:

❑ **Tamil Nadu's parallel development** alongside the Indus Valley Civilisation.

❑ Advanced carbon dating from Keeladi, showing Tamil Brahmi script dates back to 600 BCE, **narrowing the historical gap.**

❑ Highlighted symbols like the bull, connecting Indus seals to Tamil traditions like **Jallikattu.**



# Thank you

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