

## Iron Age sickle discovered from Malampuzha reservoir area



A broken sickle, presumed to be from the Iron Age, discovered from the Malampuzha reservoir recently.

Discovery may throw light on agrarian life in Iron Age

ABDUL LATHEEF NAHA  
PALAKKAD

An iron sickle presumed to be from the Iron Age was discovered from the Malampuzha reservoir near here recently.

The broken sickle was found on top of a destroyed urn in the valleys that had long been converted into the reservoir of the Malampuzha

Dam. The discovery made by a team of researchers led by K. Rajan, associate professor of history at Government Victoria College here, has the potential to throw light on the agrarian nature of life led by the people in the locality during the Iron Age.

Mr. Rajan and team have been exploring the reservoir and the catchment areas of Malampuzha for the last two years. Several iron tools were recovered during the explorations in recent months from the catchment areas.

Iron implements such as a nail, a chisel, a wedge, a

knife and a dagger had been recovered during explorations in July last year. They were found from a cist burial site.

### Burial sites

Malampuzha region has many varieties of Iron Age burials, including cist burials, stone circles, cist burials, dolmens, urn burials, and menhirs.

Mr. Rajan resumed the exploration a few weeks ago when the waters in the Malampuzha reservoir receded. The broken urn and the iron sickle were found during an

intensive search for the Iron Age traces.

"The sickle can be considered as a piece of solid evidence to prove that the Iron Age people who lived in Malampuzha and neighbouring locality had led an agrarian life," said Mr. Rajan.

Historians and archaeologists across the world have associated sickle as a symbol of agriculture. "It's mainly used for agricultural purpose. Interestingly, iron technology, pot making, agriculture and a developed burial culture were the most important characteristics of the

Iron Age in Kerala," said Mr. Rajan.

Archaeological explorations have thrown up pieces of evidence to prove that the low-lying areas around mountains and hills in Kerala had been widely cultivated by the people of Iron Age. But, historians are yet to come up with any evidence to throw light on the irrigation system that existed during the Iron Age.

"We do not have any idea about the irrigation system that the people Iron Age had used. It is certain that people might have begun cultivating

the naturally irrigated fertile lands in the fringes of the hills and mountains," said Mr. Rajan.

Iron Age in Kerala is said to have started in the pre-Christian era and ended by the first third centuries after Christ. An exploration conducted by M.G. Sankaran in 1980s had found burial sites within the catchment areas of Malampuzha.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has asked the Victoria College researchers to survey the region thoroughly and to document it in detail.

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## A goldmine of Iron Age finds at Muthalamada burial site

### Iron chisel that lay intact for over 2,000 years unearthed

ABDUL LATHEEF NAHA  
PALAKKAD

An iron chisel that lay under soil for over 2,000 years was recovered in good condition from an urn burial site at Nagampadam, near the Muthalamada railway station, in Palakkad district on Saturday.

The chisel, believed to be from the Iron Age, is expected to throw light on the early Iron Age historic burials in the region. Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) officials are expected to visit the site in a few days.

K. Rajan, who had studied the urn burials at Nagampadam four years ago as part of a University Grants Commission (UGC) minor research project on iron age burials of Palakkad district, said that the site was a goldmine for those researching in Iron Age in Kerala.

### Finer quality

After examining the iron chisel that weighed 252 gm and had a length of 24 cm, Mr.



Farmers examining the iron chisel recovered from an urn burial site at Muthalamada in Palakkad district on Saturday. •

Rajan said that it was of "finer metal quality". He said it remained intact for over 2,000 years because of its metal quality. The chisel had 5 cm width at its cutting edge. The Iron Age or megalithic period is estimated to be from the fifth century BC to the third century AD.

It was recovered from a private compound owned by A. Gangadharan, a retired railway employee. The plot

and its surrounding areas had a number of urn and cist burial sites. "We have more than a dozen cist and urn burial sites in this region," said Mr. Rajan.

Several capstones of the burial sites were removed by the farmers earlier without realising their historic significance. Urns too were broken.

### ASI visit

Shards of blackware and redware bowls were also recovered along with the iron chisel on Saturday. "Without the ASI involvement, we cannot take this study further. ASI officials have agreed to visit the site after a few days," said Mr. Rajan.

He said a lot of invaluable materials from the Iron Age were destroyed inadvertently by the farmers. "They are not aware of this site's historical value. So we can't blame them. Many urns were broken when they dug up the land for cultivation," he said.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/a-goldmine-of-iron-age-finds-at-muthalamada-burial-site/article33259012.ece>



K. Rajan, While surveying the megalithic sites at Padinjarangadi. In the picture, a Kudakkallu or umbrella stone at Vengasseri







Students at the excavation site Tharoor. Second picture, Krishnaraj of State Archaeological Dept excavating a cist burial at Tharoor

en-year-old boy, contracted the infection through the cluster. are in home quarantine and 534 in institutional quarantine.



The terracotta pipes used in iron smelting, which were found during a survey conducted at Kunnumpuram in Palakkad. The megalithic site is located in the fringes of the Malampuzha reservoir area

## Terracotta pipes used in iron smelting found at Kunnumpuram

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
Palakkad

**TUYERES** or terracotta pipes used in iron smelting were found at Kunnumpuram, a megalithic site in the fringes of the Malampuzha reservoir area. Kunnumpuram is a small hill slope where several cist burials are located. The iron slag heap is located to the north of the hill slope.

Archaeological evidence of iron smelting indicate that the foothills of the Western Ghats were home to the ironworkers since the Iron Age. The world over, evidence of iron smelting usually include iron slag heaps. There are a very few places where the remains of iron smelting furnaces are found, said K Rajan, associate professor in the Department of History at the Government Victoria College. Rajan was at Kun-

numpuram as part of a survey of Iron Age sites in Palakkad district.

Earlier, Rajan had undertaken surveys of megalithic sites as part of a UGC-aided project. He was continuing his research even after the completion of the period of his project. Rajan said five tuyeres or terracotta pipes, used to control fire in iron smelting furnace, were found among the iron slag heaps at Kunnumpuram.

These tuyeres were found in a broken state. Their length ranged from 8cm to 14.5cm. The cylindrical objects have a thickness of 1.7cm and a diameter of 2.98cm. In addition to tuyeres, brick pieces, potsherds and iron slags were found. The slag deposit is 45-50cm thick and therefore excavation in the area could throw up more evidence on iron smelting and habitation in the area, he added.

Ground Floor  
Kovilakathumpadam

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News report on the discovery of tuyeres at the Malampuzha dam site





K Rajan Taking estampage of a 11-12th century inscription in Vattezhuthu script inside Palakkad fort on April 2, 2021

# മലമ്പുഴയിൽനിന്ന് കിട്ടി ആദിമ ശിലായുഗത്തിലെ ആയുധങ്ങൾ



മലമ്പുഴയിൽ നിന്ന് കണ്ടെടുത്ത ആദിമ ശിലായുഗത്തിലെ ശിലാപകരണങ്ങളുമായി ഡോ. കെ രാജൻ

## ബിജോ ടോൾ

ദക്ഷിണേന്ത്യയുടെ ആദിമശിലായുഗ സംസ്കാരത്തിലേക്ക് വെളിച്ചം വീശുന്ന ശിലാപകരണങ്ങൾ

## ഫലക്കാട്

മലമ്പുഴയിൽ നിന്ന് കണ്ടെത്തി. 10,000 മുതൽ 35,000 വർഷംവരെ പഴക്കമുള്ള, ആദിമ

ശിലായുഗത്തിലെ അവസാനഘട്ടത്തിൽ ആയുധങ്ങളായി ഉപയോഗിച്ചിരുന്നവയാണിതെന്ന് കരുതുന്നു. ഗവ. വിക്ടോറിയ കോളേജിലെ ചരിത്രവിഭാഗം അധ്യാപകൻ കെ രാജന്റെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ നടത്തിയ പര്യവേഷണത്തിലാണ് ഇവ കണ്ടെടുത്തത്.

കോർ. ചിപ്. ഫോക് തട

ങ്ങിയ ഗണത്തിൽപ്പെടുന്ന ശിലാപകരണങ്ങളാണ് ലഭിച്ചത്. ചേർട്ട്, ജാസ്സർ, ക്യാർട്ട്സ് തുടങ്ങിയ കല്ലിനങ്ങൾ ഉപയോഗിച്ചാണ് ഉപകരണങ്ങൾ നിർമ്മിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്. ചോപ്പർ എന്ന് പുരാവസ്തുക്കാരന്മാർ വിശേഷിപ്പിക്കുന്ന ഉപകരണമാണ് ആദിമ ശിലായുഗത്തിലെ അവസാനഘട്ടത്തിലേതെന്ന് കരുതുന്നത്. ഇതു ലഭിച്ചത് മണ്ണടുകളിൽ നിന്നല്ലാത്തതിനാൽ കൃത്യമായ കാലം നിർണയിക്കാനാകില്ല.

ഇരുമ്പുയുഗത്തിലെ നിരവധി ശേഷിപ്പുകൾ മുമ്പ് മലമ്പുഴയിൽ നിന്ന് ലഭിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഇപ്പോൾ ലഭിച്ച ആയുധങ്ങൾ മലമ്പുഴയിലെ ശിലായുഗമനുഷ്യരുടെ സാന്നിധ്യത്തിന് പ്രസക്തമായ തെളിവുകളാണെന്ന് ആർക്കിയോളജിക്കൽ സർവേ ഓഫ് ഇന്ത്യ ഡയറക്ടർ ഡോ. എം നമ്പീരാജൻ, തഞ്ചാവൂർ തമിഴ് യൂണിവേഴ്സിറ്റിയിലെ ആർക്കിയോളജിസ്റ്റ് ഡോ. വി ശൈൽവകുമാർ എന്നിവർ സ്ഥിരീകരിച്ചു.

ഡോ. ശൈൽവകുമാർ കഴിഞ്ഞ ദിവസം മലമ്പുഴ ഡാം പ്രദേശം പരിശോധിക്കുകയും ഉൽഖനനങ്ങളിലൂടെ കൂടുതൽ തെളിവുകണ്ടെത്താൻ കഴിയുമെന്ന് നിരീക്ഷിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. പലഘട്ടങ്ങളിലായി നടന്ന പര്യവേഷണത്തിൽ കോളേജിലെ മുൻ പ്രിൻസിപ്പൽ ഡോ. സഫിയബീവി, ചരിത്രവിഭാഗം മേധാവി ഡോ. ഇ ശീത എന്നിവരും പങ്കാളികളായി.



Report in Malayalam newspaper Deshabhimani on the discovery of a Palaeolithic chopper at the Malampuzha dam site on July 29, 2019

The most important achievement in collaboration with the state archaeology dept

A book by the students of the history Dept on the load bearing stones erected by our ancestors for relieving the people carrying their goods in baskets on their goods to distant places

The college has been in active collaboration with the departments of archaeology at State and central levels. K Rajan, Associate Professor in History has been exploring prehistoric, Iron Age-early historic, Early medieval and modern sites as part of a deep passion for the reconstruction of early history of Kerala. He could be in collaboration with experts in the archaeology departments and various universities in Kerala and Tamil Nadu

Rajan has discovered more than 100 Iron Age sites which have not been reported. He has explored nearly 200 Iron Age sites in Kerala

He could be part of salvage excavation at the IronAge sites Choozhiyampara and Tharoor in association with the state archaeology department.

Rajan has also played a key role in the documentation of the aspects connected to habitation and sculptures at Vendalur near Valanchery in Malappuram in 2018 in association with the Calicut University history department