Keeladi (Keezhadi) Excavations – Vaigai Urban Settlement, ASI & State Phases, Tamil-Brahmi Finds, 580 BCE Dating & Keeladi Museum | TNPSC Notes

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Keeladi (Keezhadi) is an archaeological site in **Tiruppuvanam taluk, Sivaganga district**, about 12–13 km south-east of **Madurai** near the **Vaigai river**. Excavations begun by the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** in 2014–15 under **K. Amarnath Ramakrishna** and continued from 2017–18 by the **Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology** have exposed **brick structures, ring wells, Tamil-Brahmi inscribed potsherds, graffiti marks** and evidence of crafts and trade. In its 2019 report **"Keeladi – An Urban Settlement of Sangam Age on the Banks of River Vaigai"**, the State department said that carbon dating places the settlement in the **6th century BCE (about 580 BCE)**. The finds are displayed in the **Keeladi Museum**, opened on **5 March 2023**.

தமிழில் படிக்க

These notes are written for TNPSC Group 1, 2/2A and 4 aspirants and are meant to be complete on their own. Keeladi is a core topic in **History, Culture, Heritage and Socio-Political Movements of Tamil Nadu** (Sangam age, Tamil script, archaeology of Tamil Nadu). The early historic period, Sangam age and urbanisation in South India also come under **History, Culture of India and Indian National Movement**, and new excavation phases, the museums and the debate over the excavation report keep appearing in **Current Events**. Read each section, then use the tables, the quick revision table and the key points at the end.

Keeladi at a Glance

Item	Details
Site	Keeladi (Keezhadi) village, Tiruppuvanam taluk, Sivaganga district
Distance	About 12–13 km south-east of Madurai
River	Vaigai
Extent of the mound	More than 110 acres
Identified by	ASI survey of the Vaigai valley, 2013–14 (about 293 sites documented)
ASI seasons	2014–15, 2015–16 (K. Amarnath Ramakrishna); 2016–17 (P. S. Sriraman)
State seasons	Fourth phase (2017–18 season) onwards, by the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology
Key finds	Tamil-Brahmi inscribed potsherds, graffiti, brick structures, ring wells, terracotta pipelines, beads, spindle whorls, gold ornaments, dice and gamesmen, Arretine and rouletted ware
Key date (State report)	About 580 BCE (AMS date at Beta Analytic, Florida); settlement placed in the 6th century BCE
Report	"Keeladi – An Urban Settlement of Sangam Age on the Banks of River Vaigai" (September 2019)
Museum	Keeladi Museum, opened 5 March 2023; on-site open-air museum opened 13 February 2026

Location and Setting

- **Village:** Keeladi, spelt Keezhadi in many reports, in **Tiruppuvanam taluk** of **Sivaganga district**.
- **Position:** about 12–13 km south-east of Madurai, near the **Vaigai**.
- **Mound:** the ancient habitation deposit is spread over **more than 110 acres**; only a small part of it has been dug so far.
- **Neighbouring sites (the "Keeladi cluster"): Konthagai** (Kondagai – a burial site), **Agaram** and **Manalur**, all in Sivaganga district, excavated together with Keeladi from the sixth phase (2020).
- **Why the setting matters:** Sangam literature describes Madurai on the Vaigai as the capital of the Pandyas; Keeladi gives material evidence of a settled, literate community in the same river valley.

Background: How Keeladi Was Found

Before Keeladi, our picture of early Tamil society came mainly from **Sangam literature**, from **Tamil-Brahmi cave inscriptions** in the hills around Madurai and from port and burial sites such as **Arikamedu, Alagankulam, Kodumanal and Adichanallur**. Large habitation sites with buildings had not been studied in detail in the Vaigai valley.

- **Vaigai valley survey (2013–14):** the ASI's Excavation Branch at Bengaluru surveyed the Vaigai valley from Theni to Ramanathapuram district and documented about **293 sites** with ancient remains. Keeladi was chosen for excavation from this survey.
- **Permission:** every season of excavation, including those of the State department, needs approval from the Union government (the Central Advisory Board of Archaeology / ASI).

Excavation Phases at Keeladi

Phase	Year / season	Agency and leader	Highlights
1	2014–15	ASI, Excavation Branch, Bengaluru – K. Amarnath Ramakrishna	Brick structures, Tamil-Brahmi potsherds, beads, Roman (Arretine) ware
2	2015–16	ASI – K. Amarnath Ramakrishna	A long brick wall, ring wells, more inscribed sherds; a carbon date of about 200 BCE was announced in 2017
3	2016–17 (work in 2017)	ASI – P. S. Sriraman, after Ramakrishna was transferred to Assam in 2017	He reported no significant new findings; ASI did not continue
4	2017–18 season (fieldwork in 2018)	Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology	5,820 antiquities; 56 Tamil-Brahmi sherds; 1,001 graffiti sherds; dates reported in the 2019 report
5	June – October 2019	Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology	Brick wall structures and more than 900 artefacts
6	From 19 February 2020	Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology (Keeladi, Konthagai, Agaram, Manalur)	Weights, ring wells; urn burials and skeletons at Konthagai; work interrupted by the COVID-19 lockdown
7	From 13 February 2021	Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology	More Tamil-Brahmi inscribed sherds
8	From 11 February 2022	Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology	Search for the continuation of the brick structures
9	From 6 April 2023	Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology	Terracotta snake figurine; crystal quartz weight
10	From 18 June 2024	Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology	Terracotta pipeline made of joined cylindrical pieces
11	From March 2026	Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology	Started after the ASI cleared the State's proposals in March 2026

ASI phases (2014–2017)

- **Leader: K. Amarnath Ramakrishna**, Superintending Archaeologist of the ASI's Excavation Branch, Bengaluru, led the first two seasons (2014–15 and 2015–16). In these two seasons **102 trenches** (quadrants) were opened.
- **Finds:** brick walls and a brick-floored structure, ring wells, roof tiles with grooves, more than 5,000 antiquities, beads of carnelian, agate and glass, copper coins, ivory dice, spindle whorls, Tamil-Brahmi potsherds and graffiti marks.
- **Early date:** a carbon date of about **200 BCE** from an ASI sample was announced in 2017.
- **Transfer and third season:** in 2017 Ramakrishna was transferred to Assam. The third season was led by **P. S. Sriraman**, who reported no significant findings, after which the ASI stopped digging at Keeladi.
- **Report:** Ramakrishna submitted a **982-page report** on the first two seasons to the ASI in **January 2023** (see the dating section below).

State Department of Archaeology phases (from 2017–18)

- **Fourth phase (2017–18 season):** the first season of the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology. It produced **5,820 antiquities**, **56 Tamil-Brahmi inscribed potsherds** and **1,001 graffiti-marked sherds**. Its results were published in the 2019 report.
- **Fifth phase (2019):** began in June 2019 and closed in October 2019; brick wall structures and more than 900 objects were found.
- **Sixth phase (2020):** inaugurated on 19 February 2020 by Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami through video conferencing; for the first time the nearby sites of **Konthagai, Agaram and Manalur** were dug along with Keeladi.
- **Seventh phase (2021):** launched on 13 February 2021 by Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami through video conferencing.
- **Eighth phase (2022):** launched virtually on 11 February 2022 by Chief Minister M. K. Stalin, along with excavations at other sites in the State.
- **Ninth phase (2023):** began on 6 April 2023.
- **Tenth phase (2024):** launched on 18 June 2024 by Chief Minister M. K. Stalin together with excavations at seven other sites.
- **Eleventh phase (2026):** began in March 2026, after the ASI cleared the State's excavation proposals on 13 March 2026 following a delay of several months.

The Keeladi cluster: Konthagai, Agaram and Manalur

- **Konthagai (Kondagai):** a **burial site** near Keeladi; urn burials and human skeletons were found from 2020 onwards.
- **Agaram** and **Manalur:** habitation sites near Keeladi, excavated from the sixth phase to understand how far the settlement extended.
- Together they help archaeologists see the living area (Keeladi) and the burial area (Konthagai) of the same culture.

Key Finds

Tamil-Brahmi inscribed potsherds

- Pieces of pots with letters in **Tamil-Brahmi** (also called **Tamili**), the earliest script used to write Tamil.
- The fourth phase alone gave **56** such sherds; earlier ASI seasons and later State seasons added more.
- Some of the inscriptions are **personal names** scratched on ordinary household pots.
- Their presence on everyday pottery is taken as evidence that **literacy was widespread** and not limited to a few people.

Graffiti marks

- Symbols scratched on pots that are not letters; the fourth phase alone yielded **1,001** graffiti-marked sherds.
- The 2019 report suggested that such marks may form a link between the Indus signs and the later Brahmi script; many scholars remain unconvinced. Treat it as a **suggestion, not an established fact**.

Brick structures, ring wells and drainage

- **Brick walls:** walls of burnt bricks, including a long wall exposed in the second season; more brick wall structures were found in the fifth phase and later.
- **Roof tiles:** tiles with grooves and holes show tiled roofs.
- **Ring wells:** wells built by stacking terracotta rings, used for water and soakage; found in several phases.
- **Pipelines and drains:** the tenth phase (2024) exposed a **terracotta pipeline** made of cylindrical pieces fitted together, pointing to planned water management.

Industrial and craft evidence

- **Pottery:** huge quantities of black-and-red ware, black ware, red ware and rouletted ware suggest local pottery-making on a large scale.
- **Spinning and weaving:** spindle whorls, bone tools and other objects point to spinning and weaving of cloth.
- **Beads and ornaments:** beads of carnelian, agate, glass and terracotta; gold ornaments; copper objects.
- **Metal objects:** iron and copper objects.
- Together these finds point to **organised crafts** alongside daily life at the site.

Trade links

- A few pieces of **Arretine ware** (Roman pottery) and **rouletted ware** point to contact with the trade network of the early centuries BCE/CE.
- Carnelian and agate beads are made of stones not found at the site, showing exchange with other regions.

Daily life, games and weights

- **Games:** terracotta gamesmen, ivory dice and hopscotch pieces.
- **Ornaments:** ear ornaments, bangles, beads and gold objects.
- **Weights:** stone weighing units (sixth phase) and a **crystal quartz weight** (ninth phase) suggest a system of measurement.
- **Figurines:** terracotta human and animal figurines, including a terracotta **snake figurine** found in the ninth phase (2023).

Animal remains and economy

- Seventy samples of animal bones from the fourth phase were studied by **Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute, Pune**.
- Bones of **cattle, buffalo, sheep and goat** form the largest share, with smaller numbers of wild animals such as antelope and wild boar.
- This points to an economy based on **agriculture and cattle rearing**.

Dating Results

Early ASI date

In 2017 a carbon date of about **200 BCE** was announced for a sample from the ASI's second season. At that stage the site was placed broadly in the last centuries BCE.

The 2019 Tamil Nadu report

On **19 September 2019** the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology released the report **"Keeladi – An Urban Settlement of Sangam Age on the Banks of River Vaigai"** on the fourth phase. Its main results, **according to the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology**, are:

Point	What the report states
Samples and method	Six charcoal samples from the fourth phase dated by **AMS (accelerator mass spectrometry)** radiocarbon method
Laboratory	**Beta Analytic**, Miami, Florida (USA)
Oldest date	About **580 BCE**, from a sample at a depth of **353 cm**
Age of the settlement	Goes back to the **6th century BCE**
Tamil-Brahmi	Pushed back to the 6th century BCE – about a century earlier than the 5th century BCE date held before
Urbanisation	Urban life in the Vaigai plains placed around the same time as the second urbanisation in the Gangetic plains
Sangam age	The beginning of the Sangam age may be earlier than the commonly used date of about 300 BCE
Economy	Agriculture and cattle rearing (Deccan College, Pune study of 70 bone samples); pottery-making and weaving

Ramakrishna's report and the ASI review (2023–2026)

- In **January 2023** K. Amarnath Ramakrishna submitted his **982-page report** on the first two ASI seasons, using AMS dates from Beta Analytic and other laboratories.
- The report proposed three cultural periods from about the **8th century BCE to the 3rd century CE**.
- In **May 2025** the ASI asked him to revise the report; it said the 8th–5th century BCE bracket needed "concrete justification" and that the three cultural periods needed clearer naming.
- Ramakrishna declined to change his conclusions and defended his method. In July 2025 the ASI asked P. S. Sriraman to write the report on the third season.
- A five-member ASI committee then reviewed the report in a 114-page note. In February 2026 Ramakrishna rejected this review and asked for the immediate release of his report.
- As of February 2026 the ASI had not published Ramakrishna's report, and the matter remained under discussion.

The debate (stated neutrally)

- The State government and many Tamil scholars regard the dates as strong evidence of an early, literate urban society in the Vaigai valley.
- Some archaeologists and writers have questioned whether a small number of AMS dates can date the whole site and the script; they ask for fuller publication of the data.
- For examinations, write the dates as **"according to the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology"** and mention that the earliest dating is debated.

Keeladi Museum and the On-site Museum

- **Keeladi Museum (2023):** opened by Chief Minister **M. K. Stalin** on **5 March 2023** at Keeladi, Sivaganga district; built at about **Rs 18 crore** in the traditional **Chettinad** architectural style.
- **Galleries:** arranged by theme – agriculture and water management, ceramic industry, weaving, sea trade and lifestyle.
- **On-site open-air museum (2026):** opened by the Chief Minister through video conferencing on **13 February 2026**. Built at about **Rs 24 crore** on **4.5 acres**, it keeps excavated **brick walls, ring wells and terracotta pipelines in place** and has two exhibition halls.

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Key People Involved

Person	Role
K. Amarnath Ramakrishna	ASI Superintending Archaeologist; led the first two seasons (2014–15, 2015–16); submitted the 982-page report in January 2023
P. S. Sriraman	ASI archaeologist who led the third season (2016–17); asked in 2025 to write its report
R. Sivanantham	Director of excavation for the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology in its early seasons at Keeladi
Edappadi K. Palaniswami	Chief Minister who inaugurated the sixth (2020) and seventh (2021) phases
M. K. Stalin	Chief Minister who launched the eighth (2022) and tenth (2024) phases and opened the Keeladi Museum (2023) and the on-site museum (2026)
Deccan College, Pune	Studied the animal bones from the fourth phase
Beta Analytic, Florida (USA)	Laboratory that gave the AMS dates, including about 580 BCE

Outcomes and Significance

- **Urban settlement:** brick buildings, tiled roofs, ring wells and pipelines show a planned settlement in the Vaigai valley in the Sangam age.
- **Early literacy:** Tamil-Brahmi names on household pots show that writing was used by ordinary people.
- **Chronology:** according to the State department, Tamil Nadu's early historic period and the Tamil-Brahmi script go back to the 6th century BCE.
- **Economy:** agriculture, cattle rearing, pottery, weaving, bead-making and trade.
- **Link with literature:** material evidence for the urban life of the Vaigai region described in Sangam literature.
- **Archaeology in the State:** encouraged the State to excavate more sites every year and to build museums at Keeladi and elsewhere.

Writing Mains Answers on Keeladi Excavations (Group 1 / Group 2)

Descriptive papers can ask about the finds, dating or significance of Keeladi. Use the frameworks below and support each point with a fact from these notes. Always attribute the 6th century BCE date to the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology.

Significance of the Keeladi excavations for the history of Tamil Nadu (about 200–250 words)

- **Introduction:** Keeladi, Sivaganga district, near Madurai on the Vaigai; excavated by ASI (2014–17) and the State department (from 2017–18).
- **Urbanisation:** brick walls, roof tiles, ring wells, terracotta pipeline.
- **Literacy:** Tamil-Brahmi sherds (56 in the fourth phase), personal names on household pots; 1,001 graffiti sherds.
- **Economy:** agriculture and cattle rearing (Deccan College study); pottery, weaving (spindle whorls), beads; Arretine ware shows trade.

- **Chronology:** 580 BCE AMS date (Beta Analytic); settlement in the 6th century BCE according to the State department; earliest dating debated.
- **Conclusion:** gives material evidence for the Sangam age and places the Vaigai valley among the early urban regions of India.

Keeladi and the dating of the Sangam age (about 150 words)

- Sangam age usually dated from about 300 BCE.
- 2019 State report: AMS date of about 580 BCE from 353 cm depth; Tamil-Brahmi to the 6th century BCE.
- Ramakrishna's 2023 report: three periods from about the 8th century BCE to the 3rd century CE; ASI in 2025 asked for justification of the earliest bracket.
- Evaluation: more dates and full publication of reports will settle the question; the evidence already shows a literate settlement in the last centuries BCE.

Keeladi Museum as a heritage initiative (about 100–150 words)

- Opened on 5 March 2023 by Chief Minister M. K. Stalin; Chettinad style; about Rs 18 crore.
- Themed galleries – agriculture and water management, ceramics, weaving, sea trade, lifestyle.
- On-site open-air museum (13 February 2026): structures kept in place.
- Value: public education, tourism, research and pride in local heritage.

Practice: Match the Following

Item	Match
K. Amarnath Ramakrishna	Led the first two ASI seasons at Keeladi
P. S. Sriraman	Led the third ASI season (2016–17)
Beta Analytic, Florida	AMS dating of the fourth-phase samples
Deccan College, Pune	Study of animal bones
Konthagai	Burial site of the Keeladi cluster
580 BCE	Oldest date in the 2019 State report
353 cm	Depth of the oldest dated sample
5 March 2023	Opening of the Keeladi Museum
13 February 2026	Opening of the on-site open-air museum
18 June 2024	Launch of the tenth phase

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- **District:** Keeladi is in **Sivaganga** district, not Madurai district, although it is close to Madurai city.
- **River:** Vaigai – not Thamirabarani (Adichanallur and Sivakalai are on the Thamirabarani) and not Noyyal (Kodumanal).
- **Who led which phase:** Amarnath Ramakrishna led only the **first two** ASI seasons; the third was led by P. S. Sriraman.

- **Agency from the fourth phase:** the **Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology**, not the ASI.
- **580 BCE vs 6th century BCE:** 580 BCE is a single AMS date; the settlement is placed in the 6th century BCE. Attribute both to the State department.
- **Laboratory:** Beta Analytic is in **Florida, USA** (Miami) – not a laboratory in India.
- **Script name:** Tamil-Brahmi is also called **Tamili**; graffiti marks are symbols, not letters.
- **Museum year:** Keeladi Museum – **2023**; on-site open-air museum – **2026**.

Quick Revision Table

Year / date	Event
2013–14	ASI survey of the Vaigai valley; about 293 sites documented; Keeladi selected
2014–15	First ASI season (K. Amarnath Ramakrishna)
2015–16	Second ASI season (K. Amarnath Ramakrishna); 102 trenches in two seasons
2017	Ramakrishna transferred to Assam; third ASI season under P. S. Sriraman; ASI date of about 200 BCE announced
2017–18 season	Fourth phase – first by the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology; 5,820 antiquities, 56 Tamil-Brahmi sherds
19 Sep 2019	Report "Keeladi – An Urban Settlement of Sangam Age on the Banks of River Vaigai" released; 580 BCE date
Jun – Oct 2019	Fifth phase
19 Feb 2020	Sixth phase; Konthagai, Agaram, Manalur added
13 Feb 2021	Seventh phase
11 Feb 2022	Eighth phase
Jan 2023	Ramakrishna submits 982-page report to the ASI
5 Mar 2023	Keeladi Museum opened
6 Apr 2023	Ninth phase
18 Jun 2024	Tenth phase (terracotta pipeline found)
May 2025	ASI asks Ramakrishna to revise his report
13 Feb 2026	On-site open-air museum opened
Mar 2026	Eleventh phase begins after ASI clearance

TNPSC Key Points (PYQ-style facts)

- Keeladi (Keezhadi): Tiruppuvanam taluk, Sivaganga district; about 12–13 km south-east of Madurai; Vaigai river.
- Mound: more than 110 acres.
- Identified in the ASI's Vaigai valley survey (2013–14).

- ASI seasons: 2014–15, 2015–16 (K. Amarnath Ramakrishna), 2016–17 (P. S. Sriraman).
- State Department of Archaeology: from the fourth phase (2017–18 season); eleventh phase began in March 2026.
- Fourth phase: 5,820 antiquities; 56 Tamil-Brahmi sherds; 1,001 graffiti sherds.
- AMS dating: Beta Analytic, Miami, Florida (USA); six samples; oldest about 580 BCE at 353 cm.
- According to the State department: settlement and Tamil-Brahmi go back to the 6th century BCE.
- 2019 report title: "Keeladi – An Urban Settlement of Sangam Age on the Banks of River Vaigai".
- Animal bones studied by Deccan College, Pune (70 samples): cattle, buffalo, sheep, goat.
- Structures: brick walls, tiled roofs, ring wells, terracotta pipeline (tenth phase).
- Trade evidence: Arretine (Roman) ware, rouletted ware, carnelian and agate beads.
- Keeladi cluster: Konthagai (burial), Agaram, Manalur.
- Keeladi Museum: 5 March 2023; Chettinad style; opened by M. K. Stalin.
- Ramakrishna's report: 982 pages; January 2023; periods from about 8th century BCE to 3rd century CE (questioned by ASI in 2025).

Frequently Asked Questions

Where is Keeladi located?

Keeladi (also spelt Keezhadi) is a village in Tiruppuvanam taluk of Sivaganga district, about 12–13 km south-east of Madurai, close to the Vaigai river. The ancient habitation mound there is spread over more than 110 acres.

Who excavated Keeladi and in which phases?

The Archaeological Survey of India (Excavation Branch, Bengaluru) dug the first three seasons – 2014–15 and 2015–16 under K. Amarnath Ramakrishna and 2016–17 under P. S. Sriraman. From the fourth phase (2017–18 season) the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology has carried out the work: the fifth phase in 2019, the sixth from February 2020, the seventh from February 2021, the eighth from February 2022, the ninth from April 2023, the tenth from June 2024 and the eleventh from March 2026.

What did the 2019 Tamil Nadu report say about the date of Keeladi?

The report "Keeladi – An Urban Settlement of Sangam Age on the Banks of River Vaigai", released in September 2019, said that six charcoal samples from the fourth phase were dated by AMS at Beta Analytic, Florida (USA). According to the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology, the oldest sample, from a depth of 353 cm, gave a date of about 580 BCE, so the settlement goes back to the 6th century BCE. Some scholars have questioned how far these dates can be extended to the whole site and to the script.

Why are the Tamil-Brahmi potsherds of Keeladi important?

The fourth phase alone yielded 56 potsherds inscribed in Tamil-Brahmi (Tamili), some of them personal names scratched on ordinary household pots. According to the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology, they take the Tamil-Brahmi script back to the 6th century BCE, about a century earlier than the date held before, and show that reading and writing were spread among ordinary people.

When was the Keeladi Museum opened and what does it show?

Chief Minister M. K. Stalin opened the Keeladi Museum at Keeladi on 5 March 2023. Built in the Chettinad style at a cost of about Rs 18 crore, it displays the excavated objects in themed galleries such as agriculture and water management, ceramic industry, weaving, sea trade and lifestyle. An on-site open-air museum, which keeps brick walls, ring wells and terracotta pipelines in place, was opened on 13 February 2026.

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Practice questions

1. In which district is the Keeladi excavation site located?

A. Madurai
B. Virudhunagar
C. Ramanathapuram
D. Sivaganga

2. Keeladi lies near which river?

A. Thamirabarani
B. Noyyal
C. Vaigai
D. Kaveri

3. In which taluk is Keeladi situated?

A. Tiruppuvanam
B. Manamadurai
C. Melur
D. Karaikudi

4. Which ASI archaeologist led the first two excavation seasons at Keeladi?

A. P. S. Sriraman
B. R. Sivanantham
C. Iravatham Mahadevan
D. K. Amarnath Ramakrishna

5. Who led the third ASI season (2016–17) at Keeladi?

A. K. Amarnath Ramakrishna
B. P. S. Sriraman
C. K. Pandiarajan
D. R. Sivanantham

6. From which phase did the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology take up the Keeladi excavation?

A. First phase
B. Third phase
C. Fourth phase
D. Sixth phase

7. Keeladi was identified during which ASI survey (2013–14)?

A. Kaveri basin survey
B. Vaigai valley survey
C. Thamirabarani valley survey
D. Palar valley survey

8. According to the 2019 report, how many Tamil-Brahmi inscribed potsherds were found in the fourth phase at Keeladi?

A. 26
B. 56
C. 102
D. 1,001

9. How many antiquities were recovered in the fourth phase at Keeladi?

A. 1,001
B. 2,930
C. 5,820
D. 13,000

10. Which laboratory carried out the AMS dating of the fourth-phase carbon samples from Keeladi?

A. Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences, Lucknow
B. Beta Analytic, Florida (USA)
C. Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad
D. Deccan College, Pune

11. According to the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology's 2019 report, what is the oldest AMS date from Keeladi?

A. About 200 BCE
B. About 300 BCE
C. About 580 BCE
D. About 905 BCE

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12. From what depth was the sample dated to about 580 BCE taken?

A. 200 cm

B. 353 cm

C. 450 cm

D. 580 cm

13. When was the report "Keeladi – An Urban Settlement of Sangam Age on the Banks of River Vaigai" released?

A. January 2017

B. September 2019

C. March 2023

D. June 2024

14. According to the State Department of Archaeology, the Keeladi finds take the Tamil-Brahmi script back to which century?

A. 3rd century BCE

B. 4th century BCE

C. 6th century BCE

D. 10th century BCE

15. Which institution analysed the animal bones from the fourth phase at Keeladi?

A. Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute, Pune

B. Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru

C. Madurai Kamaraj University

D. French Institute of Pondicherry

16. Which site of the Keeladi cluster is a burial site?

A. Agaram

B. Manalur

C. Tiruppuvanam

D. Konthagai

17. When did the sixth phase of excavation at Keeladi begin?

A. 19 February 2020

B. 13 February 2021

C. 11 February 2022

D. 6 April 2023

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18. Which notable structure was exposed in the tenth phase at Keeladi?

A. A stone fort wall

B. A shipwreck

C. A copper plate

D. A terracotta pipeline

19. When was the Keeladi Museum opened?

A. 5 March 2023

B. 19 September 2019

C. 18 June 2024

D. 13 February 2026

20. In which architectural style was the Keeladi Museum built?

A. Dravidian temple style

B. Indo-Saracenic style

C. Kerala style

D. Chettinad style

21. What does the Arretine ware found at Keeladi indicate?

A. Indus Valley contact

B. Mauryan rule

C. Contact with China

D. Contact with the Roman trade network

22. When did K. Amarnath Ramakrishna submit his Keeladi report to the ASI, and how many pages did it have?

A. January 2023; 982 pages

B. September 2019; 61 pages

C. May 2025; 114 pages

D. March 2017; 500 pages

23. Match: (a) K. Amarnath Ramakrishna (b) P. S. Sriraman (c) Beta Analytic (d) Deccan College — (1) AMS dating (2) Study of animal bones (3) First two ASI seasons (4) Third ASI season

A. a-3, b-4, c-1, d-2

B. a-4, b-3, c-2, d-1

C. a-3, b-4, c-2, d-1

D. a-1, b-2, c-3, d-4

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24. Which of the statements about Keeladi is/are correct? (1) The ASI excavated it from 2014–15 to 2016–17. (2) From the fourth phase the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology has excavated it. (3) Keeladi is on the banks of the Thamirabarani.

A. 1 only
B. 1 and 2 only
C. 2 and 3 only
D. 1, 2 and 3

25. When was the on-site open-air museum at Keeladi, which keeps the excavated structures in place, opened?

A. 5 March 2023
B. 18 June 2024
C. 13 February 2026
D. 19 September 2019

Answers with explanations

1. **D) Sivaganga** – Keeladi is in Tiruppuvanam taluk of Sivaganga district.
2. **C) Vaigai** – Keeladi lies near the Vaigai river.
3. **A) Tiruppuvanam** – Keeladi is in Tiruppuvanam taluk.
4. **D) K. Amarnath Ramakrishna** – K. Amarnath Ramakrishna led the 2014–15 and 2015–16 seasons.
5. **B) P. S. Sriraman** – After Ramakrishna's transfer, P. S. Sriraman led the third season.
6. **C) Fourth phase** – The State department has excavated from the fourth phase (2017–18 season).
7. **B) Vaigai valley survey** – The ASI's 2013–14 Vaigai valley survey documented about 293 sites, including Keeladi.
8. **B) 56** – The fourth phase yielded 56 Tamil-Brahmi inscribed sherds.
9. **C) 5,820** – The fourth phase yielded 5,820 antiquities.
10. **B) Beta Analytic, Florida (USA)** – Six samples were dated at Beta Analytic, Miami, Florida (USA).
11. **C) About 580 BCE** – The sample from 353 cm depth gave about 580 BCE.
12. **B) 353 cm** – The sample came from a depth of 353 cm.
13. **B) September 2019** – It was released on 19 September 2019.
14. **C) 6th century BCE** – To the 6th century BCE, about a century earlier than the earlier view of the 5th century BCE.
15. **A) Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute, Pune** – Deccan College, Pune studied 70 bone samples.
16. **D) Konthagai** – Konthagai yielded urn burials and skeletons.
17. **A) 19 February 2020** – The sixth phase was inaugurated on 19 February 2020 through video conferencing.
18. **D) A terracotta pipeline** – The tenth phase (2024) exposed a terracotta pipeline of joined cylindrical pieces.
19. **A) 5 March 2023** – Chief Minister M. K. Stalin opened it on 5 March 2023.
20. **D) Chettinad style** – The museum follows the Chettinad architectural style.
21. **D) Contact with the Roman trade network** – Arretine ware is Roman pottery, indicating trade contact.
22. **A) January 2023; 982 pages** – The 982-page report on the first two seasons was submitted in January 2023.
23. **A) a-3, b-4, c-1, d-2** – Ramakrishna – first two seasons; Sriraman – third; Beta – AMS; Deccan College – bones.

24. **B) 1 and 2 only** – Keeladi is near the Vaigai, not the Thamirabarani; so only 1 and 2 are correct.

25. **C) 13 February 2026** – The on-site open-air museum was opened on 13 February 2026.

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