

least it is now possible to know what the major events of ancient Indian history were; to arrange them in their proper order; and to assign them to particular periods.

In the picture that emerges, we find the various kingdoms already welded together into one vast community; on, so to say, speaking terms with one another despite the vast distances that separated them – scattered about as they were, intermittently, over a territory covering several thousand square miles; around the middle portions of the Gangetic valley, and in the territory north of the Vindhyas.

Both the *Puranas* and Pargiter's book on them were written before anyone even suspected the existence of the Harappan

civilization. And yet the map put together by Pargiter, on the basis of information gleaned from the *Puranas*, left blank all of the desiccated Harappan area in Sind; an area which seems to have remained uncolonized for more than a thousand years after the demise of the Harappan civilization, even as the Aryans spread pretty much everywhere else in the sub-continent.

The first contact of the Aryans with the rest of the Harappan territory in Punjab, Haryana, north Rajasthan and Gujarat, occurred long after the Harappan civilization had peaked, during the late or post Harappan phase. In short, both Puranic history and Puranic geography survived the sudden discovery of the Harappan

civilization in the early 1920s. The 'Aryan invasion' theory failed miserably on both counts. Though its proponents seem not to have noticed it as yet, the fact is that this theory was dealt a death blow by these discoveries from which it has yet to recover.

Ironically, although Pargiter's findings survived the discovery of Harappa, his book itself was swept away by the deluge of findings about the Indus Valley Civilization that commenced almost before his ink was dry – and has continued unabated ever since.

SUDHANSHU RANADE

The Hindu,
Chennai 600 002, India

Who should be credited for the discovery and first reporting of arsenicosis in Koudikasa in Madhya Pradesh?

This has reference to our research communication 'Arsenicosis and deteriorating groundwater quality: Unfolding crisis in central-east Indian region' (*Curr. Sci.*, 1999, 77, 686–693) and a scientific correspondence entitled 'Arsenic groundwater contamination and sufferings of people in Rajnandgaon district, Madhya Pradesh, India' (*Curr. Sci.*, 1999, 77, 502–504).

The first article bears the date of receipt as 26 December 1998 and the date of acceptance as 26 May 1999. The second correspondence does not carry any date as per the practice of *Current Science*. Let *Current Science* disclose the

date of receipt of the scientific correspondence.

PIYUSH KANT PANDEY

Bhilai Institute of Technology,
Durg 491 002, India

Editors' note

The research communication entitled 'Arsenicosis and deteriorating groundwater quality: Unfolding crisis in central-east Indian region' (*Curr. Sci.*, 1999, 77, 686–693) by Piyush Kant Pandey *et al.* was received on 26 December 1998 and accepted on 26 May

1999 and published in the 10 September 1999 issue (77, 686–693) of the journal.

The scientific correspondence entitled 'Arsenic groundwater contamination and sufferings of people in Rajnandgaon district, Madhya Pradesh, India' (*Curr. Sci.*, 1999, 77, 502–504) by D. Chakraborti *et al.* was received on 1 April 1999 and accepted after revision on 27 April 1999 and published in the 25 August 1999 issue (77, 502–504) of the journal.

We regret that the policy of not indicating receipt dates on scientific correspondence and different scheduling has led to an apparent dispute on priority. Henceforth, all scientific correspondence items will bear date of receipt.

NEWS

China's new basic research strategy designed to eschew 'blind following of developed countries'

China intends to create a highly efficient national 'crack team' for basic scientific research by the year 2010, according to a Chinese media report. A national conference held in Beijing during 27–29 March on basic research deliberated upon the issues relating to this strategy. Major objectives of the strategy are: (i) To attract leading world

scientists by establishing state-of-the-art facilities, offering high salaries and taking care of housing and education for their children; (ii) To foster research teams comprising scientists of very high quality; (iii) To provide incentives to Chinese scientists taking part in major national basic research programmes in the form of raising their

annual salaries, etc.; (iv) To emphasize real innovation 'rather than blindly following the path of developed countries'.

The Chinese Ministry of S&T is expected to financially support about thirty-five thousand (35 K) basic research scientists under this programme.