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Lothal's Indus Valley dockyard gets 21st century town development plan

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AHMEDABAD: Lothal, arguably the world's oldest known dockyard of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization, which is believed to have existed 2200 BCE is soon to get its own decadal town development plan. Seven villages surrounding this site, located 75-km from Ahmedabad, will be incorporated into the plan. The work has been assigned to Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority's (AUDA) newly formed company Gujarat Town Planning Consultancy Limited (GTPCL).

A senior AUDA official confirmed, "Given Lothal's status as a Harappan heritage site, its development plan is underway. These assignments were handed to us by the respective authorities four months back. GTPCL has initiated the process for both the Lothal

Development Plan and the Statue of Unity Development Plan." Additionally, GTPCL is responsible for the urban development plan for Himmatnagar, and is actively working on the town planning scheme for Botad municipality.

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On June 19 last year, the state govt announced the formation of the Lothal Area Development Authority

incorporating seven villages from Dholka taluka. This authority encompasses Saragvala, Samani, Gundi, Jawaraj, Koth, Bolad, and Arnej villages.

The Lothal development plan will ensure future provisions for land use like designating areas for residential, commercial, industrial, and public uses.

The second aspect involves transportation, such as planning road networks, public transit, pedestrian paths, and bike lanes.

The development plan will also make provisions for social infrastructure such as schools, public parks and other community facilities.

"Along with Lothal, development authorities were declared by the state govt for Dholavira (2 villages) , Modhera (7 villages) and Champasar (8 villages)," says a senior urban development department official. GTPCL has also been charged with drafting the development plan for this project, as well as for the vicinity of the Statue of Unity (SOU) which incorporates the world's tallest statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Work assigned to draft DP for Lothal follows the union government's decision to build the National Maritime Heritage Complex Museum on 375 acres in Saragvala, Lothal, at an estimated cost of Rs 4500 crore, with the adjacent area falling under the authority's jurisdiction.

This world-class facility aims to showcase the country's rich maritime heritage and is expected to include a National Maritime Museum, a Maritime Heritage based Theme Park and a Maritime Research Institute.

The project work was initiated in March 2022.

