

## Underwater Archaeology in Tamil Nadu | Poompuhar & Nagapattinam Explorations

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### **Prelim - History**

#### **Underwater explorations**

- The Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology began underwater archaeological explorations in September off the coast between Poompuhar and Nagapattinam, the flourishing port cities of the ancient and medieval periods.

#### **Objective**

- Investigating submerged remains and bringing out Tamil Nadu's maritime past.
- Poompuhar, also known as Kaveripoompattinam — the capital of early Cholas — and Nagapattinam, a prominent medieval trade hub with links to Southeast Asia.

#### **Supported institutions for this exploration**

- Experts of the Indian Maritime University, the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), and the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) will collaborate for the survey.

#### **Earlier explorations**

- In the 1980s, the Department of Archaeology and the NIO, carried out geophysical surveys of the seabed. These surveys revealed several structures at depths of 20 m to 30 m.
- In 1990, a shipwreck was discovered offshore near Vanagiri.
- Between 1991 and 1993 explorations revealed manmade structures and brick formations.
- In 2004, the hydrographic survey ship *INS Darshak*, off the coast of

Poompuhar, identified a U shaped structure.

- The ship also recovered the remains of a Dutch vessel believed to have been sunk by the British in the late 18th Century.

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