

# ‘Indian scriptures, epics mention glass’

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Ahmedabad: Production of glass is a complex and fascinating procedure even today, with molten silica and minerals shaped patiently in varied designs by artisans. The process is difficult as a furnace is needed to maintain very high temperatures constantly. Experts said that ancient Indian texts mention ‘Ka ca’ regularly.

Dr Alok Kumar Kanungo, a faculty member of IIT-Gandhinagar (IIT-Gn), delivered a lecture on Tuesday as part of a four-day conference-cum-workshop on ‘History, Science & Technology of Ancient Indian Glass’ at IIT-Gn. He said that texts including Ramayana, Mahabharata, Yajurveda, Brahmanas, Puranas, Sushrut Samhita, Arthashastra, and Vinaya Pitaka talk of glass.

“We find mention of glass beads tied together with a golden thread in sacred numbers such as 51 and 101,” Kanungo said. “Gold is a precious metal even today. One can ascertain



that glass beads were considered more precious. Instruments made of glass and gold-folled glass beads are also mentioned. Bhikshus were told to refrain from using shoes with ornamented glass (beads) and glass bowl, meaning they were considered luxury items.” Kanungo said that the glass-making process in India dates back to 1200-600 BCE — originating in Ganga-Yamuna plains and taking hold in other parts of the Indian subcontinent over the centuries. He said that passing air through glass is an Indian invention and not a Persian one, though Persia popularized it.

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