

## Archaeologists to explore Nalanda university entrance

Indian archaeologists are set to excavate ruins of the ancient Nalanda University to explore its main entrance, which is still hidden.

A team of ASI archaeologists last week discovered the main entrance of the 2,500-year-old university, 100 km from here.

'The main entrance was discovered at Badagaon near the ruins of the university,' said P.K. Mishra, the superintending archaeologist of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), [Patna](#) circle.

Hieun Tsang, the famous Chinese scholar who visited Nalanda in the seventh century, had stated in his account that the university was spread over 16 km. However, till now hardly 1.6 square km of the ruins of the university was excavated.

According to ASI, a 1,200-foot high mound - known as Dhamma Khand - is spread over 20 acres of land. Archaeologists have also discovered a wall under the mound. The location of the mound - extreme north of the ancient site - and the name of the structure as Dhamma Khand indicate it as the entrance.

'ASI will soon submit a project report to start excavation at the site to scientifically prove the discovery,' Mishra told IANS over phone.

Early this month, scientists from the Indian Space Research Organisation were asked to help explore the ruins in and around the ancient university.

ASI officials here said a team of scientists from ISRO would visit Nalanda this month for radar mapping work. The radar mapping would help to explore the ruins for further excavation.

For a long time, archaeologists were in a dilemma whether to start the excavation due to lack of proper scientific details.

Last year a two-member team of senior space scientists from Hyderabad-based National Remote Sensing Agency began fieldwork for satellite imagery exploration in and around the ruins of the site. They reportedly collected data on site settlements and water bodies around the ruins.

Tourism and Culture Minister Ambika Soni, during her visit to Nalanda in April, had mooted a plan to use satellite imagery for exploration in the area.

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