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ASI stops work at Dima Hasao site

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GUWAHATI, Jan 27: The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has stopped the scientific clearance work at the unique Dubunling archaeological site of Dima Hasao (North Cachar Hills) district, allegedly in the face of the adverse situation created by some miscreants.

Talking to this Correspondent here today, Superintending Archaeologist of the ASI, Guwahati Circle Dr Milan Kumar Chauley said that the ASI undertook the scientific clearance work at the Dubunling site on the bank of the river Diyung in the district on January 15 this year after duly informing the

district's Deputy Commissioner on January 8, as per normal procedure.

Dubunling, which was named by JP Mills and JH Hutton as Derebora – a corrupt form of the original Dimasa word Dibra – is a unique archaeological site, where the stone-jar burial tradition is found. Till date, remnants of such burial practices are found only in NC Hills and in parts of Nagaland in the country. Stone-jar burial tradition is an extension of the same tradition, which was prevalent in South East Asia in the past. A proper study of the Dubunling site would have shed new lights on

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the culture, history and archaeology of Dima Hasao.

The work was going on smoothly until January 19, when some local youngsters demanded halt to the activities. They said that the ASI does not have any permission from the NC Hills Autonomous Council and that they wouldn't allow continuation of the work unless the ASI has a permission from the Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Autonomous Council.

Following this, an ASI official from Guwahati met the CEM on January 22. During the meeting, the CEM asked the ASI official to stop the work immediately and seek appropriate permission from his office for undertaking the work as the area was a disturbed one. He further asked the ASI official as to who would assume the responsibility if some untoward incident takes place there.