GENERAL STUDIES I

ASI to Conserve Ancient Buddhist Site Near Kanaganahalli

Faculty/Author: Faculty Editorial Board
Platform: Civil Service Gurukul Research Wing
Date: 18 September 2026
Reading Time: 6 Mins

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has initiated an extensive conservation project for the ancient Buddhist settlement at Sannati-Kanaganahalli in Kalaburagi, Karnataka.

Why in News?

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has approved a comprehensive architectural restoration blueprint for the stupa site at Kanaganahalli, famous for the unique inscribed stone relief sculpture of Emperor Ashoka surrounded by his queens and attendants.

What are the Key Archaeological Findings?

Excavations revealed an Ashoka Maha Stupa mentioned in Prakrit inscriptions in Brahmi script dating between the 1st century BCE and the 3rd century CE. The most monumental find is the stone slab bearing the label "*Ranyo Asoko*" (King Ashoka), which is the only surviving sculpted likeness of the Mauryan Emperor anywhere in the world.

Significance for Prelims & Mains

The site provides crucial corroboration for the spread of Buddhism into the Deccan plateau during the Mauryan and Satavahana epochs. For GS Paper 1, questions frequently probe Mauryan art, epigraphy, and the geographical reach of Ashokan edicts across peninsular India.

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