

ASI bid to restore Kamakhya glory

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Guwahati: The Guwahati circle of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) on Tuesday said it is planning to initiate confidence-building measures (CBMs) with the new Kamakhya Temple Committee to restore the 1,000-year-old seat of shakti worship to its former glory.

As part of its efforts, ASI will sign an MoU with the new temple authorities to ensure heritage conservation, expert repair of centuries-old pillars and structures, prevention of encroachment and unnecessary construction using RCC and concrete material, environment development and overall improvement of existing infrastructure.

Religious strictures imposed by the authorities of a few iconic Hindu places of worship in Assam like Kamakhya Temple and the 432-



HERITAGE IN JEOPARDY

year-old Hayagriva Madhab Temple at Hajo are taking a toll on the ancient structures.

Once the new governing body at Kamakhya gives its consent, the focus will be on undoing the damaging work done on the old stones and preventing encroachment.

The ASI officials rued the fact that unplanned construction, both inside and outside the sanctum santorum

of the main temple in Kamakhya, has robbed it of its sheen. While most of the old pillars have been replaced with RCC construction, more building works are being carried out without the ASI's knowledge. This has resulted in the age-old structures in and around Kamakhya losing their value and legacy.

"It is our responsibility to make temple authorities

understand that ancient structures should be preserved. It should be based on heritage conservation," said Milan Kumar Chauley, superintending archaeologist, Guwahati circle of ASI.

"The government departments shouldn't conduct any development work in such places without the consent of ASI. People should understand the role of ASI," added Chauley.

Another temple that is facing the scourge of unsupervised construction is the Hayagriva Madhab Temple at Hajo in Kamrup district. The ASI, for a while, was at loggerheads with temple authorities over the construction of a water tank on the temple premises. A few weeks ago, ASI had sent notices to the PHE department over the tank; construction of which has subsequently been stopped.