

A REPORT ON THE INAUGURAL FUNCTION OF THE CELEBRATION OF 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

The Guwahati Circle of Archaeological Survey of India has organized the inaugural function on the 150th Anniversary Celebrations of Archaeological Survey of India on 31st March, 2012 at Vivekananda Kendra Institute of Culture, Guwahati. In the Inaugural Function, His Excellency Governor of Assam has graced the occasion as the Chief Guest while Shri Pranab Gogoi, Hon'ble Speaker, Assam Legislative Assembly, Shri P.B.S. Sengar, Director, ASI & the representative of Director General, Archaeological Survey of India and Prof. J.N Phukan, retired professor of History, Gauhati University as the Guests of Honour. Dr. R.D. Choudhury, former Director General, National Museum, New Delhi has presided over the function.



Welcoming the Chief Guest and other dignitaries, the Superintending Archaeologist, ASI, Guwahati Circle has presented the welcome address through a power point presentation describing the inception & establishment of Archaeological Survey of India by untiring efforts made by the eminent archaeologists in the field of exploration, excavation, restoration of monuments, epigraphical researches, museum development etc. of our country.

Attending the function as the Guest of Honour, Shri Pranab Gogoi, Hon'ble Speaker, Assam Legislative Assembly narrated the development of archaeological studies in our country and lauded the ASI-NCF-ONGC project 'Amulya Dharohar' which has been inaugurated at Sivasagar recently.

Speaking on the occasion as the representative of Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, Shri P.B.S. Sengar, Director, ASI laid stress on the need of protecting heritage sites at a time when urbanization is posing a threat to these sites.



Addressing the function, Prof. J.N Phukan, retired professor of History, Gauhati University said that many of the small monuments of Ahom era have been encroached by tea planters. As a result of this many of the monuments are on the verge of extinction and hence action must be taken to sort out the problem.

Addressing the gathering, Shri J.B. Pattnaik, His Excellency Governor of Assam urged the Archaeological Survey of India to pay due attention to study & excavate the unknown facets of the history of Pragjyotishapura and Kamarupa era in the history of Assam. He also stressed the need of exploration of the capital cities of Banasura of Puranic period built by the kings of Sonitpur and Bhismaka in Tinsukia district of Assam. He also appreciated the ASI project 'Amulya Dharohar' launched recently for conservation & maintenance of four Ahom monuments in Sivasagar. He said "there are some feathers to the cap of the Guwahati circle of ASI. It is doing a commendable job for conservation, preservation, maintenance and landscape development of the centrally protected monuments". However, he said that there is still scope for improvement. He regretted that the nomination dossier to promote Majuli Island as a World Heritage Site has not been finalized and it seems the matter is being taken casually.

During the function His Excellency Governor of Assam felicitated two retired Superintending Archaeologists namely Shri B.K. Devbarman in absentia and Dr. Bimal Bandyopadhyay. Besides, he also launched the Guwahati Circle Website

www.asiguwahaticircle.gov.in and released a booklet entitled “Centrally Protected Monuments of North-East India”.

In his presidential address, Dr. R.D. Choudhury, former Director General, National Museum, New Delhi congratulated the Archaeological Survey of India for celebrating the 150th anniversary and requested the Archaeological Survey of India to establish museums in different parts of our country for keeping the antiquities of the Central Antiquity Collection at Purana Qila for the benefit of the general public and the scholars about the rich cultural heritage of our nation.



Finally, Shri Bimal Sinha, ASA, Sri Suryapahar Museum extended the Vote of Thanks.

In the afternoon session several cultural programmes were organized which included Chorus song, Folk Fusion, Bhortaal Nritya (Sattriya dance), Bharat Natyam, Classical and Bihu Dance.

A large number of people including the students of History, Anthropology of Gauhati University & Cotton College, Scientists & officers of National Informatics Centre, Assam State Museum, Directorate of Archaeology, Assam, Directorate of Research, Arunachal Pradesh and many more attended the function. The function was given wide coverage by Doordarshan Kendra, Guwahati and other local private satellite channels and print media like The Times of India, The Sentinel, The Eastern Chronicle, Purbanchal Prahari, Dainik Asom & Amar Asom.

Superintending Archaeologist