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### **Sonowal confers Srimanta Sankaradeva Award 2017**

#### **Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya to be transformed into world class university: CM**

#### **Govt committed to protect and preserve sattras and namghars: Sonowal**

Dispur, September 26: Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal conferred Srimanta Sankaradeva Award 2017 to eminent Vaishnavite scholar, writer and Satradhikar of Barpeta Sattra Basishta Deva Sarma Burha Sattriya at a function held at Srimanta Sankaradeva International Auditorium Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalashetra here this evening. The award carries a citation, a *sarai*, *angabastra*, gold memento and cheque Rs. 5 lakh.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Sonowal while congratulating the recipient Basishta Deva Sarma Burha Sattriya said, "We are happy to have conferred the coveted award on the Satradhikar who has dedicated his life for the promotion of Sattra culture and propagation of the teachings of Srimanta Sankaradeva". Sonowal also said that Srimanta Sankaradeva's teachings are inherently ingrained with the virtues of humanity. So by emulating the life of *Gurujona* and following his teachings one can become a good human being.

He also said that 21<sup>st</sup> century is the age of science and technology which have taken the world altogether to a great height. The manifestations of the science and technology have their inherent challenges. However, the teachings of *Gurujona* have their merits to empower the people to overcome the challenges and establish the supremacy of spiritualism. Terming Srimanta Sankaradeva as a founder who lent socio-cultural-spiritual identity of the people of Assam, Sonowal said that *Gurujona* helped in establishing and strengthening the foundation of a strong Assam. The Sattras and Namghars set up by the Gurujona have also lent a strong identity of the people of Assam before the world, as the government of Assam is committed to strengthen, secure and safeguard the namghars and sattras in the state, Sonowal added. He also said that his government has taken steps for granting financial assistance for the namghars and sattras to enable them to play their roles for strengthening and enriching the socio-cultural and spiritual edifice of the people.

Chief Minister Sonowal also said that State government will take proactive steps for transforming Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya set up following the ideals and philosophy of *Gurujona* into a world class university. He also said that the university using the philosophy of *Gurujona* will take his teachings across the globe. He at the same time paid his respect to Basishta Deva Sarma Burha Sattriya's brother Prabhat Sarma and his niece Tarali Sarma and said that their contribution in the field of music has given a unique identity to Assam.

Minister Finance, PWD etc. Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma while speaking on the occasion said that the people of Assam should consider themselves to be very fortunate as Srimanta

Sankaradeva was born in the state who took the culture, tradition, philosophy of the state altogether to a greater height. Stating that without the teachings and philosophy of *Gurujona* Assam can not sustain its socio-cultural and spiritual supremacy, Dr. Sarma said that to enable the younger generation of state to be aware of the teachings of Srimanta Sankaradeva, Government of Assam is taking steps for upgradation and uplift of namghars and sattras. He also said that the State government has granted Rs. 1.5 crore for Bordoia than and sizeable financial grants for 8000 namghars of the state have been earmarked.

Basishta Deva Sarma Burha Sattriya while expressing his feelings said that he is happy to have been conferred on the award. He also said that the award has increased his responsibility manifold to promote and propagate the philosophy of Srimanta Sankaradeva. Emphasizing that Sattras and Namghars formed the edifice of the socio-cultural and spiritual life of the people of Assam, he requested Government of Assam for the protection and preservation of the sattras and namghars.

The programme was organised by Cultural Affairs Department and the welcome address was given by Chief Secretary Kumar Sanjay Krishna. Minister of State (i/c) for Cultural Affairs Naba Kumar Doley also spoke on the occasion. Chief Minister's Media Advisor Hrishikesh Goswami, Chairman Housefed Ranjeet Dass, Sattradhikar Uttar Kamalabari Sattras Janardan Deva Goswami, Additional Chief Secretary Cultural Affairs Paban Kumar Borthakur, Director Cultural Affairs Department Bishnu Kamal Bora and a host of other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

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