



JANASANYOG, ASSAM  
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PRESS RELEASE

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**Sonowal presents NatasuryaPhaniSarma Award for 2020**

**Govt to preserve NatasuryaPhaniSarma's *Samadhikshetra***

**A museum to be set up in Tezpur in recognition to Jyoti-Bishnu-Natasurya and  
Sudhakantha: CM**

Dispur, July 31: Chief Minister SarbanandaSonowal presented NatasuryaPhaniSarma Award for the year 2020 to renowned theatre artistes Aishwarya Kakati and Bhabesh Baruah at a function held at the historic Ban Theatre in Tezpur today. The award consists *Sarai*, Commendation, *Man Bastra* and a cheque of **Rs. 2 lakh**.

Speaking at the function organised by the Cultural Affairs Department in association with Sonitpur District Administration, Chief Minister Sonowal said that under infrastructure development project, a financial outlay of Rs. 1.5crore has been earmarked for the preservation of the *samadhikshetra* of NatasuryaPhaniSarma. Sonowal also announced that State government would set up a museum in memory of the cultural doyens like Rupkonwar Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, Bishnu Prasad Rabha, NatasuryaPhaniSarma and Dr. Bhupen Hazarika.

Chief Minister Sonowal also said that State government has been steadfast in savouring the rich cultural heritage and inherent dignity of all the communities, tribes and sub-tribes of the state. He also said that the present generation will have to take the responsibility to rediscover the society which was given shape and enriched by our forefathers. He also said that his government always deems it its responsibility to lend more vibrance to the state which is known for its spiritual supremacy, cultural richness, revolutionary rendezvous and societal characteristics. Therefore, State government has been taking several steps including societal awakening among the youth of the state. Sonowal also said that though science and technology dominate the 21<sup>st</sup> century, 'We have to take the responsibility to generate awareness among the younger generation of our rich cultural heritage of the state'.

'Terming that there cannot be any future sans our past', Sonowal said that within three months after coming to power the present State government held '*Sohodor*' to enable everybody belonging to different tribes, sub-tribes, castes and sub-castes to converge on the same platform. He also said the spirit of a harmonious Assam can be reverberated if every heart is felt and every mind is listened to. Stating that the artistes of the state gave the message of unity and harmony, Sonowal termed the historic Ban Theatre a symbol of harmony.

Chief Minister Sonowal also said that though science and technology have contributed immensely, still people have to tread a long distance removing the evils of superstitions and free the society from the evil various manifestations of superstitions.

He also said that only through a robust work culture a formidable edifice of economy can be revamped. Assam is a state full of rivers and rivulets and their tributaries and all these have made the state a salubrious field of development and everybody will have to work hard along with the government to put the state in an absolute growth trajectory. Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call on *Atmanirbhar* Bharat, Sonowal said that everybody will have to lend their hands in the government's commitment to make *Atmanirbhar* Assam. Stating the intent radiated by popular singer ZubeenGarh in getting himself associated with agriculture, Sonowal said that it would augur well in motivating others in taking agriculture as their vocations to make the state self-reliant.

Speaking on the occasion Minister of State (i/c) for Cultural Affairs Naba Kumar Doley said that Government of Assam has taken adequate steps in giving due recognition to art and artistes across the state. He also said that for the renovation of the historic Ban Theatre, State government has adopted a project worth Rs. 2.20 crore. Moreover, a Cultural University in Majuli along with a bouquet of other projects were taken by the government for the promotion of the rich and colourful culture of the state. Stating that the number of artiste pensioners were increased to 85, a one-time financial assistance of Rs. 50 thousand each was given to two thousand artistes.

The recipients of the award Aishwarya Kakati and Bhabesh Baruah also expressed their experiences on the occasion. Aishwarya Kakati said that the artistes produced food for the soul and their creations provide a source of peace and harmony to the humanity. Bhabesh Baruah while speaking on the occasion expressed his gratitude to some of the personalities who acted as a driving force to his life and art and he dedicated the award in the name of mobile theatre.

Organised adhering to COVID 19 safety protocols, the welcome address of the programme was given by the Director of Cultural Affairs Bishnu Kamal Bora, MP Pallab Lochan Das, MLA Brindaban Goswami also spoke on the occasion. MLAs Padma Hazarika, Ashok Singhal, Ganesh Limbu, PromodeBorthakur and Rupak Sharma, DC SonitpurManabendra Pratap Singh, eldest son of NatasuryaPahniSarmaAjitSarma and a host of other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

BG/SD/ July 31, 2020.