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**Sonowal presents Sonitkonwar Gajen Baruah Award**

**Baresaharia Bhaona rekindles peace, harmony, friendship and camaraderie: CM**

**Dispur, August 16:** Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal conferred Sonitkonwar Gajen Baruah Award 2019 to noted dramatist, educationist and director Bhaben Bora at a function held at Jamugurihat in Sonitpur district today. The award carries a citation, a *sarai*, *aganbastra* and a cheque worth Rs. 2 lakh.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Sonowal said that Sonitkonwar Gajen Baruah was instrumental in popularising the cultural values of Assam in far off places including promoting and popularising the *sattriya* culture outside the country. His contribution to popularise Baresaharia bhaona of Jamugurihat is worth mentioning. By inviting the exponents and scholars from across the world to Baresaharia Bhaona in 1969 and 1975, Gajen Baruah took an important step in popularising Baresaharia Bhaona a the world stage. Considering the international appeal of Baresaharia Bhaona, Sonowal urged upon the people of Sonitpur district to take the bhaona to the world forum in a re-energised manner and make the district an epicentre of cultural tourism for the tourists not from the country alone but also from the world.

Chief Minister Sonowal also said that the essence of Baresaharia Bhaona is 'rekindling the ethos of peace, harmony, universal brotherhood and friendship. He also urged upon the teachers and parents to motivate their students and wards to imbibe love and respect towards the creation of Gurujona. He also congratulated the recipient of the award Bhaben Bora on getting the award who is working as a source of motivation for the younger generation.

At the outset of the programme, Chief Minister Sonowal paid floral tributes at the portrait of late Atal Behari Vajpayee and Sonitkonwar Gajen Baruah.

Minister of State for Culture Naba Kumar Doley while speaking on the occasion said that the Department of Culture for the promotion of different cultural facets of the state has been working very dedicatedly. He also gave a snapshot of State government's different steps for the welfare of the artistes and other exponents associated with culture. He also said that under the present government, amount of cultural pension has been raised from Rs. 4000/ to Rs. 8000/ and number of recipients of cultural pension from 20 to 85 and subsequently to 125 this year. Moreover, one-time assistance to the artistes has been enhanced from 20 to 95. Further, the new film policy has given a ray to hope to the film industry of the state.

Speaking on the occasion, Media Advisor to the Chief Minister Hrishikesh Goswami termed Sonitpur District as an epitome of a rich legacy which gave a martyr like Kanaklata Baruah, patriot and cultural icon like Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, Bishnuprasad Rabha, Phani

Sharma, Gajen Baruah who have enriched the cultural landscape of the district as the well as the state. They projected Assam as a state rich in cultural resources to the world.

Organised by the Cultural Affairs Department in association with the District Administration, Sonitpur, the programme was started with welcome speech from the Director of Cultural Affairs Department Bishnu Kamal Bora. MP Tezpur Pallab Lochan Das, MLA Sootea Padma Hazarika also spoke on the occasion. Recipient of the award Bhaben Bora also shared his feelings on the occasion.

MLAs Promode Borthakur, Utpal Bora, Ganesh Limbu, son of Sonitkonwar Gajen Baruah, Sankar Prateem Baruah, Deputy Commissioners of Sonitpur and Biswanath and a host of other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

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