

Insider



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Quality Education is key to Development: President

President Ramnath Kovind visited Gauhati University on the 20th of November, 2017 for the first time after taking charge, as part of his maiden tour to the Northeast. He was accompanied by Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, State Education Minister Himanta Biswa Sharma and GU Vice Chancellor Dr. Mridul Hazarika along with other senior faculties. Addressing the gathering at Birinchi Kumar Baruah Hall, the President thanked GU officials for holding a civic reception in his honour. Stressing the role of quality education towards overall development of the State, President Kovind called for proper use of human and natural resources in accelerating economic growth. "Assam is full of natural beauty, biodiversity and skilled human resources having great hospitality. The need of the hour is to plan and exploit these resources to develop the State. Education is the most important aspect towards this end," he said. Dwelling on the strategic location of Assam in NE region sharing international borders with a number of countries, the President highlighted its potential in promoting trade, commerce and tourism.

Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal in his speech expressed his heartiest thanks to President Kovind for visiting Gauhati University, which has played a vital role in the growth of Assamese society and development of the State.



From the desk of the **Vice Chancellor** | Dr. Mridul Hazarika

“Spring is the time of plans and projects”, said Leo Tolstoy in his famous novel Anna Karenina. To think of plans and projects one must go back to the past, and therefore I take the opportunity here to consider what we did in the last few months.

Like all the other times, the last six months have also remained advantageous for Gauhati University in many ways. At the international level, the opening of the Australian Chapter of the International Alumni Association of Gauhati University became possible on 26 November 2017. It was a notable step of the University after its launching of the European Chapter on 24 February 2016. Exploration of the possibilities of academic collaboration and exchange was made with the acting Vice-Chancellor of Canberra University and linkages were made with the University of New South Wales and Sydney University on similar matters. Near home, connection with possible academic collaborations was made with Royal University of Bhutan on 26-27 March 2018. Subsequently, a visit of a team of students and teachers from Sherubtse College under Royal University of Bhutan has been scheduled to Gauhati University on 9-11 May 2018. Meanwhile, academic achievements of students from Europe and South-East Asia at Gauhati University and of teachers and research scholars of the University at various international institutes, programmes and political events such as elections have added glory to the University. Looking at the prospects of contact with South East Asia, academic programmes such as seminars on aspects relating to South East Asia have been organized at the University.

Set as a public University, Gauhati University has never neglected the issues at home. Recently it organized an Industry Academia Conclave in collaboration with SECONE Society, Guwahati and the Botanical Society of Assam on 26th April, 2018, where more than one thousand representatives of various colleges and universities in Assam took part. Another important step taken by the University to confront problems at home was its initiative in holding a national conclave of scientists on Brahmaputra on 12-13 February 2018. A third example of the University's interest in looking at issues at home is its continuing attempt at the preservation and spread of the ethnic heritages of Assam. The launching of a certificate course in the Mising and Rabha languages at the Centre for Languages and Cultural Studies is a recent example in this regard.

I have been here at Gauhati University for nearly five years, a long period that has become resourceful with cooperation from all the members of the University fraternity. Cooperation from every side has increased in the last few months in which we applied for the recognition of Gauhati University as a Centre of Eminence and were, and still are, preparing for the visit of the peer team of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). The imminent visit of the team is crucial at this point when Gauhati University, the earliest and the largest University of the North East India, has recently completed seventy years of its glorious existence. I thank the Gauhati University fraternity for its sincere dedication to the cause of the institution and wish it a good grade in the NAAC's assessment.

OER for Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education: From Commitment to Action

Professor Asha Kanwar

What started in August last year at the COL headquarters in Vancouver is coming to a successful close today. This presentation on 'OER for Inclusive quality education: from commitment to action' is a snapshot of the entire process and its outcomes.

This journey would not have been possible without the strong support from Indrajit, David Atchoarena, Zeynep, Fengchun and Joe from UNESCO; Gasper, Mitya, Davor and Mitya from our host country; Barbara Chow and TJ Bliss from Hewlett and staunch allies like Cable Green and David Porter.

I'll first begin by giving you some background information, followed by a brief account of the six regional consultations on OER. I will then share some of the key findings of the two surveys, for governments and stakeholders that were completed within the framework of the 2nd World OER Congress and close with some trends and the way forward.

But first the background.

Five years ago COL and UNESCO organised the first World OER Congress that resulted in the Paris OER Declaration. Sir John Daniel, the former President & CEO of COL led the process and we are fortunate that he is here today to see that the torch he lit then continues to burn bright today. The road to Ljubljana has passed through six regions of the globe. The first consultation for Asia was held in Kuala Lumpur in December with our



partner Asiae University; followed in quick succession by the meetings for Europe held in Malta and hosted by the Minister of Education and Employment, the Hon Evarist Bartolo. The MENA region consultation was generously supported by Reach Out to Asia (ROTA) in Qatar. The Minister for Education the Hon Leeladevi Dookhun Loochoomun hosted the regional consultation for Africa in Mauritius. Stakeholders in Latin America and the Caribbean met in Brazil where the University of Campinas was our partner. The sixth and final regional consultation for the Pacific was co-hosted with our long-term

ally the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand. All these consultations were completed within six months. Despite this tight schedule and limited resources, our objective was to include as many governments and stakeholders as possible and to enlarge the existing circle.

A background paper for the regional consultations was developed by the Task Force and approved by the project Steering Committee with members from UNESCO, Slovenia, Hewlett and COL.

In 2012, our main objective was to foster governmental support for OER internationally. Today we want to involve many more stakeholders so that OER can be mainstreamed and implemented at all levels. Five years ago, the focus was on promoting policy development but as we know, that is not

enough—we need strategies for implementing policies. At that time, the primary objective was to seek governmental commitment. This time we are moving beyond commitment to concrete action for achieving the education and training goals of Member States.

Lets now look at the six regional consultations. The objectives of these consultations were one, to raise awareness about the importance of OER in achieving SDG4; two, identify strategies to address the barriers that prevent people from mainstreaming OER and three, identify concrete actions that different stakeholders need to undertake to optimise the use of OER. These are now being considered at this Congress.

The first regional consultation was held in Kuala Lumpur—48 participants from 20 Asian countries participated in this meeting, including Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar and Mongolia.

Some of the highlights that emerged were that Bangladesh supplies free textbooks to its school students and are in the process of developing a national OER policy, with COL support. A major project of the Indian government —the National Mission on Education through ICTs uses the CC licence. Malaysia has committed to open courseware in its e-learning policy. There are OER repositories in India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, and Vietnam.

The Asian group raised concerns about poor connectivity, lack of capacity and unavailability of OER in local languages. They also flagged the need for more attention to developing OER for people with disabilities. While there are many emerging initiatives in Asia, there was no OER policy at the national level.

In Europe 64 participants from 24 countries engaged in the consultation, including four ministers.

While in Asia, most OER initiatives were government-led, in Europe, these were either institutional or project-based. OER were seen as part of a wider ecosystem of opening up education and open education practices. Advanced technologies were available for multi-lingual searches. There were many OER initiatives but these were mostly operating in isolation. The need for complementarity and collaboration was stressed.

Participants believed that there was a greater need for political will and national level policies to support the mainstreaming of OER. Teachers were identified as critical to this process. There was a discussion about involving publishers and rethinking business models. The need for quality

assurance was also stressed.

In the Middle East and North Africa region, 37 participants from 13 countries deliberated on the status and strategy for OER.

The MENA region is bound by a common language Arabic. On the one hand, there were national OER policies in Oman and Bahrain; institutional OER initiatives in Sudan, Morocco, Jordan but on the other participants from Djibouti and Mauritania were new to the field.

There are several initiatives to translate existing OER into Arabic but the point would be to lead in producing fresh content in Arabic.

The main needs identified were more advocacy, capacity-building, national and institutional level policy development and closer regional co-operation.

Forty six participants from 23 African countries shared their knowledge and expertise at the regional consultation in Port Louis.

South Africa and Seychelles have national policies while the open universities of Nigeria and Tanzania have institutional policies. Siyavula, a prominent private initiative in South Africa has created a new business model under which the content is free but the services require payment. Lack of electricity and connectivity were identified as major barriers. There was a great deal of discussion on the lack of OER in local languages and suitability for specific cultural contexts. The African representatives wanted more policies at the national and institutional levels.

The meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean attracted 31 participants from 18 countries. There is an OER policy at the national level in Antigua & Barbuda. Institutional policies for open access are in place in Brazil and Chile; there is a strong commitment to OER at the city level, notably in Sao Paulo. Overall there was a general awareness and willingness to pursue OER in several other countries driven by a rights perspective.

There was concern over the dominance of English and a call to develop more OER in Portuguese and Spanish. Lack of national policies, capacity to use OER and poor connectivity were issues shared with other regions. The need for more accessible content for people with disabilities also came up. This will have to be addressed if we are to be more inclusive and harness OER for sustainable development.

The Pacific regional consultation was attended by 23 participants from 7 countries, including the

Minister of Education, the Hon David Collins, who has offered to be a champion of OER in the region.

Australia and New Zealand have open licensing frameworks for publicly funded content; Fiji has developed a national OER policy, and several institutions including the National University of Samoa, and the Solomon Islands National University are offering OER based courses. Kiribati and Vanuatu are using OER for the school sector through COL support. OERu has a valuable regional and international footprint.

Interestingly there was a call to link the OER policy to the regional Pacific Education Strategy. The need for better infrastructure and connectivity was something in common with the other developing countries. There was a fair bit of emphasis on promoting indigenous knowledge and culture. OER was also seen as a people's movement that would help support freedom, dignity and human rights.

Based on the key issues, participants in all the regional meetings identified nine types of stakeholders: governments, educational institutions, teachers, learners, librarians, QA agencies, publishers, civil society and associations. They suggested the actions that each group needs to take so that OER can contribute to inclusive and equitable quality education. These actions then fed into the online consultation on the outcome document led by UNESCO.

The regional consultations were a great success and brought together ministers, government officials, experts and practitioners. 257 stakeholders from 109 countries participated. We find a greater commitment by governments to support OER and adopt national policies. Governments are also allocating resources to support specific projects. The emphasis was still on OER development rather than use. All regions want more collaboration. These consultations not only helped generate momentum for the 2nd World OER Congress but also created a better understanding and awareness of OER. Mitiya very diligently recorded the events and interviewed numerous participants thereby creating a valuable resource for the community.

Let us now turn to the two surveys.

There was a government survey sent out to Member States by COL and UNESCO. The other was a stakeholder survey that was placed online and publicised through social media.

We received 102 responses from governments.

The maximum came from Africa and Asia and the Pacific followed by Europe and North America.

Key findings suggest that 56 of the 102 respondents believe that there are OER policies in their countries. 34 respondents believed that there was an OER policy at the national level, which does not necessarily add up to the reality.

More than 50% felt that they were considering policy development at the national level. Clearly all the respondents do not share the same understanding of what an OER policy is and this is an area where more needs to be done.

In response to the question on the kind of OER activities, the majority stated that these were project-based, followed by institutional and governmental initiatives.

Officials believed that OER can increase efficiencies and enhance the quality of resources and provide more flexible learning opportunities for enhanced access.

Barriers to the use of OER included: lack of capacity, insufficient access to quality content, and lack of appropriate policies. Officials also believed that we needed more credible business models for convincing ministers and publishers. Language continues to be a barrier to reaching the unreached.

We received 638 completed responses from stakeholders. The maximum responses received were from Asia and the Pacific followed by Europe and North America and then Africa. There were 57% male and 42% female respondents.

What do we know about the respondents? 49% had over 20 years' experience and the majority of respondents came from teaching, followed by administration and management and research. How can we enlarge and diversify the circle to include younger professionals and grassroots workers?

Where did the majority of stakeholders come from? 60% were from colleges and universities—how do we involve the other sectors of education, especially teachers in remote rural schools? If OER are to contribute to SDG4 which aspires to provide lifelong learning for all, then they must be mainstreamed along the entire spectrum of education—primary, secondary and tertiary as well as non-formal learning. 93% of the respondents were aware of OER. Are we only reaching out to the converted?

That said, it was surprising to note that there was scant awareness of some of the well-known

inter-national and national repositories. MIT OCW was the best known and used. The stakeholders believed that using OER would reduce costs and improve the quality of learning. OER were also seen as improving the quality of teacher training and saving their time. The barriers identified by stakeholders were lack of policy, lack of capacity and lack of quality content. COL had been recently requested to help Mozambique with the development of OER for secondary schools. Since we had already developed OER for secondary schools in 20 subjects in Africa and the Caribbean, we looked into the possibility of adopting and adapting content in physics, chemistry and biology and discovered that substantial localisation and supplementation was required. Both groups—governments and stakeholders agree that OER increase access to quality materials. Similarly, both groups were concerned about lack of policies, insufficient capacity and changing business models. Where did the governments and stakeholders differ in their priorities? Governments stressed the need for more attention to indigenous languages, culture-specific content and costs. Stakeholders focused on the opportunity for saving time for teachers and quality improvement. The OER Global Report 2017 that we have prepared for you is based on the findings of the surveys, the outcomes of the regional consultations and very significant communications received from key stakeholders in the field. You will find it a rich resource of data, trends and actual practice. How does all this add up to the bigger picture, that is, the theme of the Congress? What are the global trends that have emerged and what are the actions needed to provide more inclusive and equitable quality education for all? As we have seen there has been considerable progress since 2012. There are more OER policies especially at the institutional level. Governments are supportive but this does not always translate into explicit policies. However, the OER activities are still thriving even without the overarching policies. You'll be pleased to note that one positive outcome of the African regional consultation in March this year was that Nigeria has developed and validated a national OER policy through extensive consultations. Even though there is low awareness, there are many more repositories today than there were five years ago. Most repositories are at the tertiary



level and those from the global north are more likely to be used. Limited use of these repositories suggests that they must be more widely publicised and user-friendly. If you build it, they will not necessarily come!

More people are aware of the benefits of OER and the circle of champions and advocates has certainly grown. However, the meaning of 'open' means different things to different people. Even as more governments are offering MOOCs, these are not always open. While there is a growing recognition for promoting open textbooks, there needs to be more emphasis on learning resources for lifelong learning.

But OER have not been adopted at the speed and scale envisaged in 2012. What can we do accelerate the process? There is a huge opportunity for both COL and UNESCO to help Member States to take full advantage of the OER movement to effect the paradigm shift required to achieve the targets of SDG 4. We can continue with evidence-based advocacy, capacity building and support for policy development. One key recommendation relates to the development of a normative instrument which could help governments to harness the potential of OER for achieving SDG 4.

Stakeholders recommended that better communication strategies are required to share the findings of OER research, which has doubled since 2012. New business models would need to be explored. Further innovations are needed to bridge the digital divide. Monitoring of progress will be required to measure impact. These seven recommendations have emerged from the regional consultations and the two surveys and are highlighted for further discussion in the lead up to the Ljubljana OER Action Plan.

Finally, let me thank my colleagues who in addition to their demanding day jobs, toiled tirelessly to making these events a success and for continuing to be real champions of OER around the world.

The author is the President & CEO, Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Vancouver, Canada



GU to support Higher Education in Bhutan

A team of 16 students and 3 teachers from Sherubtse College under Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) visited Gauhati University on May 9-11, 2018. Led by Dr. Yezer, Dean of Student Affairs and senior faculty of Geography Department, Sherubtse College, the team's other two teacher-members were Dr. Jas Raj Subba, faculty of Physical Science Department and Pema Tshering, faculty of Computer Science and Mathematics Department. Along with establishment of sports-cultural exchange programme between the two varsities, the team's mission was to strengthen Bhutan-Assam ties through academic collaboration. Welcoming the team, Dr. Mridul Hazarika, VC, GU, outlined the academic dimensions of GU including its potentials in teaching and research, while calling upon RUB authority to send deserving students for Master's and Doctoral degree programmes in various subjects at GU. A Terms of Reference (ToR) was signed at the end of

the meeting between Gauhati University and Sherubtse College, RUB for undertaking collaborative academic activities in areas of mutual interest, and instituting sports and cultural exchange. There was much bonhomie at a cultural programme organized by the host varsity, with the visiting Bhutanese students spontaneously participating in a Bihu dance by GU students, and also demonstrating Bhutanese traditional and modern music-dance forms.

This exchange programme has come about following the earlier visit to Sherubtse College in Bhutan on March 26-27 this year by Dr. Mridul Hazarika, VC, GU along with Prof. Bimal Kr. Kar of Geography Department and Prof. Jogen Ch. Kalita of Zoology Department. This was said to be the first ever visit to Sherubtse College by any vice-chancellor of a foreign varsity. College President Tshering Wandi along with senior faculties extended a hearty warm welcome to the GU team and showed keen interest towards collaborative academic works and students cultural exchange programme between Sherubtse College, RUB and GU. On request of the College President, Dr. Mridul Hazarika also addressed a large gathering of students in the college auditorium.

Hemchandra Barua's statue installed



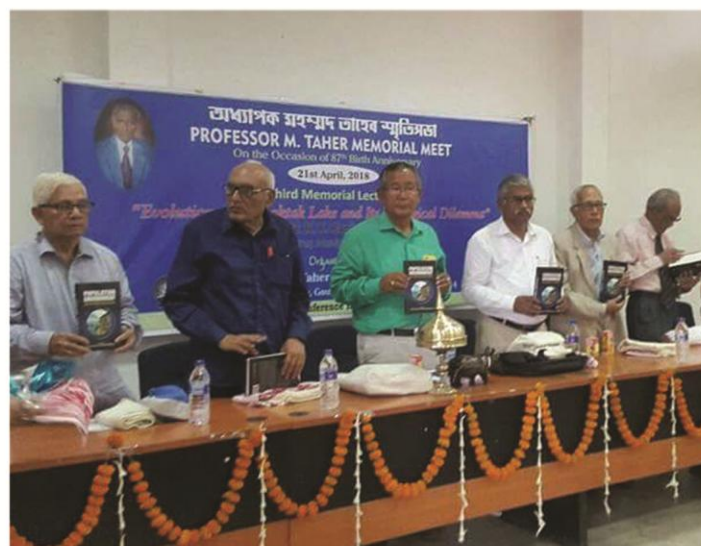
A full bronze statue of Hemchandra Barua, the pioneering lexicographer, social reformer and creator of the first Assamese dictionary 'Hemkosh', was unveiled on May 1, 2018 on the occasion of his death anniversary, at GU campus near Madhav Chandra Bezbaruah RCC No. 1 Boys' Hostel. Installed under the aegis of Sadin-Pratidin Group of Publications and Hemkosh Prakashan and supported by Gauhati University, the statue was unveiled by Chandrashekhara Kambara, President, Sahitya Akademi. At the Hemchandra Barua Memorial Day function held at BKB Auditorium and presided over by GU Vice Chancellor Dr. Mridul Hazarika, the biennial Hemchandra Barua literary prize was conferred on eminent scholar, linguist and former GU Professor Dr. Golok Chandra Goswami.

(Courtesy: GU Times News Service)

Prof. M Taher Memorial Lecture delivered

Commemorating the 87th birth anniversary of eminent geographer Late Dr. Mohammed Taher, former Professor and Head, Department of Geography, GU, the third Prof. M. Taher Memorial Lecture was held at AT Conference Hall, GU on 21st April, 2018. Dr. R.K. Ranjan Singh, geographer and former Registrar of Manipur University, delivered the memorial lecture on 'Evolution of the Loktak Lake and its Ecological Dilemma'.

Organized by Prof. M. Taher Memorial Committee, Department of Geography, GU, the memorial meet was inaugurated by former GU Vice-Chancellor Prof. H.L. Duorah, presided over by Prof. Abani K. Bhagabati and attended by members of the geography fraternity and GU family. The Prof. M. Taher Memorial Innovate (Motivate) Fellowship was awarded to Jyotisma Keot, second semester student and M. Bijoy Singh, Ph.D research scholar, Department of Geography, GU for the year 2017-18. A book titled 'Population, Environment and Emerging Challenges', edited by Dr. Bimal K. Kar and Dr. Prasanta Bhattacharya, was released in the meet by Prof. H.N. Sharma.



Engagement between India & South-East

India's Northeast became landlocked after 1947, but since prehistoric times, this region was witness to waves of migrations from distant lands. The Brahmaputra Valley lay in one of the great migration routes of the world, as indicated by anthropological studies. Over 10,000 years ago, Austro-Asiatic groups from South-East Asia migrated through this region, represented in present times by the Khasis in Meghalaya, and farther afield by the Kol, Ho and Mundas of Central India and the Nicobarese. All of them belong to the Mon-Khmer linguistic group, thereby related to the Vietnamese and the Khmer speakers of Cambodia, besides sub-groups in Java.

Trade links between India and South-East Asia date back to more than 2,000 years over land and sea routes. This in turn led to cultural exchanges. Buddhist and Brahmanical belief systems spread to these faraway lands, along with components of literature, art and architecture. Aiming to renew and develop these age-old links with South-East Asia, the Government of India formulated the 'Look East' policy, later upgraded to 'Act East' policy. In seeking to find common meeting ground through shared heritage, this policy covers a gamut of ties ranging from cultural to economic and political. The growing influence of China on the ASEAN bloc has imparted an urgency to India's initiative to engage ever more closely with her South-East Asian neighbours.

To explore these issues and facilitate a wide-ranging and continuing dialogue between India and South-East Asia, the Department of History, GU, organized an international seminar on April 27-28, 2018 with the theme 'India and South East Asia — Mapping Connections'. Eminent academics and scholars from countries including Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Bangladesh and Belgium, along with their counterparts from New Delhi, Kolkata and other parts of the country participated in the prestigious event and read their papers. (Courtesy: GU Times News Service).



Industry Academia conclave

Gauhati University organized an Industry Academia Conclave in collaboration with SECONE Society, Guwahati and the Botanical Society of Assam on 26 April, 2018 at BKB Auditorium, GU. The conclave was inaugurated by Dr. Mridul Hazarika, Vice Chancellor, GU, while Utpal Bora, Chairman & Managing Director of OIL, graced the occasion as chief guest. More than 1,000 representatives of various colleges and varsities in Assam participated in the conclave to brainstorm over ways and means to bring the worlds of industry and academia closer.



Dublin University scholar at GU

The Department of Women's Studies provided a platform to Bitopi Dutta, Research Scholar, Dublin City University on April 25, 2018 to share her studies on 'Gender Restructuring in the Matrilineal Tribe Societies of Northeast India' with faculty members, research scholars, students and invited guests.



Talk & Interactive session at Chemistry Department

Prof. R.N. Prasad, former President, Indian Chemical Society, Kolkata interacted with students, research scholars and faculty members of Department of Chemistry, GU on April 10, 2018 at the department gallery. He also delivered a lecture on the role of metal ions in life processes. This was part of GU Chemistry Department's continuing programme to invite leading scientists and academics from outside to share with GU scholars their perspectives and experiences in the latest areas of cutting edge research in chemistry and associated disciplines. Earlier on 26 February, 2018, Prof. A.K. Ganguli, faculty of Department of Chemistry, IIT-Delhi and former Director of Institute of Nano Science and Technology, Mohali, delivered a lecture on 'Design of Nanomaterials for Energy and Environmental Applications' at the department gallery.

Workshop on 'Lifestyle Disease and its Management'

A daylong workshop cum awareness program on 'Lifestyle Disease and its Management' was conducted at Tezpur Science Centre of Assam Science Society on 24 March, 2018, organised by Advanced level Institutional Biotech Hub, Department of Biotechnology, Gauhati University in association with Assam Science Society under the sponsorship of Assam Science Technology and Environment Council (ASTEC), Govt of Assam. The event was graced by Dr. N.C. Talukdar, Director, IASST, Guwahati, Dr Kulendu Pathak, former Vice-Chancellor, Dibrugarh University, Prof. Soneswar Sarma, President, Assam Science Society, Dr. Akhil Kr. Deka, Director, Science Centre, Tezpur, Dr. Biren Das, Registrar, Tezpur University, Prof. Arun Kr. Handique, Head, Dept of Biotechnology & Dean, Faculty of Technology, Gauhati University. Prof. Mohan Ch. Kalita, Co-ordinator, Advance Level Institutional Biotech Hub, Dept of Biotechnology, GU and Dr. Jaideep Baruah, General Secretary, Assam Science Society. Around 100 female members also participated in the event. Awareness lectures were delivered by Dr. Karuna Kanta Barman, Dr. Saurabh Bhuyan and Dr. Pojul Loying.

Talk on Women's Collectives

A talk on 'Women's Collectives in Northeast India' was delivered by Dr. Monisha Behal, CEO, NEN on March 26, 2018. In the course of the lecture, she took the audience through the historical trajectory of women's collectives in Assam in particular and the Northeast in general. In spite of specificities and differences among women, they need to seek common ground and work in cooperation to bring about social transformation, she opined.

GUTA lecture on solar system

In the information age, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that only a coherent body of meaningful information can form the base of genuine knowledge, which in turn develops into enlightening perspective and wisdom. "Rather than becoming smart synthesizers of information, students should aim to acquire the form of knowledge that many philosophers and scientists of past and present have been nurturing," said Dr. Jitendra Nath Goswami, eminent scientist and Padma Shri awardee. He was delivering the Gauhati University Teachers' Association (GUTA) annual lecture on 'Origin and Early Evolution of Solar System' at BKB auditorium on 28 March, 2018.

Hailed for his contribution as chief scientist to the country's first moon mission 'Chandrayaan-1' and also associated prominently with the second moon mission and Mars mission, Dr. Goswami spoke about how new things are created after destruction, as it has been with the solar system that was born from a cosmic event, and which in turn may give rise to another planetary system millions of years from now. "The entire formation of our solar system is easily traceable through the study of a small grain of meteorite only 0.1 mm in size. Refractory oxides and silicates, silicate spherules, chondrites etc., recovered from fragments of asteroids tell their story of the gravitational collapse of molecular cloud that led to the present planetary system, which could be replaced by a successor millions of years from now," he said. (Courtesy: GU Times News Service).

Russian Elections: GU Professor as International Observer



Dr. Kandarpa Das, Professor and Head, Department of Foreign Languages, was invited to Moscow by the Federation Council of the Russian Federation as an International Observer for election of the President of Russian Federation held on 18 March, 2018. As part of his assignment, Dr. Das visited the cities of Moscow and Ryazan, addressed the media and interacted with members of Russian Civil Society. During his visit, he was warmly welcomed by members of Russian Election Commission, members of the Press and general voters. It came out during the discussions that the Russian people consider their country not as a classical democracy but rather a developing democracy, and are highly interested in learning from India, the world's largest democracy. Dr. Das was also invited to visit the Russian State University for Humanities, Moscow and Moscow State Regional University to address faculty members and research scholars and to discuss the possibility of collaboration with Gauhati University.

Earlier this year, Dr. Das was also invited by the Open University, Japan to attend the Asian MOOCs Steering Committee meeting and participate as a plenary speaker in the International Seminar on 20-22 February, 2018 held at Chiba, Tokyo.

ИЗДАТЕЛЬСТВО «ПРЕССА»
НОВОСТИ РАЙОНОВ РЯЗАНСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ

ГЛАВНАЯ РАЙОНЫ ФОТОГАЛЕРЕЯ ЗНАЙ НАШЕКИ ПРОЕКТЫ КНИГИ КОНТАКТЫ ДОКУМЕНТЫ

РЯЗАНСКИЕ ПОЛИТОЛОГИ ОБСУДИЛИ ВЫБОРЫ ПРЕЗИДЕНТА С ИНОСТРАННЫМИ КОЛЛЕГАМИ

Популярные новости

Николай Любимов
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Spotlight on democracy in South-South East Asia

The whole of South Asia is painted as democratic. Nepal and Bhutan are two unique examples of democracy which have not drawn enough attention either in academic or even in policy circles. Nepal has emerged from a decade-old violent insurgency. "In contrast, we have the Bhutanese democracy which is top down, where one section of people say they want it and another section doesn't," said Prof. S.D. Muni while addressing the valedictory session of a 2-day international conference held on March 8-9, 2018 on 'Resurgence and Reversals of Democracy in South and South East Asia'. The conference was organized by the Centre for South East Asian Studies (CEAS) and the Department of Political Science, GU. The seminar presented a unique landscape of South and South East Asia that is marked by a paradox of civilizations, historical and cultural similarities, while at the same time distinguished by stark political differences and discontinuities. It focused on how the three dominant religions and cultures of Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism have evolved into multi-cultural synthesis in many countries of South East Asia, whereas such cultural synthesis have undergone severe challenges in the region of South Asia.

Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty from University of Delhi spoke in the special session on 'China, South and South East Asia' and also chaired the valedictory session, focusing on the need to re-frame the discourse on democracy and explaining how democracy has entered a new phase in the recent decades. In the inaugural session on March 8, Prof. Udayan Misra of Dibrugarh University and Prof. Swaran Singh of JNU, New Delhi deliberated on important issues related to the main theme of the seminar as panel speakers.

International conference by Foreign Languages Department

Commemorating 50 years of teaching of foreign languages, literature and culture in North-East India and 70 years of diplomatic relations between India and Russia, the Department of Foreign Languages, GU organized a 2-day International Conference titled 'Transcending Cultural Boundaries: Studies of Foreign Languages, Literature and Culture in India' on 8-9 March, 2018. Inaugurated by Dr. Mridul Hazarika, Vice Chancellor, Gauhati University, the conference was graced by Prof. Alexander Stolyarov, Director, Institute of South Asian Studies, Russian State University for Humanities, Moscow and Prof. R.N. Menon, President, Indian Association of Teachers of Russian Language and Literature and former Dean, Jawaharlal Nehru University, as guests of honour. Prof. Abhai Maurya, former Vice Chancellor, English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad delivered the keynote address while over 150 delegates representing various universities from Russia, Thailand, Laos, Bangladesh and India participated in the conference.

The international conference was organised in collaboration by Institute of South Asian Studies, Russian State University for Humanities, Moscow and Centre for South-East Asian Studies, Gauhati University. It marked another glittering event in the 50-year journey of the Department of Foreign Languages, GU in the course of which it has become a premier centre for teaching-learning of foreign languages, literature and culture attracting many scholars wishing to pursue interdisciplinary research in these fields.

Free health camp for women

A free health camp for women was organised at the initiative of Excel Care Hospital, Guwahati in collaboration with Gauhati University Officer's Association (GUOA) on the occasion of International Women's Day on March 8, 2018 at Gauhati University. Inaugurated by Dr. Suresh Kumar Nath, Registrar, GU, the health camp was availed by a good number of women teachers, officers, employees and girl students of GU. The team of specialist doctors on women related diseases was led by Dr. Judi Bordoloi and senior medical officer Dr. Sonali Barman Bhuyan of Excel Care Hospital.



GUIST Symposium

A symposium on Entrepreneurship and Youth Empowerment was held at Gauhati University as a joint effort of MHD-TEQIP Cell, Gauhati University Institute of Science & Technology (GUIST) and Department of Electronics & Communication Technology (ECT) on February 27, 2018. Organised with the objective to spread awareness about entrepreneurship skills in Northeast region, the symposium witnessed participation by colleges from across NE region and other parts of the country.



National Seminar on Urbanisation & Folklore

A 2-day National Seminar on 'Urbanisation and Folklore: Emerging Issues and Perspectives' was organised by the Department of Folklore Research, Gauhati University, in collaboration with the Indian Council for Social Science Research (NERC)-Shillong and the Centre for South East Asian Studies, GU on March 23-24, 2018. It was inaugurated by Dr. Mridul Hazarika, Vice Chancellor, GU who highlighted the value of folklore research and stressed that as one of the oldest folklore departments in the country, the Folklore Research Department of Gauhati University has a legacy and responsibility to confront the challenges in an age of overwhelming technological penetration. Dr. Anil Boro, Head, Department of Folklore Research, in his welcome address outlined the seminar theme and emphasised its relevance. Prof. Kishore Bhattacharjee, in his speech, shed light on the study of urbanisation and folklore and how the process of urbanisation gobbling up rural areas has impacted folk life. Dr. Sujay Mandal of the University of Kalyani, West Bengal gracing the session as chief guest, called for extending deliberations on the theme and utilising its vast scope to further development in the field of folklore research. Altogether 103 research papers, with topics ranging from the impact of urbanisation on folklore, commodification of folklore and urban folk festivals and ceremonies, Assamese folklore among the young users of social media, use of new media technology in the promotion of folk materials, use of folk culture as an instrument of political campaign with special reference to electronic media of Assam, portrayal of folklore in digital world, folk speech, jokes, urban legends, graffiti, urbanization and changing world-view of folklore were presented at the seminar by scholars from different parts of the country.



33rd INTER UNIVERSITY NATIONAL YOUTH FESTIVAL

UNIFEST - 2018

PALASH

FEB - 16 - 20, 2018

ORGANISED BY

RANCHI UNIVERSITY, RANCHI, JHARKHAND

IN COLLABORATION WITH

ASSOCIATION OF INDIAN UNIVERSITIES (AIU)

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10 laurels for GU team in UNIFEST

Making waves at the 33rd National Inter-University Youth Festival organized at Jharkhand by Ranchi University in collaboration with Association of Indian Universities on February 16-20, 2018, the Gauhati University team of 40 students returned with awards in 10 events. The team secured 1st prize in folk dance, 2nd prize in cultural procession, 2nd prize in skit, 2nd prize in installation, 2nd prize in western group song, 2nd prize in western solo instrumental, 3rd prize in elocution, 3rd prize in classical vocal solo and 4th prize in debate.

Led by Dr. Ranjan Kr. Kakati, Director of Students Welfare (DSW) and team in-charge Kuldip Patgiri, the GU team included both PG students from the varsity and students from GU-affiliated colleges including B Barooah College, Jagiroad College, MNC College, DK College, Gauhati Commerce College, Abhayapuri College, Darrang College, Handique Girl's College, LCB College, Koliabor College, North Guwahati College and MC College. The festival witnessed active participation of 70 varsities from across the country.

Certificate course in Mising & Rabha

The Centre for Languages and Cultural Studies, GU launched a 6-month certificate course in Mising and Rabha languages for session 2018. It is the first time GU has introduced certificate courses in the two indigenous tribal languages



2nd KN Das Memorial Badminton Tourney held

Gauhati University Officers' Association (GUOA) organized the 2nd KN Das Memorial Badminton Tournament among faculties, officers and staff of Gauhati University on 21-22 February, 2018. Instituted in the memory of Late Kumarendra Das who had served GU in the capacity of Deputy Registrar (Administration), the 2nd edition of this tourney was inaugurated GU Vice Chancellor Dr. Mridul Hazarika with over 60 participants competing in 3 categories. Dr. Sankar Moni Borah in men's singles, Swagata Singha Roy in women's singles and the pair of Dr. Sankar Moni Borah and Dr. Arijit Bora in men's doubles were crowned winners.

Students from South-East Asia Course Completion

The 25th of February, 2018 was a landmark day for Centre for South East Asian Studies, GU with the first batch of students from South-East Asia completing their course (Diploma in pattern recognition and machine learning) under GU Institute of Science and Technology (GUIST). Seen in the photo are students from Laos PDR national university along with VC, Gauhati University, Dean of Arts, Director of CSEAS, GU Registrar and GUIST Director

Centre for Brahmaputra Studies at GU



The Centre for Brahmaputra Studies was launched at Gauhati University during the 2-day national conclave on river Brahmaputra held in January, 2018 with sponsorship from Ministry of DoNER, Govt of India. "The main objective of the centre is to devise solutions to challenges posed by the Brahmaputra. The project will be funded by North Eastern Council (NEC)", said Dr. Mridul Hazarika, Vice Chancellor, GU. Opened at the top floor of Department of Geological Science, GU, the structural formation of the centre is expected to take concrete shape in due course following the inter-ministerial meeting held on February 19, 2018. Earlier at the 25th GU Convocation, DoNER Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh had announced that GU will get the Centre for Brahmaputra Studies. Prof. Parag Phukon, Head, Department of Geological Science, spoke about its technical brief: "The centre is expected to give research backing to engineering solutions of the Brahmaputra basin. It will act as a centre of basic research on the Brahmaputra which has a trans-boundary character. Issues related to the Brahmaputra from upper to lower stream will be dealt with, and technical training will be provided on crucial aspects. Exchange of ideas between students and experts from different parts of the world will be facilitated here. We may also approach relevant institutes for tie-ups to develop models". (Courtesy: GU Times News Service).



GU Professor at University of Dhaka

Prof. Narendra Lahkar, Department of Library and Information Science, GU delivered a talk at the Department of Information Science and Library Management, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh on January 4, 2018 on 'Reengineering of Library and Information System: Issues and Challenges'. He was felicitated with a citation

GU launches short term law course

Gauhati University launched a law course for working professionals in 2018, aimed at meeting their need for legal awareness in the course of their work. After receipt of application forms, the admissions were conducted on January 31. The course is being taught at evening hours, offering legal education to members of NGOs, service and ex-service men, journalists, students and researchers. The post-graduate diploma in Basics of Law will have a duration of 12 months covering two semesters. Students will have the option to exit the course with a certificate in basics of law after successfully completing the first semester. A notification issued by the Principal, University Law College, stated that the objective of the course is to impart knowledge of functional aspects of law associated with administrative, social, personal and other relevant areas including human rights, so as to ensure legal capacity building. The course has an intake capacity of 30, with maximum 5 seats reserved for GU employees.

GUWU hosts National Seminar on role of non-teaching employees.

Under the aegis of Gauhati University Workmen's Union (GUWU), a National Seminar on 'Role of non-teaching employees in the growth of higher learning' was organised at GU on December 2017 to coincide with the North East Zonal council meet of All India University Employees Confederation (AIUEC). Prof. Dipak Kr. Sarma, Vice Chancellor, Kumar Bhaskar Barma University for Sanskrit & Ancient Studies, Nalbari, delivered the keynote address. Inaugurated by Dr. Mridul Hazarika, VC, GU, the seminar was attended by delegates from different Indian varsities, teaching and non-teaching staff



Dr. Anamika Ray National Media Lecture held

The concept of health is becoming attenuated and it is gradually losing its status as an individual right. Delivering the first ever National Media Lecture organised by Dr. Anamika Ray Memorial Trust with the support of Gauhati University and UNICEF on December 20, 2017 at GU, Prof. Mohan J. Dutta of National University of Singapore said: "The 'health' that we talk about today is limited to the concept of healthcare system that is more inclined towards profit or money making." The topic highlighted by Prof. Mohan J. Dutta, Chair Professor and Head of Department of Communication and New Media, National University of Singapore, was 'Global Health Inequalities: Communication Advocacy and Social Change'. Stressing the importance of communication in eradicating health inequalities through the process of transforming private health to public resources utilised for money making, Prof. Dutta further said, "There is a need to change the entire communication process as communication nowadays is only being used for dissemination of information, whereas we should give importance on how communication mobilises those information".

In his inaugural address, Dr. Mridul Hazarika, Vice Chancellor, GU said, "Inequality itself is an alarming term and can be eradicated through sustainable social change which is possible at the beginning of life". R.B. Mahanta, Vice Chairperson of Dr. Anamika Ray Memorial Trust (ARMT), in his welcome address highlighted the history of the Trust that was created on October, 2017 and its way forward with the movement against 'Medical Terrorism' that is gaining ground day by day. Veena Kumari, Communication Officer of UNICEF, Assam, in her special remark outlined the picture of rural Assam bearing the brunt of most health hazards. The lecture programme was presided over by Trust Chairperson and former GU Registrar Prof. M.C. Sarma.



GU students selected for special training

Two MSc students Bipul Kalita and Kangkan Jyoti Nath of the Department of Computer Science, GU were selected for 'Special Training and Contact Programme for the final year postgraduate students of Statistics, Mathematics, Economics and Computer Science from NE States', organised by Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), North East Centre, Tezpur, Assam. The program was held at ISI Kolkata from 18th to 29th December, 2017.

Plant Science Research: Prospects & Challenges

The Department of Botany, GU organized an alumni meet cum National Seminar on the topic – 'Prospects and Challenges of Plant Science Research in India' on 25-26 November, 2017. Altogether, 437 alumni participated in the seminar, starting from 1960 batch to recent pass-outs from Botany Department. The seminar was inaugurated by Prof. P.J. Das, Vice Chancellor (i/c), GU with Prof. A.K. Buragohain, Vice Chancellor, Dibrugarh University as Chief Guest.



Australian Chapter of GU Alumni Association launched

The GU Vice-Chancellor Dr. Mridul Hazarika visited Sydney and Canberra, Australia along with a six-member team including Dr. Bolendra Kumar Das, EC Member, Prof. Manab Deka, Dr. Madhushree Das and Dr. Jayasree Borah to explore the possibilities of academic exchange and launching of the Australian Chapter of International Alumni Association of Gauhati University. The Vice-Chancellor and his team discussed at length with the acting Vice-Chancellor of Canberra University regarding research collaboration, teacher exchange programmes etc.

The areas mutually agreed in the discussion included food science and political science particularly different aspects of governance in democratic system. Further discussions are on with the University of New South Wales and Sydney University for similar exchanges.

On November 26, the Australian Chapter of the GU Alumni Association was launched at Epping, Sydney and it was attended by a large number of GU alumni across Australia. Snigdha Choudhury and Susmita Borooah have been selected as the vice-president and secretary respectively of the GU Alumni Australian Chapter. It needs to be mentioned here that Gauhati University had already launched the European Chapter in February 2016 and many academic activities have been undertaken under the aegis of the European Chapter.

Workshop on Social Entrepreneurship

A one-day workshop on 'Promoting Social Entrepreneurship amongst the Youth' was organized by the US Consulate, Kolkata in collaboration with the Department of Women's Studies, Gauhati University and Department of Social Work, University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya on the 6th of November, 2017. Held at Gauhati University Institute of Science and Technology (GUIST), the workshop began with keynote lecture delivered by Dr. Sriparna Bhuyan Baruah, Head, Centre for Industrial Extension, IIE Guwahati who stated that social entrepreneurship could be an effective tool for social transformation. "Social entrepreneurs work towards finding new solutions for social problems and thereby create social value; they may work in areas like agriculture, health, technology etc. and attempt to bring about positive change," he said. This was followed by a panel discussion with eminent social entrepreneurs of North-east region Ms. Hasina Kharbhih, ISE, Meghalaya, Arman Ali, Shishu Sarothi, Guwahati, M.C. Bora, El Rhino Guwahati and Pradyut Bhattacharjee, SeSTA, Bongaigaon. Subsequently, students had an interactive session with Pranjal Baruah of Mushroom Development Foundation. Ajanta Dey, Joint Secretary of leading Kolkata-based environmental organization 'Nature, Environment, and Wildlife Society' participated in the programme. Dr. H.K. Nath, Secretary, University Classes, GU and Prof. Alpana Borgohain, Head, Department of Women's Studies, graced the inaugural session.



National seminar on Text, Context and Interpretation held

The Department of English, GU organized a National Seminar on 'Text, Context and Interpretation' on 24-25 January, 2018. Prof. Ranjit Kumar Dev Goswami, Professor, Sankardeva Chair, Tezpur University delivered the keynote address, deliberating on a wide range of issues pertaining to modes of reading and knowledge production in different contexts. The plenary lecture was delivered by Dr. Saitya Brata Das from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. The seminar was well attended by academics and research scholars, providing ample food for thought to mull over on text, context and interpretation.

UGC-SAP seminar on emerging trends in Chemical Sciences

A National Seminar on 'Emerging Trends in Chemical Sciences 2018' was organised by Department of Chemistry, GU on January 29, 2018 at PD Hall. Prof. S. Mazumdar, Chair, Department of Chemical Sciences, TIFR Mumbai delivered the keynote speech. Inaugurated by Dr. Mridul Hazarika, Vice Chancellor, GU, inaugurated the seminar that was organised to honour Prof. P.J. Das who retired after serving the Chemistry department for a long time. There was a plenary lecture, 7 invited lectures and 28 oral presentations in the seminar. Three participants from Bhutan also attended the seminar.

Farmer's Awareness programme organised

A workshop as part of Farmer's Awareness programme titled 'Growing Application of Chemical Fertilizers and Pesticides in Agriculture' was organized by Advanced Level Institutional Biotech Hub, Department of Biotechnology, GU in association with Advanced Level Institutional Biotech Hub, BP Chaliha College, on 21st January, 2018 at BP Chaliha College, Nagerbera, Kamrup district. Over 80 farmers from villages in Nagerbera area engaged in rice, vegetable and fruit cultivation, attended the workshop.

Golden Jubilee celebration of MIL Department

The Department of Modern Indian Languages & Literary Studies, GU celebrated its 50 years of existence with a series of glittering events spread over 2016-2017 as its golden jubilee year. The celebrations began with holding of the Asom Vidya International Seminar and Conference in February 2016 while the concluding programme was held on 21 November, 2017 at Phanidar Dutta Seminar Hall, GU under the guidance of Prof. Dilip Borah, Head of the Department. Noted literary critic and Jnanpith award winner Prof. Balachandra Nemade delivered the Golden Jubilee Special Lecture on 'A perspective of Indian Languages (Desi Bhashas) and Comparative Indian Literature' at the PD Seminar Hall on November 20, 2017. The next day at the concluding session, the department felicitated its retired and transferred professors, followed by the release of three books on Tamil script, Tamil practice and dictionary on Tamil, English and Assamese published by Assistant Prof. Vijayakumar Balaiyan, a valedictory lecture by Tezpur University Vice Chancellor Prof. Madan Sarma and a cultural session in the evening inaugurated by Dr. Ranu Das Baishya at the PD Seminar Hall.

The Department of Modern Indian Languages & Literary Studies, GU was established in year 1967 as a research department. M. Phil course in Assamese was introduced in 1983, certificate course and diploma course in Bodo was started in 1985 and 1994. One year diploma courses in Odia, Tamil and other languages were added in subsequent years, with PG diploma in Nepali introduced as recently as in 2017. With the study of Comparative Indian Literature growing in importance, the department introduced M.Phil programme in this discipline in 2008. Full-fledged Masters degree programme in Comparative Indian Literature began in 2015 to go along with the existing PhD programme. This pioneering department has now grown into the Department of Modern Indian Languages and Literary Studies, playing a key role in building bridges among different Indian languages and literatures.

International Seminar organised commemorating Golden Jubilee of Media Education

An international seminar, "Re-inventing Nationalism, Secularism and Plurality: Media Discourses and Deconstruction", was held at Guwahati on November 11 and 12, 2017. The event was organised by the Department of Communication and Journalism of Gauhati University in collaboration with Mizoram Central University's Department of Mass Communication to mark the Golden Jubilee of Media Education in the North Eastern part of India.

In his speech, GU VC Dr. Mridul Hazarika explained the constitutional clauses related to nationalism, secularism and plurality and their relevance to modern India. He emphasized the need for secularism and plurality to build a strong India. Dr. Bhabesh Chandra Goswami, Vice Chancellor of Cotton University, Guwahati, was the Guest of Honour. In his speech, Prof. Goswami traced the history of nationalism and nationalist press in India.

In his presidential address, Prof. K V Nagaraj stated that the subject selected for the seminar was touchy and sensitive. Yet it was imperative to have academic debates and discussion on the topic. According to him, the notion of nationalism is always aggressive and violent. It would also take different forms- religious, political, social, linguistic, cultural and even economic.

The keynote speech was delivered by Mr. J.V Lakshmana Rao, veteran and renowned journalist and editor of India Review, published from Chicago, United States and a total of 400 delegates participated in the seminar.

GU Anthropological Museum set for renovation

One of the oldest museums in Northeast India, Madhab Chandra Goswami Anthropological (MCGA) Museum at Gauhati University which turned 70 this year, is set to undergo renovation soon. Established in 1948, it is home to a rich collection of ethnographic as well as archaeological materials. It is currently located in the Department of Anthropology, GU. However, authorities maintain that the current space at the department is not sufficient for the museum. For this reason, some of the artefacts are being displayed in the corridor. But now the Anthropology department authority has finalised the extension and renovation work for the museum. “The process has already begun and the Vice Chancellor has taken a keen interest in extending the museum and displaying it in its proper and scientific form. Our architects and planning managers have already surveyed the area for the eastern extension of the museum,” informed Dr. Abdullah Ali Ashraf, Head, Department of Anthropology, GU.

The museum has been documenting cultural materials from different parts of the Northeast region since its establishment. It is home to archaeological, prehistoric and historic stone tools, earthen objects and potteries, textiles, ornaments, masks, wood items, iron objects, musical instruments and head gear belonging to different tribes and indigenous groups of the region. All the artefacts are original, and many are known to be extremely rare. The Department of Anthropology became a full-fledged teaching and research centre by 1960, but storage of its priceless artefacts has remained a problem since the department’s inception; artefacts were first kept at Don Bosco High School, later shifted to Law College compound before being housed in the Anthropology department in their temporary display cases. Post renovation, the MCGA museum will be converted into a double-story building where the artefacts will be properly classified and displayed. This would require expenditure of at least Rs 50 lakhs. The new complex would include several facilities including a

Workshop for Laboratory Staff in GU

A 2-day workshop on ‘Basic Training for Laboratory Staff’ was organised by Advanced Level Institutional Biotech HUB, GU on 24-25 November, 2017 at the Department of Biotechnology, GU. A total of 22 laboratory staff from the departments of Biotechnology, Chemistry, Physics, Zoology and Botany from Gauhati University, Cotton University, B. Barooah College, Pandu College and Handique Girls College participated in the training program.

Inaugurating the workshop, Prof. B.C. Goswami, Vice Chancellor, Cotton University encouraged the laboratory staff and praised the initiative undertaken by Prof. M.C. Kalita, Coordinator, Advanced Level Institutional Biotech HUB, GU. Participants were acquainted with the basics of instrument handling along with common precautionary and safety rules and regulations to be followed in a working lab against chemical and microbial hazards. The event was graced by Prof. Jogen Ch. Kalita, Director, UGC-HRDC, GU, Prof. Dilip Kumar Kakati, Head, Dept of Chemistry, GU, Dr. Guruprasad Khataniar, Academic Registrar, GU, Prof. Arun Kr. Handique, Head, Dept of Biotechnology & Dean, Faculty of Technology, GU and Prof. M.C. Kalita, Coordinator, Advanced Level Institutional Biotech HUB, GU.



Science Modelling: Focus on Innovators

In this age of Big Science, one tends to forget that science began taking a grip on the public mind around three centuries back because it yielded solutions to real-life problems. In their continuing endeavour to put the focus back on the scientist-innovator, GU students have been helping to organise a scientific model competition on the occasion of National Science Day. This year too, the Electronics Project competition organised on 28 February by Electronics and Communication Technology Department, GU witnessed enthusiastic participation of budding innovators from GU Institute of Science and Technology (GUIST) and the Departments of Electronics Communication, Computer Science, Physics, Instrumentation and Biotechnology of Gauhati University, Assam Don Bosco University from Guwahati, Girijananda Institute of Management and Technology from Tezpur and Netes Institute of Technology and Science (NITS) from Mirza. Declared online, the first and third prizes with cash awards of Rs 10,000 and Rs 3,000 were clinched by entries from Assam Don Bosco University, while the second prize with cash award of Rs 5,000 was secured by an entry from GU Physics Department. Several participants had words of praise for the competition organised as a continuing GU students' initiative, aimed at demonstrating models of innovations.

(Courtesy: GU Times News Service).

GU research scholars shine at National level

Kuldeep Patgiri, an employee and research scholar of Department of Geography, GU has been honoured with the Young Talent Artist Award by the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India under North East Zonal Cultural Centre for outstanding achievements in the field of mime. He was also selected as a panel listed judge of the Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi (AIU) for theatre events.

Subhomoy Dey received best oral paper presentation award at the 10th Annual ACM Conference held at Bhopal on 16-17 November, 2017. Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) is the largest professional body in computing and related disciplines. In his paper, he presented a novel approach of determining threshold calculation of a speech signal dynamically using the concept of Artificial Immune System. Dey carried out this research work during his M. Tech (IT) dissertation period, in the Department of Information Technology, GU under the guidance of Kishore Kashyap, Assistant Professor, Dept. of IT.



Street play on Mother Courage

The students of Drama in Performance, a value added course of the Department of English, GU performed a street play titled 'Bahadur Amma and Her Children' on November 16 and 22, 2018 in the GU premises. It was a re-adaptation of Bertolt Brecht's epic play 'Mother Courage and Her Children' and is set against the backdrop of Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. One of its primary aims is to expose the nexus between capitalism for pure profit and war, which keeps violence running at the expense of human sacrifice. It does so by focusing on both the victims and perpetrators of violence. The play traced the story of an enterprising woman and her children as they struggle bravely to survive the ravages of war.

Prof. Portelli at OHAI Conference

The Oral History Association of India and the Department of History, Gauhati University organised a National Conference on Public Memory and Oral History at the University on November 13-14, 2017. "Understanding the past is important for society to plan its future. If we can understand the contemporary history, we can plan our future developmental activities in flawless manner," Prof. Alessandro Portelli of University of Roma La Sapienza mentioned at the third OHAI conference at Gauhati University.

Earlier, GU Vice Chancellor Dr. Mridul Hazarika, while inaugurating the conference, suggested that the gaps in the form of silences and the absences in the written history of NE region could be made up with the help of oral history.

Prof. Portelli delivered the keynote address at the function, in which the coordinator of the conference Prof. Rajib Handique welcomed the guests and participants. OHAI president Prof. Meeta Deka presided over the function.



GU Professor delivered Key-note Address in the US

Prof. Dibakar Chandra Deka of Gauhati University, Department of Chemistry, was invited to deliver a keynote address in the 'Global Conference on Catalysis and Reaction Engineering' (GCR 2017) held at Las Vegas, USA from October 19 to 21, 2017. He delivered his keynote lecture on "Heterogeneous catalysts from waste biomass and their applications". His lecture focused on preparation and applications of catalysts from different waste biomasses like post-harvest banana plants (kol gacch), water hyacinth (pani metaka) and naturally fallen red cotton flowers (shimalu phul).

Geological Science arranged lecture

Prof. Abhijit Bhattacharyya, AVh Fellow, FNA, from Department of Geology and Geophysics, IIT-Kharagpur, who is a Visiting Professor in this department since 2017, delivered lectures during the period 4-9 April, 2018. Students from Cotton University and some neighbouring Colleges with Geology as a subject besides few other faculty members also participated in the lectures for one day.

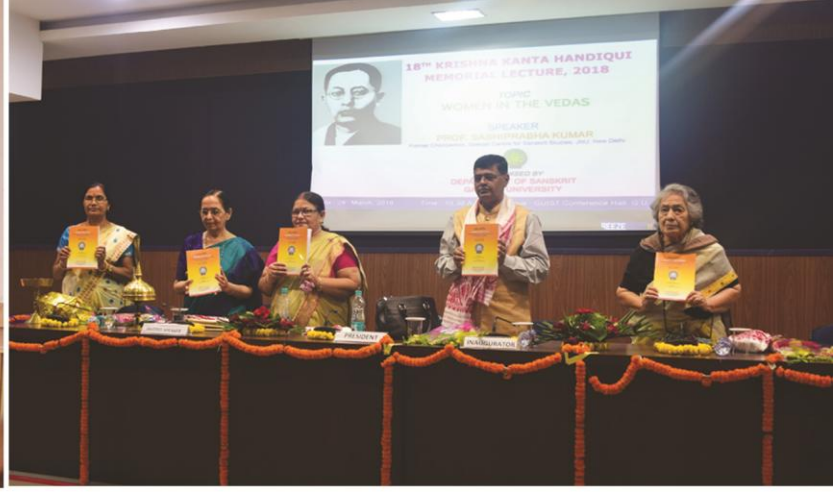


Lecture on Vedic Rituals delivered

On March 20, 2018, the Department of Sanskrit, Gauhati University, organised the Annual Lecture in the hallowed memory of the Late Prof. Jogiraj Basu, the former Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Gauhati University, which was delivered by Prof. Nabanarayan Bandyopadhyay, Former Director, School of Vedic Studies, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata, on the theme 'Vedic Rituals: Types and Symbols', in presence of Faculty members, Invited guests, Research scholars, and students of the Department.

Statue of Banikanta Kakati unveiled

A bronze bust of Dr. Banikanta Kakati, renowned philologist, literary critic, founder faculty of the Department of Assamese and the first Dean of the Faculty of Arts of Gauhati University, was unveiled at the premises of GU Arts building by Governor of Assam Prof. Jagdish Mukhi and GU Vice Chancellor Dr. Mridul Hazarika on 15 November, 2017. Faculty members, invited guests and a large number of students were present on the occasion.



K K Handiqui Memorial Lecture held

The Department of Sanskrit, GU organised the 18th Krishna Kanta Handiqui Memorial Lecture on March 28, 2018. The prestigious Annual Lecture, on the topic entitled 'Women in the Vedas', was delivered by Prof. Dr. Sashiprabha Kumar, Former Chairperson, Special Centre for Sanskrit Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and Founder Vice-Chancellor, Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies, Bhopal, presently Dean, Sri Sankaracharya Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, New Delhi. Prof. Hari Prasad Sarma, Rector, Gauhati University, was the inaugurator of the programme, which was chaired by Prof. Manjula Devi, Head, Department of Sanskrit, Gauhati University. The second Volume of Śodhajyoti, an Annual Bilingual Research Journal of the Research Scholars' Forum, Department of Sanskrit, edited by Dr. Upama Barman Deka, was also released in the function.



Cycling for a green varsity campus

In order to stay green and eco-friendly, Gauhati University is set to become a cycling campus soon. “We have prepared a grand plan to maintain the eco-friendly environment of the campus. The blueprint has already reached our hands. The plan includes various development works to keep the campus environment green. It consists of several work plans ranging from managing biodegradable and non-biodegradable wastes to building up a cycling campus”, said Dr. Mridul Hazarika, Vice Chancellor, GU.

Using bicycles will also act as an alternative means of transport, as the new regulations to come into effect soon at the completion of closed GU campus will restrict the movement of commercial vehicles inside the campus. Dr. Hazarika added, “Building GU into a cycling campus will also be helpful for students as commercial vehicles will be restricted within the campus once it is closed off. We welcome the positive proposal of Post Graduate Students’ Union for a cycling campus. We are making all efforts to bring this about in 2-3 months”.

(Courtesy: GU Times News Service).



Call to reschedule varsity bus timings

The Gauhati University bus service runs across the city on three different routes, viz Basistha Chariali to AT-7 Boys Hostel, High Court to AT-7 and Dharapur Chariali to GU main gate. This allotment was done by GU authority in collaboration with Assam State Transport Corporation (ASTC) three years back in order to provide transport facilities to non-hostellers and varsity staff. This helps not only in reduction of transportation fare for students but also saves a lot of time in comparison to public transport. However, problems have cropped up, leading to calls for rescheduling the GU bus service.

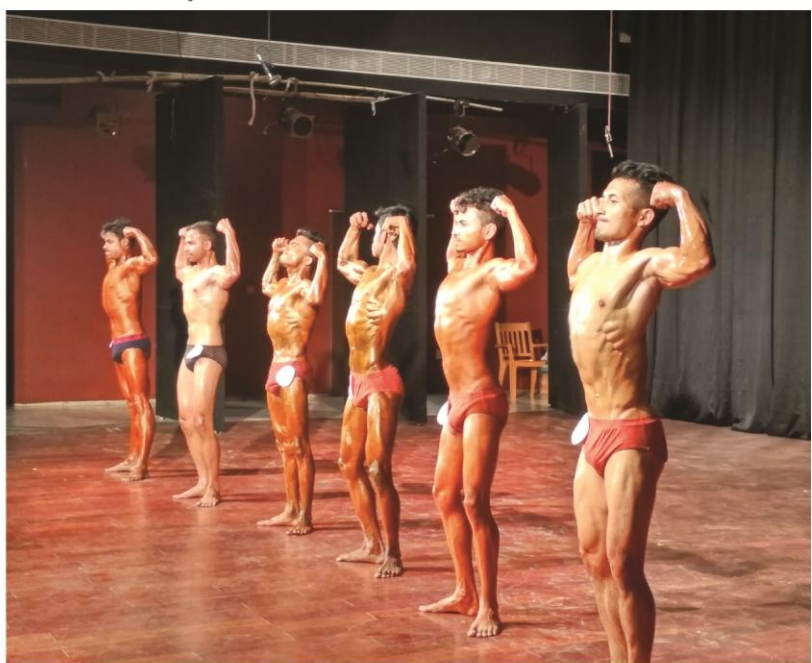
As for now there is no bus facility from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm. The bus leaving the campus at 4:00 pm is overcrowded, which could cause accidental falls for students precariously standing at the doors. Between 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm, there are no GU service buses leaving the campus, which is the time most department classes get over. “We want rescheduling of the morning 8:00 am bus to 9:00 am as the 8:30 am bus runs overcrowded. This will not only help reduce the pressure on the morning buses, it will also help us save precious morning time,” said students to this reporter. (Courtesy: GU Times News Service).

New GU market to open soon

The first phase of the construction of the New GU Market building has been completed with construction of its ground floor. "By April-May this year, the shops of the present GU market are expected to be shifted to the new market building" said Rajeswar Goswami, the estate officer, GU. He added: "The only works left for the building are to provide the electricity connections and the allotment of shops for the shop-keepers." With the opening of the new market in which Rs 1 crore has been invested, students of GU will experience less hassles as many shops will be available in the new market with varieties of goods and services. The ground floor of the new market building will accommodate 48 shops. "We are thinking of providing space to some book publications for the benefit of students of our university. This will be of great relief to our students who can easily do their browsing and book purchasing within the campus, instead of going to Pan Bazar and the city traffic congestion", said the convener of Town Advisory committee, GU. (Courtesy: GU Times News Service).

Fitness mantra at GU gym

The absence of courses like physical education in GU curriculum had long meant less thrust on health and fitness issues among varsity students. But in recent years, the scenario has changed with the University Gym working as a health awareness agent in the campus. It has turned into a meeting place for young tykes passionate about working out to develop their six-packs, along with maintaining a proper diet and fitness regimen. "The lack of a course on physical education has always been felt when it comes to the issue of physical fitness of our students. However, within the GU campus, health tips provided at the university gym have been helpful in spreading health awareness here. The special feature of GU gym is that it provides a combo pack of arm wrestling, powerlifting, weightlifting, body building and yoga", said Bhaskar Saikia, GU gym instructor. Saikia, who is also a powerlifting State referee, added, "For those who want to groom up as models, we provide tips to maintain healthy physical structure, while for those who are interested in body building, we train them. Of them, many have participated in powerlifting and body building competitions at international level like at Asia and other places, and won gold in last seven years".





Pragjyoti Mahotsava lights up GU

The 33rd East Zone Inter-University Youth Festival, christened 'Pragjyoti Mahotsava', got off to a rousing start on January 5, 2018. After hoisting of flags of Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and Gauhati University, the festival was inaugurated with Vice Chancellor in-charge of GU Prof. Pranita Sharma presiding over the meeting. Dipak Sharma, VC of Kumar Bhaskar Varma University, Sourav Lakhan Paul, DSW of Lovely Professional University and Observer of Pragjyoti Mahotsava, Dr Suresh Kumar Nath, Registrar, GU and Dr Ranjan Kr. Kakati, DSW, GU shared the dais. Giving a warm welcome to the delegates from all the participating varsities of Eastern Region, Dr Suresh Kr. Nath in his address said, "Gauhati University will be so illuminated like the songs of Bhupen Hazarika in the days to come that all the countries will want a part of us".

A colourful procession depicting the culture of States of the 16 participating varsities was later taken out in the campus, the student representatives displaying various themes which reflected the unity in diversity of the country as a whole. Traditional dances like Bihu and tribal springtime dances of Assam, Khamba and Thoibi dances of Manipur, festivals like Holi and Chhat puja of Bihar, along with various social and universal themes like Karma and Peace were on display. Over the 5-days of the festival, GU campus became the meeting place of students from various backgrounds of Eastern India, displaying their talent and skills in various sports and cultural events. Through this platform, they enlivened the idea of 'Practice Peace, Change Your World'.

Plan to conserve GU wetlands

Set in lush green environs, Gauhati University has been witness to growing construction activities within the campus, prompting the GU authority to draw up a plan to conserve its wetlands. Established in 1948, Gauhati University comprises of 508 acres of land in totality, including built-up areas of 74 acres, green areas of 170 acres and vacant spaces of 263.5 acres. "Gauhati University is a mixed campus of built-up areas, green areas and vacant spaces. The built-up areas of 74 acres include the NH 37 bypass, academic departments, residential houses, hostels and administrative blocks, while the 170 acres of green areas include the forest and marshy lands within the campus. The green areas will be kept as non-residential areas, whereas construction activities might take place in the vacant spaces in future. Moreover, there is a need to create separate blocks for each kind of construction within the campus. We are working on this plan", said Sanjib Baruah, Engineer of GU.

As of now, the total area of wetlands in Gauhati University campus is 30.47 hectare, of which two major wetlands are the one behind Statistics Department (9.34 hectare) and the other at the surrounding areas of GU Model School stretching up to Bhupen Hazarika Xam-adhikhetra (6.23 hectare). The other smaller wetlands distributed within the campus are yet to be identified.

"The wetland behind Statistics Department and the one near GU Model School are two major natural wetlands within the campus being planned for conservation as varsity water sports complexes. Conservation of other small wetlands is equally important to maintain the ecological balance of GU. We are therefore planning to clean all unidentified wetlands in the campus and develop these shortly by deploying labour," said Dhrubajyoti Saharia, Member of GU Town Planning committee and Professor of Geography department. (Courtesy: GU Times News Service)



GU Model High School Celebrates Silver Jubilee

GU Model High School (English Section) erstwhile GBN Academy, established in 193 in the GU Campus, celebrated its 25 years of glorious existence this year, 2018. It is the only English medium school situated at GU campus that caters to the children of GU employees and of nearby areas. The School was established with a view to provide quality education to upper primary and secondary education of the students.

GUMHS (English Section) kicked off its Silver Jubilee flag in the school premises by Dr. Mridul Hazarika the Vice Chancellor of Gauhati University and notable dignitaries like Dr. Hemanta Kumar Nath (Acting President of GUMHS) Dr. Suresh Kumar Nath (Registrar, GU) and much revered Prof. Abdul Mannan (Founding Secretary, GBN Academy) were also present.

A cultural rally with the theme 'Unity in Nature' comprising of students along with teachers, staff and parents started off on 30th January. The purpose of the rally was to showcase the diversity, flair and talents of the students. The cultural evening was held at BKB auditorium and many dignitaries including the Vice Chancellor attended the talent show event. "Dingora" the Assamese handwritten magazine prepared by the students of class (VIII) was released on the occasion. The magazine completed its 10th year of publication.

IPR policy for GU soon

The Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) cell of Gauhati University will soon formulate a new IPR policy for varsity students and research scholars. Speaking at the valedictory session of a two-day regional workshop on Intellectual Property Rights at Gauhati University on March 23, 2018, Prof. Pradeep Phukan, Co-ordinator of GU IPR cell, stressed on the need for proper filing of application for grant of patent rights to inventors/innovators. The workshop was jointly organised by Gauhati University IPR cell and Patent Information Centre - Assam Science Technology and Environment Council (ASTEC), Guwahati with the objective to create awareness on IPR in Northeast region and sensitize participants about IPR right from the basics. "We are still in capacity building stage on the issue of IPR. Gauhati University urgently needs an IPR policy, because there could arise a question whether a scholar researching under GU should apply for grant of patent, or whether it is the university authority that can do so," said Prof. Phukan. (Courtesy: GU Times News Service)



GU PhD scholars shine in International Scientific Fora

PhD scholars from the Lab for Molecular Virology and Cancer Biology under the aegis of Department of Biotechnology, GU and mentored by their supervisor Assistant Professor Dr. Sujoy Bose, have brought laurels for their varsity by winning various international scientific awards for their scientific works and abstract presentation. Ms. Nidhi Singh and Mr. Vargab Baruah were awarded the Asia Pacific Digestive Week (APDW2017, Hong Kong) Young Clinician/Investigator award (US \$1500 each) to present their scientifically selected abstracts; Nidhi Singh was also awarded the Poster of Distinction award (US \$1500 and certification) for figuring among the top 5 presented scientific works. Ms. Diptika Tiwari and Ms. Anjuma Begum were awarded the Full Congress Package Scholarship in the best 100 selected poster award category by the ISGE Congress Secretariat to present their scientific work at the 18th World Congress of Gynecological Endocrinology held at Florence, Italy on 7-10 March, 2018.

Alumni meet at Botany department

An alumni meet of 1993 passed batch was held on 25 December, 2017 at the Department of Botany, GU. The batch donated a showcase to the department which has been installed at its entrance. All the alumni (total 32) of the batch participated in the meet.





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