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# 2023 ASSAM STATE CIVILIAN AWARDS



# CONTEXT

- Assam Government Announces 2023 Civilian Awards, Honoring Distinguished Individuals Across Various Fields



**Assam Highest State Civilian Award 2023**

*Congratulations*

**ASSAM BAIBHAV**

**Shri Ranjan Gogoi, Law and Justice**

**ASSAM SAURAV**

**DR KISHAN CHAND NAURIYAL** Art & Culture (Archaeology)  
**SHRI ELVIS ALI HAZARIKA** Sports (Swimming)  
**SMT HIMA DAS** Sports (Athletics)  
**SHRI NADIRAM DEURI** Art & Culture (Tiwa Dance exponent)

**ASSAM GAURAV**

<b>SHRI RANJIT GOGOI</b> Art and culture (Folk & Bihu Dance Exponent)		<b>SHRI MANENDRA DEKA</b> Handicraft (Craft & Bamboo artist)
<b>SMT PARVATI BARUA</b> Environment & Forest (Animal conservation activist, Human-Elephant conflict expert)		<b>SMT MEENAKSHI CHETIA</b> Social Service (ASHA Worker)
<b>SHRI DEBOJIT CHANGMAI</b> Art & Culture (Sound Engineer)		<b>SMT PAKHILA LEKHTEPI</b> Art & Culture (Karbi Folk Singer)
<b>SHRI DRONO BHUYAN</b> Art & Culture (Ojapali)		<b>SHRI TENZING BODOSA</b> Environment & Forest (Elephant friendly Tea Estate Establishment)
<b>SHRI NEELAM DUTTA</b> Agriculture (Organic Farming)		<b>SHRI NIRMAL DEY</b> Entrepreneur (ShitalPati)
<b>SHRI ANUPAM DEKA</b> Entrepreneur (Industrialist)		<b>SMT JEGIN KUMBANG PAO</b> Handloom (Weaving)
<b>SHRI SOUMYADEEP DUTTA</b> Environment & Forest (Wildlife Conservation)		<b>SMT MARY HASSA</b> Social Service (AWC)
<b>SHRI BASANTA CHIRING PHUKAN</b> Agriculture (Progressive Mushroom Cultivator)		<b>SHRI UPENDRA RABHA</b> Agriculture (Black Rice cultivator)
		<b>SHRI RAHUL GUPTA</b> Agriculture (Hydroponic farming)

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## AWARDEES

- the Assam government proudly announced the recipients of its esteemed 2023 state civilian awards. The highest honor, the 'Assam Baibhav' award, will be bestowed upon the former Chief Justice of India and current Rajya Sabha MP, Ranjan Gogoi, in recognition of his distinguished service and contributions.

- The 'Assam Saurav' award will be awarded to four notable personalities, each excelling in their respective fields

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- **Kishan Chand Nauriyal**, a renowned cultural expert in the directorate of archaeology. He has been instrumental in the preparation of the world heritage nomination dossier for the Moidams – the Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty at Charaideo, showcasing his expertise in cultural heritage preservation.



- Elvis Ali Hazarika, an accomplished swimmer hailing from the Kamrup Metro district, who has made significant strides in the world of aquatic sports



- Hima Das, a celebrated athlete, known for her remarkable achievements in track and field, bringing laurels to the state and the nation.



- Nadiram Deuri, a distinguished exponent of **Tiwa folk dance**, lyrics, and music. His contributions to the cultural tapestry of Assam are further highlighted by his authorship of '**Barat Tiwa Folk Dance**', marking his deep engagement with the Tiwa folk traditions since 1976



- The Assam Government has meticulously selected 22 recipients across diverse categories for the prestigious **Assam Saurav** and **Assam Gaurav** awards. From archaeology to sports, environmental activism to entrepreneurship, the awardees represent excellence in their respective field

## THE AWARD

- The award includes a citation, certificate, and a medal along with a monetary prize (Rs 5 lakh for Assam Baibhav, Rs 4 lakh for Assam Saurav, and Rs 3 lakh for Assam Gaurav winners). Additional benefits for the awardees include free medical treatment at government hospitals, free travel on ASTC buses, and free accommodation at state circuit and guest houses

# ASSAM GAURAV AWARD RECIPIENTS

- Ranjit Gogoi: Folk & Bihu Dance Exponent.
- Parvati Barua: Animal conservation activist, human-elephant conflict expert.
- Debojit Changmai: Sound engineer.
- Drono Bhuyan: OjaPali.
- Neelam Dutta: Organic farming.
- Anupam Deka: Entrepreneur.
- Soumyadeep Dutta: Wildlife conservation.
- Basanta Chiring Phukan: Progressive mushroom cultivator.
- Manendra Deka: Handicraft.
- Meenakshi Chetia: ASHA worker.
- Pakhila Lekhtepi: Karbi folk singer.
- Tenzing Bodosa: Elephant-friendly tea estate establishment.
- Nirmal Dey: ShitalPati.
- Jecin Kumbang Pao: Handlooms.
- Mary Hassa: AWC.
- Upendra Rabha: Black rice cultivator.
- Rahul Gupta: Hydroponic farming.

# WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM



# CONTEXT

- The **2024 World Economic Forum** Annual Meeting started in **Davos**, Switzerland, with a focus on issues like **climate change**, **conflicts**, and **misinformation**.





# ABOUT THE EVENT

- The event is a major global gathering where leaders from different sectors convene to tackle urgent worldwide challenges, promoting collaboration and collective responsibility



# GENESIS OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM (WEF)

- Founded in 1971 by Klaus Schwab, a German professor.
- Introduced 'stakeholder capitalism', emphasizing long-term value creation for all stakeholders and society.
- Originally named the European Management Forum.

## KEY REPORTS BY WEF

- **Global Gender Gap Report:** Measures gender disparities across countries in various aspects. In 2023, India ranked 127th out of 146 countries.
- **Global Risks Report:** Examines critical global risks over the next decade, considering technological advancements, economic volatility, climate change, and conflict.
- Other notable reports include the **Global Competitiveness Report**, **Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report**, and **Global Information Technology Report**

## INDIA'S ROLE AT WEF

- India's participation is marked by the attendance of Union ministers, Chief ministers, officials, and CEOs.
- The theme 'Credible India' represents India at Davos, highlighting its economic achievements and potential as a key player in global growth.

# TRADITIONAL ASSAMESE THEATRE

## Traditional Assamese theatre

■ Sailen Bharali

The traditional Assamese theatre consists of the plays written by Sankaradeva and his successors in the early 16th century (Sankaradeva possibly wrote his first play in 1518). These plays are popularly known as Ankiya Nats and their staging is known as Bhaona. The term Ankiya Nat, however, is a later-day coinage. Sankaradeva and other playwrights did not use it. What appears in their plays is either *sutra* or *nakaha* or *urjya*. In the medieval biographies the word *anah* has been used to denote these plays. Obviously, *anah* means *nat*. Therefore, the term *Ankiya Nat* is not only a later-day coinage but also a misnomer. Anyway, it has now become an accepted term and it is by this term that these plays are known throughout India.

The immediate precursor of the traditional Assamese theatre introduced by Sankaradeva appears to be *Oppali*, the most popular and distinctive semi-dramatic art form that existed even before Sankaradeva's advent. Sankaradeva is said to have improved this institution and given birth to classical Assamese drama. But Sankaradeva, as we know from his creative works, was an outstanding Sanskrit scholar. He translated five cantos of the *Bhagavata* and one canto of the *Ramayana* into Assamese and above all, he wrote a book *Bhakti Ratnakar* in Sanskrit. It was, therefore, quite natural that Sanskrit dramaturgy had exercised some influence on him. The influence is traceable in the performance of the 'prelimin-

aries' which are an integral part of the Bhaona, in the use of the Sanskrit *shloka* and *sandhi* which open the plays and in the introduction of the role of the *sutradhara* to guide and conduct the plays.

But Sankaradeva's aim was to reach out to the common man. His aim was to carry the message of Bhakti Dharma to the common people. Therefore, in his attempt to make drama accessible to the common man, he made numerous changes in the Sanskrit dramaturgy and in doing so he took help of indigenous art forms like *Oppali*.

All great people think alike, but they do not follow the same route. For example, the functions of the *sutradhara* in an Ankiya Bhaona are more akin to those of an *oja* in *Oppali* than the *sutradhara* of Sanskrit drama. The *sutradhara*, undoubtedly is the most important character in an Ankiya Bhaona. The word *sutradhara* was obviously drawn from the Sanskrit drama. But unlike his Sanskrit counterpart, the *sutradhara* in Bhaona appears on the stage after the 'preliminaries' are over and remains on the stage from the beginning till the end of the play and conducts the whole show with songs, dances and commentaries. Like the *oja*, the *sutradhara* in Bhaona is a singer, a dancer and a director all combined in one. There are again striking similarities between the

*oja* and the *sutradhara* even in the types of dresses used by them.

In the stagecraft also, Sankaradeva did not follow the canons of Sanskrit dramaturgy. For example, the introductory musical performance at the beginning of the play known as *parbhanga* in Sanskrit drama, in Ankiya Bhaona, Sankaradeva has replaced the word *parbhanga* with a more familiar term *dhawal* (meremaking) for the understanding of the common man. The *dhawal* is performed by *gagan-ajaya* who are

The western influence exerted its profound influences on the Indian stage from the middle of the nineteenth century. Almost all the playwrights fell victim to the norm, indigenous theatre was completely neglected. It is however, gratifying to note that there has been revival of interest in folk and traditional theatre during the last four decades.

singers and dancers. The musical items they use are *khul* (small drum), *tal* (cymbals), *deba* (big drum) and *kali* (pipe instrument).

Bhaona is not performed in the proscenium. In earlier times, it was performed in the *namghar* (prayer hall) and in the community hall of the *sattras* (Vaishnavite monasteries). If the gathering was expected to be large, makeshift arrangements were made by extending all the sides of the *namghar*. The extended area was called *rubhagar* (temporary shed). At the

end of the *rubhagar* there was the *Guru-asana* (the seat of the Almighty). The audience could sit on all sides. But neither the performers nor the audiences were allowed to sit with their back to the *Guru-asana*. The actors came from the *cha-shar* (green room) situated near the *namghar*. They waited there till their entrance to the stage was announced by the *sutradhara*.

The Ankiya Nats were written to popularise Vaishnavism. They were regarded as means to an end. The emphasis, obviously was on the religious effect rather than on the dramatic requisites. In other words, the dramatic requisites were subordinated to the main objective of arousing *bhakti* (devotion) in the audience. Songs and dances which dominate the play were all oriented towards that end.

Perhaps for the same reason the plays were written in a mixed language, *Brasahi*, which is a special mixture of Assamese and Maithili. Sankaradeva might have done that to maintain the dignity of the theme and characters of his plays and at the same time to enhance the lyrical sweetness of the language. Songs and dances occupy the major part of the play and dialogue which is introduced to elaborate in prose the lyrical sentiments, plays only a secondary role. The part played by the *sutradhara* leaves little scope for incorporating dialogue in a play and his narrations and explana-

tions help in producing a kind of alienation effect as is done in the epic theatre of Brecht.

It is unfortunate that this important art form was neglected for quite a long time. The western influence exerted its profound influences on the Indian stage from the middle of the nineteenth century. Almost all the playwrights fell victim to the norms of western proscenium. As a result, indigenous theatre was completely neglected. It is however, gratifying to note that there has been revival of interest in folk and traditional theatre during the last four decades. After trying with all the avant-garde experiments of the West for more than one hundred and fifty years, it has been realised that Indian theatre and for that matter Assamese theatre, must thrive on its own. Instead of producing pale copies of the West, it has to search for the idiom rooted in Indian tradition. The idea has led to the exploration of native elements. Playwrights and producers have engaged themselves in developing a theatre indigenous in character. They have absorbed in their productions elements of folk and traditional forms.

Accordingly Assamese theatre has taken over many elements of Ankiya Bhaona. Attempts have been made to bring about a synthesis between the western proscenium and Ankiya Bhaona. Not that all these attempts have been successful. But in some of the productions the traditional elements have been successfully utilised. Thanks to the Sangeet Natak Akademi for its encouragement to young playwrights and producers trying to apply the devices rooted in Indian heritage of performing arts.

## ABOUT

- The **traditional Assamese theatre** consists of the **plays** written by **Sankaradeva** and his successors in the early **16th century**.
- These plays are popularly known as **Ankiya Nats** and their **staging** is known as **Bhaona**.



- The immediate precursor of the traditional Assamese theatre introduced by Sankaradeva appears to be Ojapali, the most popular and distinctive semi-dramatic art form that existed even before Sankaradeva's advent.
- Sankaradeva is said to have improved this institution and given birth to classical Assamese drama.

- In **Ankiya Bhaona**, **Sankaradeva** has replaced the word **purbaranga** with a more familiar term **dhemali** (merrymaking) for the **understanding** of the **common man**.
- The dhemali is performed by **gayan-bayan** who are singers and dancers.
- The **musical items** they use are **khol** (small drum), **tal** (cymbals), **daba** (big drum) and **kali** (pipe instrument).



# ANKIYA NAATS OF ASSAM

- Ankiya Naat is a traditional form of Assamese one-act plays, attributed to the medieval saint and social reformer Srimanta Sankardeva, which were written to popularise Vaishnavism.
- They were regarded as means to an end.



- The emphasis, obviously was on the **religious effect** rather than on the dramatic requisites.
- The **plays** were written in a **mixed language**, **Brajabali**, which is a special mixture of **Assamese** and **Maithili**.
- **Srimanta Sankardeva** is credited with writing **six Ankiya Naats**: **Patni Prasada**, **Keli-Gopal**, **Rukmini Harana**, Ram Bijoy and Parijat Harana.
- The **Ankiya Naat** combines **elements** from **Assamese puppet dances**, **Oza-Paali** and other **Indian theatrical institutions** and is characterized by the use of live instruments, singers, dance and elaborate costumes in its production.

# EVOLUTION OF ASSAMESE THEATRE

- Over the past decades, Assamese theatre has taken over many elements of Ankiya Bhaona.
- Not that all these attempts have been successful.
- But in some of the productions, the traditional elements have been successfully utilized.

# MOBILE THEATRE IN ASSAM

- In the field of performing Art, Mobile theatre which is also known as **Bhramyaman theatre** in **Assam** has a long heritage.
- **The first mobile theatre** of Assam, known as "**Bhramyaman Theatre**" was a groundbreaking cultural innovation established in the **early 1960's** by **Achyut Lahkar**, a notable playwright and director.



- **Achyut Lahkar** founded the **Nataraj Theatre** in **1963**, marking the beginning of a new era in Assamese theatre.
- The **term Bhramyaman theatre** was **first used** by the renowned social worker **Radha Govinda Baruah** in the remark book of Suradevi Theatre after seeing the performances in Latasil playground of Guwahati.
- Revolutionary drama worker **Brajanath Sarma's Kohinoor Opera** was the **pre indication** of **mobile theatre** of Assam of the 60's.
- He was the **pioneer** of **Assamese commercial mobile theatre**.

## PRELIMS PRACTISE QUESTION

Q. Who is called the father of mobile theatre?

- A. Brajanath Sarma
- B. Achyut Lahkar
- C. Nipon Goswami
- D. Hemchandra Goswami

## BIRD CENSUS IN KAZIRANGA



## CONTEXT

- The recent **bird census** in **Kaziranga National Park, Assam**, has revealed a significant **increase** in the number of **migratory birds**.
- This time, the **bird census** revealed the presence of 84,939 birds in **Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve**, which is said to be the **second-largest figure** in terms of the **total number of birds counted** after **Chilika Lake**, which gets the **highest number of water birds** in **India**.

### **KNP witnesses increase in number of migratory birds** CORRESPONDENT

KAZIRANGA, Jan 13: The Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve witnessed a 27 per cent increase in the number of water birds that are mostly migratory in nature. This was revealed by the Director of Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, Dr Sonali Ghosh, while declaring the 5th Water **Bird Census** result today.



- The park is home to a diverse range of bird species, including unique, rare, and endangered ones such as Baer's pochard, Baikal teal, greater scaup, and gull-billed tern.
- Baer's Pochard (*Aythya baeri*) and Baikal Teal (*Anas formosa*) are two distinct species of ducks found in different regions.

## IUCN STATUS

- The **Baikal Teal** is a **migratory bird** that **breeds** in **eastern Siberia** and **winters** in **East Asia**, while the **Baer's Pochard** is a **critically endangered** species that breeds in **eastern Russia** and winters in **East Asia**.



- Meanwhile in **Manipur** too, the **Baikal teal** (*Sibirionetta formosa*), popularly known as the bimaculate duck, was sighted and photographed after a gap of 109 years in the **Lamphepat wetland**.

## Rare duck sighted after 109 years in Manipur



A Baikal teal at the Lamphepat wetland. – Photo: Okeni Sanasam

### SOBHAPATI SAMOM

IMPHAL, Jan 13: One of the rarest avian visitors, the Baikal teal (*Sibirionetta formosa*), popularly known as the bimaculate duck, was sighted and photographed after a gap of 109 years in the Lamphepat wetland.

A team of Wildlife Explorers Manipur (WEM) photographed this small duck with a striking head pattern during a seasonal avian monitor-

ing Network (IBCN) team led by Okeni Sanasam, said that the Baikal teal has reached the Lamphepat wetland which is beyond the geographical range of its migration and they may winter in these areas for a short time. "That is why the species can be rarely seen here," he pointed out.

"Another reason for rare sighting of the bird here can be related to extreme weather and climate change in its

# SOLAR POWER ENABLED BOAT

## First time in India, solar boat to be launched on Ayodhya's Saryu river

WITH A view to transform Ayodhya into a model solar city, a solar power-enabled boat will for the first time be launched in the country in the Saryu river, an official statement said Tuesday. The Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Agency has prepared the outline for the regular operation of this boat service in the Saryu river of Ayodhya. This boat has been assembled on the banks of Saryu Ghat and its spare parts and other accessories have been procured from different corners of the country, it said.



Saryu river. File

Currently, one boat has been fully assembled and it is undergoing the testing phase. It is likely to be inaugurated by UPCM Yogi Adityanath before the consecration ceremony, paving the way for regular operations of other such boats. **PTI**

- For the first time in India, a solar power enabled boat will for the first time be launched in the country in the **Saryu river, Ayodhya**.
- The boat has been assembled on the banks of the Saryu ghat and its spare parts and other accessories have been procured from different corners of the country .

## PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Saryu Ghat is located in

- (a) Guwahati
- (b) Prayagraj
- (c) Ayodhya
- (d) Varanasi

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