

Governor holds briefing session with Cultural Affairs Department

Takes stock of the schemes of Cultural Affairs Department

Guwahati, October 3: Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria held a briefing session with the key officials of the Cultural Affairs Department, in presence of its Minister Bimal Borah at the conference hall of Raj Bhavan here on Tuesday.

During the meeting, Minister of Cultural Affairs Borah provided the Governor a comprehensive overview of the cultural wealth that distinguishes the State of Assam from others. He underscored the State's stature as a region replete with cultural diversity, where a multitude of community coexist harmoniously. He drew attention to the historical significance of Assam, particularly the crucial role played by Chaolung Siu-Ka- Pha in unifying disparate communities to form the edifice of Bor Axom.

The Minister also highlighted the contributions of both Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev and Srimanta Madhavdeb. Their commitment to fostering cultural renaissance served as a cornerstone in shaping the state's cultural trajectory.

He also underscored that the Namghar and Satras, established in Assam, transcended their roles as mere spiritual centers. These institutions, he referred, served as integral pillars for imparting moral and ethical values, thereby guiding individuals toward a virtuous life.

The Principal Secretary of the Cultural Affairs Department, Dr. B. Kalyan Chakravarthy gave an all-encompassing presentation informing the multifaceted activities undertaken by the department and its various affiliated organizations. These entities include the Directorate of Cultural Affairs, Assam State Film Finance and Development Corporation Ltd., Dr. Bhupen Hazarika Regional Government Film and Television Institute, Jyoti Chitraban Film Studio and Society, Srimanta Sankardev Kalakhetra Society, Siu Ka Pha Sammanay Khetra, Luit Konwar Rudra Barua State College of Music, Govt. College of Art and Craft, Assam Sattriya Sangeet Mahavidyalaya etc. He also provided an overview of the budget utilization of the department over the past three years and outlined the initiatives and events that have been undertaken for the betterment of society.

During the meeting, the Governor inquired about the role played by the Assam State Film Finance and Development Corporation Ltd. He sought insights into how this entity supports the film fraternity and facilitates broader exposure of cinema among the masses. The Governor expressed interest in knowing the Corporation's initiatives to introduce cinema to school students, suggesting that mobile screenings could be a valuable educational tool, bridging the gap between students and the rich cultural heritage. He proposed the responsibilities of District Commissioners to oversee these screenings at the school level.

Chairperson of the Assam State Film Finance and Development Corporation, Simanta Shekhar apprised the Governor of the organization's activities, including the provision of loans, subsidies, grants for various film productions. He highlighted how some of the films have earned recognition at both the national and international levels, contributing to the cultural and artistic legacy of the state.

The Governor further inquired about the availability of platforms where Assamese movies and other creative works could be easily accessed by the public. In response, the Principal Secretary disclosed plans to develop an OTT platform, making Assamese content accessible to those with an internet connection.

Moreover, the Principal Secretary presented information about Jyoti Chitaban, the first and only government-owned film studio in the country, which now operates as a government-registered society. He emphasized its significance as the largest audio-visual facility provider in Northeastern region, highlighting its modern equipment and amenities.

The Governor, acknowledging the importance of places like Jyoti Chitaban, recommended arranging visits for students to expose them to its cultural and artistic facilities. The Principal Secretary expressed his willingness to coordinate with the Higher Education Department to incorporate such visits into their educational schemes.

The Principal Secretary also shared about Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra and its vital contributions to the state, from organizing events to showcasing Assam's rich heritage. The Governor recognized the role of Srimanta Sankardev in Assamese society and also asked the officials about how the institution propagates his ideals and supports those dedicated to his cause.

In the discussion on the department's budget utilization over the past three years, the Governor stressed the importance of increasing the capital expenditure and achieving targets. Shri Kataria also inquired about the curriculum and placement status of students at institutions like Luit Konwar Rudra Barua State College of Music, Govt. College of Art and Craft, and Assam Satriya Sangeet Mahavidyalaya.

Besides, the Governor highlighted the cultural richness of the state and the potential it holds in history, culture, and literature. He asked officials to develop the state in a way that allows tourists not only to visit but also to learn about the background of the sites they explore. He mentioned several potential sites like Surya Pahar and Pobitora that could be artistically developed to enhance the tourist experience.

Regarding the Directorate of Library Services, the Governor suggested that libraries in every district to operate 24X7. He said that this move would greatly benefit students and the broader community by providing access to knowledge and resources at all hours.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner and Secretary to the Governor SS Meenakshi Sundaram, Special Secretary, Cultural Affairs Department, Ashok Barman, Secretary to the Governor, Swapna Dutta Deka, Secretary, Cultural Affairs Department, Monidipa Borkotoki, and a number of senior officers from Cultural Affairs Department and Raj Bhavan.

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