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## *Preface*

We are delighted to introduce the first edition of “Glimpses,” a publication of the Department of History, focusing on the rich heritage of Guwahati. This inaugural edition aims to focus on historical and archaeological sites located in Guwahati, highlighting their significance and importance in understanding the city’s past. This edition features articles contributed by students, covering various aspects of Guwahati’s heritage. Some of the historical and archaeological sites featured in this edition include- Ancient temples and Shrines, Historical monuments and landmarks, Archaeological excavations and heritage sites.

We express our sincere appreciation to our Principal, Dr. Dharmendra Nath, for his motivational guidance.

We also extend our gratitude to Md. Magrul Hussain, Head of the Department of History, and faculty members Dr. Anjali Patowary and Miss Pranami Borgohain, for their unwavering support.

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**Lalpiengmawi Changsan** (Teacher In-Charge)  
**Md. Talha Amin** (Student Representative)

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## ***“Guwahati : A City’s Odyssey – A History of Assam through the Ages”***

**Md. Talha Amin (1<sup>st</sup> semester)**

Guwahati, the largest city in Assam and the largest metropolis in Northeastern India, has a rich history dating back to ancient times. The city’s name is derived from the Assamese words “Guwa,” meaning areca nut, and “Hat,” meaning market, due to the areca nut market that once thrived in the area. The capital of Assam, Dispur, is located within Guwahati, which serves as the gateway to Northeast India. The city is situated between the southern bank of the Brahmaputra River and the foothills of the Shillong plateau.

Guwahati has a long and complex history, with various rulers and empires vying for control over the region. The city was once the capital of the ancient Kamarupa kingdom, which existed from the 4th to the 12th century CE. The Kamarupa kingdom was succeeded by the Ahom kingdom, which ruled Assam from the 13th to the 19th century CE. And eventually to the largest colonial power (British) who ruled over the region. The Ambari excavations trace the period

of the city of Guwahati between the 2nd century BCE and the 1st century CE, during the Shunga-Kushana period of Indian history. There are multiple Kamarupa inscriptions found in Guwahati through excavations. The Kamarupa inscriptions dated back from 5th-century to early 13th-century, copper plate and clay seal inscriptions associated with the rulers and their subordinates of the Kamarupa region. The common language of these inscriptions is Sanskrit. The earliest of these inscriptions, the Umachal, was found in Nilachal Hills in Guwahati. This inscription traced back around 5th century AD, and was based during the rule of Surendravarman. Another inscription, dated around the 12th century known as the Pushpabhadra inscription was found in Pushpabhadra river bed, North Guwahati, based during the rule of Dharmapala of the Pala dynasty of Kamarupa Kingdom. Kanai-Boroxiboa inscription was also found in North Guwahati which dated back to 1206. A copper bell known as Gauhati inscription was found in Guwahati, during the rule of Srikumara. These inscriptions throw light on the history of Guwahati. Descriptions by Hiuen Tsang reveal that during the reign of the Varman king Bhaskaravarman (7th

century CE), the city of present day Guwahati stretched for about 15 km.

The Kamarupa kingdom, existed from the 4th to the 12th century CE. It was founded by Pushya Varman in the 4th century CE, and it quickly became a powerful and influential kingdom in the region. Guwahati, which was then known as Pragjyotishpura, was the capital city of the kingdom. During the Kamarupa period, Guwahati was an important center of trade and commerce. The city was strategically located on the banks of the Brahmaputra River, which provided a convenient route for trade with other parts of India and beyond. The city was also an important center of industry, with artisans and craftsmen producing a wide range of goods, including textiles, metalwork, and pottery. Guwahati was also an important center of culture and learning . The city was home to many scholars and intellectuals, who came to the city to study and share their knowledge. One of the most famous landmarks of Guwahati during the Kamarupa period was the Kamakhya Temple, which was built during the 8th century CE. The temple was dedicated to the goddess Kamakhya, who was worshipped as the patron deity of the Kamarupa

kingdom. The temple was an important center of pilgrimage and worship, and it remains one of the most important temples in India to this day. Despite its many achievements, the Kamarupa kingdom eventually declined after the Pala dynasty in the 12th century CE. Guwahati was then ruled by the Kamata kingdom and after them, the Kachari kingdom till the 16th century. In 1512, Ahom king Suhungmung, also known as Dihingia Raja, captured Guwahati by defeating the Kacharis. The Ahom rule in Guwahati remained stable until the Mughal Empire set their eyes on Guwahati, marking a beginning to the Ahom-Mughal conflicts. On November 1615, the Mughal forces were able to take control of Barnagar (the old capital of Kamrup), Hajo, and Kajali, forcing the Ahoms to retreat. In the initial years of Shah Jahan's reign, the Mughals wanted to consolidate their position in Kamrup, while the Ahoms, fuelled by their recent successes, wanted to challenge Mughal authority over Kamrup with the help of rebels. In March 1636, the Ahom-backed Koch King Balinarayan invaded Kamrup, sparking off a fresh conflict between both forces. The Ahoms laid siege to Hajo and as the standoff continued, both sides managed to get small but inconclusive

victories. By the end of December 1636, the Ahoms were in retreat, allowing the Mughals to reclaim Kamrup. By the end of 1637, the Mughals had defeated the Koch King Balinarayan and the Ahoms started recapturing lost territory. In the Battle of Duimunisila in November 1638, the Ahom navy defeated the Mughal navy in a three-day battle, forcing the latter to retreat to Guwahati. Peace was reluctantly restored through the Treaty of Asurar Ali between Ahom general Momai Tamuli and Mughal commander Allahyar Khan in February 1639. Guwahati and its surrounding areas came under the Mughals. Ahom King Jayadhwaj Singha took advantage of the Mughal war of succession after Shah Jahan's removal from the throne in 1658, throwing the Mughals out of Guwahati and expelling them beyond the Manas River. After consolidating his power in Delhi, the new Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb, sent Mir Jumla, the Viceroy of Bengal, to invade Assam in January 1662. Mir Jumla entered Assam in the beginning of 1662. He easily repulsed the feeble resistance offered by the Assamese forces at the garrisons between Manaha and Guwahati. He occupied one garrison after another, and Pandu, Guwahati, and Kajali fell into the hands of the Mughals practically



unopposed. At last a treaty was concluded at Ghilajharighat in January 1663, according to the treaty Jayadhwaj Singha, transferred Kamrup to the possession of the Mughals. He promised to pay a heavy war indemnity. Jayadhwaj Singha's successor Chakradhwaj Singha was against any payment at all on principle. In 1665 the king summoned an assembly of his ministers and nobles and ordered them to adopt measures for expelling the Mughals from western Assam. The Ahom army started from the capital and sailed down the Brahmaputra in two divisions. Sayed Firoj Khan, the imperial governor of Guwahati and his army were not prepared for such an eventuality, with the result that the Ahoms gained a series of victories over the enemy. The success of the Ahoms in recovering possession of Guwahati and western Assam forms a momentous chapter in the history of their conflicts with the Mughals. Aurangzeb forced Raja Ram Singh to resume his offensive to recapture Guwahati. Lachit Barphukan led the Ahom Army at the Battle of Saraighat in March 1671, along the banks of the Brahmaputra River between Kamakhya, Itakhuli and Aswakranta. This stretch of the river was filled with war boats and soldiers, most of whom drowned. Ahom soldiers

fired cannon balls and arrows from their boats and from the banks of the river. The Mughals suffered huge casualties and were defeated. This was not the final battle fought between the Ahoms and Mughals in Assam. Mughals captured the forts of Srighat, Tamulighat and Guwahati. Guwahati was thus regained by the Mughals in February, 1679. Profiting by past experience, the Mughals did not proceed further but merely tried to keep hold over Guwahati and the surrounding regions. Gadadhar Singh, a new, vigorous monarch of the Ahom kingdom, ascended the throne in 1681. At a conference of his nobles in 1682 the Ahom ruler set out his plans to retake Guwahati and to force the Mughals back down the river. The Ahom flotillas drove back the Mughal frontier posts (thanas) and engaged Mansur Khan, the Faujdar, at an island garrison in the river opposite Gauhati. Mansur Khan had been staying with his force for a considerable time at Agiathuti outside the western approaches of the Guwahati fortifications. At the battle of Itakhuli, in September, 1682, the Ahom forces chased the defeated Mughals nearly one hundred kilometers back to the Manas river. The Manas then became the Mughal-Ahom boundary until the Burmese occupation.

The Burmese rule in Guwahati, which lasted from 1816 to 1826, was a period of significant turmoil and transformation for the city. During this time, Guwahati was under the control of the Konbaung dynasty of Burma (now Myanmar), which had expanded its empire into Assam. In the early 19th century, the Ahom kingdom, which had ruled Assam for centuries, was weakened by internal conflicts and external pressures. Taking advantage of this weakness, the Burmese army invaded Assam in 1816 and captured Guwahati. The Burmese rule in Guwahati lasted for about a decade, during which time the city underwent significant changes. The Burmese rule in Guwahati had a significant cultural impact on the city. The Burmese rulers introduced their own language, culture, and traditions, which helped to shape the city's cultural identity. They also established several Buddhist temples and monasteries, which helped to promote Buddhism in the region. The Burmese rule in Guwahati declined and ended in 1826, when the British East India Company defeated the Burmese army in the First Anglo-Burmese War.

The British succession of Burmese in Guwahati in 1826 marked the beginning of a new

era of colonial rule in the region. The Burmese, who had ruled Guwahati since 1816, were defeated by the British East India Company in the First Anglo-Burmese War. The Burmese rule in Guwahati was marked by turmoil and instability. The Burmese rulers had imposed heavy taxes, forced labor, and cruel punishments on the local population, leading to widespread discontent. The British, who had been expanding their empire in India, saw an opportunity to intervene and establish their own rule in the region. The First Anglo-Burmese War was fought between the British East India Company and the Burmese Empire from 1824 to 1826. The war was sparked by a series of border disputes and trade restrictions imposed by the Burmese on British merchants. The British, who had superior military power and technology, were able to defeat the Burmese and capture key cities, including Guwahati. The Treaty of Yandabo, signed on February 24, 1826, officially ended the First Anglo-Burmese War and marked the beginning of British rule in Assam. The treaty imposed harsh terms on the Burmese, including the cession of Assam, Manipur, and other territories to the British. The treaty also established the British East India Company as the ruler of

Assam, with the power to collect taxes, maintain law and order, and administer justice.

The British rule in Guwahati, which lasted from 24 February 1826 till 15 August 1947, was a period of significant transformation. During this period, the city underwent major changes in its economy and education. One of the primary motivations behind the British colonization of Guwahati was economic exploitation. The British established tea gardens, oil refineries, and other industries, which led to the exploitation of the local population. The British rule in Guwahati also led to significant infrastructure development. The British built roads, railways, and bridges, which improved connectivity and facilitated trade. The city's first railway station was built in 1902, and the first bridge over the Brahmaputra River was constructed in 1962. These infrastructure developments transformed Guwahati into a major commercial center. The British rule in Guwahati also had a significant cultural impact. The British also introduced Christianity, which led to the conversion of some locals. However, the British also suppressed the local culture and traditions, leading to a loss of cultural identity. The British rule in Guwahati also sparked a nationalist

movement. The city became a hub for anti- British activities, with many locals participating in protests and demonstrations. The Indian National Congress had a strong presence in the city, and many prominent nationalist leaders, including Mahatma Gandhi, visited Guwahati during the freedom struggle. The British introduced Western-style education, which helped to modernize and expand educational opportunities, their efforts were also motivated by a desire to create a compliant and subordinate local elites. The British introduced Western-style education in Guwahati, which helped to modernize and expand educational opportunities. They established several schools and colleges, including the iconic Cotton College. These institutions provided education in English, Mathematics, Science, and Humanities, which helped to equipped local students with skills and knowledge that were relevant to the modern world. The British also introduced the concept of women's education in Guwahati. The first women's college, the Assam Pradeshik Mahila Samiti, was established in 1915. This marked a significant milestone in the city's educational history, as it provided women with access to education and helped to challenge traditional

patriarchal norms. The British colonial period saw a significant influx of Christian missionaries in Guwahati, who sought to spread Christianity and western values among the local population.

The Christian missionary movement in Guwahati was part of a larger colonial project that aimed to spread Western values and Christianity throughout the Indian subcontinent. The British East India Company, which ruled India during the 18th and 19th centuries, saw Christianity as a tool for colonizing the minds of local people and creating a loyal and obedient subject population. Christian missionaries in Guwahati established schools, hospitals, and churches, which provided education, healthcare, and spiritual guidance to the local population. The missionaries also translated Christian scriptures into local languages, such as Assamese, and published Christian literature, which helped to spread ideas and values. The missionaries also engaged in social and charitable work, such as caring for orphans, widows, and the poor. They also worked to eradicate social evils, such as sati, child marriage in Guwahati. The Christian missionary movement in Guwahati had a significant impact on the city and its people. Many locals converted to

Christianity, which led to the creation of a significant Christian population in the city. The missionaries also helped to modernize education and healthcare in Guwahati, which had a positive impact on the local population. The Christian missionary movement in Guwahati during the British rule, helped to modernize education and healthcare in Guwahati, and provided social and charitable services to the local population. Today, Guwahati is home to a significant Christian population, and the city is dotted with churches, schools, and hospitals established by Christian missionaries. However, the legacy of the Christian missionary movement in Guwahati remains contested.

During the British rule, one of the major events of Assamese history also occurred, it was the treaty of Guwahati signed in 1833 between the British East India Company and the Ahoms. The treaty reprimed the Ahom Kingdom on a condition that Ahoms will have to pay taxes to the East India Company and must remain as a vassal of the British Empire. The treaty was conducted because there were multiple revolts done by the Ahoms to reprise Ahom rule over Assam which was seen in three phases in



1828, 1829 and 1830. Britishers selected Purandar Singha to be the ruler of this vassel. But later, when Purandar failed to pay the revenue, the British Empire dethroned him in 1838.

With such a vast history, Guwahati has many heritage sites that shine its rich history. One of the most important sites is of the Kamakhya temple. The Kamakhya Temple, located in Guwahati, Assam, is one of the most revered and ancient temples in India. Dedicated to the goddess Kamakhya, the temple has a rich history that spans over 2,000 years, with roots in ancient mythology, legends, and cultural traditions. The origins of the Kamakhya Temple date back to the ancient Kamarupa kingdom, which existed from the 4th to the 12th century CE. According to legend, the temple was built by the Kamarupa king, Naraka, who was a devotee of the goddess Kamakhya. The temple was initially a simple structure, but over time, it was expanded and renovated by successive rulers. The Kamakhya Temple is deeply rooted in Hindu mythology, particularly in the legend of the goddess Sati. According to myth, Sati, the consort of Lord Shiva, immolated herself in a fire after her father, Daksha, insulted Shiva. As Sati's body was being carried by Shiva, her yoni (female

genital organ) fell at the site where the Kamakhya Temple now stands. This site is considered sacred, as it is believed to be the spot where the goddess's power is most potent. The temple has been declared a protected monument by the Archaeological Survey of India, and efforts have been made to preserve its traditional architecture and cultural practices. The temple remains a major pilgrimage site, attracting millions of devotees each year. Another very important site is of the Bura Jame masjid. Nobody exactly knows how the name Bura Masjid originated. People call it Bura Masjid because it is oldest in town. Another version traces the origin of the masjid to the days of Ahom king Rudra Singha. There is no doubt that this is the oldest mosque in Guwahati. When the Mughals under Mir Jumla compelled the Ahom king, Jayadhawj Singha to accept Delhi's vassalage. Syed Firuz Khan felt the need to construct a masjid in Guwahati for the soldiers to pray in and possibly it was during this time that the mosque was built. Umananda temple is also a notable heritage site of Guwahati. It was built in 1694 on the order of King Gadadhar Singha. Besides being a place of worship, the Umananda Temple stands out from conventional religious sites as a peaceful refuge,

free from the noisy trappings of dogmatism. Its stunning natural surroundings and understated beauty make it a haven for lovers of nature. During the Mughal rule in Kamarupa, the Umananda Temple received grants and donations from Aurangzeb. Down through time, visitors still find pleasure to visit this site for reasons beyond the religious significances. By beginning of the 20th century, the monotheistic ideology of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Dwarkanath Tagore had also started spreading in Guwahati. This movement was known as the Brahmissm, a Brahma samaj temple was also constructed in 1901 which we can still see. During Ram Singh's campaigns in Assam, he brought Sikh gurus along with him due to his fear for the magicians of Mayong. These Sikh gurus had propagated Sikhism in Assam, therefore we can find a lot of Gurudawaraj in Guwahati. Many of these Gurudawaraj are also a part of Guwahati's heritage. There are many other heritage sites which are discussed in this book.

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## *Ambari Excavation*

Lungyikambe Riame (5<sup>th</sup> Semester)



Ambari excavation site, located in the heart of Guwahati, Assam, is one of the most significant archaeological sites in Northeast India. The discoveries made here have shed light on the region's rich cultural, historical, and artistic heritage, revealing traces of Assam's ancient and medieval past. Excavations in Ambari have been conducted intermittently since the 1960s, uncovering artifacts and structures that date back as far as the 7th century CE.

### **GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The Ambari excavation site is situated near the Dighalipukhuri tank, a large artificial water body believed to have been constructed during the rule of the Kamrupa Kingdom. This kingdom, which thrived from the 4th to the 12th centuries CE, played a significant role in shaping Assam's cultural identity. Ambari's proximity to the Brahmaputra River highlights its strategic importance as a hub of trade, culture, and administration.

Traditionally, the site is believed to have served as a cultural and administrative center during the Kamrupa period. Over time, it became a melting pot of various influences, including Indo-Aryan, Tibetan-Burman, and Southeast Asian cultures, which were instrumental in shaping the identity of ancient Assam.

### **THE HISTORY OF EXCAVATION**

The initial discovery of archaeological remains in Ambari occurred in 1969 during construction activities. This led the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and the Directorate of Archaeology, Assam, to conduct detailed excavations. Further excavations were carried out in phases, most notably in the 1970s, 1990s, and early 2000s. Each phase of excavation brought to

light a wealth of artifacts and remains, offering insights into the historical and cultural development of the region. However, urbanization and construction projects in Guwahati often interrupted or delayed the archaeological work, posing significant challenges to preserving the site.

### **KEY FINDING**

1. **Pottery and Ceramics** : One of the most notable discoveries at Ambari is the variety of pottery and ceramic artifacts, including terracotta pieces, black-polished ware, and red-slipped ware. These artifacts date back to different historical periods, with some belonging to the early medieval era. These include (i) **Terracotta Plaques**: These include decorative plaques depicting human and animal figures, suggesting the existence of a thriving artistic tradition. (ii) **Utility Ware**: Pottery pieces, such as bowls, jars, and lamps, indicate a well-developed urban lifestyle and trade network.

2. **Stone Sculptures** Numerous stone sculptures and architectural fragments have been found at Ambari. These include (i) **Decorative Pillars and Carvings** suggesting the presence of elaborate structures such as temples or administrative buildings. (ii) **Statues and Figurines**: Representations of Hindu deities like Vishnu,

Ganesha, and Surya. Many of these sculptures exhibit distinctive Kamrupi artistic styles, characterized by intricate detailing and a blend of Indian and local influences.

**3. Coins and Seals:** The excavation unearthed several coins and seals, primarily from the medieval period. These findings are valuable for understanding the region's trade connections and administrative practices. For example: **Punch-Marked Coins:** Indicative of early trade and economic activity. **Brahmi Script:** Reflecting administrative processes and the use of written communication.

**4. Structural Remains:** The remains of ancient brick walls and other architectural features point to the existence of significant settlements. These structures are believed to have been part of public or religious buildings.

**5. Miscellaneous Artifacts:** Other items discovered include beads, tools, and ornaments, made from materials like semi-precious stones, copper, and iron. These artifacts offer insights into the technological advancements and lifestyle of the people who inhabited Ambari.

## **FUTURE PROSPECTS**

The Ambari excavation site holds immense potential for further exploration. Advanced archaeological methods, such as ground-penetrating radar, could uncover additional artifacts and structures. Enhanced collaboration between archaeologists, historians, and conservationists is essential to fully realize the site's potential. Incorporating the site into Guwahati's tourism circuit could also generate interest and funds for its preservation. Such efforts would not only protect Assam's heritage but also promote a sense of pride and ownership among the local population.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Ambari excavation site stands as a testament to Assam's rich historical and cultural legacy. Its artifacts and remains offer invaluable insights into the region's past, reflecting a blend of artistic, religious, and administrative practices. However, preserving this heritage requires concerted efforts from both the government and the public. As excavation and preservation continue, Ambari promises to unlock more secrets of Assam's ancient history, enriching our understanding of India's diverse cultural tapestry.



## *Assam State Museum*

**Kimneizo Changsan (3<sup>rd</sup> Semester)**



A state museum is a public institution dedicated to preserving, exhibiting, and interpreting cultural, historical, and natural heritage. Typically funded and managed by the government, these museums offer a wide range of collections that include art, artifacts, scientific specimens, and historical objects, reflecting the identity and history of a region, state, or country. State museums serve as educational resources, providing visitors with opportunities to learn about their local and national heritage, as well as global cultures. They often feature permanent exhibits

alongside rotating displays and special events, helping to engage a broad audience through educational programs, interactive displays, and research opportunities. By preserving history and culture, state museums play a vital role in fostering a deeper understanding of the past, while encouraging appreciation for diversity and heritage. It is a government-funded institution that plays a crucial role in preserving and showcasing a region's cultural, historical, and natural heritage. These museums are dedicated to collecting, conserving, and exhibiting various artifacts, artworks, specimens, and documents that represent the state's identity and history. The collections typically cover a wide array of subjects, including archaeology, art, ethnography, geology, and paleontology. In addition to permanent exhibits, state museums often host temporary exhibitions, educational programs, and cultural events to engage the public.

State museums serve as educational resources, providing opportunities for visitors of all ages to learn about the past and understand the evolution of societies and civilizations. They also serve as research centers, contributing to academic knowledge in various fields.

Overall, state museums are not just repositories of history; they are dynamic spaces that connect people with their cultural roots and promote a greater appreciation for the diversity of human heritage.

**Key Features of State Museum:-**

1. **Historical Significance:-** State museums often house artifacts related to the state's history, such as ancient manuscripts, tools, sculptures, coins, and relics of historical events.

2. **Cultural Representation:** - They serve as a repository of the local art, traditions, and culture, including textiles, folk art, handicrafts, and musical instruments.

3. **Scientific and Natural Exhibits:-** Many state museums also include exhibits on the region's flora, fauna, geology, and environmental resources.

4. **Educational Role:** - These museums provide an educational experience for students, researchers, and the general public through workshops, guided tours, and lectures.

5. **Tourist Attraction:** - State museums are popular tourist destinations, offering visitors a glimpse into the region's heritage and lifestyle.

Assam State Museum is located in the heart of Guwahati city near the Dighali Pukhuri. It is one

of the most famous museums of North-East India that gives an insight into the rich heritage and culture of North-East ranging from its ancient history as well as the modern history. The Museum has a rare collection of exhibits displayed under different sections, viz., Epigraphy, Sculptures, Miscellaneous, Natural History, Art and Crafts, Anthropology & Folk Art, and Arms section. Apart from that it has a library with a rich corpus of books, manuscripts, periodicals of great socio-historical importance. The Assam State Museum was founded by the Kamrupa Anusandhan Samity and was opened on 21st April, 1940 by Sir Robert Reid, the then Governor of Undivided Assam. The Provincial Museum was taken over by the Govt. of Assam in 1953 and placed under the Museums and Archaeology of the Education Department. Subsequently, for systematic and efficient management two separate entities i.e. The Directorate of Museums and Archaeology was made in 1983.

### **1. Collections:**

Archaeological Artifacts displays ancient sculptures, inscriptions, coins, and relics from the medieval and ancient periods. Ethnographic Items such as traditional tools, textiles, weapons, and

ornaments used by various ethnic communities of Assam. Art and Craft houses an extensive collection of Assamese handlooms, handicrafts, and traditional paintings.

## **2. Sections of the Museum:**

Pre-Historic and Archaeological Section highlights tools, pottery, and sculptures from prehistoric and early historic times. Natural History Section features Assam's biodiversity, including preserved specimens of wildlife and exhibits of the state's ecological richness. Cultural Gallery: displays traditional costumes, musical instruments, and household items reflecting Assamese life.

## **3. Significance:**

The museum plays a vital role in preserving and promoting the history and culture of Assam.

## **4. Location and Accessibility:**

Situated in the heart of Guwahati near Dighalipukhuri, it is easily accessible and a popular tourist attraction.

The Assam State Museum is a must-visit for anyone interested in exploring the vibrant history, culture, and traditions of Assam. It stands as a symbol of pride for the people of the state and showcases the diversity of its heritage.

## *Basistha Temple*

**Langa Drema (3<sup>rd</sup> Semester)**



The Basistha Temple, also known as the Basistha Ashram, is located on Sandhyachal Hill in Guwahati, Assam. The temple was built in 1764 by Ahom King Rajeswar Singha on the site of an earlier stone temple that may have been built around 1000-1100 CE. The temple is located on the banks of a mountain stream that originates in Meghalaya and becomes the Bharalu River. The temple is located in the southeast corner of Guwahati, about 10 Km from the city's borders. Its on the outskirts of the Garbhanga reserve forest, which is home to many Elephants. The temple is

dedicated to Shiva and is believed to be the home of the Sage Basistha, also known as Vasistha. The temple sunken Garbhagriha is said to contain the foot impression of the Sage.

The temple's origins are deeply rooted in Hindu Mythology. According to legend, sage Vashistha, one of the revered Saptarishis (Seven great Sages), chose this site for penance. It is said that Sage Vasistha discovered three streams - Sandhya, Lalita, and Kanta, which merge to form the Basistha river. These waters are considered sacred, attracting devotees seeking spiritual purification. The temple's name is derived from the sage, underscoring its mythological and spiritual importance. The Basistha temple is believed to have been constructed during the reign of the Ahom king Rajeswar Singha in the mid-18th century. The king commissioned the temple as a tribute to Lord Shiva and as a symbol of devotion to the Hindu faith. The architecture reflects a blend of traditional Assamese temple design with influences from other Indian styles, characterized by its sanctum sanctorum and intricate carvings. The Basistha temple is a vibrant center of religious activities. Devotees throng the temple during festivals like Shivratri and Shraavan, when elaborate rituals and

offerings are performed. The temple also serves as a site for spiritual discourses and meditation, drawing seekers from across the region. It symbolizes the harmony between religion and nature, reflecting the ancient Indian ethos of worshipping the divine through natural elements. The temple is nestled within the picturesque Garbhanga Reserve forest, a verdant expanse teeming with life. The forest is home to diverse flora and fauna including Elephants and rare birds, making it a popular destination for eco-tourism and trekking enthusiasts. The nearby Basistha river adds to the scenic charm, its gentle flow creating an atmosphere of tranquility. The harmonious coexistence of the temple with its natural surrounding enhances the spiritual experience making it a perfect retreat for those seeking inner peace.

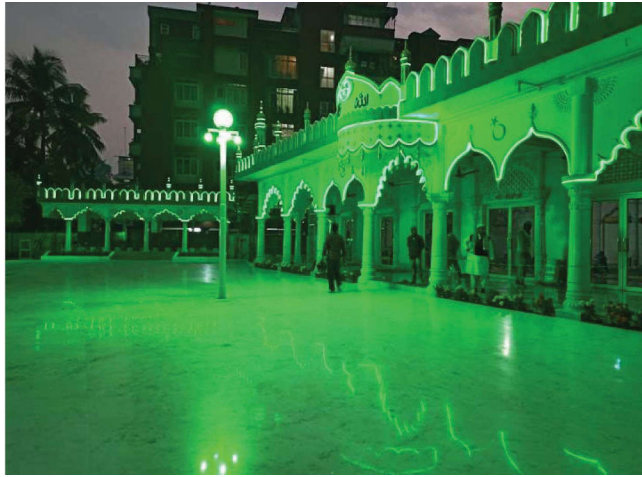
Apart from its religious significance, the temple is a popular tourist destination. Visitors can explore the scenic trails around the temple, enjoy the serenity of the river, and marvel at the architectural heritage. The nearby Garbhanga Reserve Forest offers opportunities for trekking and wildlife observation, making it an ideal spot for adventurers and photographers. The Basistha



temple is more than just a place of worship; it is a confluence of history, mythology, architecture, and nature. Its serene ambiance and rich culture heritage make it a must-visit destination in Assam. For pilgrims and travelers alike, the temple offers a unique blend of spiritual solace and natural beauty, leaving an indelible impression on the hearts of those who visit.

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***Burha Jame Masjid***  
**Carolyn Biate (5<sup>th</sup> Semester)**



Burha Jame Masjid, located in the heart of Guwahati, Assam, stands as one of the most significant religious and historical landmarks of the region. Its historical roots stretch back to the early 17th century, and over the centuries, it has become a symbol of the rich cultural and religious diversity of Assam. Burha Jame Masjid was built in the early years of Muslim rule in Assam. The region, located at the confluence of the Brahmaputra River, had long been a center of trade and culture, with various communities coexisting

peacefully. Islam was introduced into Assam as early as the 13th century, but it was during the rule of the Mughal Empire in the 17th century that the faith gained prominence in the region. The masjid, or mosque, is believed to have been established in 1650 CE by Syed Badruddin, a Sufi saint from Bengal. The establishment of Burha Jame Masjid was a significant event in the spread of Islam in Assam. It was originally built to serve as a place of worship for the growing Muslim population in the region, as well as to meet the religious needs of traders and travelers passing through Guwahati.

The term “Burha” in the mosque’s name is derived from the Assamese word for “big” or “grand,” signifying the importance and grandeur of the masjid in the local context. The mosque was designed to accommodate a large number of people, as Guwahati was becoming an important hub for both commerce and culture in the region. Burha Jame Masjid quickly became a central institution for the Muslim community in Guwahati. In the centuries that followed its construction, the mosque played an important role in fostering the religious, social, and cultural life of the area. It was not just a religious center but also a space for

learning and dialogue. The mosque hosted several religious scholars who would teach the Quran and Islamic jurisprudence to the local population.

One of the key features of Burha Jame Masjid is its association with the historic efforts to preserve and propagate the religious heritage of the Assamese Muslims. The mosque became a focal point for Muslims in Assam, particularly in Guwahati, where various communities of both Bengali and Assamese Muslims would come together to offer prayers, engage in religious gatherings, and participate in social events.

In addition to its religious significance, Burha Jame Masjid played a role in the history of the region's resistance against foreign invasions. During the time of the Mughal Empire, the region faced multiple threats from external forces, and the masjid became a symbol of resilience and strength for the local Muslim community.

The architecture of Burha Jame Masjid reflects the fusion of Mughal and regional Assamese styles. The structure is made of stone and brick, and its design incorporates elements typical of Islamic architecture, including domes, arches, and a central courtyard. The mosque's large dome is one of its most striking features,

visible from various parts of the city. It also has a prominent prayer hall with intricate wooden work, reflecting the skilled craftsmanship of the time.

Over the years, the mosque has undergone several renovations and expansions, but it has retained much of its original architectural charm. The mosque's tall minarets and grand entrance gate are important features that contribute to its impressive stature in the Guwahati skyline.

In modern times, Burha Jame Masjid continues to serve as a center for religious practice and community activities. It remains an active mosque, with daily prayers, Friday congregational prayers (Juma), and special prayers during Ramadan and Eid festivals. The mosque also plays a role in interfaith dialogue, as it has hosted events and gatherings that encourage peace, tolerance, and mutual respect among various communities in Guwahati. The mosque is also involved in several social welfare programs, including charity work for the underprivileged, medical camps, and educational initiatives aimed at supporting the community. It continues to be an important place for fostering unity and harmony among the people of Guwahati, irrespective of their religious or cultural backgrounds.

Burha Jame Masjid holds a unique position in the cultural and religious fabric of Assam. The Muslim community in Assam has a long history, shaped by local traditions and influences from various Islamic dynasties. The mosque is not only a place of worship but also a symbol of the fusion of diverse cultural elements that have shaped the region over centuries. It has become a focal point for Assamese Muslims, particularly those in Guwahati, who view the mosque as a landmark of their heritage. Its presence reinforces the idea of Guwahati as a city that embodies Multiculturalism, where people of different faiths and ethnicities live together in harmony.

Burha Jame Masjid is a monumental landmark in the history of Guwahati and Assam. From its establishment in the 17th century to its role in modern-day society, the mosque has been an enduring symbol of religious and cultural life in the region. Its architectural grandeur, historical significance, and continued role as a place of worship and community highlight its importance as a spiritual, social, and cultural institution. Today, it stands as a testament to the rich, diverse heritage of Guwahati, bridging the past with the present.

***Christ Church***  
**Hiyali Jamatia (1<sup>st</sup> Semester)**



Christ Church of Guwahati stands as a significant historical and religious landmark in the northeastern city of Guwahati, Assam. Founded in 1844, it is one of the oldest Anglican churches in the region and continues to serve as a spiritual hub for the Christian community in Assam. With its deep colonial roots and serene architectural beauty, Christ Church holds a unique place in the history of Guwahati and the larger region of Northeast India.

## **Historical Background**

The establishment of Christ Church can be traced back to the British colonial period in India. During the early 19th century, Assam was under British rule, and the British authorities took steps to introduce Western education, culture, and religion in the region. In the year 1839, the foundation of Christ Church was laid, and by 1844, the church was officially consecrated. The British, primarily Anglo-Indians, along with the local Christian population, played an instrumental role in the construction of this church.

Christ Church was originally built to cater to the spiritual needs of the British colonial officials, missionaries, and the growing Christian population in the area. The church was an essential place for prayer and worship for the British expatriates who were stationed in Assam during the British Raj. Its establishment was part of a broader effort by the British to establish religious and cultural institutions in their colonies.

## **Architectural Design**

The architectural design of Christ Church of Guwahati is a blend of colonial British styles and local Assamese influences, which reflects the



multicultural nature of the region. The church was constructed using brick and timber, a common building material in colonial-era Assam. It features a simple yet elegant design that includes a high-pitched roof, tall wooden pillars, and a spire, which is a distinctive feature of many Anglican churches. The interior of the church is equally impressive, with its high ceilings and intricate wooden carvings. The stained glass windows, some of which are adorned with biblical scenes, allow natural light to filter in, creating a peaceful and spiritual atmosphere. The altar area is the focal point of the church, with beautiful wooden pews arranged in a traditional manner to accommodate the congregation. The church's interior also houses a number of memorial plaques that commemorate important figures from Guwahati's colonial past.

### **Role in the Christian Community**

Christ Church has played a pivotal role in the spiritual life of the Christian community in Guwahati for over a century and a half. As an Anglican church, it follows the liturgical traditions of the Church of England and conducts regular services, including Sunday Mass, Christmas and Easter services, and other special church events. The church is also the center for various Christian

festivals and activities, such as weddings, baptisms, and christenings.

In addition to religious services, the church plays a significant role in social and community activities. It hosts Bible studies, youth programs, and charity events that serve the local Christian population. Over the years, the church has become a focal point for cultural and interfaith dialogue, especially in a city as diverse as Guwahati, where people from various religious and cultural backgrounds coexist.

### **Christ Church as a Heritage Site**

Apart from its religious importance, Christ Church has become an important heritage site in Guwahati. As one of the oldest buildings in the city, it provides a glimpse into the colonial history of Assam. Its historical significance attracts visitors, historians, and architectural enthusiasts who are interested in the British colonial legacy in India. The church has been recognized as an important symbol of the region's colonial past and continues to be a place of interest for tourists exploring the heritage of Guwahati. The church's location in the heart of the city, near important landmarks and institutions, makes it easily accessible to both locals and tourists. Its lush green surroundings,

including the churchyard with its large trees, provide a peaceful environment for visitors, making it a quiet retreat amidst the hustle and bustle of the city.

### **Modern-Day Christ Church**

Today, Christ Church of Guwahati continues to be an active place of worship and a center of Christian life in the region. It has seen several changes over the years, including renovations and additions to the building, but it still retains much of its original charm and historical significance. The church has adapted to modern times by incorporating contemporary practices while maintaining its traditional Anglican heritage. It serves as a spiritual sanctuary for local Christians and visitors from across the world, providing a sense of continuity and connection to the past.

In conclusion, Christ Church of Guwahati is not just a place of worship but a testament to the enduring legacy of Christianity in Northeast India. Its historical, cultural, and spiritual significance makes it one of the most cherished landmarks in the region. The church continues to be a beacon of hope and faith, serving the needs of the Christian community while preserving its rich history and heritage. Whether as a religious institution or a

historical monument, Christ Church stands tall as a symbol of the deep-rooted connections between faith, culture, and history in Guwahati.

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## *Cotton College*

**Esther L. Lienthang (1<sup>st</sup> Semester)**



Cotton College is a public state university located in Guwahati. Its glorious history starts with Manik Chandra Barooah, who owing to huge pressure, wrote a letter in 1899 to the British government to open a college. At that point of time, Assam was the only British Province in India without a college and Guwahati was regarded as the most suitable location in the region, convinced by the arguments, sir Henry John Stedman Cotton, K.C.S.I, the then Chief Commissioner of Assam, announced on 3rd November, 1899 that a college would be open in Guwahati. Cotton College the

name decided by the public to honour its founder, was inaugurated on 27th May 1901 by Sir Henry Cotton himself. The institution started functioning with five professors, which include Frederick William Sudmersen, the first principal of the college, and 37 students. At the time of inspection, Cotton College was affiliated to Calcutta University, located at the political and cultural Centre of the region. In its long remarkable journey of more than a hundred years, this institution has always witness an active participant in most of the socio-cultural and political debates, discourses and movements of contemporary times.

### **GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

Over the years, Cotton College expanded its academic curriculum and infrastructure. It became known for its rigorous academic standards and quality education, attracting students from across the northeast. The college added laboratories, libraries, and hostels, creating a conducive environment of learning

In 1948, after the establishment of Gauhati University, Cotton College became affiliated with it, further strengthening its role as center for higher education. The introduction of postgraduate

courses in various disciplines allowed the institution to advanced studies and research.

### **ROLE IN INDIA FREEDOM MOVEMENT**

Cotton College was not just an academic institution but also a hub for political and cultural activities during India's struggle for independence. The college witnessed several nationalist movements, and many students and faculty members actively participated in the freedom struggle. It played a significant role in fostering political awareness and mobilizing youth in Assam

### **POST INDEPENDENCE ERA**

Post-independence, Cotton College continued to grow in stature and academic excellence. It introduced numerous undergraduate and postgraduate courses adapting to the changing educational needs of society. The college became a symbol of higher education and intellectual pursuit in Assam and Northeast India. In 2011, Cotton College celebrated its centenary, marking 100 years of academic service. Recognizing its historical significance and contribution to education, it was granted the status of a special Heritage College by the Indian government

In 2017, the Assam government upgraded Cotton College to Cotton University, merging it

with the newly formed Cotton College State University. The transition aimed to enhance the institution's academic and research capabilities while preserving its historical legacy. As Cotton University now offers a wide range of undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programs, continuing its tradition of excellence.

As a higher Education institution, Cotton College has gone through several milestones from the initial phase of being under Calcutta University to the present when it is one of the full-fledged autonomous state universities of Assam. The first juncture came after the establishment of Gauhati University in 1948, when Cotton College affiliated to it and became its constituent college. On 16th October 1992, the college was declared as a center of excellence, an occasion celebrated in a solemn ceremony with Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, the then President of India. Post this recognition, the institution officially became a Post-Graduate College.

In 2011, Cotton College State University was established vide an Act of the Government of Assam, with Cotton College as its constituent unit. Cotton University came into existence in 2017 via the Cotton University Act, 2017 that enabled



the unification of Cotton College State University and Cotton College. The university is a reputed premier institute of higher learning in Assam at present.

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# *Cotton Collegiate*

**Christina Nistarai (1<sup>st</sup> Semester)**



Cotton Collegiate School, located in Guwahati, in the Kamrup metro district of Assam, is one of the oldest and prestigious educational institution in the region. The school was established in the 1835, it was the first school in Assam and the oldest in North-East India. It was renamed Cotton Collegiate School at the beginning of the 20th century. It has a rich history and holistic development of students. Cotton Collegiate School is known for its rigorous academic curriculum, strong emphasis on discipline, and nurturing environment, providing a wide range of extracurricular activities.

Capt. Francis Jenkins, the commissioner of Assam, was the first British official to send a dispatch to the “Government of India” in 1834 for “taking some active measures to provide instruction for the Assamese youth” and recommended the establishment of schools “to impart English education in four Sadar stations- Gauhati, Darrang, Nowgong and Bishwanath”. English was given special importance, along with history and literature as focus points. Jenkins also immediately collected a sum of Rs.1740 from the inhabitants of Guwahati for the purpose of setting up an English school in the town, which had a population of about 5,800 including that of the North Guwahati.

In 1835, the approval of the “Government of India” run by the East India Company, came and the school was established in the same year with 58 students on its rolls. Mr. Singer was appointed its headmaster on a salary of Rs.150 per month. With the establishment of this school, practically the foundation of modern education in the province of Assam was laid. Soon enough the number shot up to 340 by 1840. Donations for the schools were pouring in from different quarters. That year, the Raja of Cooch Behar, Daya

Ram Baruah and Juggo Ram Phukan contributed Rs. 500. Emphasis was given to the study of English. Subjects taught in the junior classes included Wilson's Chronology, Yate's Elements of Natural Philosophy and English Grammar. Use of globes, arithmetic, translation, and composition were also taught. The senior class course included Mesh man's History of India, Homer's Iliad and Elements of Natural Philosophy.

In 1838, Mr. Robinson was appointed as the new headmaster of Gauhati School, now named as Gauhati Seminary, with a salary of Rs. 300. They amended the school rules, imposed stricter discipline and began to seek co-operation from the guardians to bring the students to the book. As per the rules set in 1852, the effect that their wards would be present in school by 11 am sharp and the doors would be closed for the late comers.

Still the success story of some students in the 1860's elated everyone. Anandaram Barua, the first Assamese to be a member of the Indian Civil Service, was a product of the school. Bolinarayan Bora, another product of the school, became a Gilchrist scholar and went to England. Zalinur Ali Ahmed and Sibram Bora, the first two

Assamese to enter the Indian Medical Service, were Manik Chandra Barua and Abdul Majid. In 1862-63, the public representation was made to the government for the establishment of a college in Guwahati. By the mid-1860s, the government decided to raise the status of the school to a collegiate school “for political grounds of endeavouring to train up natives of the province for offices and responsibility and trust”.

Officially the Guwahati School was declared a collegiate school in 1865. The classes started in this collegiate section-the first-ever school in the entire northeastern India to achieve this status with the new academic session of 1866. The government sanctioned a sum of Rs. 12,000 towards the additional expenses of the upgraded section. Some teachers were also brought from outside the province, particularly from government colleges in the other parts of British India. That is how Babu Lakshmi Narayan Das, the officiating professor of Mathematics of Benaras College, came to the Gauhati Collegiate School.

Within a few years a law section was added to the school with the aim of producing pleaders, a profession that was becoming popular among the people. “The master, two Pundits and Maulvi.

The class is now attended by 100 lads,” mentions British official W.W Hunter in his report of 1874. This was shocking because that year, according to Hunter, Gauhati town, “the civil headquarters and the only town in the district”, had a population of 11,942 more than double the population in 1835 when the school was started.

The results of the school on its elevation to Collegiate School were on the whole not satisfactory. Of 938 students who matriculated from Calcutta University in 1872, there were only four from the Brahmaputra valley. In the First Arts (FA) examination that year none of the students who appeared from the school were successful. Ultimately FA classes were closed down, although the junior section continued to flourish. However in the beginning of the 20th century the school once again began to blossom.

Though the Collegiate School in Guwahati suffered many ups and downs during the period that followed, the school has the distinction of being the first seat of the higher education in the entire region. Much later, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the institution was renamed Cotton Collegiate School, when the school began to thrive again. Its alumni excelled in different

spheres thus setting shining examples of scholarship. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the school stands with its rich heritage at the heart of Guwahati city - bridging three centuries.

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## *Curzon Hall*

**Dimpi Rabha (5<sup>th</sup> Semester)**



Till the beginning of the 20th century, Arya Natya Samaj was the only public hall at Guwahati and a section of the educated Assamese gentlemen were pondering over the idea to construct another, which somehow did not materialize. In 1892, the Quinton Memorial Hall was established at Shillong, which became the nerve centre of public activities there and the enlightened section of



Guwahati residents wanted to have a similar institution in their own town.

At the beginning of the 20th century, however, an opportunity came. Lord Curzon visited Assam in 1903 and to felicitate him, a public reception committee was formed at Guwahati. This committee collected Rs 14,000, which was a substantial amount those days. Manik Chandra Baruah was an important office-bearer of the committee and he suggested that instead of spending the entire amount in decoration, fireworks and fanfare, something concrete should be done to commemorate the visit.

In a preparatory meeting of the reception committee, he said, "Assam is poor. We must not be extravagant to accord reception to the Crown's representative. The ceremony should be simple and sober. Instead of spending the entire money in fanfare, something permanent for public utility should be done to perpetuate the memory of Lord Curzon, which should be named after him."

Thereafter, Manik Chandra gave a specific proposal to construct a public hall, which was supported by Jaganath Barua (BA Jaganath) and Rai Bahadur Bhuban Ram Das. The duo was also the members of the reception committee.

There was, however, differences of opinion about the site of the proposed hall-some suggested that it should be at Uzan Bazar, while others proposed to construct the hall near the Fancy Bazar Ghat, at Kamarpatty. A surplus of Rs 6,000 came to the reception committee after meeting all expenditure of Lord Curzon's visit. Chief Commissioner J.B. Fuller and Commissioner Henry Gordon communicated to Manik Chandra, appreciating the idea to construct a hall to be named after Lord Curzon and requested him to expedite the work. Manik Chandra took up the project in right earnest, arranged the land and proceeded with the construction work.

Considering the fact that the hall was to be constructed with public money, he suggested involvement of the public works department. Accordingly, a hall was constructed near the old dak bungalow at Panbazar. Thus, came into existence a new public hall of Guwahati- the Curzon Hall in 1903. This old building now houses the Cotton College Library, near the present GPO. When the decision to name the hall after him was communicated to Lord Curzon by the chief commissioner, he expressed immense satisfaction. The subject also finds a place in Lord

Curzon's diary. As Cotton College started to expand, it became necessary to shift the hall from its original place. The district administration and Cotton College authorities felt that the public hall, just adjacent to the college, was affecting the tranquil environment on the college campus. Again, it was Manik Chandra who located a suitable spot near Dighali Pukhuri and took the initiative to purchase it from the landowner (father of Md Tayebullah). The government then constructed a hall there measuring 100 feet by 30.5 feet. In 1912, Curzon Hall and Library was shifted to this building while the old building became the Cotton College Library. The government made special budgetary provisions for the construction of this hall.

As a witness of many historic events, this hall now stands as a symbol of pride and tradition of Guwahati. Most important meetings of the town used to be held here till the Sixties. Almost all stalwarts of socio-cultural and literary fields of Assam are assembled here on numerous occasions. When Assam's former chief commissioner Henry Cotton revisited Guwahati in 1914 as the president of the Indian National Congress, the public reception was accorded to him in the hall.

Rabindranath Tagore was also given the public reception in this hall when he came to Guwahati in 1919. P.C. Roy, Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee, Subhash Chandra Bose, Jayaprakash Narayan, C.R. Das, C.F. Andrews and many more dignitaries visited and delivered lectures at Curzon Hall.

Interestingly, it was used as the central examination hall of Cotton College for some time. It was in this hall that Nabin Chandra Bardoloi gave the call to the students for boycotting Cotton College during the national movement. During World War II, it became a base for military operations. In 1953, when Bishnu Ram Medhi was the chief minister of Assam, the hall was renamed as Nabin Chandra Bordoloi Hall.

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## *DC Bungalow*

**Niraz Sharma (5<sup>th</sup> Semester)**



The old DC Bungalow perched on top of the hillock has been stated back to the glory of its colonial era. After the treaty of Yandaboo in 1826, Assam began to be annexed in phases by the British East India Company. The new ruler realize soon that Guwahati would one day become an important center for trade and navigation and therefore decide to establish a collector's office in the town. In the year 1834, the office was set up and Captain Catchart was appointed the first collector of revenues. Five years later in 1839, the post of collector was re-designated as Deputy

Commissioner, entrusted with additional functions. The DC had to henceforth carry out responsibilities of three roles. As Chief revenue functionary he was the chief collector, as district magistrate he had to look after law and orders, and further, as a deputy to the chief commissioner, he was responsible for the overall development of the area under his jurisdiction. Captain James Matthie was the first person to be appointed Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Guwahati.

After the establishment of the office. A suitable accommodation for the Deputy Commissioner had to be arranged. This became a problem since the town then, by all accounts, did not have any pucca house. There are known instances of British government officials staying in the cabins of steamers stationed in the Brahmaputra for lack of proper accommodation. With the passage of time, however, a proper and secure house for the highest British dignity in town became an absolute necessity. Sites were surveyed, ultimately the famous Bar Barphukanar tilla (Barphukan's hillock) on the Bank of Brahmaputra where the canons of the battle of Saraighat still lay scattered, was selected. The hillock had direct access to the river through a gradient, where a few

boats were also found hidden. The locals believe that the boats were those used in Saraighat battle and thus kept hidden from public view. The Deputy Commissioner's bungalow now came up atop the hillock. It was a Scottish type bungalow built entirely of wood and had spacious bedroom, a dining hall, a small library and a large living room that provided sufficient space for throwing a dance party. It also had four huge toilet with provision for heating water. Besides, there were also two storeroom and separate dressing room for the Sahib and Memsahib. In the living and the main bedroom, there were fireplace to keep the resident warm and true to the spirit of British raj, the house also had a bawarchikhana (kitchen). Since there was no electricity huge Candlelit chandeliers adorned the rooms. Each room also had hand-drawn pankhas (Fan) that were pulled from a central pulling point by the pankhawala who had long duty hours during the summer. In the master bedroom of the bungalow, an iron chest was installed with the British royal insignia, this chest contained important papers and cash since revenue used to be deposited at the collector's by agent at odd hours, sometimes even after the government treasury had closed for the day. Sometime agents

used to bring money from the interior place via boat an anchor just below the bungalow had a private ghat exclusively for the use of the Deputy Commissioner and his agents. This was out of bounds for the commoners, and was known as paltan paikar ghat since for reason of security sentries guards the ghat round the clock.

The interior of the bungalow was furnished with exclusive wooden furniture and Belgian glass. For ventilation of the house, the rooms had huge chimney-shaped outlets. The bungalow popularly known as Bura Sahib Bunglow, was also surrounded by a sprawling garden. In the intervening decades the bungalow has witnessed so many ups and downs. It has seen the Brahmaputra silently but slowly changing its course. It was grieved at the site of a ravaged town during the earthquake of 1897. It has heard Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose address the public in Panbazar jubilee garden just across the road, and also remind a mute spectator while the historic garden was converted into an ugly-looking water supply workshop. Its living room that once resounded with the chatter and laughter of young and old European couples



dancing to music in the candle-lit ballroom today resonates with the music of Indian classical and folk maestros.

Over the years, the bungalow itself has undergone several changes. Wooden floors have been replaced with the cemented floors and thatched roof by corrugated tin sheets. A brick-build room has also been added to accommodate the deputy commissioner's residential office. But the basic wooden structure of the mid-19th century bungalow still stand strong. Even 77 years after independence, the iron chest with the royal insignia, Belgian glass and Burmese teak furniture continue to form the master bedroom of the Kamrup Metropolitan DC's bungalow. Its ambience also remains as placid and serene as ever.

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## ***Dighali Pukhuri***

**Nandita Jamatia (5<sup>th</sup> Semester)**



Digholi pukhuri, also name as Dighalipukhuri, it is a lake and park at Guwahati Assam, India. It is a rectangular pond which has a history of wealth. This pond was said to be built in the time of Ahom kingdom, who ruled Assam for almost 600 years. The Ahoms used the pond as a naval dockyard during their battles with Mughals. During Saraighat battles in (1671) ahoms used Dighalipukhuri as a yard to park their war boat to fight against Mughals. The name is derived from the word “dighal,” meaning length, and “pukhuri” meaning pond. Many historic events

have connected Assam to this pond-one such notable event is where the wedding of Bhanumati, daughter of Pragjyotishpur king Bhagadatta took place, to Duryodhan, eldest from Kauravas. This water body was probably dug under the reign of Bhagadatta when ancient Kamrup ruled Assam land in 4th-12th century. The construction is also said to be of artificial one which might have been generated from Bharalu River located passing Guwahati city. Rai Bahadur Kanakal Barua in his work “early history of Kamrupa” mentioned that Dighalipukhuri in the town can be referred to as the main existing monument of the ancient city and is believed to date back to the times of king Bhagadatta for his daughter Bhanumati Swayamvara. According to the book, an archery tournament was also arranged with a platform erected over the tank in connection with the marriage of Bhanumati. “It is said that a fish was tied aloft at the end of a long pole and the greater archer karna looking at the image on the water aimed overhead and pierced the eye of the fish with his arrow. He therefore won the tournament and won the hand of Bhanumati but at his own request, she was married to Duryodhana, the eldest of the Kauravas. It is one the account of this

relationship that Bhagadatta sided with Duryodhan in the Mahabharata war” Barua mentioned in the book.

It was also the location of the love story between British Major General Francis Jenkins and Assamese Muslim girl Moni Phutuki. It is also said by historians that the Dighalipukhuri, from the time of Bhaskar Varman in 7th century, till annexation of Assam by the British after the Yandaboo Treaty in 1826, was a “Naoxal”, where boats were kept, repaired or probably manufactured.

Kumudeswar Hazarika in his book “Itihasor Sa Puhorot Puroi Guwahati” said Dighalipukhuri was connected to Brahmaputra on the north end and with Solabeel (a big wetland) on the south end. However, during the British times, the bulk of the northern end of Dighalipukhuri was filled up, on which there is Circuit House and Gauhati high court. During Ahom rule till 1826, Guwahati was a strategic place for battles against the Mughals and Dighaliphukhuri was widely used for naval purposes. Its utility was during the famous Battle of Saraighat which was actually a naval battle. Assam was strong in naval battles from the earliest times.

It was during British rule, Francis Jenkins, who was then the commissioner of Assam in 1834, fell in love with Fatima Begum, known as Moni Phutuki, who was living with her elder brother on the east bank of Dighalipukhuri. Jenkins, who is credited as the discoverer of the Assam tea industry according to the historian Surjya Kumar Bhuyan's book "Early British Relations with Assam", married her in the 1830s. Jenkins served as the commissioner of Assam till 1861 and died of fever in 1866. He was buried at the European Cemetery near Guwahati railway station, which does not exist now. The graveyard was demolished long back. At present, it is the address of the Assam branch of Institute of Engineers. Phutuki's family had migrated to Guwahati (then Gauhati) in the 1820s from Awadh in Agra and settled on the east bank of Dighalipukhuri after her brother Shekhawat Hussain's appointment as administrative officer under the British crown. Since then, the family has been living here. A family member of the present generation of Phutuki said it was love at first sight as Phutuki was a very beautiful woman and Jenkins got mesmerized by her beauty. However, the family member said Phutuki's family was not ready when Jenkins wanted to marry her, but eventually gave in.

In 2016, a war memorial was inaugurated on the north bank of the pond. The memorial is surrounded by landscaped gardens and has plaques and boards that provide information about the history of the wars. The lake holds cultural and historical significance.

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## ***Directorate of Historical and Antiquarian Studies***

**Lalrinfeli Ngamlai (5<sup>th</sup> Semester)**



The Directorate of Historical and Antiquarian Studies (DHAS), located in Guwahati, Assam, is a significant institution dedicated to the preservation, research and promotion of the rich cultural heritage and historical records of Assam and the broader northeastern region of India. Established in 1928, the DHAS serves as a beacon of scholarly activity, aimed at systematically collecting, conserving and studying historical artifacts, manuscripts, and various antiquarian materials, with the ultimate

goal of documenting the region's cultural diversity and historical evolution.

The origins of the DHAS trace back to the immediate post-independence period, when there was a growing awareness of the need to preserve India's diverse and rich cultural heritage, which was often under threat due to modernity and neglect. Assam, with its unique ethnic compositions, ancient traditions, and historical landmarks, was particularly in need of an institution that could focus on its history, archaeology, and the preservation of its artistic and cultural wealth. The DHAS was thus created to fill this gap. Edward Gait and Charles Lyall were in strong favor of establishing a separate department for pure historical studies in Assam, a province that did not have a university then. John Richard Cunningham, the Director of Public Instruction of Assam, then submitted a formal proposal that was accepted by the Governor of Assam. In 1928 the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies (DHAS) was established to "promote the knowledge of history". The department's principal functions were collection, preservation, compilation, transcription and publication of records. In 1929, AHW Bentinck



was appointed its provincial director while JP Mills and Surya Kumar Bhuyan were appointed assistant directors for Surma and Assam Valley respectively.

The office of the department continued in private properties, including the residence of Bhuyan, until 1936 when Raibahadur Radhakanta Handiqui, a reputed tea planter and philanthropist from Jorhat, made a generous donation of Rs. 10,000 to endow with the department with its building. This building was named Narayani Handiqui Historical Institute, after his wife. The permanent office of DHAS was inaugurated by then then Governor of Assam, Michel Keans, on April 4, 1936. The department possesses over 20,000 books, more than 2,800 original manuscripts dating back to 1734, newspaper since 1924, and copper plates and coins of immense historical value.

It was founded with the objective of facilitating research into the history of Assam, the identification of historical sites, and the protection of ancient manuscripts, inscriptions, and artifacts. Overtime, the Directorate also began taking steps to publish research, organize exhibitions, and contribute to the academic world through various

publications. Its mission is to support the study of history in Assam through research projects, field explorations, and the maintenance of an extensive repository of manuscripts and artifacts.

The core function of the Directorate of Historical and Antiquarian Studies revolve around preserving and studying Assam's rich cultural and historical resources. The DHAS conducts extensive research of the history, culture and archaeology of Assam. This involves the collection of manuscripts, Inscriptions, and old documents, as well as the exploration of ancient sites. The institution is involved in documenting oral histories and local traditions as well, which are often underrepresented in mainstream historical narratives. The Directorate also preserved antiquities, manuscripts, and artifacts of historical significance. These items are carefully cataloged, preserved in climate-controlled environments and made accessible to scholars and researchers. The Directorate houses a wealth of manuscripts, some of which date back several centuries, covering a wide range of subjects, including philosophy, religion, literature, and politics. The Directorate conducts regular archaeological surveys and excavations to uncover ancient sites in Assam. This

work contributes to a greater understanding of the region's historical developments, including the rise and fall of ancient kingdoms, the evolution of art and culture, and the socio-economic transformations that have taken place over millennia. The Directorate plays an essential roles in publishing research findings, monographs, and reports of the historical and cultural heritage of the Assam. This helps disseminate knowledge to a broader audience and stimulates further scholarly inquiry. The DHAS also publishes periodicals and reports on the findings of its research projects. Through exhibitions and public outreach programs, the Directorate actively engages the local community and visitors. These exhibitions showcase the wealth of Assam's historical and cultural heritage, including its artistic traditions, ancient scriptures, and archaeological discoveries. The Directorate collaborates with various universities, museums, and national research institutions to promote historical studies. Through these partnerships, it foster interdisciplinary research and supports the exchange of knowledge and ideas.

Over the years, the Directorate has made significant contributions to the understanding of

Assam's past. It has played a crucial role in unearthing and preserving important archaeological sites like the ancient cities of Madan Kamdev, Tezpur, and Hajo, as well as the various monuments and temples of historical significance. It has also been involved in preserving ancient manuscripts, including those written in Assamese, Sanskrit, and other regional languages, which offer valuable insights into the region's cultural and religious history. The Directorate has also shed light on the historical significance of the Ahom dynasty, which ruled Assam for several centuries, and the various ethnic communities that have shaped the region's identity. By preserving ancient records and manuscripts, the Directorate has contributed to the broader understanding of the development of Assamese language, literature and art.

Furthermore, the DHAS has been a key player in documenting the history of the region's religious practices, including the influence of Hinduism, Buddhism, and indigenous belief systems. Its research has also contributed to the study of the ethnic diversity in Assam and the broader northeastern region of India, including

the impact of migration and the region's strategic importance throughout history.

Despite its many achievements, the Directorate faces several challenges in its mission. Limited funding, the threat of climate change to delicate artifacts, and the lack of adequate infrastructure to store and protect historical items are ongoing concerns. Additionally, the Directorate must navigate the challenges posed by the growing interest in tourism, which can sometimes result in the deterioration of ancient sites and artifacts.

Looking ahead, the Directorate of Historical and Antiquarian Studies is focusing on expanding its digital archives, making its resources more accessible to global researchers, and conducting more targeted fieldwork to explore the lesser-known facets of Assam's history. It is also working on incorporating modern technologies like geospatial analysis, 3D scanning, and digital preservation techniques into its research and preservation efforts.

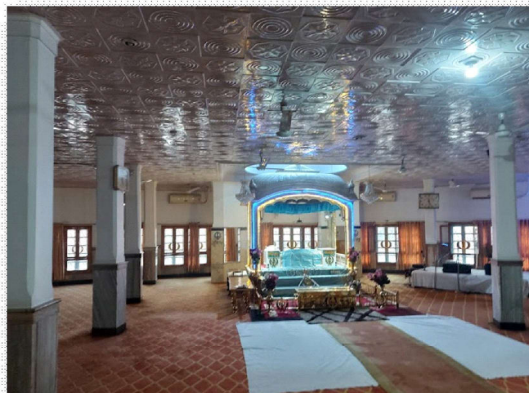
The Directorate of Historical and Antiquarian Studies in Guwahati stands as a guardian of Assam's historical and cultural heritage. Through its extensive research,

preservation efforts, and outreach programs, it has made invaluable contributions to the understanding of the region's history and identity. As it moves forward, the Directorate's work will continue to be crucial in safeguarding Assam's past for future generations and contributing to the broader narrative of India's cultural diversity and historical richness.

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## ***Gurudwaras in Guwahati***

**Laishram Anupam Singh (1st Semester)**



At the dawn of the 20th century, Sardar Alla Singh was the station master of the Guwahati Railway Station that had been set up in 1895. He was a deeply religious Sikh gentleman and quite naturally felt spiritually starved in a fledgling town that had no Sikh place of worship. He decided therefore to organize the town's Sikhs, then numbering about 100, for construction of a place for congregation and prayers. Sardar Alla Singh's efforts bore fruit and in 1902 a Gurudwara committee was formed.

For the next four years (from 1902-1906) Alla Singh and other devout Sikhs like Kishan

Singh, Keshwar Singh and Sardar Jiban Singh made all out efforts to mobilize land and funds for a Gurudwara in Guwahati. Ida Khan, a reputed railway contractor, and a close acquaintance of Alla Singh extended a helping hand in finding a suitable plot of land. In 1904-05, a plot measuring one Katha and four lechas and bearing holding number 112, dag number 39 of Guwahati mouza, was finally bought at the Lakhtokia-Kamarpatty junction and a Sikh Temple constructed. It was a single-storey Assam-type structure of corrugated iron sheets that was in 1925-26 replaced by a single-storey RCC building.

Every Sunday the Gurudwara's doors are open for guru ka langar (community feast for all) where hundreds sit for a meal. Since followers of the Sikh religion believe in practical living, brotherly love and service to humanity, the temple and langar are open to all. In 1960s, the Sikh population in Guwahati had increased manifold. Many members of the community were then holding important positions, while those who had joined the construction and transportation sector were doing flourishing business. They now decided to reconstruct the temple into a five storied structure covering the entire plot of land. The



design made, it was constructed in 1974 under the supervision of Sardar Sohan Singh of Machkhowa. A year later the Gurudwara was consecrated and shifted to the second floor. Langar khana and accommodation for guests were provided for on the third floor while the first floor was converted into a market. On top of the building, a Gambuj was constructed in which a pitcher (kalsi) made of pure gold was installed as a symbol of purity, on the lines of the Golden Temple of Amritsar.

The entire complex now began to be supervised by the newly-formed Shri Guru Singh Sabha, which had been registered in May 31, 1971. The Sabha thereafter even opened a school in the complex. This institution, called the Guru Nanak School, was later shifted to the Sarabbhati area. According to Sikh religious history, the Guru Granth Sahib, which had been compiled by fifth Sikh Guru Arjun Dev was proclaimed to be 'The Guru' by Guru Govind Singh, the last living Guru of the Sikhs. Since then the Guru Granth Sahib is installed in Gurudwaras all over the world and revered as the Guru. In the Fancy Bazar Sikh temple also offerings are placed before the Guru Granth Sahib every day. Special programmes are

arranged on the birthdays of Guru Nanak, Guru Govind Singh and Guru Teg Bahadur. Guru Arjun Dev's martyrdom is also observed with solemnity. Baisakhi, which is celebrated around the same time as Bihu, is another occasion that is celebrated in the temple premises.

Gradually, with increase in the population of Sikhs, the town now has a 6,000 strong Sikh community space to accommodate all devotees became a considerable problem for the authorities of the Fancy Bazar Sikh temple, and seven more Gurudwaras were set up in the Beltola, Marakhali, Fatasil, Maligaon, Birubari, Dispur and Gopinathnagar areas of the city.

All these Gurudwaras no doubt function independently, but the Shri Guru Singh Sabha of Fancy Bazar still acts as the nodal agency and the Sikh Temple remains yet an oasis of love and devotion amid the din and bustle of Fancy Bazar. Beyond being a place of worship, the Gurudwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha serves as a community center. It organizes various activities aimed at uplifting the underprivileged and promoting education and moral values. Medical camps, blood donation drives, and disaster relief initiatives are regularly undertaken by the Gurudwara. These

efforts reflect the Sikh ethos of Sarbat da Bhala,  
which translates to the welfare of all.

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## ***Kamakhya Temple***

**Jayashree Medhi (5<sup>th</sup> Semester)**



The Kamakhya Temple is a Hindu Temple dedicated to mother Mahamaya or Kamakhya and is considered to be one of the major Shakti shrines of India that lays the essence of Tantrism and Power worship within itself. The historical origin of the Kamakhya temple have shaped the socio political and cultural dimensions of the region in its own unique way and have always been looked upon by the civilizations as a source of power, a place of sacrifice and a epitome of worship and devotion. The origin of the temple dates back to the mythological ages when it is said that Sati the first wife of Lord Shiva upon self immolation was cut

into 51 pieces and her sexual organ (yauni) fell on the Nilachal hills where later on the Kamakhya temple was built by Kaamdev with the help of Lord Bishwakarma and was named Anandakhya Temple. Later on King Narakasura the ruler of Pragjyotispur (present day Kamrup district) built the Kamakhya temple along with the rock stairs leading to the temple as the ruins of the one built by Kaamdev could no longer be traced in the hills. The Koch king Biswasingha rebuilt the temple with bricks and gold between 1515 to 1580 AD after the early ones built by Narakasur and Kaamdev were destroyed. This temple that was rebuilt was again destroyed by Kalapahar and then it was King Naranarayan who rebuilt it once again and it is been standing ever since.

Kamakhya temple located on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra river above the Nilachal Hills . The history behind the origin of Kamakhya Temple is being reflected through the verbal tales, religious folktales and various other oral traditions. A brief historical origin of the temple is found in Kalika Purana, Yogini Tantra, Shiva Purana and a few other literary works of that period.

**BIRTH OF YONIPITH :** A religious mythology has its saying that the female sexual

organ (Yoni) of Goddess of Parvati fell on this hilltop that in turn gave birth to the religious site. This is the reason why Kamakhya Temple is also known as Yonipith. Kalikapurana mentions it as Goddess Mahamaya, the most powerful God created Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara and gave them the responsibility of creating, maintaining and destroying the world respectively. The story goes that Lord Brahma and Vishnu fulfilled their responsibilities efficiently but Lord Shiva, being in a state of meditation was semi-conscious and hence could not give his full concentration to the task he was entitled to. As such Brahma and Vishnu came up with this idea that could awaken Lord Shiva from his deep meditation state. Brahma called on his son Dakshya and advised him to pray Goddess Mahamaya and please her and as a reward should ask her to re-incarnate herself as his own daughter. Subsequently Goddess Mahamaya took birth as Sati, daughter of King Dakshya and Queen Birini. Sati lateron pleased Shiva by worshipping him and inturn asked the Lord to be her husband. Thus Lord Shiva married Devi Sati even though there was a little resistance from her father as he always thought of Lord Shiva to be good for nothing and

a homeless addict. A few years later King Dakshya organized a big religious function (Yagya) and he invited all the Gods and Kings but not Lord Shiva. It is only when Sati came to know about it from the mouth of Narad Muni that she went to her husband Lord Shiva to ask for his permission so she could attend her father's Yagya. The Puranas beautifully describes the whole picture and shows how when she did not get the permission from Lord Shiva to attend her father's Yagya that she transformed herself into the four armed Goddess Kali, the colossal of destruction and the epitome of anger and she chased after the fearful Lord Shiva and blocking his path in ten different directions each time appearing as one of the ten different avatars of Mahamaya known as Dasamhavidya-Kali, Tara, Jurshi, Bhubneshwari, Bairavi, Chinnamastha, Dhumawati, Bagala, Matangi and Kamala. Temples of the ten (Dasamhavidya) are present in the same hill near Kamakhya shrine. Lord Shiva divided the whole universe into ten parts and on each one recited one of the ten avatars of Dasamhavidya. It is believed that this ten avatars of Sati is the ultimate supreme peak of power and the epitome of unmatched knowledge. The power of the three namely of Lord Brahma, Vishnu and

Maheshwar have actually combined in this ten divisions. When Lord Shiva saw the transformation of Sati into Kali, he was forced to give way to her so that she could attend the religious ceremony of her father. But when king Dakshya saw his daughter he got furious and cursed her and even criticized her husband Lord Shiva. Not able to swallow the bad words against her husband she sacrificed her life by jumping into the Yagya fire. The news of Sati's demise made Lord Shiva very furious. By transforming into Birbhadra he beheaded king Dakshya and destroyed the whole ceremony. It was only because of Queen Birina's pleading that made Shiva returned back her husband's head and brought back him to life. Lord Shiva full of grief carried the dead Sati on his shoulder and roamed the whole universe without having any purpose or destination. In order to bring back normalcy into the universe, Lord Vishnu with the help of his Spinning Wheel (Sudarshan chakra) made fiftyone parts of her body. The places where the body parts of Sati fell were all were turned into holy, religious, places for worshiping her. Lord Shiva even promised that he would recite in each of these fifty one places along with his beloved wife in the form of the Shiva Lingam. It is believed



that out of the fifty one body parts, one of it namely the female sexual organ fell above the Nilachal hill of Kamrup- the sexual organ of the ever powerful, of the Goddess of Power, Mahamaya, the place of her ultimate rest.

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## ***Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti***

**Shreyansh Sinha (5<sup>th</sup> Semester)**



The Kamrupa Anusandhan Samiti, also known as the Assam Research Institution in North-East India. It was established in 1912 to study and research topics such as history, archaeology, anthropology and culture. The society is located in Guwahati, Assam. The Kamrupa Anusandhan Samiti started the museum movement to preserve and collect antiquities. This led to the establishment of the Assam State Museum in 1940. The museum is located in Guwahati city and features sections on archaeology, iconography, epigraphy and numismatics.

In 1927, the Kamrupa Anusandhan Samiti published a report and conspectus that covers topics such as the Assam Research Society, Gauhati, Assam, and the Ministry of Culture. The Kamrupa Anusandhan Samiti publishes a quarterly journal that covers topics such as antiquity, ethology, numismatics, iconology and related subjects.

At the time of the Swadeshi movement, Prof Padmanath Bhattacharya Vidyavinod, a Scholar and pioneer researcher of the history and culture of Assam, mooted the idea of establishing a society for antiquarian studies of ancient Pragjyotishpura-kamrupa. This idea found enthusiastic favour among a group of philanthropists who were keen on preserving the art, history, literature and culture of the province. Therefore, in the year 1912, at the literary conference of the Uttar Bangiya Sahitya Parishad held at Kamakhya in Guwahati, this group crystallized the idea into a resolution to form an organization to preserve and promote research on matters related to archaeology, ethnography, language, literature, history and culture of the region that incorporated the ancient kingdom of Pragjyotishpur-Kamarupa. The resolution was

unanimously adopted and the Kamrupa Anusandhan Samiti was born.

The Samiti, which was also known by its secondary title, Assam Research Society, started with a donation of Rs 25 by Babu Sasadhar Ray of the Calcutta High Court who presided over the Sahitya Parishad meeting in Kamakhya. Soon after its inception several prominent personalities associated themselves with the Samiti. Chandra Nath Sarma became its founder-secretary and its list of patrons included Maharaja Jitendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur of Cooch Behar, Lt Governor of Orrisa and Bihar Sir Edward Gait, Commissioner of Assam Valley Lt Col P R T Gordon, Chief Commissioner of Assam Sir Archdale Earle, Raja Prabhat Chandra Barooah Bahadur of Gauripur and a galaxy of scholars.

The Kamrupa Anusandhan Samiti started its work with missionary zeal, and soon gathered together an enviable collection of inscriptions, puthis, ethnographic objects, relics and manuscripts from the erstwhile Pragjyotishpura-Kamrupa region that included besides modern Assam, parts of West Bengal and present Bangladesh too. Soon, preservation of this large precious collection became an onerous task and

the Samiti requested the government to establish a museum to store the objects. Its plea went in vain and finally the Samiti decided to construct its own building.

The cost of the building was estimated at 20,000 an amount that was contributed by a few generous persons, among whom Rai Bahadur Naupat Rai Kedia of Dibrugarh was the principal donor. When Lt Col PR T Gordon, the then Commissioner of Assam valley honorary Provincial Director of Ethnography, Assam formally inaugurated the Kamrupa Anusandhan Samiti building on November 19, 1917, he practically opened a new chapter in Assam's rich tradition of record preservation. The samiti's activities attracted the attention of serious scholars of Indology throughout eastern India and this in turn led to the establishment of its branch at Rangpur (now in Bangladesh) Babu Surendra Chandra Roychoudhury as its secretary. Until 1950, the Asiatic society of Calcutta also kept close links with the Samiti and often organized exhibitions of lots of collections.

The Kamrupa Anusandhan Samiti served the purpose of a museum until the year 1940 when the Assam State Museum came up at the initiative

of Rai Bahadur Kanaklal Baruah. From a small sapling it developed into a full-grown plant with a rich collection of artefacts, manuscripts, miniature painting, puthis, buranjis and chronicles, some of which were later transferred to the museum. The Samiti was however not dissolved. It retained its exclusive identity and even now functions from its old premises behind the museum on the western banks of the Dighalipukhuri.

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## ***Kanai Barasi Rock Inscription***

**Peramtale Jeme (3<sup>rd</sup> Semester)**



The Kanai Barasi Rock Inscription is located in North Guwahati, Assam, and is a significant historical and archaeological site. It dates back to the early 5th century CE and is attributed to the reign of King Bhaskar Varman, a ruler of the Varman dynasty, who governed parts of Assam during this period. Bhaskar Varman is known to have had close relations with prominent contemporary rulers, including those of Gupta Empire and Harsha. His reign is often seen as a time of cultural and political flourishing in Assam. The Kanai Barasi Rock inscription is

written in Prakrit, a language commonly used in inscriptions of that era. The inscription is inscribed in the Brahmi script, which was widely used across India during the early centuries of the common era.

The inscription likely commemorates royal grants or edicts issued by King Bhaskar Varman, including possible land grants or patronage to religious institutions. Some interpretations suggest that the inscription refers to a Buddhist context, as the Varman dynasty had associations with religious institutions, and the region had a significant Buddhist presence. The details of the inscription are not fully legible due to erosion, but it offers valuable insights into the governance, religious practices, and social conditions of the time.

The Kanai Barasi Rock Inscription is an important epigraphic source for understanding the history of Assam, particularly the Varman dynasty's rule in the 5th century. The inscription helps scholars study the region's political structure, royal patronage of religion, and the spread of Buddhism or other religious practices during that period.



It also contributes to the understanding of the script, language, and cultural exchanges between Assam and other parts of India, especially with the Gupta Empire. The Kanai Barasi Rock Inscription is a significant historical artifact that provides a glimpse into the Varman dynasty's rule in Assam. Although the inscription's full content remains partially unclear due to weathering, it offers crucial evidence of the region's political, religious, and cultural landscape in the 5th century CE. This inscription, along with other archaeological discoveries, helps paint a picture of ancient Assam's development and its role in the broader historical context of India.

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## ***Kasturba Gandhi Ashram***

**Md Talha Amin (1<sup>st</sup> Semester)**



Kasturba Gandhi Ashram is an ashram, popularly known as ‘Kasturba Ashram’ or ‘Saranaia Ashram’ is located in Kamrup metro district of Assam. It was conceived as a tribute to the brave and noble spirit of the Indian freedom fighter and wife of Mahatma Gandhi i.e Kasturba Gandhi. The street address of this place is Ashram road, South Sarania, Sarania Hills, Guwahati, Assam, India. It is about 2.68 kilometers away from the Guwahati railway station. This Assam branch of the Trust was inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi himself on 9th of January, 1946. This Ashram is a living testimony of how Gandhi’s ardent followers are still practising his principles and philosophy.

Katurba Gandhi (11 April 1869-22 February 1944) took part in non-violent protests against the British rule in Rajkot, after the women in the city specifically asked her to advocate for them. In 1942, she was arrested by the British government, along with Mahatma Gandhi and other freedom fighters, for participating in the popularly known movement of Indian history – ‘The Quit India Movement’. She was imprisoned in the Aga Khan Palace in Pune. By this time, her health had severely deteriorated and she sadly passed away in the very detention camp in Pune on 22nd of February 1944. The Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust was established in the revering memory of Kasturba Gandhi in 1945. Eminent people from all around the country as well as the anonymous masses, mobilized their resources to set up this Trust with its Headquarters at Kasturbagram (Indore), Madyapradesh, and 22 state Branches were set up all over the country. One of them is in Guwahati i.e ‘Kasturba trust, Guwahati’.

The original idea for the Ashram was proposed by Amalprabha Das (12 November 1911-20 December 1994), who was one of the leading forces of the Assam branch of the Kasturba Gandhi

Memorial Trust. She along with her mother, travelled to Wardha to meet Mahatma Gandhi and present her proposal for the future work to be undertaken by the Trust. Amalprabha's mother died in 1945, and Amalprabha's father, Hare Krishna Das donated his house along with the land, and extra 54 bigahs of land for the establishment of the Ashram. Reportedly, the house of Hare Krishna Das was built in 1928 as a vacation house for his family. Hence, this Ashram is originally about 94 years old, making it a heritage site of Guwahati. When the Ashram was established and Gandhi came to inaugurate it, he gave certain instructions to the Ashram runners. According to his instructions, the Ashram undertook education of women in accordance with the principles of "Nai Talim", and also trained its inmates in vocational activities such as beekeeping, weaving etc. This was the last visit of Mahatma Gandhi to Assam. When he came, he resided for three days in the bamboo cottage in the Ashram's complex which was especially built for him to stay. This bamboo cottage is known as 'Gandhi-Ghar' and it's still present inside the Ashram's campus till today. On 11th of January 1946,

Gandhi also inaugurated the Provincial Kasturba Gram Sevika Vidyalaya.

By the 1950s, the Bhoodan movement happened, it was started by a Gandhian ideology holder (or you can say ‘the spiritual successor of Gandhi’) Vinoba Bhave. The movement was initiated as an attempt to persuade wealthy landowners to voluntarily give a percentage of their land to the landless people. When Vinoba Bhave came to Assam in course of the Bhoodan movement, the volunteers of the Sarania Ashram had arranged the entire program for him under the supervision of the Ashram’s owner – Amalprabha Das. Assam was the place where the Bhoodan movement took a concrete shape. The draft of the very first Gramdaan act was prepared and submitted to the government of Assam by the Kasturba Ashram of Guwahati. This was so impactful that Rai Bahadur Mahendra Mohan Lahiri (the third Indian chairman of the Guwahati municipal board) donated about hundred bighas of land in Guwahati towards the Bhoodan movement. Following this event, Amalprabha also started work of the Assam Goseva Samiti. Also in the 50s, hundreds of volunteers of the Kasturba Ashram and Gram Seva Kendras rendered yeoman

service to the people. They also established the Guwahati Katai Mandal in order to strengthen the concept of self-help and Gramudyog.

The Ashram continues to adhere to the philosophy of Kasturba Gandhi and Mahatma Gandhi (which is popularly known as the ‘Gandhian ideology’), undertaking activities for the upliftment of downtrodden sections of society till this very day. The Ashram had initially started Bee preservations for extracting honey, making soaps and paper, extracting oil from oilseeds etc. The daily routine set up by Mahatma Gandhi then is still followed till day without much changes. The members continue to weave yarn daily and dress only in Khadi or hand woven cloths. The presence of a human skeleton as a showcase in the Gandhi-ghar reminds one of the health lessons that were once taught to the sevikas as part of women’s hygiene and health. The Neem tree under which Mahatma Gandhi had weaved yarn still stands as a witness and reminder of his works. Gradually, this heritage site became a center of excellence in spreading the Gandhian ideology of Gramudyog in the northeast.

This distinct heritage site at Sarania continues to ring the routine bell regularly at

different hours of the day to mark the day's progress, although only a few members are currently residing here. CM Himanta Biswa Sarma visited the Ashram back in 2022 and he tweeted :  
“We will also take up a developmental project for preserving its rich heritage.”

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## *Saraighat war memorial park*

**Sangini Banik (1<sup>st</sup> Semester)**



Saraighat war memorial park is located at Agyathuri on the northern bank of river Brahmaputra. The Park has been constructed at a cost of Rs 65 lakh sanctioned by the state government for preservation and promotion of the memories associated with the Battle of Saraighat which took place in the year 1671 A.D. between the Ahoms and Mughals under the command of the Ahom commanders - Lachit Barphukan, Atan Borgohain, Bagh Hazarika and Laluksola Borphukan. The park has four bronze statues of Ahom warriors in battle postures. A bronze plate has also been inscribed to narrate a part of the



Saraighat battle. Two more fibre glass statues of Ahom warriors have been built at the entrance of the park. These have been created by sculptor Birendra Sinha and a team of experts from Shantiniketan. The park has been constructed within a record time of four months. Apart from the War Memorial, the state government has also installed a statue of Lachit Borphukan in the Brahmaputra river in Guwahati. The current Chief Minister of Assam Himanta Biswa Sarma (who was the Minister of Guwahati development department at that time) inaugurated the park on 1st of March 2006.



The Battle of Saraighat was a naval battle fought in 1671 between the naval fleet of the Mughal Empire led by the Kachwaha raja, Ram

Singh I, and the naval fleet of the Ahom Kingdom led by Lachit Borphukan on the Brahmaputra river at Saraighat. This was the decisive battle that ended the years long of Mughal siege of Guwahati, with the Ahoms pushing away the Mughals west beyond the Manas river. At this crucial moment in the battle, when the Mughals were about to land at Andharubali, the Borphukan sent orders via katakis to all the land and naval forces to attack. He also ordered six war-boats for himself and had Nadai of Kharangi carry him to a boat. He shouted and pushed a few men into the water. With the other six war-boats the Borphukan headed toward the naval battle. The entry of the Borphukan transformed the Ahom soldiers. His small flotilla soon swelled with Ahom warships from all sides that smashed into the Mughal warships at Amrajuli on the north bank, opposite Kamakhya hills. The triangle in the river, between Itakhuli, Kamakhya, and Aswakranta was filled with men and boats. Bagh Hazarika and his soldiers climbed the high embankments and poured water into the Mughal cannons, rendering them useless. The Ahoms spanned the river over an improvised bridge of boats and resorted to a combined front and rear attack. The Mughal admiral Munnawar Khan,

smoking a hookah was killed by a gunshot from the back, throwing the Mughals out of gear. In response, the Mughal soldiers rushed to their posts and tried to fire the cannons at the advancing Ahom forces. But, the wet cannons would not work. The Ahom forces used their cannons to the full potential. Mughal forces suffered the loss of three top-ranking amirs, and another 4,000 dead. The day of this decisive battle is not known for certain, only that it happened in the middle of March 1671. The Mughals were pursued to the Manas river, the Ahom kingdom's western boundary. The Borphukan instructed his men not to attack the retreating army, reminding them of Alaboi. Anticipating a counterattack, he set messengers at regular intervals, while Atan Burhagohain and other commanders stood ready for one. The Mughals in Darrang were also worsted, and Ram Singh left Kamrup on 7 April 1671 for Rangamati.

Saraighat War Memorial Park stands as a significant tribute to the valorous history of the Ahom and Mughal wars, captivating visitors with its rich historical narrative and stunning natural beauty. Nestled along the banks of the majestic Brahmaputra River, this well-maintained park

offers an inviting atmosphere for relaxation and reflection. The picturesque setting is enhanced by the surrounding hills, creating a serene backdrop that is perfect for photography, especially during the enchanting sunsets that grace the landscape. Families will find this park to be particularly child-friendly, making it an ideal destination for leisurely outings. The park's historical significance is amplified by its connection to the legendary Lachit Borphukan, who famously defended the city against the Mughal forces. This heritage is not only educational but also adds a layer of intrigue for those interested in Assam's storied past. Visitors have noted the refreshing breeze that sweeps through the area, contributing to a revitalizing experience. While the park is a lovely escape from the hustle and bustle of city life, some reviews mention that nearby traffic can create disturbances. Additionally, certain facilities may occasionally be out of service. Regardless, Saraighat War Memorial Park remains a cherished locale for locals and travelers alike, offering both beauty and a deep sense of history.



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***Satribari Christian Hospital***  
**Mridusmita Baruah (1<sup>st</sup> Semester)**



Satribari Christian Hospital, nestled in the heart of Guwahati, Assam, is a landmark institution with a legacy that extends back to the early 20th century. Established in 1926, the hospital was the first maternity and childcare facility in Northeast India, marking a significant milestone in the region's medical history. Its foundation was a result of missionary zeal and local support, symbolizing the interplay of dedication, service, and philanthropy that has shaped healthcare in this part of India.

The Women's Council of the Assam Baptist Convention adopted a resolution to establish an

exclusive hospital for women at Guwahati. The Council, had justified its proposal by pointing out from a survey conducted in some villages had shown that. “In lower Assam women lived in a more conservative society where the men did not permit them to be examined by male doctors. Women particularly, young mothers suffered from severe malnutrition and post-natal care.” Over time, it grew into a full- fledged hospital that not only provided maternal care but also catered to general health needs. The hospital was run under the aegis of the American Baptist Missionary Society, which played a pivotal role in bringing modern healthcare to rural and urban areas of Assam.

Throughout its history, Satribari Hospital has been associated with notable figures who have contributed to its growth and reputation. At first, there was no lady doctor found, meantime to provide treatment and service a missionary nurse, Millie Marvin arrived to serve. She started to serve in the hospital along with four students, who were later joined by trained, missionary nurse and the team of six nurses started to look after the patients. More than a year passed by, a lady doctor joined, Dr Lahori Bhuyan, who joined as the first female

doctor. In later years, the hospital became a training ground for local healthcare professionals, fostering a new generation of medical practitioners committed to serving their communities. This synergy between international missionary efforts and local participation laid a strong foundation for its enduring legacy.

The hospital's role in the socio-cultural fabric of Assam is equally significant. It became a beacon of hope for women, providing not only medical care but also promoting awareness about hygiene, nutrition, and childcare. Its initiatives helped combat societal taboos surrounding women's health, gradually empowering women to seek medical assistance without fear or stigma. The hospital's emphasis on education and outreach transformed it into more than just a healthcare facility; it became a center for social change.

In the present day, Satribari Hospital has undergone significant transformation to keep pace with modern medical advancements and it had nearly two-hundred beds. Now the hospital is known as the Satribari Christian Hospital, and it operates under the management of the Council of Baptist Churches in Northeast India (CBCNEI). It has expanded its services beyond maternity and



childcare to include specialized treatments in cardiology, orthopedics, pediatrics, and general surgery. Equipped with state-of-the-art facilities and a dedicated team of healthcare professionals, the hospital continues to uphold its mission of serving the underserved, irrespective of caste, creed, or economic status.

The hospital has also embraced contemporary healthcare challenges. It is actively involved in community health programs, focusing on maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS awareness, and preventive medicine. Regular health camps, vaccination drives, and awareness campaigns in rural and urban areas have strengthened its bond with the community. Moreover, the hospital has adapted to digital healthcare trends, introducing electronic medical records and telemedicine services to enhance patient care and outreach.

In addition to its medical services, the Satribari Christian Hospital remains a hub for medical education and research. It collaborates with other institutions to provide training programs for nurses, paramedics, and doctors. These programs aim to address the shortage of healthcare

professionals in the region while maintaining high standards of medical practice.

The hospital's spiritual foundation continues to inspire its work. While it is open to people of all faiths, the institution remains deeply rooted in its Christian ethos, emphasizing compassion, service, and holistic healing. Its chaplaincy services and pastoral care programs provide emotional and spiritual support to patients and their families, reinforcing the idea that healing is not merely physical but also psychological and spiritual.

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## ***Sukreshwar Temple***

**Norbu Jangmu (3<sup>rd</sup> Semester)**



The Sukreshwar Temple is an important Shiva temple in the State of Assam in India. The temple is located on the Sukreshwar or Itakhuli hill on the South bank of river Brahmaputra in the Panbazar locality of Guwahati city. Leading down from the temple compound is a long flight of steps to the river, boats moving across the river, people performing Puja in honour of their relatives who have left this world, children and older people bathing. It has one of the largest Lingam of Lord Shiva.

The history of the temple is associated with saint Sukra, who made a retreat at the Sukreshwar

hillock, where he regularly meditated and worshipping Lord Shiva. The place where he meditated is called Hastagiri as per the Kalika Purana, for it being in the shape of the hump of an elephant. This temple later was constructed in the year 1744 by the King of Ahom, Pramatta Singh, who is supposed to have constructed many religious sites during his rule. In the year 1759, the King Rajeshwar Singha took the charge of promoting the Shiva cult. The bank of the river on which the temple is located is used by the devotees of Taking holy bath and performing other Puja activities. The temple too beautifully design steps which lead to the holy river an amazing experience. Besides that, the scenic beauty of the rising sun visible from the bank of the river makes the experience even more amazing.

At the temple, the main festival is organized during the time of Mahashivratri and that time the whole temple is embellished with beautiful flowers and glittering lights. And the scene during the time is entirely different. During this festive season a large number of devotees of Lord Shiva flock to the temple to take a glimpse of the deity and to take his blessings. The temple gets crowded with an uncountable number of people, standing one

after the other in rows to take blessing of the almighty.

Guwahati is considered as one of the fastest growing cities of India which is located in the North Eastern part of the country and that is one reason that there is no dearth of places for staying during your visit to the temple. There are plenty of accommodation in the nearby places to the temple which can be best suitable for devotees. As per the Hindu religion, death rites and rituals performed here at the temple is considered to be sacred and it is believed that the dead person will get salvation if his/her last rites are performed at Sukreswar temple. Sukreswar temple is a mesmerizing architectural gem, a repository of Assamese craftsmanship. The temple complex radiates a spiritual aura and offers an incredible views of the surrounding landscape. The Lingam of Lord Shiva enshrined here is known to be one of the largest in existence. The intricate details of the temple architecture reflect the devotion and artistic finesse and picturesque location, perched upon the hill, imparts a sense of tranquility to the visitors. Sukreshwar temple perched majestically on the Sukreshwar hill overlooking the Brahmaputra, is more than just a place of worship.

It is a reflection of Assam's rich history and heritage, where devotion and artistry have. This temple, built with love and dedication by Assam's monarchs, continues to be a source of inspiration for both pilgrims and travelers.

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## *Northbrook Gate*

**Chandni Hazarika (3<sup>rd</sup> Semester)**



The Northbrook Gate, also known as the 'Gateway of Assam.' It is a significant colonial-era structure located in Guwahati Assam. This Gate was constructed to welcome British viceroy lord Northbrook who visited Guwahati in 1874. Located near the Sukreswar Ghat on the banks of river Brahmaputra. The gate commemorates Lord Northbrook's visit to Assam and his contributions to the region during his tenure.

### **HISTORY :**

After the visit of British official William Robinson to Assam in 1841, wrote in his diary that

most of Guwahati's residents lived in the thatched houses built of reeds and bamboo mats. Even residences of Europeans were of bamboo mats, without even a wooden door. The Assam Administration report of 1874-75 mentions that the only permanent structures in Guwahati were the Record Room and the treasury attached to the court.

When the Governor General of India Lord Northbrook decided to visit Assam, in 1874, his accommodation posed a serious problem for the local administration. Several suggestions were mooted but the one that found ready acceptance was construction of a gate at the point where the Governor General would land. The gate that would be named the Gate of honor would have arches and be designed on the lines of the famous King's College Chapel arches of England.

**Historical Context :**

**Construction Purpose :** Built to honor Lord Northbrook's arrival on August 27, 1874, marking the first visit of a Viceroy to this region of Northeast India.

**Subsequent Events :** The Gate also welcomed Lord Curzon and Lady Curzon during their visit in December 1900.



## **Architecture Features**

**Design** : The gate showcases Indo-Gothic architecture, featuring a rectangular structure with twelve arches-five on each longer side and one on each shorter side.

**Materials**: Constructed using bricks and white limestone, the design is noted for its simplicity and minimal decorative carvings.

## **Cultural Significance:**

**Historical landmark** : As the only surviving 19th century public colonial landmark in Northeast India, the Northbrook gate stands as a testament to Guwahati's colonial past.

**Notable Associations** : It is believed that the urn containing Mahatma Gandhi's ashes was stored near the gate before their immersion in the Brahmaputra River.

## **Tourist Attraction :**

Today, the Northbrook Gate serves as a popular tourist attraction, especially for those interested in colonial history, architecture, and Assam's past under British rule. It's a serene spot, surrounded by greenery, and offers a glimpse into the region's history.

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## *Ugratara Temple*

**Violina Deka (3<sup>rd</sup> Semester)**



The Ugratara temple is located in the eastern part of Guwahati in Uzan Bazar. Ugratara Devalaya is a temple dedicated to Ugratara located in the western side of Jor Pukhuri tanks in the heart of Guwahati city in the Lotaxil (Latasil) locality in Northeast India. It is a Shakti shrine. Legend has said that the navel of Sati, first consort of Shiva, is related to this temple. The Ugratara temple was constructed by king Shiva Singha of the Ahom kingdom in 1725 CE, who had excavated a tank three years before. The tank, known as Jor Pukhuri, is situated to the east of the temple. The tank still exists, though the upper section of the

temple was destroyed by a devastating earthquake. This was however rebuilt by a local citizen. This temple serves as one of the most important pilgrimage centres of the state of Assam. Ugratara in Assam is generally identified with Tikshna-Kanta, Eka-Jata, etc, of the Buddhist pantheon. Goddess Ugratara is the residing deity of this temple, who is considered to be another form of Parvati. Kalika Purana describes about a Shakti Peetha called Dikkara vasini. Dikkara vasini has two forms, Tikshna kantha and Lalitha kantha. Tikshna kantha is black and potbellied, also called as Ugratara or Eka jata. Lalitha kantha is gracefully attractive, also called as Tamreshwari. In the garbhagriha of Ugratara, there is no image or idol of her. A small pit filled with water is considered as the Goddess. There is a Shivalaya beside Ugratara temple and a pond behind both temples. Ugratara is worshiped in general like Kamakhya. She likes liquor, flesh, Modaka, coconuts, and sugar cane.

According to Sthala Purana, Yama (Lord of the Hell) made a complaint to Brahma that nobody is coming to hell from Kamarupa because of the sacredness of the area, despite committing sins. Brahma carried this complaint to Vishnu. Vishnu took them to Shiva. Lord Shiva ordered Goddess

Ugratara to drive away all the people who are living in Kamakhya. She sent her army. In the course of this drive, they laid their hands on Rishi Vasishtha who was meditating on Shiva at Sandhyachal. Vasishtha became angry and cursed Ugratara and Shiva. From then onwards all the Vedic (Shiva) sadhanas are given up in Kamarupa and Ugratara became a Goddess of Vamachara Sadhana. All her army became Mlechhas.

Navratri is the main festival celebrated in this temple. During this festival, devotees from across the country visit to offer prayers and seek blessings of the Mother Goddess. An important ritual that can be witnessed during the festival is the sacrifice of animals like bulls, wild boars, goats and buffaloes. Another ritual linked to this temple includes offering one's own blood to the Mother. However, the females of all the species are exempted from this sacrifice.

The Ugratara Temple, located in the heart of Guwahati, is a revered shrine dedicated to the goddess Ugratara, a form of Goddess Kali. This ancient temple, with its rich history and cultural significance, stands as a testament to the city's spiritual heritage. The temple's unique architecture, intricate carvings, and vibrant

atmosphere make it a must-visit destination for devotees, tourists, and history enthusiasts alike. As a symbol of Guwahati's enduring spiritual legacy, the Ugratara Temple continues to inspire devotion, curiosity, and wonder in all who visit.

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## *Umananda Temple*

**Regina Tirkey (5th semester)**



The Umananda temple, located on the peacock Island, is one of the important temples of Guwahati. It is situated in the middle of river Brahmaputra, this temple is dedicated to the worship of Lord Shiva. During the festival of Shivratri, every year a large number of devotees visit this temple. On the instructions from King Gadadhar Singha of the Tai-Ahom dynasty, the temple was constructed in 1694 AD by Bar Phukan Garhgarya Handique. There are plenty of engraved sculptures that adorned the rock wall of this temple. These engraving and sculptures depict the craftsmanship of the local Assamese artisans. The

engraving done on the walls include Hindu Gods like Suriya, Shiva, Ganesha and Devi. Apart from these, sculptures of Lord Vishnu and his ten incarnations can also be found in the vicinity of this temple. The area in which this temple has been raised is known as Bhasmachala. According to a legend, once Lord Shiva was meditating on this hillrock, when he was interrupted by Kamadeva, he was burnt to ashes by the fire of his anger. According to the Kalika Purana, it was believed that Goddess Urvashi who brought nectar for the pleasure of Kamakhya, resided here. Therefore, the Island in which this temple is constructed is also known as Urvashi Island. In 1897, a considerable portion of this temple was damaged owing to the effects of a devastating earthquake. However, the damaged portion was later reconstructed by a rich local merchant. On reconstruction, he also added Vaisnavite inscriptions to the interior part of this temple. According to a popular belief, it is said that worshipping here on an Amavasya day, especially falling on Monday, brings highest bliss to the worshipper. Apart from this, Shiva Chaturdashi is another important festival which is held here annually. The temple is renowned for its scenic

beauty and spiritual significance. It is perched atop a hill on the Island and offers panoramic views of the river and surrounding areas.

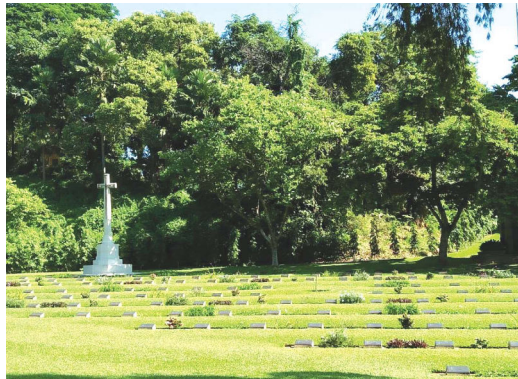
The Umananda Temple embodies the rich cultural and spiritual heritage of Guwahati. With its stunning natural surroundings and intricate architectural details, the temple is a testament to the region's architectural and artistic prowess. As one of the oldest and most sacred temples in the region, Umananda Temple continues to attract devotees and tourists from far and wide, offering a unique blend of spirituality, history, and natural beauty.

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## *War Cemetery*

**Raymond Riame (3<sup>rd</sup> Semester)**



The Guwahati War Cemetery, located in the Silpukhuri area of Guwahati, Assam, has a rich and poignant history dating back to World War II. The cemetery serves as a solemn reminder of the sacrifices made by soldiers who lost their lives during the war.

### **1: Establishment of the Cemetery**

During World War II, the British Indian Army played a significant role in the war effort, with many soldiers from the region fighting in various theaters of war. As the war progressed, the need for a military cemetery in the region became increasingly important. In 1942, the British authorities established the Guwahati War

Cemetery in Silpukhuri, Guwahati, to serve as a burial ground for soldiers who died in the military hospitals in the area.

## **2: Burials and Expansion**

Initially, the cemetery was used for the burial of soldiers who died in the military hospitals in Guwahati. However, as the war progressed, graves from other areas, including those from the battles fought in the region, were also brought to the cemetery. Today, the Guwahati War Cemetery is the final resting place for 486 Commonwealth servicemen who died during World War II. In addition to the Commonwealth graves, the cemetery also contains 24 Chinese war graves and two non-war graves.

## **3: Post-War Developments**

After the war, the cemetery was maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), which is responsible for the care and maintenance of war graves and cemeteries around the world. In the 1950s, the CWGC constructed a memorial, the Cross of Sacrifice, in the cemetery, which serves as a focal point for commemoration and remembrance.

## **4: Present Day**

Today, the Guwahati War Cemetery is a well-

maintained and peaceful oasis in the heart of the city. The cemetery is open to visitors from 8 am to 5 pm, and visitors can pay their respects to the soldiers buried here. The cemetery is also an important historical site, providing a glimpse into the region's role in World War II.

### **5 : Conservation Efforts**

In recent years, the CWGC has undertaken conservation efforts to preserve the cemetery and its graves. These efforts include the restoration of headstones, the repair of the memorial, and the maintenance of the cemetery's gardens and landscaping.

The Guwahati War Cemetery in Silpukhuri, Guwahati, is a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made by soldiers during World War II. The cemetery's history, from its establishment in 1942 to the present day, is a testament to the importance of preserving the memories of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. As a historical site, the cemetery provides a glimpse into the region's role in World War II, and as a place of remembrance, it serves as a solemn tribute to the bravery and selflessness of the soldiers buried here.

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