

Bhabananda Deka-Nalini Prava Deka Endowment Lecture held



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Prantik Deka 31 December 2019 52094 views

The 13th Principal Bhabananda Deka-Nalini Prava Deka Endowment Lecture was successfully organised by the Assam Foundation-India in a solemn function held at the Guwahati Press Club, on December 4, 2019. The function also coincided with the release of three books – Principal Bhabananda Deka Rachanawali, Nalini Prava Deka Rachanawali, and Arnab Jan Deka Natyawali – a compendium of the stage and radio plays written by popular storywriter-novelist Arnab Jan Deka.

The programme was presided over by Dr Narendra Nath Sarma, eminent historian and former Professor and Head, Department of Library and Information Science, Gauhati University, and attended by noted personalities like actors Pranjal Saikia and Dinesh Das; former Editor of Natun Dainik, Dr Rohini Kumar Barua; Satyendra Prasad Deka, founder-president of the All Assam Lawyers' Association; writer Momi Borah; poet-physician Dr Sikha Sarma; poets Purabi Barua, Purabi Devi, Nizara Deka, Rinu Devi; scholars Dr Indrani Medhi, Rajib Hari Kaushik, Girindra Nath Deka; cine-journalist Arun Lochan Das; journalist Mukut Kumar Choudhury; adviser and president of the All Dimasa Students' Union Prafulla Hafla, and Nabin Johori, respectively, among others.

The speakers, on the occasion, recalled the scholarly contributions of the eminent literary couple of the Awahon-Ramdhenu Era of Assamese literature – Bhabananda Deka and Nalini Prava Deka, and their selfless contribution in propagating and advancing the interests and glory of the Assamese people. Guests of honour – Dr Rohini Kumar Baruah and Satyendra Prasad Deka, spoke about Bhabananda Deka's pioneering works as an economist, his immense contribution to Sankari literature and ethnic communities like the Hajongs, Dimasas, Tiwas and the Karbis. They also spoke of his historic achievement in introducing Assamese as a subject, as well as a language in the all-India level competitive examinations conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and Delhi University during his stint in New Delhi, where he worked as a Senior Research Officer in the Language Unit of the Commission, in the late '60s. Other speakers recalled the couple's significant role in the making of the first film on the great 15th century Vaishnavite saint and social reformer, Srimanta Sankaradeva, which was globally premiered in 1997 at Atlantic City and Somerset in the United States of America.

The book by Arnab Jan Deka, which was released in memory of his parents – Bhabananda Deka and Nalini Prava Deka, is a precious resource. As popular Assamese actor Pranjal Saikia recalled during his speech, Deka has always been inventive and conscientious. A long-time associate of Deka, Saikia felt that it was his youthful passion and enthusiasm that ultimately led him to accomplish the arduous task of authoring several stage and radio plays that he wrote as a school-going boy during 1980-81, at the peak of the Assam Movement. The actor also recalled his experience of working with Arnab Jan Deka as a co-artiste in films and television serials. He described Deka as a meticulous person, who learned the craft of writing and filmmaking through perseverance and years of dedicated practice.

Senior film actor Dinesh Das spoke about Arnab Jan Deka's work, both as an author and actor-filmmaker, and his absolute commitment in bringing out the works of his departed parents.

Poet-physician Dr Sikha Sarma and Purabi Barua read out two self-composed poems, eulogising the finer qualities of eminent scholar Principal Bhabananda Deka. All the speakers praised Arnab Jan Deka for painstakingly recovering and editing the complete works of the departed scholars and bringing them out for the public through a series of books.

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