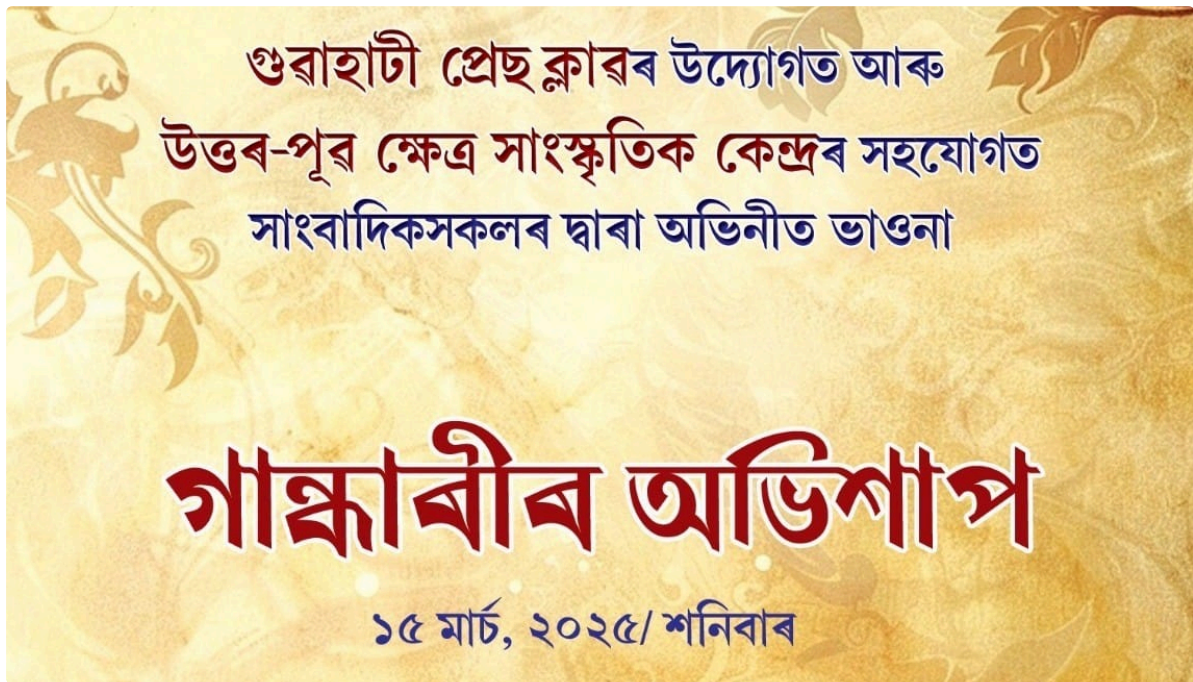


GPC Urged to Clarify Stand on Bhaona Controversy



Comments 0



AT News 5 March 2025 11870 views

The Press Club of Assam (PCA) has expressed concern over the recent controversy involving Assam Health & Family Welfare Minister Ashok Singhal and his alleged remarks on Bhaona, a traditional Assamese performing art form. The PCA has urged the journalist involved in the matter to clarify his stance, as the issue has sparked widespread debate and criticism.

The controversy began when a television journalist, associated with a news channel owned by the family of the State government's chief, claimed in a social media post that Minister Singhal disrespected a delegation from the Gauhati Press Club (GPC). The delegation had invited Singhal to a forthcoming Bhaona performance in the city. According to the journalist, Singhal questioned the necessity of a press club organizing a Bhaona, stating that it was not a secular event.

The allegation quickly went viral, drawing condemnation from various media bodies, including the GPC, as well as opposition leaders and social media users. Many criticized Singhal for his alleged "irresponsible views" on the traditional art form, which holds deep cultural and religious significance in Assam. Ankiya Bhaona, developed by the 16th-century Vaishnavite saint Srimanta Sankardev and his disciple Madhavdev, is a revered form of mythological storytelling through performance.

However, the controversy took a turn when Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma publicly stated that he did not believe his cabinet colleague would make such an immature comment. Shortly after, Singhal issued a formal clarification denying the allegations. In a social media post, he called the claims "completely false and fabricated." Singhal acknowledged that a group of journalists had visited him to extend an invitation but expressed annoyance that a fabricated story had been circulated by a particular journalist.

Singhal emphasized his reverence for Srimanta Sankardev and his contributions to Assamese culture, stating, "We are devoted followers of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev and always embrace Gurujona's creations with deep reverence." He demanded an apology from the journalist involved, warning of legal action if the matter was not resolved.

Meanwhile, questions have been raised about the GPC's decision to invite Singhal, who holds no portfolio related to information, public relations, or culture. Some social media users and senior journalists speculated whether the invitation was aimed at securing donations from the minister, which allegedly did not materialize. A prominent television journalist publicly questioned the GPC's motives and called for an apology to resolve the issue.

The PCA has urged the GPC to issue a clarification to prevent further escalation. "As the issue has seemingly gone out of proportion, the GPC should come out with a clarification so that the matter can be put to rest. Otherwise, it will only help anti-media elements in society to launch another series of attacks on the journalist community," said PCA president Kailash Sarma, working president Nava Thakuria, and general secretary Hiren Ch Kalita in a joint statement.

The PCA also extended its best wishes for the upcoming Bhaona performance titled *Gandharir Abhishap*, organized by the GPC in association with the NEZCC, scheduled for March 15, 2025, at the Shilpagram premises.

The controversy has highlighted the delicate balance between cultural sensitivity and media responsibility, with calls for transparency and accountability from all parties involved.

AT News

Assam Times Staff. editor@assamtimes.org

BY AT NEWS

People's consultation on agroecology, climate adaptation concludes in Jorhat

USTM concludes workshop on academic writing and scholarly publishing

'Grit & Glory' released in Guwahati, highlights RSS work in Northeast

Art exhibition raises awareness for vulture conservation in Jorhat

ABSU holds youth motivation programme at Rangia College

ON THIS DAY

Road safety awareness programe held in Kokrajhar

Believers Eastern Church Satgaon Mission Diocese Cleanliness Drive

Why has Egg become Danger for Manipur?

Orthopaedic doctors to conduct media OPD clinic

Believers Eastern Church Satgaon Mission Diocese Organises Swachta Hi Sewa

RELATED

People's consultation on agroecology, climate adaptation concludes in Jorhat

USTM concludes workshop on academic writing and scholarly publishing

'Grit & Glory' released in Guwahati, highlights RSS work in Northeast

Young poet Avinash Bastabha's 'The Tale of Termites' unveiled in Jorhat

Art exhibition raises awareness for vulture conservation in Jorhat
