

***Minister of State for Development of North East Region and
Education, Dr. Sukanta Majumdar inaugurates the Centre for
Brahmaputra Studies at Gauhati University***

On September 20, 2024, Dr. Sukanta Majumdar, the Hon'ble Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) and Education, inaugurated the Centre for Brahmaputra Studies at Gauhati University. This initiative is set to play a crucial role in promoting sustainable development and research concerning the vital Brahmaputra River, spanning over 2,900 kilometers, is not just a geographical feature; it is the very heart of this region, deeply embedded in its environment, culture, and the livelihoods of millions.

During his visit, Dr. Majumdar articulated that the Centre embodies the government's vision for holistic and sustainable development in the North East, driven by innovation. The Centre aims to be a hub for multidisciplinary research, policy-making, and knowledge-sharing. Vision and Objectives of the Centre are

- The Centre for Brahmaputra Studies will be a "one-stop destination" for all research, policy, and knowledge concerning the river.
- It will serve as a critical resource for policymakers, academicians, and society at large.
- The Centre's primary mission is to provide insights and solutions that guide the sustainable development of the region and ensure the well-being of the people who rely on the Brahmaputra.

Some key objectives include:

1. Conducting multidisciplinary research on the river's flow networks and environmental dynamics.
2. Studying the relationship between the land, river, and the people who depend on it.
3. Establishing a comprehensive data repository that will become an invaluable resource for future research and policymaking.

4. Collaborating with national and international organizations to develop policies that address challenges like floods, erosion, and hydrological changes.

Capacity Building and Innovation

- The Centre will also focus on capacity building by organizing training programs, workshops, and short-term courses to equip students, researchers, and policymakers with the knowledge needed to tackle the challenges surrounding the Brahmaputra.
- In addition, the Centre will foster public awareness about the importance of the Brahmaputra and set up an innovation hub to develop solutions for key challenges like water management, energy, and environmental sustainability.

International Collaboration

- This Centre will include contributions from some of the most renowned international scholars, bringing in global best practices to find solutions for the North Eastern Region's unique challenges.
- This exchange of knowledge will place Gauhati University on the global map, enhancing its standing as a leading research institution.

Supported by the North Eastern Council (NEC) with a funding allocation of ₹28 crores, the Centre is poised to gain international recognition as a vital institution addressing the complex challenges posed by the Brahmaputra River.

The inauguration event was attended by prominent figures including Prof. Nani Gopal Mahanta, Vice Chancellor of Gauhati University, Shri Angshuman Dey, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of DoNER, and Ms. Sherry Lalthangzo, Economic Adviser at NEC, alongside faculty members, students, and other distinguished guests.

Dr. Hemanta Kumar Nath, Registrar of Gauhati University, set a positive tone with the welcome address. Prof. Shikhar Kumar Sharma, Director of the Centre, shared insights into the Centre's vision, emphasizing its interdisciplinary approach to understanding the Brahmaputra and tackling challenges like river basin management, biodiversity, and climate change.

Shri Angshuman Dey underlined the importance of the Brahmaputra in the cultural and economic landscape of the North East, expressing confidence that the Centre would facilitate transformative development through dedicated research.

In his keynote address, Dr. Majumdar praised Gauhati University for its leadership in establishing the Centre and highlighted the university's achievements, including an A+ NAAC grade and top rankings among North Eastern institutions. He reiterated the significance of the Brahmaputra as a natural resource, detailing challenges such as flooding and erosion that the Centre aims to address through comprehensive research and sustainable initiatives.

Dr. Majumdar emphasized the importance of establishing a data repository to enhance public awareness regarding the river's significance and the need for international collaboration to tackle unique regional challenges. He acknowledged the financial backing from NEC, which facilitated the Centre's establishment.

Concluding his address, Dr. Majumdar reaffirmed the government's commitment to the holistic development of the North East and urged Gauhati University to expedite the recruitment of key personnel to ensure the Centre becomes fully operational as soon as possible.

The Centre occupies an impressive 8,000 square meters, equipped with state-of-the-art research facilities, laboratories, and administrative spaces, reflecting a strong commitment to interdisciplinary research on the Brahmaputra's ecological, socio-economic, and cultural aspects.

Prof. Nani Gopal Mahanta extended gratitude to the Ministry of DoNER and NEC for their support, assuring attendees that the Centre for Brahmaputra Studies is destined to become a leading global research hub, making significant contributions to the region's development.

This inauguration signifies not only a commitment to academic excellence but also a proactive approach to addressing the environmental and socio-economic challenges faced by the North Eastern Region, fostering a sustainable future for its communities.

