



bbitf

2024

Bhullung-Bhuthur International
Theatre Festival

ভুল্লুং-বুথুৰ আন্তঃৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় নাট-মহোৎসৱ

CONCEPT NOTE



Organised by
AANK_A Creative Line

GUWAHATI | ASSAM | INDIA

3-7 September 2024

The Festival

AANK-A Creative Line, a distinguished theatre group from Guwahati, Assam, India, proudly presents the continuation of its ambitious project, **The Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival (BBITF)**, with the theme “Theatre for Harmony.” Following the success of the inaugural event in 2023, this year’s festival is scheduled to take place from **September 3rd to 7th 2024** at the esteemed Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra Society.

We are proud to announce that as a result of last year’s BBITF, we have established a powerful international partnership with **Inter Act Art**, based in Colombo, Sri Lanka. This collaboration highlights the strength and potential of cross-cultural projects in fostering global artistic connections. The parallel festival of the BBITF, the **Colombo International Theatre Festival (CITF)**, will be held from **August 24th to 30th, 2024**, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, marking its 10th anniversary celebration.

This remarkable endeavour aims to celebrate the inseparable relationship between rivers and human civilization, with a special focus on the Brahmaputra, the lifeline of Assam, India. Through collaborative efforts, we continue to emphasize the importance of unity and harmony in the arts.



The festival comprises six major events:

Theatre Performances

13 Performances from 9 countries

Date: 3rd to 7th September, 2024

Time: 5.30PM to 8.00PM

Venue: Sri Sri Madhavadeva International Auditorium of *Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra Society*, Assam, India.

03-09-2024	Inauguration	"Paradox" Krzysztof Rogacewicz-Poland	
04-09-2024	"Mt Rushmore"_Monica Dudarov Hunken_USA		
05-09-2024	"The Inviction" Samitha Sudheeshwara- Sri Lanka//	"Kalpa Kotha" Pabitra Chetia-India	"She is Naked" Fr. Peter Hemapriya Botejue-Sri Lanka//
06-09-2024	"Junaki Padya"_Malaya Baruah-India "Equal Feelings" Nirmani Fernando & Vidura Abeydeera-Sri Lanka// "A River's Tale" Dr Mrinal Jyoti Goswami-India	"Storyless... Blead" Abderahmen Cherif & Sadok Aïdani- Tunisia	
07-09-2024	"Swings of Love" M. Safeer-India-Sri Lanka-France-Australian Collaborative Production		Culmination

Physical Theatre Workshop

The Physical Theatre Workshop is a specialized training program focused on using the body and rhythm for acting, emphasizing "Movement Theatre" to bridge linguistic gaps through physical movements, dance, and expressions. Classes will be conducted by various theatre personalities from around the globe.

Date: 3rd to 7th September, 2024

Time: 10.00AM to 4.00PM, (Daily)

Venue: *Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra Society*

Theatre Forum

The festival is proud to host two thought-provoking theatre forums, providing an enriching platform for dialogue, exchange, and exploration within the global theatre community.

- **4th September, 2024**

Topic: International Theatre Exchange: Prospect and Challenges

- **6th September, 2024**

Topic: Physicality and Narrative Experimentation: Exploring the Fusion of Physical Theatre Techniques and Non-linear Storytelling in Modern Productions.

Time: 2.30PM to 4.00PM

Venue: *Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra Society*

(Speakers from different countries will lead discussions on various theatre-related topics.)

Theatre Symposium (Competition Section)

One symposium will be arranged as part of the festival. It will be a competition section for college and university students and researchers. The symposium aims to provide a platform for participants to explore and discuss critical themes in contemporary theatre.

Topic: Exploring Theatre's Transformative Power

Date: 5th September, 2024

Time: 2.30PM to 4.00PM

Venue: *Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra Society*



Performance Art

Performance art is a dynamic, experimental art form using the artist's body to blend visual art with live performance, focusing on process, experience, and themes like conflict and identity. One internationally known performance art practitioner from Assam will present a piece as part of the festival.

- **The Esoteric Pain** by Anupam Saikia_India
Date: 5th September, 2024
Time: 6.00PM to 6.25PM
Venue: *Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra Society*

Environmental Sensitisation Workshop

In BBITF 2024, we will once again conduct the Environmental Sensitization Workshops to deepen participants' connection with the Brahmaputra River. These workshops will continue to explore the river's cultural heritage, raise environmental awareness, and foster community engagement, aligning with the festival's theme, "Theatre for Harmony."

- Knowledge Partner:** Aaranyak, Guwahati, Assam
Venue 1: Sonapur College, Sonapur on 6th September, 2024
Venue 2: J N College, Boko on 7th September, 2024
Timing: **Workshop:** 10.00AM to 12.30PM
 Theatre Performance: 2.00PM – 3.00PM
Name of the Play: Storyless... Blead
Team: The Unified Theatre, Tunisia
Playwright & Director: Abderahmen Cherif & Sadok Aidani- Tunisia



Assam, situated in the north-eastern part of India is blessed with natural beauty and cultural diversity, two major rivers, numerous tributaries, mountains, forests, and plains. The Brahmaputra, known by various names like *Burlung-Buthur*, *Lohitya*, *Mahabahu* etc., has shaped the socio-economic and cultural identity of the people of Assam and carries great significance in their social life. In a lecture by Bishnu Prasad Rabha, “Asomiya Kristir Samu Abhash” (A Brief Overview of Assamese Culture), he emphasized the message of symbolic harmony of the Brahmaputra and mentioned that it was called “Bhullung-Bhuthur”.

Furthermore, Assam has a rich tradition of folk theatrical performances that have been integral to its cultural heritage since ancient times. These performances have fostered unity, understanding, and empathy among the people, transcending cultural, social, and linguistic barriers. In the same way, Shankardeva’s Naat/Bhaona has been a testimony to the power of creative work to promote harmony in society and sing the praises of humanity. This proves that culture can proclaim the sound of harmony in society.

Considering the present global scenario with its various challenges and instabilities, marginalized communities are disproportionately affected. Theatre emerges at this juncture as a potent tool for promoting peaceful coexistence and driving social change. The belief that **through theatre, we can build a more harmonious and unified society with the triumph of humanity** serves as the driving force behind the *Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival*.

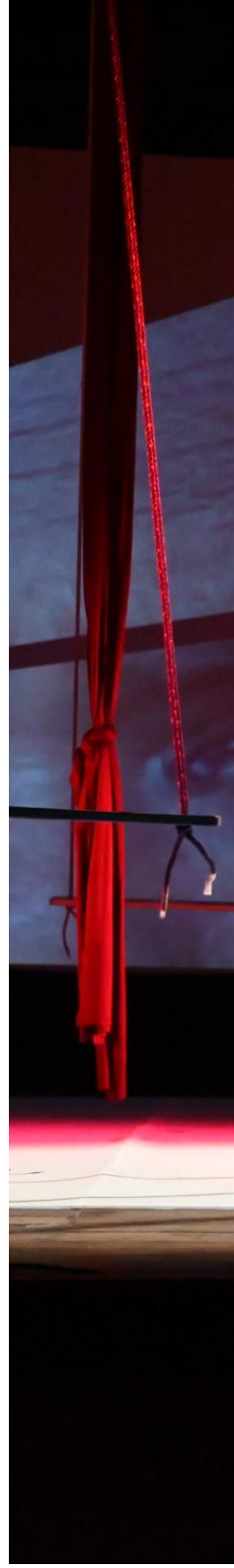
The Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival aims to harness the transformative power of theatre to

bring people together, celebrate diversity, and create a more empathetic and compassionate society. By highlighting the connection between rivers and civilization, it emphasizes the need to protect and preserve these natural resources for the substantial development of all.

Experience the pinnacle of artistic collaboration with Aank-a Creative Line's ground-breaking an International Collaborative Theatre Project, an outcome of the Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival (BBITF) 2023. This visionary endeavour unites virtuoso artists from five nations - France, Australia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India - to weave a rich tapestry of theatrical brilliance. This multifaceted project comprises two major events: Theatre Performance and Theatre Forum.

Invigorate Assam's theatrical landscape, citing the success of last year's BBITF organized in collaboration with *Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra Samaj* and *Aranyak*. The festival, held under the theme of "Theatre for Harmony," will return for a five-day celebration in September this year, aiming to deepen the bonds between rivers and human civilization, with a special focus on the Brahmaputra River.

In conclusion, AANK-A Creative Line's vision for the Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival is a testament to the belief that theatre and cultural practices can shape a harmonious and unified society, transcending barriers and paving the way for positive social change. By celebrating the rivers and cultural heritage of Assam, this festival aims to inspire people to work towards a more compassionate and empathetic world, where humanity triumphs above all else.





Objectives

The main objectives of the festival are:

- This theatre festival aims to celebrate the spirit of rivers and human society by exploring the connection between the creative dimensions of human culture and rivers.
- Seeks to celebrate the cultural significance of the Brahmaputra river and its relationship with human civilization through theatrical performances and workshops.
- To promote harmony and unity among diverse communities by utilizing theatre as a powerful tool to address global challenges, fostering empathy, understanding, and social change.
- By organizing performances, workshops, and discussions, the festival aims to highlight the vital connection between rivers and human culture, inspiring awareness and environmental sensitization for the preservation of natural resources.
- The festival envisions becoming a global platform that brings together artists from different backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives to showcase their creative expressions, fostering appreciation for cultural heritage and contributing to a more compassionate and empathetic world.

Scope of the Festival

The Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival celebrates the interplay between rivers and human civilization, with a particular focus on the Brahmaputra in Assam. It encompasses performances, a physical theatre workshop, theatre forums, a symposium (including a competition section for college and university students and researchers), performance art, and an environmental sensitization program. By engaging students and researchers from colleges and universities, the festival aims to create networking and bonding opportunities, expanding our collaborative network.

By bringing together diverse artists, students, faculty from colleges and universities, workshops, and discussions, the festival enhances cultural appreciation, fosters unity, and inspires positive social change. It may be called "Theatre for Social Change," as it provides all participants with the opportunity to establish international connections. This ambitious event sees theatre as a means to cultivate harmony, transcending global challenges, and nurturing a world of compassion and empathy. It seeks to preserve cultural heritage and humanity, engaging an estimated 5,000 attendees in person and reaching around 50,000 more through online channels.



About the Group

Founded with a deep commitment to Assam's cultural landscape, AANK-A Creative Line stands as a pioneering force in redefining theatre and performance. Since its inception in 2008, the group has been dedicated to unearthing uncharted perspectives within the realm of theatre. Its journey commenced with the impactful production "Xunor Xing Thoka Ghariyalar Choku," marking the inception of its cultural voyage. With an impressive repertoire of nine significant plays, AANK-A Creative Line has continually pushed boundaries and evolved its artistic narrative.

Notably, the group has garnered international recognition through thought-provoking performances like "Imaan Imaan Paani," "Erikoti-Mirikoti_the Butterfly Effect," "BhukarXadhu_The Myth of Hunger," "Etheror Irika_Ethereal Epoch," "Eréndira's Metamorphosis," "Alice in Assam," and "Premar Dolna (Swing of Love)." These productions transcend borders and captivate audiences in India and abroad.

AANK-A Creative Line serves as a beacon of innovation, emphasizing international collaboration and chains, breathing new life into Assam's cultural heritage while seamlessly merging tradition with contemporary expression. The group's artistic endeavours delve into unexplored territories, sparking conversations, and engaging audiences in a profound exploration of human experiences.

As a trailblazer in the theatre scene, AANK-A Creative Line continues to shape the artistic landscape, leaving an indelible mark on both local and global stages. The group's emphasis on international collaboration was

further exemplified by the initiation of the Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival (BBITF) last year. “Swings of Love” stands as a testament to the outcomes of these collaborative efforts, serving as a culmination of the group’s visionary thoughts and the previous year’s BBITF.





Short Bio of the Festival Director

Mrinal Jyoti Goswami (MA, MPhil, PhD), is a distinguished figure whose expertise spans across academia, literature, and theatre. Currently serving as a faculty member at Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University in the Discipline of Assamese, Dr. Goswami is celebrated for his profound contributions to Drama, Theatre, Performance Studies, and Cultural Studies.

As an internationally renowned playwright, Dr. Goswami's work is deeply rooted in research and innovation. He has authored numerous scholarly articles, directed acclaimed productions, and contributed significantly to Assamese Theatre and the e-jonaki movement within Assamese Literature. Notably, he authored the inaugural "Online Short History of Assamese Literature" and has published several e-books, including "Aytijyar Nirjash" and "Bhinnaxuree Emuthi Prabandha," showcasing his versatility and depth in Assamese literary expression.

Beyond academia, Dr. Goswami's theatrical brilliance shines on both national and international stages. His plays, such as "Imaan Imaan Paani" and "Irikoti Mirikoti_The Butterfly Effect," have received widespread acclaim at prestigious festivals, including the Colombo International Theatre Festival (CITF) and Bharat Rang Mahotsav (BRM). His contributions continue to be recognized, with his play "Etheror Irika_Ethereal Epoch" being featured in the Colombo International Theatre Festival and other national theatre events.

His expertise has been featured at esteemed gatherings, such as the International Symposium on Theatre Discipline's Development in Shanghai, China. In July 2024, he played a significant role as an official guest at the Yongin International Theatre Forum (YITF) in South Korea, organized by the Korean Theatre Association. At YITF, Dr. Goswami presented his paper, "Fostering International Theatre Interactions: Lessons from India's Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival," which was met with great acclaim. Additionally, he was instrumental in signing a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with nine countries—India, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, and South Korea—to establish the "New World Theatre Network" (NWTN). This landmark achievement marks the first time an initiative from Assam has reached such a global scale, significantly advancing the region's theatre landscape.

Further, as part of the Colombo International Theatre Festival (CITF), Dr. Goswami's contributions extended to the Colombo Theatre Forum 2024, where he delivered a keynote address on the "Evolution of International Festivals in Assam, India," and performed the short play "A River's Tale," further highlighting the transformative power of theatre and the importance of international collaboration.

Dr. Goswami's dedication to the arts and his commitment to promoting cultural exchange make him a pivotal figure in the world of Assamese theatre, leaving an enduring legacy on the global stage.



Patron Members Group

To further enhance the festival experience, BBITF 2024 introduces the Patron Members Group—an exclusive community of theatre enthusiasts dedicated to supporting and championing the arts. Patron Members will enjoy a host of benefits, including priority access to festival events, exclusive discounts, networking opportunities, and special offers. By joining the Patron Members Group, patrons not only enrich their own festival experience but also contribute to the continued success and sustainability of BBITF. Details are available on the group website.

Join Us

We invite you to join us on this transformative journey as we celebrate the power of theatre to unite, inspire, and ignite positive change. Whether you're an avid theatre aficionado, a passionate environmentalist, or simply someone who values the transformative power of the arts, BBITF 2024 welcomes you with open arms. Together, let's embark on a journey of discovery, exploration, and celebration as we strive to create a more harmonious world through the magic of theatre.



Festival Team

Festival Director:	Dr. Mrinal Jyoti Goswami
Festival Secretary:	Sri Abhijit Das and Mr. Jintu Thakuria
Publicity & Media Designer:	Dr. Sanjib Borah
Festival Team:	Dr. Halim Hussain, Mr. Dhurubajyoti Deka, Ms. Jahnabi Bora, Oinau Jengrai, Ashramika, Dr. Junmoni Gogoi, Mr. Pranab Priyanku Gogoi, Ms. Kankana Das, Dr. Hari Prasad Baruah, Dr. Smriti Rekha Bhuyan, Dr. Bristi Kalita, Dr. Gargi Phukan, Ms. Namrata Sarma, Dr. Manabendra Sarma
Media Coordinator:	Ms. Darshana B Baruah
Legal Advisor:	Mr. Dipta Prasad Goswami
Advisory Team:	Mr. Nuruddin Ahmad, Mr. Utpal Datta, Mr. Nayan Prasad, Mr. Tarun Chandra Kalita, Dr. Bipuljyoti Saikia, Mr. Gopal Jalan, Mr. Sibanu Borah, Mr. Kishor Kr Das, Dr. Pratibha Sarmah, Prof. Pranjit Bora, Prof. Joydeep Baruah
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Partners

