

Guwahati's Historic Mahafezkhana Demolished, Sparking Outrage Over Heritage Loss



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The demolition of Mahafezkhana, Assam's oldest surviving concrete structure and a vital piece of Northeast India's architectural heritage, has triggered widespread outrage. Built between 1855 and 1865, the 160-year-old building—once a custodian of crucial land records during British colonial rule—was razed by the Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) as part of a park extension and Brahmaputra riverfront beautification project, according to reports published on Sunday.

Senior journalist Mrinal Talukdar expressed his dismay on X, describing the demolition as “not just demolition—this is desecration.” In a series of posts, including one at 2:30 AM IST on March 30 (Post ID: 1906172207753298046), Talukdar highlighted the structure’s historical significance, noting its resilience through the devastating earthquakes of 1897 and 1950. He detailed its unique features, such as a full wraparound verandah, massive sal tree supports over 45 feet tall, and its role as a “living witness to Assam’s architectural legacy.”

The demolition, carried out without public consultation or preservation efforts, has sparked a fierce debate over the balance between development and heritage conservation. Historians and locals argue that Mahafezkhana symbolized the foundation of Assam’s colonial governance system and served as a tangible link to the region’s administrative and archival past. The late historian Dipankar Banerjee had previously noted that the structure, also known as the record room, was a cornerstone of Guwahati’s history.

Critics, including filmmaker Utpal Borpujari, have lamented the loss, pointing out that “what 1857 and 1950 quakes couldn’t achieve...we as a community have no respect for heritage and history.” The GMDA’s actions, part of the broader Master Plan Guwahati 2025 and riverfront development initiatives, have raised questions about the authority’s commitment to preserving the city’s cultural landmarks.

As the rubble of Mahafezkhana now lies scattered, calls for accountability and stronger heritage protection measures are growing, with many urging the Assam government to reconsider its approach to development projects impacting historical sites.

OUTRAGEOUS! [#Mahafezkhana](https://twitter.com/Mahafezkhana) — Assam’s oldest surviving concrete structure, perhaps the oldest in all of Northeast India — has been mercilessly destroyed by GMDA in the name of a park extension! This is not just demolition — this is desecration. 1/4 pic.twitter.com/L4t2CQ0VQf

— Mrinal Talukdar (@mrinaltalukdar8) [March 30, 2025](#)

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