

Lumding Honors Naga Woman T. Machapakla Ao, Founder of Assamese School; Plans Statue Installation Amid Assam Sahitya Sabha Criticism



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A heartfelt felicitation ceremony was held in Lumding to honor Naga woman **Mrs. T. Machapakla Ao**, the visionary founder of the Assamese medium school in the town. The event, organized by the fortnightly publication **Matir Manuh**, celebrated her pivotal role in establishing the school in 1956—a milestone in Lumding’s educational history.

Prominent speakers at the event included **Rajkumar Baishya** (Chief Editor, Matir Manuh), **Deepak Mena** (Executive President), **Minati Sharma** (Director Member), **Prashant Hatimota** (General Secretary), **Sujata Sharma** (Social Media Secretary), **Anup Arandhara** (Secretary, Mung-Dun-Chung Kham, Assam, NE India), **Dr. T. Lima Jamir** (President, Nagaland Indigenous People's Forum), Kikheto Kika Sumi, Secretary), **Bharat Tamuly Phukan** (Lanka Social Worker), and nationalist leader **Hasibur Rahman**.

Mrs. Ao was honored with a **japi, gamosa, seleng, and a citation**, and Chief Editor Baishya announced that a **statue of Mrs. Ao would be installed in front of the Assamese school** as a lasting tribute to her contribution.

Lumding, located on the border of the erstwhile Nagaon and present Hojai districts, had no Assamese medium school until 1956. Children from **Naga, Kachari, Karbi, and other communities** were compelled to study in Bengali medium schools. A group of young visionaries—including the late **Haidar Rahman, Raunak Ali, Nandeswar Sharma, Kamaleshwar Bora, Bhadrakanta Das, Bhaven Khaound, Raheshwar Hira, and Prahlad Das**—initiated efforts to establish an Assamese medium school but faced obstacles due to the lack of land.

It was **Mrs. T. Machapakla Ao**, then moujadar of Lumding mouza, who generously **donated two kathas of her own land** to make the school a reality. With her support, the Assamese school began in 1956 and received government recognition in 1959. By 1960, the **Lumding Assamese High School** was established, with the first headmaster **Mahendra Pathak**. The high school examination center was set up in 1968, and today, the institution functions as a government-recognized school.

The felicitation also paid tribute to all the individuals who contributed to the school's establishment, emphasizing the enduring legacy of Mrs. Ao. Critically, the organizers expressed disappointment that the **Assam Sahitya Sabha has yet to honor her**, calling this oversight a reflection of the organization's "**extreme irresponsibility**".

The event highlighted the enduring impact of Mrs. Ao's vision and generosity, ensuring that future generations recognize her indispensable role in shaping Assamese education in Lumding.

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