



Field Trip 2026-2027

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Department of History, MDU

As part of the curriculum requirement for Paper Research Project 601 of the 6th Semester B.A. History (Honours), the Department of History, Madhabdev University organized a one-day educational field trip on 28th April 2026. The trip was designed to provide students with first-hand exposure to sites of ecological, archaeological, and cultural significance in Assam, bridging classroom learning with field-based observation.

Aim:

To enable students to understand the interrelationship between history, environment, archaeology, and community through direct engagement with diverse heritage sites.

Scope:

The field trip covered three domains: environmental history, archaeology, and religious-cultural history. It allowed students to collect primary data, photograph heritage structures, interact with local contexts, and prepare for their field study reports as mandated by the syllabus.

Objectives:

1. To study the environmental history of Kaziranga National Park and its role in shaping wildlife conservation in colonial and post-colonial Assam.
2. To examine archaeological remains at Bamuni Hills to understand early medieval art and temple architecture under ASI protection.
3. To understand the origin and socio-religious contribution of the G.E.L. Church in Tezpur as part of Christian missionary history in Northeast India.
4. To develop skills in field documentation, observation, and contextual analysis among students.
5. To foster team spirit and experiential learning beyond textbooks.

Itinerary

The bus departed from Madhabdev University campus at around 4:30 AM. After a brief halt for refreshment, we reached our first destination, Kaziranga National Park, by 9:30 AM.

1. Kaziranga National Park – Bagori Range

Kaziranga's environmental history is deeply tied to colonial game preservation. Declared a Reserved Forest in 1908 at the initiative of Lady Curzon, it became a game sanctuary in 1916 and a National Park in 1974. Today it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a symbol of successful conservation of the Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros.

The park is administratively divided into four ranges: Eastern (Agaratoli), Central (Kohora), Western (Bagori), and Burapahar. We undertook a Jeep Safari in the Bagori Range, known for its vast grasslands and wetlands.

The safari offered rich faunal sightings. We observed herds of Asiatic water buffalo, grazing, enjoying themselves in water and also a herd was seen crossing the trail right in front of us. The iconic one-horned rhinoceros grazing in the nearby swamp while some were grazing in the fields. We saw a few Asiatic elephants at a distant. Among deer species, we identified the swamp deer (*dolu horina* or *barasingha*) and a few hog deers. The birdlife was equally vibrant with sightings of the great cormorant, spot-billed pelican, spotted owlet, black necked stork, and lesser adjutant storks. Reptiles included Indian roofed turtles basking on logs and a couple of *Keku Saap* (Tokay Gecko), while the *sitol* (Featherback/knifefish) fish was pointed out by our guide in the wetlands. The experience helped students understand how landscape, ecology, and conservation policies shape regional history.

After a group lunch at Kaziranga, we proceeded towards Tezpur by 2:30 PM.





2. Bamuni Hills Ruins, Tezpur

Our second stop was the *Bamuni Hills*, a lesser-known ASI-protected site at Tezpur. The site contains ruins of a 9th–10th century CE temple complex attributed to the *Salastambha* or *Pala* dynasty. Scattered across the hillock are intricately carved architectural fragments: massive stone blocks, lintels with floral motifs, door jambs depicting *dwarapalas*, and remains of a circular shrine. The style shows strong *Gupta* and early Assamese influences. The secluded nature of the site prompted discussion on heritage neglect, conservation challenges, and how such ruins help reconstruct the religious and artistic history of ancient

Harappeswaral/Hatappeswara. Students made a photographic documentation of the ruins, tried to identify the remains, discuss the possible causes of its ruin and more as field exercise.



3. G.E.L. Church, North East Diocese, Tezpur

Adjacent to Bamuni Hills, we visited the Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church, North East Diocese, established in 1935. There we had the opportunity to engage in an historical enquiry with the members of the diocese. The church traces its origin to the Gossner Mission started in 1845 in Chotanagpur by German missionaries. It is a major Protestant denomination with hundreds of thousands of members today. The GELC is affiliated with the National Council of Churches in India, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India, the Lutheran World Federation, and the World Council of Churches. It is currently led by Moderator Bishop Marshall Kerketta. The GELC, along with the Bodo Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church, represents Lutheran tradition in Northeast India. The Tezpur church stands as a marker of missionary expansion, Adivasi migration for tea gardens, and the growth of indigenous Christianity in Assam. The simple yet elegant structure and interactions with the church members gave students insight into the region's plural religious history.



We departed Tezpur at around 6.30 PM and reached Madhabdev University campus by 9:30 PM. The field trip successfully met its academic objectives by exposing students to environmental, archaeological, and community history. From the ecological conservation narrative of Kaziranga to the silent stones of Bamuni Hills and the living heritage of the G.E.L. Church, the day offered a multi-layered understanding of Assam's past. Students have been asked to submit individual field reports with photographs and observations. The Department extends gratitude to the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Arupjyoti Choudhury and Registrar, Khirapada Dutta for permission and the bus staff for safe travel.



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by Harsita Borah