



## Valuable contributions

Stracey, who was born in Andhra Pradesh's Kakinada, served as an Indian Forest Service officer in Assam. He played a key role in renaming the Kaziranga Game Sanctuary as a wildlife sanctuary in 1950, introduced a course in wildlife preservation, and wrote books such as *Elephant Gold*, *Nagaland Nightmare*, and *The Authoritative Tigers*.

He also established the Assam Forest School, a training institute catering to the northeastern region. It completed 75 years in 2023.

“The PD Stracey Library offers readers books and magazines on the world of nature apart from merchandise to take memories of Kaziranga home. The initiative is a tribute to a legendary forest officer,” Kaziranga’s field director Sonali Ghosh said.

Patrick D. Stracey, an Indian Forest Service officer who served in Assam, played a key role in renaming the Kaziranga Game Sanctuary as a wildlife sanctuary in 1950. | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement

The park authorities have also introduced a 7.6-km cycling route in collaboration with a tribal eco-development committee as well as a couple of outlets showcasing the produce of self-help groups of women living in the forest fringes.

**Nature walk, dolphins and more**

Forest officials in Assam had been planning to ease the tourist pressure on Kohora and Bagori, the two central ranges of the national park. It led to the Greater Kaziranga concept being introduced this year.

The park authorities have advised visitors to stay for at least three nights to experience the park beyond the two popular ranges.

“The initiative includes a nature walk trail in Burhachapori-Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary (west of Kaziranga) for exploring a bee-eater colony and freshwater mangroves, a boat ride for dolphin watching (in the Brahmaputra) at Bhomoraguri, a visit to tourist village Biswanath Ghat, and opportunities for trekking and birdwatching,” Ms. Ghosh said.

Often referred to as Gupt Kashi, Biswanath Ghat was recently declared India’s best tourism village for 2023 by the Ministry of Tourism.

A total of 3,14,796 tourists visited Kaziranga during the 2022-23 season, which was almost twice the 1,76,181 visitors in 2018-19. The tourists were concentrated mostly in Kohora (1,53,233) and Bagori (1,38,511).

In keeping with the March 1 guidelines of the National Tiger Conservation Authority, the park authorities have decided to close the Kohora and Bagori ranges for half a day every Wednesday to distribute the tourists to other ranges.

The Kaziranga National Park, home to 2,613 rhinos, has two more ranges – Agoratoli and Burapahar – on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra. The park’s Biswanath Division on the northern bank also has four less touristy ranges.