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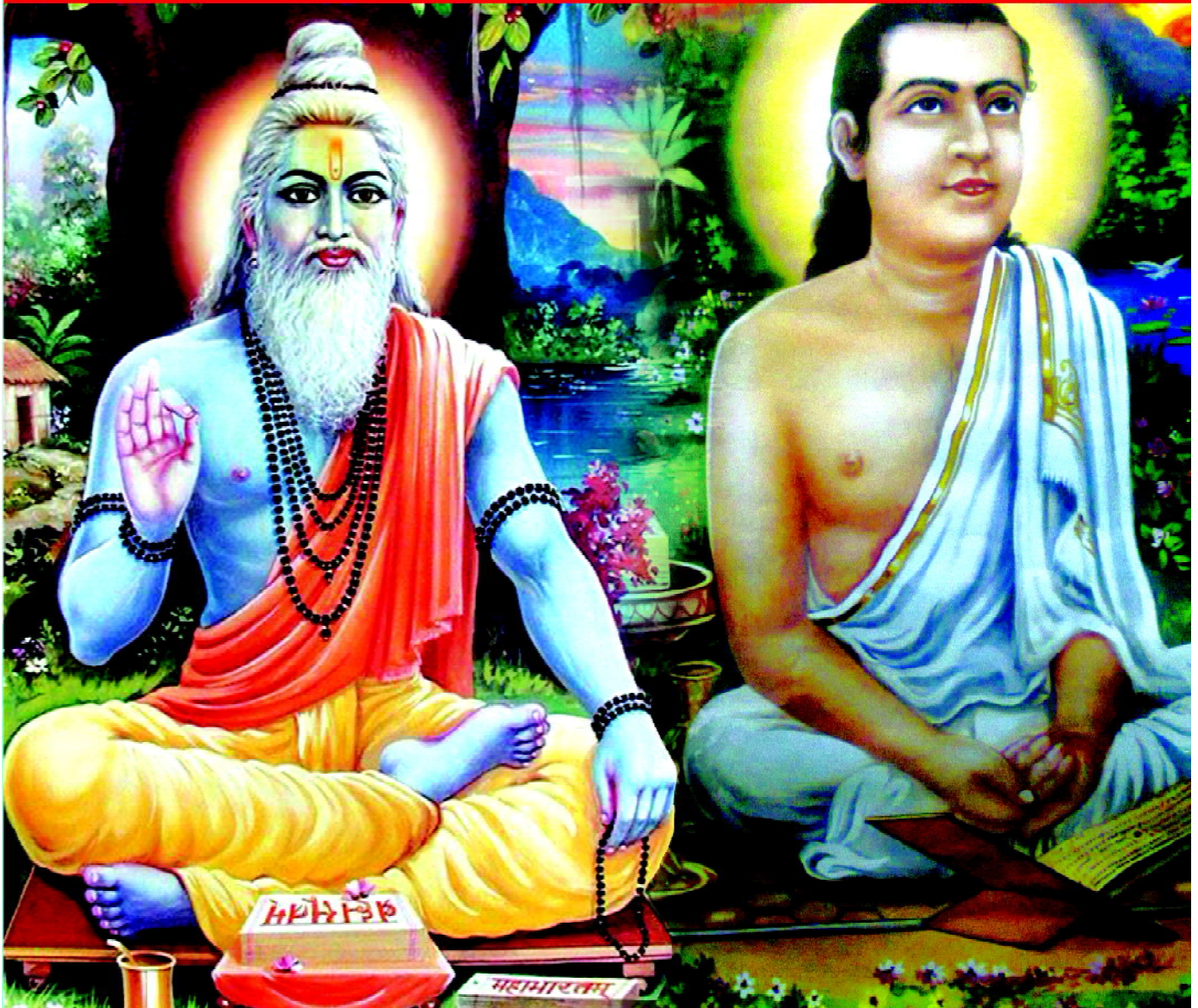
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# HERITAGE EXPLORER

*A Monthly News Bulletin*

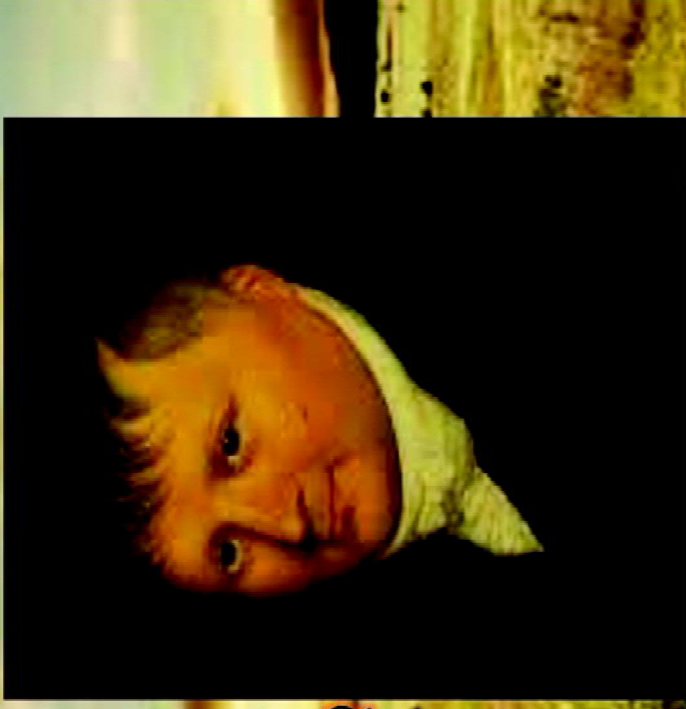
LET KNOWLEDGE COME FROM ALL THE SIDES

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**India is superior in everything – intellectually, religiously..., even Greek heritage seems pale in comparison.**

**Friedrich von Schlegel**



Great German writer, critic, and principal philosopher of German romanticism; pioneer in comparative Ind-European linguistics and philology.

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Editor : Amarendra Brahma



## Guru Purnima and its relevance today

When the months in a year roll down to July, my mind tends to take a break to relive the memories of loving teachers of my school and college days, the real life role models of the great sage Vyasa, whose toils made me what I am today. The relevance of the month of July-August with this state of my mind is in the most adorable occasion of Guru Purnima, the birth anniversary of Veda Vyasa also known as Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa, the author of Mahabharata, Vedas and Puranas. Guru Purnima celebrates the human ability to rise beyond physical nature, and the Greatness of Adiyogi, who made this possible.

The followers of Hindu religion celebrate Guru Purnima as the birth anniversary of Veda Vyasa, who wrote several eternally relevant religious books and authored spiritual teachings, and is considered as the original Guru. The day, which falls on a full moon day of the month of Asshar as per Hindu Almanac, is marked by remembering and paying homage to the great sage Vyasa, the first patron of the guru-shishya Parampara, the hallmark of Indian educational system. Guru Purnima is also traditionally celebrated by the Buddhists in remembrance of Lord Buddha, who gave his first sermon on this day at Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh.

*Guru Purnima* is not an occasion of pompous celebration only. This day, along with the *Adi Guru*, we also remember our real life Gurus, the teachers under whom we learnt our initial lessons of life. They not only taught us academic lessons but also instilled in our minds the life giving principles of truth, discipline, co-existence, duties and responsibilities towards individuals, society, state and our motherland, Bharat. Our heads automatically bow down to their feet, for what they have given us. We owe our *Guru Dakshina* to them but they feel happier when they see that their pupils are following the path they have shown them and have succeeded in life. Our society was happy and peaceful in the olden days only because our teachers, our real life Gurus were doing their duty with all devotion and commitment.

Unfortunately, the social scenario today is just the opposite. Most of our present day breed takes to teaching after their graduation only as a means of earning a salary. They lack commitment and dedication and sadly most of them do not love their profession. If we go by the news reports in our dailies, many of these so called teachers make passes at their girl students and women colleagues, forgetting that a teacher is more than a father to students, elder or younger brothers to their women colleagues. They also forget that they are being watched all the time by their pupils and nothing misses their eyes. They appear to be unconcerned that their bad habits, their style of inappropriate dresses and behaviour, their attachment to smoking and pan chewing are adversely influencing the students. They perhaps also never feel it necessary to look into the reasons behind the lack of academic progress of their students and often encourage them to indiscriminately use mobiles, Facebook, twitter, and other chatting applications.

The worst part of these deviations is resulting in loss of their prestige in the eyes of their students. The greatest loser from all these are the society and the coming generation, who are to build the future India. The students nowadays are not amenable to any discipline or decency. They enjoy taking part in agitations more than their studies. The 1979 student's agitation destroyed the academic environment of the state and many budding talents lost their path to a bright future. The new agitation centring the Citizens Bill is building up. The sacrificial goats will be the students and the political parties and their politicians will be the biggest beneficiary. If the future of our motherland Assam in particular and the North East in general is to be saved from the catastrophe, the Gurus at all level must play a decisive role.

Come, let us pay our obeisance to our Gurus on the auspicious occasion of Guru Purnima and pray to god to bless us the benign company of true teachers.

**Editor**



## Exploring the history of ancient Tripura – new perspective

Dr Sourish Deb Barma

Today the study of history has been replaced by utter confusion and indiscipline. It has become a routine affair for the new bizarre thoughts and idea to surface in the context of this indiscipline. Though there are various mythological literature without which it is not possible to reconstruct the history of India but knowingly it has been always kept neglected. Traditionally the history of Tripura depends mainly on the Sanskrit literature “Rajmala” and “Rajratnakaram” and Bengali “Rajmala” in verse style compiled by two court Pundits of King Dharma Manikya in 1407 C.E. Rajmala means “Garland of Kings”. There are a series of Sri Rajmala compiled during various Raja’s of Tripura in different ages during the medieval periods and they comprise of six volumes of which four only are available. The latest of the Rajmala series was compiled by Sri Kaliprasanna Sengupta Vidyabhushan and its first edition was published in 1926 C.E during the reign of King Bir Bikram Kishore Dev Burman Manikya Bahadur.

The work “Sri Rajmala” by Kaliprasanna Sengupta Vidyabhushan was a voluminous work which not only discussed the history of Tripura in the context of Indian mythology but also have opened up a new vista in the understanding of the development of present Indian society. More than 120 years ago Sri Kailash Chandra Singha (1851-1914 A.D) wrote a dissertation on the history of Tripura with the same name “Rajmala”. In the present era most of the writer on Tripura’s history wants to highlight the history of the state in the light of Kailash Chandra’s Rajmala. The only reason for which Kailash Babu’s discourse has been accepted is because the book has been free from the notion that it has been written with the approval from the Kings. But it is of serious doubt whether this endeavour of Kailash Chandra Singha’s was neutral or not?? After analysing the situation that precedes Kailash Chandra Singha’s rendition in describing Tripura’s history through his book, raises serious doubts due the fact that whether he was a true well wisher of the state or not? It is not unknown to the well acquainted people of Tripura’s history that

Kailash Chandra’s greed for a plum post in the royal administration of Tripura during the second half of nineteenth century invited the ire of the then Maharaj Birchandra Manikya of Tripura which led to his expulsion from the state forever and later on developed into a personal tussle between him and Maharaj Birchandra. No doubt a negative attitude might have always worked behind his attempt to rewrite the history of Tripura. We could have skipped the above analysis while discussing the history of Tripura. But this angle has been analysed with the view that it might be of importance for future researchers while analysing the history of Tripura. In this context while discussing the history of Tripura Kailash Chandra’s work ‘Rajmala’ has to be critically reviewed because his writings were mainly based on western method of history writings without giving any due importance to Indian thoughts and philosophy. In the quest for the origin of the word “Tripura”, a non kokborok (Tripuri) speaker Kailash Babu proposed a theory that the word Tripura has been originated by the admixture of two kokborok word “Twi” means water and “Pra” means near forming “Twipra”. According to him in due course of time the word “Twipra” has been sanskritised to Tripura. But gramatically this kind of word doesnot exist in Kokborok (Tripuri language) till now. The word “Pra” does not indicate vicinity or near. Tripura has been crisscrossed by many rivers and rivulets but nowhere this kind of word has been used which also cannot be traced in various folktales as well as in day to day life. But there is a word called “Bupra” which denotes division. There are words like Lampra and Bupra. In kokborok the word “lama” means road. So Lama + Bupra = Lamabupra which is incorrect according to the dictions in Kokborok. So simply it becomes “lampra” which means a place from where the road divides. “Buphang” is the word for tree in Kokborok. Again branches of trees are “Buphang+Bupra” = Buphangbupra. Again the branches are simply called as “bupra” not Buphangbupra. So from these it can be easily understood that “Pra” does not mean near. Tripura is an ancient state which at present occupies

the southern tip of northeastern region of India surrounded by Bangladesh on three sides. Since ancient period these tract of land has found mention in the accounts of various Greek scholars like Ptolemy, Nonos, Ktesias etc. They have mentioned this tract of land as "Kirrhadia" or land of the Kiratas, an ancient race of India, which extends from the southern bank of Brahmaputra till Bay of Bengal. Greek philosopher Ptolemy's writing has been translated into English by Mc Crindle which is popularly known as "Periplus of the Erythrean Sea" where the location of Kirrhadia clearly indicates Tripura and its adjacent places. Ptolemy in his account also stated that to reach Kirrhadia one has to travel across a sea eastward. If we see the Puranic literature such as Vishnu Puran (chapter 3rd verse 6-8), Markendeya Puran, Manu smriti and Mahabharata (Sabha parva chapter 52, verse 8-9) all has located "Kiratadesha" in the eastern border of Aryavarta. The royal chronicle of Tripura also stated that the earlier name of the state was Kiratadesha. Manusamhita (Chapter 2, verse 22) mentioned about the presence of sea on the eastern as well as the western border of Aryavarta. So whole of Aryavarta that is gangetic plain land of north India has been separated from Kiratadesha by sea in the east. So no doubt Ptolemy's description of Kirrhadia and the mythological Kiratadesha bear similarity in geography. Accordingly it is clear that once upon a time the whole plain land of present Bangladesh was under the sea. So from this small description it is now clear that the whole world has undergone continuous alteration in its geography since ages. In the present era sometimes we are in hurry while writing about the history of a place without giving delving deep into the fact that ever-changing geopolitical map of the world is a constant phenomena and such descriptions has always lead us to a irrational explanation of the ancient dialogue and thus contributing to the negative development in the society. Such negative developments further give way to divisive forces in the great pluralistic society of this country. So careful explanation is needed and cautious statement is required before making a passing comment on the history of a region. Discussing the impact of historical writings on the contemporary situation in India is not the subject matter of this article but I have to explain this because lot of negative comments already has been passed over the decades on the antiquity and

historicity of an ancient state called Tripura for which a fresh perspective is needed to understand the importance of this article.

The origin of the word of Tripura now a days has been a matter of debate among scholars. Every scholar tried to explain the origin of the word but none of the explanations could satisfy the quest. According to the renowned epigraphist Sri Dinesh Chandra Sircar and linguist Dr S.K Chatterjee, Tripura is the sanskritised form of tribal name "Tipra" which is the name of the aboriginal people inhabiting the eastern fringe of southeast Bengal. This has also been corroborated by pre independence historian Sri R.C Majumdar in his book "The Early History of Bengal". Sri Kailash Chandra Singha's theory regarding the origin of the word Tripura has also been one of the theory in this connection. W.W. Hunter in his "A statistical Account of Bengal" opined that the name was probably given to the country in honour of the Shaktipitha temple – "Tripura sundari" located in Udaipur, the ancient capital of Tripura. There is a popular belief that Tripura has been named after the tyrannical King "Tripur" of the royal dynasty of Tripura. But none of the theories hold strong rationale. It has been observed that as the right foot of the Sati fell on Tripura, the Pithadevi has been named as Tripurasundari. The ancient Tantric literature like Pithamala Tantra which says –" Tripurayam Dakshopado Devi Tripurasundari " and Tantra Chudamani " Tripurayam Dakshopada Devata Tripura Mata" meaning the sitting goddess of the country has been named after the name of the country only, bears the testimony of the fact that Tripura does not derive its name from the Pithadevi Tripurasundari. So Hunter's theory has been nullified by these two Tantric literature. Rajratnakaram, the sanskrit chronicle of Tripura royal family clearly discarded the view that the country has been named after the King Tripur, infact Tripur has been named after the country itself in continuation of the ancient Indian tradition of naming the prince and princess after the country like Gandhari of Gandhar and Panchali of Panchal state of Mahabharata fame. While opining regarding the origin of the word Tripura, Sri K.P Sengupta in his Sri Rajmala stated that the land on the bank of river Gomati has been named as Tripura since undesignated era of time without any explainable reason.

## Cultural Heritage: ZEME at “ZE VILLAGE”

Kiloigombe Joseph

Territorially, Zeme Naga Tribe are inhabitants of three North-eastern states of Assam, Manipur and Nagaland of our country. They are generally kind-hearted and peace-loving people. They are also popularly known by the social organizational nomenclature of Zeliangrong, a composite name of Zeme, Liangmai and Rongmai tribes. Historically Zeliangrong are biological brother and dispersed from Nkuilondi/Makuilondi village due to administrative and economic reasons with a huge population from 7777 households. To name a few, Zeme lives in Senapati and Tamenlong districts of Manipur, Haflong district of Assam, and Peren, Dimapur and Kohima districts of Nagaland. It is a well-known fact that customs and traditions of the Nagas are specific to each tribe, yet they are distinctive according to its uses and signifies different meaning to different tribes. In the same way even among the Zeme or Zeliangrong as a whole has a unique cultural practice and custom. They inherit a rich custom and tradition in a varied way from their ancestors. These articles focuses and articulate the rich custom and cultural heritage of the Zeme Naga living in Ze Village (Ze-Mnui) of Senapati district of Manipur, a historic village for Zeliangrong.

### **ZE VILLAGE**

Ze villages were founded as non-Christian villages since pre-historic days. Due lack of written record exact date and year of establishment is not known to any modern-day scholar. This signifies the need for serious research. Its people are called Zeme which is also extensively used for Zeme people generally residing in Assam, Manipur and Nagaland, though people from Nagaland are recognized as Zeliang which is comprised of two tribes known as Zeme and Liangmai. The word “ZE” is a derivative word from ZERIE (meaning Heaven). Zerie is the original name of the Ze village which has a significant meaning related to safety of the people from the external attacks during the head hunting days. All

sides of the village are protected by a cliff and a fortress to every entrance. The term Ze or Zeme is used synonymously for easy understanding and communication convenience which means Ze village or people from Ze village.

The village is said to have been established by few settlers This historical village is not only constructed in a cliff of Zaiko Rezai range (Dzukou) with rocks on either side but uniquely a historic cultural importance for Zeliangrong and Nagas as a whole with a 1000 household. This is also a center for Zeme Senapati administrative area. Confusion reigns till today about the name of the village due the varied names given by different people. Previously it was called Nsimbe Ram by Hengina (Assam Zeme) Ze by Nagaland and Manipur Zeme, Tsiefuma/Mezame and Chekwera by the Angami and Yangkhullen by Manipur and other Nagas living in different parts of Sates. These terms are used synonymously and interchangeably for communication purposes. However, the popular name is “Ze”. The ancestors of Ze were from the eastern Region who migrated from a place known as Hecumle. In the process of migration, the ancestor of Ze are said to have lived in several places, such as Makhel, Hestisie, Makuilongdi, Heriere and lastly came to Ze village, the present site. The village was founded by Gipoing (Hauna-Fuangchame), Tunrambe Hoina-Hereingchame) and Ramng (Hauna- Haume) were the first sojourners to the present site and named their sons as Namtumraing meaning first settlers, son of Gipoing and Namfungchong means the founder, son of Tunrambe.

In the later part owing to fear of attacks by enemies and to be together the Villagers requested Rapeiname (Heraangpeiname) who lived in Kikie, to come and settle at Ze. He accepted the invitation and settled down at the present site known as Helung Ki Herie in the Ze village. But it is said that Mr. Namheiloing (father of Mr. Lungchausing Robin) HOINA-Heringchame was the last person who lived



at Kikie and came to Ze village.

The Ze village is about 86 KM away from its head quarter Senapati and 50 Km from Maram-National Highway (NH) 39 (Dimapur via Kohima-Imphal). Now NH 129A is operating to Maram-Peren which pass through Ze village for smooth, easy communication and transportation, connecting Manipur and Nagaland, especially the Zeme area. The village is originally constructed in the traditional and cultural style covered by thatch on the sharp roof of triangular shape. But due to the modern technological advancement and easy access to available transportation system most of the traditional housing style have been changed. EMBIE KI is a countable house in the village that adhere to a strict observation of ritual at the time of construction or repair. EMBIE KI uniqueness is that whenever construction or repair work is undertaken the day will be blessed by, if not storm, a rain. The occupant of these houses and other house bearing a ritualistic character, especially a lady must follow certain rituals refrain from cooking pork in the traditional hearth.

The village has its HEGWANG (King/Headman), though there is no special power has been bestowed to him, he has a special duty to perform as a peace maker to mitigate any allegation made against anyone. Generally, Ze village occupants are kind, generous and peace-loving people which is an inborn quality. These are also the quality of traditional knowledge transmitted orally by the older folks. The village protect and preserve the rich cultural and traditional custom of their forefathers. Traditionally the village is composed of two major groups called HOINA and HAUNA, together they perform rituals and other events in the village. It further divides into four khels, namely Fuangchame, Haume, Hereingchame and Heraangpeiname, of which Hereingchamme and Heraangpeiname compose HOINA; Haume and Fuangchame are composed of HAUNA. This division brought a strong bond for cultural and traditional features for performing rituals and matrimonial ceremonies among them. The village is surrounded by hills and mountains externally and internally guarded by a mighty four-fortress build from stone and wooden structure representing four Khels of the village. All kinds of monuments and preserved animal

skull has a tale to tell.

### **SOCIAL LIFE**

The Ze village occupants are sociable and straight forward in their dealings with one another. They are sincere and obedient not only to the elderly people but to the people around them. They are customarily abiding people for though there were no laws or rules and regulations to deal social evils e.g., robbery, theft, murder, etc., there occur such offence very rarely in the community. They are God fearing people and everything that hinder their life, they leave them into the hands of God. The elders play a key role in decision making and they enjoy special status of trust in the village. Administering the village gennas, festivals, cultural and traditional events, the days are fixed and counted annually according to their traditional calendar. It is said that there were two calendar, namely the village-Nkangme, Nroime kei (month for North and Southern sides of the village) for different types of rituals. Gennas and traditional holidays/festivals are strictly adhered to and whosoever deviate from them shall have to pay fine as penalty and other liabilities applicable according to the degrees of such act committed on the appointed day.

The village elders appoint the eldest male called "TINGNAPEI" (Village Chief who holds his post till his demise or become physically unfit) from the village to declare all types of cultural festivals, celebrations and other events in the village in consultation with all the village elders. The present Village Chief is Mr. SIEROUNG (father of Mr. Pausuhingbe) HOINA-Hereingchame khel. He is believed to be the oldest male member at present. He has been serving the village for the last 7 years following the death of the last Chief- Mr. Erangheing (father of Eriebambe) is from HAUNA- Haume khel. There were no weekdays of rest according to the traditional calendar however with the advent of Christianity some adjustment has been made according to the convenience of the people though non-Christian never observe Sunday as the day of rest. They still follow the traditional calendar for rituals, cultural events and cultivation purposes.

### **CUTURAL**

The Ze village possess a very rich culture like

other Nagas in the region. There are varieties of colorful and fashionable dresses for different occasions depending on the importance of the event. Usually female members have rich costumes compared to their male counterparts. The cultural attires include; necklace, bangles, earring, hair band, shawl, muffler, etc for girls; the dresses for the boys and male members are traditionally very simple with decorative earring, arm bracelet, belt, pants, etc., these attires have very close relations with the rest of the Nagas in the region. Nevertheless, the choice of colors and designs vary distinctively from tribe to tribe. The most common color for Zeme tribe are red, black, white, green, blue and yellow. Traditionally boys never flaunt their attires but enjoy the creative hands of the females especially their mother and sister. They also enjoy a gift as a souvenir from their lovers. Woman folk usually engage themselves in waving and knitting while male members are expert in craft making.

Traditional dormitory called HANGSEI KI (morung) for boys and LEISEI KI for girls are strictly followed by their community even today. This is the place where maximum traditional knowledge are imparted by the elders. Each khel have a separate hangsei ki (morung) and among the khels there are subdivision of hangsei ki to accommodate every male member (3-5 years of age and above) based on the family linkage or clans in the village. Morung plays an important role in the development and modeling of the characters and attitude for the young gboys and girls. Any reformation can take place here and the deviant are given a beating as punishment. It is the center of learning in the absence of formal education. Though the scientific knowledge not known to them, traditional arithmetic is very much prevalent, also there are ample philosophical lessons imparted through oral means. Songs are composed and sang as a sort of informal communication between their peers and other groups as an expression of feelings and sharing sentiments. Unlike the present way of communication, it is said that they never address a person directly; therefore when the need arises either address someone through their son's and daughter's name or by the name of person related to that person.

## FESTIVALS

There are many cultural festivals celebrated by the villagers throughout the year, but the main or important common feast is called MILEI NGI. This celebration last upto 17 days with colorful traditional activities and indigenous sports competitions like wrestling, long jump. War dance were performed and displayed through howling-chanting by male members exclusively. Relatives from far and near living outside the village come to witness the show. The competitions are organized Khels-wise and the winner (for long jump and wrestling) are declared by the elders. The young generally maintains a healthy body with healthy food and other traditional means. The women folks are not allowed to participate in any of the games, but they share the revelry as audience dressed in their best suited attires.

Though everyone enjoys the feast, yet there are certain days that man folk and women folk do not eat together, a food cooked from the same hearth, until the games are over. This is strictly observed no matter whether one has participated in the game or not. Though there are no special food items, food for man will be cooked in a separate hearth in a traditional way of fire making called MILEI TOI/MILEI MI and fresh brackish/brine water. Women folks cannot be touched during the games and competitions. Man-folk has a separate bathing place called TEIZAI DEKO considered as sacred (pond with brackish/brine water few meters away from the village) which is believe to be a source of energy. It is meant exclusively for male members only and any female touches the water, either a village or an outsider, could invite misfortune to herself or her family or even her clan/relatives. The water neither overflow even during rainy season nor dry up during dry season and maintain its balance naturally.

HERASAM NGI (seed showing feast) is also celebrated before the seed showing in summer. This feast has a special character of killing animals for the feast with different style of wearing shawl-PAIKOM. A man will be elected from either HOINA or HAUNA or alternatively to perform the ritual of killing the animal for feast. Odd number animals will be killed for the same which last for about 7 days and the price for those animals will be paid by grain

and never in cash.

There is also a festival called REKHA which is observed as a farewell to the departed souls and to welcome the New Year. This is usually celebrated in between 10 & 11 months of the year, the beginning of winter in modern lunar cycle. The celebration takes place after the harvest and a part/portion of every crop will be pinched out for the departed souls and their belongings will be disposed off before the dawn of the New Year day. There are numerous feasts observed according to the season and months throughout the year.

### **ECONOMY**

People are self-sufficient and economically independent. Each and every individual has a plot of their own land and a share irrigated water which are traditionally inherited from their fore-fathers'. Their main occupation is cultivation and farming. Majority of them practices terrace cultivation, however traditional knowledge of Jhum cultivation is not unknown to them. Jhum cultivation is mostly for cash crop. They wear clothes produced from their own cultivation, but this practice has been drastically replaced by the modern textiles though some rare piece of clothes are still being preserved in the bottom of their RIANGVUNG/KEHAU (local drawer made of small bamboo). They also preserve harvested CHEI (paddy/grain) in a big container made of either bamboo or wood called BAU (granary) where the paddy can be preserved for 7/8 years.

Rearing of cattle in the village's forest like mithun (unique animals belonging to cow family but bigger in size) practiced in particular region. The animal is the symbol of the Govt of Nagaland), buffalo and cows are very common. Any individual can own any number of these animals, but mostly group of people either close relatives, clan members or any other integrated groups can have the ownership. They are not required to pay any money to anybody for owning the animals except payment made towards the caretaker according the numbers of animals they own. Buffalos are reared for cultivation purposes and meat for food. Same as mithun are for meat during festivals and other celebrations but kept as sacred animals with cow. Domesticated animals like

pig, dog, cat, chicken and goat/sheep are also commonly reared. Though all domesticated animals play an equally significant part, chicken plays a fundamental role in traditional rituals performance.

### **CONCLUSION**

The village relish nature's blessings in the form of varieties of flora-fauna and scenic view of highlands and rivers. If not a heaven for the world at least for northeasterners, some portion of the most popular landscape called ZAIKO REZAI (Dzukou valley) make part of the village. He can also trek through the forest path most part of which remain out of sight, but he can still exhilaration by walking down TEIFI KI (Dzukou river) freezing yet crystal-clear water which is a walkable distance (flows between Manipur-Nagaland). Barak river is famous for annual fishing festival spot for villagers. People here traditionally maintain eco-friendly practices and use non-metallic utensils. These days all types of utensils are made from either bamboo or wood which indicates their creativity and love for nature's gift. Banana leaves not only play an important role during traditional and religious events but also as serving plates and cups.

The rich flora and fauna, ecologically pleasant biosphere contribute to the rich heritage of the village. Mother nature's beauty is like a gift to the villagers. All the citizens of the village maintain and preserve the natural sites as their fundamental duty. The village could have become a cultural heritage site had it been discovered and nurtured by the scholars and researchers some years ago. Unfortunately, due to lack of present form of educational system, communication and transportation handicap during the past the opportunity slipped away. However, with the introduction of the formal modern educational system now the village literacy rate has risen to 75%, of which 60% are male and 45% female. One cannot but appreciate the contributions made by the ancestors of the people of the village when one studies the structure of the village, strict maintenance of the heritage sites, the general ambience of the village and above all the peace loving, friendly nature of the people inhabiting the area.



## Rhododendron Festival, 2018

David T Thawmthanga & R. Lianggenga

The first Rhododendron Festival of Mizoram was celebrated at Sentetfiang village located in Sangau sub-division of Lawngtlai District adjacent to Indo-Myanmar border. The festival was primarily intended to highlight protection of wildlife, Flora and Fauna of the famous Blue Mountain range, also known as 'Phawngpi' in the local Lai dialect and 'Phawngpui' in Mizo dialect. The mountain is believed to be a secret mountain by the traditional belief of the ancient ancestral history of the Lais. This mountain range was declared as a National Park by the Government of India.

Lawngtlai district is located in the southern part of Mizoram (North East India) having International boundaries with Bangladesh in the west and Myanmar in the east. It covers an area of 2557 sq. Km and has a population of 1,70,894 (which is 11% of the state population). The district is one of the most backward districts in India. It lags behind in almost all developmental aspects; this may be because of its remote location, scattered villages, rough terrain, poor transportation and communication infrastructure and hence require special attention.

Lawngtlai will be the gateway to North East India once Kaladan Multi Model Project is implemented – a project implemented by Government of India's east policy to establish closer relationship with her neighbors and to promote economy between India and Myanmar. A multi model transit route has been proposed comprising Land, River and Sea routes through Mizoram state along the Kaladan River in Myanmar up to Sittwe (Akyab) seaport in the Bay of Bengal. The up to date progress of the project is 65% and is scheduled to be completed by December 2018.

In view of the backwardness of area as also to protect the wildlife, a National Park was set up to promote eco-tourism, preservation of the rich cultural heritage of the tribal population of this part of India. The Deputy Commissioner of Lawngtlai, Dr. Arun T (IAS) and the office of the Chief Executive

Member Lai Autonomous District Council and President Central Young Lai Association, Mr. J. Sangthangpuia and other NGOs have decided to start an ambitious project on eco-tourism to be named Rhododendron Festival 2018. The Lai Autonomous District Council is an autonomous council constituted under Article 244(2) of the sixth scheduled to the constitution of India with the sole purpose of protecting and safeguarding the Lai ethnic tribal communities of Mizoram.

Phawngpui (Phawngpi) is the highest peak in the state of Mizoram, its cliffs are believed to be haunted by Spirits and is a natural home of the famous Mountain Goats. On the peak there is a level ground of about two square kilometer in area. A highly revered peak, believed to be the abode of the local traditional Deities. Phawngpi is a major center of folk traditional religion of the ancestors of the Lai and Mara tribes. The name is derived from Lai languages 'phawng' meaning 'grassland' or 'meadows' and the suffix 'pi' or 'pui' meaning 'great'. It is believed by the traditional folktale that of a Deity King named, 'Sangau' had a son who married the Princess of another royal mountain Diety King 'Cherian'. At the wedding there was an exchange of gifts, a couple of Hoolock Gibbons from Sangau and a pine tree from Cherian, hence till date the main entrance of the mountain is named, 'farpak' meaning 'a single pine'. Since 1992 the mountain has been included in the protected area of the Phawngpi National Park, the area is full of bamboo grooves, alluring vegetation, varieties of Butterflies including some rare species. One can also see Birds like Peregrine falcon, Blyth's tragopan, sunbirds, grey sibia, golden throated barbed, Mrs Hume's pheasant, hornbill, dark-rumped swift, mountain bamboo partridge black eagle and many other bird species including a very rare clouded leopard and beautiful Rhododendron flower.

The one of a kind Rhododendron festival was celebrated at this mountain range under the able

captainship of Dr. Arun T, a Deputy Commissioner of Lawngtlai District with the help of his efficient team of devoted and liked-minded individuals. The then Governor of Mizoram, Lt. Gen. (Rtd.) Sri Nirbhay Sharma was invited to grace the first ever Rhododendron festival as the Honorable Chief Guest by the organizing Committee. His Excellency was quick to respond and learned that the festival was a great master plan to promote traditional Indian beliefs and to showcase to the world, the unexplored and untapped rich natural resources and traditions of the many tribal living in this part of our great country, India. His Excellency responded on a positive note to grace the first Rhododendron festival as Chief Guest. The Governor in his speech highlighted that the Deputy Commissioner of Lawngtlai District and his team has done a great job for not only the district inhabited by the Lai tribal community but also the entire state of Mizoram in particular and India as a whole. He also blessed the festival that it would become a national event like the Hornbill festival of Nagaland in the near future. The President of India and the Prime Minister of India and other prominent leaders of our country may one day grace the Rhododendron festival and bless it with their presence. He also blessed the festival that many cultural troupes from other North East and other states of India would come and participate in the Rhododendron festival in the near future.

On the first day of the festival there was a cultural competition, among various cultural troupes. The local farmers, craftsmen and handloom weavers offered their products on sale by organizing an exhibition. Various Government departments of Lawngtlai district and self-help groups, showcased their achievements. The state Government's flagship program 'New Land Use Policy' (NLUP) and various other central programs like Swacch Bharat, Ujjawala, Beti-Bachau Beti-Parhau etc. were highlighted. There was a free medical camp conducted by the District health and family welfare department. The veterinary department also conducted free checkup for domestic animals with free distributions of Medicines. The KVK Lawngtlai

District conducted a free soil Testing program. The second day, also the closing day of the festival was graced by the local MLA of Lawngtlai East Assembly constituency Mr. H. Zothangliana as the Chief Guest. He expressed his gratitude to the organizing committee and all the participants and people across all walks of life who participated in the Rhododendron festival and made it a grand success. There was an event like traditional fancy dress competition participated by the local Lai Women Association Sangau sub headquarters. There was an exhibition of beautiful flowers, Rhododendrons and various cultures of North East India and a visit to the blue Mountain. On this day, traditional games like wrestling 'Laipeih', Insuknawr, was conducted by Art and Culture Department, Lai Autonomous District Council. There was a traditional game for girl-child known as 'kawibah'.

The festival was a grand success that it brought revenue to the local villagers in a big way such that the tea stalls earned about Rs. 20,000.00 during the two day festival. Upon witnessing the success story of the Rhododendron festival, the office of the North East Council under the ministry of DONER with its Headquarter in Shillong has decided to fund the future festivals. The honorable Governor of Nagaland His Excellency Sri P.B. Acharya Ji, Chairman of the North East Zone Cultural Club (NEZCC) under the ministry of Culture, Government of India with its head office at Dimapur, Nagaland under the ministry of Culture, Government of India offered all help on learning about Rhododendron festival and officially registered twenty cultural clubs of the Lai tribal and other ethnic cultural club of this part of India.

The festival will be celebrated in the coming years as an yearly event and the organizer extended invitation to all people from all over India and foreign countries to come and witness the cultural heritage of people living in this part of India and to visit the world famous Blue Mountain, Phawngpi and taste the freshness of the local home grown organic vegetables, fruits and natural honey from the Blue Mountain as also to breathe the refreshing mountain air which the Phawngpi mountain can only offer.

## Badungduppa and legacy of a Personality

Dr Ranga Ranjan Das

The word badungduppa, perhaps, is unfamiliar to all those who could not build any kind of intricacy with the Rabha society. It is a kind traditional musical instrument among the Rabhas which is in the verge of extinction. Connection of the name of this particular musical instrument and a centre established for perpetuating folk drama, amateur theatre by a personality and his contribution towards traditional performing arts, has lost its momentum since last month. Noted theatre artiste, actor, play writer, director, organizer and man behind, Badungduppa Kalakendra, a centre, amidst serene surroundings of nature and pioneer in popularizing amateur rural theatre, Sukracharya Rabha at took his last breathe at 10.20, 8th June, 2018 due to cardiac arrest. He was only 41 years of age leaving behind her wife Seena Rabha, son Anurag (10) and daughter Kadombari (5).

Sukracharya Rabha needs no introduction. Personally, I was connected with him during my research days in Gauhati University. Meeting him once for a quality period is enough for making a serious impact for rest of life. I am always indebted to my guide and supervisor, Prof Kishore Bhattacharjee for providing various opportunities to interact many of contemporary scholars, doyens of literature, socio-cultural activists, and leading personalities during my tender age, helping me to nourish and grow during the period of academic transition and transformation. After the first meeting, circumstances never knock me again to explore any such opportunities to meet him again. My guide always updated about his achievements time to time along with media reporting. Perhaps, my first encounter with him is subsumed in my inner corner of my heart for the last one and half decade, that came out like a bolt from the blue on 9th of June when I came across the news. On the same day, my guide called me to share the news. Sukracharya Rabha has been in close touch with the Department of Folklore Research, Gauhati University bridged by Prof. Bhattacharjee. We are in a field trip in Goalpara. The other crew member was Karuna Kanta Kakati.

News of sudden demise of Mr Rabha, pushed my conscious mind about fifteen years back. It become

nostalgia and made every possible attempt to retrieve from faded memory. His attractive stout physique with ever smiling and childish faces emitting brightness of inner beauty of mind and soul caught my eye and kept in safe custody for a prolonged period. The posts, and picture come to public domain is not too much deviation from the past. No doubt, there is always age factor in terms of growth and development. I remember it was a cold evening. Myself, Bhatta sir, Karuna da along with our driver Romon Singha, after a daylong field work in Goalpara district, was waiting in a cottage of dhaba near Agia, to have dinner at night. Sir was busy in his cell talking with somebody for arranging a meeting to a person. Sir simply said, 'a person named Sukracharya Rabha is on his way to meet us. He is a very promising young talented guy who is associated in folk drama, theatres and established a centre in his village'. At that time, besides perusing doctoral research, I was one of the members of a research team constituted to undertake empirical field work on a project on 'Intellectual Property Rights of the Communities of Assam' funded by Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. Our priority was to tap both tangible and intangible heritage of the selected plain tribes having commercial viability and need adequate protection from the illicit commercial exploitation of traditional items happening across the globe under the sui generis model of World Intellectual Property Organization. The Rabha community was also one of the selected groups. My assumption was that Mr Rabha will provide necessary help and assistance in our remaining field work. Two persons came in our cottage. One of them was familiar with my sir. He introduced another, 'He is Sukracharya Rabha'. Sir warmly and affectionately welcomed both of them. I, was sitting besides my sir and also introduced us. I, had a close looked at him and listen the conversations. Lots of discussion relating to his native village Rampur close at hand to Agia, Rabha society and culture, his initiative in his own village regarding drama was made. Plans of next day were finalized. It was the day when the seeds of the legacy of a personality were sowed. His kind assistance, gesture, affectionate behaviour, warm



hospitality during the whole day in his village Rampur and at his centre Badungduppa is still remain afresh in the midst of faded memory. It is quite amazing to witness the centre, its arrangement, and open platform to stage theatrical performances under the sal tree in the midst of natural environment. The centre arranges various workshop and drama festival time to time in a year. It becomes vibrant during its' season. There are residential arrangements for the artistes and the participants. We observed the physical structure and some traditional instruments used by the Rabha community members. Among them I have observed Karhanol, the long flute used during pharkranti ritual. One of the activists of the centre played due to our insistence. The soul of rendering of the tune is still echoed. We observed and interviewed many elders of the village along with Sukracharya Rabha. It was indeed a fruitful field trip.

In his brief span of life, his contributions and achievement in the field of theatre is many. His sudden departure compels me to explore his journey from various resources. He was born in 10th April, 1977 in Rampur village. His father is Nilakanta Rabha and mother, Paniwala Rabha. He took his early education from Rampur L.P School, did his matriculation from Agia JNM higher secondary school and become a science graduate from Goalpara college. He has developed an inherent drive in drama, an important genre of performing arts during the study period. He left no stone unturned in enhancing, mastering and learning the various skills, nuances of amateur theatre by exploring various opportunities that came during his formation period. He participated in various orientation workshops held in different places of Assam under the aegis of various organisation patronizing and promoting drama in Assam. It is reported that he participated a theatre workshop in Sivasagar organized by Axom Natya Sanmillan during his early days. In 1998 and 1999, he got the privilege to participate in drama training camp at Duliajan organized by Natya Sanmilan and School of Drama, Axom as well as Jana Sanskritik mancha, Goalpara. The exploration of various skills on the discourse of theatre and drama motivated him to form a centre for further acceleration. In 1998, he established the Badungduppa Kalakendra in his native village Rampur. He had always been in search of exploring new horizons, skills and techniques for perfection in plays and dramas. Participation in the one and half month residential drama workshop in 2001 organized by National School of Drama in

Srimanta Kalakshetra had provided him new dimensions and momentum in learning various approaches in this genre. Further, he had taken part in Director Technical Theatre Workshop in 2002 and 2006, held in Dibrugarh and Manipur under the aegis of National School of Drama and also learnt the art of puppetry from Evelien Pullens, a Drama specialist from Neitherland. Besides, he was associated as coordinator of a drama workshop funded by Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre in collaboration with Directorate of Cultural Affairs, Government of Assam and Srimanta Sankardev Kalakhetra, Guwahati. This workshop had been a great significance for him. He met H.Kanhailal, noted theatre artist and activist from Manipur and become a disciple. It is said that he learn a lot from him during his entire period. His perseverance and hard work fetch him to acquire the skill of writing, acting, directing as well representing the elements of folklife in the form of artistic expression. He had written many plays in Rabha and staged it in various platforms: 'Nanga gata anga gata' (1997), ' Hengaba ting ting hungaba ting ting' (1998), 'Tikar' (1999), 'Topoyodom' (2007), 'Danggai' (2008), 'Dumuksi' (2010). He also planned and directed various plays written by others: 'Jumangni rong' (2000) by Puruxottam Rabha as well as 'Changkhoi' (2001) and 'Sarkarni nuk' (2002) by Prakash Rabha. He had shown the skill of translation. He translated various famous plays into Rabhas for amateur theatre: 'Rupalim' (2002) of Jyotiprashad Agarwala, 'Madaya musi' of Prof. HS Siva Prakash (2009) and 'Rather rasi' (2011) of Rabindranath Thakur. His versatile personality is further explored in his knowledge in diverse languages. Besides Rabha dialect, he has translated and directed some well-known plays in other languages. The Bodo version 'Moidar aro fandi' (2005) of Munin Bhuyan's Assamese play 'Hati aru fandi', Nepali version of Jyotiprasad Agarwala's play 'Lovita' (2006) was some of them. In Assamese, he had directed plays like 'Avixapta prem' (1992) of Mahesh Kalita, 'Ahangkar' (1994) of Jiten Sarma and 'Boudha' (1996) of Haren Das. Sukracharya Rabha, after establishment of Badungduppa, had seriously engaged in drama with some innovative experiment along with features of ritual, legendary, physical theatre and search for the root in the midst of indigenous society and culture of the north east. He had participated in much national and international drama festival under the banner of Badungduppa Kalakendra and appreciated at all the levels. The centre has been instrumental in organizing

*(Contd. to Page 16)*

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में बसाया और अब हम  
उन्हें बसा रहे हैं,  
एक नए परिवेश में।





“ओएनजीसी बारासिंघा (ईस्टर्न स्वैम्प डीअर) संरक्षण परियोजना”  
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असम में पाये जाने वाले बारासिंघा या ईस्टर्न स्वैम्प डीअर (*Rucervus duvaucelii ranjitsinhi*) आज विलुप्त होने की कगार पर है। प्रसिद्ध लेखक रुडयार्ड किपलिंग ने जिस से मंत्रमुग्ध हो कर उसकी सुन्दरता को अपनी दूसरी किताब 'द सेकंड जंगल बुक' में कैद किया हो, उस जीव के लिये यह काफी दुखद स्थिति है।

ओएनजीसी ने इस प्रजाति को विलुप्त होने से बचाने के लिये अपने कदम बढ़ाये, और वो भी बिल्कुल सही समय पर।

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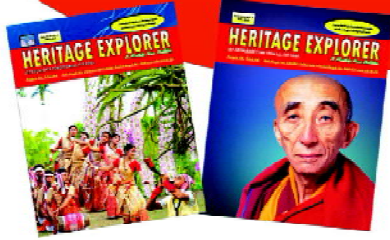
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# Global Refugee Crisis: A Humane Approach

Sanhita Saikia

Refugees are people who give up everything that constitutes life – friends, community, home, possessions – and flee to what they hope is safer ground. The world today is facing the largest refugee crisis since the end of World War II.

Choked by violence, conflict and disaster, nearly twice as many people are displaced within their own country or across international borders as 20 years ago. It is unfortunate that most refugees flee to escape human right violations and violence, yet their vulnerable situation exposes them to additional human rights violations and violence.

The images of dead bodies at sea, of drenched refugees on overloaded rickety boats, and of families climbing frantically through border fences made of barbed wire have become iconic in our collective imagination. The very existence of refugees is evidence of the world's economic and political disparities, proving that many changes need to occur in the world before intractable conflict becomes a thing of the past.

According to UN Secretary-General António Guterres, the refugee crisis is not about refugees, rather it is about us. It is about sharing a global responsibility and also on the very specific obligations of international law. The root problems are war and hatred, not people who flee; refugees are among the first victims of terrorism. The situation requires international cooperation in the form of financial, geographic, and political solidarity, which necessitates strong political leadership and public support. Yet the international response lacks cohesiveness, and aid has been far less than what is needed.

Hundreds of thousands of ethnic Rohingya refugees from Myanmar fled to Bangladesh following a campaign of targeted violence against the community that began in 2017. By the end of the year, there were more than 647,000 new arrivals at makeshift camps in Bangladesh. Rohingya refugees are in desperate need of clean water and sanitation just to stay alive. They joined thousands of other Rohingya who had fled earlier unable to face the waves of violence and persecution in Myanmar's

Rakhine state. The Rohingya are a predominantly Muslim ethnic minority who have lived in Myanmar for hundreds of years but were effectively stripped of their citizenship and made stateless in 1982.

The Syrian civil war has torn the nation apart, killed thousands of people and set back the standard of living by decades. The Syrian refugee crisis remains one of the largest humanitarian crises since the end of World War II. The number of refugees who have fled the country now exceeds five million including more than 2.4 million children, and millions more have been displaced internally, according to the United Nations.

Since 2017, the political crisis and hyperinflation in Venezuela have spurred an exodus of historic proportions. These are the weary, often desperate victims of the worst migration crisis in recent Latin American history. About 4 million Venezuelans have left the country in search of better living conditions. The Venezuela crisis is a man-made one due to the delusional and inhumane policies of the leftwing government.

Poverty, unemployment, water shortages and corruption are the cause of conflict in Yemen. In 2015, half of the country's inhabitants lived on less than two dollars a day, without access to clean water or adequate sanitation. Of the country's 29 million inhabitants, 22 million people are in need of humanitarian aid. Of these, half are in acute distress and approximately half a million children suffer from acute malnutrition.

Life as a refugee also strongly affects one's sense of identity. When Afghans fled to Iran in the 1980s, they were exposed to a more conservative form of Islam than they had previously practiced. This led to greater pressure on the men to place stricter restrictions on the women in their families. These restrictions included the end of education for women, the imposition of arranged marriages, and in some cases the almost total confinement of women to the home.

One of the largest refugee camps in the world is located in Dadaab, Kenya. The conditions in the camp

are horrendous as overpopulation is the biggest problem there. Somalian refugees continue to pour in escaping from the famine that has ravaged their country. The Dadaab complex faces major health concerns like outbreaks of fever, cholera and Hepatitis. The health concerns also stem from the lack of nourishing food. Environmental issues such as flooding destroy their homes in the camps and there are also security issues within the camps, because they are not protected by the Government of Kenya.

While the United States and some European countries are hostile to refugees, Jordan has been doing its part from the outset of the Syrian civil war. Zaatari, the single-largest refugee camp in the world for Syrians fleeing violence, just 10 miles (16 km) from the Syrian border, has been operating since 2012. Roughly 80,000 Syrian refugees currently reside in the camp, but Jordan has taken in approximately 635,000 Syrian refugees which is about 10 per cent of its own population.

Our prioritization of financial gain over people's struggle for the necessities of life is the primary cause of much of this crisis. The West has all but abandoned its belief in humanity and support for the precious

ideals contained in declarations on universal human rights. It has sacrificed these ideals for short-sighted cowardice and greed.

Can physical borders stop refugees? Instead of building walls, we should look at what is causing people to become refugees and work to solve those conditions to stem the flow at its source. To do so, we will require the most powerful nations in the world to adjust how they are actively shaping the world, how they are using political and economic ideology enforced by overwhelming military power to disrupt entire societies.

How will the poor, displaced or occupied exist when their societies are destroyed? Should they simply disappear? Can we recognize that their continued existence is an essential part of our shared humanity? If we fail to recognize this, how can we speak of civilized development? Establishing the understanding that we all belong to one humanity is the most essential step for how we might continue to coexist on this sphere we call Earth.

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## **Badungduppa and legacy of a personality**

various workshops and a yearly festival in an open platform under a theme 'under the sal tree' where theatre, drama, film personalities of national and international repute used to take part. Indeed his centre played a key role in infusing a new dynamism to theatre besides popularizing stage play across the state. His dedicated hard work and contributions is appreciated with many awards like Bismilla Kha Young Talent award (2009) of Sangeet Natak Academy of Government of India and Aditya Bikram Birla Kala Kiran award (2010), Pratima Barua Pande award (2010) of All Assam Students Union, Madendra Barthakur award (2012) of Axom Natya Sanmillan, Dorabji Tata Fellowship (2012), Jugal Kishore Choudhury memorial award (2015) and Pataliputra award (2016) from Bihar.

Sudden demise of promising personality like him is always been felt not in the field of performing arts but a true member a greater society who devoted entire life for a cause and concerns. Scholar Anandoram Barua died in a very tender age. But his

contribution in the field of academics is incomparable. Likewise, the contribution of Sukracharya Rabha, amidst limitations and economic hardship, will become a real inspiration for the new generations of Assam. Hope, the Badungduppa Kala Kendra will carry forward the legacy of this great founder in the years' ahead:

i don't desire to survive hundred years  
 give me few years  
 have many works undone  
 but I have to go  
 i am't concern who remember me after my departure  
 i desire to survive in the hearts of the masses.....  
 don't blow the karanol  
 don't create the tide of sorrow  
 but go ahead, go ahead, with a zeal and mission  
 it said and you know, we are puppets of stage  
 and show must go on....



## Haryana strives to revive mythological Saraswati River

Acknowledged as one of one of the most sacred river as per Indian mythology, River Saraswati, which once said to have flowed through areas that now make up the state of Haryana, has today withdrawn itself from the surface to flow underground to merge with Ganga and Jamuna at Tribeni Sangam in Allahabad. It is common knowledge that the river, named after the goddess of learning in Hindu religion, finds mention in ancient scriptures like the Rig Veda, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and others, giving credence to the belief that it existed during ancient times.

It is heartening to note that the first BJP government in Haryana is using technology, including space technology, to execute a project aimed at reviving and rejuvenating the mythological Saraswati River and bring it to its past glory.

The state government, which is on a “mission mode” to execute the project and has sanctioned over Rs 50 crore (over \$7 million) for this, has roped in national agencies like the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), the National Institute of Hydrology (NIH), the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) and the Geological Survey of India (GSI) to speed up work in this direction. Haryana Art and Cultural Affairs Minister Smt. Kavita Jain recently announced that “The Haryana government is working in a mission mode for the revival and rejuvenation of Saraswati River. The river is a national heritage of India,” Smt. Jain further added that “The Saraswati river is part of our rich cultural heritage and coordinated efforts are needed for its revival that would go a long way in making India Vishvaguru (world leader) once again. ISRO has been working on Saraswati River for the last 20 years.”

Buoyed by the “discovery” of water in April 2015, at just seven feet in Rohlaheri village of Haryana’s Yamunanagar district during digging work to find the mythological river, the BJP government has signed two Memorandums of Understandings (MoU) for the investigation of a palaeochannel (the remnant of an inactive river or stream that has been filled or buried

by sediment) and study of hydrological aspects relating to the Saraswati river. The agreement has been signed by the Haryana Saraswati Heritage Development Board (HSHDB), ISRO and NIH. The MoU envisages customising specific geospatial solutions for a multi-disciplinary GIS (geographic information system) database and design and development of the Saraswati Palaeochannel web portal. The Haryana Government has also taken up the water balance study of the Saraswati River’s catchment area which will be done through hydro-geological modeling and geospatial techniques. This will be carried out in four phases from 2018 to 2020. Speaking about the efforts of the Government of Haryana, Smt. Kavita Jain stated that “It is a matter of pride that Adi Badri (in what is now Haryana) is the originating point of this river. In the ancient times, our Vedas were also written at the river banks. The Saraswati river, after passing through (what is now) Haryana, got submerged in (what is now) Rajasthan.”

Hon’ble Chief Minister Sri Manohar Lal Khattar, who has been a Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) ideologue, and other BJP ministers is determined to dig up the mystery behind the mythological river, given its significance in Hindu culture. The tell-tale signs on the ground of the Saraswati River and the religiously-minded BJP government led by Sri Khattar are giving shape to the revival efforts of the hitherto invisible river. The Chief Minister has also issued firm directions for excavation work of Saraswati River from its origin district to Kurukshetra, the land of the epic Mahabharata, be completed on a “war footing”.

The most praiseworthy action initiated by the Government of Haryana is its decision to set up Digital libraries in all the districts of Haryana and making provisions for preserving the Books, Research papers and other material related to the Saraswati river in the District libraries of Kurukshetra, Kaithal and Yamunanagar so that information pertaining to the river reaches the masses.

## Girls are no less – they can scale any height

Our society always treats the girls as lesser individuals, because they suffer from the oft quoted maxim of weaker sex identity for women. It is for this reason many of them never hesitate to kill the girls before they are even born. Some of them do not feel it necessary to send their daughters to schools because they believe that the girls are meant only for managing the household and giving birth to babies.

The facts however tell a different story. There are several instances that prove beyond any reasonable doubt that the beliefs of the male superiority believers are totally wrong. Hundreds and thousands of examples may be cited to prove that the girls are no less and given the opportunity they can scale any height.

One latest example in this regard is that of a teenage girl from Haryana named Ku. Shivangi Pathak. On May 15 this year this little girl embarked on the very challenging task of climbing Mount Everest from the Nepal side. Unfortunately, she dropped her radio transceiver during the trek and lost her all contact with outside world. With no one able to contact her, there was hushed speculation that the 16-year-old might have perished in one of the world's toughest mountain terrains. After a tense 10 hours, a great piece of news came down the mountain and, later, her family in Hisar got to know about her epic triumph — she had become the youngest Indian woman to scale the highest peak of the Himalayas.

Recounting their ordeal Shivangi's mother Mrs. Aarti Pathak, 42, informed that "We were extremely worried about her safety. Our whole family kept praying for hours for her safety without eating or drinking." "It was after a really long ordeal that we got to know that not only was our girl safe, but that she had also scaled the summit. I cannot describe in words what it felt like to hear this news. We are so proud of her. She achieved what she was determined to," the mother said.

Ku. Shivangi, now an acknowledged celebrity across India by her own right, the journey of this go-getter girl to this huge accomplishment began with a joke made by her mother. Shivangi's mother Arati told that "We got to hear of an Everest summiter (Mamta Sodha) being appointed as a Deputy Superintendent of Police. I jokingly told Shivangi to do something as big so she gets a similar job." Later, Shivangi saw some videos on Miss Arunima Sinha, the first Indian amputee to climb the peak. Inspired by her, Shivangi, in November 2016, decided to climb the Everest. She trained herself for just over a year to prepare for the challenge. The trainer she approached initially criticised her for being "too stylish" with her hair. "She asked me if I have come to the ground or for a fashion walk. I was fat, and had long hair then," Shivangi recalled. "It hurt. I thought that maybe I am dreaming too big."

What seemed too big then eventually became a reality with her hard work and dedication. She got her hair cut short and toiled to get in shape. Weighing 65 kgs two years back when she decided to climb the summit, she trimmed herself to weigh only 48 kgs. Telling her tale she said that "I started shaping myself according to the requirements of the sport. I got my hair cut very short, started training under the same trainer, Ms. Rinku Pannu. She is my guru. She encouraged me to do it. I am immensely grateful to her," said Shivangi.

"It is pretty funny that because I had short hair, girls who came to the ground started hitting on me thinking of me to be a boy," she laughed. The training session went on for six to seven hours every day. Shivangi didn't attend school and dedicated all her time preparing to climb the Everest. The training session included a 10-km run, weight lifting, rope-skipping. She was made to run with a backpack of 20 kgs on her shoulders. "At times, she would tie ankle

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# Bharatiya Architecture

Prashant Pole

What is the guarantee or warranty period of a product? One year, two years, five years, ten years...? We cannot think beyond that, isn't it? However, the guarantee of the bricks made by the Indian technicians in construction or architecture sector is – 5000 years! Yes, five thousand years. And these bricks are from the remains of the ancient civilization found at Mohenjodaro and Harappa.

As the preparations for the first struggle for independence were going on in Bharat in 1857, the British were busy in building railway network in the north-west India (that is Pakistan today). The work of laying Lahore to Multan railway track was with East India Railway Company. The supervisors for the work were British engineers John and Willian Bruntan. Procuring grit for laying below the railway track was big challenge before them.

Some villagers informed them that remains of an ancient city were there near Brahmanabad and they could get their bricks from there.

These two railway engineer brothers then found the bricks from those remains. They were in plenty. Almost 93 kilometres of line between the Lahore to Karachi segment was built by these bricks. Neither of them realised that they were destroying the remains of Harappa, a very old and rich civilization.

Later on, these historic bricks served to support the Lahore-Multan railway line for many years. The newer discoveries made with the help of carbon dating has proved that the ancient civilisation found at Mohenjo-daro, Lothal and other places was 7500 years old. Even if we bring the period of these bricks to earlier, they are 5000 years old. So these bricks, that are at least 5000 years old, are strong enough when found in 1857 and they support the railway track for 80/90 years!

## Can such bricks be made today?

The bricks found at Harappa are unique. They are burned in kiln a good measure. They are found in 15 different sizes, but there is uniformity in all sizes. Thus, the proportion of all these bricks is 4:2:1 that means 4 part length, 2 part width and one part height

(breadth). It means the bricks were made with utmost scientific consideration. Then the question arises - where did this advanced knowledge in construction came to us Indians almost 5000 to 7000 years ago? Or did Indians invent it themselves?

Part of the answer we can get from our old Sanskrit books. Some of the books in Tantrashastra are available because of oral tradition. One of them is the book titled Mayamatam Kala-mula Shastra written by Kapil Vatsayana. This book explains many things in construction. One of the shlokas is as states that, "The width of these bricks is in measurements of four, five, six and eight while its length is double. Its height (breadth) is one-half or one third of the width. These bricks should be dried first and then burned."

The book consisting this shloka was written in the 6th century CE, that means almost 1500 years ago. And the bricks with the same proportion found in Harappa are 5000 to 7000 years old.

Let us take a comparatively recent example. Lepakshi temple built in 1583 CE, the later period of Vijayanagar Empire. It is said that Jatayu, having struggled with Ravana after the latter kidnapped Sita, breathed his last here. This temple, situated at 150 kilometres from Bangalore but falling in the Anantpur district of Andhra Pradesh, is unique in many aspects. Veeranna and Virupanna, two knight brothers of the Vijayanagar Empire, built this temple. It belongs to Veerbhadra and built in the Kurmshail tableau or the hill shaped as tortoise's shell. Yet, this 525 years old temple is famous for something other. It is built on 70 pillars and one of those pillars is hanging!

Of course, it does not appear so and appear to be resting on ground. However, a thin cloth can move below it from one end to other. No arrangement to keep it in bound at the upper side is seen here. This is a mystery that haunts the stalwarts of architecture and scientists. No one is able to explain how this pillar hangs in air without any support. During the British rule, a British engineer tried his hand on it in every possible way, but he could not find the secret.

This means, the advanced technology in architecture existed in India as late as 500 years ago.



It was visible at many places later also. Forts Pratapgad and Raigad were built during Shivaji's reign, but except for deliberate destruction by British, these forts stand strong even today.

However, the British brought their civil engineering later in India and whatever few books on Indian architecture and construction had survived were closed and relegated to oblivion.

Iconography or architecture in India is considered to be codified by 18 authors. They are Bhrigu, Atri, Vashishta, Vishwakarma, May, Narad, Nagnajeet, Vishalaksha, Purandar, Brahma, Kumar, Nandish, Shaunak, Garg, Vasudev, Aniruddha, Shukra and Brihaspati. However, codes of only May, Vishwakarma, Bhrigu, Narad and Kumar are available

today. It means less than one third of the knowledge in iconography survives today. If we can get other codes, many other secrets like the hanging pillar in the Lepakshi temple may come to light.

A huge cache of such knowledge is lying obscure which needs to be brought to the fore. Literature of iconography and temple architecture that has percolated down to us is available in a great measure. Bharatiya Murtividnyan is a book written by historian GH Khare, the guru of Shivshahir Babasaheb Purandare, though the subject needs much more work to be done in today's era.

In short, this is only a journey of searching the doors of knowledge, written thousands of years ago by our ancestors, and opening them!

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## Girls are no less – they can scale any height

weights and run. When tired, she put them on her wrist," said her 27-year-old trainer.

One day during her training, she suddenly woke up from her sleep around 11.30 pm as she was yet to jump rope 200 times. "I had promised my trainer that day that I would do it 5,000 times but I couldn't complete. So, I woke up in between to do it before midnight," said the mountaineer Ms. Pannu was impressed and exclaimed, "Look at her dedication!"

On April 1, 2018 Ku., Shivangi landed in Nepal from where she trekked up to the base camp where she reached by April 5. This was followed by over two weeks of acclimatization. Finally, on May 10, she began her "Everest Mission", as she called it.

"The route was full of stones and pebbles, and it was very slippery. She had to struggles very hard to move up. A storm hit the range a day before I reached the summit," Shivangi said, adding that she had to constantly motivate herself to overcome all hurdles.

"Ice on the way was very hard. It wouldn't break. Stepping on it would make us slip. There was also a day when I fell sick due to the weather conditions, but I refused to give up," she said. Shivangi was accompanied by a Nepalese guide, Ang Temba Sherpa, who was with her throughout the journey. She explained that "My guide was like god for me in that journey — he treated me like a younger sister, didn't let me miss my family. He was with me through all ups and downs."

On May 15, at 8.21 am, Shivangi made it to the summit. "The first person on my mind was my mother. I desperately wanted to embrace her at that moment. I was so happy I made her proud." Hoisting the national flag at the highest peak of the Himalayas was a great feeling" for her. "It was a moment of pride for me. This achievement turned out to be an inspiration for many girls in Haryana and in the country," she said.

"I feel girls can do anything. They can go anywhere. They just have to make up their minds and have faith and determination towards what they want," she added. She urged the parents of the girls to "encourage and support" their daughters to realise their dreams and never let them feel that they are less than the boys. "My parents were the biggest support and that is why I know how important it is for a girl to have her parents standing by her in her decisions," she added.

Shivangi's next target is to climb to the highest summits of the rest of the continents before she turns 18. "Seven summits before 18," she said. Shivaangi's coach Pannu was confident that this was going to be a cakewalk for her. "She has climbed the highest in the world, reaching the highest of the other six continents won't be tough."

"She is a girl of ambition. She made so many sacrifices. She never complained even when she was made to slog, gave up on all her food delights, lost weight, made herself physically fit. I have confidence in her. She can do it, she will," Pannu said.

## Kalidasa's Shakuntala made the West more poetic

Salil Gewali

It is no less interesting, nor is it too surprising that a world-acclaimed president and an artistic director of Vienna Boys Choir - Mr. Gerald Writh of Austria is going to guide "Shillong Chamber Choir", Meghalaya to be more operatic. But what is a very proud fact is that their new project this time is the performance of an opera based on Abhijnana Shakuntala. Needless to say, this play proclaims itself to be one of the literary brilliance of the East. Probably authored between 4th century to 5th century CE by Mahakavi Kalidasa, this Sanskrit drama, soon after its translation into Latin by Sir William Jones in 1789, had won the fascination of the most of the top European scholars. Based on the story of just a fractional part of Mahabharata it bears the rare attributes less known to the western world. So much so that many critics stood up challenging Aristotelian dramatic theory as they discovered the eastern literature with more literary adornments and philosophy.

To what extent Sir William Jones had been able to render this play from the language which he had just learned from a person who did not know English, is quite astonishing. However, a very scholarly linguist, Sir Jones learned the oldest language of the world with steady mind and determination. And, many believed this snap opened the doorway to hitherto less known Eastern wisdom.

True, when he had first begun to study this play by Kalidasa it had occurred to Sir William Jones that this drama might dwarf other literary work of the European scholars. The conviction instantaneously inspired the British linguist to translate this brilliant tale of romance first into Latin. Without further ado, he had taken it upon himself the challenge of the translation. Not very long after the publication the book captivated the imagination of many front-ranking scholars of Germany, Britain, Italy and French. The rational romantic thinkers who had not been fettered by the shackles of the prejudice and prevailing dogmas had burst out their passionate applause for the aesthetic beauty of the play. After two years, in 1791, another noted scholar George Forster translated this play again into the German language. Forster hastened himself to present his translation to a prominent philosopher and critic of the time Johann Gottfried Herder. After having

immersed in the play Herder was literally lost for the words in reverence for the literary riches of India.

He remarked that – the West seems "narrow and cold" in comparison to the Indian literature. Herder further quipped in praise of Shakuntala "I cannot easily find a product of the human mind more pleasant than this, a real blossom of the Orient, the first and the most beautiful of its kind..., something like that, of course, appears once every two thousand years...". So, Herder got much impelled to introduce the book to the literary giant of the era – Johann Goethe. The father of the German literature was so deeply enthralled by this Sanskrit drama that he decided to learn the language himself. Unsurprisingly, Jones's English edition of Shakuntala became a household name among the literary figures and it got reprinted five times between 1791 to 1807. Shakuntala was adapted for plays, operas and ballets whole across Europe.

Well, there is a very significant disclosure made by the father of German literature when another French Scholar Antoine Leonard de Chezy presented Goethe, probably in the year 1830, with his French edition of Shakuntala. In a letter of gratitude to Antoine Chezy, Johann Goethe opened up himself before European world: "The first time I came upon this inexhaustible work, [Shakuntala] it aroused such enthusiasm in me and so held me that I could not stop studying it. I even felt impelled to make the impossible attempt to bring it in some form to the German stage. These efforts were fruitless but they made me so thoroughly acquainted with this most valuable work, it represented such an "epoch in my life", I so absorbed it, that for thirty years I did not look at either the English or the German version. It is only now that I understand the enormous impression that work made on me at an earlier age."

While the intellectuals like Goethe, Herder, Heinrich Heine, Schiller, Habel,... passionately lauded Indian drama, even by writing poems, Friedrich Schlegel, the pioneer of German romanticism, exclaimed with conviction – "India is superior in everything – intellectually, religiously..., even Greek heritage seems pale in comparison".

Best of luck to Shillong Chamber Choir of Meghalaya.

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# Preserve and Promote the Cultural Traditions of Assam

Partha Pratim Mazumder

There is a famous English proverb which says that 'Rome was not built in a day'. Similarly the culture of a particular society can never evolve in a single day. It takes hundreds and hundreds of years for any culture to establish itself. However it is very difficult to pinpoint the exact date as to when a particular culture evolved. It is the duty of every citizen to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture. The art and culture of our nation are a vast continuum, evolving incessantly since time immemorial. Naturally, preservation and conservation of India's rich cultural heritage and promotion of all forms of art and culture, both tangible and intangible, including monuments and archaeological sites, anthropology and ethnology, folk and tribal arts, literature and handicrafts, performing art of music-dance-drama and visual arts of paintings-sculpture-graphics is essential and assumes a lot of importance.

Assam's life and culture are deeply influenced by the rejuvenating splashes of Brahmaputra, India's only male river and one of the most powerful rivers of the world. To pay fitting tribute to the river's life-giving prosperity and countless blessings, a five day long event, Namami Brahmaputra was organized under the visionary leadership of Sh. Sarbananda Sonowal, Chief Minister of Assam, across 21 districts along the Brahmaputra in its entire stretch from Sadiya to Dhubri. It served as an ideal platform to showcase Assam's tremendous potential as a state brimming with trade, tourism and culture related opportunities.

We all know that Brahmaputra is not called 'lifeline of Assam' for nothing as this perennial river presents incredible business opportunities. The National Waterways, especially NW 2 and NW16 shall be the drivers of economic development and prosperity of North East. National Waterways 2 (NW-2) from Dhubri to Sadiya is a bridge to drive economic progress in Southeast Asian markets, as part of India's 'Act East Policy'. These waterways were not only make Assam the centre of India-ASEAN collaboration but also attract major investments from around the world. The river is also a source of current and potential hydroelectric power generation. The rivers of the

world are fast becoming hotspots for travelers, and the mighty Brahmaputra happens to be one of them.

Thus, in a broader sense, cultural activities pertaining to national identity in conjunction with various sectors such as education, tourism, textiles, external relations etc. is the only path to prosperity for the North East. Since the time of independence, the crux of all culture related development plans centered on the preservation of cultural heritage with greater emphasis on the thread of continuity which has resulted in assimilation of the dissimilarities into a synergistic whole. The main goal has always been establishment of cultural institutions in the field of archaeology resulted in assimilation of the dissimilarities into a synergistic whole. The main goal has always been establishment of cultural institutions in the field of archaeology, anthropology and archives, libraries, museums, and performing arts including academics.

Due to the two UNESCO Conventions, one 'to safeguard and protect Intangible Heritage' and the other on 'Cultural Diversity', the government has initiated proactive measures to safeguard and protect cultural diversity and the various expressions of intangible heritage facing the risk of disappearance. The upkeep and maintenance of museums and archaeological sites will considerably improve with the introduction of modern technology and redeployment of existing staff. To start with, security services have already been outsourced and the possibility for outsourcing in areas like consultancy and maintenance needs to be examined in detail. Publication through private sector should be encouraged as they have all the modern technology and know-how to produce the best from the worst. Repository work is obviously very well done by the private sector. As the Ministry of Culture has been facing recurrent cuts in outlay due to poor spending during the first two quarters, proper expenditure planning in the field of art and culture, several schemes are being implemented without assessing the process and impact.

Way back in 1960 the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), back started SEIL (STUDENTS

EXPERIENCE IN INTER-STATE LIVING (SEIL), which continues to promote cultural exchange program focused on giving the North-Eastern students and their families, the kind of exposure that they lack. Every alternate year, a group of delegates from the north-eastern part of India travels to the north and south of India. There, they are made aware of the culture, food and heritage of the various states that they visit.

In spite of having a vast potentiality the region has not been able to develop cultural tourism for the following reasons:

Poor state of publicity- Though the state has a lot of cultural resources, it has not been able to give due publicity in national and international arena and thus tourist mobility is restricted to only a couple of destinations.

Lack of renovation of archeological sites and monuments- Only a couple of archeological spots and monuments have been renovated so far.

Infrastructural facilities are highly inadequate in the state for tourism, both in terms of transportation and accommodation.

Lack of imaginative organization to showcase the traditional local art, culture, dance, drama, music session, fairs and festivals for the benefit of the tourists is lacking.

Hospitality is a quality which is required in cultural tourism. The poor role played by the people in this respect affects the growth of tourism.

In the starting phase the role of the district administration, along with the state and central leadership will be of utmost importance. They have to create awareness of the whole idea and make people understand the importance of learning the cultures and traditions of their brothers and sisters living in different parts of the country. Once the idea picks up and gather momentum than it will be transformed into people's movement. Social media must be used to make this a grand success. Facebook pages and Whats App groups must be formed to create awareness. As far as the finances are concerned, it needs to be done through sponsorship. Initially government may have to allocate budget for the program. The will of the governments may be tested during the initial phase, there might be certain roadblocks but we all have to withstand the storm together to enjoy the fruits of success. The spirit of togetherness is much stronger than any storm. As in the words of our great visionary Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel "Manpower without Unity is not a strength unless it is harmonized and united properly, then it becomes a spiritual power"

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## Archbishops entering into the world of fatwas

E.Rajesh Pathak

"My fear is that, though Christian friends nowadays do not say or admit it that Hindu religion is untrue, they must harbor in their breast that Hinduism is an error and that Christianity, as they believe it, is the only true religion. So far, as one can understand the present [Christian] effort, it is to uproot Hinduism from her very foundation and replace it by another faith." [Mahatma Gandhi- Harijan, 13/3/1937]

Coming as it did from a man who is universally regarded as a very epitome of secularism, above statement is an eye opener for all those secularists who descended in the support of Delhi's Archbishop Anil Couto, who called upon the Christian followers to offer prayer so as to get wish of removing Modi from the post of Prime minstership fulfilled. However, what he said is nothing but the reflexive of mindset of Church and its functionaries. See, what none other

than Pope John Poul II said before the Cardinals of India in his tour to country in 1998- "Freedom of religion includes freedom to convert. If one wants to change one's religion and gets converted, no one has any right to bring about change in one's intention directly or indirectly. In the first 1000 years after Christ, Christianity was established in Europe, in second millennium in Africa and in the third millennium Christianity should reap a good harvest in Asia." Indian mission, Church planting mission, Project Joshua and such other are indulged in very conversion in the country as justified and, thus, exhorted by Pope. And Modi government for them is big stumbling block in their 'mission' as hundreds of NGOs run by them on illegal funding has been banned by it one after other.

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## Religion and Politics

The Father of the Nation had a different perception of the role that religion could play in politics when he said famously, “If I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics today encircles us like the coils of a snake from which one cannot get out no matter how one tries. I wish to wrestle with the snake” (Mahatma Gandhi by Romain Rolland). And as quoted by JJ Doke in MK Gandhi, the priest of non-violence, both as political philosophy and spiritual endeavour, had this to say about religion as he grappled with the ramifications of religion in politics: “By religion I do not mean formal religion or customary religion, but that religion which underlies all religions, which brings us face to face with our Maker.” It is a profound statement, reflecting on how Gandhi wanted religion to spiritualize politics, and not to create rifts and discords polluting political ambience, nor to cater to the imperatives of any vote-bank politics centered around a perverse politics of religious appeasement for cheap electoral gains as is in vogue in India – with secularism distorted to pander to ‘minorities’ alone because votes must rate a priority far higher than even the integrity of the nation and its hallowed Constitution.

This takes us to the controversial letter sent by the Archbishop of Delhi, Anil Coutu, to all parish priests in the national capital that points to the “turbulent political atmosphere which poses a threat to the democratic principles enshrined in the Constitution and the secular fabric of our nation”. He has exhorted his audience thus: “It is our hallowed practice to pray for the country and its political leaders all the time but all the more so as we approach the general elections... As we look forward towards 2019 when we will have new government, let us begin a prayer campaign for our country... Protect our institutions from the infiltration of the evil forces”. Had it been simply a letter asking the Christian community in the country to pray for the welfare of the country at all times without referring to elections and without making any ambiguous reference with hidden meanings to

“evil forces”, it would not have led to any controversy. But things have turned out to be different.

The Archbishop, however, has chosen to gloss over at least two fundamentals. One, it is the timing that has sparked the controversy. The pre-election phase is a time for political parties to knuckle down with new agendas to win over their constituencies, not for clergies to suddenly wake up and see “evil forces” without having to name them and be clear about what they really intend to say and convey. Lack of clarity is an antithesis when it comes to religious heads making attempts to dabble in politics in a veiled manner while attempting self-righteousness. The prayer that the Archbishop has in mind must be for all times for every single citizen in the country, and not just when general elections are approaching and “evil forces” must be defeated so that our “secular fabric” is intact. And two, some introspection becomes necessary. Where was such concern when under the UPA regime corruption had assumed a hydra-headed monstrous role and brought disrepute to the country worldwide? Were the evil forces bent on perpetrating loot on the people of the country not running berserk then? What about the Mumbai 26/11 attacks? And what about the other acts of terror savagery sparing not even women and children? When the Sonia Gandhi-led Congress, ruling the country at that time as the leader of the UPA, was failing continually to rein in the evil forces of all hues, why was there not any such call for prayer?

The bottom-line is simple: When religious figures utter words of politics and at times when such words are highly vulnerable to interpretations of all sorts with people having to enjoy the right to interpret when such words fall short of specifics, they must tread the path of the venomous blend of politics and religion, bereft of spirituality but with indirect references, very carefully. By the way, who really are the “evil forces” the Archbishop has pointed to?

(The Sentinel, 24-05-2018)

## 'Queen' pineapples of Tripura flies off to Dubai

The small state of Tripura located at the North eastern part of India is more famous as the only princely state of North East India. The state was last ruled by Maharaja Kirit Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur Debbarma from 1947 to 1949, after which the state was merged with India. The state is also famous for its unique Royal Palace better known as 'Ujjayanta Palace' and its royal residence 'Neer Mahal'.

New fame for the state has come not from a much unexpected direction. It is common knowledge that occupationally Tripura is agriculture and allied activities based state. A variety of Horticultural and Plantation Crops are produced in Tripura like Pineapple, Oranges, Cashew nut, Jackfruit, Coconut, Tea and Rubber among others. There is ample scope for increasing the area under such plantations as well as the productivity.

The most praiseworthy fact in this regards is that Tripura has given due attention to growing cash crops that are suitable for its soil and climate. The most notable among them is 'Queen Pineapple' which is an exquisite variety of pineapple known for being juicy and sweet. There is a huge demand for this variety both within the country and outside. Consequently, this unique Tripura variety of pineapple has succeeded in bringing new laurels for Tripura along with economic bonanza for the state. Hon'ble Chief Minister Sri Biplab Kumar Deb recently flagged off for the first time a one tonne consignment of this variety of pineapples to Dubai by Spice jet flight via New Delhi. The private

airliner last month signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the state government-run Tripura Horticulture Corp and a Kolkata-based company to facilitate the exports. A Spice Jet official informed that by next week they would carry three more tonnes of pineapples to Dubai.

Hon'ble Chief Minister Sri Deb took personal initiative to export the pineapple which is famous in India and the neighbouring countries, urged the people to grow more pineapples and jackfruits as both are being produced in Tripura with a rich quality due to the climatic condition, soil and the environment. At the function organized to see off the first consignment the Chief Minister said that "Tripura can earn huge foreign money by cultivating bamboo. If the farmers and others cultivate pineapple, jackfruit and bamboo, their economic condition would see a sea change." He further stated that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi was keen to double the farmers' income.

State Agriculture and Tourism Minister Pranajit Singha Roy, who along with other senior officials was present at the function, said that the Bharatiya Janata Party-led alliance government's initiative to export the pineapples would encourage the farmers to grow pineapples in newer areas in the state. He further added that "Tripura would be able to supply at least 200 MT best grown pineapples during the current season (May to July). The 'Queen' pineapples being sold in Tripura for Rs 20 per kg would be at least Rs 80 in the Dubai market,".

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(Contd. from Page 23)

## Archbishops entering into the world of fatwas

The case of Mother Teresa is rather more brazen; no matter very few know it. During Janta Party regime when Morarji Desai proposed to table a bill on anti-conversion law in the Loksabha, Mother Teresa strongly opposed it. On 26th March, 1979 she wrote a letter to Morarji Desai, warning that-"We would never tolerate any kind of prohibition on making anybody Christian. You got to be too old. You must learn that after dying few years later that you have to answer God as to why you prohibited the preaching of Christianity." At this Morarji Desai answered - "I appreciate your spirit of service. But never allow you the right of divesting others of their Dharma on the

pretext of service."

In the face of elections, the Church's role has always been dubious, and what Archbishop proclaimed should not surprise anybody. Not long ago in one of the Vidhan Sabha elections of the Mizoram state the Church openly displayed posters at different locations with the slogan of "Vote for Christ". The sole purpose behind this was to send the message to people to vote for only that candidate who, above all, owes his loyalty to the Church. Likewise, in the last Gujrat elections Archbishop Thomas Mekwan, did what, his brother in cause, Archbishop Anil Couto did today.

## Rajasthan's tribal town wins laurels for transforming education

Baran, a small tribal town of Rajasthan a given a new meaning and a smart direction to the educational setup of that areas and has succeeded in charting a history for itself.

Scripting a story of transformation, this town recently earned laurels at the national level by sharing its success story on National Civil Services Day in New Delhi last month. The schools of the district are holding regular smart classes where students are taking online and offline tests while enhancing their digital learning skills. The results in these schools are getting better and admissions too are going up bringing in winds of change in this tribal district. Also, the registration of students has increased by 19 per cent and the results of the Class X Board examinations improved by 10 per cent last year in the District.

Sharing details about Project Utkarsha, Baran District Collector Sri S.P. Singh said that the project works towards empowering students in the digital domain. Since the last one-and-a-half years of its implementation in Baran's schools, it has empowered around 10,000 students of 105 government schools of the district. The project revived the ICT labs in these schools to ensure the students' learning skills are enhanced and they become digitally empowered. The Baran District Collector Sri Singh further informed that the Project Utkarsh was also included in the book 'New Pathway' published by Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances and released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Of the around 900 applications received from different corners of the nation, only 20 have found place in the book.

About its genesis and sustenance the District Collector Sri Singh informed that the Project Utkarsha is being implemented in Baran with the help of the District Administration, the Education Department, NGO Moinee Foundation and Chhabra Thermal

Power's CSR. The Project Utkarsh also comes with a Quiz Bank which has interesting questions and students learn newer things while playing the quiz, he said.

Speaking about the transformation story of government schools in Baran, The District Collector Singh said that the ICT Labs were introduced across India in 2007-08 in senior secondary schools. In Baran, these labs existed in around 105 schools but were non-functional. Not any more.

The Project Director of 'Utkarsha' Sri Vijay Vyas said that the students of class IX and X are major beneficiaries of this project as the content served here goes in accordance with the Board's syllabus. The question papers are aligned with the regular syllabus to ensure students learn GK, Science and Maths. Besides students, teachers, too, are quite excited with the learning techniques taught to them. "The reason project 'Utkarsha' is delivering surprising results is that our team has smartly leveraged resources provided by central and state governments irrespective of the fact whether it is ICT or human resource infrastructure. We have used these resources without any extra investment," Vyas pointed out.

The Niti Aayog CEO Sri Amitabh Kant had much praise for the project saying it had much potential for transforming education in rural India.

Baran District Collector S.P. Singh was among three collectors from India invited to Delhi to give a presentation on Project Utkarsh — which, according to him, is the vehicle for transforming education in this district.

Smart classes in a remote tribal town? The Baran District Collector and associates have shown that this is possible. They deserve to be applauded and emulated.

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(Contd. from Page 21)

## Kalidasa's Shakuntala made the West more poetic

Hope this musical project will be instrumental in inspiring the people across the country to shed their past prejudices against India and her riches. One should not berate his own Mother while admiring others. India's abundant literary wisdom is acknowledged worldwide. Would it not do the world of good if we get

down to study with seriousness the literature of our own motherland first — that with the equal fervor and faith as we study Odyssey, Iliad, Macbeth, Paradise Lost, and Harry Potter? Let's bask in the brilliance of the real Sun instead of being led astray by a flickering flame of a candle.





**ZE VILLAGE**



# 1<sup>st</sup> RHODODENDRON FESTIVAL

Date : 8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> March, 2018  
Venue : Sentejfiang, Lawngtlai District.

Chief Guest : Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Nirbhay Sharma, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM.  
Hon'ble Governor of Mizoram  
Guest of Honour : Pu H. Zothangliana, MLA

Organized by : Rhododendron Festival Organizing Committee, Lawngtlai District

