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HERITAGE EXPLORER

"LET KNOWLEDGE COME FROM ALL THE SIDES"

A Monthly News Bulletin

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India's
contribution
to the rest of
the world

"If I am asked which nation had been advanced in the ancient world in respect of education and culture then I would say it was – **India**"

Max Muller German Indologist

Courtesy : <http://www.slideshare.net/jitendraadhikari/indias-contribution-to-the-world>

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Chinese aggression & Arunachal

In 1962 the Chinese army invaded India and made their push into Indian territory through Arunachal Pradesh. The Indian military defence was so weak, even after 15 years of Independence, that the Chinese almost reached Tezpur unopposed. We not only lost that war but also lost face because of our inability to defend our borders. The invasion has clearly demonstrated the vulnerability of our borders and the exceptional incompetence of our political bosses and the Military brass tacks. Our hearts ache today when we remember that ignominious defeat of 1962, doubly so, when we remember the unforgettable words of the then PM Jawaharlal Nehru who abandoned us and consoled the people of the North East thus - “My heart goes to the people of Assam” which amounted to surrender of our territories to the Chinese. Fortunately, the war ended on November 21, after China declared a unilateral ceasefire and withdrew; otherwise we the Indians of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh would have become Chinese national courtesy Nehru and his coterie of exceptionally incompetent politicians and Military bosses.

The latest incursions of the Chinese army into our eastern borders have reawakened our apprehensions about the Chinese intensions. This sudden transgressions in at least four places in Eastern Ladakh and its heavy troop build-up along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the northern sector could be part of a larger plan of Beijing aimed at grabbing as much as land possible of our country, which they claim as their own. This latest Chinese claim on Arunachal Pradesh clearly indicates that China is slowly hardening its negotiating position on the boundary dispute. It also highlights the fact that China no longer holds sacrosanct the settled principles for boundary demarcation agreed upon in 2005. On November 20, 2006, this stance was reiterated by China’s Ambassador to India Sun Yuxi, when he said that “the whole of the state of Arunachal Pradesh is Chinese territory. And Tawang is only one of the places in it. We are claiming all of that. That is our position.” The Chinese never objected when Prime Minister Nehru declared on November 20, 1950 in the Indian Parliament that “the McMahon Line is our boundary. . . we will not allow anybody to come across that boundary.” China forcefully took control of Aksai China in 1962. Now, it treats Aksai Chin as history and has begun to assert claims over Arunachal Pradesh. During the visit Chinese

Premier Chou En Lai in late 1956 he raised the issue of the McMahon Line and frontier areas at some length with Nehru. Expressing his unhappiness that “this line, established by British Imperialism, was not fair,” Chou said that “because of the friendly relations which existed between China and other countries, namely, India and Burma, the Chinese government should give recognition of this McMahon line. . .” Today, of course, this approach has been completely overturned and China says that it neither recognises Arunachal Pradesh as Indian territory nor the McMahon Line as the border.

Till not long ago the Chinese claimed that three parts of Tawang – Monyul, Loyul and lower Tsayul – were under Tibetan administrative area and hence it is under their jurisdictional control. But from these select places the Chinese claim has gradually expanded to encompass the whole of Arunachal Pradesh today. Chinese interest may stem from a number of geo-political factors. Arunachal can serve as an “eastern gateway” from the Brahmaputra valley to China’s Yunnan province. Arunachal also offers a lot on the tourism and agricultural fronts. A further attraction is the state’s purportedly huge mineral deposits and its very real hydro-electric power potential. In addition, strategic advantages in terms of providing a base to gain contiguity with Bhutan along its eastern flank as well as access to the entire Southeast Asian market has lured them to their latest overtures.. Given these attractions the Chinese strategy is to include Arunachal Pradesh – or what they refer to as ‘Southern Tibet’. China’s eventual goal thus appears to be one of territorial expansion with respect to Arunachal Pradesh.

Given the mischievous character of China, the Government of India should not rest in peace now that the Chinese have retreated to their boundary limits. The present lull may be a prelude to a more sinister assault on the integrity of our country, because treachery is the other name of China. It is more than sure that the Chinese are definitely planning for a fresh assault with renewed vigour and is presently lying little low because of negative international reactions. Along with the Government, the people of Arunachal Pradesh should also remain ever alert to safeguard the jurisdictional integrity of Arunachal Pradesh. This will not only foil the mischievous plans of the Chinese but will also strengthen India.

Chief Editor

Swami Vivekananda's vision of Self Reliant India

Nikhil Yadav

The Covid-19 crisis has destabilised the rigid, unyielding mental conditions of the human minds. Trends are changing across the globe and speculations are rife about the post Covid scenario. India's Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, gave a clarion call for Atma Nirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) on May 12, 2020, while addressing the nation to inspire them for a decisive win over COVID-19 crisis amidst China's land grabbing overtures. According to Prime Minister Modi, India has the capacity to emerge as a global leader after this pandemic. The Self Reliant India slogan overflowed all forms of media platforms with debates, discussions and write-ups and what was common in all of them was the Economic aspect of self reliance.

Around a 125 years ago, Swami Vivekananda during his visit to University of Michigan, told a group of journalists that "This is your century right now, but 21st century is India's century"¹. Prime Minister Modi also recalled that 21st century must belong to India." We must strive to make the 21st century India's century and the path to do that is 'self-reliance'². The centre and State governments are doing and will do whatever they can but there is a bigger question which needs to be addressed? Are we Indians really ready to be self Reliant? Is it possible for a country to be self-reliant if its countrymen are not self reliant themselves?

Is it possible to reach the goal bypassing the process? We have to consciously make efforts to realise that vision. Swami Vivekananda's concept of "oneness" is what we want today, we all would need oneness of the vision, oneness of the mind and effort and work as a truly organised successful team. India, the committed Nation for a Self Reliant India, should be our goal. Ways, methods, processes, procedures and coerces of action, can be different but one idea that has to be common is our prime

goal to make India Self Reliant.

Swami Vivekananda throughout his life focused on the idea of "Man Making and Nation Building" and, according to him, through this process of Man Making, India will arise and awake once again and the ancient mother will reoccupy her throne rejuvenated, more glorious than ever. After the revolt of 1857, the most important event that happened to India was Swami Vivekananda advent on Indian soil. Speaking from the platform of the first World Parliament of Religions held at Chicago, USA on 11th of September 1893, Swamiji said he is representing the Sages and Rishis of India and its people and spoke about Indian philosophy, civilization, scriptures and its culture. During his first visit to the West (1893-1897) Swamiji with his epoch making speeches changed the perspective of how the west looked towards India. India was considered to be a country of snake charmers, land of superstitions and a slaves country which was being ruled by foreign invaders for centuries.

On his return from the west he proclaimed that the first step towards Self reliant India will be to acknowledge our glorious past and out of that will rise the conviction to reclaim our position in the comity of nations. He stated that if India and Indians want to be self reliant how can we blindly follow the Western model blindly? He further stated that on one Side new India is saying, "If we only adopt Western Ideas, Western language, Western Food, Western Dress, and Western manners, we shall be as strong and powerful as the Western nations"; on the other , old India is saying , 'Fools ! By imitation of other's idea it never become one's own; nothing unless earned, is your own'³. So we have to go by our natural tendency, the Indian way. We can learn from west but should not imitate their ways blindly. We have to look across the globe and take ideas but absorb

them to make it our own.

Swamiji never talked about any idea on surface level, he used to delve deep to the core and would go to any length to know the truth. While travelling in the west he observed that education gives enormous faith in one's own self. In India we have to cover the length and the breadth of the land to provide basic education to the last man. He said that education was not a tool to get a job, rather he talked about "man making education in his lectures. He said that "Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library .Education must be on national lines, through national methods as far as practical"⁴.

This education will help build "National character" where individual excellence and egoistic growth will transform into psychosocial growth. Where the spirit will go forth to embrace the nation, nay, entire humanity with its love, compassion and humanistic care. If this is developed, our best minds which have been trained in highly subsidised institutions of higher studies like IITs etc. will not go abroad for employment. We cannot separate them with terms like "They/Them and Us". India needs them. And since the nation has made them what they are, they should be able to serve the country in the best possible way, albeit we will have to create a conducive environment for that, where creativity, innovation and growth can be assured for the deserving ones. On the part of Individual, it should not be 'What the Nation can provide us, rather it should be How can I serve my Nation. We all know how, after the "Balfour Declaration", Jews from all across the world came back to their promised land 'Israel' to make a nation which they themselves and their ancestors have always dreamt of having. And now in less than 100 years we see a powerful nation marching ahead in every field. This was only possible because of their love for their land. Jews across the

world without selfishly thinking about their personal growth went back to their land, this is a striking example of national character for one and all.

We have to develop a 'may I help you' attitude in our system. The day we all will start feeling from our heart for every countryman, our work will automatically gain momentum. But it is not so easy, some of us will have to sacrifice ourselves. Swamiji says, "no great work can be done without sacrifice. We have to forgo our comforts and pleasures to make a bridge of human chains over which millions will cross this ocean of life"⁵. So we have to work tirelessly because we have to convert this precarious situation into an opportunity and this opportunity into reality. We have to work, work and work, the results will take care of themselves. So let us join hands and accomplish our mission of "Self-reliant India." ■

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(The writer is a State Youth Head at Vivekananda Kendra , Uttar Prant. He had obtained his Masters in History from University Of Delhi and is pursuing COP in Vedic Culture from Jawaharlal Nehru University.)

The Shamadi (village youth dormitory) System among the Tiwa

Dr. Raktim Patar

Studies on bachelor's/youth dormitory system occupied a significant place in the colonial ethnography in North East India. Shakespear¹ studied about the Mizo youth dormitory. Gurdon² talked about the dormitory system among the war clan of the Khasi tribe. He observed that the bachelor dormitory system is a Tibeto-Burman trait.³ Endle⁴ commented that once the bachelor dormitory system was prevalent among the Kachari in the past but all traces have disappeared. Hutton⁵ also opined that this system was prevalent among the Kachari in Assam but discontinued due to cultural change.

Among the Tiwa, the youth group the *Panthai Khel* is a moving force behind the governance of a village. The *Panthai Khel* is centered on the village youth dormitory called the *Shamadi*. It is the most important socio-religious institution which is still prevalent among the Hill Tiwa. Practically the *Shamadi* system among the Plain Tiwa has disappeared on account of social and cultural changes. The *Shamadi* system provide an opportunity for the Tiwa youths to acquire a spirit of cooperation, responsibility and certain amount of skill essential for a traditional way of life. It is an indispensable part of the social and religious life of the hill Tiwa. It is a seat of learning for the younger generations. They learn music, dance, handicraft and other essential facts of life at the *Shamadi*. The youth joins the *Shamadi* when they attain ten to twelve years and remains as members of the institution until they attain twenty five years, that is, till they get married. The *Shamadi* is a rectangular hall of around 40/50 feet long and 25/30 feet wide. It is constructed on wooden and bamboo platform raised five to six feet above the ground. The *Shamadi* is built in the centre of a village to facilitate easy access to the villagers. Both the entry and exit points of the *Shamadi* have no walls. Floors are covered with bamboo mats. Unmarried youths of the villages generally spend the night at the *Shamadi*. There is no restriction on married men sleeping in the dormitory. However, entry of women

is restricted in the *Shamadi*. A managing committee is formed to look after the affairs of the *Shamadi*, known as "*Panthai Khel*". The three main functionaries of the *Panthai Khel* are named after the three main post of the *Shamadi*, the *Changdolo*, *Changmaji*, and *Huruma*. These three posts are collectively called as *Thamkhunda*. The entire *Shamadi* is divided into four un-demarcated parts, each with a specific purpose. The area in front of the *Changdolo* is called as *Nomaji*. It is used for observation of different ceremonies. The portion behind the *Nomaji* is called *Nukthi*. It is used for important discussions. There are two fire-places, the one which is meant for the village elders and guests and the other one is for the officials of the *Shamadi* (*Panthai khel*). The firewood is stored under the raised platform in large quantity so that it last throughout the winter and the rainy season. The cross beam of the *Shamadi* is decorated with carvings of developed female breast or *Sho*. According to our informant as the physical entry of women is restricted inside the *Shamadi*, the female breast symbolises their presence in the *Shamadi*. In addition, geometrical designs, forms of animals and birds are inscribed on the posts of the *Shamadi* to signify their close association with the nature and its surrounding.

Membership of the village *Shamadi* is compulsory for every boy of the village. A Tiwa boy enters into the dormitory at the age of ten and remains there for twelve years. During the *Khelchawa* festival, the leader of the *Panthai Khel* goes to the house of every eligible boy and informs about the new recruitment to the *Shamadi*. Later in the evening, the mother of the boy goes to the village chief's (*Loro*) house where all the *Pisais* gather. She presents her son to the assembly and recites "respected village elders in compliance with your order which is the code of conduct of our tribe and that of the *Shamadi* should continue, I have come to present you one of your helpers, whom you will give the necessary training and understanding in upholding our glory. I pray that you will always run

the *Shamadi* in strict discipline and keep high its cause, do justice to all and extend help to the villagers, so that we may live and prosper in peace". This procedure is repeated by the mothers of every boy and may take a long time. It shows the commitment of the boys' family towards the dormitory institution and significance of the community life of the Tiwa society. The newly enrolled members are placed under the junior group known as *Korkhiya-panthai*. He has to stay in this group for at least six years. During this period, he works under the strict supervision of the senior group known as the *Kbra-panthai*. He needs to bring water, firewood and take care of the requirements of the *Shamadi*. The junior boys sometime arranges the beds for the seniors and does odd jobs that may be required of them in the *Shamadi*. The seniors make sure that the juniors strictly maintain decorum of the *Shamadi*. The three most important leaders of the *panthai khel* of the *Shamadi* are the *Changdolo*, *Changmaji* and *Huruma* selected from among the senior group. The Main function of the *panthai khel* (the leaders of the *Shamadi*) is to maintain discipline among the boys. As the head of the *Shamadi*, the *Changdolo* is responsible for the overall supervision of the institution. He always takes the lead in every community work. The *Changdolo* is assisted by a deputy called *Changmaji* who is the in-charge of the attire and musical instruments required for the boys on various festive occasions. The next most important official of the *Shamadi* is the *Huruma*. He is responsible for the maintenance and cleanliness of village paths. He also needs to look after the water sources from where drinking water is obtained. Moreover, the *Huruma* has to keep a watch on the maintenance of decorum in the entire village during festive occasions. He is assisted by a deputy, the *Hurumaphali* in discharging various duties.

Among the Tiwa, the boys must not sleep outside the dormitory. One may stay at home on account of illness, but must return to the *Shamadi* soon after recovery. In case a boy refuses to come to the *Shamadi* without any sickness or valid reason, the leaders of the *panthai khel* goes to the boy's house and ask him to rejoin. If he disobeys the leaders of the *panthai khel*, the case is forwarded to the *Pisai* of the village.

Generally, the parent of the boy is fined even after the boy agrees to go to the *Shamadi* for violation of social norms. However, if they refuse to send the boy to the dormitory, then it is considered to be serious offence for which the whole family is ostracized and forced to leave the village.

After spending six years in the junior group, a Tiwa boy becomes eligible to enter into the senior group. This promotion is an important event in the *Shamadi* system as it is also the time of retirement of the senior group and selection of new *panthai khel*. It is also the time to demolish the old *Shamadi* and construct a new one. The Tiwa can marry only when they are in senior group. In case, a senior boy continues to remain unmarried, he merely sleeps as usual in the *Shamadi* but lives a retired life keeping himself aloof from the other boys. He also does not receive any respect and services from the junior boys.

According to the traditional beliefs the *Shamadi* is the place where the *Lampha raja* resides. Among the hill Tiwa, *Lampha raja* is considered to be one of the benevolent deities. Hence the *Shamadi* is no less than a holy shrine for the Tiwa. The prayer (*kebruma*) chanted at the ceremony held before procurement of the main post for the *Shamadi* is noted below:

oi' pha deuri hadari
ta' etha porlena
tao konong oi Sharipabai Sharikora
lampha rajane pale chinge etha
jella lanina ta' porlena porbena
oi deu Sharipabai Sharikora....

Free Translation

Oh father Deuri, *Hadari* (village elders)! Today we all pray for *Sharipabai Sharikora* (Tiwa deity) and request permission to construct the *Shamadi*; the residence of *Lampha raja*(deity) and to select the village elders.

The above prayer shows the significance of the *Shamadi* in the socio-religious life of the Tiwa society.

In the *Shamadi* the Tiwa boys receive training and motivation essential for a traditional way of life at an early age. The dormitory life makes them understand and acquire the knowledge about the

(Contd. to Page 10)

Power of encouragement and inspiration

Partha Pratim Mazumder

The fast pace of modern day family life can make it easy to forget that just spending time with our children is really important. Our time is one of the greatest things we can give them. Summer time offers lots of opportunities to spend time together and some good old family members. Here's why you should make quality time a priority: Children who spend time with their parents participating in activities together build a positive sense of family bondage. When children feel that they are valued by their parents, they feel more positive about themselves. Family activities don't have to be expensive trips out to be meaningful; the important part is just being together. You could go for a bike ride or play a game together. Families which share everyday activities together form strong, emotional ties. Studies have found that families which enjoy group activities together share a stronger emotional bond as well as an ability to adapt well to situations as a family. Share your favourite hobbies, sports, books, movies or other favorite activities. Children and adolescents who spend more time with their parents are less likely to get involved in unworthy behaviour. According to studies done by the National Centre on Addiction and Substance Abuse via Arizona State University, teens who have infrequent family dinners are twice as likely to use tobacco, nearly twice as likely to use alcohol and one and a half times more likely to use Marijuana. Children who frequently eat with their families also usually have improved dietary intake compared to those who don't eat as often with family members.

When you spend time with your children you are fostering an environment for open communication. Good communication is important for your children to feel comfortable with talking to about anything. Simply asking your child how did they enjoyed their day can make a big difference. Spending time helping your children with schoolwork or reading together, especially in their early years, will foster an

environment that adds value to their academics. If your child feels comfortable coming to you with schoolwork, they are more likely to perform better academically. Children learn by example. If you are setting a good example for them by spending quality time together, they are more likely to adopt those behaviours in other relationships in their lives. Simple things like playing games together will help them understand more about interacting with others as well as teach them things like sharing love and kindness.

Most importantly, family time means you can just have fun and enjoy each others company! You've still got a little bit of time left before the children go back to school so make the most of it this weekend and do something together. What does creating inspiration mean? Generally, most leaders in the world have always inspired people only by creating an external enemy. If you create an external enemy, you can inspire everybody on the street. Action, isn't it? But when you point out to people that the real enemy is within you — your limitations are your biggest enemies, whatever your limitations, your fear, your anxiety, your anger, your hatred, whatever the limitations from which one suffers — when you say the enemy is within you, then to inspire you, one needs much more commitment and dedication. But, dedication and commitment have become such scarce material. It's a lifelong thing. It's not that today you do something and everything is fixed. There is no such possibility. It's like nurturing a plant; it's like nurturing a tree.

If you want it to bear fruit, you have to nurture it every day. Every day you have to water it, everyday you have to take care of it. If this dedication is shown by the adults, the grown-ups, you will see your young ones doing miraculous things. Only because such dedication is missing in general, youth seem to be disoriented, they don't know what to do, they do things, as they like — short-term things, because everybody is working on short-term goals, youth also

work on short-term goals.

See, after all, every human being in the world is concerned about human well-being, isn't it? 'No, there is a criminal, no, there is a thief, no, there is somebody else.' See, they are also concerned about human well-being. It is just that their idea of human well-being is just this human being (points at himself). Yes? A criminal is also concerned about human well-being, but his idea of humanity is just himself. Somebody's idea of humanity is him and his family; somebody else's idea of humanity is him and his country; somebody else's includes the whole world. So one big thing that needs to happen with the youth and with everybody, is that their identification with humanity should not be limited to just themselves, and see that it includes a larger society and the larger world around them; this is missing in education today. Modern education is constantly training people only to think about themselves and nothing else but themselves. All the science that you see in the world — there is nothing wrong with the science itself — but the attitude, the way in which science is conducted is like, everything here is here only to be exploited for our well-being, isn't it so?

Now we destroy wantonly and then we talk about protecting the environment, then doing something else; all patch-up jobs, because the whole process of science is only about how to use everything for your comfort, for your benefit. So, initially, you use the planet, then the trees and plants, then the animals, then of course the human beings also. You use everybody for your comfort and well-being. That attitude has been deeply set with the process of modern education.

So, as we are investing our time, resources and energies in transmitting informative knowledge, we have to invest a certain amount of time, energy and resources to inspire people — the inspirational dimension of education which is right now not there.

We need to do something about inspiring people in an organised way. Haphazardly, individuals doing this and that is fine, but a very organised effort to inspire people without creating an external enemy, making people understand the biggest enemy for a human being is always within himself — this inspiration is what is needed. When we are not

inspired, we tend to function only within the limitations in which we are placed. Only when we are inspired, we go beyond and do things that human beings wouldn't normally do. Only then, society surges ahead and does something worthwhile. Interestingly, that happens only when strife happens. In normal, peaceful situations, people should be inspired. It is very important. When there is war, people want to go and die, that's not the point. When everything is well, to be highly inspired, to keep and to create the situations that we want in the country and in the world is what is needed. And this is not one day's work, it is life-long work. ■

(Contd. from Page 8)

The Shamadi (village youth dormitory) System among the Tiwa

community life. It enables them to take part in the social activities, thereby exposing themselves for improving personality and leadership quality. The *Shamadi* also provides security to the village. The presence of youths in the middle of the village provides a sense of security to the villagers. Moreover the *Shamadi* is a common meeting place for the village where important decisions regarding socio-religious issues are taken. Hence, the above discussion indicates that the *Shamadi* system among the Tiwa emerged to maintain spirit of community life and to prepare and train the youths for their future life. ■

Endnotes

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(The author is an Assistant Professor of History at Gargaon College, Simaluguri)

A critical review of 'Shadow of Dark God' by Mamoni Raisom Goswami

Sushoban Mazumdar

The plot of the novel 'Shadow of Dark God' is free-flowing, replete with descriptions of temples and religious sites. Accounts of religion and practices are interspersed with brief accounts of history (how certain religious places in Northern India were devastated by many Muslim invaders time and again). The past glory and present ruins of the place pervades in the background. The holy city has been a dumping ground of widows since time immemorial. The novel takes a brave stand in revealing their sordid lives through a brutally honest portrayal of their traumatic lives. The protagonist of the novel is a widow named Saudamini, who arrives in Vrindaban with her parents. Her father Dr. Raichoudhury hopes to restart the dispensary closed by his grandfather. Her mother Anupama wishes to divert her daughter's mind by seeking solace among these widows.

Attitudes developed around patriarchal interpretations of religious belief have defined and shaped the social and cultural contexts of Indian women resulting in their disempowerment and second-class status. In India, women bear the brunt of the consequences of cultural attitudes and the impact of religion and politics in their particular milieu. Usha Rani Vongur, a Marxist feminist, once said, "Religion controls our thoughts. It distorts reality

and obstructs us from questioning." Manusmriti, the divine code of conduct for Hindus, depicts women in a very poor light and is full of derogatory statements about them.

The novel is full of pathetic conditions of the Radheshyamias who are tortured both physically and mentally in the orthodox Indian society in the name of religion, culture, tradition etc. They are forced to spend the rest of their lives in a holy city of

Vrindaban post the death of their husbands. They are disowned, dumped and exploited. They work to maintain the holy city's temples, sing bhajans and lead a deprived life. Saudamini at first sympathizes with them, but the more she interacts with them, she learns of their sordid lives and determines not to be one among them. The Radheshyamias are

even forced to beg and some of them have deadly diseases like leprosy. They are mere pawns in the hands of the priests, who on the pretext of securing their futures, mercilessly exploit them. Their starved bodies crave for any means to survive and taking advantage of this, the harlots (swamis) keep them for their own satisfaction and even compel them to sleep with them stripped naked. Goswami uses this novel to attack such nefarious practices and oppression of women in the name of religion.

Indira Goswami, popularly known by her pen name Mamoni Raisom Goswami, is a nationally acclaimed author from Assam. She is famous for pioneering realism in her works of Assamese literature. She writes directly from her experiences in life and gives shape to these experiences with her imagination. Having experienced it all- intense love, sudden, shattering death, destruction, cruelty and exploitation, she reflects these in her own works. Her first novel in Assamese is 'Neel Kantli Braja' (1976) - translated for the first time into English as 'Shadow of Dark God' (1986) by Prafulla Kotoky. Mamoni Raisom Goswami bases the novel in Vrindaban where she stayed for quite some time and saw the dark side of this holy place. The novel 'Shadow of Dark God' is a fruit of her creative genius.

Most of these Radheshyamias end up as the priests' lifelong slaves and endure physical and mental abuses with nowhere to go and no one to listen to their woes. In such an unhealthy atmosphere, negativity engulfs them and the widows are forced to sell themselves to survive and meet their needs. These widows are brainwashed to believe that they can attain salvation by submitting themselves completely to the priests. Indian women, especially in the Hindu society, are revered and worshipped as goddesses. On the other hand, they are subjected to such inhuman acts and exploitations. Thus, their position is ambivalent. Goswami criticizes such adultery and corruption of the priest class in the name of religion. Even the funds allocated for the widows are misappropriated by them. The Radheshyamias make their lifelong savings for their last rites by the priests, who would not otherwise touch their dead bodies. Even after getting the money from their savings, the priests would not perform the necessary rites and dispose of the dead bodies of the widows into the Yamuna river.

Apart from Saudamini, two other female characters are mentioned who are victims of social injustice – Sashiprabha and Mrinalini. Sashi is a young widow, who is forced to stay with Alamgadhi, a priest, who compels her to strip and even sleep with him at times. After the death of Alamgadhi, Sashi's life becomes even more miserable and she is forced to flee and take shelter elsewhere. Mrinalini is a spinster, who is deprived of a normal life. She takes care of her old father and insane mother. Because of her father's poor handling of his finances, her future was ruined and she had to suffer severe penury and loneliness. She later started giving shelter to some of the Radheshyamias including Sashi when she was forced to flee.

Mamoni Raisom Goswami uses the character of Radheshyamias to reject the widow stereotype populating Vrindavan. She revolts through her pen against the oppressions Soudamini is subjected to and expresses her love for her Christian lover, going

against the orthodox society. She fails to break free from the clutches of the patriarchal discourse and ultimately commits suicide, as a mark of protest.

Generally speaking, a majority of the Assamese writers concentrate on themes related to Assam. But Mamoni Raisom Goswami liberates Assamese literature from provincial mindset by choosing locales outside Assam. No major flaws in the theme and interpretation can be seen in Goswami's novel. However, certain factors have weakened the work viz, the translation and the editing. The translator does not provide any footnote. He assumes that the readers are well acquainted with the language from which it was translated. There is a gap between the target language and the source language because of the clumsy selection of words. The subtle cultural nuances are not transferred properly because of inadequate rendering of the subject matter. He uses many archaic and obsolete words which hampers readability. Even the translation of the title appears to be flawed. The title could have been nearer to the Assamese title of the original book. Prafulla Kotoky however deserves credit for being the first translator of Mamoni Raisom Goswami and not because of the aesthetic replication of the tone and frustration of the central character Saudamini. ■

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(The author of this article is a Post Graduate student of English and can be reached at mazumdarsushobhan@gmail.com)

RE-EXPLORING MIZO HERITAGE

Dr. Ranga Ranjan Das

After reorganization of the states of north eastern region, Mizoram become one of the important state of the north eastern region. Erstwhile Lushai Hills, transforming into twenty-third state, a mountainous region, bordered by Bangladesh in the west, Myanmar in the east and south and Assam and Manipur in the north. During 1972, it become union territory and got full-fledged statehood on 1987. Mizoram comprises primarily of the Lushai and its sub-groups, broadly prefer to call themselves Mizo, which means people of the hills. It is the abode of various sub-groups under Kuki-Chin-Mizo groups reflected as Mizo Heritage, undergone rapid transformation due to impinging factors like modernization and advent of Christianity in Mizoram. It is broadly said that the term Mizo consists of five major tribe and many clan: Lusei, Ralte, Hmar, Pawi, Paihte (Liangkhaia 2011). Mizoram covered by an area of 21,081 sq km, with a population of 1,097206 (2011 census), houses 87.96 % Christians. They are distributed among other groups (small in number) apart from Mizo groups.

In terms of literacy and Christianity, the state is on the lead among all the north eastern states. Heritage of any state is a mere

reflection of the residing groups, their folklore, tradition, beliefs, practices, expressed as both tangible and intangible heritage. This essay is an exploratory attempt and makes a review of existing literature to make a glimpse on Mizo heritage from etic perspectives. The idea of compiling Mizo heritage came to mind when I look back to publication of my earlier office. That is also a decade long. But it is still a valuable aspect to reconstruct past ethno-history of the Mizos. Regarding the contemporary Mizoram, scholars have different opinion. Zama (2009) opines that Mizoram, like its sister states of the Northeast region, has been in a state of flux and transition for the last few decades. The status of folklore in Mizoram today is that our folk artifacts are seen as mere show-pieces for museums or the archive. Her observation is quite interesting in the present scenario. It also important to look their past to trace their village set up and the process of administration being part of glorious heritage. The custom of chieftainship was found among them. Dutta (2018) notes, 'in primordial times, every Mizo village was an independent entity under a traditional hereditary chief, called *lal*. There was little cohesive interaction between these

villages; on the contrary, there were conflicts, especially over ownership of arable land. Each chief was obliged by custom to ensure the welfare of his village community, to guard and protect his people against attack from enemies, and provide them with food, particularly in times of scarcity. As every village had a self-governing institution of chieftainship, Mizo chiefs were at the apex of the village social structure, and wielded total administrative and judicial powers. The land on which a village was located as well as the agricultural land under its jurisdiction belonged to the chief'. Various aspects of intangible heritage are also reported among the Mizos. There are various legends prevalent among them. Some of them is intricately related with nature. One such legend is connected with Rih lake. Lalsiamthanga (2009: 5-6) explored "Rih lake is the largest lake in Mizoram, but is situated in Burma", goes the common saying. This is an awkward claim to make, but it is a fact due to arbitrary political boundaries. It is believed that this particular lake is associated with legends and considered as inevitable passage that spirits of the dead crossed on their way to their future abode known as *Mitthi Khua*. According

to legend there was a girl named Rihí who had a cruel stepmother. One day, her father took Rihí's younger sister deep into the forest and killed her. Rihí eventually found her dead sister and was inconsolable. A good spirit known as Lasi to the Mizos found Rihí weeping and revealed to her the healing powers of a particular magical tree with whose leaf Rihí revived her sister back to life. In order to quench the thirst of her younger sister, Rihí turned herself into a small pool of water with the help of a leaf of the same magical tree. Later, Rihí was compelled to change herself into a white mithun, and wandered around in search of a permanent place where she could be safe. While she was roaming around looking for a safe haven, her urine formed rih note or small lakes wherever she went. It is believed that such lakes can still be found in the Vawmlu Range, Zur forest near the village Natchchhawng; a place above Bochung village; the area of Khawthlir village, all of which are in Myanmar ". The physical existence of a particular natural object and beliefs associated with it has been instrumental among the traditional groups of the region. It is observed that there is an impact on the belief system due to change in religion. World view of the various groups of this region has a belief on life after death. Among the Mizos, there was a belief in the immortality of the soul that goes back a long way, much before recorded history. Somewhere around the year 1935

a priest (Sadawt) Hangpuia stated 'our knowledge about the immortality of the soul is evident from the story of Tlingi and Ngama'. According to Hangpuia, this story is the origin of Mimkut, which is one of the oldest of Mizo festivals and may also be the source of the Mizo belief in the immortality of the soul (cited in Vanlallawma 2009: 6). Before the advent of Christianity, there were various ceremonies prevalent among them. Khuangchawi was one such ceremony. This ceremony was primarily associated with the concept of life after death. How a particular individual occupy a nice place in the heaven? Lallianzuala (2009: 11-12) asserts, 'Khuangchawi was the last and the most prominent public ceremony performed by a Mizo in the pre-Christian era. In pre-Christian Mizo society, the ultimate objective was to attain paradise after death. Persons who qualified for this were known as thangchhuahpa. There were two kinds of thangchhuah: domestic thangchhuah known as 'In lama thangchhuah' and forest thangchhuah known as 'ram lama thangchhuah'. In order to achieve forest thangchhuah, a person had to be a renowned hunter". It adds, 'domestic thangchhuah was performed by the well-to-do who conducted a series of ceremonial feasts. The final stage was known as Khuangchawi. The person who performed Khuangchawi was known as Khuangchawipa. This ceremony includes: *chawng bubden*-preparation of local brew from

rice, *sathing zar*- cooking of rice, meat and other dishes for the community feast, *thingthiab*-religious ritual of sticking five or seven or nice (odd number) pieces of ginger onto the wall of the house belonging to either the maternal grandfather or maternal uncle, *thingfar zan*-on the first day of the ceremony, the neighbours and the sons-in-law of the Khuangchawipa would prepare Seluphan, sacrificial posts upon which the skulls of the slaughtered mithuns were to be hung, *chawngchen-dancing*, khuangchawi- preparing special bamboo, wood and cane stretcher to carry near and dear ones of Khuangchawipa (ibid, p 12). As reported dancing was part and parcel of Mizo folkways prior to advent of Christianity. However, certain dances forms are still exist. Outsiders are aware of bamboo dance that is reflected in tourism. Scholars have identified six kinds of dance forms among the various Mizo groups: khuallam, chawnglaizawn, chai, serlamkai/solakia, cheraw and chheih.

Khuallam literally means dance of the guests, performed in the ceremony called khuangchaw, oldest dance also refers it as *thingdim*. Woman lately allowed participating in it. Some different step as reported include kaltluang, kaltheh, arpui, chawmthai, vasir len, vakawl len, ar khaw thim dai, etc. This dance form was related with the khuangchawi ceremony. Earlier, there was a custom to attain the title of thangchhuahpa

to get a distinct place in the society as well as to attain entry into paradise or pialral. One can fetch such title by performing ceremonies like offering community feasts accompanied with dancing, also known as khuangchawi. Guests who are invited from the other villages at the khuangchawi ceremony enter the arena by dancing the khuallam. Chawnglaizawn is another traditional dance prevalent among the Pawi, one of the Mizo groups. The unique feature of this particular dance form is its timing in two different circumstances as revealed. The dance is performed by a husband in mourning for his wife in the first situation, and secondly performed at the time of festivals, to celebrate successful hunting. One of the major festivals among the Mizos is chapchar kut which is still celebrated. The dance performances made during this festival is known as Chai. It is a collective dance performed by men and women stand alternately in a circle with the woman holding on to the waist of the man and the man to the woman's shoulder. The instruments player stays in the middle. Like the Nagas of Nagaland, Mizo groups also possess war dance. It was earlier performed to celebrate victory of any feuds, wars, etc. Among the Mizo groups, reports of two such dance forms are reported: Sarlamkai and Solakia. Both the dance form is similar in nature but known differently among different groups. For example, among Pawi

group, it is known as sarlamka, while among Mara, Rallulam and other Mizo groups, it is popularly known as solakia. It is a kind of warrior dance with the beat of gongs and cymbals, where the leader is dressed with warrior, with the participation of both man and women standing in alternate position within circular movement. The most significant dance form is cheraw popularly known as bamboo dance. In traditional context, it was performed to celebrate getting huge agro-products (source: Pachuau 2009: 12-14). According to Pachuau (ibid p.14), "Cheraw dance is generally performed with care, precision and elegance. It is not a community dance. It remains a dance that is performed by a few select girls with exceptional skills in dancing. Men squat upon the ground, facing each other, even as they tap long pairs of horizontal and cross bamboo staves, that open and close in rhythmic beats". It is observed that most of the dance form is made without rendition of folk songs but with the beats of traditional instruments. As revealed they possess unique folk renditions and can be categorized. Thanmawia cites (2009: 17) "Mizo folk songs have an indigenous system of classification showing about one hundred types of folksongs. It was in various forms song-chants, couplets and triplets, etc". It adds (p. 17, 18) as for example, *bawh bla*: chant raised by the victorious warrior when returning from a successful raid to show his

superiority over the enemy, and to let his people know that a successful raid has taken place, *hlado*: raised by the hunter after a successful hunt, the difference of hlado from bawh hla is that hlado can be chanted on the spot, *bawh bla* is made on the way home, just prior to entering the village, or at the celebration that ensues; *thiam bla* and *dawi bla* (invocation and incantation) by the priests and sorcerers while performing various rituals and ceremonies, *puipun bla*: songs composed for festive occasions, used for community song and dance, such as *chai hla*, *chawngchen zai*, *salu lam zai* and *tlanglam zai* and also *lengzen* (love songs). Certain specific folk songs were found. There were songs named after particular sub-tribe such as *Sailo zai*, *Saivate zai*, and so on, songs name after village such as *Lumtui zai* (songs of Lumtui village), songs named after individuals who are original composers of the particular tune. These are certain specialized categories (ibid, p. 17, 18). Besides, scholars have identified folk songstresses among the Mizos. Ruth Lalremruati (2009: 21-22) pointed out and cites, "several folk songs have been named after the women composers themselves. Pi Hmuaki, is claimed to be the first known songstress of the Mizo. Her name can be traced back to 1600-1650 AD when the tribe settled between the Run and Tiau rivers. Some of her songs disclose her profound love of her village Ngente, a few miles away from

Tiau River: Kan Ngente Khua Khaw nun nuama kha/Thla ka fam hma'n ka nghilh rua lo ve (Our Ngente village a place of joy, I will not forget thee till I die)/// Kan Ngente khaw chhuahtlang dai rawnah, lungrual taka tuan lai ngai iang e (I yearn for our contented lives together, in the happy valley of our Ngente village). Her songs are spontaneous and they contain no rigid themes for she is versatile, and flexible. It further asserts that 'Mizo folk songs reflect the social heritage, milieu and culture of the Mizos of a particular period'. This assertion on 'particular period' has gross significance in changing context. With change of religion, one will find missing much such invocation and chanting executed during hunting and rituals. Similar situation is also found in case of traditional musical instruments where present generation opts for modern instrument in the changing context. Still it is essential to re-explore their traditional musical instruments as a part of their tangible heritage. As explored (ibid Thanmawia, p. 17, 18), it is found that the early traditional musical instruments are simple and crude but they served their purpose. *Khuang* (drum), big sized one is *khuangpui* or big drum, medium one is called *khuanglai* and the small sized called *khuangte*, *dar* (gong) of various sizes made of brass, such as *darkhuang* (biggest), *darbu* and *darmang*; *darbu* is a set of three brass-gongs of different sizes produces three distinct, rhythmic notes used for *Khuallam* and other

traditional group dances, *darmang* (smallest type of gong), *bengbung* (like xylophone, it's a series of flat wooden bars, producing three musical notes), *seki* (horn made of domestic mithun), wind instruments like *Rawchhem* (nine small bamboo pipes or hollow reeds of different sizes and lengths are inserted to a dried gourd, One pipe serves as a mouthpiece), *tumphit* (made of three small bamboos of different size and length and are tied in a row with canes or strings) *tawtawrawt* (a bamboo trumpet), *phenglawng* (flute), *buhchangkuang*- simple flute made of reed or paddy stalk and played by young girls; stringed Instruments like *tringtrang* (guitar), *lemlawi* (made of a small piece of bamboo), *tuium dar* (made of bamboo with three strings) are some of them. Their relevance in present socio-cultural context is matter of empirical observation. Another important aspect of cultural heritage is dress pattern. Most of the traditional tangible products are replaced by modern items though traditional groups try to assert their unique identity by ethnic attire. This responsibility has been carried out mostly by woman folk. Some years back, it came to notice that government of Mizoram made traditional attire for government woman employees mandatory. Whether it was for a particular day or for entire office days, it needs to be verified! How, *puan* (cloth in general) has specific identity as Mizo. There are different varieties of *puan* which is normally sixty to

sixty-five inches wrapping it around from waist to ankle according to its' colour, design and technique of weaving. Lalrindiki T. Fanai (2009: 15-16) explicitly narrates Mizo *puan* and different indigenous patterns. It reveals some of the most important traditional Mizo *puans* such as *puanchei* or *puan laisen*, *ngotekherh* or *puan hruih*, *puandum*, *tawlhlopuan*, *lenbuang thuam*, *disul*, *sakei zang zia* or *keipui zia*, *senior zeh* or *senior par*, *sawhthing par*, *arsis par*, *kikiau*, *kawkpui zik zial*, *herhsawp par*, *pangpar*, etc. It is found that word 'puan' refers to the cloth. Placing of design and colour provides new names. Some of their design possesses natural orientations such as *lenbuang thuam* (junction of two or more branches), *disul* (sun grass), *sakei zang* or *keipui* (tiger), *senior* (flower), *sawhthing* (ginger flower), *arsis* (star), *kawkpui* (fern), *herhsawp* (bamboo stool) and others. *Puan laisen* is significant in societal context where red colour runs through the middle horizontally still used as wedding costumes and special festivals (ibid).

There was drastic change after British subjugation as well as advent of Christian missionaries. During early 1890's colonial extension spread to Lushai hills. Rev. Williams (1891), F.W.Savidge and J.H Lorrain (1894) were the early missionaries who not only spread the message of Christianity but also created Mizo alphabet and introduced formal education. Prior

to that Mizo society has different folkways where Zawlbuk act as multifunctional social institution, system of *bawi* (a different kind of slavery), use of rice beer (*ju*) in socio-religious life. The capital of Mizoram is Aizawl. It is reported that during pre-colonial period, the institution Zawlbuk was present. There is perhaps connection between Aizawl and Zawlbuk that need to be re-examined. But earlier, Zawlbuk functions as institution for informal education besides playing the role of bachelors' dormitory or club house or recreation centre where young man sleep in group and act as protection force of the village under the directives of the village chiefs. Later on after appearance of formal education, relevance of Zawlbuk is lost in societal context. As reported during 1930's and 1940's, it started disappearing from the villages. Changing religion decreases the scope of using rice beer. Even the custom of Chieftain was abolished during 1954 and the administration of the village was vested upon the village council (T. Lalremruata 2019). In spite of lots of changes in the socio-cultural dimensions, the Mizo heritage is still safe under their customs, usages and practices also safeguarded by our Constitution under *Article 371 G*: (1) Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution- (a) no Act of Parliament in respect of (i) religious or social practices of the Mizos (ii) Mizo customary law and procedure (iii) administration of

civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Mizo customary law, (iv) ownership and transfer of land and its resources, shall apply to the state of Mizoram unless the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram by a resolution so decides. Provided that nothing in this clause shall apply to any Central Act in force in the Union territory of Mizoram immediately before the commencement of the Constitution (Fifty-third Amendment) Act, 1986. Descent, inheritance, succession is trace through male line being a patrilineal society. Nevertheless, Mizo society had a glorious heritage which is affected by modernization and Christianity. In spite of drastic changes, the hallmark of present society is the rule of Tlawngaina that compel every Mizo to be loveable, kind and hospitable in nature. ■

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China has changed tactics, not goals. India must demonstrate strong national power

Ram Madhav

Engagement at this scale between the armies of India and China has taken place after more than five decades. The last time the two sides engaged in a violent clash was in 1967 in east Sikkim. The Chinese had objected to the erection of barbed wire fencing along the Indo-Tibetan border and attacked the Indian company commander, seriously injuring him. In a strong retaliation by the Indian side, over 400 Chinese soldiers had been neutralised. The Indian side, too, had suffered 88 casualties. A smaller skirmish broke out between the patrol parties of the two countries in 1975 near Tulung La in Arunachal Pradesh in which four jawans of the Assam Rifles were martyred.

In the clashes in Galwan Valley this week, both sides have suffered casualties. The Chinese side does not disclose the numbers of their casualties

anymore. The Indian tradition is to respect the valour and martyrdom of every single soldier. The entire nation mourns the sacrifice of those valiant soldiers who have lost their lives challenging the Chinese aggression in Galwan Valley.

Between 1967 and 2020, China changed its tactics, not its goals. It had ended up with a bloody nose in its border conflict with the Soviet Union in 1969. Waving Mao's Red Book, PLA soldiers had tried to illegally cross the Ussuri river and enter the Soviet-controlled Zhenbao island. In the Soviet retaliation, the Chinese had suffered over 250 casualties, after which China had promptly entered

into a ceasefire with the Soviets. The last war that China fought was in 1979 in Vietnam.

In the last four decades, China adopted the Sun Tzu formula of "the supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting". It has resorted to area expansion and domination tactics using numerical superiority and military aggression. It continued to nibble away at our territories through aggressive patrolling and continuous border violations. In the last one decade, more than a thousand such border violations have been recorded.



That there have been no violent clashes between India and China in the last five decades can be partly attributed to India's insistence on diplomatic engagement and physical disengagement. The result was that the contentious portions of the LAC, like the

Galwan Valley and Pangong Tso lake formations, were patrolled by both sides without engaging with each other. During this period, the Chinese side had nibbled away at Indian territory in several places. Traditional grazing areas of the people of the upper reaches in Ladakh have been encroached. The latest flashpoint at the confluence of the Galwan and Shyok rivers is one such location where the Chinese had built motorable rough tracks to claim Indian territory.

While the nibbling by China was ongoing, the Indian side preferred diplomatic engagement, entering as many as six bilateral agreements with

China in 1988, 1993, 1996, 2005, 2012 and 2013. While these agreements were full of the usual homilies about peace, diplomacy and dialogue, they failed to address the main dispute over the LAC. India also lost an opportunity in 1993 during Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's visit to Beijing when the two countries signed the Peace and Tranquillity Agreement. India had proposed to insert the word "existing" before the Line of Actual Control, thus pinning down China to agree to the concurrent position. The wily Chinese side refused to do so, and we quietly signed the agreement.

Later, when the Chinese had infiltrated and pitched tents 19 km deep inside our territory in the Depsang plains area in 2013, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh meekly repeated the same old defeatist argument that the Chinese have a different "perception" about the LAC. It was music to Chinese ears when Prime Minister Singh, speaking in Parliament in December 2013, said: "There are sometimes intrusions according to us. But the Chinese perception of the LAC sometimes differs. Therefore, I think, some confusion is created". His colleague and then external affairs minister, Salman Khurshid, had tried to downplay the incident by describing it as a "local" one. Incidentally, this "local commanders" argument is cleverly used by the Chinese side to shift the onus away from Beijing, and allow for the perpetuation of illegal border violations.

The incursions in 2013 were as bad as they are now. The Chinese had refused to dismantle the tented camps that they put up deep inside our territory. Prime Minister Singh had maintained a stony silence for full two weeks despite repeated questions from the Opposition. The final agreement between the two

sides that had led to the Chinese withdrawal after 21 days was shrouded in secrecy. The media had reported that the Indian government had agreed to destroy the bunkers the Indian Army had built in Chumar area.

Post-2014, a policy shift has been witnessed at Chushul in 2014, Doklam in 2017 and Galwan Valley and Pangong Tso lake now. Unlike in the past, our border security establishment actively engages and physically prevents incursions by the other side. We remove illegal constructions like jeep tracks and listening posts. Indian troops have destroyed a watch tower and a camera installed on a PLA hut in the Depsang plains area in September 2015.



In a 72-day stand-off at the Doklam trijunction between Tibet, Bhutan and India, the Indian forces together with their Bhutanese counterparts stalled the construction of a road by the Chinese that would have shifted the trijunction southwards, affecting India's strategic interests. India refused

to lower the army presence there, leading finally to the withdrawal of the Chinese forces from the area. Considered a diplomatic victory for India, Doklam highlighted India's new border security doctrine of "proactive diplomacy together with firm ground positioning".

In the Arthashastra, Kautilya highlighted the need for deterrent military might to demonstrate strong national power. India is committed to peace with China, but not the one of the graveyard. We need Kautilya's doctrine to defeat the Sun Tzu's tactics of "war as an art in deception". ■

(The Author of this article is the National General Secretary, BJP, and Director, India Foundation and first published this article on 25 June, 2020)

Think global and produce local- New Mantra for New India

Amita Apte

US -China economic war situation is not new to the world. Two centuries ago American rule had imposed many conditions and bans on Chinese migrants. Chinese economy has grown 24 times than it was 25 years ago, a direct threat to USA's number 1 superpower position. Now President Trump has been taking on China very aggressively for more than two years. We know all about America's imposition of tariffs and other trade barriers on Chinese goods. Covid-19 pandemic has only added fuel to the fire.

Since the last 25 years, India has positioned itself as a growing economy. Indians are improving their standard of living. More cities are being developed as smart cities. Land, labour, agriculture, Industrial and many other reforms are shaping India as an emerging world economic power. We have rapidly shifted from argumentative India to Authentic India. We started believing more in our democratic, Constitutional governance than ever before. India as a society has become more grounded when it comes to Indian culture, civilisation, humanity and morality.

Unlike China we believe in the Constitution and just cannot accept authoritarian rule. We, as Indian society hail for free thinking, free speech, right to

dissent, basically every right Indian constitution has given us. World now needs to change its opinion about India, because India is in no mood of keep shedding tears over the gone by years, and want to control its future. We have decided a path for ourselves. We are resolving old problems like they were never there.

We are wiping out chances of corruption on a large scale. Reforms like Demonetisation, digital India, Jandhan Bank accounts, applications like BHIM, GST taxation systems etc. have made the financial life of businesses in India very smooth and easier. Online or cashless transactions have led to substantial decrease in corruption, black money and revenue generation for the government has increased considerably. Tax collection data is enough to substantiate this. India's rank in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business survey has improved '65 spots to 77th position' in 2018.

We will see many more innovative changes and reforms in coming years in Indian economy. We are constructing new means of communication, using modern and innovative technology. Mobile and internet coverage has widely spread even in remote zones with improved connectivity.

India has one of largest road

networks among the world, spanning over a total of 5.89 million km. We are planning to reach a goal of 2 lakhs kms of National Highways by 2022. Not only that, we are working on non-conventional means of transport like water transports, metros etc. India is investing big chunks of money in mega-projects like smart cities, dams, in-house production of arms and amulations, new airports, sea-ports, oil, non conventional energy, research projects in technology and other branches of science, pharmaceuticals, human life especially women and children health and welfare and the list goes on..

Clean India, green India is now a slogan for 130 crore Indians to stand by and not only us but the whole world is praising India for its cleanliness drive. Indian health conditions and ignorance towards cleanliness has always been criticized by International communities and for the right reasons before India made it a people's campaign. Just imagine, if all these reforms had not happened in the last six years, how would India have faced this terrible pandemic? One can write a thesis on how India has changed in the last 6 years in the Modi regime. Of course! Some organizations, media houses crib around to earn some handouts

from foreign powers. Let them do their job.

World should understand by now that we are not a docile country any more. We know how to defend ourselves and how to deal with our enemies. National Integrity and territorial sovereignty are the two most important things for India. And our Defence forces, our government and other institutions know how to keep them safe. International investors and countries value these things along with Internal stability with a very high regard.

Qualitative and quantitative, measurable transformations in India are attracting foreign investors, countries as an alternative to China. Countries all over the world are waking up to the fact that by investing heavily in single country China, they are risking putting all eggs in one basket and now this pandemic has proved their fears right. They want to give the chance to other options now. And India, as an emerging world economy is one of the best options they have today.

In the coming years, We are going to be the most populous country in the world. In some time, we will be the 3rd largest economy in the world. We, as Young India, are going to be the largest talent pool of the world. It is not only in India's interest but for the world also to invest in Indian lands is a great investment viewing the next half a century. It's a win-win game for investments, diplomats, Governments, Indian society and

all the players involved. We are already playing an important role in world power play and equilibrium balancing. Indian leaders are working tirelessly for laying a foundation for India to become a major influence in geopolitics. As a policy, it looks like India is more interested in having a diplomatic and trade dialogue with many countries instead of lobbying with some larger economies. We are steadily building our credentials in respect to everything that attracts to foreign investors and customers. We are in the process of making our own clubs instead of being a part of already existing power centres.

Vision, dedication, perseverance, planning and implementation, love and respect for one's own motherland and it's people are some of the esteemed qualities Indian leadership, diplomats, all the officers and employees of all the other agencies and the people standing firmly behind all of them are demonstrating, resulting in such a spectacular and major shifts in Indian stature today. Indian values AKA Hindutva holds the power to rise India to its fullest height as well as change the world for the best.

Chinese communist Party's mouthpiece 'The Global Times' has written an article about how India can not compete with China in becoming a world producer. If China thinks India is not even in competition, then why is 'The Global Times' so angry about all those companies leaving China to invest in India? And why did they

feel the need to talk about UP CM Yogi Adityanath's labour Reforms...?

Here, one needs to understand that nobody is making any high and mighty claims like India is going to be the next super power in a decade or all the companies that are leaving China will invest only in India. This is Geopolitics. Here every country is a competitor of every other country. They collaborate or provide support for their own benefit. Everything is hardcore, crude business in this game. But It's not a bipolar world like old times. Geopolitics has become multipolar in recent years. Power center of the world is shifting to Asia-pacific region. India's economic rise since the 1990s has created the potential to transform it into a 21st Century Great Power. And that's why to counter chinese hegemony, superpowers like America and European countries need India to take that next step to control and to lead the world. India-US cooperation at this moment of crisis is pivotal to maintain an international order of peace and security where nations can harmoniously rise together to meet the challenges of the future.

One of the most important points which is in India's credit is the Young age of India. Developed countries like Japan and other European countries have more non working old populations than working and young populations followed by the USA. Whereas today, in 2020, the average age of an Indian is 29 years, compared to

(Contd. to Page 23)

Jackfruit delicacies are on the anvil

Jackolates (chocolates made from Jackfruit), Jackfruit Chunks, and Jackfruit Tikki! Sounds strange, but it is true. The round, sweet, and yummy fruit is now coming in new mouthwatering shapes and forms to conquer your taste buds, thanks to two young entrepreneurs from Meghalaya. Meghalaya Institute of Entrepreneurship graduates — Dasumarlin Majaw of the Smoky Falls Tribe, and Vijay Brysat of Bee Naturals — have recently launched a series of delicacies out of jackfruit that will make your mouths water.

For these two budding entrepreneurs, jackfruit was not a random selection as Shillong is home to acres of jackfruit farming. “Eleven thousand metric tonnes of jackfruit are wasted each year, we found after research. There was no second thought on utilizing this gift of nature,” says Vijay. Dasumarlin also feels the same, “It is wasted. Every year it’s the same.” Quite surprisingly, despite having vast areas of jackfruit yield, many farmers are earning from jackfruit for the first time. “They have never used jackfruit as food or fruit,” adds Dasumarlin. Cost-effectiveness, protein-vitamin content, and non-requirement of any pesticide use are the other added advantages. “Though the idea of converting jackfruit seeds into chocolate has struck the world already, using tender jackfruit is a novel concept. Also, our ‘100% natural’ practice is going to be one of its kind,” remarks Vijay proudly.

The jackfruits for these products are produced from the Southern slopes of Cherapunjee, Shella, Pynursla, East Khasi Hills, and the Garo hills. Apart from bringing the fruit to the dining tables, this

innovation is aimed to capitalize on Meghalaya’s and North East India’s huge untapped reserves of jackfruit as well as improve the livelihoods of thousands of jackfruit farmers in the state. The project also eyes the international markets for export.

The state government has always been enthusiastic about jackfruit production in the state. In fact, Meghalaya was one of the first states to introduce a project, Mission Jackfruit in 2018, exclusively concentrating on improving the production of jackfruits. Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma expressed his happiness by sharing a post on Facebook appreciating the efforts of the two young entrepreneurs of the state. “Today is a new chapter in the food processing history of Meghalaya,” he wrote. Also Read - Delhi returnee tests COVID-19 positive in Meghalaya’s Tura Both



Dasumarlin and Vijay are planning for more diverse projects in the coming days. Dasumarlin is a recipient of the Chief Minister’s Entrepreneur of the Month Award and Vijay’s Bee Natural won the SIAL Gold Innovation Award in 2019, for naturally infused honey. ■

Folk musical instruments given a new life

During the period lockdown due to COVID-19, people are spending their time according to their inclinations. Works amid the novel Coronavirus pandemic, an aged person from Udalguri district is investing his time to produce 'Ditora' and 'Dogor', the two popular musical instruments used in various genres of folk music in Bengal and Assam. Naren Deka, a fourth grade employee of 'Tangla Girls' High School and an inhabitant of Milanpur locality of Tangla town in Udalguri district, who had imbibed the skills three decades back, is keeping himself engaged during the lockdown period by making these instruments.

Over the years, the folk musical instruments of Assam have been taken over by the western musical instruments and the government too have failed to encourage and promote such craftsmanship. This has posed a threat to the indigenous skills. Deka, while sitting in the courtyard of his home, was diligently focusing on giving the instruments a final touch. He said that it took him one-and-half months and he

had targeted to make 40-50 Dotoras and Dogors each.

Deka told this correspondent, "I had imbibed the art of making these musical instruments when I was young and unemployed. But after getting a job in the school as fourth grade employee, I only played the instruments in cultural shows. But the lockdown period has given me the opportunity to make some of them and invoke interest for these musical instruments among the young generation who only know about the guitar and other western musical instruments."

"I feel there is ample market demand and wider reach for these musical instruments. We need to tap the market and the government must formulate policies to ensure a life of dignity for artistes," he added. Deka further reiterated that Assam's indigenous folk musical instruments were deeply rooted in the socio-cultural traditions with a rich heritage of skill and talent that needed to be preserved, perpetuated and promoted. ■

(Contd. from Page 21)

Think global and produce local- New Mantra for New India

37 for China and 48 for Japan; and, by 2030, India's dependency ratio should be just over 0.4. We will surpass China in population in some years. This is a very lucrative condition to foreign companies from the point of view of skilled, semi skilled and unskilled labour as well as the huge potential markets.

There is no point in denying that India still needs to bring in major changes like improved conditions of technology driven practical education, maintaining global standards of business by improving ease or comfort in doing business, institutionalize business environment etc. to attract foreign Investments. However, the way India is improving is commendable. Innovation is one of the key elements in attracting foreign investors. So along with major changes in educational prototypes Indian

government is putting a lot of efforts in research, innovation and technology development. India has improved its innovation ranking from 29 spots in the last five years from 81th position in 2014 to 52nd position in 2019. We are hoping to reach the 25th rank in the coming 5 years.

All these changes and reforms are interdependent and cumulative. There is a major setback and a halt in our forward march due to lockdown in all sectors of the economy but Indian economy will definitely regain its momentum of growth at a pace of 7 to 8 percent per year. 'Think global and produce local' is going to be the mantra for New India. ■

(<https://www.newsgharati.com/Encyc/2020/5/24/economic-war.html>)

Tripura's bamboo bottles to splash across India

Handcrafted bamboo bottles 'Made in Tripura' will soon flood the Indian markets. The natural Bamboo bottles being a sustainable alternative to artificial plastic, are aiming to improve the employment opportunities as well as the livelihood of the local artisans belonging to different indigenous tribal communities of the state. Tripura produces 28% of the overall bamboo produced in the country. Spread over an area of 3246 square kilometers, around nineteen varieties of bamboo are found in Tripura's forests. Added to this, there are traditionally skilled artisans who are making bamboo artifacts for years.

Adding value to this natural resource and providing livelihood to these local artisans, Tripura

With the first batch of bottles shipped to different parts of the country, the bottles are becoming popular all over the world. Following this, orders have even come in from abroad — including the US and Dubai. Renowned Bollywood actress Raveena Tandon was among the first to order a shipment, which she revealed in a tweet.

An IFS officer and Chairperson of TRPC, Prasada Rao Vaddarapu is the mastermind behind this project. After conducting a detailed study for almost eight months, he and his team identified a variety of bamboo which could be used for manufacturing bottles. Ten master craftsmen were initially trained who later trained another thousand craftsmen who jointly finished manufacturing the bottles. The

artisans were from Simna, Mohanpur, Subalsingh para, and other villages of West Tripura and Khowai districts. By involving local artisans, the project aims to improve their livelihoods as well as the employment opportunities in Tripura.

These bottles have given some respite to researchers working on developing sustainable alternatives to plastic. The design of these bottles is such that the outer lining is of bamboo and the inner lining is of copper, steel, or glass. Citing this as a unique feature, Rao says, "It's a unique project. There are some bamboo bottles from China

available in the market but they use cheap and light bamboo columns to make the bottle. Water or other liquid is directly stored in them leading to bad odour, fungi build-up that might be toxic for the body." Even in treating the bamboo, neem, turmeric, and other herbal items are used, Rao added. The handcrafted leakproof bottles come in four sizes- 300ml, 500ml, 750ml, and 1000ml and are priced between Rs.700 and Rs.1200, excluding tax and shipping charges. ■



Rehabilitation Plantation Corporation (TRPC) along with Bamboo Crafts Development Institute (BCDI) and Centre for Forest Livelihood and Extension (CFLE) has introduced new bamboo bottles in the state. The bottles are being promoted under the PMVDVK and NBM schemes. On June 26th, Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb introduced the bottles in social media through a tweet.

Since then, it has become the talk of social media.

Tallest Hanuman Deity Installed in USA

Hockessin, a city in New Castle County, Delaware, has become the home to the tallest statue of Lord Hanuman in the United States (US). On Monday, the city installed a 25-foot-tall statue of Lord Hanuman in its biggest Hindu temple.

“It weighs around 45 tonnes,” said Patibanda Sharma, President, Hindu Temple of Delaware Association, ANI reported. “It has been shipped from Warangal, Telangana to Delaware,” he added.

According to the report by ANI, more than 12 artisans worked full-time in Warangal for over a year to make this statue. And, the statue was carved out from a single block of black granite.

In January, the statue was transported from

Hyderabad to New York by sea, then by road to Delaware. A priest, who is from Bangalore, performed all the rituals, including purification and installation of the deity. The association, with the help of more than 300 families and devotees from the city, had organised a 10-day installation ritual. However, due to the coronavirus pandemic, there were not much gatherings for ceremonies.

After the 34-foot statue of Lady Queen of Peace in Holy Spirit Church, New Castle, the Hanuman installation is the tallest religious statue in Delaware. According to media reports, the statue costs around \$100,000, including construction and transportation. ■

Pakistan vandalises Buddhist heritage sites in POK

The government on 3rd June expressed strong concern over reports of vandalism, defacement and destruction of ancient Buddhist archaeological sites in Gilgit-Baltistan in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

In response to media queries regarding reports of vandalism, defacement and destruction of Buddhist archaeological sites, dating back to 800 AD, in PoK, the Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said, “We have conveyed our strong concern at reports of vandalism, defacement and destruction of invaluable Indian Buddhist heritage located in so-called “Gilgit-Baltistan” area of the Indian territory under illegal and forcible occupation of Pakistan.” The MEA spokesperson also accused Pakistan of trampling the rights of the people living in Gilgit-Baltistan in PoK. “It is a matter of grave concern that the Buddhist symbols are being destroyed and the religious and cultural rights and freedoms are being trampled with impunity in the Indian territories under illegal occupation of Pakistan,” the MEA official stated. “Egregious activities of this nature which display contempt for the ancient civilizational and cultural heritage, are

highly condemnable,” the MEA official stated.

He informed that the Indian government has sought immediate access for its experts to the area in order to restore and preserve this invaluable archaeological heritage. “We have once again called upon Pakistan to immediately vacate all illegally occupied territories and end gross violation of political, economic and cultural rights of people living there,” he said on behalf of the Government of India. Reaction from the MEA came amid reports that 800 AD Buddhist rock carvings were damaged by some unknown elements and the pictures of the same were posted on social media by some residents of Gilgit Baltistan.

It may be recalled that the famous carved statue of Buddha was destroyed by the Taliban militia in the Bamiyan Valley of Afghanistan in 2001. Such carvings are also present in areas along the Indus River in Union Territory of Ladakh but Gilgit-Baltistan is rich in petroglyphs (rock carvings). It is estimated that there are 50,000 pieces of petroglyphs in Gilgit-Baltistan, especially along Karakoram Highway. ■

Arunachal Govt to promote of local bamboo products

At a time when there is a great emphasis on the usage of locally made indigenous products across India, the Arunachal Pradesh administration has decided to go vocal about it — by embracing locally-made bamboo products! Deputy Commissioner of Arunachal's Changlang district Devensh Yadav today posted a tweet informing that bamboo sofa-sets, tables, and other paraphernalia made by local self-help groups have already been commissioned by the administration, in accordance with the Central Government's new "self-reliant India" policy post lockdown.

"Two Bamboo sofa sets supplied today by our local SHG group for panchayat halls. Recent Arunachal Pradesh policy to buy office items from local SHGs and other groups realized on the ground", Yadav wrote on Twitter. Yadav in his tweet informed that the next step will be the expansion of bamboo handicraft unit for bulk production. Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu took to Twitter to commend the ushering in a new local age and lauded the DC for a "good start."

In an address to the nation in May, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stressed on the need for citizens to promote local businesses as they have suffered a lot due to the Coronavirus forced lockdown. Announcing a financial package of Rs 20 lakh crores to support businesses, he urged citizens across the country to support local products and businesses by campaigning for them. He appealed citizens to be 'vocal for local' in an attempt to boost Indian businesses and products at a time when the entire country has been reeling under the lockdown. ■

CSC Kisaan e-mart of Tripura locates buyer in Dubai

The Northeastern states of Tripura's first Common Service Centre (CSC) – the digital agriculture platform run by an entrepreneur got a buyer of state's pineapple in Dubai. The first consignment of Pineapples from Tripura will be shortly on a long journey to Dubai.

Pictures shared by Union Minister for Information and Technology Ravi Shankar Prasad in his tweet showed the pineapples loaded in a truck for it's way to Dubai.

Ravi Shankar Prasad, in a tweet, said, "Pineapples from Tripura got a buyer in Dubai through the digital agriculture platform of CSC. The farmer who used to sell pineapples in local markets at a very low price has got a very attractive price for his produce'.

L Darlong of Darchawi village under Unakoti district – a village level entrepreneur runs a CSC and found a buyer in Dubai using CSC Kisaan e-mart portal and reportedly he is contracted to export 10 tons of pineapple to Dubai.

One Village Level Entrepreneur (VLE), L Darlong of Darchawi village under Unakoti district runs a CSC and found a buyer in Dubai using CSC Kisaan e-mart portal. According to sources, he is exporting 10 tons of pineapples to Dubai. The consignment has already left for Mumbai on Tuesday on its way to Dubai.

Meantime, in another tweet, CSC Tripura said, "Pineapple's of #Tripura are going to #Dubai, sold through #CSC Kisaan e-mart."

CSCs provide multiple public utility services including social welfare schemes, financial and banking services, health care services, and agriculture-related services. CSC is available in almost every Panchayat in Tripura. ■



Hockessin, a city in New Castle County, Delaware, has become the home to the tallest statue of Lord Hanuman in the United States

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