

Heritage Explorer

A Monthly Magazine

VOL. XXII. NO.1,
Jan. - Feb. 2023

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COVER STORY

INDIGENOUS YOUTH
FESTIVAL 2023, NAMSAI

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Printed & Published by :
Sri Rituparno Tamuli Phukan on behalf of
Heritage Foundation, K.B.Road, Paltan Bazar, Guwahati-781008 and Printed at : Angik
Prakashan, GNB Road, Guwahati - 781001 and Saraighat Offset Press, Bamunimaidan,
Guwahati -781021
Published from : Heritage Foundation, K.B.Road, Paltan Bazar, Guwahati - 781008 (Assam).
e-mail: ourheritage123@gmail.com,
Website: www.heritagefoundation.org.in



Guarding against Climate Change

Climate changes naturally over time but the change is very slow and never erratic. Our elders, especially who are above 70 years of age often lament that in their childhood they had to start wearing warm clothes from the month of September. Some others lament that Shillong in Meghalaya used to be cool throughout the year and in winter the temperature dropped beyond tolerance. The same is the story of other parts of north east, where overall temperature never exceeded 26-28 degrees even during the summer months. In short it can be concluded that starting from a laymen everyone agree that the environmental conditions in the areas we were born and brought up have changed drastically for worse and the overall weather has become intolerably warm and unfriendly. Side by side, the recent catastrophic occurrence of flood and landslides in the lower reaches of the Himalayas exemplified the effects of weather change, which were unheard of in past. The serene and calm ambience of this region, better known as *Devabhumi* (God's home) turned into a devil's playground.

The root cause of the warming of our region is a part of global warming threatening man and animal alike is greenhouse gas. As per the weather Scientists around the world, unless there are immediate and large scale reduction in greenhouse gas emission, limiting global warming to close to 1.50 degree Celsius over the pre-industrial times will be beyond reach. Our immediate task is therefore to fight this devil in the guise of green house gas and to do so we must first understand its origin and its effects. Carbon dioxide and chlorofluorocarbons are the main ingredients of green house gas and are generally produced due to human folly and greed for amassing more wealth by producing more. It is common knowledge that greenhouse gas emissions contributes to the greenhouse effect by absorbing infrared radiations emitted by sunlight and blanket the earth which traps the sun's heat leading to global warming and climate change. The main causes of production of greenhouse gases is burning of fossil fuels such as petroleum products, coal etc., deforestation and indiscriminate felling of trees for commercial and other purposes, agriculture and farming activities that produce Carbon dioxide, Nitrous oxide gases and manufacturing and industrial activities. Although

India emits about 3 gigatonnes of greenhouse gases each year; about 2.50 tons per person, which is less than the world average, but this is no reason to be self-satisfied or complacent. Climate Change in India will have a disproportionate impact on the more than 400 million that make up India's poor. This is because these people depend on natural resources for their food, shelter and income. More than 56% of people in India work in agriculture which is the largest contributor of nitrous oxide and methane gas.

The worst impact of climate change is temperature rise, which not only cause physical discomfort and health hazard but also cause rise in sea levels, excessive rainfall resulting in floods, melting of glaciers that inflate flow of water in rivers. These effects are very much visible in recent devastations in Joshimath and Kedarnath regions. It is apprehended that the rising sealevel in Bay of Bengal may submerge much of Bangladesh and the low lying islands of Sunderbans in India resulting in large-scale refugee displacements to areas located at higher altitude in India. Temperature rise on the Tibetan Plateau are already causing Himalayan glaciers to melt uncontrollably, threatening the flow rate of the Ganga, Brahmaputra, Yamuna, and other major rivers. Frequency of heat waves is increasing in India very abnormally. In 2019, the temperature reached 50.6 degrees Celsius killing 36 people. The high temperatures impacted 23 states in 2019, up from nine in 2015 and 19 in 2018. Not only have the hot days increased, but also the night temperatures. 2018 was the country's sixth hottest year on record. The capital New Delhi broke its all-time record with a high of 48 degrees Celsius. The litany of Climate change effects are endless but none of them are reassuring for humanity including the Indians. The Government of India has so far worked excellently to double India's renewable energy target to 450 gigawatt (GW) by 2030, promoted solar energy and Wind power in India to reduce India's dependence on fossil fuels which contributes largely to generation of green house gasses. It now the turn of the common people like us to complement those efforts in all our activities that help in accumulation of greenhouse gases in earth's atmosphere. □□

Romen Chakraborty
Chief Editor

The Traditional Healing Rituals : A Case Study among Assamese and Moria community of Kaliabor region

► Saswati Bordoloi

Introduction

Healing rituals and narratives are enriched in Indian culture. Many gods and goddesses are summoned and praised for protection against chaos, misfortune, and disease (Ferrari 1). The earliest references to healing practices in India are found in the oral tradition preserved in the Rigvedasamhita (c.ca 1700-1000 BCE) and more emphatically, in the Atharvaveda- Samhita (c.ca 1000-800 BCE). The bhaisajya (medical) section of the Kausikasutra (the ritual part of Atharvaveda) is the main source of information on healing in Vedic culture (ibid).

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The healing ritual in the rural area

Theoretical descriptions of ritual generally regard it as action and thus automatically distinguish it from the conceptual aspects of religion, such as beliefs, symbols, and myths (Bell 19). The rural healers of India and their healing practices included rituals, chants, and song therapy, which are considered sacred, and considered for curing the diseases as well. They mostly deal with fevers, digestive complaints, and childhood diseases. These rural healers are learned their practices from an older healer and also from elders who practiced their specific healing methods.

Methodology and study area

Assam is situated in India's North-Eastern region. This North-eastern state of India shares its international borders with China, Bhutan, and

Bangladesh. Assam is a land of full natural passes, mountains, dense forests, jungles, huge and terrible pits, inhabited lands, and slopes. Kaliabor is a sub-division of

Nagaon district of Assam and this place is selected for this research topic. The traditional healing ritual practices among Assamese and Moria community of Kaliabor region are going to be discussed here.

Assamese and Moria Community of Kaliabor region

Assamese community is the main inhabitant of the Kaliabor region. Brahman, Goxai, Kalita, Keot, Koch, Kayastha, Sut castes are divided in the Assamese village as their position and it has been categorising according to pre predetermined rules. Dr Kisor Kumar Bhattacharyya mentioned, "Caste is an important dimension of social recognition of the villagers... There are eleven castes (locally called jati) in the village units under study. In order of numerical strength, caste groups living in Pubthoria are Kalita, Kent, Gosain, Kayastha, Brahman (Bamun), Koch, Sut, Nath and Chutia" (Bhattacharyya 197). Naamghar¹ is the pivotal religious zone and different khel² are categorised based on this Naamghar. Vaishnava³ is the main religion among the Assamese community, but Saktism⁴ along with Saivism⁵ practice also seemed among the Assamese community. The traditional healing practices among them are already in place for a long period of time.

The Moria community entered at Kaliabor region during the Ahom⁶ period. They were the captive soldiers, who came along with Turbak, a Gaur commander. During the war between Turbak and Ahom in 1532, around 900 soldiers were captive at duimuni sila⁷ and Hatbor areas of Kaliabor, and later they are known as Moria. Mohini Kumar Saikia mentioned "It is said that the Muslim war prisoners brought by the forces of Suhung-Mung during the campaign were the earliest group of Muslim settler in the eastern Brahmaoutra Valley and they subsequently came

to be known as the Morias” (Saikia 132). Many told stories are associated with the name of Moria. According to Hemkosh Abhidhan (dictionary) and Chandrakanta Abhidhan, the community who was associated to prepare the utensils of kah (bell metal) or pitol (brass), they were known as Moria. The Moria community was also associated with Maroi Puja⁸, hence it is told that they were known as Moria (Bora 370). From another source, the Moria were excellent at sailing *maar nao*⁹, therefore, there is a possibility to known as Moria (Kakati, 43). In another hand, Kamaluddin Saikia gave one explanation, the Morias were staying with Assamese and other communities and by the pass of time, and they forgot their own culture. There is a term in Assamese „*maar juwa*’ or „*jeen juwa*’ (getting along with another culture). Though they are Muslim, mixed up with local culture hence they knew as Moria (Saikia 3). Moreover, the Morias are very helpful and they have unity; if someone is in danger, they all come forward to help him out. The Assamese term “*mar bandhi thio huwa*” (standing together) is relevant with their name Moria¹⁰.

Research question and aim

My central research question is how both the communities of Kaliabor have adopted a ritualistic way in the healing process and how folksongs are associated with rituals and my aim is, to understand how people adopt the way rituals and beliefs.

Observation and finding

Traditional healers neither always perform all the same functions, nor do they all fall into the same category. Each of them is expertise in their field. Every healer has its methods of diagnosis and its own particular way of curing. By interviewing it was found that there are different types of traditional healers based on their expertise in the Kaliabor region. The major types are as follows-

1. The healing power of the Sitala Puja ritual

Goddess Sitala has a unique position among the Hindu communities in India. It is believed that Sitala is a village/folk goddess. The worship of Sitala is not just functional to protection. It has served for centuries to learning and disseminating basic hygienic norms for the wellbeing of the household (Ferrari 1). In the “*Sitalamangkavyas*”, Sitala is an intimidating presence who distributes infected pulses in village markets or sends hordes of disease-demons,

thus causing outbreaks of smallpox and other contagious illnesses. Only when properly worshipped she agrees to heal her victims (ibid 2). This belief has been received enthusiastically among the communities of India and the communities like Assamese, and Moria of Kaliabor region have been practicing this ritual.

Goddess Sitala is predominantly worshipped by women whom she blesses with fertility, healthy sons, and decent husbands. She is invoked because she is gentle, compassionate, and loving. Like any mother, she protects her children from all imbalances like illness, poverty, injustice, misfortune, etc. Though the Sitala goddess is a benevolent mother, it is believed among the communities victims are possessed by her as a sign of „*Aai*”¹¹ (small pox), and scientifically it is known as varicella. Before going to take the medicinal help, the victim’s family likes to please Goddess Sitala to rescue from the fearing the rage of Sitala.

Aai Naam

Aai Naam, the folk song of the Assamese community is associated with the Sitala ritual or Sitala Puja. These songs are used to please Goddess Sitala. A group of women has performed the songs. The lead woman usually directs the performance. The leader acts as a coordinator, and she often sings a few solo lines that are then repeated by the chorus (Ferrari 27). The female devotees are known as *gopini* and they sit in a circle and clapping their hands rhythmically.

(Women have kept Goddess Bhavani (Sitala) as a supreme deity and asked her blessings on them).

Ghosa – Murot fulor choru loi/

Bhavanik adorugoi

Ahiche Bhavani jagat janani/

Chaya di rakhibole

Pod - Axi asa Bhagawati ae ase doroxone/

Kiba puja dibo lage tumar chorone

(We are going to welcome Mother Sitala with flowers; Mother is coming to protect us.

O Mother, tell us what kind of ritual would you like to accept?)

Though the Moria community follows the religion of Islam, surprisingly they follow the Sitala puja ritual as well. The impact of Assamese tradition and folk beliefs are observed among this Moria commu-



Sitala Puja among Moria community

The cult of 'Aai'²²

When a disease fails to respond to natural remedies, the communities of Assam (especially I am talking about this research study area) are convinced that a certain deity or spirit has been offended and has sent the ill-

nity. Intaz Ali, my informant of Moria community mentioned that they have been accepting the Assamese culture and custom since their staying at Jayantipur. When someone has noticed the „Aai in his or her body, the member of the family keeps him or her in a separate room and no one is allowed to enter with slippers or shoes. The Moria community uses the term „Aai letha'¹² for the seasonal contagious chickenpox issue. The family member gives the patient to take a bath with a special water mix with tulasi (basil), dubari (doob grass), flowers, raw milk, and they also put their silver and gold ornaments in the water. After three or five days the patient after taking a bath, he or she is asked to wear a new cheleng¹³ or gamosa¹⁴. The family member prepares panchamrit¹⁵ with kesa pithaguri¹⁶ and offers the stuff to „Aai into a kolapat¹⁷. Moreover, after reciting the „Aai lena puthi'¹⁸, they ask to take a bath with holy water. The Moulabi¹⁹ ask the dua²⁰ for him or her who is contagious thru chickenpox. The three or five kids are invited and offered them the payas²¹. After relieving from the “Aai”, they again are invited and offer a feast with pigeon or fish.

2. Spirit medium/oracles/diviners

Spirit mediums are the most important intermediaries between humans and the supernatural. The ancestors call them (more usually a woman) and they regard themselves as servants of the ancestors. Diviners concentrate on diagnosing the unexplainable. They analyze the causes of specific events and interpret the messages of the ancestors. They use divination objects and they explain the unknown using their particular mediumistic powers. Their vocation is mainly that of divination, but they often also provide the medication for the specific case they have diagnosed. Some of them use prayer for the treatment of ailments.

ness in revenge (Arikiev 122). 'Aai' is an Assamese version, which means mother, a particular lady when possessed by a deity, known as 'Aai' among the community of Kaliabor. She acquires the capacity of predicting the future of people. 'Aai's in the state of possession resolves her client's problems and also their healers.

The three Aais have been selected for this study. Bhanti Aai, Mamoni Aai, and Sorumai Aai. Three of them are possessed by divine powers or divine spirits. Bhanti Aai possessed by Goddess Basanti, Mamoni Aai possessed by Lord Shiva, and Sorumai Aai possessed by Govinda or Lord Krishna, and she informed earlier she was possessed by Goddess Kamakhya as well. Three of them are the medium to remove the obstacles from their clients or devotees lives. There are few things are common among them, such as they have the power to future predict, and they can give the solutions to remove the negativities from their household or from their lives. The clients also have few things are common. Most of them need the peace in their family or they need to remove the obstacles from the household. The family related issues are common among them. The following are the main problems of the clients –

- a) Family or relationship related issue
- b) Health related issue
- c) Job or establishment related issue

The Aai have given the solutions to remove all the problems. But they have three different kinds of way of solutions, and it is noticed during the study. The following three steps they follow respectively-

1. Meditation period
2. Future prediction with the help of rice
3. Solution with sacred chanting water, amulets

Bhanti Aai gave the solutions to her devotees during meditation period. It noticed, she directly tries to connect with Goddess Basanti during meditation.

Morning 10 am to 12 pm- these two hours used to connect with the Goddess during her meditation. After getting the solution from Goddess, she offered raw turmeric bowl paste to her devotee and asked to eat and mix the turmeric ball into water, and asked to take a bath with the auspicious water. Mamoni Aai asked to take five rice from the banana leaf placed in front of her, and she can do the future prediction with the help of rice. Sorumai Aai gave the solution with red flower and asks to mix the flowers into water and ask to drink and to take a bath. Moreover they ask to meet the middle mediums (Gonok²³) who can read the sacred mantra from the sacred chanting book, and she asked to take a bathe in that sacred water, and also ask to sprinkle the purified sacred water inside and outside of the house.

from the village. This is the yearly ritual observed in these two villages. During the Assamese Jeth month (May-June), people usually celebrate the festival. From two days before of the ritual, three small girls carry three pots filled with water and other female folks accompany them to the Naamghar and place the pots inside the Naamghar. On the ritual day who are associated during the water filled process, all are have to visit the Kamakhya temple, similarly the villagers of Deuri Silabandha village, visit the Nandikeshwar Devalay. After visiting the temple the females come back to the Naamghar. On the other hand the male folks are busy inside the Naamghar in other rituals like doing rituals in the main holy place, where the three water filled pots were kept. The Pani tula indicates the process of filing the water inside

Sl no.	Problem (s)	Solution (s)
1	Problems of family matter	<i>Bhanti Aai</i> : Solution with <i>Haldi</i> (turmeric) and water <i>Mamoni Aai</i> : Sprinkle the water of „ <i>Sudarshan Chakra</i> (sacred chanting for removing the bad impact) inside and outside of the house. <i>Sorumai Aai</i> : Solution with red flower and milk
2	Bad effects of black magic/health related problem	<i>Bhanti Aai</i> : Solution with reading the <i>Ghunucha puthi</i> and <i>Bhagavata</i> by <i>Bhakata</i> (who recite the mentioned Hindu Holi books). <i>Mamoni Aai</i> : To drink the water of <i>Koroti puthi</i> (sacred chanting for removing the bad impact) on Saturday <i>Sorumai Aai</i> : To offer <i>sandoh</i> (made from rice), <i>gur</i> (molasses), banana, and curd to three or five children on Saturday or Sunday or give black/red clothes to a beggar.

Synoptic chart of the problems and solutions offered (example) -

The Ghorī of Kamakhya temple of Silghat

The Kamakhya temple is located on the eastern side of Assam in the Kaliabor region and the Ghorī is an important part of this Kamakhya temple of Silghat. „Ghorī is an Assamese term, it s another form in the Assamese language is „Goxani utha or „Goxani Lambha (spirit possession). The Ghorī is being active during Durga puja, Basanti Puja, and Kali Puja – the annual festival of Kamakhya temple of Silghat. During possession, the Ghorī talks with Goddess Kamakhya and he gives remedies for the problems of visitors or devotees.

Pani tula bor xobah

Pani tula bor xobah is a process applying by the Assamese community of Kamakhya gaon and Deuri Silabandha gaon of Kaliabor to remove the obstacles

the pot and bor xobah indicates the ritual which is applied for removing the obstacles or bad effects from the village. In the evening they organise bhaona²⁴, and in the evening, the visiting of the Ghorī in the Naamghar is an integral part of this ritual.

The mediums of Maria community

To remove the obstacles from the village, the Moria community arrange bhitor seva²⁵ or bhokot seva²⁶. In this ritual, the aged males gathering in a separate house, called gaon than²⁷ and they enter the gaon than after the sunset. Wearing the traditional dhoti²⁸ is mandatory. They cover a chicken inside a soria (a shallow vessel) and recite the dua. At mid night, they finish the bhitor seva ritual and check the chicken. If the chicken is alive after the dua, it believes that everything will be removed from the village, otherwise if the chicken is not seems alive, and then it is the sign of misfortune.

Bor sirini is other medium to remove the ob-

stacles from the village. It is held during the Assamese Jeth month. The families of Moria community have to bring the red hen along with kesa pithaguri per household to the Masjid (Mosque), and in the evening, the cooked chicken and the pithaguri are distributed among the families, it is called sirini²⁹. The same day, one pottery is kept filled with water in the Masjid, and during the recitation of holy Quran all are asked to blow the water. It is believed that during the recitation of Quran, the water has been auspicious. In the evening the barik³⁰ distribute the water to each family of the village and it is believed that drinking this water cures disease, and also it is believed that the auspicious water has removed the obstacles from the houses, and the village as well.

3. Herbalists (Bej)

Herbalists are common in both Assamese and Moria community. They have acquired extensive knowledge to diagnose and prescribe medicines for everyday ailments and illnesses. They give the protection to prevent the misfortune or evil as well. In the healing practices of a bej, empiric knowledge plays an important role, as they can diagnose certain problems like to remove the stomach-ache or to join the broken bones with certainty healing herbs; even they also have knowledge on snake biting. People seek an herbalist rather than go to the hospital. They usually apply the folk medicines, amulets, and magical water for curing the problems. Though they don't have divine power like an Aai, they know some sacred hymns or magical chants and apply on herbs, amulets, and on water.

One example of magical chant for curing the stomach ache-

Bor bor aadar Xoru xoru aax Bor bor bixor
Golai tule fam Nai bix
Bixihori Aaige Nai bix
Maa Manasar aaige Xor xoru aax

(Oath sentence) – This oath sentence is chanted by the herbalists inside his mind and not allowed to pronounce loudly. They apply this magical mantra to water and ask the patient to drink it.

Concluding remarks

I have tried to focus on the traditional healing rituals from Kaliabor, Assam, and have focused on Assamese and Moria community in which I have studied and found these kinds of traditional healing

rituals. The Sitala ritual, Aai Naam, Aai letha, the Aai, Ghor, Pani tula bor xobah, Bhiton seva or Bhokot seva, Bor sirini – these rituals present a model of the traditional healing ritual concept that exists in Assam and the ways of dealing with it. In this modern time also they follow the traditional way to heal; they try to please gods and goddesses to remove the negative impact from the body and even from the village.

After taking interviews of different traditional healers from my study area, it was observed that the traditional healers have some principles in their system of healing practices. Traditional healers can realize the mind-body relationship. According to them, the natural harmony of the body can only be restored by an integrated and holistic approach. They use natural methods of treatment because these were the resources that have been nurtured since time immemorial³¹. They earn this knowledge from generation to generation, and sometimes they learn from the elder traditional healer or experienced one. Furthermore, they believe that everything is in nature, and therefore they follow the traditional method for curing the diseases.

Notes

1. Naamghar is the prayer hall or prayer house of Assam, introduced by saint Sankardeva in the 14th century. The Naamghar word is a combination of two Assamese words- Naam (song) and Ghar (house). The Naam especially sings inside the Naamghar.

2. Khel is an Assamese term, indicating the categories of society, based on Naamghar

3. Vaishnava is a devotee of Lord Vishnu. Vaishnavism, also called Vishnuism, is one of the major forms of Hinduism, and those who are associated in the devotion of Vaishnavism, known as Vaishnava.

4. Saktism is known for those who worship the Hindu Goddess Shakti. Kamakhya Devalay

(Silghat), Hatimura Durga Temple are examples of Saktism.

5. Saivism is the major Hindu tradition, that worships Lord Shiva. Kaliabor is a place for Saivism as well. Ambikanath Devalaya, Citra Sankar, Trishuldhai, Nag Sankar Siva Mandir, Nandikeswar Devalay are the pivotal pilgrimages for Saivism.

6. The Ahom is a group of people and the Ahom

kingdom ruled Assam in the medieval period.

7. Duimunisila is two cursed rocks found at Kaliabor. There is a mythological story behind the two cursed rocks. Demon king Bana wanted to establish a second Kashi in the north side of Brahmaputra and collected Shiva Lingas. But why second Kashi required, therefore Lord Ganesha hid one Shiva Linga from one crore. Bana asked Lord Shiva, and Shiva suggested asking duimuni (two sages) Koustubh and Kumud, but they lied about not knowing the missing Shiva Linga. After knowing this incident Bana wanted to suicide, and then Lord Shiva appeared in front of him and cursed Kaustubh and Kumud for their untruth discourse.

8. Mario Puja is an important religious festival and it is related to the snake Goddess Manasa.

9. Intaz Ali, informant of Moria community, Jayantipur, Kaliabor.

10. Aai is an Assamese term, indicating Mother. Here, when chickenpox appears in the body, people believe that it is a flaw given by Goddess Bhagavati or Goddess Sitala. It is known as 'Aai ulua', which means the Goddess appears in the body in the form of chickenpox. To show respect to the Goddess, people use the 'Aai' term.

11. Aai Letha is the situation when chickenpox appears in someone's body, and it is called 'Aai lethal.' Aai is the word for Goddess Bhagavati and Sitala.

12. Cheleng is a traditional attire of the Assamese community, made from silk or cotton.

13. Gamosa is a traditional attire of Assamese, made from cotton.

14. Panchamrit is the mixture of milk, curd, ghee, honey, and sugar.

15. Ground rice

16. Banana leaf. It is believed, banana leaves are very pure to offer something to God/Goddess.

17. Aai Lena puthi is a book of devotional songs related to Goddess Bhagavati or Goddess Sitala. Through these songs, the ladies try to please Goddess.

18. Moulabi (cleric) is a religious title given to Muslim religious scholars, and the Moulabi is a pivotal religious character in Islam and the Muslim society as well.

19. Dua is ritual worship.

20. Payas is a sweet dish made of rice, milk, and sugar.

21. Aai is an Assamese term of Mother, but it is different from the 'Aai' indicated in no. 11. Who is possessed by the divine power, that particular female is known in the Assamese community as 'Aai'. 'Aai' is a respective word, to show respect to the divine possessed woman, the 'Aai' word has been used.

22. In the Brahmin community there are two categories, one who worshipped the deity and the other who is associated with the calculating. Gonok is the second one, who can chant the sacred mantra from the sacred hymn scripts and purify the water with the hymns or chanting.

23. Bhaona is a performing art of Assam, introduced by Saint Sankardeva.

24. Bhitor seva indicates the ritual which is performed inside; here bhitor indicates inside and seva the ritual.

25. Bhokot seva indicates the ritual is performed by the bhakat, the prestigious and religious male folk.

26. Gaon than indicates the separate house of the gaon (village), which is used for religious purposes. Here, than indicates the auspicious place for ritual.

27. Dhoti is traditional attire made of cotton, used for religious occasions. But, in Assam Dhoti is common attire worn by the male folks.

28. Sirini is the mixture of cooked chicken and grind rice, a kind of plate that is offered in the Mosque.

29. Barik is the male folk, who perform the religious responsibility of the village.

30. Website content – www.sciencedirect.com

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7th Edition of STATE LEVEL INDIGENOUS YOUTH FESTIVAL 2023

A Brief Review

► Tongke Ering Abotani

The seventh edition of the State Level Indigenous Youth Festival was held at Poi Pee Mau ground, Namsai from 18th to 21st January, 2023. The four-day occasion was organized by Indigenous Faith & Cultural Society of Arunachal Pradesh (IFCSAP).

On the occasion, Shri Chowna Mein, Honourable Deputy Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh was present as the Chief Guest and Shri Tarun Vijay, former Rajya Sabha MP as Guest of Honour. Shri Mukut Mithi, former Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh and Shri Chau Zingnu Namchom MLA, Arunachal Pradesh Assembly were amongst the other dignitaries present.

In his address as the Chief Guest, Shri Chowna Mein stated the Government's commitment towards building *Indigenous Prayer Halls and Gurukuls* in every district of the State, which would facilitate the practice of indigenous festivals, passing indigenous Knowledge on to younger generations and it would further help preserve the rich and diverse heritage of the land for generations to come.

Addressing the august audience gathered at the Youth Festival, Er. Katung Wahge, President of

IFCSAP demanded before the Govt. for an early implementation of renaming of the Dept. of Indigenous Affairs, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, as Dept. of Indigenous Faith and Cultural Affairs. He adds that the *Arunachal Pradesh freedom of Religion Act 1978*, which prohibits conversion from one religious faith to any other religious faith by use of force or inducement or fraudulent means, has not yet been enforced in the state.

Greeting the audience and dignitaries, the chief guest and the guest of honour requested everyone present there to follow their respective traditional ways of livelihood and stressed on the pivotal role parents and elders can play in teaching younger generations to practice, protect and promote indigenous culture and traditions. A total of 2000 delegates, eminent members from central and district units of IFCSAP as well as allied organizations from 25 districts of State and across the Country participated in the four-day mega event.

Youths from each of the districts participated in cultural performances, which were followed by the inaugural ceremony of the festival. As part of the

(Contd. to Page 13)

Prehistoric Heritage

► Dr Ranga Ranjan Das

How many of us aware with the term prehistory? Students of history, archaeology, anthropology, antiquarian studies have some sort of idea about prehistory. Simply speaking, 'prehistory' denotes that part of human existence where there are no any written records. The writing of history is not too remote. Prior to that there was a prolonged period of time span where people survive and existed coping with their natural environment, adopting own means for survival mechanism. There is no any other scope to know about them. On the basis of their stones, bones, harpoons and its development in subsequent phases, prehistoric people made successful attempts to reconstruct the prehistoric periods as Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic period- further classified into Lower Paleolithic, Middle Paleolithic and Upper Paleolithic period. 'Lith' means stone. It was redesigned by early human being to use as tools or weapon for hunting animals and birds and executing day to day work. Prior to Neolithic period, people were hunter and gatherers, leading a nomadic life, moving from one place to another. In various parts of the world, such stone assemblages are unearthed from the soil. Commonly said the evidence of prehistory lies beneath the soil. In various parts of the world including Asia, Europe, Africa, etc, exploration and excavation is going on. Apart from tools, fossils of ancestors of early human, different prehistoric animals are found. The Dinosaurs, Woolly Elephant are some of the such prehistoric animals. Using various methods of relative and absolute dating methods, such as Stratigraphy on the assessment of depositing layers, Carbon dating, Potassium Argon dating method, scientists can provide the particular period or date of their existence. From that period prehistoric culture developed stage by stage, period after period. Scholars wonderfully traces from the period of promiscuity to barbarism and civilizations.

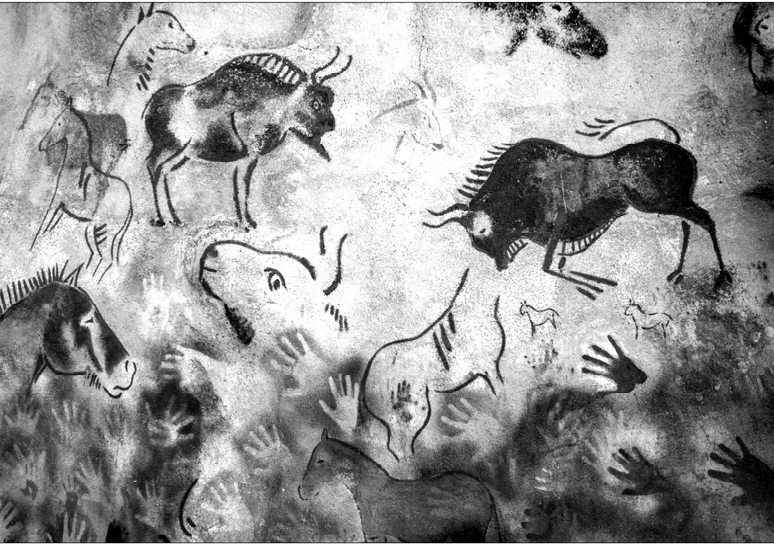
Various civilizations are reported from various parts of the world during prehistoric period: Sumerian



civilization, Egyptian Civilization, Indus Valley civilization- in Harrapa and Mahanjodaro, etc. That was a major shift from Neolithic to Iron, Bronze age, Copper age. In India, there are lots of detailed studies on Indus valley civilization- their life styles, ways of living, architectural planning, pottery, dockyard at Lothal, Harappan seals, appeasing gods and goddess, the city planning and factors responsible for decline of such sophisticated civilization. Film maker Ashotosh Guwatrikar made a partial attempt to depict it silver screen through Mohenjodaro. Major parts of Indus valley is located at present in Pakistan. In Indian contexts, attempts have to make to establish the prehistoric period through various scientific excavations and explorations. It is successful to explore prehistoric tools, rock or cave shelter, cave art at Ajanta, Ellora, rock and pillar inscriptions, ethno-archaeological explorations in tribal dominated areas of India in general and north eastern region in particular. Such artifacts and explorations are real testimony of prehistoric heritage. In north east India, traces of prehistoric heritage are reported from various parts of the region.

Technically, the term 'artifact', is used to manmade objects. For example, stones are available

in nature in various forms. On the other hand, the stones or other objects that is touched by human hand, is different. In the scientific or systematic study of tools, the difference between man-made and natural stone or tools are taught. Some generalized features like presence of primary, secondary flaking,



bulb of percussion differentiate tools into core tool and flake tools. There are more salient features of tools. When a tool is prepared by detaching flakes (side portion of a stone so that front becomes point) from the original lump of stone, it is core tool. During Lower Paleolithic period, such tools are mostly found under the soil. During middle and upper Paleolithic periods, flake tools predominated. Upper Paleolithic period, is also signified by bone tools and cave arts. Besides, during Mesolithic period-the transitional phase between Paleolithic and Neolithic, we have seen predominance of composite tools-known as microliths and also bone tools like harpoons, needle, etc, while polished and grounded tools like celt, and other diverse tools reflects Neolithic period. In Africa, Europe and Asia, various sites were excavated where remnants of stone tools were traced as associated materials with the fossils of skeletal remains of prehistoric man who are at the different stages of evolution from Dryopithecinae to Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon man to modern man via Homo erectus. In north eastern India also, scholars found the sufficient evidences that testifies the existence of early prehistoric man in this part of the world. During pre-Independence period, Sir John Lubbock (University of London) asserted the existence of pre-

historic culture in north eastern region. He published a paper entitled *The Stone Age Tools in Upper Assam* in 1867. Thereafter existence of stone tools are reported by many foreign and India scholars from 1870 to 1928 in different parts of the region: E.H Steel, Lt Barron and Hutton from Nagaland, Cockburn and Godwin Austen from Khasi Hills, Anderson and Banerjee from Arunachal Pradesh, Dasgupta and Coggin Brown from Assam, G.D Walker from Garo hills, etc. J.H Hutton's systematic study entitled *Pre-history of Assam* focused on Neolithic cultural patterns (cited by Sharma 2003:13).

In Assam, the most known prehistoric site is discovered at Daojali Hading of the present Dima Hasao district (earlier known as North Cachar Hills District). M.C Goswami and T.C Sharma was the main exponent. They got stone tools, mullers, pestles, grinding stone or hewns, cord-marked pottery, bone fragments and a piece of tortoise shell. Scholars established connections between south east Asia during Neolithic period. There is another important site Sarutaru, located towards south east edge of Kamrup district. It reports about existence of ground and polished stone tools and cord-marked pottery. It is reported as Neolithic site, but radio-carbon dating (a absolute scientific technique to ascertain appropriate age) reveals it as modern period. H.C Sharma and his team also explored Sarutaru site along with Marakdola, and got medieval potteries. PK Saikia explored Neolithic tools in the Dibru river valley in 1988 (ibid p. 16). Pottery- collection, making of the different types of earthen pots also provided information about Neolithic period.

The north eastern region is inhabited by various ethnic groups that undertakes certain important practices that has linkages with prehistoric people. Another important branch such as ethno archaeology is one of the methods to know the prehistoric period. In Assam, various scholars under Gauhati University came up with such studies to explore rich prehistoric heritage of Assam using ethno-archaeological approach. S.K Roy (1977) made a study of ceramics from Neolithic to Medieval Period. It made a wonderful analysis on various prehistoric sites like Daojali Hading, potteries of Neolithic period found in Garo hills and potteries of Ambari (Guwahati). One of the important salient features of Neolithic

period was settled inhabitation. People started living as villages. They developed the art of production economy and also know the art of pottery making. Fragments of pottery are deposited beneath the soil. Studying pottery, scholars get an idea of prehistoric life. In north eastern region, remnants of pottery is explored from various parts of the region including Garo hills and famous site at Ambari, Guwahati. Collected specimens are kept in a small museum nearby the site, adjacent to Guwahati Press Club. Another scholar B. Medhi (1992) has also undertaken study on ceramic tradition and its evolution from prehistoric period to contemporary period. It made an attempt to link the potter caste group Hira and Kumar and their art of making pottery to prehistoric period.

Apart from Assam, prehistoric elements are also found from various other north eastern states like Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Meghalaya. For the first time John Anderson reported (1871) presence of stones tools in Arunachal Pradesh, when it was NEFA. It was followed by R.D Banerji's effort (1924) who found a stone adze on the left bank of Dibong river in a village Mebo in Siang district. There was also collection of neoliths from Kameng district (1972). B.P Bopardikar (1972) explored Palaeolith for the first time in Daphabum area of Lohit district, while N.Sarkar revealed about the existence of Neolithic celts in different region. A.A.Ashraf (1982-83) had made major contribution when he and his team explored Parsi-Parlo, of Kamala river valley, "opened four trenches, four cultural layers identified- two contained ceramics and lower two were pre-ceramics belonging to the Neolithic culture..." (ibid Sharma, p. 18). There is also report¹ of finding Neolithic axe from Taksing in Upper Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh, bordering China. It is made of diorite black stone which is rectangular in shape. Both the surfaces are fully grounded and finely polished with a few scars found in the lateral margin. It is reported that tool is associated with agriculture and farming. In another major exploration, the archaeology section of the state Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, remnants of ancient settlements are discovered from the forest of Papum Pare district². As reported, it covers more than 20 acres, at

the jungles of Ramghat under Tarasso circle. It comprises unearthed fortification (rampart) measuring 226 meters long made of stone blocks, burnt brick and stone boulders along with one gate, made of stone blocks- rectangular and hemispherical shape, burnt bricks and stone slabs. It is further revealed that stone have symbols and designs inscribed on them, resembling combined bow and arrow and trident. Besides a broken shiva linga, sealing ball and potsherds were also explored.

The prehistoric heritage of Manipur was brought out by Yumjao Singh. He explored some copper objects from an old palace in Imphal, series of lime stone caves in the Ukhrul area near Burma border and stone age sites in Napachik. Like in Garo hills of Meghalaya, various stone age sites were explored. Various stone tools are collected from the river valleys of Rongram, Ganol and Simsang rivers. H.C Sharma, noted scholar also explored the existence of Chopper tradition during 1978 at Nangalbibra in Simsang-Nangal Valley of East Garo hills district. Moreover, another lithic tradition with flake tools and a few microliths on chert and jasper, were explored justifying prevalence of Levalloisian (a typological culture of prehistoric period) and microlithic traditions. During 1968, various Neolithic sites are explored in Meghalaya mainly in Garo hills. Various artifacts such as chipped and ground stone axes, scraper and plain hand-made grey pottery, microliths, fluted core, hammer stones, micro-flakes, etc were found. In Tripura, B.C Poddar and N.R Ramesh explored several archaeological sites in the valleys of Hoara and Khowai rivers near Agartala.

One of the important artifact of prehistory is 'megalith'. Mega means 'huge' and 'lith' means stone. It means huge stone. This huge stone is utilized as 'a grave or memorial erected in stone, whether dressed or in its natural form containing, enclosing or erected over the funerary assemblage'. It is a prehistoric culture that is reported from various parts of world including north east India. On the basis of its typological features, it is classified into menhirs, dolmen and cists. The Khasis and Jaintias of Meghalaya erect single standing stones (menhirs) or alignments of stones in honour of dead, who are thereby encouraged to help their living kinsmen. The Khasis erect megaliths, monoliths, cromlech and dolmens over which lie the foundation of prehistoric origin. Such megalithic

sites in Meghalaya are Nartiang, Cherrapunji, Jowai, Maoflong, Lailugkot, various sites of Ri-Bhoi district such as Mawrong, Mawbri, Tyrso, Umswai, Amjong, Umbi, Nongkhrah, San-Mer, and some sites in East Khasi hills district, West Khasi hills and Jaintia hills district. Vinay Kumar³ has done an in depth analysis on megalithic tradition prevalent among the Khasis and Jaintias. It brings out various observations. The Khasis erect monolith as a tribute to a dead person, immediately after the cremation. Such monoliths are comprised of a set of upright and flat stones. The upright stones or the menhirs are known as mawsynsang or the mile-stone and the table stone or dolmens are known as mawkynthei or the female stone. Menhirs or pillars stand upright, their bane being dumped inside and the dolmens lie flat in the front. They are known as mawkjat which are laid during the cremation of the deceased or during the disposal of the ashes of the demised members of the house. Interpreting megalithic tradition of Jaintias, it is observed that they also erect megaliths, monoliths, cromlech and dolmens that connect custom of prehistoric people. Immediately after the cremation, a monolith is erected which are comprised of a set of upright and flat stones. Menhirs or pillars stand upright, their bone being dumped inside and the dolmens lie flat in the front. It is more or less similar with the Khasis.

The present north east, is the melting pot of diverse racial strains, that has close nexus with the prehistoric past as asserted by different scholars and prehistorians. Evidences are found through various prehistoric or archeological sites spread across the north east. Some of the state museums also stored some artifacts that have prehistoric relevance. Late Madhab Chandra Goswami Museum, in the department of Anthropology, Gauhati University, is one the major destinations where prehistoric tools explored from various parts of the north eastern region, not only stored but also scientifically analyzed and interpreted. It is observed that diverse heritage is lying beneath the soil. A handful of such prehistoric heritage is explored within the span of a century or more. More scientific exploration and studies is the need of hour to trace prehistoric heritage of the north east. □□

End Notes

1. For details See <http://www.ndtv.com>, reported in 18th September 2012, accessed on 8th December, 2022, at 11.10 am

2. See, <https://www.sentinelassam.com>, reported on 12 May, 2022, accessed on 8th December, 2022, at 11.30 am

2. <https://www.tribaltribune.com>, Vinay Kumar, 'Megalithic cultural tradition amongst the Khasi and Jaintia tribes of North-East India

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mega event, traditional folk song and dance competitions were organized, which saw overwhelming participation of the young generation. Apart from this, vibrant traditional dances and folk songs were performed by various groups including, Do:nyi Po:lo, Rangfra, Amik Matai, Nani Intaya, etc. with joy and harmony. A cultural procession was also taken out in the morning which had the participation of more than 1000 youth, and following this commenced the key sessions of the event. Various traditional games and sports competitions, including archery, athletics, marathon race, and volley ball (boys & girls) were held as part of the festival. With a view to promote skill and literary activities, competitions such as essay writing, drawing (Senior and Junior levels) and extempore speech were also organized.

Attending the valedictory session on Saturday, Namsai MLA Shri Choue Zingmu Namchoom applauded this great initiative and thanked everyone present for a successful conduction of the festival. He urged the young generation to make the best out of the knowledge and experiences they have garnered which will help them secure a bright future. He underscored the necessity to explore the vast world of indigenous knowledge through platforms such as the youth festival.

The four-day event concluded successfully with kind cooperation, suggestions and generous support from prominent groups and organizations including the Namsai unit of Donyi Polo Yelam Kebong, Tai Khamti Singphoo Council Namsai, Galo Welfare Society Namsai, Namsai unit of Arunachal Vikas Parisad.

IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE IN INDIA

► **Dr Mukul Chandra Bora**

Agriculture is the oldest profession of mankind in the world as it relates to the survival of human population. Out of three basic need food is the main components for the survival and that is why ancient human beings were have to travel a lot to acquire its demand of survival. The heritage of Indian agriculture is one of the most ancient systems in the world and its record goes back to 10000 BC in ancient India or Bharat. It is worth mentioning that to preserve the glory of agriculture heritage in the World the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations has published one Report on Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS, 2017) and another on Technical Reference Manual entitled Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) Monitoring and Evaluation Manual (2022): A Technical Reference wherein the huge importance has been given on Providing Food and Livelihood Security for Millions of the World's Poor and Small-Scale Farmers. "***Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems***" (GIAHS) are outstanding landscapes of aesthetic beauty that combine agricultural biodiversity, resilient ecosystems and a valuable cultural heritage. Those specific places located around the world may provide sustainability in multiple goods and services as well as food and livelihood opportunities for millions of small-scale farmers.

Indian Civilisation is about 12 thousand years old and when whole world is in dark our ancestors wrote books and these philosophical books are now the foundation of Modern Development. Being the oldest civilisation of the world and as we know that food, shelter and cloths are the primary need of human population and hence the agriculture system in India has begun in 10000 BC as a part of early cultivation and domestication of plants, crops and animals. When the people of ancient India have settled their life then they have discovered the techniques to implement different techniques to be implemented in cultivation of food grains required for their livelihood and the benefits of two rainy seasons facilitate them to go for two harvesting in a year and then those products were reached the other parts of the world

via existing sea routes and the foreign crops were introduced to India by those merchants. As the plants and animals and water are vital for human life and hence due respect has been given to those lifesaving materials and worshiped in our country as on today. The system of irrigation canal has been introduced as the population increases and it was staged in the Middle Ages in India and reach a new height in entire agricultural systems. The concept of land and water management systems in agriculture were invented with an aim of providing uniform growth of the cultivated crops. Although, in modern India we have developed comprehensive agricultural system but the importance of Heritage Agricultural practices of this motherland cannot be ruled out as it has got lot of sustainable practices used from generation after generation. In India although it is an occupation in modern India but it was a way of life in ancient India for many people of this educationally rich country. The concept of worshipping of nature was only to respect the Bio-diversity not the material which is regarded as a superstition by the so-called modern Scientists and Intellectuals without understanding its philosophy therein which makes our country unsustainable and hence it is of great need that the young generation should be make aware of the great Sustainable Development practices of our ancient and traditional agricultural systems.

It may be understood that although our country has made tremendous progress in agriculture but the adverse effect of intensive use of inputs were not properly studied or not let us to know by the people promoting green revolution in India and it just become one way traffic for monetary growth of people. The long-term impacts of Green Revolution are visible now in terms of sustainability in agriculture. The situation become more worsen with the irrational use of chemical fertilizers, insecticides together with exploitation of natural resources which is a threat to the agro eco systems. The fertile soil of our country has been destroyed and become addicted towards chemical fertilisers and the insects are become insecticide resistant and the residue of it is now easily

found in food and vegetables we used. The indigenous knowledge system (IKS) is capable of providing insight into the sustainable agriculture as these are the time-tested innovations and is in practice for thousands of years in our country. Although lot of valuable traditional agricultural techniques were in India but these local systems are dying out of our one-sided economic activities. Agriculture Heritage of India is unique and we must feel proud about our rich cultural and technological heritage and this is way back to Neolithic age of 7500-4000 B.C. due to which the life style of early nomadic hunter of wild berries and roots to cultivator of land has got settled in one place which is seen today. The traditional farmers in our country have developed the nature friendly farming systems and practices such as mixed farming, mixed cropping, crop rotation etc which was the present day of concept to reduce the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Values and traditional practices adopted in ancient India which are more relevant for present day system and its history proves the continuous record of past events, whereas heritage indicates the inherited values carried from one generation to other generation. Agricultural heritage denotes the values and traditional practices adopted in ancient India, which are more relevant for present day system. List of available documents on agriculture during ancient and medieval period.

The great ancient text Rigveda (3700 BC) describes about the agricultural practices in the Vedic period and may be started from 500 BC and ended in 500 BC which corresponds to last phase of the Chalcolithic period and Iron Age in India. The possible sites stretched from north-western parts of India to the entire alluvial of the river Ganges. The factors associated with agricultural practices of Vedic India are: (i) Soil, land and village settlement; (ii) process of manuring; (iii) Crop and plant protection, agricultural technology and agricultural implements; (iv) Irrigation system; (v) Animal husbandry and (vi) Meteorological observations in relation to crop prospects. The Vedic Aryans, the theory propagated by Max Muller in 1853, stated that they have pursued pastoralism and agriculture as the mainstay of their livelihood and that is why he may define term Arya as a people who used to stir soil by means of stick or plough and this proves that Aryans were cultivators

before separation as Indo-Iranian and Indo-Aryan. The analysis of related data on agriculture contained in the Vedic texts shows three prominent phases and the early phase were mainly comprised of struggle for fertile field.

Agricultural practices were thus not very easy during early age of Vedic period and that is why the Prayer to different godheads for copious rain and other favourable conditions for raising of food crops (Anna) and animal resources is frequent in the Rigvedic mantras. Agriculture occupied such an important place that Surya was conceived as having three bonds in three lokas. Thus, in this hymn Vedic idea on three essentials of Krishi (agriculture) is presented through this imagery of Surya in form of Asva. A very few grain-crops are mentioned in the Rigveda out of which Yava (barley) is one among them which indirectly proved that the particular settlement area of the people at that time was favourable for cultivation of Yava. The concept of divinity was imposed on every condition of nature and the whole agricultural systems were based on spiritual domination of the nature. This is found in the idea of Ksetrapati (presiding deity of agriculture), indicating either Rudra or Agni which were assumed as the supervising authority of all the agricultural activities.

The Atharvaveda (2000 BC) was found to be introduced the process of manuring of yava (barley) seeds in later Vedic period with clarified butter and honey as pre-sowing treatments of seeds and was done through a process of chanting of Mantras laid down in the Atharvaveda. According to the Atharva Veda Yava (sweet corn) was first cultivated by the God on the bank of holy river Sarasvati for the benefit of mankind and the lord Indra was the furrow master and the Maruts were the ploughmen. The association of lord Indra and Maruts suggests it as a rain-growth corn and the birds were used as pestiferous agents to control the pest and insects. The knowledge of infesting grains in the field and unfavourable natural phenomena causing harm to crops came to be known during the Atharvavedic period and the pests were Borer (tarda) indicating either insect or bird, hooked insect (samanka), noxious insect (upakvasa) and locust (patanga), Rodents (vyadvaras) and rats (akhu) and Reptiles. The natural phenomenon like lightening and sun, charms and spells formed the preventive and remedial measures

and in late Vedic period weed as pest was introduced in addition to those recognized in the Atharvaveda and the weed was particularly wheat-pest. Preventive and remedial measures were charms and spells in association with some substances appear to have pesticidal effects. These include: a) spreading of lead after furrowing, b) burying in field the metabolic product (grass) from the bowels of sacrificed cattle and some parts of particular plant substances. Weed control was also recommended by burying of several plant substances in the fields before sowing of seeds. The Atharvaveda refers winnowing fan (surpa) in this connection. Grains (here barley) were stored in a vessel (urdara). The concept of using rainwater harvesting were first introduced in the Atharva Vedic period and used for the purpose of crop irrigation.

The utilization of river water by diverting its course in small channel became prominent in late Vedic period and the process of green-manuring (Organic Manure) to increase the soil fertility has continued since the Atharva Vedic period and are still continuing in present day of civilisation. The holy text Ramayana (2000 BC), Mahabharata (1400 BC) also refers to the names of river Sarasvati in its flows in different directions and there were seven branches of the river Sarasvati and they called as seven Saraswati River at the period of time. The place where the river Sarasvati divided into seven channels was known as Pehowa and the River disappeared in the desert at Vinasana before its meeting with Indus drainage and it reappeared at Camasodbheda and the final meeting of river Sarasvati at sea has been mentioned in Rigveda and Mahabharata.

Krishi-Parashara (400 BC) (A treatise on Agriculture) also provides the details of the design of the plough with names for different parts in Sanskrit and this basic design has hardly undergone any changes over centuries and may be seen as on today. Vedic literature and Krishi-Parashara also mention disc plough seed drill, blade harrow (bakhar), wooden spike tooth harrow, planks, axe, hoe, sickle, supra for winnowing and a vessel to measure grain (udara). Pairs of bullocks used for ploughing in ancient days varied from one to eight and the Krishi-Parashara (400 BC) and Brihat Samhita give, what today one could describe as, simple astrological models for predicting rains. Parashara's main technique of forecasting rain was based on the posi-

tions of the Moon and the Sun in the sky and it was stated that crops grown without manure will not give much yield and a method of preparing manure from cowdung were also described and the construction technique of cattle shed. The cleanliness of the shed was emphasized to protect animals from diseases and the cattle sheds were regularly fumigated with dried plant products that contained volatile compounds. The other ancient texts of India in which the farming techniques were described are: Kautilya's Arthashastra (300 BC), Amarsimha's Amarkosha (200 BC), Patanjali's Mahabhasya (200 BC), Sangam literature (Tamils) (200 BC-100 AD), Agnipurana, Varahamihir's Brhat Samhita (500 AD), Kashyapiyakrishisukti (800AD), Surapala's Vrikshayurveda (1000 AD), Lokopakaram by Chavundaraya (1025 AD), Someshwardeva's Manasollasa (1131 AD), Saranghara's Upavanavioda (1300 AD), Bhavaprakasha-Nighantu (1500 AD), Chakrapani Mishra's Viswavallbha (1580 AD), Dara Shikoh's Nuskha Dar Fanni-Falahat (1650 AD), Jati Jaichand's dairy (1658-1714 AD) and Watt's Dictionary of Economic Products of India (1889-1893 AD) are few names in the field of agriculture heritage of India.

It may be concluded that the Heritage Agriculture is gaining lot of importance across the world and this is the only way for sustainable Agriculture. Keeping in view of this importance of this system of agriculture, the Food and Agricultural Organisation of United Nations has adopted recently the implementation of this Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) programme aims to identify, support and safeguard agricultural systems that sustain and conserve our biodiversity and genetic resources for food and agriculture, rural livelihoods, knowledge systems, cultures and remarkable landscapes. The complete road map for this implementation has already been released in the year 2022 and this article may be able to create an awareness of this great agenda of FAO to save the man and nature of the world. Now it is evident from this discussion that ancient India was a knowledge power of the world and this type of agenda of UN organisation are making us proud of our Ancient Knowledge System. □□

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Kantara & Avatar-2

► Kiran Acharyya

The year 2022 saw an unusual movie blockbuster-Kantara, which awed audiences pan-India, in spite of its regional content and low budget production. Initially, it was released only in Kannada language with sub-titles in Hindi and released only in very limited screens; but seeing the audience Reviews, it was later dubbed in numerous languages and released in large amount of Screens across India.

Various You Tube movie Reviewers have called it a harbinger of a Hindu Awakening.

The movie deals with the culture of coastal Karnataka, Dakshina Kannada District and Udupi District; the Daivas-Panjuruli(Varaha/ Wild Boar Avatar of Lord Vishnu and the companion deity-Guliga(a ferocious form of Lord Shiva).

A You Tuber- JaideepBhide has compared the progress of the protagonist - Shiva to Kundalini Awakening, which ultimately makes Man into a God, in this manner:-

As a young boy, when Shiva's father who is the Bhoota Kola performer disappears into the forest, Shiva is traumatised and refuses to become a Bhoota Kola performer himself in his youth.

His lifestyle is limited to the Muladhara Chakra(Root Chakra), Hunting, Eating, Drinking, etc.survival Mode.

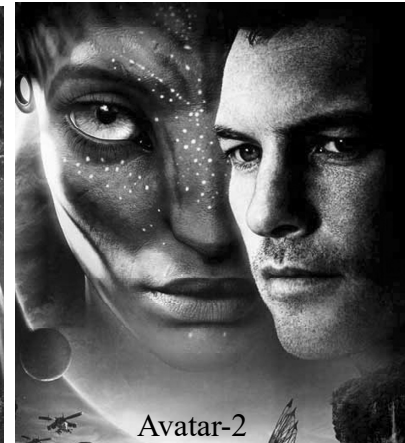
Then the Daiva(Deity) decides that he will smash all the Chakras of Shiva and lead him to his true divine destiny. While hunting the wild boar, Shiva gets a vision of the Varaha Avatar and his Muladhara Chakra is smashed.

His Swadisthana Chakra(Navel Chakra) is smashed and activated, when his Bhoota Kola father appears from behind and gives him a great fright, during the time when he accompanies the King(Landlord), having an amorous encounter with a maid servant.

Shiva's Manipura Chakra

(Solar Plexus) is smashed and activated when Guruva, his close friend and the present Bhoota Kola performer is stabbed on his belly by the King and Guruva appears in a vision to Shiva in the Jail Cell and frightens him. Now, the lower 3 Chakras have been activated and he gains clarity of his life purpose, coming out of the mundane Survival Mode.

Shiva's Anahata Chakra(Heart Chakra) is activated, when he is suddenly attacked at night with swords, amidst Rain (Water) and Fire.



His Vishudhhi Chakra(Throat Chakra) is activated, when he crosses the threshold of the Kings house and sits confidently on the dining table and warns the King.

Shiva's Ajna Chakra(Third Eye Chakra) is activated, when he encounters his Bhoota Kola father in the middle of the dark road in the forest and falls down from his bike out of fear. It is also the Full Moon night and the Moon appears as if Lord Shiva is looking down on Shiva and blessing him

Shiva's Sahasrara Chakra(Crown/ Thousand Petalled Lotus Chakra) is awakened, when he is apparently dead and is thrown against the rock with the Trishul/ Trident of Lord Shiva marked on it. His Kundalini is fully awakened. He is no longer Shiva, but has become a God himself (Lord Shiva/ Guliga) and gains supernatural powers and strength, fights

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JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2023 17

INDIGENOUS STATUS TO MUSLIMS IN ASSAM AND ITS POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

►Dr Jnanendra Barman

Assam Govt on the eve of Idd on 6th July, 2022 declared five Muslim groups in the state as indigenous.

Granting of indigenous status by Assam Govt to 5 Muslim groups of the state has deeper political implications. As per the “Assam Accord” signed between the All Assam Students’ Union (AASU) and the central Govt after six years long agitation in 1985, the indigenous people of Assam would be entitled to “constitutional safeguard”. Assembly and Parliamentary constituencies would be reserved for the indigenous people. Once accorded indigenous status, nearly 77 lakh Muslims out of 1.07 crore would be entitled to political reservation.

As per the accord, Govt is bound to detect and deport illegal migrants from Assam who entered the state after 24th March, 1971. For rest of the country the cut off date for detection and deportation of illegal migrants is 19th July, 1948. The citizenship Act has been later amended several times. Any person born in India till 1986 is now Indian. It was further amended in 2003. Whether there can be a separate cut off for Assam is a matter of dispute, now subjudiced.

In Assam Muslim population was 19,81,867 in 1951. All Assam Students’ Organization and also other regional nationalist’ organizations and BJP - AGP want political reservation or constitutional safeguard based on 1951 census data. During the period 1951-2011, population of Assam increased 290% (Total population of Assam in 1951 was 80,00,000. It increased to 3,12,00,000 in 2011). At 290% increased rate, the Muslim population in 1951 becomes 77,29,281 in 2011.

Now, Assam has total 2,37,10,834 electors as on 5th January, 2022 in all the 126 legislative assembly constituencies of the state. As such, average voters in each constituency is 1.86 lakh. Now, as per clause 6 of the Assam Accord, if political reservation or ‘constitutional safeguard’ is provided, the “indigenous” Muslims would be entitled to some 42 Assembly constituencies. That is 33.3% of Assam’s

total assembly seat.

Disproportionate increase of Muslim population in Assam has reduced the Hindus into minority in 9 districts of Assam. Now Hindus would be mutilated politically in these districts once they get political reservation.

In Assam “Who an Assamese or indigenous has not been defined yet. In the Assembly heated discussions took place on the issue, but there could not be any consensus.

But now, around 70 lakh Muslims have become Indigenous Assamese Muslims. Some questions arise here:

The Cabinet decision says their Assamese identity precedes religious identity. Is there any Muslim who says that he is Assamese first and Muslim thereafter?

The indigenous declared Muslims will enjoy political reservation benefits along with other social benefits.

This appears to be a dangerous turn in the history of Assam

How Syed has become Indigenous community? It opens flood gates for entire Syed’s of India to take indigenous character similar to what is happening in Manipur under Pangal Muslim category.

What kind of different policies Assam Government wants to implement for this category of Muslims?

If immigrant Muslims claim to be Garia, Maria etc and thereby present themselves as indigenous, how will the Govt distinguish? Will it be possible to distinguish?

Titles are same; Many of the immigrant Muslims are fluent in Assamese. Their dress code is very similar or almost same.

Thousands of Marwaris, Biharis have also been staying in Assam for more than one hundred year. They have not been declared indigenous

even though they are indigenous Indians and have been living in the Indian state of Assam for more than a century now. It seems Govt is pursuing “Muslim First Policy” and the so called ‘Indigenous Muslims’ are proudly pursuing “Islam first policy”.

In addition to this:

Govt had decided to issue minority certificates to all the Muslims in the state. Once it is done, won't the illegal migrant use it to claim their Indian citizenship?

In Dhuburi, Barpeta, Goalpara, Bongaigaon, Karimganj, Hailakandi, Nalagaon, Darrang Hindus are minority. Will the Govt. issue minority certificates to the Hindus in these districts?

Around 11 lakhs Bengali Hindus have been left out of the NRC. Their migrant certificates have been refused to be accepted as a valid document to prove their citizenship. It may be mentioned here that Nehru Govt issued migrant certificates to the Hindu refugees and committed a respectful life to the Hindus who were forced to leave Pakistan. It is regrettable that thousands of Bengali Hindus are still suffering in the Detention camp and the state Govt seems to have turned a blind eye to the woes of the Bengali Hindus.

Lakhs of Bengali Hindus have been living here for centuries. But Govt is not declaring them indigenous; thereby depriving them from constitutional safeguard. In some constituencies, where Bengali Hindus and Muslims are highly concentrated, the Muslims who have now been declared indigenous will be entitled to contest, not the Bengali Hindus once clause 6 of the Assam Accord is implemented.

Creating Assamese indigenous Muslims as a distinct category leads to heightened consciousness of a separate cultural identity which will lead to a feeling that Assamese indigenous Muslims are required to be distinct from Assamese Hindus.

With creation of Assamese indigenous Muslims category, rights on proportional political reservation at all levels of representation is created. That means 1/3rd of political representation will be for Assamese indigenous Muslims.

Assam Govt under Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma's leadership has taken several steps to free land from encroachments and to protect the indigenous people. He is very vocal on Hindutva. The entire nation is recognizing his leadership capabilities. Hindutva is our soul, we must protect the soul of the country. Muslim appeasement policy is a Congress legacy, BJP should avoid the politics of appeasement. □□

Kantara & Avatar-2

(Contd. from Page 17)

the evildoers and vanquishes them. Then he assumes the benevolent form of Panjuruli Daiva and expresses love and brings peace and blesses all.

This reminds me of Swami Vivekananda's sayings- “God becomes Man and Man again becomes God. This is the whole of religion”.

All pre-Christian, Pre-Islamic cultures, civilisations across the world, saw the Presence of Divinity everywhere and worshipped them, lived in harmony, balance with mother nature. Hence, practiced- Animism, Nature worship, which is condemned as a grave sin by both the Christians and Muslims unfortunately.

We have Vana Devata (Forest God), Vriksha Devata (Tree God), Varuna Devata (God of

Water bodies), Vayu Devata (God of the Atmosphere), Sun God, Moon God.... Gram Devata (Village God), Kula Devata (Clan God)...etc.... The Vedas and Upanishads say- All that is, is THAT. You are also THAT. There is nothing other than THAT.

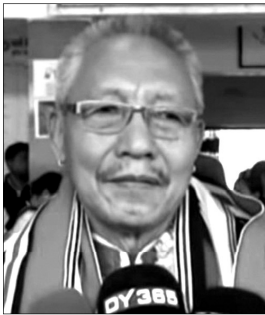
The common Indigenous People across the world understood the manifest Divinity in the whole of Nature/ Creation through Observation. Some, among them realised this Divinity through Meditation, and came to be called as Rishis/ Sages/ Brahmins, during the ancient ages.

The Avatar-2 movie released recently also dwells on this conflict between people following Native Culture/ Indigenous Culture (Sanatana Dharma) Vs Greed based Alien/ Foreign Culture. □□

13 from North East to be awarded Padma Shri 2023

Padma Awards for the year 2023 has recently been announced on the occasion of the 74th Republic Day. A total of 106 awards will be conferred on many distinguished personalities from various fields across the country, among which there are 6 Padma Vibhushan Awards, 9 Padma Bhushan and 91 Padma Shri. Notably, 13 persons from the North East will be honoured with the Padma Shri this year. Following is a brief account of the Padma Shri awardees from the North East.

► Ankur Dewri



Ramkuiwangbe Newme: Shri Ramkuiwangbe Newme is a religious leader and a social reformer, who has been working diligently towards preservation of Hareka Religion, an Indigenous faith brought into light by Haipou Jadonang and Rani Gaidinliu. He brought the

importance of women's education to the fore by taking various initiatives such as setting up of many primary schools in his region as well as establishment of Vishwa Hindu Parishad Girls' Hostel at his own residence, an instance first of its kind.

His views against apostasy helped create far reaching awareness amongst the people. He is the Founder General Secretary of Zeme Hindu Students' Association, which held preservation and promotion of the Heraka Indigenous Faith to be amongst its prime objectives along with education as the fundamental key to social development. He wrote the Tingwang Hingde, the transcript of the holy Heraka religion as guided by Rani Maa Gaidinliu.

As recognition to his invaluable contribution and service to society, the Padma Shri Award 2023 in *Social Work* category, will be conferred on Shri Newme, who hails from Haflong, Assam.



Hem Chandra Goswami: Shri Hem Chandra Goswami, a well known personality in the arts and cultural arena of Assam, has been instrumental behind the revival and promotion of the "Mukha", i.e., the 500 years old mask making tradition of the state

throughout the entire world. Mukha or masks, which are made traditionally of a variety of natural ingredients, e.g., clay, hair, straw, etc., depict vivid characters of humans, animals, gods and demons as well, forming an important element of theatrical presentation of "Bhaonas" which date back to the early sixteenth century.

Goswami, who learnt this art from his father Rudrakanta Deva Goswami, will be conferred with Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award of India, as recognition to his vast knowledge on the subject and the undying passion he manifests, to keep this age-old tradition of Mukha alive.



Hemoprova Chutia: Hemoprova Chutia is an artist widely recognised for her excellent weaving skills throughout Assam and the country as well. Among others, the woven rendition of the entire Bhagavat Geeta on a cloth stands out as one of the most remarkable

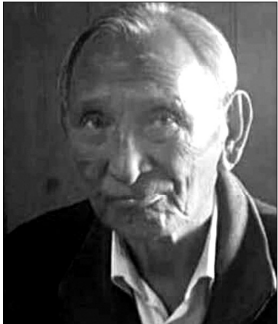
achievements to her credit. Smt. Chutia also weaved the *Naam Ghosa* by Mahapurush Madhabdev and the *Gunamala* by Mahapurush Srimanta Shankardev.

In recognition to her exceptional skills and the contribution she has made in the field of arts and culture of the country, the Padma Shri Award 2023 will be conferred on Smt. Chutia, who is a resident of Dibrugarh, Assam.



Risingbor Kurkalang: Risingbor Kurkalang is a folk artist from Meghalaya who is an expert in both making and

playing the *Khasi Duitara*, a traditional string instrument unique to the Khasi Tribe. Recognising the contribution he made in the sphere of arts and culture, the Govt. of India has conferred on him the Padma Shri Award 2023, which itself is a testament to his passion and dedication to the field of traditional folk music. We are honoured to congratulate him for this great achievement.



Karma Wangcha: Karma Wangchu was an eminent social activist who worked tirelessly towards preservation and promotion of rich cultural heritage of Arunachal Pradesh and served the people at the grassroots level. Besides being a devoted and ardent follower of the 14th Dalai Lama, Wangchu was a revered philanthropist known for his compassion. He provided free education along with residential facilities to more than 1200 children, mostly orphans, destitute and children belonging to very poor families of border villages. For such noble contributions made to society, he will be conferred with the Padma Shri Award 2023 in *Social Work* category.



Moa Subong: Moa Subong is one of the founding members of the folk fusion band 'Abiogenesis' of Dimapur, Nagaland, which lays special emphasis on traditional Naga music. Besides innovating a new and easy way to play the 'Bamhum' a wind musical instrument made from bam-

boo, he also has the creation of a new musical genre 'Howey' and an instrument called , to his credit. For his invaluable contribution to folk music, the Govt. of India will confer on him the Padma Shri Award 2023 in the Art category.

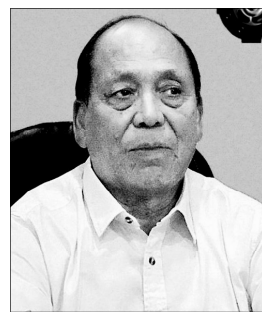
Neihunuo Sorhie: Smt. Neihunuo Sorhie is a revered artist who received many accolades for her excellent weaving skill. In the traditional handicraft circle, Smt. Sorhie is widely popular for her exceptional artistry, marked by meticulous attention to



detail on patterns in traditional weaves; and also for her creative original art motifs.

Mentionable that Smt. Sorhie mentored and guided many women in learning the age old Naga craft of weaving. She also runs a two-decades old handicraft store in Kohima. From knitting, creating decorative pieces with local products, crafting traditional jewellerys, weaving cushion covers with traditional motifs and crafting tea coasters with indigenous motifs, Sorhie exhibits a wide range of skills that are worth mentioning.

She has also been a pioneering voice calling for patenting of Naga indigenous handicraft tools. In recognition to her skills as well as contribution to society through handicraft, she will be awarded the Padma Shri 2023 in the category of Art.



Thounaojam Chaoba Singh: Chaoba Singh is a former politician from Manipur. He has served as the deputy speaker of the Manipur Legislative Assembly, as a Cabinet minister and the deputy chief minister of Manipur. He was also elected to the Lok Sabha in 1996

from Inner Manipur Parliamentary constituency. He is currently serving as the chairman of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Bishnupur and as the managing chairman of the Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Manipur. Recognising his service to public affairs, Shri Chaoba Singh will be awarded the Padma Shri 2023.



K. Shanathoiba Sharma: Guru Kakchingtabam Shanathoiba Sharma is a practitioner of Thang-Ta, a traditional form of armed combat of Manipur. He started practising the art from the age of 7 years and actively continued the same by learning all the traditional

and ritual formalities from his maternal uncles Guru G Gourakishor Sharma and G Sana Sharma when he was 14. Subsequently, he went on to learn different principles and techniques of Thang-Ta from various eminent Gurus of Manipuri martial arts including Haobam Ibotombi Singh, Bor-Mantri, Konjengbam Biren Singh, Potsangbam Manichand Singh, M Ibetombi Singh and S Devabrata Singh.

For his three-decade-long distinguished contribution and other promotional activities in the field of sports and martial arts, i.e., the Thang Ta, in the state and also for imparting training to many Thang-ta enthusiasts across the region and taking a key role in establishing various cultural bodies, Guru Shanathoiba Sharma will be conferred with Padma Shri Award 2023 in the category of sports.



BB Jamatia: Shri Bikram Bahadur Jamatia is a social activist from Tripura. When the state of Tripura was facing an all-time high rate of insurgency cases, Shri Jamatia campaigned extensively against the brutal militants. He was an instrumental force behind the

turning of tides against banned militant outfits. He is widely recognised for his relentless campaign against forceful religious conversions by Christian missionaries in the state.

Being a janajati leader from the state, Shri Jamatia put his best efforts in advancing a movement of the indigenous peoples calling for end of violence resulting out of insurgency that was plaguing the state during that time. Shri Jamatia is a promoter of indigenous faith, religion, culture, and tradition. He is the Founder Chairman of Janajati Dharma Sanskriti Suraksha Manch, which has been working for promotion and preservation of indigenous, faith, culture and religious traditions across the length and breadth of the country. For his selfless service to people and passionate efforts towards safeguarding society and culture, the Padma Shri Award 2023 will be conferred on him in the category of Social Work.

NC Debbarma: Shri Narendra Chandra Debbarma

was a Janajati leader and a former Revenue Minister of Tripura. Shri Debbarma is famous for his activism for empowerment of the indigenous people of the state. He will be awarded the Padma Shri 2023 posthumously in the public affairs category.



KC Runremsangi: Popularly regarded as the 'Queen of Mizo folk', KC Runremsangi is a Mizo Folk Singer from Aizwal, safeguarding Mizo cultural heritage for over 3 decades. Smt. Runremsangi has performed Mizo folk songs extensively in Mizoram

and other parts of the country as well. She is a famous performer at the prestigious Mizo Festival, the Chapchar Kut and has many recordings of folk music of Mizoram to her credit. Smt Runremsangi received her initial training from elders and later at the Institute of Music and Fine Arts. She also received the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 2017. In recognition to her immense contribution to the folk music of Mizoram, the Padma Shri Award 2023 will be conferred on her in the category of Art.



Tula Ram Upreti:

Shri Tula Ram Upreti, often referred to as *Jaivik Kheti ke Prerak*, is a 98 year old self-sustained small farmer, practicing organic farming using only traditional methods. He has been doing so since childhood, 6 decades before Sikkim Govt. of

Sikkim formed the Sikkim Organic Mission. Since then he has been training and inspiring other farmers to adopt natural farming techniques. He reduced dependency of farmers on Agrochemical industry. He was engaged in farming with his wife Benu Maya Upreti. For promoting organic farming and for training and inspiring many others to resort to this nature-friendly mode of agriculture, Shri Upreti will be awarded Padma Shri in the year 2023 in the category of agriculture. □□

New 'morph' of Asian golden cat found in Arunachal Pradesh



In 2019, six colour variations of the Asiatic golden cat (AGC) were found, sparking interest among wild lovers. Now, scientists from Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have found a new "morph" of the species when camera traps were deployed in the West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh to study threatened vertebrates.

The Asiatic golden cat, also known as Temmink Cat, is a less studied feline species. The species has, however, gained renewed interest from researchers due to recent sightings of the animal with peculiar colouration. The species is distributed in most of Southeast Asian countries, ranging from eastern Nepal to North-eastern India, through eastern Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Sumatra, Lao, PDR, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Malaysia. Asian golden cat is categorized as 'Near Threatened' by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and protected under Appendix I of CITES and listed as Schedule I under Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

74th Republic Day Tableaux

As India marks its 74th Republic Day, with President Droupadi Murmu leading the celebrations at Kartavya Path, the National capital witnesses the pompous and grand annual parade attended by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi as chief guest, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and other dignitaries. A total of 23 tableaux, 17 from states and union territories, and six from various ministries and departments, depicting India's vibrant cultural heritage, economic and social progress were part of the ceremonial parade. Tableaux from three North Eastern states, viz., Assam, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh, were part of the parade.

The theme for the tableau of Assam was 'Land of Heroes and Spiritualism' comprising Lachit Borphukan on boat and a structural view of sacred Maa Kamakhya Temple.

Sustainable Livelihood through Tourism and Organic Farming in Tripura with Active Participation of Women' was the theme of Tripura. The beautiful Mahamuni Pagoda (Buddhist stupa) with its base adorned by bamboo reliefs and various indigenous performing art forms of Tripura viz. - Hojagiri, Mamita, etc were part of the tableau.

Themed as "Prospects of Tourism in Arunachal Pradesh", the tableau of Arunachal Pradesh displayed the potential for tourism in the fields of adventure, sports, ecology, culture, religion, history and archaeology. □□

Nari Shakti Diwas



Rani Gaidinli

26 Jan, 1915 – 17 Feb, 1993

The country celebrated Nari Shakti Diwas on 26th of January, i.e., the 74th Republic Day of India, commemorating the 108th Birth anniversary of **Rani Maa Gaidinli**. The undaunted heroism as well as the invaluable sacrifices made by pioneers of modern India like her in the freedom struggle, is what the country is firmly rooted in. The Zeliangrong Heraka Religion, brought into light by Rani Maa along with Haipou Jadonang, is a reawakening of self identity and cultural heritage becoming a significant factor strengthening the Indigenous faith and cultural diversity in the country. We pay our deepest regards and greatest tributes to the freedom fighter. □□

G20 Summit: Guwahati Hosts first meeting of Sustainable Finance Working Group

The first meeting of Sustainable Finance Working Group under G20 was organised in Guwahati on 2-3 February 2023 in which more than 100 delegates, including representatives of G20 nations, guest countries and international organisations participated.

The Sustainable Finance Working Group aims to mobilise sustainable finance to help ensure global growth and stability and promote the transition towards greener, more resilient and inclusive societies and economies. The following issues were discussed in the two-day meeting, conducted in four sessions: a) mechanisms for mobilisation of timely and adequate resources for climate finance; b) Enabling finance for the Sustainable Development Goals; and c) Capacity building of the ecosystem for financing toward sustainable development.

The essence of India's G20 Presidency is embodied in the theme of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" or "One Earth, One Family, One Future" underlining the significance of interconnectedness and green transformation to promote a pro-life planet with people centric approach. Further, Mission LiFE, a vision pioneered by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri



Narendra Modi, places individuals at the centre of driving change in the pursuit of climate action and achievement of UN Sustainable Development Goals. On the sidelines of the G20 meetings, a number of Jan Bhagidari events, viz., cleanliness drive, painting and slogan competition, seminar on financing for SDGs, tree plantation drive, etc. are being organised.

Y-20

The first meeting of Y-20, the youth wing of G20 was conducted in IIT Guwahati on 6th February, aiming to reach out to youth and consult with them for their idea of a better tomorrow. The event will deliberate on five themes- 1) peace building and reconciliation, 2) future of work industry 4.0, 3) climate change and disaster risk reduction, 4) shared future and 5) health wellbeing and sport. A 'White Paper' on various topics is to be launched following the summit in which Minister of Youth Affairs and sports Sri Anurag Thakur will hold a Youth dialogue. The meeting had the participation of total 300 delegates, along with 36 educational institutions of the state. □

Manipur to host first international friendly football match in March

Hero Tri-Nation, a series of international friendly football matches featuring India (FIFA ranking 106), Kyrgyz Republic (FIFA ranking 94) and Myanmar (FIFA Ranking 159) will be hosted in Manipur. from March 20 to 28. Addressing media in a press conference, CM N Biren Singh announced that the tournament, beginning on 20th March till the 28th, needs support from people of the state in order to make it a grand success. The Chief Minister added that it is an opportunity to host the international tournament given by the All India Football Federation acknowledging the contribution of the State's players to the country's football scenario. □

Arunachal Pradesh observes Reh Festival

Reh is a festival of the Idu Mishmi community. It is celebrated widely with a view to strengthening the bond of brotherhood and unity. The first day of the festival is called 'Andropu' which is observed by offering prayers. 'Naya' dance is performed that night. Eyanli is the second day and may be termed as the killing day of animals such as mithuns and buffaloes. The guests are entertained with rice, meat and rice beer. The third day is called 'Iyili' and on this day heavy feast is arranged and everybody is entertained. Presents of meal-rice are also supplied to the neighbouring villagers who fail to come to the festival. On Ilyiromunyi, the fourth day, rituals are performed for wealth, prosperity, and well-being. The fifth day of the festival is called Aru-Go, which is again followed by Etoanu the sixth day when blood smeared seeds are sown in the fields and rice beer is poured for the goddess of the household. □