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INDIGENOUS FAITH DAY  
CELEBRATION 2022

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## Border clashes may turn to Inter-state disputes

The recent incident of Police firing in Assam-Karbi Anglong border village of Mukroh that resulted in the death of six people is an extremely sad incident and needs to be looked into at a greater depth. It should not be looked into in a routine manner as is normally done in most cases of this sort because it was clearly a man made incident and not an accident. It is needless to assert that the after effects of this incident may be very damaging considering the longstanding border dispute in 12 areas along the 884.90 km long inter-state border and the location where the violence took place is one among them.

What little information that has come out about the incident it is gathered that, a group of people were returning back to their village Mukro in Meghalaya from Jirikinging in West Karbi Anglang District of Assam, in a truck allegedly laden with illegally felled timber from Assam forests. The truck was said to have been intercepted by the forest guards of Assam when a huge number of people from Meghalaya armed with weapons gathered at the spot to rescue the alleged law timber smugglers. Learning about the development a police team from Assam reached the spot immediately but failed to pacify the mob rather they were face to face with the highly agitated mob from Meghalaya side. The situation went out of control and the Assam police had no option but to open fire in self defense which resulted in the death of six persons one of them being a forest guard from Assam. The accuracy of the story behind the violence may vary if we are to rely on the statements of the feuding sides. The exact details of the skirmish will come out only after a unbiased enquiry by a statutory authority. It is reassuring that Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Minister of Assam wasted no time to declare that the Assam Government has decided to hand over the probe into the violence at the Assam-Meghalaya border to the CBI in addition to a judicial enquiry into the incident. Side by side the council of ministers of the Assam Government also decided to bring out a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the police and forest personnel to deal with such situations arising out of altercations with civilians in future. This declaration by the Assam CM and the Assam Cabinet should have pacified the Meghalaya counterpart but as per the reports appearing in news papers the Meghalaya CM and his cabinet had their own take in the matter. In a tweet, Meghalaya CM Conrad Sangma, whose party is an ally of the BJP, complained that the

Assam police and the forest guards “entered Meghalaya and resorted to unprovoked firing” on civilians from his state. He tagged Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Sarma in the Twitter thread. In addition to the above, the Meghalaya cabinet meeting decided to send a delegation of ministers led by CM Conrad K Sangma to meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah on November 24 to demand a CBI or NIA probe into the violence. It is quite evident that the Meghalaya state authorities are not ready to bury the hatchet immediately

The disturbing questions that arise is who are the feuding groups, why the skirmish, who are behind it and how do they benefit out of it. The answer to the first question is very simple, it is a clash between the Mukro villagers and the Assam police. The skirmish is the result of unlawful attempt to rescue the timber smugglers from Meghalaya. The villagers of Mukro are clearly behind the untoward incident. The answer to the fourth question is, a group of middleman who derive their clout by exploiting the lawless climate prevailing in the disputed areas on the Assam Meghalaya border areas.

The need of the hour is to understand the emotive aspect of the border dispute between the states of North East which were carved out without enough research and understandings. This is the root cause of local disputes in the Northeast. We must also take note of the local factors and the designs of the mischievous elements that thrive on disputes and motivated clashes. Long 32 years ago, drawing legitimacy from the Article 263 of the Indian Constitution, an Inter State Council was setup to address such situations. Unfortunately, its meetings were sporadic and were held only twice in last 16 years. Though the Zonal Councils with CMs meet regularly but that is not empowered enough to address issues that have national implications. The Government at the Centre and the states must therefore revive the Inter-state Council, as this the only option that can effectively mitigate volatile situations. It must be remembered that where forest and land related issues, especially in the Northeast, are involved which are highly emotive in nature, there is every possibility of things turning violent. Solutions becomes impossible then. For the sake of peace and prosperity of our country we must not allow that to happen. □□

*Romen Chakraborty*  
Chief Editor

# INDIGENOUS FAITH DAY CELEBRATION 2022

## A BRIEF REVIEW

► **Dr. Sodyong Kri**

**On first of December 2022**, Indigenous Faith Day (IFD) was celebrated with traditional fervour and gaiety across the state. Along with traditional cultural presentations, the fervent call for preservation and promotion of indigenous faith, rich cultural heritage and unique traditions of the Indigenous Faith believers. On the occasion, the indigenous faith believers also remembered ‘Golgi Bote’ Talom Rukbo – the pioneer of indigenous faith movement in Arunachal Pradesh.

**Namsai:** Deputy Chief Minister, Chowna Mein while attending the Indigenous Faith Day celebration at Namsai said, “Language and culture is our identity and we must zealously protect and promote our language & culture. He said, “We must also strive to revive and promote our folk songs and indigenous music”. We must preserve them either in written documents or in audio-visual format too, he added. He said that a cultural revolution is going on to keep alive indigenous cultures & traditions and further stated that our Govt will continue to support Indigenous Faith and Cultural Society of Arunachal Pradesh in their endeavours for preservation and promotion of our rich cultures & traditions.

On the occasion, Advisor to HCM, Tapin Sigha, Advisor to IFCSAP (Namsai Unit), Tape Bagra (retired IAS), Vice-president IFCSAP, Bai Taba, President Indigenous Faith and Cultural Society of Arunachal Pradesh (Namsai) – Chau Khok Longchot, DC Namsai, C R Khampa also spoke among others. Executive members of various Community Based Organizations were present on the occasion. Identity Card issued by the Department of Indigenous Affairs was distributed to the priests and Calendar 2023 by IFCSAP was also released on the occasion.

**Doimukh:** Health and Family Welfare Minister Alo Libang, attending the Indigenous Faith Day

celebration at Rono General Ground, Doimukh, said, “Preserving one’s indigenous faith, rich cultural heritage & unique traditions must be our priority”. While asserting that freedom of religion doesn’t mean to convert people to other faiths, Libang said, there is no any right given for conversion in fundamental rights of the Indian Constitution. Arunachal Pradesh has the largest ethnic group in India and people of the state are still following their respective culture, tradition and faith, he said and appealed to all to maintain their own traditional culture and faith, and not to convert to other’s faith. “Today, we are observing the birth day celebration of Taklom Rokbo as the Indigenous Faith Day to mark the Donyi Polo movement,” the minister said. Thunbui Zeliang, general secretary, Zeliangrong Heraka Association, Nagaland said that though a maximum of indigenous people of Nagaland have converted but still the indigenous people are trying to protect their tradition, culture and faith. But as compared to Nagaland, the traditions and culture in Arunachal Pradesh are still ‘alive’, he said and appealed to the Arunachalis to protect and preserve their tradition, culture and identity before its too late, he said. IFCSAP president Katung Wahge demanded the state government for early implementation of the Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, 1978, and re-naming of the Indigenous Affairs Department as Department of Indigenous Faith and Cultural Affairs (DIFCA) as its real name, while stating that government should not afraid to do the right thing because the department was created to protect the indigenous people of state. He appealed to the people of the state to maintain their own tradition, culture and faith and not to covert to other religions. While commenting on the Tawang Church issue; he urged the government to work according to the sentiments of the public. Various colourful traditional dances and folk songs were presented by various groups of Donyi Polo believers and VKV school students.

**Hapoli:** Like the recently conceptualized local gurukul school at Seppa which teaches the cultural ethos and practices blended with modern NCERT English education to young high school students, we need more such gurukuls in our Districts to educate our young generation with value-based education comprising both tribal and modern education, said local legislator and Minister Agri, Horti Tage Taki.

Attending as chief guest at the Indigenous Faith Day celebration at the Danyi Pillo Ground, Tage Taki said such local gurukuls will play pivotal role in educating the younger generation of their traditional values, ethos, culture, social practices and local dialects blended with modern English education which will give a sound foundation to a student to be realistic in life and rooted to its own tribe. Articulating the need to involve participation of young generation in such social occasions where one's roots and traditions are showcased in full potent, Taki appealed the Apatani denizens to stand united for good social causes irrespective of caste, clan or political lineages. On the occasion, Taki also spelt out the significant encompassing roles of Danyi Pillo in the lives of tribals of the state. He also donated electric kettles to all the Meder Nello of the district including few at other districts. While advocating participation of young generation and maintaining a 'uniform dress code' in such social occasions, guest of honour and Lower Subansiri Deputy Commissioner Bamin Nime announced to provide 100 supreme ornate chairs and help in upkeep of Danyi Pillo Society library. Counsellor in the Department of Indigenous Affairs and prominent Apatani elderly citizen Lod Kojee dwelt at length on the topic of protection, preservation and promotion of one's culture and traditions. Spelling out that Apatani dress code was rich, varied and famed all over India which had even fascinated Prime Ministers Late Indira Gandhi and Narendra Modi, Kojee voiced against forceful conversions and urged the District Administration against grant of permission to use Govt. general grounds for religious activities.

President of Apatani Supun Dukung (TSD), the apex body of Apatani, Hage Khoda Shalla said

that Danyi Pillo was the earliest and biggest religion of the world which had evolved before any other religion came to light. He also expressed hope that the modest honorariums given to tribal shamans like gaon buras would further attract more tribal people to take up shaman as their profession. While reiterating that 'loss of culture is loss of identity', another prominent Apatani senior citizen and retired Dr. Hage Tabio said that a person cannot escape the identity of his birth to a particular community, place of birth, traditions and the dress code. Hence, we need to regard and respect our identity and culture in which we are born in this world, he explained. President Apatani Danyi Piilo Meder Nello Council (ADPMNC) Ziro and senior citizen Nending Chatung welcomed the gathering and explained the importance of celebrating the Indigenous Faith Day while ADPMNC Ziro member secretary research, reformation and documentation Rubu Taming narrated the history, growth and development of Danyi Pillo religion in the state. Vice-President ADPMNC Ziro Habung Apo suggested to annually observing 1st December as Danyi Pillo day. On the occasion, late Gyati Pada was remembered and felicitated for his long and untiring works for growth of ADPMNC Ziro and as a dedicated Danyi Pillo faithful worker posthumously, while singers Tage Tanyo and Tilling Kari were felicitated for their extraordinary works in the field of research and reformation works for preservation of the Indigenous faith. Also, Engineers Nani Chilyang and Dani Gambo were felicitated for their generous donations of a mithun each during the Indigenous Faith Day celebrations.

The day-long celebration witnessed showcasing of several colourful dance items by Apatani, Nyishi, Galo, Tagin and Missing tribes. A mega-dance comprising all the tribes and exhibition of Apatani traditional dresses, tools and equipment was another added attraction to the huge gathering of Danyi Pillo believers.

**Pasihat:** The East Siang unit of Indigenous Faith & Cultural Society of Arunachal Pradesh (IFCSAP) and Central Donyi Polo Yelam Kebang

on Thursday organised the Indigenous Faith Day with a day-long programme. A tableaux depicting the traditional way of life of the Adi tribe, showcasing the rich textiles, handloom weaving, spinning and agricultural practices was also displayed on the occasion. More than seven thousand people participated in the procession taken out in the morning before the main programme, informed organizing committee Chairman and noted folk artiste Delong Padung. Rich tributes were also paid to Golgi Botte Talom Rukbo on the occasion. State Indigenous Affairs director Sokhep Kri joined the celebrations organised at central Donyi-Polo Yelam Kebang along with prominent social worker Vijay Taram. East Siang DC Tayi Taggu and retired commissioner Tajom Taloh also attended the event.

**Shi-Yomi:** In Shi-Yomi district headquarters Tato, Legislative Assembly Speaker PD Sona called for “maintaining originality and presence of one’s tradition and culture.” Attending the IFD celebration, the speaker said, “One should maintain the originality such as language, attire, tradition and culture, which reflect the real identity.” He said that languages, songs, dances and traditional attires “not only help in preserving one’s identity but also boost rural tourism,” and urged the people to spread awareness regarding the significance of the IFD. State Assembly Speaker P D Sona while attending the Indigenous Faith Day celebration at Tato in Shi-Yomi district called for maintaining originality and preserving one’s tradition and culture. Addressing the gathering, Sona exhorted the people to maintain and preserve age-old culture and tradition. “One should maintain the originality such as language, attire, tradition & culture which reflects the real identity,” he said. “Your identity is connected with culture. You should maintain your identity by preserving your culture,” asserted Sona. He said, we are lucky that unlike many other places in the world where indigenous faith is on the verge of extinction, people of Arunachal Pradesh have maintained it well. He further said that language, song, dance and traditional attire not only help in preserving one’s identity but also boost rural tourism.

**Raga:** “The indigenous faith of Arunachalis is

not a religion but Dharma,” said Advisor to Chief Minister, Tai Tagak, while attending the Indigenous Faith Day celebration at Raga in Kamle district. The tribal people praise the Sun & Moon Gods that provide everything to all living things and 30% of world’s tribal populations are living in India which is a good indication that India protects the cultural ethos of tribal people well, he said. Tagak urged upon the people to do good karma to other fellow beings, wildlife and karma of conservation of air, water and ecological balance and that karma will come back to self-wellness. We should praise Mother Nature, preserve the rivers & streams’ catchment areas, maintain afforestation and preserve wildlife for our own survival as water bodies are receding due to carelessness, he said. Niri Chongrowju, Member, State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, said that while maintaining & preserving the tribal faith, belief, traditions and culture, the protection of child rights, particularly the rights of girl child must be maintained by all sections of the society.

**Lohit:** The Indigenous Faith Day was organised by the IFCSAP Lohit unit along with its sister organisation (i.e., MICAFPS) at Amik Ringya Hall, Tezu. The occasion was celebrated in two session i.e., morning and evening session. The first session’s occasion was graced by Shri. Karikho Kri, HMLA, Tezu-Sunpura Assembly Constituency as Chief Guest, Shri Shashvat Saurabh (IAS) Deputy Commissioner Lohit as a Guest of honour and Shri Sandeep Kaviswar Ji, All India joint organising Secretary Vawasi Kalyan Ashram as a Resource person –cum- Special Guest. The indigenous faith believers in Lohit district also celebrated the day with much fanfare. The celebrations began with a cultural procession by believers from tribes residing in the district. The procession was preceded by a band display by VKV students. Later, the participants gathered at Amik Ringya Hall, where various cultural programs were held and identity cards issued to priest/shamans of the Tawra and Kaman Mishmis.

Speaking on the occasion, local MLA Karikho Kri stressed the need for cultural documentation in order to stop the language and culture from being extinct. He also highlighted the need to evolve with time, to bring positive changes

with time. He asked the priests and shamans to play the leading role in these changing times. While remembering late Talom Rukbo – the pioneer of indigenous faith movement in Arunachal, IFCSAP Lohit district unit president Ambrelum Gamre stressed on the need to preserve the cultural traditions for the future. Lohit DC Shashvat Sourabh informed that during his previous tenure as DC Upper Siang, a tribal museum and a video were being made with full contribution by the local people, and added, a similar initiative can also be done by the local CBOs, NGOs here. Stating that youths are the future of the society, he said all the elders, CBOs, NGOs should help to assimilate those youths who have fallen in the path of the evils like drug menace. The resource person of the occasion, Shri. Sandeep Kaviswar Ji, has specifically mentioned that nobody will come to preserve and protect others culture and faiths, rather the son of the soil have to come forward to preserve and protect our own rich culture and faiths. He further mentioned that merely wearing attires, speaking language and merry making with the community people does not signifies who you are, so you must have a concrete faith system which will identify who you are. The evening session was graced by Dr. Mohesh Chai Ex- Minister and present Chairman of APMC & TC cum spokesperson BJP of the state as a Chief Guest, Shri Bai Taba, Vice president IFCSAP State and Shri Sokhep kri Director DIA cum Vice president IFCSAP (East) as special Guests of the occasion respectively.

**Khonsa:** Tirap Indigenous People Society (TIPS) in congruence with other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh celebrated the Indigenous Faith Day at Nehru stadium, Khonsa in which Pawan Kumar Singh, Commandant Officer, 36 Bn CRPF graced as Chief Guest. While greeting the Indigenous people on the occasion, the chief guest advised the gathering to follow traditional ways of livelihood, and stated that the parents and elders must play a pivotal role to teach mother tongue (dialect) to their children and younger ones to speak their native language at least at home. The commandant said, if any of our languages die, our cultural identity will also die. Hence, it is the high transitional time to transfer the Indigenous culture to the younger generation for posterity. Guest

of Honour Er. Debang Tayeng said that parents and elders must play a pivotal role to teach the younger generation to practise, protect and promote the indigenous culture which were held dear by our ancestors and handed over to us for posterity. He said that only preservation of traditional culture will not serve the purpose of Indigenous Faith celebration but it should be practised, protected and promoted practically. Folk dances, folk culture and practices, traditional games and sports performed by Noksa Ransom Hum, Turet Ransom Hum, Doidam, Deomali Ransom Hum and Tupi village marked the day.

**Longding:** The indigenous faith day was observed in grand manner at Longding, in which Sri Tapho Wangnaw, the HMLA 59 Longding-Pumao AC graced the occasion as Chief Guest and Col. Sri K.S Kill, 40 Assam Rifles Longding camp, as Guest of honour respectively. Sri Nampang Wangjen, President, IFCSAP Longding district delivered welcome address followed by speeches from Sri Ngamjang Wangsu (Retd ADC) a few words on the significance of the Wancho indigenous faith and culture and Sri Manhang Loham (Former president Wancho Cultural Society) about how alienation of one's own culture can adversely affect the civilization process. Mr Loham also enlightened about the enormous contribution of Golgi Bote Talom Rukbo ji, in safeguarding the tribal indigenous faith in the entire state of Arunachal Pradesh. Later, the celebration turn much captivating with the display of the Wancho indigenous rituals that was performed by Ngompha Wangsa, (Longkai Village), Jewang Wangsu (Senua village) and Taichat Loham (Luaksim Village). Many youngsters that were unknown about these rich traditional systems were fascinated to learn more about the Wancho customs by seeing the ritual display.

Er. Tage Nipa (E.E, PHED) also motivated the gathering to keep strong hold to ancestral root, so that the rich values and culture won't get wiped out from the tribal community. The resource person of the event, Mr Morjum Bam, who is also an architect by profession, strongly advocated for honouring the indigenous faith system which is an attribution of our forefathers. He said, "Our forefathers who taught us to

( Contd. to Page 19)

# Lachit Borphukan the Pride of India : The legacy continues

► Dr. Indrani Medhi

The battle of Saraighat 1671 was the finale of many smaller battles and encounters between the Mughals and the Ahoms which covered almost the entire 17<sup>th</sup> century. The name of Lachit Borphukan is synonymous with the battle of Saraighat. He successfully repelled the forces of the Mughal Army and curbed the expansion of the Mughal Empire further east. Born on 24<sup>th</sup> November, 1622, to Momai Tamuli Barbarua, the general of Assam, in the wars that were waged during the reigns of emperors Jahangir and Shah Jahan. He had risen from a humble position to the office of Barbarua during the reign of Pratap Singha. Besides being an excellent general he was also excelled in administrative work and equally performed well the function of chief executive officer and that of the Lord Chief Justice of the land. The secret of Momai Tamuli's rise to power and eminence was his surpassing sense of duty and extreme loyalty and devotion to his mentor. Lachit Borphukan inherited the quality of the supreme sense of duty and the capacity self-effacement in the cause of the enterprise he undertook. Had Lachit Borphukan written his autobiography he would have admitted "From my father I learnt to be dutiful and love my work, and to forget myself in the ecstasy derived from a faithful and conscientious discharge of the trust imposed upon me". His

father's courtroom in his metropolitan residence served both as academia as well as training camp. King Chakradhwaj Singha the then king was impressed by the attentiveness of Lachit promoted him to be one of the Borphukan. His contemporary Maratha hero Shivaji's success against Mughals in the Deccan during the period from 1663 to 1665 were regarded by Chakradhwaj Singha as the fitting opportunity for his own projected enterprise. The preparation for wresting Guwahati from the Mughals were fully completed by the summer of 1667 and the Mughals were pushed back to the Manah River the old boundary between the Ahoms and the Mughals. Several Mughals fugitives including Syed



Firoz Khan, the *faujdar* of Guwahati and Syed Sana Sirdar Mir Bakshi were captured by the Ahoms

Aurangzeb received the news of the capture of Guwahati by the Ahoms and he at once resolved to dispatch a strong army to re-establish Mughal prestige at the Northeast frontiers. He selected Raja Ram Singha son of Mirza Raja Jai Singha partly on account of his able general ship and partly as a punishment for his alleged involvement at the escape of Shivaji and the Sikh Guru Teg Bahadur. The Guru introduced Sikhism in Assam. Another thing that was introduced by Ram Singh was *Bulbulir-jooj* or the fight of the bulbuls, which is still current during *Bihu*. Ram Singh is believed to have begun his campaign by praying at the Hayagriva Madhava Temple in Hajo, where he organised the first fight of the birds and started the tradition.

Ram Singha got formal orders for Assam expedition on January 6, 1668. Ram Singha's army consisted of 21 Rajput chief, 4000 troopers at his own cost, 1500 gentlemen troopers or *ahadis* and 500 artillerymen and with reinforcement from Bengal his total army swelled up to 30,000 infantry 18,000 Turkish cavalry and 15,000 Koch archers. Thus started a new phase of Assam-Mughal conflict in the annals of history, the defensive war of retaining Guwahati and the territories up to Manaha.

Lachit's plan was simple - he intended to fortify and guard Guwahati so as to prevent the Mughals from sailing further east to Gargaon, the capital. He entrusted his maternal uncle with the task of constructing of a rampart near Amingaon, on the north bank. The work was not completed within the stipulated time. Lachit was aghast. A furious Lachit ordered his uncle to be executed for this. For Lachit Borphukan, his uncle's attitude amounted to treason - punishable by death as per the prevalent law. Without thinking twice Lachit beheaded his uncle by uttering "My uncle is not greater than my country". A maxim still current in the folklores of Assam.

Then there is also the story of Ram Singh sending a box of poppy seeds to Lachit, suggesting that the Mughal army was as numerous as the seeds and the

Ahoms would be crushed to which Lachit responded by sending back a box of sand, suggesting that the Ahom army as the sand grains and far more numerous and insoluble. Sporadic engagements accompanied by proposals of peace continued during the years of 1669 and 1670. Chakradhwaj Singha further enquired why Lachit was delaying altercation which forced Lachit to give battle to the Mughals on open ground in spite of knowing the fact that Ahoms had no chance in an open battle on the ground. It proved to be true at the battle of Alaboi Hill where the Ahoms were routed by the Mughal heavy cavalry. Nearly 10,000 Assamese soldiers lay dead when the day ended leaving Lachit terribly saddened. But the war did not end there. Diplomatic manoeuvres continued along with peace negotiations

The final battle was fought at Saraighat in 1671. Ahom boats built an impenetrable fortification on water placing their boats one after another in a row. The Borphukan was too weak to move and was discouraged by Achyutananda Doloi, the astrologer from the attack as time was not yet favourable. The advance of the strong Mughal army and Lachit's failing health was dispiriting the morale of the Ahom army. But once allowed he furiously threw some of them into the water. Inspired by the act of Lachit Borphukan his soldiers rallied and a desperate battle ensued on the river Brahmaputra. The Assamese were fighting for their life and sovereignty while the Mughals for mere magnificence of triumph and territorial expansion. It was on 23<sup>rd</sup> of *Chaita Saka* or 5<sup>th</sup> April 1671 Ram Singha commenced his withdrawal from Assam. The news of the victory at Saraighat was corresponded to King Udayaditya Singha at Garhgoan who in return dispatched expensive gifts to the commanders. But the joy of victory at Saraighat was marred by the death of Lachit Borphukan. It was his resolute spirit that motivated him to action. It was his timely intervention that the failing fervour of Assamese soldiers to fight to a finish. Lachit Borphukan thus died in the lap of victory.

It is indeed a matter of great pride for the people of India in general and the people of Assam in



particular that the center had acknowledge Lachit Borphukan great leadership by announcing the best cadet award and establishment of his statute at the historic National Defence Academy. The initiative of bringing Lachit Borphukan to pan Indian platform can be traced back to 1999 when Vice President of India Dr. Krishna Kant, V.P. Malik India's Army chief General and many other luminaries including H.k. Barpujari, Indian History Congress President consulted Prof Bhabanand Deka a renowned littérateur and heritage scholar from Awahon Ramdhenu era and senior officer in the Central Government ,to learn more about the war strategy and leadership qualities of Lachit. It was unanimously acknowledged that Lachit was not only an Assamese but top Indian general who stood at the same footing with that of Shivaji and Rana Pratap. It was declared in the same meeting that a statute would be erected at the entrance of the National Defence Academy campus and the annual award to the top cadet would be given in the name of Lachit Borphukan.

Twenty three years later the Assam Government also planned for a flagship event to commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> Birth anniversary of Lachit Borphukan in a grand way. From Delhi Metro rakes displaying posters of Lachit to Assam government launching Lachit Borphukan government app, there has been a deliberate attempt to create awareness about the bravery of the great Ahom General. The chief minister of Assam Dr. Himanta Biswa Sharma has written to the chief Minister of other states to include a chapter of a Lachit Borphukan in their school curriculum. A similiar appeal has been made to National Council of Educational Research and training (NCERT) to include a chapter on the Assamese hero. The state government has also taken up with the Sardar Vallabhbai Patel National Police Academy(SVPNPA) in Hyderabad to name a building after Lachit Borphukan and to set up a statute of the same there. It was declared further that a statute will be built at a cost of 175 crore at his memorial at Hollongapar at Jorhat.

The restrictions suffered by Lachit Borphukan's reputation and glory are not attributable to any inferiority of his qualities or leadership but due to the lack of sufficient publicity. Even in Assam the full details of Lachit Borphukan's career is not commonly known as they are buried in old Assamese manuscripts, chronicles etc., very few of which have seen the light of the day. These measures are indeed an honest attempt to push Lachit Borphukan to the stature of national hero. □□

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# TAKSHSASHILA OR TAXILA

## Ancient India's knowledge contribution

► **Dr. Mukul Chandra Bora**

**T**akshsashila or Taxila, the oldest non-existing University of ancient Bharat and is now located in the Rawalpindi district of Pakistan's Punjab province and back to the time earlier than the Achaemenid occupation in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. The fame of Takshashila, modern Taxila, rested on its status as a university and the university was a cluster of scattered colleges headed by the renowned professors of ancient undivided India. The great Panini and Kautilya were the most reputed Teachers who had made significant contributions in their respected fields of expertise. The presence of these esteemed teachers raised it to such a prominent position that students from distant areas accessed Takshashila to complete their education. The students like Jivaka, an ancient physician, who were graduated from Takshashila had excelled and remembered even today for their contributions in the present-day development of Medical Science. *Takshashila* (modern Taxila) was the capital city of ancient Gandhara and located in the eastern part of Gandhara between the river Indus and river Jhelum. It is situated at a distance of 32 Km. northwest of Rawalpindi on G.T. road, which connects Central Asia with present day India. *Takshashila* was the meeting ground of three significant trade routes of ancient times: one from *Pataliputra* (modern Patna), second from Central Asia through China and Tibet and third from Assyria, Iran and Afghanistan. Although *Takshashila* was a part of Gandhara kingdom but sometimes it also enjoyed an independent status, as in the time of Alexander's invasion. The name *Takshashila*



originated from the name *Taksha*, a son of *Bharata* and was referred in the holy text *Ramayana* as:

*“The Gandharvas all being slain, Bharata, the son of Kaikeyi entered those two opulent and magnificent cities, and there, Bharata established Taksha in*

*Takshashila and Pushkala in Pushkalavata, in the country of the Gandharvas, in the ravishing region of Gandhara. Overflowing with treasure and precious gems, adorned with groves, they seemed to vie with each other in magnificence”.*

The archaeological sites of Saraikala, Bhir, Sirkap, and Sirsukh are collectively of unique nature in illustrating the evolution of urban settlement on the Indian subcontinent. The prehistoric mound of Saraikala represents the earliest settlement of Taxila, with evidence of Neolithic, Bronze Age, and Iron Age occupation. The Bhir mound is the earliest historic city of Taxila, and was probably founded in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC by the Achaemenians. Its stone walls, house foundations, and winding streets represent the earliest forms of urbanization on the subcontinent. Bhir is also associated with Alexander the Great's triumphant entry into Taxila in 326 BC. Sirkap was a fortified city founded during the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. The many private houses, stupas, and temples were laid out on the Hellenistic grid system and show the strong Western classical influence on local architecture. The city was destroyed in the 1<sup>st</sup> century by the Kushans, a Central Asian tribe. To the north, excavations of the ruins of the Kushan city of Sirsukh have brought to light an irregular rectangle of walls in ashlar masonry, with

rounded bastions. These walls attest to the early influence of Central Asian architectural forms on those of the subcontinent.

The Taxila serial site also includes Khanpur cave, which has produced stratified microlithic tools of the Mesolithic period, and a number of Buddhist monasteries and stupas of various periods. Buddhist monuments erected throughout the Taxila valley transformed it into a religious heartland and a destination for pilgrims from as far afield as Central Asia and China. The Buddhist archaeological sites at Taxila include the Dharmarajika complex and stupa, the Khader Mohra grouping, the Kalawan grouping, the Giri monasteries, the Kunala stupa and monastery, the Jandial complex, the Lalchack and the Badalpur stupa remains and monasteries, the Mohra Moradu monastic remains, the Pipplian and the Jaulian remains, and the Bahalar stupa and remains. The Giri complex also includes the remains of a three-domed Muslim mosque, ziarat (tomb), and madrasa (school) of the medieval period.

*Takshashila* was regarded as “the greatest of all cities between Indus and Hydaspes” by Arrian. According to Arrian *Takshashila* was a prosperous and thickly populated city. *Takshashila* is a Sanskrit term and in Pali it was called as *Takhasila* which means “the rock of *Takshaka*” or rock of the great Naga King. Strabo remarked *Takshashila* as a large city, thickly populated and extremely fertile, governed by good laws. Pliny described *Takshashila* as “a famous city situated on a low but level plain, in a district called *Amanda*”.<sup>1</sup> Plutarch remarked that *Takshashila* city was “as large as Egypt, with good pasturage and in the highest degree productive of beautiful fruits”. Patanjali, in his *Mahabhasya*, described it as a town renowned for its commercial activities.

Fa-Hien, a Chinese Buddhist Monk, referred *Takshashila* as *Chu-ch'a-shi-lo* which means “cut-off head” in the following words: “Seven days’ journey from this to the east brought the travellers to the kingdom of *Takshashila*, which means ‘the severed head’ in the language of China. Here, when

Buddha was a Bodhisattva, he gave away his head to a man; and from this circumstance the kingdom got its name.

Hiuen Tsang a 7<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese Buddhist Monk, Scholar Traveller and translator states the same in the following way: “This is the spot where Tathagata formerly dwelt when he was practising the discipline of Bodhisattava; he was then the king of a great country and was called *Chen-ta-lo-po-la-po* (Chandraprabha); he cut off his head, earnestly seeking the acquirement of Bodhi: and this he did during a thousand successive births, (for the same object and in the same place).

The great Buddhist Monk cum scholar, Hiuen Tsang further stated that “The land is renowned for its fertility, and produces rich harvests. It is full of streams and fountains. Flowers and fruits are abundant. The climate is agreeably temperate. The people are lively and courageous, and they honour three gems”.

An Aramaic inscription (The **Aramaic Inscription of Taxila** is an inscription on a piece of marble, originally belonging to an octagonal column, discovered by Sir John Marshall in 1915 at Taxila, British India. The inscription is written in Aramaic, probably by the Indian emperor Ashoka around 260 BCE, and often categorized as one of the Minor Rock Edicts. Since Aramaic was the official language of the Achaemenid empire, which disappeared in 330 BCE with the conquests of Alexander, it seems that this inscription was addressed directly to the populations of this ancient empire still present in north western India, or to border populations for which Aramaic remained the normal communication language), dated back to 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., discovered from Taxila reports that the city was reputed as a “University town” known for the coaching of various disciplines of arts and sciences.

*Takshashila* “stood as the main gate to India connecting her with the rest of the world.” It also remained a political and administrative unit of Gandhara since ancient times. *Takshashila* as famous

as a trade centre and was considered as a significant seat of learning due to the presence of *Takshashila* University. It was the oldest and the earliest organized learning center of ancient India which was funded by the rulers of almost all the kingdoms of India. People from remote areas came to get education in the fields of 'philosophy, medicine, languages, archery and military science.' A graduate from *Takshashila* University was considered as a sign of merit. Will Durant as cited by Kamlesh Kapur states "Students flocked to Takshashila as in the Middle Ages they flocked to Paris; there all the arts and sciences could be studied under eminent professors, and the medical school especially was held in high repute throughout the Oriental world.

As the *Takshashila* university did not possess any huge civil Infrastructure at that time and hence few people did not recognise it as a university but everybody in today's academic world recognised but still regarded as the great place of learning, knowledge and wisdom. However, some large houses at *Sirkap*, which acquire space larger than a single family would need to reside, are thought to be used as the university quarters. They may be the residences of the teachers of the *Takshashila* University, who use to accommodate their students with themselves which obviously needed a larger space than any usual house. It was a seat of great learning where higher education was imparted to the students coming from distant places in quest of knowledge and skill. As this place of learning called *Takshashila* university did not possess the characteristics of a modern university, however, when compared with any modern institution it surpasses every single character of modern days University of the world.

*Takshashila* became the centre for advanced studies due to the presence of teachers who were considered as authorities in their respective subjects. The charisma of these intellects made *Takshashila*, the capital of Gandhara which attracted the students belonging to all ranks of society from far and wide to accomplish the specialized education. Every

teacher was an absolute authority on the subject and taught with full freedom and the way he liked. He was independent in the selection or rejection of students, designing the course and teaching methodology. The university was represented by a group of schools for higher studies which were maintained by teachers and supported by the donations of the wealthy community. The senior students of university were appointed as Assistant Masters or *pitthiachariya* who assisted the principal teacher or *Disapamokkhacariya* and sometimes also acted as his substitute when he was engaged elsewhere. This facilitated the assistant to train himself as a teacher.

The distinction of *Takshashila* or Taxila as a university date back to the age of *Jatakas* and maintained its merit up to the beginning of the Christian era. It has been a celebrated centre for learning in the times of Achaemenid control in 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E and was considered as the head quarter of Brahmanical education. During the Alexander's invasion to India and when they met the Brahman philosophers at *Takshashila*, they got amazed by the "asceticism and strange doctrines". The university enjoyed a prominent position in the period of Asoka. Mr. V. A. Smith describes its significance during the period of Asoka as: "***The sons of people of all the upper classes, chiefs, Brahmans, and merchants flocked to Takshashila, as to a university town, in order to study the circle of Indian arts and sciences, especially medicine.***" The educational activities at *Takshashila* after the Mauryan period are outstanding and was an important centre of learning for the Buddhist during Kushans who were known for promoting Gandhara art and Buddhism. Many renowned scholars were affiliated with this great institution during the Kushan rule which signifies its eminence and patronage of education by the rulers in their period. The fame of university had undoubtedly risen due to the commercial activities which were on peak in the Kushan period.

Buddha Prakash (1976, p.140-141, *Political and Social Movements in Ancient Punjab*) mentions the significance of this renowned university of ancient

undivided India as: A significant result of the rise of Gandhara was the growth of her capital *Takshashila* as a seat of learning and education and a centre of culture and commerce. The age of Buddha saw the spread of the fame of *Takshashila* throughout the whole *Uttarapatha* (a region situated along the northern route as opposed to the Deccan, south of the Narmada River). Students from Magadha traversed the vast distances of northern India in order to join the schools and colleges of Takshashila. We learn from Pali text that Brahman youths, *Khattiya* princes and sons of *setthis* (rich merchants) from *Rajgariha*, *Kasi*, *Kosala* and other places went to Takshashila for learning the Vedas and eighteen sciences and arts. Jotipala, son of the Purohit (court Brahmin) of the king of Benares, returned from Takshashila with great proficiency in archery or military science and was later appointed commander-in-chief of Benares. Likewise, Jivaka, the famous physician of Bimbisara who cured Buddha, learnt the science of medicine under a far-famed teacher at Takshashila and on his return was appointed court-physician at Magadha. Another illustrious product of Takshashila was the enlightened ruler of *Kosala*, Prasenajit, who is intimately associated with the events of the time of Buddha. Panini and Kautilya, two masterminds of ancient times, were also brought up in the academic traditions of *Takshashila*. (Prakash, 1976, p.140-41).

Educational system of ancient undivided India was mainly dependant on the Vedic literature, which are the foundation of India's social and cultural and intellectual capabilities and that is why Rigveda, Yajurveda and Samaveda, were taught at the Takshashila University. Buddhist religious literature was also included in the curriculum. Pali was the language of tuition and it was here that Indian, Greek and Persian cultures blended together and Buddhism transformed in to a liberal faith. The Brahmans and the nobles from India sent their sons to Taxila for education. Due to its accessible location, students from Afghanistan and Central Asia easily came here

to study. It is worth mentioning that the University of *Takshashila* is undoubtedly the earliest university of South Asia which was recognised as a centre of advanced studies in different subjects of present days importance. The ancient sacred texts mentioned it frequently as the great seat of learning which attracts pupils from different countries of the world. It was not only notable reputation in India but it also attracted intellectuals from all over the world.

It is believed that the diversified political influence, observed at *Takshashila*, would have left some affect over the curriculum and the mode of teaching prevalent at *Takshashila*. For instance, Persian control over the region introduced the Aramaic script all over Gandhara. Kharoashti was evolved from the Aramaic which replaced the Brahmi script already prevalent in the region.

The *Takshashila* University attracted students from distant states to get higher education. A student with maximum age limit of sixteen or eighteen was admitted in the university. *Jatakas* mention the stories of princes who became sixteen years old were sent to Taxila by their royal fathers for advanced studies. Besides princes of royal blood, there were some other students who were awarded scholarships by the states to pay their fees. A Brahman boy, Jotipala, from Benares was sent by the ruler to *Takshashila* for specializing in the skill of archery. Some student accompanied the princes who were sent to Takshashila for the completion of education such as the royal chaplains of Benares and *Rajgariha* were sent to *Takshashila* for higher studies with their respective princes. The amount of fees demanded from a student was around one thousand gold coins. Those who were unable to pay the amount carried out physical labour in exchange. The students offering labour, as an alternative of fees, received education during night. The students who had paid the teacher could live with his teacher as his eldest son. All students at *Takshashila* were not residential students. Those who could afford their living used to beside privately like Prince Jhuna of Benares, who lived in a rented accommodation during his stay.

The admission in *Takshashila* university was not confined only to the students belonging to the elite class and it was a place of universal learning as evidences mentioned about the sons of kings, nobles, merchants, tailors and even fishermen getting education at Takshashila university. Chandala, were the only class, who were not eligible for admission in the university. Two Chandalas, disguised as sons of Brahmans, went to the university and got education in law were soon banished when their guise was detected at a dinner. All the pupils were required to follow a simple life style, eat similar food, wear simple dress and none of them could possess money at all while studying in the university. Incompetent students were not given admission to maintain the excellent reputation of the university. Life of the student at the university was very hard and he had to follow numerous strict rules. Qualities like self-discipline, honesty and modesty were prerequisites for obtaining admission in the university.

There were no proper present day Examination system and no degree, certificate or diploma of any kind was awarded after the accomplishment of higher studies to the students. Knowledge was regarded as a true reward using it for any monetary benefit was considered immoral and hence Dikshanta Somaruh were organised after the test for skills were got over. The formal degree or diploma like present day education system were considered as unnecessary due to its analytical and meticulous mode of teaching and learning. The strict supervision were ensured as the Pupils were stayed with the teachers and pupils were not allowed to advance further unless he thoroughly mastered his preceding levels of skills and knowledge. Least but not the last this system of education were later in modern times is called as residential university of residential education and is the same idea which were borrowed from our great ancestors of ancient Bharat. □□

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## BHIMBOR DEORI

### The Statesman

#### ► Dr. Rahul Deori

Bhimbor Deori, with his political expertise and visionary leadership, played the crucial role of a saviour of the people of Assam in pre-independence India. It was with regard to protection of rights and promotion of socio-economic development of the backward tribes, that a plot was devised to make the then Assam province a part of East Pakistan as per the colonial grouping policy adopted nation wide. Bhimbor Deori had been able to comprehend about this policy developed by Cabinet Mission. He was also able to extract his demands from the British government by means of diplomatic, administrative strategies instead of processions, strikes or non-violent movements against their expansionist policy. This was perhaps proved to be acceptable to the British too. In this regard, Heritage Foundation is making efforts to bring into light the vital role Bhimbor Deori played through his policies and administrative strategies. It has been a remarkable initiative of the government of Assam to confer awards in remembrance of his contributions every two years.

Deori was born on 16th May, 1903 at Borgoya Deori Gaon, a remote village of Panidihing, in the district of Sivasagar. He was descendent of the famous Borphurohit Bordeori family of Tamreshwari temple of Sadiya, a renowned name in the pages of history. Being a meritorious student, Deori was awarded a scholarship of 4 rupees per month for passing the Primary school examination in 1918 with flying colours. In high School examination he bagged first division with letter marks in five subjects in 1925 from Sivasagar and later completed his bachelor's degree in Philosophy with second class first position from Cotton College. After receiving the degree of B.L., he appeared for Assam Civil Services examination. Despite bagging 1st position in the examination, he was not appointed,

as the British regime was not disposed to appoint tribal people in the civil services during that time. It was the year 1932, when Bhimbor Deori embarked upon his career as an advocate in Dibrugarh. Later in 1938, he was elected as members of Dibrugarh Local Board and of the governing body of Berry White Medical School. In 1933, Bhimbor Deori was elected uncontested as General Secretary of Tribal League in the very first session of the organization presided over by Jadav Khakhlali in Raha. On the basis of demands made by Tribal League, 4 out of 108 seats of the Assam Legislative Assembly were reserved as per the Government of India Act, 1935, for people belonging to backward plain tribes of the state and this number increased to 5 when, as a result of Deori's efforts, the elected member from Mikir Hills joined the Tribal League. The 5 members were- Rupnath Brahma, Rabi Chandra Kachari, Karka Chandra Dole, Dhirsingh Deori and Kharshing Terang of Mikir Hills. They played active role in the Assam Legislative Assembly under the strong leadership of Bhimbor Deori. That period saw tremendous rate of migration of Muslims from East Bengal to Assam and Bhimbor Deori was alarmed at foreseeing the ploy of capturing most of the Assembly seats by Bengal origin Muslims as soon as they become a larger figure. He could sense a clear conspiracy of making Assam, through these streams of migration, a part of East Pakistan in the near future. The Pakistanists of the East Bengal would have been benefitted the most if the tribal leaders had taken shelter of secessionism. This was the reason why Bhimbor Deori held his view in favour of contesting elections jointly with the Congress party, opposed to the wishes of some of the tribal people. It was a brilliant idea of Bhimbor Deori, that the tribal people of North East identified themselves as tribals in the 1941 census thereby to establish through census data that the North East belonged to the tribal natives of the region. This remarkable policy adopted during the 1941 census put an end to Jinnah's secret mission 'Assam Lunga' during the period of India's partition. Muhammad Saadulla, leader of the Muslim League, was one of the signatories in support of the 1941 census. Violent policies such as the 'direct ac-

tion' of Jinnah failed because of efficient strategies taken by Bhimbor Deori. Thus, such violent policies of Jinnah could not be executed despite being well planned in Assam.

Notably in 1938, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, the then president of the Indian National Congress, formed federal government for the first time in Assam with members of Tribal League under the leadership of Gopinath Bordoloi. Bhimbor Deori and Gopinath Bordoloi, along with Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose successfully devised strategies to form government. As he got to know Bhimbor Deori closely, Netaji once commented about him. Dambarudhar Deori, in his book 'Deori Sanskriti', noted "In Netaji's view, Bhimbor Deori was a politician with prudence and foresight." After the death of Bhimbor Deori, Gopinath Bordoloi the first Prime Minister of Assam, who was close to him, noted in his article titled 'Swargiya Bhimbor Deori' published in (1948, Bhimbor Deori issue) the magazine 'Nayak', "In my opinion, Bhimbor Deori was a statesman, a leader of the people. Bhimbor was the builder of a thriving and self reliant Assam. Bhimbor and I used to discuss about the Assamese language, art, culture as well as our duties and responsibilities towards them. And I am of the view that his policies and agendas were not in contrast to that of any leader of the congress party or of a patriotic Assamese. By virtue of his intelligence, coupled with foresight and his bold nature, it did not take him much time to secure his position in the Council of ministers of Assam Assembly and soon he proved well his honesty, fearlessness and efficiency."

The way Congress government of Assam failed to acknowledge the crucial role played by Bhimbor Deori post independence, is in tune with how Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose has been neglected by the Congress government in the centre. The initiative taken by the present BJP Government with a view to keep Bhimbor Deori's ideals alive by conferring awards in honour of his prudent personality and his endeavour towards protection of the socio-political existence of Assam, is a foundation of a masterstroke. □□

# 'NAA-MIN'

## Name Giving ceremony of Nocte

► Dr. Watsen Bansia Yekar

*(From previous issue)*

After deciding the name of the child, a cock is sacrificed in his or her name. The paternal aunts will cook special rice. The oldest paternal aunt who performs "Taan-phum" and the "Taan-was" are offered special jumin. The chicken will be served to aunts and "Taan-was". Heart of the cock will be kept aside in the name of the child to be used later during 'Naakung' means feeding of the child. The head, one thigh and some pieces of chicken are given to the head Romnyu, oldest lady of the village. Chicken has to be systematically distributed to all important people or otherwise it is believed that mistakes may bring complicity in child's future.

Meanwhile villagers started gathering for the feast. Every villager is offered Jumin for 'Rangtaam'. The responsibilities of the feast are pre-decided. For better management of the feast, paternal aunts prepare rice and maternal aunts prepare rice-beer. The nephews are responsible for preparing meat, curry or daal. When everything is ready, the child will have haircut and bath called 'Naa-kho Chhun' and 'Naa-josuan' respectively. Maternal uncle called 'Hatte' are very important for the child. Hence, they are given special treatment. The maternal Uncle is served with meat and jumin before the villagers and this process is called 'Hatte-Nget'. Prior to naa-kho chhun and Naa-josuan, rice is supposed to be cooked in a small pot separately which is called 'Na-Kung Chham.' The oldest paternal aunt who did the Taan-phum will serve small quantity of the rice in form of tiny balls to the baby with jumin. This is only part of the ritual. The complete process is repeated for thrice. As child cannot consume rice and jumin, the food is eaten by the one who holds the infant. This is called Naa-kung. The ritual of imitative feeding is done to signify that the little soul belongs to the family and he eats food as human being for the first time with the family he is born into. All gathered guests are

expected to be inside the house for the feast of Naa-kung. Nobody is allowed to enter the house after Naakung. After the feast, some villagers leave and some stay till evening. Only family members are allowed after the sunset. The child is again fed at night by the family members.

On the next day, the baby is taken to farmland. The resident relatives of the village are invited to accompany the child and family. The eldest paternal aunt carries the baby on her back. This is called 'Na-Baa-ba'. A plant called Hiram is placed at the courtyard. The mother has to touch the hiram with her left leg and say "Rum-RoRo" meaning that there should be peace and prosperity in life of the child. The process is repeated when they reach the taap (hut) in farmland. The ladies in the village go along with the family. Only one male member of the family escorts. The male member accompanies the ladies as a protector and takes care of the meat taken for lunch. In Nocte Society vegetables and meat are prepared usually by male members and the rice and rice beer by female folks. The ladies enjoy joyous moments of work and merry making in the farmland. They have lunch and return home in the evening after work. After reaching home, the child has a hair cut once again. In the evening, maternal aunt brings Jumin, Juja, one and a half Kg of paddy and ginger piece tied in a thread. The ginger is tied to the neck of the baby with the belief that it will guard him or her from all dangers and diseases. This giving of all these things by maternal uncle and his family is known as 'Naa chin kom koh'. The paddy given by him is cooked. Again three tiny balls of this rice is offered to the baby at night. This is the last ritual in the name giving ceremony of a child in Nocte Society.

With time many are converted to Christianity and they follow diverse means of name giving ceremony. They avoid or do not follow the rites and



rituals of the indigenous Noctes anymore. They do the Naming ceremony of the child according to their convenience of time and ease. Sometimes the ceremony happens after a month and the name is selected as per the as per the choice of family and friends.

The villagers are invited for feast and rituals are performed in indigenous way of name giving. They prepare meat and rice for the feast. But instead of Jumin, people offer juice or soft drinks to the guests. When food is ready, the deacons and pastor bless the food while they pray. Only the blessed food is then served to everyone. No one is permitted to consume food before it is blessed.

On the third day, the child is taken to the maternal house for chinlit, tying of ginger to child. The maternal clan will gather with gifts and presents. Meal is cooked consisting of rice, meat ,curry and drinks. A piece of cloth of measuring 2.5 to 3 meters approximately is given to wrap the child called 'naa-khet-bah'. After food, all return home. Thus a child in a Christian family gets his or her name. Naming ceremony is considered as one of the essential ceremonies in Nocte community because after naming ceremony the child gets recognition as an individual in society. Traditional rituals defined and followed by ancestors are lengthy and complicated but have their own significance. These events help to tighten the social ties and kinship relation. Helping each other and gathering together helps to build a strong, close knitted and healthy society. □□

## Hornbill Festival of Nagaland

Named after a bird, Hornbill Festival is a major festival in Nagaland. Like many festivals in the state, Hornbill festival is also related to agriculture. It is a 7 to 10 days festival that begins with immense zeal from December 1 every year. Held in Kisama Heritage Village, this festival is attended by all the major tribes in Nagaland. Hornbill is a good time to witness the cultural vividness; it also gives the opportunity to bond with different communities. The warrior log drums, colorful headgear, and soulful war cry, exquisite costumes are the highlights of the festival. The Kohima Night Bazaar and contests like pork eating and King Chilly add tingly flavor to the festive mood.

Organized by the Department of State Tourism and Department of Art & Culture, the Hornbill Festival showcases a mélange of cultural displays under one roof. This festival usually takes place between 1 and 10 December every year mainly in Kohima District. The main venue of the Hornbill Festival is held at the Kisama Heritage Village located in the Southern Angami region of Kohima District which is about 12 km from Kohima. All the ethnic groups of Nagaland take part in this festival. The aim of the festival is to revive and protect the rich culture of Nagaland and display its extravaganza and traditions. For visitors it means a closer understanding of the people and culture of Nagaland, and an opportunity to experience the food, songs, dances and customs of Nagaland.

The week-long festival unites one and all in Nagaland and people enjoy the colourful performances, crafts, sports, food fairs, games and ceremonies. Traditional arts which include paintings, wood carvings, and sculptures are also on display. Festival highlights include the traditional Naga Morungs exhibition and the sale of arts and crafts, food stalls, herbal medicine stalls, flower shows and sales, cultural medley - songs and dances, fashion shows, the Miss Nagaland beauty contest, traditional archery, Naga wrestling, indigenous games and musical concerts. The Hornbill Festival provides a colourful mixture of dances, performances, crafts, parades, games, sports, food fairs and religious ceremonies. The festival both exposes the culture and tradition of ethnic peoples, and reinforces Nagaland's identity as a unique state in India's federal union. Experts have commented that A lot of older folk in the villages travel to Kohima to attend this festival and meet people from other villages from Nagaland because they haven't met before, hence leading to cultural assimilation. Traditional arts are also featured, with paintings, wood carvings, and sculptures by modern Naga artists on display. Naga troupes sing folk songs, perform traditional dances and play indigenous games and sports. In the evenings a programme of music concerts, catering for all tastes, ensures that the festive spirit continues through the night. One of the major highlights of this festival is the Hornbill International Rock Festival, which is held at Indira Gandhi Stadium; local and international rock bands perform. □□

## CM yogi Adityanath appreciated Kalyan Ashram on Janajatiya Gaurav Diwas

► Thunbui Zeliang

Addressing the gathering of around 60 thousand Janajati people, UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath praised the Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram for its effort for all round development of the Vanvasi Samaj, on the occasion of Janajatiya Gaurav Diwas. He was delivering his speech at Sonbhadra, Uttar Pradesh on 15<sup>th</sup> November, when the birth Anniversary of Indian Freedom fighter Bhagawan Birsa Munda was being celebrated as the Janajatiya Gaurav Divas at national level. Speaking about the working system and the residential arrangement for the tribal students in its Hostels, he stated that the credit will go to the Sewa Samparan Sansthan, the state unit of Kalyan Ashram in Uttar Pradesh, which has educated and enabled hundreds of tribal youths to lead their societies in different fields.

It is notable that Sri Ram Vanvasi Shatrawas, run by Sewa Samparan Sansthan, in Gorakhpur was started in 1983 at the Shri Gorakhnath Mandir compound, with two rooms by the grace of Mahant Shri Avaidynathji Maharaj, the Guru of C.M Yogi Adityanathji. After three Years when the number students were increased and the rooms, provided for hostel became too small for accommodation for all the students, Mahantji provided another hall, attached with Sanskrit Vidyapeeth Building. The hostel remains at the same place till the construction of the new building was not completed in 1988 at Keshavpuram colony. The hostel was started with few tharu students from pachpedwa area of eastern UP and some Zeliang students from Nagaland. Thus it was well known as hostel of Naga Boys by the local people. After some years more students from Nagaland and other NE region states as well as some Oraon students from Sonbhadra area of then Mirzapur dist. were brought to the hostel. For many years from the beginning of the hostels, the students use to have their dinner with the Sanskrit Vidyapeeth students in Mandir Bhandara and it brought more close to students to Mahantji. The Mahantji was very kind hearted to the students of

Vanvasi chatrawas and during the Shastra-Puja procession in Dasher, they were put in front line to walk, singing the Har-Har Mahadev song learnt from Ramayan serial of Ramanand Sagar. When Yogi Adityanath succeeded as the Mahant of the Goraksnath Mandir, he was also very gracious towards the hostel and its students. In 2008, the silver jubilee of Shri Vanvasi Chatrawas celebrated and a grand function was organised at Saraswati Vidya Mandir, Arya Nagar in which shri Yogiji graced the occasion as the chief guest.

The CM yogiji applauding the Seva samaparan Sansthan on the occasion of Janajatiya Gaurav Divas, said that after the Indian independence, this is the only voluntary organization which has worked tirelessly for the educational, economical and social development of the tribal people in UP and the same thing is being done by Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram on national level. He said that it is only because of the work of Kalyan Ashram that the tribal society has come closer to the main stream of the nation and as the result of its effort we are being able to celebrate this day. This is a great opportunity for all of us that we are paying tribute to all those India Freedom fighters emerged from different Janajati societies. This Gaurav Divas is not only for the Janajati samaj, but also very important day for the whole nation as while we are remembering their sacrifices for our independence, they would be acknowledged by the whole nation. The CM also said that Vanvasi area is full of medicinal plants and they knew very well how to use these medicines in different kinds of diseases, that is why this should be preserved and promoted on mass level so that the rich traditions of medicinal healing power of the tribal people come to the knowledge of the others. In this regard he also urged that the Seva Samparan Sansthan to establish some vocational & skill development centres so that the young generation of its own society could learn the very effective method of medicinal treatment. □□

## INDIGENOUS FAITH DAY CELEBRATION 2022

### A BRIEF REVIEW

( Contd. from Page 6 )

worship nature and love nature is beyond our imagination, there teachings are truly scientific. Therefore, it must be brought into practice, preserved and also promote it". He also exhorted that, "Simply preserving the culture by mouth is not enough, people needs to practice the way of life taught to us by our great forefathers, since the culture and faith is two sides of coin that can't be separated" he added. The Guest of Honour, Colonel Sri K.S Gill of 40 Assam Rifles Longding, also encouraged the gathering. He said, "One must take pride of one's own culture and identity, then only it can be preserved by any community". For instance, he showed his own turban worn on head that indicated his Sikh culture and identity of being Punjabi.

The Chief Guest, Sri Tanpho Wangnaw (MLA) in his address appealed the gathering to know the importance of the indigenous faith and culture. He appreciated the IFCSAP team for organising such a wonderful programme that would ignite the spark of belongingness to one's own traditional culture. Various cultural programs were also displayed. The school children from VKV Niauxa, VKV Senua and Maha Bhodhik Kanubari, lead by their Principals also took active participation on the day.

**Anjaw:** Indigenous Faith Day was celebrated in a grand way wherein Hon'ble MLA Anjaw, Smti. Dasanglu Pul has graced the occasion as Chief Guest, Deputy Commissioner, Anjaw Shri. Talo Jerang as Guest of Honour and Shri. Sotailum Bellai ADC Hayuliang as Special Guest.

**Seppa:** Indigenous faith believers of East Kameng celebrated Indigenous Faith Day at Donyi Jalling, Seppa today with pomp and gaiety. Shri Mama Natung, Minister, GoAP and Er. Bharat Sonam, Chairperson EKSOWCO has graced the celebration as Chief Guest and Guest of Honour, respectively.

**Chayang Tajo:** Indigenous Faith Day Celebration at Chayang Tajo-2022 was witnessed by Hayeng Mangfi HMLA-9th Chayang Tajo A/C as Chief Guest. Ram Rebe, Chairman of Indigenous Faith Day Celebration-2022, shared some words of encouragement regarding the celebration.

**Roing:** In Lower Dibang Valley, HMLA Shri

Mutchu Mithi Ji has attended as Chief Guest, Shri. Bishen Mepo, VP IMCLS as Guest of Honour and Madam Maya Murtem ji as Resource Person respectively.

**Kra-Daadi:** Indigenous Faith Day was celebrated at headquarter Palin and the programme was graced by Shri. Jikke Tako ji, HMLA 20<sup>th</sup> Tali AC as Chief Guest, Sh. Tojo Basar (ADO) Chairman Adi-Galo Society as Guest of Honour and Dr. Gamnya Baki Garam has attended as Resource Person –cum- special guest.

**Anini:** The day was also celebrated by the members of IFCSAP, Idu Mishmi Elite Society, public, teachers and students. The VKV Principal welcomed all the members present in the occasion. Secretary IFCSAP (Anini unit) Aito Miwu, elaborated about the Indigenous Faith Day and urged everyone to protect and preserve Indigenous culture. He lauded the tradition and culture of the indigenous community around the globe. IMES President Robert Rondo, stressed on the role of youths to carry forward the traditional practices and raised his concern about the conversions. Dipen Molo, Ex -ZPC thanked all the organizers and members present in the occasion.

**Basar:** The Chief Guest of IFD at Basar was Dr. Emi Rumi, President GIFCC; Guest of Honour was Dr. Rime Ngulom Potom, President (WW) GIFCC, Prof. Tomo Riba from RGU has attended as Special Guest and Sh. Techu Gubin, President AVP as a resource person of the occasion.

**Daporijo:** Indigenous Faith Day was celebrated in Upper Subansiri District with colourful events. The occasion was graced by Shri. Nyatro Dukum, HMLA cum Chairman Building and Other Welfare Board GoAP as Chief Guest, Shri. Gumjum Haider SIC, GoAP as Guest of Honiur and Shri. Akom Gaat Ligu, Board of Trustee VHP cum Dy. Director Panchayati Raj GoAP as Special Guest respectively.

The Indigenous Faith Day was celebrated in a grand manner not only at every District Headquarters, but also at every Circle Headquarters by show-casting aged old culture and traditions of the respective tribes of the state. □□

## Manipur's Loktak Lake to host event of G20

As India assumed presidency of the G20, Manipur will be hosting events of the Group of 20 Summit at Loktak Lake in mid February, said Loktak Development Authority Chairman M Asnikumar Singh. The possibility of Manipur hosting the G20 Summit events from February 15 to 17 was announced by Chief Minister N Biren Singh earlier, he said adding Loktak Lake will be an important event site. He said this while inspecting several sites of the lake along with CAF, PD & PHE Minister Leishangthem Susindro Meetei today. Following the direction of Chief Minister N Biren Singh, the Loktak Development Authority (LDA) is thoroughly and regularly reviewing the ongoing cleaning work in the lake. The authority is also in the process of identifying appropriate sites for creation of required infrastructure for the G-20 event, he added.

Meanwhile, Asnikumar said the Loktak Lake, which is the largest freshwater lake in North East India, is under serious threat from anthropogenic activities such as encroachment, pollution, changes in water levels, and various developmental activities in and around the water body. "We have reached a point in our history where we cannot take a back seat and let others decide on the fate of the iconic Loktak Lake which is regarded as the cradle of Manipur's civilization." The State Government is determined to make Loktak Lake an iconic wetland in the entire world, he said.

Under the guidance of Chief Minister N Biren Singh, the Loktak Development Authority (LDA) is moving ahead with community participation, research, policies and conservation activities to fulfil the mandate of conservation and sustainable management of the lake. The LDA has constituted an Expert Advisory Committee to address the issues related to the fast-changing ecological status and their impact on the socio-economic condition of the community dependent on the lake. The committee is being led by Prof Dr Rajiv Sinha of IIT Kanpur and its report will be submitted soon, he added.

The State Government is also working on a long-term plan to conserve and preserve the lake, he said and informed that the Chief Minister has taken up

the initiative and approached the Asian Development Bank with a detailed project report to rejuvenate the lake's ecology and improve the livelihood of those dependent on the lake for sustenance. He further added that the State Government has already approved a short-term plan for wise use of Loktak Lake and is awaiting for final say from the Union Ministry of Forest Environment and Climate Change. Regarding prevention of encroachers in the lake, he informed that an empowered committee, comprising three Cabinet Ministers, Chairman of LDA and officials of stakeholders Departments has been formed recently by the Government to determine the actual boundary of the Loktak Lake. The committee will submit its report within 3 months to the Chief Minister. The first sitting of this committee was held on November 13 last and was chaired by Chief Minister N Biren Singh. The sitting took crucial decisions, he said. He also added that the LDA is also determined to safeguard the livelihood of the fishing community. It has suggested the State Government to regulate and come up with a fishing policy to check on the dwindling fish population in the lake.

Maintaining that the construction of floating homestays would provide ample employment opportunities to youths, as well as promote eco-tourism in the State, he said that the Government is setting up guidelines for the construction of the floating homestays that reflect the cultural heritage and are environment-friendly. He added that with a strong sense of hope and optimism, the work of conservation and management of Loktak Lake and its associated wetlands could be achieved with the collective cooperation and efforts of all stakeholders. In the recently concluded Manipur Sangai Festival, a huge number of tourists, both domestic and foreigners including high level dignitaries visited the Loktak Lake. For the first time, India's Foreign Affairs Minister Dr Jaishankar also visited the lake and spent quite some time there. Other dignitaries including Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh Pema Khandu, Union Law & Justice Minister Kiren Rijiju and Ambassadors of different countries also visited the lake. (Source: Sanghai Express, Manipur)

## USTM mentors school teachers across NE to adapt to NEP practices

Over 1500 teachers from various parts of the Northeast region took part in a regional workshop on “National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020): a Game Changer for School Education” on the premises of the University of Science and Technology Meghalaya (USTM) on Sunday. The workshop was organized by USTM in association with the Assam Higher Secondary Education Council. Experts from NCERT, CBSE, SEBA, and SCERT deliberated on topics related to NEP and school education. Notably, USTM has collaborated with various stakeholders and state governments to mentor and equip school teachers to adopt practices of the National Education Policy 2020 at the school level.

“We have to train teachers to take care of the learners and parents so that the learning condition and outcome are balanced. NEP has given a call to all of us that the real implementation of NEP is the progression and integration of how the child moves from looking into himself or herself to the family and society and then moving with nature and the globe,” Prof B.K Tripathi, former director of IUCTE, Varanasi and former director of NCERT, New Delhi, said while addressing the gathering of school teachers. He was speaking on the topic — “Critical insights on NEP 2020 and its implications for School Education.” NCERT director and chairperson,

NCTE, New Delhi, Dinesh Prasad Saklani was the chief guest on occasion and addressed the teachers. Secondary Education Board of Assam chairman R.C. Jain spoke on “Translation of NEP 2020 into practice: Readiness of Schools”. Thongkholet Mate, regional officer, CBSE addressed the session on “NEP 2020: Sustainable Development Goals for the Faculty and Students”. SCERT director Nirada Devi addressed the session on “NEP-2020 and Science Education.”

Besides, Paul Pudussery, an eminent social science researcher, spoke on “Career Openings for Faculty and Students in Higher Education in the light of NEP2020”. Speaking on the occasion, USTM chancellor Mahbubul Hoque said, “Such workshops will continue at regular intervals at different places, and experts will be invited to conduct such sessions.” He deliberated on “Professional Development and Career Progression of School Teachers: A Way Forward”. Making the presidential speech, USTM vice-chancellor G D Sharma said, “The new education policy is a significant shift from the earlier education system. If we do not change with time, we will become obsolete.” “To bring NEP 2020 to action, there is an urgent need to equip teachers of all levels so that the real benefits of the policy reach the grassroots,” he said. An interactive session was also held where experts took questions and feedback.

## Garos’ colourful 100 Drums Wangala festival celebrated in Assam

Garos Cultural Forum and Garos students’ Union (GSU) jointly organised two day-long post-harvest festival, the 100 Drums Wangala Festival at the Chotipara village playground in Goalpara district. Ten Garos traditional Wangala Dance troupes took part in the festival. One Wangala troupe came from Dadangre village, Meghalaya and the other nine troupes were from both Assam’s Kamrup and Goalpara District.

Desal Bimik R Marak, President of Garos Cultural Forum said the Wangala Festival is celebrated every year in Meghalaya only. But for the first time, we Garos people living in Assam are celebrating here in Chotipara (Jajong Kadoram). “We get support from the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council (RHAC), but we need full support from the Assam State government so that we can celebrate this colourful

festival broadly,” he added.

Frylin R. Marak, RHAC executive councillor of Co-Operation, Dramatic theatre and Cinema Performance said to develop our Garos tradition and culture, RHAC financed workshops on Wangala Dance and Music at Chotipara and Muskhuli in Goalpara District before this year. On this festival, Deputy Chairman of RHAC Ramakanta Rabha, RHAC Executive Councillors Aditya Rabha, Nagarmal Swargiyary, GSU Assam state zone President Foldin R. Marak and many other dignitaries took part and enjoyed the Wangala dance. Garos indigenous games competition and indigenous food festival are also included in the festival. Deputy Chairman of RHAC Ramakanta Rabha lauded the steps taken by Garos Cultural Forum to save their culture and for the first time in Assam, they celebrated their post-harvest festival. (Source: East Mozo)

# CINEMA AND PAINTINGS :

## Reviewing Contribution of two Extraordinary Genius

► Dr. Ranga Ranjan Das

Cinema and paintings are two different genres of entertainments in different moods, medium and ways of expression. While surrounding environments, mountains, hills, rivers, lakes, trees infuse some kinds of colour to human mind, body and soul in a natural way; cinema and paintings do the same things in an artificial ways. The purpose of cinema-as a mass communication has been instrumental extending service as derive needs of human mind; do the function of escape mechanism, loitering in the midst of reality and fantasy. Treatment of script and dramatic presentation of actors in the screen has made more people attracted towards cinema. Common people have special attention on cinema that provides some sort of scope for mental relaxation. Paintings, is also a medium of recreation for a section of people who has a real taste of creative excellence, thought process and expression in the canvass. Though these two genres have created a wider space in different lines in the quest of expression and entertainment, efforts have been made to bring two arts in one platform while remembering two genius of Assam who created separate identities in their respective fields. Nipon Goswami and Neel Paban Baruah quit physical existence recently. Nipon Goswami was a well known actor who brought a new dimensions to Assam cinema over the last few decades or so. At the same time, Neel Pawan Baruah was the noted painters who take abstract paintings at different level. This particular endeavour is, to bring a brief discussion on film industry and modern paintings in Indian context a tribute to both of them and at the same time made a review of their life and works.

Personally, I like Indian films since childhood. Television (TV) was not common like today. In a locality, few had TV. We sat in the drawing room of others. Earlier films fascinated me. We made close connections with the film stars, story and acting skill that seem to be real. Such fascination continues during teenage when we got the first black and while television.

We are allotted some specific time to watch TV programme. Film was telecasted mainly on Sunday. We enjoyed and sat to watch- we have no other choice. We are adopted more commercial films then arts films that has critical appreciation and also awarded. At that period we understand that we get some kinds of entertainment through commercial films. That was the beginning which still continue to a certain extend. At that period we are familiar with the names of some popular actors and actresses of Hindi and Assamese films. By that time, we, understand that there is big Hindi film industry concentrated at Bombay (now Mumbai), later on known as 'Bollywood'. Films are also made in other modern languages spoken in different parts of the country. Out of them, we got the opportunity to watch them at noon on every Sunday. Films are made in four different states with their own languages: such as Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam. We watched the movies with English subtitles but unable to differentiate the language-just satisfied as south movies. Assamese and Bengali movies were also telecasted in that segment. During the period, we found Nipon Goswami as a wonderful actor in Assamese film industry. Two names were mostly popular during the period, and other one was Biju Phukan. The played the lead role in most of the films during the period. The duo was responsible for golden age of Assamese cinema during 1970's and 1980's. As a serious film lover, I tried to make a comparison between Hindi and Assamese movies. I found there was no such difference in story narration except technical sides and shooting locations. I still remember one incident. One evening, we were watching 'Buwari'-an Assamese film lead by Biju Phookan. Storyline, Narration and acting on the film makes everyone so involved that brings tears to mother and others. Assamese films are really wonderful that are mostly set in rural backdrop, reflecting Assamese folklife. I still remember when I saw the song sung by Dwipen Barua- '*Moina Kun Bidhatai Khajile Tumar Padum sakuti*' in the lips of Nipon Goswami- that was first film I got the

opportunity to watch. Perhaps, it was Dr Bezbaruah. Thereafter, I have seen almost all the films. In Bollywood, we have seen the combination of legendary singer Kishore Kumar and Big B, it seems Amitji is singing; here I found Dwipen Barua and Nipon Goswami's combination. It is observed in film industries a handful of actors or actresses have background of formal training in acting. Nipon Goswami was one of them who had got formal training from Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune. It was his dream to be an actor. He got the taste of acting in the film during his childhood when he appeared as child artiste in the film Piyali Phukan directed by Phani Sarma in 1957. After completion of course, he had a choice, either to come back Assam or try in Bollywood. Some of his class mates or companions in the institute got wider reputation later on. Subhash Ghai, Nabin Nischal are some of them. It was a bold decision for him to come back Assam and become part of Assamese film industry. At that period, one needs courage to opt acting as career in Assam. By dint of hard work and sincere efforts he overcame all the difficulties and challenges, and achieves stardom in Assamese film industry. The sequence of film starting from 1968- and his versatile acting performances as a heros, during his early phases and subsequent periods, followed by character role, and number of hits and popular movies made him a household name in Assam. It has been a long journey from the movie Sangram (1968) to Lankakanda (2022). The sequence of cinemas: Dr Bezbaruah (1969), Baruar Sangsar (1970), Mukuta (1970), Sesh bichar (1971), Marisika (1972), Abhijan (1973), Parinam (1974), Santan (1974), Meghamukti (1979), Duranir rang (1979), Aajali Nobau (1980), Moinajan (1980), Mon aru maram (1980), Uttar sunya (1981), Aprupa (1982), Nayanmani (1983), Kakadeuta nati aru Hati (1983), Sakuntala aru Sankar Joseph Ali (1984), Jiban Surabhi (1984), Bohagar duparia (1985), Mon Mandir (1985), Puja (1985), Deepjyoti (1986), Aarti (1986), Ma (1986), Juge Juge Sangram (1986), Pratima (1987), Pratixudh (1987), Pratidan (1987), O Senai (1987), Ai mur Janame Janame (1988), Siraj (1988), Bhai Bhai (1989), Bordoisila (1989), Ranganadi (1991), Rickshawala (1993), Hridayar Aree Aree (1994), Devata (1997), Mohmukti (1998), Maharothi (1999), Anal (1999), Bukur Majat Jale (1999), Baivab (1999), Hiya Diya Nia

(2000), Tumi mur Mathu mur (2000), Asene Kunuba Hiyat (2000), Jun Jale Kapalata (2000), Dag (2001), Koina mur Dhunia (2001), Prem aru Prem (2002), Jakham (2002), Tumiye mur Kalpanar (2002), Priya o Priya (2002), Marami Hobane Lagari (2002), Jiban Nadir Duti Par (2002), Tyag (2002), Mitha mitha Laganat (2002), Kakadeutar Ghar Juwai (2002), Premgeet (2002), Arpan (2003), Priya Milan (2003), Aiyei Jonakbihin jiban (2003), Prem vara Sakulu (2003), Juman Suman (2003), Satyam shivam Sundaram (2003), Maa tumi Annanya (2004), Hriday Kapuwa Gan (2004), Anurag (2004), Kadambari (2004), Khunar kharu nalage muk (2005), Hiyar dapunat tomarei sabi (2005), Kadam tale Krishna Nase (2005), Aghari atma (2005), Deuta diya Bidai (2006), Jiban bator lagari (2009), Pale pale ure mon (2011), Baraler Ghar (2012), Mohasamar (2013), Hiya diba kak (2014), Gane ki ane (2016), Mriganavi (2017), Sesh Angikar (2017), Mission China (2017), The Under world (2018), Sima-the untold story (2019) and Lankakanda (2022). Dr Bezbaruah was a super hit movie which sequel as Dr Bezbaruah 2 goes to editing floor this year. He also played character roles in Hindi and Bengali films. Bengali films include Tushar tirtha amaranth, Mou sesh, Debanjali and Duranta Sarai. Hindi film includes, Do Bhai, a Jeetendra starrer and Do Anjaane, whose lead actor was Amitabh Bachhan are the prominent.

Mobile theatre has been occupying an important place in the entertainment industry of Assam. Plays and dramas are performed under the banners of different groups. Nipon Goswami was also part of some of these groups and executed acting skills in such platforms. He acted in various mobile theatre groups such as Abaahan, Kohinoor, Hengul and Sankantala. Besides he acted in Assamese TV serials such as Ritu Ahe Ritu Jai (season comes season goes). Due to his wide range of experience, he had provided responsibility to serve in the Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Assam, and also served as chairman of Jyoti Chitraban- the only film studio of Assam. It is also need to mention that during his training period in FTII he acted in three diploma films such as Painted III, Shadi ki Pehli Salgirah and Waiting for them. His acting career and contribution to Assamese film industry fetch him Lifetime Achievement Award by Jyotirupa, Prag Cine Award,

Kalaguru Bishnu Rabha Award and many other awards and felicitation. This renowned actor was born in Kalibari, Tezpur on September 3, 1942 and took his last breath on October 27, 2022.

On 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2022, Assam lost Neel Pawan Baruah, the most versatile, prominent artist, exponent of abstract paintings in Assam. He was 86 years old. He expressed his scholastic excellence through canvass, had a rare capacity to express different meanings through a single portrait. Apart from his own identity as an artist, he is also known as a son of noted poet Binanda Chandra Baruah, famed as 'Dhvani Kabi' and shared identity as a rare example of eternal love with his wife Dipali Borthakur, celebrated singer who was suffering from incurable disease who lost her voice. People of Assam know about the narrative of his love and respects towards his wife. His wife predeceased him in 2018. He was born to Binanda Chandra Baruah and Labanya Prabha Baruah at Mariani. He studied in Jorhat and Guwahati before leaving for Santiniketan in 1961 to pursue his artistic interests and graduated from there. He learnt the basics of fine arts and also about glaze pottery. During his academic period, he got the opportunity to come under influence of sculpture artist Ramkingkar Baiej, Binood Bihari Mukherji, Sukhmoi Mitra and Radhacharan Bagsi. He completed his education in 1966. Coming back to Assam, he joined as teacher in the Government School of Art at Guwahati founded by the artist Jibeswar Barua. His thinking was wide open and wanted to do something different. He gave up the jobs within a short period. Later on he had taken shelter in an abandoned house located towards south of George playground (near Gauhati High Court). In this temporary residential complex, he had founded the Assam Fine Art and Craft Society. It is the main platform through which the modern fine arts spread nook and corner of Assam. As a human being he had a great personality that attracted every body. It leads many noted people to join him. A few of them were Ashu Deb, Tarun Duwara, Jugul Das, Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya, and Neelamoni Phukan. With the inspiration of many he went on creating new paintings with different themes. In the year, 1971 his first single paintings exhibition held at Nabin Chandra Bordoloi hall at Guwahati. In early

period, he focused on Sattria culture of Assam and also included different expression, elements of folk culture in own ways. His painting exhibition was also held at Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata, Lalit Kala academy at Lukhnow, Bhubneswar and New Delhi. Various noted artist were born touching his finger tip. He also established 'Basundhara Kala Niketan' at the residential premise in Saurav Nagar, Guwahati. Through his painting skill, he could bring various dimensions of human nature, expressions of pains and sufferings. Critic says that he utilized 'gadur bird' symbolically, also sometimes create 'imaginary birds' and used horse as metaphor for expression inner thought. I have seen one of the portrait hanging in the wall of noted scholar of Assam. It was difficult to understand for me to explore the meanings. It was an abstract painting that represents people are fishing in a river. Paintings have different dimensions and speak own language. One needs to understand metaphor of the society and human beings. People are still trying to explore the famous smile of Monalisa portrait created by Leonardo de Vinci. Picaso's paintings are also difficult for common people. It is god gifted art bestowed upon some human beings. Neel Pawan Baruah, is truly a god gifted individual who tried to redefine the contemporary paintings with own creative excellence. Apart from artistic skill, he penned down some valuable books such as Annya ek Gati (compilation), Basundhara 1 and Basundhara 2. Due to his lifelong contribution he was awarded with Pranab Barua Silpi Bata, Bishnu Rabha awards from Government of Assam and Tarun Duwara artist award. We are really happy to know that the Cultural Studies Department of Tezpur University, create The Neelpawan Baruah Museum of Modern Art by exhibiting 56 selected paintings. Such efforts not only preserve the valuable work of a noted artist, at the same time it will encourage new generation to take modern paintings to another level.

It is needless to repeat how cinema and paintings play important role in the materialistic human life. It provide new flavor in human life. Both the medium has its own role for entertaining people in their own line. Nipon Goswami and Neel Pawan Baruah had entertained the people in their own ways. Their contribution will be remembered over the years to come. Truly, there were extraordinary genius. □□