



HERITAGE Explorer

LET KNOWLEDGE COME FROM ALL THE SIDES

A Monthly News Bulletin

Pages 28, Size A4

RNI. Regd. No. ASSENG/2002/6981 Postal Regd. No. RNP/GH-094/2012-14



Tamra Patra for awarded by
Indra Gandhi in 1972



Rani Ma at her Kohima residence



Rani Ma offering spiritual healing
to an ailing young lady



Rani Ma with Kalyan Ashram
workers at Kohima



Rani Ma with B.K. Nehru at his
residence on 20th November 1968



Rani Ma with Karbi Girls during
her visit to Karbi Anglong, Assam



Indira Gandhi and Rani Ma
greeting each other by exchanging
rose in New Delhi



Rani Ma with Jawaharlal Nehru
at Shillong Jail in 1937



Rani Ma with Rajiv Gandhi



Rani Ma with her followers



Date of Birth: 26th Jan 1915
Date of Death: 17th Feb 1993



A scene of Rani Ma's funeral
ceremony in Lunikao Village on
17.02.1993



Heritage Explorer

A Monthly News Bulletin

Vol. XIII, No.3, MARCH 2014, (28 Pages, Size-A4)

Contents

■ Editorial	P-4	■ Pre-Nyokum Celebrated at NERIST Campus	P-18
■ U Kiang Nangbah- A Patriot and Prophet	P-5	■ Wake up Women Police	P-18
■ Rani Gaidinliu in Modern Context of Naga Society	P-7	■ The Terminal Decline of Christianity in New Zealand	P-19
■ Birth Centenary Celebrations of Great Freedom Fighter Rani Gaidinliu	P-8	■ World's Oldest Man Credits Simple Diet for His Long Life	P-20
■ Inner Line Permit: A Legal Paradox	P-9	■ Law of Mother Earth makes Bolivia Best Country in the World	P-21
■ Workshop on Promotion of Tagin Dialect	P-10	■ Hindus, Facing Existential Attacks in Bangladesh	P-22
■ India-Bangladesh Border Management: The Challenge of Cattle Smuggling	P-11	■ Census Shows Christians No Longer a Majority in New Zealand	P-23
■ China Should Shed Expansionist Mindset: Modi	P-14	■ Curbs on 'The Hindus' Ignites Row in the US	P-24
■ I love my India...	P-14	■ Hindu Community Facing 'Forced Conversions' in Pakistan	P-24
■ China Plays Down Modi's Border Remarks	P-15	■ Woman and Hindu Dharma	P-25
■ Hindus Should Have at Least 5 Children, Says VHP Leader Ashok Singhal	P-15	■ Hindu Widow Recalls Religious Conversion	P-26
■ Spotlight on Indian-American Contributions to US Culture	P-16	■ Ali-Aye-Ligang Celebrated	P-26
■ Of Valentine and My Little Nephew	P-16		
■ Hawkings and Beginning of Time	P-17		

Subscription may be sent by M.O./ Cheque / Demand Draft to :

Heritage Foundation,

30, F.C.Road, Uzan Bazar

Guwahati-781001, Ph: 0361- 2636365

e-mail: ourheritage123@yahoo.com, Website: www.heritagefoundation.org.in

(Please Mention Pin Code No. along with your full postal address in BLOCK Letters)

DDs/Cheques may please be drawn in favour of

Heritage Foundation.

Bank A/c with PNB, Guwahati,

A/c No. 3213 0001 0009 3631

**Annual
Subscription
₹100/-**

Edited by : Amarendra Brahma, C/o. Heritage Foundation, K.B.Road, Paltan Bazar, Guwahati-781008, Published & Printed by : Narayan Dev Sarma on behalf of Heritage Foundation, K.B.Road, Paltan Bazar, Guwahati-781008, Published at: Heritage Foundation, K.B.Road, Paltan Bazar, Guwahati - 781008 (Assam). e-mail: ourheritage123@yahoo.com, Website: www.heritagefoundation.org.in, Printed at: Arindam Offset & Imaging Systems, Rajgarh, Guwahati - 781003 and Angik Press, GNB Road, Guwahati - 781001 and Saraighat Offset Press, Bamunimaidan, Guwahati - 781021

Editorial

On eve of Independence Day, we try to lay a foundation, though basic it may be of a topic which very likely prove a Heritage for present as well as in future readers and researchers. We have initiated our this concept since 2009. Our endeavours in this respect from that year to 2013 include:

- 2009 *Folk Tales of Northeast Bharat.*
- 2010 *Freedom Fighters of Northeast Bharat*
- 2011 *Festivals of Northeast Bharat*
- 2012 *Indigenous New Year of Northeast Bharat*
- 2013 *Philosophy of Nature Worship of Northeast Bharat*

This time we propose:

Sacred Place of North East Bharat

We now could like to request our readers to extend a helping hand in bringing out this remarkable approach to our rich heritage. You are welcome to participate in it. You may inspire other persons whom you feel proper for the propose.

For your convenience we would like to suggest some guidelines.....

1. *Location and distance from an important known place*
2. *Historical and mythological background*
3. *Name of deity, if any, and way of worshipping*
4. *Point of reverence of the place*
5. *The time and occasion of visit*
6. *Ways and means of maintenance*
7. *Name of the communities use to visit this place*
8. *Relevant photographs of the site*

Our NEBH is abundant with material we sought for. Your kind and active and timely act will be an asset for us all here.

Editor

U Kiang Nangbah- A Patriot and Prophet

- Dr. Omarlin Kyndiah

U Kiang Nangbah was born to Ka Rimai Nangbah at Tpeppale in Jwai. The exact date of his birth is not known but it is said that he was a child at the time when the British annexed the Jaintia Kingdom in 1835. Unlike other patriot of the region, U Kiang Nangbah had no royal background. He was a rural folk and a common farmer that belonged to the lineage of the Sookpoh clan. Though very young in age at the time of annexation, he was greatly disturbed by the highhandedness policies of the Britishers. The spirit of patriotism was inspired in U Kiang Nangbah by these developments and by the story of his maternal uncle, U Ksan Sajar Nangbah, who fought against the British at a place called Chanmyrsiang. The reason for this early resistance is attributed to the construction of road from Jaintiapur to Nowgong.

The British adopted a policy of least interference and left the Jaintia people almost entirely to themselves for a period of more than two decades. During these periods U Kiang Nangbah became fully aware about the policies and plan of the British to impose authority on the Jaintias. However, the anti-British feelings started when the British India Government attempted to impose taxes and interfered with the custom and religious activities of the people. These acts are viewed by the people as an attempt of the British to impose authority and make the people "submissive to the authority" and to "acknowledge the supremacy of the British government".

In 1860, a House Tax was imposed in Jaintia Hills. The public pronouncement of this imposition was made by Manik Pakyntein (nicknamed Daloi Tyngkaen as he was a former Daloi of Jwai and limped when he walked) at a Dorbar held at

Mĩnkoi Pĩrdi (Yaw Yongpiah). The story of U Kiang Nangbah and the Jaintia Resistance of 1860 can be traced from the incidence that had happened in this Dorbar. In this dorbar, Daloi Tyngkaen had informed the people that the British



government had imposed a House Tax vide an order dated the 28th March, 1859. U Kiang Nangbah gave a befitting reply in the Dorbar and said, "Natives do not pay taxes to the foreigners". In the same year, many more taxes were imposed which include Income Tax and duties on trade and other commodities despite the people of Jaintia had made it clear that they would not pay any forms of taxes imposed by the foreigner. According to the oral tradition, Daloi Tyngkaen and the British officials had attempted to collect tax from the house of one Lakhi Pĩrdiang at Chilliangraij, who refused to pay the tax. Anger by this refusal, the British officials vehemently entered and ransacked her house. U Kiang Nangbah arrived at the scene and fought with stiff resistance against these armed British officials.

Apart from imposition of taxes, there were other activities of the British government that made the Jaintia people determined not to remain mute spectators, but to resist the British authority. A police station was established at Jwai in 1855, as a token of the government authority over the hills. The setting of police station near the cremation ground of the Dkhar clan was resented by the people. The British administration was asserting its power and took additional measures to control the Jaintias. One such step was the order issued by Mr. Rowlatt, Deputy Commissioner asking the people not to burn the dead near the military outpost. On one occasion the Sumer clan was prevented to cremate in their traditional cremation sites. Other clan who were prohibited to burn their dead included the Paswet clan, the Pakyntein clan and the Langdoh clan. These acts of the British administrators were considered by the people as an attempt to suppress their religious beliefs. In addition, establishment of a school by the missionaries also caused concern for the people.

The immediate cause of the resistance was triggered by the incident that took place at Yalong. On the occasion of the traditional dance called '*Pastieh Kaiksoo*'. The police led by Surki, a Khasi police officer of Jowai confiscated all the weapons that were meant for the festival and burned them before the very eyes of a large number of people that had gathered to witness this traditional dance. The act of religious intolerance carried out by the British officials had made the Jaintia to rise in arms and protect their land, customs and religion. Other activity of the British official that hurt the religious sentiment of the Jaintia people took place in 1860 when a



police constable called Solomon Dohling shot a monkey in the sacred forest (*Khloo Langdoh*) in Nangjingi. The government official and missionaries influenced the people to believe that the sanctity of their sacred grooves known as '*Khloo Langdoh*' was a superstition belief.

This political and religious interference of the British ignited the fire of mass movement which started with the calling of the Dorbar of the twelve Dalois to appraise the people about the need to resist the alien rule. This Dorbar was held at Madiah Kmai Blai on the bank of the river Syntu Ksiar. Daring old and young men attended the Dorbar and a few of these were Mynlon Daloi of Mynso, Kiri Daloi of Changpung, Sawor Daloi of Sutnga, Mon Daloi of Rymbai, Bakhiar Daloi of Nangkhlieh, Liang Pator of Barato, Bukhiar Pator of Raliang, Ridon Pator of Nyrtinag, Chai Rangat of Jwai, Kat Chen of Changpung, Manik Syngkon, former Daloi of Jwai, Kma Langdoh of Yalong, Bang Daloi of Raliang, Kat Pator of Raliang, Loi Paswet of Jwai, Iata Kynjiñ of Jwai Sdiah Toi of Jwai and Kiang Nangbah.

Tradition tells us that a resolution was passed in this Dorbar as whoever could bring a plant called Phlang Letang from the bottom of the river would be recognised as the leader

of mass movement to fight the British. U Kiang Nangbah was successful and he was garlanded by Daloi of Nartiang with his armour and was unanimously elected a leader.

U Kiang Nangbah and his men started building barricades, stockades, stored grains and manufactured weapons and firearms. U Kiang Nangbah and his people from the villages of Jwai, Yalong, Latober, and Changpung attacked the Police station at Jwai and destroyed it completely. They also burnt down Christian settlement and besieged the military post. The attack spread to other part of Jaintia Hills like Padu, Satpator, Nangbah, Yalong, Mynsoo, Changpung, Nyrtiang, Raliang, Sutnga, Nangkhlieh, Barato, Mookayaw etc. and the British had to reinforce more Regiments which comprised of the 21st Regiment native Infantry, the Eurasian Battery of Artillery and the 44th and 28th Regiments of Native Infantry to conduct a full scale military operation against U Kiang Nangbah and his men. Meanwhile U Kiang Nangbah fell ill and retreated to Umkara. But unfortunately, patriotism had its own enemy and treachery. The Daloi of Nartiang U Mon and his right hand man, U Long Sutnga informed about the place and condition of U Kiang Nangbah. On 27th December 1862, Lt. Sadlier led by Long Sutnga captured Kiang Nangbah in the early hours but with stiff resistance from U Kiang though he was ill. U Kiang Nangbah was brought to trial and on the 30th December 1862, he was hanged at 5.00 P.M. at Yawmusing in the presence of troops and all the villagers.

U Kiang Nangbah faced the gallows with courage and one could not forget his prophetic message which he uttered from the gallows to his people, he said, "Brothers and sisters please look carefully on my face when I die on the gallows. If my face turned towards the east, my country will be free from the foreign

yoke within 100 years; if it turns towards the west my country will remain in bondage for good" True to his words in less than 100 years, on the 15th August 1947 the British had to leave the country making U Kiang Nangbah a patriot and a prophet.

The greatness of U Kiang Nangbah lies as much as in his supreme sacrifices that he laid down his life for the freedom of his motherland. U Kiang Nangbah fought for preservation of the rights of the people in the face of imposition of alien way of life and values. He did succeed in his struggle, but within 150 years of his sacrifice the people of Khasi and Jaintia Hills lost many elements of their traditional way of life and in the process they have got westernised to that extent that they virtually lost most of their cultural identity and even some of their values. It is sad to know that the younger generations virtually do not know most aspects of their culture including even their folklore.

The tradition of Khasi and Jaintia political system was managed on the basis of certain values like righteousness. In social life, one of the most fundamental values was the principle of *kamai ya ka hok* which is not adhered to anymore. Obviously, one cannot expect the traditional values to continue permanently because the times and situation have changed radically since the time of U Kiang Nangbah. However, if one looks at the background of creation of Meghalaya state, one of its purposes was to protect the tribal identities. But have we remained really tribal, while we have given up most of our traditional way of life and traditional values? Today, Meghalaya is facing a lot of crises in her political, social and economic life. In this situation U Kiang Nangbah is becoming a increasing relevance.

(<http://meghalayatimes.info/index.php/note-book/3539-u-kiang-nangbah-a-patriot-and-prophet>)

Rani Gaidinliu in Modern Context of Naga Society

- Jagdamba Mall

Born to mother Kerotlenliu and father Lothuanang on January 26, 1915 at Lungkao village in Tamenglong district of Manipur, Rani Gaidinliu was a very different person from the very childhood. She was affectionate, hardworking, obedient and very talented, always curious to learn.

Her exploratory mindset, love for religion, culture and the country drew her closer to fierce revolutionary and spiritual leader—Haipou Jadonang of Kambiron village.

Her association with Haipou sparked the inherent energy already in her and she became his lieutenant. But the British rulers had some other plan. They implicated Jadonang in a false murder case and hanged him in Imphal jail on August 29, 1931.

As a wounded lioness she was gnawing her teeth against the British rulers. There was a fierce fight in 1932 between the Rani and the British army at Hungrum village in Assam. The British declared her as the "terror of northeast" and announced a reward of Rs 500/- on her head to catch her live or dead.

She was surrounded from all corners in a pre-dawn fight in Poilwa village and was put in jail for life. After fourteen years of jail term from 1934 to 1948, she was released from Shillong jail and camped in Yimrup village in Tuensang district. But she went underground again in 1956 and resumed her fight for preserving her religion and culture.

On being approached from the state Government she responded positively and under an agreement she submitted her arms to Government and started leading a life of social reformer and spiritual awakener in 1966.

She was given a Government accommodation, a freedom fighter's pension, security guards, a Government Personal Assistant (PA),

two maid-attendants, a vehicle along with driver and journey expenditures. Rani Gaidinliu was of the view that culture and religion of Naga society was in peril.

She used to arrange threads of nylon and cotton, for preparing customary Naga costumes. The Heraka training camps were organised to teach weaving of



customary garments, practice of folk songs, Heraka songs and dances.

New formations of dances were evolved. Traditional musical instruments were played, competitions in traditional games and wrestling were organised and customary dress competitions were held for boys and girls separately, sea-shells and glass-beads were sold at cheaper prices to participants preparing traditional dresses. Rani Ma was a saint poetess.

She composed hundreds of devotional and patriotic songs. She has also composed a number of songs sung individually and in groups. These songs are for various occasions like festivals, marriage ceremony and death rituals, etc.

The visit of Rani Ma in any Naga area used to spread like wildfire and people- Christians and Hindus (non-

Christians) both used to come out on the road to have a darshan of her. She would stop at gathering at prominent places, meet the people, exchange the good-wishes and then advance on journey.

The Hindu society worshipped her like a Goddess. She toured the country extensively. She met the second RSS Sarsanghachalak MS Golwalkar (Guruji) in early seventies at Guwahati, attended the Second World Hindu Conference 1979 at Prayagraj (Allahabad) at Sangam (convergence) during one and quarter month long Maagh Mela.

She graced the World Women Conference as its President where the lady dignitaries from all over the country and abroad had assembled. Since then, she had close association with a number of dignitaries and organisations throughout the country. She became a bridge between Naga society and larger Hindu Samaj.

For the selfless service to the society and the country she was conferred a number of awards. They are:-

Freedom Fighter Tamrapatra Award 1972 by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

Padma Bhushan 1982 by President Neelam Sanjiva Reddy.

Vivekananda Sewa Samman 1983 by Bada Bazar Kumarsabha Pustakalaya, Kolkata.

Birsa Munda Award, 1996 (Posthumous)

In addition to this, Rani Gaidinliu Stree Shakti Purashkar was started by the Government of India in her memory which is given on March 8 of each year to veteran women social workers in recognition to the selfless sacrifice for the society.

Rupees one lakh in cash and a citation is given to winners of this award. A postal stamp has also been released in her memory.

Birth Centenary Celebrations of Great Freedom Fighter Rani Gaidinliu

The National Executive Committee (Karyakarini Mandal) of Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (ABVKA) was held in Gangtok, Sikkim from Feb. 19, 2014 to Feb. 20, 2014.

The view of ABVKA on Rani Gaidinliu is reflected in the following writeup.



Rani Gaidinliu was a freedom fighter and spiritual leader from Lungkao village in the north easternmost corner of our country, presently in Manipur state. Her dedication and sacrifice did not get much attention and importance alike great Jhansi Rani Lakshmbai, Rani Durgavati, Madam Kama etc. since she hailed from the remotest area of the country. She was born on 26th Jan 1915 and breathed her last on 17th Feb 1993. Her 78 years of life was full of tremendous actions. She possessed divinity by birth and a lot of incidents are there as a testimony to it. Her great determination and dedication to fight out the foreign rule and protect the Indigenous faith of Zeliangrong people did not receive the deserving importance even after 66 years of Independence. She was the preceptor of 'Heraka', an indigenous Faith that aimed to reform the Zeliangrong Community

At the age of 13 she joined in the struggle initiated by her cousin Haipou Jadonang against British Rule in India. Jadonang undertook Dharmayatras to Bhuwan Pahad in Cachar District of Assam. Young Gaidinliu also joined in these Dharmayatras. Jadonang and Rani Gaidinliu were aware about the freedom struggle under the leadership of revolutionaries as well as Mahatma Gandhi. The British had imposed tax on the villagers and had brought full control of the forest areas. The villagers came under the leadership of Jadonang and discussed about the high-handedness of the British on their native villages. The movement later turned into an armed rebellion to drive out British and free the hilly terrain that spread, presently in the state of

Manipur, Assam and Nagaland. The movement was semi political and religious. Jadonang and Gaidinliu had met Mahatma Gandhi at Pandu near Guwahati, when the latter visited the place in 1928. Rani Gaidinliu took over the leadership when Jadonang was hanged on fake charges by the British on 29 Aug 1931 at Imphal.

Rani Gaidinliu organized people belonging to Zeliangrong tribe and fiercely fought against the British. Gaidinliu was arrested in 1932 at the age of just 16 and was sentenced to life imprisonment by British Rulers. Jawaharlal Nehru met her at Shillong jail in 1937. Nehru gave her the title of 'Rani' and she became popular as "Rani Gaidinliu". She was released in 1947 after the country got independence and continued to work for the upliftment of Zeliangrong people.

It is a matter of astonishment that after spending rigorous imprisonment for 15 long years, she organized a resistance movement, when she was freed. She stood against the forceful conversion drive executed by outlawed Naga National Council (NNC) lead by Phizo into Christianity. She had to go underground from 1959 to 1966.

Later, she was honoured by Govt. of India by giving Tamrapatra as a recognition to her struggle against British and was conferred Padma Bhushan.

A postal stamp of Rani Gaidinliu was also brought out during NDA regime.

ABVKA has been doing its best efforts in bringing the great sacrifice of Rani Gaidinliu into limelight. Zeliangrong Heraka Association has taken task to celebrate centenary year of Ranima from 26th Jan 2014 to 26th Jan 2015. KKM of ABVKA extends its full support to Zeliangrong Heraka Association to make the birth centenary celebrations a grand success. KKM, also, demands to the Government of India to honour Ranima Gaidinliu in a great manner by installing her statue in the premises of Parliament and by other appropriate ways. It urges the Governments and other concerned authorities that the heroic deeds of Rani Gaidinliu and other freedom fighters of N.E. Region should get the deserving place as national heroes in our History and text books for the knowledge of our new generation for long lasting inspirations. KKM, further, calls upon all nationalist organizations to celebrate the birth centenary programme in prominent and metro cities of India. KKM also resolves to take all steps of its own in celebrating the birth centenary across the country.



Rani Gaidinliu performing puja and being blessed by his Holiness Swami Vijnandji Maharaj of Bharat Sevashram Sang on the occasion of conformation of Vivekanand Sewa Sanman-1987. Sponsored by Bada Bazar Kumar Sobha Pustakalay, Kolkata in 1987. Watching-Jugakishor Jaitihala, the President.

Inner Line Permit: A Legal Paradox

- Dr. Fenela. L. Nonglait, Advocate

The present hype over the sensibility of the need to protect the folk identity in consonance with the law of the Land have brought about a wire storm debate with everyone looking at a half full glass of water and a half empty one.

Belling the wild cat of influx and anti-infiltration seems to spurn a stream of courageous approach by one and all. Hitherto let us turn back time from where this legal paradox emerges in this ipso facto lexicon (legal dictionary). Way back in the 18th Century when India was neither a country nor a legal State, comes a law canon by the Queen to safeguard through fears and cold regime with punitive regulatory provisions to the transit Bengal Province to enter the entire North Eastern Region through the Government of India Act, 1870, viz., The Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873.

The Law bequest judicial powers on the districts authority of Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur (Garo Hills), Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Naga Hills and Cachar to frame restrictive prohibitions for the entry of only Indian Citizens or passing through such districts from going beyond such line without a pass under the hand and seal of the District Officer/officers. However facing grave loss of revenue and non-cooperation of the natives in some districts the regulation was referred to the Amending Act, 1897 along with many tracts Regulations. Section 4, repeal the Garo hills district from the purview of the 1873 Regulations.

This repealed provision exempt the Garo hills District during the partition of Bengal in 1905, Eastern Bengal and Assam. It is to be noted that the Garo hills district does not fall under the Eastern Bengal Provincial Jurisdiction. So the apt implication is that the State of Meghalaya which comprises of the three Districts, Garo, Khasi and Jaintia Hills would have no

locus standi to frame a law which does not cover the jurisdiction of the whole State, for the ILP under the EBF Act 1873 covers and is applicable only in the Khasi and Jaintia district.

Hence The State of Meghalaya attains its statehood on the 21st January, 1972, and it comprises of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills District of Assam. The regulation therefore does not apply to the third district of Garo Hills. It applies to the then British areas of Khasi and Jaintia Hills District only. This development puts the expose facto law effect (laws, enactments pass before independence still got constitutional recognition after Independence) to the repealing Act, 1897. Hence the Legal hindrance for formulating the INNER LINE PERMIT in the present scenario of our unbounded State of Meghalaya is a stale picture of law and reality. The Regulation in its present form is applicable only in some areas of the State. It does not apply in the third district of Garo Hills nor does its applicability in the Khasi States area determined. If extension is sought a new law has to be made.

If a new Law/Act is proposed to be made for extension of the Regulation 1873 over the whole State, it may amount to making a law relating to migration on movement of population. Such a subject is covered in the Union List and the State does not have the power to make such or any Law in this matter. Therefore, the Meghalaya State Legislature cannot enact such a law by itself. It is to be reminded here that in 1979 an attempt was made by the State Government to introduce a Bill in the State Assembly for extending the Regulation 1873 over the whole State of Meghalaya but the Bill could not be considered by the House as the subject matter falls under the Union List (Parliament). Hence the legal implications problems arising from the above legal lacunae make the present

demand for ILP in the State of Meghalaya a legal paradox.

It is to be noted that the State Government in 1999 constituted a Working Group Committee under the Chairmanship of (L) Shri T. H. Rangad, the then Home Minister in which they have admitted that there should be a proper balancing between development activities and influx of outsiders into the State as who come into the State are labourers and job seekers rather than investors and tourists. The Working Group examined certain laws which could have made and impact on inter-state migration of population and also discussed with the officers of concerned departments of the Governments regarding implementation of such laws \ regulations and noted as follows:

Inter-State Migrant Workmen Regulation of Employment and condition of Services]Act of 1979; This act deals with migrant workmen/labour force who come into the State on contract basis; that is, the local contractors should have acquired their services from other contractors outside the State.

The Labour Department which enforces the law reported that there is no contract labour force in the State which necessitates action under the provisions of the labour law. Job-seekers and labour-force who come into the State from outside the State are doing so on individual basis and therefore do not fall within the purviews of the law. Hence, all steps taken by the government for appointment of a few EACs as ex-officio Inspectors of Labour in their respective districts have not produced any result at all.

The Benami Transaction Prohibition Act 1980: This law exists only on paper and has never been enforced on the ground due to certain inherent defects. The Meghalaya Transfer of Land (Regulation) Act 1971: This law has been effective to a great

extent in preventing transfer of land from tribals to non-tribals. It does not however regulate transfer of land between the indigenous tribals of the State to other tribals of the North Eastern Region as a result the number of tribal people from outside the State owning land in the State is on the increase day by day. The Garo Hills District (Residence Toll) Regulation 1961: The Regulation provides for compulsory registration of all people assessable to Residence Toll and is therefore a very important tool for keeping track of the outside labour force and job seekers, etc., who entered into the autonomous district of Garo Hills.

The Committee however regretfully noted that the enforcement of the above regulation has been kept in abeyance by the Executive Committee, GHADC in 1994 due to certain complaints. Had this Regulation been strictly enforced in the autonomous District, the problem of influx of outsiders and foreigners especially in the West Garo Hills District could have been properly monitored and assessed.

Regulation of Trading by Non-Tribals in the Autonomous Districts: All the three Autonomous District Councils of the State are implementing their respective regulations for trading by non-tribals in their respective areas of jurisdiction. It has however been opined that the provisions of the regulation have been

misused by the concerned authorities resulting to capturing of business activities by non-tribals in many areas.

2.11. Having considered the existing laws and regulations which have a bearing on the subject, the committee came to the conclusion that there is no effective mechanism to regulate large scale inter-state movement of population which is a necessity, not only from the point of view of maintaining the demographic structure of the State, but also in maintaining the identity of the indigenous tribal people of the State.

However the said above Acts being defunct in practice may be re examined again by providing new teeth for better implementation and proper mechanism under the backdrop of the Regulation by inserting ILP provisions in them.

The Inner Line Regulation is a pre-Constitutional law and hence, the other question that whether the Regulation can still be enforced in those areas where it is applicable after the commencement of the Constitution in view of the fundamental rights to settle and reside and move freely in any part of India under Article 19(1) the answer is in the affirmative in view of Art. 13 of the Constitution as having no retrospective effect to pre constitutional laws.

Legal Measures which could be taken up by the State Government: Long Cut Measures: Move the

Government of India for extension of the Eastern Bengal Frontier Regulation 1873 in the District of Garo Hills whereby the due process will be time consuming since amendment to an existing law will be done through the Home Affairs Ministry and put up for discussion in the Parliament. e.g., State of Manipur since 2001 fights for ILP and also passed a Resolution on the 13th July, 2012. This still awaits Parliament/ President Assent till date.

Or - Short Cut Measures: Initiate new Legislative measures to integrate enforcement of all existing laws with the New Law within the Legislative competence of the State Legislature for effective measures to deal with influx and immigration issues. In which case any need to further strengthen the laws can be effectively done by the State Legislature.

Coming to the cultural, traditional and linguistic damages that the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo people are facing which in due process of time shall become irreparable loss, let's inculcate ethos which are sustainable in law and practice by incorporating the sets of already existing law to form a Strongly bounded Regulated Provisions diluting the emerging rise of crimes and depleting growth of the indigenous local people and genuine residents in general.

(<http://meghalayetimes.info/index.php/writer-s-column/21994-inner-line-permit-a-legal-paradox>)

Workshop on Promotion of Tagin Dialect

DAPORIJIO, Feb 23: A day-long workshop on development, preservation and promotion of Tagin dialect was conducted here today.

The workshop held in three sessions saw presentation of Tagin dialect in paper by language experts followed by debate and discussion on the development of Tagin script.

There was also technical session held in which language experts introduced their usage of Roman lipi (script) in the development of the dialect.

Earlier, the workshop started with

the introduction of Tagin dialect and its status in day-to-day life of Tagin community by TCS president Tabu Paktung and Secretary General Lardik Kare.

Earlier, inaugurating the workshop, Deputy Commissioner Tahang Taggu said that Tagin, one of the fast developing communities in the state is endowed with rich dialect which needs to be preserved and promoted. He appealed to all community members to know their own indigenous dialect with other modern

languages.

Meanwhile, Tapen Sigia, MLA, Dr. Ashan Riddi, Director of Distance Education, Rajiv Gandhi University, Mary Tayeng, Language Officer, Upper Subanisiri, Dr. VM Singh, Associate Professor, Daporijo Govt. College and many other intellectuals, including all executive members of Tagin Cultural Society expressed their views on development of the dialect during the workshop.

(<http://www.arunachaltimes.in/feb14%2024.html>)

India-Bangladesh Border Management: The Challenge of Cattle Smuggling

- Joyeeta Bhattacharjee

India and Bangladesh share proximity of culture, history, language and geography. In spite of this intimate relationship, ties between the two countries have remained problematic.

Among the many challenges facing the relationship are river water sharing, trade and transit, illegal migration and border management. One recent source of tension has been violence on the border.

Even though there have been attempts on both sides to bring peace and tranquility to the border, success has been elusive.

One of the reasons for this failure is the disinterest shown by both India and Bangladesh in tackling the problem of rampant cattle smuggling which has made the Indo-Bangladesh border a dangerous place for ordinary people.

Introduction

India and Bangladesh are separated by a 4098-km border passing through flat and hilly terrain, rivers and jungles. In some parts, the border passes through heavily populated areas with cultivation extending to the very edge of the border. Border pillars remain the only identification of the international boundary. What makes the areas abutting the border both interesting and complex is that the communities who straddle the political boundary are of the same ethnic stock, with common language, traditions and culture. Since there are countless streams and rivulets, it is not easy to establish and maintain border pillars on these river islands or chars. Varying seasons make it even more difficult to identify where Bangladesh begins. Many of these islands, clearly visible during the dry seasons, disappear when the monsoons arrive with thunderclaps.

This makes effective patrolling

difficult in these areas. It however encourages smugglers of all kinds—trading in contraband and cattle. The matter of cattle smuggling would have remained a law and order problem but for the incidents of firing by the Indian security forces in which Bangladeshis have died. Bangladesh has accused the Indian Border Security Force (BSF), the paramilitary unit tasked with manning the International Boundary, of killing its citizens. The Indian authorities have strongly refuted these allegations, justifying the firing as preventive action to stop smugglers and other criminals from trespassing into India. The Indian authorities assert that the attacks on the border personnel by the smugglers have increased in recent years, forcing the soldiers to resort to firing. In 2010, they state, 32 intruders were killed while 64 BSF personnel were injured in the incidents. When the BSF, on the request of the Bangladesh government in 2012, resorted to non-lethal weapons like rubber bullets and pump action guns, the number of Bangladeshis killed on the border fell to 11 while the number of BSF personnel injured in the attacks rose to 150. India contends that the security forces resort to the use of lethal weapons in self-defence.

These accusations and counter-accusations have further deepened suspicion and bitterness between the two neighbours. Although there are no official statistics either from Bangladesh or India about the number of people killed or their nationalities, NGOs in Bangladesh claim that over 1000 Bangladeshis have been killed on the border between 2001 and 2010. This figure could be exaggerated but it has led to a great deal of resentment in Bangladesh. There is no denying that deaths do take place on the border and one of the main reasons is the rampant smuggling of cattle.

Cattle Smuggling

The cattle trade on the India-Bangladesh border is worth \$500 million annually. A major reason for the flourishing trade is the export ban imposed by India. The demand for beef in Bangladesh is quite high but the supply is limited. On the other hand, India is a cattle surplus country and the demand for beef is fairly low. Estimates suggest that about 20,000 to 25,000 cattle heads worth \$81,000 from India are smuggled daily into Bangladesh. The primary motivation is of course profit. The demand-supply equation keeps the price of cattle quite high in Bangladesh. A cattle head which fetches Rs 500 to 3000 in India gets as much as Rs 20,000 to Rs 40,000 in Bangladesh.

The smuggling mainly takes place through North and South Bengal, Tripura, Assam and Meghalaya frontiers. A significant portion of the trade takes place in Murshidabad district of West Bengal. Cattle are brought from far-off places like Rajasthan, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The price per cattle head is cheaper in these states and the cattle owners get good money in the border areas where smuggling takes place. For instance, an unproductive or old cow costs Rs 500 in Haryana but it can fetch five times the price in West Bengal.

On the border, the price of the same cattle head could be as high as Rs 5000.

The smugglers also take advantage of loopholes in Indian laws. The law does not ban movement of cattle from one state to another. This is exploited by the smuggling networks to transport cattle from distant states in trucks and by rail to West Bengal. The cattle are transported purportedly for 'agricultural purposes'. Rules for

transportation of cattle are violated often but rarely is action taken against offenders. According to Article 55 of the Transportation of Animal Rules (TAR), 1978: "an ordinary goods wagon shall carry not more than ten adult cattle or fifteen calves on broad gauge and not more than four adult cattle or six calves on narrow gauge". In reality, however, as many as 300 animals are loaded in each wagon. This trend clearly highlights the country-wide network of cattle smugglers.

The policy of auctioning the seized cattle at the border by the BSF does not help the situation. Often, the highest bidders are the smugglers who happily shell out around Rs 700 for a couple of cows knowing fully well that they can get a far higher price for the same in Bangladesh.

People of different religious backgrounds are involved in this trade. Most of the traders are Muslims while the drivers and handlers are Hindus. The kingpins are

more difficult to identify. Most of the trans-shipment of the cattle across the border is carried out by low key handlers, mostly living in border areas. These handlers have a good knowledge of the border and are aware of easier routes into Bangladesh.

There are 68 smuggling corridors and 149 sensitive villages on the West Bengal border alone. Besides, the riverine borders, the char areas, are ideal transit points for smugglers—especially during the rainy season when it becomes extremely difficult to patrol these areas. Since rivers and streams change course often, vast patches of dry land also become convenient conduits for smuggling.

Perhaps the only place where the smugglers face any resistance from the security agencies is at the border itself. In many cases, these confrontations end up in the killing of low level handlers.

These killings do not deter other smugglers or disrupt the network but they certainly harm the bilateral relationship.

Criminal Enterprise

Since the stakes are quite high, cattle smuggling over the years has become a criminal enterprise with several networks involved in the trade. There is no credible information about the number of kingpins or their identity. There is also no doubt about



the involvement of the transport mafia from both India and Bangladesh as well as some police personnel. There is evidence that cattle smuggling is part of a much bigger smuggling racket that includes human trafficking, guns and other contraband. The smugglers obviously use the hawala route to transfer money and their activities have raised concerns about flow of fake currency and funding of terrorists.

Recent arrests and seizures have confirmed a link between cattle-smuggling and the smuggling of fake currency. Reportedly, as against a market price of Rs 4000 for a smuggled cattle head, Indian smugglers are paid Rs 10,000 in fake

currency to be circulated in India.

Moreover, what has alarmed Indian security and intelligence agencies is the link between cattle smuggling and terrorist groups operating out of Bangladesh. A Harkat-ul Jihad al Islami (HuJI) cadre arrested in UP in 2008 confessed to being a cattle smuggler as well as to smuggling guns and ammunition for terrorist groups. In the same year, a letter written by the Animal Welfare Department of Ministry of Environment and Forest to the Ministry of Home Affairs stated the possibility of money generated from cattle smuggling being used to fund terror organisations and their sleeper cells operating in India. In April 2013,

the National Investigating Agency (NIA), set up to investigate terrorism-related cases, filed a charge-sheet against a group of persons smuggling fake currency to fund Hizb-ul Mujahideen (HuM), a Kashmir-based terrorist outfit.

One of those charge-sheeted was a Bangladeshi involved in cattle smuggling.

The cattle trade is also linked to the problem of illegal migration. There are reports that the smugglers drug the cattle, damage the barbed wire fencing and allow people to sneak through. These points have become an easy way to enter into India.

Legal Issues

The ban on export of cattle follows the Directive Principles of State Policy set down in Article 48 of the Constitution—"the state shall endeavour to organise agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines and shall, in particular, take steps for preserving and

improving the breeds, and prohibiting the slaughter, of cows and calves and other milch and draught cattle". The ban on cow slaughter has social and cultural roots as well. The cow occupies a holy position in Hinduism. Besides faith, there are simple economic reasons for protecting cows. Cows have been used for tilling and other farming activities. Cows have also been, in many parts of the country, the only source of milk and dung (used both as a fertiliser and fuel).

In keeping with Article 48, several Indian states enacted laws banning slaughter of cattle. Assam was the first state to do so. Cow slaughter is permitted only in two states: West Bengal and Kerala.

As India industrialised and mechanized its agriculture after 1947, the utility of cattle in the everyday life of a farmer gradually declined. This, along with the ban on slaughter, led to a surplus of cattle heads—resulting in the reduction of availability of fodder and grazing areas. The problem of 'plenty' became acute with rapid improvement in the country's veterinary facilities.

Since the export of cattle is a politically sensitive issue, successive governments have steered clear of reviewing the ban. Consequently, illegal slaughter of cattle has become rampant in different parts of the country.

When Bangladesh came into existence in 1971, a new avenue opened up. The new nation was in urgent need of cattle to till its arable land and since the cattle stock in erstwhile East Pakistan was inadequate, the Bangladesh government turned to India for help. But, officially, there was not much that India could do because of the ban on exporting cattle. Instead it chose to ignore the issue as cattle heads began making their way to Bangladesh, first as 'farm hands' and then as beef. This stand underwent a dramatic shift when the regime of General H.M. Ershad, considered unfriendly towards India, came to power. It was then that India ordered a crackdown on cattle smuggling.

Thus, India has not followed a consistent policy in containing the smuggling.

Bangladesh's Position

Bangladesh does not treat cattle smuggling from India as a crime. In 1993, it gave the cattle trade a legal status by making it a source of revenue. A cattle "smuggler" becomes a "trader" once he is in Bangladesh and pays Taka 500 (Rs. 383) as Customs charges. He only needs to state that he found the cattle "roaming near the border". This convenient arrangement has enabled Bangladesh to earn substantial revenue from cattle smuggling.

The Customs levy is not the only source of revenue for Dhaka. The bone and leather collected from the slaughtered cattle are used by the leather and ceramic industries. Ceramic is a major industry in Bangladesh: it exports bone china tableware to over 50 countries that fetches substantial foreign exchange. In 2009-2010, the country received \$30.78 million from export of bone china items. The abundance of leather has also helped Bangladesh become a major leather producing country in the world. In 2008-09, leather exports were to the tune of \$381.14 million. Above all, the direct product from the slaughtered cattle, beef, is a major export item. In 2011, the export earnings from beef were over \$3.4 million.

It is, therefore, natural that Bangladesh would not be keen on taking any steps to prevent cattle smuggling. Dhaka fears that any changes in Indian laws could adversely affect its domestic beef industry, reduce revenues and create problems of food security.

Review Ban or Maintain Status Quo?

This situation presents an acute dilemma for policy makers in India. Any steps by India to curb cattle smuggling could be interpreted as being anti-Bangladesh and further vitiate the atmosphere.

Moreover, if India fails to resolve

the issue, more border killings could occur in the future.

There are several reasons why India must take a decision on this issue sooner than later. The most important is to deny criminals and terrorists an easy source of funding and transit mode. Both India and Bangladesh have been working together in containing terrorism as the link between terrorist groups and cattle smugglers has been evident for some time.

The most effective, and pragmatic, step would be to lift the export ban. This would make the trade legal, facilitate health check-ups of animals and generate revenue. It would also stop needless deaths on the border. Bangladesh may bristle at the decision initially but can be convinced about the long term benefits of legalizing the trade. As an initial step, cattle trade can be allowed in specially organized 'haats' or markets on the West Bengal-Bangladesh border.

The bigger problem, however, would be at home: cattle trade is a highly emotive and sensitive issue. It would be difficult for any government to take the risk, especially in an era of coalitions and regional compulsions. However, it is in India's own interest to review the current approach to cattle trade across the border and build the much needed political consensus by aligning national policy with ground realities.

(ABOUT THE AUTHOR : Joyeeta Bhattacharjee is Associate Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi. She has done her PhD in Conflict Resolution from Assam University, Silchar. A diploma holder in HRD from National Institute of Labour Education and Management, Chennai, she was awarded a Junior Research Fellowship by Indian Council for Philosophical Research (2002-04). She also holds a diploma in Japanese from Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan, New Delhi.)

(<http://meghalayatimes.info/index.php/writer-s-column/20960-india-bangladesh-border-management-the-challenge-of-cattle-smuggling>)

China Should Shed Expansionist Mindset: Modi

PASIGHAT, Feb 22: Wading into a foreign policy issue for the first time, Narendra Modi on Saturday asked China to shed its “expansionist mindset”, making it clear that no power on earth can snatch Arunachal Pradesh from India.

“China should shed its expansionist policy and forge bilateral ties with India for peace, progress and prosperity of both the nations,” the BJP’s prime ministerial candidate said addressing a rally here in his current election campaign.

“Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India and will always remain so. No power can snatch it from us. People of Arunachal Pradesh didn’t come under pressure or fear of China,” he said.

“I swear in the name of this soil that I will never allow the state to disappear...breakdown and to bow down,” Modi said to a thunderous applause from people gathered near the mighty Siang River.

He said China should shed its expansionist mindset because the world of today does not accept it. The entire world is moving towards development, he said.

“China needs to change its stand. China should shed its expansionist mindset and adopt the plank of development. Focus is on the development all over the world,” the Gujarat Chief Minister said.

Lauding the patriotic nature of the people, Modi said that because of the people, who were guarding the state as well as the country as sentinels, Arunachal remained an integral part of the country.

“The people here are real patriots as they salute their counterparts with ‘Jai Hind’ and are zealously protecting the state’s territory.... They gave a befitting reply to the advancing Chinese army during 1962 and the British and several army personnel from the state also fought with Pakistan during the Kargil war,” he said. “Arunachalees are very proud Indians and had always stood up against Chinese. During 1962 war,

Arunachalee soldier Neelam Tabe sacrificed his life fighting against Chinese. Arunachalee soldier have fought valiantly during Kargil war too,” Modi continued.

While directly referring to the January 29 murder of Arunachal Pradesh youth Nido Tania in Delhi, Modi cautioned the UPA government against underestimating the people of the state and added that it was the duty of the entire nation to protect the people and the state’s territorial integrity.

He termed killing of young Arunachalee students Nido Tania as national shame and promised that he will try his every best to ensure justice for the departed soul.

Modi also spoke about emotional hydropower issue. “Arunachal has been gifted with abundant natural resources, of which water is the biggest asset. The rivers of state if tapped properly can become source of income. However I respect the sentiment of those Arunachalees who are opposed to big hydropower projects. We can still construct small hydro projects and can

become powerhouse of the country,” said Modi.

Expressing his concern over slow pace of development in the state, BJP PM in waiting stated that real development will heal all the pain of Arunachalee. “Herbal, horticulture and handicraft will be important sector of development in the state. These three

sectors have immense potential and if tapped properly will provide employment opportunities to many Arunachalees,” said Modi. Setting tone for coming Lokh Sabha election, Modi while addressing the Vijay Sankalp Abhiyan rally also tried his best to touch emotion of people of Arunachal.

In the rally, prominent personalities of the state including former Arunachal Chief Minister Gegong Apang, first member of Lok Sabha R K Khrimy, Former Home Minister L Wanglet, Sanchoom Numu, former Minister, retired Colonel Remo Karbak, first military commissioned officer and also the first colonel of the state Gumke Riba, among others were officially accepted in the BJP by state BJP president Tai Tagak in the presence of Narendra Modi.

Meanwhile, BJP spokesperson Tech Necha said that thousands of Modi fans could not join the rally due to unexpected restrictions imposed by the state police on the pretext of security reason.

(<http://www.arunachaltimes.in/feb14%2023.html>)

I love my India...

What is India to me?

A giant family tree,
a land of dances and music, well known,
Cannot think of a dearer place than my home!
Full of culture, rich and unique,
Singers grin from cheek to cheek,
Pots of curry, rice and bread,
Feast and feast, until you are well fed.
The small paths and the banana trees,
Miles of bushes, with lush green tea leaves,
Stray dogs and cats roam about,
Kids run out to feed them, without a doubt.
At dawn, the sweet songs of the cuckoo ring in our ears,
As the milkman comes, you hear a clang,
Light pours in through the windows bright,
Kids run through the fields, as the birds take their flight.
Large, emerald-like green mountains and rivers so blue,
This In my beloved home, there s’ nothing more true.
Home, family and amazing memories,
That’s what my India is to me!
Ragini Bora, Grade-VII,
Core Knowledge Charter School, Madison Wisconsin, USA

China Plays Down Modi's Border Remarks

BEIJING (Reuters) - China's Foreign Ministry sought to play down on Monday remarks by Narendra Modi, after the frontrunner to become India's next prime minister asserted at the weekend that the disputed territory of Arunachal Pradesh was an integral part of India.

India and China fought a brief border war in 1962 over the region at the eastern end of the Himalayas. The nuclear-armed neighbours signed a pact in October to ensure that differences on their shared border do not spark a confrontation.

India regularly holds elections in Arunachal Pradesh, which has been administered as part of the Indian state for decades. China questions India's claim to the territory and calls it South Tibet.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying, asked about Modi's comments, said that China was dedicated to promoting friendly relations with its neighbours and to resolving disputes through

talks.

"The China-India border issue is one that has been left over from history. That being said, it is quite a complex and sensitive problem. It cannot be resolved by one or two rounds of talks," she told a daily news briefing.

"What is important is that China and India have both expressed many times their determination and desire to peacefully resolve the dispute through talks, dialogue and consultation," she added.

Before a final resolution is reached, both sides should work hard to maintain peace and tranquillity on the border, Hua said.

"The fact that there have been no shots fired in so many years really shows that both sides have the desire and ability to maintain peace and stability on the border."

Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party is expected to win more seats in the lower house of parliament than any other party at a national election due

by May, giving the Hindu nationalist leader a chance of to become prime minister.

President Pranab Mukherjee described Arunachal Pradesh as an integral part of the country on a visit last November, sparking a heated exchange. China urged India not to aggravate problems on their shared border.

The two Asian giants have a complicated relationship marked by both booming economic ties and growing distrust.

Last May, the two armies were locked in a three-week standoff in the western Himalayas after Chinese troops set up a camp at least 10 km (6 miles) inside territory claimed by India, triggering a public outcry and calls that India should stand up to its powerful neighbour.

(Reporting by Ben Blanchard; Editig by Simon Cameron-Moore)

(<http://in.news.yahoo.com/china-plays-down-modi-39-border-remarks-100731126.html>)

Hindus Should Have at Least 5 Children, Says VHP Leader Ashok Singhal



Claiming that the Hindu population was growing at a much slower rate than Christians and Muslims in the country, VHP leader Ashok Singhal Saturday said Hindu families should "produce at least five children".

The VHP veteran said if things continued in the same way and the Common Civil Code is not implemented, Hindus would be reduced to a minority in the country. "Hindus should not restrict themselves to two children per family. Only when they produce five children

will the population of Hindus remain stable," he said.

Alleging that conversion by missionaries was on at a fast clip, he said, "We won't be able to protect our religion if conversion is not stopped." Singhal was in Bhopal to meet local VHP office-bearers. Incidentally, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat is also in Bhopal.

Praising Narendra Modi as a nationalist, Singhal said more than 15,000 sants would campaign for him. He said sants had already taken a decision in this regard by endorsing the BJP's prime ministerial candidate, but added that the Parishad had nothing to do with any political party, including the BJP. Singhal said similar to the way in which BJP veteran L K

Advani emerged as a leader after the 1992 Ayodhya agitation, Modi's stature also grew after the Godhra riots. "Communal riots have stopped in Gujarat under Modi but they continue to take place wherever Congress is in power," he said.

Singhal said former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee carried out nuclear tests in Pokharan despite not being in majority. He also predicted that the Ram temple would be built at Ayodhya if Modi wins with a majority of 300 seats. The VHP leader also claimed that Arvind Kejriwal was hand in glove with "Naxals and Maoists" and alleged that he was backed by powers in the US.

(<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/politics/singhal-hindus-should-have-at-least-5-children/>)

Spotlight on Indian-American Contributions to US Culture

Washington: Bollywood, curry and yoga may be the bywords for India in the West. But a new exhibition here showcases the contributions made by Indian Americans to the American culture beyond the glam and glitter of Bollywood.

In seven sections spread over 5,000-square feet, 'Beyond Bollywood: Indian Americans Shape the Nation' explores over 200 years' history of Indian immigration from workers who built some of the first railroads in the West to the creator of Hotmail.

Mounted by Smithsonian's Asian Pacific American Centre at the National Museum of Natural History, it also takes a close look at Indian Americans' spiritual and religious influences, their achievements in academics, science and sports as also their contributions to art, food, music and dance.

The first-of-its-kind exhibition will be on display for a year in Washington and then travel to museums, libraries and community centers in 15 cities across the country through the Smithsonian Institution Travelling Exhibition Service for five years.

"We chose the title and the theme Beyond Bollywood very intentionally to attract visitors and suggest that we intended to go beyond stereotypes," said curator Masum Momaya, who developed the content.

Though its colour and design draw on Bollywood aesthetics, "My intention as a curator has been to focus on cultural, political and professional contributions that Indian immigrants and Indian Americans have made to shaping US history," she said.

A focal point of the exhibition is a dress by Indian-American designer Naeem Khan worn by First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House's Governors Dinner in 2012.



Other highlights include the 1985 National Spelling Bee trophy awarded to the first Indian American winner, Balu Natarajan and Mohini Bhardwaj's 2004 Olympic Silver Medal for gymnastics. "The vibrant life, culture and history of immigrants from India and Indian Americans is the story of America," said Konrad Ng, director of the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Centre noting one in hundred Americans has an India connection.

Told through captivating images, music, visual art, and first-person narratives, the exhibition features Indian Americans' migration experiences, working lives, political struggles and cultural and religious contributions.

Topics covered include: early (late 1800s-1900s) immigrant experiences, struggles for citizenship in the first half of the 20th century, professional contributions from the 1960s and beyond, organising for labour rights, women's rights and labour rights and cultural contributions through food, music, dance and in the entertainment industry.

Public programmes include performances featuring Indian American art, comedy, cuisine, dance, film, television, literature and music.

The Centre will also offer online education curriculum and an opportunity for individuals to share their family stories through a digital portal.

(http://zeenews.india.com/entertainment/and-more/spotlight-on-indian-american-contributions-to-us-culture_151294.html)

Of Valentine and My Little Nephew

- Er. Rajesh Pathak

On the benches; under the trees; near the entrance; here and there— wherever my eyes moved there was only one spectacle to see, and that was a pair of boy and girl gossiping intimately.

'Today the place is seemed to have invaded by the youths. But, after all, what could be the thing?'— the thought raised in my mind seeing this, as I entered the park for the evening walk, with my nephew, a kid studying in the standard 3rd then, last year.

As I moved ahead, little far inside the park, more of the couples [boy-girl] began to be seen there, drawing more close, almost falling on each other, in sheer defiance of all moral decency. Suddenly, words fell in my ear coming from some oldies passing by me— 'God save us from such Valentine-day. God knows what else time is to show us at this age!'

'Oh, so this is the fruit of Valentine day'— the thought clicked in my mind, clearing it [mind] of all the unfathomable questions so far befogged it. Amidst the scene around and in the state of dilemma, I gathered the courage to further raise my steps for the forward stroll, constantly watching sometime my nephew, and sometime the loving couples retreating different remote corners— where their activities now had got to be too outrageous to bear ; the people around were no concern for them. 'Indeed, it is because of this there raises so much hue and cry against Valentine-day'- gradually it began to occur to me. Suddenly, I grew concerned about my nephew. And, almost when the thought as to what impression all this would be making on the innocent mind of the child, he in a sheer innocent fashion asked me, 'Don't their teachers punish them for this, uncle?' The question left me stunned. And, the very next moment I turned my steps and made the back journey, holding the hand of the child, thinking as to why something else not occurred to Valentine that we are today made to see this his so-called day.

Hawkings and Beginning of Time

- Samir Kamerkar

Stephenn Hawkings in his lecture titled "The beginning of Time", concluded that the Universe has not existed for ever, but had a beginning with 'The Big Bang', about 15 billion years ago. He also stated that both the universe and hence real 'time' began from a singularity, an entity of infinite density, which then very slowly but steadily started expanding. Over billions of years it came to the current state of the universe through this expansion and is still expanding. These observations of arguably the world's greatest astrophysicist are very similar to what is written in the Naasadiya Sukta in Rigveda. You may not have heard of these Suktas by name or by their verse, but you may have heard their wonderfully meaningful translation by Shri. Vasant Dev, as the title and ending songs of "Bharat - Ek Khoj", the TV serial.

The Naasadiya Sukta begins by suggesting that

नासदासीनोसदासीत्तदानीं नासीद्रजो नो

व्योमापरो यत् ।

किमावरीवः कुहकस्यशर्मन्भः

किमासीदगहननं गभीरम ॥

Translated by Shri. Dev as
(Srishti se pehle sat nahin thaa, asat bhi nahin, Antariksh bhi nahin, aakaash bhee nahin thaa. Chhipaa thaa kyaa, kahaan, kisne dhaka thaa? Us pal to agam, atal jal bhi kahaan thaa.)

Thus stating that the universe that we know today, truth and un truth, atmosphere and space, even water, did not exist at the beginning. The sukta then goes on to say that there was neither death nor immortality, nor day nor night, not even fire. And then it describes an entity, just like Hawking's 'singularity' - The One, that was self sustaining, breathing without wind, just that One, and no other (existed).

न मृत्युरासीदमृतं न तर्हि न रात्र्या । आन्ह ।

आसीत् प्रकेतः

आनीदवातं स्वधया तदेकं तस्माद्भान्यन्नपरः

किंचनास

Hawking argues that the Book of Genesis, dates the creation of universe by God at four thousand and four B.C, where as the Big Bang proves that the world began much before that, and on its own from the

singularity. In the last two verses, the Naasadiya Sukta proclaims that the Gods as we know them, came later than The Creation itself, and hence who can really know, when creation happened and how it happened ? It very well may be that only The One (singularity) itself is the only entity that knows.

इयं विसृष्टिर्यत । आबभूव यदि वा दधे यदि वा न ।

यो । आस्याध्यक्षः परमे व्योमन्तसो आंग वेद यदि वा न वेद ॥

Again Shri. Dev captured the simple essence very well.

Srishti kaa kaun hai kartaa? Kartaa hai ya vikartaa? Oonche aakash mein rahtaa, Sadaaa adhyaksh banaa rahtaa. Wohee sach much mein jaantaa..Yaa nahin bhi jaanataa, Hain kisi ko nahin pataa, Nahin pataa, Nahin hai pataa, nahin hai pataa.

It will be interesting to explore further, the concept of singularity, as stated by the Hiranyagarbha Sukta, but that's for another time.

Tips on writing on Article in our Independence Day 2014 Special Issue.

Topic: Sacred Place of NE Bharat.

Guidelines :

1. Location and distance from an important known place
2. Historical and mythological background
3. Name of deity, if any, and way of worshiping
4. Point of reverence of the place
5. The time and occasion of visit
6. Ways and means of maintenance
7. Name of the communities use to visit this place
8. Relevant photographs of the site

NB: 1. Articles in hardcopy or softcopy by 15th June 2014.
2. Author's passport Photo and short biodata.

Post/Courier Your Letter to:

Heritage Foundation

30, F.C.Road, Uzan Bazar
Guwahati-781001,
Mob: 097070-85235

Or

e-mail to:

ourheritage123@yahoo.com

(Editor)

Pre-Nyokum Celebrated at NERIST Campus



NIRJULI, Feb 23: Pre-Nyokum Yullo was celebrated on Saturday at NERIST compound by its students and faculties with traditional and religious fervour.

NERIST Director Prof Depankar Pal and Special Secretary (Health) Dr Joram Beda attended the celebration as chief guest and guest of honour respectively.

Speaking on the occasion as special guest, assistant professor of Dept of Botany (RGU) Dr Hui Tag stressed on the breeding and conservation of Mithun in the eastern

Himalayan regions. Stating that Mithun is an animal of both cultural and economic importance for Tani groups, he suggested its conservation for sustainable utilization.

He further expressed concern over the excessive slaughtering of Mithuns during festive occasions – a practice that put the proud possession of the tribals under the vulnerable category. He opined that in order to sustain Mithun population, extensive breeding can be adopted and identification of community conservation reserve of

around 70 to 80 square km can be adopted.

“As Mithun is associated culturally so there should be customary laws to protect it, no laws framed by the govt can check and balance the Mithun population”, Dr Tag added.

Among other activities, presentation of traditional dance numbers by several artists, discourse on mythology of Nyokum Yullo celebration, etc marked the festivities.

(<http://www.echoofarunachal.com/?p=44141>)

POINTS TO PONDER

Wake up Women Police

- Lingdum Taha

It is appreciable that an independent women Police station has been established in Itanagar but it is sad to say that many offences like prostitution, alcoholism and drugs among women specially the teenagers are growing high. Recently when I was driving back from Itanagar to Naharlagun, I saw two teenage girls fully intoxicated driving Scooty. At 6 mile near Vantage point, the duo slipped and fell down in the middle of road. The passerby tried to help them but girls were using abusive words and so no one helped them. Later they were lying on the road side. I was there but I did not dare to help them.

It was not because I was afraid of them but I am afraid of the law that is new “criminal law (amendment) /Anti - Rape Bill, 2013” which provides ample provisions for the women folk to file case against any person by mere complaint without any proof or evidence. Moreover, the girls were using filthy words which made me more nervous to go near them.

In an another incident in my friend’s colony a women complained that she was raped by one man but later it was found that she was a prostitute and due to pecuniary interest the complaint was made. Such privileged provisions are now

being misused by the women. The law also prohibits the male police officer to arrest the women between dawns to dusk. Therefore, under such circumstances the male counterpart feels better to skip off to avoid uninvited trouble. In such case the women police can only maintain the neutrality without any hindrance. So, I would like to request the women police team not to stay idle but to carry out patrolling in and around the capital complex and take control of such situations relating to women where male counterpart cannot reach.

(<http://www.arunachaltimes.in/feb14%2022.html>)

The Terminal Decline of Christianity in New Zealand

- Max Wallace

8 January 2014 : The results of the 2013 New Zealand Census has Christianity down to 47 per cent. Retired scientist, Ken Perrott's, accompanying graph charts Christianity's decline in every recent census and projects its decline to just above 20 per cent by 2030 and further, beyond that date. It is, of course, very unlikely to disappear altogether, but, equally, the chances of a major Christian revival in New Zealand are very remote.

Perrott argues that citizens can 'double dip' in the Census by being a member of more than one group. He argues there are more responses to the religion question than there are citizens. Given the majority of Census religion question options are Christian, those ticking more than one Christian denomination could be, mathematically, in excess of 100,000. If that is so, Christianity in New Zealand could now be as low as 41.9 per cent.

The New Zealand Catholic noted that there was 'a stunning rise' in the number of people declaring 'no religion', a total of 1.635 million citizens out of a total population of 4.24 million. They remarked 'the number of census respondents who identified as 'no religion' or who didn't answer the religious affiliation question was more than the total number who identified as Christian. This is believed to be the first time this has happened in New Zealand census history.'

In a major address entitled 'The Gospel in the Decade Ahead' published on the website of the New Zealand Christian Network in 2011, but since removed, the national director, Glyn Carpenter, said that the NZCN's agenda was partly to 'turn the side of secularism' and 'rebuild a marriage culture'.

Three years later their agenda is in tatters with the government

legislating for gay marriage on 19 August 2013 and the Census result showing Christianity in a state of steep decline. It goes to the credibility of the NZCN that its website makes no mention of the Census result.

Secularism and secularisation

Like many hardline evangelists Glyn Carpenter confuses 'secularisation' with 'secularism'.

Secularisation refers to the on-going centuries old societal process of the fading away of religion as a part of everyday life. Many Christian writers agree with Max Weber's location of the origins of secularisation in the 16thC Reformation, the Protestant-Catholic split which 'allowed the freedom of the believer to think for himself.'

Briefly, it is characterised by the decline of religion as a factor shaping human life; replacement of community by a society-wide, pluralistic, materialistic, rational culture; a reliance on scientific modes of thinking and planning; the gradual diminution of the supernatural as a credible idea.

A Seventh-Day Adventist author wrote in 1987, well before Dawkins, Hitchens and Harris came to prominence, that 'the threat to religion in [the] modern technopolis does not come in the first place from aggressive atheism or the state or secularism, but from the urban-societal system itself with its underlying principles and attitudes and assumptions.'

Christian critics confuse secularisation with secularism when they claim that secularism is government characterised by 'the lack of any apparent, overt, visible interest in God, the Bible, religion or spiritual values.' This misses the key point, recognised by many other Christians, that secular government is characterised rather by separation of church and state, as inferred, they argue, in Jesus' famous response to

'render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.'

Locating separation of church and state in these words is contestable. Nevertheless, there is the key recognition here that government and religion are better separated. If they are not separated it follows that government is theocratic to a degree. I have argued this is the case in Australia and New Zealand, as many symbolic and financial aspects of government preference religion very advantageously, despite its decline.

Evangelical Christians, like many Muslims and other hardline religious, just don't understand, or refuse to understand, or reject the principle of, political secularism. They are wedded to a world view that simply cannot countenance any alternative to their own.

That, in fact, is a working definition of the term 'ideology': the inability, or total reluctance, to consider that other world views are credible alternatives to one's own. The notion that government should attempt balanced compromises between all world views, i.e; political secularism, is not on their radar. They do not seem to take the point that their rigid views don't sit well with democracy and are inherently totalitarian in nature.

Aspects of Christian decline

Sociologically, it seems the party is over for Christianity in New Zealand. While the New Zealand Association of Rationalists and Humanists' radio campaign to encourage citizens to tick 'no religion' in the 2013 census may have been successful, it is more likely that long term trends of secularisation and various sexual abuse and financial scandals associated with churches have put them beyond the point of no return; future declines in adherents seems certain well into the future.

The impact of civil celebrants, I believe, has also been very important.

Over decades they have been conducting marriage, funeral and naming ceremonies as alternatives to church services. The majority of these ceremonies are now civil. I suspect families experiencing a civil ceremony for the first time have found that a meaningful ceremony is possible without religion. At the next occasion they have chosen that option. Churches have been undermined at an important point of interface between themselves and the public.

This decline of religiosity is also global in most western nations. Even in the most religious, the United States, a British Christian theorist was advising his colleagues in 1987 that 'one of the best means of witnessing to those who do not currently have spiritual interests is at points of personal crisis: divorce, the death of a spouse, the loss of a job, or a serious accident or illness.' In other words, the mainstream message of Christianity even by then had little impact and the best way to convert citizens was, like compensation lawyers, to chase ambulances. Glyn Carpenter himself has conceded in the speech cited above that that is how he found God.

Despite their vast wealth, in the billions, forever accumulating thanks to their tax-exempt status; despite all the funding they have received for their religious schools; despite their wealthy, independent tax-exempt colleges; despite their schools of theology in universities; despite all the media time through various radio and television programs, either through purchased time or their own media; despite their various campaigns, their bookshops, their churches, their profile in the symbolic activities of government, the Anglican Queen's tours - despite all this - Christianity in New Zealand is falling in a hole.

By focusing too much on (1) the accumulation of wealth (2) attempts to influence government (3) the pursuit of status and prestige and (4)

risible attempts to rationalise all that, Christians have lost the plot. They are supposed to be about spiritual wealth and salvation, that is their *raison d'être*, but it is one gig they don't want to personalise.

They dish it out, but few practice it. They don't sell off their assets to alleviate poverty in pursuit of the Christian ideal of giving in a truly serious way, preferring to boast, in a self-aggrandising way, about how the sky would fall in if it wasn't for their charities. This is only partly true, and many of them live quite well, thank you, in comfortable positions running those charities.

It is this double standard that is augmenting their decline as the average citizen cannot see any difference between themselves and how self-confessed Christians live. To be sure, they are caught between a rock and a hard place: 'How are we Christians going to live in a money-loving world and yet not be of this world?'

That is a question that perhaps understandably could not be properly framed two thousand years ago when Christianity commenced. On the one hand they were told it was easier for a camel to pass through an eye of a needle than for a rich person to get to heaven. On the other they were told their God provided the abundance of the world for them to enjoy. Maybe two thousand years ago in a tiny, simple, illiterate, peasant economy that subtle but all-important contradiction could go unnoticed.

Today, in the high-intensity, market-setting, capitalist economy, it is a near impossible question, a source of confusion, as only extreme ascetics deny all forms of materialism. Because it's a project that will not be realised as there will never be enough Christian will to do so, Christianity will continue its downward slide. The new Pope, naming himself after the eccentric ascetic, St Francis, is trying to square this circle by cutting down on his Vatican luxuries: a futile gesture

from the man who is the sole owner of the never-publicly-audited Vatican Bank.

Conclusion

Just why all taxpayers should continue to subsidise Christianity's failing mission in New Zealand (and by extension, Australia) through tax exemptions and grants is a question that is now thrown into relief.

There are many secular demands on the budget, alternative ways to allocate taxpayers' revenue that would help grow the economy. It is not in the public interest for New Zealand to subsidise Christianity's (and other religions') failing private projects. It is time for government to move with the soon-to-be majority of the public, and blow the whistle on this game.

(<http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=15897&page=0>)

World's Oldest Man Credits Simple Diet for His Long Life

Born in 1896, world's oldest man, 118-year-old Premsai Patel, native of a remote village, attributed his long, healthy life to fresh green vegetables, pulses and a strict vegetarian diet. Patel, A retired government teacher, lives in Korba district of Chhattisgarh where he starts each day by reciting verses from the sacred Hindu scripture 'Ramcharitmanas' which he says 'purifies one's body and the soul'. Patel, lives with in a big joint family of sons, daughters- in- law and their children. Born in 1896, Patel is a living testimony of the heydays of Indian kings and British rule. A woman relative, Ghana Bai, said that Patel believes in living a happy and contented life and therefore, eats and drinks simple food without suffering the perils of old age.

(<http://in.lifestyle.yahoo.com/video/worlds-oldest-man-credits-simple-132100096.html>)

Law of Mother Earth makes Bolivia Best Country in the World

- Derek Schroeder



Bolivia's Law of Mother Earth, is the first of law to recognize the earth as a living breathing organism with inherent rights

Feb 22, 2014: No matter what you believe in — Christianity, Hinduism, Atheism, Sean Hannity — there's little debate that humans on this planet exist with a certain degree of impact. Environmental. Political. Social. It's the nature of cohabitation. Force a bunch of people, of anythings, to live in a confined space for several centuries and shit is going to hit the proverbial fan. There's no argument there. Where the argument intensifies is what the hell to do about it.

Do we stop reproducing to soothe our conscience and end the evil before it escalates? Do we stand united and direct the collective energy into a new dawn through consciousness conductivity, recreational drugs and dubstep? Or do we drill baby drill and embrace the rapture?

One thing that needs to be made clear is that with or without us, the earth is going to be just fine. Whenever we talk about saving the environment what we really mean is saving our environment. Most animals don't shit where they eat, except sheep. And Humans.

Which is what the Bolivian has decided needs to change. In Bolivia there is a government that has a

creative vision of life on this planet that puts our quality of life on a realistic plane. Evo Morales, the President of Bolivia, is a controversial person. However his vision that the value of life — all life—has merit and it is the first time a government has made this kind of leap. Bolivians believe that we cannot survive on

this planet if we fail to see that human life cannot exist without nature. Read that sentence again.

Think about it.



So...this is weird

The Law of Mother Earth is the first legal measure giving the Earth its day in court. It's the first law that states Mother Earth has the right to maintain the integrity of living systems and natural processes that sustain them, and capacities and

conditions for regeneration, the right to preserve the functionality of the water cycle, and the right to preserve the quality and composition of air for sustaining living systems and its protection from pollution among other things.

Developed by grassroots social groups and agreed by politicians, the Law of Mother Earth recognises the rights of all living things, giving the natural world equal status to human beings. In America we give this legal priority to corporations.

A major obstacle is the fact that Bolivia is structurally dependent on extractive industries. In 2010, 70 percent of Bolivia's exports were still in the form of minerals, gas, and oil. This structural dependence will be very difficult to unravel. But it isn't a hurdle with diminishing stature, nor is it one EVERY country will face in the future.

According to TheRightsofNature.org, the law requires the government to transition from non-renewable to renewable energy; to develop new economic indicators that will assess the ecological impact of all economic activity; to carry out ecological audits of all private and state companies; to regulate and reduce greenhouse gas emissions; to develop policies of food and renewable energy sovereignty; to research and invest resources in energy efficiency, ecological practices, and organic agriculture; and to require all companies and individuals to be accountable for environmental contamination with a duty to restore damaged environments.

Time will tell if Bolivia will crumble from within before or after the rest of the world because of this incredible law.

(<http://www.travelerstoday.com/articles/8889/20140222/law-mother-earth-makes-bolivia-best-country-world.htm>)

HINDUS, FACING EXISTENTIAL ATTACKS IN BANGLADESH

- Dr. Richard L. Benkin

Pakistan's 1951 census counted Hindus to be a third of the East Pakistan population. Today, in that same territory now known as Bangladesh, Hindus are about one in fifteen. That is a tragic fact—that Hindus are disappearing in another ancestral land of theirs. Two things make it even worse:

- That their disappearance is the result of atrocities including murder, gang rape, land seizures, child abduction, forced conversion, religious desecration, and more; which continue to occur at an average rate of at least one per week.

Every Bangladeshi government—from the first government under Sheikh Mujibar Rahman through the current one under his daughter Sheikh Hasina Wajed has been complicit in these atrocities and in the deliberate attempt to eliminate Hinduism from their nation.

One nine-day period in May 2012 saw a Hindu community leader murdered in broad daylight, the abduction of a child walking to a Hindu festival, and gang rapes of two Hindu women. Four horrific actions in nine days and the government took it as nine normal days in Bangladesh. In July 2013 alone: Hindu human rights advocate Rabindra Ghosh was attacked multiple times and harassed by an Awami League MP; a Hindu college student was abducted and murdered so his girlfriend could be forced to marry Muslims, and after she refused, police arrested her and let the perpetrators go; Hindu land seizures by a Member of Parliament were exposed, and the government protected the MP allowing him to continue committing crimes while remaining in office; police covered up massive attacks on Hindu communities that involved, rape, looting, arson, and assault, and they also tried to extort "protection money" from the Hindu communities. And these are only the atrocities we

confirmed with our limited resources and at least two independent witnesses.

More disturbing news: Evidence keeps coming to me about a disturbing trend that indicates how ingrained anti-Hindu atrocities are in Bangladesh. For several years, Bangladesh has seen an influx of Rohingya Muslims fleeing inter-religious conflict in neighboring Myanmar. According to several credible and independent sources, an unknown number of these refugees have joined with the radical groups and engaged in anti-Hindu activities. If Bangladesh is not actively supporting anti-Hindu ethnic cleansing, it is at the very least enabling it by looking the other way when it happens and sending even its newest residents a message that such actions will go unpunished in Bangladesh. Stay tuned for more information.

Imagine the horror of living under constant threat, having friends and family members brutalized or worse. Now imagine how much more horrifying it is to live like that knowing that the rest of the world simply does not care, which it is like for Hindus in Bangladesh.

Bangladeshi officials are so confident that their crimes will go unnoticed that they do not even try to be credible in their denials. Akaramul Qadar, the Bangladeshi ambassador to the United States for instance, tried to tell me that the reason why Hindus are disappearing from Bangladesh is voluntary: "They cannot find suitable matches for their children [in Bangladesh] so they go to India where there are more Hindus." Bangladeshi Home Minister Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir would not even acknowledge that Hindus are disappearing instead implying to me that, as an American, I should mind my own business because "33 people were killed in Connecticut," reference to a criminal act that the US government did

prosecute. That might be changing, however, and the change is coming from half way around the world.

The United States is one of the top importers of Bangladeshi garments. In 2012, the US had a \$4.4 billion trade deficit with Bangladesh; through October of this year, the deficit is on track to be even worse. Companies like Wal-Mart and all major jeans makers buy heavily from Bangladesh. Several other countries from Asia and Latin America export garments to the US and would love to grab a bigger piece of the large US market; countries that would move in quickly if the Bangladeshis were no longer competitive and not be ready to cede their new market share if the Bangladeshis decide to do the right thing. If discussions going on in Washington now bear fruit, Bangladeshi garments will be harder to get and more expensive when purchased unless that country stops its ethnic cleansing of Hindus. That would be a serious blow to the current Bangladesh government that is just clinging to power as next year's election looms. That severe economic blow could spell the end of its reign—and the Awami League knows it.

Are the Bangladeshis reacting already?

For the past year, I have been following the case of one young Hindu woman who was abducted when her family refused demands by local Muslim thugs and a few government officials to abandon their family land. When I was in the Bangladeshi capital of Dhaka earlier this year, I met with her family, who told me about the incident and the government's complicity. They asked for my help and by this time were not even interested in getting justice so long as their daughter was returned to them unharmed. Thus far, the government had turned a deaf ear to their pleas; and even after I submitted the evidence they provided to the Home Minister—

as he asked me to do—he ignored it and the girl remained missing.

Recently, however, I received word from associates inside Bangladesh who spoke with the young woman's sister. After we raised the issue, the case evidently came to the attention of Sheikh Hasina. The family met with her, and she said she would direct the local government to take action to retrieve the young woman. That is particularly interesting because it suggests that even the Prime Minister understood that the problem was complicity by the government; that it would take nothing more than appropriate action to save the woman.

As is the modus operandi of the Bangladeshi government, words never translated into action and the woman is still missing. While Sheikh Hasina's action is better than the inaction of the Home Minister and the ridiculous prattling of the Ambassador; it is far from enough and far too little for us to stop pressing at full speed with our efforts. The government's wish to appear civilized, however, could be the beginning of a turning point in our struggle.

More initiatives are underway in the United States, including a move to have individual localities recognize the ethnic cleansing of Hindus and

how the media and others have been ignoring it. The first success came on October 1, 2013, when the Chicago suburb of Mount Prospect did so, noting, "scant attention is being paid to the plight of Bangladeshi Hindus who live each day in fear of atrocities being committed against them for their religious beliefs."

Ultimately, it is up to the Bangladeshi government to choose between injustice and the radicals they fear or justice for all citizens and the ideals that Bangladeshi voters want them to have the courage to maintain.

Census Shows Christians No Longer a Majority in New Zealand

11 Dec 2013 : The results of the New Zealand census show a similar trend to that of the rest of the developed world – with religious adherence dropping dramatically.

Census 2013 figures released this week show four out of ten New Zealanders now declare themselves non-religious – a rise of 26% and a total of 1.6 million people.

Only 1.9 million people say they are affiliated to a church, down from more than 2 million in 2006.

Victoria University professor Paul Morris, who specialises in religious studies, said: "For the first time since 1901, Christians are not the clear majority of the country. The question now is: are we any longer Christian country?"

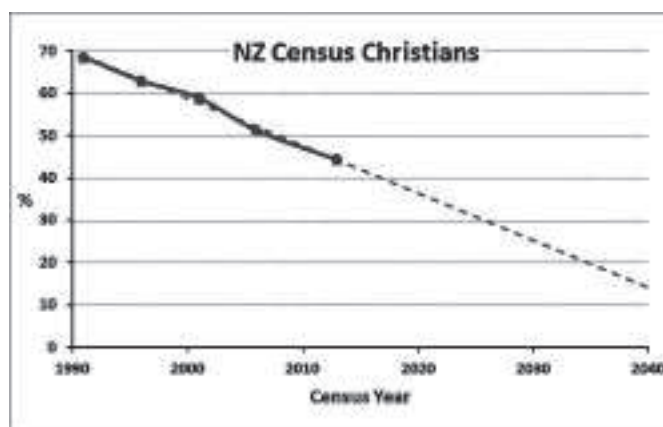
As in other Western nations, Christianity is facing a generational problem, with its older devotees dying off and the younger generations showing little interest.

The Anglican Church has lost nearly 100,000 followers, with the total dropping to just 459,000. This means that Catholicism is now New Zealand's biggest denomination with 492,000 devotees, down from

508,000 in 2006.

Most major churches saw a decline, but Pentecostal and smaller evangelical churches showed a small increase.

Anglican Bishop of Wellington Justin Duckworth admitted that his church was not connecting with



younger people but he clung to the "they're spiritual but not religious" comfort blanket.

Archbishop John Dew, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, insisted Christianity was still a big part of New Zealand life. "Religion continues to be part of our make-up and identity as a nation."

But while Christianity may be dwindling, other religions, often linked

with a rise in migrants, are flourishing.

Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam have all grown hugely. There are now 89,000 Hindus in New Zealand, a rise of 16,000 since 2006. During the same period the New Zealand Indian population grew by about 50,000.

Prof Morris said what were once fringe religions in New Zealand were now, through migration, big enough to challenge established churches. "These migrant religious communities are active and growing and now represent a significant facet of our life."

The rankings:

1. No religion 1,635,348 (38.6%)
2. Catholic 491,421 (11.6%)
3. Anglican 459,771 (10.8%)
4. Presbyterian 316,329 (7.5%)
5. Christian 217,177 (5.1%)
6. Methodist 97,320 (2.3%)
7. Hindu 89,082 (2.1%)
8. Buddhist 58,212 (1.4%)
9. Baptist 53,496 (1.3%)
10. Muslim 45,963 (1.1%)
11. Pentecostal 45,777 (1.1%)

(<http://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2013/12/census-shows-christians-no-longer-a-majority-in-new-zealand>)

Curbs on 'The Hindus' Ignites Row in the US

Washington, Feb 23, 2014 : Penguin India's decision to withdraw from publication and pulp copies of an American professor's book on Hinduism in an out of court settlement has ignited a fiery debate here on freedom of the speech in India.

The reactions have ranged from anger to sadness to jubilation depending on which side of the debate one is in.

If the influential New York Times branded it "Muzzling Speech in India", an Indian-American author and activist called it a "moral victory" for Hindus.

Pulping of "The Hindus: An Alternative History" by Wendy Doniger, who teaches Hinduism at the University of Chicago Divinity School, "is only the latest assault on free speech in India", the Times said in an editorial Friday.

"The publisher's move is likely to encourage more demands for censorship," it said, suggesting "the wanton abuse of laws restricting speech is creating a climate of fear" and "enemies of free speech have pledged to get even more books banned".

Alyssa Ayres, a senior fellow for India, Pakistan and South Asia at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), a leading think tank, who earlier worked as a top official in the State Department's South Asia Bureau, was more circumspect.

In an article last week on "The Limits of Speech in India", Ayres wrote that Penguin's decision "came as sad news" to her. "One of the great things about India, in my view, is the wonderful acceptance of vigorous disagreement."

But now "it is getting harder to reconcile the India that symbolises robust democracy, pluralism on a grand scale, and the lessons of tolerance, with another India tiptoeing to avert hurt feelings", she wrote.

Doniger herself declined a request to talk about her until she has "had time to catch my breath", but she told the New York Times last week that she expected the book to meet trouble in India.

Noting that "she wasn't the only author to face scrutiny by Hindu fundamentalist groups", Doniger told the Times that "right now people are really worried about what's happening in India" and that has spurred "this tremendous outpouring of indignation" about the fate of her book.

In her book, Doniger said she wanted "to tell a story of Hinduism that's been suppressed and was increasingly hard to find in the media and textbooks".

The author told the Times she "had no plans officially to protest the decision in India" and expressed gratitude for the a good run the book had there.

In the US too, the controversy has sent the book shooting toward the top of Amazon's best seller ranks.

Meanwhile, Dinanath Batra, president of Shiksha Bachao Andolan, the group that had initiated legal action against Penguin, told Time magazine why they objected to Doniger's book.

"Her intention is bad, the content is anti-national and the language is abusive. Her agenda is to malign Hinduism and hurt the feelings of Hindus," he was quoted as saying.

New Jersey entrepreneur and author Rajiv Malhotra, founder of The Infinity Foundation who has questioned the "eroticisation" of Indian texts by Western scholars, called the Penguin decision a "moral victory".

Doniger is now "anticipating trouble" with a forthcoming Norton anthology of primary Hindu writings, due out in November, of which she is the editor.

"It's not me, I'm collecting these texts," she told the Times. "It's the texts these people won't like."

"I've made a point of putting in a lot of them, so people will see Hinduism is both the thing Batra and company say it is and what I say it is."

(<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/387947/curbs-american-author039s-book-hinduism.html>)

Hindu Community Facing 'Forced Conversions' in Pakistan

Islamabad, Feb 17, 2014: Hindus in Pakistan have been facing problems due to forced religious conversions, an issue that came up at a seminar titled 'Hindus in Pakistan - issues and solutions' held at the Karachi Press Club.

"Can you accept your daughters forcibly being married to Hindu men?" asked Raj Kumar, uncle of a Hindu

girl Rinkle Kumari, at the seminar held Sunday. Calling a six-year-old girl, Jumna, to the stage, Kumar said she along with her 10-year-old sister Pooja was forced to change religion, Dawn reported Monday.

"What do children as young as Jumna and Pooja know about Islam and their own religion for that matter, that they'd want to convert? This is

the height of injustice," he said. Jumna's parents said their girls did not return home Feb 4 after they left home to sell toys, adding that they raised an alarm over it.

It was found that they have been staying with a Muslim man. Police brought them to a court as Muslim children and prevented the parents
(Contd. to next Page)

Woman and Hindu Dharma

- Er. Rajesh Pathak

“At the time when Brahmadev was deeply absorbed in Samadhi [meditation] his body split into two halves— one of a man, *Manu*; and another of a woman, *Shatarupa*, the wife of Manu. It is they who were the ancestors of human beings, and thereafter only from them that the entire subject came into existence.”[Bhagwatpurana-3-12]

What above verse signifies is that where the other parts of the world awakened to give equal right to woman like man as late as modern period, she was held to be as sacred as man at the very inception of the civilization in Hindu life- philosophy. And, more notably, unlike the ways of the world, this sanctity was not confined to the doctrine alone- this was emulated in the practices of real life as a matter of fact. Taitreya and Shathpath Brahman [Upnishads] explicitly reveal that husband and wife together were given yagyadiksha [spiritual initiation] in Vedic period. So also, Manu says- “It is not only home is a home, but the real home is none other than the woman”. And, just see what Yamasmiruti likewise says -“In the preceding kalpa [period of time] women used to undergo Upanayan sanskara. They were taught Vedic knowledge and also Gayatri mantra.” It is because of this we get in our scriptures the accounts of Ghosha, Lopamudra, Gargi and Maitrey, all highly learned ladies. How learned was Maitrey, we get to see it from the religious polemic went between her

and her husband, Yagyavalkya, in Brihadaryankopanishad. And among the great exponents of Dharma in the sabha [assembly] of Raja Janak, Gargi enjoyed prominent place. So much so that when it came to testify the divine wisdom of Yagyavalkya Muni, it was none other than she who was assigned to fulfill the task. Yet this is not all— women could fulfill the role of teacher, as well. There comes in Patanjali Mahabhashya the mention of two terms — *Upadhayani* and *Upadhayaya*. Where *Upadhayani* is referred to the wife of Acharya [teacher]; then *Upadhayaya*, for such a lady who used to impart teaching.

And, likewise, according to Rigveda after the marriage she should be regarded to be the hub of all kind of domestic affairs—“From your attitude father in-law should feel that you are the queen of the home, mother-in-law should feel that you are the owner and your sister-in-law should feel that you are the key-functionary of the home.” [Rigveda-10-85-46]. So also, “Gods make abode where women are worshipped; and where not, all the rituals come to grief.” [Manu Smiriti]

More notably, besides above rights and honors that they enjoyed, they could also take part in the battle field to demonstrate their prowess, if they possessed it. Well- versed in using the weapons, courageous and forbearing, Mudgalani and Vishpala are the two such of the women who fought valiantly with their husbands

in the wars. [Rigveda 2, 7, 11-102-10 & 1-112-1]

[Refer, for more, “Vedic Rashtra-Darshan”—Balashashtri Haridas]

It’s because of this outlook of our ancestors nourished in virtues of Dharma that we find a considerable number of girls to earn the education at par with the boys in the schools still in the recent history, at the time of inception of British rule. Before deciding as to which model of education be introduced in India, obviously as to fulfill their vested interest, British had a survey conducted in the beginning of 18th century under William Adam. William Adam submitted his first report in 1835 and second and third report in 1838. According to the reports, behind every 63 students there was one school averagely in Bengal and Bihar. These schools had girl students as well, though there numbers were small, with lower-castes girls outnumbering upper-castes girls, notably. Almost the same views were then held by Sir Thomas Munroe and Dr. G.W. Litner regarding educational scenario of Madras Presidency and Punjab respectively. [Refer, “Bharat Ka Swadharm”— Dharmpal]

Thus, when in the other parts of the world woman was discriminated to be mere object of physical enjoyment, in India she was held to be as indispensable as man in the activities of life, worldly and spiritual both.

(Contd. from previous Page)

Hindu community facing ‘forced conversions’ in Pakistan

from seeing their daughters, they said. Kishan Chand Parwani, chairman of the All Hindu Rights Organisation, said it was sad to see such problems of the minorities in Pakistan multiplying instead of decreasing.

“Minorities are protected by law everywhere in the world but the Hindu community in Pakistan is facing harassment at every level,” Parwani said. Writer and poet Fahmida Riaz thanked the Hindu community for coming and raising its voice against the issue. Iqbal Butt of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan was of the opinion that one had to raise an issue to be able to solve such problem.

(<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/386866/hindu-community-facing-forced-conversions.html>)

Hindu Widow Recalls Religious Conversion

- Udisa Islam

January 27, 2014: The witness also told the tribunal that her husband had to go to the mosque five times a day after the conversion.

A martyr's wife yesterday told the war crimes tribunal that the razakars led by accused AKM Yusuf had carried out atrocities in their village in Bagerhat and forcefully converted members of the Hindu community to Islam.

In her deposition Ullashini Das, the 26th prosecution witness, said: "Among other victims, I lost my beloved husband Mahadev Chandra Das. We could not even bury him."

She said the razakars had forced over 300 Hindus of Shakharikatthi village in Kochua to convert to Islam in the month of Srabon (Bengali month) in 1971. "They asked us [villagers] to go to the house of Dr Sanatan. We had to take beef to save our life."

The witness also told the tribunal that her husband had to go to the

mosque five times a day after the conversion.

After the cross-examination of the witness by Defence Counsel Mizanul Islam, the International Crimes Tribunal 2 set tomorrow for recording testimony of Md Helal Uddin, the investigation officer of the case.

It is assumed that after the deposition of the IO, the case would start hearing closing arguments of both sides.

Accused Yusuf, a senior nayeb-e-ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, is facing 13 charges of crimes against humanity. He was indicted on November 1, 2012. According to the prosecution, Yusuf had been the founder of razakar forces and chairman of Peace Committee in the Bagerhat, Khulna and Satkhira areas. The groups had collaborated with the Pakistani occupation forces to commit murders, rape, arson and looting against the pro-liberation

people.

In her deposition, Ullashini said the razakars led by Yusuf had gone to Shakharikatthi after two months, on the 18th day of Bengali month Kartik. At this, some villagers had fled the area and took shelter at the market.

She said: "When the razakars attacked the marketplace, my father-in-law and brother-in-law manage to escape but my husband could not."

Ullashini said she had searched the market area and shouted for the whereabouts of her husband but nobody answered.

As Mahadev screamed for help from a nearby canal, she and her family members rescued him wounded. "My husband died on way back home. As we were afraid, we could not bury him."

(<http://www.dhakatribune.com/law-amp-rights/2014/jan/27/hindu-widow-recalls-religious-conversion>)

Ali-Aye-Ligang Celebrated

ITANAGAR, Feb 21: Mishing people living here on different occupations celebrated Ali-Aye-Ligang, the main festival of the community, with traditional fervor and gaiety at Mopin-Solung ground here on February 19.

Ali- Aye-Ligang is celebrated on the first Wednesday of Fagun month (between January and February) every year and is associated with agro-based rites and rituals. The literal meaning of Ali- Aye-Ligang stands for first sowing of roots and fruits in which 'Ali' stands for seeds, 'Aye' for Fruits and 'Ligang' for sowing.

Attending the festival as chief guest, local MLA Techi Kaso called upon people of the community living here on different occupations to maintain cordial relations with all and peaceful coexistence that already

exists. He assured all possible help from his side and requested them to call him up whenever they need a help from him.

Secretary, WRD, Gaken Ete, who was guest of honour, was all praise for the community for jealously preserving their age-old culture and traditions.

He said that Mishings are also the descendents of Abotani and are said to have migrated to the plains of Assam from Arunachal Pradesh centuries ago. He suggested younger generation of the community to play a lead role in preserving their age-old culture and traditions for identity.

Colourful cultural programme, including 'Gumrag soman' were displayed on the occasion by various troupes. The revellers including young boys and girls with their best



traditional attires danced whole day to the tune of famous "Oi nitom" and drum beats (Dumdum-lupi). Apong and purang (bolied rice cake) were served to all on the occasion.

Ali- Aye Lingang was also celebrated at Naharlagun.

Cultural troupes from Assam participated and presented traditional dance. One of the senior most employees of SBI Naharlagun Mem Doley also attended the festival.

(<http://www.arunachaltimes.in/feb14%2022.html>)

Garo Janajati, Meghalaya

