



The Yobin also called the Lisu, are mainly concentrated in the Vijaynagar circle of Changlang district and also in the eastern Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh. They are small tribe and live in 10 villages among which Gandhigram is the largest. It is a four day walk from these villages to the nearest town of Miao. However, the road running through the Namdapha Tiger Reserve is being extended along the Nao Dehing River to improve accessibility

The Lisu tribe consists of more than 58 different clans. Each family clan has its own name or surname. Lisu history is passed from one generation to the next in the form of songs. Today, this song is so long that it can take a whole night to sing.



# HERITAGE Explorer

LET KNOWLEDGE COME FROM ALL THE SIDES

*A Monthly News Bulletin*

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# Heritage Explorer

A Monthly News Bulletin  
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## A Living Heritage in Peril

A living Heritage of Assam, the one-horned Rhinos, is in peril. Yes, the manner in which way they are falling prey to poachers, specially during the last year 2013, at least one in average in every month, rings the bell of their existence swipe out before long.

Rhinoceros are considered as the “missing Link” of dinosaurs (Saur Lizard) a gigantically big and large animal that lived in some parts of this planet millions of years ago. Rhinoceros (ceros-Greek-Keros meaning horn) that are found mainly in Kaziranga (Dist. Golaghat) and also in Pabitara (Dist. Marigaon) are one horned in contrast to their brothers in Africa with two horns. Because of its horn it has human enemies called poachers. The Rhinos of Kaziranga are becoming easy prey to poachers even though there is a strong contingent of soldiers from DFO to the constables to protect the animal. Above all there is a minister of the state government to take care of the animal in particular and look after the sanctuary and the functioning of the concerned government employees in general.

But, surprisingly we have the highest number of rhinos killed by poachers during last year (2013) in comparison to earlier years, and astonishingly, there is no record of killing or capturing a single poacher by the government machinery. There are naturally more public resentment and demands to protect the pride animal of the state, but all ended as a cry in wilderness.

Of late the state government is thinking of “dehorning” the rhino, which reminds us an Assamese proverb: *To shave the head to get rid of lice*. The DFO (wildlife), issued an advertisement requesting public comment (E-mail: [Pccf.wl.assam@gmail.com](mailto:Pccf.wl.assam@gmail.com)) in this affect. Some time back a central minister came, visited Kaziranga and promised financing

Year	No. of Rhinos Killed
2001	9
2002	5
2003	6
2004	5
2005	12
2006	9
2007	21
2008	12
2009	14
2010	7
2011	9
2012	12
2013	34
2014	14

(Till April 30, 2014)

of pilot-less plane to detect poacher’s movement. How shallow are the thought and the proposal. How dangerous are the poachers that we need such a pilot less plane? In fact there is no accountability for any loss of the life of a Rhino.

A rhino follows a fixed route of its own to graze and to defecate and to return to his resting place. A poacher takes it as an advantage to kill the innocent animal. The “protectors” of the animal too can choose the route to poach the poachers. How many poachers are there in all? - 100, 1000 or 10000? What machinery are required to eliminate them? You eliminate 5 and see that 10 rhinos graze peacefully there after. Shoot the poachers as mercilessly as they poach our pride animal. The shot no wonder, may hit a high-up too. But we want to save our beloved prestigious animal, the LIVING HERITAGE at any cost after all. Is not it?

Editor

# Indian Inventions

- Akshay Kanta Sharma

Indian inventions and discoveries have been instrumental in shaping the face of the modern world. Ancient Indian discoveries are an inseparable part of today's modern science and they still play a very significant role in our life. Ancient India was a lot more developed than the western countries in terms of scientific achievements. Here I pick up a few such interesting findings out of a whole bunch that will surely make you say, "I didn't know that!"

**Buttons:** These small tiny plastic 'shapes' are a part and parcel of our everyday life. We can't even imagine wearing a shirt without these tiny objects. Buttons were first used in Mohenjo-daro for ornamental purposes rather than for fastening. They were first used in clothing by the Indus Valley Civilisation by 2000 BCE.

**Chess:** Chess was developed out of 'Chaturanga, which is an ancient strategy board game developed during the Gupta Empire in India around the 6th century AD.

**Ruler:** Rulers were first used by the Indus Valley Civilization prior to 1500 BCE. Made of ivory, the rulers found during excavation reveal the amazing accuracy of decimal subdivisions on it. Perhaps the measurement of length originated in ancient India, and the world imitated from, us!

**Shampoo:** The word shampoo' is derived from 'champo'. It was initially, used as a head massage oil for the Nawabs of Bengal during the Mughal Empire around 1762. It has evolved as shampoo over the years.

**Snakes and Ladders:** The game, Snakes & Ladders, was invented in India as a game of morals. Later it spread to England and was eventually introduced in the US by game pioneer Milton Bradley in 1943.

**Cotton cultivation:** The ancient

Greeks used to wear animal skins and were not even aware of cotton. But Indians started cultivating cotton during the 5th-4th millennium BCE in the Indus Valley Civilization. The word spread to the Mediterranean and beyond, and soon everyone was jumping onto the bandwagon. Well, pretty much.

**Decimal system, quadratic formula and zero:** It was in the 7th century CE when Brahmagupta found the first general formula for solving quadratic equations. The decimal system (or the Hindu number system), which was a precursor of the Arabic numeric system, was developed in India between the 1st and 6th centuries CE.

**Cataract surgery:** Indian physician Sushruta (6th century BCE) had the knowledge of performing cataract surgery. It spread to China from India. Greek scientists would visit India to get operations done and also to learn the nitty-gritty.

**Water on the moon:** ISRO's Chandrayaan-1 made the startling discovery that our moon is not a dry ball of rock. The discovery of lunar water is attributed to the Chandrayaan mission.

**Radio/wireless communication:** We all know that Marconi received a Nobel Prize in Physics in 1909 for contribution to the development of wireless telegraphy. But the first public demonstration of radio waves for communication was made by Sir Jagdish Chandra Bose in 1895, two years prior to Marconi's similar demonstration in England.

Sir Bose was posthumously credited (more than a century later) for his achievement. The fact remains that this discovery truly shaped the face of modern wireless communication.

**Flush toilets (hydraulic engineering):** Flush toilets were first used in the Indus Valley Civilisation. These existed in most homes and were connected to a sophisticated sewage mechanism. The civilization was prominent for hydraulic engineering.

**Binary code:** Binary numbers were first described by Pingala (200BCE). Pingala is the traditional name of the author of the Chanda shastra, the earlier known Sanskrit treatise on prosody.

**Ink:** Many ancient cultures and civilisations independently discovered and prepared ink for writing purpose. The source of carbon pigment used in Indian ink (called *musi*) was used in ancient India. Since the 4th century BCE, the practice of writing with ink with a sharp pointed needle was common in South India.

**Steel and metal works:** Ancient Indians were pioneers in metallurgy. High quality steel was produced, almost two thousand years before it was understood by the West. One of the most remarkable feats in metallurgy-creating a seamless celestial globe was invented in Kashmir. It was earlier considered impossible to create a metal globe without seams.

So thanks to India, 'Iron Man' can wear his suit now!

**Fibre optics:** Named as one of the seven "Unsung Heroes" by Fortune magazine, Dr. Narindra Singh Kapany is widely recognized as the "Father of Fibre Optics" for his pioneering work in fibre optics technology.

So, we have always been a cool country. History bears testimony of that. So what's stopping you from being innovative? Go, win the world.

(The Assam Tribune – 28.3.2014)

## The Henderson Brooks Report

Full text of the Volume I of the top-secret internal review report of the Indian army to look into the debacle of the 1962 war with China, as made public by Australian journalist Neville Maxwell on his website.

The veil over Indian army's internal assessment of the 1962 war with China seems to be finally lifting.

Eighty seven years old Neville Maxwell, the retired New Delhi correspondent for The Times, who published his controversial 1970 book India's China War based on the top-secret Henderson-Brooks report, the Indian army's internal operational review of the debacle of the 1962 war against China, has put up a large section of the hitherto unseen report on his website.

Not only the above link, but the entire site, [nevillemaxwell.com](http://nevillemaxwell.com) has remained inaccessible hours after news of the report being available there broke.

The report authored by the then Lt Gen Henderson Brooks and Brigadier P S Bhagat was commissioned by the Indian Army following its crushing defeat by the Chinese but the government has refrained from releasing its findings which, it said, were "extremely sensitive" and of "current operational value".

Only two type-written copies of the 1963 report were believed to exist—one with the office of the defence secretary, and the other in the Indian Army's Military Operations directorate, both located on the first floor of the South Block in New Delhi.

With Maxwell going public-albeit only with the first volume of the report (the second volume and annexures, which contain damning correspondence between army commands

and Delhi, have been held back) -it is clear that there was indeed at least a third copy in circulation. That he had access to the report has never been doubted or disputed before, because his controversial 1970 book quoted extensively quoted from the report.

The demands for the report to be made public have periodically been made in the past, but the government has been unyielding. "Based on an internal study by the Indian Army, the contents are not only extremely sensitive but are of current operational value," Defence Minister A.K. Antony told Lok Sabha in a written reply on April 2010.

The Hindu's Ananth Krishnan, in a report on the newspaper's website quoted Zorawar Daulet Singh, a scholar at King's College London who has written on the war and has read through the volume released by Australian journalist Neville Maxwell on his website, as saying: "Ultimately the buck stops always at the Prime Minister's office, Singh is quoted as saying that the report revealed that the Army "could have put its foot down and prevented the execution of a militarily unsound policy".

Singh also said that he did not believe the report in any way had "operational value" or endangered national security — the official reason for keeping the report classified — and pointed out most Western countries, including even the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, declassified documents after a period of three or more decades.

The report is particularly scathing about the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's Forward Policy, his favourite army officer Lt Gen BM Kaul, and the then director Intelligence

Bureau BN Mullick for the debacle.

Two years back, Claude Arpi, wrote an article for The Indian Defence Review on Why the Henderson-Brooks report has never been released! in which he concluded:

**The Government of India was not keen to show that the 4 Corps Commander (earlier Chief of General Staff in the army Headquarters), Lt. General BM Kaul, a special appointee (and protégé) of Prime Minister Nehru, was not only unsure where the frontier with Tibet was, but took the risk to set up a post in a place which could be north of the border. The Prime Minister was too busy solving the problems of the world to look into these 'small' details.**

But it was enough for China to have a pretext to attack India a few months later (October 20, 1962).

"This review is not concerned with the probability of conflict with or without the Forward Policy but with its introduction the chances of a conflict certainly increased. What is pertinent here is whether we were militarily in a position to implement this," the report says.

We acted, the report says, on a military unsound basis of not relying on our strength but rather on believed lack of reaction from the Chinese.

"To base military actions and place in jeopardy the security of troops on suppositions and beliefs put across at conference tables indicates either acceptance of the belief or a militarily immature mind," the report scathingly observes.

"Militarily, it is unthinkable that the General Staff did not advise the government on our weakness and inability to implement the Forward

Policy,” the report says, questioning the actions of Lt Gen B M Kaul, the then Chief of General Staff, who played a key role in shaping the Policy and resigned following the debacle.

The reports said the Defence Ministry might have put on pressure but it was the General Staff’s duty to point out the “unsoundness” of the Forward policy without the means to implement it, which was brought out forcibly by the Western Command.

We provide below the prefatory note by Neville Maxwell and the report as put up by him on his website

My Henderson Brooks Albatross (Published 7th February, 2014)

Those who gave me access to the Henderson Brooks Report when I was researching my study of the Sino-Indian border dispute laid down no conditions as to how I should use it. That they would remain anonymous went without saying, an implicit condition I will always observe, otherwise how the material was used was left to my judgement. I decided that while I would quote freely from the Report, thus revealing that I had had access to it (and indeed had a copy), I would neither proclaim nor deny that fact; and my assumption was that the gist of the report having been published in 1970 in the detailed account of the Army’s debacle given in my “India’s China War”, the Indian government would release it after a decent interval.

In 1962, noting that all attempts in India to make the government release the Report had failed, I decided on a more direct approach and made the text available to the editors of three of India’s leading publications, asking that they observe the usual journalistic practice of keeping their source to themselves. To my surprise the editors concerned decided, unanimously, not to publish.

The passing of years showed that

assumption to have been mistaken and left me in a quandary. I did not have to rely on memory to tell the falsity of the government’s assertion that keeping the Report secret was necessary for reasons of national security, I had taken a copy and the text nowhere touches on issues that could have current strategic or tactical relevance. The reasons for the long-term withholding of the report must be political, indeed probably partisan, perhaps even *familial*. While I kept the Report to myself I was therefore complicit in a continuing cover-up.

I marked the new century by publishing as an “Introduction to the Henderson Brooks Report” a detailed description, and account of the circumstances in which it was written, explaining its political and military context and summarising its findings (EPW, April 14, 2001): there was no public reaction in the Indian press or even among the chauvinist ranks of the academic security establishment. My first attempt to put the Report itself on the public record was indirect and low-key: after I retired from the University I donated my copy to Oxford’s Bodleian Library, where, I thought, it could be studied in a setting of scholarly calm. The Library initially welcomed it as a valuable contribution in that “grey area” between actions and printed books, in which I had given them material previously. But after some months the librarian to whom I had entrusted it warned me that, under a new regulation, before the Report was put on to the shelves and opened to the public it would have to be cleared by the British government with the government which might be adversely interested! Shocked by that admission of a secret process of censorship to which the Bodleian had supinely acceded I protested to the head Librarian, then an American, but received no response. Fortunately I

was able to retrieve my donation before the Indian High Commission in London was alerted in the Bodleian’s procedures and was perhaps given the Report.

In 2002\*, noting that all attempts in India to make the government release the Report had failed, I decided on a more direct approach and made the text available to the editors of three of India’s leading publications, asking that they observe the usual journalistic practice of keeping their source to themselves. (I thought that would be clear enough to those who had long studied the border dispute and saw no need to depart from my long-standing “no comment” position) To my surprise the editors concerned decided, unanimously, not to publish. They explained that, while “there is no question that the report should be made public”, if it were leaked rather than released officially the result would be a hubbub over national security, with most attention focused on the leak itself, and little or no productive analysis of the text. The opposition parties would savage the government for laxity in allowing the Report to get out, the government would turn in rage upon those who had published it.

Although surprised by this reaction, unusual in the age of Wikileaks, I could not argue with their reasoning. Later I gave the text to a fourth editor and offered it to a fifth, with the same nil result. So my dilemma continued – although with the albatross hung, so to speak, on Indian necks as well as my own.

As I see it now I have no option but, rather than leave the dilemma to my heirs, to put the Report on the internet myself. So here is the text (there are two lacunae, accidental in the copying process).

(<http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?289845>)

## Moon Goddess YEMOJA

Thousands of years before Christianity and other foreign religions were forced upon the African people, through invasion and acceptance, the Yoruba ethnic group of South Western Nigeria paid homage and respect to their own Gods and Goddess known as Orisha (Orisa), including Yemoja, who is syncretized with the Moon. Yemoja is a core aspect of the Yoruba pantheon of deities, however the religion itself, which can be referred to as the Corpus of Ifa, is not polytheistic in doctrine.

The Yoruba believe and accept that there is one main energetic force referred to as Oludumare (owner of the sky realm) that permeates the entire universe and everything within. Oludumare could be viewed as God, itself, though the concept of God is more complex in Yoruba worldview than it is in the West; Oludumare is never personified. Oludumare is not an Orisha and is completely indifferent to the affairs of humanity.

Various elements of Oludumare's life force, power, and energy (Ashe) is contained within each Orisha, and it is the Orishas that are, to varying degrees based on their own Ashe, involved in and interacts with the affairs of human being. There are hundreds of Orishas who represent and are syncretized with elements of nature. Goddess or Orisha Yemoja is syncretized with the element water, mainly the ocean, and is interlinked with the moon throughout all its lunar phases. Yemoja's energies are objectified as the mermaid.

Yemoja is the patroness of motherhood, childbirth, the womb, giver of life, and all things relating to femininity. She is the great nurturing force linked to water and the seas, as water is the sustainer of life. The moon goddess, Yemoja is the energy behind the creation of all things alive, and she is also the energy behind the creation of the Orishas. Feminine principles rank highly within the Ifa corpus. It is a belief system that incorporates the concept of balance, the concept of Iwa-Pele (cool head). The imbalance of the

negative over the positive, male over female, or hot over cold equates to chaos.

Yemoja's Ashe, along with the Ashe of her energetic sister being, Oshun, can be accessed for wealth and fortune, but a successful outcome is more likely if tained destiny of the individual, the actions of a person life and the own Ashe of a person's own guardian Orisha, among other factors allows it. The Yoruba believe that each human being is born with one or more personal Orisha which correlates with, and guides the life path of the person



on the material plain.

The Yoruba also believes that each individual is a God (Ori) themselves, and only a fragment of that Godly energy is incarnated as a human entity. After a person's destiny is compete, the individual's energy is reunited with what is known as a person's Ori, which remains in the spiritual plain, and then reincarnate again if need be. Your Ori, like the Orisha, are all elements of Oludumare's Ashe, and so are human beings. Though a person's destiny is pre-ordained, it is only a blueprint of life on earth, and a person still has free will, but the blueprint of destiny will always manifest.

Yemoja's Ashe is neither bad or good in nature, like the other Orishas, her Ashe is mainly neutral, but it correlates towards a certain energetic pull which leans towards being more positive, which the Yoruba refer to as cool. Hierarchical members, practitioner and believes of Ifa within and outside the Yoruba community can, with correct knowledge,

manipulate the energies of Yemoja, and any other Orisha, for positive or negative intent. However, Ifa is highly based on the concept of karma, preordained destiny and reincarnation, and they believe strongly that the energies (positive and negative) you create will return to you in this life or another incarnation.

Yoruba religious doctrine and practices still exist on a very wide scale in Nigeria, but it is in the Caribbean and Latin America where the belief and practices thrive. Yemoja and the main Orishas of Nigeria were transferred to the Americas during the Atlantic slave trade. Due to suppression from Christianity and Europeans against all forms of Afrocentricity during slavery, the Orishas of Ifa were meticulously syncretized and disguised as Catholic saints by the African people.

In Cuba, where Yemoja is known as Yemaya, she merged with Our Lady of Regla, and Ifa merged into what is known in Cuba as Santeria or Lucumi. In Brazil, the country with the highest percentage of people of African origin outside of Africa, Yemoja is known as Yemanjá and the religion is morphed into what is known as Candomblé.

In Jamaica, the Goddess of the Moon is known as Mami Wata (mother of the waters), though in Jamaica and other countries that are Church of England protestant as opposed to Spanish (Roman) Catholic, the Ifa religion is non-existent to the naked eye. In Cuba, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Brazil and other parts of Latin America, Yemoja and Ifa is widely accepted and practiced, though maligned by the Catholic Church. The people of the Caribbean and Latin America and immigrants from Africa have also brought Yemoja and Ifa various facets to major Cities of the United States. Like the Moon, Yemoja is considered to be all around a person, if they look hard enough.

*(<http://guardianlv.com/2014/04/moon-goddess-yemoja/>)*

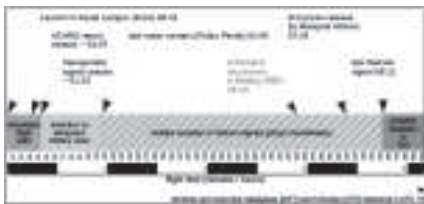
# The Malaysian Plane Mystery

- Sneha Rode

Malaysian Airlines 370, a Boeing 777 plane, went missing on March 8th 2014, en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing. More than three weeks later and search operations by more than seven nations, there is no strong evidence of the plane. With 239 people on board, it is a matter of distress. Satellites and aircrafts continue to hover over the ocean waters, but all in vain. Satellite Communication plays a very important role in such cases. Some issues, little data and more mysteries engulf it now. Some of these are discussed below.

## What exactly happened?

On 8 March 2014, the aircraft flying the route, a Boeing 777-200ER, went missing less than an hour after takeoff, 00:41 local time. It was operated by Malaysia Airlines (MAS).



The aircraft carried 12 Malaysian crew members and 227 passengers from 14 nations.

No, it wasn't a simple crash, it disappeared! So, what was different?

All communications stopped and the transponder signal was lost (a transponder is a radio transmitter that works with ground radar. When the transponder receives a signal from ground "secondary" radar, it returns a code with the aircraft's position, its altitude and its call sign. It constantly sends information about the speed and direction of plane to air traffic controllers). The aircraft's last known position was on 8 March at 01:21 local time.

Military tracking shows that the aircraft descended as low as 3,700 m after taking a sharp turn towards the

Strait of Malacca. This sharp turn seemed to be intentional and confusing as to why this turn was taken. No emergency messages or distress signals were relayed from the airplane.

## What about other communication?

The plane is equipped with a standard voice communication radio and two other kinds of communication technology: Transponders and the



Aircraft Communications Addressing and Reporting System (ACARS). ACARS is a digital data link system for transmission of short messages between aircraft and ground stations via radio or satellite. Automated "ping" messages are used to test an aircraft's connection with the communication station. In the event that the aircraft ACARS unit has been silent for longer than a preset time interval, the ground station can ping the aircraft (directly or via satellite). A ping response would indicate a healthy ACARS communication.

A series of "handshakes" — or electronic connections — from ACARS were transmitted to satellites (INMARSAT) for four to five hours after the transponder stopped sending signals. The pings are just messages, and do not provide details about location. It however means the plane was aloft in air for few hours, considering the fuel was also sufficient in plane; there would be two ping corridors. One stretches from the border of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to northern Thailand;



the other from Indonesia to the southern Indian Ocean.

## What is the black box?

Air crash investigators have depended on data carried by flight data and voice recorders — known popularly as the "black box". The flight data recorder records flight information. The cockpit voice recorder stores conversations and other noises made in the cockpit. The black box sends out a ping - activated by immersion in water - that can be picked up by a microphone and a "signal analyser". There's another



beacon - the emergency locator transmitter - which transmits a distress signal on impact. But these don't work in water. The battery of the pinger on MH370 will only last for 30 days. There are fears that the MH370 black box may never be found because it will stop emitting a signal after 30 days. Black box is a small object to find, and heavy, it does not float. In very deep sections of the Indian Ocean, it would be difficult to find. The range of the pinger is few kilometres only. These have to be



picked up by the towed pinger locators successfully.

#### What about searching it?

As of 28th March, 57 ships and 48 aircraft from 13 countries were involved in the search. Along with China and Malaysia, a number of nations are involved in search operations. Australia, Indonesia, France, India, Japan, New Zealand, Myanmar, Vietnam, US, UK, Thailand, etc are cooperating together. Search operations include air surveys, patrol ships, naval ships, scanning satellite imagery, helicopters, civilian jets, surveillance aircrafts, submarine rescue ships are few to name. Search area includes Gulf of Thailand, South China Sea, South of Sumatra, South Indian Ocean, and South Andaman Sea. China and Australia have searched

thousands of square miles of regions.

Australia also conducted their first aerial search of the southern Indian Ocean Orion aircraft, searching more than 600,000 square kilometres of the Indian sea –South-west of Perth. It spotted two objects 2490 km southwest of Perth. A Chinese satellite image taken on 18 March shows a possible object measuring 22.5 by 13 metres approximately 3,170 kilometres west of Perth. French satellite images, captured on 23 March by Airbus Defence and Space, show possible pieces of debris in southern Indian Ocean. The search for MH370 continues to be massive and a highly complex, multinational effort. Highly specialised experts are working out theories and latest technology is being used.

#### What could have happened?

Possible mechanical failures, fire in airplane, lithium battery fire, air crash, failure of window or door, tail fuselage tear, are possible theories being considered. Some claim of a terrorist or hijacking plot too. In 2009, Air France Flight 447 crashed in the South Atlantic bad weather conditions. It took two years to find the wreckage and majority of bodies of passengers. The voice and data recorders weren't found on the ocean floor until May 2011!

The strange path of the airliner, the switching off of transponders, the black box still missing, and no wreckage confirming the crash; with passing days, intensive search and wait for loved ones, the mystery continues....hope remains...

## Khushwant Singh: A Literary Genius

His death has created a void in the nation's literary arena which would be hard to fill. The man who called a spade a spade and spared none, passed away on Thursday at the ripe old age of 99 at his residence in New Delhi. Khushwant Singh who was a journalist, columnist and novelist, will be best remembered for his strong sense of humour. For him humour was a weapon with which he highlighted the shortcomings of society. He took a dig at the high and mighty and his own community as well. A non-conformist to the core, he never tried to portray himself in good light. In fact, he often made public his weaknesses and failures. What made him stand out was the fact that he made no intellectual pretensions. His self-confessed love for wine, women and gossip made him a cult figure and he earned both fans and foes in abundance. His keen sense of observation helped him write on contemporary themes and events having a great bearing on society. In that, Khushwant Singh's writing was so popular that his weekly newspaper

column, 'With Malice towards One and All', published in many Indian national dailies, was among the most widely-read commentaries in the country. As a journalist he had edited the now



defunct illustrated Weekly of India and later the Hindustan Times. He was instrumental in making the Illustrated Weekly of India a household name in the country for many years.

Satire apart, Khushwant Singh's works ranged from political commentary to outstanding translations of Sikh religious texts and poetry. A secularist to the core, Singh with his writings lashed out at the religious bigots and the self-styled godmen who were hoodwinking the

gullible public to promote their interests. He firmly believed that parties based on religion would destroy the country. His outspokenness made him a highly unpopular figure among the orthodox and rightwing sympathizers. He was the author of classics such as Train to Pakistan, I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale and Delhi. His latest novel The Sunset Dub, was written when he was 95. His non-fiction works include the classic two-volume A History of the Sikhs, a number of translations and works on Sikhism and Sikh culture, nature, current affairs and Urdu poetry. Khushwant Singh was nominated to the Rajya Sabha by the government under the late Indira Gandhi. He was a Member of Parliament from 1980 to 1986. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1974 but returned the decoration in 1984 in protest against the storming of the Golden Temple in Amritsar by the Army. In 2007 he was awarded the Padma Vibhushan. With Khushwant Singh's demise the country has lost one of its best-known literary geniuses.

*(The Assam Tribune-21.03.2014)*

## On the Occasion of 15th Birthday Celebration

### Homage to Bezbaroa

Ranjit Kumar Dev Goswami

Sahityarathi Lakshminath Bezbaroa (1864-1938) is one of the towering personalities of Assamese culture to whom we owe not only a sense of an Assamese past going back to the seventh century and beyond, but also an awareness of tradition capable of fostering values of a future society based on equality and democratic, humane principles. Poet, playwright, short-story writer, novelist, biographer, essayist, satirist and editor of periodicals, he became a legend in his lifetime for the indefatigable energy he had brought to bear on the movement for rehabilitation of Assamese language and culture that began in the forties of the 19th century. The early thirties of the last century saw Bezbaroa virtually institutionalized through the "Bezbaroa Society" formed in Calcutta in 1930. It was in one of the meetings of the society held in Calcutta University that Banikanta Kakati (1894-1952), Assamese critic and scholar who was also an outstanding alumnus of the University acknowledged the overall importance of his works for Assamese culture. Referring to Johnson's observations on Addison's style ("Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison"), Kakati suggested that it would not be proper for one to even try to write in Assamese without first familiarizing oneself with the genius of Bezbaroa's prose. Bezbaroa's centrality in the movement for Assamese language was also an aspect Kakati took due note of in his presentation. For one thing, it was in the name of a standard language that Bengali came to be introduced as a language of the courts and educational institutions of Assam from 1836, just ten years after the annexation of Assam as a part of the British territory in India. For another, the idea of a *patois* gaining ground in

the colonial discourses from the early fifties of the 19th century even the Vaishnavism of Sankardev (1449-1558) came to be considered a distant echo of the religion preached by Chaitanyadeva (1486-1534) of Bengal.

While the first generation of the 19th century Assamese intellectuals, namely, Jaduram Deka Barua (1801-1869), Haliram Dhekiyal Phukan (1802-1832), Juggoram Kharghariya Phukan (1805-1838) and Maniram Dewan (1806-1858) chose to make do with either Bengali or an Assamese Bengali hybrid form, the second generation led by the Hindu College-educated Anandaram Dhekiyal Phukan (1829-1859) waged a virtual war on the language policy of the colonial rulers with support received from the Baptist Mission in Assam. The movement for restoration of the language of Assam culminated in 1873 when the colonial rulers could finally persuade themselves to accept the distinctive identity of the language and rehabilitated it by issuing a notification. The separation of Assam from the Bengal presidency a year later effected an altogether new phase of modern Assamese culture now not only free from the yoke of a language imposed on them but also spatially separated from Bengal that considered it as a colonial hinterland. Bezbaroa who got himself admitted into Ripen College, Calcutta, in 1886, soon emerged as a leader of the group that took it upon itself the task of carrying forward the works undertaken earlier by Anandaram Dhekiyal Phukan (1829-1859), Gunabhiram Bama (1834-1894) and Hemchandra Barua (1835-1896), among others. Bezbaroa thus marked the culmination of an era in Assamese culture that saw the language nearly relegated to the margins as a mere patois of Bengali and signaled an altogether new beginning by facilitating an era of reconstruction marked by the formation of *Asamiya*

*Bhasa Unnati Sadhini Sabha* (1888) and the launching of two important periodicals, namely, *Jonaki* (1889-1895) and *Bahi* (1909-1933).

Lakshminath Bezbaroa's manifold contributions could perhaps be outlined, first, in terms of his efforts at fashioning an idiom brimming with the history of the race. It was the language of Hema Saraswati, Madhav Kandali, Sankardev, Madhavdev, Bhattadev, Anandaram Dhekiyal Phukan and Hem Chandra Barua, among others, now recast or redefined in terms of what may be called a fusion of the linguistic registers of the *Charitas*, the *Buranjis* and the folk resources of Assam, notably the ballads and tales, peasant poetry of diverse types, riddles, folk-idioms, the *Bangeets* and *Bihu* songs in particular. This deep mastery of language and style is what is inextricably bound up with a worldview so radically different from that of his immediate predecessors that one is tempted to surmise that it was shaped by response to the agrarian uprisings of Assam during 1861-1892. His inwardness with the sufferings of the poor during the colonial rule is what resonates throughout, in his belles-lettres exercises in particular marked by a kind of surface laughter covering a deep sense of hurt and suffering within. 'Takarur Dauratmya' bemoans the fate of the Assamese villages in the wake of the colonial encounter - the self-sufficient economy of the Assamese villages in its death throes, an old agrarian society systematically destroyed by forces of colonial exploitation eluding the simple folk that took the British presence in Assam for granted. Bezbaroa's acerbic wit was directed not only against the evils of colonial rule, but also the ideas of inequality, untouchability, caste-distinction and forces inimical to change and progress. Sankardev's quest for a religious ideal, 'pure' (*visuddha*

*dharam*) in its avoidance of the formal trappings of sacerdotalism; the valour and patriotism of Lachit Barphukan and the spirit of sacrifice represented by Sati Jaymati are ideals he upheld throughout his works. A pioneer of Sankardev studies in Assam (he wrote extensively on the lives and works of the Vaishnava saints of Assam, Sankardev and Madhavdev in particular), Bezbaroa was also instrumental in rehabilitating Lachit Barphukan and Jaymati in mainstream historical discourses for

values that he considered foundational to the nation-building process. His play *Jaymati Kunwari* (1915) is one of the important literary exercises in Indian literature that projects the Gandhian ideal of *satyagraha* involving resistance to evil; trial of patience, faith and fortitude and, most - importantly, unswerving commitment to truth and *ahimsa*.

Orpheus-like, Bezbaroa sang in different pitches; his voice capable of infinite modulation. And Orpheus-like

he used his power of language to work miracles: to make dry stick sprout leaves pulsating with life. His was an extraordinary life dedicated to the Assamese language whose power and possibilities he revered, stood in awe of, loved; explored and played with. An extraordinary life it was, dedicated to the exploration of the possibilities of a language rich in history and its folk substratum that our long 19th century remained oblivious of.

(The Assam Tribune-26.3.2014)

## Demographic Influx

The statement issued by the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) on Wednesday that the number of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh is increasing at a rapid pace and is endangering the existence of the indigenous people is absolutely correct. This grave danger owing to illegal influx from Bangladesh is a matter of great concern. In fact, owing to such illegal infiltration from Bangladesh, Assam today has about 10 districts having Muslims as the majority community. This increased rate of fertility is not at all due to any increased fertility rate among the indigenous Muslims but because of the practice of polygamy prevalent among the infiltrators from Bangladesh. It will be recalled the Gauhati High Court too once pronounced that illegal Bangladeshi settlers had already become 'kingmakers' in Assam. In the statement issued on Wednesday, AASU advisor Samujjal Bhattacharyya cited Clause 6 of the Assam Accord which mandates constitutional safeguard to the indigenous people of the State.

Readers would do well to note that this newspaper in this take on the problem of illegal immigration from Bangladesh has not found the Assam Accord to be satisfactory enough. We in the past several occasions have remarked that the Accord was a hastily signed one and where the intellectual class of the then Assamese society

failed to guide the then AASU leaders on the draft of the Accord. Nevertheless, certain clauses as the one mentioned by Bhattacharyya cannot be discounted in entirety. But what remains saddening is the intention of the ruling dispensation. We have long projected that the Accord was hastily signed on August 14, 1985 just prior to the Independence Day celebrations to pacify the situation prevalent in Assam. When such has been the intent one can very well guess the political willingness of the Congress party- that has been in power both at the Centre as well as the State- to implement the relevant sections (especially Sections 4 & 5) of the Accord. This has precisely been the situation in the past 30 years. Till 2005, we had the perverse IM (DT) Act to protect the illegal infiltrators. And after 2005, we have the perfume baron Badaruddin Ajmal emerging with his AIUDF as the protector of the illegal Bangladeshi settlers. In 2005 there was even a tripartite agreement between New Delhi, Dispur and the AASU to work on the modalities to upgrade the NRC. But still the government is not showing much interest. For the Congress, its intentions are quite well-known. It has quite earlier realized the potential of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh as monolithic vote banks that would always favour the Congress. And now when the AIUDF is aiming to cut a portion of its illegal Bangladeshi votes, the reluctance of the Congress is natural to be more against taking

some strong action against illegal immigrants. The BJP too raises the issue during election time only. When the BJP-led NDA government was in power in Delhi, what prevented it from holding a joint parliamentary session to bring a strong legislation against the problem of illegal influx from Bangladesh? And, sadly, what to speak of the AGP? This party came to power riding high on the agenda of regionalism and to solve the problem of demographic influx in Assam. But in its two stints at Dispur it did not do anything regarding this problem. When a regional party comes to power riding on a specific cause and then when it itself betrays its own people, can one hope that some national parties- that are always known to neglect this hinterland— would espouse the cause of the people of Assam?

In the ultimate analysis, the irony is the lack of political will by all political parties that is allowing this grave danger to persist. Unless the political parties show strong determination to weed out this problem, no matter how much protest or rallies are organized by organizations or civil societies, it is not going to matter. The people can individually contribute their bit by not employing illegal Bangladeshi settlers in any kind of work, but even this is limited in scope if the government of the day is unwilling and acting on their side.

(Editorial The Sentinel- 04.03.2014)

## The Role of Water in the Traditional Rites and Ceremonies of Hynñiewtrep Race - Heibormi sungoh

Water is the most essential item in the traditional rites and ceremonies of Khun Hynñiew Trep right from cradle to the cairn. Therefore in each and every ritual ceremony the water plays a very important role. Without water we can say that the indigenous religion of Khun Hynñiew Trep Hynñiew Skum will come to an end.

Water is used in the following ceremonies

*Ka por kha* - Birth Ceremony

*Ha ka jer ka thoh* - In Naming ceremony.

*Ha ka Ksan rngiew* - The amplification of the essence of personality

*Ha ka iapoikha poiman* - In Marriage ceremony.

*Ha ka Dukh ka sep* - In the Death Ceremony

*Ha ka Krep* - In the Cairn

When the embryo ripen in the womb of the mother, the baby came into existence in the world, the midwife and the nurse already keep the water in some special Jar/ container. The moment the baby was delivered, the mid-wife or the nurse would sprinkle the baby with cold water on the head portion of the baby at the same time they would say the words of blessing. After blessings and prayers for the baby to have a long life, they will sprinkle the water three times in the head of the baby.

Just before giving birth which means at the time of labour, the helpers or mid-wives boil first some hot water and pour it into a clay pot called '*Khiew Pangrai*' and this water will be use for bathing the baby for three times in three days.

Warm water is poured into a clay pot/vessel and then an axe would be dipped thrice into the water and prayers would be uttered: "*Ko umksiar umrupa ka wa mih ka wa wan napoh mutha napoh musiang, Kam wa da pynsum ia ini I wa kham*

*wa sbait (kynthai) u kni u kpa (lada ioh da u shynrang), mo umksiar mo um rupa kam wa em iakam kam wa em iakit nang lung pyrthai nangkha pyrthai wow pynsum wow pynsleh ia u khon ñiaw iung ia u khon 'ñiaw Trep mo Blai kynrad ioh u nang u chait ioh u nang u tram, ioh u im tymmen ioh u im chade, ioh u im mulong ioh u im muteh, ioh u im chong prah ioh u im chong chang. ....phui.*" The translation roughly goes,

*O water of gold and silver, the one who come and goes from the bosom of the earth, while I am showering this child in you, bless this newly born, as you have been empowered by our creator, right from the beginning of the earth, to shower the son/the daughter of the 7 huts so that he/she can have a long life, to become healthy and strong and couched in the good fortune of the winnow basket and plenty. ....phui."*

The one who showered the child will bow down before the divine creator by sprinkling the water and start to bathe the child.

Water plays a vital role among the Khasis when there is "*Ka jer ka thoh*" The birth of the child is taken to be the most delicate and critical parts for the simple reason that, during this time a woman's health may be hazardous. Therefore it is also connoted as 'waitsamen'. If the maker is not under and the giver is not along treat the very form of life. Therefore the children of the Hynñiew Trep would first consecrate the event before the child is born. In case of 'Pom tyrut (accident) before any ceremony is to be performed all the ritual articles are being sprinkled by a consecrated water which is called "*Um ksiar Um rupa*'

### The Nohmyonsoo Ceremony:

In case of *Nohmyonsoo* (Driving away bad omen) the children of Hynñiew Trep who reside in Shangpung would clean the Ceremonial Utensils, Ritual items

etc three times with consecrated water the diviner would pray and say "*Ko umksiar ko um rupa ka wa mih ka wa wan napoh musiang napoh mutha na pha ka bei ram aw kam wa em iakam kam wa em iakit nanglong pyrthai nang kha pyrthai wow pynsait khmat pynsait khmut ia kine ki kyndit ia kini ki luber, ia kini ki soit ia kini ki tiar iong me u mynsoo iong me u mynsnam. loh mi u liwan wa miat, ioh mi u liwan wa bha sha pyndiñ ka khim sha pyndiñ ka shka sha riaj khyndriam sha Riaj langhiang wa bha ka synkhian wa bha ka pyrda wa bha ka suloi wa bha ka man wa bha ki ma wa bha ki woh Hoi dei re u kchon hoi dei re u chyit ia kani ka wa kham ia kani ka wa sbait."*

### The translation goes :

O! Water of gold and silver, you that springs from the foundation of rocks and stones, come wash and clean the tender grass of spring, the young stalks of rebirth. Clean so as to protect, and guide during difficult times, trying times, so that no infirmity and no sickness shall be fallen on this little one, this one, the young...

When they have completed the prayer, all the ceremonial utensils will be poured & sprinkled by the consecrated water for three times. This water ritual ceremony, marks as the beginning of the ceremony and also before the end of the ceremony the priest would hold the bottle gourd in his right hand and offer thanks to the Almighty.

### Chatlanei (Naming ceremony)

In this Naming ceremony, water is the main tool for this ceremony. The Maternal Uncle would carry the consecrated water and sprinkle before the Almighty Ruler by bowing with due reverence to the one who exhorts who breast feed for all the living things on this earth and to bless them in order to maintain the law as given by the creator. It was he who distributed the consecrated water equally to the children of seven huts so that they will

not cut the 'sla Lane' (Leaf) at random.

The leaves are taken according to the Covenant made by forefathers since the beginning of time. Before 'Chadlanei' rites take place, the maternal uncle washes his feet, hands and face. This symbolize that he is purifying himself with consecrated water which was specially kept by the 'Ka nongpynsum' (the lady who performs the bath ceremony for the baby) on that very morning. The person who performs ChadLanei while purifying himself, he would face to the east, bow with homage and then only begins the sequences of the ceremony to name the child.

#### **Marriage ceremony:**

In the marriage ceremony the water is the most eminent item in performing the marriage ceremony. Before the groom enter the house of the bride, his feet and hands must be washed by any of his paternal brother-in-law or by any of his male-in-laws. When after finishing the washing of his hands and feet, then only he can enter in the bride house and continue with the other part of the ceremony. Through this traditional ritual ceremony we can see that how water plays the main role because if he would not wash his feet and hands they would not let him enter in to the brides house. That's why they the Hynñiew Trep called water as "Um Ksiar Um Rupa" (Golden water Silver water/ consecrated water).

#### **The Ksan rngiew' Ceremony.**

Ksan rngiew mean amplification or strengthening the essence of personality of the human (this happens only with the Hynñiew Trep). This ksan rngiew is performed in many different ways or methods but the procedure use to perform Ksan rngiew is almost the same in any ksan rngiew performance. It is performed according to the rules and regulations, which is associated with consecrated water.

Before the consecrated rice reaches home, the 'Hiang pynah' will sprinkle to all the ritual articles that is brought from 'ki luh ki khein.' At the time, of sprinkling, at home with consecrated water ka 'Hiang pynah' would say this prayers, "Kurrrrrwan kam wa da wan ini I bhet I bhar nei iong ka wa luh ka wa khein, te mo Blai kynrad myntu ka sngi myntu ka nong, kam wa da pyllum bhet kam wa da pyllum bhar iei iong I kñia iei iong I khriam, iong ka bok iong ka rwiang, te mei u khow ksiar khow rupa ioh mi u wan wamiat ioh mi u wan wa bha, wow bishar wow pynchong kam wa da em iakam kam wa da em ia kit nanglong pyrthai nang kha pyrthai ioh hi mi u sum ioh hi mi u sleh da kani ka um ksiar da kani ka um rupa."

#### **Translation goes:**

Kurrrr wan, as you (rice) arrive from the house of worshipping. O God today is the day and today wage is to be paid just as these things and articles are prepared for the purpose of performing observance or ceremony for ksan rngiew. Then you the consecrated one (rice) will maintain the chance to come safely, and to judge and settle as being empowered by the almighty from the very beginning of the Universe, so that you shall be showered by the Golden water silver water (consecrated water). After uttering these words the 'Hiang pynah' would sprinkle the man who carries the items with consecrated water.

Water is the most essential item in performing a ceremony called Ksan Rwiang. Water is poured into a gourd bottle and then carried to a sacred place, called the house of God (iung Blai), along with all the leaves on a basket tray and they would sprinkle water on it for three times, then follows the cleansing ceremony (Kyrpang Um), which is again followed by different rites. At the end of this cleansing ceremony they would bow in reverence for three times to the consecrated leaves.

When the cutting of sacrificial meat is done, then the leaves will be divided

to each person who has his own way to perform his own duty that belongs to the Children of Seven huts. Then the priest would preside by sprinkling the sacred water, which was taken to the house of God. When the water rite is completed then the heart and lever of the cock will be consecrated, with this follows what is called I Pynah I Pyrjin (Rice Beer), lastly, rite of Ginger and Fish take place. Then comes the feast of eating and drinking.

#### **Water in the Cremation Ceremony.**

Water is performing as one of the main tool, in the death ceremony. Without water it is impossible to perform the rites of the dead ceremony. When a person dies, the member of the family would boil a quantity of water and then spread a mat so that the dead body shall be placed on this mat and is to be clean by this warm water with the help of a piece of cloth. In case of a male, male folk will bathe the dead person with the warm consecrated water. Likewise if the dead is a female, the female folk will bathe the dead person with the warm consecrated water. This rite is taken and being practiced because the Hynñiew Trep believe that the departed body would appear in front of the Almighty cleaned and purified.

Before cremation early in the morning, the feet and the face of the dead is again washed with the consecrated water and formally offer the dead with tea and followed by ground betel nut. Then the family members will offer the dead with all the things that he used to use before, as well as the edible items he used to eat. Even his friends and comrades could offer the dead according to their wishes. On the other hand all the items must be sprinkled with consecrated water, because it is believed that it purifies the offered food of the departed person at that time. Therefore offering any item to the dead like betel nut, money etc should be sprinkled with the devoted water.

Even when they reach the crematorium place, friends and

relatives may offer the dead with betel nut, money, but these must be sprinkled with consecrated water before placing them in the dead burning area. When the body is burned to completion the place where the body is burnt is poured with water to extinguish the fire so that they can collect the bones in order to perform the remaining part of the ceremony. Before doing the bone collection the collectors will first sprinkle some amount of consecrated water on the betel leaf; after doing this only they will start to collect the bone.

The uses of water in the Cairn

When these bones are kept in the Cairn, first of all the sarcophagus or Mawbah will be sprinkled with water. The mawbah would be opened by the

maternal Uncle in order to place the bone. Meanwhile when the male member handles the *Krep*, the female member would open the edible items being offered to the dead. These gift, are of two purposes, one is dedicated to the dead and the second are to those departed earlier. Before they offer these gifts, before the Mawbah, each and every item would be consecrated with water as a sign of giving water to the dead. Then all the articles are being washed as a rite for purification. This is done in front of the gate of the Cairn.

When the members who had gone to the *Krep* returned home, the crowd along with the dead family members would return home directly. As a sign of purification all the members would wash their hands, face and feet and sprinkle themselves

with water before entering into the house of the bereaved family.

Therefore water plays as one of the main elements in our daily life as well as in, rituals and traditional ceremonies of Hynñiew Trep families. If there were no water in this earth, there would be no traditional rites and ceremonies of Hynñiew Trep siblings. Consequently mankind's relation with water and nature is an Eco-friendly existence as per the concept and philosophy of Hynñiew Trep people.

**CONCLUSION:** Water plays an important role in the traditional rites and ceremonies of the Hynñiew Trep people right from "birth to death". If water is removed from this mother Earth the indigenous religion of Hynñiew Trep will come to an end.

## Mormons Join Holi Colour Festival in US

March 30, 2014: Tens of thousands of people have gathered at a Sri Sri Radha Krishna Temple in Spanish Fork for the start of an annual two-day festival of colours in the US state of Utah.

Revellers danced to music, practised yoga and threw coloured corn flour in the air once every hour during the all-day Holi Festival of Colours.

The large majority of participants are not Hindus, but Mormons, The Salt Lake Tribune reported.

Thousands of students from nearby Brigham Young University take part in the festival, which is expected to draw 70,000 people.

The event stems from a Hindu tradition celebrating the end of winter and the triumph of good over evil.

"It's an opportunity for young LDS (Mormon) kids to come and celebrate their spirituality without alcohol or drugs," said Caru Das, the temple's priest.

Das said the event feels more like a rock concert than a religious

ceremony, particularly with live music.

He appeared frequently on stage, exhorting crowd members to give hugs to strangers and not to think of themselves as ordinary.

"Each and every one of you is



lovely and brilliant. No exceptions," he said.

"This festival is to remind you who you are."

The festival gives participants a chance to gain exposure to Hindu chants and beliefs while plastering others with dust of many vibrant colours that costs \$US3 (\$A3.25) per bag or \$US12 for five bags.

The hourly throwing of rainbow-hued corn flour leaves participants drenched in colour.

"It's a place for your inner child to come out," Robynn Kirkham, a Pleasant Grove accountant who runs a construction company, told The Tribune.

Ranjan Khurana and his wife, Anu, came from Boise, Idaho, because friends in the Spanish Fork Hindu congregation raved about how electrifying the event has become.

"It's vibrant, and everybody is just so cheerful," Anu Khurana said. "It's a blessing that so many people are here celebrating the colours."

Student Haylee Buchanan said she has attended the event with friends and likened it to a big party.

"I wish that I could have read information on why and what they are celebrating," she said, "because it was fascinating."

(<http://www.news.com.au/world/breaking-news/mormons-join-holi-colour-festival-in-us/story-e6frfkui-1226868991519>)

## Australian Gallery Refuses to Return \$5-mn Shiva Idol

The National Gallery of Australia is refusing to return the dancing Shiva statue it purchased for \$5 million from an Indian-origin antiquities dealer despite evidence that it was stolen from an Indian temple.

Allan Myers, chairman of the Canberra-based National Gallery of Australia (NGA) Council, said the gallery would wait for the processes of the law to take place before deciding whether to send the statue back to India, The Melbourne Age reported Tuesday.

The Indian high commission in Australia requested the gallery to return the ancient idol.

The gallery's failure to adequately check the ownership

history of the statue and other items purchased from the New York-based arts dealer Subhash Kapoor was sharply criticised by Australia's Arts Minister George Brandis.

Brandis said that the decision to buy the statue for \$5 million in February 2008 was "incautious".

"The due diligence standards of the NGA which are very high, in fact are world's best practice, were not in my view sufficiently complied with on this particular occasion," he was quoted as saying.

Allan defended the gallery's procedures, including its failure to contact the previous owners of objects it purchased from Kapoor.

Kapoor is being tried in India on charges of smuggling ancient art works.

The gallery also purchased a number of other Indian artifacts from Kapoor, including a stone sculpture of the God Ardhanarishvara for \$300,000 in 2004 and which was also allegedly stolen from a temple.

However, the gallery's director Michael Brand indirectly criticised the lax procedures of the gallery under his predecessor Edmund Capon, who presided over the purchase of several items from Kapoor between 1994 and 2004.

"I think the best answer there is that they would not have passed our current acquisition policy but again I'm not going to comment on decisions made by my predecessors," Brand said.

(The Sentinel-26.3.2014)

## Philosophy of Worship of Tribal Culture, Naga, Heraka

- Huguibamle Ngame

It is assumed that worship of God first began in fear. Among the tribal groups too the mode of worship is different. From the very beginning Zeliangrong Naga people had been practicing a God gifted religion which was popularly known as "Heraka" Religion. Heraka literally means pure and which was spelled out by the Supreme God, himself.

### CONCEPT OF GOD (HERAKA RELIGION)

The ancestors of Zeliangrong Naga believed in the existence of one Supreme God, who is known as "Tirgwang", the Creator of universe. The main concept of Heraka Religion is that whosoever obeys the principles of Heraka religion would be blessed good fortune in their life and also the immortal souls of good doers would go to God's kingdom.

**MODE OF WORSHIP :-** The way

of worship in the Heraka Religion is very simple. In the Heraka Religion prayer may be performed individually or collectively at any time and day. Whenever required the devotees offer sunrise prayer on every moon day and The Heraka New year Day at Kelumki (Temple). On the full moon day, the devotees gather at Kelumki, early in the morning. They recite Mantra and offer collective Sunrise Prayer. The Priest Offers Prayer to god and the devotees enter Kelumki singing devotional songs. Then there are individual prayers at the holy altar. After that there is a benedictory song. When the song is over, announcement

and time given to speak on *Heraka Hingde*. After that Exultant prayer is made by the priest upon the offertories. As soon as this rite gets over, a devotional song is followed by incantation of Heraka Mantra. Besides that whenever need arises for performing Pujas it is done in Paiki. The Paiki is a venerable sanctum in the Heraka Religion which is honoured by all Heraka followers. Paiki is the main socio and religious Centre Hall of Heraka which stands in second holy place after Kelumki in the Heraka Religion.



## Jesus Christ was Married: A Research Evidence

A ancient piece of papyrus that contains a mention of Jesus' wife is not a forgery, according to a scientific analysis of the controversial text, US researchers said Thursday.

The fragment is believed to have come from Egypt and contains writing in the Coptic language that says, "Jesus said to them, 'My wife...'" Another part reads: "She will be able to be my disciple."

Its discovery in 2012 caused a stir. Since Christian tradition has long held that Jesus was not married, it renewed long-running debates over celibacy and the role of women in the church.

The Vatican's newspaper declared it a fake, along with other scholars who doubted its authenticity based on its poor grammar, blurred text and uncertain origin.

Never before has a gospel referred to Jesus being married, or having women as disciples.

But a new scientific analysis of the papyrus and the ink, as well as the handwriting and grammar, show that the document is ancient.

"No evidence of modern fabrication ("forgery") was found," the Harvard Divinity School said in a statement.

The palm-sized fragment likely dates to between the sixth and ninth centuries, and could have been written as early as the second century CE (common era), said the study results published in the Harvard Theological Review.

Radiocarbon dating of the papyrus and a study of the ink using Micro-Raman spectroscopy was done by experts at Columbia University, Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"The team concluded the papyrus' chemical composition and patterns of oxidation are consistent with old papyrus by comparing the GJW (Gospel of Jesus' Wife) fragment with a fragment of the Gospel of John," said the study.

"Current testing thus supports the conclusion that the papyrus and ink of GJW are ancient."

### Anonymous origins

The origin of the papyrus is unknown. Karen King, a historian at Harvard Divinity School, received it from a collector-who asked to remain anonymous-in 2012.

King, a historian of early Christianity, said the science showing the papyrus is ancient does not prove that Jesus was married.

"The main topic of the fragment is to affirm that women who are mothers and wives can be disciples of Jesus - a topic that was hotly debated in early Christianity as celibate virginity increasingly became highly valued," King said in a statement.

"This gospel fragment provides a reason to reconsider what we thought we knew by asking what the role claims of Jesus's marital status played historically in early Christian controversies over marriage, celibacy, and family."

The fragment measures four by eight centimeters (1.6 by 3.2 inches).

King said its late date-written centuries after Jesus's death-means the author did not know Jesus personally.

Its crude appearance and grammatical errors suggest the writer had no more than an elementary education, she added.

Leo Depuydt, a professor of Egyptology at Brown University, wrote an article, also published in the Harvard Theological Review, describing why he believes the document is fake.

"The papyrus fragment seems ripe for a Monty Python sketch," he wrote.

He noted grammatical errors and that the words "my wife" appear to be emphasized in bold letters, which are not featured in other ancient Coptic texts.

"As a student of Coptic convinced that the fragment is a modern creation,

I am unable to escape the impression that there is something almost hilarious about the use of bold letters," he wrote.

King published a rebuttal to Depuydt's criticisms, saying in part that blotted ink was common and that the letters below "my wife" are even darker.

(<http://phys.org/news/2014-04-scroll-mentions-jesus-wife-ancient.html#jCp>)

## Literature Acts as Bond of Unity: Thongchi

ITANAGAR, March 11: Literature acts as a bond of unity of different communities between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh and the spirit should be continued, said noted litterateur and president of Arunachal Pradesh Literacy Society (APLS) YD Thongchi.

He was addressing the multi-lingual poet meet organized by Dakpun Literary group at Ghuna Huti in Assam on the sandy banks of Ghaghar river, a tributary of Subansiri river on Sunday, a press release said here today.

"Through literature we can strengthen the unity between the people of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh," Thongchi, who himself is an eminent writer in Assamese literature, asserted.

Thongchi further said Assamese literature is not only enriched by the speaker of Assamese language but also by the people of other communities including Mishing, Arunachalees like Lummer Dai and others.

The 13-member APLS delegation in the poet meet led by Thongchi included its vice-president Dr Tage Tada, general secretary Tokong Pertin, assistant general secretary Jamuna Bini, executive member Batem Pertin and member Tridipta Trishna, the release added.

(The Sentinel-12.03.2014)



## United States: A Pathetic Nation

- MV Kamath

This is a story some fifty old years old but reading the media today, I think it is worth recounting. The year was 1956. I had been appointed by the Press Trust of India as its United Nations correspondent (1955–58) and as only the second Indian to be around, I was very much in demand in political and intellectual circles. My office was on the third floor where all correspondents, local and international, were allotted office rooms. It was a wonderful time to be at the U.N. which was then barely a decade old and was very much in the news. To my left were the offices of Reuters and in front was the office of the New York Post whose correspondent Joseph P. Lash and I became good friends and I learnt a great deal of American culture. At one stage he asked me whether I would care to review a book written by a friend of his, Prof. Max Lerner, a distinguished scholar, entitled *America as a Civilization*.

It was a fascinating book and I remember reviewing it for the Mumbai-based *Economic & Political Weekly* which itself made news in intellectual circles. Thereupon Prof. Lerner indicated a desire to meet me in person and Joe Lash invited me and three other European correspondents for an evening of frank discussion. Very innocently I had argued about the word 'civilization', the Egyptian and Euphrates–Tigris civilizations as well as the Chinese and Indian civilizations, with the last especially having a civilization over 10,000 years old. The U.S., I argued, was hardly two hundred years old and while it was rich, multi-cultured and intellectually productive, it could not with all due deference to its status, be yet called a civilization. I had hardly concluded my argument when I saw Prof. Lerner getting redder and redder in the face. By the time I had my last word, he exploded. "You dam Indians," he said, "are arrogant and consider yourselves superior to the rest of humanity". What did you think we were? And think of India today with

its beggars with their bowls, cows roaming in the streets, widows being burnt alive, children under age getting married and thousands of castes dividing the people.

It went on for some fifteen minutes. It was a frightful scene and no one dared to stop him. I kept my composure because I knew I was right in my understanding of civilization but I hardly expected the kind of response I elicited from a well known scholar. Joe took it badly and apologized to me the next day but I told him I wasn't the least offended since I was supposed to give an honest opinion and was only saddened by Prof. Lerner's outburst. Six decades later things have apparently not changed. Poor America still thinks it is a civilization and we Indians do not measure up to its high standards. They have a terrible inferiority complex.

The U.S. Government, especially its State and Justice Departments must be thinking that beggars still go around seeking alms, cows wonder aimlessly in urban streets and caste conflicts are a daily occurrence. How can India, loathsome India, measure up to high American standards with the government's rules on Human Rights? My thoughts were drawn to the subject by an article in a Chennai-based daily written by Kanwal Sibal, a former Foreign Secretary of India. As Sibal saw the situation "the Devyani episode shows that at the highest level, U.S. decision makers are willing to jeopardize an important relationship on a narrow point of law applied arbitrarily." And "India could also face unpredictable U.S. behaviour tomorrow on some other issue on which the Americans mulishly uphold some principle of their own making." And to that Sibal added: "For all the inflated talk of India and the U.S. being the world's largest and oldest democracies and sharing the same values, the reality is that the U.S. intermarry scoffs at the institution of democracy in India, as the egregious act of evacuating Indian citizens from the purview of Indian courts show". Sibal went on to say

that the commentary in the main stream U.S. press on the Devyani affair carries a lesson for all of us.

As he put it: "It has been parochial, full of condescension, narrow political thinking and cultural insensitivity. Editorials have poured scorn on Indian reactions as being petty, unbecoming of a democracy and a would-be great power". Apparently, the U.S. thinks that India cannot aspire to get a great power status outside U.S. control, of its world view. All this is not to say that India suffers from no faults. India is, alas, much too conscious of its faults and the media exposes its shortcomings with no holds barred. But this is not the case with the U.S. So deep is its inferiority complex that it will go to any length, like my former friend Prof. Lerner, to damn India, if only to show that America's moral and ethical standing rises to high heavens and forget My Lai, aerial bombing of villages in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border areas and what else. We must feel sorry for the U.S. It was, incidentally, a White House report which revealed the other day that one out of six American women had been raped at some time or other in their lives. Since the end of the Second World War, U.S. governmental behaviour has been so atrocious, whether in Korea, Vietnam, Iran, Pakistan or Afghanistan, that it can only be described as sickening. In the name of establishing law and order hundreds have been killed and a frightened world has been reluctant to raise the subject in the United Nations. No country has been more guilty in damning Human Rights all over the world than the United States and it is time it is stated in clear terms.

It is a big joke for the United States to think that it can stand comparison with India in matters of civilization. It is time, though, that India stands up to U.S. abuse. It is for this reason that I would suggest that Kanwal Sibal's articles be widely distributed not only in the United States, but all over the world if only to make our position clear. Sibal's article is worth its weight in gold.

*(The Sentinel-22.3.2014)*

## Inculcate Ancient Indian Teachings with Modern Education: Dalai Lama

Shimla, HP, India, 19 March 2014 (IANS) - Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama Wednesday stressed the need to inculcate ancient Indian teachings with modern education.

Addressing students and faculty of the Himachal Pradesh University at its convocation here, he said: "India is a very rich country full of knowledge and wisdom and there is an urgent need to harness that, especially by the youth, for educational prosperity."

The Dalai Lama, who was conferred with an honorary Doctor of Letters (D.Litt) degree by Governor Urmila Singh, said the students should use the knowledge gathered for the welfare of society and their real

achievement lies in using the knowledge with wisdom.

The Nobel Peace Laureate stressed the need of traditional education system for transforming a realistic society which in return gives new heights to the philosophy of the "gurus".

"Even I am a follower of ancient Indian gurus and I have used the knowledge to fight problems in life," he said.

He said India has a flourishing democratic set up which has paved the way for peace, progress and stability throughout the world.

"The three big civilizations — Indus Valley, Indian and Chinese — have given new vistas to the phrase of humanity and incidentally all of them

lie in the Asian continent," he added.

"The ancient Indian language Sanskrit has contributed a lot to the educational platform in society. There is an urgent need to study the language and understand the values enshrined in Sanskrit literature."

Honorary D.Litt degree was also conferred on Rajendra Kumar Pachauri, chairperson of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change during 2007.

Renowned historian S.R. Mehrotra was also given D.Litt degree in social sciences while Priyadarshani R. Kalra received it for medical sciences.

*(The Sentinel-20.3.2014)*

## Call for Protection of Mising Tradition and Culture

SILAPATHAR, March 30 - The 6th Mising Youth Festival held at Oi Aapun Gonesh Lotta came to an end today with the call for protection of the indigenous Mising culture and tradition.

Huge crowds participated in the colourful programmes of the festival. A large number of dignitaries and resource persons also attended the functions.

The open session held today was inaugurated by Pormananda Changia, Chairman of the Mising Autonomous Council. Speaking on the occasion Changia expressed his delight at the overwhelming public response given to the festival.

Changia said it was such types of platforms that were taking forward the

progress of the culture and tradition of the community. Intense belief along with determination and contribution from each and every member of the community and set goals for development of the community is the key to success, he said.

Dr Sammujjal Bhattacharyya, advisor to the All Assam Students' Union paid homage to all the students and leaders who had sacrificed their lives for the sake of the State. He said no history can be written without keeping in mind the sacrifices and valour of the students and leaders of the State. He appealed to the youths to stand up and deliver for the sake of

the community and the State.

Dr Ronuj Pegu, Chief Councilor of the Mising Autonomous Council spoke on the relevance of the power and strength of the youths. Young minds need to rise up keeping in view the new innovative ideas and mindset, he added.

The open session was also attended by various student leaders and resource persons from all over the northeast, including Jarjurn Etee, chief advisor Galo Welfare Society Sukeswar Goyary, Deputy Chief of MAC, Akam Yasung general secretary Adi Mising Kebang and various other student leaders of the State.

*(The Assam Tribune-31.3.2014)*

## Dalai Lama in Fortune's Powerful People List

Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama was ranked ninth in the list of world's most powerful people by the Fortune magazine, which put another spiritual leader Pope Francis at the top.

Myanmar's pro-democracy icon and Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi occupied the sixth place in the list.

"For over 50 years, the Dalai Lama, 79, has campaigned tirelessly for

peace, non-violence, democracy and reconciliation, especially among world religions," Fortune said Thursday.

The top 10 leaders in the list are Pope Francis, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Ford Motor chief executive officer (CEO) Alan Mulally, Berkshire Hathaway CEO Warren Buffett, former US president Bill Clinton, Aung San Suu Kyi, Commander of US Force in

Afghanistan Gen. Joe Dunford, US singer Bono, Dalai Lama and Amazon.com. CEO Jeff Bezos.

The magazine said "serving in an influential role" was not necessarily enough to land a spot.

"We have drawn a distinction between leaders and people who are admirable and powerful but who are not transformative leaders."

*(The Sentinel- 22.3.2014)*

## Sikkim Buddhists Want their Karmapa Back

Gangtok: As the lone Lok Sabha constituency in Sikkim goes to poll on April 12, the Buddhist minority want their Karmapa to his seat in Rumtek monastery while the Nepali communities, which form almost half of the populace, seek tribal status.

With less than 30 per cent of the population, Buddhists are the largest minority in the Himalayan state. All the six candidates for the seat are promising to try to enthrone the Karmapa in Sikkim.

Karmapa is a spiritual leader of the Kagyu order of Tibetan Buddhism and is waiting to be enthroned in Rumtek monastery, the largest and most important seat of Buddhism in Sikkim.

Citing security concerns, the union Home Ministry has restricted Ogyen Trinley Dorje, the Karmapa, to travel to Sikkim.

"He is our guru and should be here with his disciples. No one should politicise religion and stop Karmapa from coming here," Sonam Dorjee Lama of Rumtek monastery said.

The ruling Sikkim Democratic Front's (SDF) candidate and sitting MP Prem Das Rai has promised to pursue the issue with the Centre and bring the monks their guru.

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM)'s Tek Nath Dhakal says the people of the state have given enough time to SDF.

"We want the right Karmapa to come here," he says but refuses to comment on the controversy whether Ogyen Trinley Dorje or Trinley Thaye Dorje should be regarded as the 17th Karmapa.

Although they are not being considered as strong contenders, the Congress, BJP, Trinamool and Aam Aadmi Party have also fielded candidates for the seat.

There are 3,70,731 voters in the constituency including 1,79,650 female voters. None of the six candidates are however women.

Polling would be held in 538 booths with the Election Commission deploying more than 3,200 polling

personnel. Lok Sabha and Assembly elections would be held simultaneously on April 12. Granting of tribal status is also an issue here.

As per the recommendations of the Burman Committee, the SDF government is on a mission to make Sikkim a tribal state. They have already accorded tribal status to Tamang and Limboo community.

This time they have also promised reservation of seats for them in the State Assembly. 12 seats are already reserved for the Bhutia-Lepcha community.

All the remaining communities of Sikkim like Bahun, Chettri, Rai, Gurung, Newar, Manger, Bhujel, Jogi, Sanyasi, Sunuwar, Yakha, Dewan, Mukhia, etc will be accorded scheduled tribe status as per the Burman Commission recommendation and Sikkim would be granted a tribal state status, promises sitting MP Prem Das Rai who will be defending his seat.

*(The Assam Tribune – 11.4.2014)*

## IM Instigated Bodo-Muslim Communal Flare-up: NIA

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has said that Indian Mujahiddin (IM) has instigated the communal flare-up in the country during the 2012 Assam violence between Bodos and Muslims.

An NIA probe has said that the extremist outfits had circulated morphed photos online and fake SMSs just to avenge the killing of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar.

This revelation was made in a charge-sheet filled against the IM's Indian operative Yasin Bhatkal by the NIA.

The charge-sheet filed by the

agency says that in pursuance of the conspiracy, "The operatives of IM have been making attempts to foment communal tension in different parts of India".

The charge-sheet reportedly mentioned conversation between Bhatkal and his Pakistan associates Afeef Mota. The conversation said that a few IM operatives have participated in spreading fake news about atrocities against Muslims at the hands of northeastern people.

Taking advantage of the Bodo-Muslim clash in Kokrajhar, the IM did circulate rumours and fake SMSs

to instigate the communal flare-up. Thousands of northeastern people had left their workplace for the region anticipating attacks by the Muslims.

In fact in several places of Bangalore and Mumbai, northeastern people came under attack creating fear psychosis across the country.

Following the wide scale use of social media networking like Facebook, Twitter, the Union Home Ministry had said that the forces inimical to the country's security might instigate the communal flare-up.

*(The Sentinel-12.03.2014)*

## Mizoram Takes Steps to Repatriate Tribal Refugees

Aizawl/Agartala, April 22, 2014:

Mizoram has undertaken a fresh initiative to take back the tribal refugees sheltering in neighbouring Tripura for the past 17 years after fleeing from their villages.

"A meeting of the State Level Core Committee on tribal refugee repatriation, chaired by Mizoram Home Minister R. Lalzirlana was held in Aizawl Monday. It was decided in the meeting to resume the repatriation before the counting of votes of the Lok Sabha election May 16," a Mizoram home department official told reporters.

The official said the home department would take up the matter with the Election Commission to find out whether the refugee repatriation process would violate the model code of conduct in force for the Lok Sabha polls.

He said the central government has sanctioned Rs.7.87 crore as financial assistance to the repatriated refugees. "Adequate foodgrain has been stored to provide free rations to the repatriated tribal refugees for one year."

The Election Commission earlier

this month made arrangements for the refugees in six of the seven Tripura relief camps cast postal ballots. The poll panel decision aggrieved six NGOs and students' groups and they called three-day shutdown and a poll boycott in Mizoram.

The Election Commission had deferred the April 9 Lok Sabha polling in Mizoram to April 11 due to the stir.

Mizoram Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla, who is also the state Congress chief, and the six voluntary organisations have been demanding the refugees to be repatriated to their villages in Mizoram and then allowed to cast their votes in the normal process.

Of the over 36,000 Reang tribal refugees living in seven camps in Tripura since October 1997 after fleeing their villages in western Mizoram, 11,500 were on electoral rolls in Mizoram and 71 percent of them voted through postal ballot earlier this month.

"In view of a threat given by NGOs in Mizoram to obstruct counting of postal ballot papers in Aizawl, the Election Commission has decided to count the votes in Kanchanpur (north Tripura) May

16," Kanchanpur Sub-Divisional Magistrate Nantu Das told IANS.

The Reang tribals - locally known as 'Bru' - fled their villages in Mizoram and took shelter in Tripura in October 1997 after an ethnic conflict broke out with majority of Mizos over the killing of a Mizo forest official.

Despite Tripura government's repeated requests, an initiative of the union home ministry and the Mizoram government to repatriate the refugees to their villages has failed.

Only about 5,000 refugees returned to their homes in the past three-and-half years following continued persuasion by Mizoram, Tripura and the union home ministry officials. The repatriation process was subsequently stopped.

The refugees insist on a written agreement with the Mizoram government assuring them security and economic settlement in their villages in western Mizoram.

*([http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/mizoram-takes-steps-to-repatriate-tribal-refugees-114042200548\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/mizoram-takes-steps-to-repatriate-tribal-refugees-114042200548_1.html))*

## School Student Invents Page-Turning Machine

A city school student has invented a foot-operated manual page-turning machine which can go a long way in meeting the needs of physically-challenged people unable to use hands to turn the pages of a book.

The machine is solely based on manual foot controls and hence totally independent of any kind of power requirement.

Swapnanil Talukdar, a Class XI (Science) student of Maharishi Vidya Mandir Senior Secondary School, Barsajai, who has invented the machine, told The Assam Tribune that it can be operated by a simple three-function process, manipulating a well-designed concept.

"The machine lets the user to have complete control over the operating process and chances of error are very few. Since the user is in complete control of the turning process, he/she can rewind or skip any number of pages at the user's leisure," he said.

Even magazines, paperbacks and other reading material - with different page thickness, textures, etc., — can be read with the page turner. As the page turner is operated manually, page thickness, page texture, crumpled pages or position of the book do not affect its operation.

"It is an objective of the invention to provide a machine that can attach to and turn every page of a book quickly,

regardless of the relative quality and type of material the book pages are made from, and without damaging the book," Swapnanil said.

The advantages of the machine include its low cost of production, involvement of minimum components, and can be manufactured in very less time. "It is also easy to operate, repair and recycle and also to maintain. It does not need any electrical power, and is eco-friendly and noiseless," he added.

The inventor has moved the authorities concerned for the machine's patent.

Swapnanil is the son of Debajit Talukdar and Nirmali Talukdar.

*(The Assam Tribune- 02.04.2014)*

## Over 12,000 Killed in Naxal Violence in Past 20 Years

Over 12,000 people, including security force personnel, have been killed by Naxals in nine Left Wing Extremism-hit states in the past 20 years.

Of the total 12,183 people killed, 9,471 were civilians and 2,712 central and state security force personnel, the Home Ministry said in reply to an RTI query. The killings were reported in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

About 468 people were killed by Naxals in 1993, 376 in 1994, 396 in 1995, 541 in 1996, 583 in 1997, 489 in 1998, 595 in 1999, 548 in 2000, 564 in 2001, 481 in 2002 and 515 in

2003 in these nine states, it said.

As many as 565 people lost their lives due to Naxal violence in 2004, 659 in 2005, 678 in 2006, 691 in 2007, 717 in 2008, 908 in 2009 and a huge 1,005 during 2010, the Home Ministry said.

Besides, 608 people (466 civilians and 142 security force personnel), were killed in the nine states by Naxals in 2011, 415 (301 civilians and 114 security force personnel) in 2012 and 381 (267 civilians and 114 security force personnel) between January and December 15, last year, it said.

Maoists had on Tuesday ambushed a security patrol killing 16 people, including 11 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel, in

Naxal-hit Sukma district of Chhattisgarh.

The attack was carried out barely five km from the area where top Congress leaders of Chhattisgarh were killed in a Maoist attack in May last year.

Mahendra Karma, who started anti-Naxal movement Salwa Judum, Nand Kumar Patel, Chhattisgarh Pradesh Congress Committee chief and his son Dinesh were among 25 others who were killed in the attack carried out by Naxals on May 25, 2013 in Darbha Valley of the state.

Veteran Congress leader Vidya Charan Shukla, who was also injured in the attack, later succumbed to his injuries in a Gurgaon hospital.

*(The Assam Tribune -13.03.2014)*

## Hard Times: UK Churches Turning into Pubs, Libraries

LONDON: At one church, the only thing being worshipped is beer -at another, gleaming cars are on sale. Increasingly, it seems, a different kind of conversion is taking place at few of Britain's churches.

Thanks to a steady decline in religion and the high costs of maintaining these historic buildings, a rising number of churches are being given new lives that may have horrified their founders. Behind the imposing red-brick facade of one

Presbyterian church in north London's upmarket Muswell Hill district, throbbing pop music and barrels of Guinness are the first clues that there's a new congregation.

Built in 1902, the church's beautiful exterior remains unchanged. Inside, it's an Irish pub. "If it was a church, there would be only two or three people here -but on Fridays and Saturdays, it's packed," said John Earl, a construction worker.

Religious worship has been

declining in UK for years, and church authorities are increasingly forced to rethink the management of their huge - and very expensive - estates. A wide range of other churches have been transformed into a climbing centre in Manchester; a circus school in Bristol; a supermarket, a library, a Sikh temple and luxury homes.

*(http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/uk/Hard-times-UK-churches-turning-into-pubs-libraries/articleshow/33101202.cms)*

## Iron in Red Meat 'Red Flag' for Heart: Study

April 24, 2014 : Replacing red meat portions in your diet with vegetables may be a good recipe for your heart as scientists have now discovered a strong association between heme iron, found only in meat, and potentially deadly coronary heart disease.

There are two forms of dietary iron: heme and non-heme.

The study found no association between non-heme iron, which is found in plants and other non-meat sources, and coronary heart disease.

Heme iron consumption increased

the risk for coronary heart disease by 57 percent, the study warned.

"Heme iron is absorbed at a much greater rate in comparison to non-heme iron (37 percent vs. five percent)," said the researchers from Indiana University in the US.

Once absorbed, it may contribute as a catalyst in the oxidation of LDLs (Low-density lipoprotein or bad cholesterol), causing tissue-damaging inflammation, which is a potential risk factor for CHD, they noted.

The body can better control

absorption of iron from vegetable sources, including iron supplements, but not so with iron from meat sources, showed the findings of the research.

For the study, the researchers examined 21 previously published studies and data involving 292,454 participants.

The study appeared in the Journal of Nutrition.

*(http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/iron-in-red-meat-red-flag-for-heart-study-114042400433\_1.html)*

### 3 Naga Groups Sign Reconciliation Pact

The efforts of the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR) towards reconciliation among the Naga underground groups saw some positive outcome following a two-day-long intensive meeting of high level leaders of three Naga groups and subsequent signing of a 'Lenten Agreement'.

Addressing a press conference at the end of the meeting at Niathu Resort conference hall here today, FNR convenor Rev Dr Wati Aier described the meetings as "very, very frank and honest". Apparently pleased at seeing the top leaders of the three groups coming together and interacting in "most friendly manner" during the two-day meeting, he expressed hopes that this would be a 'Magna Carta' in Naga history and "another step towards a united future".

Rev Wati said the agreement has been named 'Lenten Agreement' since it was arrived at

during the Christian season of preparation before Easter which begins 40 days prior to Easter (Sundays are not included in the count).

Asked if FNR is in touch with other groups, he said, "The FNR is in touch with other groups. We can't afford to leave aside any group but we can't force them too."

The two-day meeting was represented by 12 leaders from each group. By next week, each group is expected to nominate members for working out the modalities.

"Recognizing that reconciliation is a continuous process, we urge all Naga political groups to join the Naga reconciliation and to unitedly pursue the Naga political and historical rights for the common good of all," the FNR members said.

The FNR was formed in 2008 to reconcile the warring Naga

underground outfits and its members are drawn from various Naga civil bodies, activists and intellectuals. The Forum had organised football matches for these Naga underground outfits both in Nagaland and abroad. Several reconciliation meetings were also convened under the aegis of FNR in Nagaland, Thailand and elsewhere. Numerous agreements were also signed among the Naga underground outfits to stop hostility among them.

The February 27, 2014 meeting at Niathu Resort in Dimapur was to update the Naga civil organisations about the processes and progresses of the Naga reconciliation. The 'Covenant of Naga Reconciliation' was signed in June 2010, and the 'Naga Concordant' in August 2011, by the highest leaders of the Naga political groups (underground groups).

*(The Assam Tribune-30.3.2014)*

### Madurai Girls Win NASA's Space Settlement Design Contest

Five students of Sri Sarada Vidyalayam Girls Matriculation Higher Secondary School in Madurai have won the third prize in the NASA Ames Space Settlement Design Contest for their fictional work titled 'Cronus-The Utopia'.

The team is made up of Class XII students S.B. Vishaka Nandini, M. Shenbagam, K. Kamali, P. Dhivya Priya and S.G. Yogalakshmi. Their work is set in 2250 AD and it is a story about the depletion of natural resources on earth and how it forces the humans to settle in Cronus, a fictional space orbit of Saturn.

"In the recent years, depletion of natural resources in Earth is rapid. In our work of fiction, we have created Cronus, which is diverse from Earth

in so many ways. The resources available are all similar to the Earth, but those living there are well efficient in conservation of nature and are unaware of corruption and other vices prevailing here," Nandini said.

"In contrast to the present day Earth, where waste is not managed properly and chemical fertilisers are used in agriculture, inhabitants of Cronus are very efficient in recycling waste, make best use of solar and wind power, and use bio fertilisers in their aeroponic farms," explained Yogalakshmi.

The NASA Ames Space Settlement Design Contest was first held in 1994 and this is the first time that a team from this school competed in this prestigious

competition. The competitions were conducted under different categories such as Artistic Merit, Literary Merit and Projects on Space Settlement.

Under the Literary Merit category, there is a tie between Arecibo Observatory Space Academy, Puerto Rico, and Ryan International School, New Delhi, for the first prize. For the second prize, there is a tie between Sri Chaitanya Techno School and Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies (RGUKT), both from Andhra Pradesh.

*(<http://www.delhidailynews.com/news/Madurai-girls-win-space-settlement-design-contest-of-NASA-1396331455/>)*

## 'Partition was not Solution, Only Led to India-Pakistan Confrontation'

Sonipat, April 22, 2014: Partition was not necessarily the best solution for India and Pakistan as it only led to confrontation between the two neighbours that led to wars with disastrous consequences for development and democracy. This was among the views expressed at a day-long India-Pakistan youth dialogue in Sonipat.

Ishtiaq Ahmed, Professor Emeritus at Stockholm University and Visiting Professor at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Pakistan, said in his inaugural address at the event that the so-called Hindu-Muslim problem was not really solved by the partition of the Indian subcontinent. It simply converted it into an India-Pakistan confrontation with wars that resulted in disastrous consequences for democracy, development and pluralism.

Addressing the youth dialogue on

Monday on the campus of OP Jindal Global University (JGU), Ahmed also said that India and Pakistan need to build a welcoming network, for which both sides should facilitate cultural exchanges.

"Efforts need to be made to facilitate education exchanges, relaxation in the visa regime, cooperation on water resources, free movement of people and resolving the Kashmir issue amicably," he said.

"Demonization and dehumanization of the other must cease in media representations," he added.

The youth dialogue was organized by the Jindal School of International Affairs in collaboration with LUMS. Twenty-five visiting students from LUMS and Indian students of JGU participated in activities ranging from seminars on the legacy of the partition of India and the way ahead

to improve bilateral relations. This dialogue was conducted under the aegis of an academic collaboration agreement between both universities, a press release said.

Professor Sreeram Chaulia, Dean, Jindal School of International Affairs, said both sides need to "think about commonalities between the two nations as a result of globalisation, which places similar challenges before the youth of both India and Pakistan in terms of economic security and personal freedom".

Professor C Raj Kumar, Vice Chancellor, OP Jindal Global University said the aim of the conclave was to build a network of academics with a view to improve bilateral understanding.

(<http://ibnlive.in.com/news/partition-was-not-solution-only-led-to-indiapakistan-confrontation/466895-3.html>)

## Growing Involvement of Women in Crimes in State

- Sanjoy Ray

In what is all set to throw fresh challenges before the law enforcing agencies in Assam, there has been a growing involvement of women in criminal acts, including grave ones, a development testified by the fact that nearly 5,000 women criminals have been arrested in the last three years.

These include nearly 140 accused arrested on charges of murder, a good number of them being cold-blooded ones.

Statistics show that most murders are committed by women between 18 and 45 years of age and the victims in most cases are known to the accused.

Involvement of women in serious offences like kidnapping or planned abduction has led to the arrest of

nearly 80 of them in the last three years.

Even in commission of offences like rioting and thefts, the fairer sex has made rapid strides in Assam. Since 2011, over 1500 women were booked for thefts and nearly 500 of them for rioting.

While some attribute the trend as the fallout of growing intolerance in people as a whole, others opine that 'as crime against women has increased, retaliation in some point of time was expected.'

"Assam may not be a place with the highest occurrence of crime by women, but the trend here is certainly alarming. Worse is the fact that women no longer commit serious offences like murder and abduction

on the heat of the moment or owing to social or emotional reasons. Planned offences, including murder, and abduction through honey-trapping, have also become a forte of female criminals," a senior Assam Police official said.

He opined that 'crimes of passion' too have increased over the years in the State although there are no specific statistics with the law enforcing agencies in this regard.

"We all talk about crime against women, which no doubt is a serious issue. But, one must not overlook the growing rise in commission of crimes by women," he observed.

Till mid-2013, nearly 300 women were languishing in different prisons of Assam in connection with various offences.

(The Assam Tribune – 21.3.2014)

## Pope Replaces German 'Bling Bishop' After Inquiry

VATICAN CITY (AP) - Pope Francis recently has permanently removed a German bishop from his Limburg diocese after his 31 million-euro (\$43-million) new residence complex caused an uproar among the faithful.

Francis had temporarily expelled Monsignor Franz-Peter Tebartz-van Elst from Limburg in October pending a church inquiry.

At the center of the controversy was the price tag for the construction of a new bishop's residence complex and related renovations. Tebartz-van Elst defended the expenditures, saying the bill was actually for 10 projects and there were additional costs because the buildings were under historical protection.

But in a country where Martin

Luther launched the Reformation five centuries ago in response to what he said were excesses and abuses within the church, the outcry was enormous. The perceived lack of financial transparency also struck a chord since a church tax in Germany brings in billions a year to the German church.

The Vatican said that the inquiry into the renovation found that Tebartz-van Elst could no longer exercise his ministry in Limburg and that Francis had accepted his resignation, which was originally offered Oct. 20.

The Vatican said Monsignor Manfred Grothe, currently an auxiliary bishop in Paderborn, would take over but that Tebartz-van Elst would get a new job "at the

opportune time."

It added that the pope hoped that the faithful of Limburg would accept the decision with "docility and willingness to rediscover a climate of charity and reconciliation."

In Berlin, Cardinal Reinhard Marx, the head of the German Bishops' Conference, told reporters he would do whatever he could to help the Limburg dioceses move on.

"For that we will need reconciliation, new trust and the power of prayer," he said.

Francis has called on his priests and bishops to be models of sobriety in a church that "is poor and is for the poor."

(<http://news.yahoo.com/pope-replaces-german-bling-bishop-inquiry-112249029.html>)

## Pope Asks for Church Abuse Forgiveness

Vatican city, April 11 (Reuters): Pope Francis made his first public plea for forgiveness today for the evil committed by priests who molested children, using some of his strongest words yet on the Roman Catholic Church's sexual abuse crisis.

The Argentine-born pontiff said the church, which last month named a high-level group on the scandal including an abuse victim, had to take an even stronger stand than before against the scandal that has haunted it for over two decades.

"I feel compelled to personally take on all the evil that some priests- quite a few in number, (although)

obviously not compeared to the number of all priests-to personally ask for forgivenss for the damage they have done for having sexually abused children," he told members of members of the International Catholic Child Bureau.

"The Church is aware of this... personal, moral damage carried out by men of the Church, and we will not take one step backward with regards to how we will deal with this problem and to the sanctions that must be imposed.

"On the contrary, we have to be even stronger. Because you cannot interfere with children," Francis said

Victims' groups have criticised

Francis in recent months for not taking a bold enough stand on the issue and for not meeting with sexual abuse victims in Italy and in a July trip to Brazil.

The Vatican announced in December the creation of a new dedicated group to help the Church fight the abuse crisis but only named its members in late March. The group of clerics and lay people includes Marie Collins, a survivor of abuse in Ireland in the 1960s who has campaigned for the protection of children and for justice for children who were molested.

(The Telegraph 12-04-14)

## Indian Students Shine at NASA's Design Contest Too

02 APR 2014: Young Indian students have made the country proud once again by winning around 50% of the design prizes in NASA.

A Class VII student from Pune deserves special mention as he won the 1st prize.

Reports said that NASA had received about 600 entries from across 18 countries and Indian students managed to grab 12 prestigious 1st prizes at the NASA Space Settlement Contest competition.

About three dozen teams from 12th grade and below were sent by India.

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## Britain Takes Action Against Islamist Extremism in Schools

London: The UK will send hit squads of inspectors into dozens of state schools in cities like Birmingham where conservative Islamic practices are allegedly damaging children's education.

According to 'The Sunday Times', education secretary Michael Gove wants inspectors to fail schools where "religious conservatism is getting in the way of learning and a balanced curriculum".

This would mean that governing bodies and head teachers of schools judged inadequate on such grounds can be replaced.

The move is primarily focused on Birmingham, UK's second biggest city, where claims that secular

schools have been taken over by Islamic hardliners are already being investigated, the newspaper claims.

Similar allegations have now emerged in other Northern England cities like Bradford and Manchester.

Fifteen schools in Birmingham have been inspected this month by Ofsted, the schools inspectorate, at the request of the Department for Education (DfE).

The reports, due to be published later this month, are expected to find a common pattern of problems in some of the schools inspected.

Allegations include the takeover of governing bodies by Islamic fundamentalists, harassment of non-Muslim heads, bullying of female staff

and the segregation of girls and boys in lessons.

If enough of the schools are judged "inadequate" by Ofsted, a second wave of snap inspections of state and private schools in the city, many run by Muslim heads, will begin, DfE sources were quoted as saying.

The spokeswoman for the DfE said: "The allegations made in relation to some schools in Birmingham are very serious"

"It is absolutely vital these investigations are carried out impartially, without pre-judgment."

([http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/britain-takes-action-against-islamist-extremism-in-schools\\_924243.html](http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/britain-takes-action-against-islamist-extremism-in-schools_924243.html))

## Hindu Temple Attacked, Set on Fire in Pakistan

A Hindu temple has been desecrated and set on fire by unidentified persons in Pakistan's southern Sindh province, two weeks ahead of an annual fair at the holy site. The caretaker of the temple of Hindu deity Hanuman, in Latifabad town told police that three men came on Friday to offer prayers.

"But after offering prayers they first broke a statue of Hanuman and then sprayed kerosene oil and set it on fire," said a police official. Darshan, the interim caretaker of the temple, said the attackers ran away when he called for help.

The miscreants had covered their

faces, thus could not be identified, he added. The attack came weeks ahead of the April 14 fair organised at the temple every year. Around 500-600 scheduled caste Hindu families inhabit the locality the temple is situated in. They staged protests at several places in the city.

The initial investigations suggest the attack is not related to any communal strife. The local Deputy Superintendent of Police and Station House Officer have been suspended and an FIR has been lodged against three unidentified attackers, said DIG Sanaulah Abbassi.

On March 15, a frenzied mob had set on fire a temple and a 'Dharamshala' in Larkana over alleged desecration of a holy book, prompting authorities to impose a curfew in the area. Hindus are the largest minority in Pakistan, but make up only about two per cent of the country's 180 million population.

Most Hindus live in Sindh province, where there have been several instances of alleged abduction and forced conversion of women from the minority community.

(<http://indianexpress.com/article/world/neighbours/hindu-temple-attacked-set-on-fire-in-pakistan/>)

(Contd. from previous Page)

## Indian Students Shine....

The 7th grader, who won the prize is named Chaitanya Vashistha and he is a student of Pune's Wadgaonsheri's St. Arnold Central school.

"It's a matter of great delight and brings a lot of pride to us as it was a competition organized by such an eminent and recognized research center NASA," said his father.

"This space research has motivated the students to hope that some day they will go and settle and explore in the field of astronomy," said Nalini Sengupta, principal of Vidya Valley school, which was among the winners.

Indian students claimed 15 3rd prizes, including artistic Merit and Literary Merit prize.

(<http://www.delhidailynews.com/news/Indian-students-bag-top-prizes-in-Design-contest-of-NASA-1396433382/>)



**In 1962 Indian soldiers during the Sino-Indian War**



**Saroi Khangba** (propitiation of the evil spirits) at Khouyathong near Pukhri Mapal, Imphal on 8th March 2014 - done by the elderly women of the locality to appease the evil spirits on the first Saturday of Lamta (month).

Edible items such as rice vegetables and others are collected from each family and offered to the tutelary deities - Koubru, Marjing, Wangpuel and Thangjing in order to propitiate the evil spirits who are hungry and demand food from human beings.

The Meitei community performed this function in the first thangja on the month of Lamta.

