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HERITAGE EXPLORER

LET KNOWLEDGE COME FROM ALL THE SIDES

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1835-1910

Most celebrated prolific American humorist, satirist, lecturer and writer; often lauded as the greatest American humorist of his age.

Mark Twain

India is the land of religions, cradle of human race, birthplace of human speech, grandmother of legend, great grandmother of tradition. The land that all men desire to see and having seen once even by a glimpse, would not give that glimpse for the shows of the rest of the globe combined.

Source: *Mark Twain on the lecture circuit* - by Paul Fatout

* * *

Our most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of man are treasured up in India.

Source: *The dragon and the elephant: China, India and the new world order* by David Smith



Great American author, essayist, lecturer, Unitarian Minister; most noted for leading the *Transcendentalist* movement of the mid-nineteenth century. His works inspired intellectuals like Henry David Thoreau, Friedrich Nietzsche, William James, Émile Armand, Emma Goldman, Marcel Proust and Harold Bloom.

1803-1882

Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Vedas haunt me. In them I have found eternal compensation, unfathomable power, unbroken peace.

Source: *The Commemorative Souvenir* 2003 Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

* * *

I owed a magnificent day to the Bhagavad Gita. It was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us.

Source: *Sacred Jewels of Yoga* - by Dave DeLuca

* * *

All science is transcendental, or else passes away. Botany is now acquiring the right theory – the avatars of Brahman will presently be the text-books of natural history.

Source: *Autobiography of a Yogi* - by Paramhansa Yogananda

A great writer Thomas Carlyle to Emerson : 'This (Bhagavad Gita) is a most inspiring book; it has brought comfort and consolation in my life – I hope it will do the same to you. Read it.'

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Yoga Karmasu Kaushalam

Yoga i.e. proper training of body and mind begets all works accomplished successfully and meaningfully.

Yoga is an out come of age old and time-tested realization of the great thinkers (Rishis) of this land i.e. Bharatavarsha, which gives a practioner an ailing free sound body, a longer life, an aesthetically trained mind, a pious soul, or; in short a perfect man in him(her).

Yoga has been being preached by many sages of yore and of present day from Rishi Patanjali to Baba Ramdev; and this preaching and practicing yoga has now been able to draw the attention of the world. Thanks to our Present Prime Minister Narendra Bhai Damodar Das Modi, that his preaching speech at the U.N. on Yoga convinced the international body to revere and recognize the theme of peace in this simple form of 'exercise' having penetrating effect on body, mind and thought of an individual. Hence the 21st June (the day has the longest duration of day time in the Northern hemisphere) as the Yoga Day. The First time, it will be observed by 177 member-nations of the U.N.

A microscopic group of haters in our country, thanks to the private TV Channels, shows their faces to oppose Yoga on their religious beliefs. But out of 177 Nations 46 are from the Muslim faiths. Similarly another group of U.S. smelt a rat in it. They changed the word '*Padmasana*' to '*Lotus Pose*' and then practice Yoga.

Mahapurush Madhavdeva of Baishnava religion in Assam wrote 500 years ago that pigs and haters (*Ninduka*) are part of a clean society. Pigs clear the defecated fields (thanks to present Central Government that has come forward to give retirement to pigs of that job, now) and the haters indirectly clean a society. In Hindi proverb "*Haathi jai bazar, kutte bhuke hazaar* (When an elephant goes to market, dogs in thousands barks at him, and he seldom cares for it)" is a fitting reply to the *Ninduka*'s.

God incarnation Krishna is mentioned as 'Yogeswara'. In the last sloka of The Geeta. Sanjay said where 'Yogeswara' Krishna and 'expert archer Arjuna' are together, vijay is certain to them. In present day context where Yoga & Karma go together victory of peace is certain and predictable, an approach to future Heritage indeed in deed.

Editor

Psychology of Children

- Dr Jyotsna Bhattacharjee

Since the time of Confucius, back in the 6th century B.C., childhood has been known as the “foundation age of life”. The basic attitudes, behaviour patterns, the way the child feels and acts are developed in the first 5 or 6 years. They largely determine what kind of a person the child will be as an adult.

Two separate yet related processes build the foundations for the child’s physical development, *behaviour* and *attitudes*. They are maturation and learning. Maturation is the natural development of the child’s inherited traits, both mental and physical. It is an ongoing process that begins before birth. When maturation reaches a certain point, learning can begin. For example, when the muscles of the legs and back have matured enough, the baby can learn to walk. Other kinds of maturation and learning go on at different rates and times.

Learning means getting knowledge, skills and experience. To learn, the child has to work at doing things over and over again. It will not happen by itself. Maturation also will not be able to do the job alone. Maturation and learning go together.

Children must reach a certain level of maturity before they can learn the skills of any given behaviour. The state of readiness to learn a certain thing is sometimes called the “teachable moment”. The teachable moment does not occur at the same time

for all patterns of behaviour, for all attitudes and feelings or for all children. For example, some babies learn hand skills before they learn leg skills. Then some mental abilities develop sooner than others. For example, imagination develops before reasoning. Children grow and develop at different rates and because of this; they reach the teachable moment for any given kind of learning at different times.



One 3 year old, for example, may be ready to learn a certain skill, while another 3-year old may not yet be physically and psychologically ready.

There are three simple rules which help to decide if a child is ready to learn a certain thing. First of all, the children must show an interest in the thing to be learned. For instance, when a toddler tries to put toothpaste on the brush or tries to climb on to the seat of a tricycle, there is a reason to believe that the toddler may be ready to learn the skills for these activities. Secondly, the interest must continue and even become stronger than many other interests. Thirdly, the performance

of the task must improve with practice. It is important to understand that all three of these rules must be used; one or two is not enough.

Learning may be either self-initiated or outer-directed. In self-initiated learning the children decide what to learn and how to learn it. There is little or no guidance from others. In outer-directed learning, the learning is directed and controlled by others. In self-initiated learning we may include learning by trial and error, learning by imitation and learning by identification. Out-directed learning includes authoritarian, democratic and permissive learning.

However, the difference between the methods of learning is not always clear-cut. For instance imitation is listed as a self-initiated form of learning. But imitation can also be used in training the child and in that case it becomes an outer-directed form of learning.

But we must note that children’s learning is not always so carefully planned and formal. Actually huge amounts of children’s learning take place when neither adults nor children are thinking about it. Children’s attitudes are largely shaped by those around them. Adults may tell children that they should be kind and friendly. But if those around them are usually cross and unfriendly, the children will learn cross and unfriendly

attitudes and not the attitudes adults tell them to have.

Children do not learn attitudes and feelings by being told about them. They learn about anger, guilt and punishment by observing others. They learn about good manners when they see how their mother or father greets visitors or answers the telephone. They learn about honesty when they watch parents' behaviour in stores. They learn about kindness when someone comforts them when they are sad or hurt.

Adults may not think that they are teaching children anything by their everyday behaviour. But some of the most important things a child can learn are learned that way. People usually do not think that much of a child's learning takes place when no one is paying attention. So it is very important for the adults to look into their own behaviour, when they are with children. They are always an example. Parents need to know that a child is likely to copy everything they do.

Guidance is the best way to help children learn. It is specially needed in the early stages of learning something, when the ground work is being laid. Once a good base is laid, the adult does not need to guide the activities quite as closely. Much of what the child does becomes a habit. However, some guidance is still needed even in the later stages of learning. This is because the child may still make mistakes. If the mistakes are repeated instead of being corrected, they would become unwanted habits. Guidance is most needed for the development of feelings and attitudes. There are two reasons

for that. First, attitudes and feelings are far less noticeable than many behaviour patterns. Thus undesired attitudes can become deeply rooted before parents become aware of them. Secondly, attitudes and feelings once set are most difficult to change, because they are based on emotions.

Supposing a child is developing a poor attitude towards playing with other children or if the parents think that the child is just tired or wishes to watch some special TV show, they may be overlooking more important causes for the child's behaviour. The child may have had bad experiences with other children or may not enjoy their games.

The parents need to try to discover why the child does not play with other children. They have to ensure that the child gets some positive, happy experiences of playing with others. The example the adults set is very important here, as in others. Are the parents themselves friendly towards other children. Do they welcome other children to play in their home and yard? Do they have adult friends and pleasant times of their own? Some people think that nature will see to it that children adjust well in life. However, nature just provides the chance for a wide variety of behaviour patterns. The behaviour patterns that will be established depend on learning based on the guidance and examples that the child has. Without guidance the children would have to depend on the trial and error method of learning. This is just not good enough to prepare them for today's complex world.

Since young children are not able to guide their own learning, parents have the major responsibility for guiding and training their children.

Childhood foundations play a great role in the way a person later adjusts to life. If the foundations are good, they lead to good personal and social adjustment and to a greater chance for happiness. If they are bad, they leave the person poorly adjusted to the world and less chance for happiness. A child should have a happy time. One of the most important things parents can do for their children is to help them find happiness. Guidance is essential for laying the foundations of happiness. Children do not know what will or will not lead to happiness. Parents and other adults must make choices that will make it possible for children to grow up happily. People have their own ideas about happiness. What makes one person happy does not make everyone happy, since happiness is personal. Since happiness is different for each person, there is not one thing that will make children happy. However, there are certain things that add to true happiness. They may be called the 3 As of happiness. They are achievement, acceptance and affection.

To young children, going to school means growing up. Some may want to grow up and have the independence that being grown up brings. They eagerly look forward to going to school. But eagerness may change into fear. The children may dread to leave the security of home in order to enter the unknown world of school. Going to school is a major

adjustment. The school should have a pleasant atmosphere. Bright and airy class rooms have a wonderful effect on children's mentality. A child before joining the school may be eager to go, since he has a new uniform, water bottle, bag, books etc. But once he enters the school he may be afraid in a strange atmosphere amongst strange people. Here the role of a teacher is extremely important. The teacher should realize that every child is an individual with his own likes and dislikes. They are not machine products. Some may be able to mix with others quickly and some may take time. The teacher should start with a play-way method, as the child needs to learn through play. The teacher



should be affectionate and strict at the same time. Using the rod is disastrous for the child. The teacher should know that every child may not have the same calibre, yet one should not be condemned as dull, simply because he is slow in response. Parents also should know that children are lovable and exasperating at the same time; yet they are a vibrant part of the family.

The parents should know that each child is a separate individual. To help them in giving a boost to their self-confidence, one should let the child to put one step before the other without warning him that he might fall into a puddle. The

teacher should give him guidance, but he must not be pushed. Let him make mistakes and correct himself. Untried children are always unsure. They should be allowed to develop their personality and here the teacher has a big role to play. The teacher's job is to bring out the potential in each child and to find out in which direction his interest lies. The teacher has to maintain discipline to train the child for

future, to make him self-reliant, so that he may face any problem - come what may. The teacher should encourage him in developing his personality and help him in developing good qualities in him - not by precept, but by example. It is no use teaching him the value of kindness and generosity if the teacher himself/herself is unkind and stern. Child psychology is a study of the aptitude, mentality and the attitude of a child. It is essential to bring out their talents, their personality and their interests.

Play is necessary for a child; play differs from work and drudgery. Children derive many

values - physical, emotional, social and intellectual values from play. Play equipment should stimulate young children's physical, social and mental development. Many people think that discipline means punishment. But dictionaries say that discipline is training in self-control or conformity. Stress should be given on training rather than on punishment. It is true that punishment is often a part of discipline but punishment is not all that discipline has. Education is the major feature in the discipline of young children. Parents should take a hand in disciplining their child before sending him to school. They should discipline the child firmly, but fairly. Mental abilities play a very

important role in school adjustment. Reading is one of the most important skills learned in the first grade. It plays a decisive role in the child's attitude towards school and learning. Creativity should be encouraged and too much TV watching destroy the imagination of children. The most important thing is to develop self-confidence in a child, so that when he grows up, he can take decisions on his own. Our endeavour should be to build up the character of the future citizens of the country for their welfare and for the welfare of the country.

(The writer is a former Head, Department of Philosophy, Cotton College, Guwahati)

(The Sentinel 24/05/2015)

Hindu Population up in US, Becomes Fourth-Largest Faith

New York: Fueled by immigration, America's Hindu population has reached 2.23 million, an increase of about one million or 85.8 percent since 2007, making Hinduism the fourth-largest faith, according to estimates based on wide-ranging study of religions in the nation.

The proportion of Hindus in the US population rose from 0.4 percent in 2007 to 0.7 percent last year, according to the Pew Research Center's "Religious Landscape Study" published Tuesday.

The study only gave the percentage shares of Hindus in the population, rather than numbers, but calculations by IANS using the population proportions in the report and census projections showed that the number of Hindus rose from 1.2 million in 2007 out of a total US population of 301.2 million that year to 2.23 million in 2014 in a population of 318.88 million. This amounts to an increase of 1.03 million or 85.8 percent in the Hindu population during the seven-year period.

Pew said that it may have underestimated the size of the Hindu population.

An earlier report from Pew on the future of world religions in April said that by 2050, Hindus would make up 1.2 percent of the US population and number 4.78 million. This would make the US Hindu population the fifth largest in the world.

Looking at the socio-economic profile of Hindus, the new Pew report released Tuesday said they

had the highest education and income levels of all religious groups in the US: 36 percent of the Hindus said their annual family income exceeded \$100,000, compared with 19 percent of the overall population. And 77 percent of Hindus have a bachelor's degree compared to 27 percent of all adults and 48 percent of the Hindus have a post-graduate degree.

Even as some American Christian organisations push for proselytisation in India, their share of the US population fell by 7.8 percent during the seven-year period, from 78.4 percent in 2007 to 70.6 percent last year, the Pew study said. That works out to about 11 million fewer Christians.

However, "Christians remain by far the largest religious group in the United States, but the Christian share of the population has declined markedly," the report said.

Underlying the change, there was a marked increase in the number of people who say they have "no particular religion," the study reported. About 23 percent of American adults fell into this category, up seven percent from the 16 percent in 2007. Included in this broad category are atheists who make up 3.1 percent of the total US population and agnostics, four percent.

Compared to Christianity, the others are miniscule despite the increases. The second largest religion is Judaism, which accounts for 1.9 percent of the population, with an increase of 0.2 percent, the study found. It is

followed by Islam with a 0.9 percent share of the population, up by 0.5 percent. Buddhism ties for the fourth place with Hinduism at 0.7 percent.

The US census does not ask questions about religion. The Pew Research Center, an independent Washington-based organisation, surveyed more than 35,000 people across the US to fill this gap and arrive at the statistics.

The rising trend of Hinduism in the US contrasts with that in India. The Pew report released in April said that the share of Hindus in the Indian population was expected to decline by 2.8 percent, from 79.5 percent in 2010 to 76.7 percent in 2050 even though their numbers were projected to grow to almost 1.3 billion by that year in a total Indian population of nearly 1.7 billion.

The new report Tuesday on the religions in the US said that most of the increase in the Hindu population came through immigration and not conversions: 87 percent are immigrants and nine percent are the children of immigrants, the report said. Only 10 percent of the Hindus are converts, with Catholics and unaffiliated each accounting for 3 percent.

Hindus are least likely to convert to other religions, according to the report: Of all the America adults who said they were raised as Hindus, 80 percent continued to adhere to Hinduism. Of those born Hindu, who did not any longer identify themselves as Hindus, 18 percent

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Indus Valley Script is Numerical, not Language: Historian

Contrary to the age-old assumption that the Indus script is a language, a veteran science historian has claimed that it is numerical, as evident from numbers and symbols in the seals and artifacts of the Indus Valley Civilisation (3000-1900 BC).

“Attempts to decipher the Indus script were based on the assumption that a script should connote linguistic writing. There are many languages the world over without a script even today,” the 90-year-old historian, B.V. Subbarayappa, told IANS.

Though the Indus Civilisation came to light 90 years ago when then Archeological Survey of India (ASI) director general John Marshall wrote about its discovery in “The Illustrated London News” in 1924, its mysterious script became contentious due to different interpretations by linguists, historians and archaeologists the world over.

“Over 4,000 seals and other inscribed artifacts were unearthed in the Indus Valley sites or the Harappa culture as archaeologists call it, and located in India and (now) Pakistan. They were used to meet the accounting needs of farm production and management,” Subbarayappa asserted.

Showing the unique and distinct characteristic features of the numerical-based Indus script, the city-based renowned scholar said the Indus Valley people had widely used the decimal, additive, multiplicative numerical system in their day-to-day occupations, which were primarily agriculture and animal husbandry.

“The symbolic representation of six, four and two-rowed varieties of barley, wheat and cotton were depicted in the form of a composite animal - unicorn, a motif in about 1,100 seals, which were intended to be records of foodgrains (wheat & barley) and commodities (cotton), Subbarayappa, a former president of the International Union of History & Philosophy of Science, said. Other animals like buffalos, humped bulls and rhinos were also used as records associated with agriculture activity or production.

“The premise of the numerical hypothesis is that a language can be in vogue in the form of oral tradition long before it was scripted. For instance, the Vedic language did not have a script for over 1,000 years,” the nonagenarian recalled.

As numerals require symbolic representation, the first attempt at writing began with numerical forms, as was evident from the basic script forms on the Indus objects that were used as numerals in the past.

Ten Indus forms were also used as numerals in the Ashokan, Naneghat and Kushan inscriptions.

Edicts of emperor Ashoka of the Maurya dynasty were recorded for posterity in 33 inscriptions etched on pillars named after him, boulders and cave walls.

Naneghat inscriptions belong to the Satavahana rulers in the Western Ghats near Junnar in the Pune district of Maharashtra. The Naneghat, a mountain range, was also used as a trade route between Kalyan and Junnar.

Kushan inscriptions were used by Kushan rulers in the Hindu Kush region of what is now northern Pakistan. They had texts in Bactrian in Greek script, in Prakrit written in Brahmi or Kharosthi.

“Repetition of symbols twice, thrice and four times alongside on an Indus seal makes sense only in numeration and not in a language. Their presentation in a line mostly and occasionally in two or three lines on seals indicates numerical value than linguistic expression,” Subbarayappa reiterated.

The numerical hypothesis explains the role of granaries and de-husking platforms at Mohenjodaro in what is now Pakistan’s Sindh province and Harappa, while the objects throw light on remnants of barely, wheat, cotton, peas, sesame and dates found in their sites.

“My hypothesis describes not only the agricultural production and management but also their quantitative records in the numerical symbols inscribed,” the chemist-turned-scientist added.

In view of the Indus script’s archaeological importance, the science historian wants national institutions like the ASI, the Indian Council of Historical Research and the Indian National Science Academy to evaluate his numerical hypothesis in a scientific way as its linguistic assumption has reached a blind alley.

(May 24, 2015 http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/indus-valley-script-numerical-not-language-historian-115052400266_1.html)

Illegal influx: turning into a rignmarole

Guwahati, May 11 — Dr Bhumidhar Barman, the Minister in charge of the Assam Accord Implementation stated in the Assam Assembly during its last Budget Session, that since 1985, the Foreigners' Tribunals have identified 38,186 persons as foreign nationals, found liable for deportation. The Minister also stated that 36,670 persons were either absconding or dead, 2844 persons have been deported and 68 persons are in the detention camps (The Assam Tribune, March 4, 2015). This was in response to a question raised by AGP's Phani Bhushan Choudhury. The news also reported: 'Prafulla Kr Mahanta of the AGP said that the deportation of illegal immigrants cannot be undertaken properly in the absence of a bilateral pact with Bangladesh and called upon the State Government to approach the Centre to convince the latter to approach Dhaka for the purpose.' It shows the deplorable status of the process of addressing a problem which is burning the State for past 36 years and coined by the 'Assamese people' as the greatest problem of Assam, threatening the very existence of the indigenous communities. Surprisingly, the Assamese intelligentsia and the media were silent on this matter; whereas they reacted strongly on the Minister's reply to a supplementary question raised by another AGP MLA that there was no proper definition of the Assamese people. The response was so strong that for the last two months, the pages of the local

newspapers were filled with innumerable views on 'who an Assamese is'. An undeclared competition was seen in the TV news channels as to who can present a better quarrelling debate on the small screen on the issue. One of the reasons for the silence and indifference of the intelligentsia and the media on such an important matter may be perhaps the people are now convinced about the difficult and time-consuming process of identifying illegal immigrants and declaring them as foreigners. Another reason may be that the people have now realized that without a proper repatriation treaty between India and Bangladesh, the present process of deportation, by dumping the foreigners on the other side of the Indo-Bangladesh boundary, cannot make Assam free of 'lakhs of foreigners'. Whatever may be the reason, it is high time for a proper stock taking of the problem and its probable practical solution. It is needless to mention that before a foreigner is deported, he/she has to be the identified and declared as a foreigner residing in India illegally. The process of identifying illegal immigrants and declaring them as foreigners is difficult, clumsy, complex and time consuming. Apart from the process, the inadequate infrastructure for the purpose, in terms of the number of Tribunals and the people manning the Tribunals have been a great hindrance in the identification effort. Even if the physical infrastructures are created by establishing 100 Tribunals as has been announced by the

Government, judges are not available for appointment as the heads of the Tribunals. Assuming all 100 Tribunals are functional and effective, the detected illegal foreigners cannot be deported without a proper treaty with the Bangladesh Government. Bangladesh has to accept the foreigners declared by the Tribunals as their people. The Assamese people have the habit of throwing garbage in the neighbour's empty plot of land or even in drains. The Bangladeshi people, though they entered India illegally, cannot be dumped like garbage. They are human beings with flesh and blood like that of ours. They have fled their country in search of livelihood or as victims of some atrocities. Deporting them with full dignity may not be possible, but we must at least ensure the protection of their minimum human rights while deporting. The present system of pushing a foreigner beyond our border taking advantage of darkness and absence of the personnel of the Bangladeshi security forces is not at all effective; because taking advantage of the unsealed border, he/she again enters India. Also, such pushing out on a large scale is not possible. Imagine the plight if all the 38,186 persons identified as foreigners were to be deported by push back. And in absence of a repatriation treaty, 'lakhs of foreigners' if identified, would have to be kept and fed in the detention camps. It is beyond one's imagination how lakhs of people can be kept and maintained in the detention

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Border management will improve: BSF Chief

- R Dutta Choudhury

GUWAHATI, May 11 – Implementation of the land swap deal with Bangladesh will bring in considerable improvement in border management as the international boundary will be properly demarcated, said Director General of the Border Security Force DK Pathak. He also said that a number of new schemes have been launched by the border guarding force to check infiltration.

Talking to The Assam Tribune, Pathak said over the years, the border guarding force faced problems in border management in the areas where the international border was not properly demarcated. A fencing could not be constructed in the disputed areas, which also added to the problems of the personnel

guarding the international border. He said the contiguity of the villages in the unfenced areas also affected border management as the infiltrators could take advantage of the situation to sneak into India from the neighbouring country.

The BSF DG pointed out that after implementation of the land swap deal, the exchange of the enclaves and adverse possessions would take place and the international border would be properly demarcated. Following proper demarcation of the international border, India would be able to construct fencing all along the international border with Bangladesh, which would be of great help to the BSF in improving border management, he added.

Pathak further pointed out that the disputed areas including the adverse possession areas had witnessed tension in the past, but now the situation would improve considerably and peace and tranquility can be maintained along the border.

The BSF DG admitted that the international riverine border remains an area of concern and the BSF has mooted several new schemes for improving vigil. He said a proposal for deployment of floating border outposts is under active consideration of the Government of India. "We are also considering using modern available technology for improving vigil along the riverine international border," he added.

(<http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may1215/at055>)

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Illegal influx: turning into a rigmarole

camp for an indefinite period waiting for a repatriation treaty. The international attention it would attract is also unimaginable. The Bangladesh Government is not waiting to sign a repatriation treaty with India. Firstly, Bangladesh has never accepted that their people are illegally residing in India. The Indian Government has also never felt the necessity of signing a repatriation treaty with Bangladesh to free Assam from the illegal migrants. So, the first step will be to convince the Central Government about the necessity of a repatriation treaty with Bangladesh. If the Central Government feels the necessity, India has to discuss and negotiate with Bangladesh which itself will

be a long drawn process. And then, execute the physical deportation of such a large number of people! Let us imagine the time frame of achieving such a Herculean task and face the reality. Before we try to convince the Central Government, let us get ourselves convinced. Let the intellectuals, journalists, students' organizations, literary and non-political bodies deliberate on this issue, individually as well as collectively, and arrive at a consensus as to whether India really needs a repatriate treaty with Bangladesh. We have wasted enough of our time and energy in the illegal immigrants Issue. If really it is beyond practical means to solve the

problem within a foreseeable future, then there is no point wasting our time and energy taking it as our prime problem. If really our existence is in stake, let us explore other options to secure our existence and identity. The NRC update may serve some limited purpose; but it cannot be the panacea. Even constitutional safeguards are a far cry for reasons which are so obvious in a divided society like that of ours. Let us ponder if there is any sense in pursuing an issue which eludes a practical solution in a foreseeable future

(15 May 2015 http://m.newshunt.com/india/english-newspapers/the-assam-tribune/news/illegal-influx-turning-into-a-rigmarole_39630880/c-in-l-english-n-theassam-ncat-news)

Pakistan Chief Justice Nasir-ul-Mulk raises the question whether his country can be secular

Pakistan's chief justice Nasir-ul-Mulk, hearing petitions on apparently unrelated issues, has mooted the issue of what it would take to transform Pakistan from an Islamic republic to a secular state. This shouldn't be as unthinkable as it sounds. Other countries have undergone dramatic transformations as well: Eastern European countries from communist dictatorship to capitalist democracy, or Iran from monarchy to Islamic republic.

Determining 'true' against 'false' interpretation of a religion is a messy theological area no government should ever get into. If it attempts to do this it ends up undermining itself, as it gives religious authorities – or anyone who claims to be the 'true' interpreter of a religion – greater legitimacy and leverage than itself. Pakistan is a textbook illustration of this principle. Even as (or precisely because) it continues to nurture terror groups it suffers unrelenting terror attacks itself, triggering a slide into anarchy and making Pakistan resemble a failing

state. Moving in the direction of secularism would reverse this inexorable logic and stabilise the Pakistani polity. If Pakistan's being an Islamic republic is meant to differentiate itself from India as a secular state, this is no longer necessary. Nobody questions Pakistan's right to exist, least of all India which has moved on. Pakistan's being a secular state doesn't make it an India clone; just as its being an Islamic republic doesn't make it an Iran clone. The question raised by Pakistan's Supreme Court on whether the country can become a secular state is purely of academic interest and cannot be taken seriously. Though many Muslim majority nations have evolved into secular republics the same cannot be expected to happen in Pakistan that not only owes its very existence to the two nation theory, which held that Hindus and Muslims were two separate civilisations, but has also taken a different trajectory from other modernising countries.

The trend was set off by

Pakistan's first constitution, which named it the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and also specified that only a Muslim can be its president. The process of Islamisation intensified since then with the government setting up sharia courts and incorporating sharia provisions in the penal code.

The resurgence of political Islam after the Iranian revolution and its growing popularity in recent years, including in some of the most modern Muslim countries, has only accelerated the growth of religious fundamentalism in Pakistan.

This has encouraged widespread violence on minorities and even against the military which had nurtured the fringe elements. With Islamic fundamentalism taking such strong roots and poverty levels remaining undiminished it is now virtually impossible for Pakistan to change course and evolve into a secular republic.

(May 7, 2015 <http://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/toi-editorials/pakistan-chief-justice-nasir-ul-mulk-raises-the-question-whether-his-country-can-be-secular/>)

Fall in Line to Get Passport: BJP to Geelani

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir unit of BJP on Sunday said hardline Hurriyat Conference chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani should acknowledge he is Indian and "apologise" for his anti-national activities if he wants to get passport to visit his ailing daughter in Saudi Arabia.

"Passport cannot be given to Geelani 'sahib' till he apologises for the mistakes he has committed during the past 25 years. Passports are issued to

Indian citizens and not the ones who don't believe in India and its democracy," BJP spokesman Khalid Jehangir said in a statement here.

"If Geelani 'sahib' wants the passport, then has to fall in the line and follow law of the land," Jehangir said.

The BJP spokesman said "if Geelani acknowledges that he is an Indian and won't indulge in anti-India activities, then Government of India can consider his request

for the passport".

Geelani has sought a passport to visit his daughter, who is admitted in a hospital in Saudi Arabia in a critical condition.

"The Government of India cannot give a passport to a person who spews venom against the country where he lives and enjoys all the comforts," Jehangir said.

(May 18, 2015. <http://news.statetimes.in/fall-in-line-to-get-passport-bjp-to-geelani/>)

Bihar's Muslims donate land for world's largest Hindu temple

PATNA, May 19, 2015: Muslims in Bihar, in a stellar demonstration of communal harmony, have donated land to help build the world's largest Hindu temple which will have the capacity to seat a staggering 20,000 people.

"Muslims have not only donated land, they have also provided land at a nominal rate for construction of the world's largest Hindu temple. Without help of Muslims, it would have been difficult realise this dream project," Acharya Kishore Kunal, secretary of the Patna-based cash-rich Mahavir Mandir Trust that is undertaking the ambitious project, told IANS.

Kunal, a former Indian Police

Kunal said that more than three dozen Muslim families have their land in the middle of the proposed location of the temple and some Muslims families have land along the main road that connects to the project site.

"Some Muslims donated lands and others helped and supported us to purchase their land for the temple. If Muslims had not come forward, the temple project was sure to have got delayed..."

He said that Mahavir Mandir Trust has obtained 200 acres of land. "Hindus and Muslims have donated about 50 acres of land and the remaining has been purchased."

said.

Gurgaon based Radheyshyam Sharma, director of Indgenious Studio Pvt Ltd, will look after the architectural aspects.

He said the Virat Ramayan Mandir will be taller than the world famous 12th century Angkor Wat temple complex in Cambodia, which is 215 feet high. The complex will comprise 18 temples with high spires and its Shiv temple would have the largest Shivling in the world, another distinction.

He said the temple would have a seating capacity of 20,000 people in the hall facing the main temple having the idols of Ram,

Muslims have not only donated land, they have also provided land at a nominal rate for construction of the world's largest Hindu temple. Without help of Muslims, it would have been difficult realise this dream project

Service officer, said that Muslims have come forward to ensure that the temple comes up soon. The construction of the temple will commence in June at Janki Nagar near Kesaria in East Champaran district, about 150 km from here. It will cost over Rs.500 crore. "It is usual for Hindus to donate land for temple, but it is unusual for Muslims to donate land for the construction of temple," he said and added that Muslims should be lauded for joining hands with Hindus to donate land for a pious cause.

Earlier, some Muslims had helped build a Hindu temple dedicated to Goddess Durga in Gaya district, another temple was dedicated to God Shiva in Begusarai district and in Sitamarhi district.

Mumbai-based Valecha Construction Company will construct the temple, which will be 2,500 feet long, 1,296 feet wide and 379 feet high.

"The temple will be earthquake proof (since it) is near the Nepal border," Kunal

Sita, Luv and Kush. According to him, no temple in the world has such a huge seating capacity.

He said the temple was to be named "Virat Angkor Wat Ram Mandir", but later its name was changed following objections by people in Cambodia.

Angkor Wat was built during king Suryavarman's rule and is today a Unesco World Heritage site.

(<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Bihars-Muslims-donate-land-for-worlds-largest-Hindu-temple/articleshow/47346145.cms>)

Yoga Wins The Heart of Chinese People

The Chinese are taking to yoga in a big way, if what their officials here say are an indication. Of late, yoga has been gaining ground in China despite its traditional tai chi fitness practice. Even First Lady Peng Liyuan is said to be learning and practising yoga.

More and more officials and their families in the Chinese embassy here are turning to yoga for sound mental and physical health.

"We have arranged for an Indian exponent who is holding a yoga class once in a week in the embassy," press counsellor Xie Liyan told IANS.

She said 35-40 people, comprising mainly the embassy staff and their family members, have been attending the classes for the past few months.

"Some of the exercises like breathing are quite tough and hard. We are asking for light exercises. But yoga is really relaxing and helps keep the body fit," she added.

Minister Counsellor Cheng Guangzhong, who is in India for over a year, said almost every major city in China now has several yoga learning and practising centres.

"Two Indian teachers are holding yoga classes in my hometown. They are saying yoga is generating much interest like learning English among the Chinese, mainly the youngsters," he said.

Xia said the yoga class in the embassy is held in the evening.

"The purpose of holding the

class in the evening is to get relaxed after calling it a day. Physical or breathing exercises help recovering inner peace and energy. This of course helps me become more effective," she said.

Indian officials say the country will hold one of the biggest global yoga meets in China's Sichuan province on June 17-21 to celebrate the UN's first "International Day of Yoga".



Promotion yoga is likely to be discussed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to China May 14-16.

Books by renowned yoga exponent BKS Iyengar, which have been translated into Mandarin, are also said to be quite popular in China.

According to Asia Weekly, a publication of China Daily, a yoga school will be established at Yunnan Minzu University in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan. Students will have access to courses including Indian philosophy, Indian religions and yoga culture.

It said the decision to start the yoga school was made during the 10th K2K (Kunming to Kolkata) Forum, held in Kunming last November 25. The forum is jointly run by the governments of Yunnan province and India's West Bengal state.

Cao Chenrui, dean of Yunnan Minzu University's South Asian Institute, says this will be the first yoga school at a Chinese university.

Yoga has become popular among Chinese people in recent years, with a number of gyms and training centres providing yoga courses, mostly at high prices. For example, Yogi Yoga charges 1,000 yuan (\$160) for a week's lessons at three of its branches in Beijing, Asia Weekly said.

Some yoga clubs and organizations have been established in China's universities, providing courses to yoga amateurs - mainly college students. For example, the Tea Yoga Club in Peking University, established in 2010, has more than 100 members.

The UN General Assembly last December adopted a resolution, moved by India, declaring June 21 as "International Day of Yoga"

The UN recognised that yoga "provides a holistic approach to health and well-being" and that wider dissemination of information about benefits of practising yoga would be beneficial for the health of the world population.

(http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/chinese-take-to-yoga-to-be-discussed-during-pm-modi-visit_1589792.html)

Mizoram to take back her tribal citizens from Tripura after 18 years

Agartala/Aizawl, May 17, 2015: Following pressure from the union home ministry and the Tripura government, Mizoram has finally agreed to take back all the tribal refugees from Mizoram sheltering in Tripura for the past 18 years.

“The repatriation of refugees expected to start from June 8. A tripartite meeting between the officials of Tripura and Mizoram governments and refugee leaders took this decision,” Panisagar Sub-divisional magistrate Biplab Das told IANS.

He said: “It was decided in the meeting that from June 2 to June 4, a study would be done about how many of the refugees’ names have been enrolled in the electoral list of Mizoram. Then sub-divisional level officials of the two states in presence of the refugee leaders would be held before starting of the repatriation on June 8.”

According to Relief and Rehabilitation Minister Badal Choudhury, there are 5,286 tribal families comprising 31,223 men, women and children sheltered in seven camps in Kanchanpur and Panisagar sub-divisions under North Tripura district adjoining Mizoram.

The Reang tribals, who locally call themselves “Bru”, have lived in makeshift camps in Tripura since October 1997 when they fled western Mizoram after the killing of a Mizo forest officer triggered ethnic trouble.

The Mizoram government earlier refused to take back all the refugees citing that all the migrants are not the resident of

Mizoram.

“In the Friday’s district magistrate-level meeting, the Mizoram government officials more or less agreed to take back all the refugees sheltered in Tripura,” said Das, who was also present in the meeting.

The Tripura government team was led by additional district magistrate of North Tripura district Ranjit Das while Mizoram’s team was led by Mamit district Deputy Commissioner Vanlalngaihsaka.

Meanwhile, Mizoram’s additional secretary of home department Lalbiakzama said in Aizawl that following the Supreme Court’s directives and the decision made in the meeting of the union home ministry in presence of Mizoram and Tripura governments’ officials on January 30, it was proposed to repatriate all the remaining tribal families from the relief camps in north Tripura district.

“The union home ministry has recently released Rs.4.7 crore for the repatriation purposes, but the amount would not be sufficient for repatriation of all the remaining Reang tribal families,” Lalbiakzama said.

The Mizoram government earlier sought around Rs.70 crore financial assistance from the union home ministry to rehabilitate the repatriated tribal refugees.

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh and his deputy Kiren Rijju had visited the refugee camps and held talks with the refugee leaders on February 14 and persuaded

the tribal to go back to their villages in western Mizoram.

Refugee leaders told the central ministers that they were willing to return to their homes in Mizoram if their 10 points demands, including security and rehabilitation, were met.

The Mizoram Bru Displaced People’s Forum (MBDPF), an organisation of the refugees, submitted a six-page memorandum to the central ministers accusing the Mizoram government of discriminating against them.

The Mizoram government remains ambiguous on the refugees’ demands, which also included free supply of food grain for two years, and allotting land to them.

Mizo organisations, however, have opposed the MBDPF’s demands.

Tripura Revenue and Relief Minister Choudhury told IANS: “We urge upon the central government to ask the Mizoram government to take back the refugees.”

“The union home minister tried to hold a meeting with the chief ministers of Tripura and Mizoram to finalise a road map to repatriate the refugees to Mizoram. However, the Mizoram chief minister did not attend the meeting nor did he send his representative.”

“It is very unfortunate that the tribals despite being Indians nationals and permanent inhabitant of a state, are unable to live in their homeland. This is

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JSM flays APSC for 'violating' ST (P) quota

KOKRAJHAR, May 14: The Janajati Suraksha Moncha (JSM) has expressed strong resentment over the recently declared result of Assam Public Service Commission (APSC) examination that allegedly violated the ST (P) reserve quota.

JSM advisor Janaklal Basumatary, who is also a retired IRS, said the result of the Assam State Civil Services examination, 2013 conducted by the APSC and declared on May 12, 2015 has come to their notice. He said there appeared prima facie serious manipulation in the filling of the quota for ST reservations. He said the total vacancy filled up in Assam Civil Service category is 90. The quota for ST (P) at 10 per cent comes to 9 only. The APSC has filled up the ST (P) reserve quota only 7 vide Sl. No. 56, 64, 71, 78, 82, 89 and 90 of the result sheet of the ACS category. Open category 46 vides Sl. No. 1 to 44 and 82 and 88 have been filled up. The maximum vacancy for ST (P) category is 9 but filled up only 7 and so 2 remained unfilled. *(May be that no qualified candidate of ST(P) was there.- ed)*

In APS category also, out of 60 vacancies six should have been for ST (P) quota but only 4 posts

in ST (P) reserve quota were filled up vide Sl. No. 84, 85, 87 and 88 in ST (P) reserve category. There are two posts less in ST (P) reserve quota. Whereas, there are excess of 12 vacancies for OBC category in ACS list which is 37 in total. Twenty-seven per cent of 90 posts is 25 only. Thus, there are 12 excess in this category. "It appears that political consideration influenced the APSC result. The OBC category people are favoured for their number of voters," said Basumatary.

He said the ST (H) and SC did not lose their reserve quota of 5 per cent and 7 per cent while OBC gained but ST (P) lost two reserved quotas. "Moreover, Sl. No. 1 in ACS category is Deepti Morang. If she belongs to Moran community then she will not be ST (P) as Moran is not yet recognized as ST, Sl. No. 6 Bhaskarjyoti Rajbonshi apparently does not belong to ST (P) as Ranbonshis are also not recognized as ST. Both are OBC category but have been included in the open category list. But, corresponding 2 ST (P) remained short in the ST (P) category list. Thus, the ST (P) status given to two OBC category candidates mentioned in the result sheet has

affected the filling up of ST (P) quota," he added.

"In APS category also ST (P) quota is six but only four have been filled up. Open category should have been maximum of 30 but 32 have been filled in this category. The two excess have been taken from ST (P) category. These two were taken against the ST (P) places in the open category vides Sl. No. 8 and 10. They are placed in open category. So, corresponding two have been reduced from the ST (P) reserved category, which should not have been done. Besides, Deepti Moran and Bhaskarjyoti Rajbonshi prima facie belong to OBC, not ST (P). There is one Asustosh Deka in Sl. No. 55 of ACS category list who is placed as ST (P) reserve category. Since Deka is prima facie Sarania surname and Saranias are not ST (P), his case is also doubtful," said Basumatary.

The tribal leader said that the rules for filling up of the reserve quota were grossly flouted and OBC category people were favoured for political consideration.

(<http://sentinelassam.com.bh-in-7.webhostbox.net/state.php?sec=2&subsec=2&ppr=1&dtP=2015-05-15>)

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Mizoram to take back her tribal citizens...

dangerous for the ethnic amity, stability and peace," the minister said.

"A serious socio-economic problem has cropped up due to the long stay of the refugees in

Tripura. The refugees have damaged vast areas in forests in Kanchanpur causing serious environmental problems," he added.

"Some refugees are involved

in terrorist activities. The refugees also work for cheap wages, creating an awkward situation for local labourers," the minister said.

(http://zeenews.india.com/news/north-east/mizoram-to-take-back-its-tribal-citizens-from-tripura-after-18-years_1596690.html)

Centre mulls ST status to 6 State communities

NEW DELHI, May 18 – Worried over the possible demographic changes in Assam due to illegal immigration, the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre is contemplating to turn the State into a tribal majority by according Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to six communities.

The move came after the pro-talk faction of the ULFA, which is having peace talks with the Centre, made it clear that it would give up the demand for Assam's sovereignty only if the Koch-Rajbongshi, Moran, Muttok, Chutia, Tai Ahom and tea tribe communities are given ST status, a Home Ministry official told PTI.

The group, led by ULFA chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa, voiced strong concern over the alleged unabated illegal immigration from Bangladesh and conveyed to the government that granting ST status to the six communities was the only way out

to protect the interests of the indigenous people of Assam.

The BJP has been vocal against the illegal immigration from Bangladesh since the early 1980s when the All Assam Students' Union launched the six-year agitation against Bangladeshi immigrants.

If the NDA government takes a decision to grant ST status to the six communities, it would give a big boost to the prospects of the BJP in the Assam Assembly elections, expected to be held early next year.

All these six communities are currently listed as Other Backward Classes and are willing to be included in the list of Scheduled Tribes as the new status would give them more benefits.

As per the 2011 Census, the total population in Assam is 3.12 crore and the total population of the six communities, along with the

existing tribals like Bodos, Sonowal-Kacharis, Dimasas and Karbis, would be around 50 per cent.

This figure, when translated into Assembly strength, would bring as many as 80 out of the 126 Assembly seats under the reserved tribal status, thus ensuring that despite changes in the demography, the indigenous population would continue to enjoy political power.

In the next stage, once Assam becomes a tribal majority State, the Centre would start the process of delimitation of Assembly and Parliamentary constituencies after the 2021 Census.

Home Minister Rajnath Singh had at least two rounds of meeting with Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram and discussed the issue threadbare, officials said.

(<http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=may1915/at050>)

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Hindu Population up in US, Becomes Fourth-Largest Faith

said they had no religious affiliation (a category that includes atheists and agnostics), and only one percent joined Christian Protestant sects.

Rajan Zed, the Nevada-based president of the Universal Society of Hinduism, attributed the high retention rate of Hinduism to "the focus on inner search, exploring the vast wisdom of scriptures and making spirituality more attractive to youth and children."

Referring to the social and economic attributes of Hindus reported in the Pew study, told

IANS, "The Hindu community in America is continuing with the traditional values of hard work, higher morals, stress on education, and sanctity of marriage amidst so many distractions."

These are the highlights of the Hindu community profile in the report:

* Hindus have the lowest divorce rate of only 5 percent.

* Hindus are least likely to marry outside their religion: 91 percent have a spouse or partner who is a fellow Hindu.

* The median age of Hindu adults is 33 years.

* Five percent of San Francisco's population is Hindu and three percent of New York City's.

* Most Hindus live in the West (38 percent) and the Northeast (33 percent).

An anomaly in the report is that 62 percent of Hindus are men and 38 percent women, a difference of 24 percent, which may be due to the pattern of immigration.

(<http://www.abplive.in/World/2015/05/13/article586284.ece/Hindu-population-up-in-US-becomes-fourth-largest-faith>)

NE Chakmas ask PM to raise tribal rights issue in Dhaka

Guwahati, Jun1,2015: Ahead of Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh, the Chakma community of the northeast has asked the Prime Minister to raise with Dhaka the issue of alleged human rights violation against Jummas (tribal communities) in the Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT) of the neighbouring country.

The Chakma National Council of India (CNCI), the body spearheading the rights of Chakmas living in the northeast and other parts of the country, said India being one of the largest democracies in the world and a key player in the subcontinent, it was the country's moral obligation to raise the issue of CHT in bilateral talks with Bangladesh.

CNCI president Anirudha Chakma said the resolution of the CHT dispute was important for India and New Delhi should play a proactive role in prevailing upon Dhaka to stopping alleged persecution of tribal people in CHT. He said injustice was being

meted out to the communities of CHT during the 1947 Partition, and since then Chakmas and other tribal communities were leading a life of misery and displacement.

CNCI had a two-day meeting here recently where the issue of reports of human rights violation and persecution in CHT were discussed.

"It was observed during the meeting that the root cause of the Chakmas' present plight in India and in the CHT was the injustice meted out to the community during Partition. The meeting sought to remind members of the community and the outside world about the injustice meted out by the Sir Cyrill Redcliff Boundary Commission which awarded CHT to Pakistan even though more than 97% of the population there was non-Muslim. This was against the very principle on which the boundary commission was formed," a CNCI statement said. Many Chakmas migrated to

India due to post-Partition persecution in the CHT.

The CNCI has also floated an Assam committee to spearhead the demand for social, economic and cultural justice to Chakmas living in the northeast.

Though Chakmas had migrated to various states of India following turmoil in CHT, Anirudha said many members of the community had been living in the northeast even before Partition.

"The tragedy is that all members of our community in the northeast are looked down upon as migrants even though many of us have been in the northeast before Partition. The overall condition of the Chakmas in the region is deplorable as they are deprived of proper education, health facilities and other fundamental rights," Anirudha said.

(<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/NE-Chakmas-ask-PM-to-raise-tribal-rights-issue-in-Dhaka/articleshow/47492956.cms>)

Yoga helps me to stay flexible: Paul McCartney

London: Beatles legend Paul McCartney says he feels as fit and healthy as he is 27-year-old because he gives more importance to yoga than hitting a gym.

The 72-year-old guitarist said he does not need any trainer to get the fitness right, reported Daily Mirror.

"I feel pretty fit. I'm not the sort of person who particularly needs a trainer. I'll just watch what the

trainers do and then copy them.

"I do a bit of the cross-trainer, a bit of running, a bit of cardio and then I do some weights, some abs on the Swiss ball, before ending up on the mat doing a few stretches. And then standing on my head," he said.

McCartney said yoga helps him to stay flexible.

"That's my big claim to fame! I actually learned it in the 60s, it was a yoga thing, and my

argument is I need flexibility not strength.

"But what's cool about it is that I'll be in the gym with all these guys doing really big weights, whilst I'm there doing not big weights, and afterwards, when I've done my headstand for about five minutes, these big guys will come up to me and say, 'That was pretty impressive, man'!", he said.

(May 31, 2015 http://zeenews.india.com/entertainment/wellness/yoga-helps-me-to-stay-flexible-paul-mccartney_1604951.html)

Another big arrest in Tripura trafficking racket

- Biswendu Bhattacharjee

AGARTALA, May 18, 2015: Police arrested a third accused in running a human trafficking racket in the border villages of Tripura based on information from two other accused who were arrested last week.

Delaware Hussein was arrested from Sobhapur village of Sonamura in West Tripura on Saturday.

The two other accused - Kurban Ali, a resident of Indiranagar area of Sonamura and Abdul Rashid Dar, a resident of Kashmir valley - were arrested last week along with 25 Myanmar nationals belong to the Rohingya community from Kurban's house.

Sub-divisional magistrate of Sonamura Debolina Kilikdar has sent all three accused to five-days police remand. Superintendent of police (Sepahijala) Pradip Pal said Delaware was arrested based on the information revealed

by Ali and Dar while in police custody. They admitted that they had been running a trafficking racket along with a gang in West Bengal. According to police, the detained Myanmar nationals were trapped by the racket in Bangladesh. They were brought to India through the western border to be sold in northern India at a cost of Rs 1 lakh each.

"The women and girls were being sent to brothels while the men were made to join criminal gangs," a police officer said quoting the confession of the accused persons. They have already sent many people to different parts of India.

The racket has administrative reach in Tripura by which they managed fake passports and sent people outside India. They also admitted that some more Myanmar were sold through this racket in northern India and Kashmir, police said.

During investigation, police traced a joint account of Kurban Ali with Joel Shikdar, a resident of 24 Parganas of West Bengal in SBI. The account has a record of huge transactions in the past few months. Seven men, eight women and 10 children from Myanmar were sentenced three months jail for illegal entry into the Indian territory. Tripura police is also contacting the Myanmar embassy for their release.

Tripura has reported as many as 13 cases of fake passport rackets in the last one year. In all the cases, passports were processed from different district magistrate offices of Tripura with fake documents. But in none of the cases could police identify the culprits in the administration.

(<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/Another-big-arrest-in-Tripura-trafficking-racket/articleshow/47321336.cms>)

Nepal's child goddess unscathed in quake

Kathmandu, May 2, 2015: When the deadly earthquake battered Nepal last week, major temples in Kathmandu's Darbar Square were razed to the ground, but the home of a nine-year-old girl worshipped as a living goddess remained almost unscathed.

Kumari, the city's living child goddess, is the prominent of the girls who are worshipped as the symbol of the fearsome Hindu goddess Durga until they reach puberty after which they are replaced.



As the earth started shaking on April 25 just before noon, most of the ancient structures in the Square collapsed but the living goddess' small palace just got a few cracks.

The families of the previous Kumaris who also reside in the courtyard did not run away to safer places, believing that the child goddess "will save them from her powers".

"If the reigning Kumari assured us about our safety, we knew that we would not be hurt," the mother of a previous Kumari told the Nepali Times.

"We believe that it was her powers that might have protected the place," said a member of one

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Connectivity, mobility and the North-east

- Dr. Pahi Saikia

Fluid territorial boundaries and continuing multi-directional exchanges between the frontiers in South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia have attracted much attention in the policy circles of India's Ministry of External Affairs. What is the significance of these external linkages between India, particularly its north-east frontier and the East Asian borders? This question has gained more prominence in the context of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visits to China and Central Asia. These visits have evoked mixed reactions. The proponents, both experts and policy makers, seem to be optimistic. Some of them search for new terrains for trans-border connectivity and development of the Asian frontiers. Some even highlight the pre-colonial and colonial legacies in relation to connecting these frontiers. Critics take these visits with a pinch of salt. These debates are important. A broad brush approach reveals that except a few countries identified as high-income economies notably Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan and the metropolitan areas of Malaysia, Thailand and China, the border regions of Asia including India, are ridden with unresolved civil conflicts, underdevelopment and environmental insecurity. How do we address these problems? Will the Asian connectivity serve as a potential alternative? Historical writings indicate that widespread connections between the Asian borderlands developed during the first millennium or even earlier through trade as well as culturally significant migrations. India's north-east frontiers once acted as

a bridge 'connecting people, cultures and civilizations' and were centres of trade and commerce. Spread of Buddhism from India via Sri Lanka and Myanmar, to Yunnan in Southern China, the historical links between India and China through the Malay archipelago which served as the major crossroad or India's influences in Javadwipa and Suvarnadwipa or the cultural and commercial interactions along the Southern Silk Road connecting Sichuan and Yunnan to east India, all indicate historical links. The ethnographic map of the frontier regions of India, Burma, Bangladesh, Nepal and China represents a dense mosaic of culturally interconnected communities. For instance, the *Miaos* (China) and the *Hmongs* (Vietnam), the *Jingphos* (China) and *Kachins* (Burma), *Khamtis* (Burma) and *Khamtis* (Assam and Arunachal Pradesh), *Tais* (China's Kwangsi region) and *Ahoms* (India), *Shans* (Burma) and *Siamese/Tai* (Southern China) and the *Dai* (Yunnan) and *Thai* (Thailand) all represent groups with same ethnic origins, but remain dispersed across the Asian borderlands. What happened to these links in the course of modern state building? Modern state building was associated with domestic policies to control the mobility of border communities. It led to 'bordering in' and 'bordering out' of targeted ethnic communities. Debates emerged on who is 'indigenous' and who belongs to a 'settler community' or who should be included and who should be excluded from the discourse of politics. Increased communication networks,

population mobility (forced and voluntary), the impulses of economic regionalism, trans-boundary infrastructural and developmental projects and above all, violent insurgencies, have renewed many old relationships and created new ones. In a way, Asia's frontier regions have become inseparable to the modernization projects adopted by the faster growing economies, particularly because of their geostrategic locations, rich untapped minerals, energy resources and ethnic ties of frontier communities to populations across the borders. Due to the hydropower potential of India's north-east, the region has earned the assumed name from the policy circles as 'India's future powerhouse'. Even the international funding agencies have propagated the idea that the socio-economic development of the north-eastern region while making substantial contribution to the national economy, lies in harnessing the region's immense untapped hydropower potential. Former Indian President APJ Abdul Kalam's convocation address to the august gathering of graduating students at the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati in 2012 reinstated the idea of connecting the north-east of India through a 'smart waterway' or rather 'smart Brahmaputra water grid'. The Government of India is very clear on improving rail and road infrastructure. It decided to 'Act East' by investing in joint economic ventures with China, South Korea and other Southeast Asian countries. The government is also clear about improving ties with

Bangladesh in this regard, especially the use of the Chittagong Port for trade purposes between the two countries. These are commendable efforts but in reality, the promises of connectivity to mitigate the growth and development deficit in the north-eastern states began at a very sluggish pace. Connecting India's north-east to Thailand is a distant dream when the Indian state has failed even to connect the state capitals and districts in the country's north-east. Only a negligible portion of the fast-growing trade flows through India's northeast. Large inflows of informal trade through the north-east borders have already raised eyebrows. There is a consistent

fear of cheap, low quality consumer goods from China flooding the Indian markets. Given the political and economic situation, there are other practical challenges to realize real issues of connectivity. Local communities have limited livelihood options. They lack the technological skills and financial capacities to compete with Chinese goods. India's policy makers also cannot ignore the discomfiting water issues and border claims that China makes on Arunachal Pradesh. So it would be important to know whether India's north-east border connectivity can be realized without addressing local incapacities, criminalization of government and problems of

internal security as well as bilateral problems of water and territory where India and China have stakes. It will also be important to know how these societies in the border areas respond to the policy changes proposed by Indian state agencies. To remove some hurdles in this direction, the advocates of bilateral linkages and Asian connectivity must first create an environment of real governance and accountability. There is also a need for consultations with businesses, entrepreneurs and local communities to build their political and financial capabilities.

(The Assam Tribune 1/6/2015)

'Tourism in Northeast can Flourish with Buddhist Sites'

Agartala/Kohima/Itanagar, May 4, 2015: Tourism could flourish in the northeastern states due to the Buddhist sites in the region, Nagaland, Assam and Tripura Governor Padmanabha Balakrishna Acharya said on Monday.

"The northeast being the gateway of India's 'Look East' policy, the region can be made a more effective tourism destination based on goodwill of the crores of followers of Lord Buddha in the region and the adjoining countries," Acharya said in a statement.

"Without a single drop of blood, Buddha conquered the hearts of the people of the world. India is fortunate to have crores of his followers from neighbouring countries like Thailand, Korea, Bhutan and Japan," he said.

Only 250 km out of the

northeast's 5,687 km outer perimeter touches India. The remaining 5,437 km represents international boundaries with China (1,300), Myanmar (1,643 km), Bhutan (516 km), Bangladesh (1,880 km) and Nepal (97 km).

Paying rich tribute to Lord Buddha on the occasion of Buddha Purnima on Monday, Acharya gave a call to spread the message of goodwill of Gautama Buddha, as the occasion is celebrated across the world as "Buddha Jayanti".

The main functions of the Buddha Jayanti were being held at the Tawang Monastery in Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang district.

Built in 1681, the world famous monastery is very close to the Tibetan border. It is one of the largest Buddhist monasteries in

India and draws a large number of visitors every year.

The monastery is also an important centre for Buddhist learning and cultural studies.

Buddha Purnima, marking the birth of Gautama Buddha, was being observed across the northeast region on Monday along with rest of the country.

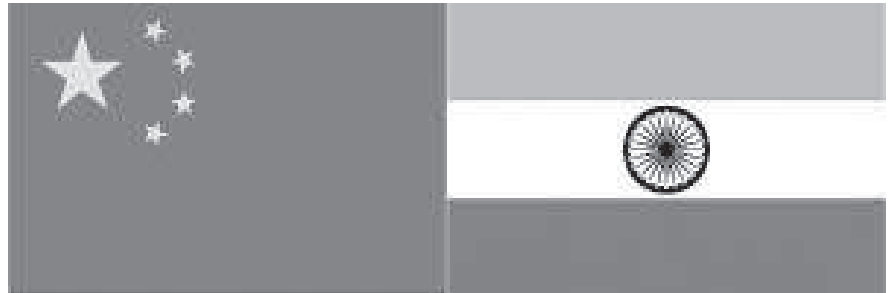
Prayer sessions were being held in the various temples and monasteries, including those in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Assam and Tripura.

Devotees thronged the Buddha temple at Polo grounds in Meghalaya's capital city of Shillong, one of the oldest Buddha temples in the northeast India.

(http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/tourism-in-northeast-can-flourish-with-buddhist-sites-115050400462_1.html)

Now on India will grow faster, outpace China: UN

United Nations, May 20, 2015: India is expected to log a growth of 7.6 percent this year and 7.7 percent, nearly 1.5 percentage points higher than the outlook just four months ago, in a clear sign that it will outpace China quite decisively, as per a UN report released here Tuesday.



In the Mid-Year Update to the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2015, the reason for India's outlook is credited to changes in the way national income is computed, with no specific mention of policy reforms during one-year of Prime Minister Narendra Modi government being the cause.

The original report of the UN Development Policy and Analysis Division (UNDESA), released in January, had estimated India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate for this year at 5.9 percent and 6.3 next year.

"This revision mostly reflects a higher growth trajectory in India, where the recent changes in methodology and data sources have resulted in a considerably higher official growth figures for the past two years," said the latest report.

"India is now projected to grow by 7.6 percent in 2015 and 7.7 percent in 2016, surpassing the growth of China," the report added, in what should come as another major pat for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government that completes one year in office this week.

The latest UN update matches the projections of other international institutions like the

World Bank and the International Monetary Fund that have also put India's growth rate as the fastest, and all of whom have also revised the estimates for India upward.

Last week, in fact, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) also released a report that said the Indian economy would grow by 8.1 percent this year and 8.2 next year — the highest among the projections made by international institutions.

"Overall, I think the authorities in India have done a very good job over the past two years and this is actually reflected in some indicators," Ingo Pitterle, a UNDESA Economic Affairs Officer and India expert, told IANS in an interview here Tuesday.

"In 2013 India was group grouped together with Turkey, South Africa, Indonesia and Brazil, and considered a fragile economy. And now, you look at the same variables — today, they look very different," Pitterle said.

"When you look at the currencies the story is India's is the only currency that has held up well here, which is a sign of confidence by investors, by the international community, in the Indian economy," he said.

Like the UN report's outlook, Pitterle saw several positives on the Indian economy. The rupee, had done better than most currencies, inflation was down, monetary policy was prudent, current account deficit had declined, external imbalances had reduced and oil prices had softened.

"The changes that are being made are all going in the right direction, both by the government and by the central bank. I have been following the Indian economy now for seven years or so. I see a return to a high degree of macro-economic stability."

Asked about the differences in India's growth projections, Pitterle said he did not believe that a growth of 8.1 percent or 7.6 percent really mattered — neither in the medium term, nor in the long run.

"What is important is that it is balanced growth, that it is the same (level of) growth, that it can really have 5-10 years of this high growth period, without major disruption, without causing excessive inflation, or other imbalances."

(<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/478693/now-india-grow-faster-outpace.html>)

Yoga for the Working Body

- Tyler Gledhill

“Yoga keeps you young”. That is what my favorite yoga teacher once said in the middle of the class. I immediately thought of Madonna. She is close to 50 years old and does not look a day over 35, claiming that yoga has changed her life. She can still keep up with twenty-something year old dancers she hires to be in her music videos and live shows. Most people, myself included, probably did not expect Madonna to still be performing at the level she does by her current age. I am a ballet and contemporary dancer, so I started to imagine myself dancing into my fifties. In the past six years that I have been practicing yoga, I have given a serious thought to how it can affect the longevity of my career, as well as my life after I leave the stage for good. For me, yoga has become insurance for my body.

I attended my first yoga class around six years ago at my gym on a Friday morning at 7 am. I did not know much about it, but yoga was getting more popular by the day so I decided to jump on the bandwagon. I heard it was a good way to get centered and relieve stress. My job can be very stressful, so it sounded perfect. I walked into a room full of lit candles and a clear view through the window of dawn on the verge of breaking. The teacher instructed us to sit cross-legged and breathe deeply together. I remember feeling relaxed, and a connection to the people around me. We proceeded to perform sun salutations and poses that

warmed me up, stretched me out, and engaged my muscles in a way that challenged me and felt very natural. When the class was over I went on with my day: an hour and a half ballet class and 6 hours of rehearsals. Usually on a Friday, after a whole week of working like this, my body would be extremely exhausted and sore. On this particular Friday I felt energized and got through the work day much easier. I knew I would be back in that yoga class the following week!

I started attending evening classes as well as in the mornings. The morning practice was a great preparation for my day and the evening practice was the perfect wind down after dancing hard for several hours. I was getting stronger in the muscles that were weak and improving flexibility in the ones that were tight. The more yoga I did the more I found my dancing improved. My approach to the art changed. I became much calmer and controlled, which resulted in a freer movement quality. My discomfort in the off hours also decreased. Less sore muscles and joints meant I slept better. It appeared that I had found a perfect cross training for dance.

The typical dance career ends between age 35 and 40, without a serious injury that is, and many dancers experience uncomfortable and painful retirements. Three of my most important male ballet teachers from my youth all have one thing in common: injury. The first, when I was 14 years old, was quite

young. Had just turned 35 and was forced to retire from dance due to foot injury. He could demonstrate almost all the steps to the class but it was obvious that minus the pain he was in, he was still in his prime as a dancer and his career ended far too soon. The next year I had a teacher who was in his fifties and although he was very energetic and had the entire class hanging on his every word, he walked with a limp because of a bad knee from years of jumping. For my senior year in the ballet school I was taught by a white haired tyrant who could scream at young dancers for hours to get amazing results out of sheer terror. He often had to sit down because he had so much pain in his back. All three were principal dancers, leading men at the height of their careers, but experience a great deal of discomfort in their retired lives. Two serious demands put on male dancers are to jump continuously and to partner women. The latter entails a lot of lifting their partners over their heads. Jumping puts a lot of stress on the knee and foot joints, while partnering strains the back. Looking at these role models I had, I can't help but imagine myself with one of these serious injuries one day, either mid career or after retirement due to overuse. The idea of not maintaining an active lifestyle as I get older, or to not be able to chase my grandchildren around some day is terrifying.

I once worked with a choreographer who had an

assistant. Her purpose was to warm him up every morning with yoga practice and to help the dancers with our approach to the material. She had a very serene and peaceful energy about her. Also, the way she moved and the things her body could do were unlike anything I had ever seen before. I was intrigued by her so I picked her brain every chance I got. She was close to 40 years old. She told me that she started doing yoga 13 years ago, and if she hadn't learned yoga and made it part of her life, she would have already retired. Instead she was still dancing beautifully, powerfully and youthfully.

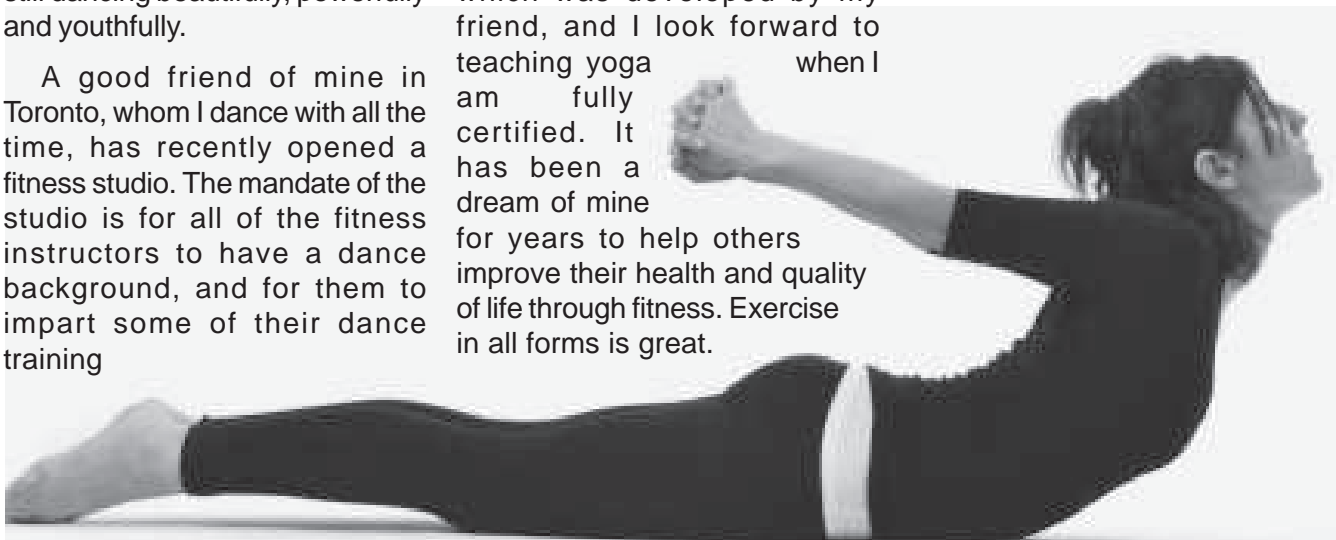
A good friend of mine in Toronto, whom I dance with all the time, has recently opened a fitness studio. The mandate of the studio is for all of the fitness instructors to have a dance background, and for them to impart some of their dance training

and fitness level as a result of dance onto non-dancers. The classes include ballet-based aerobics, Pilates, personal training and yoga. All of us who work there are either retired dancers or still dancing and have been trained in one or more of these aspects of fitness. Many of the clients in the studio are athletes or people who danced in their youth but didn't take it to a professional level, so they understand the importance of maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle. I already teach the aerobics (Ballet Boot Camp), which was developed by my friend, and I look forward to teaching yoga when I am fully certified. It has been a dream of mine for years to help others improve their health and quality of life through fitness. Exercise in all forms is great.

Yoga however also has the meditation aspect. This makes a huge difference for active people by balancing and restoring the body and mind in a positive way.

Prolonging an intense career that relies on physical strength and endurance is reason enough for elite athletes to practice yoga. I highly recommend it to all my colleagues. To live an overall happy and healthy life and with the ability to remain active and fit into old age.

(<http://www.yogapoint.com/articles%5CYogafortheworkingbody.htm>)



Contd. from Page 19

Nepal's child goddess unscathed in quake



of the dozen-strong family that guards the child goddess revered by Nepal's Hindus.

Kumari, a pre-pubescent girl selected from the Shakya caste or Bajracharya clan of the Nepalese Newari community, lives in isolation in her small palace and emerges only on feast days when she is paraded in ceremonial dress.

The 7.9-magnitude quake claimed nearly 6,624 lives with another 14,025 people injured and left a trail of devastation and suffering in the Himalayan nation.

(http://zeenews.india.com/news/south-asia/nepals-child-goddess-unscathed-in-quake_1588850.html)

Self-restraint and Environment

- Er.Rajesh Pathak

Few months back in a symposium on environment the main speaker in his speech said that regarding environment people are greatly concerned, and on this issue debates are going on, conventions are being held all over the world. But all these things are now getting to be a matter of joke either, for whole world is looking that the things continue getting from worse to worst, let alone improved. Last days I underwent an experience that reminded me of the symposium and the views expressed by the speaker in that. What happened that I went to the city to consult the doctor about an ailment I suffered from on reaching the clinic I parked my scooter and went inside to get the coupon. Having done that, as I came out of the clinic to wait outside for my turn.

To my astonishment I saw my Scooter gheraed by another two similar vehicles and blocked by acar from behind, leaving no scope to get my scooter out, unless perhaps lifting up by my two arms! I did not see an owner of the bikes or the car around to solve the situation. No wonder such by he of events' happen even on the wide street.

Luxurious it ems like ears of latest models with tempting advertisement and discount offer, exchange after often above the garage of a proud owner, who in turn displays them on roads with breaking rules of the road. Likewise A.C. frige and other electrical gadgets occupy the drawing rooms and kitchen.

As my mind was possessed of these thoughts that my mobile rang up. The call was from my one friend. In conversation with him I knew that on that day his married sister had her birthday, and her husband was about to present a car to her as a gift!

"But they already have one car in their family?" I asked him, surprised.

"Ugh! What of it — even their son is insisting upon a separate Bolero car to be purchased for him, while he is still unemployed"— was his reply, of course came as more perplexing one to me. Yet, now this was not difficult for me to understand the cause, behind the problem I underwent that day on that parking space in front of the clinic.

The family of the sister of my friend whom we are talking about in all consists of three— her husband, son and herself. Husband is an engineer, while sister is well-educated and a house-wife. Whole family is very religious; and initiated from a guru [religious master] either. In learning the so-called lesson of self-control from their guru, family spared nothing. The effect of which could be seen in their eating-habits. Garlic, onion, potato, brinjal and what not they left to consume as a testimony to their religiosity! When it comes to keep fast, passing the day only on water was no great a thing for them to do. Now if such family begins to add the cars like this then who would not fill with surprise! Forsaking the edible things is the first lesson, the first step to set out for higher journey of emulating self-restraint in the life — this their guru must have taught them, whether they thought it wise to keep it in their minds it is different matter.

All the living and non-living things endowed by the nature are mutually dependent and receive sustenance from each other. Keeping this doctrine of co-existence into account to what extent other part of the world regulated their life-style that may be the matter of debate. But we made it very basis of our life-

philosophy that's true. Only due to this or, in other words, so that environmental balance may not be disturbed so much emphasis is laid upon self-control, and upon restrained consumption here in our country. Expounding the importance of *dana* [giving or charity] Taitreyaupnishad says— "Give out of faith. Give no matter you don't have faith. Give even with the sense that this would earn glory to you. Give out of *shame* [means, with the thought that what people would say if I don't do so]. Give out of *fear* [that lest people might loot you if not done so]. Give out of knowledge or righteousness." In the nutshell of the teaching is to imbue an individual with the sense of caring others or, in other words, with the virtues of self-control, and with restrained *consumption* as said earlier.

Today America has the population of 32 crores, and about half of it that is 14 crores car it has. Above this the car that can carry the load of 5000 pounds is being used to carry only one person with weight of only about 150 pounds. This ends the need of finding another instance of what is called colossal wastage of energy. By now very little portion of population in our country own the cars, and condition is that those having the hobby of driving the car know no better place than leaving the car in the middle of the road. If this model of America of prosperity is continued to be emulated like this then days we would have to see could be well imagined. And as far as environment is concerned what good the conventions or government or government schemes alone would do to it. The previous experiences are enough to know it. But yes, by improving upon our habits at personal level we could of course hope for better results.

The Bug and the Poor Flea

Mandavisarpini was a white flea. She lived in the folds of the exquisite white silk sheet that covered the bed of a king in a certain country.

She fed on the king's blood without anybody noticing, and was happy to spend her days.

One day, a bug managed to enter the beautifully decorated bedroom of the king.

When the flea saw him, she warned, "O Bug, what are you doing in the king's bedroom. Leave at once before you get caught!"

The bug replied, "Madam, even if I were a good-for-nothing bug, that is no way to treat a guest. One should welcome a guest with humble words, sweet behaviour and offer refreshments"

The bug continued, "I

have fed myself with all types of blood, but never have I had the pleasure of the blood of a king. It must be very sweet, for the king eats the choicest of food. I would love to taste the king's blood, if you permit."

The flea was taken aback, "O Bug, you have a nasty bite, like a sharp needle. Besides, I feed on the king's blood only when he is deep into his sleep. I can permit you to feed on the king's blood only if you promise to wait till he is asleep."

The bug agreed, "I promise to wait till the king is asleep, and only after you have fed yourself, will I feed myself on his blood."

Soon after they decided on such terms, the king came to his bedroom and lay down to sleep.

The bug could not control himself, and

decided to take a tiny bite of the king, without waiting. As the king was yet to fall asleep, he jumped at the sharp bite of the bug.

The king shouted at his servants, "Hey, there is something in my bed that has bitten me. Look for it, as I have already been bitten."

On hearing this, the bug quickly hid himself in a corner of the bed, before the servants could start searching for him.

However, the servants scrutinized the entire bed, sheet by sheet, and found the flea between the folds. They killed her at once, and the king went to sleep without anymore worries.

The wise indeed say: The false promises of friends as well as strangers have no value. You end up paying for it.

Seasonal Photos

