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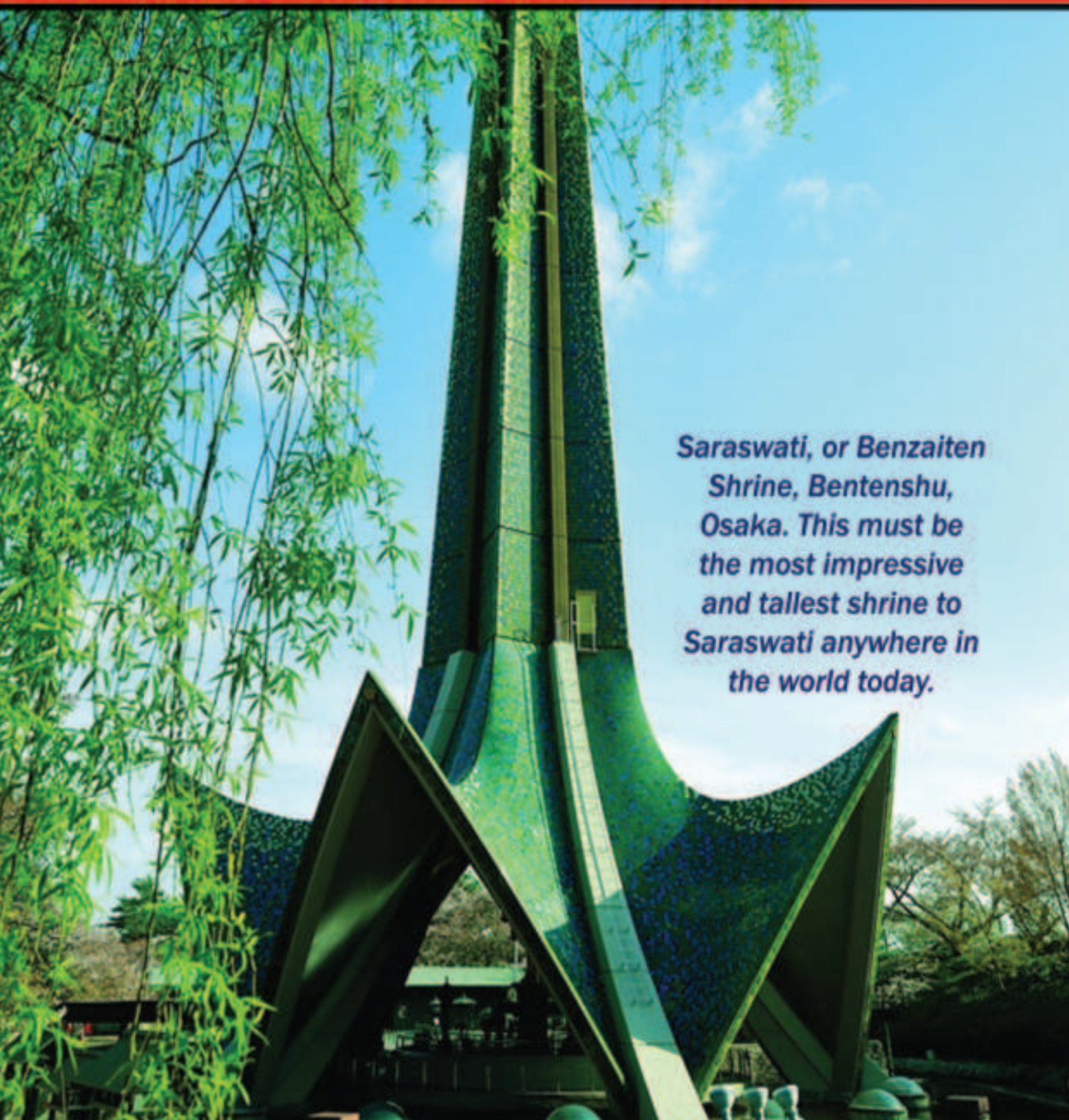
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HERITAGE EXPLORER

LET KNOWLEDGE COME FROM ALL THE SIDES

A Monthly News Bulletin

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Saraswati, or Benzaiten Shrine, Bentenshu, Osaka. This must be the most impressive and tallest shrine to Saraswati anywhere in the world today.



1823-1900

Famous German philosopher, writer and philologist, he was considered one of the foremost Sanskrit scholars of his day, translating vast amount of ancient literature into English. His belief that the study of the earliest documents of the Vedic culture would provide clues about the development of subsequent European religions led him to study the ancient of the Vedic scriptures.



Prof F. Max Müller

The conception of the world as deduced from the Veda, and chiefly from the **Upanishads, is indeed astounding.**

Source: *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* - by Max Müller

*

What distinguishes the Vedanta philosophy from all other philosophies is that it is at the same time a religion and a philosophy.

Source: *Three Lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy* - by Max Müller

*

The earliest of these Upanishads will always maintain a place in the philosophic literature of the world among the most

astounding products of the human mind.

Source: *Hinduism In India America* - by Wendell Thomas



1887-1961

One of the greatest physicists of the twentieth century; awarded the Nobel Prize for his invention of *Wave Mechanics*, his 'Schrödinger Equation' has been regarded as one of the most important achievements of the twentieth century. He also wrote about 'The Basic view of Vedanta' by expounding Sankara's version of 'Advaita' and 'Non-dualism'.



Erwin Schrödinger

Nirvana is a state of pure blissful knowledge. It has nothing to do with the individual. The ego or its separation is an illusion. The goal of man is to preserve his **Karma** and to develop it further – when man dies **his karma lives and creates for itself another carrier.**

Source: *What is life? the physical aspect of the living cell & Mind and matter* - by Erwin Schrödinger

*

The multiplicity is only apparent. This is the doctrine of the **Upanishads**. And not of the Upanishads only. The mystical experience of the union with God regularly leads to this view,

unless strong prejudices stand in the West.

Source: *The Eye of Spirit: Eastern Mysticism and Science* by Amaury de Riencourt

In his scientific explanation of Quantum Mechanics, the Upanishads became Schrödinger's core source of knowledge and guidance. His world acclaimed book 'What is Life' stands as testimony to the fact. And this very same book later was also credited by the Maharishi Institute Dr. Francis Crick, as the inspiration for his key insight that paved the way for his revolutionary discovery of the DNA code.

Contents

Mohan Bhagawat's Raising Call To The Nation On The Eve Of Vijaya Dashami	P-5	NAGA Peace Accord is a Game Changer	P-21
BHARATIYA TALENT : GENIUS OUT TO LEAD THE WORLD	P-10	Encroached tribal lands slipping into corporate hands	P-22
The Art Of Tolerance And Dharma	P-11	Zeliang clears air on Gaidinliu memorial row	P-22
Social protection is needed to end hunger	P-12	Wildlife Corridors	P-23
A Flickering Flame	P-13	Govt to start declassifying Netaji files from 23 January 2016: PM	P-23
The Importance of Praise	P-15	US conservation initiative dedicated to Jadav Payeng	P-24
One Life one Mission	P-17	Khasi songs commemorate Tagore's first Shillong visit	P-24
Hindu Deities in Japan	P-19	Everyone has a 'sacred cow': Horse slaughter banned in US	P-25
NASA Studying How Zero Gravity Affects The Brain	P-20	The Bird Pair and the Sea	P-26
300-yr-old Urdu Mahabharat in Lucknow home	P-20		

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Geeta and Phalgu and Bajrangi Bhaijan

Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee sincerely wanted a samjhauta (understanding in real sense) between the two politically powerful governments and among the people of the two countries emotionally and culturally of India (i.e. Bharat) and Pakistan to lead a peaceful and progressive life hand in hand in the world. Hence there was a train, 'Samjhauta Express' that ran for some time in between the countries. It is reported that a dumb and deaf girl at her early teens reached Lahore without understanding what awaiting before her was.

The girl was literally rescued and placed under the care of Edhi Foundation, a unique organization devoted to humanitarian works. It is unique because it is functioning in Pakistan where, politically speaking, rule of militarism prevails under cover of pseudo- democracy. The girl was nurtured according to her behavior (following Hindu way of Life, worshiping Lord Ganesha and eating vegetarian food only) and named Geeta by Bilquis Edhi, one of the founders of Edhi Foundation and fondly called Guddy by Ansan Burney who is instrumental in taking Geeta to India.

Geeta observed Rozax in Ramzan month. She performed her Hindu rites with assistance and cooperation of the inmates and organizers of the Foundation. This symbolizes the underground River Phalgu (river Saraswati). As phalgu is not seen but her presence is felt, similarly we feel the undercurrent of oneness of the people of the subcontinent divided politically into two (later three) parts, we praise the Edhi foundation for it's purely humanity based mission. We praise even more loudly when we set the news that it politely denies to accept a donation of 1 crore (10 million) rupees from the government of India. Geeta speaks loud (though being practically deaf and dumb) of the inherent oneness among the good people either side of the border. Indian Government has unanimously decided to return a boy from Pakistan, who did similar political mistake like Geeta, and in no time.

We appreciate the film Bajrangi Bhaijan for its meaningful story leaving aside the powerful acting of Salman Khan. A positive message is always welcome and adorable too.

We hope the Geeta ('our daughter' according to Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj) episode will surely accelerate the Samjhauta of hearts before long than expected.

Editor

Mohan Bhagawat's Raising Call To The Nation On The Eve Of Vijaya Dashami

On the Vijaya Dashami, RSS completed its 90 years of existence. The day is observed throughout the country by swayamsevak. It is held annually centrally in Nagpur. This time it was held at Reshimbaug, which was addressed by Sarasanghachalak Dr. Mohan Bhagawat. Following is the English Verson of his speech.

Honorable Chief Guest of Today's program Dr. V. K. Saraswat, other invited guests, revered citizens, mothers, sisters and beloved swayamsewaks:-

Today, we are gathered here to celebrate our annual festivities of the Vijayadashmi Parva. 90 years have elapsed since the sangh work was started. This year is the 125th birth anniversary of Bharatratna Dr. Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar. He made a lifelong struggle against the injustice of social inequality and made provisions in the Constitution thereby eradicating those discriminations from the political and economic spheres of our national life. In Shri Guruji's (M.S. Golwalkar, second Sarsanghchalak of RSS) words, his talent was a confluence of Acharya Shankar's sharp Intellect and Tathagata Buddha's unbounded compassion.

Last year was also the 125th Birth Anniversary of Parampuja Dr. Hedgewar (founder of Sangh). He envisioned creation of a prosperous Bharat as an example for the whole world to follow, through collective efforts of an egalitarian society. The evolution of a technique to create honest and selfless workers, striving incessantly and wholeheartedly to achieve this goal was his lifetime contribution. Birth centenary of Late Shri Balasaheb Deoras, an expert in this technique and the third Sarsanghchalak of RSS, is also

to commence this year. Late Pandit Deendayalji Upadhyay, who was nurtured in this technique, had suggested an integral approach called *Ekatma Manav Darshan*, adopted to modern times for the nation, based on the eternal values of Bharatiya Philosophy. His birth centenary has also commenced.

By a pleasant coincidence, this is also the 1000th year of coronation of RajRajeshwar Rajendra Chola, a royal who had established a model of good governance in Bharat and had promulgated in South East Asia the benevolent influence of the eternal Bharatiya culture. Rejecting all disparities based on caste and creed, and breaking all the barriers of superstitious traditions, Shri Ramanujacharya made the path of Bhakti to all the sections of the society, thus paving the way for social harmony. Preparations are going on at the social level to celebrate his 1000th birth anniversary in the coming year. This is also the 1000th birth anniversary of great Shaiva philosopher from Jammu-Kashmir, Acharya Abhinav Gupta. The celebration of the 5151th Anniversary of our revered *Bhagvad Gita*, which conveys the message of doing Karma without expecting any of *Phala*, and the principles of "*Karmasu Kaushalam*" and "*Samatva*", will be continued till the Gita Jayanti.

Two great souls departed us this year. Our Ex President, Dr.

A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was one who had dedicated his life towards instilling confidence and national pride in our young generation, while constantly urging them to achieve the best for our country in all walks of life. Swami Dayananda Saraswati (Puri), by being a Vedic teacher, provided a modern view of our eternal culture and aroused pride and activism about it in our society and the world at large. Both of these eternal souls etched the message of the glory of Bharat and social unity through their work.

The reason behind remembering all these coincidences today is to draw our attention to the call of our innate duty to build up a prosperous, efficient and egalitarian Bharat, to bring peace, prosperity and progress, right from our families to the whole world. To accomplish this goal, based on the strength of an organized society, is the point of contemplation today.

The resurgence of a self reliant, strong, prosperous and secure Bharat, giving benevolent and flourishing leadership to the world, is possible only when an egalitarian, organized and enlightened society with self esteem strives towards this end; not only that, the firm resolve of such a society will reflect on the policies of our democratic system and the constitutional authorities who run the system. Agile, clear, accurate policies as well as discretion of a society which is free of selfishness and

divisiveness are mandatory requirements to change the destiny of nation and, therefore, it is essential that both should complement each other.

With this picture in mind, when we ponder over the present situation in the country, we get a very optimistic and soothing view. An atmosphere of disappointment and lost faith, which existed couple of years back, has evaporated. An atmosphere of expectations has come to fore, generating a sense of optimism that such expectations shall be fulfilled. It has to be made sure that these positive vibes reaches the last person in the row, by turning it into an actual experience by bringing about a real positive change in his life; his trust in the bright future of his own personal life as also of national, should grow.

It is becoming evident to all that Bharat's esteem in the world has gone up many-fold in the last couple of years. In view of Bharat's national interest, many pro active steps have been taken to improve bi lateral relationship with the neighboring countries, with successful results. It seems that the world is being introduced to a new modern Bharat. The World is experiencing a Bharat, which is full of self-respect and self confidence, maintaining the traditional view of goodwill towards all but, at the same time, unhesitatingly taking stand in very clear terms, in international diplomacy whenever national interests are involved, and giving a helping hand to nations in distress anywhere in the world. Bharat is reincarnating itself into an all together new manifestation and the world is enchanted to see Bharat's new Avatar with utmost

optimism. Bharat's Gita, Yoga and Tathagata have a universal acceptance like never before. Keeping in view the need to develop goodwill for Bharatiya psyche and tradition and to protect and enhance its prestige, Policies are being formulated at the administrative level. All the developing nations of the world are looking forward to Bharat's leadership to emancipate them from the undesirable influence of the so called world powers. Throughout its chequered history of rise and fall, Bharat has always treated the whole world as its own family. On account of its agility and strength, Bharat has always followed the tradition of finding the balance between national interests and world interests, with utmost integrity towards both, and today we are gradually experiencing the glimpse of same age-old diplomatic approach. It is necessary that this effulgent picture of Bharat is imprinted in the mind of the World as well as in the mind of every individual of the land. Hence, it is vital that we should make all walks of our national life vibrant with a new thought and new valiant efforts. So, creating a new picture of the society capable of adopting policies and systems in keeping with modern times and, at the same time, based on the foundations of the eternal truth, which forms the substratum of our immortal national life, is the need of the hour.

We must come out of "Saheb is always Right" ("*Saheb Vakyam Pramanam*") mentality. Making Bharatiya mind and soul as the basis, we should adopt whatever is good, truthful and fair from the rest of the world and create an independent modern

road-map for our nation. The thoughts and actions of intelligentsia, administration and policies of government should be transformed accordingly. In the absence of this synergy, it will not be possible to present a Bharat that is self reliant, egalitarian, strong and prosperous. Deficiencies of the thought processes and philosophies, which prevailed for centuries in the world, are being scientifically proved. The ill-effects of such deficient thought process and philosophies are even more compelling to ponder over the very same thought processes and philosophies have made review of them all the more compelling.

In 1951, Social and economic department of United Nations, supporting these deficient philosophies had made following proclamation:

"There is a sense in which rapid economic progress is impossible without painful adjustments. Ancient philosophies have to be scrapped; old social institutions have to disintegrate. Bonds of caste, creed and race have to burst and large numbers of persons who cannot keep up with the progress have to have their expectations of a comfortable life frustrated. Very few communities are willing to pay the full price of economic progress."

It was an extremely materialistic, self-centered and insensitive philosophy that was forced upon the world. When the ill-effects of the very same philosophy started affecting the proponents of this philosophy, they made a sudden U turn. In October 2005, the conclave of the Governors of Central Banks of the G20 countries declared:

“We note development approaches are evolving over time and thus need to be updated as economic challenges unfold. We recognize there is no uniform development approach that fits all the countries. Each country should be able to choose the development approaches and policies that best suit its specific characteristics while benefitting from there accumulated experience in policy making over last decades, including the importance of strong macroeconomic policies for sustained growth.”

Bringing more clarity to the statement above, News Bulletin of World Bank in 2008, said:

“In our work across the world we have learnt the hard way that there is no one model that fits all. Development is all about transformation. It means taking the best ideas, testing them in new situations and throwing away what doesn't work. It means, above all, having the ability to recognize when we have failed. This is never an easy thing to do. It is ever more difficult for an organization to do so, be it the government or the World Bank, which constantly need to adapt to the changing nature of developmental challenge.”

After this self realization, phrases like ‘Holistic’ and ‘Sustainable development’ started appearing in the world discourse over development talks. Environmental concerns also could find made some place in this discourse. So, it will be prudent to free ourselves from the tendency to accept this deficient philosophy as the ultimate truth, since it in itself is going through the cycle of experiment-experience- change. It would be

better if we stick to our time tested philosophy. This philosophy is based on cooperation and coordination. According to this philosophy, *Dharma* and *Sanskar* are at the forefront of Life and not *Arth–Kaam*. For sustainable development, this philosophy encourages least use of energy, maximum employment, sensitivity towards environment, ethics, and the wholesome approach to agriculture. It suggests a decentralized and self reliant economic and industrial order. There is a major emphasis on skill development and increased productivity. As per this philosophy, success of the system is judged on the fact whether the last person in the land is getting justice, education and basic needs of life. Hence the major emphasis has to be on farmers and agriculture, small and medium scale industries, small traders and craftsmen. All organizations, intellectuals, policy makers, political class and administrators working in the socio-economic field have to take a note of this.

It is a pleasure to note that the manifesto of Niti Ayog is giving clear indications in the same direction. It is obvious that this metamorphosis will not take place all of a sudden. It would be a challenge to bring inherited economy back to normal state, balance political compulsions, and straighten administrative machinery. We ought to keep whole lot of patience to see the fruition of our efforts to take the benefits of development to the lowest strata of society and enlist their participation in the nation-building. We would like to see steady increase in their confidence towards nation

building exercise. Mudra Bank, Jan Dhan Yojana, voluntary surrender of cooking gas subsidy, Swatch Bharat initiative, and skill development are some useful initiatives of the present government, in the same direction. It is essential to get credible data, both qualitative and quantitative, from the grassroots level to measure the efficacy of our developmental policies. It is also necessary to hold fruitful dialogues to ensure the participation of all in the nation building exercise, and speed up the execution of the program.

Efficacy of all the policy measures aimed at changing the destiny of the nation will very much depend upon the enterprising spirit, capability to cooperate, and the wisdom of masses. To achieve it, enlightenment and training of society is a prerequisite. While speaking about development, population growth is one related aspect, which is much talked about. We need to seriously ponder our population policy. It must be discussed whether population is a boon or bane? Whether the current systems and resources would be adequate to provide employment and basic amenities to masses after 50 years from now? How much manpower would be required to run our systems effectively? Quiet often, it becomes mother's responsibility to bringing up children and inculcating values in them. Hence diet, healthcare, self-respect, empowerment, enlightenment, opportunities and freedom to make use of those opportunities by our mothers need to be ensured by our system. Are our systems turned for the same? What is our anticipation regarding the condition of our environment

after 50 years? Facts and figures of last two census reports and the imbalances that have come to notice as a result are being widely discussed. Our present and future is getting impacted by the same. We need to rise above vote bank politics to formulate a holistic approach, equally applicable to all citizens, towards the population policy. Such a population policy cannot be enforced by our Governments or laws, all alone. Considerable efforts are required to tune society's psyche to the same. It would be prudent to think about the same during policy making exercise.

To bring about a change in the natural instincts and behavioral patterns of humans, customary religious practices, and cultural traditions, in accordance with current times is often, too tricky. Even if this change is appropriate, it cannot be accomplished by just bringing in a law or making law enforcement agencies to enforce the law. It never happened this way and it will never happen this way. It can only be accomplished through a respectful dialogue with concerned entities. This dialogue and the efforts to enlighten the society through the dialogue, needs to take place at all the levels be it the government, administration, media or intellectuals in the society and it should consistently continue before and after such changes. We should not be guided by cheap popularity or political incentives. What is truthful and just should be our guiding principle. By adopting a compassionate approach towards every section of society, we can change their approach through a friendly and respectable dialogue. The anguish some sections of people felt as a result

of some reasoned judgments could have been avoided. For example, Santhara, peculiar life style of Digambar Acharyas, Bal-Deeksha (initiations of children as recluses), etc., are some of the age old practices prevalent in the Jaincommunity. To bring about changes in such matters without consulting the Acharyas of the respective sects about the reason, importance and philosophy behind such practices, will affect social cohesion and harmony and finally harm the nation. It has been a tradition in every sect/religion in our Country to introspect about their rituals and practices at regular intervals and attunes such a rituals and practices to current times and circumstances. This is the healthy way of bringing about necessary changes. All such changes have always come from within. Any external attempt to bring about such changes has always ended up only in controversies. Success in any systemic change is achieved only through changing the social psyche.

Education system is an important tool for social transformation. In recent years, we have been observing commercialization of education. Getting more and more expensive, it is going beyond the reach of an ordinary citizen. Hence the purpose which education is expected to fulfill, is not taking shape. Apart from imparting formal education, education also aims at shaping a complete man, who is wise, self respecting, self reliant, compassionate, efficient and cultured. With this integral approach to education, many experiments are going on within as well as outside the country.

We should take cognizance of all these experiments. Results from these experiments, and the suggestion made by various organizations, educationists and panels should form the basis for all the aspects of education be it curriculum, fee structure or management of education. Education should be society based. Education should be oriented towards fulfilling its goal as well as contemporary requirements of society. And in the light of these limits there should be freedom to chalk out the education system. To ensure that education is not commercialized; government needs to make sure that government educational institutions also are run well at all levels. This process starts with the quality of teachers we have. We need to have effective training, and maintain standards for teachers. More than anything else, we need teachers who realize their responsibilities.

However, the role of parents and society is equally important. Do we tell our children that it is more important to have a meaningful life than a successful life? Is our behavior such, which instills the values of truthfulness, justice, compassion, sacrifice, patience and good behavior? Is our generation ready to tread this path in social and professional fields with insistence and agility, ignoring petty gains? Do we – the social and political leadership – and media care to see that our walk and talk leads the society, particularly new generation, towards national integrity, social harmony and ethical behavior?

To say that Governance and economy and other systems drive human behavior –"Yatha

Raja Tatha Praja". Hence our policies should unite the society; caring for the uplift of the weakest link of the society, they should achieve progress of everyone in the society. We need fundamental reforms in our electoral practices, administration, tax systems, public health system, and industrial, educational and agricultural policies to make them more effective and people oriented. Hostilities by Pakistan, expansionism from China, rising fundamentalism and chauvinism in the world order, and unfair international diplomacy, resulting in rise of terrorist outfits like ISIS, are acting as a catalyst to already complicated and serious internal and external security of our country. Fostered by external powers and inspired by external ideologies, some people from within are walking the path of terrorism. It goes without saying that it is government's responsibility to come out with a comprehensive and a firm policy to root out all such problems ones and for all. Ethical education should be made part of the education policy so as to preserve our social and cultural values intact and thwart all attempts at destroying our culture. There is a view that media should be regulated while conserving their freedom to ensure that no ill effect, knowingly or unknowingly, prevails in the society. It is a fair to expect that all the promised dreams are realized and became a reality fast. But this is also true that governance is driven by the will, quality of thoughts and organized state of the society. When a self realized, righteous and holistic society starts walking with determination on the path towards national glory, the systems and apparatus of nation follow and become helpful in the

transformation. A nation becomes prosperous, safe and capable only when government, administration and public at large are on the same page on the issues of identity of nation, national pride, and credible integrity towards nation, and are ready for constant efforts with focused contemplation.

What is the chord that can keep our diverse society together? (1) Certainly, it is our eternal culture – Hinduculture – that accepts and respects all forms of diversity and which precisely forms the nature and value system of every Bharatiya. (2) The very culture, based on which our ancestors build their lives, toiled hard to nurture and foster it, and even sacrificed their live for its protection and honor, even to this day, their glory is a source of inspiration and ideal for us. (3) This divine motherland endowed with richest and wealth, who helped us realize the truth that formed the foundation of that culture and the Dharma born out of it, whose abundance of divine wealth nurtured us and made us magnanimous, the love and devotion for whom we inherited from our ancestors, such motherland of ours, even today has the power to arouse the creative spirit of every individual of this country. Through these three factors an individual can easily be assimilated while keeping ones diverse identity of language, region, sect and party intact. Also, even while safeguarding one's smaller identity, one becomes part of the larger social identity. The humanitarian spirit, vision and philosophy based on the above three factors, the decision in conformity and equally matched practice is what is called Hindutva.

This lifestyle of Hindu society, from time immortal, even long before the term Hindu was coined, evolved in keeping with the time on the basis of above three factors. The onus of good and bad of this nation ever rests only on their shoulders.

For last 90 years, RSS has been constantly trying to galvanize the energies of Hindu society for nation building. Sangh founder Dr. Hedgewar had very well understood that the task of nation and society building cannot be entrusted on contract. When an efficient and organised society works persistently for the betterment of nation for a long time, then only the nation becomes prosperous. The mission of RSS is to prepare such workers who can organize the society for this noble cause. Today, everyone can see the impact created by Swayamsewaks coming out of the easy and simple *modus operandi* of RSS. Now they not only get respect and affection from a grateful society, but also the recognition of the whole world.

Come on, let us all become Swayamsewaks and be part of this sacred work, because this the only way to build the Bharat that the world inevitably looks forward to for a new opening. The Bharatiya society has to become perfect and organised on the strength of their eternal identity. Soaked with the nectar of our Dharmic Values that ends all divisiveness and is capable of infuse the whole humankind with the feeling of fraternity by giving them real freedom, let us individually and collectively endeavor to accord happiness, peace and redemption to human race. This the way out and we have to do it.

Bharat Mata Ki Jai!

BHARATIYA TALENT : GENIUS OUT TO LEAD THE WORLD

Bharatiya-origin professionals are occupying top posts in various multinational giants across the globe. They are successful in all the fields in the UK and the US. That is why President Obama recently said 'I want more and more Indians to settle in America and help in its progress.'

Even after Independence the country's traditional glory and genius was systematically consigned to the dustbin of secularism propounded by Nehru Gandhi family, with the result of that "India during these 60 years has failed to create intellectuals of global stature", complains Shri Narayan Murti of Infosys, who made India a world leader in software. Yet due to their inherent genius, as reported by Time in issue dated May 8, 2015, Bharatiya-origin professionals are most successful in the UK. In America they are successful in all the fields of life. That is why President Obama had to say, "I want more and more Indians to settle in America and help in its progress."

Bharatiya born Sunder Pichai living in the US was recently appointed CEO of the Google. Two of the world's most valuable five companies are now led by Bharatiya people. Not only this, more than one dozen more Bharatiya IT genius head various wings of the Google. They also hold top posts in various other companies. It is a cause for celebration that dozens of Bharatiya have made it to the very top post of some of the world's most valuable companies.

Today, Bharatiya entrepreneurs are everywhere like Laxmi Mittal (one of the world's richest man), Mukesh Ambani (ranked fifth best CEO in world), Anil Agrawal of Vedant and Venkat Ramkrishnan who shared Noble Prize for chemistry with his colleague. Three Bharatiya Americans—Khurana, Chandra Shekhar and Ramkrishnan—have won Noble Prizes in Science.

Prasoon Joshi has been elevated as chairman of the McCann, the biggest agency network in global advertisement. Prez Obama has picked Vinita Gupta as head of the US Civil Rights Department, Harish Manwani, former top executive of Unilever, has joined the investment major Blackstone as a global executive advisor. World famous investor Warram Buffett is contemplating of making Ajit Jain as his successor.

Here juniors also do not lag behind. Thirteen year old Granth Thakkar from Vapi (Gujarat) has been crowned as the world's fastest mental calculator. Thirteen year old Shubham Banerji of California, has launched a Company to develop low cost machine to print Braille. More than 25 names of such luminaries have recently appeared in The Time. The list is endless. This is pure Bharatiya Genius.

Bharat provides leaders of talent who are able to help solve the problems of the country where they are designated. Unfortunately, they do not get much respect in their own motherland Bharat. Industrialisation has been possible in Bharat because of the genius of entrepreneurship of our capable industrialists. Development in all sectors of Bharat was invented and generated by our agriculture experts, academicians, innovating scientists and doctors by their own individual capability. They are creating a resilient self-generating and self-sustaining economy in contrast to Government controlled economy of China, now in trouble. Such men and women gave Bharat a world class status in these spheres. But unfortunately they have been restricted through our wrong practices and corruption all these years.

After destruction in 700 years of slavery, when Bharat achieved freedom, then within a span of 50 years only, industrialists brought great

industrial development, amazing the whole world. Great persons like Ashok, Vivekananda, Gandhi, Tagore, Ambedkar and Abdul Kalam took birth in Bharat.

Today when superpower countries are still under recession, our Bharatiya entrepreneurs are busy acquiring companies overseas. Their genius is second to none in the world. They are capable of making Bharat an economic superpower, solving the problems of poverty and unemployment provided they are granted full liberty and respect, as provided to their counterparts in America.

Today one third of Silicon Valley engineers are Bharatiya, Wall Street is replete with Bharatiya. They are rising fast in politics. Bharat's women genius was on full and radiant display at the Obama's White House banquet. Among the invitees were four Bharatiya women CEOs Chanda Kochher of ICICI, Pepsicola's Indra Nooyi, Bicon's Kiran Mazumdar and Apollo Hospital's Preetha Reddy.

Hence Rabindra Nath Tagore said "India is destined to be the teacher of all lands." Swami Vivekananda said "India in future will be the centre of knowledge for the whole world."

Maxmullar said, "If I were asked under what sky the human mind has reached its zenith and solved some of the greatest problems of life, I will point out to India". Hence in future sky will be the limit for progress of Bharat.

All this is due to the self-restraint Atma Sanyam of Gita and family values of Ramayana taught to Bharatiya from their childhood, which unfortunately is being neglected, today. We should remember that if our next generation forgets our culture and heritage, our source of genius will dry up. This is the main concern of the organisations like the RSS. Bharatiya

Contd. to Page 11

The Art Of Tolerance And Dharma

- B V Vaman Maharaj

Much noise was made over the issue of the fundamental right of living beings. The pertinent question going around was who is to decide what to eat and what not to eat. Is this the decision of individual living being or a governing body?

What to eat

In the broader sense, does one earn the liberty on the choice of food as soon as he is born? The answer is 'No'. Not only human beings, but all species on this planet depend on Mother Nature to provide them their basic need of food and water.

A child cannot decide what is good for him. Likewise a sick person cannot decide what is good for him. Though he may yearn for spicy food, he has to follow doctor's advice. Similar situations exist in the regions where there is severity of atmospheric conditions or cultural limitations or financial problems. Sometimes this is also attached to religious sentiments. One cannot eat everything available as everyone has limited means of eating. One cannot eat as much quantity as one wants, due to limited body capacity and so on.

Follow dharma

So, what do we do? We follow the dharma of tolerance. What is dharma? Dharma means that which holds the individual, family, society, country – that is, the whole world, together. Where there is dharma, there can be no conflict. For dharma enables a way of life that enables peace and harmony, truth and justice. When

the path of dharma is abandoned, you find yourself following adharmas, which is just the opposite.

'We have been brought closer to each other by science physically but our hearts are apart now. Cultivation of love can remove this distance between hearts. We tolerate our limitations, for those, we have love and affection. We tolerate our family, and our friends but we tend to forget this when there is some other motive or interest.

Universal love

Sreela Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad explained that developing love for Krishna—the Absolute Whole—will foster love for all. When you love someone, you will love him as a whole. You will not love one part of the body of the lover. This means when someone will love God, then naturally he will develop love for all the creation of God including human beings and animals and other life forms. The one who loves God, will never commit violence with anyone.

Non-violence as well as tolerance is automatic in the culture of pure love. Love of God is the greatest force on earth which can bring unity of hearts among all human beings.

Name of God

Scriptures state that amongst all spiritual practices, Sri Harinam-sankirtan is the best and most effective practice to attain 'Krishnaprema' or love for Godhead in 'Kaliyuga'. This

spiritual practice of 'Nama-sankirtan' is a universal religion under which banner, people of all sects and rank can unite.

When human beings have lost the capacity to understand the difference between a civilised and uncivilised society; when they no longer know the difference between good and bad, they have lost everything. There is one pithy saying to know the criterion to understand which is good and bad, beneficial and non-beneficial—'When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; and when character is lost, everything is lost.'

*(The writer heads the Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, Chandigarh).
(The Times of India, 12.10.2015)*

Contd. from Page 10

BHARATIYA TALENT...

philosophy believes "the whole world is one family," which ensures peace and cooperation from all sides. Our ancient Rishis have authored 36 books of great importance on science. They have also made about 25 discoveries which modern scientists falsely claim as their own. Fortunately, today Modi's vision brings hope of all round resurgence in the destiny of the nation, though it will take some time to amend all the horrible wrong done to the country earlier.

Anandshankar Pandya (The writer is Mumbai based senior columnist)

(<http://organiser.org/Encyc/2015/9/14/Bharatiya-Talent-Genius-out-to-Lead-the-World.aspx>)

Social protection is needed to end hunger

- Ranjan K Baruah

We are aware that every individual has a fundamental right to be free from hunger and the right to adequate food. The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child has the physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement.

Though extreme poverty has been reduced in last few years or decades but poverty and hunger is still seen in many parts of the world. Millions of children die due to malnourishment. 4 in 10 children in poor countries are malnourished damaging their bodies and brains. 60% of the hungry in the world are women.

After the launch of Millennium Development Goals, its Goal 1 was to eradicate poverty. It has achieved some milestones but it could not fulfill all its target by 2015. Forty countries have already achieved the first target, which is to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015.

In Focus

In addition, over the past 20 years, the likelihood of a child dying before the age of five has been nearly cut in half, which means about 17,000 children are saved every day. Extreme poverty rates have also been cut in half since 1990. There are many things to achieve as there are more challenges but with time this has to be overcome else it would be shame on mankind if someone dies out of hunger in present times.

World Food Day (WFD) is a day of action against hunger. On October 16, people around the

world come together to declare their commitment to eradicate hunger in our lifetime. World Food Day celebrates the creation of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (FAO) on October 16, 1945 in Quebec, Canada. First established in 1979, WFD has since then been observed in almost every country by millions of people.

The 2015 World Food Day theme is "Social Protection and agriculture: Breaking the cycle of rural poverty". Social Protection has been chosen as the theme of this year's WFD to highlight its importance in reducing rural poverty and granting access to food or means to buy food. Social protection can be defined as a range of solutions, often combined with each others, - such as work opportunities, provision of food, money and services- that are designed to support the vulnerable and help the poor in society move out of hunger and poverty.

Social protection boosts family income and food security - by providing income (cash) or consumption (food) transfers. Social protection helps children stay in school - by ensuring basic family incomes so children don't need to work to fill the gap. Access to social protection helps people to manage the social and economic risks and environmental threats they are exposed to. Through direct income support to the most vulnerable households, social protection helps alleviate extreme poverty and overcome food insecurity.

If properly designed, social

protection tends to benefit women and promotes their economic and social empowerment. Similarly, it can also benefit children and youth, as social protection helps improve nutrition and health outcomes in as much as household income security allows young people to stay in school longer, and cash for work programmes help enhance employment opportunities for youth.

FAO is committed to support governments and partners in addressing the main challenges for incorporating social protection into national strategies and actions to fight hunger and in promoting greater policy coherence and synergies between social protection, food and nutrition security, agricultural development, natural resource management and rural poverty reduction.

Right to food is a basic right for individuals and everyone has the right to get food. Over last few years things are also changing amongst different governments. In India, right to food has been a demand by many civil society organisations. There are guidelines related to right to food.

Together we can make the world free from hunger and we have to start from our locality. We can be part of right to food campaign and other activities to make sure that no one lives in hunger. WFD tells us that we have to be active and think on the issue so that we can make the world free from hunger.

(<http://www.merineews.com/article/social-protection-is-needed-to-end-hunger/15910502.shtml>)

A Flickering Flame

- Mukut Lochan Kalita

The story of an indomitable teacher who defied financial constraints and government neglect to educate the children in a nondescript village

As our SUV made its way gingerly over the pot-holed road in *Simenmukh* interior, I took some time to absorb the surroundings. We were passing through some pristine, unspoilt areas in Dhemaji district, with swampy marshlands stretching in different directions where the Simen river joined the mighty Brahmaputra. It was not with the eyes of tourists, however, that we observed this remote area. The time was November end in the year 2011, and we were visiting the place as part of a study commissioned by ActionAid. Our objective was to observe and assess the impact of flagship educational programmes like *Sarba Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)* on marginalized communities in Assam. We had to know firsthand the experiences of the stakeholders who mattered most — the poor, deprived children who trekked over distances to learn in the schools, the parents and guardians who sent them with whatever meager resources they could muster, the teachers who soldiered on despite tremendous odds.

After travelling about 10 kms from the highway to Silapathar, we made our first stop at a school, bang in the midst of a rural marketplace. There some KMSS (Krichak Mukti Sangram Samittee) activists gave us a few details about the area and the village communities we had seen along the way. The local population, apart from the original Assamese residents, was also

made up of migrant Hazong, Rabha and Bengali communities, having settled in these areas in last 50-60 years coming from places as far-flung as Goalpara, Bongaigaon and Mancachar. They had cleared jungles and started farming, mostly vegetables. Some engaged in fishing and sundry petty businesses. Slowly they integrated seamlessly into the thriving community life holding the area together. There were 15 villages with 700 families making up a population of around 15,000. Almost every family possessed around 5-20 bighas of land, though they were yet to get land pattas. The land being fertile, they could at least grow their food and were relatively free from hunger. The uncertainties of their migrant days were to some extent over as far as livelihood was concerned. But education was another matter altogether.

There were 14 lower primary (LP) schools in the whole Simenmukh area, of which only two were set up by the government. The other twelve were venture schools. A former president of the village education committee had some inputs for us about the school scenario there. From him, we came to know about an Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) centre (termed as *Aamar Parhashali*) under SSA in one of the villages, which however had gone defunct a few years back. At once, he was corrected by another activist who said the centre was still up and

running, but in a different avatar as Ekal Vidyalaya operated by an NGO.

Surprised as we were, we decided to visit this school as well. But for that, we had to move some 7 kms onwards to Lakhmisuti chaponi, right near the bank of the Brahmaputra. It took our SUV an hour to bounce its way to the village, which remains cut off during the rains as the road becomes impassable. The road, in fact, all but disappeared over the last 4 kms right into paddy fields. There were about a hundred households in the village, with people going about their farming work or tending livestock. Cheerful locals guided us to the village school.

We saw a thatched cottage in which the school was thriving. There were about 50 village children of different age groups studying there, right up to class V. Pupils of the higher three classes were lodged in the larger room, while the toddlers learnt in the verandah and courtyard. The lone teacher, Sushma Hajong, was handling the tiny tots, playing and singing along with them, while the elder students pored over the lessons and activities assigned to them earlier.

Taking some time out to talk to us, Sushma spoke about how the school had first come up as an EGS centre some time in 2004, when she was engaged as '*Siksha Sahayak*' by SSA. A graduate, Sushma had come to this village as a daughter-in-law

and was happy to involve herself in educating the children of this woefully backward place. It was the first time the village children had a school to go to, right in their own neighbourhood. But those good days turned out to be short-lived. Thanks to some strange machinations within the SSA authority, the EGS scheme suddenly fell out of the State government's radar. The fledgling EGS centre in Lakhmisuti chapori was forgotten, the funding and support for it drying up by 2006.

Dismayed at this bolt from the blue, Sushma and several village elders then began the long struggle to revive the school. They kept making the rounds of officialdom at the Dhemaji district headquarters, petitioning offices of the SSA, District Inspector of schools and the Deputy Commissioner — but to no avail. It is no laughing matter to negotiate the 35-kilometers distance from Lakhmisuti chapori to Dhemaji town; villagers take out their creaky cycles or ride a combination of tempos, vans and buses. A cumbrous, time-consuming journey in the dry season, it becomes a hellish experience once the monsoons start.

In the midst of gloom and despair, came help from unexpected quarters. Sushma Hajong made contact with Friends of Tribal Society (FTS), a Guwahati-based NGO. It provided her support to re-start the school, but this time as part of its *Ekal Vidyalaya* network. Along with other teachers, Sushma underwent the FTS specialized pedagogical and academic training at Silapathar, Dhemaji and Guwahati. Armed with a monthly

stipend of Rs 1,000, textbooks and learning materials, Sushma was soon back in the fray to educate village children.

For Sushma Hajong, the multi-grade model of Ekal Vidyalaya was not a problem; she did not feel it a burden at all to single-handedly teach all the lower primary pupils in her village. Rather, she firmly believed it was an asset as students of higher grades all pitched in to help and instruct their juniors in doing lessons at school. Her training in multi-grade method incorporating group learning, peer learning and self-learning, had stood her in good stead. Thus it was that when we met her, she had been already been running for three years since 2008 the Ekal Vidyalaya from her residence. As it was the only learning centre in the radius of 3-kms, new children were enrolling every year. And that was four years ago. Sushma is teaching there still.

Founded by RSS ideologue Nanaji Deshmukh, the Ekal Vidyalaya network of schools had made significant inroads in remote, predominantly tribal villages of Bundelkhand, Jharkhand and Chattishgarh in the late nineties. So it was really intriguing to find a school of this network operating in an interior part of Dhemaji district, where even the Assam government with its vaunted SSA programme had to withdraw after failing to make its presence felt! We later came to know that the FTS was running around 50 Ekal Vidyalayas in various parts of the State.

Should we take issue with philanthropic groups setting up schools, driven by their religious

ideologies? This is an old debate however. Did not the Baptists lay the grounds for education in mother tongue in Assam at the turn of the 20th century? The Jesuits set up institutes in West Bengal and other states that grew up into leading academic centers. Though groups like Ramkrishna Mission, Don Bosco, Jamia Hamdard and many others are spreading the light of education in remote parts of the country — they are also pilloried for supposedly engaging in proselytizing activities. But these groups have succeeded in creating sound learning environment and methods, that have empowered countless deprived children of marginal communities. This fact cannot be denied.

This is why the role of the State should be central in educating its citizens. When it abdicates from this responsibility, it cannot blame others from filling up the void. Passing the light of knowledge to children of the poor and needy is a sacred duty; many teachers heeding the call to this duty have toiled long and selflessly, remaining mostly unsupported and unsung. The country now has a law elevating the Right to Education to a fundamental right. But it threatens to remain a hollow slogan, at least in a state like Assam where myopic officialdom cannot see beyond the air-conditioned confines of Dispur. The hopes of those overlooked and ignored to get some sort of education continue to rest upon the likes of Sushma Hajong, a flickering flame...

*(Mukut Lochan Kalita is Convenor, Right to Education Forum, Assam and independent researcher)
(The Sentinel: 18/10/2015)*

The Importance of Praise

- Dr Jyotsna Bhattacharjee

Praising is a kind of art, which one should practise in order to make somebody feel happy and worthy. Praise does wonders in developing one's personality and self-confidence. It is different from fulsome flattery which is rather destructive of whatever talent somebody may have. If somebody has the ability to do something well and is praised, the person will perform even better than before, as praise is a kind of tonic for a person's inherent qualities. Hence we should develop the practice of praising which can make people happy and successful in life. But we often neglect to do so:

Some people love gardening and they have green fingers. I know a lady who has a small garden in her home. Though the garden is very small, she creates wonders with her nibble fingers. She often gives me vegetables from her garden to my delight. Only the other day she brought me some spinach from her garden and a few guavas from her own tree. The green spinach looked fresh and crisp and the ripe guavas also looked very fresh and attractive. I told her with real pleasure that her home-grown things were much better than anything bought in the market. I told her that her gardening skill was admirable. I was sincerely grateful to her for her gifts of vegetables and the guavas. But what touched me most was her delighted expression on hearing my few words of praise, which she really deserved. Her gardening skill is really superb and she grows luscious vegetables and trees from a handful of seeds. She was worthy of my admiration.

I think that one of the deepest

factors of human nature is a craving to be appreciated. Every one of us needs to be praised for doing something well. Praises make us happy and we try to do whatever we are doing even better. You can see even a difficult child turn into an angel the moment the mother praises him for doing something well.

Teachers definitely should use the art of praising to turn even a recalcitrant child into an obedient lovable one. In fact, not only small children, even grown up students need praise to make them better ones, so that they can demonstrate their caliber effectively. In fact, I believe the teaching cannot be successful unless the teacher heaps praise on the deserving students and encourage others to do better with tact and skilled appreciation. They can easily tell the weaker one that they are as good as the brilliant ones and if only they make the effort they would shine like the others. This kind of praise works wonders with the weaker students. The important thing is to instil confidence in their minds. Disparaging a student is disastrous for his well-being. A student may behave worse than before if the teacher humiliates him or taunts him. Only by a few words of praise and encouragement the teacher can do wonders with the mentality and performance of the student. I wonder why some teachers are so wary of uttering a few words of praise. After all, they do not cost them anything. I do not understand why we are so stingy in giving praise to others. Naturally not all of us (either as children or as adults) are qualified to shine or win glittering

prizes. Only a few people can do brilliantly in life and most of us belong to that "average ordinary group". But still I believe that every one of us does have some special ability for doing something well. It may not be something extraordinary but still it is an achievement of the doer, however small it may be. Some ladies have magic in their fingers and can weave fantasy in their knitting or embroidery. Some can bring out exotic meals from the most simple and ordinary ingredients. Some can do wonders in their gardens, some are handy with tools or may have skill for making various electrical gadgets; some have a special way to deal with various problems. They are not much, you might say, but they are achievements, which we cannot deny. Every one cannot be a genius, but everyone can do something really well. For that they deserve to be praised. Women like to be complimented on looking good—and perhaps so do men. Then why not compliment them? But of course no one is grateful for insincere flattery.

Every one of us likes to bask in the pleasure of being appreciated. 'Even able and self-confident people are encouraged when they get the recognition and appreciation for their skill. Then imagine how much more that encouragement is needed and appreciated by those who find themselves to be "square pegs" wobbling uncertainly in the "round holes". They will develop only if their works are appreciated and encouraged from time to time. If they do not get it, they might wither away as the flower does in the absence of sunlight.

The lady of the house might have put much effort and ingenuity to make some delectable food for her husband. She certainly deserves praise for her skill in cooking. But if the master of the household gobbles up the food without a word of praise, certainly the lady will feel disheartened. Of course it will be a loss for the husband. The gentleman may not get such delightful dishes in future, due to his lack of understanding.

By thoughtless remarks we often destroy the confidence in a child. Sometimes some child is considered "difficult" in a family, simply because he has no

their parents that they too want their proper place at home and outside and do not want to be the second best. They too have the capacity to do something really well and deserve to be appreciated. It is not only in the family circle we need to be careful, but outside as well. I have a friend who is one of the kindest women imaginable, who would not hurt a fly. Yet I once heard her praising the daughter of one of the ladies with whom she was talking seemingly unaware of the plain and plump daughter of the other lady, who was listening to the conversation.

These kind of unthinking

nothing to mollify her. She gave me a wan smile and left immediately. I felt very embarrassed and sad at the unexpected turn of the simple incident and told the lady that perhaps she was a little rough in her remark. But the lady was totally unrepentant. She snorted and said decidedly, "For me spade is a spade and I don't hold with hypocrisy".

I had nothing more to say. But I do think that unpleasant truth should never be spoken out. Tactfulness for me is not hypocrisy. We must not hurt other people by saying an unpleasant truth. If a small harmless lie brings smile to

We need praise and encouragement to build up our confidence. No one is good at everything. It is very true that appreciation won't make us do what we are incapable of doing, but it can make us do what we are capable of doing. A little amount of praise makes us more determined to do the thing ever better. A child swells with pride if he gets a pat in the back for his efforts. If you offer a delicious meal to your family, you deserve praise and should get it. Women sometimes resent the fact that in spite of her hard work, keeping the house in good order, preparing food and looking after everyone's comfort, she rarely gets appreciation. Often the family take many things for granted as their due-but the person who does so much for them deserves to be appreciated. A little bit of praise will go a long way in giving her the pleasure of feeling needed and loved. All her tiredness, boredom, resentment disappear the moment her family appreciate her efforts. Men also want praise for doing something well.

inclination to follow the footsteps of the father or to toe the line chosen by the parents- But why not let him take his chosen path and appreciate his skill in that direction? Because he has chosen an alien field, he should not be termed as a failure.

Unconscious of the damage they do, parents often pay more attention to the child who takes after them and praise him to the hilt, forgetting that this kind of biased praise will make the other somehow excluded from the family. So he or she will try to get notice or draw attention in the wrong way. Hence the tantrums, naughtiness, showing off are their way of telling

remarks are very painful. They hurt some people terribly. Some may take the remark as a deliberate insult. I remember an incident which is rather painful. A neighbour's daughter sometimes comes to my place. She is rather a plain girl. The other day S was talking to a lady, who had come to see me. At that time the girl came in, looking very excited and happy. She asked me if I liked her new hair style. Before I could utter even a word, the lady famed for her caustic tongue, told the girl that the new hair style looked like a bird's nest and it did not suit her at all. The young girl's expression changed from joy to sorrow. My soothing words did

somebody, then I am all for the lie. The truth, which is painful to someone, is certainly not a virtue for me. As William Blake stated, "A truth that's told with bad intent beats all the lies you can invent". Hence I believe that praising a person who does not deserve it may be a lie, but if it does well for the person concerned, we should stick to it.

Criticism sometimes may be considered to be necessary for the good of a student. But it should not be destructive criticism, which does more harm than good. An ounce of praise is worth a hundred times more than a ton of criticism. If the student receives a little bit of

Contd. to Page 19

One Life one Mission

- Nivedita Raghunath Bhide

This year is a very special year for Vivekananda Kendra. This is the Birth Centenary Year of Mananeeya Sri Eknathji Ranade. He was the master organizer who galvanized the whole nation and with support of all he built the grand memorial for Swami Vivekananda on the mid-sea Rock at Kanyakumari in a record time. As a natural sequel to this memorial he founded Vivekananda Kendra which has work today in 813 places in the country. The whole mantra of his life was 'One Life One Mission', so it is chosen as the central theme of the Centenary Celebrations. Today our country is poised for a great take off at such time each one of us have to contribute. In each field we have to strive for excellence, whatever we do should be a contribution for the development of our country. And mantra for this is "One Life One Mission". Below is an excerpt from Eknathji's editorials to Yuva Bharati.

The goal of human life rather human destiny is the same for all. Sooner or later, everybody, every one, according to the higher stage of life he is in, begins to have this craving for perfection. So what else can be the human destiny than to reach God? You may have different conceptions of God. You may not like to call it by the name God. One may like to call something like absolute or Brahman, whatever names you may choose. But after all that only shows that you give that name to your concept of absolute. So when we have to describe

something perfect then we call it divine. So divinity is the goal. No doubt about it. You may like to have something but as soon as you reach there, it doesn't stop there. Then you find that is not enough. You must go ahead. Where will you go? Ultimately you have to go towards perfection, towards divinity,



Even in our common life we find. We go forward. We feel satisfied. We have progressed. But still we find that it is not enough. You may be a good singer. You may be perfect according to the science of singing. Compared to others you are proficient. Others may be envying it. But when you introspect, you are not satisfied. You feel that, 'No, proficiency is alright. But lots of things are to be learnt for. I am still on the lower level of the ladder. I must still go up.' But when you reach that stage you are not happy. You try for something more. Very proficient men you might have seen. And you may be very enamored of

them. But then if you happened to have an interview with them, then they will say that, 'What we have gained, what knowledge we have gained that is nothing. What a vast knowledge is there!' So he tries to go up. You take anybody at any station in life he is always looking up and he will never stop unless he merges with the absolute, unless he is one with the Divine,

If that is our ultimate destiny then why not plan /live in such a way that we reach there at the shortest possible time? To reach there whatever the price, I will pay the price, full price and get the thing what I want. This is called purposeful life. If one gets something worth living for and worth dying for, then that becomes a purposeful life. When you want to go in a particular direction, you go in that direction.

And if in your effort to go in that particular direction if some obstacles come, some adversity come and you are required to face death, you don't mind sacrificing, because that is something which is worth living and worth dying for. Purposeful life begins with this. And therefore in this context we have to understand and we have to make a master plan of life!

'What is the purpose of my life? What is that I want to achieve? What is that I am going to contribute? All the apparatus that I have got, all that I possess is to be used for that particular thing. What is it for which I have to use every moment of my time, every ounce of my energy? The whole life has a purpose and my

existence must be purposeful existence. My existence should not be just from moment to moment'. There are many roads, many lanes, many avenues and many works. You choose one. When I say you choose one I say you reject all others. It is not - 'This is good and that is also not bad'. This sort of thinking will never make you live a purposeful life. You choose a thing that is meant for this life. Therefore I say, 'One Life One Mission'.

You choose your own path. Once you choose your path, all other paths -they may be very good- but they are not relevant in this life. I can enumerate thousand things which are good. Are you going to do all those thousand things? You cannot. Your life is so short. Life span is so small you cannot even think of two things at a time. Even one thing you cannot do proper. But thinking of two things or three things or five things is out of question, because the life is so short. So looking at the short span of life you cannot waste time in just thinking what path to choose. Sometime people say that, 'Well, I have to decide what am I to do? I shall think. I shall first get the knowledge. I shall study something and ultimately when I find that comparatively this one is good then that path I will choose.'

Can anybody go and examine all the avenues? Life will be wasted. So, in the very morning of his life, he has to decide. Otherwise he will be in two minds and hundred minds till the noon of his life. No use of deciding upon the life in the afternoon, in the evening. Decide upon the

course of your life in the morning of your life, so that you get sufficient time to achieve. So in the context of this hard reality that the life is small, as soon as you mature, as soon as your mental apparatus is mature enough to think, you meditate, introspect, look within, think of your past — the equipment you have got, think of the situation, think of the work you are called upon to do. More and more you introspect you will get insight into what you should do in your life and once decided the only thing remains is implementing it.

Once you decide, then, with single minded devotion- doesn't matter if people call you one track-minded. But as long as you are not one track minded you will never achieve anything great in the life. This sort of mental disposition that 'this also may be done, that also may be done, this also may be tried, that also may be tried, little of this, little of that', - this luxury the small span of life doesn't allow.

But by and large you have to find out whether you are capable of it. Whether, if you exert yourself, you can reach it. Much depends upon your own assessment. And much depends upon your confidence in your potential divinity. Much depends upon this! If one is full with this confidence then why is it not possible?

'If one person can do it how can I not do it? I also can do it. Where is the question of my assessment? If this man can do it, that man can do it I am also a man; I also belong to the same species. Why should I not be able

to do it? I have to see only the assessment of the human being. I am a human being. I will do it.'

If that confidence is there you need not go in to self- assessment to decide the mission of your life. What the country needs do it. The very fact that you have understood this principle of potential divinity of man - a man can rise to divine heights - there is nothing impossible for you. If you have confidence in this, that means you have confidence in you. That means you have faith in god. To have faith in god and to have faith in yourself- they are one and the same thing! I cannot conceive of a person who has faith in god and has no faith in himself. And therefore you would always feel that, 'Well, if somebody has done it then I also can do it'. So, with this confidence one has to formulate the plan of life.

The question of 'How I can do it? Whether I shall fail?' Well, you may fail, you may again rise up! What is there? You may not achieve it in first trial. You may do it in a second trial; you may do it in third trial; you may have ten trials! After all a child, hundred times it falls; again it walks. Ultimately it knows how to walk. Not only walk, run! Nobody laughs at child falling. So with this confidence one has to think of higherthings. With this confidence you must formulate plan for life. Then, the plan will be worthy of yourself. So, this is about the formulation of the master plan of life which one has to do as early as possible so that rest of the life remains before him for its implementation.

(Yuva Bharati, July 2015)

Hindu Deities in Japan

The original concept of Saraswati and her association with the natural order and good fortune are well preserved in Japan.

Most people are not aware that at least a score of Hindu deities are actively worshipped in Japan. In fact, there are hundreds of shrines to Saraswati alone. There are innumerable representations of Lakshmi, Indra, Brahma, Ganesha, Garuda and other deities. In fact, deities that have practically been forgotten in India, such as Vayu and Varuna, are still worshipped in Japan.

Yasukuni Enoki, former Ambassador of Japan in India, says: "As I come from the Japanese 'Lakshmi Town', it is no great surprise to find that Japanese life is full of so many Hindu deities. Since these Hindu deities were introduced into Japan through China, with Chinese names, Japanese people are unaware of their origins."

One of the most revered deities

of Japan is Saraswati. There are scores of shrines built to her. There are two kinds of Saraswati, or Benzaiten, in Japan. One is the eight-armed Saraswati and the other is the two-armed one. In her two-armed form, she has a musical instrument in her hand, which is called veena, or biwa in Japanese.

In many ways, the original concept of Saraswati and her association with the natural order and good fortune are well preserved in Japan. She is often visualised as a sacred body of water. In Japan, one finds the continuance of many early ideas of Indian philosophy.

I did the research for and took most of the photographs used in this feature in spring 2015 with the support of a Japan Foundation Fellowship. I am deeply grateful for this valuable support which was provided. I have also made a film for the Ministry of External Affairs on the subject "Hindu Deities Worshipped in Japan". My partner Sujata Chatterji is the assistant director of the film.

Benoy K Behl is a film-maker, art historian and photographer who is known for his tireless and prolific output of work over the past 36 years. He has taken over 46,000 photographs of Asian monuments and art heritage and made 132 documentaries on art and cultural history. His exhibitions have been warmly received in 54 countries around the world and he holds the record, in the Limca Book of Records, for being the most travelled photographer.

The vastness of Behl's documentation presents a wide and new perspective in understanding the art and culture of India and of Asia. He has been invited to lecture by most of the important universities and museums around the world that have departments of Asian art. His landmark book "The Ajanta Caves" is published by Thames & Hudson, London, and Harry N. Abrams, New York. It is in its fifth print run.

<http://www.frontline.in/arts-and-culture/heritage/hindu-deities-in-japan/article7654825.ece>

Contd. from Page 16

The Importance of Praise

appreciation for what he can do and less criticism for what he cannot do, then he may have the chance to be successful in later life.

We need praise and, encouragement to build up our confidence. No one is good at everything. It is very true that appreciation won't make us do what we are incapable of doing, but it can make us do what we are capable of doing. A little amount of praise makes us more determined to do the thing ever better. A child swells

with pride if he gets a pat in the back for his efforts. If you offer a delicious meal to your family, you deserve praise and should get it. Women sometimes resent the fact that in spite of her hard work, keeping the house in good order, preparing food and looking after everyone's comfort, she rarely gets appreciation. Often the family take many things for granted as their due—but the person who does so much for them deserves to be appreciated. A little bit of praise will

go a long way in giving her the pleasure of feeling needed and loved. All her tiredness, boredom, resentment disappear the moment her family appreciate her efforts. Men also want praise for doing something well.

Knowing how reassuring it is to receive praise, let us make sure not to be niggardly in giving it. After all, it does not cost us anything. Yet it is a wonderful tonic to cheer up others and make them happy.

(The Sentinel: 18/10/2015)

NASA Studying How Zero Gravity Affects The Brain

WASHINGTON: NASA-funded researchers are studying brain structures and functions of the astronauts aboard the International Space Station (ISS) to understand how brain changes in space and ways to deal with those changes. Astronauts have experienced problems with balance and perceptual illusions in microgravity.

The NASA-funded study is examining changes in both brain structure and function and determining how long it takes to recover after returning from space. Researchers are using both behavioural assessments and brain imaging.

For the study, astronauts complete timed obstacle courses and tests of their spatial memory, or the ability to mentally picture and manipulate a three-dimensional shape, before and after spaceflight.

The spatial memory test is also performed aboard the station, along

with sensory motor adaptation tests and computerised exercises requiring them to move and think simultaneously. Astronauts are tested shortly after arriving aboard the station, mid-way through and near the end of a six-month flight. Structural and functional magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans of the brain are done pre-flight and post-flight.

"We are looking at the volume of different structures in the brain and whether they change in size or shape during spaceflight," said principal investigator Rachael D Seidler, director of the University of Michigan's Neuromotor Behaviour Laboratory.

According to Seidler, both the behavioural assessment and brain imaging are important to help identify the relationship between physical changes in the brain and those in behaviour.

"On Earth, your vestibular - or

balance - system tells you how our head moves relative to gravity, but in space, the gravity reference is gone," Seidler said.

"That causes these perceptual illusions, as well as difficulty coordinating movement of the eyes and head," said Seidler.

These difficulties could have serious consequences for astronauts, especially when changing between gravitational environments, such as landing on Mars.

In those cases, astronauts will need to be able to perform tasks such as using tools and driving a rover, and they must be capable of escape in a landing emergency.

The study results could also show whether astronauts return to "normal" post-flight because the brain changes back, or if the brain instead learns to compensate for the changes that happened in space. *(The Assam Tribune 12.10.15)*

300-yr-old Urdu Mahabharat in Lucknow home

- Shailvee Sharda

LUCKNOW, Oct 2, 2015: The Manjuls in Old City's Karbala Colony never thought that their forgotten legacy could be so precious. Sifting through the library started by his great grandfather Mawalihussain Naseerbadi in his native village in Raebareli, Farman came across a Mahabharat written at least 300 years ago.

The surprise element was that the Mahabharat was written in Urdu with each chapter containing an introduction in Arabic and Persian languages. The script is Arabic. His mother Shahin Akhtar

revealed that the family had been preserving this book as a lucky icon for the past five generations. "It was probably misplaced after my father's death," says Farman, who is going to get the book restored.

Family friend and a Kari (religious teacher), Waheed Abbas, studied the book in detail. "This is an emblem of our Ganga-Jamuni tradition and must be saved for generations to come," he said, adding that Haji Talib Hussain and his friend Durga Prasad wrote the book for Urdu readers. Abbas also said that the

Manjul family, which can trace its roots to a Shia Iman Hazrat Ali Naqi, was also keeping the tradition of communal amity alive by preserving their prized possession.

"Though it is not a literal translation, it has covered the details of the book in easy language in a story form," explained Abbas. Each chapter has been beautifully introduced by Arabic verses. Citing an example, Farman said, "Ba une khaliq e maqan ... azamin-o-asman" for example means this book

Contd. to Page 21

NAGA Peace Accord is a Game Changer

- S. K. Kaul

The inking of Naga Accord on Monday, 3rd August 2015 between R.N.Ravi Interlocutor for Naga talks, GOI and Thuimagaleng Muivah, General Secretary NSCN (TM) who is 81 years old, a Tangkhul Naga from Manipur, was a frame-work solution to Naga problems with its exact terms to be finalized over the next three months according to minister of state for home affairs Kiran Rijju. Sakchis Swu, Chairman of NSCN (IM) is 85 years old and admitted to a private hospital in Delhi is a Sema Naga from NagaJ.and and the GOT did not want to take chance and wanted Swu who in crucial to any peace solution to be part of the accord. The advancing age and indifferent health of the NSCN(TM) leaders may be one of the reasons for the militant group to come forward for an agreement with Government of India.

The other reason for accord also relates to NSCN (IM) Muivah and Swu and their Commander-in-chief S.S. Khaplang never forgave Angam Zapu Phizo, the father of the Naga movement for the 1975 Shillong Accord. The hardened militants opposed the accord and in 1980 formed NSCN. In 1988, they split further and Khaplang formed NSCN(K) has unilaterally abrogated ceasefire agreement with India on March 27, 2015 and entered into ceasefire agreement with Myanmar Government. In the June 4, 2015, ambush on security personnel in Manipur, NSCN (K) cadres killed 19 Indian Army soldiers showed that Naga movement is no longer a monolith. In a retaliatory surgical strike, the Indian Army killed several NSCN(K) operative at its base in Myanmar on June 9, 2015. Given that Khaplang is a Myanmar-based rebel group, GOT may want to deal

with him separately. NSCN (TM) there for sized the opportunity to enter into a peace accord with GOT.

In 2001, NDA Govt. under Atal Bihari Vajpayee wanted to extend to extend ceasefire with NSCN (TM) to the Naga inhabited areas of Manipur and Assam. This was opposed and the idea was dropped. NSCN(IM) had in the past demanded 'Nagalim'. While details of the framework agreement are yet to be made public, it appears that both sides have agreed to a solution that does not involve redrawing of State boundaries. This is big breakthrough as the demand for greater Nagaland by clubbing together Naga-dominated areas in Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh was a major stumbling block in negotiations

Reportedly, an alternative formula that allows for autonomy to Naga Janjatis outside Nagaland has been worked out along with a mechanism to discuss

decommissioning of arms held by NSCN(IM) and cultural integration of Nagas across states. That said, challenges remain in terms of operationalizing the peace accord on the ground with several details yet to be worked out. Giving autonomy to Naga dominated areas in the states surrounding Nagaland to being greater and cultural integration of Nagas across States will be opposed by the three states. In 2011, negotiations for setting up an integrated body to decide on issues like culture and language of the Naga Janjatis living in other states had come unstuck because states of Manipur, Aninachal Pradesh and Assam argued that it would open a Pandora's Box with other non-Naga Janjatis also seeking a similar treatment, Add to all this, the unfinished task of winning over other Naga rebel groups must receive attention if the Naga Peace Accord has to succeed.

(Vanbandhu, Sept.2015)

Contd. from Page 20

300-yr-old Urdu Mahabharat in Lucknow home

contains personalities who are found on both earth and sky... I assume that reference is being made to Lord Krishna." Abbas added that the descriptions were quite vivid as well.

Ever since the book has been reclaimed from the library of 10,000 books, Shahin is reading it. And as it is said about Mahabharat, the book has stirred her thought process. On Thursday morning, she was heard telling her son to quit anger. "Krodh patan ka karan hota hai (Anger is the cause of one's downfall)," she said. She also feels that reading the book was far better than



Shahin Akhtar and her family members with the copy of the Urdu Mahabharata

watching TV serials on the epic. "There is no retention and recall value in TV after all," she reasons.

The 300-year-old Mahabharat has also changed their life. "We are getting unprecedented guests these days...and all want to take a look at this age-old book," said Shahin.

(The Times of India, 3.10.15)

Encroached tribal lands slipping into corporate hands

Highest encroachment in Tinsukia district, 66 industries already set up in Kamrup (metro) tribal blocks

Guwahati, Oct 11: As large tracts of tribal belts and blocks in Assam continue to be under illegal occupation, there are now reports that some of these plots are being unlawfully allocated to corporate houses and businessmen for setting up industrial units.

Sources said that as many as 66 such industries have been set up in tribal blocks of Kamrup (metropolitan) district alone. According to official records, around 189 bighas of tribal block in the district are under encroachment.

There are a total of 17 tribal belts and 30 tribal blocks in the State, comprising an area of

around 82,14,985 bighas.

The highest encroachment is in Tinsukia district, where 1,64,012 bighas are under illegal occupation.

In Kamrup district, 22,516 bighas are under encroachment, while in Lakhimpur and Dhemaji 13,336 and 11,577 bighas respectively have been usurped.

Around 7,260 bighas of tribal land is under encroachment in Sonitpur district and 1,966 bighas in Nagaon district.

There are reports of encroachment of tribal belts and blocks in other districts as well, but the administrations have not yet quantified it.

“We have been repeatedly asking the government to clear the tribal belts and blocks, but no action has been taken so far. We have submitted representations to everyone concerned, but to no avail. Now the encroached tracts are being unlawfully allotted to businessmen and corporate houses. A nexus between revenue officials, circle officers and land mafias is preventing the government from taking action,” All Assam Tribal Sangha president Aditya Khaklari said.

He said while the State government is yet to implement Assam Land & Revenue Act in toto, the indigenous people are becoming landless in the State.

(The Sentinel, 12.10.2015)

Zeliang clears air on Gaidinliu memorial row

KOHIMA, Oct 3, 2015: Clearing the air on the controversy surrounding Rani Gaidinliu and the construction of a memorial library-cum-museum in Kohima, Nagaland chief minister TR Zeliang has said the Centre is honouring her as a freedom fighter and not cult leader.

Zeliang, while interacting with officials of Ao Senden at Mokokchung on Thursday evening, said the construction of the museum does not mean Heraka or Hinduism is being promoted.

Zeliang was reacting to the opposition by various Naga tribes to the construction of the museum and iconizing of Rani Ganidinliu by the Centre and the state government.

“No matter what I or we say and do, we cannot change history which is very clear about the role played by Rani Gaidinliu against the British in the earlier quarter of the last century. She had spent some 14 years in British jails located in several parts of the northeast and was freed only after India got Independence. She again went underground in the Fifties. It was only in 1966 that SC Dev convinced her to come overground. From then on, successive governments of Nagaland had given her allowances, perks and privileges befitting a cabinet-rank minister of the state,” he said.

He added that the sanction and approval of the museum-cum-memorial library in Kohima was

given in 2010, and the site was identified and allotted by his predecessor. “Now, it would be wrong to say that I being from the same community as Rani Gaidinliu is trying to iconize her or promote her,” he said.

He added, “Organizations such as yours should first know the background or history of any issues and comment. Otherwise, commenting blindly may not be wise. It could prove embarrassing at times when the truth unfolds.”

The Ao Senden delegation, led by its president Imolemba Ao, had called on the chief minister who is en-route to Chuchuyamlang in Mokokchung district for the inaugural function of the Mahatma Gandhi Academy of Human Development.

(The Times of India, 3.10.2015)

Wildlife Corridors

That Kaziranga - among the prime wildlife habitats of the State and a World Heritage Site - continues to grapple with debilitating concerns is a damning indictment of the Forest Department and the State Government's apathy and insensitivity. Finalizing the process of land acquisition for the proposed six additions which will double the park's present area of 430 sq km and freeing the critical animal corridors linking Kaziranga with the nearby Karbi Anglong hills is one such priority that continues to get delayed by the authorities' inertia. Clearing encroachment on the animal corridors and facilitating unhindered movement of wildlife to the forested hills of Karbi Anglong is something that has longterm implications for the future of the park and its wildlife. This is because the Karbi Anglong forests serve not just as a safe haven for wildlife during the annual floods but also provide space, food and an extended home range for the animals. Bringing at least a part of the hilly forests under a single protective mechanism with

Kaziranga would serve the interests of conservation better. This, together with expanding the area of the park by finalizing the additions, would give a huge boost to conservation.

Government inaction apart, a section of local people who have illegally settled and blocked wildlife corridors are also resorting to aggressive protests against any move to clear encroachment. To make matters worse, organizations like the KMSS are siding with the encroachers under the unjustified pretext of those being indigenous residents. This is totally uncalled for, and the Government - which has now been asked by the Gauhati High Court to clear the encroachment within two months - needs to act fast. If necessary, efforts should be directed towards resettling the people in other areas. There are instances across India when entire villages relocated willingly away from wildlife habitats in the interest of wildlife. It also reflects poorly on the State Government that it has been dilly-dallying with removing the encroachers for

years and even contradicting its own reports on the status of the animal corridors. Yet another disturbing concern for Kaziranga stems from mushrooming tourist facilities, expanding human settlements along the Park's southern boundary, and industrial activities that have disrupted Kaziranga's much-needed contiguity with the Karbi Anglong forests. Increasing the forest cover along the buffer zones of the park is another imperative to ease the mounting anthropogenic pressures from the fringe human settlements. People with no understanding of conservation and having their own vested interests are fuelling public sentiment against Kaziranga's recent tiger reserve status on the absurd ground that the tiger has replaced the rhino as the conservation priority in Kaziranga. The Forest authorities and NGOs should assuage such extreme and ridiculous public sentiment by presenting the correct picture.

(The Assam Tribune 14-10-15)

Govt to start declassifying Netaji files from 23 January 2016: PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi while announcing this also said that there is no need to strangle history

New Delhi October 15, 2015

The government will start unveiling the classified files on

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose



from his birth anniversary on January 23 next year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on Wednesday, meeting a seven-decade-old demand for disclosing details which could solve the mystery over his disappearance seven decades

ago in August 18, 1945.

Modi made the promise to 35 of Netaji's family members whom he hosted at his official residence here, declaring, "there is no need to strangle history. Nations that forget their history lack the power to create it."

(http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/govt-to-start-declassifying-netaji-files-from-january-2016-pm-115101401140_1.html)

US conservation initiative dedicated to Jadav Payeng

- SIVASISH THAKUR

GUWAHATI, Oct 11 - A major conservation initiative in the United States is honouring 'Forest Man of India' Jadav Payeng by dedicating a plantation ceremony in his name.

The Bridgewater Township Shade Tree Board (Team Arbor) and the Assam Foundation of North America (AFNA) have announced the tree dedication ceremony that will honour the internationally-acclaimed conservationist from Assam.

The community event in honour of Payeng will be held at Chimney Rock Park, Martinsville, on October 17. The event will include a memorial tree dedication, live music and a display of folk dance forms of Assam.

"The celebration also marks Bridgewater's achievement as a recognised 'Tree City' of the United States for the 19th consecutive year. It honours the community for its commitment to effective urban forest management," Ankur Bora of AFNA told The Assam Tribune.

Payeng is credited with singlehandedly transforming a 1,400-acre barren river sandbar of Jorhat district of Assam into a bustling forest ecosystem by planting and nurturing thousands of saplings.

The Tree City USA programme is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in partnership with the US Forest Service and the National Association of State

Foresters. The celebration will include the recognition of the Roots and Shoots Club from Hillside Intermediate School for the students' support of the local tree canopy and their commitment to the preservation of the rain forest.

"This is completely an educational, environmental, cross-cultural, non-religious, non-profit, and family event. This event is designed to assimilate the Indian community with the local American community," Bora said.

The Arbor Day Foundation with a mission "to inspire people to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees" was founded in 1972 by John Rosenow.

(The Assam Tribune, 12.10.2015)

Khasi songs commemorate Tagore's first Shillong visit

SHILLONG: Recitation from the 'Jingsneng Tymmen', which codifies the rich and ancient Khasi culture, marked the 96th year of Rabindranath Tagore's first visit to Shillong on October 11, 1919, at a function organized here on Sunday at the Brookside Bungalow, where the poet laureate had stayed and composed some of his famed literary pieces.

Tagore, who had loved the pine-dotted hill station, had visited Shillong thrice, despite the challenging travelling conditions about a century ago.

The celebrated poet, in his memoirs described the zig-zag road to Shillong from Gauhati as "aka baka poth" with "Dhudhare drishshoman jongol" (Eye-catching jungles on either sides of the road).

His poem "Krantikari", which he wrote in Shantiniketan in June 1927, is replete with memories of Shillong. The bard was vivid about his 'meetings' with "unknown flowers' in the evergreen hills of the Khasi Hills. Besides his magnum opus "Shesher Kobita", which was set in Shillong, Tagore had also written short stories entitled "Ekti Din" (One Day) and "Ekti Chahoni" (One Look), said Malabika Bisharad, who organized Sunday's colourful programme with support from the Indian Council for Cultural Relations.

Attired in traditional Khasi and Jaintia regalia, women sang and danced to the beats of traditional Khasi 'bom' (drum) and 'duitara' (string instrument) at Brookside, a revered heritage site in the Meghalaya capital.

Self-composed poems by

young poet Priyajit Dey and paintings by children on themes based on the first Nobel laureate in literature from Asia were part of the programmes that marked the day.

"Moter upor Shillong bhalo, jai na baluk ninduke (Overall Shillong is good, no matter what adversaries may say)," these were the last lines Rabindranath Tagore penned down in his poem "Shillonger Chitti", the "Letter from Shillong".

The eternal tourist that he was, Tagore wrote: "Gormi jokhon tutlo na aar pakhaar haowai, shorbote, thanda hote doure elum Shillong namok porbote (When the heat of summer could not be dealt with even fans and cold drinks, I rushed to Shillong to be cool!"

(<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/shillong/Khasi-songs-commemorate-Tagores-first-Shillong-visit/articleshow/49320653.cms> Oct 12, 2015.)

Everyone has a 'sacred cow': Horse slaughter banned in US

Everyone has a 'sacred cow'. Even the American who ridicules the Indian's opposition to cow slaughter. Here, the American's 'sacred cow' is the horse.

Horse slaughter is effectively banned in the US through a convoluted budget tactic while two bills are pending before the US Congress to make it permanent.

While the bill for an outright ban works its way through Congress, the present backdoor horse slaughter ban works like this: The budget that was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Barack Obama last year prohibited the agriculture department from spending money on inspecting horse slaughter houses. Without inspections, the slaughter houses cannot operate legally and that effectively banned horse slaughter.

Twenty Republican and 50 Democratic Representatives jointly introduced a bill in the lower house in April for an outright ban on horse slaughter and its export for butchering. Two senators from each of the two parties followed suit the next month and the bills are pending in Congress.

Several organisations like the Humane Society and Equine Advocates have been lobbying for ending the killing of horses for food.

Cultural reasons that verge on religious fervour in this predominantly Christian nation are the main motivators for banning horse slaughter. In its mobilisation efforts Equine Advocates uses a

quote that elevates horses to the level of a national icon and invokes the nation's cultural heritage.

"Our forefathers honoured The Horse as a 'favoured' animal like dogs and cats when this country was founded," Cathleen Doyle, who led the efforts to ban horse slaughter in California, is quoted



as saying. "Dog, cat and horse slaughter are not part of our culture or heritage. We should no more be slaughtering our horses for export than we should slaughter our dogs or cats for export to countries where their meat is eaten."

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) says that according to a 2012 national poll 80% of Americans are against horse butchering.

Moreover, the Bible in the books of Deuteronomy and Leviticus put horses in the category of the "unclean" and, therefore, not to be eaten because unlike cattle they do not chew the cud.

Even though cultural reasons are the motivation, the anti-horse slaughter advocates present it as a health issue claiming that the medications given to horses can be harmful to humans. The legislators, who call their

measure Safeguard American Food Exports or SAFE Act, avoid the cultural or religious reasons and say that the proposed law is for health reasons.

Horses have not been slaughtered in the US since 2007 when Illinois State, where the last American horse abattoir was operating, banned horse slaughter.

A federal horse slaughter ban bill was passed by the House of Representatives in 2006, but was blocked in the Senate by a group of lawmakers representing horse butcher interests. Several businesses have been trying to revive the horse slaughter houses but have been stopped by the budget measure.

American horses, however, still fall to the butchers' knives as they are transported to Canada and Mexico which allow horse slaughter. The SAFE Act, if passed, would stop the exports.

Although horse meat is eaten in several countries and cultures, including European, organisations in the US, especially those of the Indian diaspora, that oppose cow slaughter ban in India on the grounds that people should have the right to eat what they want have been silent on horse slaughter ban.

The ASPCA and the Humane Society say they oppose horse slaughter because of the cruelty to the animals, but they do not advocate a cow slaughter ban.

(<http://www.hindustantimes.com/world/everyone-has-a-sacred-cow-horse-slaughter-banned-in-us/story-oSnriQrFgoiLAMA0xXEKP.html> Oct 10, 2015)

A pair of Tittibha birds, husband and wife lived on seashore. The female Tittibha bird was expecting to lay eggs and raise a family.

When the time to lay eggs came, she asked her husband to look for a safe place to lay her eggs, "My dear, please look for some good and safe place for me to lay eggs as it is almost time for me to lay them."

But the male Tittibha bird said, "Dearest, where in the world could be a better place than this seashore? Please lay your eggs here."

She disagreed, "The waves of sea on full moon nights are so high that they can drag even an elephant into it. No, please find a place away from here."

The male Tittibha bird laughed and insisted, "The Sea would not even dare to do any harm to my children! Do not fear unnecessarily and lay eggs here without any worries."

All the time, the Sea had been hearing this, and thought, "From a small bird as he, such impudence is not expected. I'll certainly take away his eggs to see what he does after that and teach him a lesson."

Within a few days, the female Tittibha bird laid her eggs in the seashore. Shortly afterward, when the birds went away in search of food, the Sea started making waves. The waves became higher and higher, till it swallowed the eggs into it.

The birds returned later to find the nest empty. The female Tittibha bird started weeping bitterly, "See for yourself that the waves of the sea has swallowed our eggs. You are a fool not to listen to me when I asked you to find a safe place to lay eggs."

The male Tittibha bird continued its stupidity, "Dear, don't worry. I will prove to you how brilliant I am. I will dry the sea, and force it to return our eggs."

The female Tittibha bird wondered, "How can you dry this enormous sea?"

The male Tittibha bird explained,

"Even small beings can overcome the strongest opponents if they are zealous. And so, I plan to dry up the whole sea by sucking its water with my beak."

The wife argued, "How can you suck the sea dry, when rivers like the Ganga & Sindhu, and hundreds of other rivers flow into it. There is no good in this babbling". While the husband argued, "I'll work day and night to suck all the water from the sea with my beak, which is as solid as iron. One can succeed only after putting efforts".

The female Tittibha bird understood that she will not be able to convince him, "Dear, there is no point in arguing. If you want to conquer the sea, please call for your friends to help you". The husband agreed, "All right, I will do this with the help of my friends".

Now, all the friends of the male Tittibha bird were called in and when they all gathered together, the male Tittibha bird explained his problem with the sea, and how it had insulted him, and how he plans to dry the sea to seek revenge.

All the birds, the swan, crane, peacock and other unanimously agreed that the task was impossible, "There is no good in this babbling. It is impossible for us to suck the sea to dry it up completely. Instead, let us visit our king, Garuda (Lord Vishnu's vehicle, and the king of birds according to Hindu mythology). When he comes to know that we have been harassed by the sea, he will get angry and seek revenge. Even if we merely pay him a visit to seek his advice, we shall feel relieved."

As decided, they all went to their king, Garuda, and explained the reason of them being so sad, "O King, the sea has robbed the eggs of the good Tittibha birds even after the fact that you are our protector. If this is allowed to continue, our entire race shall perish."

Garuda realized that the birds were in grave circumstances, and agreed

to go and dry the entire sea. Just as he was leaving, a messenger arrived from Lord Vishnu who needed his assistance at once, for some divine task.

Garuda explained to the messenger that he was unable to serve his master at this time, "I am such a common servant to the Lord for him to need me. The sea, which is the resting place of the Lord, has swallowed the eggs of the Tittibha birds. I refuse to serve him if he will not force the sea to return the eggs at once. This is my firm resolution. Please let him know of it."

When Lord Vishnu came to know of Garuda's resolution from his messenger, he thought, "I can understand his behaviour and need to pacify him. He is the king and protector of all the birds. I must meet Garuda at once."

As Lord Vishnu visited Garuda, he bowed in respect and explained, "O Master, the sea, which is your resting place has insulted me by swallowing the eggs of my humble servant, the good Tittibha birds. It is out of the respect that I have for you that I have not taken any step for revenge."

Lord Vishnu considered his plea, "Come with me Garuda. You are right. The sea should not have done such a thing on purpose. Let us go and return the eggs to the Tittibha birds. After that we will leave, as I need your assistance."

They all went to the seashore where Lord Vishnu reprimanded the sea. Taking a thunderbolt in his hand, he warned, "O Sea, you have been wicked. Return the eggs of the Tittibha birds at once or dare to face my anger."

When the sea heard the warning from the Lord Vishnu himself, it was terrified. It apologised at once, and returned the eggs to the Tittibha birds.

The wise indeed say:

"Do not underestimate the power of the timid."



KUT 2015

1st November, Imphal

Kut Festival celebrated in Manipur

Kut festival, the biggest festival of the Kuki-Chin Mizo groups of people living in the North East and western part of Myanmar was celebrated on Sunday (1st November 2015) at the 1st Manipur Rifles ground, Imphal.

Addressing the people gathered for the Kut festival, Manipur Chief Minister Ibobi Singh said people should understand the significance of the festival and it could promote the spirit of living together with peace and unity, a government release said.

The Manipur state government has declared November 1 as a state holiday to celebrate Kut festival with traditional flavour, the Chief Minister added.

(<http://www.thestatestman.com/news/northeast/kut-festival-celebrated-in-manipur/100968.html#dxrzb723ByjCVi8.99>)



Saraswati, or Benzaiten,
Rokuhara Mitsuji, Kyoto.



Saraswati, or Benzaiten,
Enoshima Jinja, Kamakura.



Saraswati, or Benzaiten,
Yoshiwara Jinja.



Eight-armed Saraswati, or
Benzaiten, Enoshima Jinja,
Kamakura.



Eight-armed Saraswati, or
Benzaiten, Gokokuji, Tokyo.



Saraswati, or Benzaiten, National
Treasure Museum, Tsurugaoka
Hachimangu, Kamakura.



Ginkakuji, or Temple of the Silver
Pavilion, Kyoto.



Yama, or Emma, Ennoji,
Kamakura.



Yama, or Emma, Inoji, Kyoto.