



Remembering the Martyrs of 1962 war



HERITAGE Explorer

LET KNOWLEDGE COME FROM ALL THE SIDES

A Monthly News Bulletin

Members of the Rendile tribe and the turkana tribe dance during the total hybrid eclipse in Sibiloi National Park in Turkana. Astronomy enthusiasts in Kenya caught a partial glimpse of a rare Hybrid Total Eclipse which has not been witnessed in Africa for over 40 years.



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A Monthly News Bulletin

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Assam Govt to Recognise State Anthem

Guwahati, Nov. 18: Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi today announced that Sahityarathi Lakshminath Bezbaroa's '*O Mor Aponar Desh*' would be officially recognised as the state anthem.

"I was not aware that the government has not yet recognised the song as the state's anthem. Since the issue has come to light now, I will take necessary action to give due recognition to such a beautiful, meaningful and patriotic song," Gogoi told reporters on the sidelines of a function at B. Borooah Cancer Institute (BBCI) here this morning.

A press communiqué issued by Dispur this evening stated that the government had decided in principle to adopt the song as Asom Rajyik Jatiyo Sangeet.

Bharat Narah, press adviser to the Chief Minister, told The Telegraph that Gogoi had instructed chief secretary Jitesh Khosla to immediately initiate the process to accord state anthem status to *O Mor Aponar Desh*. He said Khosla had also been asked to prepare a cabinet memorandum on the issue and place it at the next

cabinet meeting for approval.

The development comes a day after *O Mor Aponar Desh* was sung in 29 languages at Nehrubali in Nagaon district.

The Assam government faced criticism from various quarters for not yet recognising the song as the state anthem.

In May, Arup Ballav Goswami, a resident of Golaghat district, had filed an application under the Right to Information Act in the office of the state public information officer and that of the chief secretary in Guwahati to know whether *O Mor Aponar Desh* was a state anthem. If so, which government notification had accorded the status, he asked.

In reply, the deputy secretary of the state cultural affairs department, D. Bora, stated that the government of Assam had not accorded the status of state song or anthem to *O Mor Aponar Desh*.

When reporters raised the issue before the Chief Minister here today, Gogoi immediately said *O Mor Aponar Desh* would be accorded state anthem status at the earliest.

Earlier this morning, Gogoi, speaking at a function held to mark the 40th foundation day of the cancer institute, said the high incidence of cancer in the state could be minimised through awareness, preventive measures and early detection.

He said the state government was contemplating setting up state-of-the-art diagnostic centres in 10-12 small towns for early detection of cancer.

BBCI director A.C. Kataki said the institute has taken up academic and research activities in association with Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences and Gauhati University. "New courses like radiology, an MCI-approved three-year course, have been introduced," he added.

Kataki exhorted BBCI doctors and employees to work relentlessly to catapult the institute to national stature by 2023, when it would complete 50 years.

(http://www.telegraphindia.com/1131119/jsp/northeast/story_17586908.jsp#.UostYCdH6OE)

Gauhati High Court Declares CBI 'Unconstitutional'

GUWAHATI, Nov 7, 2013 : In a curious judgement, the Gauhati high court has struck down the resolution through which the Central Bureau of Investigation was set up and held all its actions as "unconstitutional". The judgement by the division bench, comprising justices I A Ansari and Indira Shah, came on a writ petition filed by one Navendra Kumar challenging an order by a single judge of the high court in 2007 on the resolution through which CBI was set up.

"We hereby...set aside and quash the impugned Resolution, dated April 1, 1963, whereby CBI has been constituted... We do hold that the CBI is neither an organ nor a part

of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) and the CBI cannot be treated as a 'police force' constituted under the DSPE Act, 1946," the court said. It further said the aforementioned home ministry resolution was "not the decision of the Union Cabinet nor were these executive instructions assented to by the President". "Therefore, the impugned Resolution...can, at best, be regarded as departmental instructions, which cannot be termed as 'law'," the judgement said.

The court then set aside and quashed the chargesheet, submitted by CBI, against Kumar, along with the trial. Further, the court

said, "The actions of the CBI, in registering a case, arresting a person as an offender, conducting search and seizure, prosecuting an accused etc. offend Article 21 of the Constitution and are, therefore, liable to be struck down as unconstitutional."

The court, however, said quashing of the proceedings that are pending in the CBI court would not be a bar to any further investigation by police having jurisdiction over the subject-matter.

(http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-11-07/india/43773042_1_dspe-act-delhi-special-police-establishment-cbi-court)

The Bright Sides of Ahom Rule in Assam

- Labanu Kr. Borah, Guwahati

With the treaty of Yandabo coming into force on the 24th February 1826, the sun of the 600 year old rule of the Ahoms set and Assam lost its sovereignty. Along with a few other north eastern states Assam went under British rule up to the 15th August 1947, the day India got liberated. Yet the rule of the Ahoms in Assam for long 600 years with varying power is a historical wonder. What caused fall of the kingdom was severe infighting among the nobles of the state in later part of their rule. Secondly in later parts of its rule, clash with the Satras (religious centers spreading Vaisnavism in Assam) gave rise to civil upsurges in the kingdom in the shape of Moamorian Rebellion which weakened both the political power and the socio-economical structure of the state rendering total incapability to the Ahom force to resist foreign aggressions particularly the aggressions of the Burmese (Maan) which broke the backbone of the Ahom monarchy.

The style and functions of the Ahom rule in Assam was not purely a monarchy system but an aristocrat government formed by the nobles namely (Burhagohain, Borgohain, Barpatragohain, Borbauah and Borphukan), and the king was more or less a nominal head of the state.

The Burhagohain was the prime minister of the state and he was responsible for guiding the king (Swargadeo) in the matter of ruling the kingdom forming both internal and foreign policies of the state. Though theoretically an aristocrat government, it is a very good form of government which can be called a semi-democratic form of government in those days. That system in Ahom kingdom is observed to fail miserably in later parts of its rule because of power crisis among the Gohains. The swargadeos were accepted as divine representatives but the power of selecting the kings rested with the

ministry of the nobles-a liberalized form of monarchy system. The ministry could even dethrone a king at its sweet will. So there remained a scope for corruption by the ministry, and it so happened during the middle and later part of the Ahom regime. Evil minded and power crazy ministers and nobles like Laluk-hola Buragohain, Badan Barphookon, Kirti Chandra Barbaruah, through their misdeeds, were directly responsible for decay of the monarchy.

The Ahom rule was again a single feudal system where the land owned to the crown only; the nobles and the subjects were simply users of the lands. The economy in the state was purely agricultural based. This mono feudal system facilitates a widespread control of the monarchy over the subjects. On the other hand as the land distribution was almost uniform and no other feudal in between, the subjects in those days were less exploited. Introduction of Paik system in the kingdom can be termed as a systematic exploitation of Ahom rule. However in the middle part of the Ahom rule, there were land allocations to the Satras and other religious shrines of Assam in the shape of Devottor lands. As individual paik system could be organized by the satras, this land allocation empowered enough the Satras even to conflict with the king and to organize a revolt even.

Chao-Lung Su-Ka-Pha, the founder king of Ahom Dynasty:

In the year 1228, Su-Ka-Pha entered into Saumar (the then eastern part of present Assam) with some 9000 followers comprising of nobles, scholars, chiefs and soldiers. He founded his first permanent capital at Charaideo (the Che-Rai-Dei).

He was a man of outstanding personality and man with vision to build a big nation in Assam valley uniting all the local tribes here under the banner of the Ahom kingdom. He paved the way for national unity and solidarity for greater Assam and a greater

Assamese society.

He did not adopt hostility but diplomatic means to win over the local tribes like Barahi, Moran, etc. excepting the Nagas with whom he, of course, had to fight with extreme hostility. He accepted brides from Barahi and Moran tribes and extended brotherhood and friendship to all the tribes subjugated by him. As there was no caste system and untouchability in the Ahom social system. Incorporating of these local tribes into the Ahom social fold was very easy. He even appointed the Changmais (the royal cooks) from the Barahi communities. As the Ahom were a very few in number at that time and their Tai language was very tough to be learnt by common people, Su-Ka-Pha developed a common dialect of the Borahi and the Moran tribe to a language or lingua- franca to be used in the royal court and in communicating to the subjects. Thus the Assamese language was born in the Brahmaputra valley.

Su-Ka-Pha also set the foundation of the base of the greater Assamese culture through assimilation of the local tribes without disturbing their originality and without imposing any Tai culture on them. But in spite of that there was a free flow of Tai culture and customs into the main streams of Assamese culture, and Tai culture is seen belong to the main core of the Assamese culture. As all the subjugated local tribes were taken into royal confidence, their governance was not disturbed and their religion and cultures were not interfered by the Ahom monarchy, Su-Ka-Pha could earn immense popularity as a king and leader of the great nation. Social and religious tolerance was the key of success for Su-Ka-Pha, the great. It is seen that till the Ahom monarchy maintained this spirit and philosophy of Su-Ka-Pha its days were golden, and the moment it deviated from this liberalized royal principle under the influence of

Hinduism which got introduced in the royal house sometimes in the middle part of their regime, there started decay of the monarchy, and finally Assam lost sovereignty.

Warring Technique:

As population at that time in Ahom kingdom was not enough, sufficient manpower was never got for serving as soldiers in the battles fought against enemies invading the land. The Ahoms, therefore, adopted some improvised warring techniques to fight the enemies. They raised ramparts to resist movement of enemy cavalries. The Ahom soldiers were expert in river battles. So by erecting ramparts they used to call the invaders to river battles so that the enemies were controlled and defeated easily. They were even known to have use under water ramparts to resist movement of enemy boats by suspending big blocks of stones from catenaries made of canes, etc. The Ahoms adopted mostly guerilla warfare techniques in fighting the enemies. In most of the battles, fought against the Mughal forces, the Ahoms could organize supports from the local tribes. The weapons used in those days were *Hengdang* (a typical Ahom sword), spears, bows and arrows, *Bortoops* (Ahom canons), etc. The Ahoms could not maintain a regular army. The same paik who is basically a cultivator had to fight in the battle field when there was any foreign aggression on the land. This was a serious drawback in Ahom military set up. When a large section of the paiks joined the Moamoria Rebellion, it is seen that Monarchy failed to arrange a force with sufficient number of soldiers to resist the revolt. So was the case during the Maan attacks.

Monuments of Ahom age and their architecture:

The monuments of the Ahom age - *Kareng-ghar*, *Tatatal-ghar* (the Royal palaces), *Rang-ghar*, *Dols*, *Silar Sako* (stone bridge) etc. all bear a sign of an improved building technologies of that time. The multi storeyed constructions with underground chambers with bricks are definitely

unique from technical and architectural point of view. These constructions rested on load bearing walls and the roofs were supported by arches, they were all made of flat bricks reinforced with steel rods. The stone bridge on the river Namgdang is a monolithic structure curved out of a single stone bears a sculptural beauty. Digging of giant size tanks on natural springs at various places of Assam is again a sign of improved technology of those days. There were experts to locate the right underground springs of water and there was a proven technique for it. A few important roads were also constructed during Ahom reign like the *Dhodar-ali* and *Garh-ali*, etc. As constant foreign aggressions were there all through, the Ahom kingdom could not develop a strong and steady economy in the kingdom. As such, the monarchy could not extend wide range of social service to the subjects. In spite of that whatever the structures, the Ahom kings built, are quite notable and are important historical monuments of Assam.

Agriculture:

The Ahom economy was basically agrarian. Swargadeo Su-Ka-Pha himself was a good cultivator who introduced cultivation of Sali rice to boost up rice production in Assam. He used to call Assam, a land of golden fruits-*Mong Dun Sun Kham*.

Technology:

May be primitive but the technologies developed by the Ahoms in the field of metallurgy, architecture, etc. is quite notable. The Ahoms created separate clans to develop each field of technology. The *Kharghorias* were good gun powder makers, the *Jawkhorias* made nitres, and similarly there were carpenters, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, stone curvers, tailors, etc. The giant size canons were casted processing iron ores in traditional crude methods but it worked. The canons are still rust free even though they are centuries old. Nitre was prepared from goat's urine. The *Hengdangs* and weapons were suitably heat treated and nitrated for hardening and resisting corrosion. The

Ahoms had a good set of blacksmiths developed as a clan for the job. They could prepare Bio-cement mixing eggs, rotten fishes, lime stone powder, jute fabric and molash, etc. in a specific proportion. All the monuments of the Ahom age were built with this Bio-cement which was undoubtedly of exceptional quality. The thin plate like bricks could give lateral stability to building structures, and these bricks are still strong. The Ahoms adopted a good technique for searching the sources of spring water and digging giant size tanks there. They were also expert in digging canals and tunnels, erecting bridges, constructing ramparts and under water fences. The multi storied maidams they built can be called the pyramids of the east.

Promotion of language, literature, art & culture:

Mass education was not there in the Ahom kingdom. Even most of the nobles and kings were unschooled. The princes, of course, used to receive training in warfare and in administration. Perhaps the economy of the state did not permit opening schools for the masses or it might be the wish of the crown to keep the common subjects unschooled. However, the Ahom priest clans namely the *Deodhais*, the *Bailungs* and the *Mohans* continued their schooling in Ahom language, they also wrote *Buranjis* (history/royal diaries) in Ahom language and Ahom language continued to be the court language almost to the end of the Ahom regime. The practice of writing *Buranjis* started from the days of the founder king Su-Ka-Pha. So Assam has the credit of writing history first in India quite systematically and scientifically. Assamese language, which was developed as lingua-franca during the regime of Su-Ka-Pha, was further developed into a full fledged language during the Ahom rule adding Sanskrit roots to it gradually. *Hasti bidyarnava*, a pictorial Hand-Book on elephant written in Assamese during the middle part of the Ahom regime is a master piece of its kind in the whole

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Hindus and the Future of India

- MV Kamath

What the Muslims of Kishtwar in Jammu have clearly conveyed is that they are unwilling to live and work with Hindus come what may and are willing to take any action including heartless violence to drive the Hindus from Jammu. It is time after sixty odd years and three wars in 1947, 1965 and 1971, to take note of it. The media has been reticent in describing the events in Kishtwar, least they are accused of encouraging more inter-communal violence. What happened was this: After saying Eid prayers, Muslim goons took out a procession, carrying Pakistan flags and chanting 'azadi' through a predominantly Hindu majority street. In the ensuing violence the Hindus suffered heavy losses. Many of their homes and businessmen were vandalized, vehicles burnt and all this without any provocation but with intentions deliberate and preplanned. Actually Hindu homes had been targeted several days earlier. What is to be done? Delhi has said that it will not permit a repetition of that large scale migration of Kashmir Pundits which took place in the 1990s. Around 3.5 lakh Hindus then had to flee Kashmir to Delhi. Looking the other way, what needs to be done immediately is to set them up in the Vale, their true ancestral home, in newly built and well furnished homes. To protect them, about 90,000 para military forces have to be deployed and the message must go that attacks on Hindus will not henceforth be tolerated and even a single attack will invite the harshest response. Secularists have singularly failed. **Secularism has become a symbol of cowardice.** Where were the secularists when Muslim goons were attacking Hindus in Kishtwar? Obviously they were living in fear. In the border districts of Rajouri and Poonch, Muslims have a majority, 60 per cent in the former and 91 per cent in the latter, which makes it easy for Pakistani jihadis to enter Kashmir easily. Importantly, it is time for

Presidential rule to be established in the entire state, which furthermore, must be divided into three parts: Jammu, the Vale and Ladakh. Ladakhis are, as it is, fed up with an attack on their way of life and have begun to demand a separate state. That request must be met without further ado.

All these years, we have recklessly adhered to secularism and now it is time to question its relevance against the large scheme of things to face Islamic fundamentalism. Hindus are by nature, secular, but Hindus must now assert themselves, just as Muslims are, if only for the simple reason that, whatever Samuel Huntingdon may have said, we are witnessing in Kashmir a clash of civilizations. And Hindus have to fight back. The lesson Kishtwar has given is that such things as secularism, courtesy and decency, do not pay. Those Muslims who want to fight for Pakistan, that is exactly what they did in 1947, must be given a choice: stick to India, or leave it. The tragedy is that the young and an openly Defective Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah has failed miserably. Both he and his father have shown themselves to be two tongued, "hunting with the anti Indians" and "running with the pro-India hares" as the media put it. That takes neither the state nor the larger India nowhere. Omar Abdullah sought to compare the Kishtwar riots with those that took place in Gujarat bellowing Godhra, forgetting that in Godhra there was deep provocation. The question that we must be engaging our minds is in what way aggressive Islamic can be contained. In the first place, the very concept of Muslims being a 'minority' must be totally given up. In the second place, a way must be found to warn Pakistan that there are limits that it cannot cross without paying heavily for it.

It must be convinced that if it tries

to hurt India, India can also be an active player in the game and this must be proved in action, not just words. A cowardly government in power in Delhi is incapable of undertaking this. The people of India must knowingly replace it with a government that has the courage to act. In the third place, a strong nationalist movement must be set up beyond politics to send a message to Muslims that it is not in their larger interest to play communal politics. Unfortunately we have only ourselves to blame. Parties function on communal and caste lines with Muslims cheerfully attempting to play one party against another. Nitish Kumar in Bihar and Akhilesh Yadav in Uttar Pradesh are classic examples of destroying the unity of people. Finally there has to be a promotion of Hindu resurgence in all fields of human activity as never before in the history of India, which should convince not just Muslims but countries abroad, especially the United States and China that they can't take India lightly, that Hinduism is a force to be reckoned with. If indeed there is a clash of civilization, then it is for Hindus to show their mettle. We don't need to be apologetic about it. Enemies of India among them largely Hindu 'secularists' have all these years sought to marginalize Hinduism. This has to be reversed with a great deal of pride and a greater sense of urgency. This does not mean that we should not hold talks with Pakistani and Muslim jihadi leaders. It is imperative that such talks are held so that they become aware that there is going to be a greater force ready and willing to take them on, so, beware.

There should be no hesitation in using plain language in conveying the message that Hinduism will no longer accept a secondary role. As a former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court P.B. Gajendra Gadkari once said, "he

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Monasteries and Temples of Sikkim

- Aniket Raja

Sikkim is situated at the foot of Mount Kanchendzonga and boasts of an unexplored beauty. The lofty mountains dominate the skyline of Sikkim. Hilltop monasteries emerge from the rugged terrains while multi-coloured prayer flags wave in the mountain breeze. In Sikkim, Buddhism is the major religion and as a result there are many Buddhist Sikkim Temples in and around the state, than Hindu temples in Sikkim. One can find as many as 200 Buddhist monasteries in Sikkim as against a few Hindu Sikkim Temples. Besides the Hindu Sikkim Temples, the Lachung Gompa is a Buddhist temple located atop a hill is one of the most striking Buddhist Sikkim Temples in Sikkim.

Sikkim the second smallest State after Goa is less populated State in the Indian territory with a population of around 550,000 in an area of around 7,096 square kilometers. Located amidst the panoramic Himalayas, the State is hub of tourist activity with more than 28 mountains, 80 glaciers, and 227 high-altitude lakes including the famous Tsongmo Lake, Gurudongmar Lake and Kecheopalri Lake. There are also five Hot Springs and more than a hundred rivers and streams.

Ganesh Tok is located at an altitude of about 6,500 feet on the Nathula-Gangtok Road. Ganesh Tok is a small temple, located at a distance of 7 kilometre from Gangtok. Situated next to the television tower on the small hill nestled on Gangtok-Nathula road, the temple is dedicated to Lord Ganesh. This temple is so small in size that it can only accommodate one person at a time. In addition, one needs to crawl to get inside this temple. Besides its size, the temple is also known for the bird's eye view of several places such as the Gangtok Town, the Mount Kanchenjunga and the Raj Bhawan Complex. In addition, there is small place located close to this temple, which is known as Smriti Van. In this

place, the devotees on behalf of their loved ones can plant saplings.

Hanuman Tok dedicated to God Hanuman, is one of the most renowned temples located in Sikkim. Managed and maintained by a division of Army, this temple is located at a distance of 5 km from Gangtok. With a total height of 7,200 ft, from the top of this hillock, tourists can enjoy beautiful view of Gangtok Town along with the nearby hills.

The White Hall is located on the Gangtok-Nathula highway, at a distance of approximately 5 km. The 'Royal cremation grounds of Lukshyama' is located in close proximity to this place. On this cremation ground, the mortal remains of family members of former Namgyal dynasty were brought to pyre. According to the local legends, when Hanuman was flying with the Sanjeevani (mythological life saving herb) mountain to save Rama's brother Lakshmana he rested in the spot where this temple now lies. The mandir is actually managed by The Hanumantok Mandir Committee.

Thakurbari Temple is located in Gangtok, in the heart of the town. It is one of the oldest Hindu temple in Sikkim constructed in 1935 on a piece of land donated by Sir Thutop Namgyal, the famous Maharaja of Sikkim. The temple houses almost all major deities and has emerged as an important centre of convergence for the Hindu community of Gangtok. The temple was upgraded to a major temple complex during 1945-47 and is now being further upgraded to include multi-purpose hall and library.

Kirateshwar Mahadev Temple also known as the Shiva Mandir is a Hindu temple which is located in Legship, West Sikkim, along the banks of River Rangeet. According to a popular legend, pleased with Arjuna's hard penance and devotion, Lord Shiva appeared before him in the very spot where the temple

lies as a Kirat or hunter and blessed him with success in the Mahabharat War. This temple comes under the West Sikkim District and is connected with the mythological stories of Mahabharata. It also has a dharamshala within the premises that has a capacity to accommodate to over 500 devotees. The most popular feature of this temple is the annual festival of Shivaratri, held during February.

Bala Chaturdasi is one the famous festival of this temple, which is usually celebrated between the months of November and December. This temple is located at a distance of 4 km from Pelling and is connected with Geyzing and Pemayangtse.

Rumtek Temple also called the Dharmachakra Centre, is a Tibetan Buddhist monastery. It is a focal point for the sectarian tensions that characterise the Karmapa controversy. Rumtek monastery or Dharma Chakra Centre is located at 24 kilometers away from Gangtok, East Sikkim. The Monastery is the seat of the Karmapa Kagyu lineage outside Tibet. The main monastery is surrounded by the monks dormitory. Roof peak of the monastery is comprised of four storeyed golden sculpture, known as *ghanzira*. Inside, the monastery is the paintings of the Kagyu lineage, the eight great Bodhisattvas, the sixteen Arhats, the Genduk Chonggi etc. Behind the Rumtek Monastery is the Karma Shri Nalanda Institute of Higher Buddhist Studies. Karma Shri Nalanda Institute was founded to preserve and propagate the noble teachings of the Lord Buddha, particularly the Kagyu tradition of Mahayana Buddhism.

The Pemayangtse Monastery is a Buddhist monastery in Pemayangtse is located at about 140 kilometres west of Gangtok. Planned, designed and founded by Lama Lhatsun Chempo in 1705, it is one of the oldest and premier monasteries of Sikkim. It is not only

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Comparative Study of Bharateeya-Janajati and Cross-Nation Faiths

- Nivedita Raghunath Bhide

To make a comparative study of Bharatiya Janajati faiths and the cross-nation faiths, a question may arise in the minds of few that whether such study is possible at all? There are above 456 main Janajatis in India; can we really put them all as one and make a comparative study of them with the cross-nation faiths? India is a land of diversities and if we harp only on differences then nothing would appear as one. But fortunately India is also a land of deep unity. The scholars like Vincent Smith acknowledges the deeper cultural unity of India, which defies all the theories of the scholars. It is something like a body. In it even fingers are not alike, each limb and organ is different and yet everything is expression of One. So the apparent differences need not put one off from the comparative study.

The comparative study shall be attempted at three levels.

1. What is the vision of existence of life in that faith? The human being, the nature and God – How are these viewed?

2. What are the values or principles that spring forth from its vision of life?

3. The systems - customs and rituals in that faith which help to acquire that vision.

Apparently a custom may be same in two faiths but if the vision that drives that custom is different then its impact on the behavior of the followers of that faith would also be different. If the vision is same then even if the systems are apparently different its end result in moulding the community and its life would be same.

The Vision of life

God:

For Bharatiya Janajatis the whole existence is imbued with life, with consciousness, with God. God is not away from the creation but has manifested as creation. We are not

polytheists as some scholars say nor are we monotheists. For Adis of Arunachal, *Ane Donyi* is the Goddess Supreme like and they do not worship her directly but the manifestation of its power in the form of many gods and goddesses are worshipped. About Ahom, Dr. A . Barua, writes "God is the Supreme Being or absolute. He is not physical and cannot be perceived through our senses. God is not limited by space and time. ... Besides their implicit belief in One God, the Ahom traditionally believe in large number of gods and goddesses..." To put in Vedic language, the *Paramatman* or *Brahman* is not offered worship but is to be realized, while gods and goddesses who are the manifestations of the power of Paramatman are worshipped. The whole existence is thus viewed as interconnected, interrelated and interdependent. For all Janajatis the details vary but the conception is '**God is everywhere**'.

In the Semitic faiths God is away from his creation. The God is considered as the only true God. Thus the God becomes a jealous God. The worship of other gods and goddesses is not just looked down upon but one is punished for this offence.

Creation:

All over India for all communities (whether tribal or non-tribal) everything is pervaded by God. Therefore creation, nature are considered as sacred. There are *poojas* before tilling the land, before harvesting, before cutting of the forests, before building the house and before entering the new house. The earth, the mountains, rivers, trees, plants and animals are worshipped or are considered as man's kith and kin. Man can take from nature whatever he needs but he reveres nature, mother earth. The nature is not seen as inert matter but as living. Thus Sant Tukaram sings, "*Vriksha Valli Amha soyare vanachare...*" - the trees and

plants are our relatives"

In Semitic faiths the earth is created by the God for the enjoyment of the man. Thus the nature is to be used, to be conquered upon, to be exploited. Nature is not imbued with spirit but is inert. No sacredness is attached to it.

Man:

For Bharatiya Janajatis, Man is not considered as sinner but has divine origin. He is not just a destructible body-mind complex but is *Atman* which has no death. The theories of creation differ from community to community but the principle, the world-view is same that man is either progeny of Ane Donyi as in Adi and Nishi or are of Shakti as in Shaivaites or from the eggs of the divine birds as in Santhalis. Swami Vivekananda said "And then comes the most differentiating, the grandest, and the most wonderful discovery in the realms of spirituality that has ever been made. ... It is this that ... we all hold in India that the soul is by its nature pure and perfect, infinite in power and blessed. ... When we worship, we close our eyes and try to find God within. The Western is looking up outside for his God. ... This is one great point to understand, and, my friends, my brethren, let me tell you, this is the one point we shall have to insist upon in the future."

In the world view of a savior God of Semitic faith, man is a sinner and is in a need to be saved. As per the Old Testament in Bible which is followed by all the three Semitic religions Adam- the first man- as he ate the fruit of knowledge he fell down from the heaven. His progeny has committed original sin by the very fact of taking birth in sin. To save from that original sin a savior is needed. God will save him from sin only if man believes only that God.

The principles and the values that come from the Vision of life

Specific values and principles spring forth the vision of existence. For example saying brotherhood is valued in all faiths would not give adequate idea of practice of brotherhood in each faith. As Bharatiya Janajatis have vision of Oneness, as they view existence as interconnected, interrelated and independent entity, for them practice of brotherhood encompasses not just human beings but all animate and inanimate things. But for those faiths where existence is viewed with division of chosen and not-chosen, believers and Kafirs or heathens, sacred and secular etc the practice of brotherhood gets limited to the chosen followers of that faith. As it is limited it is also very intense. Thus the context of Jivan Darshan ie Vision of life is essential to understand actual practice of each principle or value in life. In Bharatiya Janajatis prayers will be for the welfare of all where as in exclusive faiths prayers are for god of the followers of that faith only.

Approach to others' God:

Though the Janajatis do not have the same name or form of God, they know that God can be worshiped in any form and by any name. Thus if anyone is worshipping God differently he is not looked down upon leave alone the persecution. If a person is attending the rituals of another Janajati he/she would bow down to that God in whatever form is worshipped there. This very natural acceptance of God in other names and also adopting the festivals connected to these forms of God is very natural phenomena seen in Bharatiya Janajatis. It is an inclusive philosophy and understanding of God. That is why the traditional communities in India do not deride the way of worship of other communities while sticking to their own. Not only that, while staying together for centuries, the communities even adopt other Janajatis festivals and gods and goddesses but do not give up their own gods and goddesses. For example:

Meities, Daarangs, Tiwas, Ahoms, etc though took to Durgapooja etc, but they did not have to give up (Or were asked by anyone to give up) their own traditional poojas. Sandhya Jain enumerates in her book '*Adi Devo Arya Devata*' numerous examples of various communities adopting and adapting from each other the various worships of gods and goddesses. It is an inclusive approach towards God, unlike, for example, Christianity and Islam. Once a person becomes their follower, he is not only forbidden to believe in his traditional gods, goddesses and age-old customs but also is goaded to despise them.

The exclusive approach to God Christianity and Islam promotes conversion and violence. The belief that "My God alone is true" is the root cause of lot of violent bloodshed in history of mankind as was referred to by Swami Vivekananda in his speech at Parliament of Religions at Chicago. Jean Pierre Lehmann, Professor of International Political Economy at the International Institute for Management Development (IMD), who later on became the Advisor to World Trade Organisation, wrote in the online magazine Globalist in 2006 that while the worship of hundreds and thousands of gods, that is inclusive Hinduism, promotes tolerance not only within but also towards other faiths, the Abrahamic faiths, the belief in one all-powerful and omniscient God make the believers intolerant, and even violent.

Position of woman

If we look into the narratives (documented or oral) of all Bharatiya Janajatis about the creation, a woman had equal or exalted place like goddess herself. Nowhere is she looked down upon as evil or witch or appendage to man.

Whereas in Semitic faiths man alone is created in the image of God. Woman was not created initially. Later just for the entertainment of the man she was created from the rib of Adam. Thus she is considered inferior, just

an appendage of man.

It is not just theology. These principles then direct, mould, inform the behaviours and systems. Thus we see in India where woman is considered as form of goddess, when India became independent there was not even discussion about whether the right to vote should be granted to women or not. As men got, women too got it. Whereas American women got Federal voting rights only in 1920, after several decades of struggle; the British women got equal voting rights with men only in 1928, after over a century of tussle; the Swiss women got their Federal voting rights not until 1971; in fact, majority of Swiss men said "no" to women's voting rights in a national referendum as late as in 1959. Thus, in these countries, women could achieve their suffrage only after century of debate and struggle, arrests, and violence. Even today, in the Roman Christian Vatican State, there is no suffrage for women. The Vatican State, which was supposed to be the mirror version of the Kingdom of God, incorporated the Christian theological rules for the society and polity. In many Muslim countries even today the one man's witness is considered more than one woman's witness.

Peaceful Co-existence:

In spite of the immense diversities of customs and rituals the Bharatiya Janajatis co-exist peacefully with each other. There are no incidents of genocides and exterminations or witch hunting in India. Why only human beings? Even animals birds, trees, plants, stones and soil all have a place and a respect. In Tangsa community one of reasons of sickness is if a person disturbs the stones in the jungles. Fights and clashes were always due to human frailties and are not to be misunderstood as lack of principles for peaceful co-existence.

Whereas wherever Semitic faiths went they exterminated the indigenous people there or converted them forcefully. To quote Samuel Huntington from his book '*Clash of Civilizations*',

"The West won the world not by the superiority of its ideas or values or religion but rather by its superiority in applying organized violence." No Janajati with its faith could be tolerated. This is because of exclusive claims to truth. Even within the same faith the violent fights took place and even now take place.

Life and Death:

The details may vary from community to community but the principle is that death is not end of the journey of human soul. It travels as per its actions to various worlds and then again takes birth. How one lives his life is important. One should perform good actions so as to move forward in journey of the human soul.

Whereas in Semitic faiths, after death, the 'person' awaits the Day of Judgment in the graveyard. There are no more births again. And the result of Day of Judgment does not depend on how he lived his life but whether he believed the particular God as the only true God. Religion is believing for those faiths whereas for Bharatiya Janajatis religion is being and becoming.

We can go on enumerating many more *Jivan-tatva* – values of life for Bharatiya Janajatis like the conception of time; worship of ancestors; shraddha ceremonies (Name would be different) to help the departed soul to move forward; worship of mother earth; types of pooja like invoking the God in an object selected for worship like stone, image, image made of bamboo trees, betel nut etc; respect to the guests; community councils to take care of the functioning of the community. Names of these community councils may be different like Po of Vanchus, Darbar of Khasis, Kebang of Adis, or Moran or Jati Panchayat or Sabha and Samiti of Vedic times etc are generally these are formed by consensus and not by election.

Customs and Rituals:

The third component is to understand any faith is its customs

and rituals. Sri Ramakrishna says that the customs and rituals are like husk of grain, it helps to carry forward the grain to next generation. Similarly the customs and rituals help in inculcating the vision and principles of that faith in the future generation. If the time changes and the customs and rituals become ineffective or inadequate to carry forward the great vision or the life-principles then these are to be changed. If a Janajati refuses to change with the time, it could become stagnant and if it changes with the time without protecting its vision and principles, its gods and goddesses, it loses its identity itself. Thus always such great spiritual leaders – Rishis are required who reinterpret, modify the customs and rituals in such a way that the Janajati continues its march with confidence and without losing its identity.

Fortunately in India this dynamics of change and continuity is very well understood and practised. The recent best example is of *Golgi Bote Sri Talom Rukboh* of Arunachal Pradesh. Earlier as the community lived together the practice of tradition was easier. But the modernization has scattered the community, so how do they perform their poojas, as many times the poojaris would not be available at their place. Many therefore started becoming Christians giving up their own gods and goddesses. At that time Sri Talom Rukboh started *Gangging movement*. Weekly prayers are conducted in prayer halls, where the people are also educated about their faith. Gradually the movement has caught on in other parts of Arunachal. People realized that even regular prayers to their gods and goddesses are equally effective. Thus there are *Nyder namlos*, *Rang fra* temples, *Myder Nello*s etc. for various communities.

We see in the West that when men found that their faith, mainly the religious book was teaching what science has disproved they did not know what to do and many gave up

their religions. For example only 3% people go regularly to Church in France. Many Churches in the West are sold and are used as temples, libraries etc Whereas in Islam we see that more 'pure' a Muslim means he is more dogmatic. Thus as soon as Taliban came to power in Afghanistan then to usher in 'pure Islam' lot of atrocities were committed. Unfortunately the exclusive faiths do not know how to be *Chirapuratan* (All ancient) and *Nityanootan* (All new).

Misconceptions:

There are many misconceptions which are to be understood by us in order to move ahead with confidence and organized strength.

Animism - The faith of Janajatis?

The word 'animism' is a Christian theological construct, used in a derogative sense to describe the faith of Janajatis. Generally Janajatis are considered in Christian theology as animistic. Animism is equated, in the modern parlance, with the worship of animals and nature. But the Chamber's Dictionary says interestingly: 'Animism- the attribution of life (soul) to natural objects and phenomena'.

G. E. Stahl's theory that the soul is the vital principle in animism. In Latin, anima means soul (perhaps derived from Atma or Tamil Anma). The general Hindu belief is that God or Soul pervades the entire creation, i.e. the whole universe. It is Indian tradition to worship trees, animals, and natural objects and revere everything in the Universe. If we go by the dictionary meaning of Animism, then all Hindus whether Nagarvasi, Gramavasi or Vanavasi are animist too.

The Christian missionaries and therefore the British, to separate the vanavasi from the rest of the Hindus, used the idea of animism in India. Till 1901 the tribal community was mentioned as Hindus in the Census. But due to the pressure from the Christian missionaries in 1901, the census officers were directed to

mention the religion of Tribals as 'Animism'. Many census officers complained that it was very difficult to decide who was animist and who was Hindu. In one census, a specific community was listed as animist and in the next, the same got listed as Hindu or vice versa. To 'solve' this problem, the British government ultimately directed the census officers to mention the name of the community as the name of its religion. By one stroke, the government further divided even the Janajatis. After calling them for few decades as animists, deriding each 'religion' became still easier for the Missionaries to pursue the policy of 'Divide and Convert.' Yet the term animism kept doing rounds. Unfortunately, even many Indian scholars have inadvertently used the term animism with respect to Janajatis.

The relationship of faith and culture:

The misconception that propagated is faith is personal and culture is collective. One can change one's faith and yet retain one's culture by wearing traditional clothes, speaking in the mother tongue, celebrating traditional festival etc.

T. S. Elliot, in his notes towards the definition of culture describes the culture of a people as "the incarnation of its religion." The book 'Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the world order.' by Samuel Huntington has been widely discussed at international level. Samuel Huntington is a Director of John Olin Institute for strategic studies of Harvard University, USA. In his book he too mentions religion as the basis of Civilization, the term which he uses for culture. He wrote, 'Since religion, however, is the principal defining characteristic of civilizations, fault lines of wars are almost always between peoples of different religions.' Thus while classifying the major cultures – civilizations in the world he takes religion as the main factor. The classification by him is as follows, 'The major Civilisations in the world are

Western Civilisation (America, Europe), Latin American, African, Islamic, Sinic (China), Hindu (India), Orthodox (Russia, Greece etc.), Buddhist (Tibet), Japanese'. Thus the practice of one's religion in preserving one's culture is very important. There can be addition, modification in the form of worship, and also further evolution of our cultural forms but giving up of our gods and goddesses will amount to the loss of faith and therefore loss of culture too. Celebration of festival without the worship of our gods and goddesses is mockery of our ancestors.

The Greek had such a wonderful culture. But when they gave up their gods and goddesses and accepted an alien form and concept of God that was the death knell of Greek culture. It is true for all those beautiful cultures that are now extinct and the living descendants of those do not share today anything of their ancestors.

Culture consists of the inner core and outer forms. Basic eternal principles and vision of Reality in the names and forms of gods and goddesses form the inner core. For a culture to continue and to be vibrant, the inner core is Sanatana – eternal. It should remain constant forever. It never changes. Our understanding of it can expand and deepen, leading to relevant interpretations. But if the inner core is discarded or changed, then, the identity is lost. The customs, rituals, systems, dress etc. are all outer forms. As per the need of time, modification and reinterpretations of customs and rituals may take place in the light of Jeevan Darshan and Jeeva tatva ie the Vision of life and principles - the inner core of a culture. If the outer forms in the changed context cease to reflect the inner core, then alone there is need for change in form. The inner core, the basic principles keep the continuity and outer forms undergo changes as per the need of the time. Though water is not the same, the river is. The consciousness of belonging to time immemorial tradition and yet having the

satisfaction of moving with the time is achieved only when inner core is intact and outer systems are modified to express the inner core more vibrantly. The challenges of time are always an indication to reinterpret or to modify the outer form. It is also an opportunity to respond suitably to these challenges. And by doing so, a culture evolves further and further because of deeper understanding of inner core. Thus the Gods and Goddesses are not given up though the ways of invoking them may undergo changes. Culture cannot be retained if faith is lost.

Are Hinduism and Janajati faiths different?

David Frawley, during the Janajati Convention held at Guwahati in recent past termed 'Hinduism as the largest indigenous tradition in the world, which is inclusive of all indigenous traditions.' It was like at some point in the human history, some evolved souls probed deeply the diverse ways of indigenous faiths and discovered the commonalities on which all the traditions without a beginning follow the eternal laws of existence towards nature or human relationship. These great souls termed variously as Rishis, Mystics, Poojaris developed, codified, reinterpreted, and incorporated these eternal principles. As and when other communities came into contact they too became part of this endeavor of probing commonalities and integrating with it. At some time, these efforts over the centuries got labeled as Hinduism. The communities, which came into contact with these interpretations, symbols in idol form or rituals, forms, codification etc whether oral or written, found that they too had same approach towards life. So those communities adopted these (termed as of Hinduism and unfortunately rigidified as one of the diversities by modern man). This all-encompassing tradition, which responds to the commonalities and respects the diversities, consists of the tribal rituals and customs. Hinduism is not a religion aiming at uniformity but a harmonizing –integrating -

principle, and therefore unless we see it in this light 'as ever growing, indigenous and inclusive tradition' we would not be able to appreciate distinctness of traditions of each Vanavasi community.

Encyclopedia of Britannica, explains what Hinduism is, "In principle Hinduism incorporates all forms of worship without necessitating the selection or elimination of any. The Hindu is inclined to revere the divine in every manifestation, whatever it may be, and is doctrinally tolerant, leaving others- including both Hindus and non-Hindus - to whatever creed and worship practices suit them the best.

A Hindu may embrace a non-Hindu religion without ceasing to be a Hindu. Since a Hindu is disposed to think synthetically and to regard other forms of worship, strange gods and divergent doctrines, as inadequate rather than wrong or objectionable, he tends to believe that the highest divine powers compliment each other for the well-being of the world and the mankind. Few religious ideas are considered to be finally irreconcilable. The core of the religion does not even depend on the existence or non-existence of God or whether there is one God or many.

Since religious truth is said to transcend verbal definition, it is not conceived in dogmatic terms. Hinduism is thus both a conglomerate of religions with neither a beginning, nor a founder, nor, a central authority hierarchy or organisation"

The Janajatis could retain their identity because of the tradition of this land. As aptly said by Sri Rabindranath Tagore, in his article 'History of Bharatbarsha', "We find that a single objective has always been motivating Bharatvarsha. This objective has been to establish unity among diversity, to make various paths move towards one goal, to experience the One-in-many as the innermost reality, to pursue with total certitude that supreme principle of inner unity, which runs through the differences. It has also been her endeavor to achieve these without destroying the distinctions that appear in the external world."

This work of Rishis of India finding the commonalities and the Oneness of all should continue if we want to protect our indigenous culture. Protecting our indigenous culture is not only our need but the need of the humanity. Sri David Frawley an American scholar told in the Janajati

convention at Guwahati that, "You - people of India carry cultural and spiritual tradition of the humanity. We in the West have only political conflicting ideologies. Ethnocide - destruction of traditional communities is on in the name of religious conversion. All true religions come from nature. You carry wisdom of Earth. You are connection with Mother Earth, you are her voice, you represent her conscience. You all have the same vision of God - God as inner self present in all beings and not authoritative God. The recent developments you should know. There is a new seeking in the West to connect with nature. For that you are needed. Those who seek higher knowledge will support you. Your voice needs to be heard. For that we all need to be united. This convention is the expression of that need."

On the eve of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda we have to resolve to work as he had envisaged 'for gathering of the scattered spiritual forces whose hearts beat to the same spiritual tune', only then the strong, vibrant India with words of peace and benediction for whole humanity would emerge.

Images of Hindu Deities on Beer Bottles Removed



November 15, 2013: Washington: Hindus, who were upset over images of deities Ganesh and Lakshmi pasted on beer bottles by an Australian brewery, have hailed the company for apologising and

feelings of Hindu community and for showing responsibility, respect and maturity by taking quick action in apologising and announcing its redesign," Zed, who is president of Universal Society of Hinduism, said

redesigning the pictures.

It was a step in the right direction, Nevada-based Hindu statesman Rajan Zed, who spearheaded the protest, said Friday.

"We thank and commend the brewery for understanding the

in a statement.

He said businesses should be respectful to various faith traditions.

The brewery, in a statement Thursday, said: "We have subsequently apologised for any distress caused and begun the process of removing the images from the website."

It asked graphic designers, artists, and even doodlers to come up with a better design by Nov 24 and is reportedly urging them not to use imagery that may be deemed offensive.

(http://zeenews.india.com/news/nation/images-of-hindu-deities-on-beer-bottles-removed_890062.html)

Visva Bharati Marks Tagore's Nobel Centenary

To salute poet-philosopher Rabindranath Tagore on the centenary of his getting the Nobel Prize for literature — the first Asian to win the coveted award — the Visva-Bharati University, founded by him, has organised an international seminar and an exhibition to climax the yearlong celebrations.

The seminar "Tagore Across Cultures: The Nobel Prize and Beyond" would see the participation of leading Chinese scholars on Nov. 14, exactly a 100 years after the news of him getting the coveted award reached India, says a Visva-Bharati official.

"Though Tagore was declared the Nobel awardee-designate on Nov 13, 1913, the news of the award reached the sylvan surroundings of Santiniketan (in Birbhum district where Tagore originally founded a school and later used the Nobel prize money to expand it into the Visva-Bharati) only the next day.

"So we are holding the seminar on that day to mark the centenary," Amrit Sen, joint secretary, Visva-Bharati Study Circle, told IANS.

Hungarian Foreign Minister Janus Martony would be the chief guest at the seminar titled "Tagore across Cultures — The Nobel prize and

beyond."

Tan Chung, Chinese academician and an authority on Sino-Indian relations and cultural exchange, would deliver the keynote address. The Padma Bhushan awardee's father Tan Yunshan was the founding director of Cheena Bhavana, the Department of Chinese Language and Culture at Visva-Bharati University.

Tan Chung is leading a four-member delegation comprising three other academicians — Huang Yishu, Wei Liming and Zhou Liuxi — for the seminar, which would study the context of the award, the issues of translation that Tagore debated and the ideas of global cooperation that the poet emphasised.

"The seminar will trace the reception of Rabindranath Tagore's ideas on nationalism, education and aesthetics to continue the discussion on the relevance of Tagore's multifaceted genius," said Mr. Sen.

The Vice-Chancellors of Visva-Bharati and Rabindra Bharati University would also address the seminar slated to be held at the Cheena Bhavana. The exhibition, 'Kantha as stitch art' with Tagore as theme, would be inaugurated, also on Nov. 14, at the Vichitra Hall of the museum Rabindra-Bhavana.

The Visva-Bharati had launched the centenary celebrations last December in the presence of president Pranab Mukherjee. A centenary edition of the anthology of poems Gitanjali (Song Offerings — for which the bard got the Nobel) and a publication on Tagore's son Rathindranath (Rathindranath — The Unsung Hero) were brought out as part of the celebrations.

"We also organised various cultural programmes, the museum was extended, and conferences on the impact of the award on the east and the west were organised through the year," said Mr. Sen.

Born on May 7, 1861, Tagore in 1913 became not just the first Asian Nobel laureate but the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize for literature.

He also holds the distinction of having authored the national anthems of two sovereign nations — India and Bangladesh — and the bard's rich, diverse and vast literary oeuvre is virtually unmatched in the world. He was also a painter and composer par excellence.

(<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/visva-bharati-marks-tagores-nobel-centenary/article5345933.ece>)

Govt Urged to Ensure Safety of Women

GUWAHATI, Sept 20 – Condemning the recent incidences of sexual violence on women and girl child in Kokrajhar, Karbi Anglong, Guwahati, Morigaon and other places, the North East Network (NEN) asked the State Government to adopt exclusive gender sensitive policy measures to strengthen the safety of women and girls in public places.

In a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup Metro, the organisation asked the Government to take immediate steps to set up fast track courts to freely and fairly investigate sexual crimes against women, to immediately install functional women's helpline in the State with equal accessibility in rural and urban areas and to establish task force at block and district levels with adequate gender representation to prevent any form of violence against women.

"While laws are in place, there has to be attitudinal change in mindsets beginning from homes to institutions towards women and girls. It is with a combination of State obligation and public responsibility that such violence against women can be prevented," said a statement.

(<http://www.northeastnetwork.org/news/govt-urged-ensure-safety-fair-sex>)

Swedish Embassy Marks 100 Years of Tagore's Nobel Prize

NEW DELHI, Nov 6, 2013 : Rabindranath Tagore, the first Indian to receive the Nobel Prize in literature will be at the centre of celebrations of the Sweden India Nobel Memorial Week in the country.

Organized by the Swedish embassy, the seventh edition of the week is dedicated to Rabindranath Tagore to mark the centenary of his Nobel Prize in literature.

"Tagore was not only the first Indian to bring home the prestigious award but also the non-European to get one in literature," according to an official statement from the embassy.

The week is scheduled to begin here on November 8 with a panel discussion "Tagore, now!", moderated by scholar and translator Radha Chakravarty which aims to explore the relevance of the timeless poet, writer, philosopher in today's day and age.

Panelists include filmmaker Kaushik Mukherjee (popularly known as Q) who recently worked with Tagore's "Tasher Desh", theatre-person Prakash Belwadi and Shirshendu Chakrabarti.

The embassy would display a statue of Tagore along with the English translation of the original text Tagore's Nobel Prize nomination, procured from the Swedish Academy.

The Delhi Metro Corporation is putting up a 'Nobel Memorial Wall' to commemorate Nobel Laureates from India with a weeklong display at the Rajiv Chowk Metro station.

The embassy has also commissioned famous sand artist Sudarshan Pattnaik to create a sand sculpture of Tagore on the sands of Puri beach, which will be unveiled on November 12, the eve of day that Tagore's prize was announced in 1913.

As part of the celebrations "Tagore in Sweden - 1921 and 1926", written by Swedish Tagore expert Olavi Hemmila, was also re-released this year.

An exclusive, sit-down Nobel Memorial Dinner, prepared by Nobel chef Mark Phoenix, this year replicates the dinner menu from the 1913 Nobel banquet.

Apart from these the Sweden India Nobel Memorial Week 2013 comprises seminars, lectures, intercollegiate quizzes and round tables discussions spread across cities - Bangalore, Hyderabad, Pune, Chennai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad and Mumbai.

(http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-11-06/india/43731642_1_nobel-prize-rabindranath-tagore-olavi-hemmila)

Muslims Celebrate Durga Puja with Hindus in Tripura

Tripura, October 12, 2013 : In a heart-warming sign, Muslims in two villages bordering Bangladesh in Tripura are jointly celebrating the Durga Puja with Hindus.

Dominated by Muslims, the Kulubari and Durgapur villages in western Tripura's Sepahijala district, attract people of all religions across the northeastern state for their rare show of religious harmony in celebrating Durga Puja, which begun Thursday with the 'Bodhan' - welcoming the idols of Goddess Durga.

"The festival is for all. Why should we not organise this with everyone else? This is Tripura. We would like to live here together, die together and also like to share everything amongst us," said Mujibur Rahman Chowdhury, an elderly Muslim leader in Kulubari village.

"Men, women and children,

Muslims and Hindus, with all sincerity and commitment have been jointly been organising Durga Puja for the past few years," Chowdjury said.

Over 90 percent of the total population of both Kulubari and Durgapur villages are Muslims, who comprise around nine percent of Tripura's total of 3.7 million population.

Kulubari Durga Puja Organising Committee secretary Ratan Das said: "Our puja budget is around Rs.1 lakh. The majority of the money is given by the Muslims. Hindus are not in a minority in the village but they are very poor too."

"Muslim youths are helping us to collect the materials for the puja. Elderly Muslim men are also conscious about the rituals of Durga Puja," Das said.

Like Kulubari, less than 10 percent Hindus people live in Durgapur, 70 km

south of Tripura capital Agartala, located adjoining the Gomati river that flows into Bangladesh.

Durgapur villagers have been celebrating Durga Puja with fanfare and religious fervour, thanks to the active support of Muslims.

"We are really happy that Durga Puja is celebrated in our village with the active help of the majority Muslims. This is incomparable in many parts of our country," said, Swapan Saha, a Hindu villager and a government school teacher.

He said: "Without the sincere support of Muslims, we can't dream of celebrating the festival in such a big way as the Hindu population is very less."

(<http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/muslims-celebrate-durga-puja-with-hindus-in-tripura/article1-1134314.aspx>)

In the Name of Freedom

- Yanpvuo Kikon

(The Naga Blog is a forum on facebook where Nagas from Nagaland and around the world network, share ideas and discuss a wide range of topics from politics and philosophy to music and current events in Nagaland and beyond. The blog is not owned by any individual, nor is it affiliated to or associated with any political party or religion. The only movement it hopes to stir is the one raised by the voices of the Nagas every step of the way, amassing perhaps to mass consciousness one day. <http://www.facebook.com/groups/thenagablog>)

Aamugha Chishi: Dear NSCN. I was amused to read your statement in the papers. You came out with a statement after four days of brain storming by your intellectuals and seriously am disappointed that you came up with so little after so much. What did you mean when you said you have the peoples mandate? Do you think you have our approval because we pay your incessant demand of taxes? Come on, you're highly disillusioned. We pay because we are forced to. Which Nagas are you talking about when you said you have the support of Nagas, Miya Nagas probably, because the Nagas I know came against you in protest when ACAUT called the rally. If you really want to know how many Nagas support you, please call a rally, sir, and let's see how many will turn up to support you. Lastly, I hope that the very people whose supposed mandate you profess to have, don't turn up bringing the fight to your high and mighty Hebron doorstep in case you do something as stupid as what you wrote today.

Nahkai Angh-nao Konyak: "They have every legitimate right to levy tax on the people". Are are you guys like really provoking and underestimating the power of the people. You think with your threatening words and pride you can succeed in suppressing and

continue to instil fear psychosis in the hearts of the Nagas? In which century and civilization do you think you are. Our spirits cannot be intimidated by your million threats and your ferocity sound so lame. We pity on you guys for you are no less than beggars, infact beggars have dignity for they literally beg others in broad daylight. Where do you stand Mr.Nationalists. We don't want the freedom you will deliver, we will fight and achieve it on our own. If you want some money come beg us with some dignity,with that pitiable face and stretched out hands, we have a heart of gold unlike you. We might throw a penny or two into your begging bowl. Money doesn't grow on trees, we toil and sweat for it day in and night out. ACAUT says "ONE TAX" even that is too much? I personally would go against it but then I'm not arrogant and uncivilised like you are. I support ACAUT and I am determined to go to the world's end if an eyebrow is raised against the leaders of ACAUT. Well that's the spirit of every Nagas right now.Pride leads to a fall. Be smart and step back or the history itself screams out so loud and clear about how powerful and despotic rulers had become the victims of the fury and madness of the people.

Akhep Angnao: Is this some kind of joke? And what am I hearing? NSCN(IM) has every right to levy tax on Nagas? Well, I am not sure about that you ANTI-SOCIALS. Who the hell do you think you guys are? I don't think, we THE NAGAS are entitled to pay anything to anyone. You may believe in any self-designed concepts you want. But please, don't ever try to force us into your filthy policies. We were born into a FREE LAND as a FREE MAN. We are not and will never be entitled to pay anyone or any FACTIONS or any kind of ORGANISATIONS. Why don't you just tell us the consequences if we don't pay you tax, so that we can profess

to you of how badly you ANTI-SOCIALS are going to end up at the hands of WE, THE NAGAS. I think you guys have seriously messed up your IDEOLOGIES and are BLURRY with your cause. This is my sincere appeal to you ANTI-SOCIALS that we don't need your freedom and we don't need your sovereignty because we have realize that, even if we do, its going to be NO GOOD. We don't want a dictatorship or a hands of tyranny upon us because like I have mentioned earlier, we were born in a free land as a free man. We know that it's going to be no better than SYRIA, MYANMAR, VENEZUELA or ZIMBABWE just to mention a few. In those countries, people are suppressed to the extreme. They are given no rights, and every voice that is raised against the act of inhuman government is silenced within no time. And this recent development of the ANTI-SOCIALS in our land is no lesser than those. This is 21st century and we, The NAGAS are not fools or coward to bow down before any gun bearing bunch of idiots. Stop trying to dictate us and stop giving your unwelcomed ultimatums. It is of no good. We have had those enough. HOW DARE YOU SAY THAT YOU HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO LEVY TAX AGAINST US. Please remind us about what right you are talking about and who gave you that right and who the hell approved that right?

Sen Longchar: Freedom from India may just be a vision or it may be in course of time a long struggled reality. But as of now, the question put forward by Sir Khekiye Sema "Are we fighting for our Independence so as to lose our individual freedom"? Tempted me to ponder over several issues and it led me to a very disturbing question "Are we struggling for freedom the right way"? There are few points I want to discuss in this- Firstly, there are many incidents when a Naga brother

(Contd. to Page 22)

Church-backed Watchdog Body has its Own Poll Rules

- Vishant V Agarwala

AIZWAL, Nov 14, 2013 : 'Thy Kingdom Come'. That's how Mizoram welcomes you. Painted big and bold across a giant Cross a few yards from the runway at state capital Aizwal's Lengpui airport, the message seems ominous as you get familiar with the political nitty-gritty of this Christian-dominated state.

The election process has a sense of divine edict about it. The Church pushed the Election Commission to reschedule polling and counting dates to accommodate the Presbyterian Church's five-day Synod despite chief electoral officer Ashwani Kumar's protests; counting was postponed by a day to December 9 because 'Sunday is meant for prayers'. Not just that, the clergy also plays virtual election commission. The Church has issued a four-page list of do's and don'ts for voters and candidates. Apart from the honesty and harmony bits, it says: "Refrain from voting for those who drink or have extra-marital sex." With almost 70% of Mizoram following the Presbyterian Church, no party rubs them the wrong way.

Dr Robert Halliday, secretary of Mizoram Presbyterian Church, says: "Mizoram's common people are pious, they'll abide by any Church guideline. We can only urge them to lead a moral life. We don't want to

interfere with the election, rather we want to facilitate the process."

Mizoram People's Forum, a Church-sponsored watchdog formed in 2006, has signed a 27-point 'MoU' with major political parties, including the ruling Congress and BJP, to ensure a 'free and fair' election. Apart from curbs on lavish campaigning, the charter prohibits tall promises in manifesto, bans public meetings and protest rallies and tells parties not to organize vehicles to drop voters to polling booths. Hinting at Rahul and Sonia Gandhi's visit later this month, MPF general secretary Lalramthanga said: "Rules won't be relaxed for star campaigners of national parties. MPF will conduct the public meetings permitted by the Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee."

No party defies the diktats. If they do, the MPF would "invalidate the party (sic)," says the MoU. "Constituencies here are small — 15,000 to 20,000 — each vote counts. No politician can afford to ignore the Church's guidelines," says CEO Kumar.

Insisting the EC, MPF and the Church share a common goal — free and fair elections — Kumar explains: "In Mizoram, the Church is older than the government. The state was formed in 1986 after the Church facilitated the peace process. Until

recently, they looked after the people's education and healthcare. The Church isn't just a religious institution here, it's a way of life, the centre of social activities."

While the EC's lauded the MPF's role, many question the religious body's role in a democratic process.

"Elections should remain secular. The scenario in Mizoram is like that of 18th century Europe when religious doctrine got mixed up with political administration," says Lallianchunga, assistant professor of political science, Mizoram University. "Would similar orders issued by another religious body in another part of India be accepted by the politicians?" he asks. "Going by this logic, we shouldn't have elections on Fridays and Tuesdays either because they are holy days for some religions."

College-goer Nghaka believes MPF is a Frankenstein in the making. "What authority does it have to issue guidelines beyond those issued by the EC? We're supposed to elect leaders, not saints. Some of the best leaders in world history - including Churchill and Kennedy, one a heavy drinker and another known for extra-marital affairs - would never have been able to contest elections in Mizoram."

(<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/25732972.cms>)

US Senator Concerned Over Situation in Tibet

Nov 15, 2013 : Expressing concern over the situation in Tibet, US Senator Harry Reid has said "what is happening there is very sad", the Central Tibetan Administration, based here, said Friday.

Visiting Tibetan prime minister-in-exile Lobsang Sangay called on the senator in his office in Washington Thursday and discussed the current situation in Tibet.

"I have met his holiness the Dalai Lama several times. He is a remarkable figure. What is happening in Tibet is

very sad," a Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) statement quoting Reid said.

The forthcoming visit of Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, to Washington was also discussed.

Sangay explained the efforts of his administration to draw attention to and resolve the Tibet issue, it said.

According to the CTA, over 120 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since February 2009 in Tibet.

The common cry of all self-immolators is the return of the Dalai

Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans.

The CTA reiterated that it was not encouraging self-immolations and asked China to send an investigation team here to prove otherwise.

The Dalai Lama, 78, has lived in India since 1959 when he fled his homeland after a failed uprising against the Communist rule. The government-in-exile is based here but is not recognised by any country, including India.

(<http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report-us-senator-concerned-over-situation-in-tibet-1919670>)

China to Ease Decades-old One-child Policy Nationwide

- Sui-Lee Wee and Li Hui

BEIJING, Nov 15, 2013 : China will ease family planning restrictions nationwide, the government said on Friday, allowing millions of families to have two children in the country's most significant liberalization of its strict one-child policy in about three decades.

Couples having an only child will now be able to have a second child, one of the highlights of a sweeping raft of reforms announced three days after the ruling Communist Party ended a meeting that mapped out policy for the next decade.

The plan to ease the policy was envisioned by the government about five years ago as officials worried that the strict controls were undermining economic growth and contributing to a rapidly ageing population the country had no hope of supporting financially.

A growing number of scholars had long urged the government to reform the policy, introduced in the late 1970s to prevent population growth spiraling out of control, but now regarded by many experts as outdated and harmful to the economy.

While the easing of the controls will not have a substantial demographic impact in the world's most populous nation, it could pave the way for the abolition of the policy.

"The demographic significance is minimal but the political significance is substantial," said Wang Feng, a sociology professor at Fudan University specializing in China's demographics, before the announcement.

"This is one of the most urgent policy changes that we've been awaiting for years. What this will mean is a very speedy abolishment of the one-child policy."

In the 1980s, the government allowed rural families with a girl to have two children, Wang said. "Ever

since the '80s, there's been nothing as clear as this," he said.

Wang Guangzhou, a demographer from top government think-tank, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, estimated the new policy would affect 30 million women of child-bearing age. In a country which has nearly 1.4 billion people.

Although it is known internationally as the one-child policy, China's rules governing family planning are more complicated. Under current rules,



urban couples are permitted a second child if both parents do not have siblings and rural couples are allowed to have two children if their first-born is a girl.

There are numerous other exceptions as well, including looser rules for ethnic minorities and allowing parents who are themselves only children to have two children at most.

Any couple violating the policy has to pay a large fine.

The one-child policy covers 63 per cent of the country's population and Beijing says it has averted 400 million births since 1980.

Many analysts say the one-child policy has shrunk China's labor pool, hurting economic growth. For the first time in decades the working age population fell in 2012, and China could be the first country in the world to get old before it gets rich.

"It's not a huge reform, there have been small adjustments all along," said Liang Zhongtang, a demographer from the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

"I am just worried that they will make no further adjustments for a very long time after they've made this one."

Tian Xueyuan, a retired family planning scholar who helped draft the original one-child policy, told Reuters the rules were only meant to last about 25 years.

"They could have implemented this policy several years ago," he said.

Numerous studies have shown the detrimental effects of the one-child policy. China's labor force, at about 930 million, will start declining in 2025 at a rate of about 10 million a year, projections show. Meanwhile, its elderly population will hit 360 million by 2030, from about 200 million today.

A skewed gender ratio is another consequence.

Like most Asian nations, China has a traditional bias for sons. Many families abort female fetuses or abandon baby girls to ensure their only child is a son. About 118 boys are born for every 100 girls, against a global average of 103-107 boys per 100 girls.

Family planning officials have been known to compel women to have abortions to meet birth-rate targets.

Still, the adjustment is likely to be popular.

Zhang Yuanyuan, who has a one-year-old son, said she had already decided to have one more child before the new policy and was willing to pay the fine.

"We are very, very happy about this new policy," Zhang told Reuters.

(Editing by Raju Gopalakrishnan)

(<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/15/us-china-reform-child-idUSBRE9AE00D20131115>)

Thailand Gives 300kg Gold to Bodh Gaya Temple

- Arun Kumar

November 13, 2013 : The dome of the holiest Buddhist monument, Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya, the only UNESCO world heritage site in Bihar, will get a gold veneer by the end of this month.

The process for gold plating was set in motion after 289 kilograms of the precious metal donated by Thailand king Bhumibol Adulyadej and devotees in that country arrived in the holy town two days ago.

Bodh Gaya Temple Management Committee (BTMC) member Arvind Kumar Singh said following a chemical treatment, the dome was ready for gold plating. Only the top 18 feet of the 180-foot-high structure would be covered with gold.

"It is a big moment for us. The spire of the temple will glitter with the gold," said BTMC secretary N Dorjee.

The gold landed in the custody of

a 40-member team led by former Thai deputy prime minister General Pracha. The 13 sheets of gold were brought in 13 boxes in a special flight guarded by 23 commandos two days ago. Seventeen gold plating experts, part of the team, will deposit the yellow metal on the dome.

Adulyadej, who donated 100kg of the total consignment, had offered to coat the spire with gold last year. Authorities had initiated the process soon after the Bihar government, archaeological survey of India (ASI) and the BTMC approved the king's offer.

Now that the final phase of the work to be undertaken by Thailand-based company Kreign Thavorn Containers Co Ltd under ASI supervision gets underway, security has been enhanced around the temple campus.

A special prayer will be held under the holy Bodhi tree, where Buddha is believed to have attained enlightenment, on November 16. At least 500 devotees from Thailand, including those who donated the gold, are likely to participate, Dorjee said.

The Bodh Gaya temple is revered the world over, more so in the south-east Asian countries, China and Japan.

The temple is believed to have been built between the AD 500 and 600.

On July 7 this year, a series of low intensity serial blasts rocked the temple, but no casualties or any serious damage to the temple were reported.

(<http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/thailand-gives-300kg-gold-to-bodh-gaya-temple/article1-1150656.aspx>)

Sumi Community of Valley View Celebrates Ahuna

Dimapur, November 14 (MExN): Marking the occasion of Ahuna festival with colorful cultural celebration in the spirit of unity, Sumi community of Valley View, Dimapur observed the post harvest festival on Thursday, with Pikuto Shohe, GB Valley View as Ahuna Papuh (Ahuna Father).

Speaking on the occasion, Pikuto Shohe said the celebration symbolizes the blessing and joy of sharing. He was of the view that no community can prosper with pride and selfishness and such is the occasion to retrospect ourselves and continue to uphold spirit of togetherness

among the community which had brought the people together to celebrate the occasion.

Also addressing the gathering, Kihevi Murru, CPO, ICDP Zunheboto greeted the community on the occasion and shared some significance of the festival. He said this was an important occasion to relive the rich cultural heritage and pass on the same to the younger generation.

The community members proclaimed merry making through the tunes of folksongs presented by youth, men and women groups.

Competitions of various cultural games and cooking rice in a bamboo were conducted during the day.

More than 100 families participated in the celebration organized by STH Valley View. Celebration prayer was pronounced by Pastor Kaito Achumi. Function was chaired by Kittoli Chishi, president STH Valley View. Akatoli Achumi, secretary STH Valley View recorded the event. Hovili Chophy proposed vote thanks while Aloli Swu said the benediction.

(<http://www.morungexpress.com/local/106629.html>)

BJP meets Bangladesh envoy over attacks on Hindus

New Delhi, November 07, 2013: A Bharatiya Janata Party delegation Wednesday met Bangladesh High Commissioner Mahbub Hassan Saleh and lodged a protest over attacks on Hindus in that country.

The delegation was led by BJP's convenor of overseas affairs Vijay Jolly.

"He (Jolly) pointed out that the minority Hindu community in Bangladesh today lives in the shadow of fear," a statement released to the press said.

"The Hindus in Bangladesh are regular victims of communal violence. Desecration of Hindu deities in

Bangladesh is reported in the media repeatedly. Hindu families are identified, targeted, threatened and forced to convert," the statement said.

(http://zeenews.india.com/news/nation/bjp-meets-bangladesh-envoy-over-attacks-on-hindus_888362.html)

Sikkim: World's No. 1 Region to Visit in 2014

- Joanna Sugden

October 29, 2013 : Sikkim, the tiny Himalayan mountain state in northeast India, has come top of the Lonely Planet's regions to visit in 2014.

The Lonely Planet said Sikkim has set new benchmarks for responsible travel in India, with sustainable community-based tourism and eco-friendly policies that have reinvigorated the state.

It added that organic farming is being promoted in Sikkim, which has a population of around 600,000, and that a new airport scheduled to open near Gangtok in 2014 will shave several hours off travel time to the region. Reaching the state now involves a winding journey from West Bengal on narrow mountain roads, which are often flooded or blocked in winter.

In September 2011, a 6.9 magnitude earthquake struck the region, killing more than 100 people.

That year, Sikkim was one of six states and union territories to experience a decline in domestic tourists, with just over half a million

visitors, down 21.1% from 2010, government data show.

But the state continued to attract foreign tourists thanks to its snow-capped mountains, Buddhist monasteries, terraced fields, agreeable climate and excellent trekking. In 2011, the number of foreign tourists in Sikkim rose 13.7% to 23,602. Foreigners need a permit to enter the state.

Growth in India's tourism industry has slowed this year. In the first four months of 2013, the growth in foreign tourists was just 1.8%, against 9% a year earlier. Some female tourists say they carry stun guns and pepper spray for protection in India, following reports of attacks on women in the country, including foreign tourists.

The Incredible India campaign launched in 2002 to attract tourists to the country was felt by some in the north east to have left the region behind. In response in 2012, the North East Development Council, a body aimed at promoting economic and social development in the region, began its own 10-year campaign to entice visitors.

Sikkim was an independent kingdom until it became India's 22nd state in 1975. Along with Goa, it is one of only two states in India to permit gambling.

The state does well on some development indicators. It has a female literacy rate of 76.43%, above the national average of 65.46%, and infant mortality is 26 per 1,000 births, nearly half the national rate of 50 per 1,000 births.

The Kimberley in Australia was second on the Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2014 rankings for regions. It was followed by Yorkshire in England, Hokuriku in Japan, the U.S. state Texas, Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe and Zambia, the Spanish island Mallorca, the west coast of New Zealand, the Chinese province Hunan and the Tongan island group Ha'apai.

The Lonely Planet also lists what it deems to be the world's top cities, countries and destinations based on other travel criteria.

(<http://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2013/10/29/sikkim-worlds-no-1-region-to-visit/>)

Hornbill Festival to Host National Dance Competition



Kohima, November 13, 2013 : For the first time, the Hornbill Festival in Nagaland will feature Footloose, a national dance competition. Participants from other states and local talent are expected to light up the dance floor.

The competition will be held Dec 7-9 at The Heritage (Old DC

Bungalow) here. The total prize money is Rs.2.9 lakh - solo first prize (Rs.70,000), solo second prize (Rs.50,000), group first prize (Rs.1,00,000) and group second prize (Rs.70,000), said a statement.

Nagaland Fitness and Dance Academy (NAFDA) in partnership with the Nagaland government will host the dance competition at the gala, which is the most celebrated event in the northeast region.

Those wishing to compete can register online and send their video CD or upload their video for audition. A panel of experts will select the participants.

There will be two elimination

rounds before the grand finale and separate categories for solo and group dances.

Outstation competitors will be provided accommodation.

The annual Hornbill Festival is organised by the state tourism and art and culture departments. Held at the Naga Heritage Village, Kisama, about 12 km from Kohima, the fest showcases a melange of cultural displays under one roof.

The aim of the festival is to revive and protect the rich culture and traditions of the state.

(http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/hornbill-festival-to-host-national-dance-competition-113111300566_1.html)

(Contd. from Page 6)

The Bright Sides of Ahom Rule...

world. Another remarkable literary work of that time was translation of the great epic Ramayana to Assamese language by Madhab Kandali in the fourteenth century under patronage of the Barahi king, Mahamanikya.

Even though the Royal house did not impose anything of their Tai culture and social customs on the subjects, yet all the good customs and culture flew into the Assamese culture thus a strong fabric of national cultural assimilation was woven. The Assamese musical instruments dhol (drum) was brought by the Ahoms from the Shan country, Maolung, Maihang, Bankahi, Banbati, Sharai, etc. the dishes and utensils used by the Ahoms became popular among other communities of Assam, as well. Assamese ornaments like Jangphai, Jonbiri, Gam Kharu etc. and dresses like Khingkhap, ahom Mekhela are all of Ahom origin. Muga silk worms were first reared by the Ahoms. The costumes prepared with Muga golden silk fabrics are still regarded as the dresses of national honour and dignity in Assam. The plain Janpis and floral Janpis used by the Ahoms became popular headgears for other tribes also. Maan-dhora system (honouring the seniors and the visiting guests) in Assam came originally from the Ahom culture.

There is rise and fall with every monarchy but the biggest prize the Ahoms could give Assam was resisting powerful Mughal attacks for as many as seventeen times, otherwise the history of Assam would have taken a different turn. Credit must be given to the tribal friendly Ahom monarchy in diluting the caste system in Assam and removing untouchability, in particular, to a great extent. The Ahom kings are noted for sacrifice of their own Tai culture and own Ahom language in the interest of the greater Assamese nation. This fact perhaps nobody can deny. Some of the Swargadeos definitely had big hearts, and that is why they are still remembered with honour by the present Assamese generation and perhaps they would be also remembered in days to come. One can definitely learn the ethics of co-existence, brotherhood, social and religious tolerance from the Ahom monarchy to embolden the fabric of the great Assamese society to march forward with glory.

(<http://www.voiceofassam.com/LK%20Borah1.htm>)

(Contd. from Page 7)

Hindus and the Future of...

who excuses himself, accuses himself" or, to quote Marx in a different context: "Hindus of India unite, you have nothing to lose but your fear". There is nothing communal in Hindus asserting themselves. Hinduism is not just a religion: it is an entire civilization, a fact that they tend to forget, thanks first to Mughal and later to British interference. Condemned for some of its shortcomings, Hindus have for centuries gone into their shell and it is time they woke up. We need a new kind of leadership that is 'Indian' in every way to make the country independent in science, technology and all faces of progress. We were once that way and we can be one tomorrow. Wake up, Hindus!

(The Sentinel, 28.09.2013)

(Contd. from Page 8)

Monastries and Temples of...

one of the oldest monasteries of Sikkim but also the most famous in west Sikkim. Originally built by Lhatsun Chenpo in the 17th century, as a small Lhakhang, it was subsequently enlarged during the reign of the third Chogyal Chakdor Namgyal who was considered as Lhatsun Chenpo's third reincarnate, Jigme Pawo. The monastery follows the Nyingma order of Tibet Buddhism and controls all other monasteries of that order in Sikkim. The monks of this monastery are normally chosen from the Bhutias of Sikkim.

Enchey Monastery was established in 1909 above Gangtok, the capital city of Sikkim. It belongs to the Nyingma order of Vajrayana Buddhism. The monastery built around the then small hamlet of Gangtok became a religious centre. The location was blessed by Lama Druptob Karpo, a renowned exponent of tantric (adept) art in Buddhism with flying powers; initially a small Gompa was established by him after he flew from Maenam Hill in South Sikkim to this site. The literal meaning of Enchey Monastery is the "Solitary Monastery". Its sacredness is attributed to the belief that Khangchendzonga and Yabdean – the protecting deities – reside in this monastery. It is also believed that these powerful deities always fulfil the wishes of the devotees. The monastery has a large collection of masks which are used for the annual ritual dances. As its name implies, monastery has a peaceful atmosphere and also maintains a good library.

Sikkim has also created history by bringing the four Dhams under one roof at Solophok, Namchi, South Sikkim. The four most revered Dhams of the Hindus namely Jagannath, Dwarika, Rameshawaram, Badrinath have been replicated in this fantastic complex to benefit the devotees who will visit this place. Siddhesvara Dham was consecrated by Shri Jagadguru Shankaracharya Swami Swarupananda Saraswati on November 8, 2011 and is now open to public.

(Contd. from Page 16)

In the Name of...

kills or is killed by another Naga brother in the name of FREEDOM. Is that the right way? Secondly, the general public have never been approached by NPGs to discuss issues regarding independence but when approached, it was and it is for only one purpose i.e to collect tax. Is that the right way? Thirdly, whatever matters or issues discussed is kept confidential only between GOI and NPGs and is never made known to the general public. Whose freedom are we talking here? Is that the right way? Just an opinion but the present state of events does not represent any kind of democratic character which if not rectified in time may lead into a much darker future. GOD BLESS THE NAGAS.

Noyalo Kath: Naga public should demand RTI from NSCN government. If they speak so much of National struggle, they should be transparent about our Nation's financial record. Every single paise should be entered in the register so that when there is any solution the contribution of all the tax payers should be acknowledged!

Abemo Shitiri: For they love Indian money so much, that they gave up their freedom struggle. Whosoever believe in them, will not survive but perish forever. Amen.

(The Naga Blog was created in 2008 by Yanpvuo Kikon. This column in The Morung Express will be a weekly feature). (http://www.morungexpress.com/morung_youth_express/106253.html)

Tripura Militants Recruiting Youths: Manik Sarkar

Agartala, Nov 15 (IANS) Tripura's separatist outfits are recruiting youths and have camps in Bangladesh though the security forces of the neighbouring country are cracking down on them, Chief Minister Manik Sarkar said here Friday.

"Currently, there are about 18 camps belonging to outlawed NLFT (National Liberation Front of Tripura) militants in various parts of Bangladesh, specially southeastern region of that country," Sarkar told reporters.

"The NLFT leaders are recruiting youths to strengthen their outfit and to carry out violence in the state."

According to the chief minister, there is no camp at the moment in Bangladesh of the ATTF (All Tripura Tiger Force) — another militant outfit.

"Of Tripura's 856-km border with Bangladesh, 130 km remains unfenced. The extremists take

advantage of the state's terrain, dense forests and unfenced boundaries to conduct their trans-border movements," Sarkar added.

He said the 14th Finance Commission team (which visited the state Nov 12-14) has appreciated the Tripura government for successfully taming the four-and-half-decade-old terrorism in the northeastern state.

During deliberations with the finance panel, Tripura demanded Rs.232 crore to develop infrastructure for the security forces — specially the Tripura State Rifles, an elite counter-insurgency force constituted in March 1984 to deal with terrorism.

Director General of Tripura Police C. Balasubramaniam earlier this week said the militants of various separatist outfits go to the neighbouring country for training and come back to carry out violence in the northeastern region.

"Taking advantage of the hilly terrain, thick forests and unfenced border, northeast militants trained in the Bangladesh camps cross over into Indian territory," he said.

"Extremists are suffering a severe financial crunch. The outfit's lower-level cadres are frustrated as they are not getting the due financial share and other facilities, forcing them to surrender to the security forces of Tripura," the police chief said.

Tripura's two militant outfits - NLFT and the ATTF, both banned by the Indian authorities - had set up bases in Bangladesh along with the other outfits of the northeast, and receive support from other separatist outfits of the the region.

They have been demanding secession of Tripura from India.

(<http://www.mangalorean.com/news.php?newstype=local&newsid=438742>)

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65 Terror Groups Active in India: Govt

Manipur tops the list with 34 militant groups

The government has identified 65 terror groups active in the country, out of which a maximum of 34 are in Manipur, the Lok Sabha was informed today.

Minister of State for Home R P N Singh said available intelligence inputs show that militants/terrorists active in India are often supported and funded by their parent outfits based abroad, particularly in Pakistan, in terms of shelter, training, weapons and finance.

'The existing statutory and legal structure provides adequate provisions to deal with funding of terrorism,' he said in a written reply.

The list of terrorist groups active in various states shows Jammu and Kashmir has five such organisations, including Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hizbul-Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Harkat-e-Mujahidden and Al Badr.

In the North-East, Assam has 11, Meghalaya four, Tripura two, Nagaland four, Mizoram two and Manipur 34.

Babbar Khalsa International,

Khalistan Zindabad Force and Khalistan Commando Force are the three militant groups active in Punjab, the statement said.

'...Various terrorist groups like LeT, IM, HM, HuJI, Al Badr are active in the hinterland of the country, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Delhi,' the minister said.

(http://www.business-standard.com/article/politics/65-terror-groups-active-in-india-govt-113082700671_1.html)
27.08.2013)

Manipur's Sankirtana may Join UNESCO Heritage List

Guwahati, November 4, 2013 : A rich cultural tradition and an art form of Manipur, which has been practised in the state for ages, is among 31 nominations to be decided for inscription on the Representative List of the Unesco Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The Sankirtana, which includes ritual singing, drumming and dancing and practiced specially by Vaishnava community in Manipur, has been nominated from India this year. It is at present waiting to enter the Representative List of the Unesco

Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, 2013.

The Manipur government in a statement on Thursday said the formal decision for inscription in the List is likely to be taken during the eighth session of the Unesco Inter-governmental Committee, to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan, during first week of December. Sankirtana is practised primarily by the Vaishnavite community of the plains of Manipur and also practiced by the Vaishnava Manipuri population settled in the neighbouring states of Tripura and

Assam.

Starting with ritual observances, which involve singing and dancing in the temples of Manipur, Sankirtana encompasses an array of arts performed also at home and on streets to mark occasions of religious import and stages in the life of the Vaishnava people inhabiting the Manipur plains. In a typical performance, two drummers and about 10 singer-dancers perform in a hall or domestic courtyard encircled by seated devotees.

(www.thehindu.com)

Women can't claim in-laws' property, rules court

New Delhi, Nov 17 : A woman has right over the property of her husband but she cannot claim a property of her parents-in-law, ruled a Delhi court.

The court made the observation while dismissing an appeal of a government hospital doctor here, who sought right of residence in her mother-in-law's house in which her husband does not have any share.

"If it is anybody against whom or against whose property she can assert her rights, is the husband but under no circumstances can she thrust herself on the parents of her husband or can claim a right to live in their house against their consent and

wishes," the court said in an order made available Sunday.

The court was hearing the appeal of the woman doctor who contended that her mother-in-law had abused and misused the process of law by making false submissions, and sought the trial court's order to be set aside.

She challenged the trial court's order, saying it did not appreciate the fact that her mother-in-law had in connivance with her husband dispossessed her from shared household accommodation in Delhi's Pitampura area.

The court noted that the woman's

husband is working and residing separately in Chandigarh for the past several years.

"The matrimonial house of the appellant under the given circumstances is the place where her husband is working and residing, and not where she herself chose to reside of her free will," the court said.

The court observed that the petitioner is a working woman and is in a position to maintain herself being a doctor in a government hospital.

(<http://www.sify.com/news/women-can-t-claim-in-laws-property-rules-court-news-national-nlrqEndgaba.html>)

Conversion poses grave threat to indigenous faith—Torik Osik

- Virag Pachpore



"The major threat to indigenous people of Arunachal Pradesh, their culture, religions, faiths, and traditions is from the Christian Missionaries and Church organisations. They are pouring in money, men and material in an unmatched fashion to convert the Janjati population to Christianity. But, we, under the auspices of Indigenous Faith and Cultural Society of Arunachal Pradesh (IFCSAP) are contesting their efforts to a great extent. But in view of our limited

resources, we look forward to our brethren in India to help us preserve our traditions and culture and faiths."

This was an earnest appeal from a group of 24 teachers who had come on a tour of Maharashtra under the project 'My Home India'.

Osik, who is the Vice-President of IFCSAP is a champion of indigenous faith and undertakes lots of efforts to convince local people to reject conversion tactics of the Christian missionaries. He said the IFCSAP has been trying to thwart and stop conversion attempts by various Christian denominations in various parts of Arunachal Pradesh under the multi-faceted programmes of IFCSAP. There are followers of different

indigenous faiths in Arunachal Pradesh including the Buddhists of Kameng, Tawang, the Singphos of Tirap and those who pray to Donyi-Polo i.e. Sun and Moon, the principle deity of the Tani group of people. In absence of any written literature, scripture and places of worship, these indigenous people are easy prey to the proselytising tactics of Christian groups.

It may be noted that Arunachal Pradesh had passed the 'Indigenous Faith Law' prohibiting conversion of indigenous people to alien religion, especially Christianity during the tenure of the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1975. In spite of that legislation, the number of conversions have increased manifold. "Among the Tani group of people, 20 per cent have been converted to Christianity", said Kido Lollen, a teacher from Allong.

He further emphasised that "The Missionaries come to our people and easily lure them to their faith with attractions of money, jobs, and other such things."

127 Rape, 61 Murder Cases in Assam

NEW DELHI, September 22: At a time when the involvement of a minor in the December 16 gang rape of a 23-year-old woman shocked the entire nation, statistics from the Union Home Ministry revealed that 127 cases of rape and 61 cases of murder were committed by juveniles in Assam in last three years.

The incidents of rape involving juveniles seem to be increasing with every passing year.

Home Ministry statistics revealed that 37 cases of rape by youths under 18 years of age were taken place in 2010 in Assam. Although such incidents came down to 34 in 2011, it took a u-turn and witnessed a drastic

increase with 56 rape cases in 2012, involving juveniles.

The shocking figure revealed in the Home Ministry's report further stated that the juveniles are also involved in murder, kidnapping, robbery and even riots in the State.

133 cases of kidnapping and abduction of women and girls were registered against juveniles in different police stations of the State.

The government statistics show that 1,800 juveniles were arrested in the last three years for their involvement in different crimes under sections 302, 376, 395-398, 363-369, 371, 372, 373 and Section 143 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

Ironically, a few of them (convicted by the court) had been punished with three years term at reform homes.

The government report stated that many of the arrested juveniles were sent to homes after giving advice, many were released on probation and placed under care of parents, many were sent to special homes and several were dealt with fine.

"It is really unfortunate that juveniles even after committing the most heinous crime like rape allowed to go to their homes after spending three years in a reform home," rued Devika Mittal, a Delhi-based women activist. (The Sentinel, 23.09.2013)

Martyr Jaswant Rawat's Mother to Lead Sarhad ko Swaranjali event in Itanagar

Itanagar, Nov. 19, 2013: Ninety-year-old Leela Devi, the mother of martyred rifleman Jaswant Singh Rawat, has said she would lead the Sharhad ko Swaranjali function at the Indira Gandhi Park here on November 24.

Devi, accompanied by her relatives Vijay Singh Rawat, 58, Madhubala, 47 and Amit Rawat, 23, would arrive here on November 24 from Dehradun. They would fly to Guwahati and a special helicopter would then bring them to Itanagar, according to organising committee president Kipa Babu.

Every word of the proud mother would be a louder message for the soldiers serving the motherland in harshest condition along the Indo-China border and boost their morale to continue their duty. It would be rarest occasion when the mother salutes her brave son who sacrificed his life 51 years ago.

Besides the proud mother of Rawat, who had changed the course of 1962 Chinese aggression by halting the advance of Chinese soldiers for 72 hours before sacrificing his life, Shaktiman famed Mukesh Khanna, Lt Gen (retd) G M Patil who was posted in Tawang during the war, flutists Rajendra Prasanna and Pandit Ketan Joshi, besides Chanaykya serial producer Chandra Prakash Dwivedi, Hindustani classical exponent Nagraj Havaladar, Dagar Bandhu Nasiffudin and Hanifuddin, painter and singer Satya Narayan Maurya, Manipuri bamboo dance expert Gauri Kishore Sarma, Bhojpuri singer Manoj Tiwari, world-known portrait expert Basudev Kamat and cine artist Pranjal Saikia, 600 representatives from seven north east states, about 10,000 locals, including 400 dancers and singers of host state would take part in the mega event to

begin at 10. 30a.m. to pay rich tributes to the brave hearts who had sacrificed their lives while guarding the frontier.

'Ae Mere Watan Ke Logon', the chorus by 10,000 students would rent the air besides numerous patriotic programmes as part of the event, organised by Sanskar Bhrati Poorvotar.

Like Jaswant, Major Shaitan Singh



Jaswant Singh Rawat

Leela Devi

and Subedar Joginder Singh were conferred Param Veer Chakra for their unparalleled heroism while fighting at Rezang La and Bum La respectively. Jaswant Garh stands tall between Se La pass and Jang along the Bhalukpong-Tawang road as a testimony to his saga of valour for which he won Maha Vir Chakra posthumously at the Battle of Nuranang.

Locals claim that when the Indian troops retreated from Nuranang, Rawat (No 4039009 of the 4th Garhwal Rifles Bn) was the only soldier who refused to budge from his post. With the help of local girls, Sela and Nura, he managed to stave off the enemy advance for 72 hours.

Located at an advantageous position on a hilltop overlooking the two river valleys, Rawat positioned himself in a long trench with guns and enough ammunition. He kept running from one end to another firing at the enemy from one point after the other.

The Chinese realized that the Indian Army had retreated after the girls' father betrayed Rawat. The invaders in local outfits surrounded his position and captured him.

He was tied to a tree with a telephone wire and beheaded. Sela escaped and jumped off a hilltop. The place later came to be known as Sela Pass. Nura was captured and taken away by the invaders.

Jagjit Prasad Jain, who died in Dec 2009, after serving the state for 59 years since 1950, had set up the P J Canteen at Kimin to supply PDS items to inaccessible areas.

Damodar Sarma was the manager of his canteen at Jang in Tawang district.

Despite an order to close down the canteen, Sarma stayed back and hid himself behind a huge stock of rice bags. Sela and Nura had informed Sarma that the Chinese had tied Rawat to a post and killed him before proceeding towards Bomdila.

Sarma, who saw the mortal remains of Rawat, had narrated his experience to Jain, who had explained this to this editor before his death.

While the Army's official version significantly differs, but legend has it that the Chinese troops after killing Rawat beheaded him and carried it as a trophy after he had stood alone against them, firing from a .303 rifle.

After the ceasefire, the Chinese commander, impressed by Rawat's bravery, returned the head along with a brass bust of the gallant soldier. The bust is now installed at the site of the battle.

It was in December 1962, India's cultural icon Dr Bhupen Hazarika shocked at the human tragedy caused by the war after visiting Chakoo, Rupa and Bomdila had written his famous heart touching

number: *Kata juwanar mrityu hol* (Grieving about the soldiers killed by the enemies) at Bomdila circuit house.

Jaswant has become a 'Baba', a saint. A small temple was built at the spot where he fought, with a bust of his and many of his personal effects.

A marble plaque commemorates him and 161 other men of his battalion who died in the battle. Indian Army personnel irrespective of rank passing by this route pay their respects there without fail.

Jaswant is treated as if he is alive, his boots shined and his uniform and accoutrements cared for daily by Army personnel posted at the shrine. He was retired in 2002 as an Honorary Captain.

Meanwhile, Khanna, in a letter, - "*Pyaare Bachchon, Main Arunachal Aa Raha Hun*," has heartily greeted the children and expressed his desire to interact with the tiny hearts during the mega event.

Bachchon main tum logon ko milne Itanagar aa raha hun, Khanna, who gained fame as Hindi TV serial Mahabharata's Bheeshma Pitamah, wrote in the letter.

He has asked the people of Arunachal to protect the rich culture of the state and also guard its boundary. By Pradeep Kumar.

(<http://www.newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/2013/11/19/373-Martyr-Jaswant-Rawat-s-mother-to-lead-Sarhad-ko-Swaranjali-event-in-Itanagar.html>)

Cattle smuggling rampant in Dhubri

GUWAHATI, October 11: Right from the Dhubri area beside the mighty Brahmaputra to the India-Bangladesh border in the district, cattle smuggling has been on the rise due to the huge demand of cattle in the neighbouring country.

Along with the cattle smuggling, fake note currencies have also been in circulation in Assam. This apart, drugs and arms have also been flowing in to Assam in recent times, said Md Abdul Naser Al-Faruque, president of the Assam State Freedom Fighters' Association, Dhubri District Committee.

According to Faruque, even locals are involved in the cattle smuggling business.

"Even illegal Bangladeshis are involved in this business. There are allegations that some persons like Soleman Khan, Jahur Khan, Mokbul Hussain, Anowar Mollah, Manik Kalita and Prafulla Kalita are primarily involved in this business. Manik Kalita is OC, Dhubri Police Station. Prafulla Kalita is Junior Engineer of Inland Water Transport, Dhubri," said Faruque.

According to Faruque, all along the banks of the Brahmaputra in Dhubri district, cattle smugglers are on a free spree, which has not been checked by the State government. "This is highly unfortunate. This must be stopped," he said.

In this regard, Faruque has written a letter to the Asaam DGP, asking for necessary action and a probe by the CBI.

(*The Sentinel*, 12.10.2013)

War Memorial for 1962 Martyrs Planned in Itanagar



Nabam Tuki

Itanagar, November 25, 2013: Arunachal Pradesh is the nation's "sentinel of the east," and its

people are patriotic and "jealously guarding the territorial integrity of the country," Chief Minister Nabam Tuki said on Sunday.

"Sitting in the lap of the Himalayas, we are the first to resist any force against India. If any enemy eyes India through the northeast, Arunachal Pradesh will stand against it first, like in the 1962 Sino-India war," he told the valedictory programme of the three-day 'Sarhad ko Swaranjali' here.

Lauding the defence personnel guarding the frontier in the State, Mr. Tuki said the programme would boost

their morale as they serve the motherland in harsh conditions along the border.

The programme was necessary to infuse in the people the spirit of patriotism and contribute to the building of the nation, he said and expressed appreciation for the organisers 'Sanskar Bharati.'

A memorial would be constructed here by the State government to honour the martyrs of the 1962 war, he said.

At least 100 veterans and families of the martyrs of the war hailing from Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar, West Bengal and Assam participated in the programme.

Among those honoured on the occasion were Tagam Taki from Beging village in East Siang district who served as SSB constable and

died on March 30, 2002 during an attack on the Raghunath Mandir temple in Jammu, Kriti Chakra awardee Lance Naik Tape Yajo from Aalo and jawan Pate Tasuk from Kurung Kumey, both of whom died in action along the J&K border.

Leela Devi (92), mother of martyr Jaswant Singh Rawat, his relatives, and Lt. Gen. (retd.) V.M. Patil, a captain posted in the Tawang sector in 1962 were also present.

Rawat, who belonged to 4th Garhwal Rifles, had won the Maha Vir Chakra posthumously for his bravery and supreme sacrifice at the Battle of Nurangang in 1962. He was beheaded by the Chinese army, which later returned the head along with a brass bust for his gallantry.

(<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/war-memorial-for-1962-martyrs-planned-in-itanagar/article5388477.ece>)



Children pay tribute to Dr. Bhupen Hazarika on his Death Anniversary on 5th November



MONASTRIES AND TEMPLES OF SIKKIM



Enchey Monastery



Pemayangtse Monastery



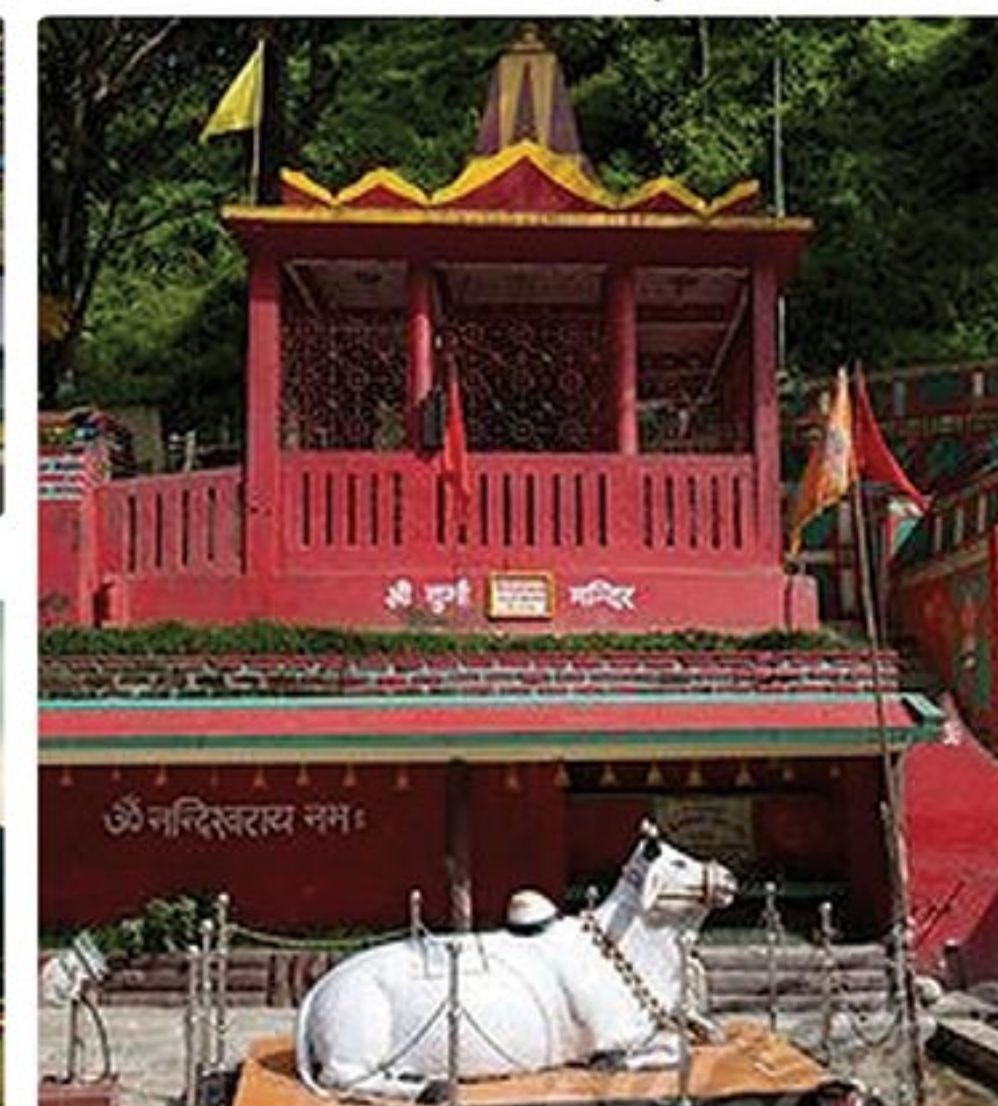
Ganesh Tok



Thakurbari Temple



Rumtek Monastery



Kirateswar Mahadev Temple



Hanuman Tok