

জেতুকা

Jetuka '09



ASOM ASSOCIATION - KUWAIT
Rongali Bihu Celebrations 2009

WITH BEST COMPLIMENTS FROM DET NORSKE VERITAS AS KUWAIT

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MESSAGE



AMBASSADOR OF INDIA
KUWAIT

May 17, 2009

MESSAGE

I am pleased to learn that the Asom Association, Kuwait, will be bringing out a Souvenir to commemorate its recent formation.

I have no doubt that the Association will succeed in its efforts at promotion of cultural and socio-charitable activities amongst its members and others in Kuwait.

My greetings and good wishes for health, happiness and prosperity go out to all members of the Asom Association, Kuwait, and to the members of their families.


(Ajai Malhotra)



MESSAGE

On behalf of the Asom Association Kuwait I am extremely pleased that we have finally formed the Association. I thank each and every member of the Association who have come forward, took up the challenge, and made this long cherished desire of the People of the North Eastern part of India come true.

Let me begin by wishing one and all a Very Happy Bohag Bihu. May the New Year bring in goodwill for all and create friendship and harmony amongst all communities.

Kuwait is an excellent place to be in as it is safe and has a dynamic economy offering a good standard of living and an easy day-to-day hassle free existence. It takes about one year for an average newcomer to get the feel of the place and settle down but once that happens it often proves very difficult to leave. Yes, one feels the lack of interest in social interaction of the locals with the Expatriates but it has more to do with the cultural diversity than any animosity.

The 'The Gulf Kid Syndrome' is a problem that often plagues most of the parents as the children who have been brought up in the shelter and softly cushioned cocoon of the home, where everything is available at a price, often find that they are misfits in any other society. Though the hard knocks of the 'Real World' often bring them down to earth in time, several of them are known to suffer long term inability to adjust to the other countries and particularly their own.

It is here that we the parents, through the Association, should step in and apart from promoting to the outside world the vivid and unique culture and traditions of our people, emphasise and impress upon our own children our proud origin. We should hold their hands and guide them through our roots and teach them to hold their heads high and take pride of who they are. I am proud to say that we have already taken a large step towards this direction and made a beginning through ' Oomola Ghar '.

I wish this Young Association all the Success and all my blessings for them to go from Strength to Strength.

Bikash Jyoti Gogoi

President

Asom Association, Kuwait



MESSAGE

“Xokolu rajjoloï Rongali Bihu-r oolog jasilu”

The Asom Association, Kuwait conducted its inaugural Rongali Bihu celebrations on 10th April, 2009. This was made possible due to the dedicated and tireless efforts of different members of the Association.

I take this opportunity to thank all members of the Association for their co-operation and constructive suggestions that helped us both in arranging the Bihu celebrations and also to form and register our Association with the Embassy of India, Kuwait. The support received from Bikash Jyoti Gogoi, M. N. Debchoudhury, Abhijit Sharma and Debasish Kakoty for collecting the signatures of the members for submitting to the Embassy for registration is highly appreciated. Hirendra Nath Rajkhowa, Iqbal Hussain, Rajib Rajkhowa, Dr. Debasish Sharma and Probeen Bora made an invaluable contribution by collecting the individual financial contribution from the members in a short period of time. The efforts put in by Shyamal Barooah, Cultural Secretary, to put together an entertaining programme is gratefully acknowledged.

I look forward to receiving similar co-operation from all of you in conducting various activities of the Association and making our Association a vibrant and lively one.

With Best regards,

Jayanta Bardalaye

General Secretary,
Asom Association, Kuwait



EDITORIAL



For Assamese people, the Bohag or Rongali Bihu, which marks the Assamese New Year, has always been an occasion of joy, hope and optimism. This spirit that rekindles people's positive energy also gets adequate reflection in a rejuvenated Mother Nature who discards her old garb and comes out resplendent in all her glory. The dry and dusty "Fagoon Days" give way to the much-sought-after spells of refreshing rain that foretell of a rewarding harvest for the farmers. A spirit of love and bonhomie pervades the atmosphere, as it finds an outlet in the Husori and Bihu dance. It is the biggest festival of the Assamese, cutting

across caste, community and religion. The universal appeal constitutes the most compelling feature of Bihu, setting it apart from many other festivals normally associated with religion. Amidst the all-pervasive joyous spirit, the people reaffirm their faith in all that is pure and good.

In Kuwait, we have a very small group of Assamese people. It is a small group, but highly spirited and very cohesive. With the number of members increasing in this group, the enthusiasm is also increasing- almost exponentially. Although this Assamese group in Kuwait has been active for last couple of years & also organizing various activities informally, this year we are officially registered at the Indian Embassy of Kuwait. This is indeed a significant achievement; nevertheless we believe it is only the advent of our journey towards building a more vibrant Assamese Society in the heart of Kuwait.

It is a pleasure for us to introduce to you this year's issue of "JETUKA". This is the second year of JETUKA and we would like to thank all the contributors who made this souvenir a reality by their valuable contributions.

Abhijit / Debasish



THE TIMES GONE BY

Tanaya Devi Choudhury

The days are all over,
Where only a hand full stood
Among the sands of Kuwait.
Now it has grown spreading branches
Across the boundaries of Kuwait.

Here we all stand united,
Together making this place
Where we dwell
Similar to our motherland.
We may not be able to
Change the sands into mountain.
But we have surely made a step to spread
The feeling of brotherhood that
We all belong to the same land
Assam.

We all stand together
We all stand united
To sing the joys of our festival
Oh, yes I talk of Bihu
We have celebrated to the best we can.
Dancing and singing gaily
Making pitahs and larus
And other sweets made of gur
Eating traditional mouth watering
Seera and mitha doi.

Fly us back,
Back to our land of mountains and valleys,
Where young lads sing with their dholes
And damsels dance to their rhythmic beats.
Across the tea gardens and paddy fields

Our hearts belong to
Our land of rhinos
Assam

MY NAME

Sharmistha Bhattacharyya

You asked my name,
It is Tear, my dear...!
I am Tear by name.
One nauseates me,
To reveal one's dolour,
When one fails to return
The joys, the buxom days of life.

You asked the meaning of riddle
It is life, my dear...!!
Me, tear has the strongest power
To unfold the unfair of one's heart

You asked me about my source,
My reply is two unkempt eyes.
I flow through the flabby cheeks.
And I am so powerful a tear...

One sheds me when one is entirely absorbed
In hearing flageolet and even in one's joys.

Then, my question is...
Am I hurting everyone...?
No, my friends...!
My source is one's noble heart,
My source is humanity...
The benevolent ardent wish is my expression...

Tear drips by the inspiration of heart.
So, I am very unmixed...
Free from fault and defilement...
I am the evidence of a true, mute heart;
Tear is my name....



তাৰেক ৰাজাৰ মিউজিয়াম

শ্ৰীমতী আভা বৰা

চহকী আৰব সভ্যতাৰে এটি অংশ কুৰেইটত প্ৰাচীন কীৰ্তি চিহ্ন বিশেষ নাই যদিও তাতে ব্যক্তিগত উদ্যোগত দুটামান মিউজিয়াম গঢ় লৈ উঠিছে। সেই কথা টুৰিষ্ট গাইড জাতীয় কিতাপ এখনৰ পৰা জানিব পাৰি আমি তাৰে এটা মিউজিয়াম চাবলৈ ওলালো ২০০৮ চনৰ ২০ আগষ্ট তাৰিখে। সংগ্ৰহালয়খন তাৰেক ৰাজাৰ নামৰ এজন ব্যক্তিৰ। সেইবাবেই নামটো তাৰ তাৰেক ৰাজাৰ মিউজিয়াম। ইয়াত দেশ বিদেশৰ বিশেষকৈ আৰব দেশৰ ইছলামিক শিল্পৰ নানা বস্তুৰ প্ৰদৰ্শন কৰা হৈছে। সভ্যতাৰ আদিম অৱস্থাৰ পৰা বৰ্তমানলৈকে নানা বস্তুৰ সংগ্ৰহৰে একোখন দেশৰ শিল্প সংস্কৃতি সভ্যতাৰ নিদৰ্শন এই মিউজিয়ামে ডাঙি ধৰাত সক্ষম হৈছে।

মিউজিয়ামৰ যি ঠিকনা পালো সেইমতে গৈ আমি বিচাৰি ফুৰিছোঁ, কতো একো উমঘামেই নাপাওঁ দেখোন। গাড়ীখন ৰখাই ৰখাই মোৰ পুত্ৰ জিতে (দ্বৈপায়নে) নানাজনক সুধিছে - কোনেও ক'ব পৰা নাই। এজন ডেকা ল'ৰাই হাতত কিতাপ পত্ৰ লৈ বাটেদি যোৱা দেখি ভাবিলো নিশ্চয় ছাত্ৰ, তেওঁৰে জানিব চাগে। জিতে সুধিলেগৈ, তেওঁ মিউজিয়ামৰ নামটোকে শুনা নাই। এখন টেক্সী ৰখাই ড্ৰাইভাৰকো সুধিলে, নাপায়- চিনি নাপায়। মিউজিয়ামলৈ আকৌ ফোন কৰি চালে- যিটো ঠিকনা ক'লে আমি দেখোন তাতে ঘূৰি আছোঁ। নাপাওঁহে নাপাওঁ, শেষত জানিবা দেখিলোগৈ এটা ঘৰৰ ওপৰত লিখি থোৱা "Tareq Rajab Museum" এজন লোকৰ এটা ব্যক্তিগত ডাঙৰ ঘৰ। ওপৰত গৃহস্থৰ আবাস স্থল। মানুহজনৰ বৰ্তমানৰ বসয় সন্তৰ বহুমান হৈছে বুলি গম পালো। বিভিন্ন বস্তু সংগ্ৰহত তেখেতৰ চখ আছে। তাৰে ফলশ্ৰুতিত গঢ় লৈ উঠিছে এই ব্যক্তিগত সংগ্ৰহালয়খন। সংগ্ৰহালয়খন দুটা গৃহত বিভক্ত। তাৰে এটা গৃহ বিভিন্ন যুগৰ অস্ত্ৰ সস্ত্ৰ, পোছাক পৰিচ্ছদ, বাদ্যযন্ত্ৰ, গহনা, metal works, ceramics, চিত্ৰ শিল্প, সূচীশিল্প আদিৰে সজোৱা, আনটো গৃহত আৰবী আখৰৰ ইছলামিক কেলিগ্ৰাফিৰ নানা নিদৰ্শন। আৰবী আখৰ আৰম্ভ হোৱাৰে পৰা বৰ্তমানলৈকে হোৱা ৰূপান্তৰ আৰু ইয়াৰ দ্ৰুতভাৱে হোৱা উন্নয়নৰ নিদৰ্শন এই মিউজিয়ামত দেখা যায়।

আমি সোমালোগৈ প্ৰথমটো গৃহত। প্ৰৱেশ পত্ৰ নোহোৱা এই সংগ্ৰহালয়ৰ দুৱাৰ মুখতে কোনোবা ৰাজপৰিয়ালত ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা বৃহদাকৰৰ খুন্দনা তিনিটা আৰু এটা অঙঠা ভৰাই ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা ডাঙৰ ইষ্ট্ৰীয়ে আমাক অভ্যর্থনা জনালে। তাৰপিছতে আছে নানা ঠাইৰ পৰা সংগৃহীত বন্দুক, তৰোৱাল, ডেগাৰ ইত্যাদি অস্ত্ৰ শস্ত্ৰ। প্ৰায়বোৰতে ক'ব পৰা সংগ্ৰহ কৰা লিখা আছে, কিন্তু সকলো বস্তুতে কোনে ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা, ক'ব বস্তু লিখা নাই। ৰজা বা ৰাজবিষয়াই পৰিধান কৰা নানা পোছাকৰ তলত, ক'ববাত কোন শতাব্দী বা চনৰ বস্তু, কোন দেশৰ বস্তু লিখা আছে, কিন্তু কোন ৰজা বা ৰাজবিষয়াৰ ব্যৱহাৰৰ পোছাক তাক লিখা হোৱা নাই। ইছলামিক বিয়াত দৰাই পিন্ধা নানা পোছাক, নানা জাতৰ কামৰ নমুনা, মক্কাৰ কাবাৰ ওপৰত ঢকা কাপোৰৰ টুকুৰা, বিভিন্ন ঠাইৰ পৰা সংগ্ৰহ কৰা বহা আসন, বিভিন্ন চকী ইত্যাদি সংৰক্ষণ কৰা হৈছে। মহিলাই ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা বেগ, গহনা আদিৰ সংগ্ৰহো যথেষ্ট পৰিমাণৰ আছে। বিশেষকৈ গহনাৰ সংগ্ৰহ বেচ আকৰ্ষণীয়।

এটা কথা মন কৰিলো। বিভিন্ন গহনাৰ লগতে আমাৰ মুঠি খাৰু, গাম খাৰুৰ দৰে নানা দেশৰ গহনা। আলজেৰিয়ান, টুৰ্কমান, হায়দৰাবাদ, মৰক্কো, আফগানিস্থান, পাকিস্থান, উত্তৰ আফ্ৰিকা, য়েমেণ আজাৰবাইন, বিশেষকৈ এচিয়াৰ আৰু আফ্ৰিকাৰ বিভিন্ন দেশৰ নানা ধৰণৰ অলংকাৰৰ লগতে ডাঙৰ ডাঙৰ গামখাৰু দেখা পালো। এইবোৰৰ কিছুমান কিলাকুটিৰ পৰা হাতৰ সৰু গাঁঠি পৰ্য্যন্ত ঢাকিব পৰা।





বিভিন্ন ধৰণৰ এই গহনাবোৰৰ কিছুমানত সোণ খটোৱা। অসমীয়া গহনাৰ দৰে চিটিপাতি, দুগদুগী আদিও দেখিলো। কেৱল বাখৰ খটোৱা নহয়। পাকিস্তান, আফগানিস্তানৰ গামখাৰু আমাৰ ইয়াৰ দৰে শলখা লগোৱা। আৰবৰ বালা বৰ ডাঙৰ। উত্তৰ আফ্ৰিকাৰ গহনাবোৰো বৰ ডাঙৰ দেখিলো।

Arabian Gold Jewellery Section ত দেখিলো বৰপেটাৰ ফালে ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা অলংকাৰ 'কৰীয়া'ৰ সৈতে একেবাৰে একে ধৰণৰ লকেট। তিব্বত, নেপাল, ভূটানৰ সোণৰ ডাঙৰ ডাঙৰ ধৰণৰ গামখাৰু, গলপতা, হাতৰ গোটাৱালা। যোদ্ধাৰ পৰা উনৈশ শতিকাৰ মোগলৰ সোণৰ গহনা দেখি বৰ ভাল লাগিল। একেবাৰে আধুনিক ডিজাইনৰ দেখোন! তাৰ আৰ্হিৰে সৰুকৈ কৰিলে বৰ্তমানেও ব্যৱহাৰোপযোগী হৈ যাব। উজবেক, টিউনিচিয়াৰ গহনাৰ লগতে আমাৰ নাগালেণ্ডৰ মনিৰ গহনাবোৰো শাৰী শাৰীকৈ সজাই হৈছে।

এটা কোঠা কেৱল সোণৰ গহনাৰ! মিউজিয়ামৰ ভিতৰ কোঠাটোত বেলেগে তলমাৰি থোৱা ব্যৱস্থা। দৰ্শক গ'লে খুলি দিয়ে। ৰখীয়া এজন দেখিলো প্ৰথমে কিছুদূৰ আমাৰ লগে লগে গৈছিল। পিছত দেখোন আঁতৰি গ'ল। আমাক বিপদজনক যেন নালাগিল চাগে।

ইয়াতে দেখিলো ইৰাণৰ শিলিখামনি এধাৰ। আমাৰ শিলিখামনিৰে সৈতে একেবাৰে একে। তেৰ শতিকাৰ ইৰাণৰ জালিকটা গহনা বেচ চকুত লগা। তাৰৰ কাম কৰা কেইবাখনো দেশৰ কিছুমান সংগ্ৰহ আছে। বৰমিহি হাতৰ কাম। বেচ আধুনিক ধৰণৰেই, সোতৰ শতিকাৰ পৰা উনৈশ শতিকাৰ ভিতৰৰ কিছুমান গহনা আজিও ব্যৱহাৰৰ উপযোগী ডিজাইনৰ।

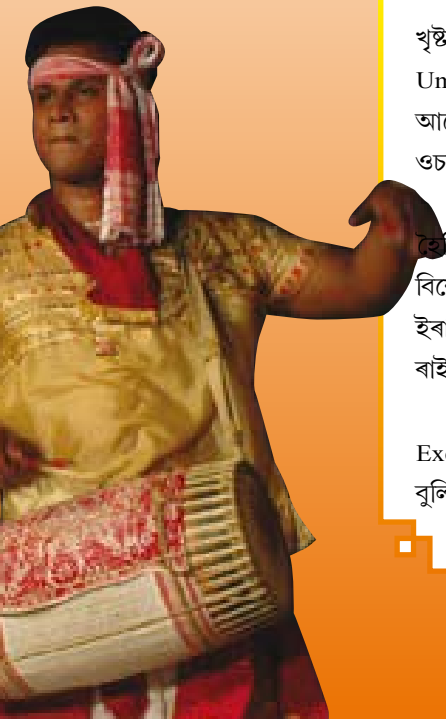
অলংকাৰে এখন সমাজৰ, এখন দেশৰ লোকৰ শিল্পবোধ আৰু জীৱন শৈলীৰ পৰিচয় দিয়ে। বিভিন্ন দেশৰ প্ৰাচীন গহনাবোৰৰ লগত অসমীয়া গহনাৰ সাদৃশ্য দেখি ভাব হ'ল বিশেষকৈ এচিয়া মহাদেশৰ লোকৰ শিল্পকলা আৰু ৰচিবোধৰ সামঞ্জস্য আছে।

এই মিউজিয়ামত নানা দেশৰ নানা তৰহৰ বাদ্যযন্ত্ৰৰো বিশাল সংগ্ৰহ আছে। অতীতৰ পৰা কুৰি শতিকাইলৈকে নানা বাদ্যৰ সমাবেশ ইয়াত ঘটিছে। আমাৰ শৰাইৰ দৰে কিছুমান ঢাকোন দিয়া শৰাই দেখিলো। সিংহাসনৰ দৰে পিতলৰ আসন এখনো দেখিলো। তাৰ মাজভাগত জালিকটা ঢাকোন এখন। ইয়াৰ চাৰিখুটাত মেকুৰী আকৃতিৰ জন্তুৰ চানেকী। তলে ওপৰে তেনে আঠটা জন্তু। এইখন যেন চকাবিহীন ঠেং লগা এখন যান। মুখত আন এটা মেকুৰীৰ দৰে জন্তুৰ চানেকী - যেন ই চলাইছে। প্ৰকৃততে ই যান নহয়, এটা ধূনা দানি - জালিকটা ঢাকোনৰ তলত ধূনা দিয়ে আৰু জালিৰ মাজেদি ধোৱাবোৰ সৰকি যায়। আৰব দেশৰ ইছলামিক আৰ্টৰ ই এটা অনন্য সুন্দৰ সংগ্ৰহ।

ইয়াৰ পিছত দেখিলো অন্য এটা কোঠাত ৰূপৰ মোহৰ, সোণৰ মোহৰৰ সংৰক্ষণ। ৬৭৯ খৃষ্টাব্দৰ পৰা ৬৯৭ খৃষ্টাব্দলৈ আৰব দেশৰ সোণৰ মোহৰ। উমায়াদ খলিফা আব্দাল মালিকৰ (Umayyad Khalifa Abd Al Malik) দিনৰ মুদ্ৰা, কুৱেইটী দিনাৰ, আৰবৰ নানা ঠাইৰ মুদ্ৰা সংগ্ৰহত আছে। গ্লাছ কে'চৰ মাজত সজাই থোৱা শাৰীশাৰী সোণ ৰূপৰ মুদ্ৰাৰ মাজত ঘূৰি ফুৰোঁতে আমাৰ ওচৰত কোনো ৰখীয়া নাছিল, অন্য দৰ্শকো নাছিল।

এজন লোকৰ ব্যক্তিগত সংগ্ৰহেই কোটি কোটি টকাৰ প্ৰাচীন সামগ্ৰী- দেখি আমি আচৰিত হৈছিলো। ব্যক্তি জনাৰ উদ্যম আৰু প্ৰচেষ্টা সংচালকৈয়ে প্ৰশংসনীয়। পিছে তেনে এটি সংগ্ৰহালয়ৰ বিশেষ প্ৰচাৰ নাই। সেইবাবে তাত থকা বিদেশী লোকে সংগ্ৰহালয় খনৰ সম্পৰ্কে নাজানে। সংগ্ৰহালয়খন ইৰাকী আক্ৰমণৰ সময়ত বন্ধ কৰি থোৱা হৈছিল যদিও মুক্ত হোৱাৰ পাছতে সংগ্ৰহালয়খন পুনৰ ৰাইজৰ দৰ্শনৰ বাবে খোলা হ'ল।

সংগ্ৰহালয়খনৰ পৰা ওলাই আহোঁতে টেবুলত সজাই থোৱা Remark ৰ বহীখনত লিখি আহিলো Excellent Collection, Needs more publicity. মতামত পৃষ্ঠাত নিজৰ নামৰ লগত Assam, India বুলি নিজ দেশখনৰ পৰিচয়েৰে চহী কৰি ময়ো এক তৃপ্তি লাভ কৰিলো।





2007
বঙ্গলি বিহ উদযাপন

2008
JANUARY
BIRTH





BIHU YEARS 2009







WIKIPEDIA, DHEKI ARU JATIYA SATWA : AN INCOHERENT SPREAD OF THOUGHTS

Chinmoy Dutta

To know something more about almost anything, as a quick reference, one can always search for it in the Wikipedia. Here is such a search result :

"It is prepared from Kola bora, Ghiu bora, Pakhi bora or Ronga bora. The rice is soaked for three to four days and then it is fried. The fried rice is pounded in dheki, to pound grains, and sifted to dehusk. Now the pounded and dehusked rice is again fried in hot sand. It is served with curd, hot milk, yogurt, sugar or jaggery."

Yes...you must have guessed the name of this *Jalpan* correctly !

But some others who are finding it difficult to say confidently "Hey! I know what is this", for them there is at least a familiar *Asomiya* word '*dheki*'..... or, for the younger generation even that word may be an unknown foreign word.

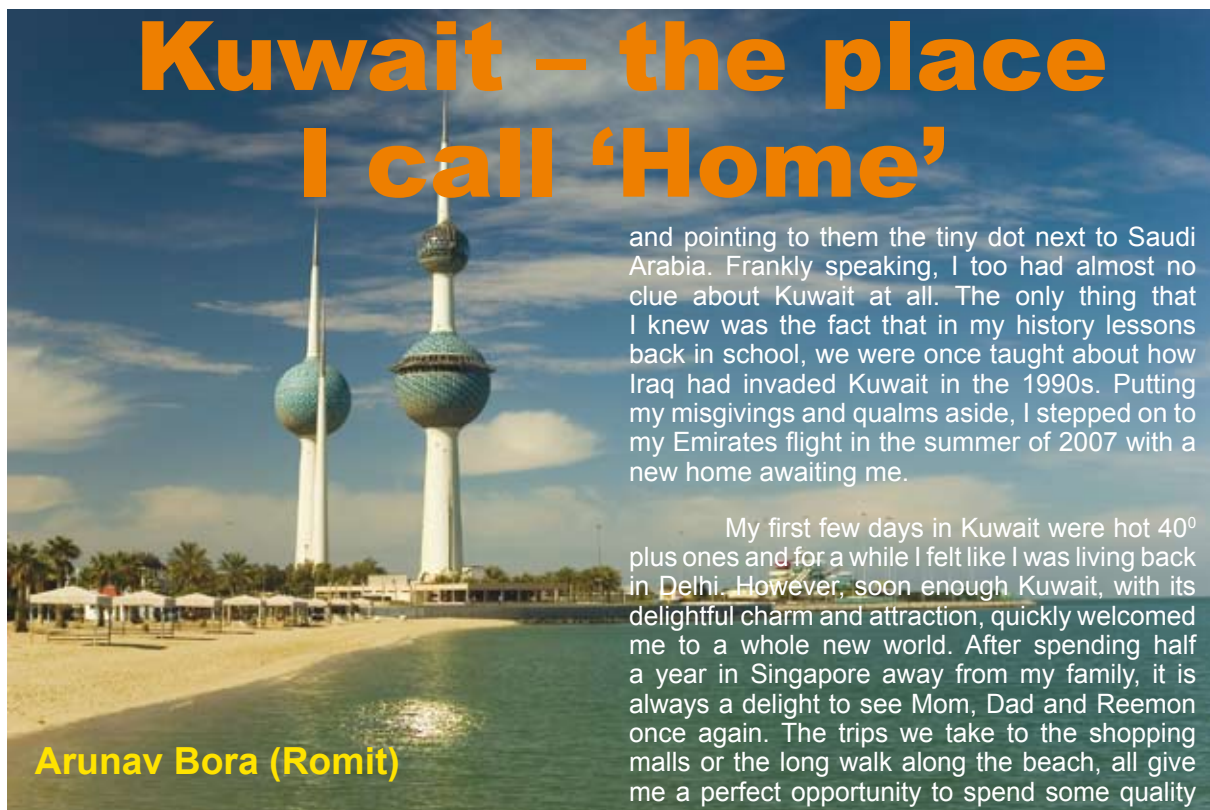
Once, while we all were watching the movie 'Kokadeuta, Nati Aru Hati', I quickly drawn attention of my nine year old son to a particular scene in the movie saying "look... that's called a *dheki*". Not to disturb others, I started briefly explaining to him in a low voice what a '*dheki*' is, why it is used.....and... and....by time I started explaining how it works, his attention already got drifted away to something else that interested him.

There surely is a big difference between things learnt from books or audio-visuals and things actually experienced. During our childhood when we visited our *Aita* and *Koka* in the quaint village 'Bangaon' we used to play around the *Dhekisal*, while watching the elders working joyfully on the *Dheki* ... also, gossiping or chanting 'Bihugeet' at the same time. What a skilful synchronisation of pounding of the *Dheki* and the

shuffling hands ! At times when the elders were not around, we would sneak in to the *Dhekisal* and try a few careful pedaling of the *Dheki*. There was the aroma of de-husked rice or *pithaguri*. The sight of the *dheki* pounding, the rhythmic sound of the *dheki*, the skillful & joyful working of the ladies in the *dhekisal*, the aroma all these melted in to a feeling that has remained forever. This feeling is much different from something we learn and try to memorise from books. *Asomiya mat-katha*, culture, tradition are infused in us. It is more of a feeling ... '*satwa*'. '*jatiya satwa*'. These are very dear to us. The sound of *Dhol*, *Pepa*, *Gagana* and a *Bihugeet* would spontaneously make us feel good and jubilant. It is a feeling as subtle and sweet as the mother-child relationship. They, who fail to appreciate and inculcate a '*jatiya satwa*' would surely be deprived of the everlasting sweet feeling and numerous moments of happiness in their lifetime.

Surely, it is not possible to infuse the feeling in to our budding generation through preaching or book knowledge. It is even more difficult when we are staying in a foreign land and the children are growing up in a metropolitan environment. If I ask my son what 'Hurum' is, probably he would, like me, try to search for it in the Wikipedia ! He would find it, read and memorise what it is.....but, the taste would be missing! It is the great enthusiasm of the Assamese community in Kuwait and the initiative of the praiseworthy enterprising ones that have kept the younger generation in touch with our customs by experiencing and feeling the traditional and cultural festivities of Rongali Bihu even when staying thousands of kilometers away from Assam. With active participation in such events, the young ones, without any conscious effort, will continue to inculcate the sweet and tender feeling of deep attachment to our cultural and traditional heritage and values. Thanks to the organisers of Bihu in Kuwait.

Kuwait – the place I call ‘Home’



Arunav Bora (Romit)

and pointing to them the tiny dot next to Saudi Arabia. Frankly speaking, I too had almost no clue about Kuwait at all. The only thing that I knew was the fact that in my history lessons back in school, we were once taught about how Iraq had invaded Kuwait in the 1990s. Putting my misgivings and qualms aside, I stepped on to my Emiratis flight in the summer of 2007 with a new home awaiting me.

My first few days in Kuwait were hot 40° plus ones and for a while I felt like I was living back in Delhi. However, soon enough Kuwait, with its delightful charm and attraction, quickly welcomed me to a whole new world. After spending half a year in Singapore away from my family, it is always a delight to see Mom, Dad and Reemon once again. The trips we take to the shopping malls or the long walk along the beach, all give me a perfect opportunity to spend some quality

time together with my family. Though there are hardly many people of my age-group, it is still wonderful to mix around with my brother's friends and get a chance to relive a childhood that often passes by too fast for one's liking.

The most amazing part about Kuwait is the wonderful Assamese society that we have over there. I am not much of a cultural person as such but after being exposed to so many different cultures abroad, it is heart-warming to go back to a place where so much emphasis is placed on preserving our roots. The numerous functions and get-togethers that we have in Kuwait have helped in creating a very closely-knitted Assamese community and it's wonderful to see so many families sharing each other's joy and happiness.

Though it's true that a small part of me will always miss my friends back in Singapore and Delhi, the love and care of so many people in Kuwait truly makes up for it. To most people, home is the place where they grow up, spend all their teenage life and eventually marry and settle down. For me however, home is thousands of miles away, at a place which most of my friends don't even know exists. For me, home is in Kuwait.

From the simple residential house in Duliajan, to the 2nd Storey flat in Delhi and finally to the high rise Alia Ghalia apartment in Kuwait, it would be fair to say that I have had a decent share of 'homes' in my life. Writing this article from my rented 3 room-place in Singapore, I can't help but take a trip back in time and think of all the fond memories I have had at all the three different places. Though I hardly remember my time in Duliajan, I can vaguely recollect certain reminiscences of a happy and care-free childhood. Delhi on the other hand, is much clearer in my mind as it was the place where I spent most of my school life. With its hectic and busy lifestyle, along with all the friends I made there, Delhi will forever be close to my heart. However, surprising as it may sound, it is Kuwait, out of all three which I would one day sit back and truly call, my 'home'.

At the time when my Dad first told me that we would be shifting to Kuwait, I was over at my hostel in Singapore and I remember quickly breaking the news to my roommates here. The first response I got from my friends was, "Hey Bora is Kuwait like a part of India?" Amidst peals of laughter, I remember quickly going on Google



Surrendering to the call of situations, one fine day I landed in Kuwait to stay with my elder son's family along with my two grandchildren. I don't say that I never liked the idea of coming to Kuwait and join them with their lives. I have always liked to challenge new situations and to see new places in my colourful life. So far It has been a life full of ups and downs for me and so it has taught me a lot in terms of how to tackle the different kinds of situations at different phases of my life. When on the first day in Kuwait I landed in a house very near to the sea, I experienced mixed feelings in my heart of hearts. It was neither a feeling of sorrow nor a feeling of happiness. In a nutshell I was in the middle of a puzzle. This is was so because for me the situation was a bit critical at this stage of my life to face such a big change.

Our Identity

BHARATI SHARMA

Sometimes when I stood in front of the window and looked towards the distant sea I felt some kind of loneliness in my mind and my heart cried for my Motherland which I left so far behind. But as days passed by and met some young ladies in our apartment complex I started to feel a bit homely. Gradually when I started to respond to my feelings towards our traditions like the festivals and the spiritual activities, I started to see rays of hope. I could realize that I would be able to serve my Motherland in Kuwait too in some way or the other with the cooperation of these young ladies. They gave me immense support, respect and love and made my life meaningful. I started to forget my age and thus very easily and very happily spent almost three years here.

Occasionally, I spend some of my days with my younger son in Bangalore too. During one of my stays there I asked whether he listened to the Assamese songs on the audio cassettes that he brought from Assam. He said that he does listen to them sometimes, but they made him sad as he missed Assam so much. Back in those days when he had come to Manipal to study engineering, he has told me that he would go back only to Assam after finishing his studies. However, circumstances did not favour that to happen and he started his professional life in Bangalore and finally married a good Tamil girl. But he always remained homesick. He would almost cry at the thought of his Motherland, Assam. His wife too embraced the Assamese culture thoroughly and has become a fully Assamese girl learning the Assamese language and culture so well. In fact she has even learnt to sing of the some verses from Srimanta Shankardeva and Shri Madhavdeva's Kirtan and Namghosha. She is currently working for the computer giant IBM.

At the time of writing this article, my younger son is in the USA on an assignment from his Company and he called me up the other day and told me that they too are celebrating Rongali Bihu in North Carolina, the state where they are staying, along with other Assamese people staying there. They have been planning to sing two of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's songs of Sagar Sangamat and Buku Ham Ham Kare. My heart



swelled with pride upon hearing this – the hearts of Assamese staying across the seven seas in USA too are thumping at the thought of their beloved Motherland. It is indeed a good sign that the beacon of our culture is held high wherever we are on this Earth. And not only that! The very other day my elder son had shown me a video of Mr. Mike Fincke, a NASA astronaut who is also a son-in-law of Assam, happily performing our very own bihu dance with a gamosa around his neck in his space station miles above the Earth!

It was indeed another pleasant experience for me when my Assamese sons in Kuwait gave me the opportunity to teach some 'Assamese' to the little ones here. I was really thrilled and overwhelmed because this is a dream come true for me. When I was given farewell from the Duliajan Sahitya Sabha in Assam I had told in my speech that I would serve my Bhasha Jananee wherever I may be in some way or the other if the situations provided me the opportunity. Even though I had never expressed this desire here in Kuwait, my dream came true and we started the Oomola Ghor here in Kuwait and I sincerely hope that it will remain alive with the cooperation of the Assamese parents here.

When we arrived at Kuwait for the first time my three year old grandchildren did not know how to speak English and we never taught them at

home either. But within a year it was such a pleasant surprise to hear them bubbling with English words and sentences! And that was only by their interaction with the teachers and friends at school! So nowadays it is not at all difficult for the little children to learn to speak English. But on the other hand it is extremely easy for them to forget their own mother language. That is one reason why parents have to take extra care and efforts to not to allow their children to forget their own identities. Actions speak louder than words. So let us try to act so that our next generation can learn a little bit about their own culture and tradition from us. The little ones do not know which is their Motherland or what is the benefit of learning their language and culture. It will be the duty of the older ones only to arouse such feelings, consciousness and alertness amongst them. Our own experiences have taught us that if the children do not know a little about their roots, wherever they go at later stages of their lives they will have to face situations where they will feel awkward and confused about their own identities. When they grow up into adults and they have to answer that they are Indians, they are Assamese and yet they do not know anything about their own identities they will feel very sad and then it will be too late.

**Chira Senehi Mor Bhasha Jananee
Aai Dhanye Punye Hritapawani'**



ASSAMESE CUISINE

Cuisine of a land is a specific set of cooking tradition and practices. It reflects the culture of a specific society. A cuisine is primarily influenced by the ingredients that are easily available and the climate of the area. Religious food laws also exercise strong influences on its food habits. In Assam eating means much more than just indulging your stomach. Food is sacred and eating is almost a ritual but the cooking process is fuss-free and in sync with nature, a trait that reflects the simple lifestyle of the inhabitants.



Narasinghar Lagot Maach Fish with Curry Leaves

Ingredients

- Fish: 6 pieces
- Salt and turmeric powder: to rub on the fish pieces
- Oil: for frying the fish
- Curry leaf paste: ½ cup
- Mustard oil: 2 tbsps
- Whole pepper: 20
- Bay leaves: 2
- Dry red chilli: 1
- Crushed garlic: 2 tps
- Whole pepper: 1 tsp
- Turmeric powder: ½ level tsp
- Salt: to taste
- Warm water: 400 ml
- To garnish: fresh ground pepper - 1 tsp

Method

- Clean, wash and drain the fish.
- Rub salt and turmeric powder on the fish pieces.
- Heat mustard oil and half fry the fish pieces.
- In 2 tbsps of mustard oil add whole pepper, bay leaves, dry chilli and crushed garlic one by one.
- When the garlic changes colour add curry leaf paste, turmeric powder and salt.
- Stir upon low fire for half a minute.
- Add hot water and bring to boil by increasing heat.
- Add the fried fish. Simmer covered for 6-8 minutes or until the fish is tender and the curry thickens.
- Garnish with fresh ground pepper powder.
- Serve hot Narasinghar Logot Mach with rice.



Maachor Tilor Torkari (Sesame Curry)

Ingredients

- Sesame seed: 50 gms
- Pepper: ½ -1 tbsp
- Fish: 6 pieces
- Salt and turmeric powder: to rub the fish
- Mustard oil: to fry the fish
- Mustard oil: 2 tbsps (to prepare the curry)
- Fenugreek seeds: a pinch
- Bay leaves: 2
- Garlic cloves: 1 (whole)
- Pepper paste: 2 tps
- Hot water: 500 ml
- Turmeric powder: ⅓ level tsp
- Salt: to taste
- To garnish: sliced onions and chilli

Method

- Clean and soak the sesame seeds and pepper for half an hour.
- Make a fine paste of the sesame seeds and pepper.
- Clean, wash and drain the fish. Rub salt and turmeric powder to the fish.
- Peel the garlic cloves, wash and crush..
- Heat oil in a karahi. Fry the fish and keep on a paper napkin to soak excess oil.
- In two tbsps oil add fenugreek seeds, bay leaves and garlic cloves. Sprinkle turmeric powder.
- Add the hot water to the sesame paste and mix well.
- Stir in the sesame mixture and bring to boil.
- Add the fish and sprinkle salt.
- Simmer covered till the gravy thickens and the fish is soft.
- Remove the curry from fire. Garnish with onion and chilli.
- Serve Tilor Torkari with steamed rice.



Maachor Adar Torkari (Ginger Curry)

Ingredients

- Fish (any small variety): 300 gm
- Salt and turmeric powder: to rub the fish
- Ginger: 80 gms
- Mustard oil: 100 ml
- Nigella: a pinch
- Turmeric powder: ½ level tsp
- Dry chillies: 2
- Hot water: 300 ml
- Turmeric powder: ½ level tsp
- Sugar: ½ level tsp
- Salt: to taste
- To garnish: coriander sprigs
- : green chillies

Method

- Clean, wash and drain the fish.
- Peel and wash the ginger. Crush it and take out the juice.
- Rub salt and turmeric powder to the fish.
- Heat oil in a karahi and half fry the fish.
- To the remaining oil add nigella and dry chillies.
- When the chillies change colour add ginger juice, turmeric powder and chillies.
- Also add hot water and salt.
- When the curry starts to boil add the half fried fish and cover.
- Simmer for about 10 minutes or until the fish is soft.
- Garnish with coriander leaves and green chillies.
- Enjoy Adar Torkari on a rainy day.

Notes: Can also garnish with one tablespoon of ginger juice.



Koldilor Chop (Banana Flower Chop)

Ingredients

- Potato: 500 gms
- Water: 200 ml
- Banana stem fry: ½ cup
- Ginger: ½ inch long
- Green chilli: 2
- Egg: 1
- Breadcrumbs: ½ cup
- Mustard oil: for deep frying
- Salt: according to taste

Method

- Wash the potatoes. Pressure cook in 200 ml water.
- Clean the ginger and grate.
- Peel the potatoes when slightly cold.
- Smash and mix well with salt, finely chopped green chillies.
- Divide it into ten portions.
- Make balls. Flatten it. Make a depression at the centre.
- Place a spoonful of banana stem fry.
- Form into desired shape.
- Beat the egg with a little salt.
- Deep chops into the beaten egg. Quote with bread crumbs.
- Deep fry in hot oil upon moderate heat.
- Decorate according to your taste and serve hot with pickle or sauce.

Notes: If you have any left over banana stem fry can use it as a tasty filling of vegetarian chop.



The Battle Royale

Dr. Rifat Mannan



These are the days of much hyped warmth and bonhomie in Indo-US ties, full of *saccharine* sentiments. The bitter-sweet rivalries and verbal rhetorics of the past seem to be long dead and buried. However, little is known about one particular 'fiery' spat that brewed in this saccharine backdrop, not so long ago, away from public glare and media razzmatazz. This 'hot and sizzling' brawl is particularly special as it involved 'one' of our very own. This was a real 'scorcher': which is the hottest chilli on Earth, our very own but little recognized 'Bih Jolokia' or California's reigning champ *Red Savina*? As far as 'flaming rows' between the two countries are concerned, this would arguably rank amongst the top few.

The verdict has long been announced. Bih Jolokia, as it is popularly known, has outplaced Red Savina from the 'hottest' spot by a huge margin: 1,001,304 SHUs to Red Savina's highest 577,000 SHUs. In 2007, The Guinness World

Records has awarded 'Bih Jolokia' (aka Naga Jolokia) as the hottest chilli in the world. In the process this otherwise little known chilli became the first natural pepper to breach the 1 million SHU mark.

The Little 'Red' Champ

Like the Habanero, Scotch Bonnet and Red Savina, Bih Jolokia belongs to the *Capsicum chinense* family. Although Asom is its official homeland, this chilli is also found in Nagaland, Manipur, neighbouring Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. It is known by various names, which is just an indication how desperate people were to find the right adjective to quantify how 'hot' this King chilli is. *Bhut Jolokia*, *Borbih*, *Nagahari*, *Naga Jolokia*, *Raja Mircha*, *Raja Chilli*, *Naga Morich* (in Bangladesh), *Nai Miris* (in Sri Lanka) are just a few of the myriad of names this intense chilli has earned over the ages. Needless to say, no one was aware of SHU when these names were coined.



SHU?

SHU is the acronym for Scoville Heat Unit, named after William Scoville, who invented it as a dilutional measure to quantify spice heat. Bih Jolokia's score of 1 million SHU means, for it to be rendered neutral or tasteless, one measure of it has to be diluted 1.001 million times. Most people are reduced to tears at 300,000 SHUs, the standard for the hotter varieties including Mexico's famed habanero. A Shimla mirch is typically measured at nil.

The 'not so friendly' spat

The story of the sizzling row between Bih Jolokia and Red Savina dates back to the year 2000 when scientists at India's Defence Research Laboratory reported a rating of 855,000 SHU for Bih Jolokia. This news, reported in *Current Science* magazine was greeted with much scepticism by the American growers. They took it as another example of scientific misventure from the 'not so scientifically oriented' developing world. Frank Garcia of GNS Spices, a Californian developer

and grower of the 'Red Savina', thought it highly unusual for this 'unknown' chilli to be so hot. He took the report to Paul Bosland, head of the Chili Pepper Institute.

miles from the . Located at Les Cruces, about border town of El Paso, New Mexico, Bosland's CPI had been the centrestage of some of the hottest experiments involving chillies. Like Garcia, Bosland too had his doubts about the standards of the Indian experiment. They decided to experimentally validate the claim, rather than simply wishing it away. They planned to grow the chilli in their own locale and put its heat 'intensity into what they called 'the real test

This was indeed going to be an arduous task, with so many logistics involved. Various communications to Indian authorities fell into deaf ears. Several emissaries also failed to bring quality seeds of the chilli. They were in desperate need of some real 'wasta' to bring back quality seeds from India. When Bosland finally got his hands on the right stuff, it took two years of careful breeding to grow Bih Jolokia in New Mexico. Bosland had grown and lined up enough, . By Bhut Jolokia (as he prefers to call them) along with the reigning champion Red Savina and another 'fiery' cousin Orange Habanero to conduct what he dubbed the 'Great Heat Test'. It seemed BJ was quite confident of its prowess and very much determined to prove all the detractors wrong. It accepted the challenge and grew in gay abundance in unfamiliar 'experimental' conditions, far away from its natural abode. When finally all the three were put to 'test' the results were simply stunning: BJ emerged as the undisputed king of the world of hot chillies with million SHUs. What's more, even . : a score of . Orange Habanero huffed past Red Savina

The result from the Chili Pepper Institute test, validated by two peer outfits, was ultimately recognized by the Guinness World Record organization before crowning our very own Bih Jolokia as the hottest chilli

Echoing the punchline of the website fieryfoods.com, which chronicled this epic, "So much for the 'world's current hottest chilli pepper



‘বেছি কথা নকও’

বিবেশ খাউণ্ড

Oil India ৰ কথা বেছিকৈ কলে মানুহে বেয়া পায়। “খালী একেবোৰেই কথা কিমান? কিবা কবলৈ গলে সেইয়া হ'ব internet বা TV ৰ 2nd hand information, First hand কথা জানো খালি Oil India ৰ। উপায় নাই। Oil India ৰ কথাই বা কিমান আছে? Limited Company- limited কথা।।

এসময়ত দুজনেই ধনী মানুহ। ওপৰত এন. চি. বৈশ্য চাহাব- তলত ৰাজু হাজৰিকা। দুই বৰলাই সদায় কুকুৰা খায়। ঠিকেই চলি আছিল। পিছে বামুণৰ ঘৰৰ ধুনীয়া ছোৱালী এজনী দেখি ৰাজুৰ মন ঘূৰিল। কুকুৰা খোৱাৰ মুদা মৰিল চেৰে'লাক কিনিব লগা হ'ল। বৈশ্য চাহাবে হেনো এতিয়াও খায়েই আছে..... জয় মা কামাখ্যা!

১৯৯৫-১৯৯৬ চন শালমাৰীত work over well। খাদৰ কাম তেনেকৈ নাই। Local Problem, ঢেৰ, ডিজেল, জুট, ৰচী কিমান যে requirement। ওচৰতে ফুটবল পথাৰ এখন। Tubing কাটি goal post বনাই দিব লাগে local club ক। উপায় নাই। দিবই লাগিব। খুটা কটা হ'ল। ফুটবল পথাৰত পেলাই দিব লাগিব Company ৰ গাড়ীৰে। পেলাই দিলো। দুজন club ৰ সদস্য আহি খাদ ওলালহি। আৰু বা কি লাগে। এজনৰ হাতত as usual এখন দা।

অই ডিলাৰ চাহাব, বলচেন খুটা কেইটা পুতি দিবি।

(আঃ ইহঁতৰ উৎপাত দেখিছা) গৈ টো লৈ যা, সিহঁতে পুতি দিব।

এ নাই, জোখটো নাজানে বোলে।

(আঃ দেখিছা, ফুটবল খেলিব সিহঁতে কিন্তু goal post ৰ জোখ নাজানে) তই তেনো ইমান দিন কেনেকৈ খেলিলি?

এহ খোজৰে জোখো। এতিয়া লোহাৰ পুতিম নহয়, জোখাটো, ‘কেৰেকট’ হলে ভাল।

হ'ব বল। 100 mtr tape টো হাতত ললো। (দিম মজা ইহঁতক)

ফুটবলৰ goalpost ৰ জোখ সঁচাকৈয়ে মনত নাই। কিন্তু আন্দাজ আছে। আন্দাজ মতে যিমান হ'ব লাগে তাৰ প্ৰায় দুগুণ বহল কৰি post কেইটা পুতি দিলো..... জয় মা কামাখ্যা!

তিনি মাহ মান পিছত। খাদৰ বিশেষ Progress নাই। খালী ৬০ টা মান হাঁহ খোৱা হৈছে।

club সদস্য এজন আহিল। অই ডিলাৰ চাহাব, ডিজেল ৫ লিটাৰ দিবি?

ডিজেল একেবোৰে নাই অ' গাড়ীত ভৰাবলৈও নাই।

দে দে ‘অস্লীল’। এনেও তোক মানুহবোৰে খুব বেয়া পাইছে।

(কি কৰিব লাগে মই, Stupid চালা।) কেলেই, কি হ'ল?

সিদিনা Final খেল আছিল নহয়, ইমান Goal হৈছে খেল খনত।

কিমান?

ইফালে একুৰি সিফালে একুৰি দুটা।

(90 min ত 42 টা goal। পাইছ মজাটো।) Goalkeeper বেয়া।

নহয়..... ‘অস্লীল’। Headmaster ৰে Lecture দিওতে কৈছে TV ত Goal হয় এটা বা দুটা।

আমাৰ ইয়াত হৈছে 42 টা। কি খেল চাবা এইবোৰ। ডিলাৰে Post ভুল কৈ পুতিছে।..... জয় মা কামাখ্যা।

বহুতদিন আগৰ কথা। দেৰগাঁওত আমাৰ এটা Football Club আছিল। নামটো নৱ ক্লাব।

জাতিত নামটো লিখোতে English ত লিখিলে ‘NOVA’। এতিয়া কি বুলি কব? নভা নে নৱ। সি যি কি নহওঁক ঘৰৰে Club। বহিৰা Player বেছি নাই। দৰকাৰো নাই - বৰদেউতাই তৰে ল'ৰা আঠটা..... জয় মা কামাখ্যা!

Assam Police Team টো এসময়ত ডেৰগাঁও Police Training College ত আছিল। তাৰ পৰাই Second Hand Boot, Football, চৰ যোগান হয়। Inter Club Final খেল, পৰিল, Zango Club ৰ লগত। Zango Club হৈছে Police Training College ৰ এটা সাংঘাটিক Club Team। কি কৰা হ'ব এতিয়া? মাজুলীৰ কাৰ্তিক চাপৰিৰ বিষু মাৰাং, Dergaon Higher Secondary School ৰ Boarding ত থাকি পড়ে। চাপৰ, কলা শকত মিচিং ল'ৰা - একে চটে এটা goalpost ৰ পৰা সিটো post পোৱাই দিয়ে। মনে মনে hire কৰা হ'ল। Referee জনো খুড়াৰ বন্ধু - - - নামটো ‘মাণ্ডৰ’। নিৰ্দিষ্ট দিনত খেল আৰম্ভ। Half Time লৈ দুগল Lead, এগল Off-side আৰু এটা Penalty. Referee য়ে দিছে, উপায় নাই।..... জয় মা কামাখ্যা!

Half time ত ইমচি আৰু ইমক আহি পালে। দুই ককাই ভাই, Zango club main forwards। কৰবাত গৈছিল, অহা দেবি হ'ল। কি কৰা হ'ব এতিয়া? মোক বহাই দিলে। Right full back বিষু মৰাং in।

Half Time ৰ 23 min পছত বিষু মাৰাঙে এটা back pass দিলে। speed টো অলপ বেছি আছিল - suicide goal!..... জয় মা কামাখ্যা!

বৰদেউতাই তৰ 6 নম্বৰটো Goalkeeper আছিল। গৰম একদম, বিষু মাৰাঙক মাৰেই এতিয়া।

“লাহেকৈ দিছুটো” “লাহেকৈ দিছ - হাতৰ পৰা বল ওলাই গৈছে।”

খেল আৰম্ভ হ'ল। 33 min ত বিষু মাৰাঙে আৰু এটা দিলে। back pass টো কিছু বেছি আছিল Suicide Goal 2 - 2 জয় মা কামাখ্যা!

ছলছল। Goal Keeper নেখেলি ওলাই আহিল। জিকা খেল খন বৰবাদ। বিষু মাৰাঙক ঠিকচে দম দিয়া হ'ল। উপায় নাই। কিছুমানে মোক আকৌ খেলিবলৈ ক'লে। যেনেকৈ নহওক খেল আকৌ আৰম্ভ হ'ল। 43 min ত বিষু মাৰাঙে তৃতীয়টো back pass দিলে। গুলী যোৱাদি বল গৈ গলত সোমাল - suicide গ'ল। 3-2 আৰু সময় নাই। Goalkeeper আৰু বিষু মাৰাঙৰ বগৰাবগৰিৰ মাজত খেল শেষ হ'ল। Three Cheers for Zango Club! World Record! তিনিটা suicide goal..... জয় মা কামাখ্যা!

সিদিনাৰ কথা Oil India ত সোমাই Football বাদ দিলো। ইয়াত নচলে এইবোৰ। ভলীবল favourite বুলি..... কৈ য়ে Career বৰবাদ কৰিছিলোৱেই, ভাগ্য Buzarbarah GGM হ'ল, একেই..... কেৰী Zaloni Club volley ball ৰ net ওলমি গল - - - অবিশ্বাস্য! এ দবা, fitai দে, কি হাল্লা।..... ‘জয় মা কামাখ্যা’

Golf ত ধৰিলো। চাহাবৰ খেল। কথাই বেলেগ। খেল বিশেষ improve হোৱা নাই, etiquette বোৰ শিকি আছে। একেলগৰ Utpal Deka ই Digboi Club ত বহুত improve কৰিছে। খেলো শিকিলে, etiquette ও শিকিলে। (কাটা চামুচেৰে ভাত খায়) একেলগে খেলিবলৈ গৈছে এদিন। মই বোলো Chance টো ভালেই পাইছো - - - অলপ শিকি লও। .. এই মোৰ .. টো অলপ চাই দিয়া চোন, Correct হৈছে নে???

Grip টো তোমাৰ গুণ্ডগোল, কেতিয়াও নাঙলৰ লগত same grip নহয়..... ‘জয় মা কামাখ্যা’ (একেবাৰতে গোটেই background ফাচাং-ফাচ) কাণখন গৰম হৈ গ'ল। ক'ত Golf আৰু ক'ত নাঙল। সেইদিন ধৰি উৎপলৰ লগত খেলা নাই, নেখেলো কেতিয়াও।



my MEMORABLE Bihu

Ronit Bhattacharya

Class VI

Kuwait English School

One morning, long ago when I was a little child, I woke up to the sound of a cuckoo only to know that the season of Rongali Bihu has arrived. I was so excited that I ran out to the front yard and started imitating the cuckoo. I was anxious to go to my grandmother's house and when my father came and told me we were going to her house next week, I was overjoyed.

So after a week I found myself at my grandmother's house in Guwahati. All around, there was a festive atmosphere. Granny was busy preparing goodies for Bihu. On the next morning my Mom woke me up early and asked me to get ready soon. Grandma gave me a white and yellow paste, she said its called 'Mah, Haldi' with which I had to take a bath instead of a soap on this Bihu day. It is a custom in Assamese culture. After I finished the morning chores, I dressed up in a new pair of clothes. My Mom asked me to touch the feet of grandma and grandpa and ask for their blessings. Grandma wrapped a 'Gamosa' around my neck with heart full of blessings.

By that time all my cousins arrived. I was so happy that I couldn't resist myself from jumping around and playing pranks with the cousins. Grandma asked all of us to proceed to the dining table. I couldn't believe my eyes. The table was full of "Laddus", "Pithas" and loads of Assamese

delicacies. The next day, in the evening a group of 'Husoori' came to our house". This was my first experience to see a live Bihu performance. We danced along with them for a long time.

At night Mom announced that we were going to a nearby Bihu Sanmilan after dinner. The Assam sensation Zubeen Garg was going to perform. I was reluctant to go as I didn't have any idea of what "Bihu sanmilan" meant. However when I was there with all my cousins I enjoyed the programme. Sadly we couldn't see the whole concert because it was really late and we had to go home. I begged my parents to stay for some more time because Zubin Garg's most famous songs were coming up and fortunately they told me I could stay for two more songs.

One week after that I had to go back to Duliajan and I was very sad because I didn't want to leave my grandmother's house with all the people and fun around it. But I had to go and so I bid goodbye to all my relatives and left for my Duliajan home. I think this was the best Bihu of my life. Although we get to celebrate Rongali Bihu in Kuwait in our own way, I still cherish the memories of those Bihus of my childhood in Assam. Even today, as we are preparing to celebrate Bihu in Kuwait, my heart is longing to fly down to our Green and Beautiful Assam.



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IN SEARCH OF ROOT: Youths performing Lai-Lung-Kham dance in honor of Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand during her visit to Patsaku in Sivasagar in Assam.



Making of a Khaloi-a traditional fishing tool (made from bamboo)



REMEMBERING THE FOREFATHERS: An Ahom king is offering a cock for sacrifice on the occasion of Me-Dam-Me-Phi, the day when the Tai-Ahom community remembers their forefathers and all the Ahom kings.



BHOGALIR BHOG: A woman prepares "Saaj-Pani"-Traditional Assamese rice beer on the eve of 'Bhogalee Bihu'

The land of Red Rivers and Blue Hills a photographic voyage...

Photographs by **Mr. Luit Chaliha**, a young news photographer from Sibsagar, Assam



Weaving Dreams: A woman is weaving 'Gamosa' - The traditional Assamese Towel.



JOY GURU SANKAR: A troupe of Gayan-Bayan waiting to perform...

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