

## Sunday Poetry

### Atonement of Lost Heart

By : Parthajit Borah  
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Assam, India

Heart is lost amidst the natural serenity,  
Mind is sailing in the vastness of water  
Soul is resting for ethereal blue  
Dream is catching the night  
to write a new poesy behind the horizon.  
An ounce of bounce travels me from  
bottom to the shore,  
Fluctuated inclinations knit a silvery  
String to flicker the waves in heart.  
Flying kites of the blue smeared  
Vermillion joy to reach me  
At the silence.  
Let me sing the song of assimilation  
Let me listen the rhythm of your bosom.

## Tripura registers 11 per cent voting in first two hours

**Agency**  
**Agartala, Feb 18:** About 11 per cent of Tripura's electorate had cast their vote within the first two hours in the state Assembly elections which began at 7am today. Additional Chief Electoral Officer Tapas Roy said. Elections are being held in 59 out of the state's 60 Assembly constituencies. The election in Charilam constituency was postponed following the death six days ago of CPI(M) candidate Ramendra Narayan Debbarna. No incidents of violence had been reported from anywhere in the state, officials said. The voting process, however, got delayed in some booths of West Tripura, Khowai, Unakoti districts as election workers could not connection the EVMs or electronic voting machines, he said. "Engineers rushed to the booths and put everything in order," he added. BJP leader Sudip Roy Burman and ruling CPI(M) leader Krishna

Majumder, both candidates from the Agartala constituency, had earlier in the day claimed that voting in a few polling stations in the state capital were held up for more than 90 minutes because of EVM glitches. Roy refuted the claims and said all voting machines were working. State Director General of Police Akhil Kumar Shukla said security measures had been put in place across Tripura for the Assembly polls. The BSF has been asked to keep a close vigil on the 856-km-long India-Bangladesh border in Tripura and 300 companies of central armed forces along with state armed personnel and police have been deployed across the state to ensure free and fair polls, he added. Tripura Chief Electoral Officer Sriram Taranikanti said the Election Commission has appointed police observers, general observers and expenditure observers to oversee the entire poll process.

## Iranian passenger plane crashes into mountains, all 66 people on board feared killed

**Agencies**  
**Tehran, Feb. 18:** An Iranian commercial plane crashed on Sunday in a foggy, mountainous region of southern Iran, killing all 66 people on board, state media reported. An Aseman Airlines ATR-72, a twin-engine turboprop used for short-distance regional flying, was reportedly travelling from capital Tehran to the small town of Yasuj in Isfahan province with 60 passengers, including one child, and six crew members. Pir Hossein Koolivand, the head of the country's emergency services, told the Fars news agency that "the plane has crashed in the Semirum area", which lies in the mountainous southwestern region of Iran, around 480 kilometres (300 miles) south of the capital. Aseman Airlines public relations director Mohammad Taghi Tabatabai told state TV that all on the flight were killed. "After searches in the area, unfortunately we were informed that the plane crashed. Unfortunately, all our dear ones

lost their lives in this incident," Tabatabai said the plane crashed into Mount Dena, which is about 4400-meters (1,440-feet) tall. Aseman Airlines is a semi-private air carrier headquartered in Tehran that specialises in flights to remote airfields across the country. It also flies internationally. Mojtaba Khaledi, spokesman for the national emergency services, told the semi-official ISNA news agency that a helicopter had been sent to the area. "Given the fact that the area is mountainous, it is not possible to send ambulances," he said. The Iranian Red Crescent said it has deployed to the area, which was quite foggy at the time of the crash. Under decades of international sanctions, Iran's commercial passenger aircraft fleet has aged, with air accidents occurring regularly in recent years. Following the 2015 landmark nuclear deal with world powers, Iran signed deals with both Airbus and Boeing to buy scores of passenger planes.

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## Nagaland so near, yet so far

By: Oken Jeet Sandham

After running the affairs Aof the state for fifteen long years since 2003, the Naga People's Front (NPF)-led Democratic Alliance of Nagaland (DAN) government, at its flag end, moved a resolution in the Assembly in mid-December last year urging the Government of India to resolve the Naga political issue well before the elections to the 13th Nagaland Legislative Assembly. It also urged the Election Commission of India (ECI) not to announce elections to the 13th Nagaland Legislative Assembly until the Government of India arrives at an "honorable and acceptable to the Naga political issue." The Assembly called upon civil societies, tribal hohos (apex bodies), church and other organisations concerned to cooperate with the vision of the state government in this regard while calling upon all political parties and independent candidates to implement the demand for "solution before election".

The unprecedented move has evoked mixed reactions from the political parties in the state. Within no time, the Naga Hoho, the apex body of the Naga people, stepped up its demand for "solution before election". They were even camping in New Delhi and meeting various Central leaders including Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, apprising them of the latest developments. However, the Home Minister told them that the Central government would continue its peace initiative in Nagaland and asked them to cooperate in the electoral process. He said the government was committed to finding a political solution to the Naga problem. In Nagaland, a Core Committee for Nagaland Tribal Hohos and Civil

Organisations (CCNTHCO) has been formed to push the demand for "solution before election". They have held a meeting on January 25 at Hotel Japfu, Kohima, with political parties, tribal hohos, civil societies and adopted a six-point resolution. A solution to the Naga political issue before elections in Nagaland, urging ECI to withhold the issuance of election notification in the interest of peace, asking the Government of India to revoke the ban imposed on NSCN(K) and removal of the terrorism tag from the group are among the demands put forward in the six-point resolution. Eleven political parties, including the ruling NPF and the BJP, in Nagaland, have signed a "Joint Declaration" on January 29, agreeing not to file nominations for the election to the 13th Nagaland Legislative Assembly by responding to CCNTHCO's call. The "Joint Declaration" said, "We the undersigned on behalf of all the political parties and the intending candidates have, in compliance with the wishes of the people, decided not to go ahead with the issuance of party tickets or filing of nominations." Agreeing to the would-be constitutional crisis that might emerge in the event of political parties staying away from filing nominations, CCNTHCO Convener Theja Therie has stated that "talks" on the solution were in "advanced stage. According to him, when the Nagas have come together with one voice with regard to the settlement of the Naga issue, the Government of India would surely take the matter seriously. Otherwise, holding elections in the state would only prolong the issue, besides polarising people.

"Enough is enough," said Therie, asserting that if the "negotiating parties" feel that they are unable to resolve the issue, they should hand over the task to the Naga people. The Government should have a "mechanism" to arrive at a solution and political parties should take a call, he said. But all political parties, tribal hohos and civil society organisations have been taken aback by the BJP's backing out of the "Joint Declaration". They have suspended their member, Kheto Sema, from the party, saying that they have never authorised any one to sign any such document but only to attend the meeting called by CCNTHCO. This "volte-face" by the BJP has opened the floodgate for other political parties who have started issuing tickets to their respective candidates. But many were doubtful about the BJP's integrity when their national general secretary in-charge of North East, Ram Madhav, declared on January 23 in Dimapur that there should be elections in Nagaland for solution to the Naga issue. There should be "election for solution," he said. His remark drew strong reactions from CCNTHCO. Expectedly, CCNTHCO has been dissolved with effect from February 6 as political parties have started issuing tickets to their respective candidates in full swing and candidates have started filing their nominations. It has, however, asserted that "the February 29 Declaration still stands and political parties or can- didates violating this Decla- ration shall still be accused by history of putting self before the Naga cause." RN Ravi, interlocutor to the Naga talks, has stated that holding elections has got nothing to do with the Naga

peace process. While disclosing that the nego- tiating parties are trying their best and have made significant progress in the last three years in the peace process, he has assured the Naga people that the ongo- ing "peace process" has not and shall not be affected by the elections in Nagaland and further urged them to "maintain peace and har- mony in the state." To practically thwart Congress strongman Okram Ibobi Singh's last attempt to wrest power again by exploiting the sentiments of territorial in- tegrity of Manipur, several Union Ministers and Prime Minister Narendra Modi joined the chorus on Mani- pur's territorial integrity.

This is a complete mock- ery of their "Framework Agreement" with NSCN (IM) during Manipur's last elections in 2017. Rajnath Singh declared that no force in the world could affect Manipur's territorial integrity, while Modi was confidently in- forming the people of Ma- nipur at Imphal on Feb- ruary 25, 2017, one week ahead of Manipur's first phase polling, that the "Framework Agreement" did not contain any clause that would pose a threat to the territorial integrity of their state. The two, how- ever, failed to disclose the contents of the "Frame- work Agreement." The "Framework Agree- ment" had become football in the Manipur electoral soccer 2017 and one will have to wait to see how it bounces when Nagaland goes to polls. The people of Nagaland wonder if anyone is interested in a solution to the Naga issue? (Oken Jeet Sandham is the author of Narendra Modi and Naga Peace Accord and Modi Walking On Elusive Naga Peace.) (Courtesy: nationalheraldindia.com)

## National & International News

### SC asks Delhi HC to allow judicial officers to take up exam meant for additional district judges

**Agency**  
**New Delhi, Feb. 18:** The Supreme Court has come to the rescue of lower judicial officers, who were barred from appearing in an examination for appointment of additional district judges (ADJs), and asked the Delhi High Court to register their applications. Some lower judicial officers including judicial, executive and metropolitan magistrates have assailed Rule 9 (2) of the Delhi Higher Judicial Service Rules which bars them from appearing in the examination to be held on April 15 for appointment of entry level ADJs. "We direct the High Court of Delhi to register the applications of the petitioners and intervenors, if they are otherwise in order, ignoring the objections regarding seven years practice and in case they are otherwise eligible as per the three aspects referred to above," a bench of justices Kurian Joseph and M M

Shantanagoudar said. The bench, however, made clear that this was only "a provisional arrangement. " "Mere participation does not confer them with any right to claim any equity. The eligibility for appointment will be decided at the time of final hearing of the matter," the bench said. It issued notice to the Delhi High Court Registry on pleas including the one filed by Nitin Raj, Special Railway Magistrate at Ambala, through lawyer T V George and Dushyant Kumar. The pleas alleged that judicial officers, who are in service for last seven years, have not been allowed to take up the higher judicial service examination. They also said that the judges, who have a combined service of practice as lawyer and judicial service of seven years, are also not allowed to appear in the higher judicial service

examination to be conducted by the Delhi High Court. The plea raised the issue "whether a subordinate judicial officer, the cumulative years of whose antecedent practice as well as period of service in the subordinate judicial service add up to 'not less than seven years' is not eligible for appointment by direct recruitment to the post of district judge (entry level) in the Delhi Higher Judicial Service".

Besides seeking nod to appear in the Higher Judicial Service Examination, one of the pleas also sought declaration of the Delhi Higher Judicial Service Rule as "unconstitutional to the extent it excludes the persons having experience in the field of law of more than 7 years cumulatively as an antecedent advocate and as a judicial officer from being considered as eligible to appear" in the examination.

### Pleasant morning in Delhi

**Agency**  
**New Delhi, Feb 18:** People in Delhi experienced a pleasant morning today with the minimum temperature settling at 12.5 degrees Celsius, two notches above the season's average. The relative humidity was recorded at 93 per cent at 8.30 am, an MeT department official said.

The Met office has forecast clear skies for the day ahead. The maximum temperature is likely to hover at 26 degrees Celsius, the weatherman said. Yesterday, the maximum and minimum temperatures were recorded at 25.1 degrees Celsius and 12.6 degrees Celsius respectively.

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