

Editorial

Friday, January 10, 2020

Thong Nambonbi is a part of our history and not a contractor's building

Thong Nambonbi is not just another bridge built by a contractor. It is part of this history. When it broke in half, we should accept that we have betrayed our history and our forefathers. Who are these forefathers? They are those toiled and built the Thong Nambonbi in the 17th century. This bridge was first made by the war captives from a Chinese village called Khagee, who were later assimilated in the Meitei society. Their children have today become the people of Manipur. We have betrayed their labour and their skill. When the bridge was built for the first time, these war captives built this bridge using a mix of time, jaggedy and black lentils and brick and most importantly their labour. The humped bridge was again erected in 1854 AD when Meidingu Chandrakirti ruled this land. It was designed by the British engineers. It was a sight to behold when it was rebuilt during that time.

This humped bridge collapse with no one to protect it though it was in the list of the state's protected monument. It was declared a protected monument under the Manipur Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archeological Sites and Remains Act 1976 in 1992. This indicates where the blames lies. The bridge does not just collapsed without any warning.

There have been many complaints in newspaper reports about the failure to look after the bridge. Scores of newspaper articles and reports were written when the first cracks started appearing in the bridge. Hawkers and vendors use this small humped bridge to sell their goods but they were removed as it was a historical site. Later, the authorities banned the use of the bridge. Though the government managed to chase the people away from damaging the bridge, it was unable to chase their own incompetence in protecting the bridge. Even a local women's organisation has urged the government to look after the bridge which was in a critical situation. In July last year, already a section of the bridge gave up. It was the signal of an impending collapse. Now it broke in half.

Now and then the rulers of this land show that they do not know the history of this land. Since these rulers do not know our history, they do not value the things our forefathers have left for us. While our politicians run around inaugurating foot over bridges, we have failed a bridge which embodies our history. It is not just about those who rule us as we should not have so much expectations from these people. We have to do it for ourselves. It is quite an irony that the death of this bridge happened on the death anniversary of Ghangir Singh. We should not just remember their names and things they did in seminar rooms, we should also treasure the things they have left us, more importantly through their struggle and labour. But, it is not just the king who built these monuments from the money he amassed from the people. We should remember those people who labour to build it. Therefore, it is not just Chandrakirti's Thong Nambonbi. It is the humped bridge of those who toiled in making it with their hands and we have betrayed them.

One day Special Outreach Programme (SOP) on Swachhta Hi Seva

IT News
Aizawl, Jan 10

A one-day Special Outreach Programme (SOP) on "150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi" on the themes of Swachhta Hi Seva, Swachh Bharat Mission, Ban on single use of Plastics, 180 Days Achievements of NDA-II Government and Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat was held today at Siphir High School Hall organized by the Field Outreach Bureau, Aizawl, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India close co-ordination with Siphir High School, Siphir Higher Secondary School, Siphir Venglung High School And Young Mizo Association of Siphir. The Main objective of the Programme was to disseminate information and education to the People on the above cited schemes of the Government of India. Professor J. Doungel, Director, Internal Quality Assurance Cell and Professor of Political Science, Mizoram University and Dr. A. Ibomcha. Sharma, IIS, Field Exhibition Officer, Field Outreach Bureau, Aizawl



delivered lectures as Resource Persons in the Programme. Prof. Doungel spoke about Mahatma Gandhi and his dreams of a Swachh Bharat. He narrated about the life of Mahatma Gandhi and what the father of the nation has contributed for the country. He also mentioned that the occasion of the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhiji has given us an opportunity to remind the humanity of the relevance of Gandhiji's message. He said, Gandhiji's message are relevant in many policies of the

country such as Swachh Bharat, rights of women and children, and of civil liberties of small and disadvantaged groups, health and well-being of the Indian farmer and the Indian villages. Dr. Ibomcha Sharma spoke about Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat. He said that the main objective of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat is to celebrate the Unity in Diversity of our nation and to maintain and strengthen the fabric of traditionally existing emotional bonds among the people of our country, promote the spirit

of national integration through a deep and structured engagement among the states and union territories through a year-long planned engagement among states, to showcase the rich heritage and culture, customs and traditions of the states and union territories in the country for enabling people to understand and appreciate the diversity in the country, thus fostering a sense of common identity to create an environment which will promote learning between states by sharing best practices and experiences with an endeavour to attain the new height of India as a world leader.

More than 500 people including officials of the Field Outreach Bureau, teachers and students of the three academic institutions attended the programme. A Public Rally was also organized in connection with the programme from the bus stand of Siphir to Siphir High School Ground. A cultural programme of Mizo traditional dance, Quiz competition and Prize distribution to the winners of the quiz competition were the other main highlights of today's programme.

City scribes condole death of Journalist Naresh Mitra

By a Correspondent
Guwahati, Jan 10

City based Journalist fraternity on Thursday appealed to the Assam government for launching a scheme to support the bereaved families of working journalists of the state who died on duty. Appreciating the government for initiating the pension scheme for journalists, the fraternity also urged to consider extending such benefits to the spouse of journalists who dies before attaining the age of 60.

Attending a memorial meeting of journalist Naresh Mitra at Guwahati Press Club, various speakers deliberated on the need for immediate financial support to his family. The media fraternity has also appealed to all for individual contribution for the



benefit of the deceased journalist's family. State Information Commissioner of Manipur Information Commission, Oinam Sunil (a former Bureau Chief of The Times of India and a colleague of Naresh Mitra) has already donated Rs. 2.5 lakh to the

family of Mitra. The amount in the form of a bank fixed deposit was officially handed over to Mitra's wife Biva Sarkar (Mitra) in the meeting today. Amit Kumar Jain, a renowned industrialist also donated an amount of Rs. 50,000 to the family of the bereaved

journalists. Advocate Arshad Choudhury, an advocate of the Gauhati High Court, also donated Rs. 10,000 to the family of the deceased. Meanwhile, the media fraternity of Guwahati, who are interested in donating any amount to the family of Naresh are requested to deposit the amount either to the bank account number of Biva Sarkar (Mitra) wife of Naresh (Account Holder Name Biva Sarkar, A/C No 3194937302, IFSC Code: CBIN0283229, Central Bank of India, Bhangagarh Branch, Guwahati) or to the Guwahati Press Club (Santosh Mahato, Contact: 7002700486) within next seven days. Various other organizations are also welcomed to contribute towards the bereaved family.

Tripura: CPI-M compares BJP to Adolf Hitler

Agency
Agartala Jan 10

Likening the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to Adolf Hitler, CPI-M Tripura secretary Gautam Das said here on Thursday the ruling party was curbing and choking the opposition voices. In the past three days, five Left party offices in Dhaleswar, Duki, Narshinghar in western Tripura, Kailashahar in northern Tripura and Hrishamukh in southern Tripura were attacked and raged, destroying documents, books and literatures, he said. "German autocratic ruler Hitler always tried to destroy and suppress the opposition voices. Like the Hitler, the BJP and its goons are attacking opposition workers and destroying their party offices since it came to power 20 months ago," said Das. According to the CPI-M central committee member, despite the spate of attacks and arsoning, the police had remained inactive. "We have demanded high-level inquiry into the role

of the police," Das said. Criticising Chief Minister and state BJP chief Biplab Kumar Deb, he said the attacks were being conducted on his directions. The CPI-M offices were also being attacked in Banamalipur, the Assembly constituency of Deb, he said. Criticising the government's "hire and fire" policy, the CPI-M leader said, "Through outsourcing and tender systems, over 3,300 people have been engaged in electricity, social welfare and other departments. "The BJP government before the 2018 Assembly polls promised to fill 50,000 vacant posts in a year. But they are doing otherwise," he said. The CPI-M also demanded alternative arrangements for the 10,323 ad hoc government school teachers, facing termination in March due to court verdicts. "The Left Front government had created 13,000 government posts to absorb these 10,323 ad hoc teachers. But the BJP leaders had spoiled that efforts through litigation in the Supreme Court," the CPI-M state secretary said.

By- Chalamba Kshetri -

"I could buy a piece of land, but bought a pair of shoes" - Congo Dandies
What is Sapeur ?

The word Sapeur derives from the French acronym 'SAPE' short for 'Societe' des Ambianceurs et des Personnes Elegantes, and this translates to "The Society of Tastemakers and Elegant People" and the term refers to Congolese men who take pride in dressing in stylish, elegant and colourful clothing.

Origin of the Sapeur - At the coming of the 20th century, French colonial workers or coastmen arrived in Congo. The Native Congolese men who either worked for the Colonizer or spent time in France were deeply influenced by the Parisian elegance. Few Colonists thought it wise to pay their workers in Secondhand clothes instead of money. Soon, the Congolese workers now spend their meager wages lavishly to acquire the latest fashion from Paris.

In the 1960's when both Congo ' Republic of the Congo ' and ' Democratic Republic of the Congo ' were granted Independent by their Colonizers. This cultural influence continued and soon became a part of Congolese cultural phenomenon. **Who are the 'Sapeur'** The first impression of Sapeur

might appear to be lavishly dressed, high-powered businessman. But in reality, they are ordinary men working as taxi drivers, shoemaker, carpenters, electrician, gravediggers.

Analysis on 'Sapeur' fashion style

The Sapeur or Dandies (informally) style is defined by impeccably tailored suits, bowler hats, canes, silk ties, pipes, bright pocket squares, scarves, flashy and bright shining socks. Striking pattern and matching colour co-ordination. Their accessories also includes a silver tie clip, a watch almost as large as his face and sunglasses of strange pattern. These Congolese fashion pioneers took the European aesthetic and made the style all their own. From French crocodile shoes and British sport coats, to handmade Italian ties, the Sapeur wore high end designer brands like Versace, Christian Dior, G-Star, Yohji Yamamoto, Gianfranco Ferre. But the thing is, "brand" is not everything. It's all about creativity, uniqueness, matching, attitude which define their attention to the masses. There are also clear rules and expectation about what to wear and how to wear it. Sapeur wear no more than three colours at one time, excluding white. The Sapeur culture stands in contrast to the immense poverty of the area.

' Hub' of Sapeur culture - Sapeur culture is centered around Brazzaville and Kinshasa, the adjacent capitals of the 'Republic of the Congo' and ' Democratic Republic of the Congo' respectively. These Capital cities are separated only by the Congo river, but the differences between each city's Sapeur community make them feel World's apart.

Fashion amidst Caos ? The Congo conflict and Civil War has killed, 5.4 million people and made hundreds and thousands of Brazzaville and Kinshasa residents into refugees. According to the U.N. Human Development Report for 2007, people in ' Republic of the Congo' have a life expectancy of just 53 years, and a per capita GDP of \$ 2, 030 making it the 136th least developed country on Earth. But in the case of ' Democratic Republic of the Congo' fares even worse. It's life expectancy is 47 years and per capita GDP is \$143. It is the 176th least developed country in the World.

Sapeur Philosophy and their Justification -

Media often describe many African cities uniformly as run down Urban slums where War, Poverty, Crime and Disease hit the improvement of living standards. These negative depiction considered hindrance to the Country's image by the Sapeur. The Congo Dandies look beyond these stereotypes and focusses on creativity and the individual. The

rising Sapeurism is considered a good sign by the Sapeur as they say, " Sapeur can only exist in peacetime". To them it is a sign of better things after years of Civil War. It also means to indicate Peace and Stability.

With extreme poverty and undeniable political crisis in the Country, participation in the 'Sapeur Community' is for many a 'means of building self confidence despite many strife and political turmoil.

The practice is a form of escapism, which many Sapeur says enable them to forget the crippling poverty and economic problems in their everyday lives. In the face of Colonialism, Corruption, Poverty, and even Civil War, Generation of Sapeur have found something refreshing and carefree in which they can take immense pride with. To them dressing means a sense of pride and identity. Sapeur participate in public cultural events and festivals and command immense respect and admiration from their home communities. No one can deny the artistry behind 'Sapeurism'. They considered these attitude and pattern as work of art.

To these men, the competition and investing in their image is more important than improving their living conditions. My question to these confusing theory is that, Is it self - defeating to invest to such a degree in clothing? What about their families needs? Is it a right justification amidst the Country poverty.

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