



# পছোৱা

P O S O O W A

News & Events of the Assamese People Living Around the World  
VOLUME 34, ISSUE NO. 2 :: NOVEMBER 2006



## Table of Contents

Diasporic Indian, Assamese Diaspora and Networking.....	2
Chemistry.....	3
An Unreasonable Approach.....	5
Profile: Ms. Preeya Saikia .....	6
My five point agenda to curb corruption practices in India.....	7

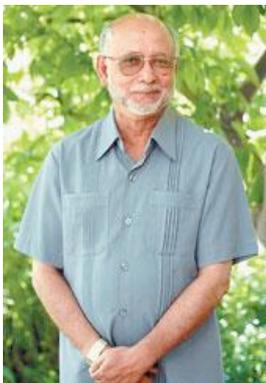
**Photo: Mary Brehm & Lisa Townsend dancing to a Bihu song during the Diwali program in Colorado Springs, Colorado in November 2006. The dance was choreographed by Bonmayuri Kalita.**

# Diasporic Indian, Assamese Diaspora and Networking

Wahid Saleh, The Netherlands

The Indian Diaspora is spread over 110 countries. It was said that the sun never sets in the British Empire. It is also the case with Indian Diaspora. The sun never sets in the world of Indian Diaspora.

The Indian Diasporic community is active in all walks of life. They are doctors, engineers, entrepreneurs, innovators, lawyers, managers, researchers, scientists, teachers, workers, and in some cases also politicians. They are an asset to their host countries as they contribute towards the development of the country in which they live. Every person in his own way is an achiever. There are some twenty five million of them living outside India.



## What is Indian Diaspora and when did it start?

Indian Diaspora is not new. It started long time ago. It goes back to the time when during the period of Emperor Ashoka Buddhist preachers went to the spread Buddhism in the South Asian countries.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, under the British rule the so called indenture labourers who left India to seek their livelihood in a foreign country were the first batch that started the Indian Diaspora. Some of them did not come back and settled in the country where they were working.

The second group of Indian Diaspora went to the Asian and African countries as skilled and semi-skilled workers artisans, traders, factory workers, engineers etc. The Petro-dollars attracted them to Middle-East. A few jumped the ocean and arrived in the African countries.

The third group is of recent origin. They are the professionals and the educated and privileged young Indians who went abroad in search of a better life. They went abroad mainly to the countries like USA, Canada, UK, Germany, France, Netherlands, Italy, Portugal, Australia etc. They are the highly qualified professionals or entrepreneurs.

Previously NRI (Non-Resident Indian) equated to Never Returning Indians or Not Required Indians. Now all of a sudden India has discovered the potential of their sons and daughters living abroad and the economic reservoir of this group living in all the nooks and corners of this world. NRI now means Now Required Indians.

It was the late Nani Palkhiwala who first drew attention to the opportunities and potential for India opened up by the economic successes of Indians abroad. All of a sudden the Indian Diaspora was discovered. India recognised the contribution made by the Diasporic Indians towards improving India's image and relationship with the host countries. India discovered the economic potential of this group.

The NRI's of today is a strong force. In the USA they are referred as the 'model minority'. In Europe the main base of the Diasporic Indian is the UK followed by the Netherlands. Two third of the Indians living in the European Union live in the UK. The NRIs who have chosen a foreign country as their "home" are professionally trained and well-

settled and have not only retained Indian identity but have also shown interest in the advancement of their kin back home in India. Many of them have retained Indian citizenship. They have gained considerable expertise in important spheres of economic and professional life. Diasporic peoples often experience the need to maintain their cultural and national identity through contact with family and friends and through consuming mass media products from their home countries and communities of origin.

If one speaks of an Indian Diaspora, it is because other forces have emerged to cement the widely different elements from India into an "Indian community". This is a combination of "nationalism" which can be translated as patriotism combined with love for the country, its heritage and its culture. They are proud to be Indian. For them '*Sare Jahan Se Accha Hindustan hamara*' - My India is better than the rest of the world. They may be the holders of Dutch, English or American passports, be first, second or third generation, but during the flag hoisting ceremony at the Indian Embassies and consulates all over the world they all very proudly sing the India's national anthem.

One speaks Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, or any of the Indian languages or one follows one's own faith, but still they preserve their "Indianness" - their "Diasporic Identity". In their heart they are still Indian. They are the Indians in the Diaspora. They have moved from their *Janmabhumi* to their present *Karmabhumi*. To quote Mr Vayalar Ravi, Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs - For an Indian in Diaspora it is not only "*Dil hai Hindustani*" but "*demaag vee Hindustani*".

## The Assamese Diaspora:

Compared to other communities from India, very few Assamese move abroad. In the USA most of the Assamese are scattered over different parts of the country. The number may not be big, but there is global presence of Assamese Diaspora and most of them are doing well. The spread and presence of the Assamese Diaspora all over the globe, however small the numbers might be, is a matter of great pride for Assam.

The overseas contribution from the Indians from Kerela, Punjab, and Gujarat to name a few states has changed the economic contour of these states. India gets substantial foreign exchange deposits under various categories from the NRIs.

Bihar, Orissa, MP, Rajahstan and others are waking up to welcome the lost souls of the soil who are working and living in a far off land. A few of the Indian states are all organising a Pravashi Divas to show them the potentials in their own states. During the last Pravashi Bharatiya Divas Chief Ministers of 10 states were present to interact with the NRI's.

During the Pravashi Bharatiya Divas, out of curiosity I attended the presentation of Bihar. I was amazed at the quality of the presentation and the effort they are taking to give a new face to Bihar and attract new ventures to Bihar. The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh informed that he keeps every Monday 17:00 to 18:00 hrs free to interact with the public. Anybody can approach him without an appointment.

And what is Assam doing? May be this seminar is a first step in that direction.

Assam has an "Image" problem. Within India the image of Assam most of the time is insurgent ridden, economically backward state, with poor infrastructure. On top of that the work force has an easy going work ethos. The negative stereotype of Assamese society or its work-ethic (something no one has yet defined as to what it might consist of) has been a product of ill-informed Indian media or perpetuated by self-loathing and insecure Assamese themselves. At the root of the low-expectations that has created the lax and

*contd. to page 5.*

# Chemistry

Nagendranarayan Choudhury

*Translated from Assamese by Jukti Kalita*

*Continued from October 2006 issue..*



The drug therapy was halted. The patient was, however, not released from the private quarters of Dr. Phukan's nursing home. It was planned that Dr. Phukan and Abhagiri would disclose the stunning results of their study at a public gathering. They wanted the patient who now had the looks of a sprightly teenager to also address the doctors, scientists, reporters and the general public who would be invited to the meeting.

A meeting was scheduled for the following week. In the meanwhile, though, there was a sharp deterioration in the condition of the patient.

The doctor and the Ayurvedic expert, the monk, expected the patient's weight to stabilize once the treatment was ended, and then slowly start to increase. But the patient continued shrinking. The doctor got concerned, and told Abhagiri that any further decrease in bulk or height would be undesirable. For the changes that were occurring were psychological as well as somatic. Not only was the patient starting to look like a child, but his demeanor, his behavior, the way he spoke or walked, and above all his intelligence level was becoming like that of a pre-pubescent boy. When the reversion engineered by them had brought him to the threshold of youth he like to gossip about the good-looking young girls of his village; he wanted to go hunting, fishing and farming or engage himself in activities normally expected of a 20 or 30 year old. Now, all that was gone. He wanted to talk about games that he played as a child and of eating. "When will these changes come to an end?" - the doctor wondered. "When will the patient start to grow like a normal child from the physical and mental state that their drugs caused him to revert to."

A demoralized Dr. Phukan began reviewing the procedures that they followed during the course of the treatment. He hoped to discover errors or oversights that may give hints of actions to arrest the decline in physical condition of the patient. The examination indicated that there were no glaring mistakes that either he or Abhagiri had committed. The compounder or the aide, who had prepared the drug from the third week of the treatment, if anyone, must have made thus errors or dereliction of duty. Further inquiry confirmed this suspicion. One day the aide had broken a glass vial containing a rare ingredient while mixing the potion. He was scared that he would be punished if this was discovered and substituted the wasted compound with another without informing either the doctor or the monk. Then there were those leaves that had become stale with growth of fungi. There was also a container whose label had partially come off, so that the aide must have used it by mistake.

Abhagiri did not know any Ayurvedic medicine that could be used to stop the continuing drop in the size of the patient. Dr. Phukan knew that there was nothing in western medicine that could be of any help. "If he continues to shrink, won't he finally disappear?" - worried the doctor.

With the shrinkage in the patient's physical stature continuing unabated, a horrified Dr. Phukan resorted to an intensive dietary program. The doctor started paying more attention to the quality and quantity of food that was administered to the old man (who was now a boy). The doctor made sure that he got sufficient quantities of food that were rich in minerals and vitamins, and at regular intervals. His goal was not to overstuff the boy's stomach for doing so may result in indigestion and a loss of appetite. It was hoped that these nourishment when properly absorbed into the body would halt the decline, and would ultimately stimulate a growth process. An Ayurvedic book called 'Rajaballabh' that Abhagiri had recommended was also purchased for this purpose.

Several times during the day, the patient was given freshly squeezed juices that were prepared alternatively from oranges, ripe tomatoes, apples and mixed vegetables. The breakfast consisted of two half-boiled eggs, slices of vitamin-enriched bread along with butter, and about half a kilogram of pure cow milk. Well cooked fish or lamb meat with rice, potatoes and peas were served for lunch. For afternoon snack he was given pieces of coconut, a few dates, pistachios, some raisins and four glasses of milk. The evening meal which was fed around 10 p.m., was kept simple and vegetarian with a couple of *rotis*, some rice, a little barley, and a stew of cauliflower, cabbage, potatoes and lentils. In addition to all the above, the boy was allowed to have supplements of juice made from raw meat, sugar candy and cod-liver oil whenever he desired. A few items like rice and bread were peptonized before being offered to the boy so that he could digest them easily. Before sending him off to sleep in the night he was given a few Ayurvedic digestive pills, and strangely enough a small dosage of brandy.

The patient withstood the barrage of all that rich food remarkably well during the first few days. Then one night he developed serious indigestion; he could not digest those fruits, meat and vegetables any longer. That was not all. A bout of dysentery overpowered his weakened defenses, and he defecated many times during the night. The doctor was shocked to discover in the morning that the patient had lost several kilograms of weight overnight. It seemed to the doctor that reversion in age that had been occurring unabatedly during the previous weeks accelerated its pace, by now purely undesirable, considerably in those twelve hours. The patient appeared to have become younger by at least ten years during that period. Alas, he now looked like a ten-year-old.

There was another factor that added to the heightened consternation on part of the doctor. Daily records of patient's height now indicated that he was losing an inch and a half per day compared to loss of an inch daily during the previous week. Dr. Phukan wondered if he should abandon the experiment completely and leave the final outcome to fate. But he was frightened at the prospect of witnessing the patient reduce to a little baby. "Who will take care of him then?" he asked himself. He knew that it was possible to hire 'wet-nurses', nurses who took upon themselves the arduous task of breast-feeding their charges with own milk. But such hired help had to be brought from the big city of Calcutta, a thousand kilometers away, and was expensive costing over thirty rupees a month in addition to food and boarding. The doctor had already spent a considerable sum on the experiment so far, mainly on the rich diet that had become necessary caused by the unforeseen complications. He realized the need to shore up his battered finances, but at the moment was unwilling to begin seeing other patients for regular diseases, because such diversions would hurt his research.

Dr. Phukan knew that certain glands controlled human height during the formative years. He wrongly recalled having read of an experiment in which dwarfs who received preparations developed from endocrine glands of chimpanzees grow to normal heights. Since chimpanzees were found only in Africa, he bought a large native monkey that resembled a chimpanzee by virtue of large stature, prepared a crude liquid extraction from its glands using his own method, and injected that into the patient. But nothing changed, the patient continued to shrink.

The old patient had never married and had no children to carry on his family name. He had several nephews who looked after his daily needs now that he had grown old. They expected him to die soon leaving to them bulk of his estate. The patient was distrustful of his nephews who he considered to be good-for-nothing gold-diggers, who were treating him well during his last days only because their sight was set on his hard earned wealth. He thought in disgust that they would carve up his fertile farmland and divvy up his bank balance as soon as he died. But he had no choice for he could not handle the daily chores by himself.

When the old man left for Dr. Phukan's nursing home in the city he went unaccompanied. He did not disclose to anyone, including the nephews, the real reason why he was making the trip. "I will be away for six weeks. At first I will go to Dr. Phukan's clinic to get rid of this chronic migraine that has been bothering me for the last few years. Then I will spend some days at the holy temple at Kamakhya."

There was an important concern that forced him to keep his true intentions secretly. He was not overly troubled at the thought that if his real wishes became known, fellow villagers would ridicule him for his lust for young girls at an advanced age. What worried him more was that if his nephews learnt of the designs to get married and have children, they would immediately stop taking care of him, for then they would not get any share of his wealth which naturally would go to his own children. That by itself would have been superbly acceptable except under the scenario that Dr. Phukan's experiment failed and the old man was left to fend for himself. He did not want to risk that harrowing prospect and hence the subterfuge.

When their uncle did not return for over nine weeks, the nephews got worried. Their uncle hardly ever left home for more than a day or two at a time. So they wrote him a letter at Dr. Phukan's address in the town. The old man was illiterate. The doctor responded with a lie that their uncle was fine and dandy.

After three more weeks, one of the nephews decided to visit the old man in the town. This sly nephew thought that if he can meet with his uncle alone for a few hours, he would be able to use his charm to convince the old man to will over the property to him and him only. The nephew met Dr. Phukan at the nursing home and wished to speak with his uncle. The doctor had no inkling into the nefarious design of the nephew. Neither did he know of the patient's desire to keep the experiment a secret from even his kith and kin. Thus the doctor escorted the man to the private quarters where the patients was held and explained how he had transformed their uncle to a small child, thanks to the amazing drugs that he invented.

The nephew could not believe what he saw with his eyes or the words he heard from Dr. Phukan. He was shell-shocked by sheer implausibility of the story relayed to him. "Does Dr. Phukan think that I am an idiot, a nincompoop who will believe any cock-

and-bull story that he dishes out? How in the world does he have the audacity to show a young boy, and tell me that that's my uncle. That's absurd, purely insane"- the nephew thought.

He concluded that Dr. Phukan was lying through his teeth. Perhaps his uncle was alive no more, the stupid experiments of the doctor may have already cost him his life. He had heard that 'foreign-returned' scientists and doctors like Phukan played with lives of not only animals but also humans. His uncle may have been sacrificed at the altar of so-called science, and now the doctor was trying to cover up his act. Or, perhaps his uncle was still alive and the doctor wanted to unscrupulously grab his uncle's wealth.

The nephew consulted with a lawyer and filed a complaint against the doctor in the town's *thana* or the police station. The case stated that his uncle who was undergoing medical treatment had disappeared from Dr. Phukan's nursing home. It further went on to say that the doctor claimed that his uncle had been transformed into a young boy by dint of his amazing age-rejuvenating drugs. The nephew complained that the incident was nothing but a clever ploy to lay hands on his uncle's considerable real estate and other properties.

The police inspector who was a dedicated servant of the government went to Dr. Phukan's nursing home early next morning ostensibly to conduct an official inquiry. He wanted to get to the bottom of what was going on. If the complaint were indeed true then the inspector would apply the law of the land, arrest the doctor and put him in prison till a judge decided upon the case. But the foremost reason why the inspector rushed to the doctor's nursing home was that for some weeks he had been hearing rumors about the experiments and wanted to satisfy his curiosity.

When he arrived at the nursing home, the inspector saw that Abhagiri was ensconced on a large tiger skin in a classic *asana* position at the entrance to the building. He was enjoying the pleasure of opium smoking. The smoke that emanated from his mouth formed circles of increasing size and decreasing density as it spiraled upwards until the thinning outer lines became indistinguishable from the surrounding air. Several of the monk's disciples who were mainly from the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar

sat surrounding him on the ground on cloth mats; they seemed to be keenly watching the lines of smoke rise, and eagerly waiting their turns at *babaji's* pipe.

The disciples recognized the inspector to be a respectable member of the police force because of his starched and ironed *khaki* uniform. They stood up from their tattered mats and lazily offered him salutations. The monk, however, did not care to rise from his seat or address the officer. When the inspector inquired about Dr. Phukan's whereabouts, a servant ushered him into the house, and offered him a chair to seat while he went in again to inform the doctor. At that moment the doctor was busy in his laboratory. The inspector explained to the doctor the reason for his visit. He was responding to an official complaint by the nephew about his uncle's disappearance from the doctor's nursing home. In the complaint he claimed an alleged attempt on part of the doctor to cover up the crime by absurdly claiming that his uncle who was in his late sixties had been turned into a child of not more than twelve.

*Continued to next issue...*

# An Unreasonable Approach

## Role of Education in choosing workable leadership



For those of us who do talk about a literate world and development through education but deep down believe that those superstitious, ignorant folks can never make it big—here is something from guys who might sound unreasonable—who believe change is possible. See the video at [http://gsevserv.harvard.edu/ramgen/iep/iep\\_nm\\_fr.rm](http://gsevserv.harvard.edu/ramgen/iep/iep_nm_fr.rm).

How many of us believe that it is possible to have an educated workforce in Assam who choose their government not based on the symbol of hand (Congress) or Lotus (BJP) or elephant (AGP)—, since they cannot read the names of the party but recognize only symbols, like preschool kids? Or, vote for whom their community leaders direct them to, but by being literate and able to read widely and judge for themselves what sort of political party is good for them, and more importantly which local leader should be voted out of office and which one voted in? Is it possible to have a society in Assam where it will be necessary for the politicians to enter in discussion and debates to convince the voters of their worthiness? And not just give speeches and car rallies to show their muscle strength, to browbeat voters into choosing them.

Of course, the questions remain: How useful is universal literacy in improving economic development of the region? Will universal literacy translate in Assam becoming the next Japan? Is there any role of neighbors in economic progress of a region?

## Location, Location, Location!!

Would it would make any difference if instead of Bhutan, Bangladesh and Burma (Myanmar) the NE region of India had the location of current Switzerland? What if France, Italy and Germany surrounded Assam? Most likely the culture of progress and technological advancement and subsequent trade would have rubbed off on Assam as well. Aren't Mexico (and also Canada) progressing due to its proximity to super power USA?

## Linkages and Learning Strategies

How can Assam inch towards such world powers despite being halfway across the globe from them?

Can we learn from Japan?

While reading "Made in Japan", the famous autobiography of Akio Morita, the founder of Sony group, who was also the unofficial spokesman of Japan Inc., it becomes clear that Japanese grew by their interactions, through trade and education, with the USA. Sony rose from the ashes of post WW-2 Japan. Akio moved to USA while running his factory in Japan, to expand trade there and imbibe new technology and business practices. He said that he kept away from fellow Japanese and mingled freely with the Americans, since only Americans alone could help him develop new skills. Fellow Japanese were like blind leading the blind, all in the same boat. More info on Akio Morita can be found at [http://www.sony.com/SCA/press/morita\\_bio.shtml](http://www.sony.com/SCA/press/morita_bio.shtml).

Can we learn something from Japan? Is learning by doing possible?

What is possible?

*Contributed by  
Umesh Sharma.*

*Ed.M. Harvard Univ. '05, MBA '96, BA (Econ.) Delhi '94  
College Park, MD, USA*

## **Diasporic Indian, Assamese Diaspora and Networking**

*contd. from page 1..*

lackadaisical work environment in public institutions is a governmental system that is unable to enforce any rule or standard of performance.

India is a country of young people, with 54 percent of its population under the age group of 25 years. What is Assam doing to absorb the potential of this young work force? There should be vision, there should be a plan to utilise this work force.

Time has come to take a different look at the attitude towards Assamese entrepreneurship and towards honest hard work. Entrepreneurship is more than being a PWD contractor employing a workforce consisting of workers from outside Assam and sometimes outside India. The Assam Tribune of 16<sup>th</sup> January 2007 carried an article about entrepreneurship and the course offered by the Assam Institute of Entrepreneurship, Guwahati. In the first batch of 16 students there are also students from Orissa and Tamilnadu. Is Assam not in a position to deliver even 16 local candidates for this course? Among the Assamese there is a general reluctance for hard work. Moreover the youth has to work in an environment with several impediments. But the same people when they go abroad they do well. The significant reasons why they excel once they leave India are (in random order):

1. Discipline
2. Motivation
3. Dignity of labour
4. Reasonable tax structure
5. Freedom from extortion from illegal tax collection agencies (*Goonda tax*).
6. Defendable property rights.
7. Reliable and timely conflict resolution processes.
8. Freedom from onerous governmental restrictions, meddling and corruption.

'democratically elected' government's unresponsiveness to glaring problems? And what has changed in the last two decades since ULFA's emergence? What have Indian government done? What have Assam government done to neutralize or even merely attempt to address the causes that gave rise to ULFA? Since then it is not only the ULFA but over thirty more insurgencies that arose throughout the Seven Sisters.

After the cowardly killing of the innocent Bihari workers by ULFA there is a flurry of high level visitors from Assam. But when the same ULFA killed the innocent Assamese in Dhemaji the so called leaders were no where to be seen. The government has beefed up the security and sent 3,000 more troops. It is not only the troops which are required but the government should also beef up the intelligence. It seems the intelligence gathering is in very poor shape. If intelligence would have been good many of the killings would not have taken place. The government should introduce a system of paying money for usable information. This might lead to neutralising some of threats by the underground organisations.

The government should walk the extra mile and join hands with the opposition to solve this problem. And the opposition, instead of protesting against the government should support the government and together with the people try to solve this social menace which is one of the main reasons for unwillingness of investors to participate in local projects. The result of a recent poll showed that 95% of the people are against the demands of ULFA.

They are all critical issues and should be recognised and dealt properly. Outside India, India has also the same problem. But India is fighting back with different campaigns. The same applies to Assam. For the tourist we should make Assam 'Incredible Assam' but for the investors for the business community it should be 'credible Assam'.

*..contd. to next issue..*

**Profile:**

# Ms. Preeya Saikia

Ms. Preeya Saikia , eighteen year old daughter of Mr. Prabhat Saikia and Mrs. Gini Saikia of Bellerose, NY, recently graduated from the famous Bronx High School of Science in New York City with honors. Preeya is a brilliant student who has earned accolades for her numerous achievements.

During her time at Bronx Science, Preeya conducted research at the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine for a year. Her research involved finding proteins that might trigger the symptoms of the autoimmune disease known as scleroderma. The title of her research was the *“Effects of pro-fibrogenic cytokine on transcription factors that induce collagen promoter activity in human fibroblasts”*. Preeya sometimes worked at the lab after school for six hours. She says that balancing schoolwork and research was a lot of work, but strange as it may seem, she enjoyed learning how to balance her time because it was a challenge and she likes challenges. She thinks that they force her to stretch her limits and inevitably see that many things are possible.

Preeya has a passionate artistic side as well and that has been roaring in her since the day she could hold a pencil. She says that “drawing is a purifying outlet for emotions and a handy tool for understanding the world”. Preeya took the AP Studio Art course during her time in the high school, and her artwork was displayed in a gallery in NYC along with her peers’ artwork. Two years ago, Preeya was also offered the opportunity to submit her work to a Lower Eastside Manhattan art gallery. She continues to draw and says that she cannot imagine her life without art. Besides the fine arts, Preeya is also adept at dancing. She has been performing Bihu dance since the age of four and has performed at such prestigious locations as Lincoln Center, Hunter College, and the NYC mayor’s residence at Gracie Mansion, as well as local Assamese community events.

Truly an all-rounded individual, “Pan-interested” Preeya, has had a hard time pinning down a college major. She has finally decided to give architecture a shot; she says “architecture has both a creative aspect and a scientific aspect”. She will begin her studies in architecture this fall in the CUNY Honors College at the



Ms. Preeya Saikia with parents,  
Mr. Prabhat Saikia and Mrs. Gini Saikia

---

City College of New York (CCNY). CUNY Honors College is a privileged opportunity open to both U.S. citizens and international students. Preeya is receiving a full scholarship to CCNY along with stipend and scholarship money for books, internships, and everyday expenses.

Among Preeya’s most recent achievements, other than her acceptance to an outstanding college, is her receipt of the Joseph E. Collins Memorial Scholarship, which is a scholarship offered through her father’s technical guild. Preeya has won top prizes for her work in research including regional level status for the NYCESF competition, third place as well as scholarship money for the scientific writing component of the Junior Science and Humanities Symposium (JHSS) and overall semifinalist status for the JHSS competition. She was also awarded at graduation for her time and achievements in research. Earlier this year, Preeya received a President’s Volunteer Service Award from the President’s Council on Service and Civic Participation.

Preeya has accomplished great many things in her eighteen years of existence and we, as a community, are very proud of her. We know that this is only the beginning of a great line of successes for Ms. Preeya Saikia and we wish her well.

*Contributed by Umesh Tahbilda, New Jersey*

# My five point agenda to curb corruption practices in India

India's development and progress have been extra-ordinary during the past decade. India is well on its way to become a developed nation during our lifetime. India's GDP has been increasing rapidly and it has been predicted that the GDP will grow to \$17,000 by 2015. One of the biggest obstacles to India's continued progress is rampant corruption. India's existing public systems are among the most corrupted in the entire world. Common people are the victims of corruption day in and day out. People need to bribe officials to get anything done, big or small.

I have come up with a five point agenda to curb corruption in India. I outline my scheme below.

1) Tough government regulation is the key to curb this practice among its officials. We need a law to make sure that if any official is found guilty of bribery, action such as the following will be taken mandatorily.

- i) If found guilty, his or her PF or pension funds will be confiscated forever.
- ii) Fines are payable upfront; if not found guilty, fines will be refunded later.
- iii) Ensure temporary or permanent presence of CBI or other anti-corruption representatives in the most vulnerable departments.
- iv) Organize yearly town hall meetings to make awareness among its employees highlighting departmental mission, products and services.

*Byproducts will be more jobs in the departments, increase in government revenue, improvements in employee morale.*

2) Systems at all levels of government need to be upgraded in such a way that interactions among government officials and the public

become very minimal. This can be achieved by using Windows based systems in all government departments where possible. The overall office environment needs to be improved so that every transaction becomes more transparent. Government officers should interact with common public using counters like we see in banks in the US with officers on the other side of the window attending to public needs without delay.



*Byproducts will be reduced traffic to the departments with the result that government officers will be more productive.*

3) Identify most corrupt departments and points of vulnerability, and install CCTV or surveillance cameras which will be run and operated by third party, preferably from the private sector. The CCTV or surveillance camera records will be analyzed and monitored by other government departments such as Anti-corruption, and CBI.

*Byproducts will be job creation for the private sector, revenue stream for CBI or anti-corruption departments, etc.*

4) **Introduce** one mandatory chapter on corruption, its consequences and the available laws in the country in social studies text books starting class 8<sup>th</sup> or sooner to raise awareness among the prospective citizen of our country.

*Byproducts will be textbooks with useful and relevant information.*

5) Identify each government department's products and services and the time taken for each service and display these numbers in public places on a mandatory basis. Publish these once in a year in popular daily local newspapers.

*By products will be a new revenue stream for the newspaper industry.*

*Contributed by Vavani Sarmah, Seattle, USA.*

## Photographs of participants in the Bihu dance show during the Diwali program in Colorado Springs, Colorado in November 2006.



L to R...front row : Anil Vasudeva & Paritosh Rohilla, 2nd row : Mary Brehm, Gayathri Chalvadurai, Monica Desai, Smita Patel, Bonmayuri Kalita, Neha Jivan, Hetal Naik, Lisa Townsend. Last row: Vishwa Somanath & Yash Raval



L to R Lata Reddy, Neha Jivan, Bonmayuri Kalita, Mary Brehm, Gayathri Chalvadurai, Lisa Townsend

This is an  
Official Publication of  
Assam Society of America, USA



The **ASA Newsletter** is published monthly. Dhruba Das, on behalf of Assam Society of America, has published this issue of ASA newsletter. The editors are Babul Gogoi (New Delhi, India), Ganesh Bora (Lake Alfred, Florida), Jugal Kalita (Colorado Springs, Colorado, Editor-in-Chief), Nandini Borah Das (Centennial, Colorado), Priyankoo Sarma (Gainesville, Florida), Ram Sarangapani (Houston, Texas), Rini Kakati (London, UK), Satyam Bhuyan (Ames, Iowa), Umesh Sharma (Cambridge, Massachusetts), Vavani Sarmah (Secane, Pennsylvania).  
**Design & Layout:** Babul Gogoi.

The ASA Executive Committee is composed of Dhruba Das, President (Coatesville, Pennsylvania), Kabita Sharma (Hillsborough, New Jersey), Vice President, Mukul Chowdhary (Edison, New Jersey), Treasurer, and Ganesh Bora (Lake Alfred, Florida), General Secretary.

We invite contributors from all over the world. We appreciate your valuable feedback, comments & suggestions, and of course, news from your part of the world for inclusion in the coming editions. Please send your written contributions to [asanewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:asanewsletter@yahoo.com). If you prefer, you can send your contributions directly to any of the editors listed above as well. Any contribution must be 750 words or shorter in length. Please include a scanned image of the author. We also request you to submit other pertinent photographs if possible.



Assam Society of America  
PO Box 254  
Mays Landing  
NJ 08330  
USA

Enjoy Your Complimentary Copy

