

Nitin Laid to Rest with Military Honors

I am back from my overnight trip to Houston to attend the funeral of our very own Ram and Alpana Sarngapani's son, Nitin.

It was a somber, poignant but dignified event attended by many of Nitin's and the Sarangapanis' friends and relatives and well-wishers. Nitin was laid to rest by an U S Marine contingent with full military honors. Some of the most touching moments were:

* Nitin's friend Luis, a fellow marine who has just returned from Iraq and at whose house Nitin was celebrating his 24th birth-

day in the hours before his life was taken, pinning his combat ribbon on Nitin's lapel. Nitin wished to go to Iraq and earn his own, but did not in deference to his parents' concerns. Luis explained over his cracked voice how he told Nitin to forget it, that it 'was not worth it'. But he understood how Nitin, a gentle and kind young man of average built, felt, how he was transformed by 9-11, and gave his own ribbon to Nitin as his parting gift.

* Reema Das' poignant rendition of Nitin's favorite Assamese lullaby: "Amaare' moina

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xuboye'---", reworded to "Amaare' Nitin xuboye' --- ---" that choked up all who understood the lyrics. Reema explained to me how the night before the funeral, Nitin's older friend Raja Deka came up with the idea and how she agreed to sing.

* Folding of the stars and stripes that wrapped the casket by the marine officers and their handing it over to Alpana and Ram.

I did not know Nitin much, even though I met him a couple of times. But knowing Alpana and Ram as we do, Nitin, just like Caesar and Antony (their two German Shepherds), who have become parts of our Assam net family, it was not an easy thing to deal with. We hope Ram and Alpana will find the peace and the strength to carry on and re-orient their own lives to give meaning to Nitin's very short one.

- Chandan Mahanta, St. Louis, October 3, 2005



Promoting Specialty Assamese Teas

There are few places that are as desolate and beautiful as a tea garden in the heart of Upper Assam. Hundreds of thousands of tea bushes on every side and the nearest town fifteen kilometers away, yet even a city boy growing up in these surroundings didn't have much time to miss his city. His most favorite pastimes were fishing with his boroxi or jakoi, or heading out into the Buri-Dihing jungles on foot, with his dah and his twenty-two bore Bruno rifle.

His father owns two tea gardens, Satrupa (aka Konapothar) Tea Estate in Tinsukia district, and Rani Tea Estate in Kamrup district. He has a knack for working on details, maybe, because of his training as a mechanical engineer, and today his Assamese teas are considered to be amongst the best (if not the best) of teas being harvested in Assam. His farming interest also extends into fisheries, goat farming, and a diary farm. He has the distinction of owning the only operational hydroelectric power plant in northeast India.

His North American subsidiary, Assam Tea Company, was incorporated in 2000 and till date they have been marketing teas through three channels. The bulk of the teas are sold to importers, branders and gift product manufacturers who buy in larger volume (an average of 10,000 pounds per order). The smallest segment, but with the largest potential market, is their online retail store (www.assamtea.biz). Through this e-store they offer the largest selection of single malt (un-blended) specialty Assamese teas to consumers in US & Canada. The last segment of their customers is retailers with one or more retail outlets. These are usually tea bars, teashops, cafés, restaurants and gift shops. They also have quite a few social clubs that are part of this last segment of customers.

Most Assamese people don't know much about the very interesting and complex

world of tea that's the heart of the Assamese economy. They harvest over 200 varieties of black teas every year, making Assamese tea the number one selection worldwide for the highest quality black teas. Commercially, black teas are harvested and processed in two traditional styles in Assam – either leaf teas or granular teas. Their tea gardens (Satrupa and Rani) are 100% leaf



tea manufacturers. However, most Assam tea gardens are predominantly granular tea manufacturers. The European, and North American marketplaces prefer leaf style teas.

Even through since the 1850s, Assamese black tea has been the backbone of the British tea industry, one will be surprised to find that very few tea drinkers in the Western world know their Assams from their Earl Grays. Also the fact that there are very cheap black teas available from a number of other countries worldwide, many tea importers blend (mix) a tiny bit of Assamese teas with teas from Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Kenya, Argentina or China, and call them Scottish Breakfast, Irish Breakfast, etc. Most of the Assamese teas in North

America average about three to four years of age.

The biggest challenge of selling pure quality Assamese teas in North America is ignorance. As people concerned educate North American tea buyers and marketers on the profile and taste characters of Assamese teas, they start seeing the light behind how they can make a bundle by marketing specialty Assamese teas in the fastest growing tea market in the world (i.e., North America). They start figuring out how to get rid of their stash of decade old Assam blends, and replacing them with a wide

range of incredible tasting single malt Assamese teas. Finally, American consumers are starting to get the choice of whether to drink thick, malty, autumnal harvest, single malt from Satrupa or a thin, tart, complex body, wet-ending Lower Assam tea, from Rani Tea Estate. I had the opportunity to taste myself during my visit to this establishment at St. Petersburg in Florida. Saunam Bhattacharjee is doing a tremendous job in marketing Assamese tea bringing directly from the tea gardens in Assam to the cups in North America. The photo shows him in his warehouse where he is expecting another container.

- Ganesh Bora, Lake Alfred, Florida

A Legend's Nite – Musical Journey from Brahmaputra to Mississippi

Assam Association, Delhi, organized a cultural evening “A Legend's Nite – Musical Journey from Brahmaputra to Mississippi” by the legendary maestro Dr. Bhupen Hazarika on 16 October 2005 in Siri Fort Auditorium, Delhi. The proceeds of the cultural evening would be used for the construction of a cultural and educational center named after the revered Srimanta Sankaradev in Qutab Institutional Area. The contributions of that great genius to the literature, culture and society of Assam and its share in the pan-Indian identity and the Mahapurusha's preaching of human dignity, an attitude of devotion to the Almighty and an un-acquisitive material pursuit in life is still relevant in today's life of high-tech glitz and at times confused interpersonal relations. That Dr. Bhupen Hazarika helped the Association in its effort by kindly consenting to hold a musical evening with some of his timeless numbers after many years in Delhi is also an indicator of the continuum of the tradition Sankaradeva set.

The proposed cultural and educational Centre would create a nurturing environment that would strengthen the sense of belonging, pride and appreciation of Assamese cultural, heritage and history. By organizing a great cultural show, Assam association, Delhi, realized its long cherished dream of having a cultural complex of its own.

The event was sponsored by ONGC and Oil India. GAIL, HAL NEEPCO were the co-sponsors while Indian Airlines was the travel partners. Smt. Julie Dutta, wife of Shri RK Dutta, CMD, OIL, was the Chief Guest. Noted filmmaker Kallpana Lajmi ably anchored the musical journey which was attended by over 1,500 people.

Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, the multifaceted genius has been hailed as the cultural ambassador of Assam to the rest of the world. He is one of the stalwarts of Indian music today. There are many facets to Bhupen Hazarika's personality –singer, lyricist, musician, writer, filmmaker and a social crusader through his songs. Bhupenda's name itself is musical for the people of eastern India; his *Dil Hum Hum Kare* won the hearts of millions of Indians.



his homeland, he joined the Gauhati University as a lecture and went abroad in a cultural exchange program where he overstayed by a few days. The bold Bhupen tendered his resignation when some disciplinary action was initiated against him. He decided to take music as a livelihood and thereafter never looked back. He has been awarded the Padmashree (1977), Padmabhushan (2001), and Dadasaheb Phalke Award the highest honour for cin-

Dr. Bhupen Hazarika was born in the year 1926. After his schooling in Tezpur and collegiate education in Guwahati, he received an MA Degree from Banaras Hindu University. Then he left for the Columbia University, New York where he received his doctorate in Mass Communication. He also received the Lisle Fellowship from the Chicago University. It was during this period that he was awarded a gold medallion in New York as the best interpreter of India's folk songs by Eleanor Roosevelt. He met Paul Robeson, the legendary black singer in the USA and was greatly influenced by his idea that “music is an instrument of social change”. On his return to

ematic achievement, for his Lifetime Contribution Indian cinema in 1993. With his multifarious talent Bhupen hazarika has proved himself as a thoughtful writer by writing fifteen books on various subjects such as fiction, travelogues, essays and an autobiography.

*Manoj Kumar Das
General Secretary
Assam Association Delhi*

Eternal Assamese Songs

Hello Assamese Reader! Here's a message from one of my friends, who works with UNI in Guwahati. Please send your lists to mrinalt@rediffmail.com. Also please drop a copy at AssamNet so that we all can learn about the best songs in Assamese:

Dear Friends

The National Games 2005 is preparing an audio CD pf 12 Greatest Assamese songs to be released along with its souvenir. I am taking this opportunity to invite you all to suggest the names of the 12 Gems of the Assamese Songs.

Mrinal Talukdar

*National Games Souvenier Committee
Guwahati*

Of course, the lists will depend on personal choices and will widely vary, but I am sure all will agree on at least a few gems. Here's my own personal choice:

1. Srimoyee Asomir (Puroshottam Das)
2. O Mor Aponar Dex (Lakshminath Bezbaruah)
3. Biswabijoyee Najowan (Jyotiprasad)
4. Seuji Seuji (Jyotiprasad)
5. Pujō Aha Aai Matrir (Parvatiprasad)
6. Sagar Sangamat (Bhupen Hazarika)
7. Moi Eti Jajabar (-do-)
8. Manuhe Manuhar Baabe (-do-)
9. Ma Aami Xodiyale Jaame (Khagen Mahanta)
10. Majulit Ejoni Sowaliye Dukh Paale (Zubeen Garg, being a modern heartthrob) or Sal Gori (Krishnmani Sutia, one of the biggest hits in Assam ever, which has immensely popular in Bengal, Bihar, Nepal and even Bangladesh. It is a Jhumur song)
11. Hastir Kanya (Pratima Pandey-Bhupen Hazarika)
12. Xurore Deulore or O Axomiya Deka Dal (Bishnu Rabha)

While this is my personal list, I feel there could be inclusion of a few songs from other languages from Assam (most notably Bodo or Karbi).

- Utpal Borpujari, New Delhi

by Dilip Datta, Univ of Rhode Island

The difficulty of selecting good songs is to decide the criteria for selection. So far, I am set on judging a song by each of the following components:

1. **Lyrics** (Theme or richness of thought, sweetness of the words used, and literary style)
2. **Music** (Synthesis of the tunes of the soil, tunes of the present day world, classical raag or raagini etc.)
3. **Dexterity of the singer to carry the feelings and emotions of the lyricist.**
4. **Popularity.**

Of course, when making a selection, one ought to think of variety in each category.

If you are thinking about 12 greatest Assamese songs, you cannot ignore Sankardev and Madhabdev. I will definitely start with the following list:

1. **Suno, suno re suno boiry promana** (Theme: Warning to evil doers; Lyrics: Sankardev; Music: Sankardev; Artist: Bhupen Hazarika)
2. **Burha bhai hori guna gai nacha** (Theme: A humorous but realistic description of old age and how one can enjoy it; Lyrics: Madhabdev; Music: Madhabdev; Artist: Soda Gogoi)
3. **Boikuntha prokasr hori namo rawse** (Theme: A supreme expression of gratitude and soul stirring appreciation of what Sankardev has done for Assam; Lyrics: Madhabdev; Music: Madhabdev; Artist: Soda Gogoi)
4. **Aaji jaagaa moor matri** (Theme: A song that brings out the patriotic sentiment prevailing in the early part of the twentieth century; Lyrics: Jyotiprosad Aggarwala; Music: Jyotiprosad Aggarwala; Artist: Pulak Bannerjee)
5. **Aami kori phuroon biakul** (Theme: A soul's longing to be one with nature; Lyrics:

Jyotiprosad Aggarwala; Music: Jyotiprosad Aggarwala; Artist: Zubeen Garg and Nitumoni Bora)

6. **Diya jodi dekha aai** (Theme: A true lover's moment of realization when he sees his lover as his goddess; Lyrics: Ganesh Gogoi; Music: Chandra kamal; Artist: Monisha Hazarika)

7. **Tumi Nusuna ganor sunala amiyaa sur** (Theme: An appreciation of what love brings to one; Lyrics: Anandi Das; Music: Anandi Das; Artist: Nirmal Chakravarty)

8. **Nahor phule nusuwai** (Theme: A strong resolve of a lover to give the best of everything to his lover; Lyrics: Bishnu Prosad Rabha; Music: Bishnu Prosad Rabha; Artist: Bhupen Hazarika and Pompa Gogoi)

9. **Logan ukoli goal** (Theme: A soul's resolve to cope with tragedy; Lyrics: Bishnu

Prosad Rabha; Music: Bishnu Prosad Rabha; Artist: Kamal Chowdhury)

10. **Aakaasor paar bhaangi naami aahe junakor dhol** (Theme: A description of the heartthrobbing experience on a moonlit night; Lyrics: Ajit Barua; Music: Brojen Barua; Artist: Monojyotsna Goswami)

11. **Nibir bone je matise**

ja (Theme: A soul's yearning to be one with nature; Lyrics: Nirmalprova Bordoloi; Music: Jayanta Hazarika; Artist: Jayanta Hazarika)

12. **Kasot kolochi haali jaali koon menoka aahe** (Theme: Rhythmic description of a rural damsel, a bongeet; Lyrics: Rudra Barua; Music: Rudra Barua; Artist: Gyanada Kakoti)

13. **Sou kuonwolir aarot sunaali** (Theme: The joy and thrill that fills one's heart during the harvesting season; Lyrics: Nirmalprova Bordoloi; Music: Mukul Barua; Artist: Parveen Sulatana)

14. **Snehe aamaar Sota sraabanot** (Theme: Friendship and its assurances; Lyrics: Bhupen Hazarika; Music: Bhupen Hazarika; Artist: Bhupen Hazarika)

15. **Jilir maate gobhir kore nirjonota** (Theme: Love for mother and one's culture; Lyrics: Nabakanta Barua; Music: Biren Datta, Artist: Biren Datta)

16. **Kauri pore** (Theme: A great song about the pangs of separation felt by a loving man whom the realities of the society has sepa-

contd. to page 5...

rated from his wife and daughter; Lyrics: Keshab Mahanta; Music: Rudra Barua; Artist: Khagen Mahanta)

17. **Imaan dhuniya mukutaar maalaa** (Theme: (can't describe it well, please try and tell me) ; Lyrics: Molin Bora; Music: Ikramul Mazid & Durga Bhuyan; Artist: Torikuddin Ahmed)

18. **Eai Niribili Jonowaali Godhuli mon moor herai jai toomak nisai kasote pai** (Theme: The bliss that one finds when the dearest is sitting beside; Lyrics: Himadri Devi; Music: Jyoti Chakravarty; Artist: Durgamoyee Bora)

19. **Senai moi Jaon** (Theme: A lover's words of consolation to his lover before he sets sails for a land far away and that too for a very long time. Even though the sentiment borders on selfishness, this sweet song remains one of the most popular songs till this day; Lyrics: Komal Hazarika; Music: Komal Hazarika; Artist: Deepaali Barthakur)

20. **Najaabaa Naajaaba mooke eri thoi** (Theme: A lover sincerely urges his lover not to leave him (perhaps for another man). This simplistic expression of a far too common experience of a bachelor (who does not have the courage to get married) set on Bihu tune was a super hit of the twentieth century; Lyrics: Kumar Bhabesh; Music: Kumar Bhabesh; Artist: Kumar Bhabesh)

21. **Chol Guri** (Theme: A determined lover's resolve not to part with his lover but to take her with him and make her his wife in a respectable way by convincing his parents and society to accept her. Compared to the lover in 'Najaaba najaaba', this lover has guts, and compared to the lover in 'Senai moi jaon', this lover does not appear to have self-serving designs.)

22. **Moor sutaalor tuloshi tolot** (Theme: A mother-in-law's love for a dear departed daughter-in-law; Lyrics: Bhagagiri Roychoudhury; Music: Jiten Deb; Artist: Nomita Bhattacharya)

23. **Mondaacranta moor kobitaar koon tumi Madhuchanda** (Theme: Perhaps an expression of faith in love, imagination, music as the inspiration for human creativity ; Lyrics: Taffazul Ali; Music: Taffazul Ali; Artist: Jyotirmoy Kakoti)

24. **Eai maayaan dhorat** (Theme: An ennobling sentiment of the time we live in; Lyrics: Zubeen Garg; Music: Zubeen Garg; Artist: Zubeen Garg)

-This list was created by noted author Dilip Datta of Rhode Island in response to Utpal Borpujari's request.

And Quiet Flows the Don (contd from pg. 6..)

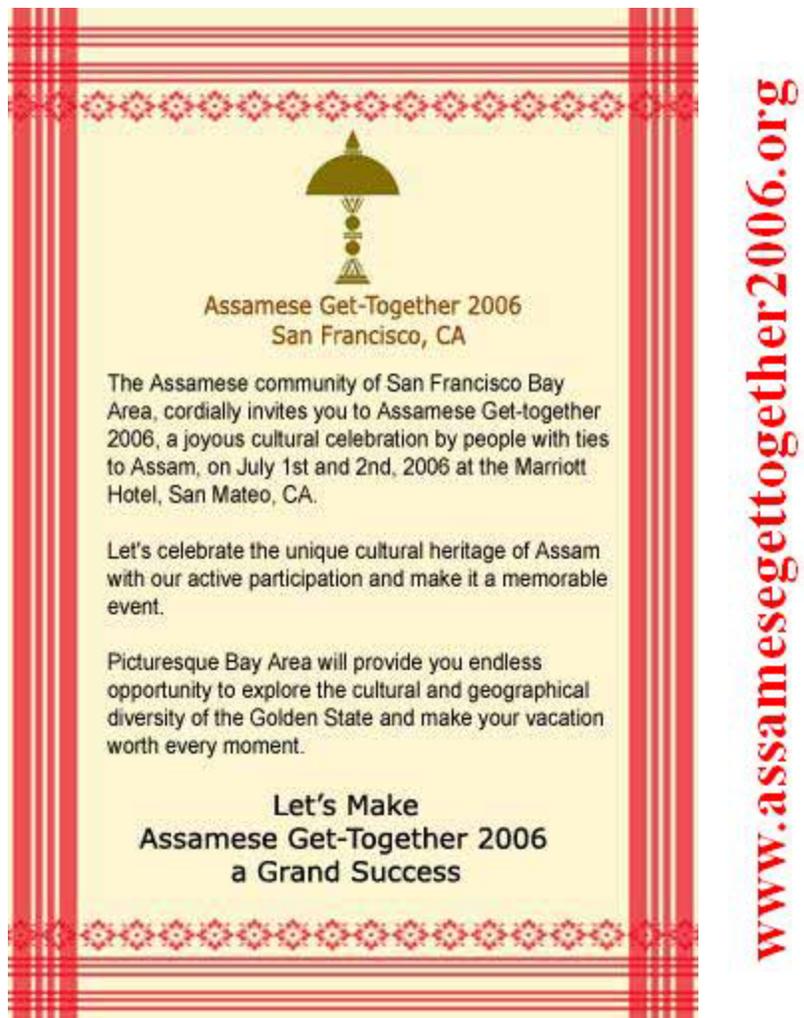
tributes to both financial success and morale boost of the enterprise that produces it, which, in turn helps it to produce more. At Assam 2005, an Assamese businessman even talked about buying the copyright of the film and, subsequently, having it telecast through popular American and international media. I would stop short of giving any recommendations on this, but I think it's definitely worth some consideration.

Some other areas that have great potential for this kind of documentary films are the national parks and the wildlife of the region. In addition to giving viewers a chance to unveil the mysteries of nature; these films can greatly augment the tourism industry of the region. Every time I watch a PBS or an IMAX film on Serengeti, the islands of Galapagos or the Amazon rainforest, I feel like visiting those places. With the widen-

ing bandwidth of the upper middle class in a country like India, a globalization super hub, I am sure people would love to explore the wild-life galore, unspoiled beauty and adventure traveling that the Northeast region of India has to offer.

In the end, I would like to congratulate Sanjoy Hazarika, Jahnu Barua and their crew members who came forward with such a brilliant idea on the Brahmaputra, one of the biggest but the least documented rivers in the world, and braved the rugged landscape of the region to turn it into an informative and enjoyable film. I hope they will produce many more such films in the years to come. I would like to wish them the very best for any such endeavors in the future. Partha Gogoi of Fairfax, Virginia is the North American contact for the movie. For your copy of the DVD on the film, you may contact Partha at partha_gogoi@hotmail.com.

- by Prakash Deka, North Brunswick, New Jersey




Assamese Get-Together 2006
San Francisco, CA

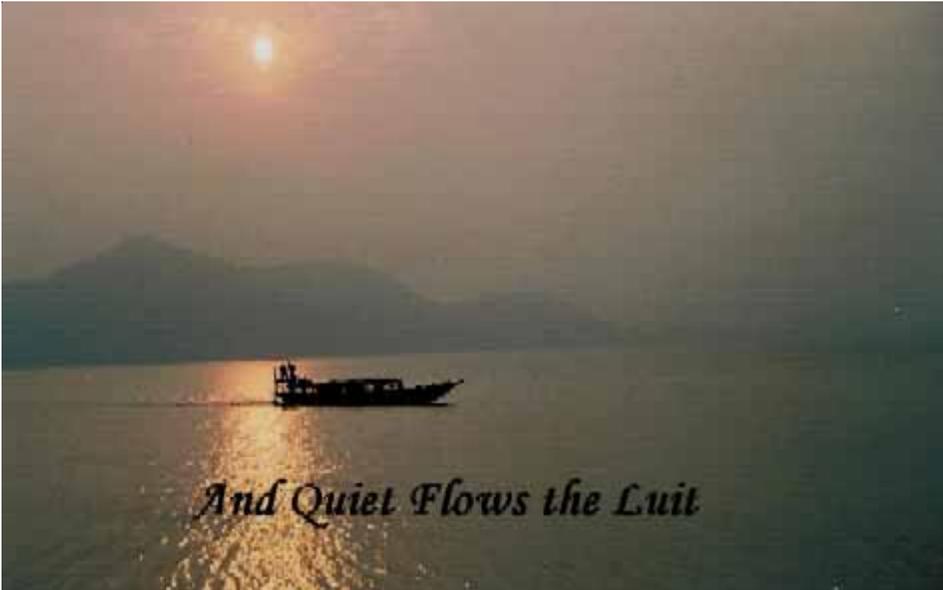
The Assamese community of San Francisco Bay Area, cordially invites you to Assamese Get-together 2006, a joyous cultural celebration by people with ties to Assam, on July 1st and 2nd, 2006 at the Marriott Hotel, San Mateo, CA.

Let's celebrate the unique cultural heritage of Assam with our active participation and make it a memorable event.

Picturesque Bay Area will provide you endless opportunity to explore the cultural and geographical diversity of the Golden State and make your vacation worth every moment.

Let's Make
Assamese Get-Together 2006
a Grand Success

www.assamesegettogether2006.org



Picture: by the author

During Assam 2005 in Orlando, Florida, I had the opportunity of viewing Sanjoy Hazarika's documentary film "A river's story - the quest for the Brahmaputra". This is the first full-length documentary film that I have ever seen on the mighty river that runs through the entire sub-continent of northeast India. Being brought up in Guwahati, I used to enjoy the river almost everyday - a river that runs through it. In my opinion Sanjoy Hazarika, Jahnu Barua and the other crew members have done an excellent job in providing with the much needed insight into this river along with the cultures and peoples that are so intricately intertwined with it, which many like me have always wondered. When I was a little kid, my family lived in a small town, called Biswanath Chariali, located on the north bank of the Brahmaputra. During school-breaks, we often visited our relatives' place in Guwahati. During the journey when it was about time to reach North Guwahati, I had all more good reason to occupy a window seat. I was whispered to by the surroundings - as if horses have begun to smell their stables - my dream river Brahmaputra was not too far away. Everything about the river stirred the curiosity of my young mind and, it continues to do so even now - the seemingly endless silvery sheet of water caressed by the rolling hills from all around, the boats that dotted the river and sailed on westerly wind and, not a bit less was my wide-eyed wonderment of the Saraighat Bridge itself that connects the two banks of it - I still vividly remember I tried counting the number of support links on its structure every time we crossed the river, but only to mess-up my count in the last minute ✍️

* Inspired by the name "And Quiet Flows the Don" - a novel by Mikhail Sholokhov often praised for its sweeping descriptions of nature.

About the film:

Well, the above was only the tip of an iceberg of my never-ending attachment with the river. In the film, I was thrilled to see the origin of the



Brahmaputra - a mammoth glacier-mass located in the northernmost chain of Himalayas and not very far from the lake Mansarowar. Then it comes roaring down the labyrinthine mountain ranges through some of the world's deepest and steepest gorges - a lavish display of the power and mystery of nature. The river, gathering momentum with every inch of advancement along its course, works as an elixir for human civilizations and cultures to flourish on either bank of it. The clusters of timeless villages concealed in the folds of dramatic escarpment, the serenity of the deep-rooted spirituality of Buddhism as mystic as the solitude of the river itself, the legend of the Tibetan monastery and the kaleidoscopic arrays of Tibetan tribes and folk-dancers are all breathtaking to watch.

A relentless river that the Brahmaputra is - it keeps flowing - down to Assam after artfully scarring the unspoiled landscape of Arunachal

Pradesh, a heavenly abode where time appears to stand still! The life and culture of the world's largest river island, Majuli, as very accurately depicted in the film, are simply fascinating to watch. One can trace the footsteps of the last of the Assamese legends, Mahapurux Srimanta Sankardev, in every walk of life on this river island.

Time fades, becomes past, but the legendary river keeps flowing - it whispers of Usha and Aniruddha and their the epic of love on its way near Tezpur. The potent river provides the lifeblood of various industries on its banks, like the ones based on golden cocoons in Sualkuchi and the metal works in Barpeta.

I have seen only in the pictures before, but it was a learning-experience for me to see the life and culture surrounding the Bangladesh side the river Brahmaputra, known as Padda. The sonority of the "bhatiali geets" as a long day begins to fold itself into twilight endorses the inseparable bonding between a river and the humans from the time immemorial.

Some comments:

In the absolute sense, there is certainly some room for improvement in the picture quality as I assessed of the film. But I have to admit at the same time that it will be foolish to expect, due to climatic differences, the same picture clarity as it is expected to come out of the herds of deer zooming in and out of the camera lenses in a flash in Serengeti or of Jackson lake embracing the cascades of Grand Teton range, where even the wind seems to shy away from putting the first ripple on! The industrial pollution and the chaining effects of deforestation in the countries like India often create smoggy conditions interfering with the clarity of pictures. Also, relatively better established enterprises have an edge over the growing ones as far as the affordability of the latest state-of-the-art equipment is concerned.

When the film was first played and projected off of a computer at the conference, my first impression about the sound quality was that it could have been better. But before writing these comments, when I watched the film again on my computer with iPod headphones attached to it, both And Quiet Flows the Don narration and sound quality appeared to be pretty good.

On this era of globalization when the world seems to be shrinking everyday, it is needless to reiterate the importance of exposure of any form of creativity to the international audience. It con-

Contd. to page.5...

India's GDP needs to be four times and Assam's GDP seven times – for Good School Education

For the past two days I had been pursuing an idea as to how much money is needed for providing “good” school education to ALL Indian students and how rich should India and Assam be to afford it. The idea struck me that if I can extrapolate the figures for Jaipur School's 500 students — for the whole nation - it may be workable.

Methodology & Result:

It is believed that any economy should spend at least about 6% of its GDP on education. Every economy has limited resources so it is perhaps not possible for all economies to spend huge portions on everything. Thus, a figure of 6% of GDP has been arrived at by international consensus as a minimum requirement expenditure on education.

USA spends 4.2 % of its GDP on school education and 2.6% on higher ed. In total USA spends about 6.8% of its GDP on education (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/98009.pdf>).

USSR used to spend 10% of its GDP on education but Russia now spends only 0.60% (http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/know_sharing/grassroots_stories/russia.shtml).

India as a whole spends only 3.3% of its GDP on education. But even if it were to increase its spending to 6% of the GDP - will that be enough?? My calculations are to identify how much money needs to be spent to provide effective and efficient education to school kids in India and Assam. My calculations show that India needs to spend about \$100 Billion on education, with \$66 Billion of it on school education alone. India currently spends only \$13 Billion on Education overall.

So the question is how rich should India be - to afford to have \$100 Billion to spend on education - and not run short on other priorities. With the current GDP of India - a \$100 Billion expenditure on Education would be equivalent to about 22% of its GDP (\$455 Billion).

Thus, the question is what should be the GDP of India - to be able to spend \$100 Billion — as only 6% of their GDP. India needs to have 4 times its current GDP - i.e., \$1700 Billion — to be able to afford a \$100 Billion Education expenditure. Similarly Assam needs to have 7 times its current State GDP to afford good quality school education for ALL school children.

The hypothesis is that the Jaipur School in Jaipur, Rajasthan, India, is a well run school - providing effective and efficient education to 500 school kids from grades

Kinder Garten to 12th grade - with specialization of Math, Computer Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Economics, Business Studies, Accountancy, Sanskrit — in high school grades — besides the usual subjects for lower grades. The students and teachers are nearly all from middle level SES (Socio-Economic Status families).

It has an optimal 9,000 sq. m. (2 acre) school campus, with a 25,000 sq. ft. built up area on four floors – with about 90% campus area as play grounds. Beside a near 100% pass rate (with atleast 95% students scoring first division) in the national exit exams (CBSE) in grade 10 and 12 – much better than nearly all US public schools – there is provision for a variety of weekly extra curricular activities etc., for all round development. All students go on to 3 year or 4 or 5 year degree college. It is true that the school management may not be following ultra-modern teaching methodologies – but the overall effect of the school's education is desirable.

Now the calculations of their expenses per student, per year

Given my personal experience with the school – I can say that the figures are not cooked up or expenses bloated

Per month expenses – certified by the Chartered Accountant – figures as per year 2003-04 (45 INR = 1.0 USD) are given in the accompanying table.

SN	Particulars	Amount (US\$)
1	Electricity bill incl. Tube well water	444.44
2	Telephone, govt. water etc	111.11
3	Misc. repairs etc	111.11
4	Extra Curr., lab, library expenses	222.22
5	Staff Salary incl. 30 teachers approx. (Base salary for govt. grades)	6,666.67
6	Salary for maintenance workers -10 approx.	555.56
7	Monthly school studies related expenses (Add all the above)	8,111.11
8	Study related expenses per school kid per month	15.56
9.	Fixed building and new facilities development expenses	1,111.11
10.	Development related expenses per school kid	2.22
11	Monthly School expenses for a school with 500 kids (Add sl. 8 and 10)	17.78 (~18)

Per Annum school expenses per school kid = \$18 * 12 = \$220 approx.

NOW calculating expenses for schooling of ALL kids in India of relevant age (4 to 18) (Minimum school going age in India is 4 years – as per Delhi Govt. directive)

1. India's population = 1 billion

2. Below age 25 years = 50% = 500 million

3. India's population in Ages 4 to 18 = 30% = 300 million

4. Cost of educating one school kid per year = \$220

5. Cost of effectively and efficiently educating India's 300 million School kids

= \$220 * 300 million
= \$ 66 BILLION!!

(to be concluded in next issue)

- Umesh Sharma, Cambridge, Massachusetts

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