



fried eye

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মৌচাক 26 Years



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Movie Desk



Children's Section

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Editorial

*Otike moromor mugare mohura
Otike moromor maku
Taatu koi senehor bohagor bihuti
Nepati keneke thaku*

(I Love the bobbin of golden thread
I love the beautiful sound of the shuttle
But I love even more
The month of Bohaag
For its Bihu
How can I not celebrate?)

I have always cursed my school for having exams during the Bihu time. Rongali Bihu comes once in a year and we always had our Annual Exams at that time. We missed the fun at *Bihu tolis*, but we developed different ways of having fun during Bihu. It's the special supplement by various newspapers which kept us involved. The Bihu Special Supplements is not just for the pleasure of reading but has been providing a unique platform to express the fun, love, affection, cultural heritage and kept the spirit alive for togetherness by various writers and other creative artists. In April 2002, The Assam Tribune started a Bihu Supplement called *SPRING sonata*. The specialty of this supplement is to focus on various art forms of Assam. Apart from the creative writing, which is of very quality, it also focuses on visual art, fashion designing and various other art forms related to Bihu. *SPRING sonata* has been a complete package for many reader enthusiast including me.

With time the idea of fun has been enhanced. Now, I enjoy the song of *Kuli* (Cuckoo) and *Keteki* (Brainfever bird). I enjoy the cool breeze. I enjoy the Spring as a whole. I enjoy the various delicacies that I get to eat during Bihu. I enjoy the *Hussori*, especially the *Hussori* by the young kids some of whom are very talented and some others are equally naughty. The *Hussori* by elders also have a charm in itself. It fills the whole environment with a positive energy giving a good start to the new year. All these make me Rongali (Colourful) like the Rongali Bihu. With these feeling, I wish you all a Happy Rongali Bihu.

Pramathesh Borkotoky

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Mouchak: A honeycomb of life

- Lord Mani



I don't know it for sure when I was introduced to *Mouchak*, but it happened very early in my childhood. It was a conscious decision by both my parents to ensure that I would know how to read, write and converse well in my mother tongue—Assamese—despite the fact that English was my first language in school. I'm so glad they did it that way.

"Age cannot be a differentiating factor between a child and an adult. Children are also human beings and they also think like adults. They don't think differently. It is the amount of knowledge a person possesses that decides the way (s) he thinks," said Santanu Tamuly, founder editor of the Assamese monthly for children.

I guess my parents also treated me like an individual with a unique point of view. That's why they wanted me to be well read and still connected with my roots. *Mouchak* fomented a cultural revolution for the children of Assam. "We tried to provide inspiration to children, by featuring various good things happening in the world," Tamuly added.

When *Mouchak* was first published on April 14, 1984, it became the first Assamese magazine to be printed in offset style. Not only that, it also gave a launching pad to several writers who rose to eminence later. Celebrated names like Ranju Hazarika, Abhijit Sarma Barua, Jayanta Madhab Barua, Rathindranath Goswami, Santanu Kaushik Barua and Indrakanta Karki had all started off with this magazine. All these writers had different writing styles, not necessarily tuned for a younger reader. So, how did *Mouchak* tackle this?

"Once, a writer sends in an article, he should understand that it is going to be part of the public domain. So, he has to repose faith in the editor, who has to fine tune the piece for the audience," Tamuly said. Today, *Mouchak* has completed 26 years of existence. It has survived the dotcom boom and the stiff competition in the print market. At a time when every modern reader prefers to read ezines and blogs, *Mouchak* has still maintained its circulation and standard. How did they do it? "We try to create intelligent readers," said the editor-in-chief. A simple and apt answer. Intelligent readers know what they are picking.

Fried Eye spoke to one of the star writers of *Mouchak*, Rothindranath Goswami, about the role of the magazine as a revolutionary tool for personality and community building.

"It is a path-breaking endeavour. Very few magazines for children could survive the test of time, both before and after *Mouchak*. This magazine had and still has some inspiring news and features that help the readers immensely. For example, in the third issue (1984), I wrote about pen friendship (*O' Bideshi*

Bondhu) and how to make a foreign friend. We were pleasantly surprised by our readers who flooded us with feedback, so much so that we had to start a column on the subject. We published letters of pen friends from across the globe in the later issues," Goswami said.

Artist Robin Barua of Prantik magazine had started his career as an illustrator with *Mouchak*. He is best known for his illustrated version of the ever popular *Burhi Aair Xadhu*. According to Goswami, Santanu Tamuly, Robin Barua and he were involved in planning and designing the content in the initial years. "Robin da used to prepare the illustrations, while Tamuli da would cut and paste the mono-compose material. He would sometimes write the headlines himself in his beautiful handwriting. It was a unique experience, I must say," said Goswami.

Mouchak did not confine its scope to providing 'fun to read' content only; it decided to do something substantial for the student community. Thus started *Jeebon Gorhar Kormoxaal*, an exclusive series on examination toppers, and *Aami Kenedore Porhisilu*—a section where examination toppers elaborated on their study methods and also solved matriculation question papers.

"Tamuli da and I were having chitchat one day when he asked me out of the blue if it is possible to know how the matriculation toppers prepare for their exams. Without thinking much, I replied in the affirmative. A questionnaire was thus prepared and I travelled to different places to interview the students," said Goswami.

Mouchak also had several articles and sections exclusive to it. Among them was, *Sile Kotha Koi*, a section that related the story of this part of the country as revealed by various inscriptions on rock as well as rock-cut sculptures and temples. Another is a travelogue by Bikash Barua where international locations are covered. Goswami is the creator of two characters *Sising and Piping*—both brothers and rats. "Sising was one experiment close to my heart. After the first two stories, children started contributing their own stories with the character in mind. Such was the response that the editor decided to take out a special issue on Sising. I do see it as an interesting character in Assamese literature. Recently, the National Book Trust has taken my Sising stories, which they intend to publish in a book format."

But Goswami had something more interesting to share: "Once while following a story, I learnt about the exemplary courage of two boys from the tea garden community in a face-off with a tiger. One of them was actually injured during the encounter. We published their story, and I appealed to the competent authority in Delhi to consider them for the National Bravery Awards. I was pleasantly surprised when I came to know that the appeal was considered."

Tamuly cited a particular instance when *Mouchak* gave children's literature a new definition. "Once we had published an article on a Pakistani girl child, who was born in prison where her mother was serving a sentence. She spent 11 years in jail for no fault of hers. At the end of the article, we added a line 'please write to the Pakistani President and request him to rescue the girl'. Our readers responded to it and wrote to the Pakistani premier in overwhelming numbers. The girl was rescued. It was a revolutionary step initiated by the children where we acted as a catalyst. There was no politics involved."



Tamuly also expressed dissatisfaction with the intelligentsia. "Everybody is talking about conservation of the Assamese Language, but no one is doing anything for the development of the language. We don't need a dictionary of five lakh words; we need a dictionary where there are 5,000 words of everyday usage. There is also no such book in Assamese that would force a reader to learn the language to read it. We have no classics as such," he said. *Mouchak* has also promoted talent. In the past, the magazine has featured swimmers Mithu Barua and Monikonkona Dutta Barua, and Papori Phukan, who was a magician. "For being a good magician, two things are very important— voice modulation and presentation skills. Since Papori was very young and her voice was not that powerful, we worked on her presentation. We had also choreographed her dance performances in between the magic show, which proved to be a key element in her success," Tamuly said.



Another Assamese talent featured by *Mouchak* was NASA engineer Renita Saikia or Jhumma. She was featured twice: first when she was awarded the President's award for excellence in studies (March, 1987), then again when she joined NASA (November, 1991). She is married to NASA astronaut Mike Fincke, who is known for his love of Assamese culture. Among other ventures undertaken by the magazine include translation of manuscripts for the National Book Trust. It has also organised a spelling bee contest named *Banan Mouchak*.

Sometimes great brands survive on simple ideas. For *Mouchak*, it is also about the simplicity of the people running the venture. When we asked Santanu Tamuly if there is any defining moment in his career that he takes pride in, he just said that he feels proud whenever

children acknowledge the hard work put in by Team *Mouchak*. Rothindranath Goswami, on the other hand, said that Tamuly deserves a Padma award for his contribution to Assamese literature on the whole and children's literature in particular.

Fried Eye wishes *Mouchak* all luck for its future.



In Biswanath Chariali, the temple town

- Ajatashatru

(... continued from [In Tezpur, the City of Love](#))

The next thing we saw in Tezpur was the Harjara Pukhuri (tank). It is believed to have been constructed by King Harjjar Varma of the Salstambha dynasty in the 9th century. There are a few rock inscriptions belonging to that era, too.

Another tank located in the heart of the city is the Padum Pukhuri or the 'lotus pond'. Interestingly, there wasn't a single lotus in the pond when we saw it, although locals say it used to be covered with the exotic plant once upon a time.

Neelam wanted to see the famous Mahabhairav Temple, so we went there. It is an ancient temple, which was originally built of stone. Legend has it that King Bana had constructed it. It got its present structure during the Ahom period. Today, it is owned and managed by the government and the Deputy Commissioner directly supervises affairs of the temple. It is particularly known for the grand celebration of Shivratri every year. And although she is a Sikh, Neelam is a follower of Lord Shiva. She has her own reasons though.

She says Lord Shiva is a very 'manly' God and very likeable. Not her fault really. When we were young, she used to watch the series Om Namah Shivay on Doordarshan, where the manly Samar Jai Singh had played Lord Shiva. But anyhow, I know it for sure that none can beat my wife's logic! She even surprised me by wearing the shalwar kameez to the temple.

Our next destination was the temple town of Biswanath Chariali. Actually, it is also my nanihaal (maternal home), and my mother's family is the custodian of all temples in the town.

We were received in a grand manner there as it was my first visit after marriage. With her pleasant experience in Tezpur, Neelam was much more at ease here. Besides, she knew that I have fond memories of this place since I would come here often in my childhood. Back then, things were much simpler and life was so carefree. City life complicates things.

I showed Neelam around the big courtyard of the house and told her stories of my childhood. I also took her to the place where once there was a huge orchard, but after the death of an uncle and my grandpa, it died out of lack of maintenance. I took her to another field where once upon a time, I used to reap the potato harvest with my grandpa and uncle. I showed her the huge rooms of the haveli-like house, where there used to be a lot of people not very long ago. Today, some of the rooms have been locked up, for their inhabitants are dead.

We went to the Biswanath Temple early in the morning. The temple area is located at the confluence of the Burhigang and the Brahmaputra. In ancient times, this place was inhabited by the Austro-Asiatic races. Several traces of a Neolithic civilization have also been found here.

One of my grandpas was performing priestly duties when we reached. He blessed both of us and made us take rounds of the temple, which is also known as 'pradakshinam'. We were then taken to the deity called 'Bhalook Guxain' (Bear God). They say if you lose something and you come here and pray, you get it back always. My youngest uncle (paternal) had left home 27 years ago. My family came here several times to pray for his return. He never came back.

"You know sweets, the idol that you see is actually four lions. Some historians argue that it is an inferior representation of the Lion's Capitol of Emperor Asoka. The architecture is Perso-Hellenic. It is possible

that this place may have been a Buddhist centre of worship once upon a time," the historian in me couldn't keep quiet for long.

Then we came to know that we could actually visit the older, ruined temple that's located in the midst of the Brahmaputra. Locally, this temple is called Paani Vishwanath (Vishwanath of the water). It was an opportunity we couldn't miss, for this temple remains submerged for most part of the year. Only lucky people get to offer prayers here.

So, we embarked on a short boat trip to the temple. Nothing much is known about this temple, but the architecture resembles that of the Gupta Age. A little ahead lies a massive rock inscription where blueprints of some ancient temples of the area are inscribed. Also inscribed is the famous 'chakravayuh' mentioned in the Mahabharata. In fact, the place is mentioned as a major centre of Shiva and Shakti worship in the Kalika Purana and the Yogini Tantra: the former was written during the 10th century, while the latter is a 16th century work.

We then went to another Devi temple called Uma Tumuni. The area had a major naval base of the Ahoms once upon a time. In fact, most of the temples in the area were lost when the Brahmaputra changed course and submerged a huge area. It is also said that King Siva Singha had lived here for a very long time and was known for his indulgences. So much so that when King Gadadhar Singha died, he refused to go to the Ahom capital to pay the last respects. The place had some magic over him. It can still be felt. No wonder my mother's family has lived here for nearly three centuries now after King Siva Singha invited them from eastern Uttar Pradesh to settle down in this place. Some copper plate inscriptions, which were devottara land grants issued by the Ahom king, are still there with my maternal family.

Neelam was fascinated to see and know the vibrant history of the place. "Tum itne ancient ho?" was her instant remark after knowing all that. She also said that she felt as if I was right there when all this history happened. "Filmon mein narrator ban sakte ho, — iivi," she said.

On our return, we went to the Chandi and Ganesha temples. It is said that King Rajeshwar Singha had constructed 18 temples in the area, most of which have long since disappeared. But their legacy has lived on. The locals here are very religious and spiritually inclined people.

However, this place is also inhabited by Bangladeshi immigrants, which has somewhat changed the demography of the place. But the temple culture and the pluralistic Hindu religion has ensured that there is no conflict between people of the two identically opposite faiths.

Visiting Biswanath Chariali was a very emotional experience, more than spiritual. Sadly, however, nothing much has been done by the government to make this place a tourist attraction. This is injustice for sure to a place whose history goes back to the time when man first learnt to lead a civilized life. For me, however, it will always be the place where the woman who gave birth to me was born.

Miss Today, Mrs. Tomorrow

- Sankhya Samhita

"So...."

"So....?"

"So this is it?"

"Hmmm....this must be it."

"Wow....just like that, huh?"

She looked at him as he stared into her face, his look intense as ever, melting her like it always did. She let out a heavy sigh.

"No....not just like that. It took a lot for this to happen."

He nodded.

"Yeah....it took a lot for this to happen."

He kept looking into her eyes, so much so that she turned her face away.

"What? Now I can't look at you?"

She let out a small smile.

"Look at me all you want. Am not the one to stop you."

She risked looking at his face again....and something inside her snapped. She was familiar to this feeling....this helplessness, like nothing was in her hands. She felt the passion between them that so strong and real one could almost touch it, as if it were a living breathing entity. And yet at that moment his eyes betrayed nothing. What would she not do to just know what was going on inside that fascinating mind of his....

"Say something....please?"

He gave that half smile of his...the one with his lips slightly crooked, the one that made his strong jaw line more prominent.

"Nope....not saying anything this once. I've said enough already."

She looked at him, incredulous.

"You don't have anything to say?? How come I don't believe this?"

"Why?" he sniggered, "Is it absolutely necessary I have to put my feelings into words each time?"

"I'm more used to it, you know. Considering the fact that you always have ten words to my one, I find it strange, if not outright implausible that you choose to be silent today, of all days."

He turned his face away, and kept staring at nothing in particular, an expression she knew well. It just meant he was feeling more than he was thinking. She touched his hand, placed her hand over his.

"Goodbyes are grueling and complicated....but we have to, you know."

"I know. I always knew this was coming. But I wonder if I'm ready for it."

"Scared?"

He nodded.

"Shit scared....don't know if I'll be able to do it."

"Hey..." she turned his face towards her, "Look at me. You'll do just fine."

"I can't seem to let go..."

She smiled, shaking her head.

"Who can? But it's the way of life....and you know it as well as I do that we will eventually do it."

"I can't get this place out of my mind. I can't get our first date out of my mind..." he admitted.

"Yeah, how can you, when that was the time you were an hour late and couldn't even recognize me when you saw me...?" she laughed.

"Need you remind me of that all the time? Told you a million times, I'd seen you just once, at that was in

the disc, under the stupid blue neon lights...how was I to know that the ethereal beauty in black I'd seen that night would turn out to be this...." He let those words hang there and looked at her teasingly.

She flared up immediately, just like he knew she would and just like he wanted her to. He loved to see this flushed look on her face, this rare display of emotion she allowed herself.

"This....? What....tell me? So I was wearing a halter top that was a little too tight and jeans that were a little too low waist that night...and that was just for a dare. So it was not the real me. Don't get me started! I know you wouldn't have taken my number from that idiot Neev had I not been playing the part of an empty headed and high heeled dumb college girl right down to the red lipstick and weird hairdo."

"Whoa! You know it was love at second sight when we met for the first time right here, don't you? At first sight I wanted to be your friend, with benefits thrown in", he winked, "And at second sight when I saw you in that pink kurti I knew I was gone...I'd already started seeing our babies running around this very place while you sat with a tired look on your face, exasperated, and me your knight in shining armor carrying one baby in each arm and letting you have your lunch in peace while I take care of the cute devils and..."

"Stop it" she interrupted "You have an overactive imagination, did I ever tell you that?"

"Only like a million times...." He smiled at her.

For a while none said anything, and yet both of them knew what the other was thinking.

She looked at her watch, it was getting late. Time would always fly when she was with him. And she always dreaded this moment. Especially today.

"I have to go....you know" she said softly.

He looked up at her and held her hands.

"Stay. Don't go. Please."

"I'm getting late. I have a flight to catch early morning tomorrow, and there's a lot to be done."

"Yeah...somebody's getting married after all."

A sudden gamut of emotions hit her, and it was a heady feeling. Her eyes moved to the pale pink diamond on her finger of its own accord, and she started playing with the ring, which had off late become her habit.

The waiter chose that very moment to come with the bill, and placed it right on the middle of the table like always.

"Remember how you'd called the waiter a sexist the first day he put the bill in front of me?" he teased her.

She gave a rare smile she reserved for the unlikely occasions when she would be embarrassed.

"In my defense, I was angry. And since I couldn't take it out on you, that being our first date, I took it out on him."

"He's seen a lot hasn't he? He's seen us through all our fights....me trying to make you talk while you look out the window and stare at the florists' outside, and then the million times you've walked out on me....leaving me looking at your receding back and then to have a solo lunch."

"And each time he must have thought we were done for good....until next time we'd come back again, arms around each other." She giggled at the memories of times gone.

"Just that this time we'd be gone for good." He said softly.

And the feeling was back. Along with the realization that she had to say goodbye that very moment.

"Look...." She started.

"I know...." He said "just let me walk you back home one last time."

She hesitated.

"I don't know if that's a good idea....I don't want anybody to see us."

"And why is that? Don't tell me you are scared....you, of all people."

"No..." she almost whispered, "My mother asked me not to meet you today. I'm not supposed to."
"Don't give me this shit. Just because you're getting married doesn't mean I can't even walk you home."
He sounded slightly irritated.

"There's something called rituals and traditions....try and understand. Only I know how I managed to convince my mom that I can go to the parlour on my own. She was so into sending my aunt as my chaperone."

He held out his hands in surrender, and stood up.

"Fine then. The last time we meet here you don't let me say a proper bye. Story of our relationship summed up in one meeting!"

She stood up to leave and looked at the place one last time.

"This is difficult. Not knowing what to expect...thus moving into unknown terrain in a matter of days. I'll miss my handsome date so much you know." She looked at him.

"Yeah...the next time you go out you'll be a married woman dining out with your husband. Could anything be more boring than that?" he remarked.

She started walking out of the restaurant. He held her hand and stopped her.

"Tell me its going to be okay. Tell me everything's gonna work out fine. I'm just so scared."

She tilted her head and looked into his eyes with that mysterious smile that always made him realize just why he'd fallen in love with her in the first place.

"It is going to be fine. I will leave for Guwahati tomorrow. And I will get married there in two days time. And then I'll be leaving for the US with my brand new husband in a matter of a month. And you, my love", she ran a finger along his face, "will do just fine."

"Remind me again why you couldn't get married here and have to go to Guwahati of all places?" he asked.

"Please...I've told you a million times....because my Aita, who's ninety and has been dreaming of seeing me get married since the day I turned 18, is there. And also because my would-be husband hasn't met any one of my cousins who are out there...got it?"

He sighed and cupped her face in his hands.

"Well then....bye young Miss. Go get ready to become a Mrs."

"You will be there, won't you? I hope you haven't forgotten to book the tickets, given your track record of forgetting to do things until its absolutely the last moment" she asked.

"It wouldn't do for the groom to be absent would it, love?"

She laughed out, and his heart soared.

"Yes my love. And for the last time, please don't make me wait a minute this time, leave alone an hour. We'll do just fine as husband and wife. Now let me go so I can be with you forever, and even after that. See you day after tomorrow."

And she walked away, with him looking at her receding back....

The Pursuit of Good Money

- Parashar Borkotoky

In the seventies and eighties, it was not a great feeling to be portrayed as rich in movies. More often than not, it was the rich guy who was also the bad guy, who schemed hard to make the life of the hero miserable. He was invariably against the nobler values of love, equality and freedom. The poor guy, on the other hand, toiled hard against miseries bestowed upon him generously by the populist director. The integrity of the poor guy was always unquestionable and he was the epitome of all things good. The movies, of course were in some ways a reflection of the times. The middle class often aspired to public sector jobs and the rich guys, the business men were at best looked upon through a suspicious lens. The bigger businesses were family owned and there were very few first generation entrepreneurs. Much has changed since then. Post liberalization, many from the lower strata of India's economic classes have started or joined private companies and being rich was no longer as much of a taboo as earlier. In the late nineties, the films started reflecting this and it was not uncommon for the hero to travel in personal helicopters or be the scion of a multi crore business empire. The simmering hatred for rich people in earlier times was slowly but surely changing.

The Forbes list of richest people has more and more billionaires from India every passing year. Some of the ones included in this exclusive list, like Mukesh Ambani and Azim Premji are among the richest in the world. It is not so difficult to imagine a time, when we have a much more disproportionate number of billionaires in the list from India, much like the number of Indian beauty queens in early part of the new millennium. It is somewhat of an uneasy laurel for a country like India, which by many accounts is also one of the poorest countries of the world. A majority of Indians depend on agricultural incomes, many a times dependent on uncontrollable factors like the monsoon. The urban employment rate still lags behind most developed and developing countries. India's Human development index measure is appalling at best. Urban poverty is so palpable in cities that even the capital has to go through a makeover to hide its poor for showcase events like the commonwealth. In terms of sheer number of people, India is the poorest country in the world.

So, as citizens of one of the fastest growing economies of the world, should we feel proud of the burgeoning number of billionaires in our country? Or should we reserve the suspicion if not hatred of the seventies and the eighties. The answer to this rather divided question is probably somewhere in between. Let's look at what the billionaires of the first world are up to. Bill Gates, for long the richest man on earth, has transformed himself from a software mogul to a modern day saint. His enormous riches have enabled him to create one of the largest charitable organizations in the world and he has changed the lives of millions around the world. Warren Buffet, the legendary investor is not very far behind. He has pledged a large part and in time, plans to pledge almost all of his wealth to philanthropic purposes. It is quite amazing that Gates and Buffet, born in the world's most developed country, which hardly get to see the extreme poverty in countries like India are able to look beyond individual greed and are able to display such generosity. Some of India's richest have started participating in what is known as creative capitalism in very small ways, but the majority of them still come across as ones who spend most of their time living extravagant lives, building billion dollar homes or buying IPL teams. The richest in India have the opportunity to show their large heart and complete the transformation to heroes, much like their western counterparts have so successfully done.

The Call V1.0

- Mapra Duo

(... continued from [The Call V1.0](#))

Swapan kept on staring towards infinity for sometime before taking off the head set. His face was spread in even concentration. He thought hard...very hard...very very hard. Replayed it again and again and wrote it down as notes. But he suddenly jumped up from his seat and rushed to his laptop. Switched it on and waited tapping his foot impatiently to get it started. He was soon on the net on google search. The first letter he keyed in was – Sholapur he watched grimly as he looked up at his laptop

Clicked the mouse few times. Then keyed in some more letters. Now he was worried. He typed in Mea Culpa, Goa. And watched wide eyed at the results. "Goodness!" he whispered slowly.

"Okay" he rolled up his sleeves and started about.

Next he clicked on Indian Army. It was not easy to find out what he wanted. After all he was working on hunches, and some previously registered bits and pieces of information.

After that he lost track of time, completely. He quietly went on at his laptop, clicking and typing. Typing and clicking. Till his sister in law called him downstairs at dinner time.

"Is it so late? ", he murmured.

He immediately came downstairs and without preamble he started at his brother, "Dada, we need to talk." His brother who was just about to sink his teeth on sarso ilish stopped midway and looked up at him.

"OK" and then continued with the ilish.

Swapan pulled a chair and impatiently started gesticulating, "Dada it's important."

"Sit down", his brother commanded authoritatively. " We will talk after dinner, by the way what is it about?"

Swapan looked askance at his sister-in-law and said nothing. He decided to have his dinner first. There was no more dinnertime chit chat after that. His brother was the the ACP of Sahnagar, South Zone-II, Pune . And at that moment Swapan felt that he was the best person to help him out. He felt restless but still curbed his excitement and managed to finish substantial amount of his dinner plate within 5 minutes and was up and about.

"Well I am waiting for you in your study" and rushed to his own room without waiting for a reply. Picked up some of his notes and his laptop and... the device he developed. Not a surprise coming from an electronics engineering graduate. He had developed a rough wireless interceptor which can intercept calls. Though he was sent forcibly by his brother for an engineering degree, he wanted to be an IPS officer, just like his brother. Both the facts combined resulted in the above conversation being intercepted.

His brother came in within a few minutes.

"Yes?" he shot back and seated himself comfortably in a chair.

Swapan took a seat. He was ready with his equipments.

"Listen to this" , and he switched on the conversation that had bothered him so much.

ACP Dutta listened to it carefully and then quizzically turned toward his younger brother.

"Yes? So?"

"Don't you get it Dada? It's a conspiracy. It's a big dangerous conspiracy"

"Wait a min wait a min. this movie?"

No the whole thing. It's a code.

His brother cocked his head and tried to concentrate. "no it cant be. Where's the pattern.?"

"Oho don't go by the book Dada. Just read between the lines."

"What is there to read? See! Stop fiddling with your strange contraptions. Cut it out with your mindless obsession. Ok?"

" Dadaaa! just give me a chance to explain.". "OK?" ACP Dutta reluctantly relented.

"Well remember Sholapur?" His brother nodded. "Well there is going to be another Sholapur."

"What? A terror bomb strike? Have you gone out of your mind? Listen, go take a vacation and let the experts do their work. Months of unemployment has taken its toll."

Swapan was offended for a moment at the reference of his unemployment but he shook off his resentment for the sake of national security.

"Just listen to me patiently. Then it's your decision after that. Dutta remained silent. seeing that Swapan continued. See Sholay? The part about remaking and flying?"

Well the other guy is asking if he is planning for an air strike. But it is only a terrorist blast but stronger than it. Dutta was about to say something but decided against it and continued brooding.

"Now Miss Charvi- look at the key words. Nice meaty role- heroine-supporting role-well have you heard of Mea Culpa the goan group –the drug runners-MC Miss Charvi MC Mea Culpa- heroine. Got it? They have a supporting role – in probability knowing the nature of their work- ammo running. They will bring in the ammo. Ok?"

Dutta still said nothing but he looked as if he was trying to make sense of what he was saying.

"Award winning of course – means they will pay well. And ah! The part which speaks of brother getting a role? – Well they have got a branch too and I have a guess that it's about dealing with human trafficking. Maybe they meant that they have an offer or role for them too."

"Typecasting- well judging by the conversation, I think he is speaking of his role as coordinator. He wants to be the villain- maybe he wanted to be on the ground- in the action, hence the reference to being killed, but the other guy who seems to be the mastermind doesn't want him. Cos as he has mentioned he need to work in more movies- meaning projects/ mission He paused. Dutta simply nodded.

"Aha now the lead! Harshal! Major Harshawardhan Singh. He is a link somehow."

"Are you crazy?" His brother thundered. "Do you want us both to go to Jail? This is insane."

"Dada please please! In last 1 year he has made 5 trips to Goa. Why? Army people don't get so many holidays. Mea Culpa are based in Goa. Something is cooking."

How do you know that he made 5 trips?

"I know. Well that's not important but yes there is a link and now hear out the rest.!"

Now the villain Prem- peoples revolutionary movement. See? Everything falls into place? RAW had an idea that Prem had joined them.

"What about the piece of killing Prem? It doesn't make sense."

"It is not killing. it is I think making a contact. That explains the killing of Miss Charvi's brother. See Dada everything is not that clear to me either, but I am trying..

Like Miss Hansa. I am not getting whether it refers to a place or a person or group but yes! That is the point of initiation..."

And of course the end is clear. It means that the mastermind group will be the supreme player with he coordinator remaining with him.for maybe further ...God knows whatever!

There was a moment of silence after this great narration.

Then ACP Dutta cleared his throat and started calmly, "See , your imagination is in over active mode. Maybe the novels that you read must have fed you with ideas but this is just nothing but a cock and bull story. So just cool down and go take a break. Things about terrorism conspiracies are not that simple to be discussed in such great detail as you have mentioned over a phone call... so stop acting like Calvin."

"Arre! At least you can trace and verify the details na Dada? What's the harm? Just see if there is a Miss Charvi.."

"What verification? Of course I know there is Miss Charvi. She is an Oriya movie import. Hansa is already famous. Who doesn't know Prem?"

Charvi exists? Ok!

"Go get a life. Have some fun Tutool .Act normal."

"But still who is Harshal? And is there really a movie being planned with them. I mean at least get the call traced na Dada!"

"Uff. Wait! There is no other way I see. Ok as you wish. Let me do this too." ACP Dutta became busy with phone calls while Swapan waited and observed face keen with interest. After about dozen calls and speaking to Charvis secretary and Prem's secretary it was found out that A movie was really planned on those lines with the following star cast.

It was 1 am by the time things were wrapped up. Swapan looked dejected.

"Go to sleep Tutool. And take a vacation".

"Dada think you should have traced the call to see from where it had come. You hadn't done that..."

"Goodnight Tutool." His brother broke in firmly...

Uncommon Glamour King

- Pramathesh Borkotoky

There are people who spend their entire lives thriving to be a part of this society... to be accepted as "one of them". And then there are a rare few who dare to be different. Who belong to a class of their own. And live their life by their own rules, like nothing else matters. If you wonder how it is to live such a life, consumed by such passion as to make your entire life worthwhile, then you should meet Mr. Jiten Bordoloi, better known as Dev Anand Bordoloi or simply Dev Anand.

All of us fantasize about a life we want to live but most of the times lack the guts to go ahead and actually live it. Our pipe dreams remain just that...something to be sighed about when we are way past the age to fulfill those dreams But this man has lived his dream. Since childhood I used to look at him every time I passed from Baruah Chariali and he never failed to attract my attention. Who says a person needs to be elusive to be mysterious? In spite of being accessible as such, this person is still shrouded in mystery. I'd been wanting to know what it is that makes Dev Anand who he is, and Fried Eye gave me an opportunity to visit him.

I was nervous meeting him, as I had taken no prior appointment with him for this interview. I nervously pressed the call bell. He opened the door and made me sit asking for a 15 minute leave. After 15 minutes, he appeared again. As I looked up, I felt as if the great Dev Anand was himself in front of me. Such was the transformation. It was a memorable moment for me.

The green shirt, and the scarf in his neck. The three watches in his shirt over the cuffs of his shirt. Shirt buttoned till neck. The stick in his hand. The yellow hanky hanging from his pocket. The boots. Certain things are not easy to put into words, and the feeling I had when I saw him is one of those.

On being asked about the particular inspiration that lead him adopt his lifestyle, he replied that he was inspired by everything about Dev Anand: his Albert hairstyle, the scarf around his neck, the flying handkerchief from his right pocket, his walking style, his rapid-fire style of dialogue delivery, his smoking style and his walking-stick. I noticed the belt worn over his shirt and the three wristwatches over the cuffs of his sleeve. He was inspired by every thing Dev Sahab did. The famous actor did everything with a certain flair, and Bordoloi impersonated this exact style down to the most minute detail.

Bordoloi's favorite Dev Anand film is 'Jab Pyar Kisi se Hota hai' (1961, Co-starred by Asha Parikh). He is equally a fan of Mohd. Rafi, he added. He likes to sing songs sung by Mohd. Rafi lip synced by Dev Anand, he believes this duo produced some of the best numbers Hindi Cinema ever had.



When asked about his personal life, he replied in true Dev Anand fashion that he is 18 years old, unmarried and wants to be married someday. He wants a love marriage with an 18 year old girl, and she should respect his talent, be loving and beautiful.

Professionally, he is a well known astrologer.

On being asked if he had any secret desires, he replied that he wants his name to be included in the Guinness World Records as the Uncommon Glamour King. He added that he was born in Shillong and spent a significant part of his life there. So, he wants to go back to Shillong and settle there.

If anything was needed to make this interview more momentous, he ended the interview with a dialogue from Johnny Mera Naam and the Song 'Dil Ka Bhanwar' from 'Tere Ghar ke Saamne'. I came back amazed, and realizing that certain things don't really need a rhyme or reason, and that not all questions can be answered. So some may ask, what does this person get by dedicating his whole life to being someone else based totally on the way he looks? Nothing much practical, the cynic would reply. But then, what I encountered left me with a renewed belief on passion... and wonder as to how satisfying it must be to know that you have lived your passion to the fullest.

Maybe it's high time we stop and think about how fair we have been to our own passions, and whether we are doing our best to have no regrets about unfulfilled dreams later in life. And for inspiration we just look for the Jiten Bordoloi's in our lives.

Wise Bachelor

Q. Dear WB, lizards scare me like anything. I am so very scared that at times I get a feeling that maybe they are attracted towards me and what not. They stare me right in the eye. I am a lover of nature otherwise and share a good chemistry with the cats and dogs of my area as well as the mice in my house. I have had encounters with snakes twice, and I'm also not afraid of tigers. The other day, I saved an injured crow from hounding stray dogs and provided him a makeshift accommodation at my place. I sincerely wish I could love the lizards too. I have been trying to accomplish the same for the past two years. I can write a whole book to vent out the frustration. What to do? ***Slithering Seer, New Delhi***

Ans: (Chip) kaliyon ka chaman jab banta hai, koi sexy lagta hai, koi raunchy lagta hai, koi hero lagta hai, par har koi scary lagta hai – my dear, I can perfectly understand your problem. I knew one chipkali (lizard) who had made her famous appearance in a hot music video, and later did a few C-grade movies before hiding in some unknown world not known to tinsel town. She was Meghna Naidu, who showed some promise that she could dominate the underbelly of the Indian male psyche (that is ever influenced by the idea of voluptuous women), but her ever increasing waistline ensured that she crashed down on her belly. Phir woh kahin chip gayi.

Now, coming to your problem, I see a chipa huwa Brady Barr in you. The fact that they are legends in their field of work is not just because they love creatures but also because they have immense respect for the animals they play with. As for snakes, the ease with which Indian adventurer Gerry Martin wrangles them is truly mind-blowing. But he has often talked about his fear for the reptiles, too.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, while serving his prison sentence during the National Movement, was in a cell that was infested by insects of all kinds. There was an ominous looking black scorpion, which Panditjee had captured. He would feed it flies and treat like a pet. He had also befriended a dog, which shared Panditjee's room. But the dog was once down with distemper and Panditjee took great care of the hapless animal as if it were his own child. So, I see that trait in you too, for you saved both the life and izzat of an abala kawwa from some shikari kutte. God bless you!

So, my dear, I don't see any reason why you should be so frustrated. After all, the lizard, they say, is a descendant of the dinosaur or "terrible lizard". A lot of people would swear by Spielberg's name to tell you how scary those dinos were. Don't be so hard on yourself.

However, when I say this, I also see a need for a new lizard superhero on the lines of Spiderman. Toons really help, you see. I had developed an immense liking for crabs after seeing the Kekkaman character in Shaktimaan. Let's wait for tinsel town to do something with lizards. I'm sure your love for them would be more spontaneous then.

Q. WB, I haven't been able to return a loan I had taken from a bank. Now the bank has sent goons after me. What should I do? ***Maara sona, mare heere, maari izzat, Jaipur***

Ans: Blessed be souls like Kharak Singh (Om Puri) of Hera Pherifame, who threatens self-immolation if his friend Ghanshyam (Suniel Shetty) doesn't return his money on time. God has stopped making such noble souls it seems. On any day, I would prefer being emotionally blackmailed into paying a debt, than being chased by goondas, followed by my mother mouthing "mere bete ko chod do".

It is always good to return loans in time, as that saves both your dignity and money. However, if your bank is harassing you in such an uncivil manner, you better lodge a written complaint with the nearest police station. Or you can contact me personally and I will give you the number of a goony purush who will give you tips to scare the Bank Manager, who seems to be a wannabe Bhaihimself. Maybe it is time for some aapsi bhaichara.

Q. Dear WB, I'm 25-years-old, and most of my friends say that I'm as good looking as Kamdev, the Hindu God of love. I feel a little weird, for no man has ever seen a God. Who do you think would resemble the God of love the closest? ***Tan bhi sundar, man bhi sundar, Mumbai***

Ans: Obviously your friends don't know the truth. If Kamdev would descend from the heaven on this planet as an avatar, he would be none other than Narayan Dutt Tiwari. Tell those sycophants whom you call 'friends' to read the (s)exploits of Tiwari ji before calling you Kamdev. Even at this advanced age of 87 years, he can handle four women at a time. None but a God can perform such a feat. And what are you saying about good looks? Did you not see how he had said 'main bahut sexy hoon' (I'm very sexy) to the TV journalist, who had interviewed him a day after he had resigned as Andhra Governor? Please tell your friends that its blasphemy on their part to equate you with the God when you know Tiwari ji is the true sensuality incarnate.

Send your questions to wise.bachelor@friedeye.com

Solitude

- Hashan Hazarika

My Solitude
 is me
 is you
 is love
 is fear
 is wet eyes
 is fading hope
 is freezing waves
 is drying leaves
 is quit breeze
 is unsure gait
 is a tune
 is dope in dark cold nights
 is charcoal scratches on canvas
 is old photographs in dusty albums
 is a melancholy cry
 is paranormal sighs
 is peace
 is bliss
 is pure!!



Haiku

- Priyanka Bhowmick



*deserted field
dragonflies haunt
corn dried in the sun*

*early winter morning
mist dew cold
dandelions sleep*

*autumn winds
spider works
a new web*





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