

ROYAL HARBINGER

Reporting Fact of the Matter

Weekly



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Beneshwar Fair

THE BIGGEST TRIBAL FAIR OF INDIA IN MEMORY OF SAINT MAOJI

The biggest tribal fair of India, Beneshwar Mela is held from Magh Shukla Ekadashi to Magh Shukla Purnima. The name Beneshwar is derived from the origin of the ancient temple elder persons in Beneshwar say that long ago a cow used to come to the Shivalinga and offered her milk to the idol. On not getting milk the owner of the cow one day got angry. The next day he followed the cow and found it offering milk to the Shivalinga. The cow was frightened and ran away to escape from the wrath of its master.



Its hoof struck the stone idol which was broken into five pieces and from then the damaged Shivalinga came to be worshipped and the practice continued.

A unique feature of Beneshwar Mela that is five hundred years old is the immersion in peace till the ashes of the dear ones of the Vanvasis who had left the world in the preceding year. Due to their financial weakness, numerous tribals cannot afford to take the ashes to distant places like Haridwar, Kashi and Gaya and carry them to Beneshwar, the meeting point of three rivers Som, Mahi and Jakham.

The ashes of the dead per-

sons called 'phool' in local language are preserved in earthen pots. In case of communities in which the corpse is buried, nails and some hair are kept aside for immersion later on.

Generally, the rituals performed after death by Hindus are also followed by the tribals. They believe that the soul does not get 'moksha' and live in peace till the ashes are immersed at Beneshwardham. That is why the tribals wait eagerly for the fair.

Just before the fair, the family members gather together to get ready to leave with the earthen pot and call upon the souls to accompany them.

On the day preceding the fair, can be seen big groups of tribals going to the Sangam. The whole atmosphere becomes grave early in the morning when the tribals in large numbers start wailing that is called Dad Paadna.

The earthen pots wrapped in white cloth in the case of male and red in case of female are worshipped with flowers, 'Kumkum' etc. at the Sangam. Then led by the heir of the dead, other family members enter the water in a line. They take bath in navel deep water and facing south they leave the earthen pots on the surface of the water. The ritual 'phool pad-rana' signifies the last homage

to the departed soul.

It is believed that with the immersion ceases the attraction of the soul with the mundane world and the journey to the other world commences. After the immersion, 'tarpan' is done by holding water in the palm and then letting it flow in the river. Water is offered to Sun god and then other gods are also worshipped. After coming out of the water, new clothes are worn and other rituals are performed.

Sitting on their 'asans' on the islands of the Sangam, dry rocks, banks of the rivers, round stones and sandy spots can be seen Bhagats and Purohits who are called Garu

or Gorji in local language. They perform rituals after spreading, small pieces of white and red cloth on the ground and making 'yantras' with rice and wheat grains, 'Kumkum', 'roli', 'haldi' etc. Some of the Vanvasis also get their heads fully shaved. They offer 'daan-dakshina' etc. to the Garu.

When the rituals are over, the tribals, light 'chulahs' on the rocks and sand of the Sangam and prepare dal-bati 'bakra', thick maize bread etc.

The present Beneshwar fair in its present form is in fact actually a merger of two fairs : one which was used to be held in honour of Beneshwar Mahadev (Lord Shiva) and

another one which started after the construction of the Vishnu temple by Jankunwari daughter-in-law of Mavji, a highly revered saint considered to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

The devotees of Mavji, who gave the message of universal love for the whole humanity irrespective of caste and creed through devotion to Lord Krishna, bring his 16 cms silver idol riding a horse in a Palanquin from Maninda Math at Sabla to Beneshwar. The same day the Mahanta of this Math is taken for a dip in the waters of the 'Sangam' as it is believed that it makes the water holy. Then the 'Sangam Snan' for pilgrims begins. For the next five days, the Mahant stays in the Krishna Mandir where devotees have his 'darshan' and the new ones are 'initiated' by wearing a 'Kanthi' on the neck. A big attraction for the devotees is the performance of 'rasleela' by the 'sad' community. Songs related to the legends and preachings of Mavji are sung and heard with great enthusiasm. Also enjoyed are the songs about Maoji and Meheri who are considered to be incarnation of Lord Krishna and Meera respectively. In the fair are also seen camps of several other saints and 'sadhus' where priests and devotees perform various rites and sing 'bhajans'.

A big attraction for the pil-

grims is the huge annual 'mela bazar'. There is nothing that is not for sale in the market. With trinkets, traditional implements, jewellery etc., the fair has become a paradise for shopaholics. The large number of shops in the fair provide an opportunity for buying and selling of essential goods and fancy articles. There are bowls and containers made of local stone and several other metal work items that the fair is known for such as sickles, scythes and axe heads. There are several shops where one can even find weapons for sale like swords, spears but the most popular are the bow and arrow made out of bamboo in the traditional style, as archery is an integral part of the tribals and is the basic weapon for their safety and security.

The tribal way of celebration can be experienced here by participating in tribal dances peculiar to the region known as Gair and Ghoomer dances. Tribal sports like archery, Gida Dot similar to hockey, is a special tribal game.

The fair resounds with the gaiety of songs, folk dances, magic shows, animal shows and acrobatic feats. Adding to the excitement are the joy rides on merry-go-rounds and swings.

The fair is a great occasion to soak in the tribal culture of Rajasthan.

SACHIN KOTHARI - A TRAINER OF ARTISTS

A person who would like to be known as one devoted totally to the preservation and promotion of the traditional art of miniature painting by training artists and supporting them, Sachin Kothari was born in the family of the renowned scientist and educationist Dr. D.S. Kothari. He is a gold medalist M.Com. from M.B. College, Udaipur. His father was Deputy Director, Horticulture Deptt., Govt. of

Rajasthan. Once when as a student of class 5, he painted a story for children, his teacher was so highly impressed with his talent that she advised him to pursue the art of painting. Miniature paintings symbolize Rajasthan in many ways, colourful and opulent. Very often, these paintings are portrayals of real life events such as court scenes, presence of important guests, scenes of battles and hunting expeditions, mythology

and traditional culture. Sachin says that the paper used for the intricate miniature paintings may be composed on special treated hand made paper. Fine brushes are used to apply the organically synthesized pigments. These brushes have fine squirrel hairs as bristles, providing the artisan the highest level of precision in his work. The manufacture of the paint itself is a tedious procedure. The colours are extracted from various natural resources. For example, the colour yellow is obtained by grinding together the Palash flowers, and black from stones. Metallic colour is made by boiling the metal in camel musk and water. It provides a base to the colour. The pre-

pared pigment is mixed with gum and water and then made into a fine paste. Since the amount of precision required is very high, the colour needs to be uniform in texture. Sachin feels that the era of the paintings as a livelihood has undergone a change due to a shift in ideology. It takes a very long time to master the art of painting miniatures. Sachin has opened a studio at village- Sisarma and keep the art alive, he trains artists free of charge, supports their families financially and morally and enables them for self-employment. With the help of his son Lakshit Kothari who runs Animotor Academy, Sachin has given a new direction to

his work by the use of software in teaching the art. The software that Lakshit uses is prepared by his younger brother Deep who works in Adobe. Situated in the heart of the city near Chetak Circle, Sachin's art gallery is open 20x7 with the help of his wife Renu who has been supporting him actively for the last 5 years. She herself is now a keen student of the art. A good number of artists and art lovers, celebs both Indian and foreign, visit his studio to view his work, discuss the intricacies of the art and get their problems solved. Several documentaries including a Canadian documentary on miniature art has also been shot under his guid-

ance. They are being shown on channels like Netgo and Discovery. Sachin has also organized workshops for various institutions both Indian and foreign like a group of Google. His articles have been published in many foreign magazines. He has been collecting rare art pieces for over three decades. He says that for him collecting them connects him with the divine power and is a means of becoming spiritual. He is also engaged in research on history of yoga and history of Jainism. A simple, modest and selfless trainer of the art, Sachin seems to be doing his bit to preserve the rich cultural heritage of Mewar in his own way.

- Ashok Mathur

Valentine's Day 2022:

A Playlist Of Bollywood's Freshest Love Songs

New Delhi: The touch of a red rose, the taste of chocolates and the smile on your partner's face - all of these are undeniable parts of Valentine's Day. But there's more to it. The day is here to celebrate love in all its myriad of expressions. And, nothing can compete with Bollywood numbers in capturing the



passions of love and romance. You can choose to mark this day with your loved one by tuning into a playlist of fresh releases that can melt your heart and create a romantic mood for the special day. Here's a list of fresh Bollywood songs that are perfect for Valentine's Day:

Gehraiyaan - Gehraiyaan

Want a mushy and breezy Valentine's Day number to make your day? This freshly released title song from Gehraiyaan can be the perfect number.

Ranjha - Shershaah

The soft singsong tune and touching lyrics definitely make it a perfect one for Valentine's Day. A tinge of sadness blended with the passion of love defines the mood of this Bollywood number.

Shiddat - Shiddat

Tune into the passionate lines of Shiddat's title track. You just can't miss the intense beats that define the splurge of emotions here.

Aabaad Barbaad - Ludo

Add more peppy vibes to your Valentine's Day with this Arijit Singh number. The upbeat and happy song is sure to lighten your heart on this day and get you grooving. We definitely love the faux-electronic undertones in the music.

Duniyaa - Luka Chuppi

This song casts a spell of innocent love and growing passions. The number became a big hit soon after its release in 2019. And, it continues to be a go-to number for infatuated hearts.

Baliye Re - Jersey

Unleash fresh energy with this melody on Valentine's Day. The groovy track can spark a sizzling romance. There is something special about this number and the beats do justice to these emotions.

Rait Zara Si - Atrangi Re

Plunge into a soul-stirring range of emotions with this A R Rahman composition. The poetic lyrics turn the simple tune into a romantic ballad of sorts.

VP stresses the need for de-colonisation of India's education system

The Vice President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu stressed that while Central and State governments are taking measures to promote digital learning, it is important to ensure that there is no digital divide. To ensure this, he called for increased access to the internet especially in rural areas and remote places and to 'keep inclusivity at the heart of the educational experience'. 'The mantra should be — embrace, engage, enlighten and empower', he said.

Addressing the gathering after inaugurating the Sports Centre at the National Institute of Technical Teachers Training & Research (NITTTR) in Chennai today, Shri Naidu expressed concerns about the impact of the pandemic on education, and said that school closures affected girls, children from disadvantaged backgrounds, those living in rural areas, children with disabilities and children from ethnic minorities more than their peers.

On this occasion, the Vice President also inaugurated the NITTTR Open Educational Resource (OER) today. Calling it an important step in improving inclusivity through distance education, he observed that it would help the teachers in improving their knowledge base and teaching methodology. Calling for cor-

rective action from the governments, Shri Naidu suggested that one of the important measures is to upgrade the skills of teachers in e-learning. Emphasising the importance of quality teacher training in India, he said that 'teachers constitute the intellectual lifeline of a nation and play a critical role in charting its development'. Shri Naidu further stressed the need to create teachers who are 'learners and creators of knowledge — teachers who touch lives and seek to uplift the human condition'. 'We need inspirational, transformational leaders in our classrooms, especially in rural India', he added.

Talking about India's demographic dividend, he said that teachers have greater responsibility in moulding India's huge youth population into responsible citizens. 'Education does not mean just degrees,' he said and opined that true purpose of education is enlightenment, empowerment and wisdom.

The Vice President also called upon the institutes to focus on developing a constrictive and positive attitude among the students. The Vice President lauded the role of teachers as 'COVID warriors' and doing their best to ensure the academic continuity of their students during the pandemic. He noted that the teaching

community explored technology and showed 'remarkable flexibility in reinventing their strategies and methodologies to support the learning of students'. Referring to the National Education Policy 2020 as a visionary document, the Vice President said that it seeks to transform the education ecosystem in our country and underlines the importance of energising and motivating young faculty members. He urged teachers to adopt innovative strategies to address important national and global challenges and opportunities in an intellectually vibrant, collaborative environment.

Stressing the need for de-colonisation of India's education system, the Vice President called for taking inspiration from India's ancient knowledge systems and great sages who had made our country a Vishwa Guru — a knowledge giver.

Calling for regaining that position, he underscored the need to make society free from the divisions based on the cast, religion, region and language. Emphasizing the need to promote and preserve Indian languages, Shri Naidu appreciated AICTE for starting technical courses in Indian languages. Reiterating that no languages should be imposed or opposed, he

opined that one must learn as many languages as possible but primacy should be given to mother tongue. Advising teachers to impart 'experiential learning' to students, Shri Naidu observed that such a learning methodology helps in promoting creativity and innovative outcomes. He called for taking teaching from a one way mode of communication to a two-way mode where activities need to be connected from content to context.

Calling upon NITTTR to take the lead in producing outstanding teachers through well-structured and scientifically designed training programmes, he appreciated its efforts in training more than 60,000 learners in the past two years. He complimented the institute for training international participants as well under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation of the Ministry of External Affairs.

Expressing his happiness over inauguration of the Sports Centre at NITTTR, Shri Naidu, who himself is a sport enthusiast, exhorted the teachers to keep fit and also encourage their students to regularly practice sports or Yoga. He said that this pandemic has highlighted the importance of physical fitness and healthy food for good immunity against the diseases.