


  
*Campus*
  
 Pg. 6 *Caricature*

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 Pg. 2

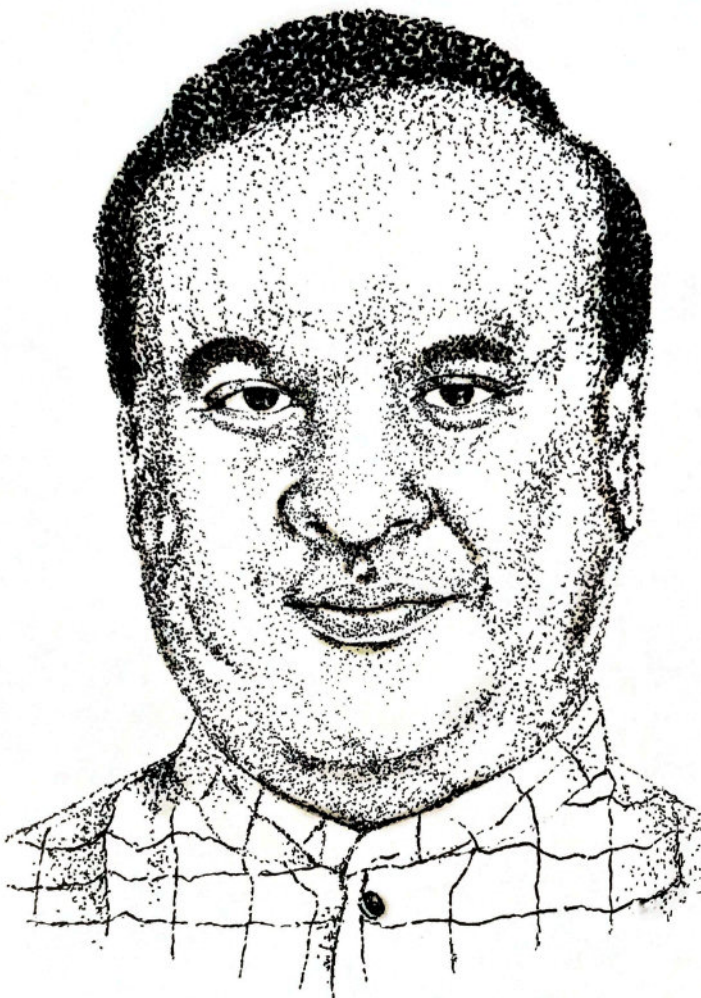


**THIS WEEK'S**
  
**THE**
  
**QUARANTINE**
  
**PLAYLIST**
  
 Featuring:
   
 If You're On the Water by The Saxophones
   
 Drunk by Keshi
   
 Every Time Around by Vansire
   
 The Reason by Hoobastank



# THE PEOPLE'S MAN

-Adrika Borah, XII



When asked in an interview with AVE during his visit to AVS at Founders' 2020, "Who the next Chief Minister of Assam would be?", Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma very beautifully managed to manoeuvre around the question, answering that "the winner would be BJP and that the Chief Minister would also be from BJP." On the 6th of May, 2021, the BJP-led alliance came back to power for the second consecutive term, with a clear majority. The election process took place smoothly, unlike the violence and loot of Bengal.

Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, the people's man affectionately known as 'Mama' among the youth, was sworn in as the 15th Chief Minister of Assam, succeeding Mr. Sarbananda Sonowal on the 10th of May, 2021. Dr. Sarma's image as the 'people's leader' rises not merely from his deep connect to his roots but also his ability to commit to the vision he draws for his people. His discourse on the Indic civilization at Speech Day, marked clearly the paradigm shift he had made in his political trajectory. Composed, quiet, with an aura of humility that highlights yet again that political finesse rests in the mind while charisma really is the attitude one wears. Dr. Sarma has finely tuned himself through a staggering body of work to take on the mantle he wears today.

Dr. Sarma started working for the Assam government as a Member of the Legislative Assembly from the constituency of Jalukbari since 2001 after defeating Bhriagu Kumar Phukan of Assam GanaParishad. Considered to be a Phukan stronghold, Dr. Sarma established his presence and has effortlessly held on to the constituency for over a decade.

After political disagreements with the then Chief Minister, Tarun Gogoi, and a very public fallout with the Congress Supremo Rahul Gandhi, Sarma quit and joined the Bharatiya Janata Party. He joined BJP on the 23rd of August, 2015, and was appointed as the BJP's convener of the Election Management Committee for the 2016 Assam Assembly Election. He again won the

Illustration: Nilasha Bhimsaria

election from the Jalukbari constituency for the fourth consecutive time. Amongst the numerous portfolios he held at the same time over the years were PWD, Finance, Health and Education.

During his tenure, three Medical colleges were established in Jorhat, Barpeta and Tezpur while five more are underway in Diphu, Nagaon, Dhubri, North Lakhimpur and Kokrajhar. More than 50,000 teachers were appointed for the first time through the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET).

In the year of the pandemic, Sarma has emerged as a hero in the state's battle against the virus. His measures and steps have outshined the efficiency of many relatively developed states and even countries! Assam's first COVID-19 case was detected on 31st March, 2020, but even before that, Sarma managed to ensure that the state had four fully functional COVID-19 testing centers in place compared to Delhi and Maharashtra who at that time had only two. The country initially celebrated the 'Kerala Model' and the 'Odisha Model' – given the stellar fight put up by these states against the virus – the country now began to applaud the 'Assam Model'. Owing to the fact that Assam has a considerable population of

3.5 crores, the state could have easily succumbed to the pandemic had it not been proactive in its preparedness for the situation. The Assam Government led by the then Health Minister, Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma and his team of sharp bureaucrats swung into action with one single mantra – “prepare, prepare and over-prepare” – and undertook the sole mission to minimise contingencies that could arise once the virus reached the state. His superb management of the first wave of COVID-19 last year gained him unparalleled popularity among the masses in the State and brought him further recognition across the country. Today, Sarma stands as the face of North Eastern Politics with a resounding standing across the country.

Now, as Chief Minister, Sarma's simmering ambition has come to fruition. However with a State in the grip of a raging pandemic he does not have the luxury to bask in the glory. A man of grit and action, his priority is to save lives. It can be rightfully said that Assam is in truly safe hands, and none would be a better leader than Dr Sarma to navigate the state through this tempest. At the helm of affairs, the days hereon will carve Dr. Sarma a niche in history, one way or the other.

# SAVE YOUR TEAR(GAS)

-Ojas Ayapilla, XI H

In the almost-century long conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians, there is realistically one loser; Palestinian citizens. They are the victims of an incompetent and violent government, and the victims of an apathetic and violent neighbor.

This messy conflict erupted in the 1900s, after the area that was called the British Mandate of Palestine was incompetently divided by the international community between the Israelis and Palestinians. After all was said and done, the surrounding Arab Countries invaded Israel, thinking the division of land was another example of Western Imperialism. Israel successfully resisted their attempts, and their bitterness is felt to this day.

One of the most controversial subjects in this entire conflict, which especially plays into their fighting today, is Israeli Settlements in what is supposed to be Palestinian territory. These settlers are often accompanied by soldiers and tanks. The small militias who accompany the Israelis often build walls and set up checkpoints in Palestinian Territory, suffocating the local Muslim population and often forcing them out of their own land. If this is the case, then why at all is there is there support still for Israel?

In 1987, this organization was formed leading to the first intifada (uprising by Palestinians against the Israelis). It split from the main Palestinian Authority, and is the de facto authority in the Gaza Strip. The Palestinians citizens suffer from HAMAS since the majority of the money in the Gaza Strip goes into constructing and sending missiles into Israeli territory,

or new Kalashnikovs for the brigade soldiers. While this money could be spent in the improving the deplorable conditions of the Palestinian citizens, what HAMAS sees is only red.

This is the principal reason for Israel's aggression; both its politics and people do not believe that Palestinians want peace, to an extent that seeing missiles shot down overhead is a normal and daily occurrence. What many people seem to gloss over is that Israel has been targeted by all its surrounding countries time and time again, and has successfully resisted every single attempt at invasion. To this day, they have and can and should exercise their right to defend themselves. Whilst now Arab countries accept Israel as a nation, they still hold it in contempt and continue to militarily aid Palestine and HAMAS.

Another interesting outcome of this situation is the famous “Iron Dome” system constructed by Israel. If a missile comes from anywhere (usually the Gaza Strip), Israeli military shoots it out of the sky with their own special missiles; which are scattered in hidden silos across the country. This system just goes to show the amount of violence Israel has faced in its short history.

In conclusion, both parties are not happy with what they were given by people who don't understand the socio-religious aspects in the area surrounding the all-important city of Jerusalem, where three major religions have roots in. Whilst a concrete solution to this situation is not easy to deliberate, it needs to be thought of before a third intifada or worse, another Israeli-Arab war.

# STORYTELLER

## Volume II: Repose

-Neelabh Kashyap, XII

“Have you ever tasted the Celeste Nectar?” the little boy held a makeshift cloth ball in his hands and asked with sparkling excitement in his eyes. “No, I haven’t,” the Hero replied. “They say that there’s a small village in the mountains to the west that makes the best Celeste Nectar in the entire continent. Sir Hero, will you take me there after you have defeated the evil monsters?” The boy’s voice was pure, innocence. Enchanting. The Hero smiled and didn’t say anything. He patted the child’s head and stood up from his crouching stance, a wave of exhaustion washing over him – nothing physical because then he wouldn’t be the ‘hero’ anymore. It was more of a mental fatigue that oozed right into his soul and bore him pain much more terrible than any physical pain could – the exhaustion after fighting thousands of battles everyday and bearing the burden of the lives of millions of citizens on his shoulders. Just like Atlas bore the world on his. He had been fighting for the kingdom ever since he could remember. Born with God-gifted abilities, the weight of the heavy sword had been thrust upon him from a very early age.

“Lord Hero!” the hoarse voice of the leader of the Patrol Team drew him back from his thoughts. “The scouts haven’t detected any monster activity nearby. I think it’ll be a fine night tonight.” “Good,” the Hero smiled, “because I’ll be away for a while.” “For what purpose, Sire?” the leader was surprised because he had never heard of his Lord leaving his station in his entire life. “I seek repose,” the Hero replied.

Come dusk and the Hero went in search of the village in the mountains to the west. There, the people were of a very short stature, with long beards tied to their waists. They smashed the luscious Celeste berries with their pestles of cobblestone, filtered them with sieves made of goat’s sinews and poured the aromatic nectar into cups of nightwood. The residents of the village offered the Hero a drink which he downed in a single gulp. Gradually, he felt the pain and exhaustion seeping out of his body. He felt euphoric, and a certain fear of going back again. He spent the entire night in the village, intoxicated. When he returned, he saw the kingdom

he loved razed to the ground by a monster rampage that wasn’t supposed to happen. As he took a stumbled through the town, his mind still misty under the lingering effects of the drink, the reality of the situation finally began to dawn on him. He saw the old shack that used to house the orphans, now a heap of debris. He saw crimson blood splattered on the walls, the colour similar to that of the nectar he had just tasted. And he saw the crude cloth ball lying on the ground, now half-burnt.

He picked it up and put it inside his sleeves. And under the sepulchral glow of the moon that seemed paler than usual, he muttered to himself, “It is a fine night tonight.” He then turned towards the village in the mountains. “I wonder if they would give me some more nectar.”



Illustration: Elozini Senachena

# OUT WEST

-Lavanya Adhikari, X

Illustration: Harshi Kashyap



In Manhattan, New York City lies the 'heart of the world' or better called, 'the Crossroads of the World'; the Times Square, a place which attracts 50 million visitors annually and a place where three hundred thousand people pass daily. In the early 20th century, when The New York Times headquarters relocated to the newly constructed Times Building, it was renamed to Times Square from Longacre Square. It wasn't long before the first electrified advertisement was put up and entertainment icons such as Charlie Chaplin and Fred Astaire started associating with Times Square. However, there has to plot twist, and everything cannot run smoothly. Then it started, crimes, corruption, gambling, prostitution and not to forget the case that gathered the most public attraction, the execution of police officer Charles Becker. Gradually the atmosphere of Times Square started changing and until the next three decades, it acquired the name of a dangerous and seedy neighbourhood. Nevertheless, all this did not stop the annual ball drop on New Year's Eve. It was not until August

15, 1945, that the largest crowd came to Times Square to celebrate the victory over Japan. In the following decades, the condition of Times Square worsened, the seediness did not go away, it was known to be a dark and gritty place. The growth in peep shops, bars, and adult theatres made it more immoral. Then came a time when Times Square paid the city tax even less than a medium-sized corporate building. It was only in the early 90s that Times Square underwent renovations for Broadway shows and commercial purposes. In the mid-90s the security increased and the adult theatres were shut. The area became cleaner, safer, and tourist-friendly. Today, Times Square has the Madame Tussauds, Ocean Odyssey, Broadway Theatres, MTV, Planet Hollywood, and all that you would want. The journey of Times Square has not been a roller coaster ride but rather an uphill ride, and every year countless movies are shot here and millions of tourists come here, and not to forget the annual New Year's Eve ball drop that still appears every year!

## DELUSIONS OF NORMALCY

-Raseen M. Shah, XII

India has faced a series of unprecedented events throughout this never-ending pandemic. From having the image of one of the countries in the world that best handled the 1st wave of pandemic, the country rapidly depreciated to one that seems to be managing the 2nd wave in the worst way possible. Ever since a significant drop in the number of cases was seen, businesses started re-opening, markets and bazaars became crowded again, airports and railways also saw a huge jump in the number of travelers and tourists. Dance clubs, malls and gyms started functioning at full capacity; festivals like Holi and the Kumbh Mela were also organized, along with large Election rallies. One thing was common among all of them - COVID protocols were completely neglected. It seemed India had defeated the virus, with even the Union Health Minister of India, Dr Harsh Vardhan proudly proclaiming their triumph. But it turns out that the storm was far from over. In fact, it was just the start of a horrifying nightmare that brought nothing but complete pandemonium in its wake. We definitely saw the second wave coming - there were more than enough signs - but a false sense of normalcy had crept in and nobody, civilians and officials included, bothered to take any measures to stop the second wave.

We didn't learn any lesson from the first wave at all. There were reports of some cities running out of beds even during the first wave and that should have been a

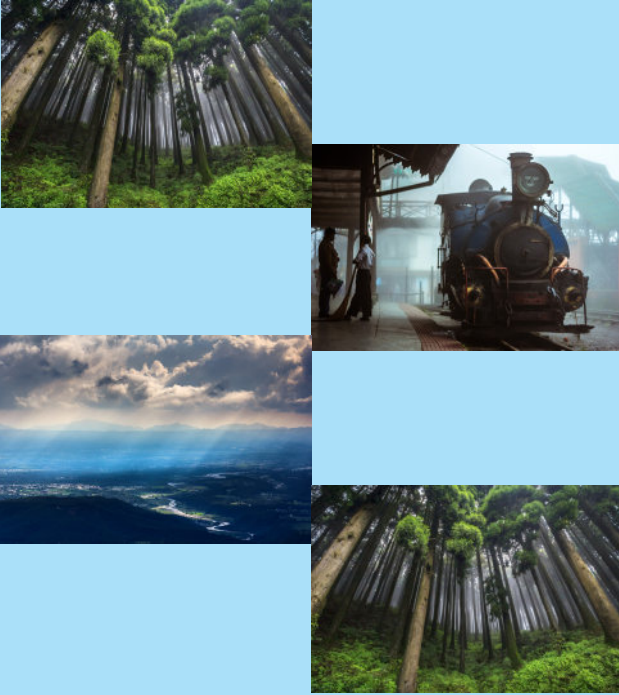
good enough reason to procure the necessary equipment and supplies and be prepared for a possible second wave. None of that happened, with the main focus of the country constantly being centered on the elections and other petty issues. It's high time now that we stop the blame game and hold ourselves accountable, and introspect our own flaws and faults as people, as a society and as a country. Our healthcare system has been completely crippled by the second wave and is having a terrible time coping up with the situation. This phase is nothing like the first one. This time, no one is busy looking for new hobbies or finishing series and movies. Almost all families have lost someone close to them or someone they know. With the constant requests for funds and pleas in social media and the phone calls begging for urgent plasma donation or the contacts of oxygen suppliers, it is impossible to go on with our daily lives. All because we let our guards down. So why pretend like everything's normal when it's clearly not?

I think the most important thing in this moment is faith. Faith that this nightmare will be over soon. And for that to happen, we need to work as a country and for humanity. It is 'never too late' to take measures. Hopefully, if we can strengthen ourselves, follow protocols and increase the vaccination pace, we can help in reducing the cases appreciably.

This too shall pass.

## ERRATUM, 25th Founders' Issue:

This is to clarify that the Photocredits of the Post Card Feature Page, in the 25th, Founders Magazine of AVE, belongs to Mr. Vivek Raj Singh, Associate Editor of AVE (2008). The omission is regretted.



*Campus  
Caricature*



Illustration: Karun Thapa

## THE OUTPOST

Russia and China set to start their biggest N-power project on May 19. Hamas-Israel fighting continues relentlessly even as calls for peace mounts and countries take sides. Amid the tidal wave of the pandemic, the country sees a ray of hope in DRDO's new Covid19 2DG drug cleared for use. States see citizens step up to the cause and pool in resources to fend for themselves. Top virologists of the world shaken with the possibility that the Wuhan Virus was indeed lab made as they seek fresh probe. Post-election violence in Bengal continues even as the Courts take their vacation.



Illustration: Sara Jha

# Ripple #162

-Danica Boro, XII

*Her voice held the room  
enthralled  
On the dais shimmering  
under the spotlight  
He stared transfixed at her  
lips  
Reading them was his way  
of hearing her sing*

## The Quarantine Watchlist

Feeling sick and tired of the same four walls at home? Well grab your popcorn and immerse yourself in the world of media, here is a list of some of our suggestions:

**IF YOU'RE ON THE WATER BY THE SAXOPHONES:** Blending the darkness and melancholy of 1950s with minimal woodwind arrangements, the song is really catchy in its own way.

**DRUNK BY KESHI:** Keshi's new track is slowly and soothing. It talks about the form of loneliness that we feel even with other people.

**THE REASON BY HOOBANSTANK:** One of the chartbusters of the last week, this piece is just another work of the album known for good lyrics and melody.

**EVERY TIME AROUND BY VANSIRE:** The duo's best from the EP "After Filmore County" is this piece of music that tells a beautiful story awaiting listeners.



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Photo Courtesy: The Photographic Society

Mistress-in-Charge: Ms. Sarmistha Paul Sarkar

Publisher: The Assam Valley School, P.O. Balipara, Dist. Sonitpur, Asom-784101, India

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