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"I am grateful to Don Bosco for the education I received. I appreciate their efforts to educate the children of the poor in our country." **Vishwanathan Anand, World Chess Champion**



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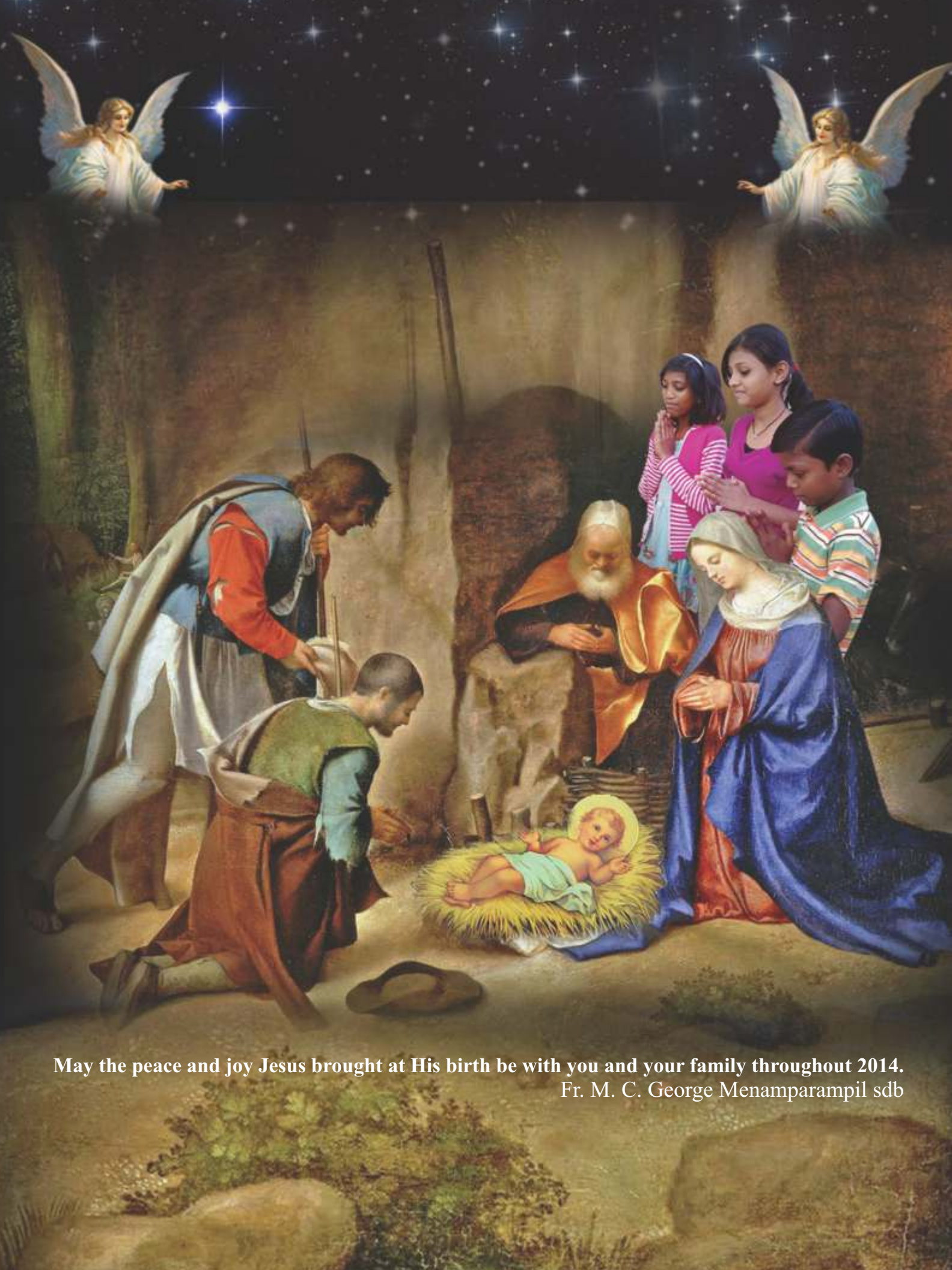
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May the peace and joy Jesus brought at His birth be with you and your family throughout 2014.
Fr. M. C. George Menampampil sdb



Editorial

The Director of BoscoNet got a rare opportunity to join a few children in their game of marbles on the streets of a poor area of New Delhi.

Uttarakhand burst on to the media scene on 17 June 2013. A cloudburst and flash floods brought disaster to the villages and towns of four districts in the West of the state. Houses, roads, fields, hotels, electricity system and a lot of other elements of infrastructure were washed off.

Some 6,000 people are presumed dead, of whom about 1,000 were local people. Over 100,000 pilgrims and tourists from all over India were left stranded. The armed forces evacuated about 110,000 people from the zone.

Some 'leaders' used the occasion to score brownie points over their rivals; for instance, one chief minister claimed that in two days he had rescued 15,000 pilgrims from his state.

Once the pilgrims and tourists were moved out of the state, it did not take long for the 'celebrity status' of Uttarakhand to fade. The media no longer has much to say about the disaster. The local people of the state resent this very much. They have to live the long-term consequences of the disaster – the loss of their homes, their property and their means of earning an income; but they seem to have been forgotten already.

Don Bosco has only one institution in Uttarakhand. It is a counselling centre situated in the Eastern part of the state, far away from the disaster zone. Lacking a base to operate from, BoscoNet hesitated to make an immediate campaign for Uttarakhand.

The staff and students of the Don Bosco institutions of West Bengal conveyed to me their desire to help the people of Uttarakhand. We decided to get involved. I went over to Bengal and conducted a series of social awareness programmes. The response was most enthusiastic and we started our relief work.

True to our identity, we focus on children. Our first visit identified their real needs. Many of them had lost their books, uniforms, etc., washed off along with their homes. Many more would have to drop out of school because their parents could no longer meet the expenses of their schooling.

We have already acted in a few areas: school fees for children; school uniforms, books and stationery; solar lamps that children may use to study in the evenings (useful for the rest of the family as well).

At our subsequent visits we distributed also blankets and warm winter clothes. Many more children and their families will receive aid in the coming few weeks.

Obviously, these are not children studying in Don Bosco institutions as we have no schools in Uttarakhand. But, all children in need are Don Bosco's children, and BoscoNet is glad to help them.

These children and their families will require assistance for quite some time. We shall continue looking for funds, and using them directly at the grassroots level. We, thus, avoid any 'leakage' of funds in transit.

If a donation is exclusively for Uttarakhand, please mention it along with your donation.

Fr. M.C. George Menampampil sdb

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Uttarakhand



Azim

My friend became my enemy !

The story of a boy in Uttarakhand

"I used to love this river. I was born here. I grew up with its sweet sound always in my ears. I learned to walk and to swim almost at the same time.

"When sad, I would come and sit on the river bank. I would feel good again. After all, it is a sacred river. Many people come here from far places.

"All that changed completely this June.

"We were all inside our house as it was raining heavily. The radio said that the water in our river was rising. It was dangerous.

"We could hear the roar below us. We went out of the house to take a look. Policemen were telling people to leave their houses.

"We were afraid. People were shouting, screaming and crying. The water was rushing down. The level was rising fast. My father told us to go up the hill behind our house. We ran without taking anything.

"I really miss my books, clothes and toys. I lost everything with our house. I stood there and

watched it go. This river was my friend. It was my playground. That day it became a DANAV (a monster). It swallowed my home. It took all that I loved.

"I just don't like the river any more. I hate it. I fear it. I do not even like the rain any more.

"I thought I would never go to school again. I had no more books, no uniforms. We had no money for school fees. Most of my friends have nothing, too.

"I am a little happier now. I saw a list on the school notice-board. You (BoscoNet) have paid the fees of 213 students of our school. Thank you also for the uniforms and textbooks. Please help in other schools, too.

"I could not have hoped for the solar lamp you gave us. I can now study in the evenings, too!

"Please say thanks to BoscoNet. Say thanks to the children of Bengal. If, one day, some bad thing happens to them, we, the children of Uttarakhand will remember what they did for us. We will do the same for them."

As narrated by Azim (9 years) to Angel Zimik and Debangshu Ganguly

Loss of property, loss of work



Total destruction caused by flood



The loss of property is tragic enough. People have to replace it. To do so, they need to earn. What turns the tragedy into a disaster is that their means of earning an income are also gone.

People are left with no fields to cultivate and no place of work. Agriculture and tourism were the mainstays of the economy. The land has been

turned into slopes of rocks, stones and gravel. Tourists and pilgrims cannot be expected again for a very long time.

Some used to make a living by running dhabas and tea stalls; others provided parking space or security to the pilgrims; yet others were auto drivers and tempo drivers.



Trying to survive after the tragedy



Children of PANKH – Remedial school from Labour colony get to study again.

"While the focus was on tourists and pilgrims, and taking them back to their home states, nobody was talking about the fate of us, the local people. They could go away, back to their homes, and start earning again. We had nowhere to go and we had no way to earn. We lost our houses as well as our means of earning our livelihood."

Light, warmth and dignity



BoscoNet team with Ms. Alankrita Banerjee, Dir. of PANKH, after the distribution of solar lamps at Kunao village.

On 30 October 2013 BoscoNet sponsored 100 solar lamps for 100 families of Kunao village of Pauri district. We will be going again soon to offer the same to several more villages in the area that have no access to power.

In the early morning of 31 October we distributed the school's winter uniform to 78 students of

PANKH - THE CREATIVE SCHOOL. Each set consists of 2 full-sleeved shirts, trousers, and a sweater. 20 students of pre-foundation classes also received some stationery such as a pencil box, pencil sharpener, eraser, ruler, exercise books, drawing books, and crayons.

In the evening we gave out the winter uniform to a further 48 students of the Labour Colony. Some of them had come to school in their undergarments.

This was no drama. At a wedding reception, everyone is in his "Sunday Best"! A few days after we returned to Delhi we were told that several children were in their school uniform at such a reception, for the simple reason that the uniform was their best or their only clothes!

We have paid the school fees of 213 students.



Mr. Amit Banerjee distributing winter uniforms to the student of PANKH - Remedial Teaching centre

There is a long way to go, and we mean to go as far as we can. On the 1st of November BoscoNet staff visited a remote village called Mudiya in Udamsinghnagar district. There are 150 families cut off totally from the main stream. There is no electricity. There is a rather poor primary school outside the village. The village will receive solar lamps at the earliest.



Gram pradhan, Satyapal Singh
Payal of Mudiya village,
Thanu



Rohan is all of 12 years in age. Rohan lives in Laamgondi of Rudraprayag district. He has an elder sister, who is already married, and two younger siblings.

His father expired last year. The family adjusted to that loss. The mother and three children carried on in relative happiness.

The flood, this year, took away also the mother. Rohan and his two younger siblings now live with his married sister. They are lucky to have her, at least, to care for them.



"Please don't resettle us here, in our own village. We want to go to Rishikesh because we don't know when the next floods will come. We are afraid there could even be an earthquake any moment now. If that happens, with the mountains as they are at present after the floods, we would certainly get buried below the earth." – The people of Devaliya village.

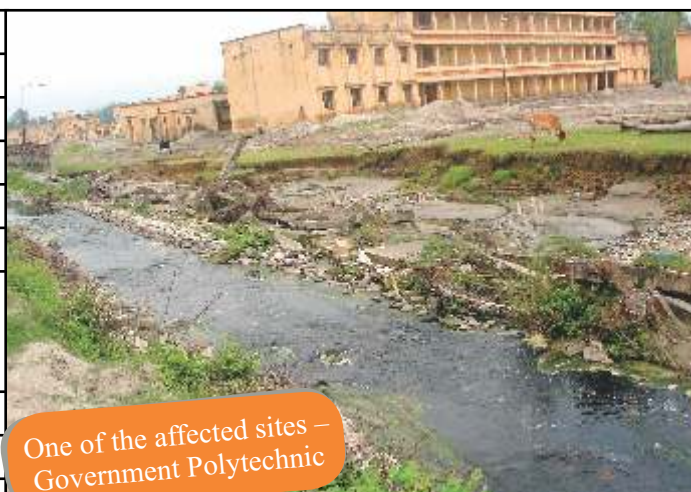
Lots of people have actually come down to Rishikesh and settled in places like Labour Colony and Shivaji, turning them to slums. They are alive, but they have no work, no assets to invest and no income of any sort.

Donors to BoscoNet may deduct 50% of their donations from their taxable income under **80 G**. Write to us for the required documentation.

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Villages affected by the flash flood	4200
Villages facing power crisis	3758
Schools affected more than	100
Districts adversely hit by disaster	4
Local people dead	1000
Houses damaged	1750
People still stranded in different places in the hills and waiting to be rescued	8000
People who have been rescued	112, 000
Local people gone missing	3500 - 3700



One of the affected sites – Government Polytechnic

From Bengal's children to Uttarakhand's children



The director conducts a social awareness programme in Don Bosco, Park Circus, Kolkata.



Children of PANKH – the creative school, Visthapit

The money being used by Bosconet to help the children and families of Uttarkhand is the gift of the children of West Bengal (Paschim Banga).

Bosconet conducted awareness programmes for the students of the Don Bosco Schools at Siliguri, Bandel, Liluah and Park Circus, and the Salesian College at Siliguri. They responded enthusiastically. They donated from their own pocket money. They also motivated their parents, relatives, neighbours and friends to make contributions.

In addition to this, some of the other Don Bosco centres of Paschim Banga collected some funds.

The children of one more school in the state St. Joseph's convent school, Matigara, Siliguri, made a special collection for the children of Uttarakhand.

May God reward our enthusiastic, generous hearted little donors and the people around them who responded to their appeal.

The assistance of BoscoNet to Uttarakhand is not yet completed. Donations are still welcome. If you intend a particular contribution to reach Uttarakhand, please mention it specifically along with your donation.

A Newspaper Takes Notice



100 FAMILIES RECEIVE SOLAR LAMPS

Rishikesh: Pankh, an NGO from Rishikesh organised the distribution of Solar Lamps in the village of KUNAO last Wednesday. The Gram Panchayat expressed its heartfelt thanks to PANKH and Special gratitude to BoscoNet of Delhi. They gave out 100 Solar lamps to the villagers. "We are offering help of this sort for the poorest, and trying to bring them back into the main stream of society," said the secretary of the NGO.

BoscoNet's solar lamps creating permanent ripples



BoscoNet staff demonstrating the use of solar lamps at Kunao village

Kunao village is only 5 km from the main road and 2 km from a feeder road leading to Chilla National Park. However, the village had no electricity. The people had made several appeals. They sat in dharnas on several occasions, all to no effect. Perhaps that had something to do with the fact that the village is of a lower caste.

The floods carried off all the electricity poles and washed off even the substation of the distribution system. No one in the entire area will have any power supply for at least several months.

BoscoNet's choice of this village for the first stage of the distribution of solar lamps was strategic. It has created immediate ripples. Soon after the distribution of the lamps and reports of it in the newspapers, staff of the electricity department landed up in the village to do a survey. The government has set up a special team for this purpose.

This is the first step towards a permanent supply of power. When the service is restored to the area, Kunao village will be included in the network. The villagers have seen a clear link between our action and the government's reaction. They have expressed their gratitude to BoscoNet for this.

BoscoNet's temporary solution will then have given birth to a permanent service for this village.

Partner in Uttarakhand



Indian Renaissance is a non-governmental organization run by Alankrita Banerjee. It was after the death of her father that she got inspired in this direction. Established in the year 2003, PANKH promotes all-inclusive education, peace, and harmony across all sections of society.

The social wing of the organization has successfully conducted literacy and vocational programmes in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.

The organization has been helping BoscoNet to identify the truly needy children and the genuine needs of their families.

Laxmi and Jayawanti are domestic workers. They supplemented their wages by cultivating vegetables on their small plot of land. This double income enabled them to feed their 10 children.

After the floods their plot of land was turned into a bed of rocks, stones and rubble. It is today a real challenge for them to feed their children, let alone send them to school.

There are times the two ladies cannot help thinking that those who died in the floods are better off than they who survived.



"I could never have imagined that such a huge amount of water could swoop down on us so suddenly, as in a blink. It was a deafening roar of disaster. I will not be able to forget for the rest of my life what I witnessed that day."

Vijay Gopal (47 yrs)

Vijay hails from the village of Gabani. He worked as a tempo driver, and took care of his wife and three children. The flood carried off his house, his tempo and his little field. What he finds impossible to reconcile himself to is the loss of his only son in the flood.

Teary eyed, he said, "It was a scary moment. People were shouting and crying everywhere. Everyone was screaming, 'HELP...HELP'. It was all futile because all of us were in exactly the same situation."

Having no shelter of his own, he and his family have come down to Kunao village in Rishikesh to stay with a relative. He was grateful for the solar lamp from BoscoNet; but who can replace his son?



Most vulnerable: Women and Children

In a number of villages, every single family lost at least one member. Often enough they were the males and the breadwinners. The men-folk used to go to the towns to work in hotels, dhabas, tea-stalls, and other facilities that served tourists and pilgrims. Women, children and senior citizens stayed back in the village. Where the flood spared a village and swept through the town where their breadwinners were, these women and children were left alone to fend for themselves.

President Pranab Mukherjee visits Don Bosco

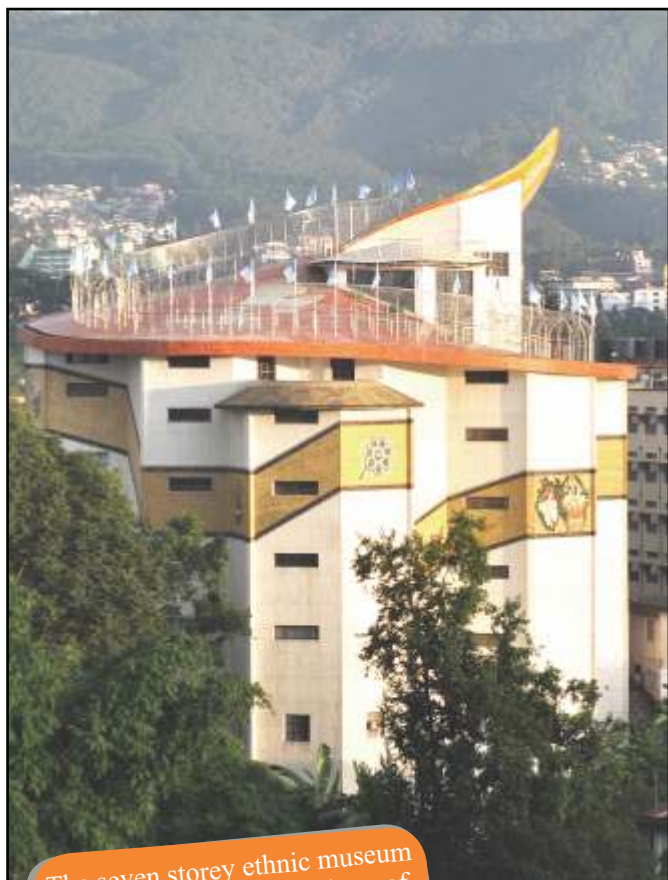
On his visit in October 2013 to Shillong, Meghalaya, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, president of India made it a point to visit Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous cultures at Mawlai. The president had heard from previous visitors (Sonia Gandhi?) about the exceptionally high quality of the displays. He insisted that he wanted to use this opportunity to see it himself.

The president went round the entire museum, guided by its director, Fr. Joseph Puthenpurackal SDB.

This is not just a museum. It is also a research centre on cultures. It has publications and does knowledge sharing through multi-media.



The president, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, goes around the museum, guided by its director, Fr. Joseph Puthenpurackal.



The seven storey ethnic museum topped by a skywalk on the roof.

Don Bosco Museum is an expression of Don Bosco's love for peoples' cultures and their cultural heritage. Culture here means values embedded in peoples' lives and expressed through their lives.

The museum concentrates on the cultures of all the seven states of the North East and the countries neighbouring on North East India.

Don Bosco Museum at Mawlai is a 7-Storey building. Its Skywalk provides the most exciting view of the Queen City, Shillong. The Museum was inaugurated by Smt Sonia Gandhi on 5 March 2010.

The number of visitors to the Museum is increasing every year. They consist of tourists (both from the rest of India and from abroad), and crowds of students from educational institutions in the country, particularly from the North East.

The Museum promotes tourism, arts and culture, education, youth and tribal life in more than one way...



Shri Pranab Mukherjee's comments in the visitors' book:

The visit to this Museum is rewarding. It is a unique experience. The rich collection of tribal artifacts has been displayed beautifully depicting the distinct yet composite culture of the North Eastern Region of our country. Amidst the diversity the trends of Unity are clearly visible linking us with our neighbours.

This museum is a work of Art created with scientific skills.

Indeed a thrilling and inspiring experience.

I compliment and extend my best wishes to all those who are associated with this Institution.

Shri. Pranab Mukherjee.

Other Prominent visitors to the Museum

Ranjit S. Mooshahary

Former Governor of Meghalaya

Smti. Sonia Gandhi

Chairperson (UPA)

Smti. Meira Kumar

Lok Sabha, speaker

Dr. D.D. Lapang

Former Chief Minister, Meghalaya

Mr. Luizinho Faleiro

Former Chief Minister, Goa

Shri. APJ Abdul Kalam

Former President of India

Dr. Krishan Kant Paul

Governor of Meghalaya

V. Rev. Fr. (Dr.) Pascual V. Chavez

Rector Major of the Salesian of Don Bosco

An SDB in administrative council of Chandigarh



Fr. Sebastian Jose has been nominated for the 4th time to the re-constituted Administrator's Advisory Council to advise the Chandigarh Administration on developmental issues and policy matters affecting the Union

Territory of Chandigarh. The present Council consists of 34 members – both Government and non government members. The previous Advisory council had 40 members.

Shri. Shivraj V. Patil, the Governor of Punjab and the Administrator of the Union Territory of Chandigarh, is the Chairman of the said Council.

Father Sebastian Jose, SDB, Director, Don Bosco Navjeevan Centre, Sector- 24, Chandigarh, has an M.Ed degree with specialization in guidance and counselling to his name. He is the Director of the Centre from July 2003. From 2008, he is the honorary director of Snehalaya - a vocational

training centre set up for street kids by the Chandigarh Administration in collaboration with Don Bosco Navjeevan and Fr. Sebastian.

Prior to coming to City Beautiful, Father Sebastian served as Director with Don Bosco, Delhi, Thiruvananthapuram, Bangalore, Manipur and Nagaland. He is currently Chairman, Child Welfare Committee, UT, Chandigarh and also Member of Executive Committee of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Society. He is the chairman of Monitoring Committee of all Welfare institutions of Chandigarh.

His social work was recognized duly by the Chandigarh Administration and he was the State Awardee for the Best Social Worker in 2007. He was honoured for his social work in the slums of Chandigarh, in the field of education. In 2008 he was given NGO's Honour Award and an Appreciation Award for his untiring services to educating the poor.



"I am highly impressed by the various services of BoscoNet, particularly its support for the education of needy children. That's why I am a regular donor to BoscoNet." – **Laishram Bombayla Devi**, Arjuna Awardee (2012), two-time Olympian, member of the National Team for Archery, winner of 24 international medals

"I am the sixth of seven siblings of a poor family. Had it not been for the Salesians of Don Bosco, I would not be what I am today. Don Bosco helped me from my kindergarten to matriculation and continued to help me become an MBBS doctor. I am contributing monthly to BoscoNet so that children who are poor, as I was once, can be helped, like I was helped, so that they become socially constructive and responsible citizens." – **Dr. Stephen Kamson**, Selection Grade Senior Divisional Medical Officer in Indian Railway Medical Service



"I never studied in a Don Bosco institution; but, after I came in contact with BoscoNet I understood the immense amount of service Don Bosco offers to the needy all over India. I got fascinated. Now I cannot resist myself talking about BoscoNet and Don Bosco wherever I go. I am proud that I and several in my family are regular donors. I am proud to have found 73 fresh donors for BoscoNet, several of them regular donors."


Ranjan Waribam, winner of 20 national medals in archery, archery coach of the services and national coach for archery.

"I am a proud student of Don Bosco, Imphal. I further studied B. Com and MSW in Loyola College, Chennai. For 15 years I worked in various International Development Agencies including the United Nations Organization (UNO). I received generous help and support from Don Bosco throughout my studies. I know many poor children receive help and support even today, like I did a long time ago. I make a monthly donation to BoscoNet."

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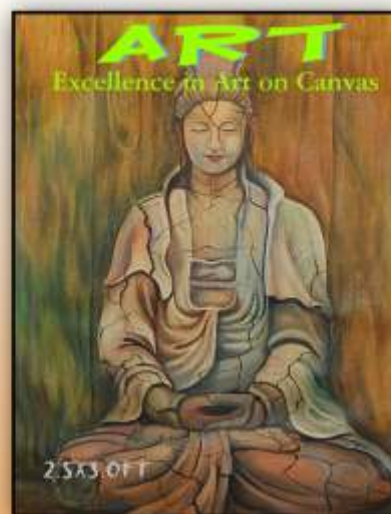
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