

## Cultural Calendar - November 2016

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Indian Council for Cultural Relations  
भारतीय सांस्कृतिक संबंध आयोग

# Sanskarika

Newsletter of the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo November 2016

1  
Tuesday  
4.00pm

**Standard English Competition**  
Organized by Angunawela Academy  
Venue: ICC auditorium  
(Closed Event)

12  
Saturday  
9.00am

Commemorating the birth anniversary  
of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru  
**Shankar's International Children's Competition 2017**  
Painting, Drawing and Essay Competition for children  
Venue: ICC auditorium  
For registration contact : Indian Cultural Centre  
on phone no 2684698 or by email: iccrcolombo@gmail.com

**Bharatha Natyam Recital**  
By Apeksha Mundargi from India  
Venue: ICC auditorium

4  
Friday  
6.00pm

**Narthana Aaradhana**  
Lecture - demonstration  
Changing of Bharathanatyam Trends  
by Subashini Pathmanathan  
Venue: ICC auditorium

18  
Friday  
6.00pm

8  
Tuesday  
4.00pm

**Lecture on stress management**  
by Yoga Guru Dr Vishal Khodaskar from India  
Organized by Dharmya Yoga Academy  
Venue: ICC auditorium

22  
Tuesday  
5.00pm

**Prize Giving Ceremony - Arts of Glory – An all Island Poetry & Art Competition**  
Organized by CLEON, Academy of Speech, Drama & Leadership  
Venue: ICC auditorium

**Children's Day Special**  
Friday Matinee - Stanley ka dabba  
(Hindi with English Subtitles)  
**Little Story with a big Heart**  
Director: Amol Gupte (Duration: 1hr 36 mins)  
Venue: ICC auditorium

11  
Friday  
3.00pm

**An evening of Poetry and Prose**  
Presented by the English Writers Cooperative  
Venue: ICC auditorium

25  
Friday  
6.00pm



# Cultural Tapestry

## HANDICRAFTS OF EASTERN INDIA

The handicrafts made by the craftsmen and artisans of eastern India reflect the colourful and rich culture and heritage of the people of the region. The range includes unique artefacts and utility items and an exquisite collection of handlooms. The traditional patterns and designs on the fabrics amke them suitable not only for use in making fashionable apparel wear, but also for making assorted textile accessories.

### Andaman and Nicobar Islands

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands was the land of exile for the Indian Freedom Fighters. The people of the Islands have developed small-scale handicraft units which specialize in the making of shell and wooden craft items.

### Shell Crafts

The craftsmen of the Islands make good use of the resources of the sea. Ornaments and decorative items are the speciality of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. A variety of shells are found and each of them is used to make different items. The shells found on the shores are used for making decorative items and jewellery. The conch shells are used mainly for religious purposes. Tortoise shells which come in beautiful colours are much in demand in the western countries for making home lifestyle items.



### Woodcraft

Eighty-six percent of the total land area of the Islands is covered with deciduous and rain forests and the people of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands have made good use of this wealth inherited by them. The ornamental woods of the Islands include the Paduak, Chui and marble wood, which are used to make show-pieces and other decorative items. Some of the most popular crafts of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands include the table-top made from the wood of the Paduak tree and the miniature model of a wooden canoe. Shaped by the currents of the sea, the driftwood of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands is also widely used to make various artefacts.



### Palm Mats

Durable palm mats which serve a variety of purposes are made from materials extracted from the palm tree. The palm trees grow well in the tropical climate of the Islands and provide a source of livelihood to many people.



## ASSAM

From time immemorial the people of Assam have traditionally been craftsmen. Though Assam is mainly known for its cane and bamboo products, several other crafts are also made in the state. Different regions of Assam are known for their different handicrafts.

### Cane and bamboo Crafts

Cane and bamboo are an inseparable part of Assamese life. Most of the articles in Assamese households are made of cane or bamboo. These raw materials not only go into the production of handicraft items, such as a variety of baskets, mats and musical instruments, but are also used to make household items and furniture. The Jappi, which is the traditional sunshade, continues to be the most important bamboo item of the state. The Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang has mentioned M his travel memoirs that visitors to the state were welcomed with the Jappi.



### Metal Crafts

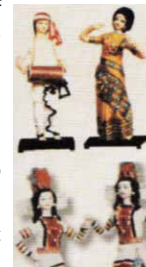
Bell-metal products and brassware form a part of the Assamese people's daily life. The craftsmen involved in the making of the metalcraft are known for their unique artistic skills. The Xorai and Bota – receptacles for betel nut and paan leaves -- have been traditionally



used for centuries. Two whole townships near Guwahati, namely, Hajo and Sarthebari, are entirely devoted to the production of traditional metalware.

### Toys

Toys speak about the culture and tradition of a place and depict the lifestyle of the people living there and the customs prevalent in the region. The traditional toys made in Assam are broadly classified under four heads: toys made from clay, toys made from pith, wood and bamboo, those made from cloth, or a combination of cloth and mud. Human figures, particularly models of bride and groom, and a variety of animal forms, dominate the clay toys scene. Images of gods and goddesses, as well as mythological figures, are also popular. The Kumar and Hira communities of the state have been involved with this art form for several generations. The Goalpara region of Assam is famous for its toys made from pith or Indian cork. As with the clay toys, figures of gods and goddesses, and animals and birds, are very popular. Wood and bamboo which are also available in plenty in the state, are used for making toys. Toys made of cloth and a combination of cloth and mud also constitute an important part of the rich toy-making tradition of the state. The art of making cloth toys has been handed down from mothers to daughters over several generations. These



household toys are made from scrap materials and given to the children to play. Here too, the figure of the bride and groom is most common.

### Poteery



The pottery of Assam can be traced back several centuries. The most common traditional

products include the earthen pots and pitchers, plates, incense-stick holders and earthen lamps. The Kumars and Hiras are the two traditional potter communities of the state. While the Kumars use the potter's wheel to create their pots, the Hiras are possibly the only potters in the world who do not use the wheel at all! Among the Hiras, only the womenfolk are engaged in the making of pottery. The men help in procuring the raw materials and marketing the products.

### Woodcraft

Assam being a state with a large forest cover, wood is available in plenty. The different varieties of wood and timber available are used to make a wide variety of objects. The intricately-carved decorative panels seen in the royal Ahom palaces of the past, and the ancient Sattras or Vaishnavite monasteries, speak volumes about the skill of the craftsmen, known for centuries as the Khanikars. The two most popular items



today are the one-horned rhinoceros, found only in Assam, and the replica of the world-famous Kamakhya temple, situated near Guwahati.

### Mask

Assam has a tradition of making masks, known as Mukhas, which are widely used in the performances of the Bhaonas, or the folk theatre of the state. The materials used for making these masks include terracotta, pith, metal, bamboo and wood. Masks are also used by the tribal communities of the state for their colourful dances which revolve around their typical tribal myths and folklore. The masks are popular as decorative items in modern homes.



### Terracotta

Terracotta has been a popular handicraft of Assam from ancient times. The tradition has been handed down through the generations in the families engaged in this art. While at one time, the images of gods and goddesses and mythological figures were most common, today several decorative items and toys are more in demand.



Source:  
**Rhythms of Life - Folk Traditions of Eastern India**  
by Gouri Basu

to be Continued..