

Assignment

There are four phases of being a storyteller at ThisDay.



The assignment reflects these four phases, starting with research and ending with review. As part of the assignment, you have to do the following:

Research and Write -

The topic of the assignment is the following - **Communities of India: Lives, Practices and Culture**. You need to research and come up with the following:

1. Research 10 Story ideas and write a 60-100 word summary of each. For example, "Apatani tribe women getting tattoos and nose piercing to look 'ugly'" could be a story.
2. Write a Full length story on any one of the above ideas in 500-800 words.

Guidelines for research and writing:

- Keep the language simple and clear
- Consistent writing style - American or British English
- Always double-check the facts with sources



- The story should be fun, entertaining or enlightening
- Length - 500-800 words
- Plagiarism check and grammar check
- Refrain from paraphrasing just to avoid the plagiarism check
- Share sources/reference links of the websites/books that you have picked up information from

Review

Guidelines for review:

- Reviewing is all about ensuring that the story remains accessible for the masses. While reviewing, try to ask yourself, would you want to read this if it wasn't mandated?
- Make sure all grammatical errors have been corrected
- If you feel that the story has plagiarised bits, please highlight them
- The aim of *Teaser* is to ensure that it entices the reader to go ahead and read the entire story. Does it do that? If not, can you rewrite it in a better way?

Here is the story that you need to review - Give your feedback in 50-100 words on the story

Topic - The Village where Ravana is worshipped.

Teaser

We are all familiar with the story of Ramayana and how it ends, with Lord Rama, vanquishing the demon king Ravana. The victory of good over evil. And we are also familiar with how this victory is celebrated every year in the form of Dusshera. However, there's a village in India, that doesn't celebrate Dusshera, for they fear that the curse of Ravana will fall on them.

Bodyline

Some 50 odd km away from Delhi is the village of Bisrakh, in the Gautam Buddh Nagar District of Noida. This village at a first glance seems like any other village in the country. However, there's



something peculiar about Bistrakh and the legends associated with it. People here do not celebrate Dusshera, instead, Navratri sacrifices and yajna are organised here to pay homage to Ravana.

Peculiar, isn't it? Local legend goes that Bistrakh was named after Vishrava, Son of Pulastya, Grandson of Brahma and the father of Ravana. As per mythological texts, Vishrava was a great sage and a scholar par excellence. Such was his fame that the great sage Bharadwaj gave his daughter Ilavida's hand in marriage to Vishrava and from this union, Kuber, the Lord of Wealth was born. However, Vishrava was famous not just among saints and rishis, even rakshasas sought to ally with him. When demon king Sumali got to know of Vishrava's abilities and powers, he hatched a plan to get his daughter Kaikashi married to Vishrava.

Kakashi appeared in front of Vishrava in a beautiful form, Vishrava fell in love and from their union were born Ravana, Vibhishan, Khumbkaran and Surphnakha, half-brahmin half-rakshasa offsprings.

Locals of Bistrakh village believe that Ravana was born there, while some account believes that he wasn't born in Bistrakh but did spend his early childhood there. It is believed that Vishrava found a Shiva Linga in the forest nearby and being a devotee of Lord Shiva, established the Bistrakh Dham. It is well known that Ravana was a shiva devotee, so much so that the Shiv Tandav Stotram was supposedly written by him.

Similarly, Vishrava was a shiva devotee too, and it is believed that both father and son used to pray in the Shiva temple of Bistrakh village, which exists to this day. The Archaeological Survey of India first discovered the cellar with Linga and the temple during an archaeological survey looking for Painted Gray Ware in Bistrakh. Thus, topographically the temple and the linga can be from 600-300 BCE when Painted Gray Ware culture was spreading in the eastern parts of the Upper Ganga Valley. These legend has had a huge impact on the cultural milieu of the Bistrakh village, noticeable especially during the festival of Dusshera. While the entire country celebrates the defeat and death of Ravana at the hands of Rama, in



Bisrakh devotees gather to mourn the death of the Maha Brahmin and perform yajna to pay homage to Lord Shiva and his supreme devotee Ravana. Such is the grip of these legends that Ramlila, the dramatic re-enactment of the legend of Rama is not performed in the village and citizens go to the nearby city of Ghaziabad to enjoy it. Furthermore, local legends and rumours speak of ill fate and curses that befell those who attempt to celebrate Dusshera. Locals believe that Ravana is the guarding deity of the village and protect them from calamity and revelling in his death entices his wrath.

Currently, plans of building a temple dedicated to Ravan are on their way in Bisrakh. While the villagers worship Lord Rama, for them Ravana is a figure closer to their home.

