

Jadav Payeng nomited for CNN Hero



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Rajen Barua 26 December 2015 9674 views

In a meeting held on December 23rd in Houston, Texas, the FASS Executive committee members have discussed and determined that Jadav Payeng is a prime and deserving candidate to be nominated [as](#) a CNN Hero. [As](#) such the members have decided to promote Jadav Payeng [as](#) a CNN Hero. [One](#) can nominate a person [as](#) a CNN Hero by filling in the application form online (per link noted below). FASS also request all in Northeast [India](#) to individually nominate Jadav Payeng for this honor.

CNN Heroes: An All-Star Tribute is an award-winning television special created by CNN to honor individuals who make extraordinary contributions to humanitarian aid and make a difference in their communities. The program was started in 2007. [As](#) of 2015 the program was hosted by Anderson Cooper. Nominees are introduced during the fall of each [year](#) and the audience is encouraged to vote online for the CNN Hero of the [Year](#). Ten recipients are honored and each receive USD\$50,000. The top recipient is chosen [as](#) the CNN Hero of the [Year](#) and receives an additional USD\$250,000 to continue their work. During the broadcast celebrating their achievements, the honorees are introduced by celebrities who actively support their charity work.

FASS feels strongly that Jadav Payeng deserves this honor more than anybody else and it is the duty of all [North East](#) Indian to try to promote the process.

Jadav Payeng (born 1963) is an [Assamese](#) environmental activist and forestry worker from Jorhat, Assam. In 1979, when the whole of Assam was engaged in a political struggle called, 'Assam Agitation' to save Assam, the young Jadav Payeng, then a [student](#) of class IX, started planting trees in one of the barren sand bars (sapor) on the river [Brahmaputra](#) in order to save reptiles and other animals who were dying. And that is what he did for the next 40 years till today. For many years, his work went unnoticed. Then a local journalist, Jitu Kalita of Jorhat discovered what he was doing and brought his great work to light.

In fact, what Jadav Payeng started 40 years ago, decades later transformed into a lush forest, the biggest man made forest, about 1,360 acres, bigger than the size of the Central Park in New York. The forest is now known [as](#) Molai Forest - named after him. The Molai forest now houses five Royal Bengal tigers, [over](#) a hundred deer, wild boar, more than a hundred vultures, several species of birds, including pelicans, three or four greater one-horned rhinoceroses, besides of course, the snakes, who were at the genesis of this extraordinary story. A herd of 115 elephants visits regularly for 3-4 months. "In 35 years, the Royal Bengal tigers have feasted on 85 of my cows, 95 buffaloes and [10](#) pigs," Payeng says matter-of-factly, then adds jokingly, "They (the tigers) do not know farming, you see."

Today Jadav Payeng is becoming a house hold name in the [North East](#) and in [India](#). In 2015, he was honored with Padma Shri, one of the highest civilian awards in [India](#). The world has noticed and is recognizing his work. For his remarkable solo undertaking, the Jawaharlal Nehru University invited Payeng on Earth Day and honored him with the title of the 'Forest Man of [India](#)' in 2012. Later that year, the then [President](#) APJ Abdul Kalam felicitated him with a cash [award](#) in Mumbai. The same year, he was among the 900 experts who gathered at the seventh global conference of the International Forum for Sustainable [Development](#) at Evian in France. Sanctuary Asia bestowed on him the [Wildlife Service Award](#).

His work of plantation of trees in the [Brahmaputra](#) sand bars has also has contributed to the control of the erosion problem of the river [Brahmaputra](#) which has wrought immense flood and devastation problem in the [state](#) of Assam. He has been inspiring many people. In 2015, FASS (Friends of Assam and Seven Sisters) an international [NGO](#) Headquartered in Houston Texas initiated a project called "Greening of the [Brahmaputra](#) Basin', in collaboration with Jadav Payeng with the goal of planting trees in all the barren sand bars of the river [Brahmaputra](#). It is hoped that besides having a great environmental impact this process will control greatly the flood and erosion problem of the [Brahmaputra](#) valley.

In order to nominate Jadav Payeng for the CNN Hero, one may go to the link <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cnn.heroes/2016/nominations/index.html>

Rajen Barua

An engineer by profession and a writer by passion. Barua writes on various critical cultural, historical and linguistic issues of Assam and India. Barua had been living in the USA with his family for the last 30 years. Barua had always been engaged in doing various welfare works for Assam and the North East. Barua is also the founder-chairman of the International 'think-tank' NGO called 'Friends of Assam and Seven Sisters (FASS).

BY RAJEN BARUA

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