

## Royal scion Jishnu 'Karta' (Debbarman), torch bearer of the Manikya dynasty in Tripura's new BJP dispensation



Conscious erasure of past, misrepresentation of historical memory and deliberate distortion of heritage have always marked history writing or rewriting in totalitarian regimes. Tripura had no totalitarianism in its political power structure. But the intellectual vanguards who thrived on patronage have always done their best to deny and twist the past. The worst victim of the process was-as it still continues to be-the state's princely past and the positive contribution of the royal Manikya dynasty rulers to the growth and evolution of this hilly state.

Yet, the common people had the goodwill to preserve and honour their past as reflected in the resounding victories of late 'Maharaja' Kirit Bikram Kishore Manikya in three Loksabha polls of 1967, 1977 and 1989 as candidate of India's oldest political party, the Congress. 'Maharani' Bibhu Kumari Debi had been elected to the state assembly twice in 1983 and 1989, performed responsibilities as revenue minister and then became a party MP in 1991. But then the Congress faltered and failed to capitalize on the personal acceptability of Pradyot Kishore.

But the BJP which pulled off a stunning victory in the just concluded assembly polls seemed to have made amends by putting up another scion of pure blue blood, Jishnu 'Karta' (Debbarman) as deputy chief ministerial candidate. The closest relative-in fact, member of Tripura's royal Manikya dynasty-Jishnu 'Karta' is the younger son of an illustrious father, Ramendra Kishore Debbarman or 'Nani Karta' who was a chief secretary of the state post-merger. Schooled and educated in premier educational institutions outside the state, Jishnu 'Karta' and his elder brother, barrister of Calcutta high court Bharat Kishore, fine-tuned and enriched their familial legacy in the wider Indian peninsula and abroad. Bharat Kishore is pursuing his profession in Calcutta's highest legal circle as well as in the supreme court but the interesting point about his personal background is that he is the son

in law of late 'Mahanaika' Suchitra Sen and consort of Hindi film star of yesteryears, Moonmoon Sen. A true cultural confluence of Tripura and Bengal indeed!



But Jishnu 'Karta' has always been deeply rooted in Tripura's soil, practicing his political beliefs and ideals as represented by the BJP. Apart from his huge business interests, Jishnu 'Karta' heads Tripura chapter of a national cultural body INTACH as a colleague of leading intellectual Chidananda Dasgupta. Jishnu 'Karta' has been closely associated with BJP since the mid-nineties as party leader and candidates for Loksabha elections in 1998 and 1999. But the desultory state to which the BJP was reduced thereafter acted as a disincentive. But the rejuvenated BJP under the leadership of Sunil Deodhar and Biplab Kumar Deb. Having contributed to the party's preparation for elections, Jishnu 'Karta' was put up as party candidate for BJP in the Charilam (ST) constituency which he was supposed to win easily . But the death of CPI (M) nominee and sitting MLA Ramendra Narayan Debbarma had led to countermanding of polls which will now come off on March 12 to yield a facile win for the 'Karta'. He has already been nominated by the party as the deputy chief minister and will be sworn in tomorrow



The post of deputy chief minister, unsanctioned by the constitution, is more symbolic but this symbolism is deeply underlined by substance. What the BJP wants to signal through the persona of Jishnu 'Karta' is a positive message to the state's 'Janjatis' or indigenous tribal people. But Jishnu 'Karta' is determined to live up to the expectations from him

and work for the welfare of all the communities in keeping with the ennobling tradition of his illustrious forefathers of the Manikyā dynasty.