

He is a product of India who is trying to save Bharat. That, in a gist, sums up the good doctor who, in the middle of Bodoland in Assam's Chirang district, is bringing about a silent movement eradicating the deadly malaria, running a weavers' network and guiding other NGOs in the region. An MBBS from Pune and trained at the London School of

SUBIR HALDER

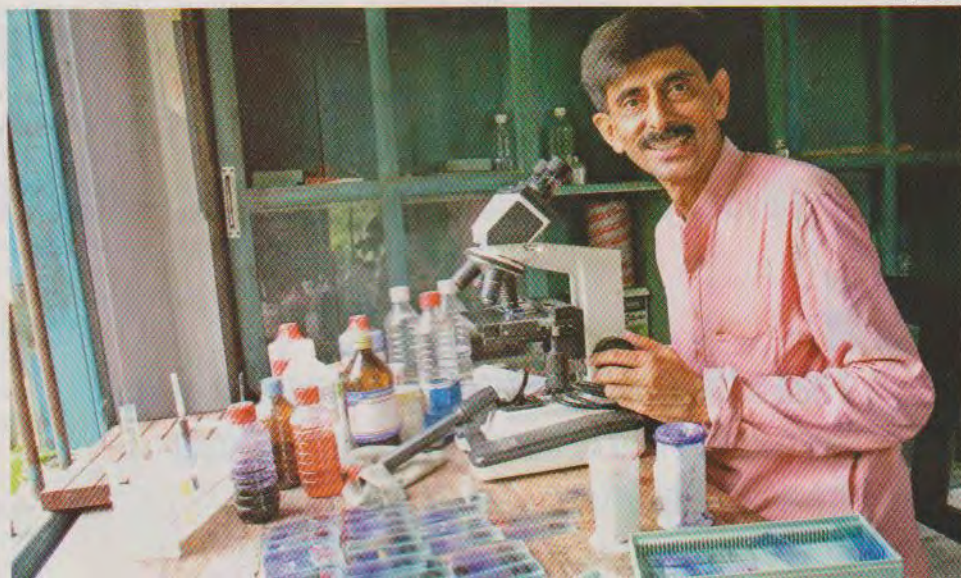
doctor AT LARGE

✱ **Dr Sunil Kaul, 46**

Project To rid rural Assam of malaria and help people stand on their own feet

Can-do Icon His wife Jennifer, an Indian Chinese born in Kolkata. They got married while working for ANT and have a five-year-old daughter, Aman Gwjwn. Gwjwn means peace in Bodo.

Assam accounts for about 2.5 per cent of India's population, but it records over **20 per cent** of deaths due to malaria



Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Dr Sunil Kaul realised that his true calling lay in the rural heartland where even basic healthcare was a rarity. In 2000, he quit the army and, with his wife Jennifer Liang, founded the Action Northeast Trust (ANT) in Bongaigaon. They have a daughter whom they have named Aman Gwjwn. The last name means "peace" in Bodo.

The foundation's most powerful impact has been in controlling malaria in Chirang. Kaul set up laboratories in remote places and trained locals in conducting blood tests and identifying the malaria parasite. He taught local chemists the correct dosage of

medicines. A local boy, Carlos, is a much-trusted lab technician. And though now a government-run clinic has come up close by, old loyalists still come to Carlos and voice their faith in Kaul when it comes to treatment. "I have often been accused of helping quacks. But no MBBS doctor wants to stay here," he says.

Each ANT centre covers about 80-90 small villages, reaching out to nearly 6,000 people. Ever since he began ANT, Kaul has trained 11 persons, of which eight are still with the project. They run the labs independent of ANT, presided over by a local managing committee. "I wanted them to be responsible for each unit and they do take an appropriate fee from the people for the tests. I had hoped this would not only provide healthcare but also be an economically-viable profession. Some of them are doing well, but with the National Rural Health Mission now setting up clinics, these centres may not do too well in the future," he says, not ready to take credit for almost showing the way to the Government.

by Elora Sen

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SUNIL KAUL, Doctor