


Sethrichem Sangtam gets first Rohini Nayar prize for rural development

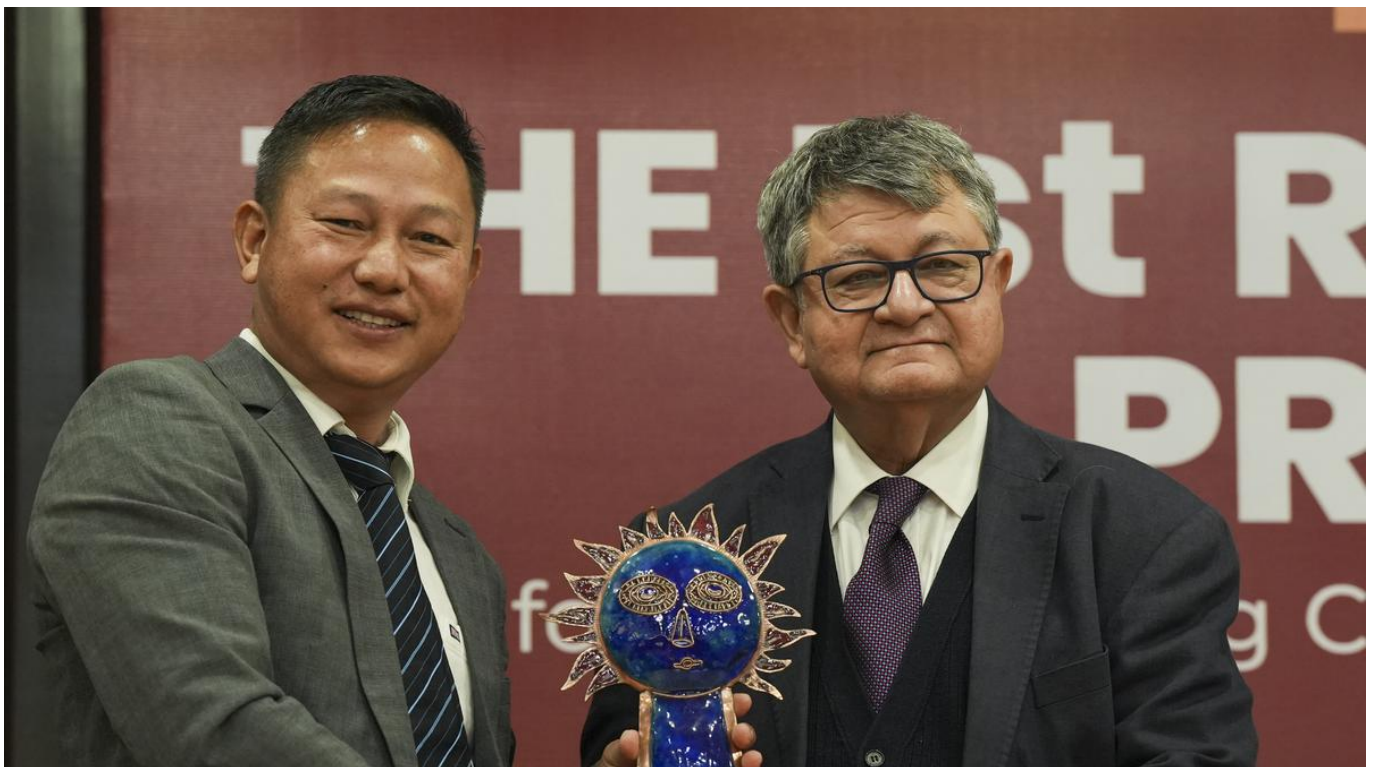
His organisation 'Better Life Foundation' focusses on rural livelihood security, environment sustainability and education for change

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NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery hands over 'Rohini Nayar Prize 2022' to Sethrichem Sangtam, in New Delhi on December 20, 2022. | Photo Credit: PTI

Sethrichem Sangtam, who helped triple the incomes of 1,200 marginalised farmers in Eastern Nagaland, was awarded the first Rohini Nayar prize for outstanding contribution to rural development.

The prize awarded to an individual 40 years or under in age, was presented by the Niti Ayog Vice-Chairman Suman Bery. The winner was selected by an eminent jury from civil society consisting of Dr. Ashok Khosla, founder, Development Alternatives; Dr. Rajesh Tandon, founder, PRIA; and Ms. Renana Jhabwala, national coordinator, SEWA.

Mr. Sangtam works with 1,200 marginalised farmers in Eastern Nagaland through his organisation 'Better Life Foundation', which focusses on rural livelihood security, environment sustainability and education for change.

Among his many achievements were encouraging farmers in the region to abandon wasteful slash, burn cultivation and move to permanent farming. The average income of the farmers tripled as a result of his interventions.

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The prize had been instituted by the family of the late Dr. Rohini Nayyar, an eminent scholar-administrator who spent much of her professional life working on issues related to rural development in India.

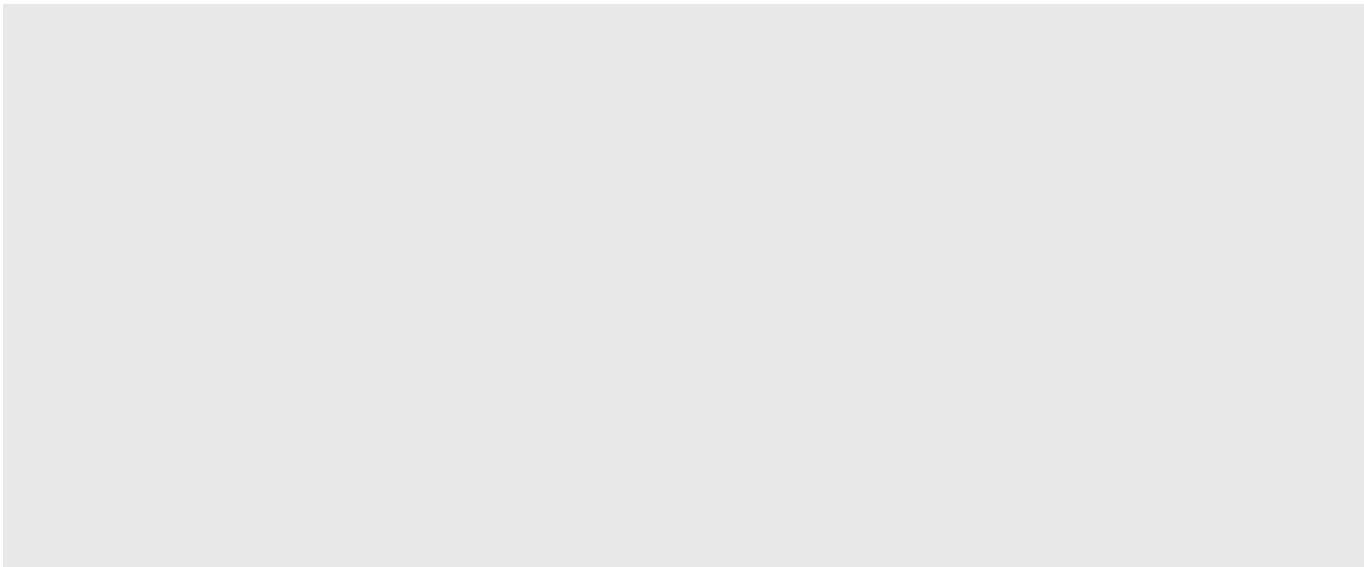
Dr. Nayyar, a well-known economist and former principal adviser at the erstwhile Planning Commission, was one of India's foremost authorities on rural development. She passed away in October 2021.

Developing India's social and economic development

The prize will be given out annually by the Nayyar Foundation for Social and Economic Purpose, set up to contribute to the social and economic development in India.

While giving away the award, Mr. Bery said many initiatives for rural India which one saw around at present, like the aspirational districts programme, the development of multi-dimensional poverty index for India, and the digitisation to create financial inclusion in rural India, were results of the efforts by Dr. Rohini Nayyar and her team, while she was in the Planning Commission.

Dr Deepak Nayyar, director of the Foundation, said that during her more than two-decades-long stint in the Planning Commission she also worked on the conceptualisation of the MGNREGA.



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