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BEYOND THE HEADLINES

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GANGTOK DECLARED BL SEAT, CAPITAL DIVIDED INTO ARITHANG & GANGTOK

Delimitation of assembly constituencies announced

by PEMA L. SHANGDERPA

GANGTOK: The process of delimitation of assembly constituencies in Sikkim is now complete and the final draft notification has been made official. In a notification issued by the Election department on Monday, the delimitation of seats based on the 2001 census has been notified thus completing the entire process for the state of Sikkim.

The notification determines the new territorial assembly constituencies into which the state of Sikkim shall be divided for the purpose of elections to both the assembly and the Lok Sabha.

The 12 seats for the Bhutias and Lepchas (BL) and the two Scheduled Caste seats have been retained. These seats, however, have been readjusted based on the population of the communities with the average population of each constituency being kept at 17, 400.

According to the new recast one seat has been decreased in West Sikkim from the present nine. There are now 8 seats in West with three of them *Yukso m - Tashiding*, *Rinchenpong* and *Daramdin* being set aside as BL seats. *Salghari-Zoom* also in West has been declared a SC seat.

One more seat has been

**8 SEATS EACH FOR WEST & SOUTH,
12 IN EAST AND 3 RETAINED IN NORTH**

Names of constituencies see changes

added to the total seven in South Sikkim raising it to eight. *Ralong*, a BL seat in South has been renamed *Barfung* while *Yangang*, a SC seat has been renamed *Tumen-Lingey* and converted into a BL seat.

All the three seats in North Sikkim have been kept intact.

East Sikkim comprises of 12 constituencies with four of the BL seats and another SC seat having been carved out in East district with the rest retained as general. *Gangtok* has been split into two electoral constituencies. *Arithang* has been converted into a separate general constituency while *Gangtok* is now a BL seat. *West Pendum* has been reserved as a SC seat while *Gnathang-Machong*, *Shyari*, *Martam-Rumtek* have been made BL seats.

The delimitation was carried out for the 31 territorial constituencies out of the total 32. The *Sangha* member in the house is elected through an electoral collage of monk's body from the monasteries.

The nomenclatures of most of the assembly constituencies have also been changed and the

revenue blocks realigned.

The next election and the new electoral rolls will now be based on the new realigned assembly constituencies.

The reservation of seats for the *Limbus* and *Tamang* communities, however, does not figure in the new notification and the two communities might now have to wait longer for them to be incorporated in the

new arrangement.

Soon after the draft notification was made the Commission had conducted public hearings in *Namchi* and *Gangtok* seeking suggestions and grievances if any.

Present at these public hearings were the chairman of the delimitation commission *Kuldip Singh* and senior members of the commission. The commission later considered and incorporated the important suggestions while preparing the final draft.

The final draft had been stalled

for over six months with the Commission having given additional time for the government to initiate the reservation of seats with the centre and the parliament. It has been the demand of all the political parties that the reservation of seats for the two communities be met before the final draft notification is released. The Sikkim unit of the *Bharatiya Janata Party* had even filed a petition in the Supreme Court to stall the notification before a decision was reached on the seat reservation for the *LT combine*.

SEE INSIDE FOR THE COMPLETE BREAK-UP

PIL fires the opposition



inside: THUKCHUK BHANDARI
TOGETHER AGAIN

Celebrate Unity & Brotherhood
on the auspicious occasion of
Pang Lhabsoi festival in Gangtok.

**Pang Lhabsoi Celebration
Committee for Statues of Unity**



ASSEMBLY FREQUENCIES

THE COMPLETE BREAK-UP

DISTRICT WEST

1. Yoksam-Tashiding [BL] [Revenue Blocks]: Mangnam, Narkhola, Dhupidara, Kongri, Labdang, Gangyep, Tashiding, Laso, Chongrang, Arithang, Gerethang, Dubdi, Melli, Yoksam, Tsozo, Mellilaching, Khechopheri, Thingling I, Thingling II, Labing, Singlitam, Topung, Tingbrum and Tashiding and Yoksam Forest Blocks of Gyalshing Sub-Division.

2. Yangthang [Revenue Blocks] Singrangpung, Nambu, Darap, Sindrang, Singyang, Chongpung, Naku, Bhaluthang, Unglok, Yangten, Yangthang, Kyongsa, Lingchom, Tikjya and Pemayantse Monastery of Gyalshing Sub-Division.

3. Maneybung-Dentam [Revenue Blocks]: Sardong, Lungzik, Sapong, Bongte, Srinagi, Liching, Gayten, Karmatar, Sopakha, Maneybung, Begha, Mangmo, Dentam, Sangkhu, Radhukhandu, Hee and Dentam Forest Block of Gyalshing Sub-Division.

4. Gyalshing-Barnyak [Revenue Blocks]: Umchung, Gyalshing, Hee-Patal, Pecherek, Martam, Barnyak, Barthang, Barphok, Chingthang, Megyong, Miyong, Gyalshing and Berynak Forest Blocks and Gyalshing [NTA] of Gyalshing Sub-Division.

5. Rinchenpong [BL] [Revenue Blocks]: Tadong, Rinchenpong, Jeel, Hathidung, Bum, Rishi, Bara-Samdong, Deythang, Parrengaon, Sribadam, Takuthang, Chuchen, Tinzerbong, Suldung, Kamling, Suntaley, Khanisherbung and Sangdorji of Soreng Sub-Division.

6. Daramdin [BL] [Revenue Blocks]: Burikhop [Rumbuk], Burikhop [Dodak], Rumbuk, Bhareng, Ribdi, Okhrey, Tikpur, Siktam, Salyangdang, Lungchok, Lower Fambong, Upper Fambong, Dhalam [Daramdin] and Hilley and Sombaria Forest Blocks of Soreng Sub-Division.

7. Soreong-Chakung [Revenue Blocks]: Chumbung, Aroobotey, Chota Samdong [Samdong], Singling, Timberbong, Tharpu, Karthok, Soreong, Malbasey, Mendo-Gaon, Chakung and Soreong Forest Block of Soreng Sub-Division.

8. Salghari-Zoom [SC] [Revenue Blocks]: Mabong, Segeng, Samsing, Geling, Zoom and Nayabazar Forest Block and Nayabazar [NTA] of Soreng Sub-Division in **District West**; Jorethang [NTA] and Salghari Revenue Block of Namchi Sub-Division in **District South**.

DISTRICT SOUTH

9. Barfung [BL] [Revenue Blocks]: Sada, Phamthang, Brong, Poley, Namlung, Lingdong, Ralong, Deythang, Tinkitam, Sanganath, Rayong, Zurung, Bakkhim, Kewzing, Dalep, Lingzo, Likship, Hingdam, Lamting, Mangbrue, Tingmo, Barfung and Ralong Moanstery of Ravong Sub-Division.

10. Poklok-Lamrang [Revenue Blocks]: Damthang, Jaubari, Tringthang, Mamley, Chisopani, Denchung, Poklok [Polok], Tinik, Dhargaon, Dorop, Shyampani, Sangbung, Assangthang, Sorok, Kamrang, Gom,

Chemchey, Pabong [Mamley], Pajer, Omchu, Chumlok and Wak of Namchi Sub-Division.

11. Namchi-Singhithang [Revenue Blocks]: Bul, Boomtar, Gumpa-Gurpisey, Saleumbong, Kopchey, Mikkhola, Rong, Palum, Singtam, Maniram, Phalidara, Tinzir, Singhithang and Namchi Forest Block and Namchi [NTA] of Namchi Sub-Division.

12. Melli [Revenue Blocks]: Manpur, Kitam, Kartikey, Sumbuk, Suntaley [Sumbuk], Longchok, Kamarey, Panchgharey, Turuk, Ramabong, Kerabari, Paiyong [Kerabari], Suntaley Sadam, Sukrabarey, Sadam, Rabitar, Melli, Mellidara and Majhitar and Melli Forest Blocks of Namchi Sub-Division.

13. Namthang-Ratepani [Revenue Blocks]: Kabrey, Karek, Phong, Chuba, Parbing, Rameng, Nijarmeng, Burul, Rabikhola, Tangji, Bikmat, Ratepani, Passi, Paleytm, Nagi, Maneydara, Turung, Kanamtek, Pamphok, Kateng-Bokrang, Nalam Kolbong, Donok, Mamring and Mamring Forest Block of Namchi Sub-Division.

14. Temi-Namphing [Revenue Blocks]: Tokal, Gangchung, Aifaltar, Temi, Tarku, Tanak, Doring, Rashyp, Barnyak, Thangsing, Tshalumthang, Namphing, and Tokdey [Reshep], Temi Tea Estate, Pabong [Gangchung] and Tarku and Temi Forest Blocks of Rabong Sub-Division; and Namphrik, Ben, Deo of Namchi Sub-Division.

15. Rangang-Yangang [Revenue Blocks]: Satam, Rabong, Namphok, Gagyong, Rangang, Sangmo, Kolthang, mangzing, Sripatam and Tokdey [Lingmo], Neh-brum and Rabongla and Lingmo Forest Blocks of Rabong Sub-Division.

16. Tumen-Lingi [BL] [Revenue Blocks]: Sokpay, Lingi, Ku, Paiyong, Upper Paiyong, Lingmo, Pephthang of Rabong Sub-Division in **District South**; Raktong, Tintek, Kambal, Samdong, Raley-Khese, Tumen, Patuk and Singbel of Gangtok Sub-Division in **District East**.

DISTRICT EAST

17. Khamdong-Singtam [Revenue Blocks]: Chadey, Simik, Aritar [Dung-Dung], Lingzey [Simik], Dung-Dung, Budang Thangsing, Beng, Khamdong, Sherwani, Sakyong, Chisopani, Rapdang, Namgeything and Singtam [NTA] of Gangtok Sub-Division.

18. West Pemdang [SC] [Revenue Blocks]: West Pemdang, Central Pemdang and Rangpo [NTA] and Rangpo Forest Block of Gangtok Sub-Division.

19. Rhenock [Revenue Blocks]: Sajong of Gangtok Sub-Division, Pachak, Kamarey Bhasmey, East Pemdang, Dikling, Amba, Tshalumthang, Pacheykhani [Dikling], Losing, Pacheykhani [Losing], Taza, Tarpin and Rhenock in Pakyong Sub-Division.

20. Chujachen [Revenue Blocks]: Chujachen, Lingtam, Phadamchen, Premlakha, Singaneybas, Subanedara, North Rhegoh, South Rhegoh, Changeylakha, Dholepchen, Sudunglakha, Tarethang, Biring, Mulukey, Aritar and Phadamchen, Rongli and

Rhenak Forest Blocks of Rongli Sub-Division.

21. Gnathang-Machong [BL] [Revenue Blocks]: Pachey, Linkey, Parkham Riwa, Machong, Chochepheri, Latuk, Gnathang, Kartok, Rolep, Lamaten, Thekabong and Assam Lingzey and Pakyong Forest Blocks of Pakyong Sub-Division.

22. Namcheybung [Revenue Blocks]: Lingzey [Sumen], Mangthang, Sumen, Lingzey [Assam], Assam and Singtam Forest Block of Gangtok Sub-Division; Samdur, Yangtam, Aho, Chhota Singtam, Changey Senti [Tsaney] and Namcheybung of Pakyong Sub-Division.

23. Shyari [BL] [Revenue Blocks]: Chandmari, Rongyek, Tathangchen, Upper Tathangchen, Nandok, Naitam, Namok, Pam, Bhusuk and Shyari of Gangtok Sub-Division.

24. Martam-Rumtek [BL] [Revenue Blocks]: Shyayong-Rumtek, Rawate-Rumtek, Chinze, Barbing, Lingdum, Tempyak Mendu, Rey, Samlik-Marchak, Namin, Tshalumthang, Nazitam, Martam, Namli, Tumlabung, Byang, Phengyong, Tirkutum, Chuba and Rumtek Forest Block and Sang Forest Block of Gangtok Sub-Division.

25. Upper Tadong [Revenue Blocks]: Tadong and Upper Tadong [CT] of Gangtok Sub-Division.

26. Arithang: Ward Nos. 1, 2 and 4 of Gangtok [NTA] and Gangtok Private Estate [Arithang] of Gangtok Sub-Division.

27. Gangtok [BL]: Ward Nos. 3, 5 to 10 of Gangtok [NTA] of Gangtok Sub-Division.

28. Upper Burtuk [Revenue Blocks]: Ranka, Sangtong, Upper Sicheygaon, Parbing, Sicheygaon, Gangtok Private Estate, Burtuk, Luing, Upper Burtuk of Gangtok Sub-Division.

NORTH DISTRICT

29. Kabi Lungchuk [BL] [Revenue Blocks]: Tangyek, Ramthang, Rongong, Tumlong, Phodong, Chawang, Phamtam, men-Rongong, Paney-Phensong, Labi, Kabi, Tingda and Kabi Forest Block in Mangan Sub-Division of **North District**; Lingdok, Nampong, Navey, Shotak, Penlong, Upper Chandmari and Kyongnosla, Pangthang and Gangtok Forest Blocks of Gangtom Sub-Division in **District East**.

30. Djongu [BL] [Revenue Blocks]: Lum, Sangtok, Gor, Gnon-Samdong, Lingthen, Lingdem, Tingbong, Lingzah-Tolung, Sakyong=Penlong, Salim Pakel, Hee-Gyathang, Barfok, Lingdong, Zimchung, Tingchim, Upper Mangshila, Lower Mangshila, Namok, Sheyam and Upper Djongu and Phodong Forest Blocks in Mangan Sub-Division; Shipgyer in Chungthang Sub-Division.

31. Lachen Mangan [BL] [Revenue Blocks]: Lachen, Lachung, Chungthang, Tung, lachung and Lachen and Chungthang Forest Blocks in Chungthang Sub-Division; naga-Namgor Singhik, Ringhim, Nampatam, meyong, Singchit, Pakshep, Kazor, Sentam, Mangan [NTA] and Naga and Mangan Forest Blocks in Mangan Sub-Division.

by SARIKAH ATREYA

GANGTOK: A gang of eight local men. The lure of easy money. Greed spawned by the daily draws of huge sums of money and occasional bumper wins that catapults ordinary working class citizens into millionaires overnight and the TV and newspaper reports that make their rag to riches story national headlines. A foolproof master plan. An inside accomplice. Two months of meticulous planning. Masks and caps in place. Maybe weapons concealed for emergency use. An electronic device that could be manipulated. And they laugh all the way to the bank.

Not really.

The seven masked men that led a half-baked attempt to rig the results of the State-run online lotteries on August 11 last month are today cooling their heels in the Police lock up, with their dream of cashing on to the great online lottery phenomenon that has swept our society like an epidemic nipped in the bud. Call it sheer bad luck or bad planning or over confidence on their part. It was, after all, an electronic device that led to their arrest. And dexterity on the part of Sikkim Police who quickly netted these men and put them behind bars.

But this is not just a simple open-and-shut case of attempted forgery. With the arrest of the supposed mastermind behind this attempt - Phu Chung Chung, it was clear that the entire operation was his brainchild. An alleged lottery addict, who had in the past tried his hands unsuccessfully in running an online lottery outlet and had squandered away lakhs of rupees in sustaining this passion of his. A regular at various lottery outlets in the town, Phu Chung Chung, alias Tshering Topden, maybe believed that the game he knew so well could be his path to easy money but where he failed was in his planning and in his underestimation of the entire process of online lotteries.

When the attempted forgery was first reported to the Police by the officials of the Directorate of Lotteries in a FIR on 12 August, one of the first suspects that the Police zeroed in was Phu Chung Chung because of his earlier minor scraps involving lotteries and the fact that he had tried to extract information on the entire format of online lotteries using the Right to Information Act. As the Police began a look out for Phu Chung Chung,

LOTTERY RIGGING ATTEMPT



A CCTV grab of two of the eight presently behind bars

QUESTIONS REMAIN UNANSWERED

an electronic device came in handy in more than one ways to nab the accused.

The Close Circuit TV cameras installed in the Lottery office proved to be the nemesis for the gang. The footage extracted from the CCTV recordings led the Police to confirm their suspicion that it was Phu Chung Chung who had in fact carried out the entire plan. Police sources have revealed that when the CCTV footage was shown to people who knew Phu Chung Chung well enough, they could confirm his presence in the footage through his physique and body language. With this lead in hand, the Police tracked down calls made from Phu Chung Chung's mobile phones to seven of his partners in crime and in less than a week, the Police had a fairly good idea about the identities of the entire gang.

What is interesting to note here that although the gang managed to forge the results document with their choice of winning numbers, the Directorate of Lotteries rubber stamp seal is missing from the forged document. Also, the gang was in complete ignorance of the presence of the CCTV cameras installed in the corridor and the draw room that recorded their entire aborted attempt!

The CCTV footage shows that the entire operation took less than half an hour, which Phu Chung Chung, clad in black jeans and jacket and his head covered in a black skull cap and face covered by a mask, led. The three officials are seated inside around a table - a lady official and two judges, with a peon and a cook filtering in and out of the small room. At exactly 9 pm, the gang of eight gingerly steps in the corridor leading up to the draw room one by one. One accused walks in wearing just a colourful skull cap and red sleeveless vest and gets his entire face revealed to the camera providing a vital clue to the Police.

Once inside the room, Phu Chung Chung gets down to business straight away and places some forged documents in front of the lady official. Interestingly, the methods of intimidation adopted by the gang prove useless as the three officials appear totally unperturbed by the entire threat perception, if any. They remain seated in their seats and appear unfazed while Phu Chung Chung continues his coaxing, apparently to sign the forged documents. The only person who shows some physical resistant is the peon who is pushed to his seat by one of the gang members. In less than an hour,

the gang leave, unsuccessful.

Although it was first widely believed that Phu Chung Chung was the mastermind and was helped in this modus operandi by seven others - Lobsang Bhutia, Thinlay Ongdup Bhutia, Sangay Bhutia, Pinsto Tashi, Chamba Tenzing Bhutia, Sonam Pintso Bhutia and Satish Shetty believed to be the inside man who provided the gang with valuable information, reports appearing in the local media suggested the involvement of a ninth man. During sustained interrogation of the accused, a name surfaced which led the Police to believe that this person could have been the real brains behind this whole scheme. This ninth accused gave a complete new twist to the rigging saga, in a way relieving Phu Chung Chung as the actual mastermind.

The arrest of Rajesh Lakhmani, intentionally kept under wraps by the Police, has opened a can of worms. What emerges from his arrest is that the whole rigging attempt could have been the handiwork of both him and Phu Chung Chung. Lakhmani reportedly ran an online lottery outline and somehow convinced Phu Chung Chung to be a part of his plan to forge the draw results in lieu of Rs. 10 lakhs. Lakhmani was arrested on 29 August through the lead provided by the eight arrested earlier but not made public. While unconfirmed reports in the local media suggests that Lakhmani could be the mastermind, Police sources have denied this theory so far. The nine arrested are still being interrogated and other vital leads are coming in.

What is interesting to note here is that most of the accused are first time offenders with regular small jobs. Police believe that Phu Chung Chung's involvement is far too much in masterminding this rigging plan, even though the extent of Lakhmani's involvement is still being investigated. Also, it is still not clear how the gang planned to receive the winning amount, had they being successful in rigging the results. Questions as to whether the gang had purchased the lotteries tickets, results of which were being forged to match the numbers on the ticket, or how Lakhmani's involvement as an agent would help them is still unanswered.

This is perhaps a first of its kind case in Sikkim where the role of technology in both carrying out the crime as well as nabbing the culprits have come handy.

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*Dr. Pawan Chamling
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Sikkim*

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

The State Green Mission

- is yet another product of the Hon'ble Chief Minister's green policy imagination, a new concept, an idea, a dream and a vision thereof
- is a new direction and dimension in the State's efforts and endeavour to sustain, maintain and enrich Sikkim's environment and ecology
- is a programme to give the people the mandate to own, regenerate and protect their resources by themselves
- is about synergising development and environmental protection
- is broadcasting greening activities through peoples participation, support and guidance
- is converting Sikkim into a green paradise, a garden state and a tourist's ultimate dream and destination
- is making Sikkim a more beautiful, more green and more natural by integrating ecology with economy for bequeathing it to the posterity
- is spearheading people's movement towards achieving healthier and pollution free environs around their surroundings

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Help and support the movement.
- Ensure your active participation.
- Plant a seedling and a flower this monsoon.
- Protect, care and nurture plants.
- Keep your compound clean, green and beautiful.



*Shri S. B. Subedi
Hon'ble Minister
Forest, Wildlife & Env. Mgmt. Dept.
Govt. of Sikkim*

State Green Mission

RESENTMENT AGAINST HYDROELECTRIC DAMS GATHERS MOMENTUM IN NORTH SIKKIM

ACT supporters detained for questioning

by SARIKAH ATREYA

GANGTOK: The otherwise subdued and almost low profile protests of the people of North Sikkim against mega hydel power projects until now took a new turn with protestors coming out in the open and the protests gathering momentum.

The protests, led by members of the Affected Citizens of the Teesta (ACT) and its supporters gained steam when a team consisting of officials from the Forest Department and developers of the 300 MW Panan Hydro Electric Power located at Dzongu in North Sikkim was gheroad and stopped from entering the area for joint inspection.

A large group of supporters of ACT blocked the road at the Sankalang Bridge that connects the Lepcha Reserve of Dzongu with Mangan in North Sikkim on September 3 and tried to stop the team from entering Dzongu. The blockade lasted for few hours until the North District authority was informed. The Police in turn deployed personnel from the Sikkim Armed Police to dispel the protestors to make way for the inspection team.

The inspection was part of the process leading to the Public Hearing for Panan Project scheduled for September 18 later this month. The project is being developed by the Himagiri Hydro-Energy Pvt. Ltd, which proposes to tap the waters of the Tholung Chu, one of the great tributaries of the Teesta in the Dzongu area. The

dam for this project will come up on the confluence of Rangyong Chu and the Tholung Chu at Lingza village, the power house will come up near the Panan village.

Matters took a dramatic turn when a couple was picked up for questioning in Passingdang the same evening while another 10 were detained the next day at Sankalang by the Police. Rambo Lepcha and his wife were detained by the North Sikkim police on suspicions after they were alleged to have thrown boulders at the cavalcade of VIP cars that was returning after a coordination committee meeting for the Panan project that was held at Passingdang in Dzongu the same day.

Among those in the cavalcade were State health minister Hishey Lachungpa, Dzongu MLA Sonam Gyatso Lepcha and the North district Zilla Adakshya Lobzang Tenzing who had attended a meeting at the Passingdang school premises. Rambo Lepcha is a member of ACT. He and his wife were picked up by the police on suspicions and were let off soon after.

The 10 other members of ACT were detained for staging the blockade at the Sankalang Bridge. They were taken to the Mangan Police Station and let off after questioning.

Meanwhile, ACT has condemned the detention and said that the authorities were resorting to terror tactics and had arrested on concocted charges. It has also alleged that

the local affected people were denied their basic fundamental right to express their opinions and views during the meeting and also that the majority of those attending the meet were not locals which was an unusual phenomenon.

Apart from large threats that such mega hydro electric power projects pose to the pristine ecosystem of North Sikkim and the fragile demographic make up of the area, one major concern regarding the Panan power project is its proximity to the Tholung Gompa, one of the most sacred and important monasteries of Tibetan Buddhist.

The Tholung Gompa, located about 25 kms from the Lingza village where the dam site is proposed to come up, is considered very sacred by Buddhists as it houses some of the most rare and invaluable artifacts relating to Tibetan Buddhism. The Monastery is open to the public once in three years and is accessible only through the Lingza village and is located in one of the most remote and isolated corners of the State. Any mega project in the vicinity of this area is definitely a cause for concern as it would involve large influx of migrant workers from outside of the State. The increased human activity in the area can be a security threat to the Monastery and its sanctity. This is a concern shared by many intellectuals and followers of Buddhism in the State.

ACT FILES APPEAL WITH NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL APPELLATE AUTHORITY AGAINST TEESTA STAGE III POWER PROJECT

a MIDWEEK Report

GANGTOK: The Affected Citizens of Sikkim (ACT) has approached the National Environmental Appellate Authority (NEAA), New Delhi in protest against the environmental clearance given to 12,00 MW Teesta Hydro Electric Power project Stage III in North Sikkim.

Dissatisfied with what it calls a "total mockery" of the Public Hearing for Stage III the Sikkim State Pollution Control Board conducted in Chungthang in North Sikkim on June 8 earlier this year, ACT has filed an appeal with the NEAA to cancel the environmental clearance granted to M/s Teesta Urja Ltd, the developer for the Teesta Stage III power project.

Talking to MIDWEEK, Tseten Lepcha, Chief Coordinator, ACT, said that having studied in detail the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and the Environment Management Plan (EMP) prepared by WAPCOS for the implementation of the Stage III, ACT found out that the reports were "totally ignorant of the real issues involving the environment and the people in the Teesta basin." "We had brought to the notice of the State Government our concerns and the shortcomings in the Reports during the Public Hearing held at Chungthang. Unfortunately, the State Government agencies, instead of addressing the real concerns brought up by the people, made a total mockery of the Public Hearing process. It was turned into a platform for political show of strength and intimidation to the people who voiced the concerns," Mr. Lepcha said.

The State pollution Control Board of Sikkim was also served a legal notice to refrain from forwarding what the ACT calls "anti-environment and anti-people" Reports to the Ministry of Environment and Forests, government of India for environmental clearance, Mr. Lepcha said. ACT has also alleged that the secretary, State Pollution Control board "hurriedly forwarded a distorted version of the proceedings of the Public Hearing to the MoEF, and the expert committee set up by the MoEF also accepted the proceedings in gross violations of the instructions laid down for MoEF for environmental clearance."

ACT has also taken strong exceptions to certain remarks in the EIAR under the Chapter on Social practises and Family and Marriage. It is mentioned here that "for the womenfolk of Sikkim, unlike other non-tribal communities, chastity of women at the time of marriage does not hold a lot of importance. Pre-marital and extra-marital relationships are not uncommon. The women are not bound by many restrictions and have more freedom."

ACT has been represented by its general Secretary, Dawa Lepcha, and the matter has been taken up by Supreme Court lawyers, Ritwick Dutta and Rahul Chaudhary from the organisation Lawyers Initiative for Forest and Environment (LIFE), New Delhi.

MCI team inspects SMIMS for affiliation

a MIDWEEK Report

GANGTOK: A three member team from the Medical Council of India [MCI] is here in the capital to inspect the Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Sciences [SMIMS] and the Central Referral Hospital at 5th Mile Tadong in connection with granting affiliation to the medical college.

The permanent representative of the MCI, Dr. Malti Mehra, Dr. JV Hardikar from Mumbai and Dr. YK Gupta of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, visited the

SMIMS and CRH and interacted with the faculty on Tuesday, 5 September. They also made rounds of the various faculties and inspected the facilities available.

This is the fourth such inspection carried out by the MCI. The issue of non affiliation with the MCI has been a major cause of flare ups between the students and the SMU authorities in the past. Last month, the junior resident interns at the institute had remained off duty in protest against the non affiliation with the MCI. This first batch of

students who passed out had said that without the MCI recognition, their degrees were worthless. Even in the past, the students had protested on the non affiliation with the protests having turned violent.

Speaking to Midweek, SMU vice chancellor K Jayakumar said that the faculty from SMIMS and the doctors of the Sir Thutob Namgyal Memorial Hospital [STNMH] were present in full strength for the inspection. The STNM doctors have also been recognized as members of the faculty under SMIMS and the CRH, based on

an agreement reached with the state government recently. Earlier, the STNM doctors were not acknowledged as faculty members despite being involved in the teaching faculty. "The entire faculty expressed and demonstrated solidarity before the team," the vice chancellor said.

Jayakumar said that the MCI

team was here based on the follow up to the meeting held by him with the MCI on 7 August in New Delhi where he had placed a fresh proposal for affiliation. The team checked if there were adequate faculty members.

"Hopefully there should be some positive outcome since we have met all the compliances," Jayakumar told Midweek.

MIDWEEK
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HISTORY CALLING



Gooroong Vs Bhandari THE RIVALRY CONTINUES

by RHEA SHARMA

GANGTOK : In politics, there are no permanent friends or enemies and political equations can change from day to day. But even amidst the constant flux, Sikkim politics has witnessed a rivalry that has refused to mellow with the passage of time. Yes, we are talking of BB Goroong and NB Bhandari. At one time political cronies and members of the ruling elite, the duo parted ways in 1984 and have ever since battled it out, in courts and in the public arena. The issue relating to the Public Interest Litigation in the Supreme court against chief minister Pawan Chamling filed by four Congressmen has recently seen them fight it out in newspaper columns, with barbs being hurled between the ruling Sikkim Democratic Front and the State Congress.

But let us go back to the beginning and study the acrimonious history between the two political leaders.

It was late evening on the night of May 19, 1984. Eight cabinet ministers were present in the residence of Mr. BB Goroong, chief minister, at the time. The meeting passed a resolution alleging that Bhandari had acquired properties disproportionate to his known source of income and asked for a CBI enquiry into the same. Thereafter, for the first time the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act which was extended in 1976, was implemented to investigate the charges. The then Director of CBI, JS Bawa flew specially to Gangtok for the purpose.

Earlier in the month, the Bhandari government had been dismissed under corruption charges and Goroong who was then the Number 2 as Finance Minister in the Bhandari led Congress government was sworn into office by Governor Homi JH Talyerkhan.

Bhandari was an angry man and in the next few days he plotted to pull down the Goroong government with the support of 19 MLA's, all of whom he whisked down to New Delhi and kept isolated at Paharganj.

The great political rivalry had begun.

Bhandari, after coming to power in the general elections six months later with 31 out of the 32 seats under the Sikkim Sangram Parishad banner withdrew the sanction of the Goroong cabinet asking the CBI to investigate and the CBI failed to submit the chargesheet. Goroong then went on a political hibernation fearing retribution and lived in New Delhi from 1985 to 1991. Later in 1993 when the Congress came to power under Sanchaman Limbu, Goroong, again with LD Kazi, moved the Supreme Court by filing writ petitions. Three hearings later the withdrawal of sanction by Bhandari was revoked and the SC ordered investigations.

Today, as the battle lines are being drawn again, a sense of déjà vu prevails as Goroong and Bhandari fight it out again in the political arena. The coming months should provide good sound bites if nothing else.

PIL fires the Opposition

a MIDWEEK Report

GANGTOK: The PIL filed in the Supreme Court against the Chief Minister seeking investigation and prosecution under the Prevention of Corruption Act and the subsequent notice sent by the Supreme Court to the Sikkim Government and the Chief Minister to respond to the writ petition seems to have galvanized the almost decimated opposition into some serious action.

Opposition leaders cutting across party lines are planning a common minimum programme that will help them derive maximum political mileage of what they think is going to be the big political issue in the coming days. Hectic politicking is taking place behind closed doors to work out a strategy that could force the Chief Minister to go on the back foot. Acknowledging that they have nothing to show on the ground, an opposition leader admitted that all they needed

was one 'emotive issue' to see them through till the elections, two years later.

Speaking to Midweek, SPCC general secretary Kunga Nima Lepcha, one of the four who filed the PIL said "Enough is enough. It is high time someone has to stand up and speak out on the rampant corruption that is taking place".

That the party morale has been suddenly boosted is obvious, as they claim to receive support from all over, "We are getting calls of support from employees, students, business people and even people from villages and towns in the districts" Mr. Lepcha said.

Another move in the same direction was the patch up between friends turned foes Nar Bahadur Bhandari and Thukchuk Lachungpa. This sprinkled more spice on the opposition drama being played out over the past weeks. It also gave rise to speculations of a new force being recreated

within the opposition camps.

The AICC member and the Treasurer of the North east Congress Coordination Committee (NECCC) withdrew the defamation suit filed by him against the SPCC chief in the court of the judicial magistrate (East) here at Gangtok. The two signed a consent term before the court for the withdrawal of the case and to resolve their feud in an amicable manner. Interestingly the agreement also reads that this was done to live in peace and 'harmony of brotherhood'

The truce took place in a hotel here at Tibet road where the two dined over a sumptuous lunch after exchanging *khadas*. The two leaders refused to comment anything more on the reunion apart from the withdrawal of the defamation. Those in the Congress also said that it was a personal matter between the two of them and the party had nothing to say over the issue. However, other insiders claimed a 'secret' understanding had been reached.

Special Judge BC Sharma 'compulsorily retired'

a MIDWEEK Report

GANGTOK: Sikkim High Court, has given marching orders to B.C. Sharma, the special judge who refused to pronounce the verdict in the CBI case against former chief minister and state Congress president Nar Bahadur Bhandari.

The decision was made at a full court meeting convened here on August 30. The meeting, which was headed by Chief Justice B.K. Roy and attended by high court judges N.S. Singh and A.P. Subba, recommended compulsory retirement for Sharma.

The recommendation has been forwarded to the state home department mentioning that Sharma be given three months salary in lieu of three months notice as provided under rule 99(1) of the Sikkim Government Rules of 1974. The court also ordered that Sharma be restrained from discharging any judicial and administrative duty as district and sessions judge (South and West).

Sharma, who was judge at the district and sessions court (South and West) at Namchi, had been designated special judge for the court dealing in cases under the Prevention of

Corruption Act. It was in this court that Bhandari's case came up on August 1 but he had refused to deliver a judgement on the case on the day, citing 'personal grounds' for his inability to decide on the matter and had passed on the case files to the High Court and proceeded himself on a month-long leave the next day. He requested the High Court to transfer the case to some other court.

The case had been filed under the Prevention of Corruption Act, against the former cm for possessing assets more than his known source of income.

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The Politics of Things

What can one say about the level of political debate in Sikkim when the most impassioned arguments are reserved to celebrate or dismiss a writ petition filed in the Supreme Court. The case is yet to be admitted, but given the column space being hogged in newspapers by the decibels that the ruling and Opposition camps are expending on it, a casual reader could be excused if he thought that a conviction had been secured. Courts, as everyone knows, can take their own time in bringing a case to closure and even then, as recent developments have shown, a verdict is not guaranteed.

While it is expected of the Opposition to oppose and the Treasury bench to defend and counter-allege, when something like a court case is prioritized, the public domain gets occupied by something that could take very long to conclude and because of the hype that surrounds its initiation will not easily make space for other, more immediate, concerns. Even if other issues are raised from time to time, their impact is compromised because the public imagination is occupied by the 'court case.'

Of course, given the paucity of intelligent debate, along the way, many brownie points are chalked up, relatively unimportant victories, but enough to make newspaper headlines for a day. For example, the ruling party by making an issue of the official process of whether it has received the SC notices or not. In doing so, it leaves itself open to a day of embarrassment when the Opposition finally announces the actual serving of

FRINGE BENEFIT

by PEMA WANGCHUK

the notice and score a point in public perception. Is this a reflection on the merit of the case? No, it is just a procedural thing, which has been offered as a minor victory because the counter-allegations digressed to so many fronts.

For the Opposition, investing too much on a court case can be counter-productive. Unlike political debates where either side can take leave of logic and reasoning and just drown everything in rhetoric, Courts tend to put a final seal on issues. The BL seats in the State Assembly for example, even though threats to it and assurances of safeguards are made often, are really not a political issue anymore. The Supreme Court has defended them and as far as the people are concerned, the protection is foolproof. What could have been a very effective poll-plank is now reduced to an issue that receives only token mention, not because it is unimportant, but because its security has already been established. The leader who based his political career in his opposition to this reservation, lost not only his calling card to the final verdict but with it, also his votebank. The Opposition allegations of rigged electronic voting machines cannot be thrown about in public meetings anymore because the Courts have decided against the aspersions. Had the doubts been shared only in the public domain, the allegations could

still have been bandied about.

What is more, while a case is in the Courts, one is bound by sub-judice clauses to reserve comment. In the present case, what the Opposition sees as its strongest weapon in its arsenal is effectively disarmed from deployment in the public domain while the case is being heard. The petition in the Supreme Court filed by four Congress leaders will be interesting to watch because the synopsis of the petition suggests that they have covered the entire tenure of the SDF government and branded all of it corrupt. If the case does get admitted, the respondents could end up securing a gag order on the Opposition leaders from making any public comments on the contents of the case. As mentioned earlier, since the range of allegations appears to be nearly all-encompassing, what will the Opposition fill its press releases with now?

Court cases, after an initial high, start to drag. Politics needs to infuse its debate with much more vibrancy, many more issues. The Opposition has to launch guerilla warfare and given its rout in the last elections, it cannot afford to engage the ruling front in a headlong confrontation. Apart from the political requirements of bombast, it has to also get down to specifics, offer a counterpoint on issues. That will keep the government on its toes and deliver on announcements. That is different from keeping it busy with paperwork. But even before that, the Opposition has to be noticed among the people and not just seen in news reports.

- the writer is Editor, NOW! Daily

MIDWEEK
BEYOND THE HEADLINES

GANGTOK DECLARED BL SEAT, CAPITAL DIVIDED INTO ARITHANG & GANGTOK

Delimitation of assembly constituencies announced

8 SEATS EACH FOR WEST & SOUTH, 12 IN EAST AND 3 RETAINED IN NORTH

Names of constituencies see changes

PIL fires the Opposition

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CHAMLING URGES TEACHERS TO REDISCOVER THE REAL ESSENCE OF EDUCATION



a MIDWEEK photo

a MIDWEEK Report

GANGTOK: Chief Minister Pawan Chamling has said that the value of education in the present day society has lessened.

"The value of education in our society has gone down. The importance of education in itself has become small and rather insignificant. Today, the aim of education has limited itself to just being a means to a livelihood. It is no longer about character building or human values. It is just about getting a degree and a job," Chamling said, while addressing a mammoth gathering of teachers from all over the State here at the Guard's Ground on the occasion of Teachers' Day, which was being celebrated as "All Sikkim Education Conference," organised by the Human Resource Development Department.

"Today, education is just about limiting your learning to what is written in the text books and answering questions related to those texts and passing the examinations," he said.

Deliberating on the real need to evaluate and reassess the true meaning of education, Chamling coaxed the gathering of over 6,000 teachers from all corners to debate on this pertinent issue. "I would like the teaching community to contemplate over the true definition of education. Have we really debated on this topic? Have we tried to understand the concept of education in its true

essence? Are our beliefs and thoughts about education in tune with scientific temperament and wholesome? If not, then we need to deliberate and debate on this with all our sincerity," he said.

While thanking the entire teaching community for the achievements made by the State in the field of education, the Chief Minister reminded the teaching community that there was still no room for complacency. "We have won the best performing State in education thrice and this has been only possible through your dedication and hard work. However, this does not mean we have to be complacent. It, in fact, gives us the inspiration to work harder and strive towards maintaining the high standards of education in the State," he said, adding that the State had already achieved the target laid down in the UNO's minimum goal 2015 in education.

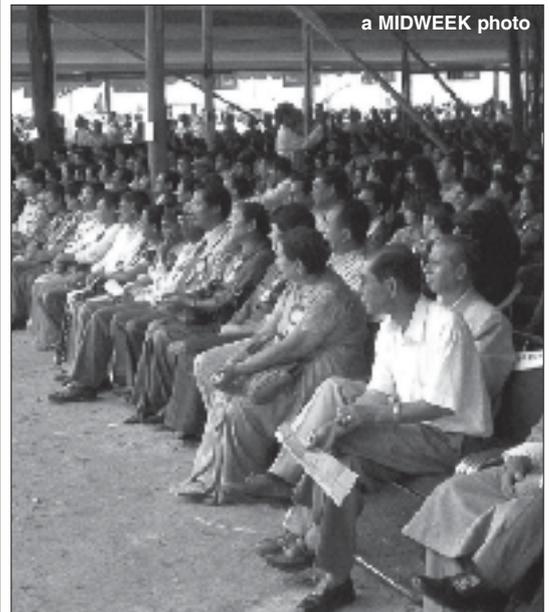
Chamling was also of the opinion that the responsibility of the teachers should not be limited to imparting just what is there in the text books and the school syllabus. It should go beyond that. "The teachers should also take upon themselves the responsibility of inculcating in students a sense of pride in their cultural heritage and traditions. My Government has been consistent in our belief that teachers are the right instruments for this and have acknowledged their contributions in the preservation and promotion of our ethnic

cultural heritage and traditions. We have been also trying our level best to maintain the standards of education and the value of teaching as a profession," he said.

"We have always respected the personal political ideologies of the teachers. We have been able to create a positive atmosphere in the State where teachers are no longer used as tools for political gains and where they are not intimidated, oppressed and forced to live in fear. We understand and appreciate the fact that one of the building blocks of our society is the teaching community," he said.

Chamling brushed aside the Opposition's criticism that the State Government was squandering away previous resources of the State exchequer in organising the Teachers' Day function here by inviting teachers from all over the State. "We are starting a new tradition by inviting the entire teaching community for one mammoth gathering and celebrating Teachers' Day function that this scale. This is our way of felicitating the teachers and expressing our gratitude. We will take this function to the Districts in the coming years," he said.

Earlier, Minister for Education, GM Gurung, Secretary, HRD Department and representatives from the Sikkim United Teachers' Association and Sikkim Teachers' Association addressed the gathering.



a MIDWEEK photo

TEACHERS FELICITATED

a MIDWEEK Report

GANGTOK: A total of 22 teachers from all over the State were felicitated by the Human Resource Development Department here at the Guard's Ground on the occasion of Teachers' Day Celebrations on 5 September.

Chief Minister Pawan Chamling gave away the State Award for Excellence in the field of education to 8 senior teachers from all over the State, 14 other teachers were handed over the Commendation Certificates for outstanding contributions.

The State Award winners include Taraman Rai, Primary teacher from the Lower Dalapchen Primary School; Dr. SN Mishra, Principal, West Point Senior Secondary School; Dupchen Bhutia, Primary Teacher, Ramthang Primary School, Devika Lama,

Graduate Teacher, Phensong Secondary School; Nar Prasad Gurung, Headmaster, Okherbotey Lower Primary School; SR Lama, Bhutia Teacher, Mangalbaria Senior Secondary School; Tej Bahadur Subba, Primary Teacher, Nampok Secondary School and Bhaskar Prasad Poudyal, Principal, Bermiok Tokal Senior Secondary School.

Similarly, the HRD Department also awarded Best Performing Private Schools in the State Award to four schools from each of the Districts. Holy Cross Senior Secondary School, Tadong bagged the award in the East District, while Himalayan Baptist English School, Gyalshing won from West District. Play and Learn Nursery School, Mangan and St. Francis Educational Institute, Jorethang won from the North and South districts, respectively.

DOUBLE TEACHER'S DAY TREAT FOR HOLY CROSS

GANGTOK: Sister Elsit, principal of Holy Cross School, Gangtok, was conferred the National Teacher's Day Award 2005 by President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam at New Delhi on 5 September. The awards function, initiated by the union HRD ministry and organised on the occasion of Teacher's Day, was held at Vigyan Bhawan. Sister Elsit was among the 20 recipients, chosen from all corners of the country, who received this prestigious award based on their overall performances.

Sister Elsit, who has 25 years of working experience, is the first among the Holy Cross congregation of the entire country to be conferred with this award. She has worked in different CBSE-affiliated schools across the country and was given the charge of the Holy Cross Institute at Gangtok six years ago. Here, she heralded the enviable reputation of the school as one of the best schools in the region.

Incidentally, the credibility of the school has got another shot in the arm with the school receiving the best private school in the state award, initiated by the Human Resource Development Department, on Tuesday during the state level Teachers' Day celebrations.

MIDWEEK INBOX

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Lord Buddha's statue, CM's gift to Rabong

Chief Minister to lay the foundation stone for Lord Buddha Garden during Pang Lhabsol celebrations in Rabong

a MIDWEEK Report

GANGTOK: The foundation stone of the Lord Buddha Garden will be laid at Rabong on 07 September by Chief Minister Pawan Chamling to mark the 2550th birth anniversary of Lord Buddha. The foundation stone laying ceremony will be a part of the three-day long Pang Lhabsol festival organised by the Pang Lhabsol Celebration Committee, Rabong.

An 80 feet statue of Lord Buddha would be located amidst an eco-garden which will help conserve the biodiversity of the area, most importantly the herbs and flora found in the area.

The project will come up under the Tourism Department and a core committee has already been formed for the purpose. The Chief Minister is also the chief patron of the project. Area MLA and Urban

Development and Land Revenue Minister DD Bhutia, along with Wok MLA CB Karki, will spearhead the construction work.

This Buddha Statue cum Garden will be the first of its kind in the state and probably the most important and oldest heritage sites. Since Rabong is located in between the religious sites, it receives a large number of pilgrim tourists. This statue would be an additional religious site that the pilgrims coming to the area could visit.

Rabong was the natural choice for installation of the statue as the town is located in the middle of the three most important Buddhist sites in the state, viz. Ralang, Tashiding and Pemyangtse monasteries. The

three areas are important pilgrim centres since they are connected to the religious and political history of Sikkim and are today the most important and oldest heritage sites. Since Rabong is located in between the religious sites, it receives a large number of pilgrim tourists. This statue would be an additional religious site that the pilgrims coming to the area could visit.

The Pang Lhabsol Celebration which started in the year 1984 in Rabong is in its 23rd year. This year the celebrations will commence from 05 to 07 September where the Chief Minister will be present as the chief guest. Rabong, unofficially the Mecca of Volleyball in Sikkim, will showcase the best players from the country. The celebrations will also be the platform for the rural artisans and artists to display their products. The evenings will witness various cultural and musical extravaganza.

AIDS awareness to be created in schools

GANGTOK: With nearly 56 HIV positive cases already in the state, the need for creating awareness on AIDS is now being felt by educationists here. In a recent meet convened by the State Council for Educational Research and Training, the idea of inclusion of health education, especially AIDS was deliberated on. It was mooted that lessons on health issues like AIDS be imparted from Class IV onwards.

The need for incorporation of this subject was felt keeping in

mind the health needs of adolescents, particularly their reproductive and sexual health needs. This is important since young children and adolescents are deprived of opportunities to get the appropriate information on subjects related to sex and sexuality, which is culturally a very sensitive area. As such, their understanding of reproductive and sexual health and their behaviour in this regard are guided predominantly by myths and misconceptions,

making them vulnerable to risky situations, such as drug/substance abuse and HIV/AIDS transmission.

Besides health education, the state government has already taken a policy decision to impart environmental studies, which is to be imparted from the elementary level. Special classes in disaster management are also to be a part of the curriculum in schools so that the children are aware of these issues at an early stage and help tackle these issues.

VAT ENHANCES TAX COLLECTION

a MIDWEEK Report

GANGTOK, August 21: The first fiscal year under the Value Added Taxation [VAT] regime has improved the tax revenue generation for the state exchequer by a whopping 20.51 per cent increase over that of the previous year when the sales tax structure still existed.

VAT was introduced in Sikkim from April 2005.

The hike in revenue collection was revealed to Midweek by the Assistant Commissioner [commercial taxes] Manoj Rai.

Rai furnished a database prepared by the State Income Tax and Commercial Taxes division of the Finance and Revenue Department for its annual report this year where the figures were listed.

Rai also said that the hike has not only enhanced the revenue collection but was also much higher than the target set by the department which was kept at Rs. 47 crores for the 2005-06 fiscal.

The total collections through VAT for 2005-06 stood at Rs. 56.64 crores, an excess of Rs. 9.64 crores of the target set by them. The increase in percentage stood at 20.51 per cent to the previous year's collection of 48.07 crores with an annual increment of Rs. 8.57 crores.

Sikkim was given an additional two years' time to implement the

VAT regime and started following it only from 2005.

Creating confusion amongst traders when first implemented, those that came under its purview have now come to terms with the new taxation procedure. The introduction of VAT was to do away with multiple taxation and the cascading effect that sales tax structure was associated with and to bring about uniformity. It was also aimed at preventing evasion of taxes.

Meanwhile, Rai has been working on a comprehensive book on VAT rules, which will explain and simplify the rules under the new system. The publication, which is still in the drafting stage will help the common man understand the VAT rules easier.

While the sales tax structure has not been completely done away with and would be removed in phases, the collection through lotteries and liquor continued to top the list of items which generated the highest revenue from sales tax. These two still do not come under the VAT purview and follow the sales tax structure. Danny Denzongpa's Yuksom Breweries, makers of the popular Hit and Dansberg beer continues to be one of the highest sales tax payers with the company having shelled out 92 lakhs in the previous year as sales tax.



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MIDWEEK

Vol. 1 No. 1

Letter From The Publisher

The gauntlet has been thrown. A local daily, in its editorial on the birth of two publications in Sikkim this week, in a backhanded compliment, burdened us with the responsibility of raising the bar on professional standards of journalism here.

Will we?

Only time will tell.

We shall not make any claims to that end.

When we are professional, it is because we wish to be true to the readers, to ourselves. Any other benefit that this commitment spawns is secondary. Good if it happens, but none of us will be losing sleep if the entire fraternity does not join in the march.

Midweek is being launched in these times of instant and daily news because we believe that readers in Sikkim now need more than just a recount of events. The constraints of deadlines and limitations of space in dailies results in a situation where news rarely translates to more than just a recap. We hope to use the luxury of having a whole week at hand before hitting the stands to weave events into possible trends, research deeper into developments and contextualize issues in the right perspective so that a reader is also provided with answers to *why* things happened, instead of just the perfunctory what happened.

At least that is what we have charted out to do. The forthcoming Wednesdays will bear out whether we are up to the task at hand. What we know is that despite everything we believe in, the challenge for a weekly to remain relevant is a tough one. We hope we can channelize this pressure to sharpen our skills, polish the content and strike up a more intimate conversation with the readers. Through the successes and failures of the coming weeks, we assure readers that we will remain irreverent without being rude, engaging without being comical, and informative without being boring.

This is not just the launch of our inaugural issue, this is also the beginning of a long term relationship with our readers.

Meet The MIDWEEK Team

Mita Zulca, Pankaj Thapa, Pema L. Shangderpa,
Sarika Treya, Tenzin C. Tashi, Serah Basnet,
Sachin Yonzon and Karchoong Diyali



The golden line to Lhasa

by SRIKANTH KONDAPALLI

As the train from Beijing chugged into the Lhasa railway station on the night of July 3, China, belying American writer Paul Theroux's prognosis, realized its dream of integrating Tibet more effectively than it has in the past five decades. Abandoned in 1987, revived in 1994 and reinforced in 2001 under China's Western Development Campaign, this railway has more than a symbolic meaning for China as the world's 'great engineering achievement'. Cold calculations prevail behind the heroic display by the 26,000 engineers and workers who laid the track. For a regime that subscribes to pragmatism, making money in Tibet is expected to be high on the agenda. The Chinese media frequently describes the project as a 'golden travel route'. But how 'golden' is the railway line to Lhasa?

First, some analysts have raised questions about the economic viability of the railway. China spent an estimated \$3.16 billion for its construction, surpassing the \$3 billion GDP of entire Tibet (as in 2005). But the construction costs could be reclaimed in less than a decade by several means, including tourism and the exploitation of natural resources. For instance, some 800,000 visitors are expected to visit Tibet using the railway over the next year. This figure is expected to gallop to about 5.28 million by 2010. According to the estimates of the Tibet Autonomous Regional Academy of Social Sciences and the Industrial Economics Studies Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, this is expected to fetch more than \$725 million. In contrast, the 1.8 million visitors who arrived in Tibet by means other than railway in 2005 contributed only about \$250 million.

Second, the current route of the Xining to Lhasa rail line spans about 1,956 km. The new construction between Golmud to Lhasa stretches more than 1,000 km. Once this route is completed and extended to Xigaze, China plans to construct more railways from 2007 till 2038 from different parts of the country for more effective integration of Tibet. These include the Chengdu to Lhasa route of 1,927 km, expected to cost about \$9 billion; the Lhasa to Dali (Yunnan) route of 1,594 km, with an estimated cost of about \$8 billion; and the Lanzhou to Lhasa route of 2,126 kilometres (about \$8.5 billion). In other words, Tibet is expected to receive immense Chinese investment in the coming decades, with drastic consequences for the Tibetan economy.

Three, the Tibetan railway took just about four years to

- continued on page 11

The Mole In The Hole and more capital capers

MADDY'S DILLI

Well, well, well whaddya know? I've miraculously been asked by your editor to write a column for Midweek. It's obvious that the sadistic streak in her has won the day and she has foisted yours truly upon you. Your loss my gain I'd say but don't say you weren't warned.

In the times to come (if this heroic effort doesn't cave in that is), I will be keeping you all posted about the progress of the pride of our great (not to forget DIVERSE) nation and particularly its not so great capital city...Dilli. A shanty town full of intrigue and subterfuge. Well unfortunately for me, I'm stuck here and like the mighty Titanic the more of you I pull down with me the better we'll drown as there'll be plenty of company right? But jokes apart, I shall strive to give all you folks out there food for thought and a few laughs to boot, hopefully. What's there and what's not; who's in and who's out... after all, there's so much to talk about. But there's just one hitch as I am no journalist, though my only claim to literary fame is that I'm the son of a scribe, I hope and pray that I make the grade even if it's just by default. So with that excuse of an introduction let me get on with it.

We have studied the working of Parliament in school, college and the likes, so I won't bore you with details of

how the two houses function. But are you aware that these great institutions have been reduced to places where Cabinet Ministers and our honorable (sic) MP's exchange the choicest of, 'mother and sister expletives'? As if to add insult to injury, the great Minister also asserts that he hasn't come to the House to hear such words of wisdom though he was amongst the thick of it when the exchange was on. The docile speaker of the house had to beat a hasty retreat and fisticuffs were just avoided! The Minister in question would win the first prize in any rustic pageant. After all he is known to have flown into his constituency in earlier days in a helicopter urging all those, 'sons of cowherds', to go check out the mechanics of the chopper. Well as the saying goes, there's always a silver lining in a dark cloud. This is after all the true representation of our great nation, not us hoity toity types who lay claims to being educated and refined if you please.

The city's erstwhile great snorter R, has moved on to tie the nuptial knot. Only he decided to choose the safer environs of amchi Mumbai to do so as Dilli was getting too snort...oops sorry hot! Well if nothing else his mug shot on the occasion shows a beaming soul who seems to have redeemed himself overnight. Lets all hope that the nuptial snort...sooo sorry knot helps in getting him

onto terra firma unlike his flying beau. As for her, well she has the great Clapton classic, 'she don't mind she don't mind...Cocaine to console herself.

And the final offering is an ode to our very own Jaswant Singhji...our ex Foreign Minister...

THE MOLE IN THE HOLE
(set to, 'Little Jack Horner')

Dear little Jaswant, sat in a corner,
figuring out his latest caper,
He fished out his pen and bloody wrote like hell
And came up with his, 'Call to Honour'
He spoke of a hole and in it a mole and
about how he had fled,

So while aloof he shouted from the roof
Thinking he had good of Son and Man misled!
But the wily two without much ado

sent back a cannonball
They said that the, 'mole' was mere hyperbole
So poor Jaswant's Honour is now on Call.

So that's it folks from this madcap. If you like what you got please do write and let me know. Ill be only too glad to ladle it out. And anyone who has got up here should get a medal for patience. Cheerio and see ya all next time.

Your very own, Maddy



Photo: Karchoong Diyalii

SIKKIM'S MOUNTAIN

by PEMA WANGCHUK

Khangchendzonga rises nearly five and a half miles above sea level. British East India Company surveyors, when they calculated its height in 1847, demolished the ill-informed myth that the earth was not supposed to break the 5 Mile barrier in its undulations skywards. They also learnt that the Himalayan giants need not always be remote and inaccessible. The closest British outpost of Darjeeling thumbed within 40 miles of the mountain making its study the most accurate of any Himalayan peak. Nanda Devi in the Garhwal hills which was considered the tallest mountain on Earth at that time and was measured to stand at 25,749 feet in 1822. This height, because the calculations were based on readings taken from too far away, were considered to be too suspect to be scientifically accepted and geographers remained unanimous in their belief that 26,400 feet [5 miles] was the pre-ordained ceiling beyond which no part of the earth was meant to protrude. Nanda Devi's height has since been recalibrated to 25,645 feet, but it was Khangchendzonga's imposing 28,176 feet [as calculated in 1847] that astounded everyone. The latest find cleared the highest known mountain of that time by three-quarters of a kilometer! And, there was no doubting the readings or the calculations, surveyors had approached the massif closer than men of science had ever been to the high snows and the calculations were the most exacting that mankind had devised till then. For an establishment [read British East India Company officials], who till little over half a century before that time believed the Himalaya to be a chain of active volcanoes due to the plume of clouds that invariably sprang out of every summit, information on the Khangchendzonga must have been mind-bogglingly sensational and this was borne out by the slew of

writers, adventurers, anthropologists and botanists who trooped the Himalayas shortly after.

And that is what Khangchendzonga is all about. For those interested in making its acquaintance, it is always available, and for those willing to push the envelope, the mountain offers as many facets as are required. For the people of Sikkim, the mountain has been especially generous. Its physical presence completes the horseshoe that makes Sikkim a biodiversity hotspot, but it is in the range of interpretations that the mountain lends itself so effortlessly to that it becomes so unique, so specifically Sikkimese.

Sometimes the simplest of interpretations is often the most complete. For the Lepchas, Khangchendzonga was Kongchen Kongchlo, the Big Stone. In their stories, Kong Chen is the eldest brother, the first creation of their Mother Creator. The eldest brother introduction is the most complete introduction of Khangchendzonga as it appropriates every aspect of the mountain that was evoked in future times to address more specific concerns. The Lepchas have probably lived in the shadow of the mountain for the longest time which is probably why they make a more direct, more intimate connection with. The Lepcha story of origin states that the first Lepcha couple was crafted from the fresh snows of Khangchendzonga. Anyone who has watched a winter sun dawn over the mountain will envy the Lepchas for where they claim to have come from and also understand that for anyone wishing to claim the ultimate pedigree in Sikkim, there could be no origin more special.

Later, towards the early 17th century when the Nyingmapa sect of Tibetan Buddhism needed to discover the Hidden Lands prophesized by Guru Padmasambhava as safe havens where the faith to survive when it was imperiled in Tibet itself, it was Khangchendzonga that made the establishment of the

faith possible in Sikkim. To begin with, the Khangchendzonga range, because it dismisses the established structure of the Himalayan layers of Siwaliks, Lower Himalayan Range and the Great Himalayas, and instead churns them together in one glorious and compact upheaval of mountainscape, kept the region conveniently protected from expansionist moves from the South. Bereft of a more layered approach, this region became too foreboding to adventure into. To understand the formidable bulwark that the mountain range provided, one must bear in mind that the Mauryan empire under Ashoka is believed to have moved up to Kashmir, slipped into Nepal and even though it spawned out of neighbouring Bihar, never attempted Sikkim which they must surely have noticed. As a result, when the three Nyingmapa masters arrived in Sikkim in the first half of the Seventeenth century, they found Sikkim to still be a hidden land, a land as yet uninfluenced by organized religion and lending itself well to the sustenance and propagation of the Nyingmapa faith when it was in distress in the place of its origin.

Apart from a Fourth Brother to be crowned the king of this now discovered land, the three Nyingmapa masters also needed an icon that would ease the conversion of the land to this new faith. Attempts had been made before them to reach Buddhism to Sikkim but had met with very limited success. Tibet was in a state of great flux at that time and failure in Sikkim was no longer an option. Khangchendzonga, which the locals revered, was appropriated as a Guardian Deity, elaborate rituals formalized for its worship and the people convinced that the new faith would be reverential to their Gods. Buddhism struck deep roots in Sikkim with this undertaking. Khangchendzonga, in a way justified and facilitated the propagation of Buddhism in Sikkim and continues to be worshipped extensively in monasteries here.

Shortly after, when the third Chogyal of Sikkim, Chagdor Namgyal, returned in 1709 to a Sikkim liberated from a Bhutanese invasion, he became the first king to realize the importance of instilling a feeling of nationhood among the people so that Sikkim was defended more strongly in the future. Khangchendzonga helped in this respect too. Chagdor Namgyal gave Sikkim Pang Toed Chaam, the Warrior Dance, and the mountain, apart from its position as a benevolent Guardian Deity, also became the Warrior God. dZonga, the deity who resides on the summit, was now also the religious warrior chief who would lead battles against those who threatened the Hidden Land. The dancers were lay persons and by that analogy, all Sikkimese became dZonga's soldiers. The idea of a nation was established and the people made a part of it. A new aspect was invoked and Khangchendzonga's imposing presence over the Sikkim skyline made its acceptance easy.

And the mountain continues coming to Sikkim's rescue. In more recent times, when Sikkim was most

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The golden line to Lhasa

complete, compared to the long time taken for similar construction in the region earlier. For instance, the Xining to Golmud line was completed from 1958 to 1984 in the Qaidam basin. The Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959, a year after the project was launched. The railway to Urumqi was completed in 1960 and the Kashgar line (all in Xinjiang) by 1999.

When the Tibetan railway was started in 2001, the Chinese leadership said it was essential for 'political' reasons. Integrating Tibet into China, opposing 'splittism' and promoting unity were cited as reasons. More importantly, whenever a railway line has been constructed in China, it led to a massive exodus of Chinese from other parts.

This was the case with the Sichuan railway of the 1920s, when huge numbers of Chinese migrated to the coastal areas. The railway line from Xinjiang and Qinghai led to not only an increase in the Han migrants to these areas, but also the displacement of locals from their livelihood. When the Chinese started constructing roads in Tibet, local Tibetan shopkeepers lost their jobs to Han Chinese even on streets of the capital Lhasa.

It is not clear how many of the millions of 'visitors' to Tibet by the railway will settle down, although Chinese scholar Ma Rong estimated that Han migration in Tibet takes the form of seasonal migration of one-to-two years (with a majority of migrants in this category), short-term and long-term migration (the latter said to be in minority).

It is not without reason that the Dalai Lama cautioned that this railway would result in 'cultural genocide' in Tibet. Tibetan groups equate the systematic resettlement of Han-Chinese in Tibet as something akin to the problems between Israel and Palestine or even of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

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Teesta Carrying Capacity Report throws up major concerns



a MIDWEEK Report

GANGTOK: The entire Teesta basin lies in an environmentally fragile and ecologically sensitive area of Sikkim, home to some of the most endangered flora and fauna of the entire Eastern Himalayas. Most of the endemic plant species are located in this unique biosphere of Sikkim. Most of the animals found in this area are threatened and listed in the Schedule I and Schedule II of the Wildlife Protection Act. The area falls in Zone-IV of seismic zoning map of India. This is the main thrust of the Carrying Capacity Study Report of Teesta Basin in Sikkim, released by the Central Government recently.

At a time when the Sikkim Government has embarked on an ambitious programme to harness the vast hydro electric power potential of the State and given the nod to three more projects on the Teesta, the report assumes great significance, given the environmental as well as social impact of the hydro electric projects on the fragile eco system of the State. The report provides an in-depth study of the physiography, terrain, drainage and other characteristics of the Teesta basin in Sikkim. It also provides information on the proposed power development model being adopted by the State.

The report has categorically mentioned and discussed in detail the adverse impacts of each of the six mega hydro electric power projects (Stages I-IV) on the Teesta and has also suggested ways and means to minimize the impacts on the fragile biosphere supported by the River Teesta. It has also covered the geophysical environment of Teesta basin and deals with various geological and seismotectonic aspects. The phenomenon of frequent landslides in the basin has been highlighted and various mitigation measures also have been suggested.

The effects of the global

warming phenomena, which is causing glaciers to melt fast and its impact on glacial lakes and glacial lakes outburst floods (GLOF), and their implications in hazard generation along with appropriate recommendations has also been incorporated in the report. It may be mentioned here that the Teesta is a glacier-fed river, originating in the Zemu Glacier in North West Sikkim.

The report suggests that proper mechanism has been evolved to check the influx of immigrants and in addition related issues like voters list, permanent settlement of immigrants, land acquisition, domicile/ residential certificates, ration cards, etc. should also be addressed appropriately. In case of unforeseen natural calamities like dam burst or accidents due to blasting, landslides caused due to project activities, etc. the victims should be compensated by project authorities within a prefixed time and amount, the report has said.

The Study was initiated at the instance of Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India while issuing Environmental Clearance to Teesta Stage-V Hydro Electric power project proposed by National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Ltd (NHPC). The Teesta Carrying Capacity Study was entrusted to the Centre for Inter-disciplinary Studies of Mountain & Hill Environment (CISMHE) in September, 2001 by Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India vide letter No. J.12011/1199-IA.1 for which funds were provided by NHPC Ltd. The study was coordinated by CISMHE, University of Delhi, Delhi as the Principal Investigator with institutional collaboration with other national level institutes.

The Teesta Carrying Capacity Studies final report is now on the web site of NIC, Sikkim, and can be accessed at www.sikenvis.nic.in/ccstbs.html and www.cismhe.org.

TEESTA HYDROELECTRIC PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

TEESTA STAGE-I HE PROJECT / TALEM HE SCHEME

Envisaged Power Generation: 75 MW

Location: The dam is to be constructed at the confluence of Kalep Chu with Teesta river in North Sikkim.

Project Summary: Talem HE Scheme is a 'modified' and much scaled down version of originally planned 300 MW Teesta Stage-I scheme. Under the original plan, one dam was to be located downstream of confluence of Lhonak Chu with Zemu Chu and the other at the downstream of the confluence of Chento Chu with Teesta river in North Sikkim. This project had to be abandoned in favour of Talem HE Scheme following severe environmental concerns raised in the phase-I report.

Environmental Assessment: Despite the present scheme being a much scaled down version of the earlier planned Teesta Stage-I scheme, it is still located in an environmentally sensitive area. Further environmental assessment of the project required.

TEESTA STAGE-II HE PROJECT

Envisaged Power Generation: 540 MW

Location: An 83 m high concrete gravity dam is to be constructed downstream of Chhaten on Teesta river, also known as Lachen Chu in this stretch, near Bansoi village 22 km upstream of Chungthang.

Project Summary: The water is to be diverted through an 11.6 km long head race tunnel to an underground powerhouse near Chungthang.

Environmental Assessment: Located in an environmentally sensitive area. Proper assessment of different project-related activities and components on geological environment and biological environment required.

TEESTA STAGE-III HE PROJECT

Envisaged Power Generation: 1200 MW

Location: The proposed project site – located in an 18 km stretch of the Teesta river between Chungthang and Singhik – falls on Zone-IV of seismic zoning map of India.

Project Summary: This project is proposed to utilize a drop of about 88 m in the proposed project site for power generation as a run-of-the-river scheme.

Environmental Assessment: The project is situated in one of the most ecologically sensitive areas of Sikkim and is likely to lead to adverse environment impacts. Any disturbance caused to the biological equilibrium of the area would lead to loss of biological wealth unique to this region. Therefore, a detailed environmental sensitivity analysis of the scheme is required.

TEESTA STAGE-IV HE PROJECT

Location: Initially, the proposed project site was the 90 m downstream of the confluence of Teesta and Talum Chu [Rangyong Chu] near Sanklang in Mangan sub-division of North Sikkim. However, the site was later proposed to be shifted to downstream location NHPC.

Project Summary: Investigations regarding the newly proposed project are in progress.

Environmental Assessment: The technical findings for the original 495 MW project had painted a dismal picture. As per the report, any increased human activity in the proposed project area would have adverse impact on the habitats of a rich diversity of mammals, fauna and butterflies. Another possible downside to carrying forward this project was geological instability resulting in an increased incidence of landslides.

TEESTA STAGE-VI HE PROJECT

Envisaged Power Generation: 440 MW

Location: The project under the present revised scheme is to be carried out at Sirwani in East Sikkim. The originally proposed 360 MW scheme was located downstream of the powerhouse of Teesta Stage-V HE Project on Teesta river, about 500 m downstream of the road bridge at Khanitar/ Mamring in East Sikkim. However, the proposed project was likely to submerge an area of 214 ha, which included forest lands, private holdings, Manipal Institute, the LPG Bottling Plant and the Indian Oil Depot.

Project Summary: Under the revised scheme, a 20 m high barrage is to be constructed on river Teesta at Sirwani. The water is to be diverted through an 11.5 km long head race tunnel with underground powerhouse proposed at Tarkhola in South Sikkim on the right bank of river Teesta.

Environmental Assessment: The proposed project site lies in seismically active region. The river channel proposed for this scheme is rich in aquatic life, in which about six species are of fishery interest. More than 100 species of mammals, 230 species of birds [including 'threatened species'], 345 species of butterflies and various amphibians and reptile species are found in the vicinity of the project.

HIGH ALTITUDE SPICES

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Recreating the 'Ban Jhakri'

by BIRENDRA RAI

GANGTOK: The Ban Jhakri Falls, presently being developed in Ranka under the initiative of the Rural Management and Development Department, is an interesting cultural development in the region simply because it aims to throw light on the phenomenon that is Shamanism.

The park will house various statues, *Dhyangro* [Shamanistic percussion instrument] and masks used by *Jhakris* currently being installed there. The aim behind the creation of the park is to catalyze a sense of curiosity among the youngsters on the way of life of Ban Jhakris [shamans who cure ailments of the spirit] and their art rarely practiced in these parts; a culture that predates any organised form of religion.

Gyaltzen Lama, the artist responsible for recreating these masks, instruments and statues, informs that the absence of any artistic or aesthetic qualities in the installations is a deliberate interpretation of the original way these masks and statues were made. There will be variations in the materials used here though, cement for wood for instance.

"The reason for creation of these installations is to remind the people of a culture that is fast losing prominence. During my month-long research, I realised that all the materials that I went through were researched not by locals but scholars from abroad. This gave me more reason to take up this project and try to recreate a true picture," says Lama.

The installations being constructed are replicas of the original masks and statues found in the Himalayas, which unfortunately belong to private collectors abroad. Some of them have been dated back a few centuries. These masks were used by shamans or *Jhakris* in their exorcism and soul journeys while the statues were of the various sacred deities that the people worshipped and revered. The project began a year ago and is likely to be completed in about two months' time.

Gyaltzen Lama at work amidst his creations at the Ban Jhakri falls. Photos by Karchoong Diyali.



A Midweek Photograph

Statues abound in Sikkim

a MIDWEEK Report

GANGTOK: Sikkim's fascination with installing statues of saints and prominent figures continues with the State Cabinet approving the construction of yet another one at Hee Gaon in West Sikkim.

In the last cabinet meeting which took place at the end of August, clearance was given for the construction of a statue of Mahatma Sirijunga Singthebe at Yumrang Thegu in Hee Gaon. Mahatma Sirijunga is the patron saint of the Limbu community of Sikkim. The cabinet has approved the detailed project report of the phase I of the project to be undertaken under the Rural Management and Development Department. It also allocated funds amounting to Rs. 30 lakhs for the first phase. This has been transferred by the Cultural Affairs and Heritage Department to the Rural Development Department.

A national level tender under a two bid system for the work of the construction is to be placed. The cabinet in turn has also approved the DPR for phase II which is to be submitted to the union government with the request for funding the project.

This will be the fifth statue that will come up in the state. A 135 feet statue of Guru Padmasambhava has already been constructed at Samdruptse in Namchi, which has become a major tourist attraction. Another large statue of Lord Shiva is coming up at Solophok, also in South Sikkim, while an 80 feet statue of Lord Buddha will come up at Rabongla in South Sikkim to mark the 2550th birth anniversary of Lord Buddha. It is hoped this will further help develop the Buddhist Circuit in the state. The foundation stone for the Buddha statue cum eco garden

at Rabongla will be laid by chief minister Pawan Chamling on 7 September, where he will also grace the Pang Lhabsol celebrations there as the chief guest on that day.

Another large statue of the Nepali literary giant Bhanu Bhakta is proposed to come up at Gyalshing in West Sikkim while the construction work on the 'Stairway to heaven' based on the Lepcha folklore has already started.

In the same cabinet meet, the ministry has also given its administrative approval and financial sanction for a revised estimate of another Rs. 59 lakhs for landscaping and development of Ban Jhakri falls at Ranka in East Sikkim with a revised estimate of Rs. 2.6 crores as against the original sanction of Rs. 1.47 crores. The Ban Jhakri falls will house a park cum gardens; the project is being undertaken by the Rural Management and Development Department.

The Tsuklakhang royal chapel has been mute witness to a tiny monarchy's chequered history, best exemplified by the many twists and turns in the celebrations of the only festival peculiar to Sikkim-Pang Lhabsol.

In the heyday of the Chogyals, Pang Lhabsol was a red letter day on the calendar. Not only were the guardian deities of Sikkim propitiated, the day was doubly significant as the national day of Sikkim. For a few years after a newly acquired status as the 22nd state of India, the deposed Chogyal still celebrated Pang Lhabsol at Tsuklakhang with a few minor changes- the new democratically elected leaders were guests of honour as the pageantry of Pang Lhabsol unfolded in front of the royal chapel.

Dzo-nga (*mDzod-Ing*) fulminating War Deity of Sikkim, was commanded by Mahakala, the Commander-in-Chief of all the Guardians of the Faith

for their well being.

The pomp and pageantry was a fulsome occasion for one and all, with people decked up in their festive best and a lunch hosted for them by the Palace.

And then, one bleak year, the Pang Lhabsol celebrations at Tsuklakhang were abruptly terminated. The magnificent costumes and masks were put away, the Pangtoed dancers put to pasture like the ceremonial horses themselves. We heard feeble protests from the public about the decimation of their culture but still there were no celebrations at Tsuklakhang.

Then the sleepy town of Ravangla reinvented itself as an alternative venue for Pang Lhabsol celebrations, complete with Pangtoed dancers. Meanwhile in Gangtok, the day found itself being promoted as a day of unity in a modern interpretation. Tourists who were lured to Sikkim by the promise of masked dances in Gangtok complained bitterly that they either had to go

Tashiding, Norbugang, Drablaghang, Dzongri, Rabdentse, Khecheopalri, Tholung, Pomdong, Kalijhora and Tsuklakhang Goenkhang among others.

Sadly, there seems to have been a most unfortunate misunderstanding over the Pang Lhabsol celebrations at Tsuklakhang. While the locals have been under the wrong impression that it is out of bounds for them, the message received at Tsuklakhang has been that of a lack of public participation.

This year finally a silver lining -the Tsuklakhang Trust laid all misconceptions to rest by taking out an ad in local papers inviting the public to participate in the Pang Lhabsol celebrations at Tsuklakhang. Further the Trust invited all the Buddhist organizations to celebrate Pang Lhabsol at Tsuklakhang itself.

We must remember that the prayers are for the well being of all people of Sikkim, that the guardian deities being propitiated are our guardian deities and most

Pang Lhabsol: A tryst at Tsuklakhang

by TENZIN C. TASHI



Pang Lhabsol celebrations as it used to be at Tsuklakhang. Photo: Late N. S. Lepcha

to guard the Faith and to protect and bring peace and prosperity to all the people of Sikkim. Dzo-nga, like many other guardian deities, was a malevolent spirit who was subjugated by and appointed as a guardian deity of the land and its people by Guru Padmasambhava in the 8th century. Guru Rimpoche also decreed that the people of Sikkim should propitiate the guardian deities in an annual ritual worship that unnatural calamities be kept at bay.

Pang Lhabsol witnessed among other chaams, the spectacular Pangtoed chaam or the warrior Dance unique to Sikkim and attributed to the third Chogyal Chador Namgyal who also invented the Lepcha script. The Pangtoed chaam is the only chaam which is performed by laymen. In the old days they were sequestered away from wine and women for one week at Tsuklakhang while they rehearsed for their symbolic role as the warriors of Dzo-nga.

People from all over Sikkim would throng to Tsuklakhang to offer the bounty of their first harvest to the guardian deities, to reiterate their faith and to pray

to Ravangla to see a mix of old and new traditions or watch a very modern tableaux on the streets of Gangtok. Where were the magnificent dances and rituals that every traveler to Sikkim had waxed about?

Over the years, the multiple interpretations of Pang Lhabsol have obscured its significance for the present generation for whom Pang Lhabsol is as much about Pangtoed dancers at Ravang as a cultural programme on M.G.Marg. A lot of myths have sprung up around the traditional celebrations at Tsuklakhang, indeed about Tsuklakhang itself. One persistent misconception among most locals today is that Tsuklakhang is out of bounds to 'ordinary' people. How ridiculous- it is primarily a place of worship where many devout people regularly do their rounds!

While the dances have definitely been discontinued, the prayers and other rituals have been regularly done in the time honoured tradition by the Tsuklakhang Trust. Traditional ritualistic offerings of 'bel-tson', prayer flags, 'poe', khadas and cash have been offered to sacred places like the four sacred caves, Pemayangtse,

importantly, Pang Lhabsol is the only festival that is uniquely ours. All Buddhists everywhere celebrate other deuchens like Drukpa Tsheshi and Lhabab Duechen but Pang Lhabsol is ours alone. How then do we ensure that this year the celebrations at Tsuklakhang are truly successful? For starters, we have to make the time to put in an appearance at Tsuklakhang, young kids in tow that they, and we, may reacquaint ourselves with the traditional celebrations. We may not have first bounty of harvest to offer but we can contribute our mite by offering 'tsog' and cash. This will go a long way in helping to defray some of the costs involved.

Finally, while there are some who feel that festivals must reinvent themselves to continue to remain relevant to the present generation, there are the purists who believe that the essence is all important. We still have a long way to go to bring back Pang Lhabsol in all its glory to Tsuklakhang but a beginning has been made this year and that's truly important. The first step is always the hardest. Lets all make this first step a giant step. See you at Tsuklakhang!

Pang Lhabsol 2006

Rubeng, South Sikkim 5 - 7 September

PANGTOED CHAAM
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'Statues' complete a decade of unity

SARIKAH ATREYA talks to THUKCHUK LACHUNGPA, president, Pang Lhabsol Celebration Committee on completion of a decade of Pang Lhabsol celebrations in Gangtok.



This is the 10th year anniversary of the Pang Lhabsol Statues of Unity celebrations in Sikkim. Can you tell us something about its inception?

Actually, since the early 1980s, there had been talks and discussions amongst the intellectuals of Sikkim on the need to preserve and promote our unique cultural heritage and traditions. In spite of having such a rich cultural heritage, there is hardly any monument in Sikkim to showcase this. We felt the need to put up monuments that reflected our unique culture. Then we started researching on the theme and sourcing for ideas. Being a professional artist myself, I too wanted to contribute my bit to this great project.

How did you come up with the idea Statues of Unity depicting Thekong Tek and Khye Bumsa?

The great event of the swearing-in of the oath of blood brotherhood between Thekong Tek and Khye Bumsa at Kabi Longstok in North Sikkim in the 13th century had till now remained only in oral traditions and later in history books. We decided to immortalise this great historic event in statues. Having decided upon the theme of Statues of Unity, we were faced with a daunting task. There were no photographs or paintings to base our sketches upon. We just had the oral traditions as our guide, which also had many versions. Based on these stories and folklore, I started the initial sketches. We had to search for models all over

Sikkim. We even went to some Lepcha villages in Kalimpong to get the authentic look for the statues. We took photographs of facial expressions and peculiarities, body type measurements from models from both the Bhutia and Lepcha communities. It took a lot of time to come up with prototype models for the statues. The total budget was Rs. 10 lakh and a sculptor from Kolkata sculpted the three statues.

Pang Lhabsol is also a religious festival in Sikkim...

I have been often accused of bringing the festival from the monasteries to the markets. This is because of lack of understanding. The traditional Pang Lhabsol ceremony has been going on for centuries in the monasteries in the form of the Pangtoed Chaam and other religious ceremonies and this will continue as it is. The celebration at the Statues of Unity here in Gangtok is the cultural aspect of the Pang Lhabsol festival.

How has this cultural aspect of Pang Lhabsol evolved over the years?

The celebrations have grown tremendously over the years. Today, it is the biggest community festival of Sikkim. It brings together all communities, be it Bhutia, Lepcha, Nepali, or the business community on one platform. Any one who is a Sikkimese, who loves Sikkim, is part of this unique festival.

What are your future plans?

Now we are slowly trying to

pass on the mantle to the future generation, the students. The more the students get involved, the more the festival will grow. From this year onward, we have started essay writing and painting competitions besides the cultural competition, among other things. From this year onwards, we are planning to put up a readymade stage which will involve less digging. In the evenings, there will be popular cultural programme for the public. It is very important to incorporate popular trends in festivals like this in order to attract a lot of people. There has to be variety besides the traditional festivities to keep the interests of the people intact.

Are you happy with the way the festival has grown in the last ten years?

Whatever vision we had, of spreading the word of unity, peace and communal harmony, has been achieved to a far extent. It is very important to maintain this peace and unity in Sikkim, for development, progress and for our future generations. This is the message we are spreading through this festival. The inspiration for unity amongst us is this Pang Lhabsol festival.

Today, Pang Lhabsol is also a big tourist attraction. This is one way we can attract more visitors to the state, who come looking for a unique experience and to really understand our rich cultural heritage. The Pang Lhabsol Committee is now planning to bring out miniature versions of the Statues of Unity which the visitors can take home as souvenirs.



Photo: PLCC, Rabong

Blending past and present at Rabong

a MIDWEEK Report

GANGTOK: In this age of 24-hour satellite television and unlimited entertainment options, where traditions are generally bypassed for something that is deemed trendy and modern, a festival that is uniquely Sikkimese has been able to blend the two aspects together and that too successfully.

Rabong in South Sikkim has been playing host to the Pang Lhabsol festival, which has turned into a major annual event on the town's social and cultural calendar. Every year, this town wears a festive coat during the biggest three-day celebrations, the highlight of which is the performance of the 18th Century Warrior Dance or *Pangtoed Chaam*, [Warrior Dance], an essential part of the Pang Lhabsol celebrations. The *Pangtoed Chaam* is unique to Sikkim and it was the third King, Chogyal Chador Namgyal, who choreographed the dance, which is said to have appeared to him in a vision around 1700 AD. The *Pangtoed Chaam* also assumes extra significance as it is the only religious dance not performed by monks.

This is just the religious aspect of the Pang Lhabsol celebrations. Over the years, the celebrations here have grown in size and started incorporating several other elements of gaiety until it took its present shape, where apart from the *Pangtoed Chaam*, performed by lay people on Pang Lhabsol, the preceding days offer a treat of activities. Rabong has been able to efficiently blend the past with the present and offer something to the people that is both traditional as well as modern.

From Boogie-Woogie dance competitions, to rural sports such as sack race and

tug-of-war to a volleyball tournament that has teams from outside of the state participating, the attractions of the Pang Lhabsol celebrations at Rabong today are many.

Rabong offers a good example of what Pang Lhabsol seeks to promote - unity. The event, managed by the Rabong Pang Lhabsol Celebration Committee, has patrons and members from all communities joining hands in making the festivities that of a lasting memory.

The focal point of the Pang Lhabsol celebrations here is the Mani Lakhang [a small monastery] also known as the *Mane Chokerling*, located in Daragoan overlooking the town. In fact, the Mani Lhakang was built by the locals for the purpose of holding the Pang Lhabsol festival.

The Mani Lhakang, a part of the Ralang Monastery, one of the premier monasteries located nearby, has grown to prominence because of the famed *Pangtoed Chaam*, performed during the Pang Lhabsol festival. In the last few years, it had become the epicentre of Pang Lhabsol celebrations in the state. The *Pangtoed Chaam* used to be earlier performed at the Tsuklakhong Monastery [the royal chapel] located in Gangtok, the state capital, but was later discontinued. Now, not only have the locals, through their undaunted spirit and hard work, kept this important aspect of the Sikkimese culture alive here in this small town, but has also added to the local economy by way of tourism promotion, drawing huge crowds from all over the state and outside.

It is indeed a fine assimilation of ancient cultural heritage meeting modern-day entertainment dictums.

Bhutan:

A Fine Balance between Tradition and Modernity



Jigme N. Kazi

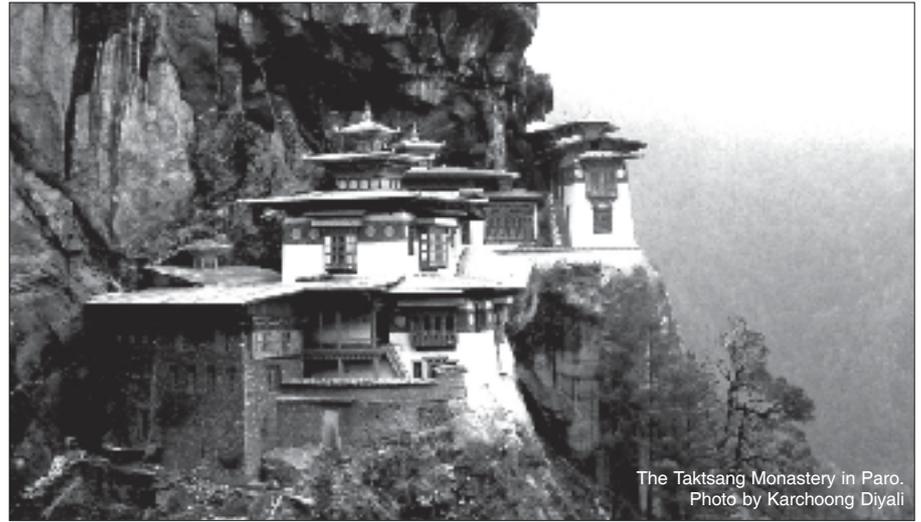
Sometimes life rewards you in an unexpected way. A wedding in the autumn of 2005 took me to the fabled Bhutanese capital - Thimphu. The brief stay in the capital and a short trip to the nearby picturesque valley of Paro - about 90 minutes drive from Thimphu - was not only a dream come true but also one of the most pleasant and fascinating experiences of my life.

Even keen visitors from its neighbouring areas - Nepal and Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam in India - have rarely paid a visit to Bhutan. Centuries of isolation has indeed helped Bhutan preserve its rich and unique cultural heritage. The Himalayan Kingdom's rugged geographic features with high snow-peaked mountains on its western, northern and part of eastern frontiers have helped the country preserve its natural beauty and ancient heritage. Now, the tiny land-locked Dragon Kingdom (Druk Yul) is stretching out its wings and opening up to the world outside.

Naturally, its first cautious move towards a more developed nation state, while preserving its precious natural and cultural heritage, is to stretch its hand of friendship to its immediate neighbours - India and Tibet (China) - which share many things in common with Bhutan. Speaking at the wedding reception hosted by the bride's family, Bhutan's Home Minister, Lyonpo Jigme Y. Thinley, rightly pointed out that the marriage between Ugyen Dhendup, a Bhutanese, and Tenzing Dechen Gyari, a Tibetan, symbolized the "marriage between Tibet and Bhutan."

Tenzing is the daughter of Lodi Gyari, a well-known figure internationally on Tibetan affairs who is presently the Special Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Washington. Both Tenzing and Ugyen, son of Sonam Dhendup, an influential Bhutanese, work and live in the US. Being married to one of Tenzing's close cousins I, along with my wife, were one of the few from Sikkim invited for the wedding. The presence of a host of rich and influential Americans and other foreigners close to the Gyari family, many of whom are active supporters and sympathizers of the Tibetan cause, added to the glitter and glamour of a wedding held in traditional style against the backdrop of a quiet and scenic beauty of the eastern Himalayas in its full splendour.

Among the most prominent invitees for the wedding were Richard C. Blum, husband of US Senator from California, Dianne Feinstein, and Founder of American Himalayan Foundation, and John Ackerly, President of the International Campaign for Tibet. Other luminaries for the occasion were Thomas Pritker, Chairman and CEO of Hyatt Corporation, USA, Gregory B. Craig, former Special Coordinator for Tibet appointed by the US Government, Professor Edward Luttwak, US Government consultant, writer and Senior Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies of Washington, and Ghislaine Maxwell, the charming New York socialite and daughter of the late Robert Maxwell, a British media



The Taktsang Monastery in Paro.
Photo by Karchoong Diyali

mogul who owned *New York Daily Times*, *Sunday Mirror* and *Daily Mirror* among other newspapers.

One of the main attractions of the wedding celebrations was the presence of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince, Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck, and some highly-placed members of the royal family. The first day of the two-day marriage celebrations was set aside exclusively for the main wedding ceremony which was witnessed by the distinguished guests, including close relations of the bride and bridegroom, visiting foreigners and select members of the top notch of the Bhutanese aristocracy and government. The second day was open for others to bless and offer their good wishes to the newly married in traditional style.

Part of the wedding celebrations reflected a fine blend of eastern and western cultures even as the westerners, in their ties and suits, danced with the Bhutanese, clad in their national 'kho' and 'kira', to the rhythmic beat of rock 'n' roll sung in Bhutanese. The spirit and style of the festive occasion reflected the aspirations of the common man in the Dragon Kingdom to reach out for modernity while preserving their glorious ancient tradition. The philosophy of their lifestyle, based on the Middle Path teachings of Lord Buddha, seems unshakable come what may.

While moving steadily but surely into the future Bhutan has its feet placed firmly in the past. The Prime Minister, Lyonpo Sangay Ngedup, puts it this way: "We need to know where you come from in order to know where you are going." The Home Minister goes further and stresses on His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck's emphasis on the need to maintain a fine balance between material needs of the people and their spiritual welfare.

Even a casual visitor to *Druk Yul* (Land of the Thunder Dragon) will at once come to realize the importance of religion in the daily life of the Bhutanese people. Prayer flags, temples, prayers wheels and monasteries adorn the gentle hills and valleys of the Kingdom. Prayers such as "*Om Mani Pedme Hung*" (Hail to the Jewel in the Lotus) are forever on the lips of most Bhutanese.

It was Lord Padmasambhava, the Indian tantric master locally referred to as Guru Rinpoche (Precious

Teacher), who first introduced Buddhism to Bhutan in the 8th century when he visited Tibet. The sacred and awe-inspiring Taktsang (Tiger's Lair) Monastery in Paro and the many foot and hand prints left by Guru Rinpoche in Bumthang in Central Bhutan and elsewhere in the Kingdom are constant reminders to the faithful of Guru Rinpoche's historic visit to this sacred and hidden land. Though Buddhism was first introduced in Tibet during the reign of King Songtsen Gampo in the 7th century it was Guru Rinpoche who actually established Buddhism as the State religion in Tibet in the 8th century.

The early Tibetan immigrants to Bhutan and in other parts of the Himalayan region is thought to have taken place in the ninth century during the reign of the apostate ruler Langdarma (836-842) in Tibet when

religious turmoil and persecution were at its height. By the 14th century many of those who came from the north firmly established Buddhism in western and some parts of central Bhutan. However, it was not until the early 17th century that Buddhism really and truly took a firmer hold throughout the country. What made this possible was the arrival of Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, a high incarnate lama from Ralung Monastery in Tibet, to Bhutan in the year 1616.

Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (1594-1651), who belonged to the Drukpa sect of Tibetan Buddhism, was one of the many lamas who fled Tibet and sought refuge in Bhutan when the Gelukpa sect came to power in Tibet at the turn of the 17th century. Because of his forceful personality and his deep-rooted religious beliefs he was successful not only in defending Bhutan against Tibetan invasions but also in uniting the entire country under a central authority with himself assuming both temporal and spiritual power as Shabdrung, meaning at whose feet one submits.

Even after the establishment of the Wangchuck dynasty in 1907 Bhutan continued to pursue the policy of maintaining a fine balance between spiritual and material needs of its citizens and the state. While gradually introducing a more democratic form of governance, aimed at ensuring continuity and change, His Majesty has set his priority and coined his own formula for the future of his people and the country in these words which now form the basis for all policies and programmes of the government: "Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross National Product."

While most people across the globe grope in darkness in endless pursuit of contentment, the Bhutanese already have the key to happiness. Someone once said happiness is not what you have but what you are. And as Ugyen and Tenzing move from east to west and begin their life together they must discover for themselves the real source of peace, joy and happiness and spread it around once they find it.

- Jigme N. Kazi is a journalist and the author of "*Inside Sikkim : Against The Tide.*"

Let me start by saying this is no treatise, these are just experiences shared on writing by a person who has been writing (more off than on) for the last 14 years. And though I am no established writer, some of my attempts have appeared on papers, magazines and periodicals making me feel like one.

Writing came to me with the first flush of adolescence. Although a casual reader from an early age, it was unrequited love that plunged me into the world of love poetry where I slaked my fire. Trying to impress her I copied poems passing them as my own only to have them delivered them at my aunt's prematurely and luckily ending my period of plagiarism.

Wish I could go back in time and look into my head to see what I was thinking when I decided to embark on writing a novel. To know what the motivation was. Was it an attempt to impress or just plain foolishness that made me write a novel with no previous attempt at any creative writing besides the usual school essays. Well what does an inexperienced 16 year old write about? His life of course, so I wrote all about my childhood and the angst of growing up in a lonely and hypocritical world. Being in that age where I was fascinated with guns and war, and also being a Alistair MacLean and Fredrick Forsyth fan, I gave my novel an action packed ending. This being so far back, it amazes me that I can recall these little details as I go about it now. Anyways, I handed over my work to my English teacher, who handed it right back to me with the usual circles and corrections in red ink. For a period of time I hid my book on the top of my almirah and one day just like that I threw it in the drain that flows next to our house. It was only recently that I learnt that my English teacher would rave about my attempt in the other classes. So my first work of art actually went down the drain.

College was the best thing to happen. Classes, except on practical days, were from 8 to 12 in the morning so the afternoon was yours for the taking. As militancy in Assam was at its height, moving around outside the campus was not advisable so we spent the remaining hours on sleeping, football, Friday movies and reading with little or no time for studies as we were busy.

Looking into the windows as families sat at their tables, people inside cars on a railway crossing waiting for the trains to pass, a farmer on his way to the field – you wish you could experience moments of their lives but you know that this is the only time you will ever see them as the sea of humanity sweeps them away. Scribbling these facts of life as I sat on my chair in the evenings was how I actually began to write. It was around at this time that I also became a voracious reader, devouring everything that was in black and white. As I read, there were times when thoughts that I felt were reflected in works of other authors, which brought a thrill. And it was then I decided to try my hand at short fiction and verses.

Sikkim students in Guwahati were concentrated in three areas – we engineering guys at the extreme north, veterinarians at the extreme south and diplomats in the west. Moving from one end to the other would take close to two hours which we eventually traveled as there was nothing else to do. While taking one route we would cross the office of The Sentinel and while taking

ON THE WRITTEN WORD

by TASHI CHOPHEL

the other it would cross The Assam Tribune, both were the prominent dailies of the state. Every time we crossed these landmarks I would crane my neck hoping to see what went inside them.

And then one fine day I just walked into the office of The Sentinel with a short story and a lot of trepidation. I handed over my work to the receptionist who rang up a lady in the features section. She came over, read my work on the spot and said okay. That was it! Had never shared my work with anyone nor taken an opinion, just went up and handed it the first time, jeez what was I thinking? Anyways the next Sunday my piece comes out, I see my name in black and white and there is no sense of elation. Sometimes I wonder if I have any feelings! Anyways I go back the next time with another piece which too subsequently comes out. I suddenly seem to have a presence in college. My status is suddenly elevated from just another chinky to a published writer. Sometimes I wish I could the awe a non writer feels towards a writer.

During those days there was a magazine called Connect which had an excellent review section, impressed by them I too tried my hand at music reviews. Giving them a personal touch I started reviewing both English and Hindi music which too came out. The first time that I got paid for my written works was a real high. A feeling of real accomplishment swept over me as I realized I was paid for not who I was or my background but solely on the basis of my work.

The first fan I had was the mother of a colleague. During our hostel days, the locals would invite us for lunch at their place; maybe they felt sorry for us having tasted our hostel food. Anyways when this colleague of mine invited me home for lunch I jumped at the idea of relishing their home food. When we reached his home and I was introduced to his parents, the mother comes up and gushingly offers me a *Ganchha* (Assamese use the cloth as garland) and says she loves the way I write. She had read a review of a ghazal album and had felt exactly the same way about it. Well, I was treated like a rock star that day and I was quite pleased about it. Similarly other colleagues would come up and say how their relatives and friends would look forward to my writing. Well, I was enjoying the attention.

And then one fine evening I asked myself the question "why do I write?" Pondering about it and writing down my thoughts I realized that I was writing to extend my ideas to the others and felt that I was forcing my views on the others.

Feeling extremely selfish and wondering why anyone would bother about what I had to say or who I was to say what I wanted, I just stopped writing. Youth and idealism is a dangerous mix.

Three years down the line and after a lot of odd jobs, landed myself a job in a weekly. Shorthanded to begin with only five of us, besides writing we had to look after other aspects and I was given sales. Those were euphoric times as the weekly spearheaded to number one within two weeks, revolutionizing the reading taste of the public. It sure was heady days seeing the readers eagerly awaiting the next issue but more than that were changes being brought about.

Well besides some journalistic pieces I was also churning out book and music reviews by the week for the next three years. Sometimes I wonder how I could guzzle so much stuff but the fact that I was enjoying it made it seem normal at that time.

And then I hit turbulence. For close to two years I could neither read nor write. For what had seemed effortless till then suddenly became insurmountable – two lines of print and I could go no

further forget about writing anything. When earlier I had stopped writing now it seemed just the opposite. Probably I had lost touch with my centre for suddenly I felt that the world had moved on and left me high and dry. I would buy books which I couldn't obviously read, enter book shops hoping to soak in the ambience which I missed. It was an agonizing period.

They say all good things come to pass but even bad times comes to pass, and then just like that I was welcomed back into the world of letters. Frequenting the bookshop of a friend who would encourage me to start writing, I managed to finish reading a novel which was huge for me at that time. Then as time passed by I wrote my first article in years and I was happy to know that I still had it in me. But I still wasn't sure until the day another friend of mine handed me a thin volume containing some articles and interviews of I. B. Rai, a renowned Nepali litterateur. Impressed by what my friend had to say of his writings but more impressed by the terms like *tesro ayam* and *lila lekhan*. As I perused the pages I came across an interview of his where when asked why he writes he says something to this effect "anybody can be an administrator, a policeman, a teacher, a father but it is only I who can write. No one can write what I feel and this writing can be done by me and only me".

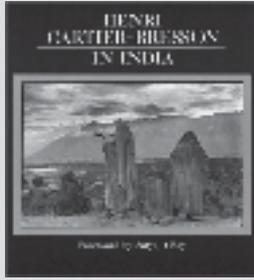
All doubts that I had cleared up. Realization dawned that writing was a celebration of individualism. Uniqueness inherent in all of us came out as we each explored different paths and came upon the one that was most compatible. Writing was mine.

So if you ask why do I write? I write because I just have to.

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THE BOOKSHELF

New Arrivals At **RACHNA BOOKSHOP**



1. **SACRED GAMES** - Vikram Chandra; Rs. 650; 900pp
2. **A LIFE LESS ORDINARY** - Baby Halder; Rs. 195; 163pp
3. **A CALL TO HONOUR** - Jaswant Singh; Rs. 495; 426pp
4. **COMPLETE HOME DECORATION** - Phil Gorton; Rs. 295; 224pp
5. **THE AFGAN** - Frederick Forsyth; Rs. 255; 350pp
6. **THE LOST KINGDOMS OF AFRICA** - Jeffery Tyler; Rs. 405; 275pp
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8. **LIFE: A MIRAGE** - Dinita Rai; Rs. 15; 40pp
9. **IN INDIA** - Henry Cartier Bresson; Rs. 1495; 128pp
10. **THE HIMALAYAN CONSPIRACY** - Sutradhar; Rs. 295; 303pp

SACRED GAMES - VIKRAM CHANDRA

Seven years in the making, *Sacred Games* is an epic of exceptional richness and power. Vikram Chandra's novel draws the reader deep into the life of detective Sartaj Singh and into the criminal underworld of Ganesh Gaitonde, the most wanted gangster in India.

Sartaj, one of the very few Sikhs in the Mumbai police force, is used to being identified by his turban, beard and the sharp cut of his trousers. But the 'Silky Sikh' is now past forty, his marriage is over and his career prospects are on the slide. When Sartaj gets an anonymous tip-off as to the secret hideout of the legendary boss of the G-company, he's determined that he'll be the one to collect the prize.

Vikram Chandra's keenly anticipated new novel is a sprawling, epic story of friendships and betrayals, of terrible violence, of an

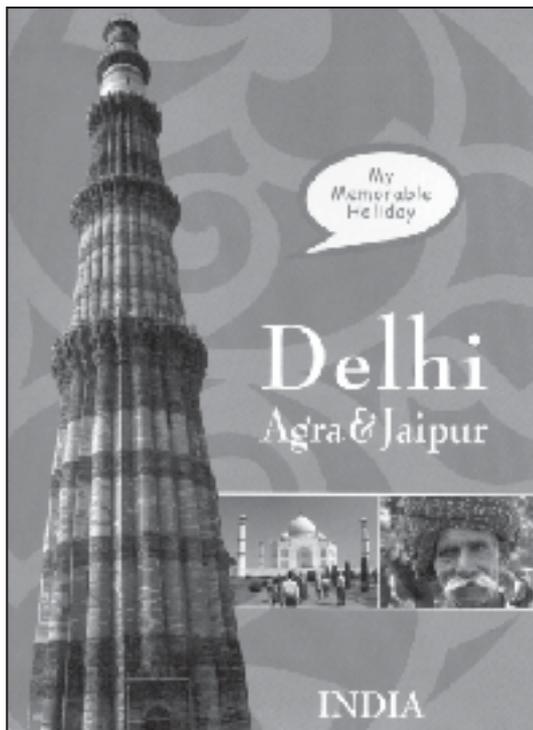
astonishing modern city and its dark side. Drawing on the best of Victorian fiction, mystery novels, Bollywood movies and Chandra's years of first-hand research on the streets of Mumbai, *Sacred Games* reads like a potboiling page-turner but resonates with the intelligence and emotional depth of the best of literature.

A CALL TO HONOUR - JASWANT SINGH

A Call to Honour: In service of Emergent India is an evocative account about a crucial period in India's history. After the passing of the Nehruvian era of conservative socialism and non-alignment in international relations, India went on to redefine its character and goals in accordance with the demands of a post Cold War world.

The BJP-led NDA Government responded to all these issues with a dream for India and a clear vision. As Union Minister of Defense,

External Affairs and Finance in the BJP-led NDA Government of India, Jaswant Singh held many keys to this radical transformation in India's foreign policy, defense policies and economic planning. He handled several critical issues that confronted the country. India's legitimate security needs found international recognition, post-1998. The consequent challenges to Indian statecraft, are analyzed in great details in chapters on USA, China, and Pakistan. He reconstructs the excitement around Pokhran II in May 1998, which provoked strong international reactions. He was a major player in the release of 166 passengers abroad IC814 hijacked to Kandahar and provides a first-hand account of that testing episode. The author has covered in details other equally important events like the Indo-Pak Summit in Agra, the Lahore bus journey, and the Kargil conflict.



Dilli Darshan from Sikkim

On the list of books to recently hit the stands is a pictorial booklet on Delhi, Agra and Jaipur, a product of Milestones, a company based in Sikkim. No bigger than a pocket diary, this glossy colour booklet serves both as a guidebook and your personal holiday diary.

Besides the usual list of recommendations on places to visit, shop and try out culinary delights, this travel diary also helps the travelers to plan their trip by including a list of websites one can visit for online information and hotel bookings. To take the drudgery out of reading a travel guide, the booklet includes lots of pictures that capture the spirit of these three cities.

The book jacket itself is interesting, which also doubles up as a 'pocket' where one can 'slip in' photographs, tickets, passes and business cards. It also allows the traveler to keep record of memorable moments, interesting people and places. Also included in the package is a handy map of Delhi, Agra and Jaipur. Once the traveling part is over, this booklet will be a beautiful reminder of your holiday to take back home with you.

The booklet is reasonably priced at Rs. 100 and is available at Metropoints and Jainco.



- continued from page 11

in need of a salve to treat the communal wounds scoured open in 1994, the mountain and its worship, Pang Lhabsol, lent themselves well to public expressions of brotherhood so necessary at that time in the observance of the festival as Unity Day in Gangtok. It was natural progression and even though the observance is not necessarily in accordance with the scriptures, the mountain's invocation to bless Sikkim with communal harmony is in tune with Khangchendzonga has always been – the Eldest Brother. The purer form of the Pang Lhabsol rituals survive in the care of Pemyangtse monks and a thanksgiving celebration to a benevolent host continues to be offered by the Kagyu monks of Ralong Monastery at Ravangla. Every celebration is unique and each invokes a special feature of the mountain as seen and required by the Sikkimese people.

The mountain has been exceptionally large-hearted and has not limited its largesse to people of a particular religious denomination. In that sense, the mountain has been truly secular. A Theravada monk who meditated 'facing Kangchenjunga' in the 1940's went on to find the answers he sought. Gertrude Hartley, a devout Christian, had lost a baby during childbirth and when she was expecting again, she decided to escape Calcutta's heat and took a cottage on rent in Darjeeling. A mountain-lore reached her that any expecting mother who looks at the peak of

Khangchendzonga and meditates will give birth to a child with a perfect face. Shortly after, in the year 1913, she gave birth to Vivian Mary in Darjeeling. The girl who would go on to take Hollywood by storm as Vivien Leigh!

Point is that Khangchendzonga has always been accessible and open. Has it compromised its identity in any way? Does not appear so. Of the top three Himalayan giants, Khangchendzonga is the only one known by its own name. Chomolungma, after numerals like Peak B and IV is known as Mount Everest, a name of recent make, and sometimes even as Sagarmatha which even newer; few would be able to connect the names Lamba Pahar, Chogori or Dapsang or even Mount Godwin-Austen with the second tallest mountain known by the world as K2. Khangchendzonga, even though it has been spelt differently over the years, has always been Khangchendzonga.

Khangchendzonga has been accommodating, understanding, benevolent and inspiring. And in being all these, it has never ceased being itself either. As Sikkim gathers together on Thursday to celebrate Pang Lhabsol, it should seek inspiration from what the mountain that defines Sikkim is really all about. Since everything about the mountain is so open-ended, every person will probably narrow down to a different understanding, all of which will be correct. What will remain common to all will be that in the process of understanding the mountain, they will understand Sikkim.

MIDWEEK DO'S & DON'TS

Preventing sports injury

Most sports related injuries are caused by the overuse or misuse of a muscle or a joint. However, these injuries can be prevented easily by following simple guidelines.

Follow four simple rules to prevent injuries:

- Be fit for the task.
- Be methodical in your workouts rather than violent.
- Warm up and cool down thoroughly.
- Use the right equipment and techniques.

Listed below are some common sports injuries and tips on how to prevent them.

Back and neck sprain: Stretch the neck, back and stomach muscles to prevent back injuries and pain. Use head and shoulder rolls to prevent neck sprains.

Foot pain: Stretch the Achilles tendon by gently pulling the foot backwards for ten seconds. Repeat ten times. Wearing shoes with heel pads can also help prevent foot pain.

Muscle pains: Warm up before and stretch after workouts. Do not bounce when stretching.

Shin splints: Well-cushioned shoes with arch supports can help prevent excessive jarring



A MIDWEEK photo

of muscles. If possible, athletes should exercise on soft surfaces like wood or grass and avoid working out on hard surfaces like pavement or concrete. Athletes should warm up slowly and stretch after participating in rigorous activity.

Shoulder pain: Stand up straight and roll shoulders backward in a circular motion. Athletes may also use one hand to grip a chair, bend at the waist so that the back is parallel to the floor and make 25 circles with the free hand to stretch the shoulders.

Runner's knee: Strengthen the quadriceps [the muscle on the front of the thigh] by contracting and relaxing them with the knee straight.

Sprain: Exercise and stretch joints such as the ankle to increase strength and range of motion.

Stress fractures: Do complete warm-ups and cool-downs that benefit all areas of the body. Do not exercise or put too much stress on one part of the body.

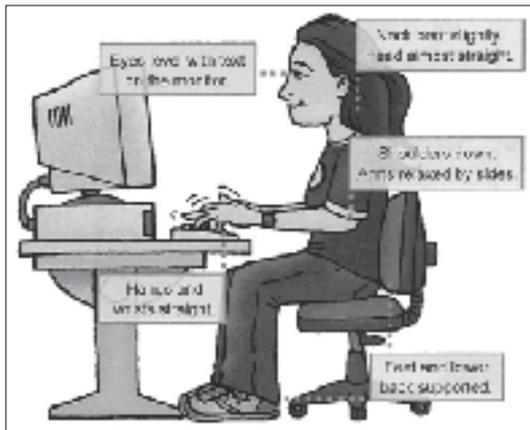
Tennis elbow: Build forearm strength by doing reverse curls with light weights or by squeezing a rubber ball.

Work without computers in the present times seems quite impossible. But while computers have revolutionised the way in which we do things, there are many long-term effects associated with extensive and prolonged usage.

It is not uncommon for individuals to experience eye problems and discomfort such as headache, backache and fatigue from extensive computer use. What follows are tips that can help you have a less painful day at work.

- Maintaining good posture while working on a computer
- Many of the ill-effects of computer use can be lessened or avoided altogether by utilising correct typing technique and posture, ensuring correct set up of equipment and good work habits.
- Place computer monitor and keyboard directly in front of you so as to avoid twisting your neck.
- Monitor should be 20-24 inches away from eyes and the height of the monitor should be 5-15 inches below horizontal line of sight.
- The mouse and keyboard should be at the same height.
- Shoulders should be

Safe computer use



relaxed with elbows forming a right angle and wrists extending straight and unbent from the arms. Hold wrists in neutral position, not upward or downward.

- Use an adjustable chair that provides firm, comfortable support.

- Adjust chair height so that thighs are horizontal, and feet are flat on the floor [use a footrest if necessary]. Chair should be with a backrest for lumbar support.

- Do not slouch.
- Ensure that frequently used materials are within easy reach.
- Get up and move around as often as possible - at least once every 20 to 30 minutes.
- Block excessive sunlight with drapes or blinds and use indirect room lighting.
- Give your eyes a rest every 15 to 20 minutes by focusing on a distant object for 10 to 15 seconds and blink often to prevent dry eyes.
- Use holder to hold paper.

Swimming Meet to start from 9 September



A contestant at the 1st Swimming Meet in 2004. A MIDWEEK photo

a MIDWEEK Report

GANGTOK: The Sikkim Amateur Swimming Association [SASA] is organizing the 3rd Sikkim State Swimming Meet at the TNA swimming pool from 9 to 10 September to encourage swimming talent in the state.

There are various categories of competition - Seniors [Men/Women], Juniors [Boys/Girls], Sub- Juniors [Boys/Girls] and Open Team Relays for Senior Men and Women.

Based on the results of the Meet, the SASA will also select the Sikkim swimmers for participation in the 60th Senior National Aquatic Championship, 2006 to be held on 21-25 September at Bangalore.

Entry forms are available at Abacus, Archies, Curtina, Rangpo Tourist Lodge and Singhal Trading, Jorethang.

Two more trophies for badminton from this year

a MIDWEEK Report

GANGTOK: The XVIIIth Sikkim State Badminton Championship is being hosted

by the Badminton Association of Sikkim at the Indoor Stadium from 7th to 10th September. Men & Women, and Boys and Girls will battle it out in their respective categories on a knock-out basis. Apart from honing local talent, selection of players for the Sikkim squad for the forthcoming North Eastern Championship at Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh will also be

made on the basis of individual performances.

This edition of the State Badminton Championship sees the inclusion of two trophies, the Under -19 (Boys Singles) in memory of late Master Kuldip Gurung and Under-16 category in honour of late Master Prasant Pradhan who had met with a fatal accident while representing the state in the North Eastern Zonal Championship at Imphal last year.

Send in your feedback, queries and mail to sikkim.midweek@gmail.com

OR post it to:

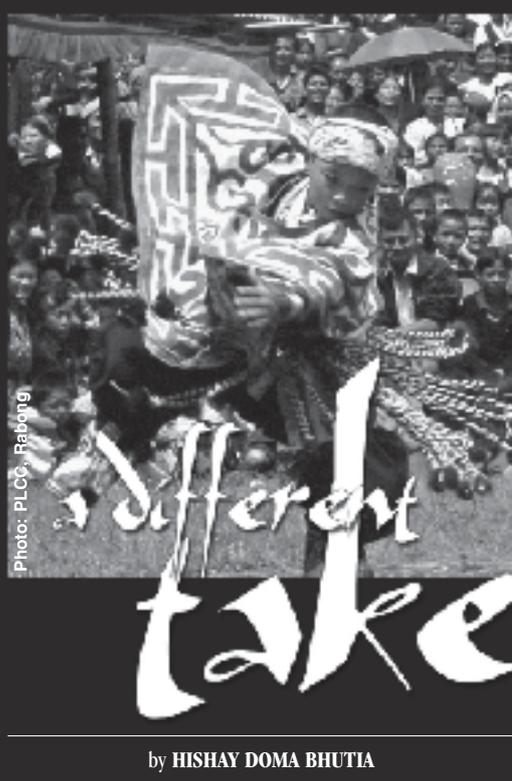
Midweek, Near Hotel Yatung, Nam Nang, Gangtok - 737101
Phone: 03592 320169

They say that 'history maketh a man'. And someone aptly said that history gives us our identity through which we can assert our rightful place in the society and the roots of our origin, the knowledge of which enables us to take the next step towards future.

The story of Pang Lhab-Sol started with how Khye Bumsa, the equivalent of Hercules, got the name by which we know him today. It's a time of about thousand years back when the 'lamas' of Tibet decided to build a 'gonpa'. How it looked like, I don't know because my history of Pang Lhab-Sol is limited to bedtime stories by my mother when I was a child and a book called *Folk Tales of Sikkim* I'd read at an age when I was too young to understand the importance of the event.

Well, back to the story. There was this huge pillar [undoubtedly a part of a building structure] so huge and so heavy that even a hundred thousand men together could not lift it up. Enter a young, strong man who lifts up the pillar all by himself. And hence the name Khye Bumsa – a man with the strength of a hundred thousand men combined.

PANG LHABSOL



by HISHAY DOMA BHUTIA

Impressed and gratified, one of the Sakya lamas [I forgot to mention the name of this newly built gonpa is Sakya] gives his daughter's hand in marriage to Khye Bumsa. That quite seemed like a quintessential happy ending but like every time, tragedy never ceases to strike. You see, Mrs. Bumsa was barren and it's a foolproof guess that during those times, to not have a child for a married couple was like the greatest curse and a source of misery to them. So one day, this determined Khye Bumsa, but with a chip on his shoulder, decides to go on a long journey to find a solution to his misery. After a long odyssey – I'd like to think that a typical Khye Bumsa journey is not without its adventures – he finally arrives in the land of peace, serene beauty, the land of nature worshippers, the land of Khang-chen-dzod-nga.

I guess Mr. Bumsa must have done something to get an advice from the above 'Headquarters' to go to the land of Khang-chen-dzod-nga where he and his wife would meet a certain delightful couple who'd be responsible for replacing their misery with happiness.

Demazong. The land where Khye Bumsa would meet the old couple Thekung Tek and Nye Kung Nal and where they would form an everlasting bond. But let's not forget the initial purpose of Khye Bumsa to visit the couple. The wish to be able to procreate children.

Formalities done, Khye Bumsa, on meeting the couple, expressed his purpose for the visit. Thus, Mr. and Mrs. Thekung Tek, being of gentle and kindly disposition, blessed Khye Bumsa and his wife with fertility.

Elated, Bumsa went back home and his wife soon bore him sons. Grateful and in high spirits, he returned to the homeland of Thekung Tek and Nye Kung Nyal with a proposition. A proposition that would make his successors an integral part of the land.

Before going further, let me mention that I am a true

byproduct of that proposition. I am the daughter of a Bhutia father and a Lepcha mother. You'd expect tradition, culture running high and of peak importance in our family but sadly that is not so. Unfortunately, that is the case with most of the families today. We are like stuck in a middle phase, neither moving ahead nor wanting to look back at our past. The world has created many bigots and biased ones with biased ideas and bigoted beliefs. We see what I personally call 'communal harmony' rife everywhere.

Coming back to the past, when Khye Bumsa presented his proposition to the couple, they being too kind to say no, said yes. Derak Pandan, if I'm factually correct, was the appointed place for the meeting. All the local deities were called upon to witness the meeting with Khang-chen-dzod-nga as the prime witness to forming of the brotherhood between, what we now call, Lepchas and Bhutias. Therefore, Khang-chen-dzod-nga is symbolic of the occasion Pang Lhab-Sol.

Some heavy swearing-in was done during the Treaty of Blood Brotherhood because Thekung Tek had already foreseen that Khye Bumsa's successors would milk Demazong and he wanted to make sure that there would be no partiality and unfairness to his tribe, the original inhabitants of the land.

I don't know why but seven or nine stones were buried facing the Khang-chen-dzod-nga and blood from both the families were dripped over the stones to make the effect of brotherhood treaty more pronounced and final. That is how Kabi Lungtsok got its name – 'Kabi' meaning blood and 'Lungtsok' denoting those stones. Kabi Lungtsok – the place where originated the family tree of Demazong. In retrospect, I personally think there should have been a severe punishment agreed upon if anyone failed to abide by the brotherhood treaty.

Anyway, this is the story that
- continued on page 23

For all the die-hard gamers in town, Midweek is introducing a section on game cheats that will add to your arsenal of secret weapons and moves. This week the cheats are for...



COUNTER STRIKE

ENTER THE CONSOLE (press ~ by default) and enter **sv_cheats 1** to activate cheat mode.

MONEY AND WEAPONS
To get **16000\$** which is the max, **sv_cheats** must be on. So type in the following in your console: **sv_cheats 1**

This will enable the cheats. After activating you must restart the level/map. Then type in **impuse 101** in your console and you will have 16000 dollars!

The other code is for the weapons. I don't want to take all the time to explain all the weapon names because if you already play Counter-Strike a lot you should know the weapons/weapon code names. To get the weapons you must have the cheats activated once again **sv_cheats 1**.

Now type the following in your console **give weapon_< - weapon name here - >**

ADJUST GRAVITY

After activating cheat mode in the console with **sv_cheats 1** you can change gravity with **sv_gravity <999 - 999999>**

GO TO MAP

After activating cheat mode in the console with **sv_cheats 1** you can change gravity with **changelevel < mapname >**. For example: **"changelevel dust"** (without the quotes of course).

SPEED UPGRADED

To upgrade the speed of your movements, go to your console and type: **cl_forwardspeed 999**. Repeat this with **cl_sidespeed 999** and **cl_backspeed 999**... After doing all of these, you'll move VERY fast.

SEE THRU WALL

Type **gl_zmax 100**.
gl_zmax 3600 will disable this cheat.

C4 TIMER TO 10 SEC

Type the following in your console: **mp_c4timer 10**

AUTO AIM ONLY TO SNIPER RIFLES

Type this in your console: **sv_cheats 1** and then type **sv_aim**

SEE OTHERS' RECORDS
cl_hidefrags 0 = To see other peoples records of kills and deaths.

MISCELLANEOUS:

gl_alphamin 1 : removes ladders, nets or fences...
de_aztec : removes net on bridge
cs_militia : removes fence at CT base.)
sv_aim: adjust_crosshair (change the color of the crosshair)



On The Rocks

Supernova > noun 1. A stellar explosion that produces an extremely bright object made of plasma that declines to invisibility over weeks or months. 2.

The unholy trinity of three aging rock stars: the infamous Tommy Lee of former Motley Crue and Pamela Anderson fame; Jason Newstead, former bassist of Metallica; and Gilby Clark, the guy who replaced Izzy Stradlin in the once hugely popular band, Guns 'n' Roses.

So *Rock Star: Supernova* is the biggest reality audition show currently being aired by CBS. Big deal! Only a tiny bit of meditation on the definition of Supernova and one is left wondering if some potential rock singer is committing a career suicide. Supernova. Not a very reassuring name for a band, don't you think? And considering the extremely mediocre songs Supernova has unveiled so far, this audition might be the brightest point in this so-called 'super' band's career. After that, is it going to be 'Hello, black hole'? We shall find that out soon.

After the "Tommyhawk" fell on the tenth contestant on Week Nine, most of whom had no business hanging around the Supernova stage anyway, only five are left to compete and connive against each other to front the band.

Kick starting the Week Nine show with *Lithium*, Lukas Rossi did an unusual piano-based arrangement of this Nirvana classic and totally nailed it. The performance earned him a standing ovation from the judges and a jump-in-your-seat moment from Jason Newstead [and believe me, he's not the jumping type]. What they probably didn't notice was Lukas repeating the same verse twice! So the next day, during the elimination show, it's the Goth doll who got to play with Supernova on their new track, *It's On*, which – though the strongest song they have unveiled so far – is still very mediocre.

Over the weeks, Magni Asgiarsson has proved himself to be a strong contender. The Iceman's vocals were on spot when he sang Live's *I Alone*. The performance had good intensity. But the judges' consistent focus on stage antics has turned even the soberest of contestants into a walking cliché. Mid-song, Magni goes into the audience; that's a good move. Then he spoils it by taking the tried and tested route to the judge's stage. But overall, it's a great performance. During the elimination show, Brooke Burke, the mannequin host, tells us he's the only contestant not to have made his way through the bottom three during the votes.

Ryan Star was great on theatrics but not so great on vocals this time. Between throwing his piano bench



away, jumping and sliding on the piano, and singing Coldplay's *Clocks*, there were a couple of pitch problems with the "Dark Horse" going a little flat and crackly in the falsetto. Having exhausted himself of every cliché in the book within the first 30 seconds of the song, he's in the bottom three 'singing for his life' the next day. No, wait! He actually grabbed this opportunity to try out some leftover clichés – popping open a champagne bottle and shaking it all over, climbing on the speakers [which looked more pathetic than cool], then jumping off it. He looked like an overeager pup trying too hard to please. It was actually very sad to see such waste of his talent.

Storm Large. Ah! I have nothing good to say about her performances these past couple of weeks. She bravely took on Evanescence's *Bring Me To Life*, a song totally wrong for her. So the next day, she's also in the bottom three singing The Beatles' *Helter Skelter*. Uh-oh, another one trying too hard! She's on the judges' side of the stage, half on Tommy Lee's lap and half on Gilby Clark's face, and poor Gilby's flexing all his muscles to push her away. Didn't the Jill 'grinding' episode teach this girl anything? The weakest performance of the night.

Toby Rand's got the female population screaming their lungs out for him but for me *Rebel Yell* was the

only memorable performance he's delivered so far. He pulled it off well with a much truer cover of the Billy Idol tune. He hit the lower projections reasonably well but his transition into the refrain was great. And that pulling those girls up on the stage act undoubtedly earned him some major brownie points with the Supernova guys who called him onstage for an encore the next day.

After weeks of going mellow, Dilana Robichaux was back in her form on week nine with Tracy Bonham's *Mother, Mother*. She kicked ass, furiously playing her Flying V, her dreads all over the place, her trademark rasp clearly subdued and instead replaced by some clear vocals. The range transition was impressive too. But not impressive enough for fans to vote for her. So there she was, in the bottom three. So what did she sing to redeem herself? Talking Heads' *Psycho Killer*. She began with an acappella, which was not a whole lot impressive. It slightly got better once the music got going but not enough to sound good.

After three stinkin' performances, Supernova did the most gentlemanly [or politically correct or commercially feasible] thing to do – they saved the two damsels in distress and sent Ryan home. Ryan returned the favour by telling the band they could have made 20 years of great music together but now that he has been axed from the show, he'll go back to being a solo artist and see Supernova on the charts because that's where he's gonna be hanging out [Ryan's words, not mine!].

So, who do you think will be going home on Week Ten? I'm guessing it's going to be Storm who's the weakest among the remaining five. But you never know. After all, it's a reality TV audition and Storm is an interesting person to have on the show for ratings.

- SERAH BASNET

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BOLLYWOOD

Bole to hats off to Vidhu Vinod Chopra and Rajkumar Hirani for making a film that is more than just a rip-roaring comedy. Even more rib-tickling and heart-warming than the prequel *Munnabhai MBBS*, *Lage Raho Munnabhai* makes you laugh, makes you cry and, parallel to all the entertainment, it gives a message that sticks in the mind. To say it in Munnabhai's lingo - it creates "chemical locha" in the brain.

This Sanjay Dutt-Vidya Balan starrer keeps you riveted to the screen from the very opening reels to its conclusion. The most exceptional thing about the film is the way it blends comedy with emotional moments.

Arshad Warsi's impeccable comic timing, coupled with Sanjay Dutt's light-humored slapstick, promises laughs aplenty for the viewers. And there are moments when the duo drives you to tears. For instance, the sequence when Sanjay slaps Arshad and later goes to apologise. Arshad proves in this sequence that he is not just an excellent comedian, but also a deft actor when it comes to serious moments.

Another good thing about the film is that Gandhiji's ideology in it never sounds preachy. The film rather shows its soundness in a practical way. Dilip Prabhavalkar plays Gandhiji's role in the most convincing way. He almost has an



enlightened smile on his face throughout the movie.

Lage Raho Munnabhai doesn't merely end as a Sanjay Dutt film. Although the actor takes to his role like a fish to the water and delivers yet another brilliant performance, ample footage is given to Vidya Balan, Arshad Warsi, Boman Irani and other actors as well.

Vidya Balan looks angelic with her mystifying smile, free-flowing hair and charming persona. Boman Irani is highly credible as a loud-mouthed Punjabi. Jimmy Shergill and Dia Mirza get their moments of limelight. Abhishek Bachchan makes a one-minute cameo.

To sum it up, *Lage Raho Munnabhai* is one of the best movies to have come out of Bollywood this year. The script is exceptionally well written by Hirani and Abhijat Joshi. The background music complements the screenplay and the songs are

not the least intrusive. Rajkumar Hirani's direction yokes together all the elements of movie-making into a cohesive, meaningful and, above all, entertaining package called *Lage Raho Munnabhai*. The film is a top-notch entertainer. There is not a single dull moment in it. A must-watch.

Oscar Academy's library acquires KANK script

Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna [KANK] may have met a mixed response in India but Karan Johar's take on extra-marital relations, continues to make waves on the global arena. After becoming one of the highest Bollywood grossers in the overseas markets, Karan Johar's multi-starrer film has now won an honour from no less than the Oscar's Academy Of Motion Pictures.

Trade sources say that the library of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, also called the Oscar Academy's Margaret Herrick Library, has acquired the script of Karan Johar's KANK for research purposes. The script of KANK would be used for research purposes by students, filmmakers, writers and actors from the world of International cinema, a prestigious honour for the filmmaker.

What makes the honour greater for Karan is the fact that KANK is the second film from the stable of Dharma productions to be acquired by the Academy for research purposes. Earlier, Nikhil Advani's *Kal Ho Na Ho* was acquired by the Oscars Library. In fact, ever since its release, the film has kicked up a heated debate in International cinematic circles with renowned critics the world over describing it as a pathbreaking film on marital relationships to have come out of the stable of Bollywood.

International critics have praised Karan's sensitive handling of the subject of infidelity and extra-marital relationships.

Hollywood-Bollywood Cultural Exchange?



Though one normally would not mention Indian singer Kailash Kher and Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder in a single breath but word has it that the duo would be collaborating on a project for a forthcoming event! The collaboration will entail a live show in New York City at Carnegie Hall where the two of them will pay tribute to late Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. Kher is quoted as saying: "I had received many offers earlier, but since I liked what Eddie had done with Nusrat Saab for the film *Dead Man Walking*, I finally decided to take the plunge."

If Kher and Vedder are planning on jamming together on stage to pay tribute to the late musician, director-choreographer Farah Khan will soon be busy rehearsing with Shakira and getting the latter to shake her hips in Bollywood style for a forthcoming gig in New York.

While Shakira's trademark belly dance will remain, Khan will not only audition some other dancers but also teach Shakira some contemporary Indian dance steps in just three days. Going by the rumours floating in the industry, Shakira may end up returning the favour by doing a special number with Shah Rukh Khan for Farah's forthcoming directorial venture.

Another star on the cultural exchange list is Hollywood actor Penelope Cruz who might come to India in January next year if things go as planned. The Spanish actress will mainly visit Delhi to find out the suitable locations in the city for her next movie, titled *The Princess of Kapurthala*. Also she will finalise then the Indian hero, who will play opposite her.

It will be a film on Javier Moro's novel *India Passion*. The story of the film will revolve around a 17-year-old Spanish Flamenco dancer Anita Delgado, who lands in the midst of a scandal when she agrees to marry an Indian king in 1908. Cruz will play the part of Delgado.

Also adding to the list of half-a-dozen Hollywood films to be shot in India in 2007, which includes Johnny Depp's *Shantaram*, is *The Darjeeling Limited*. Wes Anderson, one of the most unconventional of Hollywood directors, will be shooting the film entirely in India. An eight week schedule, starting in December, means the film will be ready for a fall 2007 release.

According to trade magazine *Variety*, the film focuses on three brothers who take a spiritual trek through India, following the death of their father. It stars Owen Wilson [who co-wrote the script with Anderson and Roman Coppola], Jason Schwartzman and Oscar-winner Adrien Brody. It may be made in about \$40 million, half the budget of an average Hollywood film.

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Take away the grey strands streaking his long hair, it's hard to believe LOU MAJAW is almost sixty. Especially not when he jives with the guitar in hand, as he continues to enthral music lovers with his vocal abilities and antics on stage.

Traveling places and performing to the hilt, North-East India's most famous rock and roll guru is not ready to quit yet and asserts he will be a 'performer' till the very end. When he turns 60 on April 14 next year, he plans to celebrate it by walking from Guwahati to Shillong. At Umiam near Shillong, grand plans are afoot to hold a music festival, a gathering of friends and musicians from all over to play and celebrate his birthday.

Often dubbed as the father of rock and blues music in the country, The Great Society's Lou Majaw was in Gangtok for a day and performed at Little Italy here. PEMA L. SHANGDERPA caught up with him for an exclusive chat.

How did this trip come about?

I was performing at Kalimpong and prior to that in Darjeeling. I was invited to play here in Little Italy by Zimba. Coming to Gangtok is a beautiful experience always. The moment I left Kalimpong for Gangtok there was this beautiful feeling, a kind of relaxed comfort level. I could feel the good vibes even before I entered Gangtok and it continued as I stepped into Little Italy straightway. This was this exact same feeling I had when I first came here 20 years ago.

Which were your last performances before this?

I was in Delhi prior to my tour to this region and also had a couple of shows in the North East. I recently performed in Guwahati and other places in Assam.

What about albums?

They are not actually albums as such. I call them demos. Demo albums from the Great Society. One of them is called *Breakthrough*. The other one is *D.Y.A.O.* [which stands for Dance Your Ass Off], which is actually a kind of spoof. Then after that I came up with a solo which

is called *Forever Young*.

What about the ones to come out?

This will be until next year yeah [laughs]. I am to come out with a much better and perfect album both in terms of performance to production.

Something on the gigs you've got lined up...

After Gangtok, I have to be in Guwahati. From 7 September, I will be in Delhi.

Does music take most of your time... anything else besides music?

For me it is music 24 hours. It can be 10.30 in the night or 5 in the morning. It is fine with Lou Majaw. I'd rather spend my time singing and playing my guitar than sleeping it off. I travel places but I am a bad tourist. I don't spend time to visit tourist spots. I keep myself busy with music.

You have played in Gangtok before...

I was here sometime in the 80's and played at a festival [October] Autumn festival sometime in the evening with The Great Society. It was a beautiful experience then. This place used to be very nice then. I don't know what's happening now. But my experience here

Lou: The Man & His Music



Lou performing at Little Italy

in Little Italy makes it feel and look all's well and nice.

What you've been listening to lately...

Listening to Indian musicians like HFT [High F#%#@ Times]. They are a great bunch of musicians. Frank Zappa and then the other Indian musicians like Hari Prasad Chaurasia.

How did u start and who was your inspiration?

I first started earning from music in 1966. I was in Calcutta then. Though I do not keep a record, it was during the flower power days and a lot of things were happening at that time. I have now overgrown as a flower child. I

met music sort of halfway. I never had a dream like I must play the guitar or I must perform or sing. It just happened. I liked to give each other [music and myself] company and that's what is happening right now as well and we are moving together. Then it moved on from Jim Reeves to Jim Morrison, Abba to Zappa [Frank], Beatles to Bee Gees, Elvis, Cliff Richards, whatever.

I remember a friend had brought a stack of LP records. There was Chuck Berry and I said this is good shit. Of course there was Dylan...and you can say that changed my music direction, it changed my outlook

At this age where does the energy level come from?

It is all but energy outburst. It is out of frustration and restlessness. Just plain frustration. There's other ways of looking at it as well

How long before you say I'm done?

Well hmmm... Until I breathe my last.

On the change in the taste of music of the present generation ...

There's been a whole lot of changes. It's just not in the North east. There were the torch bearers, the soul

searchers, the gospels, the blues, jazz, rock and roll, the disco music and now the hip hop, techno and all that fashionable trendy musicians. Eventually we don't know what else will come.

It is definitely not threatening classic rock or blues and the jazz and it never can. There is no law that says that this kind of music is not good. All we have to realise is the depth, the power of music. They will realise that. Time will tell.

On what music the North East is into now?

There's a variety of music. There are people who like reggae, metal music, jazz. There is no level ground. Not just in the North East but the entire country.

About The Great Society..

The Great Society was formed in the late 70's. We started with AJ, Bert and myself. Three of us. Later Rudy Wallang joined us but this was later and there were endless scores of people who were involved with us.

What do you say about the trend of clubbing drugs and Rock 'n' Roll?

Music itself is a high which is unmatched. If you have music you do not need any more substance. Drugs, sex and Rock 'n' Roll is often associated but they are all together different ball games. People who are not into music still hit drugs or those into music don't touch it.

Message for the youth.....

Hard work, dedication and honesty. And be professional in what you do.

And the road ahead.....

Lou Majaw is 59 years 'young'. Lou Majaw will celebrate his 60th birthday next year by taking a walk from Guwahati to Shillong. It will be a part of my celebrations and on 14 April there will be a music festival at Umiam where all my friends will be. We will all play and celebrate and all the music of Lou Majaw will be performed.

Who do you see among the present lot [band or individual performer] as the Lou Majaw of yesteryears?

At the moment, these people [points to Steve, Sunny, Noel and Chundu of Route 66 performing]. These guys are giving a clean delivery, a very pleasant rendition of music, not noisy.

- continued from page 21

Pang Lhabsol : A Different Take

started and continues. That was about a thousand years back. That is what we call history. A lot can happen in the gap between past and future. The world is divided into developed and the under-developed, the powerful and the not so powerful. The country is divided into Hindus and Muslims, rich and poor and inevitably our state Sikkim or Demazong also has its share of divisions. We talk about unity, brotherhood, equality. But scratch the surface and you still find discrimination in every phase. Like in Sikkim, the people from the plains who've resided in the land for the last many years are classified as 'Indians'. If they are Indians, who are we? During the brotherhood treaty, there

were rules like equal participation, opportunity, no dominance. Quite like an older version of our Constitution.

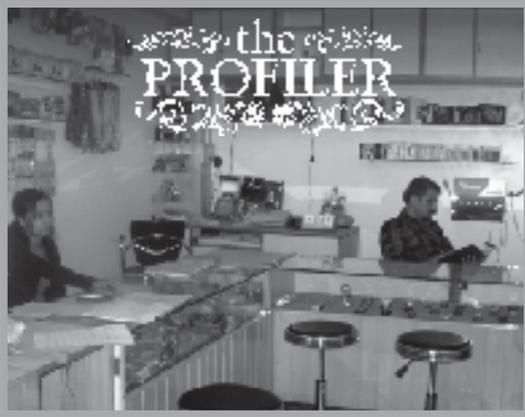
But today, these famous blood brothers can't wait to get at each other's throats when given a chance. Call that cut-throat competition. But who's complaining. Sikkim's the most tranquil state in the country. That counts. "However, when adults come, can youth be far behind?" They are the most conspicuous lot. We are losing touch with our culture, our heritage, our past. Aping the West is the rage. Guess it has something to do with the grass being greener on the other side.

I am not one of those sermonizing types. The ones who consider themselves God's gift to mankind; higher than other forms of life. The line of a famous song says "Practice what you preach", which apparently those next big things to God usually fail to do.

But I think what we need today is awareness. Not in the old tried, tested and failed methods. Awareness about our past, our culture redefined. Somewhere down the line, something got totally wrong and we are what we are today. It's a need to start afresh. Maybe a daunting task, at times nearly impossible, but patience will help I guess.

- HISHEY DOMA is a Std. XII Science student in PNGSSS

MIDWEEK
sikkim.midweek@gmail.com



With mobiles becoming everyone's permanent extra appendage, there are a lot of exclusive mobile shops springing up all over town. This is a relatively new phenomenon, given that the earliest mobile dealers were multi-product electronic goods store. With practically everyone all wired up and wireless as well, and constantly looking for an upgrade, a mobile shop always finds takers.

Subham Enterprises is the latest entrant in the mobile phone business. Located smack in the middle of **M.G. Marg**, near Sikkim Sarda, the shop had a low key but poised opening some time back.

That proprietor Sanjay Malu is himself an avid mobile phone enthusiast becomes readily apparent as he holds fort in the midst of all the latest offerings from the big brand names-Nokia, Samsung, Sony Ericsson, LG, Motorola, et al. He is especially proud of the world's thinnest mobile, the Samsung X820 as well as the Nokia N-series range.

One finds the usual suspects by way of accessories like cabinets, mobile cases, chargers, car chargers, crystal covers for all brands, dongles, batteries, straps, hands free sets, and card readers to name a few.

Hailing from a family long associated with the photography business, it seems only natural that Sanjay's shop should also offer you a quick 1 minute digital passport photo service as well. This combined with his photocopying service, and the prime location, takes his shop beyond being another mobile shop.

QUICK PICKS:

- **Super Screen Guard:** Stick on screen guarder for LCD screens-just peachy for those paranoid about getting their LCD screens nicked or damaged.
- **Mobile Metal Guard:** Stickers in metallic silver hues. Choose a Lacoste, dragon, BMW, Bugs Bunny, Snoopy or a heart to add a nice personalized touch to your mob. Rs.50/-
- **Rhythm light stickers:** These make sure you don't miss your calls by giving you a rhythmic reminder when a call comes. Small but useful, at Rs.30/- apiece.
- **Blinkers:** Straps with Winnie the Pooh, dolphins, fans, torches, stars, pink hearts with blinkers that light up. Perfect as a useful small gift. Rs.20/- each.
- **Mobiles, mobiles and more mobiles!**

What we like: The salespeople do not crowd you, you can browse at leisure and in peace!

SCORCHING THE SHELVES:

the lowdown on new products

GIVEN THAT this is definitely the year of superheroes, we can expect to see a whole host of trademark merchandise hitting the stores. With Krishi a new desi super hero has been born. Superman too has returned to save the world. Where Superman is, can Batman be far behind?

BATMAN'S a real suavely cool guy cos whereas Superman either flies or walks, and Spidey swings over the city, Batman gets to drive the coolest Batmobiles ever! Check out the great **Batman school bag** at the **kids store next to Cloud Nine** (it's called **Mini Me** but not many people know it by name) near Star Cinema.

This bag is a great buy for starry eyed caped hero worshipping young boys. We like it because it comes in a mean black, the perfect colour given the affinity most young boys have with dirt! The classic Batman logo is emblazoned proudly across its face and even the zippers sport the same logo in a neon yellow. We like that it has see through but surprisingly strong side netted pockets, perfect for snugly holding a water bottle.

It's a sturdy and smart bag, easy to wash and drips dry in a jiffy. The stitching is pretty strong too. The bag retails for Rs.700/- Rs.750/- depending on what size you opt for.

WHAT'S ONLY 6.9 mm and making a lot of eyeballs pop? The all new **Ultra edition 6.9 Samsung X820 mobile**. Yes, the world's slimmest phone. Given that Nokia ditched its classic Nokia shape and launched the hugely popular N series range, those in the trade had predicted that Samsung was upto something huge.

Looks like the **Korean chaebol** was upto something huge, only it was minuscule!

The **Samsung X820** is incredibly thin and lightweight. Some people were complaining that it did not feel like a mobile at all but we just love it. It's really sleek and what's more, it is the lean, mean John Abraham himself endorsing it. Perfect fit between the man and mobile, we'd say.

The best part is the reduction in size has not been

achieved by compromising on features. The phone is power packed with ultra features:

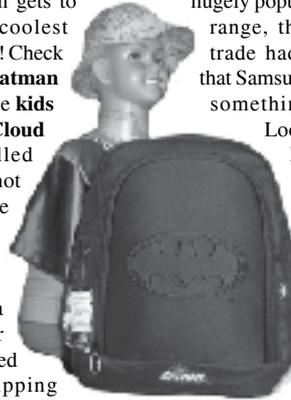
- Ultra Imaging with a 2 megapixel camera and video recorder
- Ultra Display with 262 colour TFT
- Ultra MP3 with 80 MB memory
- Ultra Share direct TV out and document viewer

We checked out the phone in the flesh or rather the Fibreglass Infused Plastic and boy, was it tremendous. The clarity of the display and the sound quality was truly phenomenal for something so thin. The mob did not feel flimsy at all, the features and the free accessories really gave it solid punch.

The phone will set you back by about Rs.15,000/- roughly but you get a whole host of ultra accessories free- 2 batteries, car charger, special battery charging case, battery charger, direct TV out cable and data kit.

Our advice to you is to covet the phone for now but to wait a while for the prices to fall to call it your own. Available in most mobile shops. We checked it out at Subham Enterprises.

- TINA



Q&A

with Ms. Karma Doma,
Health Instructor on the magic of Aloe



So what is this new product you are promoting and why?

It was in October 2005 when I was in Delhi that a friend introduced me to Aloe Vera and Bee Forever living products. As I am in Health & Wellness Industry, I took the training & feel that every human being should be made aware of this product.

Which is?

Aloe Vera is one of the oldest known medicinal plants. The knowledge of the extraordinary healing powers of the fresh Aloe Vera plant has been transmitted all over the world, and today the gel from the plant is extracted and used without losing its potency.

Are you supposed to drink this?

The Aloe Vera gel is fibrous, nutritive and easily digestible in liquid form. Since it is a natural product, its taste and amount of pulp varies due to several factors, i.e. rainfall and geographical conditions but the efficiency of the product does not increase or decrease with these variations.

Why should we try it?

In the present day our bodies are continuously exposed to pollution of various type ranging from passive cigarette smoking to high fat diets, junk food and alarmingly high level of stress. Prolonged exposure to all the above may result in toxins in our stomach & intestines. These toxins block the lining of the intestines thereby reducing the absorption of nutrients in our body. This makes it more necessary to cleanse of all the unnatural toxins and to enhance the absorption and assimilation of nutrients for a healthy living.

You really believe it helps?

The first gulp of Aloe Vera Gel initiates the mission detoxification inside our body which may accelerate the blood circulation and also provide our body with vitamins, minerals, proteins, amino acids and various other nutrients. It is believed that it lets our organ take a cleansing bath from inside.

You are welcome to contact
Ms Karma Doma Gyatso... for all Aloe Vera &
Bee Forever living Products. Call 9832054928 or
email: bgyatso2000@yahoo.com

Rural Management and Development Department Government of Sikkim

Total Sanitation Campaign [TSC]

Total Sanitation Campaign [TSC] is one of the prioritized programme of the Rural Management & Development Department, Government of Sikkim. The programme is presently in progress in all four Districts.

The main objectives of the TSC are here under:

1. To bring about improvement in the quality of life in the rural areas.
2. To accelerate sanitation coverage in rural areas.
3. To generate demand based sanitation facilities through awareness creation and health education.
4. To cover Schools/Aganwadis in rural areas with sanitation facilities and promote hygiene education and sanitation habits among students.
5. To encourage cost effective and appropriate technologies in sanitation.
6. To eliminate open defecation to minimize risk of contamination of drinking water sources and food.
7. To cover dry latrines, to pour flush latrines, and eliminate manual scavenging practice, wherever in existence in rural areas.

The Total Sanitation Campaign [TSC] gives emphasis on your active participation in its implementation process. The Rural Management and Development Department humbly request you to come forward and lend your all out support to make this programme a grand success.

We look forward to your valuable suggestions and participation.

CONTACT PERSONS:

- State Level:** 1. Superintending Engineer [East] 2. Deputy Secretary [Sanitation]
District Level: 1. District Development Officer, Divisional Engineers of South/West/East/North

CMYK



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Looking ahead, NBCC aspires to closely associate itself with its clients to provide high standards of quality, economy and in-time services to their specific needs and leave a lasting impression.



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EST LIKE THAT

by PANKAJ THAPA



CUT THE CRAP

That most of our officials have a fragile ego is a fact well known. But this incident really takes it. During one of the state's grand functions, an officer was waxing eloquent on stage when someone passed him a chit of paper. According to a buzz source, the note asked him to wind up his speech fast as many in the audience were actually dozing off. But, long speeches being the done thing here, the officer continued nevertheless. Anyway, what no one in the audience gauged was just how furious he was about the note. That evening he called up the note-sender and gave him a mouthful of choicest abuses. Both by the way were high ranking officials. Now it was the turn of the other officer to get MAD. So what best way to show his anger? The next morning he resigned from the board of the cultural organization that had organized the function. So who are they? Wouldn't you like to know! But even a *Khatam* column like Buzz has some ethics and I just cannot reveal that.



Buzz

BROTHERS IN ARMS

Did you hear about this ongoing *jhagra* between two of our ministers? Both are up in arms against each other and there is no love lost between these two 'Blood Brothers'. One of the ministers is convinced that the other is printing and circulating slanderous pamphlets about him from the official ministerial office! Some observers claim that they are just being played against each other and are naive enough to fall into the trap. I don't know anything about that. I'm just a rumour tumour that's going to get bigger and bigger, filled with secrets of the bad, bad things that the high and mighty say and do. Which, of course, I will pass on to you dear readers, so we all know *parde ke peche kya hai*

WHERE'S THE PARTY TONIGHT?

Ok this is a real funny one. A couple of weeks back, the top cops of the town decided to have a party, for which they booked a popular nightclub. Dancing continued all night, a little bird tells me, and the one with the most nimble feet and the best moves was as always...you know who. It must have been a purely inside affair [no pun intended] because no wives were spotted. But, here's the hilarious part, having fun and dancing together, unaware of what lay in store, were some of the guys who attempted the daring masked lottery robbery. A few days later, the bonhomie was over as the cops faced the men again - this time in handcuffs. No more dancing in the dark.

'MAATHI KO' OR 'ANTI'?

People are funny. The first question they ask you when you talk about a new paper is whether you are *maathi ko* or *anti*. What the hell is that supposed to mean? I'm surprised the declaration form didn't have a column to tick mark the correct answer! And then there is the well meaning advice. 'Be careful of what you write, *jata teera taali cha, uta nai janu parcha*' or else you're '*Rangpo paar*' etc. Just for the record we'd like to make it clear, we're neither *mathi ko* or *tala ko*. We're proudly going about wearing the badge of being a 'balanced' paper [whatever that means] although many are skeptical about this stance and think it's only a matter of time before we sell out to the highest bidder. When did this town become so cynical? Or maybe that's the only way things are allowed to function here. We will have to wait and watch. But, hey guys, support us by buying the paper so we can just do our job. Which is to bring you the REAL story, whether its *maathi ko* or *tala ko*!

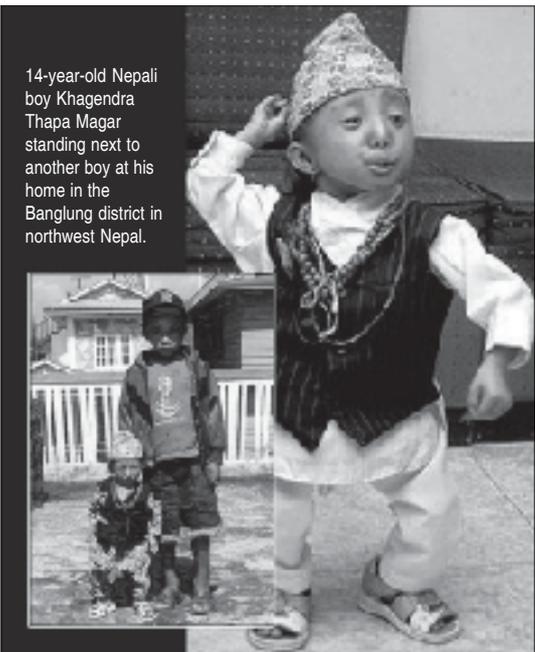
TO THE UNALTERED CHRONICLES

by KARCHOONG DIYALI



LUNCH TIME : A girl takes lunch for her family toiling in the ginger fields in Central Pendum.

Nepal boy claims to be shortest in world



14-year-old Nepali boy Khagendra Thapa Magar standing next to another boy at his home in the Banglung district in northwest Nepal.

KATHMANDU, Nepal: Nepal's shortest boy is waiting for word from the Guinness World Records, where he has applied to be named the shortest in the world, his supporters said last week. Khagendra Thapa Magar, 14, is only 20 inches tall and weighs 10 pounds. According to Min Bahadur Thapa, president of the Khagendra Thapa Magar Foundation, they are expecting to receive a reply from London-based Guinness World Records in the next few days. The foundation was set up to collect funds for the boy. There was no listing on the Guinness World Records' website on a shortest boy category, but Thapa claimed their closest competitor was 25 inches tall. The boy and family members are currently touring south Nepal, seeking support for the foundation.



"the road to excesses leads to the path of wisdom..."
- JIM MORRISON

HEARD ABOUT this 1980's hard rock band Motley Crue's BIOGRAPHY, 'The Dirt', and it's making me feel like such an INADEQUATE human being.. How can I say that I've ever really LIVED when I haven't stolen the clothes from a homeless woman while she was chained to my bed?

How can I say that I've ever really lived when I haven't had sex with 15 women in a 24 hour period? Like I said, I feel so inadequate... It is kind of daunting to read this book and realize just how extreme their lives were. And it's funny, for where most biographies tend to sanitize the subjects past, this book ONLY focusses on the unsanitary bits. And, judging from what I've read so far, there were only unsanitary bits in their lives.

Wow. I'm dumbfounded. I knew that such debauchery took place, but not in such a sustained manner for such a long time. I guess I'm a bit naive. Hhmm..and to deftly move from one topic to the nextdid you read the papers recently? Two things stand out!

FIRSTLY::: a REPORT on animal castration: "It's true that piglets are castrated with NO anesthetic, but researchers haven't yet determined whether the process is PAINFUL," according to Dr.Swamy Reddy , Director of Animal Welfare at the National Livestock Board. Hmm...cutting off an infants testicles without anesthetic, would that be PAINFUL?

I do hereby declare the above referenced quote by Dr.Swamy Reddy to be the STUPIDEST thing that any human being on God's green earth has said in the last...well..7 days!

SECONDLY:::Children fathered by OLDER men run a much higher risk of developing schizophrenia, researchers said on Thursday in a finding that provides strong evidence that MEN, like WOMEN, have a "biological clock" when it COMES to having children.

The STUDY BLOWS A GAPING HOLE in the commonly held belief that while older women run a higher risk of having babies with birth defects, men face no such risk when fathering children even at an advanced age.

Uh-oh...and I'm not getting any younger. Time to make some more babies....FAST!!

Crocodile Hunter Steve Irwin killed



CAIRNS, Australia: Steve Irwin, the hugely popular Australian television personality and environmentalist known as the 'Crocodile Hunter', was killed on 4 September by a stingray while filming an underwater documentary on the Great Barrier Reef. He was 44.

Irwin was killed by a stingray barb to the heart on Batt Reef, off the remote resort town of Port Douglas in northeastern Queensland state. Stingrays have flat bodies and tails with serrated spines, which contain venom and can cause cuts and puncture wounds.

"pls arnge pikp 4 2 ppl
arvng tmrw by rjdb xps."

That's what SMS has done to the English Language, which has yet to invent a word that would describe the mutation of words like "for" into "4" and so on and so forth. Sometimes the cryptic messages make you wonder if one should call for Mr. Langdon. And as if that's not enough ('enuf ') try mixing this new SMS jargon with a healthy dollop of the vernac and you got a spicy mix that's as hard to swallow as it is to comprehend. "wing 4 u at li ka chas" Which for the SMS challenged reads " Waiting for you at Little Italy. Where are you?" Easy? What about this one - "k b 4 6 aune ho" ("What have you decided? Are you coming?") It doesn't help that most of the SMS junkies don't bother with Upper and Lower case letters, nor with punctuation. Maybe too much work for the humble thumb, which has suddenly become the most important digit in your hand. The Thumb Rules, - and sneers at myopic geeks desperately using two thumbs to figure out how to insert a space.

However, some slips of the thumb can have a fatal result as this husband in Goa on a business trip, SMS-ing his wife:



by PANKAJ THAPA

"Having a great time. Wish you were her!" And that's not the least of the hurdles. If you have an ultra sleek cell phone, and a thumb that looks like it's been working on the railroad all day, then chances are you'll probably press a wrong digit (there's 10 of them bleeders to press) and the thumb is only human. The anatomical message you intended for your buddy reaches some matronly mother of 4, mother-in-law of 2. Chaos rules as your eardrums shatter ("Mero mistar le chal payo bhani ta maarchha!") and you reach for a Dettol-dipped Johnson bud. The heights of SMS humour has to be this acquaintance who tried out his brand new Nokia

SMS on his bro-in-law and 4-month pregnant sister. The pending message unfortunately was delivered at 2 am that night. His faithful cell beeped him awake with the "Delivered to Jyoti" message. Yup. My friend woke up the entire eastern Himalayas with his incoherent babbling about a 4-month monstrosity his sister delivered at 2 am. A true story that.

How about another chappie whose well meaning friends edited the name of his wife and replaced it with a "socially active" lady's nickname? Next day, when wifey called, the glamorous name flashed on his bigger-than-others-screen. He answered with a tremulous and hopeful "er...hello? ko bolnu bhako la?". Reality probably hit him harder than the electric chair. It is a sad truth that one can always make out when a man is speaking to his wife, mistress or daughter. He is his most tender and loving with the daughter. His conv. with the mistress you can't hear, because he's gone out onto the freezing balcony, while with the wife it sounds like a telegram. Come the full stop.

The local Kings of Humour have a nice definition of SMS.- Sabji ko Momo and Soup. That would go down well with Single Malt Scotch ! Cheers until next week.

The Week Ahead



Aspects suggest that it is time to let go of a desire or way of being that just doesn't work anymore. This may not be monumental. It could be a particular diet or method of exercise. Letting go is the theme for the week.



You have positive energies in the territories of romance, home, and family. If you need assistance at this time, just ask. Someone will be there to help right away. This is a good time to restore yourself, have a good self-talk about the good things you intend to do.



Your mind races this week and things happen in a hurry. It is possible that great insights may dawn upon you now. But you may be skipping over significant details that need to be carefully planned.



You are doing your very best at maintaining an optimistic and faithful attitude. And you are to be congratulated for doing so this week. One or more others around you are generally irritable and they want you to do something about it.



Oh, whoops! There is a surprise upon you. It comes from the territory that features corporate/joint finances, sexual relations, taxes, accidents or word of someone's crossing. Make changes where it is possible and necessary in these areas.



You will be happier if you release the anger that has occupied your attention for a time. If you haven't resolved it by now, you probably won't. Rehashing isn't useful. Look for something to freshen the spark in your relationship.



Your communications are deep and to the point at this time. There may be a few who don't want to hear what you say. If this occurs it is likely because they wish to deny the truth rather than cope with honesty.



This may be a good time to take a step back from a friendship and let the air clear. Some may want to drop out of participation in organizational activities. Sometimes people and things in our lives just use too much energy for their value.



Your relationship[s] with authority figures and others with whom you work will be particularly good this week. Your optimistic frame of mind will serve to help everyone do a better job and to have more fun while accomplishing it.



In a sense, this is D-Day for Capricorn. Saturn, as your planetary ruler, has been creeping up to an opposition to Neptune all summer. It has been a project to hold both hope and reality in the same space in your mind. But of all the signs, a Capricorn has what it takes to succeed.



Here we are. A truth is right in front of you and there is no way around it. This has been building slowly, so it comes as no real surprise. It is very probably a relief that you don't have to protect yourself from the reality anymore.



The normally placid Fish may be irritable, edgy and nervous this week. News may come your way that causes this upset. We all lean toward preserving security, often into ruts. However, you have a need for change.

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Shri. V. Rama Rao
His Excellency Governor of Sikkim



Dr. Pawan Chamling
Hon'ble Chief Minister &
Hon'ble Minister, Energy & Power

Vision of the State Government to generate 5000 MW of Power by 2012

Ongoing Projects

1. Lachung HEP
2. Rongli HEP
3. Relli Chu HEP
4. Mangley HEP



Upcoming Projects

1. Upper Kimbi HEP
2. Kalej Khola HEP
3. Bermelee Khola HEP
4. Kissim Khola HEP



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