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Dear Readers...  
 Happy Dasain. And on that happy note, we would like to inform you that there will be no edition of NOW! next week owing to the festive occasion of Dasain. We shall, however, return to the newsstands the following week, on Wednesday October 23, 2002. If Dasain favours us well, we might have some surprises for you, so wish us luck even as we join in conveying our best wishes to all for Durga Puja and Dasain...

the NOW! team

**HOMeward BOUND**



**THE MURDER**  
  
**AND AFTER**  
**TURN TO pg 8 FOR DETAILS**

**IN Rajdhani**  
  
**IT'S SHOWTIME FOR SIKKIM GIRLS ON ZEE**

**BIRKA BDR KARKI PREPARES FOR DASAIN**

*The 15 days of Dasain could arguably be the most important fortnight on the calendar of any Nepali. These are the 15 days every Nepali sets aside for family and that special day of Tika when parents bless their children with a generous streak of vermilion and rice grains. We all know that. We also know that at least Gangtok will empty into the busties and neighbouring regions of Kalimpong and Darjeeling as everyone heads for their Mool Ghar to be with the brood. While most of us undertake the relatively comfortable journey of a couple of hours ride at most, the Namleys at times trek two days from the last outpost back home to their respective villages. Their journey makes Dasain even more eventful. NOW! chats up Birka Bahadur Karki, a Namley from Nepal and tries to understand what Dasain means for him. Birka Dai is frank and forthcoming. Dasain means everything to him...*  
**TURN TO pg 12 FOR DETAILS**

**“Sikkim will decide how naughty the humour gets”**  
**AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH CHELSEA PLUMLEY ON pg 7**

## CONFUSING BANDH

a NOW REPORT

**GANGTOK:** Although there were no ugly confrontations, the 72-hr bandh called by the Kalimpong unit of GNLF starting on the evening of October 3, managed to throw vehicular traffic between Sikkim and Siliguri off gear. Although DGP, Sikkim Police, RK Handa, convinced GNLF's Kalimpong chief, Dawa Pakhrin to allow Sikkim vehicles to ply on National Highway 31-A, there were incidents when the same were turned back.

Some vehicles did manage to reach Siliguri on the night of October 4 following the parleys between the DGP and Mr. Pakhrin. The next day, however, while some vehicles made it through, others were not as lucky and were turned back from two points - Kali Jhora and Labar Bhotay.

On October 6, the day of the slain GNLF leader's funeral, there was vehicular movement on the highway but SNT buses and trucks and other passenger service vehicles did not ply in order to avoid any untoward incidents given the emotional procession they would have crossed at Labar Bhotay near Melli, the cremation spot for Kalimpong's Hindus.

Traffic on the highway returned to normal on October 7.

## THE BANGLA FLAVOUR OF SIKKIM'S DASAIN

a NOW REPORT

**GANGTOK:** Every year, as Gangtok prepares for the Durga Puja, in one corner of the town, a group of artisans work tirelessly round the clock to erect the only Bengali pandal in the State.

While many local Durga Puja pandals are coming up in the town, this particular pandal is an exception. It is one of the oldest and the only pandal set up by the Bengali community based in Gangtok.

The pandal is set up by the Sarbajanin Durga Puja Committee (SDPC) and is in its 29<sup>th</sup> Durga Puja of uninterrupted display. The elaborately done-up pandal, constructed at the Community Hall premises here adds the Bangla flavour to Sikkim's celebration of Dasain.

The construction of the pandal has already begun and will be ready just in time for Maha Shashthi on October 11. The chief artisan is Dipendra Nath Burman of the Jai Guru Decorators in Siliguri, who have been involved in the construction of Sikkim's Bengali pandal for the past 14 years. He is being assisted by 8 people. Mr. Burman oversees every detail, from the pillars to the arches and the Bengali "cultural"



WORK IN PROGRESS: Artisans race to complete Sikkim's only Bengali Durga Puja pandal at Community Hall, Gangtok. a NOW! pic

items on the stage. The Pujas are conducted by Bengali priests.

The Durga Puja celebrations here at the SDPC pandal commence on Maha Shashthi on October 11, with the *kalprambha* initiation in the morning and *bodhan* (invocation) in the evening. Pujas will be held through the Maha Saptami, the Maha Ashtami and the Maha Navami.

On Dashami, the Dashami Puja is held in the morning, followed by the *Sindur Khela* (a symbolic ritual where married women smear *sindur* on each other's forehead), which gives a first-hand glimpse of the Bengali culture here in the State.

The State's lone Rajya Sabha MP, PT Gyamtso, is the honorary president of the SDPC.

## MELLI'S RAGE CLAIMS ONE

a NOW REPORT

**MELLI:** On September 24 angry customers gathered outside Melli Telephone Exchange. The public was reportedly furious with poor telecom facilities there. When the AE (T) of BSNL reached the spot, the crowd got even more agitated and demanded that GM (T) be present. Matters cooled down only when telecom services were restored.

Violence seems to come easily to Melli as a resident Chandra Bahadur Rai realised to his peril. Official sources reveal that on October 2, Kulman and Kailash Rai of Bikmat, entered Mr. Rai's house and started beating him up.

The attack proved fatal and the victim succumbed to his injuries the next day. What has baffled the cops here is that there was no apparent reason to prompt the attack.

The accused tried to flee the area, but were nabbed the next day from the Maupur area.

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## Leprosy eradication by 2004

### a NOW REPORT

**GANGTOK:** The fourth and last Modified Leprosy Elimination Programme (MLEC) was launched throughout the State at a function here at the health secretariat on October 8:

The main aim of this campaign is to help create widespread awareness on Leprosy and its early detection and prevention.

In her welcome address, Dr. C Zangmo, programme officer, MLEC, said that the objective was to eliminate Leprosy by the year 2004 and the State Leprosy Society has launched a number of information, education and communication (IEC) activities at the District as well as the State level. She also said that the support of the local NGOs will be taken to make this campaign a success.

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### BEFORE THE LD. OATH COMMISSIONER EAST SIKKIM AT GANGTOK AFFIDAVIT

Whereas I, **Miss Tenzing Kipa Bhutia**, daughter of Mr. Chotim Norbu Bhutia, age about 32 years, by faith - Buddhist, by occupation - Government Employee, resident of Singtam P.O. and P.S. Singtam, East Sikkim, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as under:-

My correct and full name is MISS TENZING KIPA BHUTIA as recorded in my Schedule Tribe Certificate and other document, but I am also known as MISS TENZING KIPA as recorded in my Academic Certificate, but both the names are of the same person i.e. Myself.

Both the names i.e. MR. CHOTIM NORBU BHUTIA as recorded in my Schedule Tribe Certificate and other document and MR. CHULTRIM NORBU as recorded in my Academic Certificates are the names of the same person i.e. my natural father.

I do hereby verify and declare that what I have stated above is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

I have signed this Affidavit at Gangtok, East Sikkim on this 4th day of Oct. 2002.

sd/- Deponent

sd/-; Identifier, Wangchuk Bhutia, Nam Nang, Gangtok

sd/-; Ajay Rathi, Oath Commissioner, Sikkim

## *Eight Years of Pro-Poor Governance*

The Sikkim Democratic Front Government completes 8 years in governance on October 11, 2002. During these eventful years the present ruling Government spared no effort to bring about an all-round political, social and economic development of Sikkim laying particular emphasis on improving the lot of the underprivileged and vulnerable sections of our society by initiating a number of poverty alleviation and welfare schemes. In fact, the Chief Minister of Sikkim, Pawan Chamling, has said that his government's dream is to see that every citizen of his state gets a roof over his or her head, a square meal and basic amenities like education, health including social justice without any fear of favour. Chamling admits that the path is difficult and work is hard but adds that we should be determined to march on, hand in hand, with the rest of the country, and make Sikkim a peaceful, poverty and illiteracy free and model state in the country.

It is indeed a matter of great satisfaction for the SDF government that it has succeeded in achieving these cherished objectives in the last eight years. True to its promise and people's aspirations, this government has been able to bring about the much-needed fundamental shift in the style of governance during this period. The SDF government has taken multifarious measures to restore the faith of the Sikkimese people in the democratic governance. It has brought development process back on rails with its pro-poor schemes and successfully covered vast multitudes of our society with the development process.

Issued by

Department of Information & Public Relations

Government of Sikkim

## Gubernatorial goodbyes to the "Island of peace"



### a NOW REPORT

**GANGTOK:** The outgoing governor, Kidar Nath Sahani, has described Sikkim as "an island of peace" and the people as "most cultured and simple and gentle."

Addressing a gathering of media persons at the Press Club of Sikkim here on October 3, Mr. Sahani said that Sikkim was rich in natural resources and there was tremendous scope for further development and progress.

He said that plenty of Central assistance was coming to the State and it has achieved remarkable progress in every field, but there was plenty to be done as far as all round development of the State is concerned. "This depends upon the elected representatives and the bureaucrats to push forward the pace of development," he said.

In this context, Mr. Sahani said that the responsibility of the Press was manifold, as it is the Fourth pillar of democracy.

"The responsibility of the press is not only praising the government but

also to point out the drawbacks and create public opinion on basic issues. The Press in Sikkim has to develop itself in this direction," he said.

Mr. Sahani also said that the institution of Panchayati Raj has taken deep roots in Sikkim. The Press should play a positive role in creating awareness in the Panchayats in the process of making the Sikkim one of the most developed States in the country, the Governor said.

The Governor said that his stay in Sikkim for about sixteen months has been very "happy and fruitful." He said that the love and affection that he got from the people of Sikkim would be his most valuable asset.

He described his relation with the Press in the State as "very informal" right from the day he took the oath as the Governor.

Mr. Sahani said that his relation with the chief minister, Pawan Chamling has been "very cordial" and the various speculations about the soured relationship between the two appearing in some section of the media was "far from reality".

## ELECTION COMMISSION TURNS DOWN CPI (M) COMPLAINTS OF INTIMIDATION

# ASSAULT MAYBE, INTIMIDATION DEFINITELY NOT

### a NOW REPORT

**GANGTOK:** The State Election Commissioner, DK Gazmer revealed that the State Election Commission has decided not to postpone elections at Gelling Samsing Zilla Panchayat and Gelling Ward Panchayat.

The fate of panchayat elections in the said constituency had hung on a balance following complaints filed with the SEC by Punya Koirala, secretariat member, CPI (M), State Unit, that CPI (M) party's candidates, Umesh Bharati and

Purna Dhakal, had not been allowed to contest in the Panchayat elections.

According to Mr. Koirala, the two candidates along with Anjan Upadhaya, another member of CPI (M), had been assaulted by alleged SDF party supporters and were thus prevented from filing their nominations for the said elections.

Mr. Gazmer, while admitting that the complainants may have been assaulted, told NOW! that there was no evidence to suggest that the assault was politically motivated. "They did not even ask for police escort to help them file their nomination papers," he added. If

they had done so and had the police denied such help then the Election Commission could have looked into their complaint more seriously, he said. As things stand, the episode is being seen as one of law and order and not of political intimidation.

Another factor which went against the complainants was the timing. "They approached us a day after the last date for filing of nomination papers and it was too late. Had they come to our office the same day, the story would have been different," Mr. Gazmer said.

He, however, revealed that the case is still under investigation by the Police.

## Sports & Youth Affairs not to blame for unsporting activities of SAI

### by TINA RAI

**GANGTOK:** Following complaints regarding alleged misadministration of SAI Training Centre established at Namchi in 2000, NOW! decided to get some clarifications.

The said letter accused Shanti Singh, the Coordinator-cum-coach, of the Centre of being guilty of taking bribes to ensure recruitment of candidates at the centre. The letter even questioned the motive behind the Department of Sports & Youth Affairs opting to remain a silent bystander.

When contacted, Karma

Yougyal, Deputy Director (Namchi), told NOW! that he had also "heard" of the going-ons at the SAI Training Centre and had already informed his Secretary of this particular case.

Secretary, Sonam Gyamtso, told NOW! that when the allegations were first voiced to him some time back, he had written to the SAI Director, Kolkata, Dr. G Kishore, asking him to visit Namchi and investigate the matter for himself.

The Director was scheduled to visit Sikkim in September to look into the matter but could reportedly not do so due to ill health.

Mr. Gyamtso further informed

NOW! that the administration of the said Centre lay "solely in the hands of SAI".

"The Department has done its duties by informing the SAI Director in-charge of the case and has even asked the Coordinator to be replaced," the Secretary said.

"Our Department is not to be blamed at all. If there is any guilty party here, it is SAI," said Mr. Gyamtso, "The ball is in their court. We are nothing but watch dogs," added his Deputy Director, Mr. Yougyal.

When NOW! tried to contact Mr. Singh it was learnt that he had left for Kolkata on "official" business.

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## ON TURNING EIGHT

The Sikkim Democratic Front should count itself lucky. It completes eight years in continuous power with a clean sweep of the panchayats and no visible signs of rebellion in the ranks. Of course, there will always be the odd instance of a disgruntled leader blowing off some steam in an embarrassing manner, but the SDF, by and large, has had a smooth run thus far. Except the near successful overthrow bid in the wake of the Employment Exchange Act extension fiasco in 1997, the party has not really hit any stumbling blocks as yet. There may have been many Intra-party differences, but that's for the party bosses to know and for them to resolve. On the surface, SDF appears a cohesive unit with sharp political manoeuvring skills and strong survival instincts. It boasts a reasonably presentable track-record of achievements and the Sikkimese people seem in no real hurry to take to the streets in protest. In short, the State is at peace with its leaders.

It's for these very reasons that the present government cannot afford to get complacent. Even Bhandari could pull off a continuous stretch of eight years when he did not have a serious political exigency to tackle. Uneventful times, because they demand much fewer political compromises, are times of real development in a democracy. These are the brief periods (and SDF is lucky it has eight years) of political inertia which lend themselves best to some real governance. Strong decisions, urgent for Sikkim after 25 years of chalta-hai administration, can be taken and pulled off. The people have reiterated their faith in the government repeatedly and soon will come the time of taking account. For the present Government, the cushion of blaming all failures to the policy decisions of the past regime no longer exists. After eight years, it is itself the past regime now. Needless to add, it also lacks the public sympathy which a government constantly ambushed on all sides could evoke. Now there is no one left to blame. To add in the same breath, it is easy to turn complacent when no watchdogs exist. The Opposition is too ensnared in its own negotiations for survival and the public in Sikkim was never vocally observant. So, the onus now lies on the powers-that-be to themselves perform, watch and reprimand. Accolades can be cheaply purchased, but criticisms are so hard to come by that they should actually be encouraged. The best present that the SDF Government could give itself on October 11, would be an Ombudsman - an in-house critic who pulls no punches and minces no words. The Sikkimese public might not be given to action, but they surely observe. They have placed their futures in the hands of the present government and because they have not interfered much with the delivery process, they deserve results. The SDF regime owes it to them for the past eight years in the saddle. It needs to justify the confidence placed with it if it has any aspirations of getting another run of five years in two years time.

### SIKKIM ON TELLY

It was interesting reading about Lotto's first Sikkimese face - Sinora - in your last issue, but then it was NOW! that was very vocal from the very beginning about the need to include the Sikkim factor. We hope the girls will do us proud. Here's wishing them the very best of luck!  
C. Gurung, Singtam

### WHAT KIND OF LAMA?

The capers of the lottery lama made interesting reading. It was a real eye opener. One would expect monks to spread truth and compassion, not try their hand at cheating others and in the process dragging the reputation of the religious community through mud. The Chorten authorities have taken the right stand in condemning the action of the lottery lama and asking

Readers are invited to share their views, opinions and reactions to news-items carried in NOW! The letters may be edited for language and content and the name of the writer withheld on request. Personal attacks will not be carried, but letters raising pertinent issues will be shared with readers. Please mail all feedback to NOW, Gairi Gaon, Tadong, Gangtok East Sikkim. email: sikkimnow@rediffmail.com

### LETTERS

the authorities to proceed as per the norms. Cheating does not prosper in any garb.

Passang Tshering, Gangtok

### NO HARD FEELINGS

Sikkim Rehabilitation Centre has been inaugurated with much hope and promises and the blessings and good wishes of many eminent individuals and organizations and the general public. We do hope and pray that it will live up to its expectations and that all people concerned running it will grow rich in experience and skills.

People come to Rehab Centre with one last hope of recovery. The need for abundant hope, patience and compassion are the least expected elixirs here.



## NOW, FOR SOME PEACE PLEASE

The first steps towards peace in the Kashmir Valley should not be allowed to go to waste. The casting of ballots in the strife-ridden state have been completed and though there have been incidents of violence the security forces have managed to keep it under reasonable control. Their greatest achievement is they have not buckled under the combined pressures brought on by the intense international focus on the democratic process in state and the Pakistani designs to disrupt the process in a major way.

The people by coming out in large numbers have rebuffed the indigenous political patrons of militancy, represented chiefly by Hurriyat Conference. It may be recalled that the Hurriyat Conference had issued a boycott call for the polls for fear that a successful poll would sanctify the state's accession to India.

The people of Kashmir have sent out a strong message to the agents of secession and diabolical cross-border designs with their credible public mobilization and participation under extraordinary circumstances that their idea of solution to the Kashmir problem is not

## DEEP FOCUS

by RANJIT SINGH

needed nor solicited. They have signalled the death knell to "militant nationalism".

There have been some noises that the defeat of the National Conference in the elections would further enhance India's position that the elections were free and fair. The official assessment of South Block is that the results would not be too encouraging for the National Conference which supports the NDA government in the centre. Irrespective of which party comes to power, the installation of a popular government will see the levels of discontent fall and Pakistan vanish as a factor in the state. But India's commitment to dialogue should remain constant.

Another shot in the arm for the Indian Government in the efforts to project that the elections in Kashmir were free and fair has come from the US. The US had told Islamabad that the only way for

early resumption of dialogue between Pakistan and India would be the former's acceptance of the results of elections in Jammu and Kashmir. The acceptance of the results would be the precondition for the future engagement of US in the Kashmir dispute.

Whether the US is accepted as a mediator by India in the Kashmir dispute is another question and does not seem likely at present. What is of significance is that the acceptance of the election results by Pakistan would pave the way for dialogue between the two countries. This would greatly reduce tensions of war or whatever limited strike some people are thinking about especially in the wake of the desecration of the Swaminarayan Temple in Gandhinagar.

The badly mauled terrorist camp may well now attempt to unleash a prolonged spell of violence in the aftermath of by and large successful polling in the state. We can only hope that the process initiated by a free poll reaches its logical conclusion with the formation of a truly representative government in the Valley with the dissipation and eventually rejection of "militant nationalism".

I must acknowledge that the most realistic offer to provide convenient help to the Sikkimese people came from Pastor Joseph Tamang of Baptist Church of Sikkim in the form of Sikkim Rehabilitation Centre and a Counselling Centre at his residence at Nimtar and Development Area respectively.

The other significant help came from Secretary Health, Dr. TR Gyatso by providing the Detoxification facilities at the Singtam Hospital. Dr. PM Pradhan, CMO, Singtam Hospital has been instrumental in this regard. There are scores of other enthusiastic help to be tapped from several other individuals and institutions.

Mr. Rajen Dewan, former Programme Director, please note that this title is not to be misinterpreted with similar designation of authorities, left the centre unceremoniously,

as apparently the situation became very incompatible, on account of one story which appeared in your esteemed paper in good faith.

I do not wish to blame anybody for this, as it was only a matter of instinctive perception, interpretation and reaction of some individuals, which obviously was not palatable to people in general.

Once again I would like to repeat that we wish Sikkim Rehabilitation Centre the very best so it may become a source of hope and recovery to many.

And we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to your paper NOW for all its concern.

PJ Pradhan

### CRAMPED SCHOOLS

The problem of the students and parents of Joybells school, Tadong has been solved for now. But the whole issue raises many other questions. Schools have sprung up everywhere like mushrooms. Anyone with two small

rooms thinks they can open up a school. Unqualified teachers, cramped quarters, and no place to play - is this the kind of education we want for our children.

The government should be very strict in giving out licenses for schools. It is not a shop, we're talking about but the future of our children.

Radha Rai, Sairi.

### VIVA DEEPA

I found your story on cerebral palsy very interesting. So often we think that if we look the other way the problem will just go away. A special child is the responsibility of the whole society and not just of the biological parents. And as such a collective effort is needed to provide relief and support to these children.

Deepa's case demonstrates that if cerebral palsy is diagnosed early, and proper therapy and corrective measures taken a child can be helped to lead a 'normal' life.

Sonam Doma, Gangtok

# A WONDERFUL EVENING WITH A LOT OF LAUGHTER AND MAYBE SOME TEARS

Lets face it, in the West (Down Under actually, since she hails from Australia) Chelsea Plumley is a popular cabaret artist. She is, however, cautious of using the term in an India which has grown up associating cabaret with the striptease acts of Helens and Bindus of the world. The word "cabaret" actually signifies a restaurant or a cafe with live entertainment. Over the years, the name became associated with the performers at such restaurants and cafes. As a performing art, cabaret is a performance where the artist on stage takes the audience through a journey. It could be comic, it could be melodramatic, but never ever stripping. Guess it will take time for us to accept cabaret for what it really means, so Chelsea comes to India just as an entertainer. "Yes, I am cautious about using the term cabaret here. People start thinking that they can pinch bottoms at the show then," she said (surely with a wink) over the phone from Bangalore, where her show was a big success. **NOW!** managed an **exclusive interview** with the star who will perform in Gangtok on October 21. Excerpts:

**Welcome to India. Let's hear your first impressions of the place.**

I've been here only a couple of days and this is my first visit, but from what I have seen so far, I am smitten. It's absolutely wonderful. I'm lucky to be staying at the Leela. The weather has been fantastic and the people are simply wonderful. They are so helpful and caring. It's simply fantastic.

**Know anything about Sikkim?**

Actually only from Phil (Phil Bathols, Sikkim's Australian Jamai and also the producer of the show). He first told me about the setting up of my concerts in India and also my show in Gangtok. He sent me a list of websites that I could find information on Sikkim and since then I have been doing a lot of reading on Sikkim. Also, from the emails from Phil I learnt that Sikkim was a simply amazing place with wonderful scenery and people. I am actually looking forward to the change from performing in big cities to a smaller town. Yes, I am actually looking forward to being there.

**You describe your shows as music accompanied by your "naughty" sense of humour. What's this naughtiness? How naughty can we expect you to get in Sikkim?**

I have a very mischievous sense of humour in general. As for the shows, how naughty the humour gets depends on the audience. You see I perform a lot for corporate crowds and politicians and they can be very conservative about humour so the humour gets toned down accordingly. I judge the audience and then see far I can go. I love a good joke and I get my sense of humour from my father. I believe there is nothing like laughing in this world.

**You are a graduate from the Western Australia Academy of Performing Arts. What did you specialise in?**



I did my Bachelor of Arts in musical theatre. The three years I spent there were wonderful. Lot of hard work definitely, but it was for something that I loved and made my career.

**Being a performer, I am sure you went through your days**

**of struggle. Tell us about those days.**

Yes, it's a misconception that people become stars overnight. The bright lights that you see sometimes come at the end of years of very hard struggle. I, for example, have been performing since I was five. I then did several musicals through school, did my graduation from WAAPA and had performed all over Australia, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong for eight years before the first big success. The days of struggle were a wonderful experience. In this line, specially in the beginning you sometimes hit dry spells when you go months without any work. Fortunately, I also play the piano and versatility helps in this trade. So, when I was not doing a concert or a play, I would play the piano. Also, I love teaching and do at times take masters classes and share my experiences of having performed abroad. All this helps.

**Your performances are peppered with a lot of family anecdotes. What was your childhood like?**

Childhood was fantastic. I'm from a very big family. OK, maybe not very big by Indian standards, but I was the eldest of five children. I was very passionate about music since childhood and it was more than just a hobby. When I was 14, my parents divorced. Those couple of years were difficult, but I learnt a lot from them. I still love my father though. Then, before I knew it, I had finished high school and then there was WAAPA and my career. I guess it is important to have a roller-coaster side to your life.

**At present you are playing Rizzo in the Grease musical touring Australia. What's that been like?**

It is exciting because Grease was my favourite musical growing up. John Travolta and Olivia Newton John became icons at the time because of the movie version. And, even as a kid, my favourite role was that of Rizzo, the bad girl. So, when I auditioned for the role and bagged it, it was a childhood dream come true. Also, the show offered the option to travel all over Australia. Of course, I put in a lot of hard work into my role. It's after all, more than just singing and am happy that my role was liked by all the critics.

*(The critics incidentally have singled out Chelsea's portrayal of Rizzo as "stunning" - ed)*

**Finally about Sikkim. What can the people planning to make it for show expect?**

It's going to be a wonderful evening of different styles of music. There will be something for everyone. I am accompanied by a brilliant pianist Denis Follington. There will be some pop, some musical theatre, some jazz. A lot of different styles. There will be a lot of humour, lot of laughs, some tears maybe. It is going to be a wonderful sophisticated evening. A very relaxed evening as well. I have heard so many praises for Sikkim and read such good things about the people and the place, that I am really looking forward to performing there.

**So are we Chelsea, so are we...**

Sikkim, in terms of just physical resources alone, has plenty to offer. But these resources have to be developed properly so that maximum benefit can be derived from them. Development will have to be a planned and conscious effort so that while the resources are utilized, they are simultaneously preserved for future use.

This is where the HR or the Human Resource factor comes into play. Two countries that have more or less the same natural environments differ mainly in the quality of their human resources. While much stress is placed on physical or 'hard' quality, which literally means conformance to standards, 'soft' quality or the quality of the human resource acquires growing importance in the face of increasingly rapid global changes.

More than a quarter of international trade today is in services, in what is termed 'invisible' trade - trade by way of banking and financial transactions, tourism, copyrights and trademarks and the like, a case in point being Switzerland. Production, marketing, operations and all other functions that are involved in the creation of the tourism product - tangible goods and intangible services-

## HR Challenges for the Tourism industry

**TENZIN C. TASHI on the need for Sikkim to equip its human resource better to be able to deliver the service that every discerning traveller will demand of the State...**

would not be possible without the HR factor.

Interestingly, the HR needs in the tourism industry will be inextricably linked with the way the sector evolves. Therefore it becomes necessary to be able to not only visualize the emerging influences that will shape the tourism industry but to make plans to meet the new HR needs that these will throw up.

Technological advancements have not only led to the rapid dissemination of information worldwide, but are also encompassing all spheres of human activity. Today's tourists can scour the Internet for destinations and book their rooms with just a click of their mouse. Training needs of HR thus become a

continuous process entailing continuous upgradation of skills as well as refresher training. But sadly, the WTO revealed that one-third of the world's population have no access to new technology in which case it becomes difficult to acquire the competitive edge that technology entails. Have you realized the increasing use of and dependence on the Net by those in the tourism industry even in Sikkim? The Net is a great leveller that way.

Change will continue to be the only constant thing. Teaching people how to adapt to change in order to survive will have to be the predominant focus of tourism education.

Darwin's theory of evolution is still relevant, only the jungles have changed to concrete ones. While technology is a tool of empowerment, people will have to comprehend its power and learn how to use this powerful tool to their advantage. When opportunity does the proverbial knocking, people have to know what to do with that opportunity, how to translate it into gains.

HR development strategy would have to include skill training that can respond to change quickly. Solitary skills are losing their relevance in an increasingly global and networked world, multi-disciplinary skills that cut across functions are the order of the day. It is a fact that the first reaction to any crisis, 9/11 for instance, is to cut jobs. What kind of jobs? Those that involve single skills that are not critical. Organisations retain multi-skilled employees to reduce costs so multiple skills are, in effect, a harbinger of job security as well.

Access to C&S television has made the consumer more discerning about the quality of the tourism product, their expectations have also increased and become holistic in approach. The new age traveller has been de-

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# THE MURDER & AFTER

**AMITAVA BANERJEE reports on the events that followed the murder of GNLF leader, CK Pradhan in Kalimpong...**

**DARJEELING:**

The life of one of the most flamboyant Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) leaders, CK Pradhan, was snuffed out on the 3rd October 2002, when he was shot in broad daylight from the back while he was walking down RC Mintry Road in Kalimpong at around 2:10 pm last Thursday. He was immediately rushed to the Kalimpong Sub Divisional Hospital where he was declared dead.

According to a hospital source a single bullet was found in his body during post mortem. His dead body was later taken to his residence, where thousands turned up to pay their last respects. Immediately after this news broke out in Kalimpong shopkeepers began downing their shutters. An angry mob is even reported to have pelted stones at a few cars. The situation was brought under control by the Police force.

Dawa Pakhrin, President, Kalimpong GNLF Branch Committee, vehemently condemned the murder and demanded the immediate arrest of the culprit. The GNLF Kalimpong Branch Committee called for a 72 hour Kalimpong Bandh starting from 6:00 pm Thursday evening. The Darjeeling GNLF Branch Committee called for an emergency meeting.

"We condemn this dastardly killing, even though we had some political differences and demand for immediate arrest of the culprits. Owing to the Pujas at hand and the rush of tourists, we have called a token one-day 24 hour strike for Friday in Darjeeling," said Deepak Gurung, GNLF Darjeeling Branch Committee, President.

CK was incidentally GNLF supremo, Subash Ghising's second-in-command during the GNLF agitation of the eighties. Things took a wrong turn when CK fell out of Ghising's good books after an assassination bid on Ghising on February 10, 2001 at Saath Ghoomti in the Kurseong Sub-Division. CK was alleged to be a party to the conspiracy.

From that time began the gradual cornering of Pradhan. First he was removed from the presidentship of the Kalimpong GNLF Branch Committee in the first week of April 2001 and replaced by Dawa Pakhrin. Next he was removed from the post of Councillor-in-charge of Health and given the portfolio of Backward Class Welfare on the February 5, 2002. The slain leader, however, still had a large following in Kalimpong but had started maintaining a very low profile of late. This flamboyant leader in his mid-fifties who used to sport long hair, wear earrings, loved to be in shorts and was a person who used to socialize a lot, visiting people during marriages, death and any social gatherings decided to take the back seat. Though obviously demoralized, he did not ever comment against the party or oppose it.

CK also had a lot of influence on the Kalimpong Municipality. In the last week of May 2001, Maximus Kalikotey who was at that time the Vice-Chairman of Kalimpong Municipality and a CK loyalist called for a vote of no confidence against the Chairman Karna Hung Subba. 13 members supported Subba out of 23 (all GNLF) and Kalikotey became the Chairman. Barely a day after CK was removed from Health Department, Karna Hung Subba moved a vote of no confidence motion against Kalikotey who resigned under party pressure on February 26. Subba regained his Chair.

Always mired in controversy, CK had many differences with the Chairman. He had, for example, opposed the 6th Schedule issue that the Chairman and some DGHC Councillors were harping on. He said that he would not settle for anything less than "Gorkhaland." He also opposed idol worship, clearly contradicting Ghising's favourite pujas including the 18 hand Durga, of which the Chairman is an ardent devotee.

CK is the second sitting DGHC Councillor to be mur-



CK's body prepared for the final respects (left) and the mammoth procession which accompanied his last journey to Laborbhotey, Melli (above)

However Subash Ghising, DGHC Chairman did not attend the funeral but had sent an emissary with a condolence note. The Kalimpong hills echoed with "Long Live CK Pradhan" "As long as the GNLF flag is flown in the hills we will remember you" as thousands of mourners joined the funeral procession, sporting black badges of protest and carrying black flags.

Life came to a standstill in this sleepy hamlet as the people cried silently seeing off the most popular and flamboyant leader of Kalimpong on his last journey. Emotions could not be checked and 70 year old Dambar Thami wiping his tears said, "Once, when I had no money to fend for my family, CK Pradhan had taken off his gold ring from his finger, given it to me and asked me to sustain my family by selling it."

There was even a local resident working in Murshidabad who had come all the way "to see his beloved Daju (Elder Brother)." Thousands accompanied the funeral procession which passed through Dal Bahadur Giri Path, 10th Mile, R.C. Mintry Road, Wangdee Road, Motor Stand, D.S. Gurung Road upto Novelty Cinema Hall, on foot.

"Teesta Rangeel Sukhdai Na, Gorkha Kahiley Jhukdai Na (Neither will the Teesta and the Rangeel Rivers dry nor will the Gorkha ever stop down)" expressed the feelings of the mourners.

The mourners also demanded a CBI enquiry on the murder of Pradhan and chanted anti-administration slogans. Some 300 cars and 150 bikes escorted the funeral procession to Labarbotey in Melli on the banks of the river Teesta, 17 kms from Kalimpong. Kalimpong was enveloped in tight security with a contingent of Rapid Action Force brought in from Raiganj and Special Combat Force of the Darjeeling Police. Though the atmosphere was highly charged police had a tight control over the situation and no untoward incident occurred. The last rites were performed in the picturesque banks of the river Teesta with the hills in the backdrop, the thing that CK cherished the most.

The massive funeral passing through the NH31A to Melli, caused a traffic jam of the vehicles plying to and fro from Sikkim. Some of the stranded tourists in Kalimpong were provided an escort by the Police upto Chittrey, the junction of Kalimpong Road and NH31 from where they managed vehicles to Siliguri.

Meanwhile, in Darjeeling 5 drunken youth claiming to be from Kalimpong began a drunken brawl at the vegetable market at Chowk Bazar, Darjeeling at around 2 pm on the day of the funeral. They demanded that all the shops be closed as it was the funeral day of the murdered GNLF leader. They even beat up two shop keepers Sujit Singh and Ajit Singh.

The hills were already under a grip of tension owing to Pradhan's murder and when Darjeeling remained open on the funeral day even as Kalimpong was on strike, the news (rumour) that some CK loyalists had come to Darjeeling to enforce a bandh spread like wild fire. Shop keepers hurriedly began downing their shutters. A near stampede situation arose, as the main market was packed with puja shoppers, mainly women and children. People ran looking for safe shelters.

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# THE LHAMU'S COME TO TOWN



Tsewang Dolma works her cure (above) after the deity who gives her the power to heal has possessed her body following an intricate ritual of prayers (right). pix: Guru TL



## by SARIKHA ATREYA

**GANGTOK:** They are queuing up in hundreds at the 5th Mile residence of the Ladakhi family. Some have waited patiently for close to two hours just to be treated by a lady in the most unusual manner.

The lady in question is a "Lhamu" or the one with the Gods, who has the strangest gift of treating all your ailments using methods that would certainly baffle medical science and prompt the disbelief of skeptics.

Tsewang Dolma, the Lhamu who has come all the way from Ladakh, has been treating people here using her special gift. She sucks out the bad phlegm from the affected parts of the body, thus curing one of any ailment.

Unbelievable? Believe it.

For there are many who swear by this method of treatment and vouch that the treatment given by the Lhamu actually works. And the types of ailments that she cures range from your everyday headaches to severe backaches, arthritis, gastric problems and even paralysis.

The Lhamu is here at the invitation of Gurme Ladakhi and his wife, Diki Ongmu and has camped at their house since October 27 and already treated over 500 patients.

Says Mrs. Ongmu, "The main reason behind inviting the Lhamu to Sikkim was to help poor people, who cannot afford conventional treatment. And also, there are various ailments for which traditional medicines have no cure."

Going by the crowd that throngs

their house every day, all expectations have been surpassed. People from all social backgrounds, castes and creed are lining up to be cured by the Lhamu, who is assisted by another lady, Tshering Choksi, who is also a Lhamu.

The Ladakhis have every reason to believe in the healing powers of the Lhamu. The late NT Ladakhi, in the eighties, was cured of the skin problem that was troubling him for a long time. Mr. Ladakhi, who was diabetic, suffered skin rashes which even doctors in Europe could not cure. One session with the Lhamu and he was cured at least of his skin problem.

For Mrs. Tsewang Dolma, in her late forties, this amazing power of healing is a "greatest gift of God." "I do this not for money, name or fame, but as a service to humanity. If someone benefits through my deeds, I am merely serving God." "Karma hi Dharma hai," she says in halting Hindi.

Her healing powers are widely acclaimed and she has toured Germany and Denmark and all over the country curing people.

This lady from Ladakh is married with three children and is also a proud grandmother. She first received this divine gift in childhood when she started behaving like a "mad person" and suffered fits. When taken to the highest Rinpoche in Ladakh, her family was told that the young Tsewang Dolma had been blessed by a "Lha" or a deity. Soon, she was initiated by another monk and then came to be known as a "Lhamu".

She says that a deity enters her

body after she performs a puja during which she invokes the Gods. "The Gods do the healing, not me," she says.

Incidentally, she does not remember anything once the deity leaves her body.

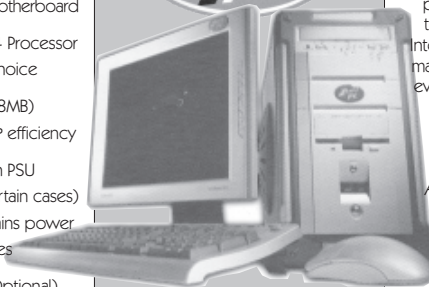
"The people of Sikkim are very friendly and hospitable. May God bless this beautiful place and the people," the Lhamu said in goodbye.

Lhamus are regarded highly in Ladakh for their healing touch and "divine" powers.

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## Ku-Tshe Shegu

We, the family members of the late Barmiak Choom Chering Choden Densapa, are extremely grateful to all friends and well wishers for your very kind assistance and condolences.

The KU-TSHE SHEGU or the 49<sup>th</sup> day prayers will be offered on Saturday, the 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2002 at the family residence in Gangtok. May we request you to kindly join us on this occasion. We deeply regret not being able to inform each and everyone of you personally despite our best efforts.

Barmiak Densapa Family  
Cherry Bank, Gangtok

# HR Challenges for the Tourism industry

Contd from pg 7

scribed as 'time poor, money rich'. While he makes more trips in a year, these are of shorter duration and he demands a higher quality of the overall experience leading to the concept of 'experience economy'. So when a tourist comes to Sikkim, he will not recount individually aspects of stay, food and travel but the overall Sikkim experience, the totality of all travel and tourism services.

The need to make the Sikkim experience memorable calls for greater links between those in the hospitality and travel sector as well as greater cooperation between the government and the private sector. Fragmented efforts will not suffice, the Sikkim experience calls for all stakeholders to put aside personal gains and work collectively towards enriching the total experience of being in Sikkim. This partly explains why we at NOW! positioned *Travelmate* as the 'guide to the Sikkim experience'.

Motivation for travel has also become more diverse and paradoxically, focused, like Kerala and the great Ayurvedic carrot that makes

India's number one destination. Tourism markets are not only highly segmented but highly individualized and complex and service providers would have to cope with the demands of these segments. Besides, pressures of the modern world make people place a greater premium on the time they take out for holidays. This leaves very little room for shortcomings in the tourism experience.

Tourism today has become the single biggest industry in the world but even then it is estimated that not even 10% of the potential travellers are actually travelling. Meanwhile, the share of the tropical countries has plunged from the all time high of 70% to not even a quarter of that of the temperate world. Tourism is touted to be the best way to redistribute global income.

Tourism is tough to nail down by way of definition. It is extremely sensitive to even minuscule changes in social, cultural, political and economic situations. Then again, it impacts on culture, ecology and environment of a place. Sustainable tourism development calls for a global code of ethics, the seeds of which must be sown locally lest ero-

sion of cultural and ecological values takes place.

While HR training and development costs are prohibitive, by their very nature of being multi-disciplinary and continuous, the Government should continue its orientation programmes for different sections of the 'modifiers', people like drivers and front desk managers who do not have much say in management but have frequent customer interaction and hence require relationship marketing skills. It is also important to treat customer service, quality and marketing as three interrelated forces or spotlights that mould the Sikkim experience and give them the priority that they deserve.

Let me in closing quote Nandcoomar Bodha, Tourism Minister, Mauritius, "The sun, the sand, the sea you will find everywhere, but what we offer in Mauritius is something special. We don't want you to just travel to Mauritius, but to come, stay and strike a bond with the magical island named Mauritius." Likewise we have to wake up to the new HR needs if we want to make Sikkim a happening destination and an experience to remember.

# SDF WHITEWASH TODAY

## a NOW REPORT

**GANGTOK:** With less than a day left for the Panchayat polls to begin, the State is all geared up for what, in all possibilities, would be a SDF taking home the booty.

Elections to 485 Gram Panchayat wards out of 903 and 42 of the 100 Territorial Constituencies will be held throughout the State on October 9.

Polls officers are already at their respective polling stations and some have travelled on rough and weathered roads to reach the remotest corners of the State.

The State Election Commission has taken all measures to ensure a "free and fair" elections. All possible poll arrangements have been completed.

The SDF party has already won 687 seats out of the total of 1003 Panchayat seats uncontested.

Meanwhile, the State Election Commission has announced bye-elections in three Gram Panchayat Units and four Territorial Constituencies, which will be held on October 30, 2002. Bye-elections will be held at 31-Arithang and 33-Upper Burtuk - B and 4 Shotak Shotak Gram Panchayat Units and 5 Bishalgaon, 1 Upper Burtuk-A, 2 Upper Burtuk - B and 4 Shotak Territorial Constituencies.

Further, the Commission has approved the shifting of Polling Station of 27/43/2 Thangsing Ward from Beng Primary School Room No. 1 to Budang Primary School in the East District as per the request of the voters of the concerned ward.

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# RS. 60 CRORE ADVENTURE TOURISM INSTITUTE FOR SIKKIM

## a NOW REPORT

**GANGTOK:** The Union Ministry of Tourism, has decided on Sikkim to set up an international institute for adventure and eco-tourism - the Indian Himalayan Centre.

Sikkim was chosen from among a host of other contenders for its "success story" of promoting tourism in the recent past, inform officials.

This Institute would be the first of its kind in the country and comes to Sikkim with an earmarked budget of Rs 60 crores. The Institute will have training facilities for water sports like rafting and kayaking, and aerial sports like motor gliding, para gliding, para-motoring and hang gliding. Training will also be given to HAP (high altitude porters), LAP (low altitude porters) as well as to the guides, it is learnt.

Sources in the Tourism Department told NOW! that with the setting up of the Institute here, Sikkim would automatically find itself placed on the international tourism map, since international events in these fields would be held at the institute.

The Institute will have experts and trainers from outside the State.

Mountain expedition teams will use equipment from the Institute and thus also generate money for the State, added some Tourism officials.

Sources reveal that come December, experts will be brought over to commence training courses for the HAP and the LAP.

The actual construction of this Institute is expected to begin sometime next year.

A meeting of the Committee set up to oversee this project under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secre-

tary, SW Tenzing, was last held on September 27 2002.

The meeting was called to decide upon the site to set up this institution. The committee members visited Rongyek, Ranka and Chenchey. Chenchey was chosen as the ideal spot since it has flat land, is easily accessible with good water supply system. Its nearness to the subdivisional town of Ravangla and the fact that the upcoming 108 feet statue of Guru Rimpoche Samdruptse is barely a half an hour drive away tilted the balance in Chenchey's favour.

The Committee comprises of Deputy Director, Union Ministry of Tourism, SK Venkatraman, Sudhir Sayi, an expert in the field of International Adventure Tourism, Secretary UD&HD, Secretary for Building & Housing, Principal Secretary Tourism and SK Safaiya, who is the main designer for this project.

## HARDLINE

by PANKAJ THAPA



## Edn. Deptt. to clear backlog of untrained teachers

### a NOW REPORT

**GANGTOK:** The Department of Education has initiated a training programme for all primary, graduate and postgraduate government teachers. The training programme was launched across the State on October 3.

The Programme is aimed at raising the standard of education in Sikkim and will be provided to all untrained teachers at government-run schools. According to the Education Department, the training will be imparted through the "distance mode of education" of the Indira Gandhi National Open University.

The Department, it is learnt, has, at present, a backlog of about 4,000 untrained primary teachers and about 1,600 untrained graduate/postgraduate teachers.

The untrained primary teachers will be put through a specially designed six-month teacher-education programme which will earn them a certificate in primary education.

The Department has identified ten centres in all four Districts of the State for the training programme. The training will be held in Tadong and Chujachen in East District, Mangan in the North, Namchi and Ravangla in the South and Pelling and Soreng in the West District.

About 100 teachers have enrolled at each of the ten training centres and will be trained in batches of 100 each. Similarly, all untrained graduate and postgraduate teachers will undergo the two-year B.Ed. course of IGNOU. The B.Ed. course for 100 graduate and postgraduate teachers will commence from January, 2003.

The entire expenditure of the training will be borne by the State Government and the Department has made it compulsory for all untrained teachers to enrol.

## Banking on the environment

### a NOW REPORT

**GANGTOK:** The State Bank of India, Deorali Bazar Branch, along with Green Circle, the environmental group of Sikkim organized an environmental awareness programme here at the Deorali Girls' Senior Secondary School on September 30.

The programme was part of the Community Services Banking of the State Bank of India.

An essay competition on "An Individual's Effort to Curb the Hazards of Environmental Pollution" was held, the first prize of which was won by Pratikcha Dewan. The second and third prizes were won by Namrata Pradhan and Sabita Jindal, respectively. The consola-

tion prizes were awarded to Laxmi Shrestha and Deepika Pradhan.

The Green Circle presented science quiz books to the top-ten essay writers.

Those who addressed the programme were DR Proddhan, System Administrator, SBI, Deorali Branch and Usha Lachungpa, Senior Research Officer, Wildlife, Department of Forests, who was representing the Green Circle. They spoke on the "judicious use" of natural resources as well as synthetic chemicals meant for everyday use.

Earlier, on September 29, a "sit and draw contest" was organized in the Bank premises in which a large number of children from Deorali area participated. The Branch Manager, L Tshering, gave away the prizes to all the participants.

## CSI nominates NIC website on North Sikkim for e-governance award 2002

### a NOW REPORT

**GANGTOK:** The official website of North Sikkim, District Administration designed by NIC North Sikkim was nominated for CSI e-governance award 2002. A final presentation of the website to the panel of judges was done by DIO, NIC, North Sikkim, LP Sharma, at the 2nd National IT workshop held

at Administrative Staff College of India, Bella Vista, Hyderabad.

The website was one among the three selected by CSI (Computer Society of India) for the final presentation during the workshop. The URL of the website is <http://sikkim.nic.in/north> and it contains detailed block level information on North District besides other features like pictures, flora, fauna, people tradition etc.

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## Anthyesti Kriya

Anthyesti Kriya of Late Shri Bisemberlaji Lakhota, son of Late Malchand Lakhota of Soreng Bazar, West Sikkim, who left for heavenly abode on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, 2002 falls on 12<sup>th</sup> of October, 2002.

All friends, relatives and well-wishers are requested to join the members of the bereaved family in offering prayers to the depart soul at our residence at Soreng Bazar. We would also like to express our sincere thanks to all those who extended their help and co-operation at the time of our bereavement and we also regret our inability to thank them individually.

*Hiralal Lakhota (Brother); Arun Lakhota, Anil Lakhota (Sons); Abbishek Lakhota (Grandson);*



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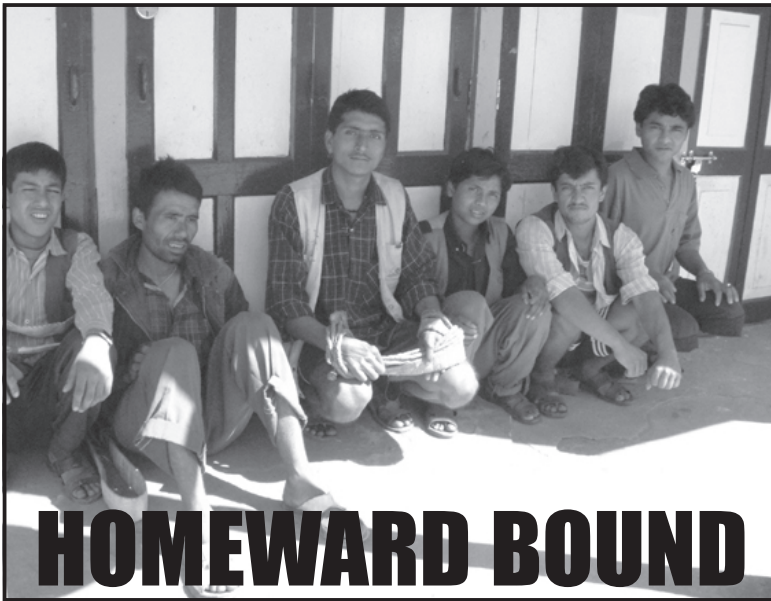
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# HOMeward BOUND

by SARIKAH ATREYA

**GANGTOK:** For Birka Bahadur Karki, this is the time of the year when he anxiously waits for the day when he can leave for his home in the interiors of Nepal to celebrate Dasain with friends and family.

After a year of hard work and backbreaking toil, this 40-year old *namley* puts together the entire year's earnings and heads home to his family that consists of aged parents, wife and seven children in the Jhapa Zilla of Nepal.

Karki came to Sikkim in the late eighties, following in the footsteps of hundreds of others like him looking for a means of livelihood in a different country. Since then, he has been working as a *namley*, earning as much as Rs. 300 on good days and as little as Rs. 50 during drier spells. He stays with a group of fellow villagers, all of whom work as coolies, in a small, poorly ventilated shack in Sichey Busty.

Karki does not spend much. He eats at his "Marwari malik's" house

where he is employed on part time basis. Still he manages to save barely enough money to celebrate a good Dasain back home. How much, he won't reveal.

But come Dasain, Karki is all set to make that all-important trip to his ancestral land and spend two weeks or so in the company of his family, relatives and friends. Taking the entire year's savings, he, along with four of his friends, will leave for home this week just ahead of Tika.

Karki has been following this ritual since the time he came to Sikkim. Ask him the reason for this yearly trip, and pat comes the reply: "Dasain is the most important festival for us. This is the time when the entire family gets together to seek blessings from the elders and indulge in merrymaking and festivity. I also have to bring home money and my family expects me to be at home during this time."

True to tradition, Karki and thousands of Nepalese like him scattered around the world earning a livelihood, return home at least for

Dasain. Karki will not be alone for he will be joined by hundreds of his countrymen from all over the State and the Darjeeling Hills in this annual journey during the Navratras.

The journey, of course, is not without its pitfalls. That the Nepalese casual labourers are loaded with cash during this time of the year on their way home is common knowledge. There are many risks. Dacoities along the Highway up to Kathmandu are common.

"Sometimes, we are looted in Siliguri itself, but over the years, we have learnt to be careful," Karki says.

For obvious practical reasons, Karki does the Dasain shopping in Kathmandu. "It is cheap there and I can pay in my own currency," he says.

Karki is, at present, working at a construction site near Nam Nang and hopes to leave for his village by Friday. The exodus of *namleys* has already begun and they are a scarce find these days. The Dasain festivity at home awaits them.

# THE MURDER AND AFTER

Contd from pg 8

An unproclaimed bandh followed and would have continued if the police and the GNLF top rung leaders had not intervened in time. Police managed to chase away the culprits and 1 of them, Binod Tamang of Dali, 4 kms from Darjeeling, was arrested. It was also established that the men were not from Kalimpong but were from the surrounding areas of Darjeeling.

After the Police made announcements around town stating that the melee was caused by a group of drunkards and requested all to open their shops, normalcy slowly returned and the shops began to reopen. October 7, 2002 found people of Kalimpong anticipating a feud to break out. It was in relation to posters signed by the Janta having been put up in town proclaiming a strike for the day. This strike would have been an extension of the 72 hour bandh call given by the GNLF Kalimpong Branch Committee which had started from the October 3 at 6 pm.

Mr. Pakhrin however said, "We had called a 72 hour bandh and as the pujas are just a few days away, we feel that the public should be given the freedom to continue with their daily schedules and their puja shopping. They have already shown their respect to the dead leader by observing the 72 hour bandh."

The GNLF had a "miking" campaign on the October 6, in different parts of Kalimpong and its adjoining areas that the 72 hour bandh would end at 6 pm on that day. Normalcy crept in on October 7, though the atmosphere seemed a bit charged, with people's minds undermined with fear of a clash between today's strike

callers and the GNLF which had declared the end of the bandh. Shops, business establishments, educational institutions were open with vehicles plying as usual. Some nursery schools, however, remained closed.

Mr. Pakhrin further added: "If the State Government cannot handle this, they better hand over the Home Department to us." Though police are on the case they complain of very little or no cooperation from the witnesses. No arrests have yet been made. However with the main law and order tension lowered with the bandh coming to an end, investigations on the case has begun, said a police source. People are being called in for interrogation. An eyewitness reported to have said that the murderer was a young man in his early twenties, wearing jeans, tee shirt and chappals and that he had a dark complexion. He shot CK from the back at point blank range and disappeared into the crowd. Maximus Kalikotey former Kalimpong Municipality Chirman and one of the most ardent CK loyalist, said: "There is a lot of resentment among the public. They are coming to me and expressing their anger over the administration's failure to react. If the administration still fails to do something concrete and arrest the culprit, the public might start revolting."

Recently there was talk in town that CK was forming a new party. Speaking to the press last year after falling out with Ghising, CK Pradhan, is reported to have said: "Though I have a father who gave birth to me, Subash Ghising has always been a father figure to me, my political mentor. I can never betray him. Till my last breath I will remain loyal to the GNLF flag."

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