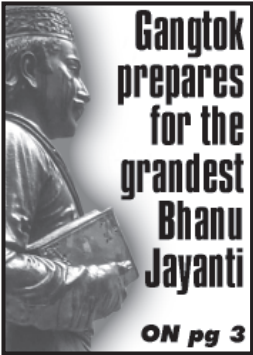


ON pg 5 Under-trial ISI suspects go on hunger strike over "delayed justice"



Gangtok prepares for the grandest Bhanu Jayanti

ON pg 3

Tuesday, 13 July, 2004

Vol. 3 No. 97

Gangtok □ Rs. 3

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THE DIGNITARIES ARRIVE



With the guests as they arrive at Rangpo

RANJIT SINGH

GANGTOK, 12 July: "The roads here seem to be better than those in Bombay," were the first words uttered by Mala Sinha as she touched ground at the Tourist Guest House at Rangpo today.

Emerging from the vehicle after a long trip from Siliguri she immediately goes about admiring the surroundings of the guest house enquiring about the flowers planted about the space. Accompanied by her husband, Mr. Lohini, with whom she starred in what was to be their first and last Nepali movie, Maitighar, the heartthrob of yesteryears is in Sikkim to receive special felicitations instituted by the State Government - Sikkim Samman Sammilan - for being one from the Nepali-speaking region to reflect glory on the Hills and its people.

Dignitaries have begun to arrive in the state for the Sikkim Samman Sammilan and all preparations are well in order to provide the best of Sikkimese hospitality to the distinguished guests who have done the Nepalese community, not only in India but throughout the world, proud with their sin-

gular achievements.

Various guest houses in the capital town as well as several hotels have been booked to accommodate these artistes and specialists in their respective fields. And it is also an honour for the state of Sikkim that many of them have decided to attend the function giving their busy schedules a rest without a second thought.

Mala Sinha speaks Nepali fluently and it is only after a while that you realise the quaintness of it all. After having spent her entire adult life in Bollywood en-

gaged as a leading actress in the Hindi movie industry, it is a pleasant surprise to see her converse at ease in her mother tongue.

As Mr. Lohini explained, "After all, we are both from Kathmandu and grew up there, so Nepali comes easily to us."

Although this is her first visit to the region, Mala Sinha's popularity ratings remain high in the hills. "There were so many autograph seekers at the airport due to which we were delayed. We started from Bagdora together

turn to pg 5

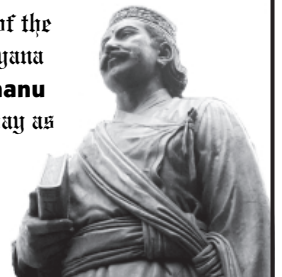


Mala Sinha [above] admires the flora at Rangpo Tourism Guest House. [panel left to right]: Some of the other dignitaries who arrived today: Ranjit Gajmere, Hari Prasad "Gorkha" Rai, Kapila Vatsyasanan and Dr. SR Sharma

A HUMBLE HOMAGE TO ADIKAVI BHANU BHAKTA ACHARYA

on his 190th Birth Anniversary

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NOW!

FIRST WITH THE NEWS

NOW THAT THE WORLD KNOWS

Representatives from all over the world are at Bangkok to discuss where the battle against AIDS is headed. Squeezed in between the photo-ops with celebrities are details on the present status. India, we now learn, is poised to take over from South Africa as the country with the most number of HIV-positive people. And yet, what do the anti-AIDS proselytisers of the country do, reinterpret the data to come up with the feel-good revelation that the increase in the number of HIV infections recorded in 2003-04 is much lower than the corresponding figure for 2002-03. And it is this attitude which underlines the rather rudderless campaign the country assembles against AIDS. At Bangkok, India must have enjoyed the rather dubious recognition as the only country which at one time toyed [and even pursued] with the idea of promoting abstinence against safe sex to keep HIV infections to a minimum. The battle against AIDS is already compromised by its epidemic proportions, short-sighted policies and less than adequate detection systems to be further short-changed by such transitory considerations as morality. Since precaution [which translates as awareness] is the only weapon against AIDS, it would make sense to start the awareness drive accepting some ground realities even though they might be uncomfortable. Taking Sikkim's case, since a high-risk group is not starkly identifiable, it is advisable to consider everyone at risk and get frank and open while sharing information on AIDS. A group specially at risk are the teenagers in schools. Raging hormones and the joie-de-vivre associated with this age leaves them as open to experimenting with intravenous drugs as risking unsafe sex. Agreed there are some AIDS awareness camps held in schools, but these are seen mostly in urban settings. It is the village school which needs this information more urgently. This applies to the entire country. But in a land where sex-education in schools was thumbed down because it was seen as a "corrupting influence," one wonders how frankly this problem can be addressed here.

New York road named after Kalpana Chawla

NEW YORK: A street in Jackson Heights, a New York suburb with predominantly Indian shops, has been formally named 'Kalpana Chawla Way' in honour of the India-born astronaut who was killed along with six other astronauts when space shuttle Columbia disintegrated in midair.

Dedicating the road to her, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg paid tributes to her courage and described her as 'heroine of two countries'.

"When people walk by this street, they would know that she was someone who made a difference even if they did not know her," he said.

The Mayor also made a gaffe

when he said he had walked with her a year earlier at the India Day parade. A reporter corrected him that the woman astronaut he had walked with was not Chawla but another Indian-American astronaut Sunita Lynn Williams.

Chawla was among the seven astronauts who perished when the Columbia shuttle broke up as it entered Earth's atmosphere back from a space mission on Feb 1, 2003. The shuttle disintegrated after the insulation which was meant to deflect heat was damaged during the take off.

The shuttle has not flown since then as experts make improvement to ensure that such accidents are not repeated.

write NOW!

If you feel strongly about something that has been reported in **NOW!** or have an opinion on some recent development, then share it with a wider audience. While the **LETTERS** section will carry responses to articles and news carried in **NOW!**, **ACTION MAIL** is about complaints and grievances. Wherever possible, **NOW!** shall also search out a response to the Action Mail. If not, then at least a complaint would have been filed in the public domain. **write to: NOW!, Gairi Gaon, Tadong, East Sikkim. Or email: sikkimnow@rediffmail.com**



Fire can purify and fire can destroy. The latter was evident in the recent fires that razed through Rhenock, Rangpo and Chandmari. On the night of May 21, eleven houses were completely gutted at Rhenock bazaar. Then again on June 6, more than seven houses were razed to the ground at Rangpo.

On 9 June, a fire at Upper Chandmari destroyed another house completely. Fortunately no lives were lost in the three accidents. The places were all wooden structures and constructed in old styles. This type of houses still exist in the old bazaars of all districts. Some of these structures can also be found in Gangtok bazaar.

In all of these accidents, people lost property, gold, cash and domestic items.

Besides these, valuable documents, even Sikkim Subject certificates, photos, books etc were also lost. I visited the spot at Rhenock on 23 May along with Pratap Pradhan and Chandra Rai to offer support to the victims. We met some of them and found their condition to be very sad and pathetic.

In the fire, the master copy of RK Pradhan's unpublished novel "Puja" was destroyed. The existing original copies of the novels "Nilam", "Biwasta", "Antim Upahar" were also gutted. The master copy of film "Nirmohi" was also lost. Somewhere in the house of Dr. S Chettri all the books were totally lost, apart from cardamom and cash.

We personally met them and they were in a miserable condition.

According to the town people, the officer in charge of Rongli Bazaar who used to stay at Rhenock showed exemplary behavior. He immediately rushed to the army camp at Chalisey in the middle of the night. He met the commandant of army and asked for his help. Army personnel with fire equipment reached the spot for immediate operation.

The name of the brave officer in-

VIEWPOINT

by P SHRESHTA

charge is Nakul Pradhan. If it wasn't for his initiative the entire Rhenock bazaar would have burnt to ash.

There were others like him who tried their level best to prevent large scale damage. Roshan Lama, Counsellor of Kalimpong, with his group carrying fire extin-

guishing equipment reached the spot in the nick of time for the operation.

The local fire department staff from Rangpo and Singtam also helped extensively in the fire fighting operation.

While one acknowledges the role played by these brave men, there are many steps we can take to prevent fire accidents of this kind occurring again.

Here are some suggestions towards prevention:

- There should be mutual co-ordination between Fire department, Public Health Engineering department, UD&HD and Rural Development department.
- The existing water reservoirs of the fire department of the various bazaars should be filled up regularly and checked properly from time to time so that in case of emergency shortage of water should not arise.
- The water hydrants should be checked properly from time to time for effective operation.
- The local plumbers and the junior engineers should always be alert regarding this matter.
- Gas cylinder, petrol and fire catching products should be shifted outside the periphery of the main bazaar.
- Petrol pump should be shifted from the main bazaar, if located in the bazaar.
- Sweepers should always be there to clean the bazaar properly.
- The local fire department officers should contact the district officers from time to time for fire fighting materials.
- The water reservoir should be constructed in the entire main bazaar
- All the staff of fire department should be trained for proper management
- Public awareness should be spread in proper manner by discussing among the Panchayat, local people and with school children. Awareness should also be spread at the village level.
- Forest department should always be careful for the safety of forest fire, which may cause disaster.
- Smoking in public office complex is banned and should be followed very strictly.
- Fire fighting equipment should be kept in all offices and should be checked by the administrative section from time to time so that it may not be dry for lack of use.
- Water bucket and sand bucket should be compulsorily kept in all shops.
- All the shopkeepers should be informed about fire hazard from time to time and if necessary, trained by government.
- The old wooden structures should be removed smoothly by making a master plan for all bazaars.
- The authorities should not encourage slum areas in the surrounding areas and should try and remove them
- If necessary more funds should be provided to improve the slum area for proper housing.

Gangtok prepares for the grandest Bhanu Jayanti

SUBHAS RAI

GANGTOK, 12 July: Preparations are on in full swing for the celebration of the 190th Birth Anniversary of Adikavi Bhanu Bhakta Acharya to be held here on Tuesday, 13 July. Decoration work at Bhanu Udhyan, here at Zero Point was almost complete this afternoon with artists giving the final touches to floats [see pic], which will be the main attraction of the Shova Yatra.

According to the schedule, the programme will begin at 8.30 am at Bhanu Udhyan with Governor, V Rama Rao as the Chief Guest and Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling as Special Guest. Other important dignitaries attending the function will include Nepal's national poet, Madhav Ghimirey, Yudha Bir Rana, winner of Krishna Smriti Puraskar and this year's Bhanu Puraskar winner, Prem Thulung.

The morning function will end with a colourful Shova Yatra taken through the main areas of Gangtok, concluding at Community Hall.

The second half of the day will



see a special commemorative programme held at the Tashi Namgyal Academy auditorium where the chief minister will be the chief guest. The programme will include recitation of Ramayana, a cultural show and release of *Kanka*, a souvenir on Bhanu Jayanti.

The chief guest will hand the Krishna Smriti Puraskar and Bhanu Puraskar to Mr. Rana and Mr. Thulung respectively.

Madhav Ghimirey, KN Rai, Minister-cum-President of this

year's Bhanu Jayanti Celebration Committee and Mr. Chamling will be addressing the gathering.

Winners of various competitions held on 10 July will also receive their prizes from the chief guest.

First prize for poetry in the open category went to Amar Bania 'Lohoro,' followed by Radha Upadhyaya and Beena Rai [Second] and Radhika Sharma with third position.

In story-writing, Parasmani Sam bagged the first prize.



Kapilmani Adhikari and Thaman Naubag were declared second and third respectively.

Durga Subba is the winner of the essay-competition whereas Kabita Naubag and Hari Bhakta Adhikari were declared second and third.

Deorali Sr. Secondary School is the winner of this year's interschool Ramayana recitation competition followed by Tashi Namgyal Higher Secondary School and Tadong Sr. Secondary School in second and third positions.

Bhawani Ghimirey of Tarethang was declared the winner of the Open Ramayana Recitation competition with Phoolmaya Sharma of Pakyong and Dayaram Bhattarai of Tadong coming second and third respectively.

Nirjala Dahal of Tashi Namgyal Academy was declared best speaker

in the interschool debate competition followed by Swastika Poudyal of Deorali Sr. Secondary School and Sampurna Lama of West Point Sr. Secondary School.

The organizers believe that this year's Bhanu Jayanti will be a historic occasion, with renowned personalities from Nepali-speaking regions like Mala Sinha, Danny Denzongpa, Bhaichung Bhutia, Jyoti Brahmin and others attending the function.

They are here to participate in the Sikkim Samman Sammilan to be held on June 14 and 15.

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SVSS PATRONS COMMIT FULL SUPPORT

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 12 July: Sikkim Viklang Sahayata Samiti will be holding a health camp for physically disabled persons on 17 July, at Community Hall, here.

To discuss this, a meeting was organized among its members and NGOs at Hotel Blue Sheep on Sunday, 11 July. Chaired by GM Gurung, Minister, HRD & Chief Patron of SVSS, the meeting had many dignitaries present. These included MLA's Ramudamu, Bhim Dhungel, NK Pradhan and Manita Mangar.

Representatives of Gangtok Marwari Samaj, Sikkim Chamber of Commerce, Sikkim Chemists Association, Rotary Club of Gangtok, Gangtok Hardware As-

sociation were also present in the meeting.

The Gangtok health camp will be the last of the five health camps held in East district. This exercise is being conducted by the Samiti to find out the exact number of disabled population in Sikkim which will help frame the policies as to how this section of our society can be given the maximum love and affection along with required medical assistance and employment, informs a press release issued by SVSS.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Gurung appealed that every person from society should come forward to help the physically challenged persons in every manner possible. He appreciated the efforts of SVSS, which is working

selflessly for the upliftment of such disabled persons.

Dignitaries and NGOs present in the meeting promised all possible help to SVSS. The meeting ended with a vote-of-thanks by MLA Ramudamu, with an appeal to attend the camp on 17 July at 10 am, Community Hall.

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GIRL SUCCUMBS TO BURN WOUNDS

GEYZING: A 19-year-old girl from Darap succumbed to burn injuries while being rushed to STNM Hospital, Gangtok for treatment. She was brought to Geyzing hospital with 100 per cent burn injuries and was immediately referred to STNM hospital. But on the way, near Melli, the girl who was a Class XII student succumbed to her injuries. Her guardians returned to Darap with the body. Investigations so far suggest it to be another case of suicide.

MISSING PERSON FOUND DEAD AFTER TWO DAYS

KALUK: Hasta Bahadur Subba, a 36-year-old resident of Lungyak Busty had gone missing from his house since 7 July. On 09 July at 4 pm his dead body was recovered from Kalay Khola by local people. The brother of the deceased along with others identified the body. The inquest was conducted and the dead body forwarded for autopsy. So far no foul play has been established. The case is under investigation.

Kutse Shegu

The 49th day Kutse Shegu of Late N. Lama who left for his heavenly abode on 1 June, 2004 falls on July 19, 2004. All friends, relatives and well wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence above Arithang School, Gangtok, East Sikkim. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who extended their help in our hour of grief and bereavement. Mrs. G. Doma (wife), Sonam Damdi (son), Mrs. Rinzing Doma (Daughter-in-law), Mrs. P. Lhamu, Mrs. Nima Lhamu (daughters), Mr. J. P. Lepcha and Mr. P. Wangdi (Sons-in-law), and all Grandchildren.

BHANDARI MEETS FERNANDES, DEMANDS INVESTIGATION INTO UTILISATION OF CENTRAL FUNDS IN SIKKIM



a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 12 July: Sikkim Pradesh Congress Committee [I] chief, Nar Bahadur Bhandari, who is in New Delhi at present called on the Indian National Congress General Secretary and Minister of State, Oscar Fernandes on 10 July, informs a press release issued by

the state Congress.

At the meeting Mr. Bhandari placed complaints alleging misuse of public funds received by the state government from the Centre as well as the North-East Council pool. He is reported to have alleged that the misuse of funds happened due to lack of proper monitoring, facilitated by the good relations shared by the state govern-

ment with the previous NDA government at the centre.

Emphasizing on the need for transparency regarding utilization of these funds, he demanded the constitution of an independent body to investigate the matter.

The release claimed that the INC General Secretary has given a positive response to Mr. Bhandari's concerns.

Awareness camp at Tingmoo covers varied social issues

PURAN TAMANG

NAMCHI, 12 July: And 8-day long Awareness Generation Programme under Manavi Sanrakshan Abhiyan concluded here at Tingmoo School premises today. The camp was organized by Kewzing Youth Club and was sponsored by the State Social Welfare Advisory Board.

At the camp, counselling-cum-health checkup on Tuberculosis was carried out for the villagers. Sr. District Tuberculosis Officer, Namchi Hospital, gave counselling on ANC/PNC and immunization.

Deputy Director, Animal Hus-

bandry and Veterinary Services gave a detailed talk on income generation through animal husbandry. Talks on various issues including attitudinal changes and the role of male members of the family and their commitment towards the girl-child were also covered at the camp.

General Secretary of the club highlighted on girl-child issues, her labour and her contribution to the economic well-being of a family which is not being acknowledge and compensated by our society.

The NABARD also launched four Farmer's club during the camp which was attended by more than 150 villagers everyday.

RAVANGLA FIRE HEAD CONSTABLE KILLED IN FREAK ACCIDENT

RAVANGLA: A dead body was found inside a public toilet at Yangyang road, Ravangla. On 07 July Bishnu Rawat, a sweeper with UD&HD reported that a person had gone inside the public toilet at around 9 AM and did not come out even after an hour.

On suspicion, a report was lodged in the local Police Station. The police broke open the toilet and found a dead body, which was later recognized to be that of Mani Kumar Gurung, head constable of the Sikkim Fire Services posted at Ravangla

During investigation photographs were taken, witnesses examined and inquest conducted over the dead body and forwarded to the district hospital, Namchi. Further investigations

revealed that the deceased had gone to check the static hydrant at Ravangla Bazaar as he was on duty. In the process he went inside the public toilet where he slipped and fell down with the back of his head hitting the wall of the toilet.

He was 41 years old.

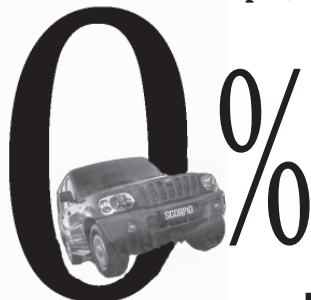
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Under-trial ISI suspects go on hunger strike over "delayed justice"

BIRENDRA SHANDILYA
DARJEELING, 12 July: The four arrested along with Mohammed Dilshad alias Raja alias as suspected ISI agents, lodged at the Darjeeling Correctional Home have been on hunger strike since last Saturday.
 Incidentally, 34-year-old Mohammed Dilshad alias Raja alias Ahmed had been arrested by the Darjeeling Police on the 03 January, 2002, from the Darjeeling More near Siliguri. Police had recovered 500 gms of RDX along with classified documents includ-

ing maps of vital installations of the area from him.
 He was charged under the Official Secret Act 3589 and under Sections 120B, 121, 121A and 122 IPC. Dilshad, who is alleged to have received training from the ISI in Pakistan is believed to have entered India through the Wagah Border and had been living in Siliguri since September 2000. He had even married a local girl and had been using his leather trade as a cover.
 After his arrest he was produced in the Siliguri court and after a few hearings the case was transferred to the Darjeeling Court.

Dilshad who is still facing trial has been an inmate of the Darjeeling correctional home for the past 27 months. Along with him, Abdul Bari, a resident of Delhi along with Manish Goel, Mohammed Sahzad and Mohammed Azad were also arrested and have been housed at the Correctional Home in Darjeeling since 12 May, 2002 facing trial.
 These four have now gone on a hunger strike in protest against what they claim is "delayed justice".
 Biplab Das, Superintendent of the Darjeeling Correctional Home stated: "As they have refused to take food, they are being moni-

tored closely by medical experts. There condition is stable thus far."
 He also added that he had got in touch with his higher ups regarding this hunger strike. "If we find anything abnormal with their condition we will immediately shift them to the Darjeeling Sadar Hospital," added Das.
 Incidentally, this hunger strike follows the incident of Dilshad consuming phenol from the toilet in the early hours of 12 June. He was taken to the North Medical College, Siliguri and is now back to the Darjeeling correctional home in good condition.

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With the guests as they arrive at Rangpo

Contd from pg 1
 with Ranjit Gazmer, but he's nowhere to be seen," she says.
 Mr. Gazmer, the Darjeeling ingredient in the Bollywood music industry, has already left the guest house for Gangtok.
 Talking to NOW!, Mr. Gazmer exclaims how much he appreciates this initiative of the Sikkim government.
 "This is truly a great step taken by the government of Sikkim to bring together all Nepali speaking achievers together at one forum. It might be belated but let's not dwell on that."
 Mr. Gazmer is also all praise for the talented crop of Nepali musicians of the modern era.

renowned poet and recipient of the Sahitya Akademi award. Indeed, age has not mellowed his memory. The two, it transpires, had met at a marriage ceremony some years ago.
 "I may be old, but this time I made up my mind to come to Sikkim for the occasion even if I had to crawl," he tells NOW! at the Rangpo Tourist Guest House.
 Mr. Rai has come all the way from Kohima, Nagaland. The weather Kohima, he says, is much like Gangtok, very wet and damp with very little sunlight for warmth.

"IB Rai," but quickly adds that this is his personal view. "IB Rai, through his writings, gives the impression that he is well read and he too touches all sections of the community," says Mr. Rai.
 Other dignitaries who make their way in and out of the guest house on their way to Gangtok include SR Sharma, neuro-surgeon with a practice in Lucknow. He, too, says he was pleasantly surprised at the invite he received for the occasion. Mr. Joshi, an ex-MLA from the Assam, is also an invitee and reveals that the Nepalese-speaking population in Assam is about 25 lakhs "...the largest of any state in India," and they, according to him, are the deciding factor in any elections in the state.
 Mrs. Kapila Vatsayanan, a researcher on culture, is visiting Sikkim for the first time. She will be handing out some of the awards. She talks on Sikkimese culture but there is not enough time to end the discussion. Also to make their way into Sikkim today were Lil Bahadur Chettri, Sahitya Akademi awardee, Bikram Bahadur Thapa and Madhav Ghimirey from Nepal.

MP VISITS KPC, PROMISES COMPENSATION FOR LANDSLIDE VICTIMS

A NOW REPORT
KALIMPONG, 12 July: The Darjeeling Cong [I] MP, Dawa Norbula, visited Kalimpong today to check on the latest condition of the areas hit by landslides on 8 July, last week which claimed two lives at 7th Mile here. Two persons injured in the landslide, doctors report, are still in a state of shock. The MP visited the landslide-hit area and assured a compensation package for the victims under the MP Fund, but could not visit the recuperating patients due to shortage of time.

LOST

ORIGINAL CLASS X MARKSHEET of Laksyata Gurung, D/o. Surjay Bahadur Gurung, r/o Sumin, East Sikkim, bearing Sl.No. 6661333 Roll No. 3120204 on 6.7.2004 at Tashing Secretariat Complex, Gangtok. If found please contact: **Pahal Man Gurung**, G.O. Dev. Planning Eco-Reform, NEC Affairs Department at 281301. or NOW! office, Gairi Gaon, Tadong, Ph. 270949.

"I MAY BE OLD, BUT THIS TIME I MADE UP MY MIND TO COME TO SIKKIM FOR THE OCCASION EVEN IF I HAD TO CRAWL," HARI PRASAD GORKHA RAI, 90

"So when I heard of the invitation I felt a wave of warmth coming over me," he says. He, too, is all praise of the government of Sikkim and especially the chief minister, Pawan Chamling for making such an event as the Sikkim Samman Sammilan possible.
 "This was much needed as it will provide a forum for interaction for the specialists of various fields as well as artistes and literary figures which was not available before," Mr. Rai feels.
 He also holds Mr. Chamling in very high regard as a poet whom he calls an accomplished "literary genius".
 "His writings touch all sections of the people," says Mr. Rai on the chief minister.
 On asking him whom he considers the greatest of Nepali writers today he immediately replies,

One hopes that those participating as well as the general public, in some way or the other, manage to make the most of the opportunity other than just ceremoniously, that such a hotbed gathering of Nepali achievers in one place provides.

"The musicians of today are coming up with some real good music both here in Sikkim as well as the Darjeeling hills and Nepal. They also have more scope and support than during our time," he says.
 Ranjit Gazmer, incidentally, was the one to introduce Bollywood to the percussive potentialities of the Madal.
 "I worked under RD Burman for many years and he is certainly the greatest," he says when asked of his great mentors. "I am basically a Darjeeling lad and there is so much music and talent in the hills which can now be nurtured without resorting to Bollywood," says Mr. Gazmer.
 He informs of another great Darjeeling musician, Louis Banks - incidentally, a close relative of his - who made it big in Bombay.
 Mr. Gazmer is interrupted by a gentle voice informing that they had met before. Hari Prasad Gorkha Rai is 90 years old and a

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Anthyesthi Kriya
 The Anthyesthi Kriya of late **Miss Sheetal Subba**, who passed away on **8th June 2004** falls on **18th July 2004**. All friends, relatives and well-wishers are requested to join us on offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence **Below PWD Office, Zero Point**.
Mr. K.B. Subba
 03592229067, 9832009455
Mr. Preetam Subba - 9832070464



Kpg to go with heritage to lure tourists

KARAN SHAH

KALIMPONG, 12 July: The Hotels and Restaurants Association of Kalimpong today approached the Tourism Department of the DGAHC [Kalimpong] with a special proposal to preserve the heritage sites in Kalimpong and the develop the town as a "total tourist centre." This was the first formal meeting between both the parties.

The members of HORAK presented a list of suggestions, which they believe would improve the town's appeal as a tourist attraction. The suggestions ranged from, standardization of taxi fares, maintenance of local infrastructure like footpaths and roads, workshop for taxi operators and guides, licensed porters and the more awareness on heritage sites.

"Since both the HORAK and the Tourism Department, are heading towards the same direction and work with the same motive of serving the visitors and accruing benefits for the town, a collective effort will certainly carry more impact," said the HORAK President, Amod Yonzone, who is also the owner of the Park Guest House.

The Association believes that having despite possessing a colourful history and rich culture and tradition of being the mini-gateway to Tibet, Kalimpong has always been neglected and still lacks the awareness factor to truly promote it as a tourist destination.

Today's meeting resolved to hold a workshop to educate local drivers on the various sites of town and its history. Also agreed upon was the decision to recruit college students and others youth as tourist guides during the tourist season. The institution of a in the municipality for the preservation of local heritage sites was also decided.

"These factors are essential for the promotion of Kalimpong," Mr. Yonzone stressed.

"We have also decided for the build a heritage museum in town," added the HORAK President.

Bimal Gajmer, Area Manager [Tourism Department, DGAHC] added: "We will certainly consider these matters seriously, but more concrete measures will be taken after the formation of the local municipal body".

"The concepts are appealing, I will approach the Assistant Director of DGAHC Tourism with the demand of a heritage museum and other issues discussed today," assured Mr. Gajmer.

The present ruling Government's single-mindedness of purpose is to invest in human resource development to make Sikkim a poverty and illiteracy free State. In this direction the role of younger generation is very crucial and important. The Government in its part will continue to provide all the facilities and create avenues for the youth and will ceaselessly work towards properly utilizing their potential.

Youth however must come forward and take benefits from the opportunities which Government is anxious to extend through multifarious schemes. They should also build up positive and competitive attitude and march forward according to the changing needs of time.



Issued by:
**DEPARTMENT OF
INFORMATION &
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Govt. of Sikkim

CINCHONA WORKERS TO GO ON HUNGER STRIKE

a NOW REPORT

DARJEELING, 12 July: Driven to near starvation, workers of the Cinchona plantations have decided to launch a massive agitation from tomorrow.

More than 500 workers of the 4 cinchona plantations will be observing a 72 hour hunger strike from 9 am tomorrow.

"For the past 3 years there have been no jobs for the family members of the workers who have either died or retired from the cinchona plantations at Mungpoo, Monsong, Rongo and Latpanchar. This has resulted in nearly 400 families with no earning members driving some to the brink of starvation," claims NB Chettri, President of the Himalayan Plantation Workers Union [HPWU], Cinchona Unit affiliated to the GNLF.

The HPWU, prior to this, has given several deputations to the Darjeeling District Magistrate who is also the Director of the Cinchona plantations and also to the State Commerce & Industries Department regarding these demands.

"The Government has utterly neglected the cinchona industry and always complained of losses," complained Chettri. Incidentally, the Cinchona Plantations, spread over 26,000 hectares in the Darjeeling Hills have been declared a loss-making units by the State Government and according to the State's Books incurs a total loss of Rs. 24 crore annually.

It is however the largest state run industry in the Darjeeling Hills with approximately 40,000 people sustaining themselves directly or indirectly from this industry. Other than cinchona, the plantations also grow Dioscorea which is used for manufacturing steroids, rubber and other medicinal plants. For the past 4 years the factory has been shut down and production is nil stated Chettri.

"Recently there was an order for 7 tones but the supply could not be met as the factory is closed," alleged Chettri. "Utter negligence on the Government's part and lack of competitive attitude of the administration has resulted in the death of one of the more prosperous industries," retorted Chettri.

The cinchona plantation started with 100 plants each of Cinchona succirubra and Cinchona officinalis being introduced in Mungpoo in 1861-62.

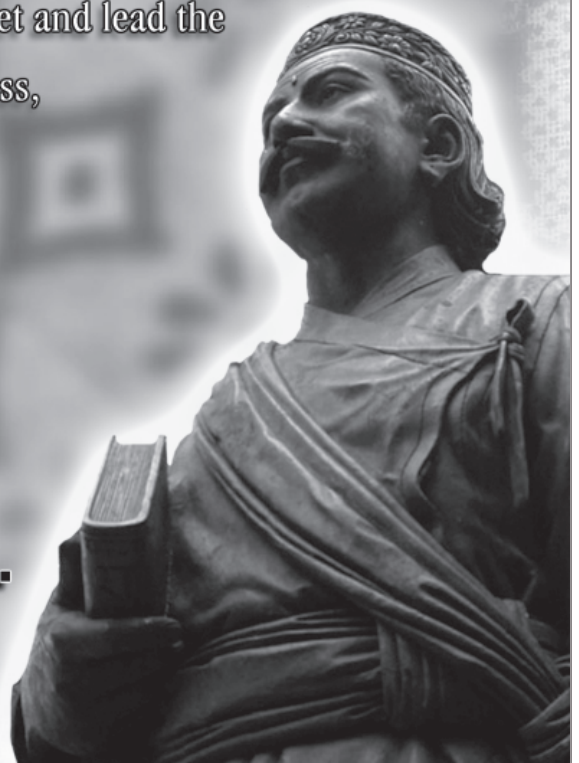
Adikavi Bhanu Bhakta Acharya was a great literary genius whose contribution towards Nepali literature cannot be forgotten.

The Nepali translation of the great Hindu Epic Ramayana carried out by Kabi Bhanu Bhakta is regarded today as one of the precious treasures in the house of every Nepali-speaking Hindu family.

The Chief Minister, Dr. Pawan Chamling has said that the real tribute one can pay to this greatest Nepali poet would be to follow the blazed path shown by him and dedicate oneself in the promotion of Nepali language and literature. The Chief Minister also urged the people to draw inspiration from the life and works of this simple but genius poet and lead the State towards literary progress, communal harmony and everlasting peace.

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History today in

13th July

- 1568:** Dean of St Paul's Cathedral perfects a way to bottle beer
- 1793:** French revolution writer Jean Paul Marat murdered by Charlotte Corday
- 1836:** US patent #1 [after 9,957 unnumbered patents], for locomotive wheels
- 1863:** Anti-draft mobs lynch blacks in New York; about 1,000 die [the final fight sequence of the movie *Gangs of New York*]
- 1898:** Guglielmo Marconi patents the radio
- 1969:** Russia launches unmanned Luna 15 to Moon
- 1976:** Courtmartial begins in USSR for Valeri Sablin [Sean Connery's character in *Hunt for Red October*]
- 1985:** Live Aid, a rock concert in London, Philadelphia, Moscow & Sydney

DARJ SMITTEN DIRECTOR BRINGS THE LIMELIGHT BACK TO THE QUEEN

BIRENDRA SHANDILYA

DARJEELING, 12 July: Anjan Dutta wears many hats. He is a renowned singer, actor and director. What he also is is a Darjeeling buff. Unlike many other celebrities who did their schooling here but forgot the Queen of the Hills after they made it big, Anjan is one who could never get over his Darjeeling hangover.

Having done his schooling from St. Paul's School, Darjeeling Dutta was in Darjeeling from 1962 to 1969.

"I got a lot from my school as well as from Darjeeling. It was not only education but music, cinema and theater. I saw some of the best movies in Darjeeling and also came to know about great theater personalities here," proclaims Dutta.

The result: "Whenever I want to do a location story. I come back to Darjeeling."

He has done more than 6 telefilms in the Darjeeling District and was in Darjeeling recently to shoot another telefilm. His next big project will be a Hindi feature film to be shot in Darjeeling scheduled for January next year.

"This is my dream project. I have always wanted to project Darjeeling in a big way and promote it also to audiences outside the state, hence a Hindi film," explains Dutta.

The film will mostly be shot at St. Paul's along with other locations in Darjeeling and is about the growing up process of a group of adolescent youths. The movie is expected to have a lot of local involvement.

"We have heard a band called the Rusty Nails from Darjeeling. We liked them and are thinking of giving them a song in the movie," discloses Neel Dutta, Anjan's son who is a music director.

Like Anjan, even Neel is very attached to Darjeeling.

"This is my second home. I have been coming here since 1990

once or twice a year," says Neel.

He loves talking long walks in Darjeeling and checking out the eateries.

"My mother too holds Darjeeling very close to her heart," he adds. Having been born in Taunggyi in Myanmar, which is also hilly like Darjeeling, Anjan's wife never went back, but always connects Darjeeling to it.

"From my school days I have basked in the cosmopolitan flavour of Darjeeling. It is high time that people realise that Darjeeling is a heritage tourist destination," Dutta is convinced.

He also lamented that Darjeeling had become very congested, "It should be a little more spread out and not so centralized."

However, he observes that in the recent times the true spirit of Darjeeling could be seen staging a comeback.

"Events like the Darjeeling Carnival which was held last year is something very positive. It will help promote Darjeeling as well as help reclaim the past glory of the Queen of the Hills" added Dutta.

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GEMINI: Physical thrills and excitement have a strong appeal for you now, and you want to do something new and out of the ordinary. You also have a lot of energy and quick reflexes.

CANCER: There is a friendly, cooperative, harmonious tone to the interactions you have now. It is a good time for social activities and for getting in touch with friends.

LEO: Friendships and love relationships are favored as you are openly affectionate, warm, and also quite responsive to loving gestures from others.

VIRGO: Sharing your hospitality, entertaining, giving something special and personal to a friend, and other loving gestures are emphasized now. You are apt to feel relaxed and pleasantly unambitious now.

LIBRA: You're dissatisfied with the

"same old tune" you've been playing or listening to from others, and now you're apt to do something different. You're drawn to the unfamiliar.

SCORPIO: Errors in judgment, due to personal prejudices or emotion, are apt to occur. Your mood very much colors your thinking right now. You can have fruitful discussions with your close friends.

SAGITTARIUS: Giving and receiving appreciation, love, and happiness come into your life now. You are moved to express your affections more openly than usual.

CAPRICORN: You are inclined to take physical risks, gamble, speculate, and to act on faith and belief in yourself. This can, in fact, be a very productive time for you if you can keep your expectations within reasonable bounds.

AQUARIUS: You are in an eager, confident mood and this is a good time for any competitive endeavor or anything that requires a lot of energy.

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