

SHRI PAANCH MUZZLES PRESS IN NEPAL

KATHMANDU, 02 Feb: Press censorship was clamped in Nepal today, as King Gyanendra formed a 10-member cabinet comprising mostly his loyalists, a day after he sacked Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's gov-

ernment, declared a state of emergency and assumed all executive powers for three years.

All major political leaders, including Nepali Congress president Girija Prasad Koirala and NCP-UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal were either un-

der house arrest or detained, sources in the parties said.

Kathmandu was cut off from the rest of the world as communication lines, including mobile, Internet, long distance calls remained suspended for the second day. Press censor-

ship was imposed with the suspension of the right to information and foreign news channels were off the cable networks.

The king suspended several provisions of the Constitution, including freedom of the press, speech and expression, peace-

ful assembly, the right to privacy, and the right against preventive detention, a statement from the royal palace said.

The situation in Kathmandu is calm and quiet till now, but uncertainty and

SAARC meet called off

NEW DELHI, 02 Feb: The meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation [SAARC] scheduled for February 6 in Dhaka has been called off after Prime Minister Manmohan Singh expressed his inability to attend.

The SAARC charter states that all member nations have to attend the meet.

Though there were earlier misgivings over India's attendance following the general strike called by the opposition in Bangladesh, the official reason given is the situation in member state Nepal, where Gyanendra dissolved the multi-party government led by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and declared an emergency Tuesday.

The cancellation of the summit, which had been postponed earlier owing to the December 26 tsunami disaster, was formally announced by SAARC chairman Pakistan on Wednesday.

Thursday, 03 Feb, 2005

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Three die as vehicle plunges 1000 ft

a NOW REPORT

PAKYONG, 02 Feb: Putting another increment to the already high statistics of road accidents in the state, is the one that took place at Pakyong sub division last night. This time, the accident was fatal resulting in the death of all the people in the ill-fated vehicle.

The incident took place at

around 10 pm on the night of 01 February when a Commander [SK-04-0741] plunged some 1,000 feet at Bhotay Khola, about 3 kms from Pakyong.

The three occupants, Birendra Thapa, Harka Bahadur and George Biswakarma died on the spot. Incidentally, all three were drivers by profession, reveal police sources. Birendra was driving

the vehicle at the time of the accident, it is further learnt.

The vehicle, which belongs to one Omkar Agarwal, a resident of Pakyong had gone to Changay, about 5 km from Pakyong, to drop a passenger, one Dorji Bhutia at around 8:30 pm. The other two passengers were apparently just accompanying their friend Birendra on the journey. It was while they were returning

that the vehicle fell of the road.

Police sources inform that the road there is very narrow apart from the fact that it is a sinking area. As such, the actual cause of the accident has not been ascertained yet. Incidentally, the vehicle has been completely damaged and reduced to scrap.

The bodies of the deceased have been sent to STNM Hospital, Gangtok for post mortem.

Now hear this, SHRP wants Sikkim's capital shifted to safer location!



a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 Feb: The demand to shift of State capital of Gangtok to a more stable land was the highlight of the 3rd Foundation Day observed by the Sikkim Himali Rajya Parishad party [SHRP] here at Daragaon today.

In fact the president of the party, Dr. AD Subba went so far as to propose two capitals

for Sikkim.

He said, "Some states like Jammu and Kashmir have two capitals, why not Sikkim?"

According to him Gangtok, which according to scientists is in the high risk zone of natural calamities has now become so overloaded and overcrowded,

that a substitute capital for it is the need of the day.

Many other demands featured in the SHRP agenda during their press conference which is the first of its kind. The list includes employment guarantee schemes for unem-

turn to pg 5

Bhandari calls for Buddhadeb's "personal intervention" to hasten Taraman murder investigation

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 Feb: Obviously not happy with the inordinate delay by the investigating agencies in solving the Taraman Chettri murder case, the Sikkim Pradesh Congress Committee president Nar Bahadur Bhandari shot off a letter to the West Bengal CM, Buddhadev Bhattacharya, calling for his "personal intervention" in the matter.

Mr. Chettri, an SPCC [I] general secretary, was murdered at 10 Mile, Sevoke on 18

December along with his friend Pemba Lepcha. Mr. Bhandari writes: "Two and half months have already lapsed since their brutal murder but the assailants have not been nabbed as yet, because of the non co-operation by the Sikkim Police."

A copy of the letter has also been sent off to the Union Home Minister, Shivraj Patil.

Mr. Bhandari also called for heightened vigilance along the 110 km border Sikkim shares with Nepal in light of the state of emergency declared there by King Gyanendra. In fact, he

said that the border should be sealed to prevent the state being affected by the happenings in the neighbouring country.

At a press conference today, Mr. Bhandari also condemned the donation of Rs. 1 lakh by the Chief Minister to the Guwahati Press Club during his press conference held there calling it an effort at self publicity.

"He is probably the first chief minister in India to do so; we condemn this donation," said Mr. Bhandari.

The demand of Rs. 1000 turn to pg 4

in conversation with SANU LAMA
ENGINEERING HAPPENED BY CHANCE, WRITING WAS BY CHOICE
INTER face
THE NOW! INTERVIEW
TURN TO pg 7

Now!

DAILY
FIRST WITH THE NEWS

Literally Endangered

When Gadul Singh Lama says that Nepali literature is not in the best of healths, he has to be taken seriously. After all, apart from being a writer himself, he is also the general secretary of the Sikkim Sahitya Akademi. Reading habits are down all over the world, so if Nepali literature finds fewer readers, it comes as no surprise. But while writers and publishers the world over are going out of their way to woo readers, the Nepali literati remains unmoved. A book launch, for example, now means more than just formal release by a VIP. It is an interaction with the writer, a chance to pose questions, get copies autographed. While the prudish might frown at such *tamashebaazi*, the written word is in the danger of extinction and desperate times demand desperate measures. Flashy book launches and promotion drives are the order of the day in the publishing business and are no longer seen as debasing the work. The best in the field resort to it.

So why doesn't the Nepali publishing industry here follow suit? The answer perhaps lies in the fact that the industry is not professional enough. Most believe that the job is done with the printing of a new title. They have to realise they are "publishers" and not "printers." A publishers work, once a piece of work has been found fit for release, begins after the printing is over. Copies of the book have to circulate for reviews, the writer has to be promoted in the media, the markets have to be identified and consignments reached there before the publicity blitz. All this does not cost much. All it requires is a professional approach. Given the identifiable pockets in India where Nepali readers reside, the paucity of reading material [thanks largely to poor marketing], and the presence [thankfully] of some great writers still in our midst, an educated and well researched approach to publishing should save the day for Nepali literature. As things stand, it won't be long before the language itself is reduced to the status of a dialect, used only for communication and neither read nor written. That would be a sad time. By continuing to do nothing about it, we are hastening the process.

CPM joins PDF in petitioning Buddhadeb for Council elections in time

DARJEELING, 02 Feb:

The PDF and the CPI [M] today sent a joint memorandum to the West Bengal Chief Minister demanding that the DGHC elections be held on time so that the new board can be formed by 26 March as required by the DGHC Act.

"Election is the most important exercise of any democratic setup. In order to reinstate democracy in the Hills, elections will have to be held as per schedule; then only will public faith prevail on the State Government," said Asok Bhattacharjee, senior CPI [M] leader.

In this memorandum, they also demanded that security agencies perform their duty strictly, sincerely and impartially in order to ensure free and fair elections. Incidentally, the Opposition camp has claimed that the GNLF has unleashed a reign of terror.

"The strong-arm tactic of the GNLF has already been enforced to strike fear among the opposition supporters. However, this time we will not give in," said SP Lepcha, former CPI [M] MP from the Hills. Allegations of largescale violence, booth-capturing and rigging by the Green Brigade are raised often by the Opposition here.

"This time the State Government should ensure that no such thing takes place," demanded the PDF leaders.

Incidentally, the meeting held today between the PDF and the CPI [M] in Siliguri resulted in further strengthening of bonds between these forces.

"Everything is moving in the right and positive direction. All the constituent parties of the PDF along with the CPI [M] are

darjeeling
MAIL
by BIRENDRA SHANDILYA

happy with the way things are moving in the opposition front," proclaimed Madan Tamang, the PDF president.

An election coordination committee constituting of three members from each constituent party of this "seat-sharing" coalition was also formed today. Mr. Tamang also announced that the seat sharing arrangements between the PDF [constituting of the All India Gorkha League, CPRM and the GNLF-C and the CPM] was nearly finalised and would be announced as soon as the State Government

made the formal announcement of the Election schedule.

Meanwhile, Subash Ghising, along with the GNLF delegation, arrived at the Bagdogra Airport today after having attended the tripartite DGHC review meeting in New Delhi on 28 January. Incidentally, the tripartite meeting was one of the demands made by the GNLF Supremo and was between the Central Government, State Government and the GNLF [the three signatory parties of the DGHC accord].

Commenting on this, DK Pradhan, Darjeeling MLA, and GNLF-C leaders stated, "Ghising's attending the tripartite meeting is meaningless as he does not have the public mandate with the DGHC's tenure having ended on 26 March, 2004, and it is presently running on an extension awarded by the State Government keeping with certain provisions of the DGHC Act. Ultimately, the net result of the meeting was also zero."

To this, RB Rai, general secretary of the CPRM, added, "The other political parties of the Hills should also be invited to such review meetings as all political parties have the same status in the Hills as the GNLF."

Dr. Bhim Singh Basnet is no more amongst us. He breathed his last on the afternoon of 27 January, 2005, at the age of 66. The second child of late Man Bahadur Basnet and late Smt. Ratna Maya Basnet, Dr. Basnet was born on 14 March, 1939, at Development Area, Gangtok.

He acquired his early education at Gangtok. Despite his inability to continue his post-matriculation education in school due to sickness, the brilliance in him did not deter him from passing the exam in the first division - a rare feat then even for regular students, as an external examinee. He then proceeded for his ISC studies from Government College, Darjeeling, which he again passed in the first division. Recognising his brilliance, the Government of Sikkim selected him to pursue B. Sc. [Agri] course from Allahabad University, which he completed, again in first class.

Following this, he joined government service as a gazetted officer in Agriculture Department during a period when the post itself was envious and self-satisfying. However, the scholar in him urged him to go for higher studies in the United States of America, and for this he appeared for an All India Competition for Tata Endowment Research Loan Scholarship Examination. His intelligence and iron-will saw him through the stiff competition and he was selected for the award for scholarship.

In America, where he did his post-

graduation, he registered himself as a research scholar in Kansas State University. In due course, he was awarded the Doctor's Degree in Philosophy by Kansas State University - a feat unparalleled in the history of Sikkim and a matter of pride for Sikkim for having such a worthy son. Though he was probably the first Indian Nepali to be conferred with such a distinction, he was not satisfied until he completed the Fellowship of Gamma-Sigma-Delta Institution, which is the world's highest society for agriculture science.

On successful completion of his studies, he was offered lucrative jobs in USA and elsewhere but Dr. Basnet, who was not after material gain, declined all these offers and

chose to serve his countrymen instead. Sikkim, during that period, was in the process of transformation and was in urgent need of persons like Dr. Basnet for its all round development in agriculture and allied fields.

He served the Agriculture Department in various capacities and finally retired as the Commissioner-cum-Secretary in the year 1996. Even after his retirement, the Government of Sikkim felt the need to have his vast experience and superior skills at hand, hence he was re-appointed as the Director General, Training, in which capacity he served for the next two years.

Dr. Basnet was a towering figure amongst the intelligentsia of Sikkim and an agriculture scientist par excellence. The



OBITUARY: Dr. BS BASNET [1939-2005]

A Man of Unmatched Brilliance

role played by Dr. Basnet in bringing the Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Departments to their present status is second to none. The Science Society of Sikkim is the brainchild of Dr. Basnet, of which he was the founder president and life member. It would be rather difficult, if not impossible, to narrate all the good deeds and laurels, which include national and regional awards, he achieved for the State.

The State Government wanted to felicitate him for his lifetime achievements in 2004; however, due to his indisposition, he was unable to receive the honour personally.

It is our misfortune that we lost him at 66, a too young an age to die, keeping in mind that the society would have benefited immensely from his continued presence and guidance. He was a great social worker and was actively associated with many social organisations. He was a philanthropist of the highest order and his contributions monumental. Death may have snatched him away from us but his good deeds have immortalised him. The coming generations will draw strength and inspiration from his disposition and society will always gratefully remember him for his munificent acts. In his death we console ourselves with the saying: Death is the golden key that opens the palace of Eternity.

Dr. Basnet is survived by his wife, one
turn to pg 3

Sikkim scribes return more educated from British High Commission's training on "balanced media"



a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 Feb: Around 24 journalists, including two from Sikkim, recently partici-

pated in a week-long training programme, "A Balanced Media - Facing the Challenge," in Bhubaneswar.

The programme was organ-

ised and sponsored by the British Deputy High Commission, Kolkata, especially for the journalists of Orissa, wherein journalists from neighbouring Chhattisgarh and Sikkim were also roped in.

The programme, aimed at training the journalists on the finer nuances of journalism, was conducted by Norrie Drummond, a UK-based trainer from the Thomson Foundation, Wales. He is presently working on an assignment in Afghanistan and is also engaged in training journalists in Kabul.

Participating scribes acknowledged the media course as "valuable". The course was jam-packed with interactive sessions, writing editorials, all-

day reporting exercise, story construction, holding press conference, interviewing persons, and dealing on aspects like pitfalls of a good reporter, in-depth analysis, media and ethics, etc.

Inaugurating the programme, first Secretary and Head of the Press and Communication Department, British High Commission, New Delhi, Jeff Wilson said that the workshop was organised essentially at the request of journalists and editors from those regions who had expressed an interest in the British Government organising such media courses exclusively for the eastern and the north eastern regions. The training programme was the fourth in its

series held exclusively for this region, he added.

The British Deputy High Commission has chosen the Thomson Foundation as the partner for this programme for the organisation's vast experience in training journalists, especially those working in difficult areas. Established in 1962 by Lord Thomson of Fleet, the Thomson Foundation provides practical, intensive training both in the UK and abroad.

The Thomson Foundation, in association with the British Deputy Commission, also presented certificates to the participants. The certificates were handed over by the British Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Andrew Hall.

DD Bhutia discusses Sikkim's concerns from cleanliness to local interest with officials

GANGTOK, 02 Feb: A coordination meeting of various departments, presided over by the Minister for Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department, DD Bhutia, was held on 31 January at the Tashiling Secretariat Conference Hall. The meeting was a follow-up to the meeting held last month in connection with cleanliness and beautification of Gangtok and different towns in the State. The Minister directed all

present to be serious about the implementation of schemes approved by the government in public interest.

Major issues like identification of labourers coming from neighbouring countries and subletting of trade licenses were discussed and direction was given to the concerned departments to work in this field seriously so that interest of the people and the State is preserved.

Concerned departments like

UD&HD, Roads & Bridges, Labour, Irrigation and Flood Control, Power and GREP were present in the meeting. All District Collectors, SPs, SDMs and SPDOs also attended the meeting and put forth their suggestions on how to keep Sikkim clean and beautiful.

Among the attendees, DGP, TN Tenzing, and, Principal Secretary of UD&HD, Jaishree Pradhan, represented their departments personally. [IPR]

Amiable Sikkimese impress Canadian exchange group



a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 Feb: A five-member team from Canada arrived here yesterday as a part of the Rotary International Group Study Exchange programme. Today, the team headed by Nancy Morris met the local journalists at the Press Club of Sikkim and shared their experience of their India tour.

The team leader informed that the main objective behind the Rotary International Group Study Exchange programme was to provide the exchange teams an opportunity to learn about people from other places and their cultures and vice versa.

She was also all praises for

the people of Sikkim, their simple and amiable nature, and also their 'unique' way of life.

The other team members - Leah Hendry [journalist], Natalia Pona and Kerrilee [agronomists], and John Nasser [property developer] - also shared the experiences they had gathered during the tour.

The Canadian team, which arrived in India on 04 January and has already visited various parts of the country, will leave Sikkim on 05 February.

Shri Paanch muzzles Press in Nepal

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confusion prevails everywhere. The King, who will head the government, through a royal promulgation named Ramesh Pandey as the new Foreign Minister and Dan Bahadur Shahi as the Home Minister, state-run Radio Nepal said. Veteran economist Madhukar Shumsher Rana has been appointed as Finance Minister while Tanka Dhaka will be the Information and Communica-

tion Minister and Radha Krishna Mainali the minister for sports and education, it said.

The United States and Britain joined India in criticising the king's action. A US State Department spokesman said US was "deeply troubled" by the dismissal of Deuba's government and termed the developments in Nepal as "a step back from democracy."

Human rights group Amnesty International has expressed concern over the king's action saying "the international community must make it immedi-

ately clear to the king that by assuming power he is directly responsible for protecting the people of Nepal and safeguarding their fundamental human rights."

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Contd from pg 2

son, two daughters, daughter-in-law and a minor grandson, besides two brothers, two younger sisters and their families.

Finally, we are privileged to pay our sorrowful and respectful homage to the noble departed soul with the following words: *Death is the liberator of*

him whom freedom cannot release, the physician of him whom medicine cannot cure, the comforter of him whom time cannot console. May his noble Departed Soul Rest in Eternal Peace. Om Shanti! Om Shanti! Om Shanti!

-From All the Members of the Bereaved Family

WEATHERUPDATE

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State CPM wants Nepal to struggle for Republic; King good only for "childish democracy"

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 Feb: Communist Party of India [Marxist], Sikkim Unit, has condemned the manner in which the Nepal King, Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah, has imposed Emergency in the country.

Addressing a press conference here today, Anjan Upadhaya, a senior CPI [M] leader, appealed to every Indian

citizen to condemn this act of the Nepal Monarch, while urging the Indian Government to withdraw all economic aid to Nepal with immediate effect.

Alleging the monarchy of always attempting to destabilise the democratic setup of Nepal, Mr. Upadhaya further appealed to all political parties of Nepal, including the Maoists, to come together and struggle for setting up of a Re-

public of Nepal.

Commenting on the present scenario of Nepal, he predicted that a full-fledged war would take place in this Himalayan Kingdom for the establishment of a democratic government.

The CPI [M] leader went on to add that the Nepal King totally lacked the ability to head the nation as its king and added that Nepal was enjoying only "childish democracy" under him.



Farmers made aware on eco friendly pest management

MELLI, 01 Feb: With a view to train the farmers and bring awareness among the rural masses about eco-friendly approach for managing pest and disease problems using available methods and techniques [IPM] and to minimise the indiscriminate and injudicious use of chemicals and pesticides, a one-day awareness camp was held here at Tek, Namthang, on 25 January. The programme with a theme of 'IPM for Better Environment' was organised by NCUI, Meli, in coordination with Central Integrated Pest Management Centers, Government of India.

In his inaugural speech, MK Das, PPO, gave a broad

definition of IPM, its concept and the methods one needs to adopt in order to make IPM a success. He further told that IPM should not be a single person programme but a community approach. IPM helps to minimise the ill effects of chemical pesticide and promotes sustainable production with minimum fiscal expenses, he informed.

A lecture on the pest and diseases of chilly and ginger and the technique of its management was delivered by RD Mazumdar, SSA. He informed that IPM is a seed-to-seed technique but farmers try to adopt IPM practice when the pest and diseases are in advanced levels,

thereby crossing economic threshold levels and causing economic loss.

The programme was attended by more than 50 participants.

On the same day, the preliminary meeting between NABARD and the trainers and trainees selected to undergo bamboo craft training under REDP, which is to be organised at Namthang, was also convened.

The objective behind holding the meeting was to introduce trainees with the sponsoring agency and also to make them understand that the training was being organised to develop their skills, in order to have a sustainable socio-economic development of the beneficiaries. [IPR]

Death toll in tsunamis passes 2,90,000

JAKARTA, 02 Feb: The number of people presumed dead in December's earthquake and tsunamis rose to more than 2,90,000 on Wednesday, with Indonesian authorities announcing a further increase in the number of dead.

Indonesia was hardest-hit by the December 26 quake and tsunamis, with a total 2,37,071 people listed as dead or missing, the health ministry said. A health ministry official said the 1,27,774 people listed as missing but who almost certainly perished would only be considered dead after one year.

Thailand's toll remained at 5,393 confirmed dead. A further 3,071 people were listed as missing, more than 1,000 of them foreigners.

The toll in Sri Lanka, which was second hardest hit by the catastrophe, stood at 30,957, according to the Centre for National Operations. The number of people listed as missing was 5,637, but many were expected to be among those never formally identified, hurriedly buried and included in the confirmed death toll.

In India, the official death toll has reached 10,749 with 5,640 still reported missing and feared dead. The government said on Monday that it would make up its final casualty figures in "about a week" in which it is expected to declare the missing dead.

In Myanmar 61 people were killed. At least 82 people were killed in the Maldives. 68 people were dead in Malaysia, most of them in Penang, while Bangladesh reported two deaths. Fatalities also occurred on the east coast of Africa where 298 people were declared dead in Somalia, 10 in Tanzania and one in Kenya.

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Bhandari calls for Buddhadeb's "personal intervention" to hasten Taraman murder investigation

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crores as a "peace bonus" raised by Mr. Chamling with the Centre during the meeting of the north eastern chief ministers yes-

terday was also termed as "unreasonable" by the state Congress president. Stating that earlier Mizoram, which has been an insurgency affected state, had received a peace bonus to aid it in its effort to restore normalcy, Mr. Bhandari said that this demand actually meant that "Sikkim was not a peaceful state".

Mr. Bhandari also revealed that he had received a memorandum submitted by the residents of about 18 villages in West District and signed by 421 people protesting the shifting of the Upper Gerathang Secondary School to Lower Gerathang.

Apart from alleging that the school at Upper Gerathang had proper infrastructure which would now be useless, Mr. Bhandari also claimed that the memo stated that the people of the villages were being victimised as they had voted for the Congress during the last elections. He further alleged that the initiative was being pushed by an SDF MLA.

On the declaration by the cabinet during its last meeting which granted the Lepcha tribe of Sikkim the status of a Primitive Tribe Group, Mr. Bhandari called this a "political gimmick."

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PASHUPATINAGAR REMAINS CONFUSED ON LIFE IN A STATE OF EMERGENCY

BIRENDRA SHANDILYA

PASHUPATINAGAR [Indo-Nepal Border], 02 Feb: With emergency declared in the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal yesterday by King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah, a shadow of uncertainty has descended on the Indo-Nepal border areas also. Soon after the announcement, a feeling of uncertainty spread from the capital to the distant borders.

In Pashupatinagar, a market on the Nepalese side of the Indo-Nepal Border, 30 km from Darjeeling, fear and uncertainty was the general feeling. There have also been unconfirmed reports of the borders being sealed soon. A Royal Nepal Army Official, on request of anonymity, informed that they had no official

orders on what was happening or what line of action to adopt.

Everyone in Pashupati decided to remain tight lipped yesterday with fear looming large over them. A businessman in Pashupati expressed his concern that if the borders were sealed, the businessmen here would starve, as they are dependent on the Indian tourists.

With the blackout of many Nepalese television channels and shut down of all means of communication following the declaration of emergency, those on the Indian side of the border are distressed, as they have no means of knowing how their relatives on the other side of the border are doing. The only thing they can do at present is pray that normalcy returns and peace is reinstated.

Phurba Sherpa, a resident of the Indian side of the border, said he was worried about his relatives in Nepal. "We have not heard anything from them yet. As Nepalese channels are blocked and even telephone lines in Nepal are down, all communication with them have been cut," he stated.

Most of the Indians having relatives in Nepal are relying on Indian news media for news updates.

Even the Maoists have decided to use this political instability to their full advantage and declared a three-day strike from 03 February. Sources in Pashupatinagar stated that the Maoists, in a display of power, held a large meeting at Baghbirey, a small settlement below Pashupati, on 01 Feb.

Meanwhile, Indian Security forces and intelligence departments are keeping a close watch on the fast changing situation. With the SSB manning the Indo-Nepal border, security has further been beefed up.

"Though everything was normal today and vehicles plied across the border as normal, we are on alert and keeping close watch," stated ASP [Darjeeling].

Incidentally, Nepal has been facing a lot of political instability and turmoil since the 1990s. Though Nepal shifted to multi-party democracy in 1991, none of the governments lasted long. After his appointment as the Prime Minister by the King in July 2001, Sher Bahadur Deuba has been removed from his office twice. In the interim, there were multiple governments, all of which lasted for very short periods.

Meanwhile, the bloody Maoist agitation began in 1996. Since then, more than 10,000 people are reported to have been killed. In 1996, when Deuba took over office, the King had asked him either to make peace with the Maoists or to begin the poll process. However, Deuba failed to fulfill either of this, which led to his dismissal on Tuesday.

Now hear this, SHRP wants Sikkim's capital shifted to safer location!

Contd from pg 1

played youths; protest against Nathula Trade Route on account of natural calamities, AIDS and other diseases; discontinuation of function of GMC on the ground of low percentage of population; demand of a Railway line through Bhakrikote, North Bengal to Saramsa; restriction over re-employment and extension of service to retired officers and employees; maximum opportunity to wards of retired government officers and employees in the service; introduction of neutral TV channel with the help of Doordarshan, etc.

Dr. Subba alleged that the present government was working only in the government files and not on the field. He assured that if his party ever came to power it would stick to the theory of "talk less, work more".

Speaking on the unemployment problem, Dr. Subba said that his party has a specific plan to solve this problem. "We have a plan, which we do not want to disclose now," he said.

Navodip sees plastic bags in new light

a NOW REPORT

NAMCHI, 01 Feb: In order to make people self-reliant, Navodip Pratibha Sangh [NAPRAS] of Lower Kitam organised a month-long vocational training on plastic bag making here at Lower Kitam under the sponsorship of Nehru Yuva Kendra, Namchi.

A total of 26 trainees are

participating in the training that started today, informed Roshan Kauskhik, general secretary of NAPRAS. The main idea behind organising this training is to inculcate work culture among the people and allow them to generate income through this very skill.

Members of NAPRAS and Angel Female, a self-help group of the locality, are par-

ticipating in the training at present; the organisers are expecting more people to join the training programme later.

Similarly, another vocational training also commenced from today at Melli Dara under the supervision of Divya Shakti, an NGO of Melli Dara. Around 15 participants will be trained on bamboo craft during this training camp.

GUTOR CHAAM AT RUMTEK

The annual Gutor Chham (The Mahakala Ritual Lama Dance) is being observed at the Dharma Chakra Centre, Rumtek, Seat of His Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa on Tuesday, the 8th of February 2005. The programme is a day long event commencing early morning. We would feel obliged if all patrons and well wishers would participate with us on the celebration of this important function.

Management
Tsurphu Labrang
Dharma Chakra Centre
Rumtek

To mark the Peaceful passing of this year and the Propitious welcoming of the Tree Bird Year, **Pemayangtse Monastery** is hosting its annual **Guru Dragmar Chaam** (Masked Dance) on the **6th, 7th and 8th** of February, 2005.

The programme for the three days is as follows:

6th Feb, 2005
Performance of Various Masked Dances

7th Feb, 2005
Appearance of Guru Dragmar in addition to other Chaams followed by observance of Gutor ritual.

8th Feb, 2005
Unfolding of the exquisitely hand-embroidered Silk Thanka of the Sakyamuni Buddha with prayers and Kawang from Ven. Yangthang Rimpoche and Ven. Lachen Gomchen Rimpoche.

courtesy: Hotel Phamrong, Pelling

*Guru
Dragmar
Chaam*
at: Pemayangtse
Monastery



Darj Zoo extends 'exchange offer' to Gangtok Zoo

DARJEELING, 31 Jan: Though the barter of Snow Leopards and Tibetan Wolves for pheasants might not seem a very bright idea, the Darjeeling Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park [PNHNP] has decided to indulge in it owing to the high success rate of their captive breeding programme. If things work out well with the Gangtok zoo authorities, the Zoological Park in Gangtok might soon get some Snow Leopards and Tibetan Wolves in lieu of Khali Pheasants.

Incidentally, the PNHNP is the only zoo in the country with the successful captive breeding programme involving high altitude endangered Himalayan animals. Started in early 1990s, the programme helped in increasing

the numbers of these animals manifold. The list of animals in the programme includes the Snow Leopard, Tibetan Wolf and the Red Panda. Such has been the success rate that the population of Red Pandas had increased from nine in 1995 to 24 in 2001. Similarly, the population of Snow Leopards has increased from five in 1995 to 14 in 2001.

"The problem we then began facing with such a high success rate was shortage of enclosures," stated DR Sewa, deputy director, PNHNP. It even resulted in the Fifth Consultative Committee meeting for the Ministry of Environment and Forests, with the Central Zoo Authority taking a very serious decision to discourage captive breeding in the end of 2000.

However, braving such a decision the PNHNP continued the

good work of finding ways of solving this problem. The authorities decided to start a restricted breeding programme. Common Leopards, which are in large numbers, were sent to other zoos and their enclosures used to house Snow Leopards. New enclosures will also be built. Some of the Snow Leopards and Tibetan Wolves would also be sent to other high altitude zoos like Nainital, Shimla and Gangtok Zoo, decided the authorities. Another landmark project of the PNHNP was the successful re-

introduction of a pair of Red Pandas into their natural habitat below Sandakphu.

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- Interview on 5th Feb, 2005**
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Kutse Shegu

The 49 days Kutse Shegu of our beloved father late Mar Tshering Lepcha, who left his heavenly abode on 28 December, 2004, falls on 14 February, 2005. On behalf of family members, we request you to join with us in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence at Chujachen Busty, Kewzing.

**Phurba Lepcha (wife),
S Tharcho Lepcha (son),
S Mayel Lepcha (son), Tika
Maya Lepcha (daughter-in-law),
Keepa Lepcha (daughter)**

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Kutse Shegu

The Kutse Shegu of Late Dr. Dechen Norbu Bhutia who left for his heavenly abode on 17 December, 2004, falls on Thursday, 03 February, 2005. All friends, relatives and well-wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence at Lower Tadong, above Kajla Petrol Pump.

We would also like to express our gratitude to all those who extended support and sympathy at the time of bereavement and we regret our inability to thank and express our gratitude individually.

Smt. Neelam N Bhutia [wife], Guinee N Namchangcorpa and Gegee N Namchangcorpa [daughters], Gyalden N Namchangcorpa [son]
Phone No: 270437; Mobile No: 9434117577



Anthyesthi Kriya

It is regretted to inform the sad demise of Dr. BS Basnet who expired on 27 January, 2005. The bereaved family takes the liberty of expressing their profoundest gratitude and heartfelt thanks for the overwhelming support and soft and kind words of sympathy, consolation and their active participation during the funeral process.

The thirteenth day Anthyesthi Kriya ceremony is to be held at our residence at Lower Sichey Busty on 08 February, 2005, and we would like to invite all our friends, well wisher and relatives to make it convenient to be there with us for praying for the noble Departed Soul.

Mrs. Prava Basnet [wife], Ashim & Luna [son & daughter-in-law], Anupa & Anooja [daughters], Mr. & Mrs. DB Basnet [elder brother & sister-in-law], Miss Padma Basnet [sister], Mr. & Mrs. Karina Basnet [younger brother & sister-in-law], Mr. & Mrs. LB Diksht [youngest sister & brother-in-law] and all the members of the Basnet Family



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Ghewa

The Ghewa of late Sumitra Gurung [Sanu ko Boju], who left for her heavenly abode on 30 January, 2005, will be held on 05 February at DK Gurung Building, Pani House. All friends, relatives and well wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul. We would also like to express our gratitude to all who extended their support and sympathy during our time of bereavement and regret our inability to express our gratitude individually.

Rajesh Gurung [Social Welfare Department], Dambari Gurung, Deepak Gurung, Ganga Gurung and Geeta Gurung



Anthyesthi Kriya

The 13th day Anthyesthi Kriya of our Late mother Dharma Devi Sharma residence of Kazitar Namchi who left for heavenly abode on 25th January 2005 falls on 6th February 2005. All relatives, well wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence at Rawley Rumtek (Ray Khola road). We would like to express our gratitude to all those who extended their support and sympathy during our time of bereavement.

Sons: Dr. S.P. Sharma, Dr.H.N.Sharma, Meelan Sharma. Daughters-in-law: Mala Sharma, D.K.Sharma, Beena Sharma. Daughters: Radha Sharma, Maheswari Sharma, Laxmi Sharma and other family members.



Kutse Shegu

The **Kutse Shegu** of late **Ana Gyamu Bhutia**, who left for her heavenly abode on 30. 12.2004 falls on **16 February 2005, Wednesday**. All relatives, well wishers and friends are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence at **Kabi Youngang, North Sikkim**.

We would like to express our gratitude to all those who extended their support and sympathy during our time of bereavement and we regret our inability to express our gratitude individually.

Sonam Palzor, Karma Dorjee [grandsons], Karma Doma, Rinzing Ongmu [grand daughters]. Ph. 220577

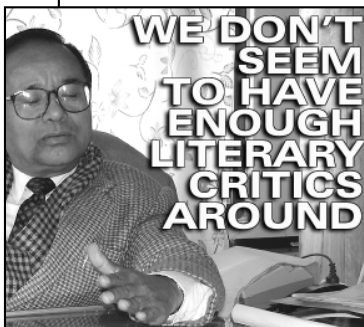
NOW!: An engineer by training and a technocrat by profession, how did you chance upon writing?

SANU LAMA: Actually, I entered the world of creative writing much before becoming an Engineer. I was inspired to pursue writing by my learned and revered teacher the late Rashmiprasad Alley, who helped me tremendously. I used to write for school magazines and my first article in a literary magazine was published in *Changa*, published from Payung Busty, Algarah.

As far as becoming an Engineer is concerned, the then Chogyal's Government declared the first Seven Year Development Plan for 1954-61. Since there was a dearth of technical persons in Sikkim, when I passed my matriculation exam in 1956, I was picked along with others to study engineering at MBC Institute of Engineering, Burdwan. My becoming an engineer happened by chance, writing came as a choice.

You have received several awards and now the Padma Shri, how important are awards for writers?

While no writer has an award in mind when he writes, these awards are still very much important because they provide encouragement and recognition. They also force a writer to improve his skills, because once awarded, he has to live up to the recognition. In that sense, awards play an important



role. Also, an award is not for the writer alone. For example, the Padma Shri is not an honour for me alone, it also honours the readers, publishers, critics, Sikkim and Sikkimese people and the entire Nepali community of the country. This award will certainly encourage the younger generation to similar creative pursuits.

Your last published work was a travelogue and now you are planning to release another. Why are you concentrating so much in travel writing?

Travelling is my hobby. My earlier travelogue "*Aangan Paratira*" was about my visit to European countries and Germany. In my book, I tried to collect facts about population, demography, background history, physical structures and even politics of that particular country, so that those who read the article can get a rough idea of that country. My next travel book will be based on South-East Asian countries including, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, etc.

Who do you write for - yourself or for readers?

“Engineering happened by chance, writing was by choice”

GADUL SINGH LAMA, popularly known as Sanu Lama in the literary circles, was recently nominated for Padma Shri for his contribution to education and literature. Born in Gangtok on 15 June, 1939, Mr. Lama retired as a Chief Engineer to the Government of Sikkim. He is recognised as one of the more popular Nepali writers, with several of his works translated into Hindi, Urdu, Assamese, Oriya, English, etc.

Mr. Lama is also the recipient of Bhanu Puraskar of Sikkim [1991], Sahitya Akademi Award, New Delhi [1993], Dr. Shova Kanti Thegim Smriti Puraskar [2001] and Madan Byakhyanmala Puraskar, Varanasi [2001]. He spoke to SUBASH RAI of NOW! shortly after his name was announced for the Padma Shri. Excerpts:

I write for the society. My aim is to always write things which are useful for the society. The thinking and expressions are mine and rest are for others to interpret.

How would you describe the reader of Nepali literature?

After the recognition of Nepali Language in 1992, efforts for the development of Nepali literature have increased tremendously. But sadly, the readership has not grown to a satisfactory level.

Some serious readers are still there but most Nepalis are losing the habit of reading and this is the main threat to Nepali literature.

One reason behind the falling readership could be that the writers are not producing material which appeals to the readers. If Nepali literature is to survive and thrive, then the writers should first understand and respect what the readers want. For this, they may have to compromise with certain things. Nepali language is very rich and can still be very appealing even if the writers have to water down their prose to a level that readers can relate with and understand.

That said, there is also the need to motivate the youth and students to develop better reading habits.

Do you find any difference between

Nepali readers of the 1950s when the publishing industry saw some big hits and the present one?

The readers are same. There were serious readers in 1950s and we find them in the present times too. But the difference is that today's readers are very busy and Nepali literature has to battle for their attention with the multitudes of other avenues for entertainment. Thus far, Nepali literature seems to be losing.

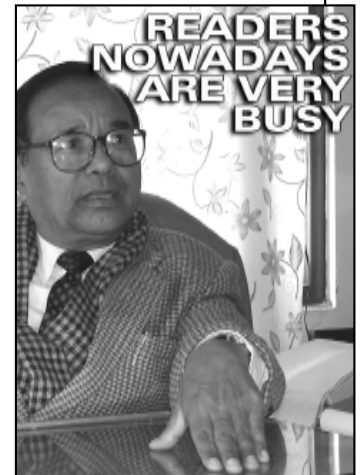
Apart from a readership, literature, if it is to develop, also needs interaction between writers. How often do Nepali writers of regional, national and international level meet and interact?

At the international level, the Government of India and the Government of Nepal have established Bharat Nepal BP Koirala Foundation to serve this purpose. The Foundation has the ambassadors of Nepal and India as its Chairpersons. This Foundation organises a literary meet every two years. As far as interaction between writers of national and regional level is concerned, we don't have any formal platform to do so yet. Some interaction happens on occasions like Bhanu Jayanti, but that is not enough. Interaction between writers is very important for the development of literature. Any development

needs debate, discussion, sharing of views, ideas, etc. and this remains a weak point of Nepali literature.

How important are critics to literature? What has been your experience with them?

Without literary criticism, there can be no literary development. Through criti-



cism one can judge a work. Sadly, we don't seem to have enough literary critics around. There are very few intelligent reviews that I have come across. Take my case, I have to depend on people I know and those I send copies of my work to for comments to get feedback on my effort. Otherwise, I hardly receive any comments from others.

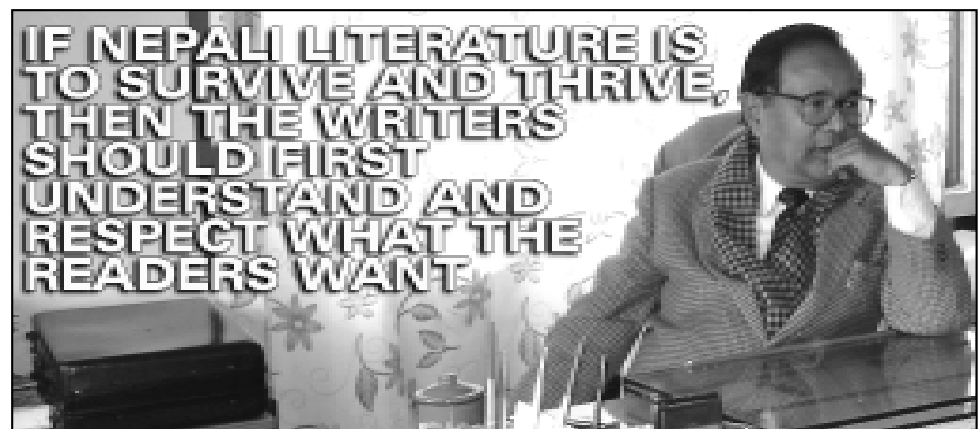
Let's get down to the basics then. Which was the last hit in Nepali literature in the region? How many copies did it sell?

I hardly remember any big hits. But a novel "*Droha*" by Bhim Dahal and a collection of poems "*Shanti Sandeha*" by Jas Yonjan Pyasi of Kurseong which bagged Akademi Award 2005, were good reads. I won't know the details of how many copies they sold, but am sure they were well-circulated in the market.

You are also associated with the Sikkim Akademi, what role does this organisation play in the development of Nepali literature?

Since it was established, Sikkim Akademi has not only been working for the development of Nepali literature in the State but it is also engaged

turn to pg 8



History

03rd February

1377: Mass execution of population of Cesena Italy
1690: 1st paper money in America issued [colony of Massachusetts]
1740: Charles de Bourbon, King of Naples, invites Jews to return to Sicily
1743: Philadelphia establishes a "pesthouse" to quarantine immigrants
1752: Dutch States-General forbid export of windmills
1783: Spain recognizes US independence
1815: World's 1st commercial cheese factory established, in Switzerland
1867: Prince Mutsuhito, 14, becomes Emperor Meiji of Japan [1867-1912]
1876: Albert Spalding with \$800 starts sporting goods company, manufacturing 1st official baseball, tennis ball, basketball, golf ball, & football
1882: Circus owner PT Barnum buys his world famous elephant Jumbo
1915: Turkish & German army reach Suez Canal
1917: US liner Housatonic sunk by German sub & diplomatic relations severed
1919: League of Nations 1st meeting [Paris]
1943: The Allied troopship S.S. Dorchester was torpedoed by a German sub and went down with a loss of 600 lives. As it sank, four chaplains gave up their lifejackets to shipmates, thereby also perishing in the icy waters. The bravery of Rev. Clark Poling (Dutch Reformed), Rev. George Lansing Fox (Methodist), Father John Washington (a Catholic priest) and Alexander David Goode (a Jewish rabbi) led Congress afterward to mark February 3rd as "Four Chaplains Day."
1945: Almost 1000 Flying Fortresses drop 3000 ton bombs on Berlin
1962: President Kennedy bans all trade with Cuba except for food & drugs
1966: 1st soft landing on the Moon [Soviet Luna 9]
1967: "Purple Haze" recorded by Jimi Hendrix
1969: The Palestine National Congress appointed Yasser Arafat head of PLO
1984: 1st baby conceived by embryo transplant born in Long Beach CA
1985: In South Africa, Desmond Tutu, 53, become Johannesburg's first black Anglican bishop.
1998: Stamps commemorating Princess Diana go on sale across Britain
1998: US military plane clips cable car lines in northern Italy, kills 20

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Training camp for rural women tackles issue close to them

PURAN TAMANG

NAGI, 02 Feb: A day-long training camp for rural women was held here at Community Centre today where around 114 participants were educated by resource persons on various subjects such as health education, nutrition, family planning, kitchen garden, thrift and saving for self help groups, etc. The programme held under the scheme of Welfare Programme for Women and Child was organised by the Panchayats of 16 Nagi Pamphok GPU.

LM Tamang, ICDS supervisor, Namthang, educated the women on topics like nutrition for pregnant women and nursing mother, National Maternity Ben-

efit Scheme [NMBBS], compulsory registration of birth and death, and SHG formation and its activities income generation, etc., while Kharki Maya Gurung, senior DPHNO, Namchi Hospital, spoke on RCH, family planning and HIV/AIDS.

While dwelling on subjects like kitchen garden, hot water treatment for ginger farming, rainwater harvesting and organic manure, BN Pradhan, Horticulture inspector, Namthang, also informed the participants of the various facilities facility provided by the Horticulture Department to the residents of rural areas.

The participants were also made aware of the causes of tuberculosis and its treatment

through DOT [Direct Observation Treatment] by NB Subba, lab assistant of Namthang Primary Health Centre, while IN Sharma, ADDO, Rural Management and Development Department, Namchi, informed the gathering about the benefits of micro-planning.

Speaking during the programme, Shanti Rai, Zilla Panchayat member of Nagi Pamphok GPU who also was the chief guest, urged the participants to share the knowledge they acquired during the camp with other rural women who were unable to attend today's camp. She also urged them to follow the advices given today by the resource persons.

The chief guest informed

that today's camp was organised from the micro-planning fund of Rs. 10 lakhs that was set aside for health related programmes. Out of this fund, Rs. 50,000 was utilised by the Panchayat of Nagi Pamphok GPU in organising a free health camp on 01 February, while the remaining half was used for today's camp.

Two women's self-help groups of Nagi, viz. Nagbeli and Nari Ekta, also voluntarily extended their help in organising today's camp.

Besides the local people and some departmental officials, the programme was also attended by the panchayat members and Jiwan Gurung, RDA of Nagi Pamphok GPU.

Forest patrols through snow

GANGTOK, 02 Feb: Despite the heavy snowfall and foul weather, Gangtok Range and Kyongnosla Range conducted a joint patrolling at Yelli and Menla on 27 and 28 January.

Apparently, the miscreants the patrolling troops were looking for were also under the weather, as nothing could be found by the teams.

CM Bhandari, BOT, Kyongnosla, who headed the Kyongnosla Range, informed that except for a few yaks and goats, they did not find anything. The other team, Gangtok Range, was headed by Lagyap BO.

ARIES: What begins as easygoing could become more complicated through the day. You might need to sort through a misunderstanding.

TAURUS: Speak your mind, not that you really have a choice. Express your feelings in a meaningful way in the morning. You might find that others have different opinions from yours. Be diplomatic with family.

GEMINI: A sensitive gesture could melt your heart. Confirm meetings and don't stand on ceremony over a message that hasn't been returned.

CANCER: You could feel confused by a discussion at work. Clarify and make sure everyone is in sync here. Later in the afternoon, you are prepared to take a stronger stand.

LEO: A sensitive gesture could melt your heart. Confirm meet-

Cop robs bank, returns to investigate

A Swedish police officer has confessed he robbed a bank and later investigated the crime himself, telling reporters at the time police had no clues.

A court in the central town of Bollnas on Monday officially charged the 36-year-old for the armed robbery on Dec. 17, court documents said on Tuesday, adding he had pleaded guilty.

The amount of money sto-

len was not disclosed but was described as sizeable. An hour after the crime the police officer returned to the bank as a leading police investigator handling the case.

Colleagues became suspicious when he bought a new car in mid-January, paying 219,000 Swedish crowns (\$31,400) in cash using banknotes from the robbery, the court said.

"Engineering happened by chance, writing was by choice"

Contd from pg 7

in the development of the 11 other sub-languages recognised by the State Government. Some of these languages are well developed while others are not. We have had some success in identifying the problems being faced by these languages. Now

we are proceeding to the next steps. Under Sikkim Akademi, we are also compiling a volume on Bharatiya Nepali and Nepali Bhasi Bharati. This will include, history, politics, culture, tradition, customs and other aspects of Nepali language.

You are also a very religious person, how do you balance

the two pursuits? Any plans of writing a book on religion?

Religion and literature serve the same purpose of serving the society. In my opinion religion and literature are the two sides of the same coin, without one, the other is meaningless. Yes, I am planning to translate some religious books from English to Nepali.

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ings and don't stand on ceremony over a message that hasn't been returned.

VIRGO: Use the daytime hours to push a special project through. You will succeed easily, but by midday, you also might be confused about the project.

LIBRA: You must continue being highly responsive to a boss, even if you want to vanish with a loved one. Schedule time late in the day for this fantasy, or a fun get-together.

SCORPIO: You need to check out some information before going along with a plan. A loved one or an admirer could be most distracting.

SAGITTARIUS: Others come to

you and each one wants your undivided attention. Confusion surrounds messages. Sort through all communication, and anchor in on the truth.

CAPRICORN: Others continue to seek you out. You might wonder what you can do to help

them. Express concern. Don't get uptight about some momentary chaos

AQUARIUS: You may need to keep your feelings under wraps for now. You will discover a lot more as the day progresses.

PISCES: A friend has only the best of intentions, though he or she might care a little too much for your comfort. Straighten out a misunderstanding before it develops into an ever bigger one..

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