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THE PROBLEM IS NOT BAD OMENS, IT IS CASUAL ATTITUDES: CHAMLING

a NOW REPORT

RANGPO, 04 March: The ruling Sikkim Democratic Front celebrated its 13th Foundation Day today; however, the party president was far from impressed with his party functionaries, many of whom, he said, lacked commitment.

The party president, while addressing a huge gathering here at Mining Ground, lamented that though his party was now 13 years old and his Government ten, the party workers still had little understanding of their role in delivering on the promises made to the people.

“A lazy public and a corrupt government lead to the extinction of a State”



PARTY PRESIDENT TURNS THE MIRROR ON PARTY WORKERS ON 13TH FOUNDATION DAY

Referring to the incident left many senior party workers red-faced with embarrassment at the beginning of today's cel-

ebration, the Chief Minister said it reflected on the casual approach which many had towards their responsibilities. In-

centally, when the party president tugged at the rope to unfurl the SDF flag, it fluttered down instead of unfurling.

“The person who had put up the flag should have instructed me which rope to pull. Instead, I was directed towards the flag-post, I pulled the rope and the flag came down,” he said.

Pointing out that the incident would provide the opposition parties with an opportunity to make a big issue out of it and call it an ill omen for the SDF, Mr. Chamling said, “As long as I work wholeheartedly for the people of Sikkim, nothing bad will happen, neither to

turn to pg 5

A Thai Princess in Rumtek



Thai Princess, Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, being received at Rumtek Dharma Chakra Centre on Friday. The Princess is in Sikkim on a 2-day visit. turn to pg 5 for detailed report

High Court reserves judgement on maintainability of EVM petitions

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 04 March: The hearings on the maintainability of election petitions filed by the Congress candidates concerning the electronic voting machines continued today at the High Court.

The single judge bench of Acting Chief Justice, NS Singh, had begun the hearings yesterday, 03 March, when both Mr. Mittal and Mr. N Dutta contin-

ued their arguments on the maintainability of the petitions.

Mr. Mittal is the counsel for the Congress candidates and is a Supreme Court lawyer while Mr. Dutta is the counsel for the respondents [the winning SDF candidates] and is also the Advocate General of Nagaland.

The hearings concluded today with Justice NS Singh reserving his judgment for a later date.

pagtime by PANKAJ THAPA

Caught him for rash driving. Recovered from his possession - one driving licence, one blue book, car keys, one bottle of milk...

INSIDE

FORGING THE CM'S SIGNATURE CASE
More seizures and people interrogated; couple suspects a conspiracy **TURN TO pg 5**

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extras
THE NOW! SATURDAY SPECIAL
A STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO MUSHROOM CULTIVATION

Rajesh Hamal in Sikkim to help Tsunami rehabilitation efforts
TURN TO pg 6

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BRING HOME PEACE OF MIND

NOW!

DAILY
FIRST WITH THE NEWS

Cultured, Not Pickled

Turn to any corner of the world and one comes across voices of protest from a culture under threat, a way of life nearing extinction. While there are always external elements like the influence of globalisation and the pressure to homogenise which eat away at the edifice of a culture, the biggest risk comes from those who refuse to let cultures breathe - those who view it as relics which need to be preserved, not necessarily living systems which need to be nurtured. For nurturing would mean allowing it to grow and there are too many who see cultures as perfect and any growth as blemishes. They refuse to accept that culture is not something that can be pickled and preserved as a museum piece for posterity. Culture, because it is about a people, is vibrant, alive and current. It is spontaneous, almost instinctive, and not something that is learnt. It is imbibed. Since culture forms a part of evolution, it is also subject to fresh interpretations, nuances and relevance.

Because culture is about people, it cannot survive on state patronage alone - that would be relegating it to the status of a museum display. Recently, members of the Museums Association of India were in Gangtok for their annual general conference. The focus of the conference was "Intangible Heritage - Preservation & Portrayal." In layman's terms, they were speaking of ecomuseology, the science, or rather the attempt, to allow cultures to breathe and thrive unencumbered in their natural habitat. But even this comes with its pitfalls. In the *Journal of Indian Museums* released at the conference, the editorial spoke of the "very amateurish and vulgar commercialisation" of culture that one sees in the tourism sector of Rajasthan. The message - preservation of cultures should not come at the cost of reducing vibrant lifestyles into caricatures. This can happen only if the people to whom the culture belongs want to nurture it.

For the same reason, if a people reject their Culture as ripe for extinction, no amount of preservation helps. Yet, a culture should not be dismissed even before we have understood it. It is important that the repository of culture is passed on to the next generation to nurture and craft as it feels right. And yes, people can discard a culture if they want to, but only after they have understood it and decided that it does not serve their purpose any more. What the current holders of culture can do is pass it on to the next generation in as unadulterated form as possible. What the younger generation, equipped with its better education, can do is research deeper into their roots. Then, even if the physical form of cultures dwindle away, at least records will remain for future generations if it feels inclined to revive the same.

Trekking To A Trickle

The current crisis in Nepal couldn't have come at a worse time for tourism

The timing of the present crisis in Nepal couldn't have been worse. February First happened just as bookings for the spring trekking season were firming up and the travel trade was looking forward to recouping losses of the past years.

Although there was a 12 percent increase in tourist arrivals last year with 380,000 visitors, it was still way below the 1998 peak of 500,000. Now, things are gloomy again.

There have been mass cancellations after news of the king's move and the subsequent Maoist blockade of highways. January had already shown a 16 percent drop compared to January 2004 and February's figures are expected to be worse.

After the emergency was declared, Kathmandu-based embassies have upgraded their travel advisories. Even the French, who have been the most laissez-faire about advisories on Nepal have posted warnings, mainly because of communication difficulties after 01 February.

"We have given up hope for this spring season," says Trekking Agents' Association Nepal [TAAN] President Deepak Mahat, "Now all we can do is hope for the best for the autumn season." Trekking agents have received mass cancellations by groups booked for the March-May season and the only people still coming are individual

travellers who in any case are not deterred by advisories.

Worst hit have been Indian tourists because of the saturation coverage of the Nepal crisis in the Indian media. Even Indian gamblers who used to throng Kathmandu's casinos are thin on the ground. People coming overland from India has plummeted to zero. "The army is

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS NEPAL

ready to take the tourist vehicles in convoys," said an NTB official, "But tourists normally don't agree to move like that."

The tourism multiplier benefited everyone from taxi drivers in Kathmandu to Nepal's national parks, porters, tea shop owners along trails and even Maoists who taxed hikers. Now, with trekkers down to a trickle, everyone is hit. The only ones who have come out unscathed are domestic private airlines which are compensating for dollar-paying tourists with a record numbers of passengers because of blocked highways.

But international airlines have suffered. Qatar Airways brought only five passengers from Malaysia on a flight this week, although its Doha flights are full. Cosmic Air flew only 12 passengers to Dhaka on the

same day. Sahara Air suspended flights and is due to resume only on 15 March. Austrian Airlines has suspended flights for March. Airlines that used to depend on tourists are turning now to ferrying Nepali migrant workers to the Gulf. Phuket Air, scheduled to begin Bangkok-Kathmandu-Dubai flights next month is doing just that.

Although the Sagarmatha, Manang and Mustang regions are trouble-free, tour operators are finding it hard to convince visitors that trips will not be disrupted. Among those still braving it are tourists from other conflict zones like Israel who don't pay attention to advisories anyway. In 2004, Nepal had 108 percent more Israeli tourists compared to the previous year.

The only hope for tour operators now is Tibet. There is heavy booking for spring into the monsoon for Lhasa-bound Kathmandu stopovers. "Tibet is looking good," says NATTA Vice President Dhruva Narayan Shrestha, "The fact that Kathmandu is ok is spreading through word-of-mouth. We are going to amplify this good news through a travel mart here."

Even so, the Maoist blockade of the Arniko Highway since 1 February has hurt overlanders and many have had to be ferried to and from Tatopani by helicopter.

[courtesy: *Nepali Times*, Kathmandu]

LETTERS

WELCOME PRIMITIVE TRIBE STATUS, CONDEMNING CRITICS

Through this letter, I want to extend my gratitude to the honourable Chief Minister and his colleagues for taking the bold step of giving Primitive Tribe Group status to the Lepcha community of Sikkim. We optimistically hope to get an early declaration from the Central Government also. The vision of the Chief Minister to instal the Stairway to heaven is another warm gesture to be welcomed.

Here, I also condemn those unhealthy people who raise their lost voices without a prior knowledge of the term "Primitive Tribe."

Similarly, I vehemently object and condemn the "Ragtime" in NOW! dated 1/03/05. The sketch of an invisible Lepcha was ludicrous and mischievous and completely intended to malign and humiliate the Lepcha community. From this platform, I would like remind that the Lepcha community lives with a rich culture and

turn to pg 6

"Leave democracy to us but help bring on the peace"

After decades of drought, it seems it is raining democracy in the Middle East. There are clear signs of change around the region: Demonstrators in Lebanon toppled their government, opposition pressure forced Egypt to allow multi-candidate presidential elections, Iraqis defied threats from insurgents to go to the polls, and Palestinians turned out to vote even under the heavy hand of Israeli occupation. Throughout the region, people are in awe and inspired by the winds of change. Members of the Syrian opposition have said they hope for a democratic spillover from Lebanon. Even the top U.S. commander in the Middle East expressed optimism about recent events, calling them "monumental, if not revolutionary."

Despite our fears and misgivings, we the people of this region have shown

The Mid-East is clear on the role it wants America to play in its affairs - a fair a just broker for peace...

a genuine commitment to the principles of democratic governance and we are taking great risks to claim our liberty and freedom.

But joy and optimism alone cannot sustain us. For in order to achieve our dreams, we must achieve peace, since it is the cornerstone of any true democracy. Failure to produce it in the past has been an Achilles' heel that has brought down democratic movements for nearly 60 years. For in these times of war, authoritative regimes have justified crushing opposition movements

in the name of "security." The result is that we have been rolling the same stone up and down the same hill, and while there have been high moments of optimism, there has been little real progress.

At this current high point, democrats across the region are looking to the United States to deliver on its promise of peace. We need no intervention on the front of democracy. Not only does simple logic tell us that democracy cannot be imposed, but we have proven that we are capable of creating it on our own. However, what we do need are the right conditions in which democracy can flourish, and this is something the U.S. can help us forge. America must play a crucial role in promoting democracy in the region by being a fair and just broker for peace.

-editorial featured in *The Daily Star*, Beirut

BANNED EVEREST CHAT MASALA ATTEMPTS A COMEBACK IN LAND OF KHANGCHENDZONGA VIA HIGH COURT

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 04 March: A Civil Writ Petition has been filed in the High Court of Sikkim by S. Narendra & Co. of Mumbai, against the State Health Care, Human Service & Family Welfare Department and the State Food Authority, challenging the notification issued by the State Food Authority prohibiting the sale of Everest Chat Masala in Sikkim. The notification [dated 15

July, 2004] issued by Dr. DK Subba, Food [Health] Authority, under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954, and Sikkim Prevention of Food Adulteration Rules, 1991, has been challenged by the petitioner on the grounds that the power to declare a substance as "injurious to health" was vested only with the Central Government and the State Government did not enjoy such powers.

Further, the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954,

was concerned with the "prevention of adulteration of food and not intended to prohibit any article used as food or otherwise," the writ petition pointed out.

The petition also contends that the Food Authority has only the limited power of issuing an order of "prohibition for a short term" to ascertain the cause of outbreak of any infectious disease and take appropriate measures to control the situation. "Beyond that, the State authorities have no power," it further

pointed out implying that a permanent ban on sale of any product was outside its purview.

While stating that it was permissible under Article 19[6] of the Constitution of India to impose reasonable restriction in the interest of general public, the petition argued that the restriction has to be "commensurate with the danger posed".

While claiming that Everest Chat Masala was being manufactured after obtaining necessary permission as provided un-

der Rule 50 of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Rules, 1955, the petition labelled the prohibition as discriminatory, as similar other products were freely available in the State.

Documents tabled reveal that the "adulteration" confirmed by the Guwahati food testing laboratory was "excess salt." The petitioners argue that chat masala is salty in nature and imply how excess salt can be taken as adulteration. The High Court has reserved its judgement on the matter.

Colleagues felicitate Dr. Tamang on National Award

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 04 March: Voluntarily Health Association of Sikkim [VHAS] felicitated its vice-president, Dr. JP Tamang, yesterday at a function held here at Hotel New Castle, Deorali, that was attended by VHAS members and Dr. Tamang's students. The recipient of the National Bio-Science Award for Career Development for the year 2004-05, Dr. Tamang, returned recently from the awards ceremony in New Delhi.

Speaking about his research [the award comes in recognition for his research contributions in the field of microbiology of fermented food and beverages of the Himalayan region of India, Nepal and Bhutan], Dr. Tamang said that patience was important for all researchers. Encouraging

the researchers, he also stressed on the importance of teamwork, which was required for success in any field.

He also expressed concern



pic: ARUN CHETTRI

that many people were embarrassed to talk about fermented food even though it was a part of the local cuisine and culture and thus needed to be highlighted and promoted in a positive manner.

"The real scientists are our forefathers who discovered all these exotic food items.

Today, we are merely conducting research on these items," he said modestly.

He also expressed his gratitude to the Sikkim Government, authorities of the Sikkim Government College [SGC] in Tadong [where he is currently teaching as Reader in the Department of Botany], and all those linked with his research.

"The credit for this award goes not only to me but to the entire society," he added.

Dr. Tamang obtained his master's and doctorate degrees from North Bengal University and did his post-doctoral research at the National Food Research Institute, Tsukuba, Japan.

Dr. Tamang's major area of research focuses on microbiology of traditional fermented foods and beverages of the North East with emphasis on microbial

taxonomy and diversity, food safety, functional properties and nutritional value of fermented foods. He has developed starter culture for *kinema* production using potent cultures.

He is also a research guide at SGC and under his guidance Soroj Thapa [2001] and Sailendra Dewan [2002] have been awarded Ph.D's by NBU. At present, three research scholars are working under his guidance and supervision at the Food Microbiology Laboratory.

He has published a number of research papers in national and international journals. Dr. Tamang has filed for patent registration on "A process for production of *kinema* fermented soybean food, using a pure starter culture".

He is member of various professional bodies, including National Academy of Sciences [Allahabad], Asia-Pacific Food Analysis Network [Australia] and International Foundation for Science [Sweden].

Spring Book Fair begins on 11th

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 04 March: Sikkim Akademi is organising the third Spring Book Fair 2005 and second State-level painting exhibition from 11 to 14 March in the newly constructed shopping complex in front of Gangtok Sadar Thana.

The participants this year will be Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi/ Kolkata; National Book Trust, India; Oxford University Press; Orient Longman; Sajha Prakashan, Nepal; and National Library, Siliguri.

From Gangtok, the participants are Nirman Prakashan, Janapaksha, Jainco, Alphabets and Good Books. Many other renowned publishers and book-sellers are also expected to participate in the book fair.

The second annual painting exhibition, organised in collaboration with Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, will also be held simultaneously in the

turn to pg 6

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SSB Lance Naik dies in road accident

a NOW REPORT

DENTAM, 04 March: An SSB personnel was reportedly killed in an accident near Dentam, West Sikkim. The accident took place at a place called Bhaisi Gaon when a SSB Tata, JK-02-B8470, fell off the road and crashed into the maize fields about 100 feet below.

The accident occurred on the night of 02 March; the truck was carrying SSB personnel of the 24th Battalion, which was on its way to Uttarey from Gangtok. They had reportedly just collected their salary at Gangtok. It has been informed that along with SSB constables, an officer, Inspector Birendra Kumar Singti, was also present in the vehicle.

Though most of the passengers, including the driver, sustained minor injuries and were immediately rushed to the Dentam PHC, Lance Naik PK Rana died on his way to the PHC.

It is believed that he died due to internal injuries, as there were no external signs of any serious wounds. The injured personnel were then referred to Geyzing hospital; one has been referred to STNM, Gangtok.

Speed Post Service makes it to Namchi, finally

PURAN TAMANG

NAMCHI, 04 March: Speed Post Service was finally launched at Namchi Post Office today. Though a sign-board announcing the launch of the service had been put up a couple of months ago, the service was made available only from today after the inaugural function at the Post Office here at around 11 AM. The launch of this service was not possible earlier due to shortage of booking materials and tariff, it was informed.

The Speed Post service will also be started at Geyzing in West Sikkim on 10 March and Mangan in North Sikkim on 12 March, informed an official from the Gangtok Head Post Office who was present here for



The board has been there for quite some time now. The service began today.

the inauguration.

He also shared the Postal Department's plans to start Rural Postal Life Insurance [RPLI] and Postal Saving

Scheme along with various other facilities that will make life easier for the people of rural areas.

The function was attended

by the officials of Postal Services from Gangtok, including DR Marak, director, G. Goswami, assistant superintendent, DB Rai, PRO, and the staff of Namchi Post Office.

Following the launch function, an awareness programme was also organised for the staff of Namchi Postal Service where subjects like various saving schemes offered by the post offices like senior citizens' saving schemes, monthly income schemes, term deposit, recurring deposit and saving account, along with the interest maturity, value and tax concession were discussed.

The booking material and tariff for Speed Post Service were also made available today with both national and international facilities.

Darj Lepchas congratulate Sikkim counterparts on PTG status, relaunch their demands for same

KALIMPONG, 04 March: Inspired by the success of Lepchas from Sikkim in securing government support for Primitive Tribe Group status, the Lepchas from the Darjeeling Hills reiterated the demand for similar status for themselves in West Bengal.

Expressing fears over the

total extinction of the tribe, L. Tamsang, general secretary to the Indigenous Lepcha Tribal Association [ILTA], said that while their counterparts in Sikkim had been recognised as Primitive Tribal Group [PTG], the demand of the Lepchas of the Darjeeling Hills for similar status, which has been voiced

since 1950 remains ignored.

"We are delighted, thrilled and congratulate the Lepchas of Sikkim and above all Dr. Pawan Chamling and his ministers and MLA for working hard for the backward tribe and giving tangible results in this regard," Mr. Tamsang said.

The ILTA said that the

Lepchas of Darjeeling were "extremely backward" – economically, educationally politically.

"If such a status is also granted to us, we will be able to safeguard our culture tradition and tribe as well as develop ourselves," Mr. Tamsang said. WB Lepchas were granted the Scheduled Tribe status in 1950.

The problem is not bad omens, it is casual attitudes: Chamling



Contd from pg 1

the party nor to the public. But we should learn to be more serious about our work from this incident."

Stating that the government

had 37,851 employees, 12 Ministers, 32 MLAs, and several departmental heads, the CM rued the fact that work done so far was still not satisfactory. "This is because not everyone is working sincerely. Too many

are working only for personal gain," he said.

All this will now change for the better, he added, revealing that Ministers, MLAs and department heads had been given 100 days to start implementing the provisions laid out

in the Rs. 22,46,79,000 budget passed recently for the fiscal year 2005-06. "Now, I shall personally monitor the performance of each department," he added.

Referring to recent controversies arising out of a tussle between the management and labourers "instigated by CITU," the CM reminded the gathering of party supporters from all across the state that even though the neighbouring state had a "CITU Government," the labourers of Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Siliguri were still starving.

Urging the Sikkimese people not to be misled by the "outside forces" who were playing politics in the name of labour issues, Mr. Chamling

warned that his government would not tolerate militant trade unionism in Sikkim.

The Chief Minister also reiterated that his Government had declared 2005 as the Youth Revolutionary Year and added that the main focus of the Government this year will be to create awareness, develop skills and motivate the youths towards service sectors so that their capabilities were honed in tune with the future plans for Sikkim.

Sikkim needs around 10,000 trained youth in the power sector, 1000 each as trekking guides, travel agents, hoteliers, drivers, vehicle owners, interpreters, guides, etc, the CM stressed. He called upon the local youth to avail trainings being sponsored by the Government in this regard.

The Chief Minister, while informing that his Government was targeting to make Sikkim a poverty free State by 2015, urged all sections of society to cooperate with the Government and get more involved in the affairs of the State.

"A lazy public and a corrupt government lead to the extinction of a State," he said.

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More seizures and people interrogated; couple suspects a conspiracy

FORGING THE CM'S SIGNATURE CASE

RANJIT SINGH

GANGTOK, 04 March: Crime Branch officials reveal that they would be objecting to the bail application moved by Mrs. Rajni Khanna who was arrested a couple of days ago for having allegedly forged the Chief Minister's recommendation on an application addressed to the Principal Secretary to the CM.

Apart from Mrs. Khanna, her husband, Anil Khanna, a former IPS officer of the Rajasthan cadre, too is under

the police scanner for his suspected involvement in the forgery case, it is learnt.

"He has been directed not to leave town," informs an official of the Crime Branch.

It was also revealed that Mr. Khanna had stated to the police that he was innocent and that some people were conspiring against him.

Incidentally, police sources reveal that some more seizures have taken place but are not revealing details. It was also made known that apart from the husband and wife, about six

other people were also being interrogated to ferret out more details on the case.

The forgery in question relates to a recommendation that the accused is alleged to have added to her application to make books and stationery supplies to Tashi Namgyal Academy here. Crime Branch officials reveal that the CM's signature, the seal of his office and noting were all forged on the said application.

Crime Branch officials also denied media reports that the accused had been released on bail.

"Nothing of that sort; Mrs.

Khanna has not been granted bail yet," clarified one official.

He further informed that the bail hearing scheduled for 03 March had to be postponed due to the absence of the public prosecutor. The next date is set for 05 March.

Police officials add that the couple is contesting the charges levelled against them.

Mrs. Khanna, it is learnt, had been brought to the police headquarters for interrogation where she reportedly made a statement to the effect that she was innocent and that there was a conspiracy in the whole forgery issue.

"Her husband too has been asked to come to the police headquarters for interrogation," say crime branch officials.

Incidentally, he too is maintaining the same line that there is a conspiracy behind the allegation that his wife had forged the signature of the Chief Minister in order to gain the right to supply textbooks to the Tashi Namgyal Academy.

This is also what Mrs. Khanna's mother believes. "My daughter is just 26 years old; how can she commit such a big crime?" she questions adding that her daughter had confided to her about her innocence.

Substance abuse tackled at Namchi college

a NOW REPORT

NAMCHI, 04 March: Koinonia Students Fellowship of Namchi Government College, in collaboration with FECAI and Tendong Educational Institute, Namchi, today organised an awareness programme on alcoholism, drugs and STD at the Conference Hall of Namchi Government College.

During the programme, Joint Director, IEC, Health Department, and PJ Pradhan, a counsellor from Gangtok, educated the college youths on the various aspects of the drug, alcoholism and sexually transmitted diseases.

While a radio play was presented by the student members of Koinonia, the main attraction of the programme was Soul Winners, a band from Darjeeling, who played a number of gospel songs.

Appreciating the programme, the vice-principal of the college, Dashrat Kharel who was present as the chief guest, stressed upon the need of holding such programmes in the future for the benefit of the students.

The Students' Koinonia was formed in Namchi in 1998. Though the organisation has in the past conducted such programmes elsewhere in the region, today's programme was the first of its kind to be held in Namchi Government College.

The programme was also attended by Daya Ratna Pradhan, director of FECAI, Aaron Subba, FECAI member, and lecturers and students from the college.

Thai princess visits Rumtek monastery

TENZIN DOMA

GANGTOK, 04 March: The Princess of Thailand, Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, visited Rumtek Dharma Charka Centre at around 4 PM today.

The reception party at the monastery consisted of T. Gelek, Additional Secretary, Ecclesiastical Department; Sherap Tharchan, general secretary of Ralang Monastery, along with Prabha Rai, Joint Secretary, Home Department.

Gyalshab Rinpoche, one of the regents of Rumtek Monastery, was there to receive her in the visiting room. He welcomed her with a khada and a statue of Lord Buddha, which he presented to her. The Thai princess expressed her happiness to be at the monastery.

During their conversation, Gyalshab Rinpoche gave her a brief about the history of the Rumtek Monastery, including the controversy regarding the reincarnation of the 17th Gyalwa Karmapa.

The Princess also visited the main prayer hall. Prayers were offered by the monks of the monastery for world peace and for the long life of the Princess there.

She was also taken to the



[above] Thai Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn with Gyalshab Rinpoche [left] Students greet the Princess with Khadas outside Ruimtek Monastery

Golden Stupa, which has the holy relics of the 16th Karmapa of the Kagyu lineage.

She was accompanied by Chirasak Thanessant, Ambassador of Thailand, Vivek Katju, Ambassador of India to Thailand, along with officials of the Thai Embassy and media persons from Thailand. The delegation accompanying the Princess was received with khadas, rosaries and packets of Sikkim Tea.

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WELCOME PRIMITIVE TRIBE STATUS, CONDEMNING CRITICS

Contd from pg 2

tradition from the times of gods and goddesses. For this we have plenty of evidence. Moreover, the Lepcha community is in no confusion of what the cartoon intends to depict.

An apology and clarification is a must from the concerned artist.

Ongden Lepcha, Upper Sichey, Gangtok

The artist has already apologised for the unintentional hurt said "Ragtime" may have caused members of the Lepcha community [NOW! 04 March, 2005]. As for NOW!, the reader is requested to go through the editorial headlined "No More Denying The Lepchas," featured in our 03 March, 2005, issue to gather the intended meaning of the said "Ragtime." -ed

Spring Book Fair

Contd from pg 3

same venue. The works of the local artists of Sikkim will be on display in the exhibition cum sale. The best five paintings, selected by a jury constituted by the Akademi, will get a cash prize of Rs. 10,000.

There would be books on various subjects ranging from astrology, astronomy, metaphysics, and philosophy to current world affairs, politics, fiction and non-fiction in Nepali, Hindi and English and in local languages of Sikkim on display.

Rajesh Hamal in Sikkim to help Tsunami rehabilitation efforts**a NOW REPORT**

GANGTOK, 04 March: Two months after the Tsunami tidal waves hit the coastal areas of South East Asia, efforts are still on to raise funds for the rehabilitation of those from the affected areas.

A charity show of *Majhi Dai*, a Nepali movie, was screened yesterday evening at

Vajra Cinema, the proceeds of which will be sent to the Tsunami Relief Fund.

The famous actor from Nepal who also plays the lead role in the movie, Rajesh Hamal, was also present during the show that attracted a large gathering. Earlier, he was greeted in a traditional Sikkimese manner with the offering of a khada by MB Dahal of Tourism Department.

An explosion of leather goods**a NOW REPORT**

GANGTOK, 04 March: A Leather Exhibition cum Sale is currently being held here at the top floor of Super Market, Opposite Denzong Cinema Hall. On display at the ten stalls from places like Kolkata, Kanpur, Arga, Indore and Maharashtra are a wide range of leather goods like bags, jackets, wallets, belts, Kolapuri chappals, shoes and some branded items.

"We have a large variety of leather jackets available in different colours, and branded shoes like Boyz, Le Fore, Cathula and others brands from Agra," informed Javed Akhtar, manager of the exposition.

For the ladies, the stalls also have a huge collection of boots.



Also available are executive and portfolio bags and Chinese leather trolleys in different varieties, he informed.

More items will be arriving here within the next few days, the manager added. The exhibition cum sale, which started here on first, will continue till 18 March.

Centre recommends President's rule in Goa

PANAJI, 04 March: Reeling under the Jharkhand crisis, the Centre today recommended President's rule in Goa.

This was stated by Home Minister Shivraj Patil.

He said that the Centre was not happy with what has happened in the Goa Assembly today and has taken suo-motu action without waiting for the Governor's report.

"What has happened in the Assembly today is not acceptable to us. It is not proper to have one member not to vote. This is exactly what has been done by the previous government," he said.

The decision was taken at a hurriedly-called meeting of the Union Cabinet.

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I Lt. Col. [ret.] P. Dorjee hereby declare that the particulars given above are true are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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Kutse Shegu

The KUTSE SHEGU of late **Naku Bhatia [Aie Suna]** of Nam Nang Road, who left for her heavenly abode on 16 January 2005 falls on **5 March 2005 [Saturday]**. All relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to join us in the prayer function for the departed soul at **Tshoka Sum Building, Nam Nang Road, Near Kyi-De-Khang School, Gangtok.**

J.J. Lhamu Bhatia, Sanu Bhatia, Phurba Lhamu Bhatia [daughters], Phuchung Bhatia, Wangyal Bhatia, Karma Bhatia [sons] and all family members.
Ph: 204451, 9932296351, 9832026866

'It's A Wrap'

At this year's Academy Awards extravaganza, a nominee in 11 categories is Martin Scorsese's "The Aviator," about the eccentric aviation innovator and pioneering movie producer Howard Hughes.

One scene in that film is fixed in my memory because it may feature an anachronism. The classic example of such a time warp of phraseology is in Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar," set in ancient times, in which Cassius says, "The clock hath stricken three." The Bard forgot that clocks that strike the hour had not been invented at the time. In "The Aviator," a glittering party is held to celebrate the conclusion of the filming of Hughes's 1930 epic, "Hell's Angels." What struck me was a large sign with red lettering: "Hell's Angels *It's a Wrap*." The placement of the phrase within quotation marks suggests it was fresh at the time. But was it? Or did the director or screenwriter project a current phrase back in time?

Five years ago, Hendrick Hertzberg, the *New Yorker* writer, spotted an anachronism in a Woody Allen movie set in the 1930's: a musician says, "You know what I'm sayin'?" a locution that did not become popular until the 80's. [As Mr. Allen famously said, "80 percent of success is showing up" - at the right time.]

During the 40's and 50's, the order to conclude a day's shooting of a movie scene was expressed as *wrap it up*, sometimes followed by "Print it." This was recorded in movies about movies: In Vincente Minnelli's 1952 film, "The Bad and the Beautiful," a cost-conscious studio executive played by Walter Pidgeon complains to a producer, Kirk Douglas, about "700 extras in 19 buses, and a crew of 85... they've been up in the mountains for two days already - eating their heads off!" When Douglas looks at his watch and says, "We'll try it again in the morning," Pidgeon says hopelessly to the director, "*Wrap it up* for tonight."

When did *wrap up* [or *wrapping up*, first cited in the sense of "finishing," in a 1926 book by T.E. Lawrence, best known as Lawrence of Arabia] turn the verb into a noun, as in *That's a wrap*? The O.E.D.'s first citation is from a 1974 cinematographic novel by Michael Ayton: "Other cars are heard starting up out of shot and the lights on the pergola go off so I assume *it's a wrap* and the crew is listening to the director saying something consequential and busy about tomorrow's call."

However, assiduous research turns up this 1957 entry in Charlton Heston's journal, quoted in the 1998 edition of "This Is Orson Welles," by Welles and Peter Bogdanovich: "We rehearsed all day ... the studio brass gathering in the shadows in anxious little knots. By the time we began filming at 5:45, I knew they'd written off the whole day. At 7:40, Orson said: 'O.K., print. *That's a wrap* on this set.'"

Thus, it appears that the switch from *wrap it up* to *that's a wrap* took place in the 50's. That seems to make its use in "The Aviator" about a party in 1930 an anachronism (from the Greek *ana*, "back," and *chronos*, "time").

How does one get this evidence? Went to Amazon.com; searched for autobiographies of film directors like John Ford, Alfred Hitchcock and Orson Welles; hit the "search inside the book" feature for *wrap* and up came the Heston usage in Welles's book. The wordhounds and phrasedicks of the American Dialect Society's listserv may now find an earlier citation to cast doubt on my conclusion; that's the fun in this etymological dodge.

A Step by Step Guide to Mushroom Cultivation

by NARPATI SHARMA

Mushrooms come under a separate group of organisms called fungi [called *Dhuri* in Nepali] and can grow on dead and decaying organic materials; hence, it is Saprophytic in nature.

There are various varieties of edible mushroom cultivated in the world today, out of which *Agaricus bisporus* [button mushroom], *Lentis edodes*, *Volvoriella volvacea*, *Pleurotus* spp. and *Auricularia* spp. are the most common and most productive varieties. Out of these, *Agaricus bisporus* contributes about one-third of the world's total mushroom production.

As we can see, the climatic condition of Sikkim's southern and low hills is suitable for the cultivation of Oyster mushroom [*Pleurotus* sp like *sajor-caju*, *florida*, *fabellatus*, etc.].

Materials required for the cultivation of Oyster Mushroom:

Mushroom seed [spawn], polybag [30x30 cm], paddy straw [paral] not more than one year old, *dekchi*/ drum/ bucket to boil water, rubber band, thread, sprayer, and bamboo rack, and incubation and cropping room.

In Sikkim, mushroom can be cultivated throughout the year by manipulating the temperature and humidity of the cropping room, but without manipulation it can be cultivated from mid-February to mid-June and mid-August to mid-November. During June and July, due to monsoon and high humidity,

it is difficult to get the desired results.

During the time of mushroom cultivation, it is important to select good quality of mushroom spawn [seed]. It should be milky white in colour without any contamination and not more than 45 days old. It is also necessary to maintain suitable climatic condition for the cropping as well as incubation room temperature 25 + -

+ 2 [23-27° C] and room should be well ventilated and temperature in between 20-30°C depending upon the species, and the relative humidity should be 75-85 per cent.

Methodology for the cultivation of

moist straw and spread a layer of spawn over it. Again fill two to three inches of the bag with straw and spread a layer of seed over it. This way, make four layers of straw and spread seeds in between per bag.

Now keep the spawned bag in the incubation room [temperature 25 + -- - 2° C] for mycelia run. After 18 to 22 days, bags appear white with mycelia growth. This is the time to remove the polythene very gently from the block without damaging it. Water should be sprinkled regularly. After five to six days, pinheads appear on the block; harvesting can be done after the maturation of the pinhead structure, i.e. four to five days after the pinheads appear. Continuous spraying of water should be done for the next flush of mushroom and it will appear within a week.

Mushroom has very rich nutritional value and is a good source of iron, potassium, vitamin, phosphorus and protein. Mushroom protein is not only cheaper but is almost as nutritious as muscle protein and also contains essential amino acids.

Intake of mushroom is also good for those suffering from cancer, diabetes and HIV/AIDS, heart and kidney problems.

Precautions to be taken during mushroom cultivation:

There are several precautions that need to be taken during mushroom cultivation. Spawn should be fresh; the 'mushroom house' should be visited regularly by the cultivator to watch out for diseases or pest problem.

Avoid over watering and maintain humidity of 75 to 85 per cent and temperature of 25 + -- - 2° C in the cropping room. Hygiene should be maintained in the mushroom house and contaminated block should be discarded immediately. Do not allow perfumed or scented items inside the mushroom house.

[The writer is a resident of Bermiok, West Sikkim]



today in
History

5th March

- 1291:** Sa'ad al'Da'ulah Jewish grand vizier of Persia, assassinated
- 1616:** Copernicus' "de Revolutionibus" placed on Catholic Forbidden index
- 1743:** 1st US religious journal, The Christian History, published, Boston
- 1770:** Boston Massacre, British troops kill 5 in crowd. Crispus Attacus becomes 1st black to die for American freedom
- 1821:** Monroe becomes 1st US president inaugurated on March 5th, because 4th was Sun
- 1908:** 1st ascent of Mt Erebus, Antarctica
- 1924:** Computing-Tabulating-Recording Corp becomes IBM
- 1927:** 1,000 US marines land in China to protect American property
- 1953:** Josef Stalin, soviet leader responsible for 11 million murders, dies
- 1970:** Nuclear non-proliferation treaty goes into effect

chemically yours

Old age is a scary place. Man has long dreamed of eternal youth and the magic elixir. The elixir being nowhere in sight, it seems chemicals will have to do - hair dye and botox to name a few. Hair colour has become so common that it is now considered unnatural to sport a grey head. In fact, it has almost become an unwritten law - when the hair turns grey, as it will, thou shalt dye it!

An elderly relative whips out her bottle of hair dye at the faintest mention of a social gathering and proceeds to colour her thinning strands despite her creaky arthritic joints. She admits that her hair started thinning after she started colouring it. Why? I ask her. At your age, you are expected to have some silver strands, I reason. No, she says - I will look too old. Besides, everyone colours his or her hair - I will look strange.

And as I look around - at family gatherings, on the streets, in taxis, at work, on TV, I see her point. It's difficult to spot a head of grey hair. It's easier to find blondes and redheads! I saw one at the Amdo Golai turning this morning - a flaming redhead. It's weird. Heads and faces no longer match. Blonde and red locks frame chunky brown eyes and dark eyebrows. Creepier still - an unnaturally jet black crown above a wrinkled, tired face. As I watched the assembly session on TV last week, I was struck with how black everyone's hair was! Looking younger than ones age is now something to unabashedly pursue. I don't

think it is easy for those who decide to keep their grey hair as it is. I admire their courage and attitude.

Looking good and hiding one's age was once a solely female preoccupation. Well, vanity now has men in its claws too. A friend has this delightful story - on a visit to Raj's Hair Salon at Deorali for a routine haircut, he saw a man getting a facial. The gentleman was swathed in an apron and his face was covered with a mask. When the mask and apron were removed my friend was shocked to see a lama! The lama is obviously an example of the new metrosexual man. He is one who takes grooming - read facial, manicures, pedicures, wax jobs - seriously and is in touch with his feminine side. Shah Rukh Khan is supposed to be one. The lama is in good company.

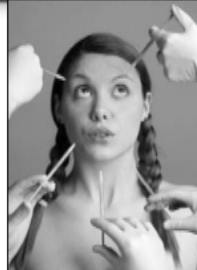
And now botox has come to town. There was an advertisement in this very paper a few days ago promising a wrinkle free face. Botox is the brand name of a Botulinum Toxin Type A, a poison which blocks nerve impulses and temporarily paralyses the muscles that cause wrinkles while giving the skin a smoother and refreshed appearance. Its original Food and Drug Administration [USA] approval in 1989 was to treat blepharospasm [eye-muscle twitching] and cross-eyes. It has now been adapted to rid the face of wrinkles. The toxin is injected into the face and the particular part numbed. Botox means frozen foreheads and benumbed eye corners. It sounds complicated. It is obviously expensive. It is also temporary.

I wonder if there will come a time when botox will be as common as hair dye - when we can just walk into any beauty parlour and have our faces frozen. If such a time comes, then heads and faces will finally match!

This whole exercise of looking good is replete with irony. It is common logic that wrinkles and grey hair are not only the result of aging but also tension. The pressure to look good and choose the right beauty products from the mind-boggling variety available, their serious side effects, their cost is stressful. It creates more wrinkles and grey hair. And then we inject a poison into our faces to deaden it to look more alive! How simple is that? How crazy are we?

The modern world's fixation with good looks and good bodies [I haven't even gone there! - another column, may be] and the millions of products on the market point to an increasingly shallow society. How else does one explain arthritic grandmothers being forced to dye their thinning strands? It is disturbing that we no longer have the luxury or the option of growing old gracefully, the freedom to let it all hang out - our vanity and science forces us to do so chemically.

something else



by ROSHAN PRADHAN

THE FUTURE, NOW! pearls
sweaters with SilverFlame pashmina shawls
silver jewellery SNOC Complex, Deorali

make you uncomfortable. Family could be difficult, as they want what they want. Your best bet is to please them for now.
LIBRA: Don't hang out alone and you'll be much happier. Listen to other's judgments. If you present a situation one way, you'll get an unequivocal "no". Try again and everyone will agree.
SCORPIO: Take charge and organize a visit with an older relative or a friend. Be careful not to stretch yourself too far. Be reasonable with your money. Try a movie. Opt for a concert.
SAGITTARIUS: First you change your plans irritating someone you really care about. Then you decide to do some-

thing very unusual and offbeat. Everyone has a good time.
CAPRICORN: You might make more out of a problem than really exists. Go within for answers. You could feel limited by finances. Change your plans accordingly if you need to.
AQUARIUS: You could feel like someone has let you down, causing tension between you and a loved one or friend. Let go and follow through, and make him or her happy.
PISCES: A partner makes a choice that could make you very uncomfortable. You might want to distance yourself. Someone you care about comes up with a winning solution. Swap ideas.

ARIES: You will put your best foot forward, but will have difficulty keeping a perspective. Adjust your plans. You might think that a conflict can't get resolved.
TAURUS: Stay grounded. A special loved one could prove troublesome. You might feel put off as a fun plan goes down the drain.
GEMINI: Move forward and you will discover that others could give you flak. Perhaps a family member wants to be closer.
CANCER: Balance your checkbook. At first you see a situation one way, but with some perspective, you see other possibilities too.
LEO: The problem is that a child or loved one only wants to win, not to play. Pull back and take a decision, then regroup. Your new suggestions make everyone happy.
VIRGO: Step back and listen harder. What you hear could

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