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Strong gale rips through Lingee-Payong; Locals peg damages at a crore

PURAN TAMANG

NAMCHI, 03 June: The violent windstorms that raged through Sokpey and Payong-Kaw GPUs under Lingee-Payong on the night of 01 June have caused wide-scale damage to government and private property, besides injuring two villagers, one of them critically. According to estimates forwarded by the locals, Rs. 1 crore worth of property has been damaged.

Among the injured is Keshav Singh Basnet, 20, of Payong-Kaw, who is in a critical condition and is presently undergoing treatment in the Central Referral Hospital, Tadong. At the time of the in-

cident [between 4.30 to 5 PM, 01 June] he was milching his cow when the cowshed fell on him. Pushpa Lal Khatiwara, 52, of the same area was also injured and referred to CRH, though his injuries are reported to be minimal.

Meanwhile, a large number of trees uprooted by the windstorm have also damaged electric cables and water pipes, cutting off all power and water supply to these areas, besides blocking all footpaths. Water and power supply are yet to be restored, and the locals here believe that it will take at least a month for the repair works to be completed.

The standing crop of maize

turn to pg 5

National Backward Classes Chairman flooded with demands for inclusion in ST list



SUBASH RAI

GANGTOK, 03 June: Shri Ram Surat Singh [Rtd. Justice], chairperson, National Commission for Backward Classes has assured that he will recommend the demands placed by representatives of Most Backward Communities of Sikkim for Scheduled Tribe status with the National Commission of Scheduled Tribes.

After meeting the representatives of eight organizations including Sikkim Sunuwar [Koyinchbu] Association, Akhil Kirat Khambu Rai Sangh, Sikkim Mangar Association, Akhil Sikkim Gurung [Tamu] Sangh, Akhil

Sikkim Kirat Dewan [Yakha] Sangh, Sikkim Newar Sangathan, and Akhil Sikkim Chettri-Bahun Sangh, Mr. Singh informed that the first four organizations, who have already been recognized as the OBC at the Centre, demanded inclusion in the ST list instead.

"Though this demand is not in my Commission's jurisdiction, I assured them that their demands will be forwarded to National Commission for STs," the Chairperson told NOW! after the meeting.

Mr. Singh further informed that the rest of the representatives [Newar, Chettri-Bahun and Dewan], who have been

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King-con suspected to have shifted operations to Kathmandu

RANJIT SINGH

GANGTOK, 03 June: The notorious conman, Sagar Chakravarty of Pacific Ship & Management Services, is rumoured to be in Kathmandu.

After having duped gullible youth in Sikkim and the Darjeeling hills of lakhs of rupees by promising them lucrative assignments abroad in exotic destinations, it is now likely that the king con has shifted his operations to the neighbouring country of Nepal where in Kathmandu, it is rumoured, he has re-established his con business.

Sources reveal that this is very likely as he needs to sustain himself and knows no other business. At the same time it is also made known that Sagar is a very slippery character. "None of the bank accounts of his company are in his name," says an official.

Sagar Chakravarty, the managing director of Pacific Shipping and Management Services, is being hounded by the Sikkim Crime Branch for having made away with about Rs. 10 lakh from local youth.

Apart from the Sikkim po-

lice, FIRs have also been lodged against him in Kolkata where he set up office before branching out to Sikkim. In Kolkata, he reportedly duped another batch of youth with the promise of jobs in cruise liners and in Seychelles; in return candidates had to deposit about Rs. 1 lakh with him for their clearance and documentation. Sagar is also known to have Dubai connections.

Crime branch officials from Sikkim will be going down to Kolkata on 05 June; this will be the second such outing for the Sikkim police in their hunt for the kingpin. The officials, headed by the investigating officer, KP Nepal, will be conducting raids in certain locations and arrests are also likely.

"We have got substantial information from Supriyo and Asim," reveal officials, adding that this will come in handy in their Kolkata opera-

turn to pg 5

ragtime by PANKAJ THAPA

"I'M SORRY, BUT I CAN ONLY TRADE WITH BONAFIDE CHINESE. CAN YOU SHOW ME SOME IDENTIFICATION?"

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Understand Environment, Protection Will Then Be Easier

Tomorrow is World Environment Day. Like every year, there will be plantation drives, workshops and seminars held all over the world. Like every year, once the people are done with the process of observing World Environment Day, they will return to their concrete homes driving fuel guzzling and noxious fume releasing vehicles, their headlights powered by batteries that turn the earth sour. This is so because although these urban-dwellers realise the need to protect the environment, they do not understand what environment really is. They want the city air to be cleaner, but cannot connect with the need to keep green belts alive for this happen. They want potable water in their taps and also uninterrupted power supply, which either burns fossil fuels or taps into water resources to generate. The city-bred idea of environmental protection is riddled with cliches, are impractical and for all their high-sounding ideals, are shallow in concern.

This is the trap that Sikkim has to work itself out of. Even though a majority of the people here live in the bustees, and are thus closer to nature, the generation which will take decisions in future are being groomed in the urban areas where Environment has become a subject in school and speaks of things they cannot associate with. There are many children who have not seen how a cow is milked or how the fields are ploughed. They know the various functions of the various keys of a mobile phone, but ask them to recognise one tree by name and they are stumped. They know the months and days of the week, but do not know the seasons. This is not the curse of modernity, it is a reflection of the previous generation's uncaring attitude not only towards their young, but also towards the society and its collective future. A generation so uninitiated in the ways of nature cannot, even if it wants to, take care of the environment. On World Environment Day, we should perhaps introduce the young to environment first. Once they get to know each other, they will also take care of each other.

After 'Deep Throat,' what mysteries remain?

Now that "Deep Throat" has been identified as a 91-year-old California grandfather, aficionados of unsolved mysteries have to look elsewhere. Luckily for them, there are plenty of places to look.

Even after Tuesday's revelation that former FBI No. 2 Mark Felt was the Watergate super-source "Deep Throat," there are still unknowns swirling around the scandal that brought down President Richard Nixon in 1974.

The main question remaining is what information was contained - and erased - in the 18 1/2 minute gap in a White House tape recording. The tape, made by Nixon's secretary, Rose Mary Woods, contained a discussion between the president and his chief of staff, HR Haldeman, pertaining to Watergate.

Woods shot to notoriety for her inadequate explanations of how she came to erase part of the tape. She never told what the tape held before her death on Jan. 22.

A more contemporary Washington mystery is the source of the leak that led col-

umnist Robert Novak to identify a CIA operative named Valerie Plame, an expert on weapons of mass destruction.

Novak mentioned Plame by name in a July 14, 2003, column critical of Plame's husband, retired diplomat Joseph Wilson, after Wilson reported an Iraqi purchase of uranium "yellowcake" from Niger was highly unlikely. Wilson's report went counter

to some in the Bush administration who sought a link between Iraq and weapons of mass destruction.

Novak has not said where he got the information, but denied it was a "planned leak," and said he was never told revealing Plame's identity would endanger her or anyone else. A special prosecutor is investigating the case.

The mystery that set Washingtonians buzzing in the summer of 2001 was the disappearance of 24-year-old Chandra Levy, a government intern who had a relationship

with Rep. Gary Condit, a California Democrat. Levy's skeletal remains were found in a city park in 2002. How they got there remains unknown.

Beyond Washington, there are historical mysteries that still resonate. Many observers wonder whether Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone on Nov. 22, 1963, when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas.

Conspiracy theories surrounding the assassination, some featured in popular movies, have focused on the possible involvement of groups ranging from the Mafia to anti-Castro Cuban exiles and the CIA. Questions have also been raised about what motivated Jack Ruby to kill Oswald in a Dallas police station two days after the assassination.

The mystery surrounding former Teamsters union leader Jimmy Hoffa revolves around what happened to his body after he disappeared from a Michigan parking lot in 1975.

The presumption is he was killed by the Mafia, but the whereabouts of his remains are unknown.

The final fate of pioneer aviator Amelia Earhart has never been discovered, although theories abound. She was last heard from on July 2, 1937, on the Pacific leg of her attempt to be the first woman to fly around the globe. Extensive rescue attempts turned up nothing.

Other disappearances that piqued mystery-lovers' interest include DB Cooper, who hijacked a commercial airliner in 1971, extorted \$200,000 from its owner and then leaped from the plane with 9.5 kgs of \$20 bills strapped to his body. He has never been seen again, and his real identity remains unknown.

"The Missingest Man In New York" was state Supreme Court Judge Joseph Crater, who seemingly vanished after hailing a cab on a New York street on Aug. 6, 1930. He was officially declared dead in 1939, but sightings of the dandified jurist continued for years.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS USA

The peace building process between India and Pakistan has escalated at a speed unseen in the history of relations between the two countries. The recent India-visit by Gen Musharraf was preceded by a lot of hype about an 'irreversible peace process'. Many of us have wanted this peace for a long time. We have pointed towards the large amounts of our budget that are spent on defence and have highlighted the fact that these amounts are ill-aforded by both countries that need to spend much more on education and health of their people; that the insecurity and paranoia generated by the discourse of exclusion and communalism have distorted our societies; that the people in general hold a lot of goodwill towards each other; and that the military-political elite has built and used a fear of the 'other' to legitimize its rule.

Certainly, there is some cause for celebration as the two countries come closer. Nevertheless, there is a need to critically examine this somewhat sudden change in the behaviour of the very elite that had previously created the spectre of the 'enemy-neighbour'. Unofficially, Gen Musharraf is acknowledged as the architect of the

The game has just begun

failed Kargil operation. What has changed to make a dove out of a hawk? And can this current stage of bonhomie really be treated as 'irreversible' as the general claims?

Some analysts have focused on personal motivations for both leaders. Vajpayee was 79 years old when the process started and wanted to leave behind a legacy of lasting peace, they argue. Some argue that Musharraf was so shaken by the two attempts at his life by Islamic militant groups that he has come to a complete re-evaluation of their role in Pakistan's internal and external policies. Other analysts have tried to take a broader canvas than individual motivations to declare that it is easier for 'right-wing' governments to make moves towards peace because their nationalist credentials are not questioned. Though this may provide a partial answer, it still does not explain why the peace process has gained such a momentum at this point rather than any other, especially since this is not the first time that the mili-

If Pakistan and India are to tread the path of durable friendship, the two peoples will have to work together to build peace through consensus and democracy, with a clear understanding of the obstacles on the way...

tary or religious group dominate politics in either India or Pakistan. In fact, this is a critical question: why now?

Some people point towards the

CROSSCONNECTION VIEWPOINTS ON INDIA FROM ELSEWHERE

momentum built up by Track-2 diplomacy to explain why the peace process has speeded up now. It is argued that these initiatives have forced governments of their respective countries to respect people's desire for better relations. In a recent visit to Lahore, Tapan Bose, one of the architects of the Pakistan India People's Forum for Peace and De-

mocracy, reminisced that when the inaugural meeting of the forum was held in Lahore at Flaties Hotel there were only 25 people who attended it. In contrast, the most recent meeting held in Delhi this year was attended by 600 delegates, half of them from Pakistan. Moreover, this meeting was held with the blessing of the Indian External Affairs Ministry that made Hyderabad House, normally reserved for visiting heads of states, available for use by the delegates.

There can be little doubt that the People's Forum and similar initiatives have had an impact, but the sudden escalation in the peace process seems to have surprised its architects too. It is a little hard to credit the change in government policy solely to a sharp increase in goodwill among the masses. Moreover, it assumes a certain level of responsiveness to people's desires on part of the government that is sorely lacking on other fronts.

Most people acknowledge the key role that has been played by the US in

prodding the two governments to the negotiating table and speeding up the process more than at any other point in the history of a divided subcontinent. However, that the US has kick-started this process and literally shoved the two governments into each other's arms is often mentioned but glossed over as relatively unimportant. The tacit understanding is that even though the US is not acting altruistically we should be happy because by some accident of history Pakistani people's interests have coincided with the US. But this seeming 'accident of history' needs closer examination.

The US has several economic, political and strategic motives for taking on the role of a mediator in the region. Pakistan is a key ally in the 'war on terror' but India has been identified by the US as its strategic partner in the larger Asian region. The Council on Foreign Relations, an important US think-tank declared in a recent report: "If New Delhi and Washington continue to broaden and deepen official and non-official ties, the prospects are good that by 2010 the world's two largest democracies will succeed in consolidating a genuine partnership."

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NGO takes anti-drugs movement to Ranipool school

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 03 June: Bethzatha Society, an NGO focussed on lending assistance to those addicted to drugs and alcohol, today held an awareness camp at Ranipool School where its members interacted with the senior students and informed them that addiction was a four-fold disease that af-

fects physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. Bethzatha representatives encouraged the students to share their problems and then offered them counselling. Speaking to NOW!, a member of the Bethzatha Society said that addiction was a social problem and a disease and people should be encouraged to come forward and discuss

the problem freely. He also stressed that the society was focussed on providing correct information to the public regarding addiction and its treatment. The society, he added, also provides support to the addicts in their recovery and they are also sensitised to the negative impacts of addiction. Bethzatha Society, it may be

mentioned here, has set up 'Serenity Home,' an Information Research and Treatment Centre, at Lower Burtuk, to help those suffering from addiction. They impart assistance to those who are habituated to drugs and alcohol but sincerely wish to get out of it. The treatment facility also counsels family members of the victims of drug abuse and alcohol addiction.

NSS programme officers and NGO representatives groomed on their role in combating AIDS

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 03 June: A day-long advocacy programme on HIV/AIDS for National Service Scheme [NSS] programme officers and NGOs was held today here at Youth Hostel,

6th Mile. The programme was organised by the NSS Cell and sponsored by the Sikkim State AIDS Control Society. Various resource persons for SSACS, NSS Cell and STNM Hospital spoke on modes of transmission of sexu-

ally transmitted diseases and its precautionary measures. The social challenges and the role of NSS in creating awareness about STDs among the people to lower the transmission rate was stressed. The programme was at-

tended by 60 NSS programme officers and 12 members from different NGOs.

WEATHERUPDATE



GANGTOK & SURROUNDING AREAS

The Weather Yesterday

MAX TEMP: 23.2 Degree Celsius
 MIN TEMP: 14.2 Degree Celsius
 Rainfall: 2.7mm
 Relative humidity: 89%

Gov'nor inaugurates training course for security personnel

GANGTOK, 03 June: The Training Course on Professional Certification for the security professionals was inaugurated here at the Community Hall today by Governor V. Rama Rao.

The training programme organised by the International Institute of Security and Safety Management [IISSM], New

Delhi, till 08 June. The Governor stressed that such trainings for the private sector was the need of the hour, keeping in mind a rapid increase of terrorist activities. "Security is common sense, which is lacking in many of us. Hence, such trainings will improve the skills of security and

safety professionals," he said while thanking IISSM for holding this programme in Sikkim. Also present during the inaugural function were RK Sinha, president and director general, IISSM; DC Nath, executive president and CEO; and Lt. Gen. [Retd.] Prem Sagar, executive president.

RONGLI OBSERVES A WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY WITH A DIFFERENCE

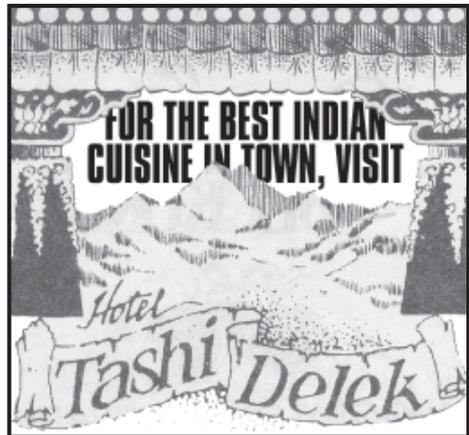
Leaders kick tobacco, paan habit, urge others to follow suit

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 03 June: World No Tobacco Day was jointly observed at Rongli Bazaar by Nehru Yuva Kendra, Gangtok, and Youth Development Society of Sikkim, Lower Dalapchand, on 31 May. Interestingly, the programme organised here was not just another day for token observation; rather it was a day for setting examples by public figures for others to follow.

ing awareness on the harmful effects of tobacco consumption; the procession culminated at Garg Bhawan where a seminar was held. Various speakers spoke on the harmful effects of tobacco consumption. They also urged shopkeepers not to sell to-

bacco/ alcohol to school children, restaurateurs were also requested not to allow school students to smoke or consume alcohol in their restaurants. By the end of the programme, 30 people had also pledged to give up their tobacco/ alcohol addiction.



A Green Day in Gangtok

by TENZING GYATSO, Sajong, Rumtek

"Save the Trees!" "Save the Environment!" entreated the placards tossing about in a stream of students. The rally was finally K.O'd in a glut of cliched VIP speeches. Other VIPs ho were planting saplings were cordially received by a host of leeches, [for oddly enough the Annual Leech Fiesta too falls on this auspicious Fifth Day of June] Then alas! Like the desert's overnight shifting sand dunes, with a flip of the page of time to just the next day, the town's "Keep Gangtok Green" resolutions are once again smothered in noxious fumes of grey.

The town's teetering spindly highrises just simply defy gravity. They stik out at the most amazing angles to baffle our sanity hence to the proud owner of a building thus precariously perched I queried, "Do you not fear a quake may cause your building to lurch?" "Gosh yes!" said he, "That's why I never venture anywhere near that death-trap. I've leased it out to tenants and other such dumb saps. Though mind you, it's fully insured against fires, slides, quakes and gales. I should make a tidy pile if it ever hits a sixer on the Richter scale!"

Such were the perplexing matters I mulled over on a bench as I dozed at the Titanic Concrete Park... three most mismatched words ever juxtaposed. Do we take a crashing, crushing tumble together some day into an abyss... In the interim we have no option but to simply muddle along in ignorant bliss.

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Congress never commented on insider-outsider issue, claims Bhandari; Expresses displeasure over Central pats for CM

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 03 June: The Sikkim Pradesh Congress president, Nar Bahadur Bhandari today stated that the state Congress has never talked about the "insider-outsider" issue, nor has it had made any statements regarding the Sikkim Subject Certificates. Addressing a press conference today, Mr. Bhandari, claimed that the press release issued by the opposition parties made no mention of either.

"Sikkim is a part of India; when the chief minister talks about outsiders does he means those from other parts

of the country are not Indians?" he questioned.

Mr. Bhandari is just back from the North East Council Coordination meet held in Shillong. A draft of his speech there which was made available to the press criticises the central government for praising the Chief Minister. "...central leaders during Sikkim visit of a day or two make public statements that the state has made progress and Sikkimese people have elected a good chief minister... to give false praise without ascertaining facts, presents the INC in a poor shape and brings in

demoralizations in the rank and file," a section of the draft states.

The Congress chief made it clear that he was referring to the recent visit of the finance minister for the inauguration of SICPA at Mamring where he had praised the Chief Minister.

Another point raised by Mr. Bhandari was the presence of the Sikkim chief minister at the Eastern region meet of chief ministers at Ranchi. "Sikkim is not part of the eastern zone," says Mr. Bhandari at the same time questioning why the CM did not attend the meet on VAT in New Delhi. The Chief Minister, it might

be added here, was at Ranchi on the invitation of the Union Home Minister.

It was also informed that primary membership to the party was open and that there was no more of the so called "dissidence" in the party anymore since the intra party elections.

Mr. Bhandari also said that those not accommodated in the PCC and other bodies will certainly get suitable posts and their potential realised.

"Madam Sonia Gandhi suggested that the youth be given party posts and we intend to follow this in letter and spirit," he said.

SAI NAMCHI PROGRESSES IN SOUTH SR. DIV TOURNEY

a NOW REPORT

NAMCHI, 03 June: Sports Authority of India, Namchi, today won the second match of the South District Senior Division Football League Championship 2005 against Jorethang Football Club by 3-1.

While Bir Bahadur Pradhan, Vishal Pradhan and Anil Pradhan scored one goal

each for SAI, the only goal for JFC was scored by Rudra Hamal through a beautiful free kick.

The third match of the championship organised here at Bhaichung Stadium by South District Football Association will be played tomorrow between Sinolchu Club, Namchi, and Gharelu Samaj, Purano Namchi.

NOTICE

All Senior Junior Engineers [Civil] who have crossed 10 [ten] years of regular service as on **31.03.2005**, whose names have figured in the zone of promotion to the post of Assistant Engineers [Civil] are hereby informed that the dates of interview have been fixed on **15.6.2005 to 18.6.2005**. They are also requested to collect their calling letters immediately from Mr. T.N. Lamtha [President/ASDEA]. Contact Nos. 99320-25697/ 99321-25697/ 94341-64477.

[T.N. Lamtha], President, All Sikkimese Diploma Engineers Association, Gangtok



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The Student Handbook & Prospectus can be obtained from the Regional Centre, Tadong, Gangtok or from any of the Study Centres in person on payment of **Rs. 50/- (Rupees Fifty only)** in cash or through post by sending a Demand Draft of **Rs. 100/- (Rupees Hundred only)** drawn in favour of **IGNOU** payable at **Gangtok**. Please write your name and address on the backside of the **DD**.

An electronic version of the Prospectus is also available at **IGNOU website at <http://www.ignou.ac.in>**. Application form can be downloaded from the website and submitted along with DD of Rs. 50/- in addition to the programme fee.

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(i) To receive the requisition for supply of Student Handbook by post : **15.07.2005**
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Late and incomplete application forms shall be summarily rejected. No correspondence in this regard will be entertained.

Addresses of Study Centres:

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2. Co-ordinator, IGNOU Study Centre (2402D), Mangan Sr. Sec School, North Sikkim, Pin. 737116	Tel. No. 03592-270923 & 03592-270364
3. Co-ordinator, IGNOU Study Centre (2403), Soreng Sr. Sec. School West Sikkim, Pin. 737121	Email: Rd_Gangtok@rediffmail.com
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SDF TO SHORE UP ITS EASTERN PRESENCE WITH A SERIES OF MEETINGS

GANGTOK, 03 June: To strengthen its organisational process, Sikkim Democratic Front party will hold meetings from 06 to 18 June at 12 different constituencies in the East Sikkim.

As per a press release issued by the party, the meeting will start from Rongli on 06 June. Other areas where the meetings are to be held are Rhenock [07 June], Pakyong [08 June], Machong [09 June], Kokley [10 June], Assam Lingzey [11 June], Makha Bazaar [12 June], Chisopani [13 June], Adampool [14 June], SDF head office at Gangtok [15 June], Singtam Dharmasala [16 June], and Chokazong [18 June].

Project affected people of Teesta cut across geographical boundaries to form Teesta Sangharsh Samiti

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 03 June: An organisation by the name of 'Teesta Sangharsh Samiti' has been formed by all organisations representing people affected by dams on Teesta river. With this, Affected Citizens of Teesta [ACT] of North Sikkim, which has joined the Samiti, has found an ally in the groups/organisations working on these issues all along the Teesta basin and NGOs of the Sub-Himalayan region.

An ACT Press release informs that the Samiti was formed during a three-day long 'People's Workshop'

held at Kalimpong from 28 to 30 May, where people of all affected areas expressed their solidarity with each other and resolved to work together for a common cause.

To understand the methods used by various agencies to exploit the vast natural resources and the livelihood of the people and to study the possible methods that can be used to protect people from such exploitation, two founder members of ACT, Tseten Lepcha and Pemzang Tenzing, had also attended the workshop.

It may be mentioned here that ACT was formed in North

Sikkim to highlight the concerns of the affected people of the area, devastation of environment and probable violation of basic rights of the native people to exist in their century-old habitat due to the implementation of large hydel projects of colossal magnitude.

The workshop at Kalimpong was jointly organised by Nespon, Siliguri, and North Bengal Regional Committee of Rashtriya Van Shramajeevi Manch and was attended by affected people from all stages of hydroelectric power projects envisaged on the Teesta, representatives from Teesta Low Dam State

III and IV, Teesta HEP from Stages I to IV and all other projects on the tributaries, apart from NGOs from Darjeeling district and people from Kalimpong.

The workshop was addressed by various national-level experts of big dam and issues relating to human rights and indigenous people. The main speakers included Souparna Lahiri from Delhi Forum, Ritwick Dutta, a Supreme Court lawyer, Soumitra Ghosh, coordinator of the workshop, and Dr. Milindo Chakraborty.

The North East was represented in the workshop by members of Centre for Organisation Research and Education, Manipur, and NGOs from other North Eastern States.

VHAS urges West to Say No to tobacco

GANGTOK, 03 June: Voluntary Health Association of Sikkim held programmes on the World No Tobacco Day on 31 May at Tinziring, Rungdung and Tingting villages of West Sikkim, wherein the locals were made aware of the harmful effects of tobacco on health and its negative socio-economic impacts. VHAS was assisted by community health workers of the area and West District Health Administration to conduct the programme. Stickers, caps, newsletters and booklets containing anti-tobacco messages were also distributed among the public during the programme that was held at Tashiding PHC in Tinziring, Kargey Health Sub Center at Rungdung, and Yuksum PHC at Tingting.

Strong gale rips through Lingee-Payong; Locals peg damages at a crore

Contd from pg 1

[nearing harvest] and cardamom, have also been devastated, locals add.

Most of the felled trees in the private holding lands have been split in half, rendering them useless as timber. The locals inform these *Pani Saaj, Okhar, Utis, Siris, Chilawney and Lapsi*, which otherwise fetch a good price in the market, can now be used only as firewood.

The affected areas of Payong-Kaw were visited today by the area Gram Panchayats who estimated that around 75 per cent of the village had been damaged by the windstorm.

Speaking to NOW! over the

phone, SDM [South] confirmed the incident, adding that the official report on the exact extent of the damage will be known only tomorrow. On the relief measures, the SDM informed that rural development assistants in the area should be coordinating the work.

Meanwhile, last night's heavy rainfall has badly damaged the road connecting Debrung village with Namchi Bazaar. Incidentally, the road extension work being carried out here at the road leading from Namchi to Gangtok had recently been stopped as an NOC had not been obtained from Forest Department prior to commencing the work.

Last night's rainwater

washed away loose soil from the road and the slush poured into the drains, blocking them. The water then overflowed from the drains and damaged the road leading to Gangtok.

After receiving complaints from the locals, DC [South], Zilla Adhyaksha [S] Phurmit Lepcha, Upa-Adhyaksha [S] BM Rai, DFO [T] Dr. P. Santhil Kumar, and an assistant engineer from PWD visited the spot. The DC [S] directed the AE, PHE, to reconstruct the damaged road and added that the NOC could be obtained later. He also directed the contractor to immediately clear the mud from the site and also asked the RO from Land Revenue Department to submit a report on the damage.

SDF to formalise Nari and Yuva wings in South by 13th

NAMCHI, 03 June: Constituency-level Nari Morcha and Yuva Morcha of the SDF party will be formed in the seven South District constituencies of Melli, Rateypani, Damthang, Jorethang, Ralang, Khamdong, Temi Tarku and Wok, by 13 June. This was decided today during a district-level meeting of the Cheli Morcha here at the party office. These women and youth wings of the party will consist of one Cheli coordinator, 100 women and 100 youth [men], two vice-coordinators; apart from them, 41 members will be nominated for the constituency-level committee. The committee will be formed in the presence of area MLAs.

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Forest claims to have initiated process to have biodiversity-stealing Czech national prosecuted in his country

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 03 June: In a rejoinder to the query made by Ratna Bahadur Gajmer of Tadong in a local Nepali daily [Samay, dated 18 May, 2005] in connection with the biodiversity theft from Sikkim by a Czech national during 2003, the Department of Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management has said that process has already been initiated to see to it that action is taken against the offender in his country.

A press release issued by the department states that one Vojtech Holubec of Sidistini, Czech Republic had put up an advertisement on the internet offering to sell wild flower seeds he had collected from Sikkim and various other parts of other countries.

As per the advertisement, he had collected wild flower seeds from Goechala, Dzongi, Thangshing, Choka, Onglathang, Lachung and Yumthang, the places he claimed to have visited in July-August 2003.

"The moment the advertisement was put on the internet, it came to the knowledge of the department, which has left no stone unturned to bring it to the

notice of the Governments, as biodiversity theft is in contravention to the provision of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972," the release states.

Accordingly, letters in this regard were despatched to the Union Ministry of Environment & Forests in New Delhi, and copies to the Regional Deputy Director, Wildlife Preservation in Kolkata, and to the State Home Department, Special Branch of Sikkim Police, Tourism Department, and also to the Travel Agents' Association of Sikkim.

The State Government, the release adds, has also written to the Ministry of Home Affairs for taking up the matter with the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi and the Indian Embassy in Czech Republic for action on the offender by that country.

From the records available with the department, the Czech national was not issued any permission by the department to visit the places from where he claims to have collected the wild seeds. Moreover, the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and the rules made therein empowers only the State Chief Wildlife Warden or the officers authorised by him to issue

permission to anyone who intends to enter any wildlife protected area like national parks and sanctuaries.

The Forest Department has already alerted the functional Forest and Wildlife check posts set up at various places, and more of such check posts, whenever required, are being strengthened with manpower in order to check illegal passing of biodiversity resources from Sikkim. Further the department is also reviewing the field activities in the departmental coordination meetings held every month, the department claims in its press release.

It may be mentioned here that the entire State of Sikkim is under the restricted/protected area regime under the Foreigners [Restricted Areas] Order, 1963, and Foreigners [Protected Areas] Order, 1958. Permits to groups of foreign tourists consisting of four or

more persons only for specified areas are issued by the competent authorities of the Governments, provided they are sponsored by travel agency/tour operators recognised by the Tourism Department and such tourists are also required to be accompanied by a Liaison Officer, who play a vital role in the checking of bio-piracy by the tourists in the State.

"Government agencies issuing permits are to ensure that the conditions laid down in the GoI guidelines are followed scrupulously; they are also to ensure that a tourist does nothing in contravention to the provision of the existing Forests and Wildlife protection laws," the release says.

The department has further requested more cooperation and coordination from the public in the department's endeavour to protect and preserve the rich biodiversity of the State.

Truckers unhappy with present working committee; to elect new members soon

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 03 June: The election of a new working committee of Sikkim Truck Drivers' Association will be held shortly, informs a press release issued by Laxuman Rai, election commissioner of the association.

The date of election, last date for filing nominations, date of withdrawal and other details will be made known through local dailies, it adds.

The decision to elect a new working committee was taken after two-thirds of the association members expressed their dissatisfaction with the present working committee to the election commissioner

[dated 22 May], it adds. In this regard, an emergency meeting was called by the election commissioner on 25 May; however, since some of the members, including the present association president and general secretary-II and two other members of the election committee, failed to turn up, no decision could be reached upon during the meeting, the release states.

Again on 29 May, another application from the association members demanding fresh elections was submitted to the election commission; following which the latter decided to hold elections without calling for any further meetings, the release informs.

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Kutse Shegu

The 49th Day Kutse Shegu of **Late Karma Wangchen Bhutia [Panchayat Secretary]** of **Ralang Lungsing**, who passed away on 1st May, 2005, falls on **18th June, 2005 [Saturday]**. All friends, family and well-wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul on the said date at our residence at **Ralang Lungsing, south Sikkim**. We take this opportunity to thank all those who stood by us in our time of bereavement and regret our inability to do so individually.

Choko Dem Bhutia [mother], Chumjey Bhutia [sister]- 9434211608, Tshering P. Bhutia [sister]- 9434318808, Y. Dem Bhutia [wife], Laden Bhutia [brother-in-law]- 9434169426



Kutse Shegu

The 49th Day Kutse Shegu of **late D.G. Shangderpa** who left for his heavenly abode on 24 April 2005 falls on **11 June 2005 [Saturday]**. All friends, well-wishers and relatives are requested to attend the prayer function for the departed soul at our residence at **Upper Arithang, Gangtok**. We would also take this opportunity to thank all those who stood by us at our time of bereavement and regret our inability to do so personally.

N.C. Shangderpa [wife], Sonam Gyatso, Tashi Wangyal, Thinlay Passang, Jigmi Wangchuk [sons], Karma Doma [daughter] & other family members.

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Kutse Shegu

The 49th Day Kutse Shegu of **late Karma Tshering Lepcha** who left for his heavenly abode on 16 April 2005 falls on **3 June 2005 [Friday]**. All friends, well-wishers and relatives are requested to attend the prayer function for the departed soul at our residence at **Government Quarter No. 3U, Upper Syari, Gangtok**. We would also take this opportunity to thank all those who stood by us at our time of bereavement and regret our inability to do so personally.

Tasbi Pincho Lepcha [father], Bina Lepcha [mother], Ongden Tsh. & Topden Tsh. Lepcha [brothers], Pramilla Lepcha [sister-in law], Ph: 9832089770, 280789

Kutse Shegu

The 49th Day Kutse Shegu of **late Cheden Bhutia** who left for her heavenly abode on 20 April 2005 falls on **7 June 2005 [Tuesday]**. All friends, well-wishers and relatives are requested to attend the prayer function for the departed soul at our residence at **Chandmari, Old Jail Road, Gangtok**. We would also take this opportunity to thank all those who stood by us at our time of bereavement and regret our inability to do so personally.

Lhendup Bhutia [husband], Bhaichung Bhutia- 9832080806, Lodey Bhutia- 9434109941 [sons], Phu Tshering Bhutia- 9434179105 [son-in-law] & all family members.



Sudoku mania reaches India

A number puzzle that has stormed its way into major newspapers, magazines and websites across the United States, the United Kingdom and most of the world, has disembarked on Indian shores via a slew of dailies, including *The Hindu*, *Hindustan Times*, *Deccan Chronicle* and *The Asian Age*. Originating in Japan in its current form, Sudoku consists of a 9x9 grid, further divided into a 3x3 subgrids with a few numbers thrown in.

The challenge? Fill each of the blank boxes in the rows, columns and 3x3 squares with digits from one to nine without repeating a single digit.

N Ram, editor-in-chief of

The Hindu, said: "The response has been positive, but it is still too early to say how positive. Yes, there is a possibility of shifting the puzzle to the main paper [currently in the city supplement]. Will the appeal of the Sudoku puzzle endure? Nobody knows the answer to this question at this stage."

The Hindustan Times carries its Sudoku on the back page.

Sudoku became a rage among the Japanese in the late 1980s but it was not until 2005 that it caught the fancy of the rest of the world.

The phenomenon has addicts obsessing over it the

same way that adults and teenagers were fawning over the Rubik's cube in the 1980s.

In India, it has already whipped up a small following, with readers describing it as 'interesting', 'addictive' and a 'refreshing change from regular crosswords'.

trends

One Sudoku enthusiast from Chennai, Murli Desikan, a senior software engineer, has even created a Java-based program that generates the answers for any given Sudoku matrix.

The game's popularity is widespread as the rules are easy to follow and seeking the solution requires use of logic and no math in spite of it be-

ing a numbers game.

It also scores over the venerated crossword as its appeal cuts across age groups, since it does not require the gamer to be highly literate, have advanced linguistic abilities or an abundance of general knowledge.

In the UK it was launched by *The Times* in late 2004. It has since become so successful that the other national dailies have been quick to realise its appeal; now it can be found in many dailies, including *The Sun*, *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph*. *The New York Times* is supposedly considering publishing it in its Sunday magazine.

Try solving this Sudoku. There is only one rule. Each 3x3 box should have all numbers from 1 to 9. There can obviously be no repeats, and the numbers cannot repeat in the adjoining box of the next 3x3 set either. There can only be one right arrangement.

	6		1	4		5		
		8	3		5	6		
2								1
8			4		7			6
		6				3		
7			9		1			4
5								2
		7	2		6	9		
	4		5		8		7	

The solution turned upside down [to discourage cheating before serious attempts]

3	7	1	8	9	5	2	4	6
5	8	6	9	4	2	7	1	3
2	9	4	3	1	7	9	8	5
4	2	8	1	6	9	5	3	7
7	1	3	2	5	8	6	9	4
6	9	5	7	3	4	1	2	8
1	3	7	9	8	6	4	5	2
9	4	6	5	2	3	8	7	1
8	5	2	4	7	1	3	9	6

Why newspapers are more popular in Asia

The world's first newspaper, called *Relation*, was published 400 years ago in Europe in Strasbourg. Now there are 6,580 daily newspapers worldwide, with a combined circulation of 395 million.

That anniversary was celebrated here this week by 1,300 newspaper executives from 80 countries at the annual convention of WAN (World Association of Newspapers). Most reported circulation growth the past year. Exceptions were in North

America and Europe. Continental breakdowns:

- South America, up 6.3%.
- Africa, up 6%.
- Asia, up 4.1%.
- North America, down 0.2%.
- Europe, down 1.4%.

Asian growth is off a huge base. South America and Africa off much smaller foundations. Among major countries, Japan is the leader. There, 64% of the people buy a newspaper daily. In the USA, it's only 23%.

Japan's biggest newspapers are *Yomiuri Shimbun*,

with more than 10 million daily, and *Asahi Shimbun*, 8.3 million. In the United States, the leaders are USA TODAY with 2.3 million, *The Wall Street Journal* with 2.1 million and *The New York Times* with 1.1 million.

Newspapers in Asia emphasize news. The volume of news exceeds the volume of advertising. In many U.S. newspapers, the reverse is true.

Also, newspapers in Asia generally are more fair and accurate than some in Europe or

the USA. London's tabloids are the most notorious muckrakers and make no apologies for it. Most newspapers in the USA are reliable, but some biggies have apologized lately for phony news, including USA TODAY and *The New York Times*.

How to attract more readers by putting more news in the paper, with accuracy and fairness above all else, may be the best 400th anniversary gift for modern-day editors and publishers in North America and Europe from their Asian counterparts.

National Backward Classes Chairman flooded with demands for inclusion in ST list

Contd from pg 1

given OBC status by the State Government had demanded OBC recognition in the central level. On this, he said, "I have asked them to submit relevant documents and supporting arguments required by the Commission in this regard."

Mr. Singh, who arrived here today on a three-day visit also held a meeting with MB Dahal, Chairperson, State Commission for Backward Classes, Member Secretary and other office bearers of the State Commission during the post-lunch session.

Speaking to NOW!, KD Mukhia and CB Sunuwar, President and General Secretary of Sikkim Mukhia Association informed that the Chairperson responded positively to their demand of similar age relaxation in job employment to OBCs as enjoyed by the ST

communities. Mr. Singh, they said, told them that this demand has been voiced in other states too and that the Commission was considering it seriously.

The President of Newar Sangathan, Khagendra Pradhan claimed that his community had raised the demand for the welfare of entire Nepali communities of Sikkim.

"We submitted to the Chairperson that Central delay in according OBC status for us was

difficult to understand when even the erstwhile ruling class of Sikkim has been accorded tribal status. Surely, the subjects of this former kingdom can be accommodated as OBCs," he said.

Besides placing the demand for tribal status, the members of the AKRS led by their President, Dr. SK Rai, requested the Chairperson to include "Kirat Khambu" as prefixed on Rai for any correspondence with the organization in future.

Elaborating further, Dr. Rai said that "Rai" was a common title in the country and the 'Kirat Khambu' prefix was necessary to avoid confusion.

Representatives of the Chettri-Bahun Sangh, when their turn came, reminded the Chairperson that in an earlier communication they were told that their demand for OBC status had to first be granted by the State. "Now State Government has recognized us as OBC, the

ball is now in the national commission's court," said DR Thapa, President of the Sangh.

Members of the Gurung organization led by its president, KB Gurung and General Secretary, Binod Gurung apprised the Commission that their demand for tribal status has been pending since 1994. They even claimed that Gurung community fulfills all the criteria for tribal status.

Interestingly, the Dewan community, which was left out

of the Central OBC list earlier demanded the status of vanishing tribe. According to PK Dewan, general secretary of the association, the data available in the Sikkimese voterlist shows only 80 voters of Dewan community in the State, which itself is enough to prove its claim as a vanishing tribe.

Members of Mangar Sangh, led by Govind Thapa and JB Thapa, reiterated their demand for ST status.

Contd from pg 2

At the same time stability in the region is critical to US political interests. Given the ongoing and particularly difficult war in Afghanistan, where the US has not still managed to establish the kind of control it had hoped for, further distractions in the region would be highly unwelcome. In this context the Kashmir issue takes on a radi-

THE GAME HAS JUST BEGUN

cally important role for the US. The current US administration is particularly keen to defuse the Kashmir issue because it is seen as a training ground for spreading anti-American sentiment in Pakistan and beyond into other Central Asian countries.

However, we need to be

clear-headed in our analysis of the gains and losses we expect to make from the new situation. We need and want a sustainable peace. Not the one that is being imposed without due considerations for the concerns of the people in the two countries.

There are two main dangers

that arise through this imposed 'peace'. One, that the US's political needs may change and it will pull the plug on this process as abruptly as it started it. Until significant momentum is generated and real advantages accrue to people either through redirected spending from defence to education and

health, or through economic relations with India, pulling the plug will be easy. Neither of these seem likely in the short-term as the army seems in no hurry to relinquish its stronghold on the country's budget and on the 'peace process'.

[by HUMEIRA IQTIDAR, courtesy: *The Dawn, Pakistan*]



1989: TIANANMEN SQUARE MASSACRE TAKES PLACE

today in
History

4th June

Chinese troops storm through Tiananmen Square in the centre of Beijing, killing and arresting thousands of pro-democracy protesters. The brutal Chinese government assault on the protesters shocked the world.

In May 1989, nearly a million Chinese, mostly young students, crowded into central Beijing to protest for greater democracy and call for the resignations of Chinese Communist Party leaders deemed too repressive. For nearly three weeks, the protesters kept up daily vigils, and marched and chanted. Western reporters captured much of the drama for television and newspaper audiences in the United States and Europe.



For most people, this is the image that symbolises the spirit of students on Tiananmen Square. Just after noon on 05 June, 1989, the day after Chinese troops stormed the square to brutally crush a student political uprising here, a solitary protester engaged in a modern-day David versus Goliath showdown: Clutching nothing but two shopping bags, he stood his ground before a column of oncoming tanks in a stand-off that lasted only minutes, but stretched for an eternity for the people witnessing it. No one knows who he was, or what happened to him after he was hustled away by onlookers.

On June 4, 1989, however, Chinese troops and security police stormed through Tiananmen Square, firing indiscriminately into the crowds of protesters. Turmoil ensued, as tens of thousands of the young students tried to escape the rampaging Chinese forces. Other protesters fought back, stoning the attacking troops and overturning and setting fire to military vehicles. Reporters and Western diplomats on the scene estimated that at least 300, and perhaps thousands, of the protesters had been killed and as many as 10,000 were arrested.

ARIES: You may commence new business activities. Those employed may experience a change of place. This will be very successful. You may invest in business. This too will be very successful.

TAURUS: You may find favourable changes in your routine. Some may get new job opportunities. There may be sudden, fresh growth in your financial position. You may think of starting new business.

GEMINI: You will be very happy. You will get good news from your relatives. Worries will be over. Politicians will do very well. Some may invest their money in a financial institution. Business will be brisk.

CANCER: Social status and popularity will improve. You may receive honour. You may start a partnership business. Worries will be over. Investing in the stock market is not advisable. Life will be comfortable.

LEO: Those appearing for competitive exams may do well. Prosperity and popularity will be maintained. You may invest in property. You will be in a sound position. Those in trade or with

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agencies may enjoy easy success. Happiness will prevail.

VIRGO: You may take up new agency business. Those involved in trade and publishing may find improvement. Government employees may receive a mid-term promotion and transfer. You may have a health problem. There may be a short separation from your spouse.

LIBRA: You will observe good environmental changes. Happiness will prevail. Expenses will be reduced. Litigation will be postponed. Encouraging communication will be received. The stock market will do well. Export business will boom.

SCORPIO: You may have no cash problems. Tensions will be relieved. There will be sudden improvement in your position and wealth. Long drawn litigations will be over. You will be in a position to make a good investment. Social status will be maintained.
SAGITTARIUS: You may get

unexpected monies. You may benefit through agricultural land. You will be in a position to gain through your correspondence. Short travel will give you mental happiness. Long travel will strain your finances.

CAPRICORN: Others will be wonderful. You may find some changes. You will be very popular. You will be in a position to make a good investment. You will prosper in all you do. You may make new friends.

AQUARIUS: You will be very successful. Unnecessary expenses are indicated. You may be very popular, but you will have to handle a host of problems. You will receive respect and responsibility at home. Popularity and prosperity are indicated.

PISCES: Business will be brisk. Popularity will be maintained. You will take a good decision. Textile business will be profitable. Export business will be very good.

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