

**EUROPE
TOUR**

CALL FOR BOOKING:

Tashila

TOURS & TRAVELS

94341-53567

Telephone:

229842 / 222978

GANGTOK; WEDNESDAY, May 21-27, 2003


NOW!

SIKKIM MATTERS

VOL 1 NO 47 □ Rs. 5

Jeeman (Meals)
A PURE VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT

Sirl Khana



No Bar

Specialised North Indian cuisine
and special fast food items
All items TROLLEY served.

JEEMAN (MEALS), KUNDEH-KHANG BUILDING, NEAR
SADA THAWA, TIBET ROAD, GANGTOK. Phone: 226068
E-MAIL: jeeman@rediffmail.com

MINISTER BOOKED FOR ASSAULTING B.O.

SUBEDI CLAIMS HE WAS NOT INVOLVED IN ASSAULT **TURN TO pg 3 FOR DETAILS**

WHY THE REPRESENTATION OF PEOPLE ACT WAS AMENDED AND HOW

The first of a 2-part series on the events that led to the amendment of the Representation of People Act, 1950, which gave the Sikkim Legislative Assembly its present arrangement of seats...

TURN TO pg 7 FOR DETAILS

CK PRADHAN LOYALISTS STORM THE GHISING BASTION

TURN TO pg 8 FOR DETAILS

Court not interested
in **Publicity** Interest
Litigations

JUDGEMENT SAYS HEM LALL DID NOT APPROACH COURT WITH CLEAN HANDS

COURT DISALLOWS ABUSE OF PROCESS OF LAW FOR EXTRANEIOUS BENEFITS

The allegation that Hem Lal Bhandari, the SSP Vice-President, was furthering the cause of his political bosses was given some credibility on May 17, last Saturday, when Mr. Justice NS Singh dismissed Mr. Bhandari's much publicised PIL against the Chief Justice with the words that: "...this court should not allow its due process of law to be abused by the present writ petitioner for his extraneous motivation or and for glare of publicity." The judgement recorded that Mr. Bhandari's petition did not meet the guidelines specified by the Supreme Court on what constitutes a PIL.

**TURN TO pg 5
FOR DETAILS**

LAST 2 DAYS GANGTOK EXPO 2003

**Biggest Exhibition
Cum Sale**

from
**MUMBAI, KOLKATA,
BANGALORE, HYDERABAD,
GUJARAT, UTTAR PRADESH,
DELHI, HARYANA, PUNJAB,
ASSAM & OTHER STATES**

PRODUCTS:
Handlooms & Handicrafts
Home Appliances
Kitchenware, Crockery
Glassware, Cosmetics
Jewellerys, Magic Toys
Cotton Socks, Kashmiri Items
Health Products
Iron Furniture & Iron Table
Woolen Carpet & Sofa cum Bed

Collect Free Coupon on every purchase of
Rs. 500/- from a stall and win
exciting prizes

**HEAVY DISCOUNTS
OF 10% TO 30%**



Till 22nd May 2003 Venue: Whitehall, Gangtok

Organised by: North East Consumer Expo, Guwahati, PH (0361) 2226824, Mb: 98640-21222/13024

STATE DAY 2003



NOW!

SIKKIM MATTERS

Who Let Democracy Down?

If one were to take the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny as the beginning of Indian aspiration for self determination, then it took the nation ninety years of struggle to achieve it. Compared to it, Sikkim's democratic aspirations were realised much faster. Barely three years of struggle saw it get incorporated into the Indian democratic institution. It is perhaps in disbelief of the ease with which it came about that even though twenty-eight years have passed since, we still hear whispers that the democracy sown in 1975 is yet to get institutionalised. If this were true, then either the democratic institution itself is flawed or the Sikkimese have still not realised what self-expression is all about. Twenty-eight years is after all a long time to get used to something.

Neither of these contentions is entirely true. The Sikkimese electorate did after all elect five governments and displace two in the ballot when it got the chance. Politics is hotly debated in the villages and concerns, whether justified or unfounded, are voiced belligerently and often. The size of the ruling and Opposition benches in its original composition after each election is also something that should excite political observers. All the elections, save the aberration of 1989, have sent an evenly balanced Assembly to a five year term in Sikkim. An absolute majority for one party has almost always been balanced by a sizeable Opposition. How this composition changed within a year of the verdict is for all to see. If anyone has failed democracy, it has been the leaders. Sikkimese democracy could have been even more vibrant had floor-crossing not started with the first democratically elected Assembly in 1979. From then onwards, it became a trend which continues to this day.

A contributing factor to this has been the involvement of the State Government in all spheres of activity - developmental, social or day to day. Belonging to the Opposition cut [or at least put the fear of getting cut off] constituencies off from the developmental loop. Realignment was forced almost as soon as the last verdict of the polls was declared and facilitated further by the general lack of ideology among the politicians. Politics in Sikkim came to mean being in power. While every politician should aspire to be in power, they should be held accountable for the means they adopt to this end. The recent Union Cabinet decision to support a new legislation to cover defections should help in this regard. As for Sikkim, a beginning can be made with the government reducing its role in the public domain. The leaders are in place to frame policies, not run our lives. Decentralisation of power in the hands of the panchayats should make governance more intimate and accountable. What will go a long way in completing the education on democracy would be a series of seminars and workshops detailing what Article 371F stands for, what being a part of India has brought to Sikkim and what is expected in return. Since it is the Merger that brought democracy to Sikkim, the ghost of '75 which still lurks in many minds needs to be exorcised. Such measures should also resolve the many controversies that are in the air at present. Such initiatives will also confirm that democracy is truly institutionalised in Sikkim.

Red-Taping Information

Right to Information is now guaranteed by the Constitution. But hold on. Before you go marching into a government office demanding a copy of certain notification or the files relating to a certain contract, you should know that there is still no law in place to counter the bureaucratic red tape that information is still tied in. For someone wanting to exercise his/ her Right to Information, an application still has to be made. To the right authorities. After this, a new file starts its journey up and down the departmental hierarchy. Notings are made, signed and countersigned. Taking into account the number of holidays, earned and gazetted, that could fall between the filing of the application and the processing of the file, even the most committed exercisers of this Right to Information could lose interest and move after another file to chase. Even if the much-travelled file does get approved, the information required, which also would be bundled in a "file," could conveniently get misplaced or "lost". Little wonder then, that the right to information is best exercised by way of greasing the right palms.

□ THE LIMITATIONS OF RESERVATION

Quotas Cannot Undo The Damage Of A Flawed System

Offering reservation is the solution worked out by our founding fathers to right a historical wrong. This option, however, cannot undo the damage of an incompetent schooling and instead sows a mentality that is essentially reservationist, writes PRAVEEN MOKTAN

A few years back a book called *The Bell Curve* by two American professors created a storm in the US. The debate that the book generated was not confined to the academia but spilled out in the open with both, the opponents and the sympathisers of the theory proposed in the book, slugging it out in seminars, editorials, letters, book reviews and other fora.

A few lauded the two professors for being courageous and insightful while most vilified them - calling them racist and neo-conservatives. India was not untouched by the book and here too we saw people on either side of the fence making their respective points in letters to editors and commentaries in various magazines.

So what exactly was there in that book that got people so impassioned?

To begin with the book was written for the general reader and although much of the analysis that was presented in it was drawn from the esoteric theories of statistics (hence the name) it immediately made sense to some and provoked the majority.

In a nutshell, the book proposed that rather than the socioeconomic status, it was an individual's IQ that was responsible for his success in the society. And because, as statistical inference of the data collected by the two professors showed, blacks genetically were predisposed to have lower IQs than the average whites, no amount of remedial action in the form of affirmative action programmes (the American equivalent of the reservation policies in India) could succeed in bringing about the general upliftment of these people.

The book did not stop at that but also went on to state with considerable note of alarm that because the genetically inferior blacks were prone to reproducing more prolifically than their more cognitively well-attributed white counterparts, a government policy that did not check such indiscriminate breeding would bring about a general decline in the quality of the cognitive capital of the US population resulting in the universalisation of the social maladies that afflicted the blacks in the present day.

The book, as one critic wrote, had the tone of an attorney speaking to the jury. The jury in this case being the policy makers in America whose decisions the authors wanted to influence with the evidence that

they presented in the book.

While it is not the intention of this essay to either support or contradict the book, some thoughts that it raises are pertinent especially in the present scenario where certain sections of the society are on some kind of a communal high after the recent decisions of the Centre to extend reservations to the Limbu and Tamang communities. While the decision itself may be given the benefit of the doubt for being an apolitical one with just the welfare of these two communities in mind, it is not without a tinge of irony that one observes the path of regression that the new status harks. It is also a cynical reflection of the times that we live in that an official pronouncement of backwardness is a cause of great celebration and a clarion call for adopting precisely the same type of ante-diluvian practices that got them there or rather no where in the first place.

VIEWPOINT

The collective sigh of relief that these communities breathed and the apparent jealousy that it aroused in those not as fortuitous gives a fair idea of the level and the nature of discourse prevalent among the intellectuals of the day.

Reservations, like socialism, are a burden of conscience of our founding fathers. It was their way of righting a historical wrong, an idealistic by-product of a western style enlightenment that was completely hijacked by the politicians. (Post independence politicians who have so fractured their constituencies that they give an entirely new meaning to the term reductionism.) The result of all this is a belief that reservation, rather than hard work, is the open sesame to the cushy environment of government jobs with its perks, incentives and security. And, one cannot really blame the average "general" guy for believing it to be so, for when he visits the bank or the post office or any other government office, the positions there are so inundated with quota candidates that in the long, dark, forbidding tunnel of meritocracy, the only light that they see is that of the flickering star called reservation.

The government therefore finds itself under the compulsion of doling out to the other dissatisfied groups the B team of reservations the OBC.

So where does *The Bell Curve* fit in all this.

The lesson to be learned from the book is not so much from what is in the book than from the type of social environment that made the writing of it necessary and relevant to some. In times as politically sensitive as the one that Sikkim is going through at the moment, one should take some time out to reflect that *The Bell Curve*, a book that tried to project an unscientific racist theory was not the project of some rabble-rousing, hate-mongering fanatic. Here were two academicians with sound liberal higher educational backgrounds indulging in some statistical sophistry to make a racist point that had a far greater potency and appeal than any politician's speech. The bottom line being the fact that because the book was an intellectual endeavour and not a pamphlet it could claim a level of legitimacy that perhaps it would not have got had similar notions been aired in other forums.

But the deeper question that still begs an answer is why the book got written.

It did, I guess, for the same reasons that made elderly white German ladies in a small town cheer approvingly when miscreants set fire to a hostel that housed

Turkish asylum seekers. Or the reasons why Gujarat saw middle class individuals engage in the sort of carnage that the state witnessed. The bottom line is that even the most altruistic policies in an imperfect system like ours or the US or anywhere else in the world cannot please anyone. But what fuels the fire further, making people incapable of critical thinking and scapegoats of "others" whom they blame for most of the ills they face, are these provocations that are generated by an intelligentsia with an agenda.

Also, what aggravates the problem further and alienate peoples is the apparent "taking for granted" of the provision of reservations by its beneficiaries.

My personal experience is that the struggle for an average person benefited by reservation is much less intense than what it is for those from the general category. And this begins right from the time when students go scouting for colleges. For colleges under the Delhi University, general candidates hop from one unfamiliar college to another in the ferocious summer heat standing in long queues for courses whose admission percentages are astronomically high while those with quotas reserved for them fill out simple sheets which are processed under far less stringent conditions. This is ironic given the fact that the student on quota often gets driven into the campus on a LG's (local guardian) Maruti while the "general" fellow from some tea garden under-



RECAP SIKKIM

MINISTER BOOKED FOR "CAUSING SIMPLE INJURY, CRIMINAL TRESPASS"

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK: In an incident that is sure to put the ruling Front in an embarrassing spot, a Minister has been accused of assaulting a Block Officer in Geyzing on May 14, last Wednesday.

In an FIR lodged with the West district police, Neelam Pradhan, wife of Neeraj Pradhan, a BO posted in Geyzing has alleged that the Transport Minister, SB Subedi, along with two others attacked her husband at their home on Wednesday evening.

While speaking to NOW!, Mrs. Pradhan alleged that Mr. Subedi called on them at around 8:30 PM on Wednesday and immediately proceeded to "beat up" her husband along with two others who had accompanied him. Following the ruckus, Mr. Pradhan, who had sustained injuries to his face, chest, head, neck and was bruised all over was rushed to the hospital and later referred to STNM hospital, Gangtok.

An emotional Mrs. Pradhan further stated that she too sustained minor injuries in the scuffle and that her 16-month-old daughter, whom she was carrying

ASSAULTED B.O.'S FAMILY WANTS JUSTICE; POLICE EFFECT TWO ARRESTS; MINISTER MAINTAINS HE WAS NOT INVOLVED IN ASSAULT

in her arms at the time, was still in a state of "acute shock".

She minced no words to castigate her neighbours either. They, she says, remained locked inside their homes when the incident was played out. Mr. Pradhan has since been referred to Mitra Nursing Home in Siliguri.

While speaking to NOW!, a relative of the BO, who is also a government servant, said that even they are at a loss as to what could have caused the assault. "We know of no reason or prior enmity to have prompted the attack. But now that it has happened, we want to see justice delivered," he said.

The West district police, in the meantime, arrested two of the accused - Kuldeep Chettri and Nayo Bhutia, the duo alleged to have accompanied Mr. Subedi to the Pradhan residence - on May 16. The two were subsequently released on bail.

On being asked what action was planned against the Minister accused in the incident, senior officials said that all three [the duo already arrested and Mr. Subedi] have been booked under Section 323 [causing simple injury], 448/ 34 [criminal trespass] of the Indian Penal Code. All are bailable offences.

The case is still under investigation. The statement of the victim, for example, is yet to be recorded and examined. His referral to Siliguri has only delayed the process although a Sikkim Police official has also been despatched to Siliguri to record his statement.

Although named in the FIR as one of the persons to have assaulted the BO, Mr. Subedi, while regretting the incident, maintained that he did not assault the forest official. While speaking to NOW!, he said: "It was an unfortunate incident, but I had no role in it. Yes, I happened to be there when two boys who had accompanied me lost control and attacked Neeraj Pradhan. By the time the melee could be stopped, he had sustained some injuries."

The Minister further pointed out that the two boys ac-

cused in the FIR had already been arrested and subsequently released on bail.

"I did not try to influence the police and will not interfere with the process of law which will reveal that I am not involved in the attack," he said.

Sources close to the Minister also suggested that the incident got blown out of proportion because the Minister was present when it happened, even though he neither instigated nor involved himself in the scuffle. "Had a Minister not been present there, no one would have approached the Press and the matter would have been compromised by now," they said.

The guilt factor aside, it is surprising that neither the victim's colleagues from the service, nor officials at the Department are willing to come on record with comments on the incident.

SIKKIM DOES WELL IN ICSE, ISC

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK: Sikkim students put in a commendable performance in this year's ICSE and ISC examinations. Tashi Namgyal Academy posted a cent per cent result on the ISC exams while Namchi Public School and St. Joseph's Convent, Martam also matched the feat in the ICSE exams.

Overall, the results were in the high percentiles is evident from the summarised tally below:

Tashi Namgyal Academy: ISC (100%); ICSE (94.4%); St. Xavier's School Pakyong: ISC (99%); ICSE (90%); Namchi Public School: ICSE: (100%); St. Joseph's Convent, Martam: ICSE: (100%).

Individual performances were also exemplary with TNA's Daipayan Bhattacharjee aggregating 93% in ISC and Padam Pushkar Pradhan notching up 93% in ICSE.

Results confirmed till going to

print show Reshmi Prasad with 94% and Analan Dey Sarkar 86% in ISC and Sharwan Kumar Sharma with 93% in ICSE of St. Xavier's, Pakyong doing Sikkim proud as did Eliza Namchu (91% ICSE) of SJS, Martam.

Kutse Shegu

The 49th day Kutse Shegu of Late Poprim Bhutia, r/o Lingeythang Busty, Below Old Market, Pakyong Bazaar, East Sikkim who left for heavenly abode on 10 May 2003 falls on Friday, 27 June 2003. All relatives, friends and well wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence. We also thank all those who helped us during our hour of bereavement and regret our inability to do so individually.

Mr. & Mrs. Prem Kr. Rai (son),
Mr. & Mrs. C. B. Subba (son in law),
Sunita Pradhan (daughter)
& all family members

ALTO CELEBRATION



Win with ALTO

Rs. 11,00,000 BUMPER PRIZE

Buy an **ALTO** before **31st May 2003**

Get **Rs. 8,000 CASH DISCOUNT** on every purchase of ALTO.

WAGON R, OMNI AND ZEN*
(Rs. 5,000 worth of accessories FREE)

Win with ALTO

Rs. 10,000

Rs. 3,000

Rs. 2,000

Rs. 1,000

Assured Prizes for every ALTO customer worth **Rs. 500**



ENTEL MOTORS
6TH MILE, TADONG.
PH: 231828, 232341, 232059

* Not Applicable for Government and Taxi vehicles



SSi
EDUCATION
It's where your future is.



ORACLE
Education Partner

WITH
JOINT CERTIFICATION FROM



ORACLE
Education Partner

Near Krishi Bhawan, Tadong
Gangtok. Phone 270876

Below Power Deptt, Kazi Road
Gangtok. Phone: 227917

Nayuma Building, Namchi Bazar
Namchi. Phone: 263919

e-mail: ssi_gtk@yahoo.com

STEP IN TO YOUR NEAREST CENTRE TODAY

POWER PLAY



Sikkim turns 28. CM recaps development thus far, reiterates commitment to rural development; Governor's all for "peace, prosperity and progress," thumbs down pamphlets...

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK: Chief Minister Pawan Chamling has said that the only way of keeping away terrorism and insurgency from the State was by providing the youth with the right incentives for employment.

Speaking at the 28th State Day celebrations here at the Community Hall on May 16, Mr. Chamling said that although the government cannot provide white-collared jobs for all, it could point them in the right direction towards self-employment and self-reliance.

"The Chief Minister's Self Employment Scheme is perhaps the only one of its kind loan scheme in the country that provides an alternative to the youth for employment. We provide the financial and technical back-up to the youth to take up various self-employment ventures because we know that a disgruntled youth population can have far-reaching consequences," he said.

Mr. Chamling said that his government has taken a policy decision to launch a new scheme that is aimed at making the State a "producer" State instead of a "consumer" State. Labeled "One Family, One Productive Scheme," the State government plans to make it compulsory for every household in the State to take up at least one production venture, be it agro-based, floriculture, fisheries or

Employment incentives can keep insurgency at bay: Chamling



WHILE THE NATIONAL ANTHEM PLAYED: [left to right] Deputy Speaker, Palden Lachungpa, Minister (Health), DD Bhutia, Governor, V Rama Rao, CM, Pawan Chamling, Mrs. Tika Maya Chamling, Speaker, Kalawati Subba, and Political Advisor to the CM, BB Goroong.

service-sector based.

"We will provide the financial as well as the technical support for this scheme," he assured.

Efforts are also on to stop migration of rural population to the towns by way of formulating policies that are village-centric, Mr. Chamling said.

"We want no shanty dwellings to come up in the bigger towns of the State. If we provide all the opportunities in the villages itself, we can check the migration of rural population to the towns," he said, while adding that the first policy decision that his government took after coming to power eight and a half years ago was to set aside 70 per cent of the plan fund for the villages and rural development.

"We cannot talk of the development of the entire country as a whole

without taking into consideration the development of the villages. If we do that, we are hypocrites," he said.

The Chief Minister announced that all the 176 Gram Panchayats in the State would have at least one tourist spot and the Panchayats would be given powers for decision-making.

"All the welfare schemes in the villages would be looked after by the Panchayats and they would be responsible for their proper implementation," he said. The State government would also make afforestation programmes compulsory in every construction activity in the State, he said.

In order to mitigate the problem of water shortage in some drought-prone areas of the State, the government will soon launch a rainwater-harvesting scheme in which a grant

of Rs. 35,000 will be provided to each household taking up the scheme, Mr. Chamling announced.

He also revealed that the Centre has already approved the project for an alternative highway connecting the State that will bypass the Kalimpong sub-division. The new highway will start from Melli in South Sikkim along the left flank of the Teesta River and connect the State at Mamring, near Rangpo in East Sikkim.

In his address, the Governor, V Rama Rao said that the new mantra of the State should be "peace, prosperity and progress."

While coming down heavily on the recent circulation of malicious pamphlets and newsletters

against the government, Mr. Rama Rao said that such incidents are unfortunate and detrimental to the peace and tranquility of the State.

The highlight of the State Day celebrations was the release of a book based on the life and vision of the CM. Pawan Chamling: *Daring to be Different*, written by senior journalist and writer Yogendra Bali was released by the Governor at the function. Critical reviews of the book were read out by noted Nepali writer and Sahitya Akademi award winner, Dr. Lakhi Devi Sundas and Prof. Noreen Dunne, head of the English department, St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling. The CM also released a book titled "Sikkim's Sons, Nation's Pride" published by the Department of Information and Public Relations during the occasion.

A cultural programme was put by the State Cultural programme as part of the State Day celebrations.

Later in the evening, a 20-member troupe from the Lalit Nriya Chandam, Darjeeling put up a colourful performance.

In attendance at the celebration were former chief ministers, MLAs, senior officials and students. A large number of distinguished scholars, writers, publishers and literary figures from the neighbouring Darjeeling Hills, Kolkata and Delhi were also present on the occasion.

High powered committee suggests special census for Limbu-Tamang figures

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK: The first meeting of the high-powered committee set up by the State Government in February this year to examine "in depth" the issues arising with the inclusion of the Limbu and Tamang communities in the Scheduled Tribes list, met on May 12 under the chairmanship of its political advisor to the chief minister, BB Goroong.

The Committee has recommended that the State Government request the Director General of Census, Government of India to conduct a special census of the Limbus and Tamangs of Sikkim to provide reliable data of their population in the State. This, the Committee feels, has been necessitated due to that fact that the two communities in Sikkim are also recognised by their sub-castes such as Ghising, Goley, Bomzan etc., in case of the Tamangs and as Subba, Tsong etc, in the case of Limbus.

With this in mind, the Committee also decided to request all Limbu and Tamang associations to

identify their sub-castes to include them in the groups.

On the issue of seat reservations for the two communities in the State Assembly, the Committee is of the view that all non-political organisations should be given an opportunity to voice their opinions on the issue. It has been recommended that a notice circulated widely calling all non-political organisations and NGOs to submit their suggestions to the Chairman of the committee on the seat reservation issue within one month from the date of publication of the notice.

In view of the fact that the delimitation of assembly constituencies will now be based on the 2001 census, the committee has decided to recommend readjustment and review of the existing geographical boundaries of the districts to facilitate equal representation.

The Chairman of the committee, along with two other members would also study the issues relating to the possible dilution of the special provisions for Sikkim as provided by Article 371F of the Constitution in relation to the seat reservation issue.

INTRODUCING

naya Commander 650 DI

Z Y A A D A K A W A A D A

** Attractive Finance Available*

Features:

- Engine - MDI 3200 L
- Direct Injection Diesel
- Tyres - Radial 185 R 16

FREE GIFT WORTH Rs. 5000/-
ON EVERY PURCHASE

Rs. 3,58,950/- (2WD)

RUSH TO:

SIKKIM MOTORS

6th MILE, TADONG.

(Authorised MAHINDRA dealers)

PH: 232767, 232873, 98320-13065; 94341-26860; 94341-37192

* Conditions Apply



HIGH COURT NOT INTERESTED IN PUBLICITY INTEREST LITIGATIONS

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK: "I am of the view that the writ petitioner could not make out a prima facie case and apart from that, there is no sufficient materials on record for treating the present writ petition as Public Interest Litigation (PIL) as the present Writ Petition virtually amounts to Publicity Interest Litigation and this court should not allow its due process of law to be abused by the present writ petitioner for his extraneous motivation or and for glare of publicity," said Justice NS Singh while dismissing the petition filed by Harvard-educated Sikkim Sangram Parishad Vice-President, Hem Lall Bhandari, accusing former Chief Justice RS Dayal [he retired on May 17, 2003] of enjoying housing and conveyance allowance when it was not due and tampering with official records to show a government vehicles as his private car.

The Court Order delivered on May 17, 2003, recorded that Mr. Bhandari's petition was "devoid of merit" and dismissed it with cost of Rs. 10,000 which Mr. Bhandari has been asked to pay within 15 days. This money will go to the Sikkim State Legal Services Authority fund.

Mr. Bhandari had alleged that Mr. Justice Dayal drew house rent allowance despite living in a "well-furnished official residence" and was provided conveyance allowance even though he used a government car. He also alleged that "to cover up the illegal drawal" of conveyance allowance, the record of registration of the vehicle in question was tampered

"... this court **should not** allow its due process of law to be **abused** by the present writ petitioner for his **extraneous** motivation or and for **glare of publicity**"

HIGH COURT DISMISSES HEM LALL'S PIL "WITH COST"; SAYS HE DID NOT COME WITH "CLEAN HANDS"

with and manipulated.

Apart from pointing out that both, the house rent allowance and the conveyance allowance, were decided and awarded by the State Government because it could not provide for either during the period in question, the petitions contesting Mr. Bhandari's claims had also alleged that his petition was not filed to "ventilate" public interest, but were instead a projection of the "political party he represents, the unscrupulous elements he supports and to terrorize the members of the subordinate judiciary so that it may deliver judgements according to his whims..."

Documents submitted as evidence also proved that there was no tampering of records as alleged and went on to show that the confusion arose because the earlier "official" car of the Chief Justice was of the same make and colour as the "private" car of Mr.

Justice Dayal.

The respondents had also suggested that Mr. Bhandari's writ petition was just an attempt to bring disrepute to the High Court which had only a week before the filing of the said petition turned down a Criminal Revisions petition filed by Mr. Bhandari's party boss and seven others. The said judgement, passed by a division bench headed by Mr. Justice Dayal cleared the way for framing of charges against the SSP chief Nar Bahadur Bhandari and seven others. The respondents had further bolstered their claim that the petition was solely for publicity by pointing out that news-reports, wrongly stating that the petition was filed on May 8, were flashed in a weekly which hit the stands on May 9 morning. The petition was not filed till in the afternoon of the said day.

Mr. Bhandari's lawyer, SK

Home Choudhury, while arguing in support of the petition also pointed out that the Supreme Court Order was not binding upon the High Court because it was passed on "withdrawal" and not "on merit".

Mr. Justice Singh, while dismissing the case, also touched upon this point and pointed out that petitioners are not allowed to withdraw PILs and when the Court allows such withdrawals, it does "by considerations of public interest and would also ensure that it does not result in abuse of the process of law". "There are umpteen ways in which the process can be abused and the Courts must be aware of the same before permitting withdrawals of the petition. This is not to say that this was one

such case. According to me, the Apex Court had considered the matter and the Writ Petition [C] No. 331 of 2002 was dismissed as withdrawn after considering the nature of the case," he said in his judgement.

Further, the judgement records that Mr. Bhandari's petition does not meet any of the 10 guidelines provided by the Supreme Court on which cases to be entertained as Public Interest Litigations. Mr. Justice Singh gets sterner as he goes on to record: "I am of the further opinion that the writ petitioner did not approach the Court with clean hands and his approach before this Court with the present writ petition is not for clean objective and apart from that, there was wide publication of the filing of the writ petition and such publication even went to the extent that the writ petition was alleged to have been filed by the writ petitioner on 8th May 2003, but in fact, the writ petition was filed on 9th May 2003 afternoon, but the same news sprang up from the early morning of 9th May 2003..."

"I made the above observation keeping in view of the existing facts and circumstances of the case and such observations is based on the materials available on record before this Court in the present case," the judgement reads.

With his PIL dismissed, Mr. Bhandari now stares at charges of perjury filed by the Registrar General of the High Court. The case comes up for a hearing on admissibility next week.

Charges framed against Pradhan and nine others in 1984 RDD case; Bhandari given time till June 4

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK: Former Chief Minister Nar Bahadur Bhandari's medical conditions may have delayed the framing of charges against him, but co-accused in the case, his then RDD Secretary, PK Pradhan and nine others were booked for criminal misconduct and criminal conspiracy on May 17, last Saturday.

Mr. Pradhan and nine contractors will now face trial for their alleged involvement in the RDD

water supply scheme scam. The Special Judge, of the District and Session Court, framed charges against them under section 120 of the IPC and section 5(2) read with section 5 (1) (d) of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

While Mr. Bhandari, the main accused did not appear in the Court on medical grounds, (his counsel pleaded before the Judge that his client has been advised complete bed rest for at least two weeks by his doctor), Mr. Pradhan and nine others were present in the Court when the charges were

framed. After the charges were read out by the Judge, the ten accused pleaded "not guilty" and "claimed to be tried" by the Court. Four other co-accused also failed to keep their date with the Court.

On the plea of Mr. Bhandari's counsel and taking into account the non-appearance of four other accused, the Court has set June 4 as the date on which charges will be framed against them.

The CBI counsel from New Delhi, IK Vaid was present during the framing of charges.

turn to pg 6

Greendale Tutorials

Hallmark of sure success for ICSE and CBSE final students. Classes for Std. VIII to XII starting from 1st May, 2003 particularly in Physics, Chemistry, Maths and Biology.

Below Convoy Ground, Opp. Health Department Premises, Tadong.

For further details contact Mrs. Ranju Bhujel. phones: 232063 (r) and 9434103370.

COURSES IN

SPOKEN FRENCH

at

'Superb' Tutorial Home from June 2003!!!!!!

To learn quickly and effeciently, select from:

- 3-month compact course
- 6-month compact course
- 12-month compact course

Contact over: Phone - 231961 & Mobile - 9434117398



FROM-THE-SPOT

GNATHANG: Everybody knows where it is, but nobody wants to go there. For the record - Gnathang, at an altitude of 12,500 feet is located on the fringes of the Indo-China border in East Sikkim.

Forgotten by time, this is a village that is steeped in history and at one time, played a very important role in the economics and the security of the region. Gnathang, was after all the village which provided the base for Tibetan Pioneer Mission of 1888-95. Later, it was an important halt for caravans en route to Tibet during the Indo-Tibet trade days.

Now, this historic village is relegated to just a tiny dot on the map, where development and the luxuries that come with modernisation remain a myth.

Reverting to history, not many people know that there is a British war memorial here as well as a cemetery of the British soldiers who died during the Tibetan Pioneer Mission.

According to the Gazetteer of Sikkim, the British build a fort at "Gnatong", which was "attacked by the Tibetans in force on May 22, 1886. In 1886, after the stoppage of the Macaulay Mission, the Tibetans advanced into Sikkim and built a fort at Lingtu which they persistently refused to evacuate. In March 1888, the Sikhim Expeditionary Force was sent against Lingtu. In December 1888, the Chinese Resident, His Excellency Sheng Tai, arrived at Gnatong and negotiations were opened with a view to a settlement of the Sikhim-Tibetan dispute, which failed... On 22nd May, they attacked Gnatong in force, were repulsed with heavy loss and retired over the Jelap... The final

GNATHANG

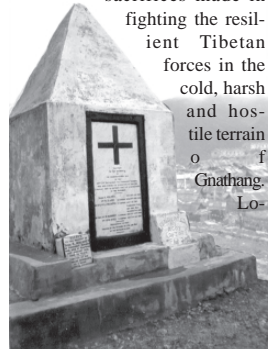
SARIKAH ATREYA on what has become of Gnathang and what is possible for it



THE REPOSITORY OF HISTORY THAT TIME FORGOT

defeat of the Tibetans came on 24th September, 1888."

Although HH Risley makes no mention of the British casualties during the Mission, the war memorial is a sombre reminder of the sacrifices made in



fighting the resilient Tibetan forces in the cold, harsh and hostile terrain of Gnathang. Lo-

cated on a small hillock on the east side of the village, the Memorial consists of two stone monuments and a small cemetery nearby. Although the two stone monuments with epitaphs are fairly well-maintained, the tombstones are dilapidated.

Much later, during the Indo-Tibet trading days, caravans headed for Lhasa, would halt here for the night before proceeding further into the semi-arid cold desert beyond Jelep La and Nathu La. A huge wooden house, believed to have been built in 1886 and which stands to this day, albeit in a dilapidated state, was the only rest-house in the village.

Today, Gnathang has a mere 267 households and a population of just over 400. The local economy collapsed with the end

to the Tibet trade and the locals, comprising mostly of Sherpas, now earn their livelihood as GREF and Army labourers.

What is ironical is that the village, barely an hour from Serathang, en-route to Nathu-La and Baba Mandir, the most sought after tourist destinations in the East District, finds no place on the tourist maps.

Topgay Bhutia, a Bhutia Language teacher at the school wonders at the government apathy towards this historical village.

"There is no transport facility for the villagers. We have to hire a jeep for Rs. 900 every time we need to come down to Gangtok or go back. Although there a number of jeeps in Gangtok with boards that say Gangtok to Gnathang, via Tsomgo, not a single of them ever comes till here," he reveals.

The village has been without electricity for the last one month. The transformer at the village caught fire last month and despite repeated reminders to the substation at Rongli, villagers are still making do with kerosene lamps.

"Given the history Gnathang encapsulates, it will be a big hit with tourists if promoted well. As for the permits, if one is allowed to go up to Nathu-La, why not Gnathang?" questions Bhutia.

Is anybody listening?

Anthyesthi Kriya

The Anthyesthi Kriya of Late Ganesh Suji, r/o Lingeythang Busty, Pakyong, East Sikkim who left for his heavenly abode on 18 May 2003 falls on 30 May 2003. All relatives, friends and well wishers are requested to join in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence. We also thank all those who helped us during our hour of bereavement and regret our inability to do so individually. **Dinesh Suji (son), Uma Suji (daughter), & all family members**

Charges framed...

Contd from pg 5

It may be recalled here that the path for framing of charges was cleared when the High Court, on May 1, 2003, disposed the plea for Criminal Revisions filed by the duo and six others challenging the Special Judge's November 15, 2002, Order directing the framing of charges. The division bench of the High Court, comprising of Chief Justice R. Dayal and Mr. Justice SM Singh, upheld the trial court's order after hearing arguments on the petition over three days - April 28-30, 2003.

The CBI chargesheet, filed on September 14, 1994, alleges that the two public servants [the then CM and his RDD Secretary] entered into a criminal conspiracy with thirteen contractors in 1984 to award works of eleven rural water supply schemes on "exorbitant" rates ignoring the recommendations of junior engineers, divisional engineer and chief engineer, "causing pecuniary loss" to the State exchequer.

This case relates to 12 rural water supply schemes awarded under the Minimum Needs Programme by the Bhandari Government in 1983-84. The Cabinet decision which cleared the project had specifically mentioned that works of more than Rs. 1 lakh be carried out by issuing tenders.

The CBI chargesheet alleges that Mr. Pradhan, "at the instance" of Mr. Bhandari, "negotiated" with contractors who had not bid the lowest rate and issued work orders to them even though his Senior Accounts Officer had pointed out that doing so would be against the financial rules. This, despite the fact that some contractors had bid 20 per cent below the approved rate.

The New Maxx Festiva
Make Every Journey a Celebration



Maxx Maane Zyao'ia

* Attractive Finance Available

Mahindra
Maxx Festiva

Rs. 4,22,950/- (2WD) ONLY*

FEATURES:

- Independent Front Suspension For That Smooth Ride
- Disc Drum Brakes For Efficient Braking
- All Front Facing Seats For Extra Comfort (Optional 9 Seater)

RUSH TO:

SIKKIM MOTORS

authorised
MAHINDRA dealer
6th MILE, TADONG.

PH: 270601, 232873, 98320-13065; 94341-26860; 94341-37192

Applications in plain paper are invited from the eligible candidates for the following vacant post in Regional Institute of Paramedical & Nursing, (RIPAN) Aizawl as indicated below:

Sl. No	Name of Posts	No. of Post	Qualification Required
1.	Ophthalmologist (Sr. Lecturer in Ophthalmology)	1	Master Degree in the field with 5 years experience after post graduation.
2.	Optometrist	1	Degree in Optometry or Diploma in Optometry with 1 year Teaching / Professional experience.

- . Sl. No 1 is a regular sanctioned post carrying the payscale of Rs. 10000-15200
- . Sl. No 2 the post is likely to be created. Presently the incumbent will have to join only on contract for which the lumpsum remuneration is Rs. 7000/- p.m. will be offered.
- . Retired personnel also can apply for contract engagement in both the posts. The remuneration of lumpsum shall be fixed by Staff Selection Committee in case of Sl. No. 1 based on experience.
- . The contract engagement will be made for 1-3 years at the initial stage.
- . The age should not be less than 18 years.
- . The application must accompany the detail educational qualification from matriculation onwards supported by certificate and marksheet alongwith age proof certificate and 2 copies of recent passport size photographs.
- . Last date of receiving application is 31.05.2003
- . Candidate should be called for interview and they will have to appear interview at their personal expenses.
- . Selected candidates will have to join duties immediately.

Sd/- Dr. K. N. Sarmah
Director
Regional Institute of Paramedical & Nursing
Aizawl: Mizoram



WHY THE REPRESENTATION OF PEOPLE ACT WAS AMENDED AND HOW

The amendment of the Representation of People Act, 1950, which outlined the reservation formula for the Sikkim Legislative Assembly still in practice today, was affected in 1980 more to validate the 1979 elections than as an endorsement of the logic behind its drafting. Complications forced by the fact that assembly elections were announced for Sikkim after the LD Kazi government was dissolved when there was President's Rule elsewhere in the country. This compounded a situation where an Ordinance, which was protested against when it was first tabled as a Bill during the Janata Party government, "had" to be passed as an Act by the parliament in 1980 on the plea of the then Law Minister, P. Shiv Shankar, to "validate" the already held 1979 assembly elections in Sikkim.

Records of the Parliamentary debate of February 2, 1980, reveal that all MPs who commented on the move to amend the said Act voiced reservations about what was proposed. These objections were recorded and the passage of the Bill without any changes re-

There is more to how seats are shared in the Sikkim Assembly than just Article 371F. And what better place to start than the Parliament itself.

PEMA WANGCHUK recaps the Parliamentary debate which enacted the amendment of the Representation of People Act, 1950, in a 2-part series which seeks to provide the background and ground realities of the Act in question.

It is necessary to know the background in light of the present situation in Sikkim where communities are getting fragmented over delimitation and seat arrangement. Everyone has their own take on what constitutes a good looking legislative assembly for Sikkim and it has become increasingly difficult to separate fact from fiction in the debates raging over the issue. It is perhaps best if we go back to the text that scripted it - the Parliamentary debates over the amendment in 1980...

quested by the Law Minister to "validate" the new Sikkim Assembly which had already been constituted in accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance.

It might be recalled that the first legislative Assembly of Sikkim headed by LD Kazi was elected in 1974, a year before the Merger, on the basis of the Representation of the Sikkim People's Act, 1974 promulgated by the Chogyal on February 5, 1974. This Act provided for 15 seats for the BLs and 15 for Sikkimese Nepalese. The balance 2 seats of the 32-member House were divided between the Sangha and the

Scheduled Caste candidates. With the term of the Kazi government drawing to a close, Representation of People (amendment) Bill, 1979, was introduced in the Parliament on May 18, 1979. The Bill, however, lapsed with the dissolution of the Janata Government at the Centre before it could be debated in detail and passed.

Three months later, on August 13, the Kazi Government in Sikkim, too, was dissolved. Fresh elections were announced and it became necessary to make provisions for delimitation of Assembly constituencies and work out

the reservation structure afresh.

With President's rule at the Centre and elections already announced for Sikkim, the Bill which had already lapsed was promulgated by the President as an Ordinance on September 1, 1979. Thus, Sikkim got its break-up for the 32-member Assembly - 12 seats for the BLs, one for Sangha and two for Scheduled Caste candidates. Seventeen seats were placed in the general category.

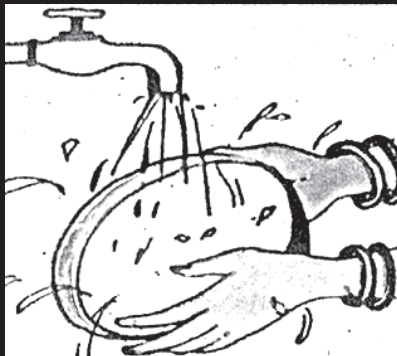
The elections over, the basis on which they were held still required to be validated by the Parliament. Thus, on February 2, 1980, the Con-

gress Government in the Centre moved the Bill seeking to amend the Representation of People Act, 1950, exactly on the same lines as the one sanctioned by the Presidential Ordinance of 1979. This was necessary, since any changes in it would have nullified the 1979 elections.

The Bill was eventually passed as an Act, but not before lengthy debates over what was proposed and why it should be amended further were tabled. Parliamentarians from Darjeeling, Manipur, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra launched lengthy arguments over what they perceived as improper in what was proposed. The then Law Minister also came on record to admit that the Bill for amendment was for a very limited purpose: "to preserve the validity of elections that have already taken place when the Ordinance was in force, and I may straightaway submit that if we do not enact this Bill, the difficulty will be with reference to the elections that have already taken place."

-Concluding part on the debate in the Parliament, objections raised and solutions offered, next week

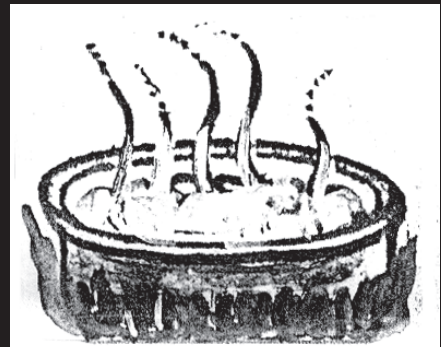
परखाला अनि पानीबाट सने रोक्नुहरू जस्तै - कलेरा, टाइफाइड, जनडिस, मासी रोकथाम गर्ने उपायहरू वा (हुन सक्दछ)



भाँडाकुडैँ सफा राख्नुहोस



खाना पकाउनु अनि खानु भन्दा अघि हात धुनुहोस



उमालेको पानी पिउनुहोस



उचित सरसफाई र पाइखानाको व्यवस्था हुन आवश्यक छ



खानाहरू धूलो, झींगा, साँवले कीराबाट सुरक्षित राख्नुहोस



नानीलाई आमाको दूध दिनु जारी राख्नुहोस

DESPATCHES

CK'S WIDOW ALLEGES GHISING HAD HER HUSBAND MURDERED GNLF (C) STORMS THE GHISING BASTION, BRANDS GNLF A "TERRORIST OUTFIT" IN DARJ

from AMITAVA BANERJEE

DARJEELING: The breakaway faction of the Gorkha National Liberation Front, the Kalimpong-based GNLFC infiltrated the green bastion of Darjeeling on May 19, Monday, with its first public meeting here in the Ghising stronghold.

Amidst tight security the first ever GNLFC public meeting drew a large crowd on its anti-GNLFC and specially an anti-Subash Ghising platform as all the speakers lashed out against the GNLFC Supremo.

The GNLFC (C) made a public declaration that henceforth it would commemorate the August 22 as "Surrender Diwas." On this day, in 1988, Ghising dropped the issue of Gorkhaland and settled for the DGHC.

"Ghising had taken the oath of Mahakal (guardian deity of the Darjeeling Hills) that he would get us Gorkhaland. He betrayed us and signed the accord," stated DK Pradhan, erstwhile GNLFC leader and at present the GNLFC (C) Darjeeling Convenor and also the Darjeeling MLA.

GNLFC (C) was floated by dissident party leaders, CK Pradhan loyalists and some family members, including Sheela Pradhan, CK's widow at Kalimpong on November 16, 2002.

Roshan Shankar, a Kalimpong convenor of the GNLFC (C) alleged that CK Pradhan was murdered because he wanted to revive the Gorkhaland issue.

"To fulfil CK Pradhan's unfulfilled dream we formed the GNLFC (C)," stated Shankar.

Sheela Pradhan clad in widow's white, while addressing the gathering, alleged that the assassination bid on Subash Ghising at Saath Goomti, Kurseong on February 10, 2001 could be a drama staged by Ghising himself.

"He used this to weed out all those who wanted the revival of Gorkhaland like Chatteray Subba who is still rotting in jail. He also framed CK and when he got news that CK was floating a new party, CK was shot in the back and murdered," stated Sheela. "The single star in our flag stands for our single-point issue - Gorkhaland," said Sheela.

The speakers stated that democracy had taken a back seat in

the Hills with dictatorship being enforced.

"We don't have to go to Iraq to see what Saddam's rule was like. We have a first hand experience here in Darjeeling," said Maximus Kalikotey, the party's Kalimpong Convenor. Adding to this Roshan Shankar said: "Ghising does not meet the public including his very own Councilors except when he is giving religious sermons. He has even managed to divert all the funds for development in the construction of temples and monasteries." DK Pradhan went a step further and said: "Living in the river, it is very difficult to oppose the crocodile. The crocodile ate Rudra Pradhan, CK Pradhan and even Prakash Thing." Three councillors named by DK Pradhan were murdered within a span of 4 years.

"Ghising is a liar. Once he had told me that under no condition could we achieve Gorkhaland, yet he now says that Gorkhaland is not far away. He does not give a single deputation nor a memorandum for Gorkhaland," alleged DK. Dubbing "Ghising's Gorkhaland" as an eyewash, he said: "22nd August

1988 (Accord Signing Day) was the complete surrender of Gorkhaland." He also gave a call to all the opposition parties to unite against Ghising's GNLFC and demand for Gorkhaland. "I will always oppose the GNLFC and I will be the last man to go back to Ghising. I prefer to die than submit to his one-man rule" added DK. Describing Ghising's two major political achievements; DK stated that the first was the "Begging Bowl of DGHC" and the second "Rigging during DGHC Elections."

Ajay Dahal, with his fiery speech, dubbed GNLFC as a "terrorist outfit" because it believed in the politics of "beheadings" and "breaking Limbs."

As anticipation of trouble was very high, security was very tight and police personnel were posted along the entire route from Kalimpong to Darjeeling.

There were around 38 vehicles from Kalimpong carrying leaders and GNLFC (C) supporters from Kalimpong. The meeting started at around 11:30 and continued till 3 pm. Traffic came to a standstill and the traffic on the Hill Cart road was diverted through INA Bypass.

QUOTAS CANNOT UNDO...

Contd from pg 2
takes the same journey squeezed under the armpits of a boorish Jat.

As far as state quotas are concerned I have seen it causing more harm than good. An average Sikkim student, due to some grandiose family or government dream, is packed off to a Maths honours course that is teeming with Bihari brains, which, although not racially superior, have had the advantage of a more scrupulous schooling. As a result, he spends the rest of his college years, which may be longer than what is dictated by the syllabus, nursing a giant inferiority complex and understanding less maths. At one time, the situation had become so bad that for a few years St Stephen's had stopped giving admission to students coming from state quotas of Sikkim partly due to the dismal pass percentage of their predecessors and partly due to their on-campus profligacy.

The lesson to be drawn from all this is that no amount of reservations can undo the damage that is done by incompetent schooling and a mentality that is essentially 'reservationist'. And unless something drastic is done, the apparent inequalities in the system will be a catalyst for intellectuals with their agendas to come up with something as dangerously provocative and pseudo-scientific as *The Bell Curve*. We also know what havoc is wreaked when a movement is hijacked by intelligent people whose consciences allow them to allow the ends to justify the means.

NOW ON THE ROAD

BOLERO SOFT TOP Di INVADER



BOLERO SOFT TOP Di INVADER

Rs. 3,99,950/- only

RUSH TO: SIKKIM MOTORS

Test Drive it Today

(AUTHORISED MAHINDRA DEALER)
6th MILE, TADONG. PH: 270601, 232873, 98320-13065; 94341-26860; 94341-37192

* ATTRACTIVE FINANCE AVAILABLE



RECAP SIKKIM

SIKKIM MANIPAL EMPLOYEES THREATEN TO GO ON STRIKE

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK: The non-teaching staff of the Manipal undertakings in Sikkim - Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Sciences, Central Referral Hospital and Sikkim Manipal University - are all set to go on strike on June 8 next month if their demands are not granted by the set date.

In their letter, to the Vice-Chancellor, SMU, the staff representatives have stressed on the high cost of living in Sikkim and demanded among others, a 25 per

cent raise in the basic salary, an 18 per cent raise in DA, a 5 per cent hike in Housing Rent Allowance and free medical treatment of all employees. Also demanded is a free ambulance service, higher risk allowance for doctors, nurses and other teaching staff, Dusshera and Diwali holidays as given by the State Government.

Interestingly, the letter points

out that although DA should be raised each year, it has remained fixed for Manipal staffers since 2000. They have now also pleaded that the present DA policy, which is fixed, be done away with and a "flexible one as per the State Government policy" be adopted. Also demanded is that DA be raised at least twice a year.

Tuition fee reimbursement for the

education of their children and vacations and half-days on Saturday [as enjoyed by the teaching staff] are other demands raised by the employees.

Employee representatives while speaking to NOW!, complained that the non-teaching Manipal staff in Sikkim was the lowest paid among all the institutions run by the Manipal group in the country. This despite the 14 per

cent increase in DA accorded to them in April, last month.

The list of demands was first raised on Labour Day, May 1, when about 150 employees marched to the VC's office in a "placard rally" to voice their demands. They are unsure about the fate of their demands, but are committed to go on strike should they be turned down.

5 perish in North Sikkim tipper accident

MANGAN: Five persons, including two ladies, died when a GREF tipper fell 150 feet off the road at Charchrey Khola 3 kms from here on May 16, last Friday.

All the deceased were GREF personnel working at Sangklang in north Sikkim. While four of the victims [Leela Tamang, 28, Rati Maya Chettri, 32, Ajit Biswakarma, 22, and Umesh Kumar Ram, 23] died on the spot, the driver, Dhan Kumar Tamang succumbed to his injuries at Mangan hospital.

The mishap occurred at around 7:50 in the morning when the vehicle was headed for the worksite at Sang Khola. One person survived with minor injuries when he jumped out of the truck as it tumbled down. The police is investigating the cause of the accident.

- IPR

A Christian State Day

a NOW REPORT

JORETHANG: Members of the Sikkim Christian Council, South Sikkim observed the 28th State Day here at the Victory School campus on May 16, last Friday.

Representatives of the Council from all the four districts and the Pastors from the Jorethang congregation attended the meeting.

Stressing on the importance of the State Day, the President of the Council stressed: "Along with preaching the gospel of Christ, we should also preach love, unity and service for our Nation."

Rev. Samuel Lepcha spoke on the necessity of preaching the faith because the situation of the world was deteriorating day by day.

To end the convention, the Pastors, along with the congregation, prayed for peace and prosperity in Sikkim and prayed for long healthy life of the Governor and the Chief Minister of the State as well.

Sikkim joined the mainstream of the Indian Union twenty eight years back as its twenty second state. With generous assistance from the Centre, the young state has been able to make sufficient progress in all the spheres of developmental activities. Being an infant State, there were no doubt, few constraints.

However, despite many constraints the present ruling Government has been trying to keep up the tempo of progress in every sphere of developmental activities and it has been the Government's constant endeavour to provide a better and a brighter future for the people of Sikkim.



The Chief Minister, Mr. Pawan Chamling has said that being a part of an independent and large country like India, we have our responsibilities and duties. It would not be right on our part to merely seek our rights and not perform our duties and shoulder responsibilities. On this auspicious occasion the Chief Minister has appealed to the people of Sikkim and transform the State into a place where every citizen enjoys equality, democratic values and justice. He said that the path is difficult and work is hard but the State is determined to march on, hand in hand, with the rest of the country and with collective contribution from each and every citizen make Sikkim into a model state.



Issued by
Department Of Information & Public Relations
Government of Sikkim

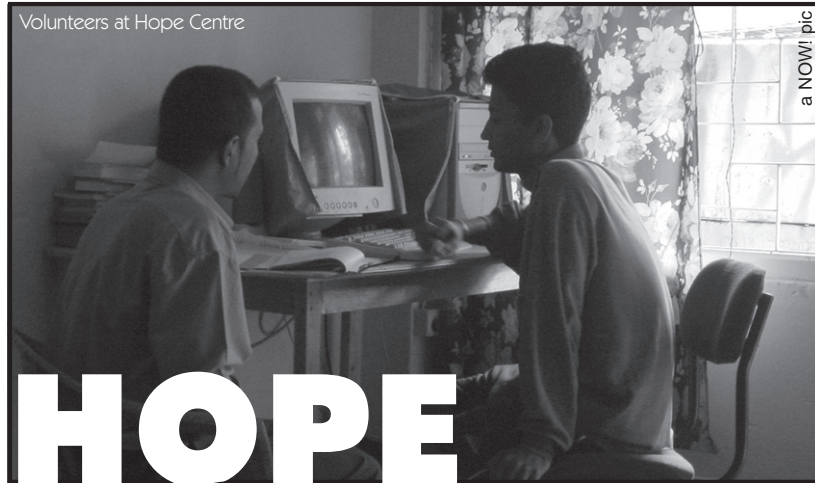
Release Order No:
18/IPR/03-04
Date: 13.05.03



DEVELOPMENT

With the Sikkimese society still hesitant to admit that substance abuse has become a major problem in the State, it is left to former and recovering addicts to bring about some hope in the lives of those who want to move forward without the crutch of drugs and without the accusing eyes of those who don't understand.

MITA ZULCA profiles Hope Centre, a group which listens, cares and counsels those suffering from drug abuse...



HOPE FLOATS

"I was fifteen when I first tried Spasmoproxyvon. My friends gave it to me. I got a nice high. For the next ten years I lived from one high to another. Sometimes I took Morphine. A vial costs only Rs. 70. It was easy to get. But there came a time when tablets stopped giving me a high. I started injecting myself. One day I was caught by the police with drugs. I was in jail for ten months. Everything was over."

This is the story of Karma, a young recovering addict, just out of prison and searching for that one thing to hold on to. Something that will give him the strength to go on from one day to the other. Without the help of

drugs. Without the accusing eyes of family and friends.

This, he has found at Hope Centre, a counselling and day-care centre for recovering addicts. Started a few months back by Jesse Targain and friends, the centre, as its name suggests offers hope for people who were or are still suffering from substance abuse. A totally voluntary and privately funded venture, it operates from a small flat at DPH road, Gangtok.

"Guys can come and spend the day here. They cook and eat here, share their problems, and are involved in the day to day activities of the centre. Most of us have gone through the pain of addiction so it becomes easier to understand oth-

er's pains," says Jesse.

Listening, sharing and counselling are the three main objectives of Hope Centre. The nearly thirty volunteers, all recovering addicts themselves, offer warmth, friendship and help in moments of crisis.

"We help people trace possibilities beyond their problem. People are more important to us than their problems. Through care and friendship we hold out hope of a new beginning for many," offers Raja, a full time volunteer at the centre.

Hope is what connects all the young men here. For Subhash, who started coming here from February, this is the only reality check that he's going to have. Here

he is beyond pretence, beyond make believe. Acceptance is the key word.

"I come here everyday. No one questions me or judges me. I get more support and understanding here than from my family," he says.

Subhash, like many others like him has been 'hooked' to drugs since he was only twelve years old. "I tried to leave it many times but could not. I needed bigger and bigger doses to get high. Even a whole strip of 'Spasmo' did nothing for me. I started injecting then. But since I started coming here I have managed to stay clean. I feel if they can leave it so can I," he tells us.

The Hope Centre follows guidelines given by Narcotics Anonymous. An important part of the recovery process for both the addict and his family are the regular family meetings organized by them.

"We meet every Saturday at Development Area and every second Saturday there is a joint meeting in which the families and the recovering addicts meet together to share problems and offer counselling. This has helped me deal with our problem with much more understanding than before," says Trishna, a young girl married to one of the boys who comes here regularly for support.

Hope Centre intends to spread its activities further into the state. On anvil is a detoxification and rehabilitation centre at Namchi.

"Health department has assured us a building at Namchi by July. We're looking for funds and will be very happy for any donation," reveals Jesse Targain.

Never Alone, Never Again. There's always time for a new beginning.

Some names have been changed to protect the identity of those interviewed for the story

Just ring 222979 and ask for a volunteer. Open 24 hours. Or write to - hopecentre@rediffmail.com . Confidentiality will be strictly maintained.

CHAMLING'S "VISION" CONVINCED AUTHOR TO PEN BIOGRAPHY

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK: Pawan Chamling: *Daring to be Different*, a biography of the Chief Minister, was released by the Governor, V Rama Rao during the State Day Celebrations here at the Community Hall on May 16.

Written by senior journalist and writer Yogendra Bali, 73, who is the Chief of Bureau of the Asia Defence News International, the book chronicles the evolution of Mr. Chamling as a "leader of the masses", his early struggles, his vision and his ideals.

For Mr. Bali, it was the "simplicity and humility" of the man and his "extraordinary vision for Sikkim" that convinced him to take up the project which took about two years to complete.

"*Daring to be Different* is an attempt to bring to the people this aspect of Mr. Chamling - his courage to be different and to stand apart. Being different is an identity, it's a faith and its courage. Courage to live your faith, your dreams and your ideals. What I have written in the book is not strictly a biography of Mr. Chamling. The positive changes that have taken place and are still taking place in Sikkim under his leadership and his successful efforts in making the State join the national mainstream is the core of the book. This book is an introduction to Sikkim and to Mr. Chamling. In the fifty years of my career in journalism, I have come across two types of politicians. Those that live a life of ideals, beliefs and principles and work tirelessly for the welfare of his people and those who do not. Mr. Chamling falls in the first category," Mr. Bali said during an informal chat with NOW!

Eminent Nepali writer from Darjeeling and Sahitya Akademi award winner, Dr. Lakhi Devi Sundas and Prof. Noreen Dunne, head of English Department, St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling presented reviews of the book during the function.

Baker's Café
fresh everyday
PRESENTS
SLICE of LIFE

Enjoy the little things in life, for one day you may look back and realise they were the big things.

Robert Brault

This week try out a bread from Baker's Cafe and you will realise how bread is more than just dough.

ADITYA CONSULTANCIES
FIRST TIME IN SILIGURI STUDIES ABROAD
GRE / GMAT / SAT / TOEFL / IELTS
USA, UK, Canada, Australia, Cyprus, Switzerland, Singapore, etc.
VISU CONSULTANTS
ADMISSIONS IN INDIAN COLLEGES & UNIVERSITY ALSO GUARANTEED
Contact: Babita Bihani (M-94340 12532)
B.Bihani & Associates, Above Kiran Optics, Hill Cart Rd., Siliguri.
Ph: 2430650, 2434538 (0), 2434528(R)
Also BE in Computing from Staffordshire University
UK. In India itself - APIT SD INDIA

THE FESTIVAL OF KIRAT RAIS

by Dr. Shiva Kumar Rai

Sikkim is a land of many ethnic groups. Each ethnic group has its own language, culture, tradition and festivals. The Kirat Rais are one such ethnic group, making up for about one third of the total population of Sikkim.

Although there are numerous sub-castes among the Rai community, Sakewa is one festival which is celebrated with great enthusiasm by all Rais. Sakewa is celebrated as a big harvest festival where worshipping of crops is done (Bali Puja). It is also known as Bhumi Puja or Chandi Puja or land worshipping ceremony. It is generally celebrated twice a year viz. in December (Udowli) and in May (Ubowli). Ubowli is more popular among the Rai people.

Kirat Rais are basically Nature worshippers. It is believed that they are descendents of Puruhang (Lord Shiva) and Sumnima (Goddess Parvati) of the Himalaya Kailash. It is customary that some rituals must be performed before the Sakewa. The Nakchung (village priest), Maheng Kulu (assistant to Nakchung) and the villagers proceed to the sacred place, which is generally located in the hilltop. The alter consists of a Shiva Linga with Trishuls on either side. Nakchung and his assistant carry grains, ginger and rice wine and wabuk (cindo-dried gourd) while the devotees carry the grains and other products of their land. Nakchung chants prayers and sprinkles water, wine, grain and ginger. The Nakchung requests Mother Nature to protect the village from disease and drought and for good rain and harvest. Then they proceed to the open space in front of the house where the Nakchung fixes a bamboo pole on the ground. Then he enters the house, goes to the three hearthstones, which is located at the centre of the house. (The hearthstones represent the ancestral deities of the Rais). The Nakchung performs Akta Swang Swengma (Water Spout Ceremony) and the Khutking and Khutma (Fire Place Worshipping Ceremony). He offers clean rice wine, water, ginger and chicken at the hearthstones. The hen sacrifice is called Mang hulu. Finally the villagers enter the house, dance around the fireplace, wine and proceed to the next house.

It is difficult for us to say when the Sakewa celebrations started. It most probably started when man learned about agriculture and farming.

Therefore, it was appropriate that once or twice a year he should thank Mother Nature and offer grains and sacrifices for good rain and harvest.

(The writer is the Treasurer, Central Committee, Akhil Kirat Rai Sangh)



GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ENGINEERING WING, GANGTOK

Sealed percentage rate tenders are invited on behalf of Governor of Sikkim from the contractor of appropriate category enlisted in SPWD belonging to the concerned Gram Panchayat unit only for the construction of four room school building under N.A.B.A.R.D. as listed hereunder. The tender document can be obtained from the office of the Divisional Engineer (N/E), Gangtok, for the works in North & East District, Office of the Assistant Engineer (South) Namchi for the works in South District and office of the Assistant Engineer (West). Gyalshing for the works in West District, during office hours on 27th & 28th May 2003.

The intending tenderers / contractors should apply for the tender documents to the respective Divisional Engineer & Assistant Engineers accompanied by the copies of valid Sales Tax & Income Tax Clearance certificates, attested copy of the validated / updated Contractor Enlistment certificate and the B.R. (non-refundable) in original towards the cost of the tender documents duly deposited in the SBS under head 0202-01-101(111) - Other Receipt Education.

The sealed tenders for North and East Districts, South District and West District should reach the office of the Divisional Engineer (N/E), Gangtok the Assistant Engineer (South) Namchi, and the Assistant Engineer (West), Gyalshing, respectively on 29th May 2003 upto 1 PM. The respective sealed tenders shall be opened on the same day at 2.00 PM in the presence of tenderers / representatives, if any.

Sl. No.	Name Of Work	District	Work Value put to tender (in Rs.)	Earnest Money (2.5%)	Earnest Money (1%)	Completion Time	Cost of Tender form
1.	Const. of 4/R/S/B at Salimpakyat P.S i/c toilet	North	9,99,186/-	24,980/-	9,992/-	9 Months	1000.00
2.	Const. of 4/R/S/B at Pegong P.S. i/c toilet	North	10,44,491/-	26,112/-	10,445/-	9 Months	1000.00
3.	Const. of 4/R/S/B at Lingdong P.S i/c toilet	East	10,82,163/-	27,054/-	10,822/-	9 Months	1000.00
4.	Const. of 4/R/S/B at Rey Mindu JHS	East	9,70,300/-	24,258/-	9,703/-	9 Months	1000.00
5.	Const. of 4/R/S/B at Linkey Sanskrit Pathsala i/c toilet	East	10,50,300/-	26,258/-	10,503/-	9 Months	1000.00
6.	Const. of 4/R/S/B at North Regu JHS i/c toilet	East	10,11,702/-	25,293/-	10,117/-	9 Months	1000.00
7.	Const. of 4/R/S/B at Phadamchey JHS i/c toilet	East	9,95,400/-	24,885/-	9,954/-	9 Months	1000.00
8.	Const. of 4/R/S/B at Ramabong P.S. i/c toilet	South	9,90,115/-	24,753/-	9,901/-	9 Months	1000.00
9.	Const. of 4/R/S/B at Sapung PS i/c toilet	West	10,39,030/-	25,976/-	10,390/-	9 Months	1000.00
10.	Const. of 4/R/S/B at Jawbari P.S. i/c toilet	West	10,15,500/-	25,387/-	10,155/-	9 Months	1000.00

The tender documents should be placed in a sealed cover and should be accompanied by the following documents/ certificates failing which the tender(s) shall be REJECTED straight away.

1. TDR @ 2.50% in favour of Accounts Officer, Education Department, Gangtok deposited in State Bank of Sikkim towards the Earnest Money and @1.00% in the case of those having the fixed deposit with the Education Department duly accompanied with an attested copy of the F.D.R.
2. Attested copy of the validated / updated Contractor Enlistment Certificate.

The tenderer should sign on each page of the tender documents. The rate quoted should be both in figures and words and should be inclusive of Sales Tax and all other Taxes. Incomplete tender shall be summarily rejected.

In case of any discrepancy in rate(s) printed in the schedule of rate and quantities issued with the tender form then the rate(s) as per the approved standard schedule of rates will be taken as correct.

In the event of the contractor failing to commence the work within 10 (ten) days from the date of issue of work order his / her Earnest Money deposited will be forfeited and the contract will be rescinded. The Schemes are time bound and should be completed with the stipulated time.

The Department reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason(s) thereof.

**Divisional Engineer (N/E)
Education Department
Gangtok.**



SPORTS

Now available the entire range of
EPSON Multimedia
(LCD) Projectors

Authorised dealer

milestones
NEXT

Phone: 225082 / 228840

Get your home videos converted to
DVDs or VCDs
Video editing facility available too

THE MAN WHO WON'T STOP RUNNING!

Sher Bahadur Chettri has one passion in life- to run. He has even run in competitions he was not allowed to officially participate in. MITA ZULCA profiles the man from 4th Mile who just won't stop running...

Twenty five trophies and medals, forty certificates and more than Rs. 50,000 in prize money. Sher Bahadur Chettri has won these for doing something that he loves the most - running.

We wait for him in his small roadside house, somewhere along the 4th mile, en route to Tsomgo. The trophies are perched delicately on a high shelf made of thin bamboo slats. Certificates and photographs lie on a side table. One could be forgiven for expecting a more fancy backdrop for showcasing such achievements.

"He's here," calls out his mother and we look out of the door. In the distance we see a man running at a slow trot towards us. "He runs everywhere, he's always running," she adds.

The film "Forrest Gump" comes to mind. For Forrest, the whole secret of life is hidden in one simple word, "Run." Forrest never stopped running in his life, running was his entire life. He ran to escape from his classmate's attack, he ran to give his Jenny flowers, he ran to save lives in Vietnam, finally came his legendary RUN. After his Jenny left him one morning, he started running, first thought just run out of his village, then why not the state of Alabama, and then why not across the country?

Sher Bahadur had never planned to be a runner. It was a gift that manifested itself quite late in life. He was then studying in Standard IX in West Point SSS.

"I had gone to Paljor Stadium to watch the ongoing open competition organised by the army. I sud-

denly felt the urge to run, I wanted to keep running," he recollects.

That evening, he ran all the way back home. Four years later, he took part in the open marathon held at Darjeeling. He stood fourth. That was the last time that Sher Bahadur would come anything but first. In any marathon. For the next few years, he was the undisputed king of long distance race. Winning trophies in 5000 mtrs, 10,000 mtrs and cross-country. Representing the State in North East and National games, he always came back with medals.

An interesting encounter in 1999 confirmed his status as a runner par excellence. The Sikkim Rhododendron Ultra Marathon was scheduled to be flagged off from Yumthang. Runners had come from Europe to take part in the 300 km long race. Sher Bahadur was desperate to run, but was not allowed to take part. He ran anyway. Faster than anyone else. As usual he came first.

"When I run I don't have a care in the world. I don't think of anything. I only feel the ground beneath my feet and the sky overhead," he says, surprised that anyone could ask him about how he feels about anything. Like Forrest, he never questions. Keep running and never ask what you will get. That is his key approach to life. That is also the reason he never questions why in spite of being the state's long distance champion and representative at all National Games, the only job he has is to wash the dirty clothes of the constables of the India Re-

serve Battalion.

"I wanted to join as a Regular. My father was in the army and I always had the desire to wear a uniform," he reminisces. Although in Sikkim since 1963, he has nothing to show for it. Applying for a job at the IRBn, he was taken in the following category.

"In my 24 years in the police, I have not met a more sincere and hardworking person or anyone who loves to run so much. Always willing to run errands, once he ran all the way to Singtam just to deliver a letter," recalls Chungchung Bhutia, Head Constable BQ/MH.

Sher Bahadur's links with the Police go back to 1998.

"I used to run, everytime, everytime. Mr. SD Negi, the present DIG (Range) used to see me run. He asked me why I didn't have a job. Later, he called me to his office and got me a job with the Home Guards," he tells us.

To this day, Sher Bahadur's



Sher Bahadur at home with his trophies

dream of a regular job remains unrealised. Even as he trains for the 2005 National Games, under the Sports Authority of India coach, Ombir Singh, it doesn't occur to him to ask for more. What does he want in the future?

"I just want to run."

"Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you will get,"

Forrest kept these, his mother's words, tightly at heart. Therefore, everyday of his life, he was opening the box. He was lucky that he always got his favourites. Perhaps a day will come when Sher Bahadur's box of chocolates will give him what he has always wanted. A regular job. Is that asking for too much for our State champion?

Assam Lingzey cricketers retain trophy

ASSAM LINGZEY: The month-long cricket tournament organised by the Assam Lingzey Cricket Association (ALCA) concluded here at the Assam Lingzey Sr. Sec. School ground on May 16.

The finals of the 3rd ALCA Challenge Club 2003, was played between the defending champions ALCA and Bahai School, Saramsa which the former won by 59 runs.

Electing to bat first, the ALCA accumulated 166 runs for 8 off the allotted 25 overs. Bahai School was bundled out for 107 runs.

Brij Kishore Gupta of ALCA received the Man of the Match tro-

phy while the Man of the Tournament trophy went to Karchan Lachungpa of Bahai School. Similarly, Anand of Bahai School was adjudged the best batsman and the trophy for the best catch of the final went to Rajesh Rai of ALCA.

The tournament saw the participation of 18 teams and each match drew a large crowd. The final was witnessed by nearly a thousand spectators, including a large number of students and teachers of both the ALSS and Bahai School, local citizens, ex-students, and Local Panchayats, informs a Press release issued by the Krida Sansthan.



Drangchu Beverages

ANNOUNCES

"Under The Crown Scheme"

(for the state of Sikkim only)

FROM 15TH MAY TO 14TH JULY '03'

Check the inside of the crown

There may be a surprise

waiting for you...

1st Prize
2nd Prize
3rd Prize

TRIP TO BANGKOK FOR TWO / CASH IN LIEU
REFRIGERATOR GODREJ (220L)
MOBILE PHONE with GSM

And over 5000 Consolation Prizes

Caps, Key Chains, T-Shirts, Wall Clocks, Badges, Coasters, Pens, Pencil Bags, Shopping Bags, School Bags and Many Bottles of Free Liquid

For Details Contact Your Local Distributors / Depot

yeh Dil maange m 

Applicable for 300ML PEPSI, MIRINDA and 7UP only
These products are available without this scheme offer also