



Annual sports meet concludes in CUHP



A Women's Cricket match in progress during the Annual Sports Meet in CUHP

By Nitish Pozta

TAB: The sixth edition of the annual sports meet of Central University of Himachal Pradesh concluded at the Temporary Academic Block of the University in Shahpur. This year's annual meet witnessed girls' teams participating in sports events like Cricket and Badminton for the first time.

"It is a great opportunity for girls to attend the sports events, like this year", said Silvia Prashar, member of the Cricket team from the Department of Social Work.

However, only few girl teams participated in the event. "More girls should come forward when the University provides such opportunities", said Silvia.

"It is the first time that the girls participated in the annual games. It

is good to see they are coming forward to participate," said Dr. Ashish Nag, Convener of the Sports Committee which coordinated the event.

"There is no separate Sports Department in the University. So Dean, Student Welfare organised this event," said Dr. Nag. During the sports meet which extended from April 8th to May 5th, competitions in Cricket, Football, Volleyball, Badminton, Chess and Carom were held.

CUHP Strikers, a team of students from different departments, bagged the title of men's Cricket, while MBA 2nd year girl's team won the women's Cricket match final. MBA 2nd year boys won the final match in Football, while CUHP Riders, a team of students from different depart-

ments, bagged the Volleyball final match. Ankit Dhiman from MBA 1st year won boy's Badminton competition and Mridul from MBA 2nd year won the girl's section.

In indoor games, Vipul Kumar Gautam, Research Degree student from MBA-TT, won the Chess competition. While Kritika Kapil from Department of MBA bagged the first price in girls' single Carom competition, Yash Pal, Research Degree student from the Department of English and European Languages won men's singles.

Kritika Kapil from Department of MBA and Suman Sharma from Department of Environment Sciences won the girls doubles in Carom as Abhishek and Ishan Sharma from Department of MBA TT won the boys doubles.

Life in little Lhasa: a confluence of cultures

By: Surinder Kumar

Mcleod Ganj: Mcleod Ganj is India's little Lhasa, a name given by the travel guides for the large settlement of Tibetan refugees here. Living that name to its fullest, Mcleod Ganj is now a Tibetan celebration of their culture, religion and the way of life.

Seeing them living their life in Macleodganj, is a beautiful image of the confluence of two cultures on a sharing mode. But is it that easy for people coming from another culture to adapt and carry on?

"Most of the Tibetans don't find much problem here with regard to communication or whatever", says Tenzin Lhaksam

Wangdue, Secretary of Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA), a major cultural entity for the Tibetan community in Dharamshala.

"However, for newcomers, language is a major issue", says Wangdue. There are NGOs who impart language training for new comers, trying to bridge the gap. "Teaching English and Hindi to the newcomers often takes lots of time", adds he.

For Tibetans, adapting to the local culture is not a big challenge. But retaining their cultural identity is often daunting, especially since they fear that the Chinese government is hell-bent on wiping out the tradition and culture of Tibet.

"If you look at Tibet, right after occupation, many

Mandyal, another student, complains about a 'canteen tactic'. "At times while taking out the Naan from *bhatti* (the special oven), it falls on the ground. Though it is kept away at that time, it is served to students who come later", says he.

However, Rakesh has got more things to worry about, than an occasional Naan which gives him a slip.

of the monasteries were destroyed by China. Because of this, Tibetan languages are getting marginalized," says Wangdue. "Out here in India, in exile, we are trying to re-alive those languages and the cultural habits", he adds.

This makes the Tibetan community in exile to focus more within the community and try to retain the loosing strains of their cultural fabric.



TIPA Secretary, T L Wangdue, at his office in Macleodganj.

So in a way, the local Himachali culture when added to this scenario makes it a puzzling picture. "We have around 80,000 Tibetans living in various parts of India, in settlements. In these

settlements, maintaining our culture is very difficult when it gets involved with the local culture", said Wangdue.

Tibetan community here enjoys warm relationship with the local Himachali community. Buddhism with its roots in India, serves as a bridge which brings in certain cultural similarities. People in both communities maintain social ties very much. "When we attend a wedding in the local community, we gift them Tibetan shawls, scarfs and special eatables", says Wangdue.

At little Lhasa, both these communities are on an on-going learning process, through which both the cultures enrich each other, bringing a new culture out of the convergence, in the Himalayas.

"I get only Rs. 7000 per month. Today, what can one achieve working 13 hours a day for that", asks Rakesh. This 30 year old, lean man is unmarried - not by choice but because of his financial status. "I want to marry but am afraid that I won't be able to fulfill the family needs with such small earning", says a worried Rakesh as he tosses a Naan into the hot *Bhatti*.

Know thy cook; know thy food more

By: Mohd Arslan Samdi

TAB: Rakesh Kumar wakes up at 4 o'clock in the morning and cuts 10 to 20 kg vegetables, prepares 30 kg rice and deals with 50 kg of wheat flour which will later turn into hot chapattis. No, this is not part of his diet, but it makes the routine diet for hundreds of students when they eat from the canteen in the campus of the Central University of Himachal Pradesh (CUHP).

As the only cook in the canteen, work is hectic for Rakesh. According to him, on an average day, he works for almost 13 hours. "My typical day starts at 4 or 5 a.m. with my tussle with the vegetables, and



Rakesh Kumar cooking Naan in the canteen

by the time I wind up the day to leave, it gets to 6.30 p.m.", says he.

Is he ok with that? Well, like the *sabji* he makes, his feelings are a mixed bag. He is happy to spend time with the young students in the campus. "Students in the campus treat

me very well. That makes me feel good working here", says he. The good treatment is not without reasons. "I know they look back for small favours", says a grinning Rakesh; "like hot chapattis, or jumping the crowded lunch-line, or a tea on demand".

For students, these favours stay off-the-record. The official reason? *Naan*, for somebody. "He cooks really good *Naan*. He is good with students too. Moreover, he talks with me in Punjabi which makes me so comfortable" says Narinder Sharma, a CUHP student.

Apparently, all the talk in the town is not rosy. Shivam

CUHP researchers measure radioactivity in villages of Himachal Pradesh

By : Narinder Sharma

TAB : Researchers from the Department of Environmental Sciences in Central University of Himachal Pradesh have detected traces of radioactive gases in Nahol village of Bilaspur district as part of



Anand Giri(L) and his guide Dr Deepak Pant, demonstrating a Pinhole meter.

their ongoing research project on assessing radioactivity in different districts of the state. They are conducting radioactivity assessment in Kangra, Mandi and Bilaspur districts.

According to the

researchers, they look for presence of radiations emitted by Radium and Thorium, two radioactive elements in the atmosphere.

“In order to detect the presence of radioactivity, we basically look for the presence of two gases, Radon and Thoron, usually produced by Radium and Thorium in the atmosphere”, said researchers Anand Giri and Ankit Choudhary.

The researchers claim that they are using a technique known as Gamma Survey to detect radioactivity. To assess the level of radioactivity due to Radon and Thoron in villages, especially in domestic space, they fit small instruments called Pinhole Meters

inside the houses. “During our survey, we usually fit the instruments inside the houses for a period of three months to detect the presence of radioactivity”, said Ankit.

The researchers said that they also collect soil and rock samples from the area to assess radioactivity. Their assessment for the areas under Kangra and Mandi districts are still under progress. They are planning to publish the preliminary findings of the study in two months.

The presence of Radon and Thoron beyond a limit can be harmful to human health, claim the researchers. According to them, harmful levels of these gases in the domestic atmosphere may cause cancer.

The project is being carried out as part of doctoral studies pursued by Anand Giri and Ankit Choudhary under the guidance of Dr. Deepak Pant.

Buttons of bliss

By : Rishika Sharma

Dharamshala : Buttons. They may seem insignificant to you. After all, aren't these just plastic bits with a couple of holes for stitching up in your clothes? Ask Jitendar Koundal and he will vehemently protest. He is a button collector, one who passionately accumulates buttons as a hobby. For him, buttons are tiny little fragments of joy that mean the world.

He does not look like someone who would venture on a road less travelled in India, that too for collecting buttons of all things collectible. However, the moment you ask him about buttons, you can spot a sparkle in the eyes

of this 47 year old from the hill station of Dharamshala. It switches his five foot frame to a different level of almost child-like energy as he tells the story of how it all started.

Buttons were not necessarily a natural attraction for Jitendar in his childhood. He was a tailor's son and buttons were all around him and never held much significance. “My father was a tailor in Dharamshala and at times it was difficult to get the right buttons for fitting on coats,” he recalled.

But in a small town like Dharamshala buying buttons was not something to seriously ponder over and far from a hobby or business venture.

So buttons never caught his imagination until a day some twenty years ago when Jitendar came across an article in a local daily Punjab Kesari. The article was about a US entrepreneur who



Jitendar Koundal, with his collection of buttons in Dharamshala.

had gone on to establishing a 500-crore rupee business from collecting buttons.

So impressed was Jitendar at this idea that he immediately set himself off on a tryst with buttons. “I never thought one article would change my life, but I really felt good about it; though nobody cared much about buttons in Dharamshala in those days,” remembers Koundal.

“But now the times have changed. People buy buttons first and then decide

what dress would go along with them. It is becoming a fashion instrument now,” Jitendar says with a smile.

For the beginners whose knowledge about buttons may be limited to their belly buttons, Jitendar's collection is a sheer celebration of diversity. “There are different kinds of buttons here based on the material they are made of.

I have wooden buttons, pearl buttons, thread buttons, crafted buttons, mother shell buttons, bone buttons and many other categories in my collection,” says Jitendar with a hint of pride. “They are from different countries. For instance, this one is from Japan,” he gushes while showing off an exotic looking button.

His collection has buttons from Bhutan, Nepal and other countries of the region also.

When he first started buying buttons he went to the big markets of Maharashtra and Delhi. He was dazzled with the diversity and choices. Gradually, with the help of other businessmen and shopkeepers, and with experience, he gathered comprehensive knowledge on what to buy, how to buy and the many different sources to look for.

When Jitendar decid-

The preamble machine of Nawada village

By : Rajesh Kumar

Samastipur, Bihar : A five years and half old rustic boy, wearing torn shorts and shirts. He wipes his freely running nose on his shirt's sleeves. With a shabby, disheveled hair and dust smeared all over his body, this is Deepak Ram, the preamble machine of the Nawada village of Samastipur district in Bihar. At his age, despite being counted as mentally unstable by the village folk, Deep-



Deepak in front of his school at Nawada

ak can recite the complete preamble of the Indian Constitution without even the slightest mistake.

People in the village call him 'Batha'. Officially, in the records of *Rajkiya Utkrmit Madhya Vidyalaya* in Nawada where he is enrolled as a student, he is Deepak Ram, son of Ramanand Ram and Somani Devi. The day starts for Deepak when he reaches school at 8.30 in the morning, too early, since the class hours starts at 9.30. “Though he is not very bright in the studies due to his mental condition, he comes to the campus early in the morning, often by 8.30”, says Vikas Gupta, a teacher at the school.

“He never skips the school assembly and the mid-day meal also”, adds Gupta. It is his love for the school assembly that inspired his love for the preamble. The preamble is being recited every morning in the school assembly and thus Deepak has learned every sentence and word of it by-heart.

Everybody knows him for being the preamble machine. Even his headmaster is very proud about this.

“That child belongs to a Mahar family. They live in Piligt village,” says Deepak Kumar, another teacher in the school.

As we chat about him, Deepak approaches the headmaster's office, roaming aimlessly. “May I ask something?” enquires Deepak while lavishly wiping his running nose on

the curtains hanging by the office window.

“Yes. Go on”, encourages the headmaster.

“May I have one rupee?” asks

Deepak, as if it is a normal thing to demand anything from the head of the institution. Deepak dashes away before the headmaster gets out from behind the table, scolding all the way.

Getting out of the office, I found a scared Deepak, trying to stay away from any trouble coming from the headmaster. Wooed by the one rupee shown to him, Deepak hesitantly approaches. When encouraged to recite the preamble, he raises his hand and starts with “We the people of India...”. He goes on till the very end with proper enunciation and diction.

“That child has some learning disability. He cannot focus on his study and grasp the things mentioned in the class. But it is astonishing that he has learned the preamble correctly”, says Gupta. “He sings well too, but everybody in the village thinks him a ‘mental case,’” adds he.

As we give him the money promised, a jubilant Deepak dashes for the petty village shop outside the school compound.

Voice Editorial Team

Design Team : Rishika Sharma, Nitish Pozta

Reporters : Rishika Sharma, Narinder Sharma, Surinder Kumar, Nitish Pozta, Anjana Devi, Shailesh Kaushal, Mohd Arslan Samdi.

For more stories, log on to : <http://de-layer.blogspot.in/>

ed to explore deeper into this risky unknown business path, money turned out to be a major obstacle. Undaunted, he borrowed a loan of Rs. 5000 from UCO Bank to make a start. Today, nearly two decades later, he has a network for collecting and ordering buttons of different countries and he himself travels frequently to different parts of

India to enrich his collection and to search for new additions.

A hobby by chance has turned out to be successful business for Jitendar but interestingly enough he couldn't care less about the money it brings. After all these are the 'tiny little fragments of joy for him'.