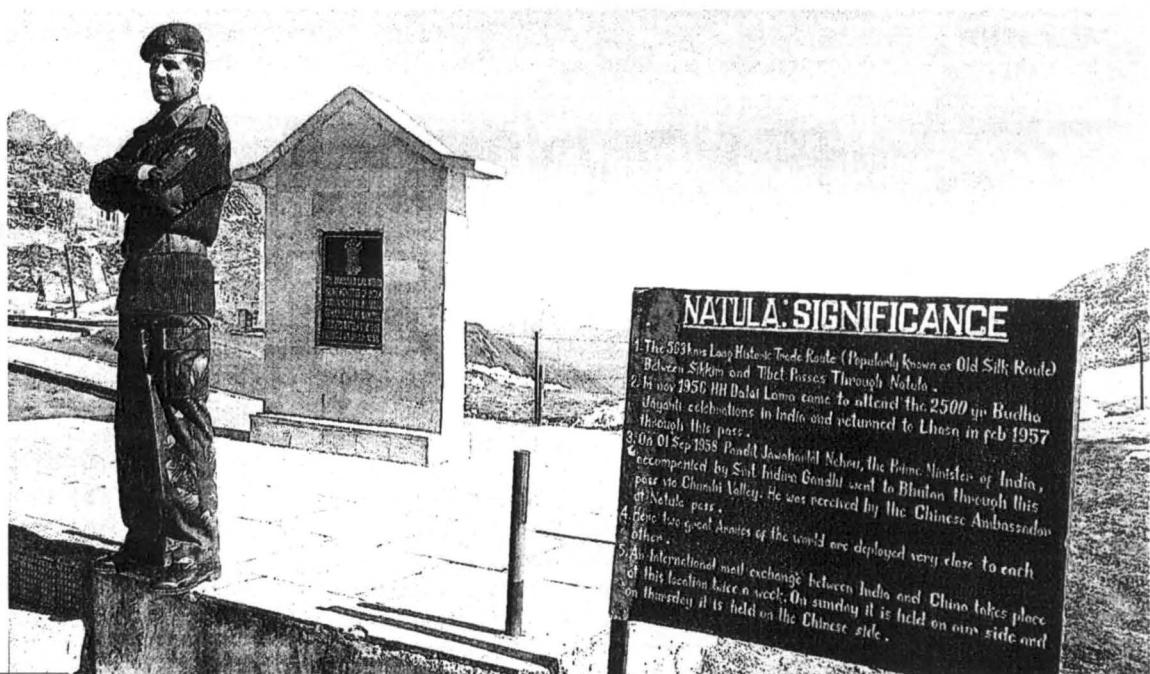


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Melting ice and making way for trade: reopening of Nathula pass

RAM SINGH (Name changed), often used to make trips to the other side of the border to bring cigarettes, kerosene and blue and khaki for his shop in Yantung. These visits stopped after closing of the Nathula pass in 1962. Hopefully small traders like him can again start their regular trips after opening of the Nathula



NATHULA SIGNIFICANCE

1. The 5000 Km Long Historic Trade Route (Popularly Known as Old Silk Route) Between Sikkim and Tibet Passes Through Nathula.
2. 14 Nov 1950 HH Dalai Lama came to attend the 2500 yr Buddha Jayanti celebrations in India and returned to Lhasa in Feb 1957 through this pass.
3. On 01 Sep 1958 Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, accompanied by Smt Indira Gandhi went to Bhutan through this pass via Chumbi Valley. He was received by the Chinese Ambassador through this pass.
4. The two great armies of the world are deployed very close to each other.
5. An International mail exchange between India and China takes place at this location twice a week. On Sunday it is held on our side and on Thursday it is held on the Chinese side.

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Nathula Pass, India China border

pass, which is located at the height of 15000 feet above sea level and is 54 Km from Gangtok.

The immense possibilities of trade and commerce shall once again emerge with the opening of this ancient trade route. A number of traders will move to and fro with their consignments. The India's total trade with China which today stands at a meagre

\$ 5 billion will definitely receive a boost with the opening of the pass, to ensure that this happens smoothly India needs to strengthen the existing infrastructure. It needs to set up warehouses, check posts, and arrange for manpower for the security purpose.

The opening will also lead to a boost in the tourism sector because the time spent on travelling will be con-

siderably reduced. Presently it takes 15 days to reach Mansarovar, which will become a journey of only 2 days once the pass opens, this will benefit lakhs of tourists and shall allow two very ancient civilizations to get close to each other which will enrich our culture.

How to Reach Us

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Must include writer's full name, address and home telephone no., may be edited for purpose of clarity or space and should be addressed to:

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Bhutanese nationals feel the heat of Ulfa backlash

BHUTANESE nationals, residing in the Indian States of Assam and West Bengal are under tremendous pressure these days to leave India because of the currently battered ULFA, which as an aftermath of the Royal Bhutanese Army's recent crack down upon it is going on revenge mission revenge against Bhutanese nationals.

The extremist organization is now swearing vengeance against Bhutanese nationals and contends that if Ulfa, Bodo and KLO can't stay in Bhutan, the



Bhutanese people have no right to stay in Assam and North Bengal.

Around 6,000 Bhutanese live in Assam and around

3000 are seasonal visitors, which descend from hills to sell spices and woollens. The ones living in the state are mostly engaged in the liquor trade and are concentrated in Upper Assam. Kamrup distt has a large no. of Bhutanese visitors who come here temporarily for trade, but now days the distt. administration is not taking risk and has shut the temporary stalls of Bhutanese woollen traders. The traders are also requested by the authorities to lie low for some time for their own security.

People's initiative for peace

KARACHI'S Beach Luxury Hotel from December 12 to 14, 2003 was a witness to a peace initiative, by the people of the two neighbouring countries. This was a venue of the Sixth Joint Convention of the Pakistan-India people's Forum for Peace and Democracy (PIPFPD). 244 delegates from India and 276 from Pakistan attended the convention, the theme

of which was 'Defy the Divide, Unite for Peace.'

The Indian delegation headed by Dr. Ashok Mitra (chairperson of the PIPFPD's Indian National Committee) on its arrival at the Karachi Cantonment railway station received a rousing welcome by a large crowd. The person heading the crowd was the Mayor of Karachi.

From the proceedings of the convention one could

feel the pulse and the positive desire of the common man of both the countries to enhance people-to-people interaction between the two countries and also to reduce the tension and hostility that has marred India-Pakistan relations in the past.

One could also see an urge among the Pakistani people to resolve all outstanding issues including the Kashmir issue.

Nishan-e-Pakistan for Vajpayee!!

IS Pakistan conferring Nishan-e-Pakistan to the Indian PM? Indians please relax, don't be so thrilled, Indo-Pak relations have yet to trudge a rough road before our relations are so good that this headline is a reality.

President recently appeared in an interview cum



Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf

phone in show on a special radio broadcast of the BBC

Hindi and Urdu services stated, "I would like to nominate Vajpayee sahib for Nishan-e-Pakistan if we move forward towards solving the Kashmir issue. If there is an achievement which is significant from Pakistan's point of view, we would like to honour anyone."

Natural allies? India and Washington

IN the year 2003, America's relations with India saw new horizons. US now considers India as an emerging regional and global power which has come a long way from being a country, dependent on America's economic aid to meet its chronic food shortage, to the one which is exporting its products and competing globally. Not only this, now the com-



Natural Allies

plaint is against India that it is taking away American

jobs through Information Technology outsourcing.

It is a new dawn, India is considered as the stability factor in Asia and Washington is acknowledging. It is also realising that India's fight against Pak-sponsored terrorists is a part of the global war against terrorism. Another thing about India-US relations is that US, although acknowledges India's fight against terror-

ism, for its foreign policy in South Asia it has decided that it needs both India and Pakistan, even if Pakistan does not fulfil its promise to end cross border terrorism against India.

But there are many positive things have taken place in the Indo-US relations in the recent times, such as the joint military exercise and the cooperation between the two navies. Both countries are also working towards promoting democracy worldwide which was evident in their cooperation to defeat Maoists in Nepal and also in the joint peace efforts in Sri Lanka.

WB and ADB willing to lend more

"OUR funding to India will increase substantially in the next 2-3 years. We have already discussed with the government, which wants the bank to increase its lending," said Michael Carter, World Bank's country director on the occasion of the launch of a Country-level development market place initiative at New Delhi.

According to him the World Bank is going to double its annual aid to

India to \$3 billion by 2007. Around \$100 million will be raised through bonds. Infrastructure improvement, human development, rural livelihood and fiscal and structural reforms are some of the areas where the increased lending funds are going to be targeted.

It seems now all the leading agencies are more than willing to lend to India, this is clear from the fact that apart from WB, ADB has

also expressed a desire to increase its lending to \$ 1.7 billion from next year.

There is some good news for Indian academic institutions and non governmental organizations and the private sector which is doing pioneering work in the field of rural services, they are going to receive \$ 250,000 as start up funds under the World Banks India Country-level Development Market place Scheme.

India's regional diplomacy

INDIA with its new found confidence is now ready to deal with more developed countries on the basis of equality-technology, investment skills. It is a happening place, a place where one can make more money than the other countries in the East Asia.

But an important fact which India politicians and diplomats are fully aware of is, that if we are developing, then it becomes very important for us to take our neighbours also with us in the path of progress. Which if not done will have many adverse effects, some we

are aware of and some we have not even thought of such as if Bangladesh does not progress with us, the illegal migrant problem in India will increase. Another bitter lesson, India has learnt is that it is difficult to trust developed countries regarding the fair implementation of the treaties with them because they 'preach well but not practice'

At this juncture, India is doing what it should, i.e. looking east, already a FTA

has been signed with Thailand; in Sri Lanka, a progress has been made from FTA I to II and one

with Singapore is just going to happen. Negotiations are on with the Bimstec bloc. A PFTA with Afghanistan has already been signed. At present much more South-South cooperation is going on in terms of technical assistance and tie-ups, human resource development, project participation, exim bank credit. This shows, that although India is ready to have trade pacts all across the globe, it is at the same time going to give equal focus to the South Asian region as apart of its economic diplomacy.

SAARC summit; Musharraf and Vajpayee; will they meet?

ISLAMABAD is going to be the host of the much talked about SAARC summit which is going to take place in Jan 2004, there are speculations, whether the two leaders, Vajpayee and Musharraf will meet or not.

In an answer to a query on an interview, at BBC early this month, Pervez Musharraf said, " If he wants to meet me. I'll meet him. See he should not get an impression that I am desperate to meet him. Let me tell you, I am living here and sitting comfortably, there is no problem. I would meet him only if he wants." The statement very well communicates as how willing the Pakistani General is to meet the Indian PM.

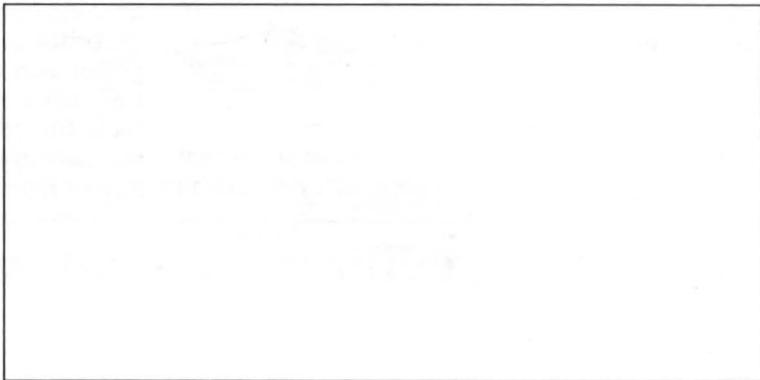
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To



India will have more productive people in 2050 than China

IF the 'dragon' is surging a head, the 'tiger' is also not behind. When the two giants

future economy of any country. As per the latest OECD science, technology and in-

2050? Well how much a country is developing depends on many factors and

fices and contributes to the economy of the country and is relatively in sound health

India's population in productive cohort (mn)

	2000	2020	2050
China	812	921	824
India	599	824	962

Source: United Nations and World Bank

Percentage sectoral growth rates in the 90s

	China	India
Agriculture	4	3
Industry	13.1	6.1
Services	28	22.7

Source: World Development Indicators 2003

are moving ahead, comparisons are bound to happen. At present China is emerging as a global base for manufacturing, it is also increasing its Research and Development expenditure, which is a good sign for the

industry report, India is the topmost spending country in terms of R&D and China has been ranked as the third largest Research and Development spender in the world.

But where these countries

are going to be in the year one of them is the percentage of persons in the productive age i.e. the age group of (15 to 60 years), this is a factor which can't be ignored because this age group is the one which works in the farms, factories, of

as compared to the older age group. At present China's productive population is more than India's (see table) but in the year 2050 India will have 962 million people in this productive age group.