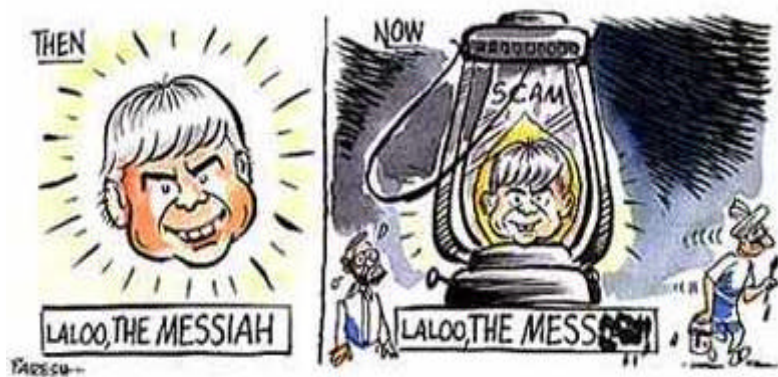


Lokniti Newsletter

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IN THIS EDITION:



Source: <http://www.dinesh.hostultra.com/cartoons-archives/september-1999/20-september-1999.html>

'State of Democracy in South Asia'

Case Studies

Projects undertaken

Announcements

Debates

Editorial

Contact Us

Next Issue

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the October issue of the Lokniti newsletter! And my apologies for being so late.

I'm Lillian D'Costa, the new Research Assistant taking over from Edzia Carvalho, who has left Lokniti to pursue further studies in the UK. Also new on the Lokniti team is Dr. Sanjeer Alam, who is working on the data of the SDSA Project, besides assisting on the post-poll survey of Bihar assembly elections.

It's been an interesting task getting to know about the 'State of Democracy in South Asia' Project and indirectly each of you in the Lokniti network and the work you do. I hope the coming year will be one of fruitful interactions and intellectually engaging for all of us.

We are also hoping to make the Newsletter more interactive in the near future and would be immensely grateful if you could drop me a line with your suggestions.

Also do visit the website www.lokniti.org for an update of recent events and activities.

With best wishes,
Lillian D'Costa

'STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH ASIA'

The outline of the report on the *State of Democracy in South Asia* project that was discussed in Colombo was circulated among the writers of the Report for their feedback. The final outline after incorporating the feedback has been sent to the authors. The editorial team working on the *State of Democracy in South Asia* report at Lokniti has been sending literature inputs, relevant tables and other references to the writers to facilitate the writing of the report. A time line has been fixed for receiving the first drafts of the chapters.

Case Studies

We have received the case study *Monarchy in a Democracy: The Case of Nepal* by Mr. Deepak Thapa. In it Mr. Thapa traces the last 65 years of Nepal's political history, which is riddled with factionalism and strife, as the country oscillated between a 'crude' democracy and a belligerent Monarchy.

Nepal makes for an interesting example of a peoples struggle for republicanism and the Monarchy's incessant attempts to subvert the process and retain control, the most recent example being that of King Gayanendra.

In his case study on 'Monarchy in Nepal' Deepak Thapa, takes a look at the relationship between religion and the Monarchy, as the Kings continue to claim to be descendents from the Hindu God Vishnu and the State continues to remain a 'Hindu Kingdom'. Recently, the Monarchy has also displayed an obvious proximity to the Indian rightwing namely the RSS and VHP, and even accepted the title of 'Emperor of the Worlds

Hindu' from the VHP. Currently, the Monarchy has also found itself in the eye of a storm on whether it should remain purely ceremonial or play a more active role in Governance. The Monarchy itself has been none to happy at being sidelined at various points in history and has cultivated the loyalty of the Royal Nepalese Army, which thus far has proved to be its closest ally and shield in quelling dissent.

Projects Undertaken

- The Lokniti office is abuzz with preparations for a **post-poll survey** that will be conducted in the State of Bihar. The post-poll survey will be conducted for the first three rounds of poll and an exit poll

Suggested Reading

Prof. Rajani Kothari, 2002, **Memoirs – Uneasy is the life of the mind**, Rupa & Co.

Prof. Rajani Kothari the founder of CSDS has recently published *his Memoirs – Uneasy is the life of the mind*, 'memoirs unlike books are not 'written'. They only 'recall'. As they recall they lead to reflection, rediscovery and reinvestment long left behind events and episodes, ideas and institutional involvements,...' so begins the 268 page memoirs of India's most influential social thinker.

The memoirs gives the reader interesting glimpses into the thoughts of Prof. Kothari on the evolving Indian polity and social landscape since 1942. Prominently mentioned is his involvement with CSDS and the time he spent there. The last chapter 'The Keeper of My Conscience' is a touch reminiscence of his family and wife Hansa.

will be conducted on the last day of polling, which will give the Lokniti team scope for both analysis and forecast.

- Prof. Yogendra Yadav and Prof. Suhas Palshikar have been invited by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to be the Chief Advisors for the textbook writing of political science for Classes from IX-XII. Many Lokniti colleagues are involved in the different text book development committees, namely Pankaj Pushkar, Manish Jain, Prof. Peter R. deSouza, Prof. Rajeev Bhargav, Dr. Pushkar Raj, Dr Sanjay Lodha, Prof. Sandeep Shastri, Alex M. George and Professor. K C Suri.
- As discussed in Bangalore, Lokniti has been approached by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to carry out a study on the Social Backgrounds of Panchayati Raj Representatives; we are in the process of formulating the questionnaire.
- Three scholars, Alex George, Manish Jain and Pankaj Pushkar have joined the State of Democracy in South Asia as consultants on Pedagogy of Democracy. They are working on the pedagogical aspects of democracy and investigating diverse kinds of critical thinking skills that young students need to understand and reflect upon in the concept of democracy and its practices. They are also

attempting to incorporate the life experiences and social contexts of the students for the above purpose and the different kinds of educational material, experiences and teacher-student interaction that can be developed for greater sensitive towards larger social issues.

Recent Publications

- Kumar, Sanjay, 'Congress – Unhappy marriage' Indian Express, 26th, September 2005.

Presentations

- Kumar, Sanjay, 'Political Parties and Indian Parliament – Has the increasing number of parties affected the Parliament', paper presented at a seminar on *Parties and democracy in India emerging trends and futures*, held at the Indian International Centre, Organised by KAF and CPA, Delhi.
- Kumar, Sanjay, Lecture on Questionnaire Design given at Kamla Nehru University, Delhi.
- Yadav, Yogendra, Lecture on the 'Intellectual legacy of (late) Mr. Kishen Pattnayak', at Orissa, Bhuneshwar on 26th September and Ranchi on 27th September.

Announcements

- Lokniti is planning to launch a summer/ winter school for the study of Democracy in Asia and a few ideas from you will help us go a long way in enriching our plans. We

request your suggestions on the themes to be included in the curriculum, the minimum qualifications for participation, the duration of the course- whether it should be 2 or 3 weeks and on when it should be held, whether in summer or winter.

- The Governance and Policy Spaces (GAPS) Project Hyderabad is organizing a national seminar on '*Political Regimes, Economic Reforms, Policy Processes in Indian States*', to be held in December 2005. They are presently inviting papers on the above theme, if any of you would like to present a paper or know more about the seminar please get in touch with Prof. K. Srinivasulu, Honorary Director, Governance and Policy Spaces (GAPS) Project, Room No 9, First Floor, Library Building, Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Nizamiah Observatory Campus, Begumpet Hyderabad 500016, Andhra Pradesh.
Tel: 040- 23410906 Email: policyspace@rediffmail.com
- The Institute of Chinese Studies, CSDS is organising a 2-day workshop on 21st –22nd October on *Politics of Culture in Contemporary China and India*. The conference will assess the 25 years of experience in the field of culture against the background of the larger historical canvas of liberalization and globalization shared by India and China.
- The Project on Communities in interaction: Discourses of conflict, conversion and coexistence in cosmopolitan contexts is organising an international workshop *Living*

Together in Asian Cities from the 24th –26th October. Some of the papers and presenters are ‘Debating cosmopolitanism’ by Shail Mayaram, ‘the mythos of the city: Partition and the South Asian cities of Dhaka and Lahore’ by Ashish Nandy, ‘Psycho-geographical aspects of Jerusalem and the Arab-Israel conflict’ by Avner Falk besides others. To know more about the Project visit www.communitiesininteraction.org

German formula be adopted and a coalition Government be formed.

Debates

From this Newsletter onwards we are introducing a section on debates, where in we will be pitching issues at you for thought and requesting your opinions, which will then be carried in the subsequent newsletter.

1. The death toll after the Kashmiri earthquake is still mounting and the figures are unlikely to stop as the cold fingers of winter descend upon the Mountain State. A view has emerged that Corporate India and Civil Society has not responded as generously to Kashmir as to the Tsunami.
2. Even while India and Pakistan reel under the impact of the recent earthquake, the natural disaster has offered an opportunity for radical diplomatic exchanges, what is the significance of the earthquake for interstate relations between the neighbours. What should be the response of the two states?
3. The first phase of the Bihar elections are over, Should Bihar have a hung house, what should the response be, a) horse trading be allowed b) fresh elections called c) the

CONTACT US

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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of the Lokniti newsletter will be issued in November 2005.