



A walk in the clouds



Lily Wangchuk.

Released on 21 October 2008, the book underwent several changes, especially when the monarchy gave way to a democratic set up. "The system of governance changed, the role of the parliament changed. I spent the last two years updating the book. Until 2008 we were not sure as to how things would work. I had to give up my job to complete the book. I worked on the book for years but found writing to be a process that demanded a continuous stream of thoughts. One has to work in isolation for months.

"I referred to several books on other countries, giving me an opportunity to enrich my knowledge. Then I wondered what could be of interest to readers - local and international. If you are looking for official figures, it's difficult to get information from government organisations, and the process involves paperwork.

I tried to put together a lot of information to make this more of a reference book - how many people are happy in the country, contribution of hydropower to the economy, how is happiness measured. Development should never be at the cost of the happiness of our people. We have indeed taken a cautious approach to development policies. In 1999 local television channels went on air and then private channels arrived. Even now we don't allow certain channels like Fashion TV, MTV, etc. It's been a careful move."

Her next book is on Bhutanese cuisine, which is extremely diverse and each district has its specialties. "We have a lot of Chinese and Indian influence on our cooking style and there is the danger that we might lose our traditional cooking styles. My objective is to document food from different parts of the country." By the way, did you know there is only one Bhutanese restaurant outside Bhutan? It's in New York.

For Wangchuk, writing allows her to look inwards and be enlightened. She has decided to spend the next many years showcasing before readers across the globe, Bhutan's rich and diverse cultural heritage. (To find out more about Facts About Bhutan, visit www.absolutebhutan.com.bt)

■ Mathures Paul

THE transition from monarchy to democracy has brought about several changes in Bhutan but not at the cost of happiness. Any good bookshop stocks scores of travelogues on Bhutan but rarely does one come across a book written by a Bhutanese. Lily Wangchuk gave up her job to write Facts About Bhutan, a comprehensive book that unveils all there is know about the tiny country. Intended for tourists and Bhutanese, the book speaks about the country's history, society, tradition, culture, people, governance, judiciary, clergy, foreign relations, economy, environment, health, education and tourism, among many other topics. Policies of the government, information about all twenty districts of Bhutan and other places of interest are vividly explained in the book.

"I thought of writing Facts About Bhutan in 1996 and along the way several changes had to be made. During my assignments in the Bhutanese embassy in Delhi, where my work involved interacting with representatives of the Press, academicians, diplomats and government counterparts, I realised that even though India and Bhutan share a special relationship, there was little awareness about the erstwhile monarchy. The international community didn't know much. I think this can be attributed to the isolation policy that we once had... You will find a lot of travelogues on different countries. The government also brings out many factual publications but those are more like propaganda material. This is a book on Bhutan written by a Bhutanese. Tourists visit Bhutan and take back a lot of information after interacting with local people. Often they don't present the correct information or show the country in the correct perspective. Second, it's a shame that we haven't tried hard enough to write about our country. You have a lot of coffee table

books but not a book on Bhutan. It's also a good opportunity to learn about one's country. You may know about your government's policies but you may not know about the cultural aspects, the life in rural areas," says Wangchuk.

The former assistant resident representative for UNDP Bhutan, she



has written numerous research papers and publications related to Bhutan among which are, Window on Bhutan and Bhutan in Focus, published by the Royal Bhutanese Embassy, New Delhi. She has a Masters degree in Public Policy with specialization in Diplomacy and International Policy Studies from the Australian National University, Canberra; post-graduate diploma in Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law and Refugee Law from Indian Academy of International Law and Diplomacy, New Delhi. Her qualifications obviously made her write a book that's well researched and offers an unbiased picture of the political and social set up.

Lily Wangchuk gave up her job to write Facts About Bhutan that gives readers more than an overview of the country's culture, economy, environment, health and education



"Being a small country, we have a unique approach to development - Gross National Happiness, we have good leaders... People are interested to

know about these aspects. People want a book about how the country evolved over the years and the governance we have. It's much more than a travelogue.

Tourists want to know more than where to stay or eat. They want to know about the culture, governance, the political transition that has taken place."

games people play

LITTLEST PET SHOP
ELECTRONIC Arts Inc. has announced that spring fever has arrived early with work underway to launch Littlest Pet Shop for the Nintendo DS in March 2009. Targeting 6-10 year old girls, the game will be the sixth offering in the Littlest Pet Shop interactive gaming lineup following the highly successful Wii, PC and three

Nintendo DS (Winter, Garden, Jungle) releases in fall 2008.
Inspired by the Hasbro, Inc. blockbuster toy line, Littlest Pet Shop Spring for the Nintendo DS will feature a festive and colorful spring environment for girls to explore alongside their favorite sidekicks, including six new, exclusive pets. The fun also gets turned up with all-new playsets as well as four new mini-games for a total of 20 including those from

previous Nintendo DS versions. Accessory choices will also expand allowing pets to step into spring in high style. With the addition of 20 new accessories, girls will be able to select from well over 100 hats, glasses, scarves and other fun items.

MEMORIES OF THE ELEMENTS
GAIA Dream Creation Inc. has released a new memory game based on cards and the theme of the earth. The goal of the game is to develop its memory by remembering cards. The game offers a practice mode and a competition mode. The practice mode allows to



practice with a precise number of cards from 3 to 12. The competition mode starts with 3 cards up to 12 as long as the player is able to memorize the cards. The game focuses on developing the player's visual memory. The visual aspects of the game are the numbers written on the cards and the 4 different images representing the 4 elements of the earth (air, earth, water and fire). As the player solves new levels, new sceneries are revealed.

ANCIENT QUEST OF SAQQARAH
INDEPENDENT studio Codeminiion launches Egyptian Encounters - the second expansion to the successful casual puzzler Ancient Quest of Saqqarah. The company is also running "Get Featured In Our Game" contest for all who buy the expansion. Egyptian Encounters is the second SaqPack add-on to Ancient Quest of Saqqarah and it expands the game with 504 new levels, effectively doubling the original content. The expansion also includes additional gameplay music, extra graphics and new ranks for the players to collect.

NET RESULT

WHY watch music television channels that carry advertisements most of the time when you go online and listen to the latest music?

www.clever.com: "Founded in February 2006, Clever is a streaming video entertainment website. Clever offers some of the best in premium video entertainment content from major movie studios and major record labels... Our site is set up for quick access and we make it easy to find the content you want to watch by letting the cream rise to the top and featuring the most popular videos at your fingertips. In addition, it is now simple for people to share video on the Web without the hassles of figuring out media formats, file sizes, uploading and streaming methods. Our viral video service does all the technical stuff for you, so you can just have fun."

www.blastronet.com: "Born in the music and technology capitol of Texas, Austin-based Blastro Networks runs the Internet's leading music video network for today's hottest unsigned, indie, and major-label artists. Through three genre-specific music entertainment sites, we serve the active music consumer whenever and

wherever they want a fix of their favorite artists' videos. We enhance our catalogue of 10,000-plus music videos with culture- and genre-relevant original shows, industry news and artist profiles (bios, pictures and ringtones). Streaming over 10 million videos every month on our sites and via widgets on the social web, Blastro Networks has content distribution deals with such heavyweight partners as Windows Media Guide (mobile) and Verizon FiOS TV (HD video-on-demand), rounding out our offerings into a triple play package."

www.videocure.com: "VideoCure.com is online since year 2005 and the database has exceeded 11,300 music videos."

www.soundflavor.com: "Soundflavor Advanced Music Search is a web-based platform of search, discovery, and recommendation services for companies that sell, stream, or license music, or provide social networking around music. Our platform enables more purchasing, with lower sales and marketing costs, by helping users quickly and easily find the 'right' song that fits their specific tastes or needs from a large library of songs. The bottom line: our platform encourages more browsing, discovery, sampling, and purchasing of music."
■ Cyber Crack

