

## News from the Far East made from a journey by Maarten van Delft

**Andaman & Nicobar Islands:** AIR Port Blair celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Shortwave was introduced in 1989. Last April one of the two exciters in the NEC transmitter broke down and since then the SW transmitter has only been running at 5 kW. As NEC no longer produces any spare parts, the AIR Research & Development Dept. has been asked to design and produce a replacement exciter, but this could take a while yet. SW is only intended for the most Northern & Southern islands in the long island chain. This is especially so since last May a new 100 kW Thales MW transmitter came on the air on 684 kHz to replace the old 20 kW transmitter which now serves as a standby unit. The SW & MW transmitters are located at Brookshabad, 8 km (as the crow flies) South of Port Blair, and a dipole array ensures North-South SW coverage. The station is on the air as follows: 2330-0300 on 4760, 0310-0340/(0500 Sunday) on 7115, 0730-0930/(1000 Sunday) on 7115, 1030-1700/(1900 on Sat. & Sun.) on 4760. The station's main broadcasting language is Hindi and only one or two programmes in English are produced locally. There is a short daily programme in Sanskrit at 0125-0130. Other languages are Malayalam 0700-0730 (daily except Sunday), Bengali 1200-1230 daily & 0930-1000 Sunday, Nicobari 1030-1100, Telugu 1100-1130 & Tamil 1130-1200, all daily. The correct address of the station is: AIR, Delanipur, Haddo Post, Port Blair – 744102.

**Bhutan:** Lhotsam is listed in the WRTH as a BBS programme language. This is incorrect. The word means "Southern people", denoting the Nepali speakers living in Southern Bhutan. A correct listing of programme languages is: Dzongkha, Shar-chopkha, Nepali and English. As 68% of the population relies on BBS radio as their only source of news and information, a second radio programme is being planned. This which will be on the air 12 hours a day in Dzongkha only. A new studio for this purpose has already been constructed and a 50 kW SW transmitter will be ordered from Thales (Thomcast) after final approval of the plans. The old 50 kW Brown Boveri unit will continue on 6035. The transmitting station is located on Sangay Hill overlooking Thimphu. A folded dipole array beams the signal East-West for maximum nationwide coverage. Meanwhile, the FM network is being expanded, largely financed by Denmark. Danish Telecom supplies the antennas and (Italian-made) transmitters. The network is now comprised as follows: 88.1 Thimphu (beamed to the Western Region), 92.0 Phuentsholing & Paro (S.W. Region), 93.0 Bumthang (Central Region), 96.0 Thimphu city, 98.0 Takti (Southern Region) and 100.0 Yonphula (Eastern Region).



Maarten van Delft at AIR Port Blair

Together with the introduction of the internet, a BBS TV service was inaugurated on 2 June 1999 to commemorate the silver jubilee of the coronation of the king. The station operates on channel 5 (Band III) in Thimphu only, but can also be watched a day later in other towns through cable TV networks which receive the programmes on cassette for insertion in their networks. In very remote areas of the country video cassettes are received several days after the programmes were broadcast in Thimphu. In such areas groups of people watch the cassettes in community centres.

BBS TV is on the air daily at 1500-1700 when BBS radio is not on the air. The TV sound is then broadcast on the FM network for those who cannot afford a TV set.

**China:** China Tibet People's Broadcast Company, Lhasa heard with American English language lessons at 1400-1430 on 3910, 4820, 5935, 6050, 7170 & 7240. Heard in English at 0700-0730, 1100-1130 and 1630-1700 with "Holy Tibet", a propaganda-style 'cultural' programme to justify China's annexation of Tibet. Frequencies noted: 3995, 4905, 4920, 6110, 6130, 6200, 7385, 9490 & 9580. Though announced as "Monday to Saturday", the programme is also broadcast on Sunday. Comments and suggestions requested to: CTPBC, 41 Central Beijing Road, Lhasa 850000, Tibet Autonomous Region, China. (This address differs from that given in the WRTH).

**India:** AIR's Vividh Bharati programme in Hindi (with news and other segments in English) noted at 1200 on 7250, 9595 and 11620, the latter freq. often overmodulated. At the same time the National Channel was noted on 9425 and 9470, also in Hindi with news and other segments in English.

Listening in North Eastern India, the following AIR stations were heard on 7 MHz during local afternoon: 7105 Lucknow, 7120 Jaipur, 7130 Shillong, 7140 Hyderabad, 7150 Imphal, 7210 Kolkata, 7230 Kurseong, 7280 Guwahati, 7295 Aizawl.

AIR Sindhi Service heard opening at 1230 on 6165 & 9620, both poorly modulated and 6165 interfering with R Vietnam's Hmong Service via Xuan Mai.

3390, AIR Gangtok, Sikkim, heard at 0100-0400 and 1030-1600 on 3390 and 1404 MW. The station mainly broadcasts in Nepali, but has daily programmes in Hindi 1030-1100, Lepcha 1100-1130, Limboo 1130-1200 and Sikkimese 1200-1230. There are programmes in Hindi every Friday at 1430 and in English every Saturday at 1430. It no longer broadcasts on 6085 at 0700-0930.

**Vietnam:** RVietnam's Hmong Service at 0500 via Xuan Mai heard on 9650 & 9850 (rather than listed 9855).



Entrance sign at Bhutan Broadcasting Service