

Mystery Park in Interlaken

A fantastic voyage of discovery to the great mysteries of this world

IS Switzerland a mystery? No, the country itself is not a mystery, but Interlake's Mystery Park, in the very heart of the Swiss Alps, offers a fantastic voyage of discovery to the great mysteries of this world. Following in the tracks of best-selling author Erich von Daniken, visitors can travel to the Egyptian Pyramids, the imposing figures etched in the soil of Nazca in Peru, the Indian Vimanas and a planet in outer space. All year round, without getting your feet wet!

From the last week of May 2003, Interlaken is a surprising new attraction as the over 70,000 m² Mystery Park opens its gates on the site of the former military airfield. The unique mystery and educational theme park presents the greatest mysteries of the world in seven various theme pavilions, based on the ideas of Erich von Daniken. The mysteries originate from past civilisations and cultures.

Evidences of once thriving cultures, whose origins remain shrouded in secrecy to this day, are found all over the globe, often in inaccessible places. The mystery of Nazca is located about 450 km south of Lima, in Peru, with kilometre-wide areas of straight lines similar to runways -- each up to 1.60 km long and 70 m wide -- and giant figures etched into the earth. To date, every attempt to explain their creation and purpose has been refuted. The Egyptian Pyramids of Gizeh provide another mystery, with even their age still a matter of dispute. Ancient Indian literature contains detailed descriptions of flying vehicles or Vimanas. And similar vehicles are also mentioned in the Old Testament and Ethiopian folklore. This is a mystery that remains unsolved to the present day.

Where science and public meet

Erich von Daniken has been collating and researching these mysteries for decades, describing them in enthralling books, films and lectures. An audience of millions have eagerly followed his portrayals on television and in talks. With over 62

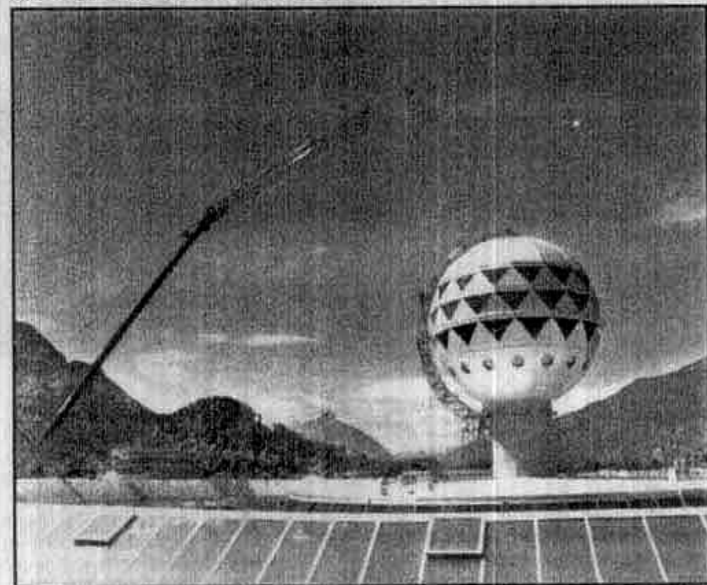
million books sold, Erich von Daniken is the world's best-selling author of non-fiction. He belongs to the tiny proportion of people on this earth with the opportunity to visit distant lands, explore humid jungles or head for mysteries in arid deserts.

But questions on our origins and our uniqueness occupy each and every one of us, exerting an irresistible, ever-inspiring appeal. The answers lie shrouded in the secrets of this world. Solving these mysteries is one of the largest untapped fields of research still open to the youth of today and future generations.

Using his knowledge and vast collection, Erich von Daniken has created a location accessible to us all. The Mystery Park will present the unexplained and very real mysteries of this world using state-of-the-art multimedia techniques, creating a meeting place for science and public where our planet can be rediscovered and fresh light shed on all its dimensions.

True replicas of relics and pyramids

Erich von Daniken stresses "We aim to arouse curiosity but can't give any answers, after all, these are myster-



A mystery to discover -- Switzerland has a mystery.

ies." Visitors shall far more learn the meaning of astonishment, make discoveries for themselves and ask questions, seek possible answers or simply enjoy the experience. Unique architectural landscapes have been built with true replicas of relics and pyramids. Internationally acclaimed teams have equipped the pavilions with informative films, exciting side attractions and amazing presentations.

The pavilions are arranged in a star shape around the central complex and linked by a glass corridor. An ingenious air-conditioning system provides even temperatures, making it possible for the park to be an all-year-round attraction free from the whims of weather. The central complex houses shops, toilets, restaurants and the Fun Zone. A variety of stands will offer culinary specialties from all over the world, befitting the cultural diversity of the Mystery Park. In the Fun Zone, visitors can dive into a wonderful underwater world aboard the submarine "Nautilus" or experience an exciting journey into outer space aboard the Landmark. The Mystery Park's landmark is without doubt the over 41 metre-high central

tower. Amongst other things it houses the "Erich von Daniken Foundation" and, the "Panorama," a circuit offering impressive views of Interlaken's wonderful mountain and lake world. Ideal for special occasions and events!

The operational organisation is as innovative as the contents of the Mystery Park are amazingly unique. Heating energy will be tapped from a nearby wood-burning plant. Tableware in the restaurants will be biodegradable. Cooling energy obtained from ground water and utilisation of waste heat will contribute to reducing CO₂ emissions by over 95% in comparison to conventional installations. The safety of the park's annual 500,000 visitors also enjoys top priority. A carefully devised rescue concept provides access to the centre of the park for safety personnel and vehicles.

Direct rail connection

The park is easily accessible by private and public transport with over 30,000 square metres of adequate parking space for four buses and cars. A shuttle bus will link the park to Interlaken Ost Railway Station and thus to international rail traffic. Tickets will be on sale at every railway station in Switzerland, available with or without a rail ticket. Entry price is 48 Swiss Francs for adults and 28 Swiss Francs for Children.

The Mystery Park has been created with the support of numerous institutions, companies and private individuals. As sponsoring partners, Coca-Cola, Feldschlösschen, SevenOne Media, Sonnheiser and Bleuel, SBB, Swatch and Sony have in particular contributed to the realisation of the project, which began in November 1997. In addition, thousands of small, major and institutional investors have bought shares in Mystery Park AG, augmenting capital resources to 51 million Swiss Francs. A further 35 million of the overall cost of 86 million Swiss Francs has been raised by the issue of convertible bonds. Mystery Park shares are listed on the stock exchange.

Is Switzerland dying out?

SWITZERLAND'S population is growing only thanks to the number of foreign nationals and to the naturalisation rate. The number of children borne by Swiss mothers is insufficient to maintain Swiss population numbers. Is there any hope left for the Swiss?

The population of Switzerland at the moment is a little over 7 million. In the early 1960s, a Swiss professor announced his forecast of a Switzerland with ten million inhabitants in close future. This prediction, based on a flourishing economy and the baby boom of that time, amazed the people of Switzerland, and it was used as a benchmark for planning the country's schools, hospitals and roads.

By the mid-1980's, the situation dramatically reversed. Now the burning question is, "Are the Swiss dying out?" prompted by fears that the low numbers of children being borne by Swiss women would reduce the population to only 4 million by as early as 2010. Four years ago, a Zurich-based newspaper concluded that "given an immigration rate of zero, the number of inhabitants will decline from the current 7 million to zero in almost exactly 1000 years."

Historical trend reversal

The current population of Switzerland has neither grown to 10 million nor shrunk to four million. Since 1993, the total population of Switzerland has grown, and is still growing only thanks to the number of foreign immigrants, their relatives and the number of children borne to them. In 1850, the population of Switzerland was 2.4 million. Since then the population has trebled: in 2001 Switzerland's population was 7.3 million, with 1.5 million foreign nationals (equivalent of about 20 per cent of the total population). The number of Swiss nationals had risen slightly to 5.8 million, thanks to naturalisations.

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office predicts that by 2060 Switzerland's population will decline to 7.06 million, with an increased number of foreign nationals of 1.6 million. Some people think that the population will grow due factors such as longer life expect-



The changing face of the Swiss population.

tancy, more immigrants and increased naturalisations. In fact, five issues dictate population trends -- births, deaths, immigration, emigration and naturalisations. Let us look at them in more detail.

Births -- declining

During the 1880s, the average number of children borne to Swiss women was four. This had declined to 1.8 during the Second World War, but increased again to 2.6 in the years thereafter. Following the baby boom of the 1960s, the number of children again fell sharply, stabilising at 1.5 children for every woman resident in Switzerland, although only 1.3 children for every Swiss woman.

Along with the decline in births, the number of marriages is also declining while the divorce rate has increased. Werner Haug, Vice Director of the Swiss Federal Statistics Office, sums up the declining birth rate among Swiss women thus: "the number of children with Swiss nationality has dropped so low that the number of deaths would outweigh births were it not for the children of the young migrant families."

Deaths -- longer life expectancy

Life expectancy in Switzerland is among the highest in the world: 76.8 years for men and 82.5 for females. The decline in infant mortality, better living conditions

and improved medical care are the reasons behind this increased life expectancy.

As life expectancy rises and birth rate declines, Switzerland's population is increasingly ageing. It has been predicted that within a few years the number of people over 65 will exceed the number of under-15s. In 2060, senior citizens will account for one quarter of the entire population, i.e. one in four people will be drawing old age pension.

Population movements -- a major influence

Immigration and emigration exert a significant influence on population trends. Migration patterns fluctuate wildly over the years, are often politically motivated and, generally speaking, cannot be predicted.

In the 19 century, emigration was the main factor affecting Swiss population numbers. Poverty and hunger in the valleys of the Grisons and Ticino drove many Swiss to seek better lives abroad. However, by the year 1880, this trend was reversed. The beginning of the construction of the Gotthard and Simplon railway tunnels brought with it an influx of foreign labourers. Since then onwards, influx of foreign nationals in Switzerland continued and at present they constitute about 20 per cent of the total population of the country.

The bilateral agreements with

the European Union (EU) on free movement of people will further increase the influx of EU immigrants in Switzerland and emigration of Swiss towards the EU. The statisticians anticipate a relatively large migration of people from outside the EU and estimate the annual immigration surplus at 23 thousand. By 2060, foreign nationals will account for at least one quarter of the total population of Switzerland.

Naturalisation -- the right to move

Although Switzerland has one of the lowest naturalisation rates in Europe, it is now the only growth factor for the Swiss population. Without naturalisations, the population of Swiss nationals would have dropped since 1993. From 2020 onwards the annual number of naturalised foreigners will exceed the number of persons emigrating (more immigration than emigration). The foreign population will then grow only on the basis of excess births.

"Avenir Suisse," an economic and social research institute in Switzerland, believes that a moderate rise in the naturalisation rate of 2 per cent would be sufficient to allow the number of foreign nationals to grow by not much more than 20 per cent, given a moderate rate of immigration.

Switzerland wants to facilitate and accelerate the naturalisation process for foreign nationals: now, second-generation foreign nationals can apply for Swiss citizenship if they have lived in Switzerland for eight years (previously, it was twelve years). Third-generation foreign nationals can obtain automatic citizenship. A right to appeal is to be introduced in the event of suspected arbitrary or discriminatory decisions.

Concluding remarks

The whole discussion above gives a striking contrast between the demographic problems that Bangladesh and Switzerland are facing at the moment. While controlling the growth of its over 130 million people remains one of the main focus for Bangladesh, Switzerland is struggling to avoid its self-extinction.

The Swiss biotech industry: Growth, diversification and a sense of identity

BIOTECHNOLOGY is one of the most promising sectors for the future of the Swiss economy. In addition to the exciting knowledge that will be gained through research, the biotechnology sector will also be a provider of high value-added products as well as new jobs for people. The small and medium sized enterprises, that are characteristic of this sector, form the backbone of the Swiss national economy. The Swiss government is committed to supporting the development of the biotechnology sector.

The Swiss biotech industry
The Swiss Biotech industry is well diversified. The 2002 edition of the Swiss Biotechnology Industry Guide identifies more than 250 firms whose business is fully or partially focused on modern biotechnology, as defined by the European Federation of Biotechnology (EFB). The

majority of these firms are small and medium-sized companies. Half of them are exclusively dedicated to modern biotechnological methods in Research and Development and/or production processes, with the remainder active as manufacturers of biotechnological equipment or as suppliers with manufacturing facilities in Switzerland or abroad.

The dynamism of modern biotechnology in Switzerland continues the long tradition of excellence in the chemical, pharmaceutical and food industries. In addition to the multinational companies, the flourishing biotech industry is also made up of small and medium-sized enterprises active mainly in the pharmaceutical sector, in engineering technologies, platform technologies or serving as suppliers to the industry.

Nation-wide synergies
Biotech firms are currently located

in 20 of Switzerland's 26 cantons, with three main clusters standing out. The BioValley Basel Area is home to 78 companies based around the four multinational companies: Lonza, Novartis, Roche and Syngenta. In the Zurich region, there are 65 companies, where academia provides the main thrust in biotechnology activities. Along the lakeshore from Geneva to Lausanne, a young biotech industry has grown from close cooperation with universities and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne. The Greater Geneva Region already counts more than 30 companies such as the famous company Serono. An initiative to support the Swiss biotech companies was founded recently by BioValley Basel, Bioalps, Zurich Mednet, Swiss SWX and the Association for Swiss Biotechnology Companies.

The Association of Swiss Biotechnology Companies: A newly emerging sense of identity

The Association of Swiss Biotechnology Companies (ASBC) was established in March 1998 and now represents over 100 member-companies. The majorities are small and medium-sized firms involved in a broad range of activities such as drug discovery and manufacturing, diagnostics and vaccines, engineering and instrumentation, food-processing, product-oriented research, services and supplies. The ASBC offers its members a Swiss biotech identity and represents their interests in the political, commercial and industrial arena as well as with the federal and cantonal authorities (Switzerland is divided into 26 geographic regions called cantons). Besides lobbying, to improve the framework conditions for the industry, the ASBC's key goals are to facilitate technology transfer between members and universities, to strengthen the contact with the European biotechnology partners and to integrate the Swiss biotech industry in the worldwide development of these technologies. The ASBC also serves as a local point of contact for foreign companies considering investment in Switzerland.

SDC in Bangladesh

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5
approach in designing and implementing the arsenic programme in consultation with the communities and partner organisations and following the guidance provided by the Government. The main arsenic programme has started in January 2001 and will be completed in August 2003. The programme includes creating general awareness on arsenic issues, testing all the operational groundwater sources, identifying the arsenicosis patients, providing support for emergency mitigation (treatment and safe water) and community capacity building.

The SDC arsenic programme has established a sound procedure for screening as well as validation and sharing of results with communities and other stakeholders. The local government bodies are involved and actively contributed in the arsenic issue through regular coordination meeting and supervising the programme at the field level. The local administration at upazila and district are also closely coordinated with the progress of the programme.

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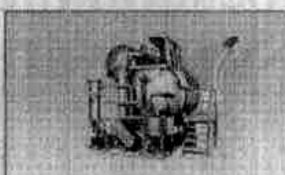
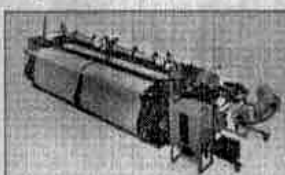
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