VIOLENCE AND COUNTER-VIOLENCE (top to bottom): Sita Debi Malla’s home was destroyed in the mob attack at Hallanagar on 16 February. One of the leaders of the Kapilbastu vigilantes speaks on his Indian mobile phone at the Krishnanagar police station. Abdul Rahman was forced to watch as Maoists executed his two sons on 26 February.

NARESH NEWAR
in KAPILBASTU

A month after vigilantes went on the rampage, villages near the birthplace of the Buddha are still in shock. In Hallanagar, 25 km west of Lumbini, families stay close for safety. Many wear vacant looks as they rummage among the charred ruins of their homes. There is little food.

On 16 February, hundreds of fellow-villagers went house-to-house here looking for Maoists. Fed up with rebel atrocities and intimidation, villagers attacked fellow villagers and many innocent farmers became victims of lynching mobs. In all 42 people were killed. Maoists were among the dead but so were farmhands, rickshaw pullers, tailors and farmers. One elderly man, Prem Bahadur Raskoti, who had lost his entire family in a flood 10 years ago, was hacked to death with an axe.

The arrival of the security forces finally brought the situation under control. But by then only 20 of the 352 houses in Hallanagar were intact.

“We feel much safer now that the soldiers are here,” says Khuman Singh Panjwar whose house was destroyed. Panjwar’s family migrated here from Galmi 35 years ago, and he recognised familiar faces of local jamindars among the attackers. Ironically, the villagers suspected of being Maoists had themselves fled rebel atrocities in Rolpa, Pyuthan and Argakhanchi in recent years.

The Kapilbastu violence had sinister communal and ethnic overtones against hill settlers. Activists fear the vigilante violence here could turn into a Bihar-style caste war. Perhaps sensing this but also to protect vigilantes from rebel revenge, the army has set up a camp at Ganeshpur. “The people have helped us with information on Maoists,” says Major Sunil Gahle at the army camp.

Sita Debi Malla lives with her family in the ruins of her house. It has no doors and a blue plastic sheet serves as the roof. Sita cooks outside, her children study for their final exams in the open. “We don’t have money to rebuild, we never did anything wrong,” says Sita whose family moved down from Puthan four years ago to escape the conflict. ActionAid is providing food but the need in Kapilbastu is much greater.

“We are not Maosits,” says another young villager. “We don’t even like them, we came here to escape them.”

Villagers say their offensive was successful because the Maoists have been driven out. “There may still be a few left but we’ll flush them all out,” says Birendra Mishra, a leader of the anti-Maoist vigilante group. Asked why innocent villagers were targeted, Mishra told us: “We have nothing against them but if they give shelter to Maoists we will not spare their village.” A week after the attacks last month, senior government officials visited Kapilbastu and gave the vigilantes a pat on the back.

But despite Mishra’s bravado, on 26 February, Maoists dressed in combat fatigues shot dead two brothers in cold blood. Their father, Abdul Rahman, was forced to watch. “I told them to spare my sons and kill me instead,” said the 65-year-old farmer. His wife stood by sobbing.

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**BLOODSCRIPT**

We share a cage, a cliff, a country. A diminishing ground draws us in as it sinks and surrounds. Walls stand, rootless, skyscrapers for the damned. Blood runs dry. The stains, a script (The iterate overtook this spine-broken book) where each village fades, mist-drawn, West to East. All land in between, tea-stained lines torn from a map. Scratches. Mouth-curdled squawk dies down to a dissonant murmur, a curse hot in the ears, ready to be heard. “Wounds won’t heal, this script cannot not be read” It’s never time

And so it adds up: Life subtracted from life A hurried high kick, dead on Your name, a child’s name, your child’s face, a leg an... Killing foretells the necessary crime Betrayal will do, or simply being there

She who can’t walk off, set free “Hands full” has a hurricane in mind “Stairway” pretends just that Moonlit stone lanterns, darkened, lead the way. Far below, hunched, haughty, the heedless hills On their backs, dead weight, discarded live, in a gazed eye a candle flickers.

Drawn down deep within the fist, what flame exists cannot reach us. Charred, the ceiling, charred, the palms, the healing bones. “Start over” has a hurricane in mind Exhusted in the ocean of sacrifice It leaves its own place Forcibly out of its native realm Cruel hills and steep there is no place But, in my land, (harbored and held high) its restless waves asleep 

**DICTION TILL THE EARTH TREMBLES**

Purna Bahadur Vaidya

Into a gullly water flows, washing the skyless world around, indifferently rippling

Killed. imprisoned tiger caged bird

It shivers... excited ripples, trembling body, slowly it thins and flattens

Anxious, limited, bound, fearful of desiccation—a revolutionary enduring a lifetime sentence Feeing birds his heart ascend! His very dream... a stream’s ongoing force

Banks, rock hard limits, his very dream... a stream’s ongoing force enduring a life sentence. Water caught in a rift Despite jungle and hills His very dream... a stream’s ongoing force Enduring a life sentence

No free man’s fate, there’s nothing to attain Finally from that dry hard enclave there’s nothing to attain No free man’s fate, unless from the depths an upheaval... sends him forth

Translated by Wayne Amtzis with the author

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DAILY REPORTS**

Reported daily: Whereabouts unknown Reported daily: Consequences suffered Reported daily: Maimed and killed Reported daily: Severely beaten Reported daily: Do not do not Implement Implement Reported daily: Immediately cease Reported daily: Immediately halt

Concurrently reported to The committee to investigate The committee to resurrect The committee to punish The committee for the end of days

Subsequently tabled to the sub-committee for forced displacement the sub-committee for loss of limbs the sub-committee for vulnerability the sub-committee for disappearance the sub-committee for sleepless nights the sub-committee for endless daze

Finally and ultimately to be forwarded with recommendations to the Committee For Daily Reports Formerly known as the committee For What’s To Be Done

Wayne Amtzis Kathmandu February 05

**YES, ALL MY RIVERS ARE LAHUREYS**

Purna Bahadur Vaidya

For the tiniest refuge, the waters move Hastily running night and day despite jungle and hills

Finding a place of rest whose whole self can stay, there it calmly abides, its restless waves asleep

But, in my land, (harbored and held high) by mountains and icy peaks there is no place to remain

Crested hills and steep cliffs pushing down, allow no rest, banishing it to the lowlands

Forced out of its native realm for a foreign land So, rubbing earthly dust onto its chest, it leaves its own peace weeping, weeping, exhausted in the ocean of sacrifice for no end, for nothing at all

Translated by Wayne Amtzis with the author

**ROADBLOCK**

A sudden mountain slams the brakes A twenty-year siege comes down to speeds up: drags out The resistant never choose Chaste walls shattered close in. Weeds among the rubble City in ruins. A dwarf species pushes through, 1 o'clock, the word gash festers The wide-open, pinpointed, a finger-leaf away splattered kiss. A mess of hacks, guts stuffed back Nothing here, so they leave behind less Far-flung failure intact, quaver-laced future

long due, rent earth and landslides, stacked line, and slingshot stone damark a grotesque range, a bateled divide Between silver and seal, shape and shatter, a lash of talks In dissonant halls, voices cast bodies mauld admired in beauty, your monuments, monuments; your faces, defaced Your vision a dredged pool of light Your fortified return a ravished valley. The relinquished heart of the Mandals Can’t you see what’s happening? The signs are clear The sharp sudden one step more trips you up. You’re the thing to be had, the naught to be done in, the zip to be zapped

That unguarded moment when we could have... All around, closing in. Tongues thickened with deceit

Escape ruffled with duty. There’s no space left in the all-alone Throats constrict. Walled-in, walls fail. Everything a taken from you Despair got you by? Pain’s all that’s left At the court of the deprived

The un-judged deliver their verdict No one suffers here (They insist) No one will speak of this (There’s nothing to be spoken of) Until you can speak for yourself (This they fear)

Endure!

Wayne Amtzis Kathmandu March 05

**25 - 31 MARCH 2005 #240 TIMES**
he history of Mao’s Great Cultural Revolution from 1966-1976 is replete with parallels with the ‘Historic Leap’ of the Nepali Maoists. The purges, mass deportations, trials in kangaroo courts and paranoia of the time were triggered by a power struggle within the hierarchy centred around Mao’s fourth wife, Jiang Qing. Ideologically, the purges were justified to hasten the completion of Mao’s revolutionary goals with the slogan: ‘power to the proletariat’. But by the time Mao died in 1976 and the Gang of Four was finally pushed out, between 2-7 million Chinese had been killed and a staggering 20 million are estimated to have died during the Great Leap Forward. Even today, there are hundreds of millions of Chinese who lived through what they still call ‘the black period’. Anyone who was suspected of not being loyal to the new party line was publicly humiliated, thrown out, exiled to the countryside or executed. Even those who were seen as future rivals to the hierarchy were eliminated. One of the aims of the Cultural Revolution was to uproot and boycott ‘bourgeois’ education. Students were encouraged to expose their teachers and in many cases even kill them through lynch mobs. Temples and monasteries were destroyed, monks and priests killed or disrobed. After Mao’s death in 1976 and the defeat of the Gang of Four, Deng Xiaoping rolled back on strict communisation, restored private property and allowed farmers to grow and sell produce for profit. His dictum: “it doesn’t matter whether a cat is black or white as long as it catches mice” became the mantra for the post-revolutionary era of prosperity and growth.
Baburam, in or out?

Sudhir Sharma in Nepal, 14-31 March

Maoist ideologue Baburam Bhattarai along with his wife Hisila Yami and Dinanath Sharma have recently been victims of the Maoist central committee’s campaign against ‘individual authoritarianism.’ The tussle in the Maoist leadership started with the committee’s meeting in September when it decided on various controversial issues which included a decision to take on India.

Bhattarai was not in favour of this. Eventually, he listed 13 points to express his disapproval and presented them to the high command of the Maoist party, which called Bhattarai’s 13-point a ‘letter bomb’. In December, he sent a commentary to Samaya magazine where he said he was not the ‘leader of surrenderers.’ And in January, he sent a write-up to Kantipur about the king. The Maoist leaders considered all this a criticism of the decisions and spirit of the party. During its meeting, the leaders had decided that no one in the party except Prachanda and Krishna Bahadur Mahara, would be allowed to speak or write anything independently. Following this decision, not only did the party drop Baburam’s regular column from its mouthpiece, Janadesh, it also stopped publishing his interviews, articles or opinions. The politburo meeting took up the matter of Baburam’s insubordination in presenting his 13 points of dissent seriously. He was cornered by a majority of Prachanda’s supporters. The party then took disciplinary action against Baburam and even his wife Hisila Yami and friend Sharma got into trouble but reasons about the latter two are not clear. Initially, Sharma who joined the party four years ago was considered to be in the pro-Prachanda camp. Now, it is not clear why party action was taken against him. Was it because Sharma had spoken in favour of Bhattarai at the plenum? What seems clear is that this is just the latest in the personality clash between Prachanda and Baburam that has been going on for years. Even before the People’s War, Bhattarai had been removed from the position of president of United People’s Front and was replaced by Pampha Bhusal. The organisation did not run well under her, so Baburam was reinstated. But by 1997, when the conflict was in its second year, the top two leaders were again having differences. Baburam was already more popular than Prachanda as the Maoist ideologue and also due to his intellect. Another leader Ram Bahadur Thapa (Badal) was gradually gaining popularity but in 2000, he was sidelined and demoted to ordinary membership. Somehow, Badal managed to gain membership in the permanent committee. In 2001, Baburam, too, was nearly ousted from the party during the fourth convention which established Prachanda as the supreme leader and made his face public. It also decided that every political writing by the Maoists should henceforth reflect Prachanda’s views. Baburam was not happy, it was evident that the party had been divided into two camps. However, the leadership, knowing that the rift would only benefit their enemy, patched up, establishing Prachanda as the number one and Baburam as the number two.
Saubhagya Dhin in ‘Hyper Empire and Hindu Kingdom’ (p236) hits the nail on the head. Given the incessant political instability Nepal went through in the past 15 years and the ever increasing fear of a Maoist takeover, international donors should see February First as necessary if they are more concerned with the people’s welfare than ideology. Most Nepalis are too busy eking out a living in remote villages to advocate political and civil rights. Let’s listen to their plight and start doing something concrete. Even if the king can cull legislation and make the bureaucracy effective, half of Nepal’s problems will be solved. What the donors need to understand is: political and civil rights can be restored anytime in the future when a majority of Nepalis feel it necessary. Subindra Bogati, London

• Great to find succinct analysis of issues like the ones presented by Saubhagya Dhin in ‘Hyper Empire and Hindu Kingdom’ and Kanak Man Dixit’s Southee Asia column ‘Unshackled colsches’ (p238) on Bhutan refugees. Because we are not just landlocked but India-locked, our manoeuvring capacity is severely restricted. This makes Nepal extremely susceptible to foreign pressures. However, another issue, if not more, troubling issue is the lack of unity within Nepal ever since King Gyanendra’s February First move. If we can’t analyse our domestic issues vis-à-vis the impact of the foreign powers we will repent it. No Nepali wishes to meet the fate of Tibet or Sikkim.

Anu Pradhan, Kathmandu

• ‘Party Nepal’ (p249) and ‘Party Nepal’ (p239) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award’. The game was #238) said Mangal’s captain Nairi won the ‘Man of the Match award'.

Jiti Jang, email

SOMETHING TO HIDE?
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Dhruba Khanal, Kathmandu

• I read your insightful editorial on press freedom ‘Something to hide?’ (p238) and couldn’t help writing to tell you that if you replace ‘Nepal’ with ‘the United States’ everything you say it about Nepal could be true about America. Sovereign thinking considering how much America is lecturing Nepal about democracy must be press.

Lina Udholm, email

• You say the blanket censorship on the Nepali media will backfire on the government and the military. I agree. It is a political issue that is linked to the fundamental rights and democracy, then asking the king to re-establish basic rights. Let’s listen to their plight and start solving the problems. What the donors prove is that aid has never been an option for peace but their threat of aid cuts only serve to emulate or strive to imitate?

Sumeer Singh, Sydney

• Why do so many people in the Nepali media blindly accept the European or American model for government? As an American citizen, I can tell you that democracy in America is utterly corrupted by big businesses and the military-industrial complex. The ‘choice’ between the Democratic and Republican parties is so ludicrous as to be tantamount to a one party system. The news is controlled by a few large entertainment corporations and they manipulate public opinion rather than inform the public. Is that really something to emulate or strive to imitate?

Daniel Birch, New York

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The quote Nepal is a garden of castes and races (p259) is correct. OK Lal brings it up again in his State of the Nation column (‘Nepal’s other half’, p238).

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Sumeer Singh, Sydney
Nepal Times: How did your meeting with King Gyanendra go? Reeto Meister: His Majesty expressed Nepal’s commitment to respect the Geneva Conventions. The audience with His Majesty allowed us to inform him about the working relationship that we maintain with different ministries. He also paid attention to the information made to him regarding our specific functions and cooperation with the Royal Nepal Army. He expressed his commitment to the issues we had brought to his attention.

You also met with other senior state officials. Yes, we also had a meeting with the minister of foreign affairs with which we expressed our satisfaction regarding the cooperation for granting access to the people in detention, arrested and detained after 1 February. We had a closed-door meeting with the chief of army staff that allowed frank discussion on the state of our cooperation, in particular the protection of the persons under control of armed forces and the modality as according to which the ICRC can visit. ICRC made concrete and constructive proposals on how to evaluate this aspect of our particular work with the RNA.

We were briefed on the situation prevailing as far as conflict is concerned and we also received a detailed briefing on what the Human Rights Cell had undertaken over the last two years. Regarding the activities of the Cell, we were apprised of the training of commanding officers and soldiers to know what the rules are. We also learnt that the RNA wishes to respect impunity and to prosecute persons in their ranks that do not respect the Geneva Conventions.

What policy does ICRC have regarding its support to internally displaced persons? For ICRC, the major challenge is to have an impact on the lives of the civilian population and the persons that do not participate in the hostilities as far as their protection is concerned, that they too do not exploit to abuse and do not disappear.

How do the state and rebels view the protection of the persons under conflict? For ICRC, the major challenge is to have an impact on the lives of the civilian population and the persons that do not participate in the hostilities as far as their protection is concerned, that they too do not exploit to abuse and do not disappear.

The state must restore press freedom, not for us, but for its own sake. To get real value from media, the state has to ensure that we can work without harassment. No law in existence will ever prevent the state from misleading the public, but the state will have to be more open and transparent. This doesn’t mean that the state must rely on the ICRC’s expertise to do what it has to do. The state must be good on its own. The ICRC doesn’t have to be right about all things. The ICRC can’t do everything. We must also understand that the ICRC is an expert in one area, not in another.

The state must respect freedom of the press, not just for its own sake, but for the sake of its own democracy. The state must respect freedom of the press, not just for its own sake, but for the sake of its own democracy.
The conflict is injurious to the health of Nepalis, especially women.

The highway blockades and bandas have made access to medical help. Sometimes, mothers in need of medical help are not able to travel to remote health posts. The Maoists have their own channels to bring in essential drugs but they are not used by the service providers. Just when Nepal was beginning to make some headway in meeting basic primary health care needs, the conflict has taken us back several decades.

Nepal Family Health Program. According to the Millennium Development Goal, Nepal must reduce its maternal mortality rate by 50 percent from 800 per 100,000 births to 230 in the next 10 years.

S

amchita was too young for it all: married off in her teens, pregnancy, losing a child at birth and finally her own death before her 16th birthday. When her labour pains came, Samchita’s in-laws refused to take her to the district hospital, insisting on adhering to the family tradition of bearing children at home. She delivered her child without help from a trained birth attendant but the baby died soon after being born. Samchita herself lost a lot of blood and in the next few days, her condition deteriorated. The only medical aid she received were aspirins. After two weeks, the family finally decided to take her to a hospital. But it was too late.

That day earlier this year in mid-western Nepal, Samchita became a statistic. She contributed to Nepal’s shocking maternal mortality statistics which puts this country at the same level as sub-Saharan Africa.

Pregnancy related complications kill over 4,500 Nepali women every year, close to 12 deaths every day, one every two hours. The government’s figures put Nepal’s maternal mortality rate at 530 per 100,000 births but this is obviously a doctored figure. UNICEF estimates it is closer to 740. In 1996, the Population Reference Bureau puts it even higher at 600 per 100,000 births. Compare this to Thailand for the 16 mountain districts, 2,400 in 30 hill districts and 2,400 in the tarai, which has the largest population and the highest fertility rates.

“Many mothers don’t die due to lack of doctors or medicines, they die because they are not considered important enough,” says maternal health expert, Aruna Uprety (See Column). According to the Millennium Development Goal, Nepal must reduce its maternal mortality rate from 800 per 100,000 births to 230 in the next 10 years.

“Postpartum is the most dangerous period,” says Swaraj Pradhan Rajbhandari of USAID’s Women’s Right to Life Network of groups working in the Nepali diaspora told us. “I see maternal mortality more as a human rights and gender discrimination issue than a public health indicator.”

According to the Millennium Development Goal, Nepal must reduce its maternal mortality rate by 50 percent from 800 per 100,000 births to 230 in the next 10 years.

“What we need most is to raise awareness in the rural areas about safe motherhood practices. It is possible to reverse this conflict situation,” says Dr. Gauri Shrestha of the Safe Motherhood Network of groups working in the Nepali diaspora told us.

Other counties in the region like Sri Lanka have slashed maternal mortality by doubling the number of skilled birth attendants in the past eight years. The Family Health Division is now following the Sri Lankan model by training skilled birth attendants and setting up birthing centres. The target is to have one centre for every 100,000 population and one skilled birth attendant for every 1,000 births.

Meanwhile, the population of internally displaced people who, because they are far away from their home districts, do not have access to regular care. Many mothers and midwives have abandoned their posts. Two years ago, we organised a health camp in Dali but had to wrap up early because of a curfew. Many women had walked for days and couldn’t be treated. I still remember the pain on the faces of those mothers. We offered money to some of them so they could go down to the Nepalgunj Medical College for treatment but they were reluctant fearing they’d be stuck if the highway was blocked and there would be no one to take care of their children, livestock and farms.

In the evening, army officials came and questioned us. One woman was hospitalised and we had to give them her full description, problem and address. “This is how it is here, we are always tense,” the nurses told us. “We haven’t been able to send medicines to many health posts.” In the midst, the tradition of cutting the umbilical chord with a rusty sickle makes tetanus a serious killer of young babies. “Even if there is 100,000 births who die in Sri Lanka with 92 and Indonesia at 22, our maternal mortality is a doctored figure. UNDP estimates it is closer to 740 and the highest fertility rates. Until now, frontline health care providers have been maternal child health workers. There are 3,152 of them all over the country but they don’t fall in the skilled health worker criteria. After 1999, the government tried to upgrade them into Auxiliary Nurse-Midwives (ANMs) but half of them are ineligible because they don’t have any formal school education. NSSP’s Indira Shrestha concludes: “The only hope and the most practical solution is to follow up with local communities to reduce maternal deaths.”

Mothers in numbers

45,000: Number of Nepali women who have died in the past 10 years due to complications at childbirth

12,000: Number of Nepali women who have been killed in the conflict since 1996

6,000: Number of trained midwives needed to reduce maternal mortality

830: Number of Nepali mothers who die for every 100,000 births

92: Number of mothers in every 100,000 births who die in Sri Lanka

2: Number of mothers in every 100,000 births who die in Sweden.
When we should be finding solutions

During the post-February First crisis, tourism is gradually recovering. While the tourists have not yet returned to pre-crisis levels, the number of tourists is slowly increasing. The Government of Nepal is taking various measures to attract tourists and to revive the tourism industry. The country is working on several projects to improve tourism infrastructure and to promote Nepal as a tourist destination.

However, the tourism industry is facing several challenges. The demand for tourism is not as high as before the crisis, and the supply of tourist-related services is not meeting the demand. The government is working on projects to increase the supply of tourist-related services, such as hotels, restaurants, and attractions.

In addition, the government is promoting Nepal as a destination for business tourism. The country is working on projects to improve the infrastructure for business tourism, such as convention centers and conference facilities. The government is also promoting Nepal as a destination for medical tourism, with the help of local medical institutions.

The tourism industry is facing several challenges, such as the high cost of travel and accommodation, and the high cost of insurance. The government is working on projects to reduce the cost of travel and accommodation, and to promote insurance for tourists.

In conclusion, the tourism industry in Nepal is gradually recovering, and the government is working on several projects to promote the country as a destination for tourism. However, the industry is facing several challenges, and the government is working on projects to address these challenges.
Democratise parties first

MIN BAJRACHARYA

If democratic leaders make mistakes, they should force them to do so. If they don’t voluntarily step down, the party cadre should force them to do so.

After that the parties need an agenda. The political leadership of these parties aren’t capable of steering the engine. Restructuring the leadership of the parties, new leaders coming into the main challenge. There is no point complaining about feudalism in the country if the parties run along feudal lines. If there is no internal democracy within the parties how can they fight for democracy in the country? Democratisation of the parties must begin with:

1. No leader should remain in the same position for more than two terms, or 8-10 years
2. Party leadership should be inclusive of all viewpoints
3. There should be a free marketplace of ideas inside the party but a unity of purpose in implementation
4. A referendum should be an instrument of reform not just for the country but also for party members to have their say
5. An independent ombudsman should monitor decisions and activities.

If they want democracy to move forward, leaders like Girija Prasad Koirala, Madhav Kumar Nepal, Sher Bahadur Deuba, Mohan Bikram Singh and Narayan Man Bijukch should humble step down. If they don’t voluntarily step down, the party cadre should force them to do so.

In the last three months of 2004, a total of 1,298 cases of human rights violations were recorded. These cases directly affected 4,421 people while 504 people lost their lives at the hands of the government forces and the Maoists. According to INSEC from 1 October to 31 December, government forces killed 209 people while the insurgents killed 205. Most human rights violations took place in the mid-western region, where the government was responsible for 535 cases of human rights abuses and 511 cases while other parties were responsible for 251 violations. All over the country at least 2,700 people were directly affected by the human rights violations from the Maoists. This number involving the government affected 1,100 people. During this period, abductions rose significantly. Out of the total 256 abduction cases, the Maoists were responsible for 242 abductions. INSEC said five persons were killed in government custody during this period while 67 were disappeared, 503 faced torture in government custody while the Maoists assaulted and injured 151 people. Other criminal gangs are known to be responsible for 13 abduction cases.

Graph: Human Rights
You need to know how to look at it. See it this way, it’s not worse at all!

Selected material translated every week from the Nepali press.
Journey from the land of Maoism to the land of Mao

SHIVA GAUNLE
in BEIJING

Five goose-stepping guards emerge into Tiananmen Square every morning, raise the Chinese flag and salute it crisply. The huge banner flutters all day at Beijing’s historic heart, as it has ever since Mao Zedong raised it first on 1 October 1949. “A new China is born with the sunrise,” Mao said in his speech that day proclaiming the communist victory as the flag was raised. Nearly 60 years later, the flag is still there, so is a giant portrait of Mao that gets a face-lift every now and then. Mao’s mausoleum has become more of a tourist destination than a pilgrimage site. Mao’s legacy in the land of his revolution today is a Mickey Mouse world of Mao kitsch: alarm clocks with little arm-swinging Mao, Mao key chains, Mao T-shirts and arm-waving Maos, Mao key kitsch: alarm clocks with little arm-swinging Maos, Mao key chains, Mao T-shirts and arm-waving Maos. ‘Maorabilia’ is restaurants that have trendy Red Guard themes. “The only thing still remaining of Mao is that flag on Tiananmen Square,” admits a Chinese colleague who is not too curious about the resurrection of Mao Zedong. There is a reluctance among officials here to talk about revolutionaries who are not too curious about the rise of Maoism in their neighbouring country or if they did, they tended to dismiss it. Narendra Raj Pandey was a royal palace employee before he was appointed the Nepali ambassador in Beijing two years ago. He says, “The Chinese government’s view is that Nepali Maoists have misused the name of their leader.”

We asked several other government officials about the Chinese attitude and they said they didn’t really know about the Maoists in Nepal. Zheng Jingxiang, deputy chief editor of Beijing Daily summed up this attitude, “I was a baby when Mao was alive, and I know even less about Maoists in Nepal.”

China is dashing headlong into an urban jungle of skyscrapers. With names like the Oriental Pearl Tower, these soaring structures symbolise not just China’s achievements but also its confidence in the future. But China is still a one-party state and freedoms are curtailed. It may be called ‘socialist market economy’ but a more laissez-faire capitalist economic system would be hard to find anywhere. Still, organised politics is not allowed and officials tell us that this is still necessary to ensure the discipline and single-mindedness needed for economic growth. Even here, there are signs of loosening up. As long as it helps create jobs and spur growth, the government is willing to take on non-communists. Compared to a decade ago, there is much more freedom to bring up environmental issues to address the ecological damage caused by a headlong rush to expand the economy. “Till recently, we could only say and do what the government told us to, today people are free to bring up demands,” says an environmental journalist. Ironically, 30 years after Mao’s death, his communist party is still engaged in winning the hearts and minds of the peasantry. The government is trying to address the concerns of farmers and workers in the hinterland who have been left out by the growth zone along the eastern seaboard with subsidised housing, cash benefits and health care. Social discontent is a concern because many have been left behind by uneven growth and the issue was addressed during this month’s Chinese People’s Congress. “There is hardly any policy left over from the Mao era,” journalist Li Bingmin told us, “Maoism is now a part of China’s history. Comrade Mao is a great historical leader and we respect him.” That seems to be the official line.
Make peace, not love

Something has gone very, very wrong with the Chetraahe Chelis’ libidos. They don’t want to lift a finger for men. For them, this qualifies as a state of emergency as they are supposed to be women of bad character.

To perk up, they decided to come out with a list of sexy people. They’ve done this before and it whetted their appetites for life. Readers know that Kantipur editor Nayan Waghe (who looked extremely fetching when he showed up for government interrogation recently) was named No 1 in their evaluation of the 10 sexiest journalists in Nepal. The editor of the present publication came in at No 3, not bad for a 50-year-old, is it? (See: ‘Media hunks’, #171)

Then they named the 10 sexiest politicians, which was frankly a taxing exercise, as politicians tend to overlook the finer points of style and grooming. But they are fearless Chelis, they placed Bashpa at the top of that list, hoping he might give up the underground life and come into open politics, if only to meet us at cafe restaurants.

Peace would then prevail.

So, recently, they decided: who’s come up with a list of the 10 Sexiest Cabinet Members? But they ran into problems, immediately.

Then they turned their attention to the rest of the cabinet but got stuck on this question: how young must one be to be sexy? Of course, it is possible to find 60-year-olds attractive or even 70 or 80-year-olds—if one is oneself 60, 70 or 80. The Chelis are themselves not spring chicken (though some of them behave as though they were). But 50 should be the cut-off age. Generally, sexy flesh, winking skin, thinning hair, stiff joints, varicose veins, chicken necks, age spots, questionable virility: these are major obstacles to sexiness. Also, short men leave the Chelis cold.

Being egalitarian, they don’t like to talk down at men. Therefore, Durga Shrestha was the list topper this time. Ms Shrestha has a roundly pleasant face and a roundly pleasant voice. And they decided to call it quits.

The Chelis take one look at the cabinet, despair and boycott lovemaking

First, they couldn’t find out whether it was legal to discuss the sex appeal of the First Vice-chairman. And if it is legal, is it permissible to speak one’s mind on the topic without censorship? Or is it only possible to say that the First Vice-chairman is the sexiest cabinet member? Which of course he is.

Then they turned their attention to the rest of the cabinet but got stuck on this question: how young must one be to be sexy? Of course, it is possible to find 60-year-olds attractive or even 70 or 80-year-olds—if one is oneself 60, 70 or 80. The Chelis are themselves not spring chicken (though some of them behave as though they were). But 50 should be the cut-off age. Generally, sexy flesh, winking skin, thinning hair, stiff joints, varicose veins, chicken necks, age spots, questionable virility: these are major obstacles to sexiness. Also, short men leave the Chelis cold. Being egalitarian, they don’t like to talk down at men.

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Yes, the Chelis are boycotting lovemaking. Not a wink, not a smile, not even a flirtatious look will emanate from them. Not forever, of course. Just till their 40-point demands (See: ‘Women declare independence’, #186) are met. And till a ceasefire is declared, peace talks are held and a new constitution is drafted via a constituent assembly. The fact is that the objective conditions are not right for lovemaking in Nepal. So: nothing, nothing, nothing. Okay, maybe they will flirt a little with people who—on a personal, individual basis—meet our demands and otherwise agree with our vision. And they may throw a lola or two at the boys this Holi. But there will be no lovemaking.

Make peace, not love. And make it now. ●

CULTURE

Happy Holi week

Let’s boycott harassment and save what’s good of Holi

AARTI BASNYAT

Spring is in the air and you are walking with the sun on your back, a song in your heart and… what? What was that? Sure sign that Holi is here again! That dreaded festival when lolas start raining down on unsuspecting lovers.

It’s this year’s coincidence that the Holy Week coincides with our own Holi week. Both probably originated in pre-Christian or proto-Vedic equinox festivals but at least our Holi has degenerated into a free-for-all excuse for society’s misogynists to batter women.

Adi legend goes, Hiranyakashyap was an atheist king who believed himself to be superior to God. His son Prahlad, however, was an ardent devotee of Bishnu. Unable to tolerate his son worshipping his goddess, Hiranyakashyap planned to assassinate him. After several failed attempts, he turned to his sister Holika for help.

Holika, as it happens, was blessed with immortality to fire. She sat on a burning pyre with her nephew on her lap and (too late) found out that her boon could only be used for good deeds. Her nephew escaped unscathed from the ashes of the fire but Holika was burnt to ashes.

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Let’s boycott harassment and save what remains good of the festival. Play Holi with your family and friends, not unwilling strangers. Let it be a celebration of spring and a joyful occasion. ●

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Life’s a golf game
Only time and practice will tell

The last few weeks saw lots of tips and guidelines. Intense though they were, I hope they kept you busy on the driving range and helped you on the course. So, while you’re diligently practicing, let’s turn to a very different perspective. If most golfers were reasonably consistent with their game, this sport would be more fascinating. Look back over your performance and ask yourself if you’ve ever maintained some semblance of consistency over a period of time. If the answer is never, which it most probably is, read on.

Even at the highest levels of golfing, consistency is one of the most elusive aspects of the sport. It is something everyone strives for by working and practicing hard. Often I compare golf with life: some days are so cheerful, some so bland, others miserable. Even then, there are plenty of similar happy moments, which is the essence of everyday living.

Golf mirrors this. One day you play 5 under your handicap and you are happy. The next morning, you start off with a perfect drive on the first tee then mess up from the next hole onwards. Some days you play good, some days passably and often you play terribly.

How many times have we sworn enough is enough and thrown our clubs into the cupboard muttering, “This is crazy, I quit”? But we can’t really bring ourselves to do so. After all, we are human and have the curious capacity to keep trying though we fail. Anyway, I’ve with the frustrations of today and the hopes of a better tomorrow, it keeps you alive.

On the PGA tour back in 1996, during one of the biggest golfing events, the Augustas Masters, the world’s no 1 golfer then, Greg Norman, shot a 9 under par 63 on the first day. Going into the final round on the fourth day, Norman was leading by six shots. He ended up shooting 78 (15 strokes worse than his first round) and lost the round on the fourth day, Norman was leading by six shots. He ended up shooting 78 (15 strokes worse than his first round) and lost the tournament. Talk about inconsistency!

I often hear from club golfers on how the day before they played so well, yet the next day they totally lost their touch. Trust me, this is all part and parcel of the game.

The place is grand, equipped with indoor tennis courts, outdoor swimming pools, an indoor heated swimming pool, squash courts, a bowling alley, pool and billiard tables, a gym, Jacuzzi, sauna and more. A sports mall guaranteed to make you sweat out all those calories you ingested yesterday munching away on your couch watching cricket on tv.

Shahanshah International Sports Centre (SIC) is easily one of the biggest sports clubs not just in Nepal but also the region, boasts Senon D Lama(right), its proprietor. An avid tennis player, Lama came up with the idea for indoor tennis courts after seeing them in Europe.

Back in Nepal, he also saw that there was no place where people could go for a complete sports experience. Increase in health consciousness and expansion of club culture meant it was high time something was done about it. So, in 1996, he began the construction of an exclusive sports complex. As the idea developed, so did the wide variety of activities in Shahanshah.

When it opened on the Ring Road in Dhapasi in 1999, Shahanshah was Nepal’s first all-weather sports centre. This meant a lot, specially for tennis aficionados in the monsoon and for swimming enthusiasts in the winter.

The indoor tennis courts became hugely popular and the covered hall has also been used for various sports activities such as badminton and karate. Schools and other clubs often organise tournaments here and this, SIC considers a major asset. Lama finds the Kathmandu public’s response to SIC “very encouraging”. The club has a capacity of 600 members and it’s already has 400 and growing.

Asked if being located in Dhapasi, far from the city is a disadvantage, Lama says, “It is a bit of a problem especially for people in Lalitpur but we are very accessible through the Ring Road”.

SIC is a complete sports club.

Where to work out

HARDIC FITNESS CENTRE, Pultok, 5522068
Membership rates vary from Rs 2,500 to Rs 20,000.

CLUB TARA, HOTEL GOODWILL, Patan, 5544520
Various membership schemes are available with different arrangements for singles, couples and families.

ESHANI CLUB, Kalankishan, 4274890
Yearly membership rates vary from Rs 12,500 for singles to Rs 30,000 for families.

GOLD’S GYM, Manbhawan, Patan, 5543517
Yearly membership rates are Rs 3,100 for admission, Rs 250 payable every month and Rs 100 for single visits.

KUNDALINI HEALTH RESORT, Chandrul, 4417021
Membership charge is Rs 15,000 a year for an individual and Rs 35,000 for a family.

CITY GYM, Lajimpat
The membership rates are Rs 2,000 as admission and Rs 400 per month.

BANU’S TOTAL FITNESS, Kamal Pokhari, 4430424

"When I Sleep Well, I Play Well!"

Deepak Acharya is a golf instructor and Golf Director at Gokarna Forest Golf Resort & Spa, Kathmandu. prodeepak@hotmail.com
Europeans not to lift their embargo on arms sales to China.

Yet Chinese leaders have spoken of China’s ‘peaceful rise’ or, more recently, its ‘peaceful development’.

Analysts such as John Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago who have fusty proclaimed that China cannot rise peacefully predict ‘the United States and China are likely to engage in an intense security competition with considerable potential for war.’ Optimists point out that China has engaged in good neighbour policies since the 1990s, settled border disputes, played a greater role in international institutions and recognised the benefits of using soft power. But sceptics reply that China is merely paying lip service to its ‘peaceful development’.

In fact, the ‘rise of China’ is a misnomer. ‘Re-emergence’ would be more accurate, since by size and history, the Middle Kingdom has long been a major power in East Asia. Technically and accurately, China has long been a major power in East Asia.

Europe and America.

Asia includes Japan, India, Korea and others but China will eventually play the largest role. Its high annual growth rates of 8-9 percent led to a tripling of its GDP in the last two decades of the 20th century. Nonetheless, China still has a long way to go and faces many obstacles. The US economy is about twice the size of China’s; if it grows by only two percent annually, China’s economy would grow by six percent, they could reach parity sometime after 2025. Even so, they would not be equal in composition or sophistication. China would still have a vast, underdeveloped countryside and would not equal the US in per capita income until sometime after 2075. China is a long way from posing the kind of challenge to America’s pre-eminen the greatest military ‘shock and awe’ American attack when they feel backed into a corner, or impossible. Weaker countries sometimes seize such amputee China and others will not equal the US in per capita income until sometime after 2075. China is a long way from posing the kind of challenge to America’s pre-eminence.

The key to military power in the information age depends on the ability to assess, process, disseminate and integrate complex systems of space-based surveillance, high technologies in the early stages of their development.

The hemispheric bias is built into the system of the BBC and CNN of the world but it also equally applies to the news editors of television channels in all powerful New Delhi who forget that the satellite footprint encompasses the rest of the region beyond Bihar. And so, all satellite channel viewers from imps miles to Quetta are made to suffer through the rubble.

Dazzled by the rain of smart US military pyrotechnics. Southasians watched the display of ‘shock and awe’ American media myopia was during the war—witness America’s overreacting to Britain at the end of the 19th century. If China’s rise remains peaceful, it promises great benefits to its own people and to its neighbours—and to Americans. It will be important not to mistake analysts’ theories for reality.

Joseph S. Nye, a former US Assistant Secretary of Defence, is Distinguished Service Professor at Harvard and author of Soft Power. The Means to Success in World Politics.
FESTIVAL AND EXHIBITIONS

- Holi Festival and Exhibitions
- Reflections from Tibet
- Celebrating Line
- Magic Pencil

EVENTS

- KICC Good Friday Service
- KICC Easter Sunday Service
- KICC Live Art workshop for kids at Buddha Gallery
- Rugby Practice Every Saturday

FOOD

- Exotic Seafood Delicacies
- The God Dance of Kathmandu Valley
- Sanibaar Mela
- 1974 AD Live Music

MUSIC

- LQ Cauldron
- Sekuwa & Momo Revolution
- Good Time Blues Band
- Malaysia Dream Holidays Packages

Nepali Weather

- June 2007 edition
- Kathmandu Valley
- Police find bodies of two women in different places
- Three persons rescued
- Monsoon begins

Kathmandu air quality

Kathmandu's air pollution levels are unchanged from last week: it is equally bad. The monitoring equipment at Putaligau has still not been fixed and the Putali station recorded concentrations of fine dust that were two times higher than the national standard of 120 micrograms per cubic metre even though the rain flushed down some of the pollutants. Stations in residential areas also logged values that were higher than the national standard. Putali Gau’s PM10 concentrations are usually as bad as that of Patan Hospital.

Kathmandu valley

In a small town in Goa steeped in azure seas and sultry secrets, the chief of local police station, Siddharth (Sudhir Hazmi), finds himself caught in the eye of a storm and about to be blown away. Siddharth is in the process of divorcing his wife, Sunita (Shamina Shetty) who still loves him but he is also involved with another married woman, Anna (Udita Goswami). Things get even more complicated when Siddharth realises that Anna’s husband beats her and that she is dying of cancer. In a haze of the moment, he decides to give Anna the money he recovered in a drug raid for her medication. Anna dies in a bomb blast that very night and Siddharth now races to uncover a murky trail of drugs, money, murder and deceit. But all the evidence points to him.

Now Showing: Zeher

March is the fourth consecutive month to have above-normal rainfall (already 44 mm against 32 mm monthly average for the Valley). The mountains trapped the moisture rich westerlies and converted them into large storm cells. One particular system on Friday afternoon covered the entire central Nepal. This satellite picture taken on Thursday morning shows the cloud band now moving off into eastern Nepal and Bhutan. There is still some lingering moisture which will bring rain with gusty winds and hail during the weekend along with the Midlands. Snow will come down to 3,000 m in the higher valleys.

Nepal weather

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he is 12–years-old, works as a domestic help in Patan and writes poetry. Many of the poems that Pabitra has penned since coming to Kathmandu six months ago from Myagdi, are about friendship like this one remembering her friend and classmate Shanti back in Beni:

I go to pick a flower and get pierced by a thorn
I long to meet you my friend, but the mountains block my way...

Pabitra had a chance to share her feelings recently with a new friend on the other side of the world. She sent the poem to journalist Pat Orvis in New York during an hour-long on-line chat. “I love your poem!” Pat wrote right back. “I wish I had been the friend for whom you wrote it!” Pabitra quickly responded: “You can be that friend...I can write poems for you too!”

The online chat between Pat and Pabitra was part of UNICEF’s initiative to channel voices of young girls to the Beijing+10 forum in New York. Pabitra dictated her messages through an interpreter and told Pat about her chores as a child domestic worker, her hopes and dreams in life.

It was very difficult for Pat to understand how Pabitra coped with all the work: baby sitting the five-year old daughter of her employer, washing clothes and dishes, wiping floors and also taking the family dog for a walk. “Yes this is a lot of work.” Pabitra replied matter-of-factly adding that the three hours of classes every day were the most-fun part of her day.

Pabitra was sent to work and study in Kathmandu by her parents “because of poverty and the Maoists” while her two brothers remained at home. Pat wanted to know why the boys were getting special treatment. Pabitra agreed but quickly defended her parents saying, “At home, there wasn’t much discrimination. They used to love me a lot!”

The chat then moved on to girls being as capable as boys. Pat suggested to Pabitra, “If you are 12 and can work and take care of yourself, it sounds as if you could take care of your folks every bit as well as your brothers can!” Pabitra agreed and said she wanted to become a teacher to educate working children like herself.

Talk of home saddens Pabitra, and she tells Pat she misses her family very much and was looking forward to going home and meeting them soon.

Before signing off, Pat asked Pabitra about her thoughts on making life better for Nepali girls. Pabitra’s reply: “Children must go to school, and once girls are educated they have the opportunity to become great.”

Pabitra and Pat

STANDING TALL: A billboard put up by the new management committee of Dharara Park in support of King Gyanendra’s February First move.

A SMILING FRONT: Vice-chairmen of the council of ministers, Tulsi Giri and Kirtinidhi Bista prepare to take reporter’s questions at a press conference last Thursday.

TEA TIME: Tea being served to constitutional elders and the press at GP Koirala’s house arrest residence on Friday. The visitors weren’t allowed inside.

WAIT AND WATCH APPROACH: An egret waits patiently, and optimistically, to snap up a fish in the Bagmati on Monday. Despite the pollution, there is still life in the waters.

NEW SPORT IN TOWN: Kristjan B Edward demonstrating Go-Karting for the press at the newly built Go-karting course in Manamaiju on Tuesday.
In this editorial today we will be making some very important, timely and relevant points, if we may say so ourselves. So it is advisable that all readers stay tuned and give us their undivided attention. Thank you.

It pains us to say this but it has come to our notice that some readers ignore leaders. Some of you have been observed skipping entire paragraphs while perusing these editorials in the past two months. Others have even been surreptitiously turning the pages to the sports section to take a peek at pictures of Maria Sharapova in action. And some of you have actually dozed off while reading the official mouth organ.

What does it take to get some respect around here? Don’t you know it is impolite to fall asleep while your government is talking to you? We take a great deal of effort to fill these pages with the viewpoint of higher up authorities, omitting no detail however slight and we don’t want people dropping down unconscious all over the place.

At a time when the country is steaming ahead to a bright and prosperous future, it is mandatory for all citizens to be alert and to exercise their freedom to read what the editor has to say even if, like today, he may have nothing earth-shattering to say. So the least you can do is show us some courtesy and pretend to read this make-believe editorial and pretend to like it. Let’s do a word count here, 240. Drat. Another 300 to go.

As the Secondary Vice-chairman aptly pointed out the other day, and we quote: “There is complete freedom of press in this country, you just can’t say anything you like.” We couldn’t have put it better ourselves, the Vice-chairman hit the nail on the head, especially the nail that was sticking out. “After all journalists today must be objective,” he continued, “which is to say they must have the same objective as us.”

In other words, it all boils down to how we as a parish state internalise the totality of the changing paradigm. Are we just paying lip-service here to end-degree refinement or are we empowering constituencies and enabling communities in the long-term? Am I making myself perfectly clear? Do you see what I am driving at? No? Let me put it this way: we in the media have to ask ourselves whether we are going to communicate by word of mouth, by mouth-to-mouth or is it going to be foot-in-mouth?

And we may well ask: how are we going to institutionalise the monitoring mechanisms? Journalism is, beyond any shade of doubt, a dignified profession that requires a greater degree of fairness, objectivity and impartiality. That is why we have to rise above partisan and personal bias to toe the party line with a holistic, bottom-up approach in order to make ends meet with the overall aim to galvanise all sectors of society so that the present policy–polity dichotomy can be overcome sooner rather than later. As members of the Fourth Estate it is therefore our duty to fill these pages one way or another because this is all you’re going to get.

Yes sir, yes sir three bags full