



Courage & Conviction

newsfront

Kathmandu | 23-29 Apr 2007 | # 13 | Price Rs. 25



Chinese Ambassador Zheng Xianglin presenting credential to G P Koirala on Thursday at Singha Durbar.

Costly cantonments 960 million Rupees for Maoists

■ Bishwa Mani Pokharel

The Government has already spent nearly Rs. 800 millions out of Rs. 960 millions sanctioned for the upkeep of the Maoists cantonments; more than half of it funneled through Minister K B Mahara. This was disclosed on Sunday by Finance Minister, Ram Sharan Mahat, when probing Congress parliamentarians wanted to know the use of spending so much when the Maoists' behaviour remained almost the same.

Prime Minister G P Koirala who briefly chaired the meeting asked the members to discuss issues freely and frankly and assured the agitated MPs that he would take up the issues with concerned ministers and parties. The meeting remained inconclusive since the Home Minister, K P Sitaula, the target of most MPs regarding deteriorating law and order situation in the country, was not available to respond to their queries.

Sitaula who was told by the PM on Friday that retaining him in the post would

not be possible "for me" is undergoing treatment for a 'mild ear ailment' in Teaching Hospital.

"Sack Sitaula," chorus dominated the CPP (Congress Parliamentary Party) meeting as vocal members - Mahadev Gurung, Vinay Chand Dhoj, Sujata Koirala, Chakra Bastola, Devendra Kandel and many others wanted the 'deteriorating law and order situation', debated threadbare in the meeting. "The CPP will meet again after Sitaula is discharged from the hospital," Dr Mahat said.

The fact that Koirala did not defend Sitaula for the first time in the meeting was politically significant. Some even see it as an indication that Sitaula's days as the Home Minister are numbered. Apart from the law and order issue, the continuing 'criminal activities' on the part on the Maoists, and their youth wing, the Youth Communist League (YCL) dominated the meeting.

Giving details of the funds released for the Maoists, Dr Mahat told the meeting that a sum of Rs 460 million was handed over altogether to Mahara and more than Rs. 50 million will be released on Monday. While the amount released

from the centre was to the tune of Rs 760 million, around 40 million additional Rupees had been released from various Government offices outside the capital.

The sum covered the allowance at the agreed rate of Rs. 60 per head to each of the 31,000 cadres living in designated cantonments and for building infrastructures and communication facilities. "It was beyond the Government's capacity to provide them salaries as demanded by the Maoist leaders recently," Dr Mahat said.

The huge expenditure on the cadres even before their verification has been completed, was not fair, a member said. Maoists were also criticised for their not returning the property they had confiscated from individuals, Government and private institutions despite their promise to do so within two weeks of their joining the interim Government on April 1. Some MPs' suggestion that all relief from the Government should be suspended until Maoists returned the confiscated property however was not adopted in the form of a resolution. ■

Inside



PM dumps Sitaula

- Page 3



Stall and quit, Maoist strategy

- page 2

Stall and quit

Maoists contemplate withdrawing from the Government.

■ nf correspondent

Maoist Chief Prachanda may have tried to cajole and pacify PM G P Koirala over Forest Minister, Matrika Yadav's defiant and arrogant behaviour, but he is under tremendous pressure to stay out of the Government. That might mean Maoists withdrawing its five members from the interim Government formed on April 1.

The central committee meeting of the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists which met in the wake of the decision of the Election Commission to postpone June elections had a majority of the members wanting immediate withdrawal from the Government. "Party Chief Prachanda will be taking suitable decision in the light of the mood and opinions expressed by the central committee members," Maoist sources told newsfront.

But Prachanda himself came under severe criticism, as a widely circulated article by the prominent central committee member Biplab that literally listed Prachanda as a political revisionist, dominated the issue for a while.

For some, Prachanda's move to convert Nepal into a Republic State through a



pix by Bhaswar Ojha

parliamentary declaration and appeasement of Baluwatar on one hand, and his moving closer to India on the other, were all aberrations from what party always stood for. But those vocal few were silenced and the set agenda moved forward.

The raids conducted by the police in three Youth Communist League (YCL) offices in Kathmandu also seem to have contributed to the visibly aggressive posture taken by the Maoists against the Government. "There is however, no



Minister Matrika Yadav

indication when and if at all Prachanda will take the decision for withdrawal from the Government," sources said.

But Prachanda gave no hint about the mood in his party when he went to see Koirala and tried to assuage his feelings in the wake of the PM - Matrika Yadav repartee. Koirala's disapproval of Yadav making remarks against the Nepal army that it was involved in felling of trees and killing of wildlife, not only triggered an en block walk-out from the Cabinet meeting by the

Maoists ministers, it also came as an indication of the shaky foundation of the coalition.

"It was only a controversy over the manner of speaking, and not so much over the issue", Prachanda told media persons after his meeting with Koirala last week. But he is believed to have told Koirala that taming Matrika Yadav in the Cabinet and Lokendra Bista in the House was really a big challenge for him. He could give no firm assurance to the PM that the defiance would not be repeated. By siding with Yadav and walking out en block, Maoist Ministers had clearly indicated that Yadav is not alone should any difference arise between the PM and the Maoists.

But Maoist sources indicate that pending their withdrawal from the Cabinet, the Maoist MPs would continue to adopt more aggressive posture in the parliament, and if necessary, stall it for days over the YCL raid issue.

Even if the YCL issue is sorted out, Maoist MPs would be demanding that Nepal be declared a 'Republic State immediately' so that they are seen as dictating the future political agenda, leaving other seven parties either to follow the Maoists or run the risk of being branded 'regressive' by the people.

'Goryfying' Gaur carnage

It was the multiple failures of the Government agencies in Gaur that was responsible for the carnage of 31 people including five women, a report made public by the OHCHR stated.

■ nf correspondent

The G P Koirala Government which came into power 11 months ago carrying a high moral pedestal and declaration that there would be zero tolerance towards Human Rights violation stands indicted by the U N body, Office of Human Right Commissioner in Nepal (OHCHR).

It was the multiple failures of the Government agencies in Gaur that was responsible for the carnage of 31 people including five women, all Maoist supporters on March 21, a report made public by the OHCHR concluded. The root cause that sparked the bloodshed was the stubbornness of the sides, the Maoists and the Madhesi groups who were determined to hold their meetings at the same spot.

The report has also exposed the sensational claims of the civil society which said that the women victims were raped and their private organs mutilated before they were killed. While the OHCHR report said it could find no such evidence despite its team having met and interrogated those who made such allegations. "OHCHR found no evidence of rape or mutilation." Citing medical reports, it said "there were no external signs of rape on any female victims," adding, "OHCHR is concerned that public diffusion of such allegations without proper verification only served to augment anguish of the victims' relatives."

An on the spot investigation report released by Civil Society leader Mathura Prasad Shrestha had claimed that the rape and mutilation of women sex organs had actually taken place. Many intellectuals and pro-democracy activists from Terai have actually asked Dr Shrestha to



Victims of Gaur carnage

respond to the OHCHR report and explain his motive behind the claims he made.

The OHCHR also expressed concern that despite the Government constituting a high level judicial probe into the Gaur massacre, it had not yet started functioning as on April 19, the day the report was published. The OHCHR reiterated that the organisers of the meetings, both Maoists and the pro-Madhesi right groups had used children in violation of the children rights. It also exposed that both groups were armed some of which were used on the day.

But what OHCHR seems most worried about is the multiple failures of the state apparatus to check the violence. "...investigation shows that

local authorities failed to take even minimum action to prevent the violence which had been anticipated, failed to intervene once the violence started and made no attempt to arrest anyone during the violence," the report said. It held the district administration, Nepal Police and the Armed Police Force responsible for the lapses. "...investigation shows that local authorities failed to take even minimum action to prevent the violence which had been anticipated, failed to intervene once the violence started and made no attempt to arrest anyone during the violence," the report said. It held the district administration, Nepal Police and the Armed Police Force responsible for the lapses.

New U S Envoy

No likely shift in U S policy with Powell replacing Moriarty

■ nf correspondent

Maintaining good relations with the Nepal Government, and fighting Maoists as terrorists has been a very difficult balancing act for the United



States. But Ambassador James F Moriarty will be passing on the task to his successor Nancy J Powell soon.

Powell will be succeeding Moriarty in early July at the end of his 3-year tenure.

Moriarty, currently Dean of the Diplomatic corps in Nepal, has been the most visible ambassador, intensely hated by Maoists but admired by many others.

Powell, a career member of the senior foreign officials, has been an old hand at the South Asia affairs and till recently she worked as Acting Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. Prior to that she served as Ambassador in Pakistan. Earlier she served in India, Sri Lanka, Ghana and Canada. She also worked in Washington D C as a Nepal Desk Officer in the early 80s. She will be the fifth woman ambassador from the U S to serve in Nepal. She was in Nepal recently on a private trip.

Experts say there is unlikely to be any major shift on the U S policy towards Nepal as well as the Maoists who continue to be on the U S terrorist list.

PM dumps Sitaula

Home Minister Sitaula has been charged by his own party leaders of acting hand-in-glove with the Maoists.



Over protecting Home Minister K P Sitaula has proved counter productive for the PM Koirala. This is something that the PM admits to every politician, especially from the Nepali Congress or whoever meets him.

"Sitaula is my last trump card. But I need to win after I drop him," Koirala assured a group of Terai MPs from his party who warned him about the political price he might have to pay if he continued to retain Sitaula as the Home Minister. Of late, party leaders like Chakra Bastola, Arjun Narsingh KC and many others have started blaming Koirala for the deteriorating law and order situation.

"The person who should have been in jail for the killing of innocent people and the poor law and order in Terai, continuing to hold the post of a Home Minister is an insult to the people of Terai," one of the MPs told PM. Koirala assured that he would not even take a second to drop Sitaula from the Cabinet if Terai agitation leaders stop the movement and hold dialogue with the Government.

The PM however, informed the MPs that he would personally take command of the police department since, "Sitaula has over politicised the

department." According to the information from the police department, PM has now begun interacting with some of the senior level police officials. As the current Inspector General of police is a hand-pick of Sitaula, important orders from the Prime Minister's office are routed through other officials, a senior police official said.

According to the source, the instruction to raid the three Youth Communist League offices in the capital on April 15 was given to the Kathmandu District Police Chief by the Head of the Operation of the Police, AIG Deepak Thangden, and not by the Inspector General. Home Minister Sitaula has been charged by his own party leaders of acting hand-in-glove with the Maoists.

Apart from his failure to maintain law and order, Koirala was said to be angry with Sitaula after he apparently told some of the police officials that the PM and his family (read PM's daughter Sujata) were directly responsible for arbitrary promotions of some officials and forced retirement of others and he (Sitaula) was unjustly being blamed for those decisions. ■

News Brief

Operation demilitarise



Nepal will have no military attaché posted in Karachi and Dhaka. A decision to this effect has been taken by the G P Koirala Cabinet. According to the sources, the decision which could upset the bilateral military affairs was taken without

consulting the army headquarters.

Along with scrapping of the military attaché s posts in Pakistan and Bangladesh, the Government has also decided to withdraw the two security officials representing the Civil Police and the Armed Police Force in Delhi. Scrapping the military attaché 's post in Pakistan which trains Nepali army officials annually is considered far more significant in the security circle, and not a mere 'cost cutting' exercise, as an official of the Ministry of Finance claimed.

The post of military attaché, both in Dhaka and Karachi used to be represented by colonel rank officials of the Nepal army. Similarly, two posts for senior police officials in Nepali Embassy in Delhi had been created a few years ago as part of intelligence gathering regarding terrorism and other crimes. "We were not consulted by the Government regarding this decision to scrap these posts," a senior police official told newsfront.

Purging spree



Krishna Bahadur Mahara wasted no time in getting into his predecessor's shoes as soon as he took over as the Communication Minister. He sacked the entire Ghatana Ra Bichar team which used to conduct the widely listened current affairs

programme in Radio Nepal. Mahara's step two was to get Prime Minister G P Koirala's nominee, Shital Koirala out from the board of Nepal Television. He has been on the look out for suitable 'journalists' to lead other Government Media - The Rising Nepal, Gorkhapatra and the Rastriya Samachar Samiti.

It seems that the first head to roll in the print will be, Tej Prakash Pandit, publisher and executive chairman of the Gorkhapatra Sansthan. Pandit has already been conveyed the Minister's verbal message, "I want you to quit." Pandit and other pro-congress heads of the Government media houses have already approached the Prime Minister to stop Mahara from conducting the purge so that he could have his supporters, mostly from the Maoists party to take the top slots.

Although the Chief of the RSS is appointed by the cabinet, Mahara is believed to have asserted that the

cabinet must review the previous appointments and approve his nominee in place of Taranath Dahal. Similarly, Mahara is also on the look out for chairmanship of Nepal Press Council in place of Rajendra Dahal, but some of the journalists affiliated with the Maoists have warned Mahara against meddling in the NPC affairs.

No compromise



Suresh Ale Magar mostly makes headlines for his honesty. But this time he did it for a different reason. He hit the headlines after the U S Embassy in Kathmandu declined to give him visa as a result of which he could not attend

a U N conference as an official delegation from Nepal. Ale Magar, a senior Maoist law maker, had declared wrongly in the visa application form that he neither belonged to any terrorist organisation nor had he ever been arrested.

Communist party of Nepal - Maoists (CPN-M) is still in the U S terrorist list. He had been arrested in India and later handed over to the Nepal Government, and was later released along with Matrika Yadav after the peace process began. Even after Maoists became part of the interim Government and interim parliament, Ale has been very forthright in stating that, "Maoists do not believe in parliamentary democracy."

Cambridge body formed

The first annual general meeting of Cambridge Educators' Association of Nepal (CEAN), elected a new executive committee for the next two years. Mrs. Milan Dixit of Rato Bangla School was elected President and Mr. Sudhir Kumar Jha of Chelsea International Academy was elected Vice President for a new tenure.

Mr. Nabin Joshi of A.J. Wild Institute and Mr. Rabin Chhetri of Lumbini International College were elected Secretary and Treasurer respectively. Among the members elected were Mr. Rajesh Acharya of King's College, Mr. L.P. Bhetwal of Orient College, Mr. Lok Bahadur Bhandari of Xavier International College, Mrs. Shiva Thapa of Kathmandu Academy and Mr. B. G. Bhattacharya of Thames College.

CEAN was established in 2006 with the aim of promoting Cambridge qualifications in Nepal with mutual understandings among the Cambridge University affiliated institutions of Nepal. CEAN currently has 21 member institutions. With the collective efforts of members the organisation has organised teacher's training programs, educational seminars, award ceremony and similar other programs.

STATUTORY DIRECTIVE: SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH



Editor & Publisher : Yubaraj Ghimire
 Associate Editor : Sushma Amatya
 Design : Sunil Khadgi, Kishor Raj Panta & Ramkrishna Rana
 Address : PO Box: 8830, Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Nepal
 Tel : 4443888, Fax : 4421147 (Edt.), 4411912 (Mkt.)
 Email: newsfront@bhrikuti.com, marketing@bhrikuti.com (Mkt.)
 Printed by: Express Color, Buddhanagar, Tel.: 4783007, Distribution: Kasthamandap, Tel.: 2010821

Point to Ponder

Power takes as ingratitude the writhing of its victims.
 - Rabindranath Tagore

Power corrupts

Politics and governance across the world are replete with instances of ministers resigning or getting fired following differences with the Prime Minister. In more glorious cases, ministers prefer to resign if they want to exercise the liberty to criticise the PM or the fellow ministers publicly.

In the Westminster model of democracy, PM is accepted as first among equals, and the cabinet functions on the principle of collective responsibility. In Nepal, despite the country practicing 'democracy,' too much concentration of power on the PM and absence of provision to remove him from the post in the interim constitution, makes him much more than the first among equals, almost a super dictator. As if that was not enough, the PM who also acts as Head of the State, supposed to be a very neutral post, continues to act as the President of a Political Party - the Nepali Congress.

But too much power gives no safety valve against criticism from rivals. Beyond a point, people start realising that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. That is what happened with King Gyanendra in the post Feb 1, 2005 phase, and early signs of decay of the G P Koirala regime are now visible. Blame for this 'concentration arrangement,' an anti-democratic exercise obviously goes to the eight parties including the Maoists.

Matrika Yadav, a Minister from the Maoist party openly criticised the PM and Nepal Army, an institution of the Government. Propriety demands that such things are done quietly and responsibly. A Minister needs to quit the post to exercise the liberty of criticising any Government institution or another minister, leave alone the PM.

It has been a free-for-all in the country, especially during the past 11 months. The Home Minister not only politicised the police institution, but also instructed it not to apply law of the land if Maoists were found committing crimes. G P Koirala who had fired his powerful Home Minister Govinda Raj Joshi for having publicly criticised the army in the aftermath of Dunai massacre committed by the Maoists four years ago, failed to act when his present Home Minister continued to interfere all around and even started meddling with the Supreme Court's jurisdiction. In the process, Koirala has lost his moral authority as well as the stature he gained last year.

The Matrika Yadav episode is a direct outcome of that. Koirala, despite all powers concentrated on him, is far weaker and vulnerable to all kind of criticisms now.

Matrika episode can be checked only if the PM and his cabinet colleagues act according to the democratic principles and tradition. His Government has to function on the basis of the common minimum programme. A helpless Prime Minister will weaken the country as well as democracy.



Letters

Many thanks

Thanks for your wide coverage and columns by reputed writers. Thanks also for the recent issue with photos of Jumli people who were expecting road connectivity from the last four decades. The story and photographs of Karnali road and Karnali people shows that newsfront is providing space for Nepal's most remote areas. I hope that newsfront will continue to provide space to people who have been discriminated since ages.

In the same issue the news on the constitution assembly, inside story of PM's India visit and the column by Yubaraj Ghimire, "Refusing to be rubber stamp" gives in-depth analysis of recent political development of Nepal. Thanks for the article by Acharya Mahayogi Sridhar Rana Rinpoche. I hope that newsfront will continue its spirit.

Shanta Paudel
Kathmandu

Market better

I am a regular reader of your weekly, newsfront. But I get really disappointed when I have to go here and there to get a copy of it. I live in New Baneswor, but can't get newsfront in any shop of this area. Sometimes I even have to run to New Road to get a copy. At least you could mention the names of those outlets where readers can collect fresh copies of newsfront.

Compared to other weeklies in the market, newsfront is proving to be the best. The most interesting and the good thing is that you carry all the contemporary news and views on different political, social and economic issues unlike other weeklies that just print feature stories on almost all pages of their publication.

Mamta Rawal
Kathmandu

Police analysis

For the past one decade, Nepal Police force has become inactive and has lost out on the faith people had on it. People

today expect no help from the police. I was happy to see the analysis of the police force on your 11th issue.

Sama Rai
Kathmandu

Diversify articles

I find that the language in the stories in newsfront needs to be more soft and heart touching. Most of the news are based on hard news and event oriented. In this new era, readers demand "news inside the news" in a weekly newspaper like yours.

To provide different flavours, it requires an increase in coverage regarding socio-politics and human interest issues. Due to repetition of same authors, opinion articles lack clear cut vision. I would like to suggest the editorial team to diversify the authors. Coverage of literature in newsfront is less. In my opinion, regular column on contemporary literature would help to increase the readership.

Chanki Shrestha
Bhaktapur

Add cinema

Newsfront is a welcome addition to Nepal's media market. It definitely portrays itself as a fair, fearless and an objective paper. I expect the paper to cover more issues like youth affairs, environment, ecology, tourism and wildlife regularly in addition to its present issues. Newsfront should also start covering sports and cinema on a more regular basis.

Mahesh P Sharma
Kathmandu

Readers, your reactions, criticisms, comments, suggestions are most welcome. Please address it to:

newsfront@bhrikuti.com

Spiritual Corner

Tukaram was born in 1608 to a Sudra family in a small village Dehu in Maharashtra, India. He vanished without a trace in 1650. Tukaram composed over 5,000 poetries, many of which speak of events in his life. He wrote in Marathi and focused on his God, Pandurang.

Poems by Tukaram:

Words

Words are the only jewels I possess
 Words are the only clothes that I wear
 Words are the only food that sustains my life
 Words are the only wealth I distribute among people
 Says Tuka witness the word he is God
 I worship him with my words

If Men

If men are habitations of God, we should fall at their feet
 But we should leave alone their habits and goals.
 Fire is good to drive away cold
 But you must not tie it up
 And carry it around in a cloth.
 Tuka says, "A scorpion or a snake is a habitation of Narayana;
 You may worship him from afar, but you must not touch Him."

First He looked confused

I could not lie anymore so I started to call my dog "God."
 First he looked confused,
 then he started smiling, then he even



danced.
 I kept at it: now he doesn't even bite.
 I am wondering if this
 might work on people?

God

He who utters the name of God while walking gets the merit of a sacrifice at every step
 His body becomes a place of pilgrimage.
 He who repeats God's name while working always finds perfect peace.

In Me Thou Livest

Take, Lord, unto thyself
 My sense of self; and let it vanish utterly.
 Take, Lord, my life,
 Live thou my life through me.
 I live no longer, Lord,
 But in me now
 Thou livest.
 Aye, between thee and me, my God,
 There is no longer room for 'I' and 'mine.'

Apathy towards Dalits

Inclusion for the sake of inclusion will prove futile and meaningless to the suffering masses... What must be done first and foremost is to declare untouchability a crime against state and crime against humanity, which must be clearly stated in the interim constitution.



■ Uday Pariyar

No doubt, political changes are keys to transforming the masses socially and economically. It is equally true that prompt socio-economic changes must be used to cement the political changes. Failure to do so on time will ultimately lead to the fall of the system. That was why the achievements of our past historical movements did not hold out for long. We might be able to introduce a wonderful system of governance best suited to our country through the Constituent Assembly. But the success of the system will ultimately depend on how well the socio-economic problems will be addressed.

Nobody needs to be reminded of the fact that Dalits are one of the most oppressed communities in Nepal. It has been widely acknowledged that the plight of Dalits was one of the fuelling factors for the rapid spread of armed conflict in the past decade. Regardless of this reality, the Koirala Government has not yet put the Dalit rights on its priority list. Moreover, Dalit issues are still utterly neglected by the political parties, civil society, human right defenders, media and others. The primary reason – feudalism governs all the parties and other institutions and organisations.

Most unfortunately, the Dalit leaders and Dalit rights defenders themselves have shown their apathy to the common cause. That was why they have not yet been able to unite and launch a joint movement even during such a crucial time of our history. Time is running out. It is time to make an impact. Probably one of the key deterrents for failure to rise to the occasion is

their sole interest on personal gains.

The Dalit leaders are putting in their best efforts to please their leaders so that a position may be doled out at the interim government, Dalit Commission, Dalit Development Committee or any other state sponsored bodies. Dalit communities are indeed frustrated with the failure of their leaders and activists to rise above their personal, partisan and caste interests.

Some may bask in the glory of having a few Dalit ministers and MPs. But to the common men and women there is no significant impact as these people have not yet been able to raise their voices in the legislature or Cabinet demanding the government to take initiatives on their issues. Inclusion for the sake of inclusion will prove futile and meaningless to the suffering masses.

What has been totally forgotten in the Nepalese politics today is that the issues of political changes and socio-economic reforms should move hand in hand. Indeed, peace building is the main priority for the government and eight parties. But at the same time they should put in considerable efforts to ensure the changes are actually felt on the ground.

For Dalits, what must be done first and foremost is to declare untouchability a crime against state and crime against humanity, which must be clearly stated in the interim constitution. Then appropriate laws must be developed to ensure those who discriminate against Dalits are quickly brought to justice. One need not wait for the Constitution Assembly to be conducted to start doing these things. The key actors are trying to put off such initiatives by falsely claiming that CA will resolve every problem.

It is time that everybody takes this as an important national issue. Serious debates and discussions on the complex issue of caste discrimination should start now. The human



Bhaswar Ojha

rights defenders, media, intellectuals and others must go beyond their rhetoric and pursue the cause seriously. The Dalit leaders and activists should respond to the call of history by developing a common front and arriving at a conclusion on what may be the best way forward.

If needed, they should launch peaceful

movements to force the government to act. Several other groups like the Janajatis and Madhesis are raising their voice to force the State to address their common concerns. The Dalit leaders and activists should follow suit. Otherwise, we will lose such an opportunity for decades. Dalit communities will once again fail to gain much, like in the past. ■

Special Offer

Subscribe to Samay & Newsfront Weekly at a Discount

Duration	Actual Rate (Rs.)	After Discount (Rs.)	Joint Subscription (Rs.)
Three Yrs	3750	2800	5300
Two Yrs	2500	1900	3600
One Yr	1250	1000	1900
6 Months	625	550	1050

समय

राष्ट्रिय साप्ताहिक

newsfront

Ganga & Christiana

For Details:

Bhrikuti Publication Pvt. Ltd.
Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Tel: 4443888, Fax: 4411912

Kasthmandap Distribution Pvt. Ltd.
Teku, Kathmandu, Tel: 2010821

(with attractive gifts for each subscription. It will not be applicable for below one year category.)

Singing national unity

■ nf correspondent

To encompass all the subtleties of national fervour, integrate emotions of all the Nepali people and yet sound rhythmic, not an easy task, was carried out by Pradeep Kumar Rai, 34, popularly known as Byakul Maila, his pseudonym. One of the contestants for writing words for the national competition, he is now thrilled to be the one selected finally.

With his background as a community development young leader in Hilepani in Okhaldhunga, Pradeep was well exposed to the sentiments of the people at the grass root level. He said, "I think the backdrop for the poem that won the national competition existed way back then when the Maoists began to prohibit students from singing the old national anthem. The idea that a new song would be called for was at the back of my mind as well as the concept of how it should be like."

"I used to be busy as a local youth leader back in the village. In Kathmandu, I felt a vacuum in my life and began to look for another platform and literature it was for me. It is a popular medium and through it I found a way to express my feelings," said Pradeep. He said he has had around 100 poems published in different publications so far. "But I never imagined that I would be the one who would be writing the national

Pradeep Kumar Rai, 34, popularly known as Byakul Maila, one of the contestants for writing words for the national competition, is now thrilled to be the one selected finally.

anthem. I had participated purely with the spirit of participation," he added.

The poem that was selected faced some controversies despite it having been endorsed by a panel led by the eminent litterateur, Satya Mohan Joshi. Pradeep said his poem, was chosen for its creativity and because it fitted all the criteria set out initially by the organisers.

The unbiased decision was contested from a few quarters and Pradeep said though he was not happy about it, he continued to be hopeful for a fair decision. "On one hand, we talk about inclusiveness and impartiality and on the other we see signs of unfairness and injustice which is contradictory," said Pradeep ruefully.

The music for the anthem is in the process of being selected. After 11 months of having gone without a national hymn, the Nepalis will finally have one. To be chosen for the song that echoes national harmony will mean something in the future and will be referred back by the future generations which will continue to use the anthem for its ritualistic value at least. So much the better if it succeeds in boosting everybody's respect for and loyalty towards the nation, which only time can tell. ■



newsfront



The First Ride of Life !!!

They had never seen a vehicle in their life before the last day of Nepali year 2063. Vijay Kumar presents special episode of the weekly show 'Dishanirdesh' Monday night 920 pm on Nepal Television. Do not miss this moving episode - Road to Jumla! Retelecast next morning at 1120.

दिशानिर्देश

The attitude that tourism is a business where more can be earned by investing little has resulted in Pokhara drifting like a rudderless boat today.

Ailing valley

Number of tourists visited to Pokhara from 1995 to 2005

S.N	Year	No. of tourists
1	1995	86,782
2	1996	92,717
3	1997	1,03,895
4	1998	1,05,546
5	1999	1,05,546
6	2000	1,20,770
7	2001	93,731
8	2002	68,056
9	2003	82,579
10	2004	87,692
11	2005	7,412



LB Thapa

The valley of Pokhara started to get tourists' attention as soon as the Prithvi highway was built in 1968. Then, the regular arrival of foreign visitors provided more business than was ever expected. Our Government as well as tourism entrepreneurs were elated and satisfied with the steady development of tourism in the country. But bumper returns from tourism began to make tourism entrepreneurs and Government highly complacent. The returns from tourism was so overwhelming that tourism entrepreneurs began to be content with the thought that tourism is a business where more can be earned by investing little. That attitude has resulted in Pokhara drifting like a rudderless boat today.

If tourism entrepreneurs had really developed any marketing skills, they would not be pushing baggage of tourists at bus parks in recent years. Just to cite an example of their lack of foresight - there are some luxurious buses in operation which provide toilet and air-condition services, but no one has ever thought of providing a neat and clean bus park for tourists. The present tourist bus park in Pokhara speaks of the apathetic attitude.

The Government has declared Visit Pokhara Year-2007, a big event but without any preparation. The tourist bus park here in Pokhara that turns into a pond when it rains causing tourists much irritation, speaks amply of lack of any preparation on the part of our local

authorities. "As far as any financial assistance is concerned, neither the local Government, Pokhara Sub-metropolitan city nor the tourism board have ever done anything to improve the face of Pokhara," said Tilak Chhetri, president of Hotel Representatives Society in Pokhara.

Selling the names of Mt. Fishtail, Phewa Lake and Annapurna trek will not be enough to pull visitors around the year. Without developing new locations and upgrading services, it is hard to attract tourists' attention.

Pokhara has earned many lofty adjectives. No doubt Pokhara deserves all these but the question is what are the tourism entrepreneurs and the Government doing to preserve the natural treasures of Pokhara? Very little has been done to protect the bio diversity of Pokhara valley but the list is long as to the damages they have done.

Pokhara is no doubt called the valley of seven lakes. But how many of us actually know the condition of those seven lakes! Then sorry truth is that except Phewa, Begnas and Rupa other four lakes have almost dried up. Due to carelessness now these four lakes are on the verge of complete disappearance.

At a time when the Government has declared 2007 as Visit Pokhara Year, Pokhara tourism entrepreneurs must try to cash on this opportunity by organising tourism activities by taking help from the local as well as village people.

Nearby villages of Pokhara should be developed as popular tourists destinations. These villages can entertain tourists with their vivid customs and traditions. Village tourism has tremendous potentiality that can draw a large number of tourists around the year. Most tourists coming to Nepal always prefer to see rural Nepal.

Phewa Lake lies in the heart of Pokhara valley and is the largest of the seven lakes in the valley. The other six are Benagas, Rupa, Dipang, Maudi, Khaste and Gude(Kharani). Today, unfortunately, Dipang, Maudi, Kahaste and Gude lakes are on the verge of extinction due to silt and pollution.

Phewa Lake covers an area of roughly 520.4 hectares, is 4 Kilometres long and 1.3 Kilometres wide. Constant silt and gravel deposits through the Harpan River into Phewa Lake are posing a serious threat to its existence. Due to excessive uncontrolled building of hotels, restaurants and shops on the edge of the lake, tons of garbage and sewage is dumped into the lake. This has not only caused serious sedimentation at the bottom of the lake but the water has been highly contaminated. Experts say that due to excessive bio-pollution, Phewa lake water is now extremely hazardous and not fit for human

consumption.

More than 19 studies have been made since 1974 in order to conserve the lake, and millions of rupees have been spent on these. Several reputed NGO's have also been engaged in surveys and studies of the lake. But all these efforts have been proved worthless since Phewa Lake is still not free from garbage dumping and many other forms of pollution, which is a disgrace to the people and its Government.

Environmentalists predict that if Phewa Lake continues to be polluted at the same rate, it will entirely lose its existence in less than 150 years. In the period of past 42 years Phewa Lake has been encroached by more than 50 percent. Phewa Lake was spread over an area of 20,000 Ropanis in 1960, but now it has been shrunk to 8,707 Ropanis only. In the recent past, around 400 million rupees had been allocated for the city development by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) which includes drainage improvement, solid waste management, sanitation work and road repairing. Not much result is visible so far, for all that investment.

To restore the health of the valley and its natural resources is a responsibility of the Government as well as its people and effective steps have to be taken fast before the valley turns into a garbage dump. ■

Begnas Lake in Pokhara



Drop democratic charade

Although India might have made gargantuan leaps economically, its failure to protect democracies in its backyard has undoubtedly questioned India's intentions and abilities in the global arena.



■ Siddhartha Thapa

The fourteenth SAARC summit, like past summits was poignantly marked with rhetoric, vague promises and strict adherence to obsessive protocol. The New Delhi summit failed to depart from the paradigm of inaction and identify the core problem plaguing development and democratisation in South Asia, that of terrorism.

Quintessentially, the drama attached to the SAARC summit was rather enchanting. Nepal, a prominent boat shaker in South Asian politics came out clearly favoring China to be given member status, this invariably in the long run will challenge India's hegemony and influence in the region. To add to SAARC's endless list of agonies, the addition of Afghanistan does no good, it further strains the mathematics of the beleaguered SAARC treasury.

On the global front, powerful countries are coming together as efficient trading blocs and protecting the interest of member states within the trading bloc, unlike SAARC which remains bitterly divided. And despite some positive signs of economic development much to the credit of the IT sector boom and relocation of multi-nationals in South Asia; the rise in terrorism and political instability in the region has halted the consolidation of further success.

In the past Indo-Pak rivalry accounted for much of SAARC's failure and even to this date, the tension between these South Asian giants has hampered much of the progress at SAARC. But much has changed over the decade; India and Pakistan are not the only countries susceptible to terrorism and instability. A common feature in the politics of all South Asian countries is the resurgence of communist and religious extremism. So are New Delhi and Islamabad the regional spoilers?

Pakistan's geographic location makes it a non-contender and a lesser player compared to India. On all accounts New Delhi has indeed

failed on three fronts: stabilising the region, effective exportation of democracy in its backyard and conflict management. Peace is a prerequisite to development. Unlike other regional trading blocs, South Asia is marred by instability and contrary to the philosophy of other regional trading blocs; South Asian politics lacks a binding force. On the other hand in the European Union - democracy, free market and stability in the region are desired objectives of all its member states.

For instance, the Delhi made '12 point agreement', might yield dividends in Kathmandu but at the expense of the survival of democratic discourse. Whereas Bangladesh and India finds its hands unbound in taking strong measures against a military government. Worse still is Bhutan, where tragic ethnic cleansing, relocation and repatriation of these refugees to a third country remain unsolved, though seventeen long years have passed by. The price that Nepal has had to pay has been dear. Growing frustration among refugees has resulted in refugees posturing extreme nationalistic sentiments and in some cases resorting to violence.

And last of course, Sri Lanka, where various groups within Tamil Nadu supported the LTTE. Unfortunately the see-saw change of policy in Delhi vis-à-vis Sri Lanka, cost many lives in the Indian army and tragically that of India's Prime

For any successful overtures in South Asia, India needs to re-evaluate its foreign policy and national security.

Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Therefore, for any successful overtures in South Asia, India needs to re-evaluate its foreign policy and national security and in conjunction, identify the main threats to its national security. It might also be prudent for the administration in New Delhi to question its policy makers in the South Block about a most pertinent issue - is South Asia headed towards disintegration? To find answers, policy makers and politicians in New Delhi need to identify interest groups within India



that have worked in tandem with various extremist groups in South Asia.

It is no secret that the weapons in the Maoist armory were provided largely by radical communist sympathisers in West Bengal and Kerala. Historically speaking, BP Koirala was funded by various socialist parties around the world in collaboration with Indian socialists to provide him with arms. Similarly, the CPI-M has without a doubt provided moral support to the Maoists and more significantly, introduced them to secret arms market of India.

Radical Islamic groups within India have perpetrated the ranks of various political parties in Bangladesh. But in regard to radical Islam, Pakistan's notorious Islamic fugitives have outdone Indian Islamic radicals in disturbing the existence of a quasi-secular political balance in Bangladesh.

In the case of Sri Lanka, Karunanidhi in the early 80's not only provided monetary assistance but also sanctuary to Prabhakaran and his associates against the Lankan government. And in Bhutan, continued support to an autocratic regime and the reluctance of India to pressurise the Druk government on the repatriation of refugees languishing in Nepal are all part and

parcel of the fallacies of Indian policy in South Asia.

India and Pakistan have to recognise the unifying elements in South Asian politics. Unfortunately, home-grown terrorism has contributed towards instability and extremism. The unprecedented growth of communism and the notion of self-determination have the proponents of mustering secession movements in India. Although India might have made gargantuan leaps economically, its failure to protect democracies in its backyard has undoubtedly questioned India's intentions and abilities in the global arena. If India cannot solve problems effectively in its own backyard how can she play a greater role in international relations?

The only solution to the advancement of South Asian regional development is a re-evaluation of policy at South Block and Race Course Road. But on a substantive policy level, it must be realised that both radical communism and religious extremism are the biggest threats to peace time politics in South Asia. And the only real response is a collective comprehensive security mechanism and the identification of common threats and rapid socio-economic response to the disgruntled masses. But more importantly it is imperative that India departs from a policy of 'democratic hypocrisy'. ■

Irresponsible remarks overboard

The whole institution cannot be blamed for any act done by one or more individuals in Nepal Army

■ Rajen Wasti

The latest in the series of humiliating remarks against the Nepal Army was the sweeping comment by Minister Matrika Yadav alleging army's senior level officials' involvement in felling of trees and killing wildlife. Yadav's comment looks more brazen especially because his leader Prachanda had apologised after his irresponsible remark that all that Nepal army did was indulge in corruption and rape women. Prachanda had made the remark at the official residence of the Prime Minister.

The credit for chastising Maoists solely goes to then Deputy Prime Minister K P Oli who defended the national army. Government's silence all throughout was perhaps much more humiliating, if not provoking. Maoists first spread false

rumours about army vehicles transporting arms and then stopped the vehicles purely meant for repair purposes. A Nepal Army captain was manhandled and tortured by the Maoists for carrying weapons in plain clothes. And in all such incidents army personnel have exercised a great deal of restraint. The leaders with sagacity ensured that its ranks did not get provoked to react.

Prachanda has maintained that the size of Nepal Army should be cut down to the lowest as it is of no use in fighting the enemies. He may be right if he did not say it just to express retaliatory satisfaction for the losses incurred while fighting the army in the past. Other political party leaders and activists are expressing their opinion against Nepal Army occasionally with the preconceived mindset that army belonged to the king.

Like anywhere, there is enough scope for reform within the force. No efficient mecha-

nism was developed to bring to justice, the perpetrators of crime against humanity during the past several years of internal conflict. The elements that go against the military value and code of conduct should definitely be sternly dealt with, and the leadership should be more concerned about it. But the whole institution cannot be blamed for any act done by one or more individuals of the force. The progress made in the Maina Sunuwar case is the milestone indication that impunity is no longer the practice that Nepal Army would encourage.

Although belatedly, Prime Minister Koirala stated in Biratnagar recently that he is highly impressed with the conduct of Nepal Army after last year's political change. He seems rightly convinced that the present leadership of the Nepal Army will never go against democracy for the sake of protecting the monarch. But the sentiment of the ranks and files of the army

needs to be taken into account by the political parties as well. It apparently favours continuation of the institution of monarchy in any form. In their reading, therein lies the long term peace and well being of this country. But if political leaders can exhibit, through their conduct and character that Nepal can be better off, stable and peaceful without the king, the army will not be able to ignore that.

Having said this, the more pertinent question arises. Nepal Army is an institution with a legacy grown over ages on the foundation of patriotism. Therefore, the ruling combination should respect that. This of course, includes Prachanda and his party as well. And PM Koirala, by showing the door to Minister Yadav for his unjust and improper criticism of the army showed that he respects people's sentiments.

(Wasti is a security expert.)

Khaleda sets out for exile

Dozen others to accompany the ex-premier; She meets Tarique at undisclosed location

■ Julfikar Ali Manik

With around a dozen members of her family and house staff, former prime minister Khaleda Zia was all set to leave the country for Saudi Arabia. That she was going into exile anytime appeared quite obvious after she met her detained son Tarique Rahman early yesterday morning at a place not disclosed officially.

A family source told The Daily Star late at night that everybody was waiting as the flight or time of departure was yet to be set. "Madam prefers passenger plane while the authorities want her to take a special flight," it added.

None however could confirm exactly when and in which flight she would be leaving. Some sources hinted that the departure would be shortly before or after the dawn today. A Kuwait Airways flight is scheduled to leave at 5:30am, Gulf Air at 6:10am, Qatar Airways at 8:30am, and Emirates at 10:15am. An intelligence source told The Daily Star that a special airliner sent by the Saudi government would fly back to Jeddah with the BNP chairperson at around 5:00am.

She would be accompanied by her younger son Arafat Rahman, his wife Sharmila Rahman and daughters Jafia and Zahia, Tarique's wife Dr Zobaida Rahman, his daughter Zaima and mother-in-law Iqbal Mand Banu, and at least three domestic helps. Meanwhile, the government will have to inform the High Court (HC) today if Khaleda is confined or not. The HC Thursday ordered them to inform it about the present state of the BNP chief.

The directive came in response to a petition challenging the reported confinement of Khaleda, and seeking a court directive so the authorities do not send her abroad. An official of the Attorney General's Office told The Daily Star at 9:30 last

night that their report was not ready yet. They would receive a briefing from the government on her latest condition about an hour before going to the court.

Of the members of Zia family, Zobaida had all along been refusing to go abroad. She argued that her husband would still be here and so would her mother and family members. And that's why she should be allowed to stay back. But the government side did not accept her arguments and pressure kept mounting on her. Eventually, she gave in but it all left her reeling with sheer emotional turmoil, said sources following the developments from close quarters.

Worried over her daughter's condition, Iqbal Mand Banu has decided to go with her and all



Hasina won't seek asylum

Former prime minister and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said she will not seek political asylum in any country in case she is not allowed to return to Bangladesh.

"Why would I seek political asylum here?" Sheikh Hasina threw back a question to BBC Bangla Service interviewer in reply to his query on whether she would seek political asylum in the United States of America or United Kingdom in the changed circumstances.

"Tomorrow I will go to the airport and I expect sense would dawn upon the caretaker government and they would let me return to Bangladesh," Hasina said yesterday.

About whether she had talks with her party leaders about her return, she said she has constant contact with the leaders of different levels. Regarding news broadcast on a private television channel that she was not returning, she said sometimes confusions are spread with references to 'sources'.

When Hasina was asked why she was taking the risk of being arrested by returning to Bangladesh, she said, "I am taking the risk for the people. I want to be back with my people on my own soil." "Sacrificing everything I am struggling to establish the rights of the people, so whatever be my fate, I will return to Bangladesh," said the AL chief.

When the AL chief was asked what she will do in case the airline authorities refuse to accept her as their passenger, Hasina replied, "I still don't know what they will say. I will approach them first. If they refuse to carry me, then I will make a decision about what to do."

Regarding the British parliament members' (MP) opinions about the ban imposed by the caretaker government on her return to Bangladesh, Hasina said, "They are deeply concerned about the bar on my return home." "They [the MPs] supported me wholeheartedly when I expressed my intention of returning home. Many MPs are personally trying to persuade the British Airways," she added.

(The Daily Star, Bangladesh)

necessary travel documents were arranged by yesterday. Saiful Islam Duke, an ex-naval officer and private secretary (PS) to the former prime minister, might also be travelling with Khaleda.

When contacted by The Daily Star last night, he declined to confirm whether he too was going. He said he does not know anything about the family as he has not been allowed in the cantonment. Duke had become estranged from the Zia family after the present caretaker government took over. Still, he might be included in the team, given that his experience

as the PS might come in handy for Khaleda overseas, the family source observed. As of last night, nothing could

be known about where the family would be based in the Middle Eastern monarchy. It is however certain that for the time being Saudi government will treat Khaleda and her family as Umrah (a pilgrimage to Mecca) hajji.

MEETING TARIQUE

A source told The Daily Star at 6:00am yesterday that the former prime minister was to meet her son at around 6:30am. But it did not say if they would get together on the jail premises or somewhere else.

Khaleda came out of her Shahid Moinul Road residence at around 6:15am but nobody knew where she was going. Tarique's wife was with her, said sources close to the family.

A team of the central jail authorities started

for Kashimpur jail with Tarique, also senior joint secretary general of BNP, at around 5:30am.

On the way, he was taken to somewhere in Dhaka Cantonment and there, he met his mother. Another source claimed that the meeting took place at Kashimpur jail. The authorities managed to bring Tarique out of the prison, dodging a large scrum of journalists who waited at the jail gate throughout Friday night. Despite repeated attempts, The Daily Star could not reach Kashimpur jail authorities over phone.

Contacted, a central jail official declined to say if Tarique was shifted from this prison, and advised the correspondent to contact higher authorities.

But neither the office of inspector general of police nor that of the deputy inspector general (prisons) responded to any phone calls yesterday. The family sources said Khaleda met her son as part of an arrangement with the military-backed government. During negotiations, she had insisted that they allow her to meet Tarique.

KHALEDA'S HOUSE

About what would become of the house on Moinul Road, a person close to the Zia family said, "We will come to know soon how the government intends to maintain it."

Previously, a defence official speaking in return for anonymity had told The Daily Star that the forces have been asking Khaleda to leave the house since the day present government took office. The house was allotted to Ziaur Rahman as deputy chief of army staff soon after the Liberation War.

(The Daily Star, Bangladesh)

Nothing could be known about where the family would be based in the Middle Eastern monarchy, Saudi Arabia.

Trafficking in India

2 more MPs named

New Delhi: One of those arrested overnight in the human trafficking case involving BJP MP Babubhai Katara told the court today that he had introduced travel agents suspected to be behind the racket to two sitting MPs and another MP who has since died.

Sunderlal Yadav, 36, who runs a paan shop on Barakhamba Road, alleged that he got the agents to meet Mohammed Tahir Khan, BSP MP from Sultanpur in UP and Ramswaroop Koli,

BJP MP from Bayana in Rajasthan. He also named late Ram Awadh, a former MP from Faizabad in UP.

While Yadav alleged he introduced Hyderabad-based agent Rashid to Khan and Koli and another agent Mahesh Gupta to Awadh, he claimed he didn't know they were agents. However, he admitted that he had received commissions between Rs 50,000 and Rs 2.5 lakh from these agents after the introductions.

(The Indian Express)

THE RHINO RESIDENCY RESORT

Where days begin and end with an adventure...

The Rhino Residency Resort
Chandol, Maharajgunj, Kathmandu, Nepal
P.O.Box: 13787, Tel: 4420431, 4421820, Fax: 977-1-4422119
E-mail: rhino@residency.wlink.com.np
Website: www.rhino-residency.com

Marshland Flowers

A Buddha arises only when the teachings of a Buddha before him has been totally lost.



■ Acharya Mahayogi Sridhar Rana Rinpoche

Buddha was born a human of a human mother and father. Suddhodhan and Mayadevi were not gods and goddesses or even their Avatr. They were humans. But in Buddhism as I have already mentioned humans are not some eternally stuck beings whose lot is to be humans for ever. It is those very humans who became gods and goddesses according to the actions they have performed (Karma); and gods and goddesses become humans and animals according to their Karma performed in the past and present.

So Devas are not eternal gods and goddesses, who have no connection with humans. So how was he not a human? Humans are those who are still engrossed in emotional defilements, and still lost in ignorance. Ignorance here does not mean ignorance of worldly knowledge – whatever they be – but ignorance of the way the world really exists, ignorance of ones own true nature (Swarup). Since a Buddha is neither entangled in emotional defilements nor is he ignorant of the true nature of all that exists including him, he cannot be said to be a human, although his physical endowments continue to be that of a human. His level of mind is no more the same as the level of mind of any human or gods and

When the learned Brahmin Puskarswati heard that Gautam indeed had those characteristics, he asked Ambatha "How did you behave with him?"

goddesses for that matter.

In fact the mind of a Buddha is no more like any sentient beings in the entire universe called Trishasra mahashra loka dhatu in Buddhist culture. That's why the Buddha himself told the Brahmin Drona to understand him as a Buddha as he was not a Deva, Yakchhya, Gandharva or human. A Buddha is the result of the spiritual practice of three immeasurable Kalpas (tri asankhya kalpa), thus according to the Lalitvistar, the Mahasangik record of the Buddha's life, he was the eldest of all sentient beings (including Gods and Bramh of the highest Deva lokas) at the point of birth itself. This is the meaning of Bramh, Vishnu and Mahesh coming to greet him at his birth as is shown in the sculpture in Lumbini and in many Paubha paintings.

Because of the immeasurable merit he accumulated during the three immeasurable Kalpas of practice he was born with the 32 Lakchhyanas (physical characteristics) and 80 Anubyanjanas (sub – characteristics).

These are found only amongst those who will become a Chakravarti King or a Buddha. These two are concepts which existed in the sub-continent even before the time of Sakyamuni because we find the Brahmin Puskarswati sending his Brahmin disciple Ambatha to check whether Gautam was really a Buddha and had those characteristics or not.

Ambatha was rude to the Buddha, but when the learned Brahmin Puskarswati heard that Gautam indeed had those characteristics, he asked Ambatha "How did you behave with him?" When Ambatha told him how he behaved, it is said Puskarswati gave him a swat on his face and went himself to apologise for his disciple's rude behaviour.

But it must be made clear that these 32 Lakchhyanas and Anubyanjanas are not the same as attributed to Krishna. These are more ancient versions of the 32 Lakchhyanas. Some of the major parts of which are a golden colored skin, a swirl of white hair between the eye brows, and a mound on top of the skull which gives the impression that he has tied his hair in a tuft on the crown. That tuft – like mound on top of all Buddha – statues is actually not a tuft of hair tied up in a bun above the crown as most non – Buddhist Nepalis think but rather a peculiar bump of the skull found only in the Buddha or a Chakravarti Kings, called the Usnisa.

These are characteristics not found in any non – Buddhist Devas or Yogis, although some of them are common. According to the Ambatha Sutta, Digha Nikaya, these characteristics were well known to the Brahmins of the time of the Buddha and mentioned in their texts too. But, this knowledge seems to have become lost in the Brahmanical systems in later centuries after the Buddha, because we find in later Hindu texts, that the Buddha is made into an Avatr of Vishnu and Krishna whose very name means black is also said to have the 32 Lakchhyanas. Even the Brahmins of the Buddha's time knew that a Buddha is as rare as the Udumbara flower.

The flower said to bloom only when a Buddha attains full enlightenment and that was very rare. A Buddha arises only when the teachings of a Buddha before him has been totally lost. As there can be no two lions in the same forest so there can be no two Buddhas at the same time or two different teachings of two different Buddhas at the same time. So a new Buddha arises only after the Ssana (dispensation) of the one before him has totally vanished. Right now the dispensation of Sakyamuni Buddha still exists and is going strong and so no other Buddha can arise. Maitreya Buddha will arise only after the dispensation of Sakyamuni has totally vanished.

(To be continued...)

(Shridhar Rinpoche is a Vajrayana Master.)

Book Review

Understanding conflict

Hagen Berndt, People Building Peace: Transforming Violent Conflict in South Asia (Bonn: Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED), 2006), PP133.



To glean the complex roots causes of violence in South Asia is not an easy task. It involves diverse range of activities focusing on conflict-sensitive analyses and planning, dealing with communal tensions.

■ Tara Dahal

The book under review is the result of three years of activities of EED with its partners in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan working especially in supporting the poor who are suffering from poverty, socio-political tension, armed insurgency, human rights violation, gender discrimination and exclusion.

To glean the complex roots causes of violence in South Asia is not an easy task. It involves diverse range of activities focusing on conflict-sensitive analyses and planning, dealing with communal tensions and patriarchy in Gujarat where Muslim and other minorities are victimised. The writer has derived descriptions of Dalit politics in South India, minority politics in Pakistan, low intensity war in Chittagong hill tracks, Naga-Kaku conflict of Manipur and People's War in Nepal. This book accounts the strengthening peace-building capacities, conceptual understanding of root causes of conflict and gender dimension of violent conflict and the role of civil society in mitigating them.

It offers a number of policies, strategies and plans for tackling conflict, such as launching anti-poverty program in consultation with indigenous people, adoption of conflict resolution method prepared by the victim themselves and the strategies and plans emerging from different organisations of the villagers.

It synthesises and highlights practical approaches to conflict transformation by assessing proven examples of intervention and challenges Western models and its failures. The writer has incorporated proven internal success of earlier experience in South Asia such role of Vinoba Bhave's Shanti Sena in India; Informal Sector Service Center's experience of conflict de-escalation in Bardiya, Surkhet and Banke districts of Nepal and conflict prevention experience of Peace Brigades International in Latin America, the Balkans, Sri-Lanka and Indonesia.

The writer's conclusion that structural and legal changes require to strengthen the right of minorities is valid for providing security for them. In the epoch of global mechanism and structure's influence on decision making process in developing countries, this book provides a good guidance as it presents alternative views about conflict resolution, development and a stable democracy. Inter-religious and inter-ethnic understanding is assumed to be important factors in transforming conflict through empathy and reconciliation.

This book thus presents several core studies of South Asia countries and offers solutions to remove parochial social perspective of conflict, addressing stereotypes of status quo and reconstruction of society by negotiating. This is highly readable for those engaged in conflict study and post-conflict reconstruction peace-building. ■



YOUR GATE TO IT WORLD



Gates Computer Pvt Ltd.

Dharmapath, New Road, Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel: 4229529
E-mail : g_computer@wlink.com.np

Think about your thoughts

Rats can introspect—so much for the belief that was something only humans were capable of.



Whether it is an eerily human bot in a virtual-reality game, an animal looking at you with soulful eyes or a patient in a vegetative state, the question nags and nags and won't go away: is there a thinking, self-aware, conscious mind in there? Not one that exhibits intelligence, since silicon chips do calculations that leave the human brain in the dust. And not one merely capable of empathy or grief or cooperation, which chimps, elephants and species in between all manage. No, the capacity that distinguishes humans has come down to something Augustine identified 1,600 years ago when he asked: what "can be the purport of the injunction, know thyself? I suppose it is the mind should reflect upon itself."

It's called metacognition—the ability to think about your thoughts, to engage in self-reflection, to introspect. It was long thought to be not just something that we have more of or do better than machines or animals, but that we have and they lack. To know what you know is not only the mark of a skilled game-show contestant who is quick (but not too quick) on the buzzer, but also of consciousness, the last stand for human exceptionalism. Now, this claim is on the rocks as both animals and machines show signs they can engage in self-reflection.

In the latest study, scientists tested for introspection in rats. Jonathon Crystal and Allison Foote of the University of Georgia trained rats to push one lever when they heard a short burst of static, and a second lever when they heard a long burst. The reward for a right answer was six food pellets. A wrong answer yielded nothing. But refusing to answer earned the rat a consolation prize of three morsels. Clearly, the smart strategy was to respond if sure of the answer, but pass if not. The rats got almost perfect scores when they had to identify two-second or eight-second bursts. But when they heard static of intermediate duration and had to choose "long" or "short," they were twice as likely to decline the test and take the three pellets; they knew what they didn't know.

To make sure the rats were truly introspecting, the scientists then eliminated the opt-out choice and required the rats to choose "long" or "short" for the medium bursts. The animals got half right, which suggests that when they opted out it was indeed because they had assessed the contents of their mind—do I know this?—and made the rational choice, the scientists report in *Current Biology*. "Rats can reflect on their internal mental states," says Crystal. "They know when they don't know." Other scientists have gotten similar results with dolphins and rhesus monkeys, who also decline to take a test when they don't know the answer. They think about thinking.

Next month an AI conference in Hawaii will feature a dozen studies on introspective machines. "I don't think there is an inherent barrier to self-understanding on the part of machines," says Michael Cox of BBN Technologies. "There is nothing magical, mystical, spiritual or uniquely human about introspection and metacognition."

Questions about consciousness have become especially poignant in the case of comatose patients. Last year scientists in England reported on a young woman who, despite being in a vegetative state, showed brain activity identical to that of healthy volunteers in response to spoken requests that she imagine walking around her home or playing tennis. Critics dismissed the brain signals as little more than reflex: maybe the word "tennis" automatically triggered the activity, they said. If so, it was nothing special, and certainly not a sign of a self-reflecting mind. Perhaps, but the new research says we need to be careful about expecting too much of consciousness. As self-awareness dawns on machines and as scientists find it in animals, it may be that vegetative patients are not the only ones whose glimmers of consciousness can be dismissed as nothing special.

(The Indian Express)

Insight

Discounting impressions

Do not ask why, just follow blindly, seems to be the popular credo.



■ Sushma Amatya

Amitabh Bacchan, one of the best known celebrities worldwide, was a candidate for a big credit for restricting the number of guests invited to his son's wedding, initially to a mere 100. That the count-up finally stopped at 500 as reported by Indian news channels on Saturday, was not too bad either, since with his clout he could easily have gone up to five or six thousand as oft has happened with other high profile weddings. Having just recovered from the shock of watching a middle class family struggling to meet its ends invite 500 guests to their daughter's coming of age party in Kathmandu, the mega star's list appeared really an effort at keeping it modest.

Keeping the wedding low profile in the family with three generations of celebrities was not an easy task but they did so out of their conviction. The event totally restricted within one's personal walls sans any media snooping would go a long way to setting a benchmark for others in the society to emulate. Whatever video-clips being repeatedly shown were an example of media invasion in what was essentially a private affair.

Kollywood (Nepali film world), that is an avid emulator of Bollywood would do well to pick up fast the hot trend set by the Bacchan at least in its story lines, so that in the process, it would send out messages of prudence and moderation and thereby discourage in-your-face extravagance that most people in Nepali society can ill afford but yet indulge in.

Those who can afford it show no qualms in publicising what they have by making their guest list as long as possible. Basking in the after-glow of what they achieved in terms of earning accolades from their small or large pool of social circles, they little realise what an example they have set for others like them or unlike them to follow. By reaffirming to much hyped up, mostly self created must-do lists when it comes to celebrating any societal event, one encourages self-aggrandisement, at any cost.

In 1975, a law came into effect that restricted the number of guests in weddings to 51. It was totally ignored and died a quiet death. The idea behind the step was to discourage competitive extravagance in the society, which sadly was squashed. Today, in any small town or cities, it is common to see a huge confused crowd ranging from 300 to 1000 at least, sweating it out, 'celebrating' any family affair.

Agreed, it may be a chance at meeting far flung relatives that one does not care about but are those invitees truly happy to be invited? Mostly not, though social propriety dictates one does not ask such questions and of course to never speak your mind even when someone is crazy enough to blunder into such an 'improper' zone. Do not ask why, just follow blindly, seems to be the popular credo.

It is not uncommon to see relatives dragging themselves out reluctantly to attend yet one more such parties and come back complaining about more than just the food. It sure provides a merry ground for much gossip and merry-making at others' cost—literally and figuratively. But scarcely anybody is happy at the end of the mega scale drama.

Happiness is important when it comes to celebrating events that are land marks in a history of a family. Trying to please all is mere stupidity. It is not selfish to concentrate on trying to derive a meaning out of such rituals, by keeping it small, simple and not trying to please the whole world. Only the brave do not to care what 'others say or think', and really succeed in enjoying the whole process and at the same time, understand the significance of it all.

Why do most of us invite people in such a large scale and waste everybody's time, effort and money trying to please all, an impossible task? Why reduce a personal event into a large scale drama where sheer chaos reigns and at the end there is nothing to show except strained bank balance or huge debts and a few DVDs? Is that not being like a monkey aping yet another monkey?

It is high time we learnt to stop allowing the all pervasive Nepali factor, 'what will others say', dictate our lives and began using our own brains to decide what is good and applicable for each individual family, keeping in mind the impact of our actions on the larger family.

Making oneself happy is not a crime; it is the only way that we can make others happy. Making an impression in creative ways begins by being brave enough to break away from the standardised norms and carving your own path that sets an example for the common good. Learning to sit on one's ego is the very first step towards it. ■



Sexual satisfaction is associated with mental state of mind

Counseling by drug therapist, Ragina Shah

What are tranquilisers?

■ Sharmila Rai, Kathmandu

Tranquilisers are anti-depressant drugs taken for their calming effect, considered very addictive and thus doctors need to justify the reasons before prescribing them. They are divided into two categories - sedatives such as Alprazolam, Valium etc and sleep inducing medicines such as Barbiturates and Nitrazepam.

Minor tranquilisers are used by doctors in short-term treatment of minor stress and anxiety problems resulting in relief from anxiety, inducing relaxation and a sense of well-being. Major tranquilisers are also known as anti-psychotics and are used in treatment of schizophrenia and other psychotic states.

Tranquilisers act on the brain, depressing central nervous system. Usage of any tranquiliser can result in high addiction and overdose, and long-term use can result in serious dependence. Because tranquilisers give you a 'high', they are often abused and tolerance can quickly

develop. Some users of tranquilisers feel stimulated rather than sedated, which means excitability and/or rage.

Short term effects are loss of memory, drowsiness, confusion and long term effects could be lethargy, over sedation, decreased motivation, nausea, skin rash, headache, tremors and impaired sexual activity. Alcohol that also slows down the nervous system, if combined with tranquilisers can be life threatening. There exists controversy in the medical community about benefits of tranquilisers. Some experts reckon they create more problems than they solve.

Do drugs affect fertility?

■ Rachana Karmacharya, Jawlakhel

Using alcohol, tobacco and drugs affects fertility negatively. Use of these impact on sexual capability, pregnancy and also result in HIV/AIDS because of needle sharing. Many believe that using drugs and alcohol increases sexual activity but studies have shown that drugs affects sexual activity adversely. Such false hopes have been circulated through gossip and the

media and many fall victims to it. Sexual satisfaction is associated with mental state of mind and such a state cannot be achieved through drug and alcohol use.

Married couples using alcohol and drugs find it difficult to conceive since these substances actually decrease sperm count in males and in females, their monthly cycles get affected.

Pregnant women who use drugs can have frequent miscarriages. There is also a high risk of an unborn child suffering from mental and physical deformities resulting in a condition called fetal alcohol syndrome. Fetus carried by females using heroin can even be addicted to drugs, and these infant have to be treated for withdrawal after they are born. Addicts who share injections end up transmitting HIV/AIDS and a child born to those parents run a high risk of being HIV positive.

Please address any queries you have about drug addiction to: newsfront@bhrikuti.com (Your identity will be protected.)

Cricket no cake-walk



Niraj Sapkota

■ Nabin Aryal

While ex-national player Nutan Bajracharya of NG Group with his 100 odd Kg of body mass was straining to regain his agility in the sun drenched international cricket field in Kirtipur, WDN Group's amateur but lithe Ram Krishna Wagle was struggling to keep pace with ex-professionals.

Besides these two players, Nepal's prominent 16 corporate houses totaling 100 plus staffers were similarly toiling and stretching their limbs for two long days. Watching them, it did not seem that playing cricket is a cake walk. And yet despite some ageing and obviously less nimble bodies, the players were in the field and giving it their best go.

The wining trophy went to Kantipur Publications in the 1st Corporate 6-A side Cricket Tournament organised by Nepal Corporate Sports Association. In as much as the whole tournament was competitive, the final match had nail biting finish with

Kantipur bettering Himalayan Bank by a mere run. Kantipur with some national level players' final 54 runs were countered by 53 runs from Himalayan side. Interestingly, WDN had no national level players to reach semi-finals and lost to Himalayan which had Pawan Agrawal, ex-captain of Nepal Cricket Team.

The corporate participants were Machhapuchchhre Bank, NIC Bank, Himalayan Bank, NB Group, WDN Group, Nepal Investment Bank, DHL, Nabil Bank, Kantipur Publications, Everest Insurance, Yeti Airlines, Bank of Kathmandu, Standard Chartered Bank, Surya Nepal, International Leasing and Financing, Kumari Bank. Standard Chartered also had the semi-final yield to Kantipur by 9 runs.

Nutan, a mature 44 year ex-professional admitted that it was tough challenge to play in the first match with WDN amateurs. Nutan who had retired from cricket 12 years back was awarded Player of the Tournament. Likewise, Suraj Singh of Kantipur was Man of the Series, Abhinash Chettri of

Standard Chartered was Best Batsman, Abhisek Pokharel of Nabil was Best Fielder, Paran Kunwar of Nabil, the Best Bowler. The two today event was very enjoyable and the Association General Secretary, Kishore Bhattarai, was confident that similar event next year would be even more enjoyable.

Besides giving corporate houses an amicable forum to establish wholesome professional relationships, the event most definitely contributed, barring some corporate houses, in collecting together ex-national players from their hibernation. This surely will add mileage and inspiration to aspiring cricketers of Nepal. The Chairman of Nepal Cricket Association, Mr. Binay Raj Pandey opined, "We are grateful to corporate houses that have helped enhance the image of cricket. We wish to further strengthen this partnership to further cricket in Nepal." Association's Chairman, Mahesh Rana and his executive team must be commended for their excellent effort. A good run indeed. ■

Reel to real

Abhishek Bachchan and Aishwarya Rai have played a role of wedding in real.

Abhishek Bachchan and Aishwarya Rai have probably played out this scene countless times on screen—the groom arrives on a horse, the gorgeous bride blushes, an opulent ceremony follows and everyone lives happily ever after. But on Friday, Bollywood's sweethearts said their 'I dos' for real. At about 7 pm, they exchanged jaimalas at Prateeksha at a star-studded event, as thousands of fans cheered them on from behind the barricades outside.

Going by precedent—the Bachchans' numerous pilgrimages around the country—it wasn't surprising that 11 priests were specially flown in from Kashi to conduct the nuptials. The shubh muhurat finally arrived at 6.40 pm and the actual exchange was preceded by a 20-minute ritual, comprising two brief pujas, in the traditional Bunt style (Aishwarya's community from coastal

Karnataka). It was followed by Arya Samaj rituals. Aishwarya wore an Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla creation.

Earlier in the day, a short puja was performed with Sonali Bendre carrying the holy kalas. Sonali, Shweta and Kajol tied the shehra—a ritual traditionally carried out by the groom's sister—on Abhishek.

The baraat set off from Jalsa with the groom on a white mare at 5 pm—another auspicious time set by the religious elders. Nephew Agastya, sister Shweta's son, sat in front of him as the sarbala. Before the procession could move any further, Bachchan junior, threaded in a white sherwani with gold embroidery, surprised everyone with a short Kajra re jig for his fans without removing his mogre kashehra. Amitabh joined in with a wave and the crowd, thrilled with their first crumbs from the event, went into frenzy.

As he trotted into Prateeksha at 5.30 pm, Abhishek repeated the dance for another set of fans, this time to the tune of Rock n roll soniye

from Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna. The crowd turned almost manic and the police resorted to lathis to control them. After 15 minutes of playing the dashing rider, Abhishek shifted to one the seven Volvo buses kept for the baraatis along with Amitabh, Shweta, Amar Singh, Subroto Roy and Anil Ambani.

By 3.30 pm, the baraatis had already trooped into Jalsa with Amaan and Ayan Ali leading the way. Yash Chopra and Rohan Sippy followed with their families. Then Ritesh Deshmukh and Karan Johar, and Sanjay Leela Bhansali came in with his mother. By 4.45 pm, Kirron Kher, Rakeysh Mehra, Ajitabh Bachchan, Danny Denzongpa with wife and son, Ajay Devgan, Prem Chopra, Uday Chopra, Shweta's in-laws and Goldie Behl had gathered at Prateeksha to be part of the wedding procession.

Even though the guest list was small, it made up in sparkle. Mulayam Singh Yadav, Preity Zinta accompanied by Ness Wadia, Shatrughan Sinha's wife Poonam, Anupam Kher and Ashutosh Gowariker were spotted at the venue. After the ceremony was over, director Ram Gopal Verma, as usual, was one of the first to leave. Sanjay Dutt with Maanyata in tow followed. By 8 pm, most of the guests like Subroto Roy, Hemant Trivedi, Uddhav Thackeray and Anupam Kher had left. Sachin and Anjali Tendulkar, Preity, Jaya Prada and Yash Chopra finally drove out of the gates by 10 pm.

The last thing left on the agenda for the newly-weds was a trip to Leelavati Hospital to seek Teji Bachchan's blessings. Aishwarya then returned to La Mer from where she will depart tomorrow for Jalsa in a bidaai ritual.

(The Indian Express)



vianet
INTERNET

**Unlimited Dialup
Night Surfing**

- One Year - Rs. 2160/-
- Six Months - Rs. 1200/-
- Three Months - Rs. 660/-
- One Month - Rs. 300/-

**8 pm to 9 am &
Saturday Whole day**

*Inclusive of all taxes

Just Call To Open An Account

Tel: + 977 1 5546410

vianet
communications

info@vianet.com.np
www.vianet.com.np