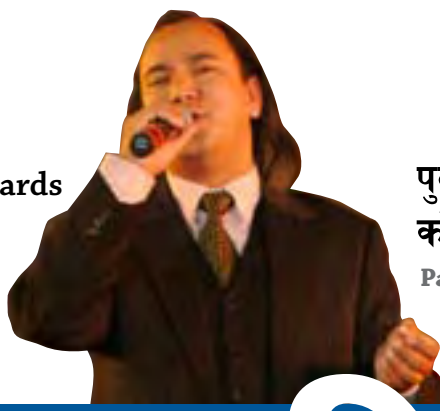


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Nepali Aawaz
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Vol.1 Issue 16
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Photo: User "Sharantha20" on Saiba.com

MISSING: PRATISTHA BUDHATHOKI

“ We treat every case with extreme importance and in a case like this we don't rule out the fact that she might have left on her own, because she is an adult, but we don't rule out that something criminal might have happened either. But we treat every as though something bad has happened and we cover all the grounds. — **Detective. Sgt. Corey Pass**, lead investigator on the case.

ANA-NYC 2006 Special



Fun things to do while
in New Jersey

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Talking Nepal

On 16 June, history was made in Nepal. "These were scenes that would have been unthinkable even a month ago: **Pushpa Kamal Dahal** flying into Kathmandu in a helicopter and riding the home minister's flagged car into town for a meeting with the prime minister in his official residence." Nepali Aawaz spoke to three respected members and veterans of the Nepali media community.

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Days in Nepali History

In July 2001, Nepal was a different world altogether; a newly crowned King Gyanendra's birthday was declared a national holiday, the Maoists were on a violent spree and Prime Minister Girija had resigned from this post to "protect democracy." In the last two months this year, the King, after a popular people's uprising, has lost all power, Girija Prasad Koirala is the PM of Nepal again, and the Maoists and government have made historical moves towards finding a peaceful solution to the 10-year-old armed communist rebellion.

3 July, 2001

According to monarchical tradition, King Gyanendra's birthday on Ashad 23 or July 7 has been declared a national holiday to be celebrated with pomp and gaiety, a Home Ministry announcement said Tuesday. The government decided to celebrate the day every year as a national holiday, the same announcement said. Saturday July 7 this year is a normal weekend holiday. Saturday is the new King's 54th birthday. (Source: Nepalnews.com)

4 July, 2001

Maoists have escalated attacks against targets nation-wide, killing, injuring or abducting more than 60 policemen Tuesday and Wednesday ahead of a nation-wide strike next Thursday to protest what they call arbitrary imposition of stiff rules to curb freedoms. Three policemen were killed and more than 50 others abducted in separate incidents in Banke and Rolpa districts in far west Nepal, police said. Rebels torched a vehicle ferrying officials of a corporate body in the city outskirts Wednesday morning at gunpoint, police said. More than 1,700 persons have been killed in a

communist insurgency in more than five years. (Source: Nepalnews.com)

19 July, 2001

Under pressure not only from opposition parties but from detractors in his own party, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala announced his resignation Thursday.

Prime Minister Koirala, in his address to the nation over Radio Nepal and Nepal Television, said, "I decided to resign to protect democracy, solve national problems and maintain unity within my own party." Koirala said that both extreme rightists and extreme leftists have unleashed an attack against democracy and the nation and added that it was the duty of all political parties that have faith in democracy to be united and collectively counter such ulterior motives. The Maoist violence is targeted against democracy, he said and condemned it.

Prime Minister highly praised the role of police and army in the fight against violence and terrorism. "I put forth a 14-point agenda for national consensus, which reflect the feelings and pains of all political parties that went to power in the last 12 years," he said. He said, "My responsibility at present is to protect the parliamentary democracy and maintain unity in my own party".

Diplomatic relations established during the month of July

Russian Federation (USSR): 20 July, 1956; Japan: 28 July, 1956; Sri Lanka: 1 July, 1957; Egypt: 16 July, 1957; Afghanistan: 1 July, 1961; Sudan: 11 July, 1969; Belarus: 19 July, 1993; Moldova: 20 July, 1993; South Africa: 28 July, 1994

July.2006

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“ We treat every case with extreme importance and in a case like this we don't rule out the fact that she might have left on her own, because she is an adult, but we don't rule out that something criminal might have happened either. But we treat every as though something bad has happened and we cover all the grounds.”

- **Detective. Sgt. Corey Pass**, lead investigator on the case.

“ Pratistha is with us in South Carolina.”

- an anonymous call made by a male Nepali

“ We just have to be patient and hopeful. Everything that can be done is being done.”

- **Swarupa Khadka**, Pratistha's first cousin in New York.

“ Radio Nepal, Nepal Television and Gorkhapatra Corp. have to come under parliamentary oversight and shouldn't be handed like a coconut to future monkeys in government.”

- **Kunda Dixit**, editor and publisher of the English weekly Nepali Times, in an interview with Nepali Aawaz. Full interview inside.

“ All the king's men, there were very few women in the government like of today, were damn against the free media. They couldn't digest the opposition voices and idea. We performed as professional journalists. Yes, we had some activism but it was basically to safeguard the right for freedom of press.”

- **Narayan Wagle**, feditor of Nepal's largest daily Kantipur, in an interview with Nepali Aawaz. Full interview inside.

“ Nepal's history is testimony to the fact that the NA has always remained committed to defend Nepal's sovereignty, territorial integrity and dignity of the

people under the direct command of the prevailing constitutional government.”

- Excerpt from a statement issued by the Nepali Army a few days after the government failed to refute the allegations made by CPN (Maoist) Chairman Prachanda alleging that the NA has only killed innocents and raped Nepali women in the military institution's history.

“ What Dhirendra said was 'lets (palace and Maoists) unite, deal with the all the parliamentary parties and share power'. We want this letter made public. Second, Dhirendra said that Gyanendra and he agreed but that Birendra opposed it. What does this indicate? Whom did they have an undisclosed working agreement with? Gyanendra or Birendra? ”

- **Former CPN (Maoist) member Rabindra Shrestha**, who was expelled from the party for criticizing the party leadership and trying to start a "new cultural revolution" within the party, answering the questions "What role did Prince Dhirendra have?" during an interview on Jana Astha (21 June). [Excerpt as translated and published by Nepali Times, #303]

“ Children as Zones of Peace' means protection of children from armed conflict and its long-term impacts. It means to avoid obstacles on normal development of children. It also means to prioritize children's protection even in difficult situations and all the concerned parties to look forward for various means to protect children and to provide them opportunity to grow in peaceful environment.”

- Excerpt from a press-statement urging the government to remove security forces from schools, released by National Coalition for Children as Zones of Peace (CZOP).

Diaspora

ANA NYC 2006

About the Association of Nepalis in the America (ANA)

Over the years, ANA has come to be most known to Nepalis as founders of the ANA Convention, the largest and perhaps the most popular Nepali gathering in the Nepali diaspora. Although branded as ANA, the conventions are, however, organized by local associations of Nepalis of the hosting state, such as New York Nepali Youth Council this year. While the ANA committee holds many decision making powers and oversees the convention generally, the local association is responsible for organizing and managing the convention in its entirety. But ANA is not limited to the convention. Here is a brief glance at the organization's history as published on its official site Anaonline.org.

"ANA is an organization of the people of Nepali origin in the Americas and international friends

of Nepal. ANA was founded on July 1983 in New York and Incorporated in Washington DC in 1983 as a non-profit tax exempt organization. Since its inception ANA has grown steadily as an international organization attracting a diverse membership that includes resident Nepalis in the Americas and many other international scholars, scientists, outdoor enthusiasts, and philanthropists who share an interest in the Nepali Culture.

"The purpose of the exclusively educational and charitable Association of Nepalis in the Americas is to promote preservation of Nepali identity and culture in the Americas, to foster cordial relations among Nepalis and Americans, and to demonstrate the effectiveness of the participation of Nepali-Americans in the communities they live in.

How to get to ANA-NYC 2006:

We'll admit, getting to this year's convention venue can be quite tricky! And if you're heading out from NY, keep in mind that it could take you anywhere from 1 hour to 1.5 hours to get to the venue by car. Carpooling or taking a taxi and sharing the cost between friends are the best options, since local buses or subways/trains don't go to the venue Sheraton hotel. Here are a list of suggestions on how to get to this year's convention venue.

From the airport:

Take the Sheraton Hotel shuttle to the hotel

From NYC (by public transportation)

Take PATH train from WTC station or 33rd street station at 33rd and 6th Ave (\$1.50) to Newark Penn Station. OR- take the NJ Transit (NE Corridor towards Trenton) to Newark Penn Station (\$3.75). From Newark Penn Station, catch the 40 Jersey Garden bus towards Elizabeth (\$1.25) to Sheraton Hotel. Alternatively, you can take a cab from Newark Penn Station to the Hotel for \$14 (sharing cab fare b a group is encouraged).

From NYC (by car)

Lincoln Tunnel: Take Lincoln Tunnel to NJ-495 W. Merge into I-95. Stay on local I-95 (instead of express). Merge into I-78W. Take the Frontage Road. Sheraton Newark Hotel is at your right.

GW Bridge: Take I-95 and follow above direction (from Lincoln Tunnel)

Holland Tunnel: Take US-1&9 S. Take I-78 W exit and immediately (0.1miles) take the Frontage Road exit. Turn left onto Frontage Road. Hotel is at your right.

History of ANA Conventions

1983: 1st, Corning, New York

1984: 2nd, Lancaster, Pennsylvania

1985: 3rd, Washington, D.C.

1986: 4th, Bowling Green, Ohio

1987: 5th, Toronto, Canada

1988: 6th, Long Island, New York

1989: 7th, Boston, Massachusetts

1990: 8th, Orlando, Florida

1991: 9th, Fairmont, West Virginia

1992: 10th, Rochester, New York

1993: 11th, Claremont, California

1994: 12th, Arlington, Virginia

1995: 13th, Denver, Colorado

1996: 14th, New York-New Jersey

1997: 15th, Boston, Massachusetts

1998: 16th, Greensboro, North Carolina

1999: 17th, Hartford, Connecticut

2000: 18th, Atlanta, Georgia

2001: 19th, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania

2002: 20th, Chantilly, Virginia

2003: 21st, Denver, Colorado

2004: 22nd, Phoenix, Arizona

2005: 23rd, Dallas, Texas

2006: 24th, to be held in New Ark, New Jersey, but hosted by New York Nepali Youth Council.

Diaspora

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Quick Guide to Summer in New York

If you're going to be in NY this summer, then here's a way you can have great fun for free, if you like music and don't mind waking up early for it, that is!

Free Concerts:

Venue: Bryant Park, 42nd St. (E, D, 7 Trains stop at the 42nd St. Bryant Park station.) **Time:** 7AM (Better if you get there by 6-6:30AM. Its first come, first serve). **Artists:** The Beach Boys (7 July), Train (14 July), Pharell Williams with Kanye West (4 August), Carried Underwood (11 August), Christina Aguilera (18 August), Lionel Richie (25 August). **About:** Part of the summer concert series by Good Morning America (ABC channel). Artists perform 2-4 songs, which is broadcast live on TV. Photo cameras are allowed.

Tea Lounge:

Miss hanging out at Himalayan Java? Take the F Train (Downtown/Brooklyn bound) and get off at 7 Avenue in Brooklyn. Just outside the Subway station, you'll find a place called Tea Lounge (10St. and 7 Ave, Park Slope, Brooklyn). You can even have yourself some Darjeeling tea in Brooklyn, NY! In any case, 7 Ave, is full of other great cafes and bars many of which

are outdoors during the summer, and shops.

Park yourself:

New York is a fabulous city to spend time at the park, and it boasts the great Central Park in Manhattan and the Prospect Park in Brooklyn. Both the parks are absolutely worth spending time in. Just don't forget to pack a blanket to spread on the floor and some snacks. Company, optional. For Prospect Park, the the F Train (Downtown/ Brooklyn bound) and get off at the Prospect Park stop. Both the parks also host lots of fre events during the summer.

Free Movies: HBO Film Festival

Every monday, hundreds of people come out to the center of New York city for an outdoor movie-picnic. The movies begin between 8 to 9 PM and the park open at 5PM for people to come in and find themselves a spot. And the free festival screens American classics. Movies showing in July are: M*A*S*H (3 July), Bullitt (10 July), The Band Wagon (17 July), High Noon (24 July), A Shot In The Dark (31 July). Full list at Bryantpark.org

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Diaspora

The Schedule

This year's ANA Convention will have a whole bunch of fun and interesting things to do, and if you want to save money on the tickets, then we urge you to register as soon as possible! Here is a quick checklist of the things happening at this year's convention, and what its going to cost you. For more details, visit the official website Ananyc.org.

30 June

Poetry Festival (Free!)

DJ Dance Night: \$10 for Gents, \$5 for ladies (\$5 off for registrants). Featuring DJ Lethal, DJ P, DJ Rhino and DJ Gorkhali.

1 July

Inauguration ceremony and sports tournaments (Free to watch!).

Grand DJ Night: \$20 for all. (\$5 off for the registrants) Featuring DJ P and DJ Sameer.

2 July

Sports tournaments, forums and movie festival.

Cultural Show: \$30 for all. (\$5 off for the registrants). Featuring local talents and Harish Mathema, The Angels, The Okely band, Raju Lama, Koshi band!

3 July

Children camp, sports tournaments, movie festival.

Banquet: \$39

Concert: \$35 for all. (\$5 off for the registrants). Featuring Mukti & Revival and Nischal from Metal Cross. Also featuring Samsara and other local bands from New York!

Mukti performing in Kathmandu last spring. Photo: Anup Prakash.



Must Eat

Dosa and paan in Jersey City

We hear that the food might be quite expensive at the Sheraton during this year's convention. So to help you out, here is a perfect option: head out to New Ark Avenue Jersey City. This small and quiet Indian/ South Asian strip is only about 5-10 minutes by car from the Sheraton Hotel. And unlike Jackson Heights in Queens, NY, this place is smaller and not as much overwhelming.

Our suggestion

If you do make it to New Ark Avenue go on down to Dosa Hut and try their Masala Dosa! It is quite a delight. And

plus, you get free soup (sambar). Its not expensive at all, especially compared to Queens. Other places offer everything from full Indian menus to desserts like the classic paan. Scenes from New Ark Avenue can't help but remind you of home, just like the food does too.

Must visit

IKEA, the Swedish furniture franchise that is popular amongst college students is quite close to the New Ark airport and Sheraton Hotel. And this outlet is so huge that you literally need a map to maze through it. Even if you don't want to shop, its fun browsing through their endless isles and halls. And chances are you will find something you would want to buy.

youth forum

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Nepali Baba in Nepali Mandir

Nepali Baba, born Tej Nath Sharma (Ghimire) in 1951AD, hails from in the village of Pokharathok in Palpa. He is also regarded as one of the senior most hindu babas. On 25 June, Nepali Mandir, New York, hosted a religious

function welcoming Nepali Baba, for which over a 100 people came. While the baba performed various pujas, he also took time to read peopel's 'chiina.' The main puja was a 'havan' to 'Bhagbati' and 'Ganesh.'



Photo: Dr. Tara Niraula

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Team Nepal in All Nation's Cup 2006

Every year Seattle hosts the All Nation's Cup where locals form teams to represent their country in the soccer tournament, and this year Nepal will be taking part in it too. The tournament will be held this summer from 14 - 16 July. The Nepali will be headed by team captain Bishal Gurung and the Nepal Seattle Society will be the team's official sponsor. On 8 July, NSS will be

hosting a fundraiser for Team Nepal at The Everest Kitchen restaurant from 6:30 to 9:30PM. The typical Nepali style buffet is \$12 per person and free for those below the age of 8-years. More details about the tournament can be found at Allnationscup.org and details about the fundraiser is available at Nepalseattle.org.

Team Nepal, Seattle. Photo: Nepal Seattle Society.



Nation

Talking Nepal

On 16 June, history was made in Nepal. "These were scenes that would have been unthinkable even a month ago: **Pushpa Kamal Dahal** flying into Kathmandu in a helicopter and riding the home minister's flagged car into town for a meeting with the prime minister in his official residence." reported Nepali Times, an English weekly in Nepal. **Nepali Aawaz** spoke to three respected members

and veterans of the Nepali media community — **Kunda Dixit** (Editor & Publisher of Nepali Times), **Narayan Wagle** (Editor, Kantipur daily), and **Shiva Gaunle** (Vice-President, Federation of Nepali Journalists) — to discuss recent political developments, media-propaganda and the fine line between journalism and activism.

Kunda Dixit

Kunda Dixit is the Editor and publisher of the widely read English weekly Nepali Times, published by one of Nepal's most influential media houses Himalmedia P. Ltd. The paper's on-line version and digital archives can be found at its official website Nepalitimes.com.

On your 16 June's edition of Nepali Times (#302), you wrote "despite the momentous decisions, the road ahead is fraught with dangers because of entrenched positions and potential for derailment." What are the biggest dangers and possible reasons for derailment that you see, how can they be avoided?



The front-page of Nepali Times, #302.

The biggest danger is that the Maoists may split vertically between a hardline and moderate factions. There are fissures on the party and the rift between Baburam and Prachanda have not been completely patched up yet. Even more sinister is that the split may be based on ethnic or regional identity politics. It is important to ensure that the Maoists make a safe landing as one party, otherwise we'll be back to square one. This is why the king must be dissuaded from using the 'Hindu card' to perpetuate himself. Once you let that genie out of the bottle it'll never go back in again.

In the same article, "Soft Landing," you also write that an election campaign has more or less started. And the role for Monarchy is Nepal's future is one of its key issues. But many Nepalis at home and abroad are still confused about what an interim government is, what the constituent assembly is and what elections are being campaigned for.

'Constituent Assembly' is the mechanism to elect a council to draft a new constitution. This is the main

Maoist plank and also the demand of the people during Jana Andolan II [April 06]. As I cited in the article there is every indication the election, when it is held perhaps Feb 2007, will be a referendum on the monarchy. An interim all party, seven plus one, with the Maoists included, will oversee this election.

There is an indication that members of the CPN (Maoist) will be included in the cabinet of the Interim government and possibly be given a deputy prime ministership too, as part of forming the interim government. And in the last 10 years, Nepal has never come so close to solving the Maoist issue. But what happens to their history of violence and brutality? Is "forgive and forget" part of the negotiation cards being played or will the leadership/politburo of a party in an interim or an elected government be investigated or tried?

The SPA was insisting on Friday [16 June] that their joint statement would include a Maoist renunciation of violence as a precondition to an interim government. The comrades appear to have convinced (arm-twisted?) the parties to drop that demand for now arguing that they'd never be able to sell that to their rank and file. Past brutality by the Maoists as well as the human rights violations by the army and police will have to be addressed by a future truth and reconciliation committee as in South Africa and elsewhere. This is so sensitive that there is a fear going into it now may derail the peace process.

Many are wondering if the government is playing into the hands of the Maoists by giving too much.

A majority of Nepalis want to give peace a chance and even if they don't trust the Maoists completely, they want to test them. The alternative is to go back to war. The ones with most misgivings are senior officials, the security apparatus, victims of Maoist atrocities, and (surprisingly) even some members of the cabinet.

When PM Koirala spoke on behalf of a "ceremonial King" there was much outcry and now there are pressures in NC (D) and NC's central committee for an explanation on the party's stand on the issue from their party leaders. Isn't the King void of his political and military powers, like King Gyanendra is now, already ceremonial? Or is there another meaning to the term?

At the moment we are in a gray

SOURCE: NepalNews.com

Highlights of the eight-point agreement signed by the top leaders of the ruling Seven Party Alliance (SPA) and the CPN (Maoist), after nearly seven-hour-long talks in Kathmandu on Friday, are given below:

1. To follow the 12-point understanding between the SPA and the CPN (Maoist) and the 25-point code of conduct signed by the Nepal government and the CPN (Maoist) with honesty and firmness.

2. By expressing commitment towards democratic norms and values including competitive multi-party system of governance, civil liberties, fundamental rights, press freedom and rule of law, launch activities in a peaceful manner.

3. To urge the United Nations to help in the management of arms and armed personnel of both the sides and to monitor it in order to conduct elections for the Constituent Assembly in a free and fair manner.

4. To form an interim constitution, constitute an interim government accordingly, to announce the date for elections of the Constituent Assembly (CA), to dissolve the House of Representatives on the basis of consensus and after making alternative arrangements, and dissolve the "people's governments" formed by the CPN (Maoist) on the basis of 12-point understanding between the SPA and the CPN (Maoist), the spirit of the preamble of the ceasefire code of conduct and by guaranteeing the

people's rights acquired from the people's movement of 1990 and the recent historic people's movement.

5. To take decisions on the basis of consensus on the issues of national importance that may have far-reaching consequences.

6. To guarantee the fundamental right of the Nepali people to take part in the constitution making process and in the elections for the CA in an environment free of fear, intimidation and violence and invite international observers to monitor the CA elections as per the need.

7. To transform the ceasefire between the government of Nepal and the CPN (Maoist) in a permanent peace and to resolve the problems through negotiated settlement by forward-looking restructuring of the state so as to address the problems related to class, ethnicity, regionalism and gender and by placing the issue of democracy, peace, progress, forward-looking movement and independence, dignity and sovereignty of the nation in the center.

8. The government and Maoist negotiating teams have been directed to accomplish all the above-mentioned tasks immediately.

Signed by senior most leaders of the SPA and Prachanda, chairman of the CPN (Maoist) after the first summit meeting between the two sides at the Prime Minister's official residence at Baluwatar in Kathmandu on Friday, June 16, 2006

Nation

zone, a legal limbo. Despite all the changes, Nepal is still a kingdom and the king is still head of state. That is why ambassadors are still presenting credentials at the palace. This will be resolved by the new constitution. The Maoists and the left parties will campaign to do away with the king altogether, Koirala and some of the centre right parties want to keep a ceremonial monarch. And India doesn't seem to have abandoned its 'twin pillar doctrine' on Nepal, that is to keep constitutional king and multiparty democracy. It'll all boil down to what the people vote for next year. There are indications the people make a distinction between the personal of the king, and they don't hide their distaste for king Gyanendra and Crown Prince Paras, and the institution of monarchy. But you're right, King Gyanendra is now just a tourist attraction and he has only as much political power as the Kumari.

And that is the way the Nepali people probably want him, if at all.

In your Editorial, Radio Free Nepal [#302], you question if "we crossed the line between activism and journalistic professionalism" and if "we" will confuse "freedom with free-for-all journalism that unnecessarily spread cynicism about politicians and tarnished democracy itself [in the 1990s]. You sound wary and cautious. Is this phenomenon Nepal centric or have we seen this before elsewhere?

It's fine line between activism and journalism. We have to ask ourselves, is our activism hurting our credibility with readers? When basic freedoms are threatened, however, journalists also have to take a stand and rise up. Some want to wave placards on the streets, that's fine, and others want to do hard-hitting journalism, that's also OK too. Still others will treat their media

outlet as a forum for public debate and present all shades of opinion and let readers make their own judgement. It's a decision individual journalists have to make on their own, I don't have a prescription.

After 1990, in hindsight, we wonder if media helped spread cynicism about democracy by going overboard with its coverage of corruption, spreading cynicism and fatalism and tarring not just politicians, who obviously deserved it, but the concept of democracy itself. We should be more careful this time, not treat politics obsessively as a perpetual quarrel and not lose sight of what it is: a mechanism to improve the lives of Nepalis. This debate is not particular to Nepal, and people have written books about how far journalists can or should go and how when you cross the line sometimes freedom can undermine freedom itself. However, we have seen from Nepal, Thailand, Philippines and

even Italy that press freedom doesn't come with any warranty it has to be protected by its maximum application. It is like a rubber band, you have to stretch it to make it work.

You too worked at Rising Nepal and you know its mechanisms. How was it different then, and in the last decade and what should be different now in the state media?

That was what the Nepali Times editorial last week was all about. But I doubt if anyone read it! No one reads editorials. The power of state media in Nepal has been tragically wasted not just during the Panchayat but by successive democratic governments who turned it into a propaganda tool. This has to change. Radio Nepal, Nepal Television and Gorkhapatra Corp. have to come under parliamentary oversight and shouldn't be handed like a coconut to future monkeys in government.

Narayan Wagle

Narayan Wagle is the editor of Nepal's most widely circulated newspaper Kantipur Daily, published by Kantipur publications. He is also the author of the critically acclaimed book *Palpasa Cafe* (2005).

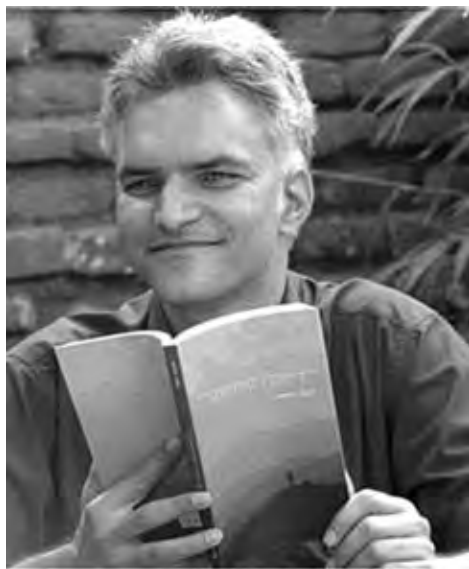


Photo: Nepa-Laya

right for freedom of press.

It was recently reported that some journalists, including those working for Kantipur, actually accepted money from the Royal regime. Have any further details emerged on that?

No, no one from Kantipur publications were alleged to accept money from government. We have been following highest possible standard ethics in our job. One reason of the

“ This is politics. You have to accept them [the Maoists] as a political party.

success of Kantipur is that its editorial team has high moral. Yes, there were two journalists in Kantipur Television, which is independent of Kantipur publications, who were alleged. They have already resigned.

How do you see the most recent political developments in Nepal between the government and the Maoists?

It is a historical breakthrough. It has eased the complicated political process to resolve the crisis to some extent. The mood of the general public is totally different now. It feels as though a lasting peace is coming near. The country has reassured its capacity to unite the people and belief in political dialogue. But there are some pertinent questions to be

answered. The government and the Maoists seemed hurrying. They lacked some serious homework.

What happens to the party's history of brutality once the Maoist joins the interim—government or potentially holds an elected position?

This is politics. You have to accept them as a political party. The political parties and the civil society urged them into mainstream politics, which

press, freedom of speech and freedom of expression. We think that freedom is the fundamental right of every citizen. We have editorially welcomed the outcome of the April Uprising. We think our role is to give information to the public, and our motto is to inform, engage and debate. We don't support any political party but we support the system of democracy. Democratic system which guarantees freedom.

One of your staff writers told us during an event in New York organized by Nepali Aawaz that most of the staff support "republicanism." Do you worry this might sometimes cloud their judgement?

No, I don't worry. Yes my colleagues have different points of views. Kantipur editorial floor is like a rainbow in terms of ideas and perspectives. But the common voice here is for the free and fair election. We think we have to test the people's mandate and trust it. That's all.

*Deviating from the topics, we also heard that an English version of your book *Palpasa Cafe* is in the works. Any updates on that?*

Thank you for reminding me my book. Yes, the translation is over. And Manjushree Thapa has already edited it. Now I think within a couple of months, it will be out. We'll publish it in Nepal first. Is there any American publisher interested to publish Nepali fiction work? (Laughter).

Many journalists joked that during the Seven Party Alliance led protests in April, Kantipur was the 8th party! When does a journalist cross the line between professionalism and activism?

Are you sure 'many journalists joked'? It was Dr Tulsi Giri and his colleagues in the royal cabinet who were criticizing our paper as the 8th political party. All the king's men [there were very few women in the government like of today] were damn against the free media. They couldn't digest the opposition voices and idea. We performed as professional journalists. Yes, we had some activism but it was basically to safeguard the

resulted in the people's movement II. Once the Maoists engage in the political process they have to renounce violence. They have to behave as a responsible, accountable force.

Kantipur daily is Nepal's largest daily paper, giving it the largest outreach in the country. How has the paper's Editorial focus or style shifted since 1 Feb. 2005 and again since April this year?

On the morning of King's takeover we were surrounded by military. We had to face a direct army censorship. Later, they made us heavily self-censor. It took some months for us to come out from its dark shadows. We openly supported the right's movement like freedom of

Nation

Shiva Gaunle



Photo: Kashish Das Shrestha

A lawyer turned journalist, Shiva Gaunle, right, is the Vice President of Federation of Nepalese Journalists' central committee and an expert on Nepali Constituion.

You played a major role in the journalists' struggle against oppression. How long will journalists continue as activists? Or, can journalism and activism exist simultaneously?

A journalist's job is to engage in journalism, not to exercise activism. A journalist can do anything outside the profession for personal fulfillment, but his chief duty is to have integrity towards, and remain active in his chosen profession. The context in Nepal, however, is very different. There doesn't exist an environment for a professional journalist to work freely, without hindrance. That forces the average journalist into activism. This is the predicament of the professional press in Nepal. Nepali journalists have become activists solely with the aim of creating a favorable working condition. That is also the only reason why I joined the struggle against the oppressive regime. I joined the struggle to gain civil rights and the freedom of expression, and as soon as these rights are achieved, I will return to professional journalism. I feel that the process towards attaining those fundamental rights has started. Still, present circumstances are less than convincing.

What sorts of changes or reforms do you think the newly formed government, or governments formed in future, needs to make regarding the media?

Short-term and long-term policies are required. Ordinances and decrees

made by the autocratic regime to attack the freedom of press should be annulled immediately. Journalists ousted from various institutions should be reinstated. An intimidation-free environment should be created for the journalists to work in. As long-term policy, media policies written in 2049, and subsequent policies, should be updated and revised. These policies should enshrine the notion that organs of mass communication are integral to the democratic practice. An environment that works with mass media on issues of nation-building should be constructed.

There have been reports about certain journalists receiving money from the royal regime. How is FNJ handling this issue?

Reports about a few journalists taking money from the regime have come to light. We have asked the government to provide us with the pertinent official information. We will wait for that information. But, the Federation of Nepali Journalists has decided to ask the [journalists] for clarification.

Most Nepali people understand that the journalists fought for "press freedom." Have we achieved "press freedom," or, is there more work to be done to achieve "press freedom" in Nepal?

The government has assured to not issue any policies, laws or directives infringing on the freedom of press. The state has been seen to be on the side of protecting the citizen's freedom of expression, and of the independence of

the press. However, lip-service is not enough; the government must make immediate changes in the policies and laws in order to assure the citizens on these counts.

What sorts of changes are necessary in the state media?

The state should not operate any avenue of mass communication. There is no justification for a democratic government to want to operate a media house. State-owned media should be immediately taken into the reaches of the average citizen. The existing state-owned media can be changed into co-operatives, or even privatized towards this end. My suggestion for the moment, however, is that the same could be done by placing state-owned media under a parliamentary committee.

What sorts of changes are necessary in the private media sector?

It is imperative that private media

organizations are also democratized. The communications industry should be developed into a prestigious industry. I think it is important to realize that running a media organization is not the same as running a noodle factory. It is enough to look at the profit margin to run a successful noodle factory, but a media organization has profound impact on public opinion, which in turn affects the course of the nation. It is important to understand the gravity of this undertaking.

What did the Maoists fail to understand about the media in the past decade and what new lessons should they learn?

Maoists think of mass media as mere tools of propaganda, and of journalists as wage-workers. That attitude must change. The Maoists' ability to respect the independent media, to listen, read and digest criticism is non-existent. Therefore, the first thing they need to learn is to respect the differing opinion of others, and develop the habit of listening to criticism.

Entertainment

इमेज अवार्डमा कर्णदाश र रिमा अगाडी

२७ जेठमा सम्पन्न आठौं टुबोर्ग इमेज अवार्ड गायक कर्ण दासले वर्ष सर्वोत्कृष्ट गायक सहित संगीतका तीनवटा प्रमुख विधाको अवार्ड हात पारे। राजधानीको अन्तराष्ट्रिय सम्मेलन केन्द्रमा आयोजित समारोहमा कर्णदासले भेटिएर छुट्टिनु भन्दा गीतबाट सर्वोत्कृष्ट गायकसंगै र फर्की आऊ शान्ति तिमी बाट राष्ट्रिय भावनाले ओतप्रोत गीतको अवार्ड हासिल गरेका थिए। उनकै आधा आकाश वर्ष उत्कृष्ट एल्बम घोषित भएको थियो। भेटिएर छुट्टिनु गीतका रचनाकार भुपेन्द्र खडकाले वर्षकै उत्कृष्ट रचनाकारको अवार्ड हात पारे।

समारोहमा रिमा गुरुड होडाले कसको आँखा लाग्यो बरै गीतबाट सर्वोत्कृष्ट गायिका घोषित भईन्। सविन राईको म संसार जित्ने आँट गर्दैछु वर्ष सर्वोत्कृष्ट गीत, प्रकाश गुरुडले विन्ती छ है गीतबाट सर्वोत्कृष्ट संगीत, दिव्य सुब्बाले पश्चताप बाट नवगायकको अवार्ड पाए। त्यस्तै मिडमा शेर्पाले छमछम छमछम तिमीले बाट सर्वोत्कृष्ट पप गायक, सिनी गुरुड तिम्रो मायामा गीतबाट सर्वोत्कृष्ट पप गायिका घोषित भईन्।

द स्याडोज ब्यान्डको प्रकृति सर्वोत्कृष्ट रक गीत, नेप्सिडेजको माया ओ माया सर्वोत्कृष्ट समूह गायन, खेमराज गुरुडको आलुतामाले वर्ष सर्वोत्कृष्ट लोकगीत, सिर्जना विरही थापा र राजु परियारको वनको काफल वर्ष सर्वोत्कृष्ट दोहोरी गीत र चलचित्र माया बसेछुको आज मन उडेर गीतबाट महेश खडकाले सर्वोत्कृष्ट चलचित्र गीतको अवार्ड जितेका छन्। सान्तना रेकर्डसको एल्बम प्रहिनिरको कसको आँखा लाग्यो बरै गीतको म्युजिक भिडियोलाई सर्वोत्कृष्ट म्युजिक भिडियो र निर्देशक आलोक नेम्वाडले सर्वोत्कृष्ट म्युजिक भिडियो निर्देशकको अवार्ड पाए।

त्यसैगरी म्युजिक भिडियो छाँयाकार धीर जजंग शाह विन्ती छ है, सम्पादक प्रकाश तुलाधर वलेको आगो, स्पेशल इफेक्ट सिमोस सुनुवार रात बाट उत्कृष्ट घोषित भए। साधारण, विशेष, म्युजिक भिडियो र राष्ट्रिय भाषा समूह गरी चार समूहमा अवार्ड प्रदान गरिएको थियो। जसमध्ये राष्ट्रिय भाषा तर्फ नेपाल भाषामा छ गनाबाट सानुबाबु महर्जन, तामाड भाषामा ए होई नाना, होई नानाबाट चन्द्रकुमार दोड र इन्द्र लामा र मैथली भाषामा जीनगी जहरबाट गुरुदेव कामत उत्कृष्ट घोषित भएका थिए। सवा चार घण्टा लामो कार्यक्रममा १५७४ एडी, डीए ६५, क्याच २२, सुगम पोखरेल, अनिल शाही र उनको समूह, मिडमा शेर्पा, राजीव लोहनी, सिनी गुरुड, दिव्य सुब्बा, रामकृष्ण ढकाल, कर्णदास लगायतले गीत संगीत प्रस्तुत गरेका थिए। समारोहमा इमेज च्यानलका अध्यक्ष आरके मानन्धरले अवार्ड वितरण कार्यक्रम आठौं चरणमा सम्पन्न गर्न पाएको बताउँदै इमेज च्यानलले अधिराज्यका साथै विश्वका ७७ राष्ट्रका दर्शक माफ पुगीर हेको जानकारी दिए।



Top (left) Karna Das, (right) Rima Gurung. Bottom (right) Bhaktaraj (left) Shadows. Photo: Anup Prakash.



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नेपालयद्वारा दोस्रो पुस्तकको घोषणा



Photo: Nepa-Laya.

पहिलो सफल प्रकाशन "पल्पसा क्याफे" पश्चात, पब्लिकेशन नेपालयले आफ्नो दोस्रो पुस्तक प्रकाशन गर्ने योजना सार्वजनिक गरेको छ।

अत्यधिक संख्यामा विक्री हुन सफल भएको पत्रकार नारायण बाग्लेको आख्यान भन्दा यो पृथक हुने नेपालयले जनाएको छ किनकि यो एक तस्वीर प्रधान पुस्तक हुनेछ। यस तस्वीरहरूको पुस्तकका परिकल्पनाकार पत्रकार तथा सम्पादक कुन्द दिक्षित भन्छन्-“यो नेपालको एक दशक लामो द्वन्द्वको सचित्र वर्णन हुनेछ।”

पुस्तकमा समावेश हुने तस्वीरहरूका लागि नेपालयले सार्वजनिक सूचनाका माध्यमबाट फोटोग्राफरहरूलाई आह्वान गरिसकेको छ। समावेश हुनका लागि सबै फोटोग्राफरहरूले नेपालको द्वन्द्व झल्काउने १० तस्वीरहरूको संकलन पठाउन सक्नेछन्।

नेपालयका टोली नेता किरण कृष्ण श्रेष्ठ भन्छन्, “हाम्रो यो आह्वान द्वन्द्वको तस्वीरहरू संकलन गरेका सबैका लागि हो, तपाईं व्यवसायिक फोटोग्राफर वा व्यवसायिक फोटोपत्रकार नै हुनुपर्छ भन्ने छैन।” “यस पुस्तकका निम्ति कुन्द दाइसंग काम गर्न पाएकोमा हामी हर्षित

छौं, अभिलेखको हिसावले यो एक महत्वपूर्ण पुस्तक हुने कुरामा मलाई विश्वास छ।”

कुन्द दिक्षित अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय ख्यातीप्राप्त नेपाली पत्रकार हुन्। हिमालमिडियामा सम्पादक तथा प्रकाशक रहेका, श्री दिक्षितले विभिन्न अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय पत्रपत्रिकाका लागि लेख्दै आएका छन्। “डेटलाइन् अर्थ”, “जर्नलिजम एज इफ द प्लानेट म्याटर्ड” दिक्षितद्वारा लिखित पुस्तक हुन्।

प्राप्त सबै तस्वीरहरूबाट छनौट गर्ने कार्य निश्चयपनि चुनौतिपूर्ण हुने विचार व्यक्त गर्दै दिक्षित भन्छन्, “यद्यपि निर्णयक टोलीमा रहेका अन्य दुई अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय सदस्यहरूको सहयोगमा प्रतिनिधिमूलक तथा उच्च स्तरको छनौट हुने कुरामा म विश्वस्त छु।”

आगामी असोज महिनामा हुने उक्त पुस्तकको विमोचनका अवसरमा नेपालयले छनौटमा परेका तस्वीरहरूको प्रदर्शनी पनि गर्नेछ। “हालसम्म प्राप्त प्रतिक्रियाबाट हामी उत्साहित भएका छौं” भन्दै नेपालय टोली नेता किरण भन्छन्, “दुर्गम क्षेत्रका फोटोग्राफरहरूले पनि आफ्ना तस्वीरहरू पठाइरहेका छन्।”

गुरुकुलमा सरिताको ताल



Photo: Anushil Shrestha

तबला वादक सरिता मिश्र २६ जेठमा गुरुकुलमा आफ्ना सिर्जना ताल सरिता लिएर प्रस्तुत भईन्। नारी भावना र चेतनालाई संगीतका माध्यमबाट प्रस्तुत गरिएको प्रस्तुतिमा चेली साँगीतिक समुहले सरितालाई साथ दिएका थिए।

सरितासंगै सितारमा अमृतहीरायोगी र पद्महीरा स्थापित, गायनमा संगीता मिश्र पुडासैनी र मालती आचार्य, तबलामा बालकलाकार अन्

नाशरद गौतमका साथै हर्मोनियममा निर्मल भट्टराई र ईफेक्टमा ७४ वर्षीय रामेश्वर नेपाल प्रस्तुत भएका थिए। सो अवसरमा सानै देखि तबला बजाउँदै हुर्केकी सरिताका आठ सिर्जना समेटिएको ताल वाद्यमा महिलाहरूको पहिलो सीडी अल्बम ताल सरिताको विमोचन गरिएको थियो।

तस्वीरमा नेचर



विगतका वर्षहरू भै वाइल्ड लाईफ कन्जर्भेसन नेपाल (डब्ल्यूसीएन)को आयोजना तथा फोटो कन्सर्नको सहयोगमा यसपाली २२-२६ जेठमा नेपाल आर्ट काउन्सिलमा नेचर थ्रोग लेन्स-२ नामक वातावरणीय तस्वीर प्रदर्शनी गरियो।

युथ इन्भाईरोमेन्ट प्रोग्रामको सक्रियता र हेको प्रदर्शनीमा राखिएका ५८ फोटो ग्राफर

हरूका १ सय ३० तस्वीर मध्ये १० उत्कृष्ट छनौट गरिएको थियो। जसमा ओमप्रकाश यादव, दिनेश शिल्पकार र राजेन्द्रदेव अधिकारीका तस्वीर प्रथम, दोस्रो र तेस्रो छनौटमा परेका थिए। उत्कृष्ट तस्वीरहरूको पोष्टकार्ड समेत प्रकाशन गरिएको कार्यक्रम संयोजक संजीवनी योजनले बताइन।



पूर्वमा बढदैछ डिजाइनरको बजार

Anushil Shrestha

सन् २००० को मिस हडकड सुन्दरी प्रतियोगितामा भाग लिने भएपछि ममिता गुरुङले आफ्नो लागि धरानमा अकर्षक पहिरनको माग गरिन। धरानका फेशन डिजाइनर उत्तम बनेपालीले ममिताको लागि ड्रेस डिजाइन गरी पठाईदिए। प्रतियोगितामा मिस हडकडको उपाधी ममिताले जितेपछि उनिसंगै धरानका डिजाइनर बनेपाली पनि खुशी भए।

धरानकी ममिता पछि मिस हडकड २००१ भएकी धरानकै पुजा लिम्बुलाई पनि धरान बाटै डिजाइनर गरिएका पहिरनहरू पठाईएको थियो। सो प्रतियोगितामा फस्ट रनरअप हुने बुटवलकी पुर्णिमा थापा र पाचौँ स्थानमा पुग्ने पोखराकी रिना शेरचनले पनि धरानका डिजाइनर उत्तमले नै तयार पारेका पहिरन लगाएर प्रतिस्पर्धा गरेका थिए। पुजालाई उनकै बहिनी मोडल विजयाले तयारी पहिरन धरानबाट पठाएकी थिइन भने पुर्णिमा र रिनाले हडकडबाटै फोन गरेर बनेपालीलाई अर्डर गरेका थिए। उनि भन्छन् - "पुर्णिमा आफै पनि म बाटै नियमित ड्रेस मगाउछिन फोन र पार्सलबाट कारोबार हुन्छ भेट भने भएको छैन।"

सुन्दरी प्रतियोगितामा भाग लिने हडकडका सुन्दरीहरू मात्र हैन त्यहाका धेरै महिला, पुरुषहरूले धरानमा रहेको बुटिकहरूमा तयार भएका पहिरनहरू लगाउछन्। धरानका उत्तम क्रियशन, स्लेण्डर बुटिक र डिजाइनर्स बुटिकहरूमाका अधिकोश ग्राहक विदेशमा बस्ने र विदेश आवत जावत गरिरहने धरानहरू नै रहेका छन्। बनेपाली भन्छन्- "हडकड पछि बेलायत, सिंगापुर र ब्रुनाईमा बढी कष्टमरहरू छन्।"

८ वर्ष अघि धरानमा क्लियोपेट्रा बुटिक खोलेका उत्तम बनेपालीले डेढ वर्ष देखि क्लियोपेट्रालाई नाम परिवर्तन गरी धरान ३, पुरानो बजारमा उत्तम क्रियशन चलाईरहेको छन। शुरुवातमा फेशन डिजाइनीङ् सम्बन्धी भारतको दिल्लीमा सिकेर बनेपालीले बाठमाण्डौँ बागबजारको एकेटी बुटिकमा एक वर्ष काम गरे। त्यसपछि आफैले प्रियका गार्मेण्ट खोलेर तयारी पोशाकहरू विदेश निर्यातको काममा पनि उनि लागे। पछि गार्मेण्टबाट घाटा भएपछि काठमाण्डौँले रञ्जना हल अगाडी युटोपिया बुटिक खोलेर १ वर्ष चलाए। त्यसपछि आफ्नै ठाउँमा केही होला भनेर काठमाण्डौँ छाडेका उत्तमले धरानमा पूर्वाञ्चलकै पहिलो बुटिक खोले। अहिले उनको उत्तम क्रियसनको व्यापार सात समुन्द्र पारी पुगेको छ। डिजाइनर बनेपालीले द कमाण्डो नामक नेपाली चलचित्रका लागि पनि डिजाइन गरेका थिए।

उत्तमकै जस्तो विदेशी बजार पाएकी छिन अर्कि डिजाइनर हेमा राईले। उनको धरान ८, कलेज रोडमा रहेको स्लेण्डर बुटिकमा तयार भएका पहिरनहरूको माग पनि धरान भन्दा बढी सिंगापुर, हडकड, बेलायततिरै छ।

फिलिपिन्समा सात महिना सम्म ड्रेस डिजाइनको कोर्स गरेर धरानमा स्लेण्डर बुटिक खोलेकी हेमा यो व्यावसाय आफूलाई फापेको बताउछिन। भन्छिन- "धरानमा विदेशमा लामो समय सम्म बसेर फर्केका मानिस भएकाले पनि उनीहरूलाई फेशन डिजाइनिङ्को ज्ञान छ।" फिलिपिन्स पछि काठमाण्डौँमा छ महिना थप ड्रेस डिजाइनिङ् सिकेकी हेमा-भूतपूर्व ब्रिटिश सैनिक परिवारकी छोरी हुन। फेशन डिजाइनीङ्मा नै आफ्नो करियर बनेको बताउने हेमा सानै देखिको रुचीका कारणले आफू यस तर्फ आकर्षक भएको बताउछिन। उनको बुटिकको शाखा पोखरामा पनि रहेको छ।

फेशनवल शहरको रूपमा परिचित धरानमा बुटिकहरू नहुदै पनि यहाको फेशनको चर्चा हुन्थ्यो। विदेशबाटै भएपनि भिकाएर नया- नया डिजाइनको पहिरनहरू धरानहरूले लगाउथे। धरानमा फेशन डिजाइनहरू बुटिक खुल्न थाले पछि विदेशमा रहने समेत धरानबाटै पहिरन भिकाउने गरेको छन। उत्तम क्रियसन र स्लेण्डर बुटिक पछि डेढवर्ष अघिमात्र खुलेको डिजाइनर्स बुटिकले पनि राम्रै बजार पाएको छ।

फेशन डिजाइनिङ् प्रतिको बढ्दो आकर्षणलाई ध्यानमा राखेर धरानमा खुलेको पोलिटेक्निक ईस्टिच्युटमा ६ महिना डिजाइनिङ् सिकेर बीना बज्राचार्य, सुनिता राई र इन्द्रकला थापाले डिजाइनर्स बुटिक खोलेका थिए। सुनिता र इन्द्रकला घर परिवारका कारण धरानबाट काठमाण्डौँ तिर लागेपछि अहिले बीना बज्राचार्यले एकलै बुटिक चलाइरहेकी छिन।

छोटो समयमा नै आफ्नो बुटिकले ग्राहक पाएको बताउने बीनाका बुबा कविरमान बज्राचार्यले धरान १५ श्याम चौकमा टेलर्स संञ्चालन गर्दै आएका छन। सानै देखिको घरका वातावरणले आफू पनि डिजाइनीङ् तर्फ आकर्षित भएको बताउछिन। भन्छिन "बुवाले टेलर्स चलाए पनि समयको माग अनुसार म बुटिक तिर लागे "बुटिक खोलेपछि आत्मनिर्भर बन्न सकेको बताउदै उनि थप्छिन " गन्थो भने चाहेको कुरा पुग्दो रहेछ भन्ने महशुस गरेकी छु।" धरान ८, गौतम पथमा रहेको उनको डिजाइनर्स बुटिकमा उनलाई उनकै काका मोहन बज्राचार्यले सघाई रहेका छन। सुप्रिया माझीले खोलेको सनफ्लावर बुटिकले पनि छोटो समयमा नै राम्रो व्यापार गर्न थालेको छ। मोडल सुप्रियाले बढ्दो "क्रेज" देखेर डिजाइन सिकेर बुटिक खोलेकि हुन्। पोलिटेक्निक ईस्टिच्युटले डेढ वर्ष अघि धरानमा डिजाइनर प्रतियोगिता समेत आयोजना गरेको थियो।

धरानकी सरिता जोशीले भने भारतको दिल्लीमा ३ वर्ष फेशन डिजाइनिङ् कोषमा डिप्लोमा सकेर दिल्ली कै बुटिकहरूमा ३ वर्ष काम गरी फर्केर काठमाण्डौँ, कुपण्डोलमा शार १० डिजाइनर्स हाउस खोलेकी छिन। दिल्लीमा संगैपढेको साथी अञ्जु मानन्धर संग मिलेर दुबै जनाको नामबाटै कुपण्डोलमा खोलेको शाराञ्ज



Fashion show and designer contest in Dharan. Photo: Anushil Shrestha.

Society

बुटिकले इन्टरियर डेकोरेशन पनि गर्ने गर्दछ। धरानमा हुर्के बढेकी सरिता धरानकै फेशनवेल् वातावरणका कारण फेशन डिजाईनिङ्ग तर्फ आकर्षित भएको बताउँछिन। राजधानीमा ४/५ वटा फेशन शो समेत उनको शाराञ्ज बुटिकले गरिसकेको छ। उनको बुटिकले ज्याडिसन लगायतका होटलमा फेशन शो गर्ने गरेको छ। २ वर्ष अघिको मिस नेपाल प्रतियोगितामा सरिताले डिजाइन गरेको पहिरन लगाएर प्रभा कडरियाले वेष्ट ड्रेसको उपाधी जितेकी थिइन्। फेशन डिजाईनिङ्गलाई नै करिअर बनाएको बताउने सरिता यसमा आर्थिक रूपमा फाईदा पनि भईरहेको बताउँछिन। उनको बुटिकको अमेरिका र लण्डनमा नियमित ग्राहक रहेको उनी बताउँछिन। भन्छिन- “प्रतिस्पर्धा चर्को छ, तर पनि नयापन दिन सकियो भने यो क्षेत्रमा चाडै अगाडी बढ्न सकिन्छ।” उनको बुटिकले ग्राहकको लागि आफ्नै कम्प्युटर वेभ साईड समेत निर्माण गरेको छ। धरानमा ठूलो स्कोप नदेखेको कारण आफू राजधानी तर्फ आकर्षित भएको बताउने सरिता भन्छिन-“काठमाण्डौंमा फेशनको बजार ठूलो छ यहा गर्न सकियो भने बाहिरको बजारपनि बढाउन सकिन्छ।”

पुर्वमा धरान अगाडी

पूर्वाञ्चलकै फेशनमा अग्रणी शहर धरानमा ड्रेस डिजाईन र बुटिकहरू सञ्चालन हुन थालेको लामो समय विते पनि धरान आसपासमा शहरहरूमा बुटिकहरू खुल्न सकेका छैनन्। विराटनगर र ईटहरीमा हाल सालै देखि मात्र एक एक वटा मात्र बुटिक खुलेको छन्। बनेपाली धनकुटा विराटनगर, ईटहरी, दमक, विर्तामावेडमा पनि आफ्ना ग्राहकहरू रहेको बताउँछन्। पूर्वाञ्चलको जुनसुकै शहरमा हुने फेशन शोमा धरानको बुटिकमा तयार भएका पहिरनहरू प्रदर्शन हुनेगरेको छन्।

धरानका बुटिकहरूमा महिलाहरूका कुर्ता, सुरुवाल लेहंगा, साडी, ब्लाउज, मिनी स्कर्ट, सर्ट, टि-सर्टका पुरुषका सुट, पाईन्ट, सर्ट, हाफ पाईन्ट भेट्न साथै बच्चा देखी बृद्ध सम्मका र चाडवाड र मौसम अनुसारका पहिरनहरू तयार हुने गरेका छन्।

धरानका बुटिकहरूमा ३ सय देखी अर्डर अनुसार १५ हजार सम्मको पहिरनहरू तयार हुनेगरेका छन्। बनेपाली भन्छिन-“एउटै पहिरन ५० हजार सम्मको पनि हुन सक्छ।” फेशन डिजाईनरहरूले आफ्नै क्रियशन बाहेक ग्राहकको माग अनुसार विदेशी क्याटलग हेरेर अरुको

डिजाईनको पहिरन पनि तयार गर्ने गरेका छन्। कतिपय नया डिजाईनका पहिरनहरू बुटिक वाटै समेत विक्री हुने गरेको छ। धरानका बुटिकहरूमा दुई दर्जन मानिसले काम समेत पाइरहेका छन्। यी बुटिकहरूमा साडीमा “हेण्ड बक” गर्ने काम पनि हुन्छ। भने अर्डर अनुसार कपडामा चाँदी र सुनका तारहरू लगाएर आकर्षक समेत पार्ने गरिएको बनेपाली बताउँछन्।

डिजाईनर हेमा आफूले पश्चिमी देश र इण्डियन शैलीका पहिरनहरू बढी तयार गर्न गरेको बताउँछन्। भन्छिन-“धरानको सोसाईटी नै विदेश संग नजिक भएकोले त्यहाको रहन सहन यहाका लाई सामान्य लाग्छ।” पश्चिममा पहिरन र सलवार कुर्ता बढी रुचाउने गरेको उनी बताउँछिन।

धरानमा रहेको बुटिकहरूको धेरै ग्राहक विदेशमा भए पनि धरानका लाहुरे तथा सम्पन्न परिवार पनि ग्राहक छन्। त्यसमाथी चार,पाच महिनाको अन्तरमा फेशन शो,सुन्दरी प्रतियोगिता हुदा भाग लिने मोडलहरू पनि बुटिकका नियमित ग्राहक हुने गरेका छन्। विवाहको सिजनमा पनि बेहुला बेहलीका लागि धेरैले बुटिकहरू वाटै पहिरन तयार गर्नेल गरेको उत्तम बनेपाली बताउँछन्।

धेरै जसो फेशन शोहरू र सुन्दरी प्रतियोगिता बुटिकहरूलेनै आयोजना गर्ने गरेको छ। त्यसमा उत्तम बनेपालीको बुटिक हालसम्म डेढ दर्जन त्यस्तै आयोजनामा संलग्न भैसकेकोछ। बनेपालीले ६ वर्ष अघि समर फेशन शो तथा मोडल कण्टेष्ट गरे पछि यहा फेशन र सुन्दरी प्रतियोगिता लगातर हुदै आएका छन्। साना केटाकेटीका लागि किड क्विन प्रतियोगिता देखी मिस पूर्वाञ्चल सम्मका सुन्दरी प्रतियोगिताहरूको आयोजना धरानमा हुने गरेका छन्। मिस कोशी, मिस पूर्वाञ्चल, मिस भ्यालेण्टाईन धरान,मिस स्विटहर्ट,मेघा मोडल, मोडल कण्टेष्ट,किड क्विन जस्ता प्रतियोगिता संगै यस क्षेत्रमा हुने फेशन शो का लागि धरानका बुटिकहरू पहिरनहरू पैदाशित हरने गरेका छन्। धरानमा र हेका फेशन डिजाईनर र बुटिकका कारण यहा फेशन मोडलिङ्गको आकर्षण पनि बढेको छ। उत्तम बनेपाली, हेमा राई, वीना बज्राचार्यका डिजाईनका पहिरनहरू यहा फेशन शोहरूमा प्रदर्शन हुने गरेका छन्। केही फेशन शो हरमा भने काठमाण्डौंका बुटिक र डिजाईनरहरूको सहभागीता समेत रहने गरेको छ।



Photo: Anushil Shrestha



Society

South Asian Women's Campaign for Gender Equality

In February 2006, the UN Secretary General formed the UN System-wide Coherence Panel, for the UN Reform Process. The panel is made up of fifteen members, of which only three are women. The panel will make suggestions on how the UN should be structured in areas of development, humanitarian assistance, and the environment, at the national and global levels; tackle new challenges, many of which were defined in the 2005 UN World Summit; and discuss how the UN system can meet the various internationally agreed goals, and in particular achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with the support of the member states.

Leaders of the women's movement in South Asia have been extremely concerned with the UN Reform and have looked at this opportunity as a window of hope for the development and stability of women's issues. The women's groups in South Asia, working together in networks on women's issues, have seen the need to appeal for a UN nodal agency for women with vaster resources, a more apposite position and authority in a restructured UN, shoulder to shoulder with the resources, privilege and position that other critical issues receive. Whenever there has been a reform, history has shown us that women's voices and concerns are often set aside and easily forgotten about. This time we are to make sure our voices are heard and presence is felt.

In March 2006, during the 'Commission on the Status of Women' meeting, women's groups in South Asia released an Open Letter to the Secretary General and member states lamenting on the lack of gender balance on the panel and the absence of gender equality concerns in the initial mandate, both in terms of gender mainstreaming and women's machineries of the UN system. Partly, due to their criticism, the UN Secretary General has expanded the order of the Coherence Panel to include both "gender equality architecture" of the UN and gender mainstreaming, and has made gender equality a cross-cutting issue.

On the 22nd of April, 2006, a delegation of women activists who have been dynamically involved in the women's movement in South Asia, led by Ms. Bandana Rana, an eminent media person in Nepal, met with the Pakistani Prime Minister H.E. Shaukat Aziz, one of the Co-chairs of

the Coherence Panel, in Islamabad, to appraise the PM of South Asian women's concerns and request him to put forth these concerns and appeal before the rest of the Coherence Panel members. Ms. Rana and her team observed that the very fact that Pakistan had made such conscious efforts to empower women under his leadership was enough to believe that he was the best, most articulate and most appropriate leader to ensure that the UN Reform Process addresses women's concerns and should consider creating a high-level lead nodal agency for women within the UN.

Ms. Rana has also been appointed as the Regional Co-ordinator for the South Asian Women's Campaign for Gender Equality. The South Asian Women's Campaign is a move to take forward this agenda to all women globally. It brings together the voices of civil society, non governmental organizations and individual men and women from all across the region who believe the need for UN reforms to be informed first by country level realities and demands. The networks involved in this campaign have a long history of having strived to work for the betterment of humanitarian and women's issues on national and regional levels and who are women's partners in development. It is the response of their long overdue felt-needs that have initiated them to come together and campaign in a united voice for women's issues and concerns to be amply addressed through the UN Reforms.

The Campaign aims to bring before the Coherence Panel for UN Reforms, the UN Secretary General and the UN member State governments:

The urgent need for sufficiently addressing the issues of gender equality and women's empowerment as a cross-cutting issue on various themes.

The call for a stronger 'Gender Architecture' in the UN System

A nodal UN agency for women with a proven track record like UNIFEM which has operational know-how of women's issues and a perceptiveness of what women need, connecting women's voices and concerns to macro policies and global processes.

At this point, the role and responsibility of UNIFEM was put forth. UNIFEM came forward in 1976 from the call of the women's movement to the General Assembly for creating an institution with the mandate and resources to give visibility and voice to women's rights



and their implementation. Ever since then, UNIFEM has unfailingly and holistically been working for gender empowerment and equality. With bricks of established assurance in their potential, they have laid down the foundation for the uncompromising fight for gender empowerment and equality. The delegation stated that despite the fact that UNIFEM was never given an appropriate structure, position or resources, it has always emerged as the lead agency for women and all her causes in the region. Against this backdrop the delegation urged the Prime Minister to recommend the UN Reforms Process to designate UNIFEM as a fitting nodal agency for women within the UN Structure. They further requested that the Coherence Panel confer with women's organizations in the countries they visit and asked him to facilitate a special gender hearing in Pakistan in May 2006 before the Coherence Panel so that the voices of the women from developing countries be heard in agreeing on the new 'Gender Architecture' of the UN System.

Various women's organizations from all over South Asia, each representing and voicing the pleas of thousands of women, wrote to the co-chairs of the Coherence Panel, in support of the delegation's appeal. The women's movement also initiated signature campaigns, manually - 'South Asian Solidarity for Gender Equality' - and online - southasianwomenscampaign.org - all over the region. Till date, more than 9, 00,000 people, both men and women, have supported this campaign by adding their signatures to the on going list. These people might not realize the important roles they have played, just yet, but each of them bring us one step closer, to making gender equality an 'in-the-near-future' reality and hopefully a permanent fixture in the future, with each of their signatures.

In Nepal, a large group of like-minded individuals of the civil society have joined forces to form what has amicably been baptized 'Friends of UNIFEM'. 'Friends of UNIFEM' is a

group of men and women from all walks of life who have decided to unite in force and voice to support the 'South Asian Solidarity for Gender Equality' and are working on getting the message across to people in their personal and professional networks and collecting signatures through the same. They meet once or twice a month and correspond on a regular weekly basis via email to monitor the progress of the signature campaign or bring out new ideas like radio info-messages and interviews on how to make the campaign more effective than it already is. Many well-established and long-serving NGO's have shown their support to 'Friends of UNIFEM' by writing official letters to members of the Coherence Panel, to hold up the campaign and have repeatedly and tirelessly voiced, "the need for the mandate of UNIFEM to be strengthened so that it can be even more active in its role of catalyzing and mainstreaming gender equality and women's rights", in their networks and among their respective partners.

We have definitely come a long way over the last three decades. We have seen major accomplishments on setting the models and ethics on gender equality by the United Nations.

On the other hand, experiences of developing countries draw attention to the fact that even today women's rights issues fail to be adequately recognized and implemented in key areas. They continue to be marginalized and ignored in areas such as the access and control over economic resources and markets, livelihood opportunities, their birth right to citizenship and inheritance, involvement in governance and the community, and personal security in the public and private zones.

Let us, men and women, all across the world, march forward, arm in arm, and continue to strive for the positive appreciation of gender, global gender empowerment and equality. Only then will the fruit of the hard work, over the last thirty years be eternally established and the progress achieved so far, concentrated.

Society

Screening of War Photographer: Review



Kunda Dixit mediates the discussion after the screening. Photo: Bhushan Shilpakar.

Friday, 16 June saw a gathering of photo journalists, journalists and media enthusiasts for a screening of the documentary "War Photographer" at the Sundhara Bakery Cafe. Organized by Samudaya.org and bn.com.np, the event was free and open to the public.

Made by Swiss author, director and producer Christian Frei, the documentary follows American photojournalist James Nachtwey to wars in Indonesia, Kosovo and Palestine, giving us an exclusive look into the daily routine of a war photographer. Through special micro-cameras attached to Nachtwey's photo-

camera, the film provides insight into a number of frontline situations juxtaposed with him talking about his fears and his motivation.

The post-screening discussion, led by Kunda Dixit, Editor of Nepali Times, included photojournalists Min Barjacharya and Bikas Rauniyar sharing their reaction to Nachtwey's passion, and their own experiences in the Nepali context. Other participants raised issues regarding ethics and responsibility in the business of making media in Nepal and the need for sharing and strong bonds within the media community.

International Meeting on Regional Wildlife trade Issues

19 June. The recent wildlife seizures and arrests in Nepal, China and India border indicate that wildlife crime has become organized. To counter such wildlife crime organization, a meeting was coordinated by Wildlife Conservation Nepal here in Kathmandu on 16 June 2006, Friday with concerned line agencies, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Nepal Police, Wildlife Protection Society of India, the foremost monitoring trade organization in India and Environment Investigation Agency, UK which was crucial to portray tiger trade in China to international communities.

Mr. Prasanna Yonzon, CEO of WCN spoke: 'Nepal is at a vulnerable stage and adequate measures have to be taken politically and with enforcement, wildlife crime can be brought down and Nepal tag as a conduit for international wildlife trade can be removed'.

The meeting also deliberated of establishing a database center in Kathmandu to exchange information on traders and seizures. Such strategies will support the ongoing effort of WCN and the line agencies in controlling wildlife crime in urban and rural areas.

(Source: Wildlife Conservation Nepal)

जनआन्दोलनको फोटो प्रदर्शनीले रुवायो पोखरेलीलाई



पोखरामा असार पहिलो साता भएको जनआन्दोलनको फोटो प्रदर्शनीमा जनआन्दोलनका पहिलो शहीद भिमसेन दहालको तस्वीर हेर्दै दहाल पत्नी सबीता ।

Durga Humagain/ Pokhara

पोखरामा जनआन्दोलनलाई स्मरण गराउँदै गत साता जनआन्दोलन भाग २ को क्रममा फोटो पत्रकारहरूले खिचेका फोटो तथा सब्यदृश्यको प्रदर्शनी सम्मपन्न भएको छ । राष्ट्रिय फोटो पत्रकार समूह पोखरा शाखाको आयोजनामा असार २ गते देखि तीन दिन सम्म पोखराको दिपेन्द्र शाहालमा संचालित जनआन्दोलनका फोटो तथा वृत्त चित्र प्रदर्शनीमा करिब २५ हजार दर्शकले अवलोकन गरेका छन् ।

जनआन्दोलनको फोटो तथा वृत्तचित्र प्रदर्शनीका कार्यक्रमको उद्घाटन जनआन्दोलन भाग २ का प्रथम शहीद भिमसेन दहालकी पत्नी सबीता दहालले गर्नु भएको थियो । शहीद दहाल पोखराको महेन्द्रपुलमा चैत्र २६ गते शान्ती पूर्ण रूपमा निस्केको जुलुसमा सहभागी हुदा सेनाले चलाएको गोलीलागी शहादत प्राप्त गर्नु भएको थियो । सो अवसरमा शहीद पत्नी दहालले शाही निरंकुशताको अन्त्यका लागि जनताले फेरी अको आन्दोलन गर्नु नपरोस र फेरी कोही शहीद हुन नपरोस भन्नुभयो ।

फोटो तथा वृत्तचित्र प्रदर्शनीमा पोखरामा सेनाले गोली चलाएपछि शहादत प्राप्त गर्नुभएका शहीद दहालको मृत्यु हुनु पूर्व जुलुसमा सहभागी भएको तस्वीर शहादत प्राप्तिपछि सेनाले मोटरमा राखी लगेको दृश्य हेर्दा दर्शकहरू भावविहोल भएका थिए । वृत्तचित्रमा शहीद दहालको घटनास्थलमै मृत्यु भएको दृश्य, रगतको आहाल र मृत्यु पछि सेनाले मोटरमा राखेर लगेको दृश्य देखा

वृत्तचित्र हेर्ने दर्शकहरू भावविहोल भएका थिए । प्रदर्शनीमा जनआन्दोलनका क्रममा काठमाण्डौमा गरिएको दमनका तस्वीर हेर्दा दर्शकहरू आक्रोसित हुन्थे । अत्र पूर्ण लोकतन्त्र प्रप्तीको निम्ती लड्न नपरोस त्यसैले नेताहरूलाई जनताले होसीयार गराउनु पर्छ फोटो प्रदर्शनी अवलोकन गर्दै गरेका विद्यार्थी रजित न्यौपानेले भने ।

निरंकुश शाही सरकारको विरुद्ध जनआन्दोलनमा होमीएका जनतालाई लोकतन्त्रलाई मजबुत बनाउन सचेत गराउने उद्देश्यले जनआन्दोलनका फोटो तथा वृत्तचित्र प्रदर्शनी गरिएको राष्ट्रिय फोटो पत्रकार समूह पोखरा शाखाका अध्यक्ष घनश्याम पौडेलले बताउनु हुन्छ । फोटो प्रदर्शनीमा आन्दोलनका क्रममा पोखराका फोटो पत्रकारहरूले खिचेका १ सय ५० र काठमाण्डौ, नेपालगञ्ज र विरगञ्जका फोटो पत्रकारहरूले खिचेका १ सय ५० गरि कुल ३ सय फोटाहरू राखीएका थिए । वृत्तचित्रमा पोखरामा भएको जनआन्दोलनका क्रममा पत्रकारहरूले खिचेको सब्यदृश्यबाट समेटिएको थियो ।

जनआन्दोलनको फोटो तथा वृत्त चित्र प्रदर्शनीले पोखराका युवा, विद्यार्थी देखि वृद्ध वृद्धाको पनि ध्यान खिचेको थियो । आन्दोलनका क्रममा प्रहरीलाई खबरदारी गरेकी पोखरा ७ मासवारकी ६५ वर्षीय कमलादेवी बराल सोही दृश्य समेत प्रदर्शनीमा देखे पछि जनआन्दोलनको स्मरण गर्दै निकै उत्साहित हुनुभएको थियो । जनआन्दोलनका क्रममा जनतामाथी गोली वर्षाउनेलाई लोकतान्त्रीक सरकारले चाडै कारवाही गर्नु पर्छ उहाँको भनाई थियो ।

Society

MISSING: PRATISTHA BUDHATHOKI

by Kashish Das Shrestha

26 June, Monday. The Nepali community in the US had hardly recovered from the tragedies of several Nepali students being involved in separate fatal accidents in spring this year when late last week news broke that the 20-year-old Nepali student Pratistha Budhathoki went missing in the quiet and peaceful small town of Estes Park, Colorado. Shocked local residents and worried Nepalis fear the worst as hopes of finding her alive rapidly turns into just hopes of finding any trace or remains of her after a week of her disappearance.

Estes Park is a small town and tourist community about an hour and a half drive from Denver, Colorado. It's year-round population is about 5,500 only although almost 3.5 million visitors pass through the area every year. And during the summer, almost 200 Nepalis usually arrive to live and work in the area. Pratistha was one of those many students who had arrived here on 14 May this year. It was where she had worked and lived during the summer of 2005 also. This summer, she was sharing an apartment with Smriti Pandey, and her work place 'Munchin House,' an ice cream shop, was only two minutes walk away from their apartment in a place locals refer to as the "hub." When Smriti received a phone call from Munchin House at 12PM on 18 June, a Sunday afternoon, she didn't know what to say. Munchin House had called Smriti to ask why Pratistha didn't come to work. But the last thing she recalled was Pratistha leaving their apartment in a rush to get to work at around 9:30 - 10AM that morning, telling her that she was getting late. No one has heard from or seen Pratistha since.

When Pratistha didn't come home till the next morning, her friends began to worry. "She was reported missing to us on Monday," Detective. Sgt. Corey Pass, lead investigator on the case for Estes Park Police Department, says. "We then immediately began our investigation."

The local media has been covering the case regularly too. "This is such a small town and the crime rate is really low here, so everyone is quite shocked and worried that something like this has happened in Estes Park," Manish Kharel, who works in Denver and has lived in Estes Park since 1997, told us. The local residents and businesses in Estes Park have collected \$1800 as a reward to anyone who will provide information to help find Pratistha.

The Nepali community in Denver also immediately reported to the Nepali Consulate in Washington DC. The consulate then reported it to the State Department and contacted Pratistha's family in Nepal. Her parents, father Yam Bahadur Budhathoki and mother Sarita Budhathoki, are currently trying to obtain a visa in Kathmandu so that they can come to Estes Park sometime this week. The Nepali community in Denver is also trying to raise funds to help Pratistha's parents buy the airline tickets, usually averaging at \$1300 - \$1400 per person for a roundtrip. The visa process alone, generally, costs approximately \$300- 400 per person.

Although the investigation has been going on for a week now, it has not been easy to determine whether Pratistha left on her own or whether she went missing. "We treat every case with extreme importance and in a case like this we don't rule out the fact that she might have left on her own, because

"We have to tell Nepalis abroad and in Nepal that the Rocky Mountain Association of Nepalis and the Nepali embassy is very concerned and doing everything they can too. But there has been some negative and impatient comments in the Nepali media and on Sajha too, I hope they understand that this is a kind of case that takes time to solve and that everyone concerned is doing everything possible." Swarupa has been in regular contact with the embassy, the RMAN, the police and even the American media. "I even spoke to the St. Clouds university's Vice President. People are doing everything they can from their own way. But the police also seemed a bit frustrated that there might be too much involvement from the Nepali community, which is good but might have adverse effect too because the investigation is done in a certain method and too many leads that are not consistent can delay the process. We also have to understand

was a possibility.

On 24 June, an anonymous phone call from a male Nepali using a blocked number said, "Pratistha is with us in South Carolina." and hung up. However, later that evening another anonymous call said "My brother had called you in the morning, I am sorry, it was a mistake," and hung up. "Pratistha didn't have a boyfriend and wasn't dating anyone. She was working at Munchin House and the Subway sandwich shop so she was just working all the time," Manish explained.

The phone calls could have been a reckless crank-call by irresponsible Nepalis, as this case has already become a public news and an issue of discussion on open thread discussion forums such as the infamous forum on Sajha.com, where users can post anything and everything they want. And phone numbers for information and leads have been obviously made public too.

Today Nepalis in Denver were scheduled to have a meeting with the town Mayor John Baudek to discuss a search and rescue operation in the near by mountains. "But its like finding a needle in a haystack," Swarupa tells us.

"Leave me a message, and I'll get back to you," Pratistha's voice says on her cell phone, followed by the automatic message "Sorry, that voice mail box is full. Please call again later." Friends and authorities have tried to call her repeatedly on her cell phone only to hear those two messages, possibly the last thing that Pratistha's family will ever hear her say. At this point, one can hope to find Pratistha alive, if not well. But the chances of that have become severely poor. "I know that everyone hopes to find her alive and well and are very concerned, but everyday in the media we see news of people missing and that it takes months in some cases to find the person," Swarupa says. "We just have to be patient and hopeful. Everything that can be done is being done."

Between December 2005 and March 2006, 9 Nepali students died in traffic related accidents, in all cases by no fault of their own. As the number of Nepalis in the US and other countries increase steadily, the chances of a Nepali being caught or involved in similar or other incidents also grows naturally. The only thing that one can do is be as careful as possible, particularly in a country where traffic accidents, missing people's cases and murder is rampant.

PRATISTHA BUDHATHOKI

Pratistha is the eldest of two children, her younger brother is studying in Grade 7 in Nepal. Her father, Yam Bahadur Budhathoki is in civil service while her mother Sarita Budhathoki works for an NGO in Nepal. Pratistha did her schooling in Kathmandu's Excelsior School and completed her I.S.C from St. Xavier's College. With a strong foundation and a keen interest in science, she had first arrived in the US to pursue Biology and Environmental Science at the Cornell College in Iowa in Fall 2004. When she transferred to St. Clouds University, Minnesota, however, she grew interested in business management and was pursuing a major in Finance.

she is an adult, but we don't rule out that something criminal might have happened either. But we treat every as though something bad has happened and we cover all the grounds," Detective. Sgt. Corey Pass, lead investigator on the case, says. "There is a dedicated phone line for the case and we are still following a variety of leads, but the investigation is still on going. There is a lot being done on a community level also."

"The police is doing everything they can, and its something that has become a national issue with potential involvement of the F.B.I. But Nepalis are being a bit impatient, I heard some local newspapers in Nepal ever wrote that the case was not taken seriously because it was a Nepali, which absolutely false," Swarupa Khadka, Pratistha's first cousin based in New York, tells

that the police can't reveal everything they know immediately because its an on-going investigation"

So far, a few facts have been confirmed. At around 11AM on Sunday morning, about an hour after Pratistha left for work, her credit card was used at a gas station in Estes Park. It is unclear why she would go to a gas station and use her card after an hour, when she was already late for work and her work place was only two minutes away. It has also not been confirmed if it was Pratistha herself that used the credit card. Police investigation has also revealed that a phone call from her cell phone was made to "a Denver area" on 20 June, on the third day that she was missing. When asked if there was chance that a predator might have come to town as a tourist and victimized Pratistha, the detective agreed that it

Politics

प्रचण्डको आगमनपछि राजनीतिमा नयाँ मोड अब माओवादी सहितको सरकार

Special correspondent

२ असारमा राजधानीमा नेकपा माओवादीका अध्यक्ष प्रचण्ड सार्वजनिक मात्र भएनन् सरकार र सात दलसंग माओवादीविच शिखर बैठक सम्पन्न भयो। प्रचण्डको राजधानी आगमनले शान्ति वार्ता प्रक्रियालाई सहज बनाएको छ भने विगत १२ वर्षदेखिको द्वन्द्वरत माओवादी चाडै सरकारमा समेत सामेल हुने भएका छन्।

शिखर बैठकमा १५ दिन भित्र अन्तरिम संविधान बनाउने, एक महिना भित्र अन्तरिम सरकार बनाउने, संविधानसभाको मिति घोषणा, संसद र जनसरकार भंग गर्ने, सहमतिबाट भर पर्दा आन्तरीक व्यावस्था गर्ने, संविधानसभाका लागि दुवै पक्षको हतियार व्यवस्थापनकने लागि राष्ट्रसंघलाई अनुरोध गर्ने, प्रतिस्पर्धात्मक बहुदलिय शासन प्रणाली, नागरीक स्वतन्त्रता र प्रेस स्वतन्त्रता प्रति प्रतिबद्ध रहने जस्ता महत्वपूर्ण सहमती भएका छन्। बैठकमा सातदल र माओवादीका शीर्ष नेताहरुको सहभागीता र हेको थियो।

बैठकपछि पत्रकार सम्मेलनमा आकर्षकको केन्द्र बनेका प्रचण्डले स्पष्ट रूपमा आफ्ना विचारहरु राखेका थिए। उनले अब नयाँ मार्ग बनाएर संयुक्त रूपमा अधि बढ्ने बताए। एक वर्ष भित्रै संविधानसभाको चुनाव गर्ने र त्यस अधि अन्तरिम संविधान बनाएर आफुहरु पनि अन्तरिम सरकारमा सामेल हुने उनले बताए। आफ्नो मन्तव्यमा प्रचण्डले भने "जनताको भावना र आकांक्षाको निम्ती समर्पित भएर अधि बढ्यौं भने २१ औं शताब्दीमा विश्वमा नयाँ सन्देश जानेछ।" १६ दिने जन आन्दोलन मार्फत जनताले दुनियाका बडेबडे साम्राज्यवादी र शक्तिकेन्द्रहरुलाई आश्चर्य चकित पारेको उनले बताए। मन्तव्य टेलिभिजनमा हेर्न पाएका जनता प्रचण्डका विचारबाट प्रभावित बन्न पुगेका छन् र धेरै आशावादी समेत बनेका छन्।

प्रधानमन्त्री गिरिजाप्रसाद कोइरालासंगको शिखर वार्ता पछि नेकपा माओवादीका अध्यक्ष प्रचण्ड र सातदलका शिर्षनेताहरुबीच प्रधानमन्त्री निवास बालुवाटारमै दोश्रो वार्ता भएको थियो।



वार्तामा सातदलका शीर्षनेताहरु नेकपा एमालेका महासचिव माधवकुमार नेपाल, प्रजातान्त्रिक कांग्रेसका शेर बहादुर देउबा, जनमोर्चा नेपालका अध्यक्ष अमिक शेरचन सबै सहभागी थिए।

माओवादीले युद्धविराम आचार संहिताको उलंघन गर्दै स्कूले विद्यार्थी विशाल तामाङको हत्या गरेको विरोधमा सिन्धुपाल्चोकको ठूलोपाखर वासीले दुई दिनदेखि अरनिको राजमार्ग अवरुद्ध पारिरहेको बेला भएको वार्ता पछि त्यसको सामना प्रचण्डले गर्नु परेको थियो। पत्रकार सम्मेलनमा प्रचण्डले गल्ती ढाकछोपको नगरी भने "छानवीन गरी कारवाही हुन्छ।"

राजधानीबाट प्रचण्ड दुर्गम गाजातिर

शान्ति स्थापनाको निम्ति सातदलसंग ८ बुँदे सहमति गरी काठमाडौंमा सार्वजनिक भएका माओवादी अध्यक्ष प्रचण्ड होलिकोप्टरबाट सुदूर-मध्यपश्चिमको सीमावर्ती गाउँमा पुगीसकेका छन्। गृहमन्त्री कृष्णप्रसाद सिटौलले प्रचण्डलाई एयर डायनेप्टिको हेलिकोप्टरमा सुर्खेत हुँदै अज्ञात पहाडी क्षेत्रमा पुऱ्याएका थिए। हेलिकोप्टरमा नेता डा.बाबुराम भट्टराई र प्रचण्ड पत्नी सीता पनि

हुनुहुन्थ्यो। प्रचण्ड हाल रहेको अछाम र डोटीको दुर्गम गाउँहरुमा माओवादीले यसअघि अति सुरक्षित ढंगले सैन्य तालिम सञ्चालन गर्दै आएका थिए।

यता, सरकारी वार्ताटोली संयोजक गृहमन्त्री कृष्णप्रसाद सिटौलले अन्तरिम सरकारको निर्माण अधि नै माओवादीको हतियार व्यवस्थापन गरिने बताएका छन्। सातदल-माओवादी विचको ८ बुँदे सहमतीबारे आफ्नो र अन्य दलहरुमा व्यापक असन्तुष्टि देखापरेपछि उनले ६ असारमा पोखर मा आयोजित कार्यकर्ता भेलामा उक्त जानकारी दिएका हुन्।

"हतियार व्यवस्थापन नभई अन्तरिम सरकार बन्दैन।" गृहमन्त्री सिटौलाको भनाई थियो, "त्यसको निम्ति छलफल शुरु भैसकेको छ।" २ असारमा सातदल-माओवादी शिर्ष वार्ताले तय गरेको सहमतिमा त्यस विषयमा स्पष्ट उल्लेख थिएन। सहमति पछि पनि हतियार सहितका माओवादीलाई अन्तरिम सरकारमा समेत गराउन नहुने लगायतका विषयमा दलहरुभित्र गम्भिर असहमति उत्पन्न भएको हो।

लामो समयदेखि अस्वस्थ प्रधानमन्त्री तथा नेपाली कांग्रेसका सभापती गिरिजाप्रसाद कोइराला

उपचारको निम्ति ३ असारको अपरान्ह बैकक प्रस्थान गरेका छन्। ८४ वर्षीय कोइरालालाई स्वास प्रश्वाससम्बन्धी समस्या छ। औषधी उपचारको निम्ति सातदिन लामो भ्रमण कार्यक्रम निर्धारण गरिएको छ। कोइराला उपचारकालागी जाने भएकैले त्यसअघि शिखर वार्ता गरिएको थियो।

राजा अधिकार विहीन रहने

अन्तरिम संविधान मस्यौदा समितिले राजा सहितको अन्तरिम संविधानको मस्यौदा तयार गर्ने भएको छ। तर त्यसमा राजाको कुनै भूमिका रहने छैन। गणतन्त्रको माग चर्को रूपमा उठिर हेको बेला नेकपा माओवादीका प्रतिनिधि समेत रहेको समितिले नै तयार गरेको मस्यौदामा राजा राख्ने भएको छ।

माओवादी निकट मानिने मस्यौदा समिति सदस्य तथा नेपाल वार एसोशियसनका पूर्व अध्यक्ष सिन्धुनाथ प्याकुरेलले ४ असारमा भएको छलफल पछि संचारकर्मीहरूसंग अन्तरिम संविधानमा राजा राख्ने विषयमा विवाद नहुने बताएका थिए। "अन्तरिम संविधान मार्फत गणतन्त्र घोषणा गर्न सबै अधिकार हामीलाई छैन।" प्याकुरेलले भन्नुभयो, "आन्दोलनको भावना, ४ जेठको प्रतिनिधि सभाको घोषणा, सातदल-माओवादी विचको १२ बुँदे र ८ बुँदे सहमति तथा २५ बुँदे युद्धविराम आचारसंहिता नै अन्तरिम संविधान निर्माणको आधार हुनेछन्।" उहाँका अनुसार, राजालाई अधिकार विहिन बनाएर राखिने छ। जुन काम उहाँहरुले संविधान निर्माणको निम्ति आधार बनाउने घोषणा, निर्णय वा सहमतिले गरिसकेको छ।

यसअघि विराटनगरमा प्रधानमन्त्री गिरिजाप्रसाद कोइरालाले सेरोमोनियल राजा धारणा सार्वजनिक गर्दा निकै आलोचना खेप्नु परेको थियो। "राजा रहने-नरहने भन्ने त संविधान सभामा कस्तो बनावट आउँछ, त्यसले निर्णय गर्ने हो।" प्याकुरेलको धारणा छ।

२ असारमा वार्ताटोलीले लोकतान्त्रिक आन्दोलनमा सक्रिय सहभागि रहनु भएका सर्वोच्च अदालतका पूर्व न्यायाधीश लक्ष्मणप्रसाद अर्यालको अध्यक्षतामा ६ सदस्यीय मस्यौदा समिति गठन गरेको छ।

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Op-Ed

Madhesis, Social Justice, And The DaMaJaMa Equation In Nepal

Paramendra Bhagat

The April Revolution in Nepal was a major milestone, but all the problems in social justice and poverty and even democracy itself still remain. The revolution has merely earned the people the tools with which to address those problems.

The Madhesis are part of the DaMaJaMa equation, namely Dalit, Madhesi, Janajati, Mahila. Dalits are the traditionally untouchables in the Hindu caste system. The Janajati are neither Bahun, nor Chhetri, the two ruling castes in Nepal. They have last names like Sherpa, Tamang, Magar, Gurung, Rai, Limbu, Tharu, among others. The Madhesis are the people in the southern plains who often bear the brunt of the strong anti-India sentiments among the ruling class in Nepal. They speak languages like Maithili, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Tharu, Urdu, and their link language is Hindi. Mahila is the Nepali word for women. Together these groups are close to 90% of the country. Bahun Chhetri men are an utter minority but hold most of the power.

Some say the Madhesis are half the country. Others say maybe 40%. Still others put the figure closer to 35%. But then there is some overlap. There are some people who are both Dalit and Madhesi, some who are both Janajati and Madhesi, like the Tharu.

The political plight of the Madhesi in Nepal is curious and can be compared to that of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the Hindus in Pakistan and Bangladesh, the Muslims in India, and the ethnic Nepalis in southern Bhutan. Madhesis are close to half the country, and contribute to 70% of the state revenue, but are less than 5% of the political power in terms of their share in the police, the army, the bureaucracy, and political offices, and get only 20% of the state expenditures, most of it going to pay for the salaries of the Pahadi bureaucrats who happen to be stationed in the Terai, the southern plains. Pahadi is the term for the hill people.

On June 17, 2006, many of the Madhesis in New York City got together to discuss and organize around the theme of Madhesi empowerment.

There is a major issue with the Hindi language that is at the core of

the Madhesi identity. Although few Madhesis speak Hindi as their first language, it is Hindi that links them all. A lot of Pahadis also understand Hindi, or they would not be watching Amitabh Bachchan on the big screen. Hindi is destined to become the sixth UN language down the line, on par with English. And as India's economic power grows, Hindi might as well become a major language of higher education and commerce.

Hindi has to be put on par with

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Hindi has to be put on par with Nepali in Nepal. Like Nepali is the link language in the hills, Hindi is the link language in the southern plains.

Nepali in Nepal. Like Nepali is the link language in the hills, Hindi is the link language in the southern plains.

Federalism is another issue. The country has to be divided into so many states with their own regional parliaments. Some want three states, some want five, some want eight. Some want the demarcation to be haphazard and geographical, others want it drawn along ethnic lines.

Abolishing the monarchy is tied to the question. The monarchy represents the ruling elites, the Bahun Chhetri. That has also been true of the army. If Costa Rica can do without an army, perhaps Nepal should as well. Why not instead have more teachers and health care workers?

There is bound to be some major contention in the run up to the constituent assembly elections that will draw up a new constitution for the country. One proposal is to have one constituency for every 100,000 Nepali, and then reserve some of those seats for the DaMaJaMa. Elections would still be direct in those seats, but only individuals from particular backgrounds may contest. It is such a reserved seat that gave India Ram Vilas Paswan, a Dalit who is a major national figure today.

Having seats of roughly equal population has been another issue of

contention for the Madhesis. In the 1990s, the Terai had only 80 of the 205 seats, although it deserved 103, going by population.

But the biggest issue of all is that of citizenship certificates. Of the 13 million Madheis in Nepal, close to half have been denied citizenship certificates. The government's official figure says four million, but it might be closer to six million. Without that certificate, you can not buy or sell land, you can not apply for government

or death certificates.

So you have a situation in Nepal where half the Madhesis get treated as non citizens, the other half as second class citizens.

The Madhesis have the numbers, but not yet the political consciousness that would earn them their equality in Nepal. The Dalits, the Janajati and the women have umbrella organizations, the Madhesis do not have one yet. There is no well articulated common minimum program. There are Madhesis in all the major political parties, but there is no Madhesi Caucus in the parliament. Like the blacks in America more than half a century ago, the Madhesis in Nepal will simply have to march, and do so in large numbers.

And the best way to cover much ground might be to strive to forge a strong coalition with the other three marginalized groups, to form a DaMaJaMa coalition. There is a need for a second revolution in Nepal, a social justice revolution.

Paramendra Bhagat is one of New York's most active members of the Nepali diaspora and a regular political blogger (Demrepubnepal.blogspot.com). He is also a member of ANTA. Nepali Aawaz requested Paramendra to write on the issue of Madhesis and minorities in Nepal. Above is an unedited Op-ed by him.

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More info at www.helpnepal.net

Law

An overview of Optional Practical Training (OPT) status

Ramesh K. Shrestha

Ramesh Shrestha is an established immigration lawyer based in New York for more than a decade now. Nepali Aawaz asked him to briefly discuss the OPT status that many students are now either already using or will have to eventually apply for.

What is Optional Practical Training (OPT)?

OPT does not have to be a training being taken towards the curriculum of the program. OPT may be exercised in one of four circumstances:

During the students annual vacation or at other times when school is not in session, while school is in session as long as it does not exceed 20 hours per week, after completion of all course requirements (excluding thesis or equivalent) for bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree program and after completion of the course of study.

Majority of foreign students chooses to exercise their OPT opportunity upon completion of their academic programs. OPT provides foreign students an opportunity to assimilate themselves into the U.S. real job market and explore the possibility of their future job prospect. Many foreign students take OPT as a measure to test their ability in the field which they obtained after spending a number of years at schools to accomplish their academic goal. OPT allows students to achieve necessary training and confidence that could be instrumental for their future job career either in the United States or in abroad.

Even if it is widely called as OPT status, the visa status for the students remain as an F-1 status even while they are on their OPT.

How can I apply for it?

Depending on the circumstance and the eligibility as described above, an I-538 Application must be filled out and an I-20 ID should be endorsed by the Designated Student Officer (DSO) of the school. The DSO must state in the application that the proposed employment is directly related to the student's major area of study and commensurate with the student's educational level. In addition, students must fill out an application for employment authorization document (EAD) (Form I-765) and submit to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) together

with the I-538 and I-20 documents. It is advised that an application for an EAD be submitted 120 days before the employment and within 60 days after completion of studies. Students are not required to have a job offer to apply for OPT. Once the EAD is issued by the USCIS, one can start his/her employment.

How long is it valid for?

The life of OPT is 12 months. It cannot be extended. Unused portion of practical training cannot be used at a later time unless reserved. OPT will be terminated if the student transfers to another school. OPT must be completed within 14 months of graduation. Students will be eligible for a new 12 months of OPT if he/she has earned a new level of degree.

What should I do to maintain my status?

OPT is valid for 12 months plus 2 more additional months as a grace period. In other words, the validity of the F-1 status will cease in 14 months.

“ It is always beneficial to have a strategic plan in advance before students graduate.

However, a student will be authorized to work only until the date the OPT is valid. In order to maintain the status, one must file appropriate petition/application to change his/her visa status to another visa status depending on the circumstances. An application for change of status must be submitted with the USCIS while the visa is still valid. No additional day will be available after the expiration of the 60-day grace period. If the students cannot apply for a change the status, it is advised that the students maintain the F-1 status by continuing the school. However, it is recommended that the students take appropriate action ahead of time depending on available opportunity and/or their individual circumstances. Once the F-1 status (OPT + 60-day grace period) is expired and no application/petition for change of status is pending on the day of the expiration, the students will be deemed out of status. It must be kept in mind that students may lose their status if 1) employed without authorization, or 2) not pursuing full course of study, or 3) transfers schools without permission

or fails to complete a full course of study in time and is ineligible for a program extension. Occurrence of any one of these circumstances will trigger a violation of the F-1 status, as a result, the student will become subject to removal from the United States.

What kind of work should I focus on during my OPT if I want to apply for an H-1B visa?

The one-year OPT period is extremely precious if one has a plan to change his/her status to an H-1B status. As OPT is designed to allow the students to obtain practical training in the field they earned their academic training, it is highly recommended that the students get a job in their own academic field. OPT must be utilized not only as an instrument to obtain basic training in the academic field, but also as a means to interact with the prospective employer[s] who would be willing to petition him/her for an H-1B visa. It will always be a good idea to let the employer be aware of your visa status and fully aware of the

dire need to file a timely visa petition for an H-1B visa to continue your employment beyond the OPT duration. If the employer expresses its inability or unwillingness to file a visa petition for an H-1B status, perhaps, it will be a better idea to shop around before it is too late to find an able and willing employer.

What are other considerations while applying for the OPT?

It must not be forgotten that timing is everything and time is of the essence. Since limited numbers of H-1B visas are available in every fiscal year, it has been a trend for few years that the visas have been used up before the H-1B visas actually became available for the particular fiscal year. Just to note, the H-1B visa cap (except Advanced Degree and U.S. Chile/Singapore Free Trade Agreements H-1B1) for the fiscal year 2007 was reached on May 26, 2006. Students are advised to have a careful plan about how one should properly utilize the precious OPT. It is always beneficial to have a strategic plan in advance before students graduate.

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हिमाल मीडियाको तन्नेरी प्रकाशन वेभ मासीकद्वारा १० असारमा आयोजित वेभ किक अफ कप फुटबल टूर्नामोण्ट को उपाधी संचारकर्मीहरूको टीमले जितेको छ ।

नेपाली संगीत र मोडलीङ क्षेत्रका सेलीब्रिटी र संचारकर्मीहरूबीच दशरथ रङ्गशालाको मैदानमा सम्पन्न खेलमा मीडिया टीमले ७-४ को ठूलो अन्तरले विजयी भएको छ । विजयी टीमका तर्फबाट कान्तिपुर टीभीको योपेश प्रधानले ह्याट्रिक गरेका थिए । भने कान्तिपुर टीभीकै सोनाम लामा, नेपाल एफएमका उत्तम थापा, मेरो स्पोर्ट्स डटकमका पासाङ लामा र सुबेल भण्डारीले १/१ गोल गरी ७ गोल पुऱ्याएका थिए । सेलीब्रिटी टीमका तर्फबाट भने गायक योगेश्वर अमात्यले २, वद्री पंगेनी र ओज श्रेष्ठले १/१ गोल गरेका थिए ।

प्रतियोगिताका विजेता मीडिया टीमलाई हिमाल खबरपत्रिकाका सम्पादक राजेन्द्र दाहालले ट्रफी प्रदान गर्नु भएको थियो । सम्पादक दाहालले रंगशालाको मैदानमा रेफ्रीलाई बल हस्तान्तरण गरी खेलको सुभारम्भ गर्नुभएको थियो ।

वर्ल्ड कप फुटबल २००६ को घमासान भइरहेको बेला आयोजित वेभ किक अफ कप फुटबल टूर्नामोण्ट मा नेपालका चर्चित मोडल, गायक-गायीका तथा संगीतकर्मीहरू र छापा तथा विद्युत माध्यममा कार्यरत पत्रकार गरी ५ दर्जन भन्दा बढीको सहभागीता रहेको थियो । सेलीब्रिटी टीममा योगेश्वर अमात्य र मीडिया टीमको नेतृत्व फोटो पत्रकार अनुपप्रकाशले गरेकाथिए । मीडिया टीमबाट मैदानमा उत्रिएकी पुर्व मिस नेपाल तथा कान्तिपुर एफएमकी एड्कर माल्मीका सुब्बा र सेलीब्रिटी टीमबाट उत्रिएकी गायिका कोमल ओलीले मैदान टीकेर खेल प्रदर्शन गरेका थिए ।

मोडलहरू र प्रिण्ट मीडियाको एक टीम र संगीतकर्मी र इलेक्ट्रोनिक्स मीडियाको अर्को टीम बीच भएको मैत्रीपूर्ण फुटबल खेल मायादेवी अनाथलय, रुपन्देहिीको सहयोगार्थ आयोजना गरिएको हो । फुटबलपछि १० असार साँझ हुने ग्राण्ड पार्टी मा सेलिब्रिटीज र मीडियाकर्मीसंगै सर्वसाधारण सहभागी भएकाथिए । पार्टीमा रमाउँदै विश्वकप फुटबलको प्रत्यक्ष प्रसारण समेत हेर्न कार्यक्रम रहेको थियो ।



Above: Team Celebrity. Below: Team Media. Bottom: The winners of the game, Team Media. Anup Prakash (WAVE magazine's photographer and the tournament's co-ordinator) is given the trophy by Rajendra Dahal, Himal Khabarpatrika's Editor. Photo: Anushil Shrestha.



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