



Courage & Conviction

# newsfront

Kathmandu | 12 Mar-18 Mar 2007 | # 7 | Price Rs. 25

## Tougher on arms

Maoists should deposit anywhere between 800 to 1000 pieces of weapons besides explosives

### ■ NF Correspondent

Maoists may have to deposit more arms by the next week to take the process of the formation of the interim Government to a credible direction. Prime Minister G P Koirala is likely to raise the issue with Maoist Chief Prachanda in view of mounting concern and doubts at home and abroad that the quantity registered by the Maoists with the U N team led by Ian Martin was far too less compared to what they have.

What the Prime Minister wants, his key aides say, is that Maoists should deposit anywhere between 800 to 1000 pieces of weapons besides explosives. "Maoists should not be averse to doing that", Prime Minister Koirala is believed to have assured some diplomats and visiting dignitaries when they called on him recently.

Registration of only 3000 plus arms with the U N does not account for nearly 781 pieces of weapons which Maoists had captured from security agencies during the decade of conflict and clashes.

Maoists are supposedly also to be in possession of Chinese revolvers and explosives which they have not disclosed. "Many killings outside the incidents of direct clashes have been attributed to revolvers. There cannot be an atmosphere of election free from fear and intimidation without the revolvers being registered along with explosives", Minister for Physical Infrastructure Planning and Construction, Gopal Man Shrestha told newsfront.

Koirala's assertion in Biratnagar on Saturday that Maoists must behave to qualify to be part of the Interim Government stemmed from his confidence and Maoists 'positive' response about registering more arms, diplomatic sources said.

"There are reasons for Koirala to insist for this. Prachanda's recent statement that palace was plotting to kill some American officials has embarrassed the Prime Minister to the hilt", a top security official told newsfront, adding, 'disarming' every group with arms will be the logical

first step before the Government, and Maoists fall in that category.

Koirala's return from Biratnagar is likely to see himself in command of the security agencies. "You should not be surprised if Nepal Army is mobilized in case there is deterioration of situation in Terai", PMO sources said. "Yes, Koirala nearly gave that indication to us when he complained about the virtual absence of the Government when we met him in Biratnagar", a local businessman told newsfront. Koirala also told them that he would fire Home Minister K P Sitaula in minutes if the Madheshi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) leader Upendra Yadav convinced him that 'he is in control of the situation and could stop the movement at will. "I will remove him if Yadav suspends the movement for a week", the businessman quoted Koirala.

But MJF is apparently suspecting a foul play—that the Home Minister is trying to cause a split among the Terai forces by engineering a new axis of Maoists, a part of the Congress party and Nepal Sadhbhavana Party—Anandi Devi in support of the bill moved in parliament to give more power and representation to the Terai. "This would trigger a dangerous revolt as 47 members belonging to different major political parties sort of rebelled by defying the whip in parliament during the voting on the bill", a MJF leader said.. "If Maoists are brought to the interim Government without addressing the Terai problem, Government will go ruthlessly against us and that will have far more serious impact not only on the law and order situation, but on the integrity of the country", MJF warned. ■



Bhaswar Ojha

American Assistant Under Secretary of State for Management, Henrietta H Fore in Kathmandu

'Interim Government : US vs Norway' on page 2



RCI/408/0002/06

### Ace Home Mortgage Credit Facility

एस फाइनेन्स तपाईंको वर्तमान र भविष्यका आवश्यकताहरू, घर/जग्गा धितो सुविधा अन्तर्गत पूरा गर्न सदा तत्पर रहेको छ ।

Ace can avail you a line of credit based on your Home Equity for your present & future needs.

#### TERMS & CONDITIONS:

**Loan Limit:** NPR. 300,000.00 to NPR. 5,000,000.00  
**Interest Rate:** Variable rate every 5 years based on market conditions  
**Tenure:** 1 year to 15 years  
**Repayment:** Flexible based on borrower's cash flow\*  
**Uses:** Purchase of Building & Apartment, Building, Construction, Land Purchase, Renovation & Extension of Building, Refinancing, Setting up a Business, Education, Personal Investment etc. **Special Feature:** No prepayment charge. **Loan Decision: 3 days!**

\*Conditions Apply

#### OTHER FEATURES OF LOANS & ADVANCES

• Hydro-power Financing • Project Financing • Bridge Financing • Industrial and Trading Loans • Loan against NSB, Shares & Fixed Deposit Receipts



Ace Finance Company Limited

(नेपाल राष्ट्र बैकबाट ग बर्गको इजाजतपत्र प्राप्त संस्था)  
Narayan Chour, Naxal, Kathmandu Tel.: 4441110 Fax: 4445554  
E-mail: info@ace.com.np URL: www.ace.com.np

# Adoption awareness



International Conference on Inter-Country Adoption that began Sunday in Kathmandu takes place amidst controversies arising from irregularities and alleged corruption in adoption of the Nepali children by foreign nationals.

The conference takes place in the wake of France suspending 'adoption' effective from January 2007 in Nepal although the general trend in the past five years has noticeably increased.

The conference organized jointly by the Government of Nepal and the Child NGO Federation,

are intended to encourage transparency and uniformity in the child adoption business. UNICEF hopes the conference will lead to the ratification of The Hague Convention on Inter-Country adoption and the adoption of national laws and mechanisms to regulate in-country and inter-country adoption. Ms. Gillian Mellsop, UNICEF's Representative in Nepal said that adoption should always be the last resort for the child since every child has the right to know and to be cared for by his or her own parents, whenever possible.

## Serving the underprivileged

Vicki Educational and Development Foundation (VEDEFON) plans to set-up educational institutions, mainly schools, in different parts of the country while continuing with its current level of involvement in the capital.

This was announced by the Head of the Foundation, Vicki Subirana, during a Science Exhibition in Nepal Katalubitha School, at Manamaiju, Kathmandu. The school which is being supported by the foundation for more than 15 years imparts free education to children from

socially and economically backward families.

Vicki Subirana, Spanish by birth has prescribed and practiced an alternative model of education in the capital. She said, "...the Government will be extending all help in spread of this pattern of education which we want to follow."

VEDEFON has supported hostel facilities, skill development and micro-finance programmes for women belonging to backward groups apart from supporting schools and informal education schemes.

## Another milestone for Surya Nepal

Surya Nepal has been conferred with the SA 8000-2001 Social Accountability Certification from Det Norske Veritas (DNV) for this year, based on the audit carried out by DNV in December 2006.

SA 8000-2001 Social Accountability Certification is considered as one of the respected standards in Social Accountability. This is the first time a company in Nepal has been awarded this certification.

"For Surya Nepal, it is another milestone and a testimony to its adherence to universal human rights compliance at the workplace, as also its commitment to social responsibility towards the community in which it operates," the company said in a statement.

Surya Nepal has also invested in Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives under the banner of Surya Nepal Prakriti for environment protection, Surya Nepal Asha for community empowerment, Surya Nepal Suswasthya for community health, and Surya Nepal Khelpariyatan for promoting sports and tourism.



Maoist Chief Prachanda receiving petition from a villager in Dang

# Norway proposes US disposes

■ NF Correspondent

The United States clearly disapproved proposed inclusion of the Maoists in the Interim Government without confirmed reform in the conduct of the Maoists. The message was conveyed in unequivocal terms by the Assistant Under Secretary of State for Management, Henrietta H Fore, when she called on Prime Minister G P Koirala on Saturday. She added "they do not deserve membership of the coalition Government" if they failed to act like mainstream political party.

The categorical assertion by the US comes in sharp contrast to Norway's development minister, Eric Solheim, who expressed happiness over the prospect of formation of the interim Government with Maoists joining as part of it. Solheim was in the capital just before Fore's visit. Solheim, key broker in the Sri Lankan peace process, had shown Norway's interest to help the process here, if Nepalis wanted it. He had also met the prime Minister and Maoist Chief Prachanda during his stay.

Yet another high-profiled visit that many thought would have bearing on Nepal's current politics by the UK Development Minister, Gareth Thomas, scheduled from March 11 was however cancelled citing, "urgent parliamentary business" at home.

What Fore said at the end of her two day visit seems to have put everything under shadow. The two trends—continuing failure of Maoists to renounce violence, extortion and intimidation and growing unrest among different ethnic groups in the country—if not resolved, threaten Nepal's democratic process, she told journalists before her return, with Ambassador James Moriarty by her side.

She recounted what appeared like a prophetic statement by Assistant Secretary Richard Boucher during his visit here last year in reference to Maoist activities— "... you don't walk into Parliament with a gun in your pocket." "Sadly – and incredibly – the Maoists recently proved that statement wrong", Fore added, in the context of much debated incident of a Maoist parliamentarian walking inside the House with a gun.

### GOOF-UP

Anti-American is an acronym for anti-imperialism for Communists in general and Maoists in Nepal in particular. But teasing them does not seem to pay always if one goes by the predicament Prachanda faces now.

Like many in the past, he dropped a propaganda missile last week that palace is hatching a plot to kill some U S Government officials in Kathmandu, to put the blame on Maoists. U S Ambassador Moriarty lost no time to react and challenged him to reveal the information that he had.

Prachanda, clearly in defensive, said it was strange that instead of 'thanking me'; the U S was reacting otherwise. Later, he added, he was collecting information to justify what he said earlier.

She said the United States valued its relationship with Nepal and supported a peaceful, prosperous, and democratic future for Nepal. "As I told the Prime Minister earlier today, we stand ready to help". ■

## Run for a cause

The Nepal Investment Bank Limited is organising the first 'NIBL Annual Marathon 2007'. According to NIBL Chief Executive Officer, Prithvi Pandey, the one day event scheduled on March 17 aims at contributing towards heritage conservation of Patan Durbar.

The total prize money for the event is Rs. 488,500, the highest prize for a marathon run in the country so far. It is open for participation for all those who "Run for Fun". It covers a maximum of 21-KM stretch, but has different distances for different categories of participants. All categories begin from NIBL head office at Durbar Marg.

According to the NIBL sources, Professional, Amateur

Category and Foreigners/Expatriates categories are eligible for participation for the 21-km stretch while Ladies Category and Financial Institutions Category (Male) will be participating for the 10 km stretch. School Children boys and girls will be participating in the 3 km stretch run. The Handicapped Category will be participating in the 1 km route.

NIBL took the initiative to support Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust (KVPT) to raise funds for the restoration and conservation of Patan Durbar. This project was selected amongst various others in the World Monuments Watch List and UNESCO World Heritage Centre. ■



### YOUR GATE TO IT WORLD



**Gates Computer Pvt Ltd.**  
Dharmapath, New Road, Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel: 4229529  
E-mail: g\_computer@wlink.com.np

# Bhutan Refugee debate

■ NF Correspondent

The Government is all set to expedite the process of third country resettlement for the Bhutani refugees living in Nepal for the past 15 years. Prime Minister G P Koirala assured the visiting US Assistant Under Secretary of State for Management, Henrietta H Fore, that the process of third country settlement should begin immediately.

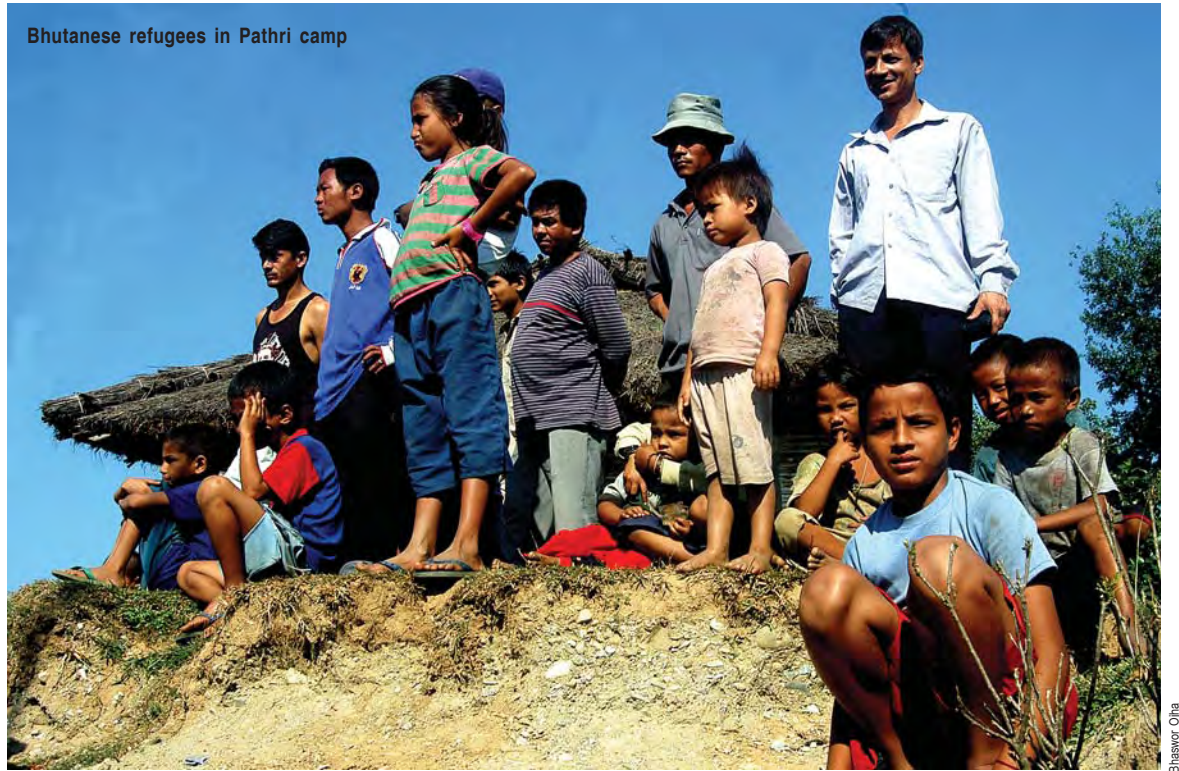
The US has offered to absorb a bulk of 60,000 refugees with E U, Scandinavian countries, Switzerland and Australia taking a sizeable part of the remaining 46,000. The green signal given by the Prime Minister has not however found favourable response from Shitwal Niwas. "This is a total reversal of all that Nepal stood for during the past 15 years. This is a negation of the bilateral ministerial level exercise," a foreign ministry official told newsfront.

"Yes, this is indeed a reversal of our stand," Dr. Bhekh Bahadur Thapa, who represented Nepal several time in the bilateral discussions, told newsfront. The critiques of the latest stand of the Government

policy has one common point—that not only does it condone Indian approach of giving its territory for exodus of Bhutanis, but it gives a clean chit to the King of Bhutan for having pursued the politics of 'ethnic cleansing'.

The Bhutanese refugees, owing allegiance to their leader Teknath Risal, are opposed to the latest decision saying it takes away their rights as a citizen of the country they belonged to. But the Association of Human Rights Activists Bhutan (AHURA) is more critical of the Government of Nepal while it supports the third country resettlement. AHURA leader Ratan Gajmere went to the extent of demanding that the Government of Nepal should call off the bilateral process "as it has grossly failed to engage its Bhutanese counterpart to resolve the refugee problem and seek international intervention in finding a comprehensive solution to the refugee problem."

Dr. Suresh Chalise, Foreign Affairs Advisor to Prime Minister Koirala said Nepal Government has consistently advocated for the right of Bhutani refugees to go back to their country



Bhutanese refugees in Pathri camp

with their 'heads high' and the current decision to allow the refugee for a third country settlement did not dilute that approach. Soon after Prime Minister Koirala lent the Government support to the third country resettlement,

US Ambassador James F Moriarty said, "We will, however, continue to push the Bhutanese government for the repatriation."

Bhutan and Nepal have had 15 rounds of talks at the ministerial level

in the past, with Bhutan agreeing to take four categories of Bhutanese back. "But Bhutan does not need to honour its commitment with the latest move of the international community," a former minister said. ■

## Midnight knock

Nepal Police is generally slow to respond in containing crimes or nabbing criminals. But it's much faster, than many think, when it comes to acting out political vendetta or appeasing its political masters.

Rajendra Bahadur Singh, an Additional Inspector General of the Police, a victim of Home Minister K P Sitaula's repeated vengeance with the tacit backing of Prime Minister Koirala, has now moved the Supreme Court, challenging Government decision to retire him. He is the only police officer denied the two-year extension on completion of 30 years in the service, which has been granted to every officer during the past 11 years.

His miseries have only increased after he challenged the Government in the court. A posse of police force visited his home in Budanilkantha around ten p m with oral instructions from the headquarters that he should return the official vehicle and three security guards right there and then. The normal practice allows a retired official to retain such facilities for a month. "I do not want to say anything at this stage as I have moved the court for justice", Singh told newsfront.

Singh, Head of the Operation Department and number two in seniority in the force until early May, was suspended from the service at Sitaula's behest. A letter from the Government simply stated that since Rayamajhi Commission has been appointed to probe excess use of force by the Government to suppress the

Jana-Andolan, Singh's presence might help in tampering with the evidence. But Sitaula's first cousin, Basudev Oli who headed the Operation Department of the Armed Police Force was not only promoted as the Chief but will also be deciding what kind of actions should be initiated against his subordinates 'found guilty' by the Commission which has already submitted its report to the Government.

Eye witnesses said the police force which went to Singh's house also pasted a notice of the Home Ministry regarding his retirement on the compound wall. "All that was in a bad taste. It was purely an act of revenge by the Home Minister who for some very personal reasons always hated Singh and humiliated him", a joint secretary in the Home Ministry told newsfront.

The incident created ripples in the canteen of the parliament house building, if not inside. Arjun Bahadur Singh, a former Minister, asked Sitaula if that was the level a minister should be stooping to. A red faced Sitaula said, "I have no idea about the incident of Singh's security and official car withdrawn in that manner". Sitaula took out his cell phone, feigned dialing the number of Home Secretary Umesh Mainali to correct the 'injustice'. But the situation remains as it is.

■ NF Correspondent

Police Headquarter



## Downsizing the Royalty

The process to assess and compile details of the private property owned by the king and his family members has begun. The cabinet committee headed by Gopal Man Shrestha sent a notice to Chief Principal Secretary of the Royal palace, Pashupati Bhakta Maharjan, on Wednesday to furnish details of the Royal property at the earliest.

The cabinet committee is to finish its task of submitting details of the Royal property within a month. Subsequent to the parliamentary declaration in May, all income of the Royal property has been brought to the tax net. Besides, the Government has already declared to nationalise the property which was transferred in

the name of the present king and his family members after the death of King Birendra along with his entire family in June 2001.

A Senior Government official told newsfront that the Government was also going to downsize the security and bureaucratic set-up in the palace within the next couple of weeks. The strength of the army will be cut-down to around 400 from existing 3,000 while most other officials serving in the royal palace secretariat would either be retired or absorbed into the Government service. "That will effectively end the Royal palace service existing as a separate and superior cadre", the official added.

■ NF Correspondent

King Gyanendra at Pashupatinath



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

# Respect people's rights

Formation of the interim Government with Maoists as a respectable partner will be the best guarantee for the peace process to move towards the desired direction. Prachanda's assurance that they will soon return the property that the Maoists seized forcibly, to the rightful owners is no doubt a positive statement. But it sounds too good to be true. Given repeated non-compliance of such assurances in the past, it will now be believed only when accompanied by verifiable action.

Unfortunately, Prachanda and the Maoists, like any existing political parties in the country are fast losing their credibility through repeated violations of the code of conduct and by using arms to terrorise political rivals and ordinary citizens of this country. The way Maoists confiscated private property was illegal as there was no due process of law or legality applied. It was all done at the gun-point without the victims even getting a chance to respond in the Maoist run Kangaroo court which purely runs on the dictates of the political and guerrilla leadership of the organisation.

In fact, returning the property should have been the first step, or the first evidence that Maoists would now begin to honour the rule of law. No party should enjoy the luxury of having private security apparatus, private army and privately set-up parameters of law and yet seek to join the Government on its own terms.

Any Government should be free to make laws which will have effect on distribution, relocation and ownership of property and resources after invoking a national debate and fully involving a democratically elected parliament.

The first thing that the Maoists need to do at the moment is qualify itself to be part of the interim Government. To do that, it has to shun violence, truthfully deposit arms to the United Nations and return the property it has confiscated. That will pave the way for Maoists seeking mandate from the people in a free and fair manner during the election to the Constituent Assembly.

It also needs to desist from realizing tax when a huge sum of money contributed by the taxpayers and donors is being spent on the Maoist guerrillas. Prachanda's claim that this would stop the moment they are part of the interim Government only exposes his attitude of taking the people for a ride. If Maoists are not willing to honour the code of conduct all these months, will they become honest just by joining the interim Government? One sided impunity and liberty to break the public pledge will not only discredit the Maoists but the entire peace process will run the risk of being held in hostage. On the other hand, it is also an opportunity for the Maoists to dispel growing doubts over their intentions by simply returning the property to the rightful owners and begin acting within legal and moral parameters of politics as well as peace process.



## Letters

### Work for peace

I would like to congratulate Abin for the cartoon in the last issue. It aptly depicts the ongoing stalemate in the Nepalese political arena. The theme of the last issue was timely, however, the Newsfront team should be cautious on some of these aspects.

The Maoists are welcome in the Interim Government and that is a positive step towards the ongoing peace process. But practicing democracy should be based on themes of peace and principles of co-existence. A Maoist with a gun in the Parliament and using threatening language in the House does not show it. On one hand they are showing enthusiasm to enter the Government, on the other hand they are not doing enough to make people feel secure. Their terrorizing the lay people doesn't establish their commitment towards the peace process. Rather, it costs them a lot in their support pool.

Our efforts now should be to help Maoists see their mistakes and get them domesticated. But, overemphasizing on their wrongdoings might be viewed as an effort to make them unpopular in people's eyes. The Newsfront should refrain from that if by any chance it intends to do that. But if its intentions are to help Maoists develop the culture of political endurance, then, you are welcome. Keep writing.

Dr Khagendra Dahal  
Kathmandu

### Practical paper

I find newsfront to be very practical and balanced in giving space for the features generally ignored by other Nepali media. I highly appreciate this approach. The feature on the Event page on issue 5 -11 Mar, 2007 really resonates the heartbeats of almost all Buddhist communities.

Narayan Rijal  
Kathmandu

### Important event

Thank you very much for publishing one of the highly important event of the rituals and explanations on one of the very high level guru, late HE Chobge Trinchen Rinpoche in newsfront. We really appreciate your balanced approach generally missed by other publications in Kathmandu. Such

endeavours in the future will certainly upgrade the status of your already esteemed publication among the spiritual practitioners and commoners alike.

Harsh Bhandari  
Kathmandu

### Good work

I was very much impressed by your article 'The Journey Continues' in your last issue. I have to commend you on publishing the news about the cremation ceremony of H.E. Chobge Trichen Rinpoche. You've published a very well written article on a subject and about a minority that is generally sidelined.

Binaya Rana  
Kathmandu

### Appreciable interview

The interview with Maoist leader Prachanda by the duo journalists, Shyam Tekwani and Ang Peng Hwa is quite interesting in the sense it has explored a different angle than some of his other interviews published, broadcast and telecast focusing only on political developments of the country.

This is one of the inspiring interviews that I have gone through which focused on technological and infrastructural development strategy of Maoists in 'New Nepal'. But the repetition time and again by the Maoist leaders of the structure of New Nepal and election of Constituent Assembly is unbelievable.

Due to their continued intimidation, riots and terror, the Maoists are hindering the peace process. It would be better for them to stop violence instead of just big talks.

Unless and until they are deeply concerned about political resolution of problems of all dissatisfied voices, real changes and restructured new Nepal is not possible. I expect some new ideas that may help political leaders to correct themselves.

Binod Pathak  
Kathmandu

Letters to the Editor should be addressed to:  
[newsfront@bhrikuti.com](mailto:newsfront@bhrikuti.com)

## Spiritual Corner

### Kiss The Earth

Walk and touch peace every moment.  
Walk and touch happiness every moment.  
Each step brings a fresh breeze.  
Each step makes a flower bloom.  
Kiss the Earth with your feet.  
Bring the Earth your love and happiness.  
The Earth will be safe  
when we feel safe in ourselves.  
You Are Me  
You are me and I am you.  
It is obvious that we are inter-are.

You cultivate the flower in yourself so that I will be beautiful.  
I transform the garbage in myself so that you do not have to suffer.  
I support you you support me.  
I am here to bring you peace you are here to bring me joy.

### To Meditate

To meditate does not mean to fight with a problem.  
To meditate means to observe.

Your smile proves it.  
It proves that you are being gentle with yourself, that the sun of awareness is shining in you, that you have control of your situation.  
You are yourself, and you have acquired some peace.

### Drink Your Tea

Drink your tea slowly and reverently, as if it is the axis on which the world earth revolves

- slowly, evenly, without rushing toward the future;  
Live the actual moment.  
Only this moment is life.



### Be A Bud

Be a bud sitting quietly on the hedge.  
Be a smile, one part of wondrous existence.  
Stand here. There is no need to depart.

Poems by Thich Nhat Hahn

Political parties' representatives with Election Commission officials



Pic by Bhaswar Ojha

## Populist politics

# no harbinger of peace

Unfortunately, the Constituent Assembly is being preempted by ad-hoc political bargaining that is appearing to reduce it to the Constitutional Convention.

Chief Election Commissioner  
Bhojraj Pokhrel



Although the election to the CA is central to the peace process and impending state restructuring, there is much confusion as to what exactly the CA entails and how it is going to make Nepal a better democracy and a stable state. Even more disturbingly while much debate on the nature, structure and function of the CA remain far from elaborative and discursive; the election of the CA itself has become a major impediment to the peace process as illustrated by the serious objections raised by Janajatis (ethnics) and Madhesis (regional identity). Both groups want a proportional representation (PR) system in the election to the Constituent Assembly election which is seen as the best alternative to the perceived failure of first past the post mode of winner takes all electioneering in the past.

The social inclusion of various ethnic and disadvantaged groups in the national political mainstream strongly advocated by the Maoists as one of their agenda to launch the 'people's war' against the Nepali state is tied to the PR in the polity. This political agenda of Maoists has graduated into the national agenda of state transformation where there appears to be the conventional wisdom on PR as the best mode of election to the Constituent Assembly.

However there again remains much confusion, disinformation and general ignorance on the nature, structure and essence of electioneering and its consequential impact on the constitutional engineering. In this scenario, the recent violent protests in Terai surrounding the call for amendment to the interim Interim Constitution of Nepal (ICoN) 2007 appears not only tragic but also clearly avoidable, had there been a vigorous discourse on the electioneering and constitutional engineering.

Unfortunately, however, the Constituent Assembly is being preempted by ad-hoc political bargaining that is appearing to reduce it to the Constitutional Convention. The directly elected assembly of people, on whom the sovereignty is vested, alone has democratic legitimacy to define and structure a polity. As such, the role of Constituent Assembly is much more expansive and intense



■ Anuj Mishra

than the comparatively less democratic Constitutional Convention, which is basically a political arrangement.

Current interim legislature, installed without election is product of political bargaining between the power sharing coalition members alone. In its expansive role it may have been called a Constitutional Convention. However, even that imminent role was denied in the absence of a wider debate among the legislative members before the promulgation of ICoN 2007.

**The focus ought to be on the objective of state transformation: what kind of Nepal is to be re-structured into?**

The intensity of political bargaining and ready amendments of ICoN 2007, as is being done on the pressure of dangerously ethno-populist agendas opens it to even more political manipulation, ultimately undoing the very purpose of the constitution itself which is to constitute a framework of governance. The de-constitution and un-governability goes in tandem, as is being witnessed in the present scenario.

This double helix of downward spiral if not abetted leads to anarchy, which is what the current scenario is giving hints of, with almost incessant shutdown and general strikes. The logical course of action then is to gear towards holding CA election and let the most legitimate and democratic apparatus of state building decide its own polity.

It is worth noting that the electioneering process alone does not make a polity more representative of its constituents. More importantly, the electioneering, being the product of deliberate design, churns out the result, however it is intended to be.

Hence, PR system of election may very well be relatively more representative than the direct election, but it is very pre-requisite that the merits and demerits of PR be transparently made available to people.

On the positive note, the PR system, makes possible the representation of minority vote count and provides an excellent design for both inter-party and intra-party democratic competition. However, on a very adversarial role for inclusive and egalitarian democracy; it not only perpetuates the social schisms, but also deepens it especially if the voting is based on identity. On purely democratic perspective of popular choice, it also negates the possibility of the election of a more moderate and inclusive candidate with appeal to the broad based constituents.

So the focus ought to be on the objective of state transformation: what kind of Nepal is to be re-structured into? Is it the objective of the political forces to eventually coalesce and congeal a collective state identity? Or, is it to perpetuate the exclusionary politics of identity? The last question has acquired much purchase in

the political discourse recently, albeit in inversion. The agenda of social inclusion is unfortunately being pushed through the politics of identity, which is inherently exclusive in character. While positive discrimination is an aspect of mainstreaming identities; on its adversarial role, it makes the politics of identity more assertive and inclined towards radicalism.

In this scenario, the pre-determination of a Federal State based on identity alone without much popular deliberation shows ample political opportunism and a complete lack of political pragmatism required for state building. Succumbing to the transitional populist politics of identity most of which are almost always of political origin and not a settled one is rendering CA, if and when it is elected, a mere Constitutional convention of present coalition forces. Not an assembly of Sovereign constituents, as is aspired.

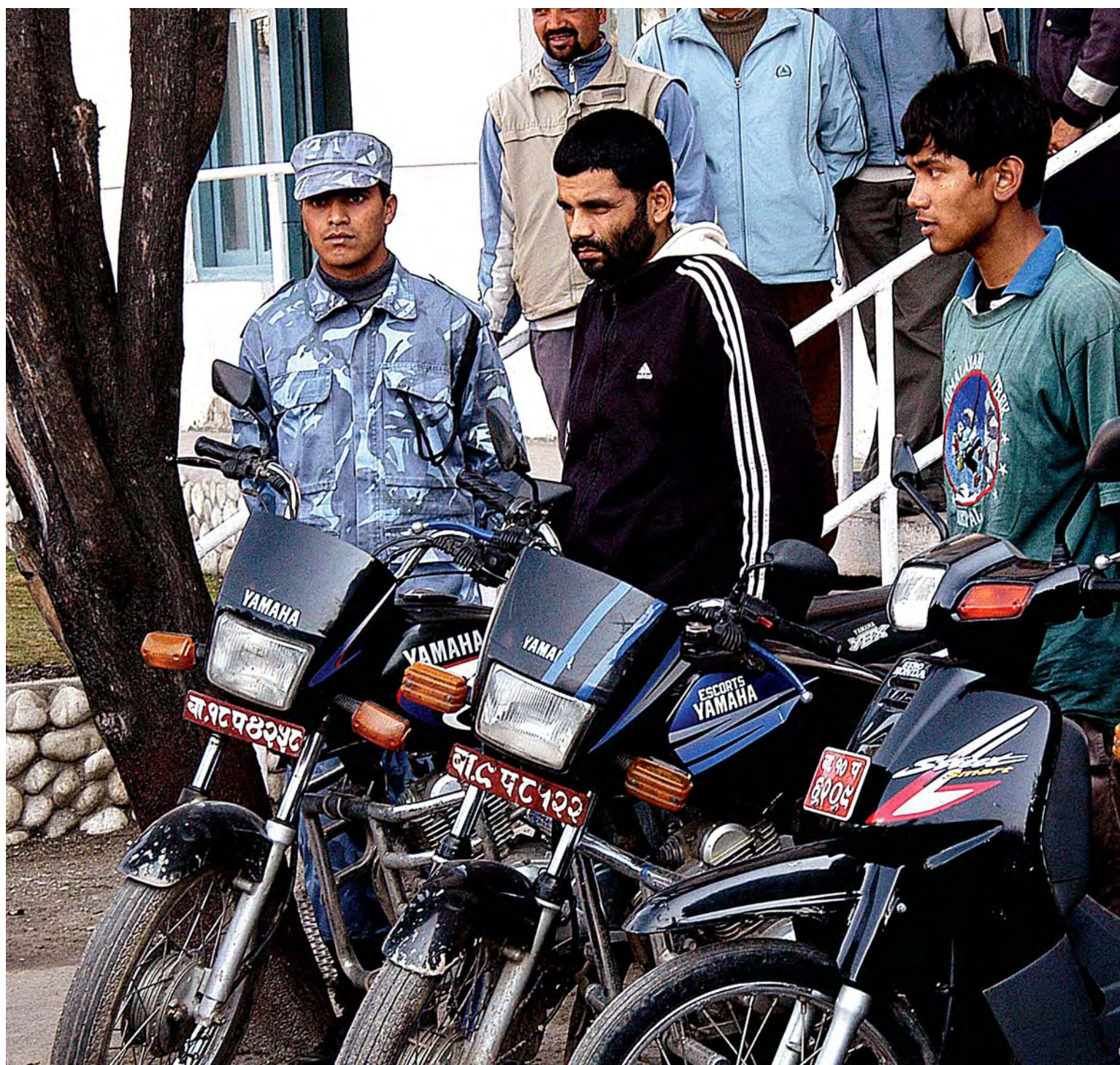
(Mishra is a young social scientist. He can be reached at: a.mishra@warwick.ac.uk)

Autolifting on the rise  
in capital

The sharp rise in the crime rate contradicts the claims of the Police Chief and the Home Minister that the crime rate is on decline in the capital



Pix by Bhaskar Ojha



# Crime H

## 'the most unsafe capital in th

### Special Correspondent

On Friday, a group of 20 Maoists warned the principal of St. Xavier's school in Jawalakhel that if he did not close the school for the day, he would have to pay a heavy price. Since taking the risk involved the security of hundreds of students, the school had no option but to shut down and the traumatised children, witness to the strength of muscles, had no option but to go home.

Though Maoists at the moment could be considered a breed above the law, they are not the only contributors to capital's crime graph. There are others too. Evidence suggests the police are either demoralized or indifferent to crimes leaving the field open to the criminals.

Recently, a police at Bouddha expressed his helplessness to a television journalist and said all his belongings were looted by a group of criminals. He advised, "please tackle the situation carefully." Armed intruders attempted a day light robbery at the residence of Kulshekhar Sharma, former Chief Secretary, at Baneshwar Heights on Wednesday. They fled the scene after someone raised alarm in the neighborhood. At least one of the three intruders carried a pistol.

Such incidents are not confined to particu-

lar areas of the capital only. Armed criminals broke in a house at Tahachal around 4 A M last month, took what they wanted to and left with a warning they'd come back after a few days to collect a certain amount of money. Another family in Naya Baneswar was shocked to find their house ripped apart and everything of value taken away when they came back from a trip. This incident occurred around three months ago. The incidents were

**Physical attack and extortion are two very common modus operandi in cases where Maoists and mafia groups are involved. "We cannot possibly check crimes unless Maoists stop these activities since that will make sure that those continuing to commit crimes are with no political links," says a senior police officer**

reported to the police but the culprits are still at large.

The sharp rise in the crime rate contradicts the claims of the Police Chief and the Home Minister that the crime rate is on decline in the capital.

"Is it a political crime? That's what we try to analyse as soon as we get any information," a Police DIG told newsfront, adding, "if it's

suspected that Maoists are remotely involved in it, we keep our hands off". He narrated a series of instances in which the Home Minister directly instructed the Police Chief, that nothing 'that would hamper the peace process should be done', even if that meant turning a blind eye to the crimes; and the message was relayed down the police ranks.

"It is only but natural for criminals feel a bit safe during the transition phase and the crime

trend here is not unusual," said Dhak Bahadur Karki, Superintendent of Police, Kathmandu. But this certainly comes as no assurance to the victims of the crimes.

"In any civilised country ruled by democracy, children's safety and right to education should get the top most priority. If the Government is not able to save children from being traumatised and bullied right in front of the school, no one

will feel safe," said Deep Prakash Pande, Secretary of the Swastha Sikshya Abhiyan, a voluntary organization.

Given the increasing sense of insecurity in the capital, U N and some diplomatic missions are even believed to have unofficially discussed how safe it is to have their family members living in the country. "We have not yet decided anything about it, but safety of our family members is certainly uppermost in our mind and we may have to take appropriate decisions if the crime rate continues at this speed," a UN official said.

Physical attack and extortion are two very common modus operandi in cases where Maoists and mafia groups are involved. "We cannot possibly check crimes unless Maoists stop these activities since that will make sure that those continuing to commit crimes are with no political links," said the DIG who wished to remain unidentified.

Doctors, school operators, business persons and retired bureaucrats seem to be the targets of both groups, according to the information available from the crime investigation department.

Information available suggests there has been a sharp rise in such cases especially during the past four months. And there are still many more cases which have gone unreported,



# Lawless in the SAARC region'

partly because of threats from the criminal groups and partly because people no longer have faith in the police. Others view this situation as a political tool in the hands of the Home Minister. "We feel handicapped at times because of lack of physical infrastructure and professional training," said S P Karki.

Many insiders openly state that absence of inspiring leadership, too much political interference and resulting demoralisation makes reform in the police institution almost impossible. Political interference in the recent days, especially regarding promotion, transfer and unjust denial of opportunities to many deserving candidates seem to be the root causes behind the apathetic condition in the police force. As a result, Kathmandu moves fast forward to claiming the title of, 'the most unsafe capital in the SAARC region'. ■

Police feels handicapped at times because of lack of physical infrastructure and professional training



## Mocking law and order

People today are living under the shadow of intimidation and terror of the Maoists

■ Rajen Wasti

The most worrying concern of all Nepalis today is that the State is failing in its responsibility of protecting the lives and properties of its citizens. Nepal Police has been paralyzed and in a way made a playground of political parties under the captaincy of the Home Minister himself. The low morale of the police force hit by the ten year long conflict has not been looked into by the Government and there has not been any effort to address the concerns of Nepal Police.

In the name of promoting peace process, national law enforcement has become an absolute casualty, but this has hardly bothered the Home Minister. On the contrary he doesn't want any action taken against the Maoists who committed crimes in the past. His explanation is that, doing so could derail the peace process. Thus, no police is allowed to arrest Maoists if they commit crimes like freely attacking others, looting, killing and displaying weapons in public. In this manner, the law enforcement mechanism has not only been demoralized further but been rendered totally useless.

The incumbent Home Minister has focused his attention not on strengthening law and order situation but on humiliating and de-motivating the law enforcement apparatus in the name of promoting peace process. In the whole history of Nepal Police, this Minister takes the cake for undermining the institution and destabilising it to this degree. He has violated the established procedures and broken up the system of career development and proportional placement of police officers. He promoted junior officers who were close to his party again with utter disregard to the established organizational norms and practice.

The security officers who found weapons on frisking the body-guards of Maoists members of parliament were taken action against and were immediately removed from their duty by the command of the Home Minister. This is just one of the many examples of how the Minister has been exploiting his position. When one of the members of the parliament from the Maoists party was found carrying a gun in the House, law enforcement failed to take any action. Home minister again interfered and held back the police from taking any action.

When Maoist cadres marched with arms in Udayapur in uniform, the law enforcement simply reported to their upper echelon and was compelled to stand by and watch. When they badly tortured and beat up Microbus workers in their office in Kupandol, Lalitpur there again was no action from the State. The Home Minister then simply declared, "peace process might derail if you take action against the Maoists for violating the rule of law."

This makes you wonder, peace at what cost and whether it is peace at all. People today are living under the shadow intimidation and terror of the Maoists. Police officers are humiliated by the Maoists cadres in districts and villages. Maoists force them to leave their posts in villages if their presence doesn't help them in anyway. These are just some instances of how law enforcement is an absolute failure today.

The Inspector General, also under the Minister's thumb is unable to raise any issues with the Home Minister. Sycophancy, breaking rules, manipulation of power is just one of the few ways how the Minister and his cohorts are functioning today. Due to the chaos reigning, thousands of trained law enforcement officers are left without a direction and minus genuine leadership at the centre.

And this has led to further deterioration of law and order situation in the country. Crime rates have gone up by leaps and bounds. Gun running is a very common phenomenon in Kathmandu now. House breaking and looting is rampant. A top ex general's house was looted at gun point in Kathmandu recently. This just goes to show how helpless ordinary citizens must be and how insecure they must be feeling in such an environment.

The local law enforcement managers are not held accountable for failing to bring to book the perpetrators of crime. In the name of promoting peace process, law enforcement has been forced to compromise itself to such a pitiful state. It is a mockery of law and order in the country going by the numbers of extortions and looting taking place regularly in the valley and elsewhere. The public who well know how useless the law and order system of the country has become, do not even bother to report such crimes, out of fear of reprisal from the perpetrators of crimes. This increasing anarchy in the country spells out loud and clear, the failure of the Government which just cannot escape the responsibility of protecting its citizens. Talks of constitutional assembly polls in such a situation appear such a farce, a pipe dream. ■

(Wasti is a security analyst)

# Conquering fate

Having learned to accept himself as he is, Amrit Ratna Shakya, 41, is a happy person today



## ■ NF Correspondent

Not being able to walk and being confined to a wheelchair did not deter Amrit Ratna Shakya, 41, from standing on his own feet and prove that a physically challenged person can be an independent person who can contribute to the society. At the age of three when polio affected him and he lost use of both his legs, he began to experience ridicule and discrimination from family members and others alike. "I was merely tolerated and never encouraged by people around me. To spend on me was considered a waste of money and time," said Amrit. With unflagging spirit, he persevered to complete class ten and did one year course in

stitching. Armed with two sewing machines, he began polishing his skill and then decided to teach. "I still recall how excited I was when I first owned an electric machine that I could operate with ease," he said recalling his days of struggle.

Today, 15 years down the line, he owns 20 sewing machines and has 200 students coming in at different shifts throughout the day, from seven in the morning to eight at night. The A.R. Fashion Design & Sewing Institute that he heads in Shree Durbar Tole, Lalitpur, today has a record of having taught around 50,000 students till date where students learn cutting, drafting, and stitching clothes and to create other decorative items. Amrit updates

himself constantly on current fashion trends through the Internet and is quick to adapt his curriculum accordingly.

Supported by a loving wife, he is a father of a teenage son. Brimming with confidence, he has no qualms admitting how inferiority complex used to plague him and how miserable he used to feel when friends and others alike used to mock him and take advantage of his disability. Reviewing his life that has been full of adversity, he remarked that when he was helpless he was someone to be ashamed of but today he is the one who takes care of his joint family. "Now the elders in my family do not worry about me but they worry about the able ones. And my friends marvel at

what I've managed to achieve. Some people find it difficult to believe that a person in wheelchair can do what I've been doing", he said this without a trace of arrogance.

Amrit is also the chairman of Saririk Apang Sanstha (Institute for physically challenged) that fights for the rights of the physically challenged and strives to create awareness about it in the society. "Having suffered a lot myself, I wish to do something for those who are suffering similarly. It pains me to see the discrimination that I faced as a child still exists today. Parents of physically disabled children are ashamed of them and tuck them away in invisible institutions. They send their able children to good

schools but try and find cheapest ones for the disabled ones. This is not fair and I wish to change this attitude that is so common in this society."

Amrit strongly advocates believing in yourself no matter how difficult the circumstances might be and not giving up until you achieve what you set out to do. "I've realized it is much better to struggle and do it on your own than hope or wait for outside support," said the self made man sitting tall and dignified in his chair. Sky being the limit when one is willing to work that hard, he aspires to open a fashion institute in future. Having learned to accept himself as he is, he is a happy person today and free from the opinion of censorious society he was a part of before he found himself. ■

# Post- Revolutionary Rolpa



A village in Rolpa



## ■ Keith D. Leslie

Rural Nepal has an amazing quality of not changing even as the world transforms around it.

I am back from a short trip to Liwang, where the Maoists had their capital during the conflict. The eight hour ride on dirt roads through Dang and Pyuthan districts with views of winter wheat along the Rapti River were breath-taking. Snow fell as we crossed the forested 1800 m. pass above Liwang. Nepal Army outposts surrounded by barbed wire sat sullenly on steep hillocks while policemen at a newly established check-point warmly welcomed us to Rolpa.

As we entered town, a familiar crimson hammer & sickle flag fluttered above the local basketball court. Inspirational images of children in peaceful marches were painted on walls below which Magar women crouched patiently on the damp ground selling their Dokos of oranges.

For all of the past promises, Liwang Bazaar appeared no different from what it

had been for before this People's War. Rough, isolated poverty in a setting of remote beauty, the town appeared quite benign, quiet actually, more like a mountain bus stop than the center of a resurgent communist showplace.

The ironies pre-dominate. For all of the rhetoric of Maoist commitments, the health, sanitation & education facilities appeared unchanged. For all of the past governments' antipathy to the Maoists, their offices remained open in Liwang throughout the war. There appears to have been a mutual agreement that the army would not strike the Maoist stronghold while the Maoists would not attack the Government offices in Liwang.

Little there was on the surface to imply that the politics of Nepal has revolved around the revolutionary fervor of this distant district for the past decade.

Yet, these appearances were also deceiving, as so much appears to be these days in Nepal. Although there were no high-profile signs of the Maoist presence in Liwang, their influence in the district appears to be quite pervasive after ten years of armed struggle.

Behind the softer national image being cultivated in Kathmandu, the local civil society and political leaders we met were united in their common concern that although the structure of the Maoist local governance had begun to be

dismantled, their party people were still in the villages carrying on through intimidation as they had often before.

They had been told by one local Maoist party cadre that "the war is not over, we're just stopping for awhile". They said that some of the PLA soldiers who had been in the district before are still there -- just without their uniforms or visible weapons.

The Comprehensive Peace Accord, we were told, had not yet been internalised by the Maoist cadre, nor been widely understood by most of the people living out in these remote villages. In truth, there had been little public dissemination of this key national peace document by the government, the political parties, the human rights activists or the international development community. It had been signed in Kathmandu and mostly left on the table there.

These local Rolpals explained to us that of the 51 Village Development Committees in the district, the police are only permitted in 7-8. In the rest, the Maoist say, the villagers don't want them to return. Of course, if it's the people themselves or the Maoist cadre, no one can legitimately say. All they said is that in the present circumstances, although the local political situation is slowly getting better compared to the conflict years, there are not yet the necessary conditions for a 'free and fair'

election. Nor do they think that this environment can be created before the June 2007 deadline that has been set.

They shrugged their collective shoulders and said, "Would our distant national party leaders listen to us?" One person said that "if the Maoists don't publicly agree to postpone the planned elections, then a return to conflict was a very real possibility." Clearly, the Seven Party Alliance couldn't make this crucial decision alone.

Not a very encouraging election scenario in the hinterlands. In some ways, rather concerning, especially since none of the major parties or leaders has yet acknowledged that a bad election in June would be worse than a postponed election. But there are only three months before this tryst with destiny for the Nepali people to elect their representatives. Not much time in any country. Particularly, not much time in a country like Nepal with a cultural and physical landscape that slows down, as much as it sanctifies, the natural world around us.

Clearly, there are a few uncertainties ahead, not just out in the isolated Maoist hamlet of Liwang, Rolpa, but for the long-awaited and often promised new Nepal.

(Keith D. Leslie is the Sr. Human Rights Advisor based at the National Human Rights Commission.)





# Sleep well, separately!

Separate sleeping spaces is another manifestation of changing marital patterns

■ TRACIE ROZHON

**Seattle:** Not since the Victorian age of starched sheets and starchy manners, builders and architects say, have there been so many orders for separate bedrooms. Or separate sleeping nooks. Or his-and-her wings. In interviews, couples and sociologists say that often it has nothing to do with sex. More likely, it has to do with snoring. Or with children crying. Or with getting up and heading for the gym at 5:30 in the morning. Or with sending e-mail until well after midnight.

In a survey in February by the National Association of Home Builders, builders and architects predicted that more than 60 per cent of custom houses would have dual master bedrooms by

2015, according to Gopal Ahluwalia, staff vice president of research at the builders association. Some builders say more than a quarter of their new projects already do.

According to the National Sleep Foundation in Washington, 75 per cent of adults frequently either wake up in the night or snore—and many of them have taken to separate beds just for those reasons.

The move to separate sleeping spaces is yet another manifestation of changing marital patterns.

**According to the National Sleep Foundation in Washington, 75 per cent of adults frequently either wake up in the night or snore—and many of them have taken to separate beds just for those reasons.**

“Couples today are writing their own script, rewriting how to have a marriage,” said Pamela J Smock, a University of Michigan sociologist. “The growing need for separate bedrooms also represents the speed-up of family life—women’s roles have changed—and the need for extra space eases the strain on the relationship.”

Nevertheless, Professor Smock said husbands were less willing to change familiar patterns. “Men are supposed to be one, dominant, and two, sexual,” she said. “Their wives might be thrilled to have their own bedroom, and see it as a romantic thing—going back to their romance, going back to dating, to intimacy, but the husband might not see it that way.

No matter what the reasons, architects and builders say they know enough not to call them “master” bedrooms anymore.

“Women are buying more homes, and women are sensitive to that terminology of the ‘master suite,’ and they’re opting for the term ‘owners’ suite,” said Barbara Slavkin, an interior designer in St Louis.

St Louis couple the Peppers agree: separate bedrooms have added spice to their relationship. “It’s more exciting,” Mrs Pepper said, “when you can say: ‘Your room or mine?’”

(New York Times)

■ Suresh Khatta

**MCLEODGANJ:**The Dalai Lama on Sunday sought to bridge a very difficult emotional gap for Tibetans when he praised Chinese President Hu Jintao in his statement on the anniversary of Uprising Day, sending a clear signal that he is willing to look ahead without letting the past come in the way.

“President Hu Jintao’s continued call for a harmonious society is laudable. The basis for the realization of such a society is to foster trust among the people, which can take place when there is freedom of expression, truth, justice and equality. Therefore, it is important that officials at all levels not only take heed, but also implement these principles,” said the Spiritual Leader of the Tibetans in his statement issued on the occasion of the 48th anniversary of the Tibetan people’s uprising.

The Dalai Lama has been more open to talks on regional autonomy and engaging the Chinese leadership towards a peaceful solution. But in praising

Hu, he has sent out a very significant message. Hu is regarded by Tibetans as the most ruthless administrator of the Tibet Autonomous Region. As Party Secretary in the region between 1988 and 1992, he is said to have come down very hard on Tibetan protests.

Tibetans in-exile claim that near 400 peaceful Tibetan protestors were killed by Chinese forces in a span of three days in the early part of his tenure. He quelled the rebellion and that is said to have earned him recognition among the Communist Party ranks. Deng Xiaoping then identified him to be groomed as Jiang Zemin’s successor.

In this backdrop, the Dalai Lama has travelled a fair distance through this statement. It may be recalled that Tibetans came out in large numbers to protest Hu’s visit last year to India.

Expressing concern over the “vilification campaign” launched by the Chinese regime against his people, the Dalai Lama said not all the recent changes in China were negative.

“In 2006 we witnessed both positive and negative changes in

the People’s Republic of China. On the one hand, the hardline position was intensified with a campaign of vilification against us, and more disquietingly, there was heightened political restriction and repression in Tibet. But on the other hand, in China itself, we saw some improvement with regard to the freedom of expression,” he said.

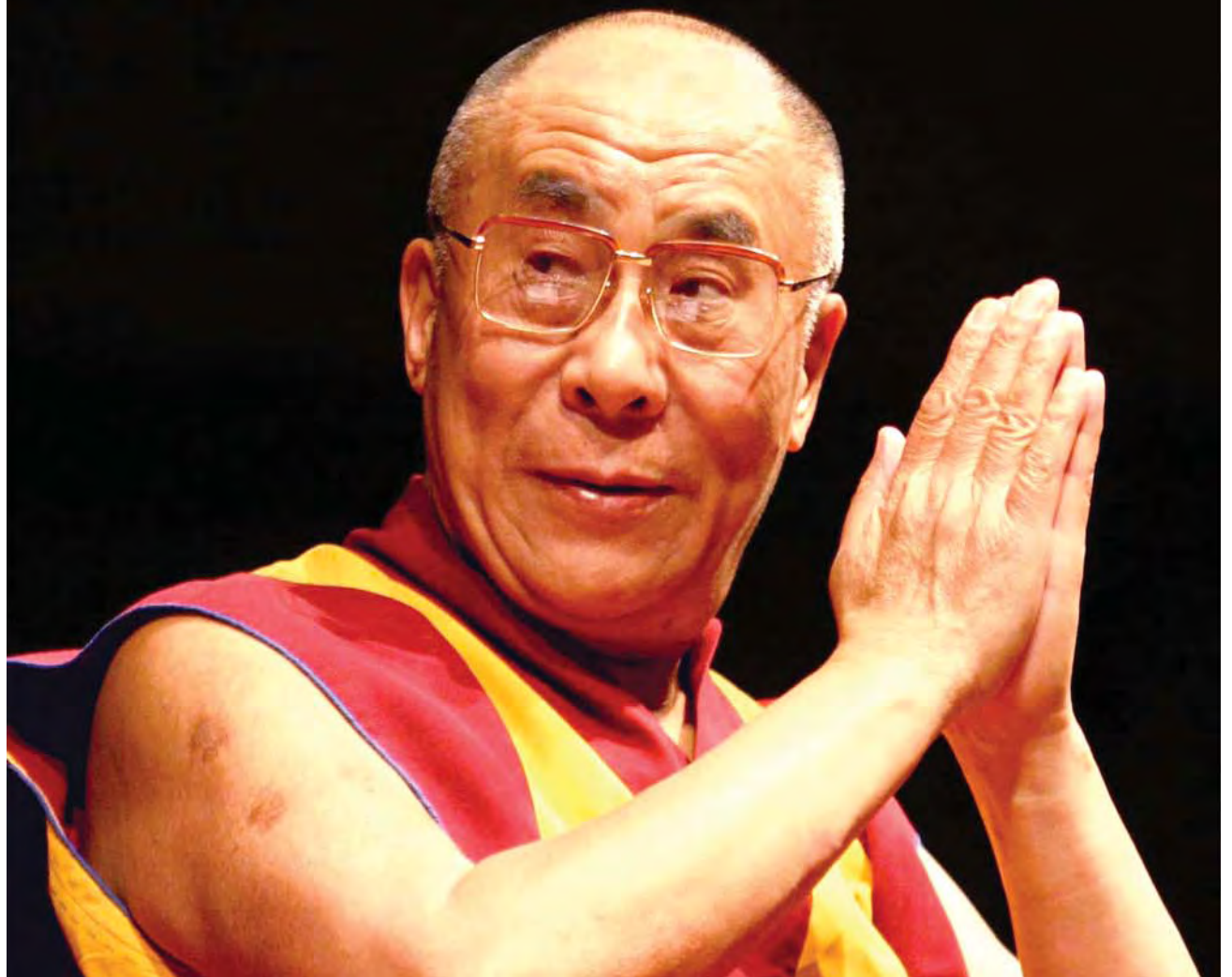
He said there was growing belief in religion in general, and Tibetan Buddhism in particular, and that there were many who wanted him to make a pilgrimage to China and preach there.

Maintaining that the Tibet issue could be resolved through dialogue, the Dalai Lama said the Tibetans and their government-in-exile had adopted a “middle path approach” which would address the immediate and long-term interests of both Tibetans and Chinese.

“In the five rounds of talks with the Chinese that have taken place since 2002, both sides were able to express in clear terms the suspicions, doubts and real difficulties,” he said. “These rounds have helped create a channel of communication between the two sides.”

(The Indian Express)

# Look who’s praising Hu



BRIDGE TECH INTERNATIONAL PVT. LTD.

Bridging Technological Gap

GPO Box: 8449  
Opposite Macchapuchre Bank, Putalisadak, Kathmandu  
Tel: 977-1-4264724 / Fax: 977-1-4263751  
Email: info@bridgetechintl.com Website: www.bridgetechintl.com



Horse ride show by Army Personnel during Ghode Jatra

Nepal is at the crossroads of change in need of new vision, new institutional arrangement and commitment. Changes in the conduct, action and behaviour of political parties, judiciary, security and bureaucracy are preconditions for materialising the much anticipated changes in Nepal. In this context, understanding the role of security sector reform (SSR) is vital to meet the new challenges.

Security sector is one of the fundamental pillars of any state and it has particular importance in the post conflict situation. SSR is a common concept globally used in the post-conflict literatures. It is a process of reforming the organizations having legitimate authority to use or order the use of force such as police, army, paramilitary, local security units, intelligence and other legally defined arrangements. Changing roles, responsibilities and actions of security actors consistent with democratic norms, values and principles of good governance are some of the basic elements of SSR, which Nepal desperately needs at present.

Fundamental principles of SSR are civilian control and parliamentary oversight of security organisations,

right sizing, modernisation of security forces, respecting rule of law and facilitating transition to peace. The aim of SSR is to strengthen the democratic states and institutions based on rule of law. It is a concept of reforming the shortcomings and weaknesses of the existing security sector with new vision and neutrality that demands honest commitments and impartiality from both civilian government and security professionals.

Appropriate trainings - both military and human rights, capacity building and technical competence, mainstreaming security issues into development policy and programmes, delicate balance between confidentiality and transparency, strong co-ordination and operational mechanisms, relationship between military and civilian, building public awareness, strengthening constitutional and legal frameworks, periodic review of performance of security sector and strengthening of independent oversight mechanisms (e.g., public complaint bodies like human rights commission, auditor general, legislative and judicial bodies, etc.) are some of the important elements of SSR that Nepal needs to promote.

SSR is not only related to security aspects but also with social, political, economic, international and development issues. It therefore has to address policy, legislative, international relations; structural and oversight issues set within standard democratic principles and values. The classical security approach mainly focuses on legal monopoly to use the security instruments and security force for safeguarding people and national security specifically to defend against external threats. This conventional state-centric approach of security operation is narrow and ignores modern notion of security that relates with holistic framework of human rights, livelihood security, environmental security, energy security; in other words, broader human security with peoples' rights for dignified life. Hence, democratic governance is a central element of SSR, which is so far seriously lacking in Nepal.

The clause 4.7 of the section four of the Comprehensive Peace Accord has mentioned the democratization of Nepal army and the Article 144 (3 and 4) of the Interim Constitution has stated similar provisions. This means that the new political context has

# Need of Security Sector Reform

The new security policy of Nepal should not be limited to conventional security paradigm practiced by this country and should cover the new paradigm



■ Dr. Bishnu Raj Upreti

envisioned restructuring of the existing army structures. However, neither the Comprehensive Peace Accord nor the Interim Constitution is able to visualize the comprehensive need of SSR which includes holistic approach, i.e., developing national security policy (by complementing international relations, defence policy, economic policy and establishing a supreme and powerful national security council), reforming state's intelligence, restructuring army, civilian police, armed police force and other security apparatus. Isolated efforts on restructuring of one component of security sector alone cannot produce expected results and therefore the need to opt for holistic approach.

Often the need of SSR arises from transition from war to peace, fundamental political changes in a country and unanticipated security related crisis. In any of these situations, important interrelated elements are economic, political, security context, international relation policy and national defence policy of a country. While proceeding for the SSR, Nepal needs to perform step by step actions: firstly, including analysing security sector (prioritising core needs and challenges, identifying weaknesses and constraints

of security sector, and exploring opportunities and potentials). Second step is the formulation of new policy and institutional and legislative framework based on the identified opportunities and potentials. And the third is to include translation of new policy, institutional arrangement and legislative framework into action.

To meet the expectations of state restructuring of Nepalese people requires fundamental reforms of security sector based on redefining existing security policy interwoven with the defence, international and economic policy and human rights standards; social justice and good governance framework and recognition of Nepalese people as the ultimate source of power. Hence, the new security policy of Nepal should not be limited to conventional security paradigm practiced by this country and should cover the new paradigm that includes national defence, international relation, territorial security, human security, environmental security, livelihood security and energy security. This means that SSR has also to incorporate good governance framework, economic and development policy of the state. ■

## Nepali Diaspora



■ Neeraj Pradhan

If you take the "N/R" trains on the NYC subway out to Queens far enough, you'll pop out from under the East River and get a great view of the Midtown skyline. If you stay on further, these trains will eventually lead you to two true gems of New York, Jackson Heights and Astoria.

Queens, one of the five boroughs that make up the city of New York, is very different from what most people come to picture the city of New York as. There aren't many glass skyscrapers, opulent galleries or exotic museums there, nor are there many particular landmarks that strike the newcomer visually. In fact, many of the buildings are of a drab earthy color. Brick and concrete make up most of the structures, and more often than not, grimy

# Queens Magic

The food in Delhi can't compare with some of the Indian restaurants in Jackson Heights

old flyers and posters line street sides and lampposts.

This begs the question: Why on earth would people want to visit there or for that matter live there? Yes, the architecture in Queens is not the greatest in the city, but what this section of the town lacks with its pedestrian and banal skyline, it makes up with its diversity and culture. Indeed, the array of variety that this segment of the city provides is what makes the Queens experience so unique, even by New York's standards.

When you step off of the subway in Astoria or Jackson Heights, you feel as though you're in a different country. Whether you hear immigrants speaking in Arabic or Punjabi, see signs in Hindi, or hear Jamaican music, you are immediately forced to reckon with the maxim that there is no unique New Yorker or American cultural identity.

The textures of different sounds that permeate through Queens might seem as

though they'd be dissonant. Surely a mélange of such drastically different backgrounds would be difficult to assimilate and harmonise?

Wrong. You see people of radically different stock, together. Whether it be a Korean grocery store sharing a stoop with the Pakistani one, or the Vietnamese barber shop balancing atop other mom-and-pop stores by the subway. You see people from different countries in a new country doing what they do, doing it the best they can.

I can attest to the authenticity of the Queens experience. I've eaten Indian food in India before, and the food in Delhi can't compare with some of the restaurants in Jackson Heights. Granted, I haven't traveled around India extensively. However, when in Jackson Heights, the food, stores and the company give the streets of the locals all the legitimacy and cultural identity that any of the main thoroughfares in

Delhi would have.

I didn't discover the grandeur of these enclaves until I'd lived in New York for a while. The tour books guides might mention that Queens is worth checking out, but who has the time or the patience for Queens when there are much more pressing, urgent things to see like the Plaza, Broadway or the Guggenheim? The charm that Queens has to offer is not immediate. It doesn't flash in front of you, jump up and down or sing you a musical number. It's only something that you can appreciate after having gone a few times.

All this tucked away, out of sight for most visitors and newcomers to the city not acquainted with the corners of Queens. There isn't much glamour in there, but there's a whole lot more than meets the eye.

(Neeraj is a student and currently lives in southern California.)

# Architect of Modern Nepali Poetry

■ Sarad Pradhan

The news of demise of the poet Mohan Koirala took me down the memory lane when I interviewed Mohan Koirala. He was 70 and though frail, he was still energetic and optimistic about poetry. "I wrote long poetries like *Suryadan* (The sun gift) and *Lek* (The hilly region) to show people that poetry can be written in prose as well, because earlier some critics were skeptical about the existence of prose poetry," he said.

When the soft spoken poet came into the limelight in late fifties, the stalwarts of the earlier period were still dominating the literary scene and the literary movement like *Tesro Ayam*, was about to make its entry into Nepalese literature. Because of his prolific and inspiring poetic career, he overshadowed some of them and established himself as a one of the leading poets of the modern Nepali poetry.

Often compared with TS Elliot, the fact remains that he never imitated Elliot and he set his own new trend in Nepali poetry which can be justifiably termed modern, both in theme and style. "TS Elliot is a world poet, and his style is different from others. I may have been influenced by him sometimes but I can't say that my whole poetic career has been influenced by him. Since my poetry



**Mohan Koirala set his own new trend in Nepali poetry which can be justifiably termed modern, both in theme and style**

writing is about to complete fifty years, how can I say I have been influenced by him all over these years. My poems like *Suryadan* and *Nadi Kinarka Majhi* (Boatmen of the River bank) have Nepali themes and conception....," said he, refuting all allegations.

His book *Nadi Kinarka Majhi* was awarded the prestigious Madan Puraskar in 1982; and he received Sajha Puraskar twice for his books, *Mohan Koirala ka kavitaru* and *Ritu Nimantrana*.

"His (Koirala's) thematic range is

wide, from the nature of man and woman, life to death, darkness and light or in short, different facets of life to an anxiety for his age and society. In development as a poet, one can discern his constant experiments, his understanding of poetry primarily as the exploration of the possibilities of the language.....," wrote critic and historian Dr Kumar Pradhan in his book *A history of Nepali Literature*.

"Just writing poetry in the modern theme doesn't make a poem modern", said Koirala during the interview, "There should be new philosophy and thinking about the subject." More than hundred poems of Mohan Koirala have been published *Mohan Koirala ka kavitaru*, *Sarangi Bhokeko Samundra* (Ocean carrying lute) *Himalchuli Raktim* (Reddish Himalayan), *Nadi Kinarko Majhi*, *Ritu*

*Nemantrana*, *Paplar ko pat* (leaf of Paplar), etc.

Lastly, in his memory, a quote from one of his poems:

*A newspaper that relives daily, without registration  
And bereft of an editor – that' me  
A Notice, and an ad, a communiqué of the day  
A bulletin printed anew,  
A story short-lived as a wrapper of a bundle of bread,  
Some poster-blocks of an attractive movie  
That's what I am. ■*

## Ganja has toxins that damages the brain nerves



**Ragina Shah's counseling on impact of drug and addiction**

**Is it okay to smoke Ganja (Marijuana) occasionally, like on Holi festivals or the Shivaratri day?**

Manish Sijapati,  
Dhumbarahi

The answer is no. It is not advisable to smoke Ganja occasionally or regularly because there are 400 chemicals in Ganja smoke. 60 of these have been proven to cause cancer. Ganja also contains a toxin that damages the nerves in the brain and the body.

Ganja is the most easily available drug that can be bought anywhere and everywhere in our country. There exist much misconceptions regarding Ganja. Some think it's better than tobacco but the fact is that it is equally dangerous. In Hindu culture, Ganja is taken as Prasad from Lord Shiva and so some devotees of the deity and many youngsters think that smoking Ganja is cool. But it is not. Ganja is a deadly drug. When you smoke Pot (Ganja), two things happen: one, there is an immediate burn up of vitamins and minerals in the body and two, the nerves in the body go numb. This numbness is also used as a means to escape from the reality. Occasional use turns into an addiction without much effort since Pot smokers don't get as high easily but they do end up feeling worse at the end of it, once the effect wears off. Once used to it, the body reacts by signaling pain, discomfort or uneasiness and

gradually, it turns into an addiction.

**My son always says that he will quit his drug habit on his own and he does not need to go to a rehab center. What do you suggest?**

Sapana Shrestha, Chabahil

Only a very small percentage of drug addicts are able to quit on their own. Addiction is an end result of problems in attitudes, personality rooted in fear, insecurity and low self esteem. Thus, we have to get professional help to treat addiction that makes our life unmanageable and spins it out of control. We have to be able to change our attitude, habits and behaviour first. We have to admit our powerlessness over the disease and work accordingly which helps us to accept ourselves as we are.

Your son is probably in denial about the seriousness of the problem and not realizing the massive effects it has on all aspects of his life. He is not able to rationalize to his full capacity and find effective solutions for his problem. The solution, I'd suggest is to seek professional help for his disease, as soon as possible. ■

**Queries related to addiction of any kind can be addressed to: [newsfront@bhrikuti.com](mailto:newsfront@bhrikuti.com) or [newsfront@gmail.com](mailto:newsfront@gmail.com). Outstanding issues will be short listed and dealt with by Therapist Ragina Shah.**

Insight

## Not beyond redemption

■ Sushma Amatya



A Nepali lady was not taken aback when a man she was introduced to at a party, after she introduced herself as a Sherpa, said, "How many kilos of weight can you lift when trekking?" Her reply was a cool, "As much as you weigh," that got the man to shut up. This and other similar remarks towards Nepalis reek of preconceived notions and disparaging attitude.

Most Nepalis, including myself have been irked by unwanted comments while visiting countries abroad; unthinking remarks by people who are so quick to jump to conclusions, to judge immediately. The lady, proud of her lineage just didn't fancy her surname Sherpa to be treated as a synonym for porters. She and many other Nepalis living abroad would like themselves to be identified by the contribution they are making to the society they are living in, by their expertise, capability and not mere presumptions that all Nepalis are only security guards or porters, with due respect to the profession.

It's tiresome to have to endure the popular unarticulated misconception that every Nepali face reflects a begging bowl. This may reflect a part but not the whole of the picture. Nepal used to be known for its honest, trust-worthy, peace loving and hard working people. Though poor, it then appeared add a halo to the saintly non-materialistic image.

About 15 years ago Nepalis could get their visas on arrival at the airport in Germany. Today it's one of the most difficult places for Nepalis to get into. Though China welcomes Nepali tourists to its mainland, they need transit visas to step outside Hongkong airport. Other kinds of visas are usually denied to Nepalis. A Nepali businessman recently said he'd never again try for a visa for HKG, having been refused seven times. Nepali domestic workers are viewed skeptically in India today when once they used to be an example of integrity.

Have we ever stopped to wonder how we succeeded in creating such an image in the international arena? Do we know how many illegal Nepali immigrants live across the globe? How many of the 'intelligent', 'educated' section of those who go on junkets, educational tours, sports events, representing their country do not come back and get 'lost' in the host country? How does that reflect on other Nepalis who respect their identity?

After 1996 when conflict came here to stay, there were waves of political asylum seekers who were granted refuge but not all of them were genuine political victims. Earlier, the Gulf countries in acknowledgment of Nepali

workers' honesty and hard work were quite liberal in granting visas but it began to be used by other South Asian nationals who by purchasing Nepali citizenship began to exploit this means of gaining access to the countries. Soon, the liberal attitude had to be changed to the disadvantage of genuine Nepali workers.

Buying a Nepali citizenship appears to be easier than buying a lottery especially these days when the process of giving out citizenship appears to be steeped in corruption. Handing out citizenship at a price highly endangers national security and for this very reason 300 lawyers petitioned against the flawed populist system when citizenships are being distributed generously, and certainly not only to the Nepalis.

Due to this lack of policy and sensitivity on the Government's part, a large section of the population is getting increasingly insecure. Citing lack of security, several retired and some serving army personnel have relocated abroad along with their families. Due to corruption again, there are large scale irregularities in DV lottery system and many people lured by fake 'agents' find themselves minus large sums of money and the lottery.

Rampant corruption in the country, apathetic law and order are equally responsible for the increase in the legal and illegal 'flights' of Nepalis. Increasing shamelessness among the 'educated' and 'elites' not having any qualms about stretching out hands to hold large begging bowls and then misusing it has further distorted the already ugly image.

Unless and until the notion of nation and nationhood develops among the Nepalis and each Nepali understands and internalises that he/she is responsible for the image of the country, the image of Nepalis will continue to receive more battering. To redeem the image calls for self respect and having courage to say no to corruption.

Till the time when all Nepalis realise the importance of upholding the pride of Nepal, other worthy Nepalis who are making large scale, outstanding contributions to Nepal and to their host countries, toiling day and night in various areas of work, will continue to remain eclipsed by their negative counterparts that far outweighs the positive. We need living martyrs in this country who have learned the importance of sacrificing the demons inside one's own self first, to resurrect our collective identity. This is something only we can do. No need to beg to improve, no need for outside help to change for the better. ■

# James Brown laid to rest



James Brown, the "Godfather of Soul" who died on Christmas Day, has been entombed at a private family ceremony presided over by the Rev. Al Sharpton, the minister's office said in a statement.

Brown, who died in Atlanta at the age of 73 on December 25, was laid to rest in a temporary place pending the completion of a public mausoleum in an as-yet undisclosed location, Sharpton's office said.

Local media reports said the singer's body was placed in a crypt at Beech Island, South Carolina, where one of his daughters lives.

Brown's children, close friends and other family members were with Sharpton and other clergy.

"The children used their own funds to pay for their father's entombment so that their father could be put to rest without further delay," Sharpton, who was a friend of

Brown, said in the statement.

Brown had left "a substantial estate and substantial holdings which are currently being disputed in court," and Brown's children "wanted to see their father entombed in a resting place without delay, rather than await court decisions," he said. The body had been kept in a temperature-controlled room at Brown's home in South Carolina in the bronze and gold-plated coffin used for his funeral in Augusta, Georgia, on December 30, a funeral director told Reuters in January.

Brown's music, with its staccato horns and guitars and his often explosive vocals, brought funk into the mainstream and has influenced pop and dance music since the 1950s. Hip-hop artists revere him, often using his beats in their own songs.

(Sydney Morning Herald)



Tabu and Irfan Khan in a scene from Namesake

# A foot in two worlds

The Namesake is an understated picture that draws a viewer completely into the world it presents

Family life and the immigrant experience are the focus of Mira Nair's engaging film, *The Namesake*. The movie, which skips between Calcutta and New York, is based on the bestselling novel by Jhumpa Lahiri.

In Calcutta, a marriage is arranged between Ashima (Bollywood star Tabu) and Ashoke (Irfan Khan), a young engineer who has moved to America. Seen through Ashima's eyes, the couple's move to New York -- in winter -- is a cultural slap in the face, but she slowly adjusts to this new culture while simultaneously maintaining the old. It's a balancing act conveyed with gentle humour, but Ashima's confusion and isolation come through loud and clear.

Eventually, Ashima and Ashoke have a son and a daughter and make a move to a suburban neighbourhood. As time passes, the focus of the film turns to the son, Gogol Ganguli (Kal Penn), who is determined to be 100% American.

Gogol and his sister are typical teenagers and keen to dodge their parents' old-world, old-fashioned influences.

Gogol (named after the Russian novelist) studies to become an architect and moves into adult life in Manhattan seemingly shed of all traces of his parents' culture.

Certainly, he doesn't understand the significance of his name or how his father came to give him a name he can't wait to change.

His girlfriend (Jacinda Barrett) is a sophisticated New

Yorker; she is also clueless about anything outside her own culture. Her encounters with Gogol's family are as cringe-inducing as you'd expect, but Nair has a delicate touch in all this, and the elements of cultural clash are subtle and often humorous.

Family tragedy leads Gogol back to his roots and eventually to a South Asian woman, but that's not a solution either. *The Namesake* is about the experience of being caught between two cultures, never feeling fully at home in either. It's also a film about family. Gogol and his sister are raised to maintain the connection with family in Calcutta while also growing up with an enviable collection of "aunties" and "uncles" in the extended family his parents create in America. The story shows how much is lost in one generation.

*The Namesake* is an understated picture that draws a viewer completely into the world it presents. As the parents, actors Tabu and Irfan Khan give the sort of superb performances that carry the film over any weak spots, and Kal Penn is so good as Gogol that it's hard to believe he's best known for *Harold & Kumar Go To White Castle*.

Nair presents India, Calcutta especially, with fantastic colour and beauty and activity. America looks somewhat bleak in comparison. It seems safe to assume that's not a mistake.

(Toronto Sun)

Special Offer

## Subscribe Samay & Newsfront weekly in Discount Rate

Duration	Actual Rate (Rs.)	After Discount (Rs.)	Joint Subscription (Rs.)
Three yr	3750	2800	5300
Two yr	2000	1900	3600
One yr	1250	1000	1900
6 Month	625	550	1050

समय  
राष्ट्रिय साप्ताहिक

newsfront

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