



Courage & Conviction

# newsfront

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**Zero Tolerance** : Supporters of pro-maoist teachers group blocking an army school bus with students inside. More than 35 thousand schools with around 7.8 million students all over the country have been paralysed for a week following a strike called by the pro-Maoist teachers group which imposed a day-long Bandh in the capital on Sunday.

Nira Saphota

## Targeting Diplomats

### Maoists only confirm US Ambassador's worst fears.

■ **nf correspondent**

Maoist leadership has been vehemently defending any attacks, be it verbal or physical on US officials or property, but the one on Ambassador Moriarty and UNHCR Representative, Rahman Rahman at Damak on Friday might prove to be very costly.

The incident also exposes the government of Nepal for its failure to give necessary protection to diplomats serving in the country.

Ambassador Moriarty, in company of Rahman Rahman, had gone to the UNHCR office to meet the camp officials after announcing that the US would be giving twenty million dollars to the World Food Programme (WFP) meant for the refugees. "We had no inkling they would pelt

stones," a senior police official told newsfront confirming that the headquarter had prior information of possible black flag demonstration.

Embarrassed by the event and the international flak it might attract, Home Minister K P Sitaula spoke to the Police Chief asking that culprits be arrested and punished at any cost. The government's embarrassment only increased since the media representatives, especially the camera persons waiting at the UNHCR office provided detailed accounts with video footages of the violent protest where almost every person is identifiable.

The local police office, under instruction from Kathmandu, made the first arrest over the incident around mid-night, and three more in the next

twenty four hours. But the Foreign Ministry sources anticipate that it would not be considered enough.

It is not known whether the UNHCR representative and or Moriarty have sent any 'diplomatic note' which means placing on record the event demanding necessary actions. Even without that, the government will be answerable to both UN as well as the US government for the attack on the diplomats concerned.

Maoists had once even demanded that Moriarty should be recalled for his 'blatant' interference in internal politics of Nepal. Subsequently, Maoist Chief Prachanda also made a public statement that the palace was hatching a plot to kill some US officials and put the blame on the Maoists, but when Moriarty challenged him to

provide evidence to authorities, he backed out.

It is not yet known whether PM Koirala has taken up the issue with Prachanda since he is in charge of the YCL; but the attack is being condemned by a much wider political spectrum.

YCL has many Maoist combatants who are meant to be in the designated cantonments. It also has people like Dilip Maharajan who has publicly acknowledged having killed former Armed Police Force Chief in January 2002.

Incidentally, the Damak attack comes barely forty eight hours after Prachanda asked the YCL leadership to behave responsibly and not do anything that goes against the code of conduct. ■

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# Eye-wash

## Yet another farce in the name of Inquiry Commission

■ nf correspondent

The G P Koirala government constituted what it calls a high-level judicial commission to probe into loss of lives and property in Terai and has packed the commission with Home Ministry officials. This smacks more of manipulation than government's sincere intention to extract the truth.

The cabinet meeting chaired by Koirala on Friday appointed Supreme Court Judge, Khilraj Regmi as the Head of the 5-member Commission with Deputy Attorney General, Rajnarayan Pathak; Siraha District Court Judge, Sahadev Bastola; Deputy Head of the National Investigation Department, Sukhchandra Jha and Eastern Region Deputy Inspector General of Police, Rabindra Pratap Shah - as members.

The commission will have one month to investigate and recommend action against those involved. While the government has secured the consent of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Dilip Poudel, for entrusting the responsibility of the probe to Justice Regmi, other members were appointed by Koirala on recommendation of Home Minister Sitaula, the person whose resignation is the pre-condition set by some Madeshi agitation groups.

There are clear signs that the commission would be acting under executive, especially under the Home Minister's guidance and control since at least two of his trusted Home Ministry officials, Shah and Jha have been inducted as the members. Apparently, Shah as Eastern Region DIG may have to face the probe himself since the first killing during



the Terai movement took place on January 19 in Lahan. "We will accept only a free and fair probe", Madheshi Janadhikar Forum leader Upendra yadav told newsfront over the phone.

Secondly, there are fears that continuation of Sitaula as Home Minister and Om Bikram Rana and Basudeb Oli as Chiefs of Nepal Police and the Armed Police Chief respectively might influence the

course of investigation as the Home Ministry's handling of the situation has largely been criticised by many parties as one of the principal causes of Terai flare up.

"The composition and conduct of the commission has to be above board," Minendra Rizal, leader of the Nepali Congress (Democratic) told newsfront. Sitaula had suspended the chiefs of Nepal Police and the

APF, along with other seven senior officials when the government appointed Rayamajhi Commission to probe into excessive use of force and government money to suppress the movement for democracy that saw loss of 21 lives last year. His argument was that their continuation in the post might influence the course of investigation. The Terai movement has taken a toll of 60 lives so far. ■

## Salvaging Melamchi Mahat softens Prachanda

■ nf correspondent

There are still some chances that Melamchi water project could be saved, but the Maoist Minister Hishila Yami is desperately looking to save her face. And if speculations in the Maoist camps are correct, the Severn Trent International (STI) could well provide her with it, by quitting on its own.

Yami did not press for review of the government's earlier decision to award the contract of drinking water supply for Kathmandu to STI during the cabinet meeting on Friday although she had sent a note for the purpose. Prime Minister G P Koirala asked Yami and other ministers not to speak in favour of or against the Melamchi project in public for some time and iron out the differences on the matter.

The Maoist flexibility on the issue follows a quiet meeting between Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat and Maoist leaders Prachanda and Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, brokered by congress parliamentarian Amaresh Singh on Thursday evening. Mahat is believed to have explained that Asian Development Bank withdrawing from the project as a result of government 'defaulting' on the question of awarding contract to STI would mean many international donors blacklisting Nepal. Moreover, exploring alternatives to STI, the lone bidder for the valley water supply, may result in escalation of the project cost by



several million dollars.

The meeting which has been kept a guarded secret so far, saw Prachanda a bit toned down as he assured Mahat that, "although we have taken a stand on the matter, I will get back to you after consulting with my party colleagues." Prachanda had earlier met an ADB representative as well. Prachanda subsequently announced that he is not opposed to ADB and that his party and ADB could work together.

Yami not insisting for review of the STI-contract related proposal in the cabinet meeting on Friday appears to be the direct result of the Prachanda-Mahat meeting.

"I think the project will go ahead undisturbed now," Amaresh Singh told newsfront. But what happens now to Hishila Yami, is a question

being debated in political circles. She has been firmly resisting signing the contract with STI saying, "It is a notorious company chased away from several other countries." But what comes as a solace to her is the fact that the British government or the embassy have not been pressurising the government here to award the contract to STI.

During a meeting with Finance Minister Mahat last week, Ambassador Andrew Hall is believed to have said he would not advise the STI to insist for the award given the prevailing situation. "If that happens, that would be a great face saving for Yami," a government official said, adding, that would pave the way for looking at other potential companies.

## Army for democracy ?

### Belatedly, PM sees only virtue in Nepal Army

■ nf correspondent

PM Koirala hardly responded when Maoist Chief Prachanda used his official residence to charge that Nepal Army was nothing but, "a bunch of corrupt and rapists."

A year down the line, with army more cornered than ever before, Koirala has now started to sing virtues of Nepal Army. "It is a great army and people need to dispel their wrong impressions about it," Koirala said while inaugurating a Rehabilitation Centre built by the Nepal Army at Ichangu Narayan on Friday.

"Nepal Army apart from maintaining law and order, defended country's integrity in difficult times. It is also committed to defending the fundamental rights and democratic values," Koirala, who also holds the defense portfolio, said. His torrent of praise of the army comes at a time when not only the Maoists, but his own party ministers have still been treating the army as a tool of 'political regression.'

Koirala's praise comes in the wake of top brass army officials questioning the PM the justification of unilaterally investigating alleged excesses by the 'Nepal Army' during the years of conflict, but not that of the Maoists.

The government has also been delaying appointing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as pledged by the government and the Maoists through the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) way back in November.

TRC is supposed to be investigating excesses committed both by the



state and the Maoists during the years of conflict and recommend appropriate actions against the culprits. The Rs 90 million project envisages providing medical treatment and imparting skills and vocational training to army personnel, their families and other civilians to make them economically independent.

"There are questions being asked on whose side Nepal Army stands. The army is present everywhere from roads to hospital construction. All doubts should be erased about the army now," he said. Interestingly, there was no participation from the Ministry of Home or other security agencies during the function. ■



News Brief

## YCL rampage

Young Communist League is not only terrorising and attacking people it is also acting like a kangaroo court which Maoists say they have shut-down. YCL activists are now giving 'instant' justice and imposing penalties that include imposing fine on those they declare 'guilty'.

On Friday, YCL activists gate crashed at Samata School in Jorpati, and slapped its founder, Uttam Sanjel on face which was seen by the public. The activists also left a notice in the school asking Sanjel to pay Rs 5,700 as penalty to YCL. He was held guilty for defying the school shut-down call by the pro-Maoist teachers. Sanjel, apparently terrified, refused to talk about the incident with newsfront.

In yet other glaring examples of YCL highhandedness, its cadres issued written 'instructions' to shut-down an adult education center in capital's Manamajju area, but the locals stiffly resisted the anti-education dictates of the League.

## GPK defeated

Prime Minister Koirala is not quite used to accepting defeat. He tries to win every political battle by hook or crook. But this time around, he lost badly when Nepal Vidhyarthi Sangh, a student wing of the Nepali Congress, elected Pradeep Poudel with thumping majority despite Koirala having thrown his weight behind another candidate, Badri Poudel.



The shocking defeat was all the more humiliating for Koirala as he could not engineer victory of his 'choice' this time like he managed to ensure victory of Ambika Basnet as Chairperson of Nepal Mahila Sangh, the party's women's wing, last month.

An overwhelming majority of the students opted against the official candidate giving Poudel 830 votes in a multi-cornered contest. Koirala's hatred for Gagan Thapa and the latter's insistence that he would contest for the student wing leadership's post had resulted in the postponement of election about two years ago. Thapa did not contest for the leadership in the Chitwan conclave, but whole-heartedly supported Poudel. After all, in politics, an enemy's enemy is a friend.

## Fuel drought

Thanks to government's repeated promises and its appetite for breaking them, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has slashed fuel supply to Nepal resulting in most petrol pumps in the capital running dry.



Even the ones run by army, Armed Police Force and the Nepal Police that have very limited reserves have stopped giving petrol to people who do not belong to their organisations. If the parched tanks are not replenished soon, vehicular movement might just come to a standstill, a Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) source told newsfront.

Commerce Minister Rajendra Mahato said a sum of Rs one billion will be paid to IOC requesting unobstructed supply of fuel to Nepal. The amount constitutes nearly one fifth of the arrears due, to the company. There are clear indications that the government might soon be hiking the price of petrol to around Rs 80 to minimise the loss for its having to buy petrol at a higher price from IOC and selling it at a much lower rate of Rs 67 at present.

## Speaker's dilemma

Old loyalty dies hard. That is what is being exhibited by Speaker Subhash Nembwang now. Conferred with the duty as a Speaker to run the House fairly and impartially, many expected him to at least summon the session and then adjourn it, if unruly scenes were repeated. But in the last few days, he has just been issuing notices that the House has been adjourned.



This has raised many eye-brows but many members already have the answer why. CPN-UML, the party that the Speaker belongs to, has made things difficult for him by issuing whip to its members including those from Terai to let the House run. Any defiance of the party whip by the members once the House is assembled naturally merits action under parliamentary rule. However, Nembwang has saved the UML members by adjourning the House through advance notices.

■ nf correspondent

# Unfazed

Maoists may be terrorists for U S Government, but not for Jimmy Carter

■ nf correspondent

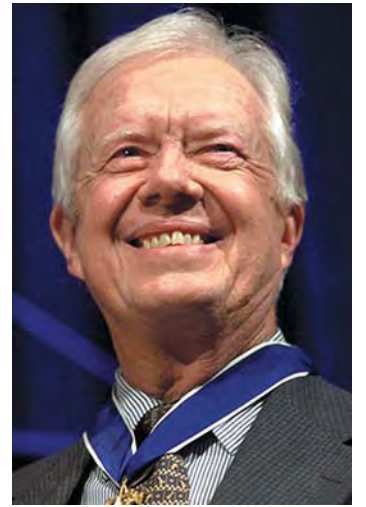
Former U S President Jimmy Carter has saved his statesman's image often at the cost of his own country. But his impending visit to Nepal is likely to surpass all that. During his three day visit beginning June 13, he is likely to meet Maoist Chief Prachanda, the person who figures as a terrorist in the State Department's list.

Entertaining a 'terrorist outfit and its head' is something normally avoided by those who have held high offices. But as Carter Center here has confirmed that the former President is keen to have a meeting with Prachanda, the embassy's involvement as such could be restricted to extending courtesies and protocol formalities.

It is understood the US embassy will provide administrative and other support for the former President while Carter Center oversees the substance of his visit. President Carter, who frequently has criticised his successors'

foreign policies, may meet the Maoist leadership, even though the Maoists remain on the US government's terrorist list. While this cannot make the United States government happy, it most likely will not be a surprise either. There has been no word as yet from the embassy here on the visit.

Carter Center has been taking lot of interest on the conflict in Nepal and even wrote to King Gyanendra, way back in April 2002, offering its expertise and services to resolve the conflict. While the Center could not get any response at that time, a team of about a dozen representatives from the Center a couple of months ago, was told by Maoist Chief Prachanda that his party would appreciate a much bigger team of observers from the Center when the election to the constituent assembly takes place. The team headed by former U S diplomat Peter Burleigh was also told that the Center's team of observers should have at least 80 people, if



not more.

Just like week, Carter had criticised British Prime Minister Tony Blair for supporting President Bush on Iraq asserting that the world would be seeing the US differently today if Blair had opposed the war on Iraq. Carter, the U S President between 1976 and 1980, has also been meeting Hamas leaders embarrassing the U S government. Carter visited India as the President in January 1978, but visited Nepal only in November 1985, years after his second bid to the White House suffered a set-back.

He had to cancel his scheduled visit to Nepal in early May following confusion over the tussle between the King and the pro-democracy forces in the country.



Nihal Sapkota

# For bright future

■ Jyoti Devkota

The 5 day long second edition of Ambition 2007, an exclusive mega education and career expo that concluded Sunday saw more success than last year. More than 80 thousand students visited the expo, Naresh Raj Pokharel, coordinator of 'Ambition 2007' said.

In a short span of time, Ambition has established itself as a center catering to all career and educational demands of the country. In the expo, more than two dozen educational institutes offered courses ranging from journalism, fashion, chartered accountancy,

management, medical education, arts to biotechnology and many more.

There were three hundred educational consultancies that provided counseling to students for studies abroad. The expo focused on helping students in their college hunt, providing them a forum where they could find answers to all their questions and where they could find guidance in determining their career.

Apart from academic institutions, over a dozen study and career consultations were present in the expo to help students choose the right university and subjects. "I am here to find a good institute abroad,"

Shova Shrestha said. Every year thousands of students go aboard seeking a bright future. "We are giving free counseling here for those who wish to study in a film school in India" said Sandeep Sharma, General Manager of NIILM School of Business in India.

The consultancy services help students prepare for tests like IELTS, TOEFL, SAT and GRE which are important measuring tools for gaining admissions in international universities. "We hope this event helped those who were seeking quality education, good jobs and careers," Pokharel said. ■





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**Point to Ponder**

“Water is life’s matter and matrix, mother and medium. There is no life without water.”

- Albert Szent-Gyorgyi

# Capital dehydration

Free flow of water from Melamchi to dehydrated Kathmandu, has long been promised but not delivered by governments who have come and gone. A ray of hope sparkled when the Melamchi project actually started and the successive government managed to secure commitment from ADB as the lead financier.

The royal regime caused many hiccups to the project when the King took an interest in it in a quest for personal vendetta against the then Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba who was sacked and arrested on corruption charges involving the project. Then, the international donors, suspecting that the King’s intentions were not fair, withdrew from the project. It came back only after the seven party government backed by Maoists returned to power last year.

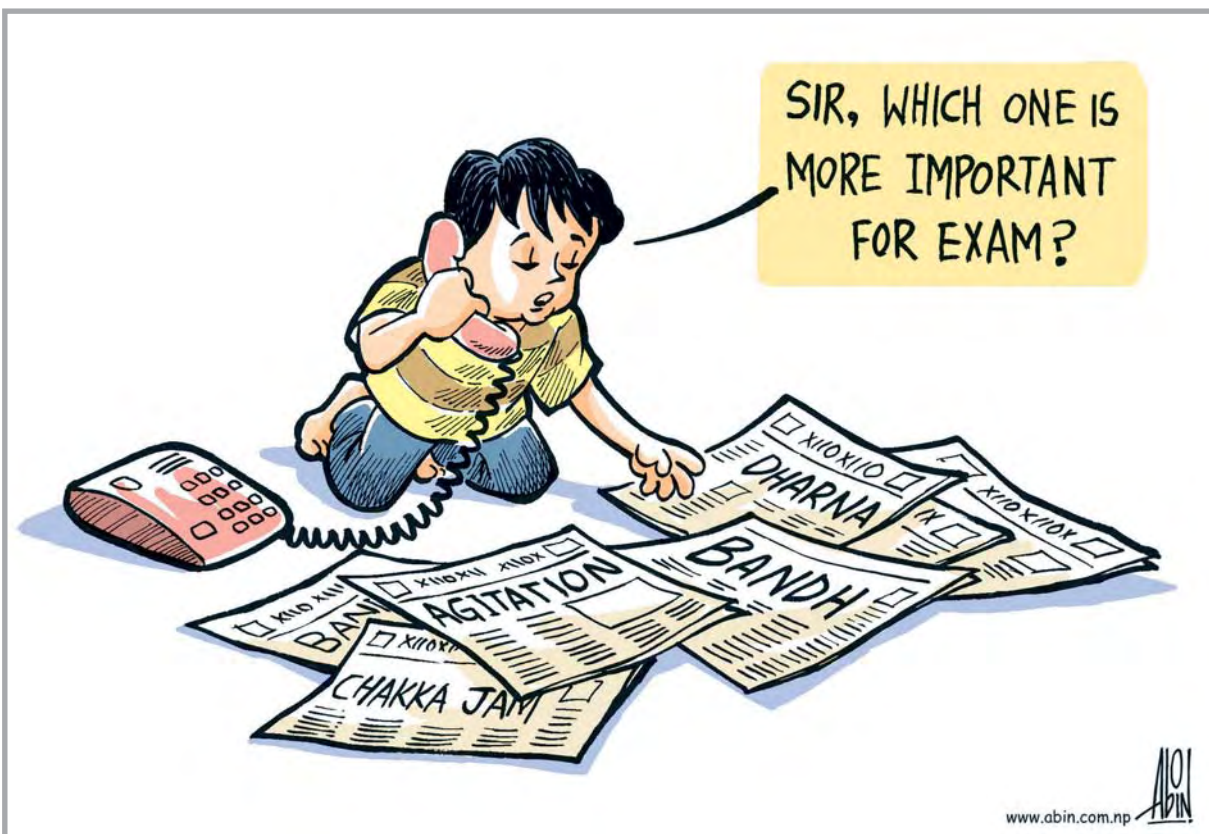
Giving responsibility of distribution of drinking water to the capital to a private company in a fair and transparent manner, as a more efficient substitute to the present arrangement under the government, pending completion of the Melamchi project, was a condition set by the ADB and agreed to by the government.

Renewed hopes that the return of democracy would see the people’s thirst quenched, are being belied since Hisila Yami, the Physical Infrastructure and Housing Minister appears to be following the King’s footsteps. She is determined not to sign the agreement for valley water supply with Severn Trent International which won the contract legally. ADB appears all set to withdraw from the project as a result of PM Koirala not being able to honour his own decision. Moves like these virtually make the country a defaulter and discredits it internationally.

Minister Yami is right when she says that there should be transparency in awarding of contracts and only companies with reputation of being clean and efficient should be given responsibility of managing essential services. This however has to be a government policy and should not rest on mere whim of a minister. She has to follow certain ways and processes to influence government to formulate such policies in future. But arbitrarily flexing muscles and derailing previously agreed projects would only invite trouble that she cannot surmount.

The Melamchi controversy has now invited some bizarre developments like ADB’s senior officials directly negotiating with the Maoist leader, Prachanda. This nearly makes him an extra-constitutional leader capable of undoing the government’s decisions.

In the case of Melamchi, Koirala has to be fully answerable to the parliament and to the people of Kathmandu on whether the project would be abandoned under the dictates of a minister or he would implement it as per the pledge he has made to the nation. He would be losing all his relevance and moral authority if he cannot convince his minister and instead get overruled by her.



## Letters

### Save heritage

It is encouraging that Kathmandu - by sheer chance - has prevented itself from inclusion in the category of World Heritage Sites in Danger (Issue 16). However, the capital’s rate of urbanisation and public apathy will undermine the achievements. A complete lack of coordination between the tourism board, ministry of local development, municipalities and wards to preserve the heritages sites is evident.

For instance, take Kathmandu Durbar Square and its vicinity, which has become congested due to traffic, vendors and also has become a frequent platform for political parties. The traffic police have put a ‘no-entry’ sign for all traffic towards Hanuman Dhoka area but they cannot enforce this simple rule. Every evening, the square becomes crowded with hawkers and consumers who litter the areas adjoining the heritage sites.

Similarly, dilapidated roads from Dharma Path to Jhochhen and from Om Bahal to Lagan Tole are inconvenient to locals and tourists alike. The government, which is ostensibly sitting on unused funds, should invest on city roads that enhance the image of the localities. While farcical traffic weeks are observed each year, wouldn’t it be a good idea to relocate the hawkers from New Road to Brikuti Mandap so that pedestrians can actually walk on the sidewalks and not on roads? This would automatically reduce over-crowding and save everybody both time and money. The big question is: who is going to take these bold steps?

Shyamal Shrestha  
Kathmandu

### Protect forests

The editorial on timber trade is highly relevant in the



present context.

Minister of Forest and Soil Conservation, Matrika Yaadav has said that if the Home Minister helped, more and more red sandalwood smugglers could be captured. It has been crystal clear from his remark that the higher-ups including ministers seem to be primarily involved in supporting smuggling of forest products and biodiversity overexploitation.

The Forest Minister’s statement clearly indicates protection of smugglers from high places and a strong nexus between the criminals, police, politicians and others. It is not a new thing. The news of amnesty granted by the government in the past to rhino poachers is still fresh in our minds.

Maoists are protecting cadres who are clearing off community forests and smuggling precious natural products like Yarshagumba. Be it Maoists or any parties, there seems sheer negligence on biodiversity related issues.

Sadly, natural resources has been the most neglected aspect in this naturally rich country. High level politicians need to be aware of the value of the forests and biodiversity; and know that if the last tree is cut and the last river is polluted, our survival will be threatened. So, please take protection of natural resources seriously.

B K Dalit, President  
Team for Nature and Wildlife, Kathmandu

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

newsfront@bhrikuti.com

## Spiritual Corner

### I celebrate myself

Walt Whitman (1819 – 1892) was born in the West Hills of Long Island, New York. Young Walt, the second of nine children, was withdrawn from public school at the age of eleven to help support the family. At the age of twelve he started to learn the printer’s trade, and fell in love with the written and printed word. He was mainly self-taught. He read voraciously, and became acquainted with Homer, Dante, Shakespeare and Scott early in life. He knew the Bible thoroughly, and as a God-intoxicated poet, desired to inaugurate a religion uniting all of humanity in bonds of friendship.

### Extracts from Walt Whitman’s poetries :

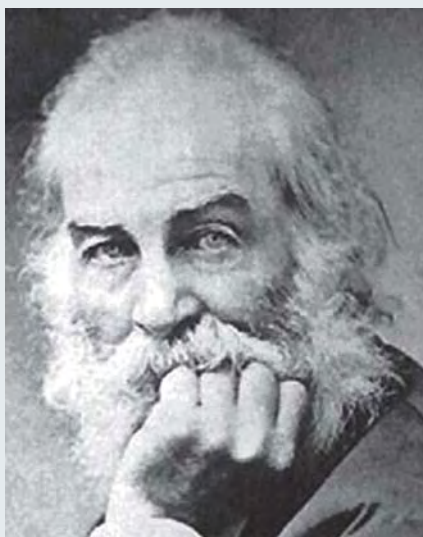
I celebrate myself, and sing myself,  
 And what I assume you shall assume,  
 For every atom belonging to me as good  
 belongs to you.

\*\*\*

All truths wait in all things,  
 They neither hasten their own delivery nor  
 resist it,  
 They do not need the obstetric forceps of the  
 surgeon...

\*\*\*

The soul is always beautiful, it appears more  
 or it appears less,  
 it comes or it lags behind,  
 It comes from its embower’d garden



and looks pleasantly on itself and encloses the world...

\*\*\*

Man and woman: different entities?  
 I am the poet of the woman the same as the man,  
 And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be  
 a man...

\*\*\*

I dream’d in a dream  
 I saw a city invincible to the attacks of the  
 whole of the rest of the earth,  
 I dream’d that was the new city of friends,  
 Nothing was greater there  
 than the quality of robust love, it led the rest,  
 It was seen every hour in the actions of the  
 men of that city,  
 And in all their looks and words. ■



# Politics of deceit and plunder

Politics of dual standards has already led to many compromises.



Justice Rayamajhi: Biased

pic by Bhaskar Ojha

Nepal Democracy Forum has been a most watched site for debates on issues that confronts Nepal. The site launched by Nepali youths in the United States to promote democracy often debates on topical issues. An on-going one is whether Home Minister K P Sitaula should resign over the Madheshi issue.

Clearly, the members are divided, with some favouring that he should own the responsibility for killing of more than 60 people in Terai, step down, face a commission of inquiry as per the precedence he created by setting up Rayamajhi Commission - over the killing of 21 people during the movement for democracy last year. Some others ask, why Sitaula and why not the prime minister? And others in his defense ask, will his resignation solve the problem?

Certainly all the questions are valid and have a point. But what is missing in the debate is viewing things in a proper context. What was promised to new Nepal, in the name of Jana-Andolan II, was that we will bury deep in the past, the culture of impunity; that we will have a system of governance where accountability rules supreme; and we will not have a system where certain people would be above the law. That is why the first declaration in parliament said that not only the earnings of the royal family including that of the king will henceforth be brought under the tax net, but they will also be liable for trial for criminal offences.

Hand-picked by G P Koirala and Sitaula, Justice Rayamajhi, kept reiterating in public that he, as Head of the Commission, would not hesitate to recommend action against the king for all misuse of power and funds to suppress the people's movement. The PM turned a blind eye when Sitaula punished some police and civil officials, and rewarded others, even when the commission that Rayamajhi headed was investigating their roles in the context of their alleged roles in suppressing the movement.

Khadga Oli who as the Deputy Prime Minister headed the ministerial committee



■ Yubaraj Ghimire

to study and recommend actions on the basis of findings of the Rayamajhi Commission now says that, not only did the commission not recommend any action against the king (who acted as head of the government for 15 months beginning Feb 1, 2005), it also recommended action against some civil and police officials who helped the movement.

Rayamajhi can afford to keep silent on these questions, but Sitaula as the Home Minister cannot. In the context of politics and governance post April 2006, Sitaula has to be answerable to the parliament. Interestingly, Terai MPs cutting across the party lines have

stalled the House demanding more political rights for Terai and rejection of the report of a commission set-up by G P Koirala on delimitation. But unfortunately, none of them has demanded a commission to investigate the killing of sixty people including 28 Maoist activists in Gaur on March 21.

The pertinent question is – now that a probe commission headed by Supreme Court Judge Khilraj Regmi has been formed, will Sitaula need to resign to ensure a fair probe? In that case, does this government have to follow its own precedence of suspending security chiefs like Sitaula did, for killing of people during the April movement?

Having a DIG and National Investigation Department (NID) official, both serving under Sitaula in the commission clearly shows it is a move to give the current Home Minister and Police Chief a clean chit. Their subordinates are not going to implicate their bosses. The government is once again trying to cheat the people of Terai through the politics of deceit. To ensure that the probe is fair and free from executive influence, the resignation of Sitaula and suspension of Nepal Police and APF Chief, as it happened last year, is the first prerequisite.

Those supporting Sitaula at the moment should realise that he could have emerged as a strong democratic leader if he had stepped down after owning moral responsibility for the failure in Madhesh, and for his having undervaluing the cause of the Madheshi movement and worth of the lives sacrificed there.

One compromise leads to many. This politics of dual standards has already led to many compromises. The government has agreed to pay a salary of Rs.3000 per month to the Maoists 'combatants' lodged in designated cantonments. These 'combatants' are the members of a political party - Communist party of Nepal-Maoists; and by paying them from the state coffer, the government is only setting a dangerous precedence.

One minister enjoying the privilege of not having to be accountable at all; members belonging to one particular party enjoying the privilege of drawing salary from state exchequer and not having to work for the state, would only make a mockery of democracy. ■

**The pertinent question is – now that a probe commission headed by Supreme Court Judge Khilraj Regmi has been formed, will Sitaula need to resign to ensure a fair probe?**

Setting dual standards







Humde, Manang airport, 3300 meters.



Ice lake, 4564 meters.

With its spectacular panorama of mountains, nature in its vibrant colours, Manang is one of the best travel destinations in Nepal.

# Wild, wonderful MANANG

Children  
in Pisang village



Annapurna II, south of Ghyaru village,  
the highest elevated permanent  
settlement in Manang.





King Mahendra's statue in Manang airport that YCL activists destroyed when Dev Gurung, a Maoist minister visited upper Manang recently.



Ponies, the only means of transport.

■ Text and photos by Manoj Dahal

Flying to Manang, you get to view the lower part of the trans-Himalayan region and it is a vision that will stay with you for long. There are 13 villages in Manang, seven of which are in the upper part of the region. When you land at the upper part of Manang, a mere 40 minute flight from Kathmandu, you feel that you have arrived in a new world. The beauty is mind blowing. With its desert like features, villages like Pisang, Ghyaru, Ngawang, Braga, Manang, Tenki and Khangsar look different compared to other mountain villages in Nepal.

No roads go to Manang and there are no regular flights. To reach this unique place, you need to ask Manang Youth society to arrange a chartered flight; and if you are fond of trekking, start walking from Beshisahar, Lamjung. It takes four days to reach upper Manang from Beshisahar and you will walk up from less than 1000 meters height upto 3540 meters.

If you want to cross Thorang-la or want to experience the wonderful Tilicho Lake, the highest elevated lake in the world, in the altitude of 4912 meters; by walking from Beshisahar you will acclimatise yourself. Although there is a scheduled flight thrice a week from Pokhara to Humde - the Manang airport that lies at the height of 3300 meters, the Nepal Airlines flights are pretty unreliable.

Ponies are the only form of transport available in Manang. They are seen everywhere in this part of Nepal which is called Nyeshyang valley in local language. Very few people live in Manang and even in the upper parts; the population is not more than five thousand.

Every year around 13 thousand tourists visit this part of Manang. As it lies on the way to Annapurna circuit, tourists take this way to cross Thorang-la, one of the most unique passes. BBC has listed the Annapurna circuit as one of the 50 things you should do before you die.

The Himalayan range viewed from upper Manang is not in the north as is commonly mistaken. The peaks seen from Manang are Tilicho and Chulu, and you should look southwards to see the views of Annapurna

range from upper Manang.

Manang starts from a height of slightly more than 1000 meters and extends upto 7134 meters. The Tilicho peak is the highest part of Manang. But Thorang-la at 5415 meters and Tilicho Lake are the most challenging points while trekking in Manang. The rest of upper Manang is not easy to trek either. When you reach Ice lake that lies at 4564 meters, walking up from Braga village, it is easy to give up and go back.

At this point, Manang people and people from other parts of Nepal have set their bases to collect Yarchagumba, a rare and expensive herb now much sought after for its aphrodisiacal qualities. They climb up hundreds of meters to collect this herb. It seems climbing up and down the steep mountains for them is no effort at all.

Once at the lake, it feels as if you can touch the Annapurna range. The feeling that you get here cannot be expressed in words. It is heavenly to say the least. Gangapurna Lake, close to Manang Village flows directly from Gangapurna Peak which has religious and spiritual values.

Manang is the land of traders. Called 'Manangi' they comprise mainly of Gurung community. Today, almost two thirds of Manangi people do not live here but are settled in Kathmandu, other cities of Nepal, Europe or America. But most of them make it a point to participate in the development of Manang. One sees many bridges, good houses, newly built monasteries and much more to prove it, and which goes to show that Manang is not an undeveloped region.

Best time to visit Manang is March to May or from September to November; but if you want to see Manang aglow with the reddish hue of the fields of flowering buckwheat, you need to choose autumn season. However, flora and faunas of the upper Manang flourish during spring time.

With its spectacular panorama of mountains, nature in its vibrant colours, Manang is one of the best travel destinations in Nepal. The vibrant colors of nature, wild flowers, herbs, tranquil lakes simply take your breath away. Richly endowed, Manang provides you with plenty of opportunities for adventure outdoors. ■

A woman left alone in her home.



Gangapurna lake flows directly from Gangapurna peak.



Tourists enjoying Mringyo Lake in Pisang. It is believed that if a leaf drops in the lake, birds pick it up and throw it out.



Temporary tents made by those who go up to collect Yarchagumba.



Braga village





*Deen Bandhu Pokhrel at a young age of 26 is confidently following the path laid out by his father, Pandit Narayan Pokhrel, popularly known as Bachan Shiromani, who was shot dead by Maoist assailants in June 2005. A student of Masters in English literature and self taught in Sanskrit literature, Deen Bandhu believes in what is doing, that is, developing Nepali society through self contemplation and raising spiritual awareness through religious discourses. He talked about his work with newsfront recently. Excerpts from the interview:*



**What inspired you to take on this line of work?**

My father was truly committed to serving the society through peaceful means. From the money he raised from religious discourses, he contributed a lot in areas of health, education, supplied drinking water and built roads. He was highly respected by everyone who knew him and I too was in awe of his personality and work.

The home environment was such that I naturally imbibed what he strove so hard to teach, that is peaceful co-existence, developing moral code of conduct and discipline, adopting virtue and gaining victory over evil. I was very interested in what he did. After his tragic death, his friends and co-workers encouraged me to take on what he left behind.

**What does your typical programme look like?**

My team consists of three artists, five musicians and one co-worker. In my discourses I talk about the essence of what all religions teach that is useful and applicable to

modern day life. My presentation is such that people can relate to the teachings drawn from scriptures such as the Bhagavat Gita that I primarily draw from. I link the events in the scripture with real life events, taking one issue at a time and then reach a conclusion as to how best to resolve that particular issue. The musical presentation, hymns and a character that enacts different roles make it interesting for the crowd.

**Do you enjoy doing it?**

I thoroughly enjoy it and now I realise this is what I was meant to do. Though it has only been a year that I have begun doing this work, I find tremendous positive changes inside me, especially the growth in my devotion. Now I understand why my father took on this challenging work. It is highly satisfying.

**What kinds of people attend your programme?**

They come from all kinds of background. An interesting difference I have seen is the composition of the crowd. My father usually

had audiences that consisted of about 75 percent of elderly crowd whereas more than 60 percent of my audience is the young people. Perhaps they are attracted to my programmes because I am relatively young.

**Do you plan to do anything for the young people?**

I have observed the need for taking programmes of this kind that is orientated towards the young minds; in its content and presentation. The sooner one is made aware and educated spiritually, the better one's life becomes. Keeping that in mind, I do plan to reach out to more young people and perhaps one day train some too, to do what I do.

**What keeps you going?**

My happiness with what I've been able to do so far. I am already booked for various programmes across the country for one year. Through the monetary contributions I receive, I contribute to social welfare like my father did. I believe that only when a person finds peace within him/her can a society find peace. Only through peaceful societies can a country find peace. To get that peace, spiritual understanding is important. So, if I can help generate that understanding in the people who come to listen to me, it means a lot to me.

**You mentioned about your wish to declare your father as a religious martyr?**

Yes, I requested the present government regarding that and also sent a petition to the home ministry but no decision has been taken till date. It is sad to see that illegal demands voiced by burning tyres, declaring Bandhs are being tolerated; and valid ones just getting ignored. I believe that renowned personalities who worked for the society, such as my father,

who was murdered for no known reason, and whose murderers are not yet brought to book, should be acknowledged. The government should not strive to erase history but should protect it. Significant contributions of any member of the society should not be underestimated.

**Does the thought that your life too might be at risk of senseless attacks strike you?**

Yes, sometimes. Memories especially of that kind do not fade away so easily. But now, I feel that if my life has to end while doing good work, so be it.

Fear will not hold me back from my work. ■

# Serving through devotion

“...more than 60 percent of my audience is the young people. Perhaps they are attracted to my programmes because I am relatively young.”





# Thousands rally for ousted Pakistani judge

Pakistani lawyers and opposition party members rallied outside the Supreme Court here on Saturday to support the judge at the centre of a row threatening President Pervez Musharraf's hold on power.

Chanting "Go Musharraf, go" and "We want independent judges," the crowd of about 3,000 burst into applause at the arrival of Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry.

Chaudhry, whose suspension by Musharraf on March 9 has triggered violent protests, was to speak to lawyers and diplomats at the court's auditorium. Outside, supporters of the country's mainstream opposition parties waved their colourful party flags and denounced military ruler Musharraf.

Hundreds of police were deployed around the court complex but the crowd remained peaceful, witnesses said.

Chaudhry's last planned address — in Karachi two weeks ago — was cancelled after his arrival at the local airport sparked savage fighting involving opposing political factions and ethnic groups that left 42 dead. Pro-Chaudhry rallies in Islamabad have previously resulted in angry scuffles between paramilitary troops and protesters outside the Supreme Court, where Chaudhry is fighting an ongoing legal battle to retain his post.

Munir A Malik, president of the Supreme Court Bar Association, told AFP that some lawyers had reportedly been prevented from



Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry attending the event. "We have reports that police stopped groups of lawyers from travelling to Islamabad from northwest Pakistan," he said. "Despite the hurdles we expect a very large number of lawyers to be present. "We know we are doing it at the risk of our lives, facing threats and intimidation from the rulers. This speech by Chief Justice Chaudhry

will be historic."

Musharraf says Chaudhry was suspended for misconduct, but the president's opponents say he wants to weaken the courts ahead of any legal challenges to his bid to remain army chief past the constitutional time limit of the end of 2007. Musharraf's dismissal of Chaudhry has become a focal point for disparate opponents of the military regime of the general, who seized power in 1999.

Chaudhry has received rousing welcomes from lawyers and opposition supporters in cities across Pakistan. In his address in Lahore three weeks ago, Chaudhry appeared to issue a direct challenge to Musharraf, declaring the "era of dictatorship is over."

Musharraf later countered with a rally in Islamabad, where he warned: "Do not challenge us. We are not cowards like you. We have the power of the people." Chaudhry will talk on "the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary" — a theme at the heart of Pakistan's current troubles. Musharraf has blamed Chaudhry and his supporters for the carnage in Karachi, saying that they had politicised the judge's fate and stoked up tensions.

Two days after the riots, Supreme Court deputy registrar Syed Hamad Raza, who served as Chaudhry's personal assistant, was killed by gunmen.

(Khaleej Times)

## Officials try to defuse Iran nuke standoff

With the threat of new U.N. sanctions looming, senior European officials met Friday with a ranking envoy from Iran in what officials described as an attempt to defuse the crisis over the Islamic republic's refusal to scrap uranium enrichment.

Also Friday, U.N. experts inspected a key Iranian nuclear facility, days after the U.N. atomic watchdog agency reported that its knowledge of the country's activities was shrinking because of restrictions on visits.

Iran's nuclear defiance — most recently documented in a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency that was sent to the U.N. Security Council — has set the stage for further



council sanctions against Tehran, and a European official warned against undue expectations from Friday's talks. "It was a stocktaking session," said the European official who — like diplomats agreeing

to discuss the meeting with The Associated Press — spoke on condition of anonymity because the talks were not public.

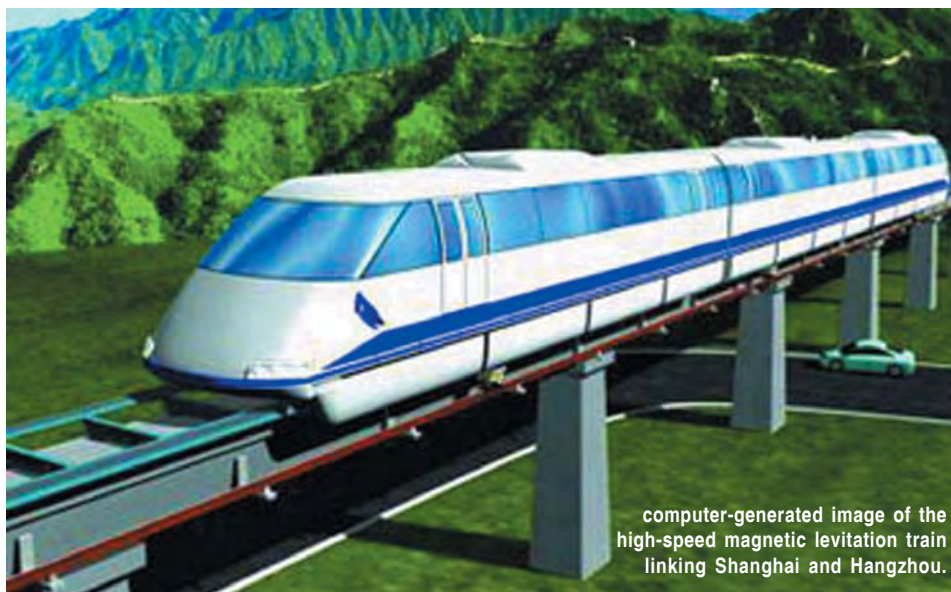
Still, they suggested that the meeting was positive in demonstrating a joint effort to try to return to negotiations over Iran's enrichment program to try to stave off further sanctions — and a potential escalation of the crisis.

The Pentagon this week moved two aircraft carriers and seven other ships into the Persian Gulf in a show of force. Iran, meanwhile, has detained at least two prominent Iranian-American citizens.

(Centredaily.com)

## Shanghai maglev project suspended

China has suspended the construction of a high-speed magnetic levitation train linking the eastern cities of Shanghai and Hangzhou after residents raised concerns their health may be affected by radiation from passing trains, officials and experts said on Saturday. "The project has been suspended in line with the arrangements of the municipal government," said a spokesman with the government of Minhang District in Shanghai's southern suburbs. An official with the Shanghai Municipal People's Congress confirmed a major reason for suspending the project was the magnetic radiation concerns raised by residents living along the proposed route. "The government is working on the issue," said the official on condition of anonymity. Approved by the central government in March 2006, the 35-billion-yuan (4.5 billion U.S. dollars) maglev train track was to be 175 km long and trains were expected to reach speeds of 450 km per hour. Many thought the line would be operating by 2010, when Shanghai plays host to the World Expo. The Shanghai-



computer-generated image of the high-speed magnetic levitation train linking Shanghai and Hangzhou.

Hangzhou maglev line would have been the world's second commercial high-speed maglev track. Shanghai operates the world's only commercial maglev system on a 30-km run between Shanghai's financial district and its Pudong airport. "The petition office told us early

this month that construction and all the plans to relocate residents (along the route) had been suspended," said a resident in Xinzhuang township in Minhang. "We had been looking forward to this." The 28-year-old expectant mother, began to petition in March, shortly after

### NE India

## 6 killed, 30 injured in market blast



Guwahati

Unleashing a reign of terror, yet again, suspected United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) once again triggered a powerful blast, killing at least six and injuring more than 30 persons, including four children, in the Athgaon Someswar Choudhury Road locality on Saturday. The injured have been rushed to the Guwahati Medical College Hospital (GMCH) and MMC Hospital.

Saturday's blast, which took place at around 10:40am, could well have become a replication of the 2004 Dhemaji tragedy, where as many as 13 school children were killed in a bomb blast carried out by the proscribed outfit during the Independence Day celebration. It was sheer luck that a larger number of school going kids had already crossed the spot when the blast occurred.

"Out of the seven killed, four were brought dead while the others succumbed to their injuries in the Hospital," informed a GMCH official. Among the injured, the condition of eight were described as "critical".

"School students mostly use the SC Road during this time of the hour, as it leads to many primary and high schools situated in close proximity," said D. Medhi, a local resident and an eye-witness of the blast. He further said that this particular road remains congested as businessmen and students of various schools situated in the area. Senior Superintendent of Police (City) SN Singh said that the bomb, suspected to be an IED, was planted in an auto-rickshaw, which was parked nearby by an unidentified youth.

"The bomb was a high intensity one and after it went off, a gas cylinder, which was being carried away by a rickshaw immediately caught fire and added to the intensity of the explosion," Singh said.

(Assam Tribune)

she learned the maglev route was to run through her community. "I was worried the radiation could harm my baby." The planned maglev route was to be separated from communities along the route by a greenbelt only 22.5 meters wide, although a blueprint at the local government indicated a protection belt 150 meters wide would be built on either side. German specifications require a 300-meter leeway on both sides of the track. The local government has been under huge pressure over the past months, with crowds of petitioners knocking at their doors every day as thousands of complaints were received online. The Minhang District government alone received more than 5,000 petitioners in a single day in March. According to the designers' blueprint, the new maglev route would have run south-west from the existing maglev station in Shanghai's financial center. It was to then pass the Shanghai World Expo venue and cross the Huangpu River to the Shanghai Southern Railway Station.

(www.chinaview.cn)



Lacking necessary observance of the rule of law, a nation turns itself into a domicile of the lawless. Be it an existing independent country or a newly established nation, constitution is the primary source from which the people obtain everything else including their fundamental rights. The nature and scope of the political, economic and social systems are all embedded in the constitution. In order to make it operational, judicial and legislature play a critical role.

In most countries today, practicing democratic governance, which is supposed to give highest regards to fundamental human rights, among others, rule of law is an essential component which makes the system work. At a time when Nepal needs to build on the rule of law for the establishment and sustenance of a new Nepal, the situation today appears to be exactly opposite.

Nepal's interim constitution, worked out after a long and arduous exercise among political parties of different ideologies, is the sole basis of governance for Nepal in today's context. Until a new constitution is approved by the members of the Constituent Assembly, which is to be created after the CA elections in near future, Nepalis, despite their differences, must abide by the interim constitution that they have approved.

Attempt to introduce new provisions to the constitution by the framers themselves, within a short span of less than one year, looks out of place. What is highly dangerous is the manner in which certain political groupings are trying to persuade the interim government with their demands. Violent protests, regular disruption of business, taking law into their own hands by groups associated with legal political parties and members of government, and the ongoing extortions, threats and violence are taking a high toll on Nepal's newly found freedom.

Important tasks remain unattended owing to postponement of the meetings of the parliament. In spite of some indications that the CA polls will be held sometime in November of this year, delay in its announcement is causing a lot of anxiety and unrest.

Current exhortations of CPN-UML chief for dissolving the existing body of election commission for failing to hold the CA election in time is a classic example of Nepali propaganda. The existing body of the election commission, the only organ that can provide



# Tampering with law

If so proven, all of them must be fired without any delay.



■ Binod P Bista

legitimacy to the ongoing elections of the CA, was nominated by the government and its appointment confirmed only after the parliament went through its public hearing process. The election commission has been clearly stating that it cannot proceed further in the absence of necessary legislations to be enacted by the parliament.

The recently registered proposal of CPN-Maoists also demanded immediate integration of PLA members into Nepal Army, writing off all debts of farmers, postponement of all decisions regarding nation's water and natural resources until the CA, besides declaring Nepal as a republic. All of the demands put forth by the

Maoists, even if they were within the bounds of the interim constitution, would require careful analysis, timely preparations and suitable conditions for execution.

Humiliations suffered by top civil personnel such as the governor of Nepal Rastra Bank, prevented from attending a regional meeting in Bangladesh, reflect that the present government is yet to find its standard bearings. The recent grilling of the governor of the central bank of Nepal not only damages the prestige and dignity of the central bank but also raises an all important question with regard to independence and credibility of our national level institutions.

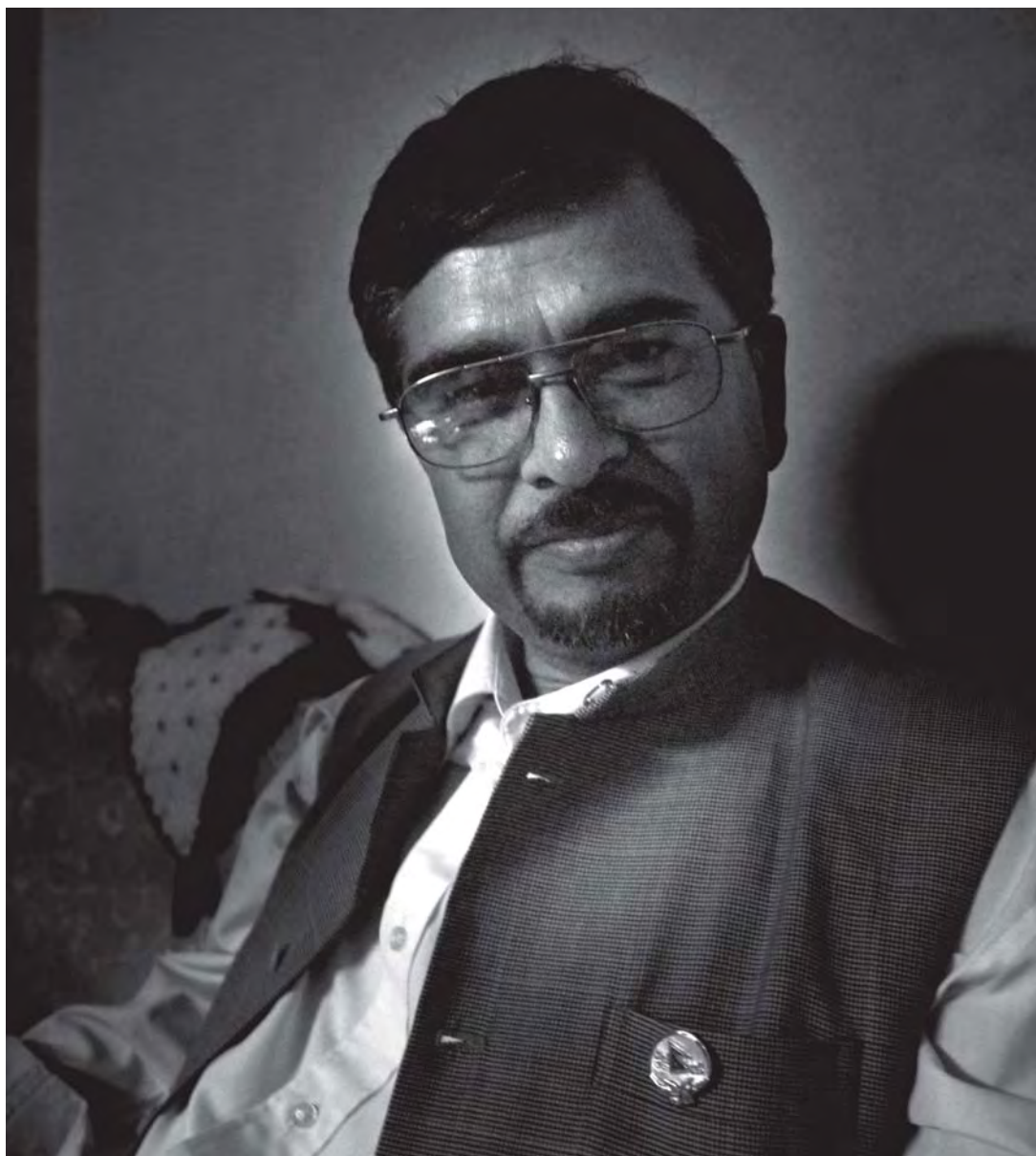
A series of questions arise with the implication of the central bank governor on the charges of unlawful transactions for suppression of the April uprising. First and foremost, it has to be clear whether the governor of central bank acted beyond his authority provided by law. If so, was he a party to the

group that tried to suppress the uprising? It would be difficult to assume that the functionaries of government, central bank, and all other institutions are anti democratic in nature and acted against the law.

If so proven, all of them must be fired without any delay. Furthermore, there are departmental provisions under every ministry, and the central bank would have necessary provision to sanction its staff, including the governor, for misconduct or illegal actions.

The CIAA (Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Authority) need not have waited for referral from the Rayamajhi Commission to start investigation and take appropriate actions against the high official of the Central Bank, which clearly falls under its jurisdiction. Tampering with established standards of rules and regulations is no less harmful than non-abiding of law. ■

(Bista is a development economist, works with Boao Forum for Asia in China.)



■ David Bross

## FAITH IN PEOPLE

Rajendra Pandey, a member of UML, was working for the social development ministry till two months ago. He stopped his ministerial activities and now has committed himself to help the people by helping establish schools and hospitals.

My appointment with him was in a modest house in Kalanki and I quickly discovered a peaceful personality in Rajendra Pandey. He expressed he is weary of watching the havoc that weapons have wrought on Nepal and so prefers to support the power of democratic votes. That is why he said his party does not need military force.

Rajendra said his priority is social development specifically in education and health. He stressed on the importance of giving power to the people through real democratic elections. He said, "That is the only way for people to get power without bloodshed."

With 30 years of political experience behind him, he is still optimistic about the future of Nepal, and has faith in the people. His dream for a new Nepal is a country with a free population, a democratic leader, and one government composed of different political parties.

(David Bross, 20, is a French photo reporter who works for a French newspaper – 33T.)



# Marshland Flowers

Till the 12th century, Tibetans came down to the hot plains of India to study the tenets of Vajrayana...

■ Acharya Mahayogi Sridhar Rana Rinpoche

The Adi Sankaracharya refuted the Buddhist tenets in his commentaries of the Upanishads and Brahma Sutra; but the Buddhists have also equally refuted the concepts of Sankara. Debate and refutation was both ways till the Islamic invasion. It was only after Buddhism was literally razed to the ground by the Islamic invaders that present day Hinduism, which is a metamorphosed form of Vedic Hinduism, began.

Till then 75% of Indian subcontinent and 75% Asia was Buddhist. From the time of the Buddha and especially from the 1st/2nd century till the 11th/12th century, when the Vajrayana form of Buddhism was in sway, Buddhist art, philosophy and logic developed to its fullest potential. It can certainly be said that, that was the golden period of Indian culture as a whole and Indian Buddhism specifically. This was also the period when, as a result of interaction with Buddhism, Hinduism also developed to its hilt.

It should be remembered that Sankaracharya who is considered as the cream of Hinduism by an overwhelming majority of the Hindus, was a product of the 6/7th century and many ancient Hindus like Bhaskaracharya etc even called him Pracchanna Bauddha (crypto Buddhist). Why did these Hindu pillars call Sankaracharya a crypto-Buddhist? This is not because he, his philosophy or tenets were like the Buddhists'.

No, far from it, he has attempted to



refute the Buddhist tenets. It is because he used the Buddhist logical modus operandi to refute all his opponents which included the Hindus, Buddhists and Jains. This clearly shows how even Sankara was influenced by Buddhism. The great Buddhist Nyaiyayik (logician) Dharmakirti literally changed the logical system of the Indian subcontinent with his Buddhist logical tenets.

Another big confusion is that the Buddhist Tantra was a result of the influence of Hindu Tantra on Buddhism. But the famous Indian iconographer Benoytosh Bhattacharya has amply proven that it is the other way around. Hindu Tantra developed after Buddhist Tantra (Vajrayana) reached its acme in the Indian subcontinent. One of the oldest Hindu Tantric literatures the Pichu Tantra also called the Rudrayamala and the Brahmayamala very clearly states that Vasistha went to Mahachina (Tibet) to study the

Tantric methods with Shivarupi Buddha.

Till the 12th century, Tibetans came down to the hot plains of India to study the tenets of Vajrayana in the great learning houses like Nalanda/Bikramashila etc. This means this oldest Hindu Tantra was written after the 12th century and not before that. It was written after Vajrayana vanished from India after the Islamic invasion. Although Hindu Tantra developed as a result of the influence of Vajrayana on the entire subcontinent, the two are only apparently similar. A deeper probe into both of them exposes a tremendous difference not only of the paradigms on which each is based but also on the principles on which each is based, the path followed by each and the final goal of each.

The entire Hindu Tantric systems are themselves diverse; some based on Shakti, others on Shiva and some on Visnu. The objective of most of them is to unite with the deity and finally attain Brahma, Parasamvit or Sambhava states. Excepting the dualistic Tantras, they are all varieties of Advaita Vedanta where other names substitute the Brahma of the Vedanta. Most of them are geared towards the realisation of the eternal unchanging self called the Atma in the entire Hinduistic system. Now the whole of Buddhist Tantra is geared to the realisation of emptiness (Sunyata) which is a subtle form of Anatma.

(To be continued...)

(Sridhar Rinpoche is a Vajrayana Master.)

## Insight

# Under-developed civil sense

Freedom appears to be misunderstood grossly and mistaken with license to behave in disruptive, hostile manner.

■ Sushma Amatya



In these turbulent times, braving your way through the unruly traffic and maintaining your blood pressure at a normal level has become yet another challenge. Motorcyclists squeeze their way through dense vehicular chaos acting as if they were humans pushing their elbows through a crowd. Public transports, especially the mini-buses go wild swerving and overtaking as they please; in a bid to outdo the motorcyclists. At times you are left wondering if they might just not fly in air on wheels to get where they want to.

Freedom appears to be misunderstood grossly and mistaken with license to behave in a disruptive, hostile manner. Most drivers and travelers think it is fine stop the vehicle where ever and when ever without a bit of consideration to traffic around you. Except for a few daring ones, most traffic police hang around helplessly, stripped of their authority and confidence. It's a surprising how such reckless drivers get driving license in the first place; and allowing such people to drive who put at risk lives of many people, is disgraceful to say the least.

You get to observe drastic attitudinal changes of late, in the way most people drive, be it on four, three or two wheelers. Not to be outdone, pedestrians too walk the jungle in absolute abandon, disregarding public rules, obviously ignorant or purposely ignoring basic self restraint. Over head crossings or underground crossings need policing for people to actually use it instead of risking their lives crossing busy streets.

It appears the pendulum in most people's attitude have swung from one extreme of servility towards whoever dominated them in whatever way - to antagonistic posturing, targeting one and all that come in their way. The distinct Nepalis character known for their gentleness and politeness appear to be fast transforming to something rather unpleasant. Traffic behaviour is just one example of the negative change that is growing in our society. There are innumerable other examples to cite that reflects it.

Hawkers overtaking space meant for walking is nothing compared to the marathon of spitting, urinating even defecating around the corners that is visible for all to see. Throwing garbage out on the streets, in rivers or in your neighbour's yard is yet another popular example of uncivilised behaviour indulged in by many once the sun sets. 'Forgetting' to flush the toilet even where water is plentiful is another gory evidence of gross lack of sensitivity towards others.

That freedom and democracy come hand in hand with responsibility, respect for others' rights and is closely intertwined with a code of conduct and self discipline has apparently not been understood by most of us. This ignorance leads to - friction between individuals, disharmony in society; it can also get distorted, be dangerous and self destructive in the long run.

Civil societies in our country appear partial to political affairs only. They need to understand that major political issues arise out of seemingly simple, harmless and thoughtless acts of individuals. Is it not better to be far-sighted and spot such irregularities and act on them through individual and collective efforts than wait for it to grow out of proportion - before treating it as an issue? Politics is just one aspect in peoples' lives; there are other equally important and serious issues that impact on their well being.

Pointing fingers at top policy levels or down at the masses is easy but it does not solve the problem. Being aware of how you behave and then making the necessary positive changes is as important as watching how your family behaves and influencing them to cultivate a sense of responsibility and develop respect for other citizens. At the same time, the importance of keeping social order and polishing civil sense need to be realised at the policy levels whereby effective rules and regulations could be specified and endorsed. To create a civilised nation, it is important to learn to be civil to each other first. ■

**Hawkers overtaking space meant for walking is nothing compared to the marathon of spitting, urinating even defecating around the corners that is visible for all to see.**



## Alcohol is often a cause of death

Counseling by drug therapist, Ragina Shah

**My cousin suffers from convulsions even though he has left drinking alcohol. Why is that?**

■ Ram Dixit, Jawlakhel

This symptom is called Delirium Tremens (DT). It is an acute episode of delirium that is usually caused by withdrawal or abstinence from alcohol following habitual excessive drinking especially when the person does not eat enough food. DT can also appear after a rapid reduction in the amount of alcohol being consumed by heavy drinkers. It only occurs in individuals with a history of constant, long-term alcohol consumption.

It may also be triggered by head injury, infection, or illness in people with a history of heavy use of alcohol. DT typically manifests about 18 to 24 hours after discontinuation of alcohol consumption, but can appear two or three days after stopping drinking. The main symptoms are confusion and agitation. Other common symptoms include intense hallucination such as visions of insects, snakes or rats. These may be related to

the environment, e.g., drawings on wallpaper that the patient would perceive as giant spiders attacking them.

DT hallucinations are primarily visual. It can sometimes be associated with severe, uncontrollable tremors of hands and feet and secondary symptoms such as anxiety, panic attacks and paranoia. DT is a severe form of alcohol withdrawal that involves sudden and severe mental or neurological changes. It is most common in people who have a history of alcohol withdrawal, especially in those who drink a heavy dose every day for several months. It also commonly affects those with a history of habitual alcohol use or alcoholism that has existed for more than 10 years.

**How does alcohol affect my teenage children as also my drinking?**

■ Saurav Bista, Baluwatar

Knowing and recognising symptoms of alcoholism is an important step toward seeking treatment before alcohol abuse progresses to alcoholism. Early intervention is particularly important to prevent alcohol dependence in teenagers.

Alcohol use among teens increases dramatically during high-school years, and leads to serious consequences for many teens. Each year all over the world, alcohol-related automobile accidents are one of the major causes of teen deaths. Alcohol is often a cause of teenage deaths besides drowning, suicide and homicides.

Teens who drink are more likely to become sexually active, have sex more frequently and engage in risky, unprotected sex than those who don't drink. For young people, the likelihood of addiction depends on the influence of parents, peers and other role models, susceptibility to advertising, how early in life they begin to use alcohol, psychological need for alcohol and genetic factors that may predispose them to addiction.

You can help prevent teenage alcohol use by setting a good example with your own behaviour and attitude towards alcohol use.

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





# Sparks Wins 'Idol'

The best days may still be ahead for Jordin Sparks, but the same may not be said for "American Idol." The 30.7 million people who watched Sparks win on Wednesday was a sharp drop from the 36.4 million people who saw Taylor Hicks in last year's finale, according to Nielsen Media Research.

Industry observers said chances are that the 2006 season will stand as the peak for audience interest.

A lackluster pool of contestants, the general malaise among viewers this spring and the simple laws of TV gravity are all factors.

"People are getting tired of it," said Marc Berman, an analyst for Media Week Online. "I know I am."

Mind you, most TV shows would kill for this kind of "bad news." The Fox phenomenon was still TV's most popular program this season. Barring a major surprise, it likely will be again next year.

Fox executives cautioned against counting "Idol" out. For the season as a whole, "American Idol" ratings will be slightly down or even identical to last year, when DVR viewing is taken

into account. To some degree interest is driving by the personalities involved, and a whole new cast of characters join next spring, said Fox's Scott Grogin.

This year's finale compares to the 30.3 million who watched in 2005, and 28.8 million in 2004. The showdown between Clay Aiken and Ruben Studdard in 2003 attracted 38 million viewers, Nielsen said.

For the first half of this season, ratings outstripped last year. When water-cooler favorite Sanjaya Malakar was voted off in April, much of the interest left with him.

"The competition down at the end didn't have the excitement that it had in years past," said Tim Brooks, author of "The Complete Directory to Prime-Time Network and Cable Television." "It's kind of a rehash to viewers."

Producers have tweaked the show each year to keep it fresh, this season adding a songwriters' contest and charity drive for those starving in Africa. In past years, famous musicians were brought in to work with the singers.

(abcnews)

# Coke Found in Lohan DUI Investigation



In a press conference this afternoon about the arrest of Lindsay Lohan, cops say they found a "usable amount" of a drug at the scene, which they say was cocaine. Lt. Mitch McCann of the Beverly Hills Police Department would not say where the drug was found, but it was "not on her person."

Police tell that 20-year-old Lohan and two other adults were in her 2005 Mercedes SL-65 convertible when she lost control and crashed into a curb and trees in Beverly Hills around 5:30 AM. After the crash, police say LiLo got into another car and was driven to Century City Hospital where she was treated for minor injuries that involved "something to her upper chest area." Police said the two other people in her car were not hurt.

Officers received a 911 call about the accident and "tracked Ms. Lohan to the local hospital, where she was ultimately placed under arrest" for investigation of misdemeanor driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Lt. McCann said it appeared as if Lohan was speeding and lost control. Lohan was cited and released and will have to face a judge.

A rep for Lohan could not be reached for comment.

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