



Courage & Conviction

# newsfront

Kathmandu | 1-7 Oct, 2007 | # 36 | Price Rs. 25



Maoists holding public rally to press their demand for proportional representation system of election in the capital on Sunday.

## Wrecked !

■ nf correspondent

Prime Minister G P Koirala is 'wrecked' from within and thoroughly confused after the political drift that has set in the country." He feels cheated and betrayed as Maoists were all bent upon stalling the election to the constituent assembly even after Nepali Congress adopted its republican agenda," a senior minister told newsfront on condition of anonymity.

Koirala was shocked to the hilt after the only surviving founder member of the party, KP Bhattarai, severed his six-decade long relationship with the party in protest against its going republican. That did not make him popular within the pro-republican camp of the party.

Narahari Acharya, central committee member of the Nepali Congress and hard line republican, was the first to warn Koirala that he shall have to resign if elections do not take place on November 22. With that as the likely scenario, Koirala is almost going to be the first target of the pro-republicans with no traditionalists coming to his rescue.

There are worries within the party that he would make more compromises now to save the chair in a speed that would discredit the Congress party thoroughly. What are the likely scenarios? Firstly, he agrees to become the president of republic Nepal through a parliamentary declaration under Maoists' dictate; with

**Koirala was shocked to the hilt after the only surviving founder member of the party, KP Bhattarai, severed his six-decade long relationship with the party.**

Maoists, the second largest party bagging the prime minister's post. Secondly, he resigns owning failure to hold elections second time in a row; and thirdly, he defers poll date on condition that the country will adopt solely the representative model of electoral system.

Koirala, sources said, went to the extent of bulldozing dissents or any kind of debate against 'republican agenda' during the recently held

'Dangerously confused' PM Koirala is prone to making more compromises.

party general assembly although at least 26 district party chiefs and 18 central committee members of the Koirala led Congress party had clearly stated their reservation.

Yagyaraj Pathak, leader and delegate of the party from Doti went to the extent of telling Koirala on face, "You have handed over the party to Sher Bahadur Deuba, power to the Maoists and nationalism to the foreigners." "Never have I seen Koirala so lost and down as in the past one week," said the minister, adding, he could not even refute what the district level leader was saying.

With no way that he can correct the compromises he has made there are growing concerns in the party over the possibilities of him making more and more embarrassing compromises. Accepting proportional representation system or becoming the president may not be something that Koirala will be averse to if that saves his chair, a central committee member of the party said. ■

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Newsbrief

# JCB introduces

JCB India, one of the prominent construction equipment industries in the world has introduced its latest entrant in the JS range of excavators, JS 140, in Nepal. The industry is producing over 220 different models, which are sold in over 150 countries.



The latest machine, JS 140, is best in class of 14T

Machine. Tested in most demanding conditions, it is superior in reliability, performance and operator convenience when benchmarked against competitor's model. JS 140 is powered by Cummins B 3.9 100C engine with Gross H.P. 92 h.p., operating weight of 13,600 kg.

Key applications to name a few include roadwork, mass excavation, pipe work and other underground installations, highway maintenance, foundation work and waste recycling. Morang Auto Works is the sole distributor of JCB products in Nepal.

# Medical feat

History was created in the medical chapter in Nepal on Sunday when Dr C R Pandey conducted the first successful arthroscopy at Medicare Hospital on Sunday. The operation, the first by any Nepali doctor in the country, involved surgery of shoulder dislocation which was a two hour long exercise which was purely camera controlled, Dr Pandey told newsfront.

The high tech surgery was conducted on Rabi Nepal, a journalist from Tansen. Dr Pandey said he spent nearly six years learning this method. He added, the patient can be discharged 24 hours after the operation.



Police made public four suspects of the serial bomb explosion in Kathmandu last month on Sunday.

# Small crisis

In yet another jolt to the ruling coalition, PM G P Koirala is under political obligation to include a new minister in the cabinet in place of Industries and Civil Supplies Minister, Rajendra Mahato. With that the portfolio that is responsible for ensuring import and supply of petroleum and cooking gas in the fuel starved country has will remain vacant for some more days to come.

Nepal Sadhbhavana Party (Anandi Devi) will soon be recommending the minister's name against the party quota after Mahato failed to secure the election commission's recognition as the

real NSP-A last week. "We will be submitting the name of the minister in a day or two," a NSP leader told newsfront.

Mahato now faces the prospect of having to contest elections as an independent candidate following the EC decision which he said was biased against the 'Madesh'. In fact, Mahato had got into the cabinet only few months ago replacing Hridayesh Tripathi with whom the apolitical party chief, Anandi Devi, had fallen out with at that point of time.

Mahato who led his followers in capturing party offices in Kathmandu

and Birgunj soon after he fell out with Anandi Devi group also burnt the decision of the election as a mark of protest against the EC decision refusing to recognise him as the real NSP. As a result, police took him in custody for two hours on Saturday.

The EC however said it was only following the past precedence in the Nepali Congress and Rastriya Prajatantra Party split cases in deciding who should be recognised as the real Sadhbhavana party.



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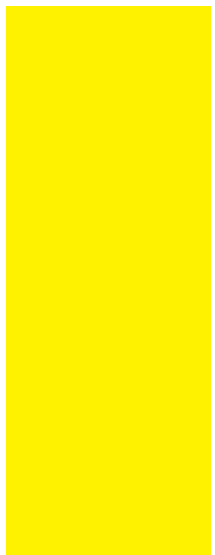
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# Debate federalism

Seek public endorsement first

The Constitutional Lawyers Forum (CLAF) has demanded a national debate on the issue of federalism as the government's declaration to switch to the federal without securing public endorsement was flawed.

The forum, through its nine-point declaration said a debate on pros and cons of the federal system has to take place before any final decision is taken. A decision in the manner the government took was much against the system of public accountability as it came without adequate homework and dialogue with the people.

It said while the measures towards decentralisation taken in the past were inadequate, the new system should have local authorities empowered enough to ensure that they promote developmental activities, language and culture. It favoured special measures including reservation to bring people from all spheres, classes, communities and regions into the mainstream.

The declaration finalised after a series of debates and discourses in the five regional development centers and finally in the capital on September 26 and 27, favoured

election to the constituent assembly on schedule to ensure a constitution that guarantees a fully democratic constitution based on constitutional supremacy. It asked the political parties to honour their demands and dedicate themselves to political, economic and social justice.

It said that the interim constitution and 12-point agreement, the comprehensive peace agreement and the inherent understandings should act as common agenda and there should be commitment of all political players to issues like sovereignty, independence and nation's integrity besides competitive multi-party parliamentary democracy, civil rights, fundamental rights, regular elections, press freedom and independent judiciary. All these should be adopted by the political parties as their common agenda when they go the polls, the declaration said.

It said proper law and order situation was the key to holding elections in a free and fearless atmosphere and also appealed to all the political parties including the Maoists to contribute towards creating a conducive atmosphere for the polls.



# Helpless

A dejected EC defers poll process.

After a marathon two hour long meeting on Sunday, the Election Commission (EC) finally yielded to the political dictate to defer election process by five days. As a result, the fresh date for accepting sealed envelopes from the political parties with names of candidates under the list system has been fixed for October 5 instead of the earlier date of September 30.

Similarly, the process of nomination under the first past the post system will begin from October 10. Nomination was to begin on October 5 as per the earlier schedule worked out by the EC.

The date of election, November 22, will however remain unchanged.

But it was not at all easy for PM G P Koirala to secure EC's endorsement of the cabinet decision for deferring the poll dates. The commission meeting chaired by its Chief, Bhojraj Pokharel, weighed three options: quitting en masse, endorsement of government request or put off the polls; and ultimately decided to go for the second option as one time exception. "We are doing this with hope that peace process and election will go as scheduled," Pokharel told newsfront.

The cabinet meeting on Sunday followed failure of the seven party ruling alliance to come to an understanding on the Maoist party's rigid posture that they cannot participate in the election as scheduled if their two demands are not fulfilled. They include immediate declaration of Nepal as a republic state and going for proportional system of election for all the 480 electoral seats in the constituent assembly instead of the mixed system which was agreed on through consensus earlier. "This alliance may break if our demand for proportional representation is not accepted," warned C P Gajurel, the influential leader of the Maoists.

Although the cabinet wrote to the commission to defer the poll process, there has been no assurance from the Maoist party that they would honour the new deadline and participate in the election process. Deferring the already declared poll process became necessary as Maoists refused to send the list of their candidates under the list system on September 30, the earlier deadline for the purpose.

Going ahead with the earlier schedule would have meant going for the polls without Maoists participating in it. "We discussed the political implication of the Maoist boycott, and agreed to re-schedule poll process to encourage peace process for which their participation in the election is necessary," an election commissioner said.

# Education deprived disabled children

The plight of disabled girls in Nepal is worse.

■ Chhatra Karki

Education for all (EFA) by 2015 is the main educational goal of the government. Many programmes have been initiated to achieve that goal, but it appears difficult to achieve it. About 1.2 million physically disabled children who constitute more than 92 per cent of the total children in that category are still deprived of any educational opportunities.

According to the government policy, this category includes children who are visually impaired, hearing impaired, mentally retarded etc. Educationist Bishnu Karki says, "The goal cannot be achieved if such a big section of the children are away from the reach of education."

According to Dr. Karki disabled children are discriminated at home and in society. As a result, their right to education has suffered greatly. A study by UNICEF stated that 84 percent of the disabled children do not get involved in social activities due to

humiliation they suffer in the society. This goes against the thrust of the EFA programme which is clearly against discrimination on grounds of physical disability.

A UNICEF study conducted in 30 out of 75 districts in Nepal in 2001, showed that there was a heavy dropout of disabled category children from schools. While about 56 percent of school aged (6-16 years) took admission in schools, more than one third of them dropped out. There are only around seven per cent children of this category studying in private boarding schools, with the rest in the government schools. Inadequate physical facilities provided by schools also discourage such children from active participation in school activities.

The plight of girls in this category is worse. Around 78 percent of disabled girls are deprived of formal education. An official in the ministry of education says that the government is aware of the problem and doing its best to address the situation. According to him; more than 218 special primary schools are already operating all over the



country where 1700 disabled children are studying; and 16 integrated secondary school and 12 higher secondary schools have been providing education to blind children.

13,000 disabled children are awarded scholarships; for which the government has allocated 35 million

rupees but it is hardly enough, sources from department of education say.

The ministry of education is working to bring more disabled children into the mainstream education system under the integrated and special system. According

to the Joint Secretary, Lav Prasad Tripathi, several policies and programs for providing access to EFA for disabled children have been formulated and the government is planning to implement special programmes for them soon.





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 Tel : 4443888, Fax : 4421147 (Edt.), 4411912 (Mkt.)  
 Email: newsfront@bhrikuti.com, marketing@bhrikuti.com (Mkt.)  
 Printed by: Express Color Press, Buddhanagar, Tel.: 4781810, Distribution: Kasthamandap, Tel.: 2010821

**Point to Ponder**

**Do not believe that possibly you can escape the reward of your action.**

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

# Justice done

The Supreme Court has once again risen to the occasion. It has come in defense of justice and upheld the basic principle of democracy that all are equal before law. It quashed a law brought forth by the G P Koirala government barring certain people from contesting election as and when the polls to the constituent assembly take place. And the sole basis of that law was the findings of a commission of inquiry which was not only political in composition, but was highly prejudiced in its conduct.

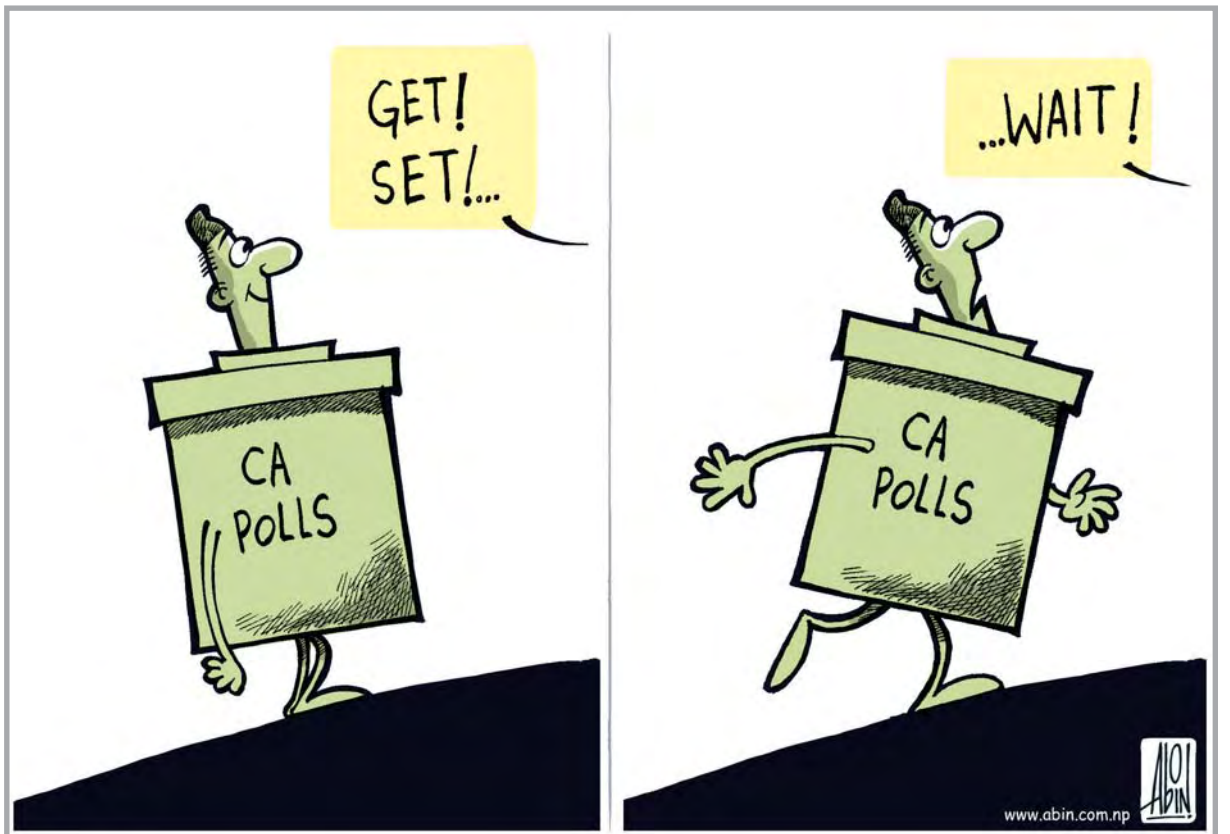
The Supreme Court (SC) by a 3-2 judgment, declared the law as ultra-vires to the constitution and upheld the right of the petitioners, and all those who are in the bad book of the Rayamajhi commission, to contest election if they so liked. The three judges who constituted the majority opinion, Kalyan Shrestha, Balram KC and Tap Bahadur Magar, deserve all praise and compliment as they bulldozed an authoritarian design of the legislature, an out and out undemocratic exercise, and proved once again that the SC will not remain a silent spectator when democracy and democratic values as well as principles are in peril.

It will be wrong to uphold such laws, bad in intent and principle, in the name of 'legislative wisdom'. Upholding such a law by the SC would have meant a total travesty of justice and justice system. Such fallacies by the apex court would mean encouraging the legislature to go for any brutal attack on the right to equality before law purely on the strength of brute majority in the House. And mercifully, the SC saved the country from such a situation.

At a time when the government is making all efforts to bring judiciary under the executive and legislative control at the cost of well laid and well-practiced democratic principles of separation of powers, such a judgment by the apex court is timely and is an opportunity for the government to retreat. Government's sinister design vis a vis the court is clearly visible. It has deliberately chosen to keep the chief justice's post vacant.

With the system of parliamentary hearing and judges' public scrutiny introduced, everyone knows how much leverage a prime minister will have on the matter of appointing or not appointing somebody a judge and chief justice if there is no consensus in the 28-member house committee.

There cannot be pious intentions on the part of the prime minister in appointing Shailaja Acharya as ambassador to Delhi in absence of consensus in the parliamentary committee and keeping the issue of CJ's appointment in limbo. Does he want guarantee of a servile judiciary from the would be chief justice? Koirala's fears must have increased with the SC verdict on the recent case. Only an authoritarian regime plays an arbitrary role in appointing judges because it is mostly in favour of a committed or a guided judiciary.



## Letters

### Great cartoons

Abin has emerged as the most respected cartoonist in the country today. His punches are fierce, but never at the cost of decency, which sometimes most other cartoonists tend to lose sight of. That makes him greater than most of his contemporaries and seniors.

Cartoon not only makes a paper rich, it is altogether a different art of expressing facts and undiluted truth, with satire. That is what Abin has been able to do for newsfront. I sincerely hope that you will maintain the quality of the cartoons.

■ **Rehana Malla**  
Lazimpat, Kathmandu

### Dictator Koirala

Yubaraj Ghimire's article, 'Captured state', captured the essence of what has been going on in Nepal today. Absence of the state, lack of accountability on the part of the government, dithering UN bodies and growing empowerment of political party chiefs at the cost of their parties all seem to be leading the country to a disaster.

We have noticed how the PM Koirala is out to save his chair through any deal with Maoists and other political parties without trying to secure the mandate of the people. He is fast emerging as a dictator par excellence.



■ **Narayan Sharma**  
Kirtipur, Kathmandu

### Koirala, no leader

This is regarding your lead story 'Countdown'. I fully agree that G P Koirala will have no right to continue as the prime

minister if he cannot hold election after he misses the second deadline for election.

But this is also the time to think about the implications of too many political experiments and impending instability. Maoists should honour what they have publicly pledged in the past and not precipitate the matter by demanding proportional representation system at this stage. And for Koirala, it is very necessary to step down now that he has proved he cannot lead.

■ **Ashok Thapa**  
Naxal, Kathmandu

### Yoga choice

Can Yoga be modern life's choice? Last week's issues of most of tabloids, newspapers and

magazines were colored with stunning radiance generated by Yog Guru Swami Ramdev from India, who was on his great mission of making healthy society, mentally and physically, across the world using ancient self realisation techniques. During his one week long yoga teaching sessions here, he shared the values, importance and utility of yoga science in every aspect of social life.

Before leaving Kathmandu, he mentioned that one of the major problems in Nepali society is mental tension; which is true. Why don't we all practice the practical yogic living right from the political leaders, party workers down to the common labourers?

■ **Krishna Chandra Dahal**  
Project Coordinator,  
Antenna Foundation Nepal

## Spiritual Corner

### Yunus Emre

(1238 – 1320) is considered by many to be one of the most important Turkish poets. He was a Sufi dervish of Anatolia. His poetry expresses a deep personal mysticism, humanity and love for God. He traveled and taught among the rural poor, singing his songs in the language of the common people. Yunus' poems:

### Knowledge

Knowledge should mean a full grasp of knowledge  
 Knowledge means to know yourself, heart and soul.

If you have failed to understand yourself,  
 Then all of your reading has missed its call.

What is the purpose of reading those books?

So that man can know the all-powerful.  
 If you have read, but failed to understand,  
 Then your efforts are just a barren toil.

Don't boast of reading, mastering science  
 Or of all your prayers and obeisance.  
 If you don't identify man as god,  
 All your learning is of no use at all.

The true meaning of the four holy books  
 Is found in the alphabet's first letter.  
 You talk about that first letter, preacher;  
 What is the meaning of that-could you tell?



Yunus Emre says to you,  
 Pharisee,  
 Make the holy pilgrimage if need be  
 A hundred times-but if you ask me,  
 The visit to a heart is best of all.

### Word

A single word can brighten the face  
 of one who knows the value of words.

Ripened in silence, a single word  
 acquires a great energy for work.

War is cut short by a word,  
 and a word heals the wounds,  
 and there's a word that changes  
 poison into butter and honey.

Let a word mature inside yourself.  
 Withhold the unripened thought.  
 Come and understand the kind of word  
 that reduces money and riches to dust.

Know when to speak a word  
 and when not to speak at all.  
 A single word turns the universe of hell  
 into eight paradises.

Follow the way. Don't be fooled  
 by what you already know. Be watchful.  
 Reflect before you speak.  
 A foolish mouth can brand your soul.

Yunus, say one last thing  
 about the power of words --  
 Only the word "I"  
 divides me from god.





# Address issues of oppressed Dalits



■ Uday Pariyar

**It is important that the Janajati and Madhesi activists look out for feudalism growing within their own communities...**

Those who understand Nepal know well that Dalits are the most ill treated and suppressed ones in the country. They are segregated as untouchables, considered outcasts and forced to live in the fringes. They face discrimination and humiliation in their everyday lives.

In many villages they are denied use of public water taps; many landlords refuse to rent out rooms to Dalits. And the social order is so strong that they get verbally abused, physically attacked or raped if they failed to observe the strict social rules. The worse part is that, despite the rhetoric of all the changes in Kathmandu, they have not been treated any better. And the state or any party has not made any effort to stop the social injustices.

A blind couple in Illam district was recently forced out of their homes and communities on the charges of committing the 'crime' of a Limbu (Janajati) boy marrying a Pariyar (Dalit) girl. The socially 'exiled' couple is now struggling to eke out a living in a town area. The local government, the parties and NGOs have refrained from raising any voice against such an illegal treatment. This is the scenario in a country that has been declared 'free from untouchability' and 'secular.' There are many such incidents of abuses that go unreported and unnoticed.

The case of a Limbu marrying a Dalit woman and being thrown out is a classic example of the fact that the Janajati are equally responsible for suppressing Dalits. They are no less than Brahmins and Chhetris when it comes to

segregating and mistreating the so-called untouchables. Sadly, the leaders and activists of various ethnic groups fighting for their rights such as federalism along ethnic lines and right to self-determination and autonomy are least bothered about their need to change their attitude towards Dalits.

Why do not people like Dr Om Gurung and Pasang Sherpa championing the Janajati cause speak a word about liberating Dalits at least from the hands of the people of their own communities?

The Madhesis have launched various struggles and agitation to put pressure on the state to treat them on equal footing. But again, the Madhesi leaders have forgotten the issues of many Dalits in their areas being treated in a way worse than the hill Dalits. There are frequent reports of Chamars, Doms and others in places like Saptari and Siraha continuing to suffer from social exclusion and humiliation.

There are many unreported cases widespread all along the Terai belt. Nothing has changed for them even in the new regime. Isn't it something that leaders like Upendra Yadav and others should be worried about? Are they not ashamed of the way they treat their own so-called low caste people?

Rights and responsibilities are two sides of a coin. If the Janajatis and Madhesis demand their rights from the state, they also have the duties to mitigate or discourage wrong actions and

activities within their own communities. They cannot act as agents of social change if they forgot their responsibilities and duties.

Indeed, it should be the primary duty of the state to guarantee civic rights and liberty to every citizen. But, the issue of caste based discrimination is a very complicated one that is deeply entrenched in our societies. It makes inroads into almost all social lives everywhere in the country. So, it should be the responsibility of everybody working to change societies to take the issues more seriously. Only then the outcome of any change will be meaningful in the true sense.

It is important that the Janajati and Madhesi activists look out for feudalism growing within their own communities while fighting against other feudalism. It is time for them to discourage their people from stepping on the civic and human rights of other people including Dalits. Dalits too might revolt for their rights in the future, even if they have remained tolerant and quiet till now.

Ethnic tensions and violence will be prevented only when the oppressed are given a chance to live a better life. The Janajati and Madhesi leaders and activists have a duty to address these problems. Only such concerted efforts by everybody will help prevent the ethnic tensions in future. If we do not wish to see Kapilvastu violence, we should start acting now before it is too late. Political developments are crucial but social changes should move along hand in hand. Only then can we dream of a peaceful Nepal.





Media is a powerful tool to maximize the mode of learning, creative thinking, feeling, perceiving, understanding and becoming active observer and finally becoming participant in public life of the nation. Reading habits of media involves synergy; as learners become the future multipliers of knowledge and skills in other areas of life.

In order to effectively respond to rapid socio-economic, political and technological changes and growing competition in today's media landscape, it is important for the media to become a creative part of history in the making and help arrest the drift of Nepali society's race to the bottom. There is a generational divide in journalism in Nepal that isolates ideologues from realists; but the public function of media has not changed much.

Media's success lies in enabling the public to think critically about human life, free them from structural constraints and instill in them human values. These are critical to transform people into citizens and citizens into cosmopolitan public. One must understand that a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual society cannot exist without a framework of laws protected by a virtuous state. Politics becomes more rational if people are informed and guided by a lively public sphere, public opinion and general interest formed through reasoned debate and discussion.

Public debate in an equal, open and free sphere is a precondition to democracy and democratisation of society. Media's diagnostic function of the ills of society and reporting of the possibility of remedy justifies its search for the continuous improvement of human condition. This, however, requires media persons to step aside from the sound-bite of politics where politicians do nothing other than shout at each other. Media should also examine some of the long-term problems the public and its institution, the state are facing in everyday life.

Rational public opinion allows the people to exercise their sovereign

# MEDIA as a medium



■ Dev Raj Dahal

**Without responsible media, politics operates only in a void, devoid of substantive issues, creative work and critical social inquiry.**

power. The notion of popular sovereignty implies the legislative power of people. But, the critical questions are: How can people exercise equal sovereignty when media is unevenly distributed in society like income and condition of people's participation in public affairs is reduced to their

level of access to other socio-economic preconditions? How can media establish people's right to know if it is dominated by interest groups, forces of market and administrative power?

The answer to these questions lies in a

balanced reporting through uncoerced, fair and diverse media. Structural freedom of media is, therefore, essential to stimulate the moral consciousness of its power and its engagement in public's struggle for the creation of good society. In contrast, the loss, decline and erosion of public mark a loss of democratic life. Social and political pluralism requires an atmosphere of media competition and professionalism where public issues receive priority over private ones in agenda setting and framing of news.

Professionalism does not mean loss of human feeling. Rather it is defined as a social obligation to serve the public. Media is the voice of voiceless. Invisibility of public mirrors the failure of media workers in fair reporting and maintaining editorial independence. The public values of media motivate media workers to interpret their responsibility to society and politics. Without responsible media, politics operates only in a void, devoid of substantive issues, creative work and critical social inquiry. Awareness about

learning needs and methodologies are, therefore, crucial to understand the changing patterns of media culture.

An informed public opinion can reform society and leads to a more rational course. It creates a vibrant public sphere where opinion formation about public issues, suggestions, constructive criticisms, activities and collective power of society is engaged in a reasoned dialogue and compromise. The responsibility of media workers lies in satisfying the public's thirst for justice rather than reflecting only the institutional biases of their employer.

The public service values of media, therefore, entails them to focus on the weaker side of public, such as women, children, powerless and marginalized and activation of the concept of citizen equality who makes governing power legitimate, transparent and accountable. Public accountability also calls for a diversity of voices and a rough sense of balance in reporting opposing interests that are given control of the access and new rules of equity essential for a democratic political culture. ■



At present, there are two kinds of Madhesi agitations taking place: the peaceful movement, and the other so called armed struggle. Madhes (also known as Terai) constitute a region which is on the southern side of Nepal, bordering India. The Madhesi society is indeed a very complex group of people to understand. They have been suppressed and subjugated since many years and suffer from an identity crisis where until recently; they did not know where they actually belong.

This situation in Madhes was not the creation of the collective Pahadi community as wrongly perceived by many. It was a situation created by successive rulers of Nepal, who always doubted the loyalty of these people for the simple reason that they live close to the Indian border and speak the same language that people of neighboring Indian states speak. Even the Nepali media did not understand the problems of the Madhesi people correctly.

No doubt the Nepali media played a vital role in ending the autocratic rule of monarchy as also in bringing the Maoists on the tract of peace process. The media also contributed immensely towards educating the people on the importance achieving democratic goals. But it failed to

## Terai problem and the media



■ Chandrakishore Jha

**This situation in Madhes was not the creation of the collective Pahadi community as wrongly perceived by many.**

produce the desired result when it came to realistically projecting the issues confronting the Madhesis. Even those working in Terai could not understand the problems from a proper perspective.

The people had lots of expectation from the media, and when nothing actually happened, they felt let down and frustrated. Therefore, there were many instances of direct attacks on media personnel, media houses and media organisations and the tendency is continuing even today. This is not a healthy development, which needs to be understood by the people and the media.

In the present situation in Terai,

there are various challenges confronting the media personnel. The armed group wants that the media is dictated to suit their conditions, while some anti social elements and fundamentalists do not want it to function smoothly. On the other hand, the state is not able to ensure the safety and security of media personnel.

In the midst of all these unfriendly atmosphere, the media can still function as an effective institution of nation building provided it is able to demonstrate through its functioning that independent and free media is in the interest of all. This can be achieved by correctly understanding

issues, and approaching them without sense of bias, partiality, and within democratic norms.

In this fragile transition period it is not possible for the state establishments to see everything correctly, including the plights and difficulties of marginalised communities. As a responsible institution, the media must therefore play the all important role of pointing out the shortcomings of the state so that the nation at large benefits from it. Its watchful eyes must not be waver when the need arises to point out issues that are inter-community in nature.

The media also should play the role of initiating inter-community dialogue

keeping in mind the need to respect the identity of every community. It should function as a cementing agent particularly in a pluralistic society like Nepal. It is necessary that the state is continuously reminded of what needs to be done.

Presently, Nepali society has shown signs of dividing itself along communal lines. And the media faces a daunting challenge of bringing the society together. For this the big media houses must adopt more inclusive policies in their selecting their personnel. They must also ensure that their staffs are instructed to understand the socio-cultural importance of people they work with.

As media people, we are neither Paharis nor Madhesis, but professionals functioning within a framework of democratic norms. It is only when we compromise on professionalism and function as members of a particular community, leaving our professions behind, that fingers are pointed at us. Similarly, no state machinery can effectively provide security to media persons at any given point of time. Strict adherence to code of conduct, people sensitive approach, and respect for social values can only be our automatic security.

(Chandrakishore is a Birgunj based journalist, editor of Terai Khabar Patrika)



I try and learn each day and try not to think too much about the past or the future; which is not always possible but I try.



Pix by newsfront

My body is old but not my spirit.

# Living it up

**Inger Lissanevitch, 80**, has spent the past 55 years in Nepal, a place she fell in love with the very first time she landed here in 1952 with her husband, Boris Lissanevitch, one of the pioneer entrepreneurs in Nepal. She watched, painted and experienced amazing twists and turns of events in this country of which she feels very much a part of. She walked down the memory lane with newsfront recently.

**How has living in Nepal been for you?**

Never has there been a dull moment living here! I was 24 when I first came here with Boris and my two young children. You know, Boris was one of the key persons who helped King Tribhuvan get back into power. It was a fascinating time and Kathmandu was so beautiful and so safe then! It was a miraculous moment when we had our first view of the mountains, when we stepped out of the plane into the crisp air of the valley.

My outstanding memories are the treks to Tyangboche, the Everest area; where I used to go with Sherpas and my tent and paint. The beauty of the place was over powering! It was the best time in my life when I was up there surrounded by beauty, incredible peace and such friendly people. Sadly, I cannot trek anymore.

**What was living with Boris like?**

I had an interesting life with Boris. I would not say it was totally happy. I would have liked more family life but he was very busy with his hotel, social life and so we could not see as much of him as we would have liked to. Well, life is not always happy or always sad. It is a mixture. But I was never bored; since he was always so full of fascinating ideas.

Boris was a visionary, ten years ahead of everyone else with his ideas and plans. He gave many feasibility studies to the government long before the word feasibility was heard of. He gave it free; all he wanted was for it to get implemented, like trout, mushroom, strawberries farming and many other things. Nepal had been closed for so many years and Boris worked hard to open the country to tourism. There is a big story on Life magazine about it. Nepal would surely have opened eventually but ten years later probably.

**Where did you meet him?**

I met him in Calcutta; where I had come back to join my mother and step father after finishing my schooling in England. Boris was then running a club in Calcutta, the first mixed club where everybody could go. It was a tremendous success, with good food and dance music.

**Did you work with him?**

Being much older, he liked to do things his way. I was his hostess and used to help with his English and write up his feasibility studies. I was very interested in interior decorating as well. I did up the bar in his Royal hotel. I created the Yak and Yeti footprint logo which was stolen from us along with one third of the Yak and Yeti hotel; where a gentleman's agreement was breached and the other party refused to honour his verbal agreement. So, we lost all that. Boris was actually a terrible businessman.

**Why did you stop painting?**

I really could not concentrate on painting after Boris died in 1985. It seemed to dry out.

When I had an exhibition in Copenhagen years ago, I sold quite a lot. Some of them, I wish I had not sold. I am no great artist but some of them were beautiful. I painted landscapes and a few portraits. No abstracts, I do not want to change what god has created. I could not improve on that.

**You never felt like leaving Nepal?**

I am from Denmark and Boris was from Copenhagen. Some people I know had suggested I could go back to Denmark but what for? What can I

do there? Here, I can do something and fulfill a dream. In life, you have to have a purpose and you must always dream and try to realise your dreams. And if it is possible to do something for others, do it.

**Tell us about your recent life.**

I spent 15 years in Thecho alone, gardening, fight off village boys from stealing fruits from my garden, but not much success there! After I was attacked twice by robbers that put my life at risk, I shifted to Bhaktapur; where I lead a very quiet life and I am under protection of my god son Rabindra Puri. I love living in Bhaktapur with old houses, temples, everything antique. We share the same dream, to bring back beauty to Kathmandu valley in the form of traditional architecture with all modern conveniences.

Just look how interesting life is! I have three sons, two of whom have married Nepali women and altogether, I have four grandchildren. And now I am lucky to have a Nepali son who looks after me so well. And he is a great business partner too.

**What do you feel about the changes you have witnessed in the country?**

In the fifties, it appeared peaceful, people seemed happy, even if they did not have very much. Now we have almost a civil war. It really hurts my heart. But I keep hoping. I follow the news very closely. It is sad to see the deterioration.

The government does not seem to do anything for the country. They are busy quarreling among themselves, for power. There is no free health service, no free schooling. Why do not they do something for the people? I do not

understand it. I also do not know if rich Nepalis do much for the poor; I have not heard much about it. I hope it will change for the better. It is sad that so many young people are leaving but I understand why. Not everybody has the drive and energy to create one's own opportunity.

**Has your perspective of life changed now?**

Perhaps I have become more accepting of circumstances. I used to get very excited about things like trying to stop cement factory or cutting down of trees and wanted to go out on streets with a big banner but Boris used to stop me and tell me that I would not be doing him any good. His generation could not accept it anyway. If I had married somebody younger, maybe!

I try and learn each day and try not to think too much about the past or the future; which is not always possible but I try. And you must keep a sense of humour. God sends us tricky situations and humour makes it easy. You should never lose it. Even in worse in situation, there is a funny side somewhere, not always though.

**What keeps you interested in life?**

My dreams. I want to invest in renewable energy, rain harvesting and solar energy. I have health problems but the secret of my alertness is to be interested in everything that is going on and to try and do something. We all have dreams, ideas, things we would like to do. And we should try to do it. You have to do things to keep your interest alive. You cannot just sit back and grow older! My body is old but not my spirit. I hope to keep going a few more years. ■



# Nepal's new dilemma

No party should be above the code of conduct and the laws and regulations

Nepali leaders, seven party coalition as well as the Maoists, appear to have entrenched themselves into an intractable position unwittingly. In order to accelerate the campaign from street and parliament for achieving their long stated goal of a republic Nepal, the Maoists have forced themselves out from the government. Also by stating that without a republic Nepal, the elections would not be possible, they are taking a stand that does not conform to the interim constitution.

Although the present government and the parliament have made amends to the constitution within a very short period of its declaration in support of federal structure and other important issues, the question of change in the form of governance affecting the long held system and belief of the majority does require people's mandate in a clear manner. For this reason, the interim constitution states clearly that the issues relating to monarchy would be decided by the very first meeting of the constituent assembly.

The announcement of Maoists ouster from the government came as a shock to all law abiding citizens of Nepal. The programmes launched by the Maoists at a public meeting, especially the announcement of Bandh during the time of filing of nominations of candidates for the CA elections casts a serious doubt on the possibility of the elections in the scheduled time.

Although the Maoists have not yet formally announced that they will boycott the elections in November, they have also not stated clearly that they will take part in the forthcoming elections. Similar to the total failure of the municipal elections called by the king's



■ Binod P. Bista

government some two years back, Maoists absence in the elections this time would reduce the CA elections to a hoax. Considering the past record of the seven coalition partners who were leading and controlling the system of governance prevailing in the country before King Gyanendra took power, the Maoists would have to have a meaningful say in the new constitution and the system of governance for a new Nepal.

The civil society organisations of Nepal and other concerned groups and individuals have been voicing their concern about the sudden departure of Maoists from the government. India, the United States, and the rest of international community have been alerting the Maoists the difficulty of legitimacy that they would face as a political party if they did not partake in the CA elections.

**Lack of unity among the eight parties has given rise to new problems as evidenced from the killings and a possible emergence of religious conflict that never ever happened in Nepal before.**

At this juncture, Maoists' responsibility as a formidable organised force surpasses all other political parties when it comes to CA elections as their share as the creator and hopefully the preserver of an all-inclusive democratic Nepal is much larger than others.

Lack of unity among the eight parties has given rise to new problems as evidenced from the killings and a possible emergence of religious conflict that never ever happened in Nepal before. People of Nepal have given their full support to the eight party's sweeping and radical changes in the framing of Nepal's interim constitution and its subsequent amendments.

It is quite a feat that was achieved by the leaders of the eight parties during the time of peace. The people accepted the momentous change with the hope that they would be able to enjoy all their rights freely and fully, including the right to economic and social progress and prosperity. The parties have no choice other than to accept the reality that they must fulfill their commitments to the CA elections.

No party should be above the code of conduct and the laws and regulations set up by the national election commission and the parliament for the successful holding of the CA elections. Breach of this important element by any party is likely to negate the expected successful outcome of the elections. All parties must understand that all eyes are watching their conduct and activities to the run up to the election of a lifetime for all Nepalis. Failure to conduct the elections on time on such a grave matter might change the course of history of Nepal forever. And, it might not be for the better. ■

## Lacking humane sensibility



■ Amit Pyakurel

The discourse on shock, grief and monstrosity regarding the recent triple blasts in

Kathmandu now seems to have lost its vigour. There have been political conjectures but the human facet regarding this evil act seems under-rated, with less regard to the loss of innocent lives and irreparable trauma to the family members of the dead. Despite our reasonable optimism and worries concerning the CA polls, it seems the loss of innocent lives is trivial compared to this big objective.

Besides the blame game and obvious speculations, we see no earnest efforts from the authorities concerned to trace and punish the real culprits. Relating the event with the current volatility and our all familiar mode of violence, also seem to give an ordinary face to the incident. Due to practical reasons, shocking incidents lose its prominence after few days of media highlight. But the actual sufferers retain their pain for a long time, and they are denied answers why it happened to them and whether the real culprits will actually get punished.

Life has to go on but the question arises: are we securing the safety of other citizens in face of such unprecedented attacks? We must not allow the once-elevated urge for fair investigation and stern actions against the real culprits diminish and disappear. Our human sensitivity must not be compromised. We should acknowledge that if such crimes go unpunished, the criminals could inflict similar atrocities against others in future.

Simply relating the incident to the days of the insurgency also sounds untenable. Culprits who victimised the innocents during years of insurgency should be identified and punished; although the acts were "unintentional" as per the policy of Maoists and the state. Past impunities should not be used to rationalise the current acts of evil or leave any doubts about meting punishment to the criminals. Acts of terrorism deliberately targeting innocent bystanders in public places can never be justified.

Another painful aspect is the numerical calculation of human fatalities by some 'practical analysts' who tend to relate the number of dead with other greater war casualties. The Maoist chief, Prachanda calculated that the insurgency caused the deaths of around "only" 13,000 citizens as compared to other similar revolts around the world. Similarly, we have heard some heartless comments that "only" three dead from three bombs in Kathmandu is a "minor" event. Both these assessments outrageously underrate the value of human life.

Inadequate law and its ineffective implementation have forced many aggrieved ones to wonder if they will ever find justice. While the lives lost or dismemberment of limbs causing lifetime ordeal is irreparable, the emotional pain and outrage of the victims and their close ones will naturally increase if justice is denied or delayed.

Fingers have been pointed at the all elusive "regressive" elements for the murders. But whoever the culprits are; they are accountable for punishment, regardless of their regional identity, political standing or influence. A strong independent body without any political proclivity needs to investigate the issue. The government's repeated, 'assurance to punish' the culprits must be fulfilled well in time.

People need tangible answers as to who was behind this bloodshed? The government should act urgently before the culprits, who victimise innocents as their bargaining tool cause further acts of terror.

(Amit is a student, Shepherd Int. College, Kathmandu).

## Who benefits from Kapilvastu riot?

The victimised are living in extreme terror.

Houses, shops and vehicles were burnt down; Chandrauta Bazar was in utter painful silence. The killing of one of the influential local leaders, Mohid Khan by unknown assailants became an issue of the communal riot. Places like Krishnagar, Chandrauta, Gorusinhe, Birpur, Bisanpur, Ganeshpur, Khaire, Patthardahiya, Khuruhuria, Shivaghadi, Shivpur, Hallanagar, Jayanagar, Sundaridadi were disturbed and gradually it spread to Butwal, Lamahi and Tulsipur.

Ironically, the Home Minister felt it necessary to visit the victims only after almost four days of the incident; which goes to show its insensitivity towards issues of common people and their lives.

According to the local people, Mohid Khan was regarded as a social figure. He was the feudal landlord. Similarly, his father was also the member of the then Raj Parisad Standing committee. Mohid was also a type of institution that played an



■ Sabita Gyawali

important role to maintain social and communal harmony among people of his community. It appears now that Khan's killer knew that his murder could easily be an issue of communal uprising. The killing took place around 7:50 to 8 AM and the violence started from 9:30, taking

**People of Kapilvastu have lost their trust in local administration, police, state and the government.**

shape of communal and ethnic riot which indicates that it was a politically motivated murder.

The incident of Kapilvastu has affected the already fragile communal harmony. Many people have lost their lives, shops were looted and burnt down, trucks and vehicles were burnt. More than 5000 people have been displaced. The

displaced Pahadis have moved towards the north and Madhesis towards the south and some even have crossed the border.

People of Kapilvastu have lost their trust in local administration, police, state and the government. If the police could have taken some actions to resolve the violence, when it started, it would have been possible to stop the riot but the armed police force that was just about seven kilometers away from the place of the incident remained

silent. It is said that the police around 11 am Sunday had informed Muslim businessmen in Butwal to be alert to aftermath of the incident. So, why were there were not enough preparations from the government to mitigate potential repercussions?

People in Kapilbastu, Chandrauta, Lamahi and

Tulsipur are today living in extreme terror. There exists mass fear psychosis and people are not certain about what will happen the next minute. Nepalgunj and Birgunj are also vulnerable places where such chaos can easily take place. In Chandrauta people were not at all willing to talk about the incident. They are extremely disillusioned with the political parties who proved themselves to be pathetically lethargic, shortsighted and careless.

In the meantime, both Muslim and Hindu leaders and civil society actors in different parts of the country are trying to play an important role to create communal harmony. They have been pleading to the public to have patience and be aware of those who are trying to get benefit out of this situation. In this critical context, the role played by Hindu, Muslim and the civil society leaders is praiseworthy. Finally, a fundamental question arises – if the parties and the government really care about the people, who is benefiting from such communal riots? ■



# China backs end to Myanmar violence



China called for an end to violence against protesters in Myanmar as United Nations Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari arrived in the Southeast Asian nation to meet with its military leaders. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao urged Myanmar to seek a peaceful resolution to the protests, according to the Chinese Foreign Ministry's Web site. Wen's remarks came after nations, including the U.S. and the European Union pressed China, Myanmar's closest ally, to use its influence.

"China hopes that all parties concerned in Myanmar show restraint, resume stability through peaceful means as soon as possible, promote domestic reconciliation and achieve democracy and development," Wen said. "China is very concerned about the situation in Myanmar." Condemnation of the regime in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, has increased since soldiers were deployed last week on the streets of Yangon to end the biggest anti-government protests in almost 20 years. Internet access was cut and "several multiples of 10" have been killed, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said Sept. 28.



"The streets are normal today, although there are lots of troops and they have arrested huge numbers in recent days," British Ambassador Mark Canning said today by e-mail. "We will continue to see small protests, but once the security is lessened, they will grow."

## Gambari Hopeful

Demonstrations began more than a month ago after the government raised fuel prices, and intensified when Buddhist monks took to the streets. The government tolerated the protests until Sept. 26, when soldiers began firing on and clubbing demonstrators.

Gambari arrived in Myanmar's largest city Yangon, formerly Rangoon, yesterday afternoon, a UN statement said. Gambari said as he left Singapore that he was hopeful for a "fruitful visit." On previous trips, he has met Myanmar's top general, Than Shwe, and pro-democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi.

"I expect to meet all the people that I need to meet," Gambari told reporters in Singapore yesterday when asked whether he would meet Suu Kyi. His last visit to Myanmar was more than

a year ago.

A spokesman for the UN in Yangon, Aye Win, said today in a telephone interview that "information had not been shared" about when Gambari's meetings may take place. "There are reports of Gambari leaving tonight, but I can't confirm that and I am on standby to hear from his party about their schedule." Gordon Johndroe, spokesman for the U.S. National Security Council, yesterday expressed "concerns" that Gambari "was swiftly moved from Rangoon to the new capital, far from population centers."

## Business Ally

"We urge the junta to allow him access to all those he wishes to meet with, including religious leaders, as well as Aung San Suu Kyi," Johndroe's e-mailed statement said. The authorities fired tear gas and forced off the streets the few people who ventured out in Yangon and Mandalay yesterday, the Associated Press said. As many as 40 civilians were arrested outside a Yangon hotel where they had planned a demonstration for Gambari, Deutsche

Presse Agentur said.

The Htoo trading company, owned by Than Shwe's "right hand man" and business tycoon, Tayza, shut down its operations on Sept. 28, Mizzima News reported on its Web site. Mizzima is run by exiled Myanmar journalists in India. Buddhist monks, the backbone of the protests, were holed up in monasteries, sealed off and surrounded by barbed wire. Armed personnel were stationed on nearly every street corner, AP said.

U.S. President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown agreed yesterday in a secure video conference to maintain international political pressure on Myanmar's ruling junta.

## Global Rallies

The two leaders conferred on "the need for countries around the world to continue to make their views clear to the junta that they need to refrain from violence and move to a peaceful transition to democracy," White House Deputy Press Secretary Scott Stanzel said.

Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura lodged a protest with Myanmar counterpart Nyan Win over the death of a Japanese journalist, Kyodo News reported. Komura met with Nyan at United Nations headquarters, it said. Japan today sent Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Mitoji Yabunaka to Myanmar, where he will ask for a full investigation of the shooting and punishment for those responsible, Kyodo reported. The journalist was shot at extremely close range, Kyodo reported.

The U.S. said it has banned visas for Myanmar's military junta as global condemnation of the Southeast Asian nation's government spread. There were protests in New Delhi, Geneva, Paris and Canberra yesterday.

The U.S. targeted "more than three dozen" officials and their families. It will add others "who bear responsibility for the ongoing attacks on innocent civilians," the State Department said on its Web site. (Bloomberg)

## Pakistanis stage protest

Police used tear gas and batons yesterday to disperse lawyers protesting legal rulings that cleared the way for President Pervez Musharraf to seek a new five-year term.

A day after the Supreme Court dismissed several petitions challenging Musharraf's bid for reelection, the Election Commission yesterday approved his candidacy in a ruling expected to be challenged.

Police first tried to disperse the lawyers, then turned on journalists covering the chaotic clashes. Deputy Information Minister Tariq Azim was also caught up in the melee, receiving a few punches from protesters before being bundled into a car by aides and driven away.

More legal maneuvers are expected from the opposition - a request for the Supreme Court to review its decision and a planned mass resignation from parliament for the Saturday vote by federal and provincial lawmakers.

Despite dwindling popularity and increasingly bitter opposition, Musharraf, a close U.S. ally, seems set to win the election. The ruling coalition says it has the



numbers it needs, and even the general's main challenger, retired Judge Wajihuddin Ahmed, has admitted he has little chance.

The Election Commission approved only six of the 43 candidates, including Ahmed, who was nominated by lawyers, and Makhdoom Amin Fahim, vice chairman of ex-Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party. Fahim's party earlier said he would run only if Musharraf were disqualified.

The opposition alliance has said its lawmakers will quit Parliament on Tuesday to protest the general's candidacy, a move also aimed at depriving the election of legitimacy.

Musharraf, who seized power in a 1999 coup, has pledged to give up his post as army chief if he wins the election.

(Philly.com)

## Karzai invites insurgent leaders to contest polls

Afghan President Hamid Karzai said yesterday he would talk to two top insurgent leaders wanted by the United States in an effort to bring peace to his country.

Karzai also challenged Mullah Mohammad Omar and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leaders of the Taliban movement and the radical Hezb-i-Islami faction respectively, to stand in the forthcoming elections and said he would even offer them government posts if they renounced violence.

The president made the new offer hours after a suicide bombing killed 30 people in the capital in one of the worst attacks of a bloody insurgency launched by the extremist Taliban that was driven from government in 2001.

A suicide bomber wearing an Afghan army uniform set off a huge explosion yesterday while trying to board a military bus in the capital, officials said. The Taliban claimed responsibility. The blast ripped off the roof of the bus and tore out its sides, leaving a charred hull of burnt metal.

"For 10 or 15 seconds, it was like an atom bomb - fire, smoke and dust everywhere," said Mohammad Azim, a police officer who witnessed the blast. Karzai said 30 people were killed, 28



soldiers and two civilians. The Health Ministry said 30 others were injured.

Karzai rejected the insurgents' demands that the 50,000 international troops helping Kabul to face the growing Taliban threat must leave for any negotiations to take place.

"We're ready to talk to all Afghans, any Afghan wanting talks, we're ready," Karzai said when asked if he would negotiate with Mullah Omar and Hekmatyar, both of whom have multi-million-dollar bounties on their heads. If peace could only be brought to Afghanistan through talks, "we're ready to do it".

This was his most direct invitation yet to leaders of the growing unrest, with previous offers of talks vague about whether the fugitives were included.

Karzai said that should the men ask, "President, give us this or that post in a ministry and we won't fight", if they ask

me for such thing, I would immediately accept." He said the time for seizing power through force was over, with the country now pursuing democracy. "Do you want power, do you want government?" the president asked. "There's elections, come and stand. If you get elected, then welcome."

## Red Cross staff freed

Four members of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) staff kidnapped by Taliban in Afghanistan three days ago were freed yesterday, a Taliban spokesman said.

"The four employees of the ICRC who were kidnapped by the Taliban because of some suspicions have been released just now," spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said by telephone from an unknown location.

A spokeswoman in Kabul said she would not confirm the four had been freed until they had arrived back at the organization's headquarters in the Afghan capital. "I know that the operation for their release, for their transfer, is ongoing, but they are not here yet," ICRC's Graziella Piccolo said.

(Gulf News)



# Gulliver's travels in New Lilliput

## ■ The Wanderer

"I was surprised on my return to Lilliput after such a long interval to find an increase in population beyond my imagination. I was told that this was because of the influx into the capital of many of those unfortunate Yahoos who had migrated to work in places like Belefuscu—a country similar to Lilliput in its mountainous topography—as well as many who were coming back from Lalputa and Brobdingnag.

My old friends among the Yahoos were very concerned because they said the Lalputans had the habit of throwing rocks at people who disagreed with their point of view and, of course, interference by Brobdingnagians has always been anathema to the Lilliputians. It is not for Lemuel Gulliver to comment but I will tell you what I have observed.

Everyone is talking about New Lilliput and how wonderful it is going to be. One of New Lilliput's continuing problems is that its leaders believe that, if one is not rich, one has no excuse for enjoying life: hence the poor hardly get a day off and have to resort to strikes or 'bandhs' as the New Lilliputians call them. Another belief, common to all, rich and poor, politically powerful and politically sidelined alike, is that it is always someone else to blame, never themselves. There are many suspects for New Lilliputians to fall back on: ambassadors from Brobdingnag or Lalputa and agents of the same springing most readily to mind.

Since my last visit, the Lilliputian Liberation Army (LLA) has joined up with the Houghnhnms and together they persuaded the Yahoos with promises of fragrant grease to agitate for New Lilliput. Unfortunately for the Yahoos, once the agitation was successful—as it always is when plenty of Yahoos get together against the diminutive peoples who originally ran Lilliput—the arrogant Houghnhnms, with their convic-

tions of superiority over everyone else, and the LLA with their rhetorical overkill, sidelined the Yahoos completely.

The Houghnhnms, having spent so long in exile in Brobdingnag, obviously had very big ideas and, suffering as they do from verbal enteritis, made promises that they certainly don't seem to be keeping. Announcing a peaceful coup, they established a Great Revolutionary Council (GRC) of 1,765 members handpicked and nominated by the Houghnhnms and the LLA cadres themselves. Governance is by absolute consensus of these 1,765 unelected council members. They have already decided what the outcomes of the next election will be before the majority—who are mostly Lilliputian Yahoos—have had a chance to vote.

I had forgotten how quarrelsome Lilliputian Yahoos could be but, when the GRC revived the old edict that everyone must break their eggs at the small end, the Yahoos were enraged. Their anger was aggravated even more by the fact that eggs were rationed by the GRC and that queues were stretched for miles just to purchase a single egg. The price of eggs in Lilliput, readers will remember, is heavily subsidised as a sweetener to get everyone to vote for candidates who have already decided without an election which end of the egg should be broken. When the Yahoos retaliated by disrupting the normal traffic of Lilliput the GRC made the regressive decision to discontinue the sale of eggs until it could pay for previous supplies.

You will recall, dear readers, that Lilliput is unfortunate in that it is landlocked and has no eggs of its own, hence it has to rely on Brobdingnag for a steady supply. The council had been playing a dangerous populist game selling eggs below the global market price and Brobdingnag has rightly demanded payment for goods supplied. Why the GRC would do

such a foolish thing can only be explained by the fact that its own members and hangers-on don't pay for their eggs any way; that many of those willing to pay for their eggs are not too fond of the GRC and might not vote for the council members even if they're the last politicians on earth; and the rest, who are Yahoos, are expected to put up and shut up like they always do.

It is at this juncture, of course, that I have chosen to return to dear old Lilliput. It is, however, distressing to meet my old friends among the Yahoos who have suffered a great deal. They tell me that, far from being peaceful, the agitations were long, violent, and sectarian, incurring great losses of lives and livelihoods. They have witnessed horrendous things and are fearful that all is not yet over. My heart goes out to the Lilliputian Yahoos who have, it seems, been hoodwinked once again.

In my capacity as an objective observer, I have it on authority that, contrary to general belief, millions of litres of eggs intended for New Lilliput have been waylaid at border crossing points. They cannot be transported because the Yahoos themselves, poor dears, have closed down the traffic. No prizes for guessing who will be landed with all the rotten eggs once they finally arrive.

I must say, dear readers, New Lilliput's current system beggars all belief! But then as the Lilliputian Yahoos tell each other: "What to do, what to do? This is Lilliput!"

I have observed on my second visit to this astoundingly beautiful land, with its quaint customs and anachronistic style of governance that New Lilliput might just end up being the old one in new packaging.

*(The Wanderer wishes to express his gratitude to Lemuel Gulliver for permitting him to freely use and interpret his journal. Lemuel may be almost 300 years' old, but his mind is as sharp as ever it was.)*

## Marshland Flowers

but the ultimate goal itself and the longing to reach it must come from another source.

### ■ Acharya Mahayogi Sridhar Rana Rinpoche



Heisenberg warns that spirituality/religious experiences and science/mathematical knowledge are two different modes of thinking and should not be confused. He warns, "many modern creeds which claim that they are, in fact, are not dealing with questions of faith, but are based on scientific knowledge that contain inner contradictions and rest on self-deception." Heinrich Hertz, in his introduction to the Principles of Mechanics says, "a natural science is one whose proposition on limited domains of nature can have only a correspondingly limited validity; that science is not a philosophy developing a world view of nature as a whole or about the essence of things."

Erwin Schrodinger, the Nobel Laureate of Physics in 1933 in his various books like My View of the World, Mind and Matter, Science and Humanism etc says, "I do not think I am prejudiced against the importance that science has from the purely human point of view. But with all that, I cannot believe that (for example) the deep philosophical enquiry into the relation between subject and object and into the true meaning of the distinction between them depends on the quantitative results of physical and chemical measurements with weighing scales, spectrometers, microscopes, telescopes, with Geiger-Muller counters, Wilson chambers, photographic plates, arrangements for measuring the radioactive decay, and what not. ...."

Further Schrodinger says, "The scientific picture of the real world around me is very deficient. It gives a lot of factual information, puts all our experiences in a magnificently consistent order, but it is ghastly silent about all and sundry that is really near to our heart, that really matters to us. It cannot tell us a word about red and blue, bitter and sweet, physical pain and physical delight, it knows nothing about beautiful and ugly, good or bad, ... Science sometimes pretends to answer questions in these domains, but the answers are very often so silly that we are not inclined to take them seriously. .... Whence come I and wither go I? That is the great unfathomable question, the same for every one of us. Science has no answer to it."

The well known Nobel Laureate of Physics in 1921, Einstein perhaps the most well known scientist of the 20th century says in his Ideas and Opinions: Objective knowledge provides us with powerful instruments for the achievements of certain ends, but the ultimate goal itself and the longing to reach it must come from another source.

Ken Wilber, a distinguished scientist in his own right and a prolific writer says in his Quantum Questions: "Modern science, in its beginning, was characterised by a conscious modesty; it made statements about strictly limited relations that are only valid within the framework of these limitations. .... This modesty was largely lost during the nineteenth century. Physical knowledge was considered to make assertions about nature as a whole. Physics wished to turn philosopher and the demand was voiced from many quarters that all true philosophers must be scientific."

This was the era named modernism, and we can see that the influence of modernism is found in almost all writing on religion, be it Buddhism or Hinduism or philosophy; during this period. Many Buddhist scholars of that period like Rahula Sankrityayana, Dr. Ambedkar are stalwarts of modernistic interpretation of Buddhism. Modernism lasted in the West till about the mid twentieth century when the cognitive revolution, threw modernism overboard and a new era of post modernism began in the west.

Many writers like Ken Wilber are of the opinion that post modernism is also on its death throes in the West and it is looking for another world view. But alas Nepal, as usual always behind time compared to the rest of the world is still in the throbbing grasp of modernism, although a smattering of writers talk about post-modernism, the brunt of the Nepalese weltanschauung (worldview) is still pretty much coloured by modernism, which was itself blinded by the view that the one and only truth/fact/reality were what was compatible with the empirical, reductionist positivism that believed that only what could be measured by scientific instruments was real.

*(To be continued.)*  
*(Sridhar Rinpoche is a Vajrayana Master)*

Last week, an English daily started off a piece with the statement, "Nepali Congress has gone republican following the wishes of the people. ...." And the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) uses terms like "People's Liberation Army" and justifies all its actions in the name of the people.

Who exactly are these people? Does not each and every one of us comprise the people? Are our political leaders speaking on our behalf, but without our knowledge or consent? The haphazard use of the term 'people' across the political spectrum has gone on for long enough. It is time for us, the common people, to speak up and tell these power-crazed maniacs that we are the people and they cannot speak on our behalf without consulting us!

Democracy means: government by the people, exercised either directly or through elected representatives; where the common

## Who are the 'people'?

### ■ Roop Joshi

people are considered as the primary source of political power; where the majority rules and there are principles of social equality and respect for the individual within a community.

In Nepal today, we have a government not elected by the people. The common people are certainly not the source of political power. There is no majority rule and social equality and respect for the individual is flaunted by everyone, from top to bottom. And we are living in a country falling apart from chronic shortages of essentials, chronic bickering among political

parties and chronic inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflict. This must be a peculiar Nepali version of democracy indeed!

This situation reminds us of Plato's assertion that a democratic government holds out the promise of equality for all of its citizens but delivers only the anarchy of an unruly mob, each of whose members is interested only in the pursuit of private interests. Does this not remind us of our current political landscape?

We do not live in a democracy in present-day Nepal. Our voice has been silenced by intimidat-

tion and political trickery. It has been taken away from us for others to use as they please. We are the silent majority who must remain silent no more. Let us speak up for our individual rights as Nepalis who deserve and want to work for a better future. Let them not hang over us the mirage of a "New Nepal."

Nothing is new, only the honeyed words of irresponsible politicians seeking to waylay us while they pursue their dreams of power and grandeur. Their dreams are not our dreams. They must be made to realise this. The harsh fact is: we are a poor country with serious development problems. The barrel of a gun or baseless demagoguery cannot solve the problems. We the people must realise this and wake up to our inherent rights and fight against the prevailing tyranny.



## World Heritage

# Boudhhanath the little Tibet



■ Pramesh Pradhan

Boudha showcases faith and principles transforming into practices and devotion. Often called small Tibet, Boudhanath has developed dramatically since the 70s. The influx of Tibetan refugees sparked off residential and monastery constructions in Boudha and it was further fuelled by the booming carpet industry in the '90s.

Chempo', the great stupa ; and Newars call it, Chaitya. The age of the stupa remains uncertain. Testimonials say the present stupa may have been erected only after 14th century. Boudhanath used to be a thanksgiving stop for a successful journey across the Himalaya in the Tibet-India trade route. It is one of the very few places on earth where Tibetan life and culture is practiced unhindered.

Numerous monasteries around the stupa serve also as learning centres for monks and nuns. All four Tibetan Buddhist sects of Ningmapa, Kagyupa, Gelukpa and



Its diameter exceeding 100 metres and its height at 40 metres, Boudhanath is claimed as one of the world's largest stupas. A symbol of the Buddha's enlightened mind, it is almost an icon to Buddhism. Derived probably from a Pali word 'Thuba' meaning a pile, the stupa looks like gigantic pile. It stands on a three dimensional mandala. Objects of religious significance is normally kept inside the centre on the basement of a stupa and here, Tibetans believe, a bone of Padmasambava or Guru Rinpoche, the Tantric master who spread Buddhism in Tibet, is kept as a votive.

The stupa has square Harmikas in each directions, two omniscient eyes, the Tika like Urna – the symbol of Buddha's spiritual perfection and the nose like Nepali number one. The spire represents 13 steps towards Nirvana, like a pyramid ; the umbrella and the pointed pinnacle completes the stupa. The Mandala, dome, square Harmikas, spires with umbrella and pinnacle represent five cosmic elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether. Instead of five Dhyani Buddhas normally seen in a stupa, 108 smaller images of Amitabh Buddha are set in niches around the dome and prayer wheels are mounted around the perimeter wall.

Boudhanath is generally acknowledged as the most important Tibetan Buddhist monument outside Tibet. Tibetans call it 'Chorten

Sakyapa can be studied and practiced here making it a prime place to study Buddhism. Every monastery has a gilded statue of Buddha and Bodhisatvas, Tara or the founder of the sect in its assembly hall. Oil lamps, heaps of rice piled onto three tiered silver stands, Tormas, fruits, coins, flowers and incense are seen arranged nicely as offerings. Beautiful frescoes on the walls depict guardians and deities expressing the complex cosmology of Tibetan buddhism. The serenity of such a magnificent setting gets punctuated by group recitation of sacred texts and sounds of musical instruments.

UNESCO has recently removed Boudhanath from its list of endangered World Heritage Sites. But improvements are required to control rampant constructions around the site. Increasing problems like traffic chaos, garbage litter and disorganised street market among others also need to be addressed effectively to maintain its image.

Resonant chantings of monks, pilgrims performing prostrations around the dome creates magical moments in Boudhanath especially at dusk, when deep sounds of long horns are blown and drums beaten in the monasteries fill the air. The crowd circling the stupa, sounds of murmured prayers and creaking prayer wheels and fluttering of thousands of five-coloured praying flags overhead add to the spiritual ambience.

(nte@mail.com.np)

# Rainbow of Dasani's skirt

It's always difficult to translate poems about pain and human suffering.

From the fury of the blistering winds flutters Dasani's skirt  
like a failed nation's flag wavers  
Dasani's skirt

Million brutal kicks it has survived  
water wells of blood it has shed  
so many rapes so many water  
channels it has pumped into  
landlord's barren fields  
no matter how weary it looks  
beaten by heat and rain it's still a  
rainbow

like a garden of million flowers this  
Dasani's skirt

Went to get firewood from the  
forest never returned

Does someone know where must  
be fluttering the rainbow of Dasani's  
embroidered skirt?

--Shyamal, "Dashani's Skirt"

Nepali poet Shyamal's poem about  
disappearance of a Tharu girl in the  
quagmire of ongoing Nepalese political



■ Yuyutsu RD Sharma

conflict is difficult to translate. It's  
always difficult to translate poems  
about pain and human suffering. More  
specifically the end of the poem that in  
the original is intriguing and complex.

People vanish, political pundits  
predict more awful times in the years  
to come. The mere name of elections  
sends a chill down your spine. So  
many more Dasanis are likely to go  
down the grinding wheels of political  
turbulence

In face of all this, activism on the  
part of the writers has remained  
limited to a section of party workers  
or those who have been associated  
with the ruling clans and castes all

these decades. The average  
Nepalese literary and cultural icons  
have stayed away from activism in the  
recent political upheavals. The  
enthusiasm and active participation  
from almost everyone that was visible  
in 1990 upsurge has this time remain  
limited to party goons and crafty  
career builders. Is this because the  
average people seem scared of the  
fearsome conflict; or a decade of  
democratic rule has shown them their  
roles in the scheme of things.

It's often the case that a politician  
prefers a worthless party artist to an  
able and famous literary figure or  
artist. For some this turbulence is a  
great industry and they want their  
role and share reserved without  
knowing democracy involves even  
those who are on the margins or who  
do not speak, hear and see the ugly  
dance of the corrupt polity.

(writer@yuyutsu.de)

# Well aged photos



Mukunda Bahadur Shrestha, 81,  
showcased for the first time, a  
selected number of his work  
collected over the years he spent  
working as a photographer for  
tourism ministry for decades. The  
week long-exhibition held at Patan  
Museum comprised of a mixture  
of black and white and colour  
prints pictures taken with manual  
cameras only.

Outstanding were the pictures  
of Kathmandu taken in the sixties  
that showed the valley before  
modern constructions invaded it;  
as also the pristine beauty of lakes  
and mountains in Syangboche  
and Langtang. "I have traveled in  
almost all the 14 zones of the  
country and my favorite place  
remains Syangboche. I still recall  
the moment when I peeped out  
from my tent and gazed at the sky  
in the brilliant moonlight, with the  
snowcapped mountains all  
around. It felt like heaven," said  
the photographer.

He plans to hold more  
exhibitions in future if he receives  
support for it and also hopes to  
publish a book of his photo  
collection.

## INSIGHT



A tribal boy in a forest, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh

BY Sushma Amatya





# Capturing India in Darjeeling Limited

"Making a film in India can never be easy," says director Wes Anderson whose newest film, *The Darjeeling Limited*, was shot mostly in Rajasthan. "Every little place in the country is so fascinating that you feel like making one film after another."

*Darjeeling Limited* opens the New York Film Festival on September 28, and focuses on three bickering brothers who go on a spiritual journey in India hoping to reconcile with each other.

Anderson, whose hit films include *The Royal Tenenbaums*, wanted to shoot the film in Darjeeling. "But I hardly saw the sun when I spent a few days there while working on the script," he chuckles. "By then, I had fallen in love with Rajasthan, and that is how we ended up with most of our work shot on a moving train through the state."

The 38-year-old director cast Owen Wilson, Oscar-winner Adrien Brody (*The Pianist*) and Jason Schwartzman (who also co-wrote the screenplay) as the brothers who have not spoken to each other in a year. Veteran actress Angelica Huston plays a small but pivotal role as the estranged mother of the three men.

London-based newcomer Amara Karan, who among other interesting encounters with the three brothers has a scorching kissing scene, is the steward on the train. And in a very brief appearance, Irrfan Khan appears as the grieving father whose son dies in a drowning accident.

Anderson says by putting the tense brothers, who are suspicious of each other, in a constantly fast moving India, he was able to create a kind of quiet drama he has never created before.

Eschewing the standard practice of shooting the interior scenes of a train on a sound stage in a studio, he opted to shoot them on a hired train. The train itself is one of the big 'characters' in the film. But India is an even bigger character, he says.

"India gets under your skin in no time," Anderson, who fell in love with India when he watched Jean Renoir's *The River* and practically every film of Satyajit Ray. "I have travelled widely and can't think of any other place that is filled with colours like India. Another

amazing thing I found when I visited India by myself four years ago was how people look at you as if you are from another planet. This happens in smaller towns and villages. I feel I am an alien. But soon, I realise I can never be alone in India. Friendships are made in no time."

Owen Wilson plays Francis, the eldest of the three brothers in the film, and is a control freak. Wilson is a

thought of becoming a father soon. And the youngest brother Jack is a writer who finds plenty of 'inspiration' in the crises in his own family. Like his siblings, he too has a mean streak in him.

Despite visiting a number of temples and shrines, the brothers don't come any closer. But an unexpected incident lands them in the middle of the desert in a small village.



close friend of the filmmaker from their college days in Austin, Texas. The actor, who is recovering from a suicide attempt recently, is seen heavily bandaged throughout the film. It is suspected that he had tried to kill himself.

'Francis sees himself as one trying to keep the family together,' he says in the production notes. 'Because our father is dead, our mother is AWOL, Francis is literally damaged. And there is Jack (Schwartzman), coming out of a bad relationship. There is also Peter, who is having trouble with his wife. So Francis has united the brothers on this great spiritual adventure in India, and he has the funny idea they're going to have a spiritual journey -- whether they like it or not.'

But a lot of things go wrong till the three find sudden inspiration to alter their lives. 'For much of the film, the story reminded me of one of those family vacations you had growing up where everything would in a disaster,' Wilson muses.

The second brother Peter (Brodie) is intensely unhappy with his life for a number of reasons including the

Watching a tragedy unfold, and seeing the villagers addressing it with dignity, the brothers start another kind of journey. And this time, it looks like they may learn a few life lessons.

Anderson has said that he always wanted to do a film about three brothers because he is one of three brothers. 'We grew up fighting and yet, they are the closest people in the world to me,' he has said in an interview. 'Of course, all the characters in the movie are fictional.'

As the three watch things happen unexpectedly to them, they learn to approach each other in a different way. "They learn to approach death in a different way too," Anderson says, adding that their minds go back to their father's death and how they had behaved after the funeral.

Anderson, who also got Schwartzman's cousin Roman Coppola to work on the script, talks about how they started plotting the story in the cafes in Paris, and went to India in 2006 to do more writing. They travelled by train and went to dozens of temples looking for plot ideas.

(rediff news)

## Momos, Chowkidar and Prashant

An uncharitable comment of a radio jockey through a Delhi based FM station triggered an ethnic clash in West Bengal's Siliguri area, but the situation was brought under control after both the central and state government agencies swung into action.

The flare-up was sparked off after the jockey, Nikhil Kumar, said in a live broadcast that Nepalis were better suited to making Momos and working as Chowkidars than becoming an Indian idol.

The derogatory remark instantly triggered communal tension in Siliguri with a mixed population of the hills and plains people, where the newly crowned Indian Idol, Prashant Tamang's fans took its ire out on the streets. West Bengal Chief Minister, Buddhadeo Bhattacharya called in the army to contain the situation.

Aggrieved fans of Prashant also petitioned to India's Information and Broadcasting Minister PR Dasmunshi to take stern action against the concerned radio station and the radio jockey. They were informed that station has been asked to submit its explanation in the issue so that further actions could proceed.

While all that was happening India, Prashant was busy reaching out to his expanding fan constituency in Nepal where he sang and also got into some social meetings.

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Teku, Kathmandu, Tel: 2010821

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