



Courage & Conviction

# newsfront

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People queuing up to greet King Gyanendra in the Narayanhity Palace on the occasion of his 61st birthday celebration as youth and student groups protested in different part of Kathmandu.



Bhaskar Ojha

## Murky politics

■ nf correspondent

For Prime Minister G P Koirala, it was a very delicate tight rope walk. In public he maintained that the law should take its own course and that all those figuring as 'guilty' in the Rayamajhi Commission report should be tried.

But in private, he acted differently. He ordered the higher ups in the police department to make arrangements for treatment of Bijayanath Bhattarai, governor of the Nepal Rashtra Bank (NRB) in a private nursing home at Lazimpat. As a result, what looked like a determined effort on the part of the Commission for Investigation into Abuse of Authority (CIAA) to have him put in police custody at least for a night was foiled.

According to the top level sources in the police since statement on behalf of Bhattarai in the Special Court was incomplete on Thursday, all arrangements for his nightlong 'custody' had been made in the Singha Durbar police station. But Koirala approached by top level NRB officialdom, Finance Ministry as well as the World Bank, intervened asking the top police official to act responsibly and not to deny medical supervision that Bhattarai might need.

He was taken to Melina private nursing home, and after a night long observation was found fit enough to depose before the CIAA next day. He was let off on a bail of Rs. 250,000.

The politics surrounding Bhattarai's investigation by the CIAA based on the Rayamajhi Commission report which has not yet been published, has divided the government in two clear poles. Finance Minister R S Mahat was

opposed to the arrest and detention of the governor saying it would have an adverse impact on the country's leading financial institution and the international community would not appreciate the way things are being handled.

Koirala, in the face of mounting demand for trial on the basis of the commission report, told Mahat and some other ministers privately that he would not be interfering in the course of investigation, but intervened quietly when the CIAA was bent upon putting Bhattarai in jail.

Bhattarai has pleaded innocence and refuted charges of the Rayamajhi commission that he acted against the law and norms of the Nepal Rashtra Bank in honouring clandestine orders of the government during the royal regime.

The Rayamajhi commission has been dogged by controversy over its political composition, controversial conduct and accused of having acted under instructions of the home minister and for carrying out a 'frame up' operation against selected politicians and bureaucrats - civil, police and military as well. ■

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# No collaborator

Ram Raja Prasad Singh declined Maoists' request to be their 'minister'.

■ nf correspondent

What most people and the media know is the partially circulated fact that Ram Raja Prasad Singh who has been crusading for a republic Nepal for the past three decades refused to be associated with the free Terai movement that aims to have it ultimately carved out of the country's territory as a separate nation.

Singh, who was present in the meeting of many Terai groups, apparently in the knowledge of Indian government, in Patna a few months ago, refused to be the first president of Republic Terai. He said all this was against his belief that Nepal's integrity was not a negotiable issue for him.

In early April, Singh also declined Maoists request to join the G P Koirala government from their party, saying that the Maoists first need to be clear about their position on country's integrity, issue of monarchy and their demands for ethnic states or provinces.

Singh has a history of having turned down lucrative posts. He first got an offer to become the prime minister from King Mahendra about 35 years ago. At that time he appeared uncompromisingly determined to move a resolution in Rashtriya Panchayat that Nepal should revert back to parliamentary system of democracy. Since he declined the offer, he was put in jail.

But once out from jail, he gave up 'peace' as his means to achieve his political ends, and took up guns to begin a new revolution to overthrow monarchy and made Patna his base for it. Most people who joined him belonged to the hills and outside Terai as they saw in him someone who was above 'sectarian' interests.

Singh's armed crusade failed almost instantly after he launched it. In 1985, his supporters planted a



Ram Raja Prasad Singh

bomb in Annapurna Hotel, Narayanhiti palace and the Rashtriya Panchayat building simultaneously that resulted in loss of lives and property. But it had an instant political impact which aborted a peaceful movement for democracy. Acting President of the Nepali Congress, K P Bhattarai called off the Satyagraha, saying violence was not acceptable as a means for democracy. After that Singh went into exile completely only to return back in 1993.

Singh had extended his moral support to the Maoists in their armed struggle for 'republic', but his refusal to be part of the Maoists and their representative in the government has brought their relationship under strain now.

# Temporary respite

■ nf correspondent



K P Sitaula

It was once again a major relief for Home Minister K P Sitaula that the meeting of the Central Committee of the Nepali Congress was put off following demise of India's former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar on Sunday.

Sitaula, whom many in his party call a thick skinned charlatan, was being criticised for the total collapse of the law and order situation in the country in the meeting which was held at the Prime Minister's Baluwatar residence. The rise in the crime graph, demoralisation in the security forces and absence of an atmosphere for free and fair polls were the issues the members raised one after another pointing fingers mostly at the home minister. But soon a pall of gloom fell on the central committee as the news of Shekhar's demise came in and the only person who perhaps felt a bit relieved was the home minister himself.

All the business listed on the agenda was postponed and the meeting adjourned after mourning the death of a 'great visionary, a far-sighted leader and someone who made a huge contribution in restoration of democracy in Nepal.'

# Television boom

Spurt in homegrown private television channels set to change Nepali mediascape.

■ Krishna Pokharel

There was a time, not long before, when we had to solely depend on Nepal Television for the news and programmes of home. Government owned and controlled, Nepal Television lumbered on for two decades without any effective competitor in the domestic market excepting the ones from across the borders. All that changed with the coming of privately owned Kantipur Television, Channel Nepal and other television channels.

As of now there are four Nepali private television channels that combine news with entertainment programmes and two news channels, Avenues Television and Sagarmatha Television, are expected to be on air by the end of this month. Everest Channel is in the offing and three more have already secured the transmission permission from the Nepal government.

"These are welcome developments in Nepali media and will result in better and quality programmes due to increased competition," opines Rajendra Dahal, chairperson of Nepal Press Council. "There are questions of where the investment is coming from," adds Dahal, "but they are moot as long as transparent ways of media investment are not legally ensured."

Unlike other mass media, television is a capital-intensive industry. At the time when all other domestic industrial sectors are in the doldrums and the market is severely limited, television in Nepal has seen a significant flow



and concentration of capital. Robust domestic market is a precondition for a free and independent media in the lack of which they are likely to be the handmaiden of politicians, state apparatus and the privileged few.

As television is a potent mass medium for opinion formation and creating a democratic "public-sphere," there are uneasy questions

about how the burgeoning private television channels survive and what type of audience culture they promote.

"Survival is a key factor," says Mahesh Swar, the Chief Marketing Officer at Kantipur Television, the leading private television channel in Nepal that is popularly watched for its news. He looks askance at how the upcoming television

channels will survive when the existing ones are grappling for their survival. "Television is the only media industry in Nepal that has been simultaneously competing with the rival print, radio industries at home and the Indian and English channels that already hold strong sway on the urban population in Nepal."

With the private television industry still in its nascent stage, the investors in the upcoming television channels have much to explore and experiment. Suresh Poudel, the Senior Producer at Kantipur Television, identifies small market as one of the two constraints – the other one being the lack of well-trained and competent television professionals. "We are working under these constraints and are still trying to be innovative and cater to the tastes of Nepali audience," says Poudel.

Kedar Koirala, the news co-ordinator at the soon-to-be-launched Avenues Television that is priming itself to be the first Nepali news channel, refuses to acknowledge market as a primary issue. "Market and audience can be created," according to him, "once the quality of the programmes is ensured."

For Ramji Dahal from Sagarmatha Television, another upcoming news channel, the emergence of the news-only channels would be a break from the existing television channels in Nepal which have so far been adhering to "infotainment model." "It will help redefine the news as not just being what happened and who did what but in terms of the events that people can easily relate to their lives."

Newsbrief

## Testing waters

The Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M) is testing their acceptability to the world outside, albeit diplomatically this time. That is why they are insisting that at least one of their nominees should be appointed as Nepal's ambassador to one of the NATO alliance, preferably a close ally of the United States.

Which country will fit in that description more aptly than the United Kingdom? If that happens, Maoists can hope to use that as a point to build bridges with the US if situation moves in the right direction. In the worst case, CPN-M can always counter the US by saying that a more mature and established democracy have 'welcomed' us.

As a result of the Maoists' insistence for UK, the whole list of the to-be-appointed ambassadors which the Prime Minister had endorsed based on recommendation of the Foreign Ministry, is now being reviewed, according to the official sources. "The PM may even concede to that," a Shital Niwas source told newsfront adding he wants the posts fulfilled very soon. As per the indication the Maoists are insisting that at least one forth of the total appointments to be made should rightfully belong to them. In case the government is going to review the London posting, Murari Raj Sharma, who retired a few years ago as the Permanent Representative to the United Nations, may be the one losing out. He was Koirala's choice as the ambassador to London against the Congress quota.

## Majestic shift

Ambassador Moriarty could not realise his dream of moving the US Embassy to the new grand building located at Chakrapath before he left for the US, but he sort of managed to formalise it. Barely 48 hours before his departure, Ambassador Moriarty would be hosting a 'dedication' ceremony in the new building. PM Koirala will be attending the programme scheduled on Wednesday (July 11). The new embassy along with other US government bodies, like the USAID, American Center and VISA consul which are now operating from outside the embassy premises, will all be housed in the new building. The embassy is likely to begin operating from the new building from mid-August.



## Koirala's advisors

As Home Minister Krishna Sitaula was bent upon sacking two DIGs, Krishna Basnet and Roop Sagar Moktan, on the plea that their names figured as 'guilty' of suppressing the people's movement in the Rayamajhi Commission report, PM Koirala appeared equally adamant.

Finally, he bowed to his all powerful home minister. "I will use their services if you do not require them," Koirala told Sitaula. Both Basnet and Moktan have since been posted to the PM's office as security advisors to the PM. The government, especially the home minister, has been using the Commission report, not yet made public, as the invisible tool against anyone on the 'hit-list'.

## Atonement

Tul Bahadur Pun, was awarded the guard of honour on behalf of the British government as soon as he landed at Heathrow Airport on July 5. The honour accorded first time ever to a Gorkha soldier, was a clear atonement for the mistake that the British government made earlier by refusing a visa to Pun who had been conferred Victory Cross, the highest military award, for the bravery he displayed during the Second World War for the British. The honour given to the 84 year old soldier is normally presented to the heads of the state or the government during their official visits to the United Kingdom.

Several Nepalis from different ethnic backgrounds in their traditional attires lined up at the airport to receive the war veteran. Colonel of the Brigade of Gorkhas, B G David Hayes joined by a couple of fellow officers presented Pun with the Guard of Honour as soon as he alighted from the aircraft. "It is an honour for entire Nepal, and not for Pun alone," said Padam Bahadur Gurung, the chairman of the Gurkha Ex-Servicemen's Organisation (GAESO).

Pun, who even during the joyful moment was thinking about his old friends and colleagues who fought together with him for the British, told a battery of journalists and admirers, "There are many brave fighters who suffered much more than I did during the war. It will be good if the British Government grants settlement permit and bears the cost of medical treatment for those who needed it." Pun is suffering from high blood pressure, gastritis, hearing problems and impaired vision. Pun thanked all those who campaigned for his right to visa and treatment at the expense of the British government as his right.



Tul Bahadur Pun

# Alag Madhesh

Terai is neither Nepal nor India, said JTMM chief Goit.



Jaikrishna Goit

■ nf correspondent

Jaikrishna Goit, head of the underground Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM-G), wants an independent Madhesh, carved out of Nepal's territory, asserting that this alone would correct the error that history had committed.

The new independent nation would neither be part of Nepal nor India, he said almost in the line of what Kashmiri Jehadis have been demanding in Kashmir - a free state independent from both India and Pakistan. Goit made this demand in an interview he gave to Sankarshan Thakur, Executive editor of Tehelka weekly published from Delhi, recently. The interview was conducted in a hotel on the Indian side of the Nepal-India border.

"The Tarai was annexed by Nepal's Pahadi rulers and then parts of it were ceded to them by the British through treaties. By the Indo-Nepal agreement of

1950, all earlier treaties stood abrogated," Goit said. He added, "we are free, we should be free."

Goit said he is least bothered about the international response to his demand. "...I am not seeking anyone's acceptance, I want my country, whether anybody agrees or not. I know what you are talking about — whether Nepal will be ready, whether India will want it.... The fact is I am neither Nepali nor Indian or of any Indian origin. History proves that and I have texts to establish that." He insisted that all that people in Terai want is freedom and all the other Terai groups who are negotiating for 'autonomy' are collaborators and will only get 'tokenism.'

Goit justified the killing of his opponents by his supporters by saying, "The enemies of my country have to be eliminated, there is no other way. Ram fought and killed Ravan. Krishna fought the Kauravas. Nepalis do not treat us as human beings. There is no other way of dealing with them." He said the enemies of liberation have to be eliminated, no matter who they are. "Don't you see I have been pushed into a corner where I have no choice but to pick up the gun? Nobody calls the Maoists and the Young Communist League criminals. They are in government and continue to kill and commit all sorts of other crimes everyday," he said.

Asked whether he was willing to talk if the government invited him, his answer was, "If they create the right atmosphere, I can go and tell them: pass legislation in parliament for an independent Terai and we will live happily thereafter. That is all I have to say to those in Kathmandu. At the moment, there is no such atmosphere as the State and the Maoists are after us." Asked if India was protecting Goit, he said he did not want to make any comment on that. "All I can say is I am a freedom fighter and a guerrilla. And legally speaking, India has to support the case that the Tarai was never a part of Nepal, it had only been annexed or gifted by imperial powers. That injustice has to be undone."

# Courage of conviction

Skeptical about independence of judiciary.

■ nf correspondent

As there are increasing fears that the present coalition government is bringing judiciary under the executive control, at least two judges of the Supreme Court, who have now been confirmed, endorsed those fears and sent a subtle message across the country that they would not want to continue if the executive ever made such an attempt.

The special committee of the parliament which heard four judges separately was taken aback when Justice Kalyan Shrestha and Justice Ram Kumar Prasad Shah objected to the new system introduced. But the committee headed by Amod Kumar Upadhyay announced in the evening that all the four that included the dissenting two had been confirmed, and that its message would be sent to the Judicial Council for their appointment as permanent judges of the Supreme Court.

Both judges expressed their worries that the way this hearing was taking place may contribute towards erosion of independence of judiciary. "I am quite worried that independence of the judiciary may erode and



Supreme Court

that it would be more politicised," Kalyan Shrestha told the committee, further expressing his fear that, "ultimately people may lose their confidence in the court." What will democracy be without an independent judiciary? The committee of parliamentarian did not have much to answer. Kalyan was sober, but forceful enough to be heard.

The executive, under pressure from different political parties in the coalition, had turned down request from the apex court, not to have the

provision of public hearing for judges now. "If at all necessary, it should be left to the constituent assembly," was all that the Supreme Court said.

Justice Shah was equally forthcoming. He raised fundamental issues asserting that the constitution must honour the principle of separation of power. "It also may have bearings on the principle of separation of power and the checks and balances," he went to add that the committee was doing a job that the constitution has already assigned to the judicial council.



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Point to Ponder

**A genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus. - Martin Luther King, Jr.**

# Neo-secularism

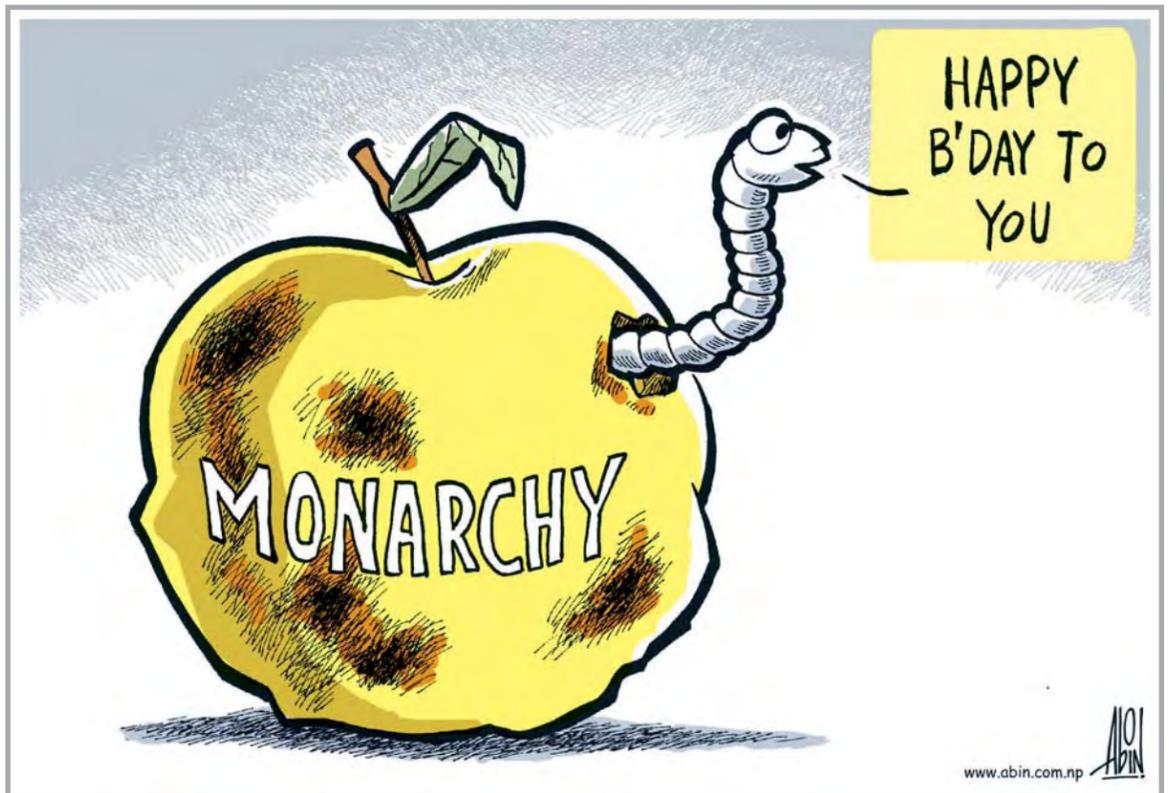
Nepal has been a laboratory of 'innovative' but clearly misguided politics for some time now. King Gyanendra appropriated all powers, isolating political parties and their leaders completely, and yet he declared that he did this to strengthen multi-party democracy. A popular mass upsurge ousted the king from power, and the leaders who were catapulted to power preached nothing but democracy.

The people who came to the streets for democracy owned this political system and there was no way leaders could have ignored that message. Its impact was so visible that the king who had taken absolute powers just about 15 months ago, and the Maoists who had raised arms for 11 years to establish one party authoritarian rule, both pledged to support multi-party democracy as the future polity that the country would adopt.

But many things happened behind the scene: some good things in bad manner, and some bad things in bad manner. Nepal was declared a secular country in a mysterious way. This was no doubt a good thing to happen, as the country's Hindu status clearly gave to Hindus an increased sense of psychological ownership on the state affairs than other minority faiths. But the manner Nepal was declared a 'secular country' was not only mysterious, people who came to the streets had no involvement in it. Who did it then?

Secularism is not a mere slogan, but a nation's commitment that it will not promote or patronise any one religion, customs and tradition associated with that. The state is expected to maintain an equal distance from all. Religion or faith becomes a purely personal affair. Of course, the practitioners, in a manner that promotes communal and social harmony are free to promote their social, developmental and pro-right issues as their obligation towards the nation and society. And they are also expected not to use religion as a tool of dividing society, promoting bigotry and fundamentalism or injecting communal and ethnic hatred. These are values a secular state is in any case expected to enforce, not as per the dictates of a particular faith or religion, but as per the rule of law.

But look at the travesty of Nepal's secular credentials. Now it will be the prime minister of a secular Nepal who will be 'exhibiting' the 'Bhoto' of Rato Machhendranath. This will be a blasphemy that the state will be committing in the name of secularism. A secular country cannot afford to have its executive chief who also dons the cap of a 'head of the state' associating with one particular religion or a tradition associated with that. Nepali Congress, Maoists, UML and other partners of the government need to understand and decide on how to practice secularism.



## Letters

### Prepare for elections

Firstly, I want to let you know that newsfront is not available in Jhapa easily and so we have to read it online. When we can buy this weekly easily in our domestic market?

Secondly, the CA elections seem to be the main preoccupation of Nepalis these days. The elections due to be held 22 Nov is being welcomed by all despite various obstacles. All leaders of the political parties need to take this election very seriously and stop the blame game they are indulging in.

With the present indiscipline and unrest in Terai, there is no way we can elect our representatives freely and fairly. Other obstacles like the monarchy and the possibility of it meddling with the elections also need to be kept in mind. There are these and many other dangers facing the polls that we all need to be aware of.



Sulav Dahal  
Surunga, Jhapa

### Lousy mobile service

Is Nepal Telecommunications trying to swindle money by providing its customers awful service? It is a common experience these days that to get one call through and to communicate clearly both ways, one has to dial at least two times if not more. And often, one of the parties gets disconnected. No network service is another message that comes on so often, making it impossible to get your calls through.

If the company cannot provide good service, why not shut down and stop cheating customers? I cannot imagine how they plan to manage the huge numbers of phones they have given out. Like everything else in the country, mobile phone

services too are shooting downhill.

Tara Baidya  
Khumaltar, Lalitpur

### Class apart

In these turbulent times, when everybody and everything seems to be going haywire, nothing seems to make sense. This applies also to the media where it is difficult to make out who is saying what with what intention and how true it is. Journalism today is plagued by unethical norms, slandering and invading personal space of individuals. And the best part is people believe what is printed blindly and get swayed so easily by biased reporting of events and people.

But I'm glad to say that newsfront is a class apart that stays away from yellow journalism. This is one paper I can place my trust on and I enjoy reading it very much.

Sangeeta Lama  
Gaibachapati, Kathmandu

### Unbiased

I like the way newsfront picks and projects issues that are very different from other existing media as most of them are politically biased and we can see their affiliations clearly in their reporting. One major problem with Nepal's media is that they lose their objectivity and balance. Thus the reason the independent newsfront has become our favorite.

But despite its good looks, good print and a paper with difference it lacks many things: sports coverage is almost nil and youth related issues do not get much prominence. I hope that we will see these grievances addressed in your subsequent issues.

Yogesh Neupane  
Gwarkho, Kathmandu

## Spiritual Corner

### Boundless freedom

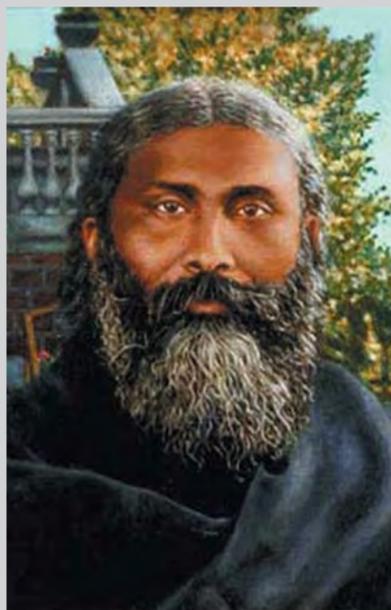
**Hazrat Inayat Khan (1887 -1927)**  
**Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan was born in Baroda, India into one of the most musical families in India. Inayat founded the International Sufi Movement travelling widely, inspiring many with Sufi teachings. During his travels he continued to write on religious unity and universal spiritual values. His tomb is located near Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, New Delhi, which is now a place of pilgrimage for Sufis from all over the world.**

Inayat said: "I read the lives of the founders, the prophets, the seers, with as much reverence as their most devout adherents. This brought me the bliss of realisation of the one truth which all religions contain as different

vessels but may yet hold the same wine. The different messengers most wondrously, by their very diversity of civilisation, nationality and age, revealed the one source of inspiration. A human being, not generally understanding this and owing to blind dogmatic faith, has always clung to the originator of his or her own faith... And not recognising the manifold aspects of truth, thus all the racial and religious prejudices!"

### Inayat's poems:

Invocation  
 Toward the one  
 the perfection of  
 love, harmony and beauty,  
 the only being,  
 united with all the illuminated souls,  
 who form the embodiment of the master,



the spirit of guidance.

My salvation  
 Thou art my salvation and freedom is mine,  
 I am not, I melt as a pearl in sweet wine!  
 My heart, soul, and self, yea, all these are thine;  
 O Lord I have no more to offer!  
 I drink of the nectar of truth the divine,  
 As Moses thy word, as Yusuf they shine  
 who walk in thy ways; and Christ is thy sign:  
 Thou raisest to life everlasting!  
 Thou art as Muhammad to them that repine,  
 My spirit is purged as the gold from a mine!  
 I only know that my heart beats with thine,  
 And joys in boundless freedom!



# GLACIER LAKES

## Dangerous for Nepal



■ Ananda Bahadur Thapa

Since the 1940s, there have been five glacier lake outburst floods in three glacier lakes of the Arun River basin, and four in three glacier lakes of the Sunkosi River basin.

The 309 MW Upper Tamakosi Hydropower project is surrounded by a host of misgivings about the completeness of its study. Based on previous studies it appears that the proposed project, apart from being entangled in serious technical problems might be found to be at a great danger of being totally washed away by glacier lake outburst floods (GLOF), much the same way as it happened to the Namche Bazar hydropower some time back.

The bitter past experience of blindly believing in the manipulated cost estimate of the Khimti Hydropower is still fresh in the minds of Nepalese engineers. An unacceptable level of inaccuracy and manipulation of the cost estimate of the 60 MW Khimti Hydropower project, had forced our country to buy electricity from the private developer, based on a very high rate of US \$ 140 million revised cost of that project though its original cost based on the feasibility study carried out by the NORPOWER just before the commencement of the construction was only US \$ 60 million.

The Tamakosi River is the second largest tributary of the Sunkosi River. Originally six hydropower stations in a cascade were planned. The Tamakosi No.6 according to the Kosi basin master plan is the uppermost project. The intake of the proposed project is said to be further towards the north, close to China-Nepal border. This reach of Tamakosi is very close to places in Nepal and Tibet where very dangerous glacier lakes are located. Thus, any GLOF incidence would have left in its wake the most horrific destruction on this stretch of the river.

The bed slope of the Upper Tamakosi is expected to be extremely steep. A very high dam is needed to provide a daily storage reservoir adequate in volume. JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) study under the Kosi basin master plan had ruled out the possibility to provide daily storage pond to serve Tamakosi-5 and 6 projects.

We have learnt from our past Arun-3 project planning experience that the provision of a daily storage reservoir by damming the river course itself; in case of the rivers like the Arun or Tamakosi is going to be an extremely difficult

task that would certainly involve a huge investment. In case of the Arun-3 Hydropower project, it was originally planned that a dam only 20 meters in height would suffice to provide daily storage pond but at the final stage we had to raise the height to 65 meters.

In 1988 a joint team of Sino-Nepalese conducted the studies of the glaciers and glacier lakes in the Arun and the Sunkosi basins primarily in the Tibetan region of China. The Lanzhou Institute of Glaciology and Geocryology took part in the study from the Chinese side, similarly the Water and Energy Commission (WECS) took part from the Nepali side.

According to the findings of the above mentioned joint study, there are many glacier

**The bitter past experience of blindly believing in the manipulated cost estimate of the Khimti Hydropower is still fresh in the minds of Nepalese engineers.**

lakes in Arun, Tamakosi, Bhotekosi, Trisuli, Buri Gandaki and Karnali basins within Xizang (Tibet) of China which have past records of glacier lake outburst floods. The joint study report has recommended conducting extensive studies to cover Tamakosi and other basins also.

The glacier lakes study conducted jointly by experts from the JICA and WECS in 1991 provides detailed descriptions of the Tsho Rolpa glacier lake on the end of the Trambau Glacier within Nepal in Tamakosi basin. This glacier lake is extremely dangerous.

On August 4th 1985 the nearly completed Namche hydropower plant was completely destroyed by the Dig Tsho glacier lake outburst flood. Since the 1940s, according to Sino-Nepal study, there have been at least 10 cases of Glacier Lake outbursts within the basins investigated. Among them there have been five bursts in three glacier lakes of the Arun River basin, and four in three glacier lakes of the

Sunkosi River basin.

Gelhaipuco is an end moraine dammed lake located in the headwaters of Gelhaipu Gully (Nantangqu River Basin, east of Riwo, Dinggye County) in Arun basin. On Sept. 21, 1964, the lake burst abruptly. According to the study of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, there was a heavy precipitation in the Nantangqu River basin, which caused the glacier of the Nantangqu River to slide. Huge amount of ice slid into the lake. The generated shock waves triggered the lake water to overflow the moraine dam causing the burst. There was a breach across the dam which was 30 m deep. The debris flow rushed down to the lower reaches of the Arun River in Nepal, and caused heavy economic losses

On July 11, 1981, an end moraine dammed lake located at the headwater of the Sunkosi River suddenly burst. A breach of 50m deep and 40-60m of bottom width was formed at the moraine dam. The highest burst discharge was about 1600 cu. m. which was observed 23 minutes after the

burst. The high flood lasted about 60 minutes and the burst water amount was estimated at 19 million cu. m. The debris flow damaged the Kodari Highway and the Sunkosi power station in Nepal. The flood destroyed the Friendship Bridge at Kodari. According to the investigation of 1984, there had been a similar burst in 1964 from that same lake, but the burst discharge and damage caused was smaller.

Nepal electricity authority has already made it public that it wants to implement the Upper Tamakosi project in near future. It is said that it is already holding negotiations to borrow money from the Karmachari Sanchaya Kosh to cover a part of the expenses to implement this project. Its hasty decision to implement the project without a thorough study could put the hard earned savings of government employees in jeopardy.

*(Ananda Bahadur Thapa, Ph.D, is former Member and Executive Secretary Water and Energy Commission)*

the best thing about CNN is that we have global resources. We were able to do interviews and get reports from the only Western television journalist in Iran.



# CNN Destination

You have to be well-read and be curious.



**We have the wires and feeds that are coming in continuously. These are video feeds where you get information on various stories.**

**Kiran Chetry, 32**, is a rising star of cable television news in the United States. She began co-anchoring American Morning, CNN's flagship morning program in April 2007. Before that she co-hosted Fox and Friends on the Fox News Channel. In an interview with Dharma Adhikari of Nepal Monitor, she discusses her recent career transition, her connection to Nepal and her views on broadcast journalism.

**How was the recent convention of Nepali journalists in Washington DC - the first such meeting of Nepali journalists in North America?**

It is really great to be able to come together as journalists, especially of the same nationality, people with common concerns and interests in covering the news. I think that it's a small but growing community here in America and it's wonderful that the journalists' society was able to put that together. Hopefully it will continue to grow, and more people will get involved.

**You recently moved to CNN from Fox News. How has the transition been for you?**

We started off with the tragedy of Virginia Tech – it was our first day on air when that story broke and we've also been covering a lot of politics following the debates and a lot of breaking news in the morning.

And the best thing about CNN is that we have global resources. We were able to do interviews and get reports from the only Western television journalist in Iran. We were able to have on the ground, real-time reports from Baghdad.

**How do you describe the nature of news in today's world?**

I think that there is a broad definition of news, certainly. We take into consideration the top stories of the day, whether they are international, politics, unexpected breaking news about weather or a murder or something like a shift in policy. We have been doing a lot of immigration issues, about Asian Americans in the workplace and we have a special correspondent doing that type of work. So I think we have a very broad definition of what news is.

**What is the nature of your connection to Nepal today?**

It's my family. Many of them come back and forth a lot. And a lot of them are studying here in the States. I am hoping to go back to Nepal and be able to take my daughter with me, who is only 15 months now; so that when she is a little bit older she can have some memories like I do.

**What stories on Nepal would you put on your show, if you were reporting from the location?**

The emerging democracy, the parliament and

the first time voting on the Constituent Assembly. We have been following the situation with the Maoists and the difficulties. My father did a lot of interpreting for the courts for asylum here for people who were persecuted or who feared persecution and had been threatened by the Maoists. I think that's something that would be very interesting to follow one of those cases so people can understand what is going on there.

**What are the key characteristics of a good broadcast journalist?**

You have to have curiosity about the world around you, the ability to communicate and willing to spend a lot of time trying to put what you are saying into context. Reporting a story is reading what is going on and helping the audience understand and put it into perspective in the world around them. How it relates to them is also something that is important. It is also important to be a good listener so that you can hear what people are telling you, and you can learn from the world around you.

As members of the media, we inform our fellow citizens and we can't take that lightly. We are informing those around us so that they can make decisions when it comes to their lives, when it comes to their views. And I find that endlessly fascinating.

What is your view about the significance of physical looks in broadcast news? You have been rated number three among "TV's Sexiest News Anchors" by Maxim magazine.

I try not to pay too much attention to that kind of stuff or take it too seriously. You know, its television, so, of course, there is a focus that people sometimes have on someone's appearance. I think sometimes they focus more on the appearance of women. But I try not to put too much stock in that.

**Who is your role model in television?**

Just to name a few, I would say Peter Jennings. I really admire his style of delivering the news. You felt like he was having a conversation with you, never talking down to you. I met him in person when I was very young and was trying to get into the television business and he was somebody who was very kind. I was an intern at that time in a little cable station. I also really admire Diane Sawyer. She has been in the business for so long in so many different ways and she still brings a lot of energy. I really find that admirable.

**What has been your most challenging assignment?**

My assignment after 9/11 was covering the victims' families and we were out there every single day. Not knowing if they could pull anybody out, family members were walking around with pictures of their loved ones and day after day it

was very difficult. The Virginia Tech shooting is another example. I interviewed a lot of family members who had lost loved ones. It was very difficult, especially seeing that situation unfold.

**One of the criticisms of the US media is that they pay little attention to international affairs and that the coverage of minorities that it is not always accurate. What is your view?**

I think that the US news media does cover US stories and sometimes centers around things that perhaps affect a small number of people or focus on one missing person, when there is so much other news happening. But I think that CNN covers global issues better than anyone else, frankly, not only with the coverage of CNN domestic but also CNN International. We are some of the only people that have correspondents and bureaus all over the world, including in Africa and Asia. I think we are better at it than others.

In terms of minorities and television, no doubt, there is an under-representation. I don't think it is intentional, but that it is something that many news organizations are moving toward becoming more mindful of and taking steps to change in the future.

**How do you keep tabs on international affairs?**

We have the wires and feeds that are coming in continuously. These are video feeds where you get information on various stories. And we rely on our producers as well to flag interesting things. This is a 24/7 operation. News stories breaking around the world are monitored at all times and drawn to our attention. Of course, you can't always cover it all but we certainly have resources at our fingertips so we are always able to keep abreast and cover the different stories.

So it is just a matter of reading—I get a lot of the big newspapers in the morning stacked on to my desk. The Internet also plays an enormous role in broadening our world and making us aware of other things that are going on across the world.

**What suggestions do you have for young people, especially from South Asia, who would like to embrace broadcast journalism as their career?**

You have to be well-read and be curious. The most important thing I can say really is to do an internship, learn from other people that do it and find people who are willing to take the time. If anybody wanted to come learn from me, I would always try to help them out. The reason I say that is because I had people who helped me. You can't do it alone. You can't do it without people guiding you. And that early guidance helped me, I'll always remember, and that is something I want to pass along to others as well. ■

# Public-private partnership

Full attention must be given to safeguard the national assets created with hard work and sacrifice of honest operators.

A subtle change seems to be taking place in Nepal's corporate management structure in recent days. The first indication came under the watch of the NSP-A nominated minister for industry, commerce and supplies in the present government, who talked about the possible introduction of a new petroleum act involving the private sector. This announcement was further expanded by a private sector representative mentioning setting up of an 'integrated valley import committee' or 'integrated national import action committee'. Taken together it indicates that the act, if approved, would involve some sort of public-private partnership.

The second indication came under CPN-Maoist minister who has been actively pursuing functionalising 'Kathmandu Upatveka Khanepani Limited' (Kathmandu Valley Water Limited—an utility operator) and Kathmandu Valley Water Supply Management Board (policy making body owning assets of Nepal Water Supply Corporation) as well as Water Supply Tariff Fixation Commission (a regulatory agency) under ADB's institutional reforms program. These institutional reforms emerged as a result of the overall management of the Melamchi project under ADB's loan under a scaled down project of USD 350 million.

The third indication is much clearer under the CPN-UML minister, who has recently stated that the government was planning to run Nepal Airlines Corporation through a public-private partnership. The minister seems to hold the view that the corporation was not ably managing its internal resources causing such a pathetic



■ Binod P. Bista

state of the national flag carrier despite the assertion made to the contrary by its managing director. The managing director appears to have claimed that the airlines made profit this year including improvement of 8% in passenger service and 15% in cargo handling.

In most privatisation exercises, the government's role, except projects requiring

**Political corruption and related issues of protecting and preserving national interests are better left with the political parties and the Nepali government of which Maoists are an integral part.**

massive investment such as infrastructure, is to create an enabling environment for the private sector to run the enterprises that it got from the government in an efficient manner for the benefit of the people. The government would need to take the responsibility of looking after the consumers' interest by appropriate regulatory agencies. Nepal's past experience of privatisation of government owned and

operated enterprises such as textile factory, paper factory, and such others, have proved to be a disaster. National assets were sold at book value prices, without giving due regard to necessary upward adjustment to market prices of fixed assets such as land, to selected businesses. Not to mention of the corrupt practices.

The government seems to have focused on only one of the various objectives of privatisation, i.e. to reduce the yearly fiscal burden of loss making enterprises and raise funds internally to launch social sector development. Without a proper monitoring and follow up mechanism of the privatised enterprise, and most of the funding being raised by the private

sector through government owned commercial banks, there was hardly any need for the private sector to be serious about its commitment. It was the people who suffered most not only from high prices of

goods but also scarcity under the private sector. Bansbari leather and shoes factory is a case in point although part of the land occupied by this factory was later utilised by Gangalal Heart Center, which has turned out to be a high class hospital in Kathmandu.

In all of the three ministries aforementioned it would not be surprising if only cosmetic changes are made to the role of government. Even

among the ministries, we may find different styles and structures of the PPP. Such a situation may be totally counter productive and against the spirit of privatisation.

A thorough exercise is warranted by a high level policy making body such as the National Planning Commission to work out the nature and scope of PPP including the respective roles of the government and private sector in every organised sector owned and run by the government. Whatever the outcome of such exercise, full attention must be given to safeguard the national assets created with lot of hard work and sacrifice of honest operators. Anything else would be betraying the trust of the people.

Considering our past experience in transforming government owned enterprises to private ownership and management in accordance with the policy of privatisation, and also lacking essential in house expertise, the first thing that may have to be agreed by the lawmakers and bureaucrats is to locate credible outside expertise. Also bearing in mind the exorbitant cost of international experts, their expertise may be contained within the first stage of the exercise—the right pricing of all government assets. The second stage of a workable design and its execution in the Nepali context can be assigned to a team of non-resident Nepalis (NRN) with proven expertise and resources to carryout full privatisation or PPP, as the case may be. Rest would be routine. ■

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



■ Uday Pariyar

## Untouchables forever?

Then the whole exercise of proportional representation could turn out to be futile in the end.



republic, for instance. But none are interested to discuss ways and means of doing away with untouchability, one of the key factors that blight our country.

It is now clear that half of the CA members will be elected through a proportional representation system. Dalits have been allocated 13 percent seats as per their population size in the old census. However, some Dalit organisations have made small noises claiming more seats, 20 percent as per their assumed population ratio. In practice, however, the debate on who-gets-how-many may be important but not enough.

The deprived communities must ask for a better representation not only quantitatively but

also qualitatively. The real impact will not be felt even if half of the CA members, for instance, came from Dalit communities alone but did not do anything to address the key issues of the concerned group. Indeed, we now have a better number of ministers and members of the parliament but they have not achieved much in terms of supporting the issues of their communities.

Another serious defect of the current proportional system is that the way the nominated candidates will be selected appears rather dodgy. The people will vote for a pool of candidates from different caste/ethnic groups but the final selection will be done afterwards by the parties. Therefore,

the parties will choose their most faithful followers instead of the true representatives who are capable of delivering for their groups.

People elected this way will be more likely to work for the interests of the party rather than their communities. Consequently, Dalits, like other marginalised groups, will not gain much. Then the whole exercise of proportional representation could turn out to be futile in the end.

Nobody should be reminded of the fact that caste based discrimination; particularly untouchability is an unrecognised but extreme form of racism. This is a different form apartheid that contributes to our backwardness and hurts our national unity.

In that context, why are the responsible people who claim to be building a new Nepal simply not bothered about the whole issue? Do the eight parties wish to keep the problem intact forever? Do they not understand that the slogans of Loktantra, republic or democratic republic or freedom from feudalism will be meaningless if a significant chunk of population continues to suffer from the medieval practice?

This is the time to act. The problems of Dalits should not be ignored just because they have not manifested yet in violent forms. A sustainable peace, inclusive democracy and progressive future are dependent mainly on resolving the longstanding historical issues such as untouchability. ■

# Eco-friendly production

The need of cleaner production (CP) practices is escalating in Nepal. Even if industrialisation in Nepal is sluggish, the need of cleaner production is so vital due to the low income state and higher risk situation of the industries and workers. Cleaner production is not just an environmental initiative. One of its most basic premises is that it improves efficiency and productivity for industry.

These improvements are seen in lower expenditure on resources such as energy and water, increased efficiency in production, fewer risks associated with environmental impacts, and decreased waste generation that leads to savings in landfill fees and pollution licenses.

Incorporation of cleaner production



■ Madhav Thakur

Cleaner production requires changing attitudes responsible for environmental management creating conducive national policy environments and evaluating technology options. It essentially is applied in the process of production, products and services. Other environmental preventive approaches, such as eco-efficiency and pollution prevention serve similar goals.

CP endeavors at making more



practices also leads to greater employee involvement in, and commitment to the production process that often leads to higher quality product. Industries have to be enforced to take cleaner production principles into prior consideration for sustainable industrialisation.

The concept of cleaner production was introduced by UNEP (United Nations Environment Program) Industry and Environment in 1989. It is the continuous application of an integrated preventive environmental strategy applied to processes, products and services to increase eco-efficiency and reduce risks for humans and the environment.

efficient use of natural resources (raw materials, water and energy) and reducing the generation of wastes and emission at the sources. It is quite a wide area which can be applied almost in every sector which has potential for any environmental impact. Its application can range from households, vehicles to industries of any kind.

According to EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) and UNEP, there are five major prevention practices in the principle of cleaner production: product modification, technology modification, input substitution, good housekeeping and site recycling. Product modifications change the

Cleaner production is one of the strongest tools for the path of sustainable development.

product characteristics, such as shape and material composition.

Technology modifications include for instance improved process automation, process optimisation, equipment redesign and process substitution. Input substitution refers to the use of less polluting raw and adjunct materials and the use of process auxiliaries with a longer service lifetime.

Good housekeeping refers to changes in operational procedures and management in order to eliminate waste and emission generation such as spill prevention, etc. On-site recycling refers to the useful application of waste materials or pollutants at the company where these have been generated.

CP is one of the strongest tools for the path of sustainable development. It is the best integration of business and the environmental improvement at the best pace. Its scope remains mainly to prevent and reduce waste generation at the source instead of treating it at the end of the pipe and thus increasing efficiency and productivity and reducing costs and risks to humans as well as the environment. By eliminating or reducing waste at the source, economic development can continue to occur, but in a more environmentally sustainable manner.

Some of the intrinsic concepts in CP that directly support sustainable development include: reduction of waste at source and reducing the use of raw materials as a more sustainable practice for the Earth's limited resources; pollution prevention, which covers the environmental portion of the triple bottom line; greater degree of partnerships and communication with local governments and communities to ensure local participation and encourage equity; return on investment calculations that help the economy and the environment.

In this way CP not only protects the environment and human health, but also improves the economic efficiency, competitiveness and profitability of enterprises. ■

# Marshland Flowers

A layman cannot be an Osho /Upadhyaya.

■ Acharya Mahayogi Sridhar Rana Rinpoche



A very good example is that of the famous scholar of Zen Buddhism Professor Dr. D. T. Suzuki. He was a good practitioner of Zen Buddhism, and had attained a very high level. He wrote many books on Zen Buddhism which was crucial in popularising Zen Buddhism in the west. But because he had never sat for the Dharma – battles (The Zen system of interview) with any of the older Masters, he never received the title of Roshi / Zenji / Osho etc. which are the authentication of his enlightenment from any of the Masters; he himself never called himself an Osho or Zenji or Roshi which are all Japanese words.

Zenji means Zen Master, Roshi means old venerable Master which is given to a disciple whether he be a lay person or a monk, when he completes the training and the Master is satisfied that he has attained the final Satori (enlightenment). This entitles him to teach. In the Rinzai school of Zen the person has to complete the course by answering a series of three or four hundred Koans. Koans are questions which point directly to the nature of mind and Dharma and the student has to show that he has experienced directly what is being pointed out by the question.

In essence they are not questions but fingers pointing to the Dharmata of all Dharmas (phenomena). We shall talk more about this later when we describe the Zen lineages. For

now, no one is entitled to call himself Roshi unless he has completed this course and been validated by his own Master and at least 3-4 other masters. The word Osho is also a Japanese word which is given to a Master who is a monk. It is made up of two Chinese ideographs which is pronounced as Hwa Shang in Chinese, and in Japanese the pronunciation varies with the particular lineage.

The Zen and Pureland Schools pronounce those two ideographs as Osho, while the Tendai school pronounces those same ideographs as Kasho and in the Shingon School (Japanese Vajrayana) it is pronounced as Wajo; and they originate from the Sanskrit Upadhyaya (Pali Upajjaya) which means 'Master' in the sense of teacher. A layman cannot be an Osho / Upadhyaya.

The meaning of Osho does not mean 'to be one with or disappear in the ocean' or one who has attained Bhagvatta upon whom the sky showers flowers or ocean of wisdom as some non-Buddhists with very little knowledge of Buddhism have posited; but means the teacher who is an old monk specially. Now going back to the example of Professor Dr. Suzuki, even though he was already enlightened, according to many Zen Masters, since he was never authenticated by any of the older Masters, he never called himself a Zen Master. Even though he wrote many books on Zen; he never took on students to guide them on the path.

This is the spirit of genuine Buddhism. It is a true display of the authentic experience of Anatma (Japanese Muga). And this is a genuine Buddhist culture, a culture based on modesty (Hri - Apatrapya) and no-self (Anatma).

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

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# 'Surrender or face death'



Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf on Saturday asked the cleric of the capital's Lal Masjid and the militant students holed up inside the mosque to surrender unconditionally or face death. But he did not give any deadline for the surrender, giving the impression that the Government is no hurry and still hopes to pressure those inside to come out without using force.

In his first public comments about the five-day stand-off between the militants and security forces at the mosque that has claimed at least 19 lives, Gen. Musharraf said the militants had brought a bad name to both Islam and Pakistan.

"They must surrender, or they will be killed," he said, adding that the

Government had exercised great restraint in handling the situation because of the presence of women and children inside.

"We have the power and resources to deal with them. I request them to surrender unconditionally," he said.

He was speaking near Turbat in Balochistan where he has gone to inspect flood-affected areas.

The official death toll in the stand-off is 19, but Abdul Rashid Ghazi, the defiant cleric who is leading the militant students, told local television over telephone that 70 students had been killed.

He said 30 of them were women, and they had been buried on the mosque premises. Journalists, who

have had no access to the area around the mosque from the day after the confrontation began, were pushed back further this morning by security forces, and have no means of independently verifying the situation on the ground.

On the fifth day of the stand-off, gunfire and heavy explosions could be heard from the mosque and television channels were reporting that the walls around Lal Masjid had been demolished.

Both the Army and paramilitaries are involved in the crackdown on the masjid. A curfew still remains in place in the entire residential and commercial sector around the mosque.

(The Hindu)

## Afghan war's toll rises or does it?

Afghan elders Saturday said 108 civilians had been killed in a bombing campaign in western Afghanistan, while villagers in the northeast said 25 Afghans had died in air strikes, including some killed while burying relatives.

U.S. and NATO leaders, however, said they had no substantiating information, and a U.S. official said Taliban fighters were forcing villagers to say civilians died in fighting whether or not it was true. Even the government officials who reported the deaths Saturday could not confirm the assertions, which came from dangerous and remote regions inaccessible to journalists and independent researchers.

The reports and denials of civilian casualties are part of an increasing campaign of information warfare between the Taliban and Western militaries. "It is a very problematic information environment," said Adrian Edwards, the U.N. spokesman in Afghanistan.

He said the reliability of government reports was crucial to addressing the problem of civilian casualties. The United Nations also has not been able to confirm the latest casualty assertions.

"If figures are coming up quickly, it's my sense that they probably need to be taken with a pinch of salt," Edwards said. "But it also doesn't help if it's two or three weeks before the information



comes out." Civilian deaths are a problem that Afghan President Hamid Karzai has repeatedly deplored, and they have caused increasing concern in European capitals, threatening to derail the NATO mission here.

Lt. Col. Rob Pollack, an officer at the main U.S. base in Bagram, said Taliban militants had been told to fight in civilian areas because civilian deaths caused by the U.S. or NATO give the fighters a propaganda victory. "In the south, villagers are being told by the Taliban that if they do not call in and report civilian casualties, they will be punished," said Pollack, who said payments to the families of Afghans killed or wounded in fighting could also be fueling the reports.

Qari Yousef Ahmadi, saying he speaks for the Taliban, said there was "no need" to use civilian homes during fighting. He denied that militants were forcing villagers to inflate reports of casualties.

(philly.com)

# Seven 'new' Wonders of the World named

Seven 'new' wonders of the world including the Great Wall of China and the Colosseum in Rome were selected by nearly 100 million Internet and telephone voters overnight upsetting cultural experts.

The other wonders named were the Taj Mahal in India, the centuries-old pink ruins of Petra in Jordan, the statue of Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro, the Incan ruins of Machu Picchu in Peru, and the ancient Mayan city of Chichen Itza in Mexico.

British actor Ben Kingsley and US actress Hillary Swank hosted the celebrity-studded ceremony at Lisbon's Stadium of Light, which was broadcast in more than 170 countries to an estimated 1.6 billion viewers.

A private Swiss foundation launched the contest in January, allowing voters to choose between 21 sites short-listed from 77 selected by a jury.

It said it had gathered nearly 100 million votes by the end of polling at midnight Friday.

Losing out among the frontrunners on the short-listed sites were the Acropolis in Athens, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the statues on Easter Island, and Britain's Stonehenge.

The privately-sponsored campaign was the brainchild of Swiss filmmaker and museum curator Bernard Weber.

However, the UN cultural body that designates world heritage sites declined to support the event.

"The list of the seven new wonders will be the result of a private initiative which cannot contribute in any significant or lasting way to the preservation of the elected sites," the Paris-based UNESCO said in a statement last month.

The initiative sought to recreate the popularity of the seven wonders of the world of antiquity. Only one of the seven, the



Pyramids of Egypt, still stands today — and it was ruled out of the contest.

The others were: the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Statue of Zeus at Olympia, the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus in Asia Minor, the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, the Colossus of Rhodes, and the Pharos of Alexandria.

The shortlist of 21 was drawn up by a panel of world renowned architects and ex-UNESCO chief Federico Mayor in January last year.

They also included the Angkor Wat temples in Cambodia; the Alhambra in Granada, Spain; the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul; the Kiyomizu Temple in Japan; the Kremlin and Red Square in Moscow; Neuschwanstein Castle in southern Germany; New York's Statue of Liberty; Sydney Opera House and the ancient city of Timbuktu in Mali.

Saturday's ceremony was attended by a myriad of stars and celebrities including former astronaut Neil Armstrong, actress and singer Jennifer Lopez, and Portuguese Prime Minister Jose Socrates.

"It is the first time in history that all the citizens of the world have been able to vote and decide,"

declared Diogo Freitas do Amaral, chairman of the organizing committee.

In China, the televised event was not broadcast, leaving thousands of tourists at the Great Wall unaware of the new designation.

"As usual there are a lot of tourists here today, but I don't think they came here because the Great Wall was chosen as one of the seven wonders of the world," Hu Yang, an official at the Badaling Great Wall near Beijing, told AFP by telephone.

"There was no special activity to welcome this ... all the same it is a great honour for all of China."

"Most of us here (at Badaling) voted for the Great Wall, but I have no idea how many Chinese voted overall," Hu added.

Indians handed out sweets and set off fireworks outside the Taj Mahal to celebrate its inclusion in the list and promised discounts to tourists.

Hundreds thronged the 17th century monument built by Mughal ruler Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal.

"It's a victory of love, the message which the Taj stands for," said Rakesh Chauhan, president of the Agra Hotel and Restaurant Association, announcing a 20 percent cut in room rates in the town's budget hotels for the next year.

In Peru, hundreds gathered at 2,430 meters (7,970 feet) to greet the announcement that the ruins of Machu Picchu where they were standing had been voted one of the "new" wonders of the world.

Thousands more cheered and hugged each other in Cusco, 70 kilometers (44 miles) to the southeast of the ruins after cafe and restaurant televisions beamed the result.

"The selection of Machu Picchu is an example of what Peruvians can achieve when we unite" as they did in voting in favor of "the new marvel," Trade and Tourism Minister Mercedes Araoz told reporters after the announcement.

Thousands also cheered, waved flags and broke into Mayan dances at the archaeological ruins on Mexico's Yucatan, when Chichen Itza became one of the seven "new" wonders of the world.

"Chichen, Chichen, ra, ra, ra," chanted a group of Mexicans in white flowing robes at the foot of the Kukulkan (The Castle), the central pyramid that dominates the ruins and was built 967-987.

The Mayan ruins attract more than one million tourists a year.

In Rio de Janeiro which hosted one of the Live Earth concerts hundreds of thousands of singing and dancing revelers broke into huge applause as they were told that the city's landmark Christ the Redeemer statue had been included among the new wonders of the world.

(The Turkish Press)

# Weaving delicate threads



■ Yuyutsu RD Sharma

*So many forgotten gods and tribes  
So many hardened ritual sites  
the skeletons of so many stories  
all waiting to be re-fleshed by me  
all waiting to be awakened with a kiss  
like a sleeping beauty — Grace  
-Nicholas, Startling the Flying Fish*

Very rarely reviewers review books to learn lessons to reshape their own creativity. Reviewing falls under the murky shadow of criticism and hence, the third person authority of a critic / dictator is automatically taken for granted.

I received Jean Binta Breeze's *The Fifth Figure* (Bloodaxe Books, 2006) and Grace Nichols' *Startling the Flying Fish* (Virago, 2005); which Kadja George, my friend and editor of London-based magazine, *Sable*, advised me to explore and find what I could possibly learn from these books.

I was certainly inquisitive how these poets with their roots in the Caribbean would handle their subjects. I discovered if Breeze had a flood of memory materials to pour without making it consistently readable, Nicholas did not have much to make the 'epic' poem that at the first sight it might seem to be.

Though both the poets embark upon the massive task of evoking the forgotten spirits of landscape and the

people of their distant homeland and employ native materials to astound their primarily Western readers, the results are seldom above commonplace and tolerably middling.

Nicholas dabbles with the stereotypes instead of dealing with real life materials. In the beginning of this millennium, the poem's Eliotic structure appears mundane, programmed and out of place. Poem after poem she keeps evoking natural elements in abstractions and materials from Aztec, Inca, Indian and Greek myths without a deeper understanding of their implications in her context. For example, look at her use of Hindu god, Hanuman in her long poem:

*Come, Hanuman, only your many arms can help console this man still waving to an empty sky the white flag of his handkerchief.*

Firstly, the reference to Hindu monkey god Hanuman is incorrect. She refers to the Hanuman with many arms. In the scriptures it is goddess Kali that Nicolas employs elsewhere, who has many arms and not Hanuman. Hanuman is a Herculean god with a colossal body but has only two arms throughout the Hindu epic, *The Ramayana*. Furthermore, the reference to Hanuman here appears very inappropriate, unnecessary, and artificial, borrowed without any ingenious textual demand. It is an embellishment and the whole book is a catalogue of such uncalled for embellishments. To evoke what she

calls 'the tributaries of my blood', page after page Nicholas continues to quote Aphrodite, Odysseus, Cassandra, Persephone, Columbus, El Dorado, Kai, Zeus and scores of other mythological stereotypes, instead of concentrating on the real life subjects emanating from the lives of people and places in the Caribbean. Nicholas could not 're-flesh' her world, 'all waiting to be awakened with a kiss /like sleeping beauty.'

In the treatment of her subject, Breeze does just the opposite. Even though she does bring forth to her readers raw and unsullied feel of the speech and the landscape, bringing forth five generations of the Caribbean and black British women of mixed ancestry, she fails to keep it alive and readable throughout the book. It becomes almost impossible to plod through the chapters of her narrative, this "part novel, part poem, part family memoir" experiment. It certainly provides a slice of life feel and seems a material suitable for stage performance as opposed to Nicholas' narrative. But it demands a lot of devotion and almost Hanuman style loyalty on the part of readers to go through these simple but life pulsating accounts.

Did I learn anything from these books? Yes, I would say. I learnt how difficult it is to weave the delicate threads of narratives dealing with forgotten, actual or imaginary homelands. How intriguing it is to evoke the lives of the generations lost to darkness of the dark seas.

*(The writer can be reached at  
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## Insight

# Fumigate fossils?

**Be they fossils, seeds or saplings, Nepal is the motherland of all Nepalis and nobody has the right to force them out of their country.**



■ Sushma Amatya

PM Koirala's recent declaration in the parliament that fossils should leave this country came as a strong reminder of the fascism that was a harbinger of inhuman atrocities against the mankind during the Second World War. It brought to mind the dark pictures of the flight of Jews from Germany and the grisly murders of those who did not. It is indeed very shocking that a man who holds such an important and responsible position should make such an irresponsible statement that borders on shortsightedness and immaturity if not sheer stupidity.

Be they fossils, seeds or saplings, Nepal is the home, the motherland of all Nepalis and nobody has the right to force them out of their country. Is the remark not symbolic of his perhaps misplaced notion of creating a new Nepal that is akin to Hitler's hallucination of a 'pure' Aryan country? By forcing out 'fossils' is he trying to allude that, only those who agree with his notion of the kind of people this country today should comprise of, should stay and dissenting factors should flee or face dire consequences?

It is but obvious that in a democratic country, all the people regardless of their background, status, ideology and all that go to create individuals have all the right to live in their country and have a right to occupy their own space within the parameters of the law of the country.

Nobody has the right to push them out. If the PM was targeting at those who have violated the democratic norms of the country, even so it is an extremely discriminating statement. Those violating the law of the country should be tried in a court of law. The act of the country's Chief Executive Officer reading out the punishment without such a process being adopted, only smacks of authoritarianism, to say the least. Nobody can be asked to expel themselves from their place of birth in the manner Koirala has done.

If Koirala wants to create a clean slate for 'new Nepal', then he has to begin with himself as

a role-model, as the leader of the country. He has to reflect on his journey, his growth as a political persona, the mistakes he made and how much he should be accountable for it. If

tomorrow, another leader, another government deems that his past deeds befits expulsion from the country, would he agree that it is fair on him? Would he accept it?

The architect of today's Nepal, Prithvi Narayan Shah united the country with his concept of one garden for all different kinds of flowers; signifying unity in diversity. Much later, the Congress leader, BP Koirala who fought for democracy wrote a book called, *Hitler and Jews* in which he showed deep empathy towards the Jews. His writings show his stance against repression, inhumanity and tyranny.

It is unfortunate that G P Koirala, BP's younger brother and someone who now has become the custodian of that legacy, chose to say something that reflects Hitler's view. It is about time Nepali Congress decided whose legacy it should be carrying forward.

Attempts to wipe out disagreeable, dissenting factors has only resulted in further strife as history shows all around the world. Such an intention as shown by GP Koirala signifies an attitude of dictatorship, repression of all opposition in all forms that only autocratic rulers are threatened by. The question arises if he has the recent Pakistani or Bangladeshi model in mind; where the authoritarian takeover has tried to oust its political rivals—with some degree of success—ostensibly under corruption charges.

A truly democratic leader would set an example for others to follow by showing respect to all diversity, opinion and philosophy and create a system in which all species of plants, animals and humans could thrive in. Nepal today needs such a leader, not a tyrant in the making.

**If Koirala wants to create a clean slate for 'new Nepal', then he has to begin with himself as a role-model, as the leader of the country.**



## No easy way out of addiction

Counseling by drug therapist, Ragina Shah

**I think my son might be into drugs. I feel very depressed and frustrated. Please advice.**

■ Mrs. Kayastha, Kathmandu

Firstly, it is important to confirm whether your son is into drugs or not. If he is, he would not be following any type of routine or fulfilling responsibilities of any kind. He would be losing weight, behaving abnormally, sleeping and eating too much or too little; and asking for money periodically for various reasons. He would be avoiding any communication, confrontation with his family members. Other signs are aggressiveness, violent behaviour; losing temper for minor reasons and negative thinking.

If confirmed that he is an addict, your son needs treatment. If left on his own, it would cause serious negative consequences to your life and other family members. Parents of such drug addicts suffer the most when they watch their children get lost in the destructive world of addiction.

You may try to reason with him, threaten him and try all means to get him to see sense but because of addiction he will not be able to quit. The more he gets into it, the more you will feel helpless and

hopeless. To watch someone dear to you kill himself is extremely painful.

Getting professional help is the only way to help your son. To cure addiction, finding underlying problems in your son's life is important which could be pain, boredom, discomfort, problems, peer pressure etc. Once you understand addiction, it will be easier for you to understand why it happens and you will stop blaming yourself for it. And only through experienced professional treatment can he be able to quit drugs and stay away from it, all his life. Without it, he will continue to go downhill and live a meaningless, miserable life.

That addiction of drugs and alcohol can be treated with 'magic pill' theory or with some quick fixes is absolutely untrue. There is no easy way out of this problem. And never take it for granted that there is time to deal with the problem. The longer you wait, the worse the addiction gets. Other dangers that accompany facing addicts are that they could overdose, take a bad batch of drugs that could permanently damage their system, get arrested, cause an accident or even die.

After starting treatment, there will be attempts on his part to quit or run away. He may even stop using drugs for a while and convince you that he can do it on his own but inevitably, he

will start again. He can be very convincing of his commitment etc. and succeed in making you believe in what he says. So you have to be alert to these possibilities.

Helping an addict confront and solve his deep lying problems requires giving him moral guidance in a systematic, professional way. This will help him deal with negative situations that are left behind from his addictive lifestyle. Understanding and accepting this means half the battle is already won. Then he will be taught how to repair the damages done to his relationships and improve his quality of life by being stable, drug free, ethical and productive.

Please remember that your love for your son should not be a hindrance but a force to help him take the right path. You are not alone in this battle. Everybody who has an addict in their family go through what you are going through. The key factor to reclaim your happiness is to recognise the addiction of your son, take him for rehabilitation, educate yourself as you go along, continue to support him through various stages and at the same time seek counselling for yourself to survive well through this phase.

# Politician with human face

■ Yubaraj Ghimire

India's former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar was a unique leader who was feared, respected and trusted by his friends and foes alike, but not followed by too many. That was the political tragedy he faced until his death on July 8 at Delhi's Apollo Hospital, aged 80, after a prolonged battle with cancer. He will surely be missed in India, and no less in Nepal, for the role he played in restoration of democracy here in 1990-91.

**It was Chandra Shekhar who ignited the movement for democracy here through his direct involvement.**

What made him stand above most of his contemporary politics was his refusal to compromise on values he held dear, which sometimes reflected a lot of contradictions. He joined politics as a young post graduate student from Allahabad University in the early 50s under instruction of his mentor, Acharya Narendra Dev, a doyen of Indian socialist movement. But in 60s, that followed dithering of the socialist party, he joined the Congress party, where he carved a place for socialist ideals. It was here he got national prominence, his speech fiery and

always refusing to act with servility to leaders like Indira Gandhi.

He ignored her wish to have him in the working committee of the party as a nominated member. But he always preferred to face party electorate and get elected on their strength. In 1975, he was faced with a difficult choice. Indira Gandhi who was gradually moving in as an authoritarian, sent I K Gujral as an emissary to him with an offer to join the cabinet with any portfolio of his choice. But Shekhar said frankly that he would be siding with Jayaprakash Narayan who was leading a movement against authoritarianism.

The next morning, Shekhar found himself in jail with other politicians, a price that he paid for his value, but his personal relationship with Indira Gandhi remained even after they parted ways and he became the president of the Janata party which for the first time in a quarter of a century had dislodged Congress from power in 1977.

He was the only one who became India's Prime Minister without holding any ministerial position. His stint with the support from Rajiv Gandhi led Congress party however was cut short to just seven months, with his refusal to accept 'interference' from the supporting party.

Shekhar remained close to the people and was always available to help anyone in need, friends and foes alike. Humble and without any airs, he was strong in his political commitments.



Whenever he rose to speak in the parliament, a pin drop silence would inevitably follow. From Speaker to Prime Minister, all used to come under the fury of his criticism, but without a shred of personal pettiness. He would often get a 'chit' from the Secretary General to speak, and time was never a 'bar' for him on issues of national importance.

His association with Nepal and its democratic movement began way back in 60s. He always shared his thoughts privately with those he trusted and he thought that B P Koirala in a way was responsible why democracy came so late in Nepal. Chandra Shekhar had advised BP many times to work together with the communists, but to no avail. What BP kept ignoring throughout his life, Ganesh Man Singh did it in 1990. Shekhar was quite unhappy with the way Nepali politicians, especially his friend G P Koirala conducted themselves afterwards.

It was Chandra Shekhar who ignited the movement for democracy here through his direct involvement. In his demise, Nepal has lost a sincere friend, and India a rare politician whose house at 3-South Avenue Lane used to be a hub for all politicians and people from all background. It is truly a big loss for the Indian parliament which saw him in its first row for years, dignified, in speech and in silence. ■

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