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“We will flush them out”

NARESH NEWAR
in KAPILBASTU

A month after vigilantes went on the rampage, villages near the birthplace of the Buddha are still in shock. In Hallanagar, 25 km west of Lumbini, families stay close for safety, many wear vacant looks as they rummage among the charred ruins of their homes. There is little food.

On 16 February, hundreds of fellow-villagers went house-to-house here looking for Maoists. Fed up with rebel atrocities and intimidation, villagers attacked fellow villagers and many innocent farmers became victims of lynch mobs. In all 42 people were killed. ('Villages in ashes', #237)

Maoists were among the dead but so were farmhands, rickshaw pullers, tailors and farmers. One elderly man, Prem Bahadur Raskoti, who had lost his entire family in a flood 10 years ago, was hacked to death with an axe.

The arrival of the security

forces finally brought the situation under control. But by then only 20 of the 325 houses in Hallanagar were intact.

"We feel much safer now that the soldiers are here," says Khuman Singh Pariyar whose house was destroyed. Pariyar's family migrated here from Gulmi 35 years ago, and he recognised familiar faces of local zamindars among the attackers. Ironically, the villagers suspected of being Maoists had themselves fled rebel atrocities in Rolpa, Pyuthan and Argakhanchi in recent years.

The Kapilbastu violence had sinister communal and ethnic overtones against hill settlers. Activists fear the vigilante violence here could turn into a Bihar-style caste war. Perhaps sensing this but also to protect vigilantes from rebel revenge, the army has set up a camp at Ganeshpur. "The people have helped us with information on Maoists," says Major Sunil Ghale at the army camp.

Sita Debi Malla lives with her family in the ruins of her house. It has no doors and a blue plastic sheet serves as the roof. Sita cooks outside, her children study for their final exams in the open. "We don't have money to rebuild, we never did anything wrong," says Sita whose family moved down from Pyuthan four years ago to escape the conflict. ActionAid is providing food but the need in Kapilbastu is much greater.

"We are not Maoists," says another young villager, "we don't even like them, we came here to escape them."

Villagers say their offensive was successful because the Maoists have been driven out. "There may still be a few left but we'll flush them all out," says Birendra Mishra, a leader of the anti-Maoist vigilante group.

Asked why innocent villagers were targeted, Mishra told us: "We have nothing against them but if they give shelter to Maoists we will not spare their village." A week

after the attacks last month, senior government officials visited Kapilbastu and gave the vigilantes a pat on the back.

Editorial p2
It ain't broke

But despite Mishra's bravado, on 26 February, Maoists dressed in combat fatigues shot dead two brothers in cold blood. Their father, Abdul Rahman, was forced to watch. "I told them to spare my sons and kill me instead," said the 65-year-old farmer. His wife stood by sobbing.

Times nepalnews.com
Weekly Internet Poll # 240

Q. Has there been an improvement in urban services in the past two months?

■ Yes 52%
■ No 41%
■ Don't know 7%

Total votes: 483

Weekly Internet Poll # 241. To vote go to: www.nepalimes.com

Q. Is the international criticism of February First justified?

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PICS: NARESH NEWAR

VIOLENCE AND COUNTER-VIOLENCE(top to bottom): Sita Debi Malla's home was destroyed in the mob attack at Hallanagar on 16 February. One of the leaders of the Kapilbastu vigilantes speaks on his Indian mobile phone at the Krishnanagar police station. Abdul Rahman was forced to watch as Maoists executed his two sons on 26 February.

athens

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BLOODSCRIPT

We share a cage, a cliff,
a country. A diminishing ground
draws us in as it sinks
and surrounds. Walls stand,
roofless, sky-lights for the damned
Blood runs dry. The stains,
a script (The literate overlook
this spine-broken book) where each village
fades, mist-drawn, West to East,
all land in between, tea-stained lines
torn from a map. Scratches
Scrawls. Mouth-curdled squawk
dies down to a dissenting
murmur, a curse hot in the ears,
ready to be heard. "Wounds won't heal,
this script cannot not be read"
It's never time

And so it adds up
Life subtracted from life
A hurried high kick, dead on
Your name, a child's name,
your child's face, a leg, an...
Killing foretells the necessary crime
Betrayal will do, or simply being there
Cinched bones snap
She who can't walk off, set free
"Hands full" has a hurricane in mind
"Start over" pretends just that
Moonlit stone lanterns, darkened,
lead the way. Far below,
hunched, haughty, the heedless hills
On their backs, dead weight,
discarded lives. In a gashed eye
a candle flickers

Drawn down deep
within the fist, what flame exists
cannot reach us. Charred, the ceiling,
the lived-in rooms
Charred, the palms, the healing bones
Land pocked with beauty
Body with pain

Wayne Amtzis Kathmandu 10/04

**THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF DAILY REPORTS**

Reported daily:
Whereabouts unknown
Reported daily:
Consequences suffered
Reported daily:
Maimed and killed
Reported daily:
Intimidation and rape
Reported daily:
Forcible recruitment
Reported daily:
Severely beaten
Reported daily:
Do not Do not
Reported daily
Implement Implement
Reported daily:
Immediately cease
Reported daily:
Immediately halt
Reported daily:
Abide by Abide

Concurrently reported to
The committee to investigate
The committee to resurrect
The committee to punish
The committee for the end of days

Subsequently tabled
to the sub-committee for forced displacement
the sub-committee for loss of limbs
the sub-committee for vulnerability
the sub-committee for disappearance
the sub-committee for sleepless nights
the sub-committee for endless daze

Finally and ultimately
to be forwarded with recommendations
to the Committee For Daily Reports
Formerly known as the committee
For What's To Be Done

Wayne Amtzis Kathmandu February 05



WAYNE AMTZIS

DITCHED TILL THE EARTH TREMBLES

Purna Bahadur Vaidya

Into a gully water flows,
scratching the wall-skin all around,
indifferently rippling
Suddenly
trapped tiger
caged bird

it shivers...
excited ripples,
trembling body,
slowly it thins
and flattens

Anxious, limited, bound,
fearful of desiccation—a revolutionary
enduring a life sentence
Free flying birds his heart ascend!
His very dream... a stream's ongoing force
But bound by rock hard limits
necessity stands. Water caught in a rift
curtailed by mountains and hills
cannot fly nor flow

A lump. Immovable flesh
Its time-borne current lost within
As pining birds peck at water,
aroused, trembling, and yet
again, sleep presses down
silence stills, he foregoes his goal

Finally from that dry hard enclave
there's nothing to attain
No free man's fate,
unless from the depths
an upheaval...
sends him forth

Translated by Wayne Amtzis with the author



WAYNE AMTZIS

ROADBLOCK

A sudden mountain slams the brakes
A twenty-year siege comes down to
speeds up/ drags out
The hesitant never choose
Chaste walls chastened
close in. Weeds among the rubble
City in ruins. A dwarf species
pushes through. I, splinter...
the word gash festers
The wide-open, pinpointed,
a finger-touch away,
splattered kill. A mess of hacks,
guts stuffed back
Nothing here, so they leave
behind less
Far-flung failure intact,
quarry-faced future
long due, rent earth and landslides,
stacked tires
and sling shot stone
demark a grotesque range,
a battered divide
Between sever and seal,
shape and shatter, a fetish of talks
In dissonant halls,
voices cast out, bodies mauled
Ad(mired) in beauty,
your mountains, monuments;
your faces, defaced
Your vision a dredged pool of light
Your fortified refuge
a ravished valley. The relinquished
heart of the Mandala
Can't you see what is happening?
The sign ahead veers
The sharp sudden one step more
trips you up. You're the
thing to be had, the naught to be done in,
the zip to be zapped
That unguarded moment when we
could have... All around now,
closing in. Tongues thickened with deceit
Escape rutted with delay
There's no space left in the all-alone
Throats constrict. Walled-in,
walls fall. Everything's taken from you
Despair got you by/ Pain's all that's left
At the court of the deprived
and vanquished,
the un-judged deliver their verdict
No one suffers here (They insist)
No one will speak of this
(There's nothing to be spoken of)
Until you can speak
for yourself
(This they fear)
Endure!

Wayne Amtzis Kathmandu March 05

YES, ALL MY RIVERS ARE LAHUREYS

Purna Bahadur Vaidya

For the tiniest refuge,
the waters move
Hastily running night and day
despite jungle and hills

Finding a place of rest
where its whole self
can stay, there it calmly abides,
its restless waves asleep

But, in my land, (harbored and held high
by mountains and icy peaks)
there is no place
to remain

Cruel hills and steep
cliffs pushing down, allow no rest,
banishing it to the lowlands

Forced out of its native realm
for a foreign land

So, rubbing earthly dust onto its chest,
it leaves its own place
weeping,
weeping,

exhausted in the ocean of sacrifice
for no end,
for nothing at all

Translated by
Wayne Amtzis with the author



It doesn't matter if the cat is black or white

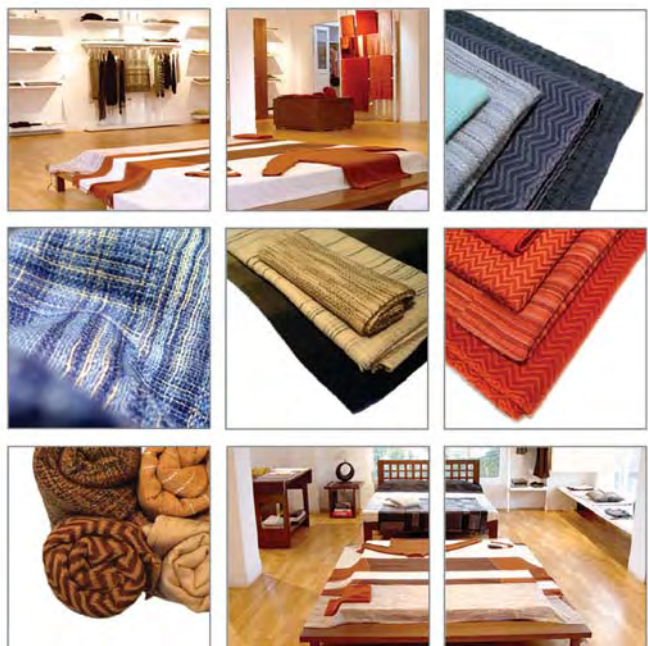
The history of Mao's Great Cultural Revolution from 1966-1976 is replete with parallels with the 'Historic Leap' of the Nepali Maoists. The purges, mass deportations, trials in kangaroo courts and paranoia of the time were triggered by a power struggle within the hierarchy centred around Mao's fourth wife, Jiang Qing.

Ideologically, the purges were justified to hasten the completion of Mao's revolutionary goals with the slogan: 'power to the proletariat'. But by the time Mao died in 1976 and the Gang of Four was finally pushed out, between 2-7 million Chinese had been killed and a staggering 20 million are estimated to have died during the Great Leap Forward. Even today, there are hundreds of millions of Chinese who lived through what they still call 'the black period'.

Anyone who was suspected of not being loyal to

the new party line was publicly humiliated, thrown out, exiled to the countryside or executed. Even those who were seen as future rivals to the hierarchy were eliminated. One of the aims of the Cultural Revolution was to uproot and boycott 'bourgeois' education. Students were encouraged to expose their teachers and in many cases even kill them through lynch mobs. Temples and monasteries were destroyed, monks and priests killed or disrobed.

After Mao's death in 1976 and the defeat of the Gang of Four, Deng Xiaoping rolled back on strict communism, restored private property and allowed farmers to grow and sell produce for profit. His dictum: "It doesn't matter whether a cat is black or white as long as it catches mice" became the mantra for the post-revolutionary era of prosperity and growth.



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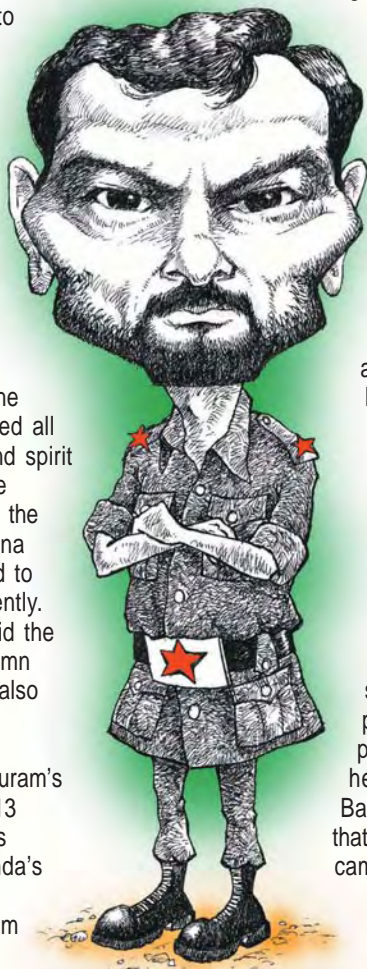
Baburam, in or out?

Sudhir Sharma in *Nepal*, 14-31 March

नेपाल

Maoist ideologue Baburam Bhattarai along with his wife Hisila Yami and Dinanath Sharma have recently been victims of the Maoist central committee's campaign against 'individual authoritarianism.' The tussle in the Maoist leadership started with the committee's meeting in September when it decided on various controversial issues which included a decision to take on India.

Bhattarai was not in favour of this. Eventually, he listed 13 points to express his disapproval and presented them to the high command of the Maoist party, which called Bhattarai's 13-point, a 'letter bomb'. In December, he sent a commentary to *Samaya* magazine where he said he was not the 'leader of surrenderers'. And in January, he sent a write-up to *Kantipur* about the king. The Maoist leaders considered all this a criticism of the decisions and spirit of the party. During its meeting, the leaders had decided that no one in the party except Prachanda and Krishna Bahadur Mahara, would be allowed to speak or write anything independently. Following this decision, not only did the party drop Baburam's regular column from its mouthpiece, *Janadesh*, it also stopped publishing his interviews, articles or opinions. The politburo meeting took up the matter of Baburam's insubordination in presenting his 13 points of dissent seriously. He was cornered by a majority of Prachanda's supporters. The party then took disciplinary action against Baburam and even his wife Hisila Yami and friend Sharma got into trouble but



SUBHAS RAI

reasons about the latter two are not clear. Initially, Sharma who joined the party four years ago was considered to be in the pro-Prachanda camp. Now, it is not clear why party action was taken against him. Was it because Sharma had spoken in favour of Bhattarai at the plenum? What seems clear is that this is just the latest in the personality clash between Prachanda and Baburam that has been going on for years. Even before the People's War, Bhattarai had been removed from the position of president of United People's Front and was replaced by Pampha Bhusal. The organisation did not run well under her, so Baburam was reinstated. But by 1997, when the conflict was in its second year, the two top leaders were again having differences. Baburam was already more popular than Prachanda as the Maoist ideologue and also due to his intellect. Another leader Ram Bahadur Thapa (Badal) was gradually gaining popularity but in 2000, he was sidelined and demoted to ordinary membership. Somehow, Badal managed to gain membership in the permanent committee. In 2001, Baburam, too, was nearly ousted from the party during the fourth convention which established Prachanda as the supreme leader and made his face public. It also decided that every political writing by the Maoists should henceforth reflect Prachanda's views. Baburam was not happy, it was evident that the party had been divided into two camps. However, the leadership, knowing that the rift would only benefit their enemy, patched up, establishing Prachanda as the number one and Baburam as the number two.

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LETTERS

HYPER EMPIRE

Saubhagya Shah in 'Hyper Empire and Hindu Kingdom' (#238) hits the nail on the head. Given the incessant political instability Nepal went through in the past 15 years and the ever increasing fear of a Maoist takeover, international donors should see February First as necessary if they are more concerned with the people's welfare than ideology. Most Nepalis are too busy eking out a living in remote villages to advocate political and civil rights. Let's listen to their plight and start doing something concrete. Even if the king can curb corruption and make the bureaucracy effective, half of Nepal's problems will be solved. What the donors need to understand is: political and civil rights can be restored anytime in the future when a majority of Nepalis feel it necessary.

Subindra Bogati, London

● Great to find succinct analysis of issues like the ones presented by Saubhagya Shah in 'Hyper Empire and Hindu Kingdom' and Kanak Mani Dixit's Southasia Beat column 'Lhotshampa chargesheet' (#238) on Bhutani refugees. Because we are not just landlocked but India-locked, our manoeuvring capacity is severely restricted. This makes Nepal extremely susceptible to foreign pressures. However, another equally, if not more, troubling issue is the lack of unity within Nepal even after King Gyanendra's February First move. If we can't analyse our domestic issues vis-à-vis the interests of the foreign powers we will repent it. No Nepali wishes to meet the fate of Tibet or Sikkim.

BR Giri, email

● If the international community is asking the king to re-establish basic fundamental rights and democracy, then they also bear the burden of telling the political parties, media and NGOs to reform themselves. With rights come duties to safeguard democracy and rule of law. The parties, with their Stalinistic tendencies, should look at themselves in the mirror first. We will see rebellions every 15-20 years if some of these reforms aren't undertaken:

1 Party leaders should have term limits and abide by it. GP Koirala is in direct violation of his own party by-laws in trying to run for the NC presidency for a third time by amending its constitution. Is that dictatorship or what?

2 There should be a mandatory retirement age

3 All party leaders should release their tax forms and wealth details

4 Party people accused of corruption or misuse of power need to be expelled from the party and the EC should bar them from elections

5 Any party calling for bandas or strikes will have to pay a fine equal to the dent in the Nepali GNP caused by the shutdowns

6 Party fundraising should have limits

7 Most party leaders are bahuns, parties must reflect the country's ethnic diversity

8 If any party disrupts the people's work in the parliament for more than three business days in any session, that party

will be fined against the dent in the Nepali GNP caused by the disruption
9 Schools, colleges and universities should be de-politicised

SN Singh, email

● As the moral majority of the west gang up on poor Nepal after the monarch's take over on February First, we Nepalis are made to feel like guilty children. Western countries having nothing to lose and India, our great brotherly neighbour to the south, is apparently upset that it read the signals completely wrong. The world's greatest democracy wants us to follow the shining examples of democracy in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The west and India are leading the crusade to try to teach this poor country a lesson but their threat of aid cuts only prove that aid has always been an ideological weapon. Denmark et al need to remember that many of them have skeletons in their own closets.

Buddha Basnyat, MD, Kathmandu

● Nepal needs to be self-reliant and should not further rely on foreign aid as Pravin Rana points out in 'When you're a poor country' (#238). There is excessive pressure from arrogant foreigners in our internal matters at the toughest time in our history. We are the only ones who can solve our problems.

Anu Pradhan, Kathmandu

● Your paper is looking more and more like a wrinkled yam sandwiched between royal guns. You may be proud to have a



wide readership but not all of us are pro-king. Your paper is loaded with one-sided arguments, mostly poisoned by your royalist columnists. If you can't accommodate other views, it may be a good idea not to publish such royal rubbish. It's high time to save your neutrality (if you have any) and avoid being a mouthpiece for the palace.

'Republic Nepal', email

● Your editorials are sounding like a broken record. You keep saying the political parties made huge blunders and they should repent but even if they don't, they should be put back in charge. C'mon, what kind of logic is that? The king is trying to resolve the political deadlock and take the country forward. Why don't you give him a chance, especially since a majority of Nepalis do?

Jit Jang, email

SOMETHING TO HIDE?

I couldn't agree more with your editorial 'Party Nepal' (#249). To sum it up in one sentence: had our so called political leaders kept the national interest ahead of their personal agenda, Nepal wouldn't have been in such deep trouble as she is today.

Dhruba Khanal, email

● I read your insightful editorial on press freedom 'Something to hide?' (#238) and couldn't help writing to tell you that if you replace 'Nepal' with 'the United States' everything you say in it about Nepal could be true about America. Sobering thought, considering how much America is lecturing to Nepal about democracy and free press.

Lina Undholm, email

● You say the blanket censorship on the Nepali media will backfire on the government and the military. I agree. It is simple logic that a free press and parliamentary democracy are necessary for justice, freedom and plurality. The current rulers, as you say, must be trying to hide something because something is seriously wrong. By polarising society and forcing them to choose between peace and war, the authorities are giving the people a false choice. We want peace but not by sacrificing freedom.

Sameer Ghimire, Sydney

● Why do so many people in the Nepali media blindly accept the European or American model for government? As an American citizen, I can tell you that democracy in America is utterly corrupted by big businesses and the military-industrial complex. The 'choice' between the Democrat and Republican parties is so ludicrous as to be tantamount to a one party system. The news is controlled by a few large entertainment companies that manipulate public opinion rather than inform the public. Is that really something to emulate or strive to imitate?

Daniel Birch, New York

OTHER HALF

The quote 'Nepal is a garden of four castes and 36 races' has been repeated to death. CK Lal brings it up again in his State of the State column ('Nepal's other half', #238). Poets, politicians, historians and whoever have all interpreted the saying to their advantage. But how many people have stopped to think whom the quote really refers to? Did Nepal, 200 years ago, comprise the population groups and landmass it does today? It did not. So the designation of castes and races doesn't apply to people living within Mechi-Mahakali today. The great king, of course, was referring to the inhabitants of the Nepal Mandala.

'Bhai Kaji', Kathmandu

● CK Lal in 'Nepal's other half' is incisive and succinct as always. While agreeing fully with his article, I would like to offer one more point as a corollary to the dogma of 'Nepali language', since it will not be complete unless the myth of the 'Nepali language' is demystified.

The languages and dialects traditionally spoken in the territory of

Nepal, from north to south and from east to west, are Nepali bhasas: each one of them is and should have been called Nepali Bhasa and not mere titular 'Rastra Bhasa'. The so-called 'Nepali Bhasa' is in fact the 'Khas Bhasa'.

Ramesh Tiwari, Sanepa

NOT PERU

It seems obscene to look to Alberto Fujimori's horrid reign as an example for Nepal's counter insurgency ('Moving on to Peru', #237) as Ashutosh Tiwari has in his Strictly Business column. Fujimori's corruption affected all levels of government and was the chief factor for the departure of most NGOs there. The Senderos' similarity to Nepal's insurgents is at best, superficial. The so-called peace that resulted from Fujimori's henchman, Montesinos, gave the Narco traffickers free reign and dramatically increased the poverty in the city due to refugees from the army's death squads. Your dear departed King Birendra declared Nepal a zone of peace. Let's look there for an answer to this class war. Shalom.

Gregory P Pehrson, email

18TH BRUMAIRE

Is Dr Baburam Bhattarai wishing a long reign to His Majesty? His latest writing posted on Krishna Sen Online quotes 'Le dix-huit Brumaire de Louis Bonaparte' with the same ridiculous repetition of a historical event has taken place in Nepal. 'The First February of the Nepali history seems to be a carbon copy of the Eighteenth Brumaire of French history,' writes Bhattarai. For anyone who has read some texts after Karl Marx's pamphlet about this period, the comparison sounds rather funny since Bonaparte's coup and title of emperor were both approved by plebiscite by a very large majority 7,800,000 of 'yes' and 2,500,000 of 'no', leading to his long and prosperous reign as Napoleon III. He remained on the throne for 18 years, whereas his uncle's reign lasted only 10 years.

Marie Lecomete-Tilouine, CNRS, Paris

MAN O MAN

Rameswor Bohara's report on women playing cricket ('Bowled over by girls', #239) said Mangal's captain Nairi won the 'Man of the Match award'. The game was played by girls, won by girls and the award was called 'Man of the Match'?

Mona Shrestha Adhikari, ActionAid Nepal

DISTASTEFUL

I read the distasteful interview with the British ambassador (#239). Britain was the first country that Nepal established diplomatic relations with, thousands of Nepalis have given their lives trying to protect the British crown and the British people. For absolutely no reason of enmity, Nepali Gurkhas fought a war against Argentina in the Falklands just because the British told us to. Now, when we are in trouble, Britain has stopped military aid to Nepal. Can there be any other example of ungratefulness?

Dr Rajiv Sharma, Dilli Bajar

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IT AIN'T BROKE

Politics make headlines. And when the struggle for power turns violent as it has here over the past decade, it makes even bigger headlines. Disasters also make it to the bulletins because they fulfil the basic criteria for news: they are negative. Television can't get enough of typhoons and wars, especially if they come with cool visuals. To make it to the headlines, disasters by definition have to be shocking and sudden. Slow, silent death doesn't grab the editors.

Children in Nepal die of easily preventable causes, but because they don't all die suddenly, all at once and in one place, media gatekeepers don't consider it 'news'.

Nepal's maternal mortality rate is as high as some sub-Saharan countries, but the mothers are dying in isolated remote villages scattered all across this rugged land. Four times more women have died at childbirth in Nepal over the past ten years than all the men, women and children who have been killed in the conflict (see p 4).

Yet, eyes glaze over when you try to get media interested in our shameful maternal mortality rate, or the needless death of Nepali children. The Buddha weeps, but Kathmandu couldn't care less.

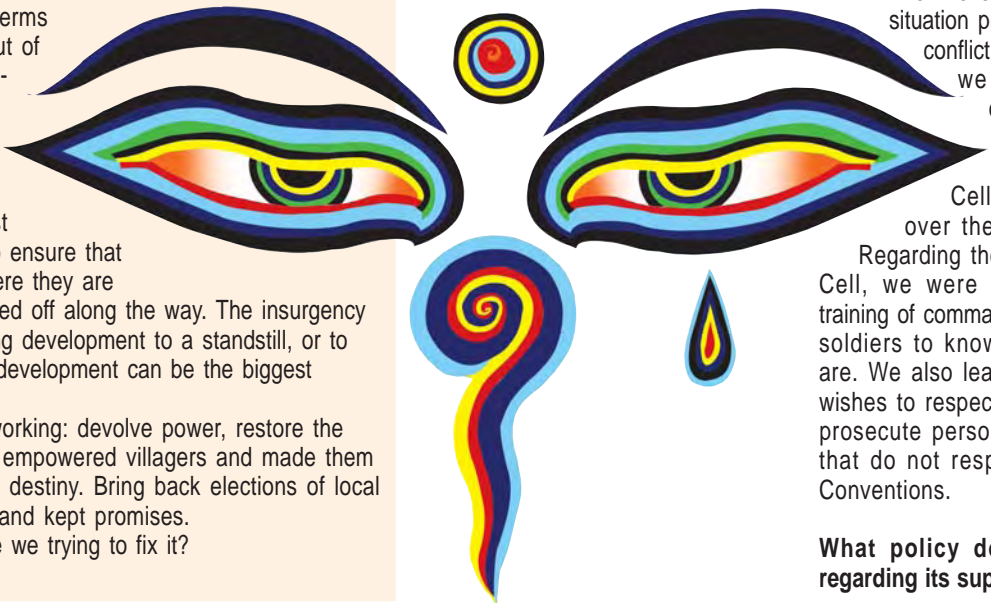
The biggest challenge ahead of Nepal today is actually not the conflict—sooner or later the men directing this war will see just how foolish and wasteful it is. The real challenge is to use the opportunity for social reform that the conflict presents to finally begin to address the country's development deadend. How do you kick-start delivery of health care, nutrition and disease prevention so helpless Nepalis don't have to die prematurely? How do you overcome the avarice and apathy of rulers in the capital?

Actually it's not such a tall order, and we don't even need to wait for a complete restoration of peace to begin. There are numerous examples of communities even in conflict zones today who have ensured health posts are staffed, schools are run, community forests are conserved and roads are constructed. In many VDCs, chairmen whose terms have long expired still serve, out of a sense of duty to their constituents, as de facto volunteer headmen.

All they need is a slightly more efficient government machinery and relatively honest managers in the bureaucracy to ensure that budgeted resources end up where they are supposed to and not get siphoned off along the way. The insurgency should not be an excuse to bring development to a standstill, or to say there is no money. In fact, development can be the biggest contribution to peace-building.

Just bring back what was working: devolve power, restore the grassroots democracy that had empowered villagers and made them participate in shaping their own destiny. Bring back elections of local leaders who were accountable and kept promises.

It wasn't broken, so why are we trying to fix it?



JAYANTO/HT

Nepali Times: How did your meeting with King Gyanendra go?

Reto Meister: His Majesty expressed Nepal's commitment to respect the Geneva Conventions. The audience with His Majesty allowed us to inform him about the working relationship that we maintain with different ministries. He also paid attention to the information made to him regarding our specific functions and cooperation with the Royal Nepali Army. He expressed his commitment to the issues we had brought to his attention.

You also met with other senior state officials.

Yes, we also had a meeting with the minister for home affairs during which we expressed our satisfaction regarding the cooperation for granting access to the people in detention, arrested and detained after 1 February. We had a closed-door meeting with the chief of army staff that allowed frank discussion on the state of our cooperation, in particular the question of the protection of the persons under control of armed forces and the modality as according to which the ICRC can visit. ICRC made concrete and constructive proposals on how to evaluate this aspect of our particular work with the RNA.



The Delegate General for Asia-Pacific of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Reto Meister was in Kathmandu last week. He met King Gyanendra, the army chief and senior officials. He spoke to Nepali Times about his meetings.

NARESH NEWAR

We were briefed on the situation prevailing as far as conflict is concerned and we also received a detailed briefing on what the Human Rights Cell had undertaken over the last two years.

Regarding the activities of the Cell, we were apprised of the training of commanding officers and soldiers to know what the rules are. We also learnt that the RNA wishes to respect impunity and to prosecute persons in their ranks that do not respect the Geneva Conventions.

What policy does ICRC have regarding its support to internally

displaced persons?

The ICRC has a mandate to protect the victims of armed conflict. Giving materials and health assistance are some of the major activities of our institution. Other than the protection of civilians and prisoners, IDP support is one of our key operations in the field.

Recently, a senior government official said there is no need for international human rights monitoring. Your response?

The first responsibility to apply international law lies with the signatory state. If the state demonstrates that it can apply international law, then indeed there is no need for an international observer. Again we would abstain ourselves to pronounce whether or not what the government representative has said corresponds to what I have just said. It is not for us to comment whether or not Nepal specially needs UN human rights representative. We would definitely abstain from taking any position on this.

What is the major challenge for humanitarian work in a conflict situation?

For ICRC, the major challenge is to have an impact on the lives of the civilian population and the persons that do not participate in the hostilities as far as their protection is concerned, that they are not exposed to abuse and do not disappear.

How do the state and rebels view your presence in Nepal?

You take as an example the question of the security of our personnel. We are pleased to say that we are able to work safely. We don't have the kind of security threat that would indicate that we are not accepted. On the contrary we have good dialogue and assurances that contributions made by ICRC are welcome.

The statutes of liberty

The state must restore press freedom, not for us, but for its own sake

Nearly two months after the emergency was imposed and civil liberties curtailed, it is looking like the unintended consequences of press censorship have begun to run counter to the purpose of the royal proclamation.

The decision to fetter press freedom has resulted in the reduction of media's reach, influence, and credibility shrinking its capacity to deliver to the public even the information that the state wants. A responsive state would have seen the danger of this and quickly lifted curbs.

But we hear that even tighter measures to asphyxiate the press are afoot.

Curbs on press freedom seldom work because they undermine the very process of nation building. A modern state is an 'imagined community' created and propagated by the media. Mass media unifies nations in its own special ways. Only an unrepresentative government can fail to take that into account, and at its own peril.

Nepal needs a free press for another very important reason: our supreme law is a statute of liberty. The 1990 constitution

doesn't envisage governance by plebiscite as in direct democracies, where important decisions are subjected to referendum. In a representative system like ours, the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary can only be kept continuously accountable to the people by a vibrant press exercising full freedom and unfettered right to information.

In a constitutional democracy, the media is also the terrain where policy issues are freely discussed. The interpreters of constitution in the media must exercise 'a wide range of discretion that inevitably allows, in fact frequently requires, a degree of creativity' that may challenge and even change the constitutional order. The media in that sense is a site of informal legislation.

Our constitution places a lot of authority in the hands of unelected bodies which can only be held accountable by a free press. Wise old Brahmins (nominated by political parties and appointed by the king) man constitutional organs which are constituted, like the supreme court itself, outside the purview of the executive. Other than submitting an annual report to

parliament, institutions such as Public Service Commission, Election Commission, Auditor General, or Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority function almost independent of the legislature and the executive. The only agency which can keep a constant watch on them is an independent press. The unprecedented freedom given to the media in the constitution is therefore not unintentional.

Governments even in democracies have a range of options to make the mass media 'behave'. Collusion with media moguls, subsidies for media enterprises, libel laws, taxation, market regulations, licensing, ownership, spin, selective information leaks, distribution of advertising largesse of the state, or if nothing else works, buying off journalists. Censorship and suppression are too crude and violent in civilised countries in this day and age.

Either way, direct government intervention in media content lead to two opposing effects: the potential for informational rent increases if media is perceived to be credible, but the media can only remain credible if it is allowed to

cover a range of views in an atmosphere free from unwarranted pressures.

Suspension of civil liberties this time has adversely affected Nepal's image worldwide, and it has cost unprecedented job losses within the country. But those aren't the only reasons to restore press freedom. The best reason is that a free press is in the government's own self-interest. Even an unelected government.

To get real value from media, the state must let it function freely and uphold its trustworthiness. Loss of media credibility give rise to wild rumours, pushes listeners to tune in to clandestine transmissions, and rely on photocopying and cassette recorder journalism. It leads to intensification of unverifiable, and probably dangerous, personal communication. And we are seeing signs of these pre-1990 phenomena now.

Smart governments don't censor, they use spin doctors. After all, you want the people to believe you when you are telling the truth.

The state must restore freedom of the press not just for us, but for its own sake. ●



Mother and newborn baby in postpartum care at Mahendra Hospital, Dang.

UNICEF

Unhealthy war

The conflict is injurious to the health of Nepalis, especially women

To officials who rarely set foot outside Kathmandu Valley, it is difficult to understand how the conflict is affecting the health of women.

Going by the child and maternal mortality figures at the number crunchers in the capital, the health status of Nepalis is improving dramatically. Government officials are in a state of denial. I have often heard them say: "Our health programs are progressing on schedule, maternal mortality and morbidity rates have been reduced and our grassroots level health workers are doing a fantastic job."

The reality is very different. The conflict has unleashed a population of internally displaced people who, because they are far away from their home districts, do not have access to regular care.

COLUMN
Aruna Uprety



The highway blockades and bandas have made access to medical care the biggest worry for maternity cases. It is not just that women with complicated

pregnancies can't be taken to hospitals, but health workers aren't able to travel to remote health posts.

One auxiliary nurse and midwife in Achham told me: "A few years ago, I used to go to different areas assigned by my health post. People would call me to help deliver babies but I can't do that anymore. I know the people need my services but I am afraid about my own security."

Most health posts don't have medicines and health workers themselves work at great personal risk. Medicines, even if they arrive at the district headquarters, are barred from being taken out to VDC health posts for fear they will get into the hands of the rebels. The Maoists have their own channels to bring in essential drugs but these are mainly for treating their own wounded cadre and not for the general population.

Many nurses and midwives have abandoned their posts. Two years ago, we organised a health camp in Doti but had to wrap up early because of a curfew. Many women had walked for days and couldn't be treated. I still remember the pain on the faces of those mothers. We offered money to some of them so they could go down to the Nepalganj Medical College for treatment but they were reluctant fearing they'd be stuck if the highway was blocked and there would be no one to take care of their children, livestock and farms.

In the evening, army officials came and questioned us. One woman was hospitalised and we had to give them her full description, problem and address. "This is how it is here, we are always tense," the nurses told us. "We haven't been able to send medicines to many health posts." In the midwest, the tradition of cutting the umbilical chord with a rusty sickle makes tetanus a serious killer of young mothers. But it has been years since tetanus injections have been dispatched to health posts.

There are frequent reports of women dying in childbirth because a banda or blockade prevented access to medical help. Sometimes, these women do reach hospitals or health posts but there is no one to provide service. Just when Nepal was beginning to make some headway in meeting basic primary health care needs, the conflict has taken us back several decades. ●

Dr Aruna Uprety is a women's health and reproductive rights activist.

NARESH NEWAR

Sanchita was too young for it all: married off in her teens, pregnancy, losing a child at birth and finally her own death before her 16th birthday.

When her labour pains came, Sanchita's in-laws refused to take her to the district hospital insisting on adhering to the family tradition of bearing children at home. She delivered her child without help from a trained birth attendant but the baby died soon after being born. Sanchita herself had lost a lot of blood and in the next few days, her condition deteriorated. The only medical aid she received were aspirins. After two weeks, the family finally decided to take her to a hospital. But it was too late.

That day earlier this year in mid-western Nepal, Sanchita became a statistic. She contributed to Nepal's shocking maternal mortality statistics which puts this country at the same level as sub-Saharan Africa.

Pregnancy related complications kill over 4,500 Nepali women every year, close to 12 deaths every day, one every two hours. The government's figures put Nepal's maternal mortality rate at 530 per 100,000 births but this is obviously a doctored figure. UNDP estimates it is closer to 740 and the Population Reference Bureau puts it even higher at 830 per 100,000 births. Compare this to Thailand with 44, Sri Lanka with 92 and Bangladesh with 380 mothers dying out of 100,000 births.

Whatever Nepal's figures for maternal mortality, it is clear that the situation for motherhood in Nepal is even bleaker because of the conflict and the 830 figure may have to be revised.

The reasons for high maternal mortality rates are many but it boils down to the low status of women in mainstream Nepali society. Sanchita's case showed

Nepali ama

The number of women dying in childbirth exceeds the number of Nepalis killed in conflict many times over

how the in-laws delayed taking her to hospital. The disempowerment of girls and women translates into low nutrition levels, early marriage and it results in: delay in deciding to seek medical care, delay in accessing care and delay of care at health centres.

This year, there will be an estimated 900,000 pregnancies in Nepal. Out of these, 129,000 will develop life-threatening complications, according to estimates from the Support to Safe Motherhood Program (SSMP) which the government runs with support from DfID. The program's Indra Shrestha told us, "I see maternity mortality more as a human rights and gender discrimination issue than a public health indicator."

Indeed, the interventions needed to reduce Nepal's maternal mortality rate will need to reach beyond just health delivery. Yet, although the number of women dying from pregnancy related complications exceeds the total number of people killed in conflict, safe motherhood has hardly been given priority.

Successive governments have neglected the crisis and been apathetic about better maternal care. Nearly 90 percent of deliveries are still carried out at home under the supervision of friends and untrained traditional birth attendants.

"It is not that Nepal does not have trained health professionals; it does. The trouble is that they tend to be clustered in Kathmandu and other major cities," says Dr Geetha Rana who runs the Women's Right to Life and Health Project at UNICEF. Deliveries without trained birth attendants mean that most women suffer prolonged labour, postpartum haemorrhage and retained placenta. Nearly half the maternal deaths occur due to post delivery bleeding or postpartum haemorrhage.

"Postpartum is the most dangerous period," says Swaraj Pradhan Rajbhandari of USAID's Nepal Family Health Program. Such complications are easily treatable even in district hospitals. The problem is that most rural families constantly delay sending the mother to a hospital. The low standing of the daughter-in-law therefore directly results in her death.

A few years ago, a woman pregnant with her fifth child in Morang suffered internal bleeding after her uterus burst. Her family refused to donate blood. "If she dies, that's her fate," they calmly told the doctor. The husband said: "I'll grow weak if I give her my blood." His wife died within half-an-hour.

"Many mothers don't die due to lack of doctors or medicines, they die because they are not considered important enough," says maternal health expert, Aruna Uprety (See: Column).

According to the Millennium Development Goal, Nepal must reduce its maternal mortality rate from 800 per 100,000 births to 200 in the next 10 years. "What we need most is to raise awareness in the rural areas about safe motherhood practices. It is possible even in this conflict situation," says Ava Darshan Shrestha of the Safe Motherhood Network of groups working in 10 remote districts.

Other countries in the region like Sri Lanka have slashed maternal mortality by doubling the number of skilled birth attendants in the past eight years. The Family Health Division is now following the Sri Lankan model by training skilled birth attendants and setting up birthing centres. The target is to train 752 midwives for the 16 mountain districts, 2,400 in 39 hill districts and 2,400 in the tarai, which has the largest population and the highest fertility rates.

Until now, frontline health care providers have been maternal child health workers. There are 3,152 of them all over the country but they don't fall in the skilled health worker criteria. After 1999, the government tried to upgrade them into Auxillary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) but half of them are ineligible because they do not have adequate formal education. SSMP's Indra Shrestha concludes: "The only hope and the most practical solution is for the government to work with local communities to reduce maternal deaths." ●

Mothers in numbers

45,000: Number of Nepali women who have died in the past 10 years due to complications at childbirth

12,000: Number of Nepalis who have been killed in the conflict since 1996

6,000: Number of trained midwives needed to reduce maternal mortality

830: Number of Nepali mothers who die for every 100,000 births

92: Number of mothers in every 100,000 births who die in Sri Lanka

2: Number of mothers in every 100,000 births who die in Sweden.

Looking for problems

We are being bombarded with questions: Is the economy really stagnating? Has consumption gone down? Have people stopped buying goods and services? Is the remittance from Bipalis drying up? Is the World Bank ending aid? Will Nepal ever recover from the current crisis? Whew! Beads of

purely about getting booked for their wilful defaulting. It is not an indication of the economy going downhill.

There is also real panic about consumption crashing post-February First. Though the off take by intermediaries have come down, retail consumption has remained the same. All manufacturers as well as intermediaries in the supply chain were working on their inventory to tide over potential blockades and therefore, too much money is now locked in inventory. If you thought that hoarding can bring more money, at times it can really work against you. It's a lesson to be learnt by the trading community.

Similarly, there are intermediaries who do not pay their vendors on the pretext of lower sales. Let us admit that squeezing vendors has been a way

of life and unfortunately, trading remains on taking an arbitrage position on vendors or tax payments. Banks, cautious about lending money, have squeezed funds to the traders thereby creating a working capital crunch. Consumers are buying and only major consumers such as the INGOs and the NGOs have reduced their intake. There are fewer workshops, seminars and projects and that would definitely make some impact.

Yes, tourism has been badly hit. But its problem is not so much security or insurgency as it is excess supply chasing little demand. This has been visible since 1996 and is still valid. While we can cater to a million-and-a-half tourists, we get less than fifth that number. Tourism entrepreneurs kept pushing junkets and pressing for waiver of loans rather than working on

When we should be finding solutions

concrete plans to tackle the supply side. It is not too late to remedy this.

Remittances have not shrunk, as people who save \$100 or \$150 a month can only remit that money to Nepal. They can't buy apartments or houses in Malaysia or the Middle East with that kind of money. Fact is, there is a real estate boom that indicates remittances are healthy.

The uncertainty of future assistance from bilateral agencies has perhaps made people believe that the economy has changed post-February First. It has also been made to sound like a major crisis as the future of 'hardship allowances' earning people in projects is unknown. But pragmatic Nepali analysis is best in times like these. ●

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ECONOMIC SENSE

Artha Beed



perspiration is coming off the Beed's brow. Yet, it still feels like things aren't really as bad as people think. Economically speaking.

True, businessmen hunted by regulators for default in loan payment of taxes are panicking. Not paying taxes or not paying debts has nothing to do with insurgency or emergency, it is

Green stuff

JG Entertainment has launched Green Productions to produce radio and television program focused on media awareness in Nepali and English. Its first documentary called 'Yatra' by Kiran Man Joshi.



NEW PRODUCTS



EDITION OPTRA: Vijaya Motors has introduced 1,600cc and 1,800cc Chevrolet Optra NY Edition in Nepal. This model with the new look was conceptualised with focus on comfort, convenience, safety and luxury.

WAFER THIN: Laxmi Group's Sujal Food Products is launching Waffly Creamy Wafer in the Kathmandu market in three different flavours: orange, vanilla and strawberry.



PEARLY WHITES: RB Brush Industries has launched a 200ml Active Pearl Shampoo with the slogan 'Pearl is clear'. The shampoo costing Rs 100 per bottle is available in black, yellow and pink for different types of hair.

TEA TIME: Everest Herbs has launched Yarchagumba Tea, made up of Yarsagumba (*Cordyceps sinensis*) and Shilajit. Both these ingredients have extraordinary rejuvenating power and health benefits. Rs 315 for 25 tea bags and Rs 50 for three and is already available at select restaurants.



नेपाल अधिराज्यको संविधान २०४७ ले प्रत्येक नेपाली नागरिकको आधारभूत मानव अधिकार सुरक्षित गरी स्वतन्त्रता र समानताको आधारमा नेपाली जनताको बीच भ्रातृत्व र एकता कायम गर्ने कुरामा जोड दिएको छ। जुनसुकै विचारधाराका भए पनि नेपाली सबै एक हौं भन्ने भावनाले राष्ट्र निर्माणको काममा अग्रसर हुन सके मात्र यस देशको विकास तीब्र गतिमा हुन सक्ने हुँदा विचार फरक भएका विषयहरूमा आपसी समझदारी र सहयोगको भावना लिएर छलफल गरी निष्कर्षमा पुग्नु र सम्पूर्ण नेपालीलाई भ्रातृत्वको दृष्टिले हेर्नु प्रत्येक नेपालीको कर्तव्य हो।

श्री ५ को सरकार
सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय
सूचना विभाग

SNV/Nepal Vacancy Announcement

SNV/Nepal, a Dutch non-government development organisation, has been working in Nepal since 1980. SNV/Nepal focuses on capacitating key institutions at the district, regional and national level with the ability to serve the interests of marginal areas. SNV's sectoral niches are in governance, private sector development and natural resource management.



SNV/Nepal invites qualified Nepali citizens to apply for the position of

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISOR

The **Social Development Advisor** will be stationed in Kathmandu with the requirement to make frequent visits to remote and conflict affected areas of Eastern and Western Nepal. The Social Development Advisor will have an overall responsibility for providing advisory services, institutionalising learning activities/processes and knowledge development on gender and social inclusion.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Support clients/partners to formulate national policies on Gender and Social Inclusion
- Advocate on gender and social inclusion issues at national level distilling lessons learnt from the meso and micro level to support formulation of national policies.
- Support SNV/Nepal in mainstreaming gender and social inclusion activities in practice and portfolio plans.
- Proactive technical backstopping and instrument development meeting specific practice plan requirements.
- Build and maintain knowledge management on gender and social inclusion issues.
- Contribute to the region and corporate level on gender and social inclusion issues.
- Build up functional and professional linkages with relevant network of actors and stakeholders

Required Knowledge: A minimum of Masters Degree in Social Sciences with specialisation on gender and social inclusion; 3 years of working experience on gender and social inclusion issues at the national level and with local governance bodies. Expert knowledge of gender analysis, gender mainstreaming, gender audit, social audit, social inclusion and integrative approaches; participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation are essential.

Required Skills: Fluency in spoken and written English and Nepali; excellent communications skills; networking skills; coaching skills; planning, organising and coordinating skills; analytical skills and decision making ability; excellent computer skills; ability to work in team; willingness to travel to remote and conflict affected districts. Strong advisory experience would be advantageous.

Applications are to be sent to the below address along with a cover letter with the latest curriculum vitae, daytime contact number, a recent photograph and the names of two referees along with their contact address/telephone numbers. Only shortlisted candidates will be notified; written assessment and final interviews will take place on the week of April 25 2005.

Deadline for submitting applications: 5:00 pm Friday April 8, 2005

Job description is available for pick up from **Organisation Development Centre (ODC)** from **March 21, 2005** onwards or it could be accessed through our website www.odcincorp.com under the category "Recruitment". Candidates unable to pick up the above or access the website may request for it through e-mail.

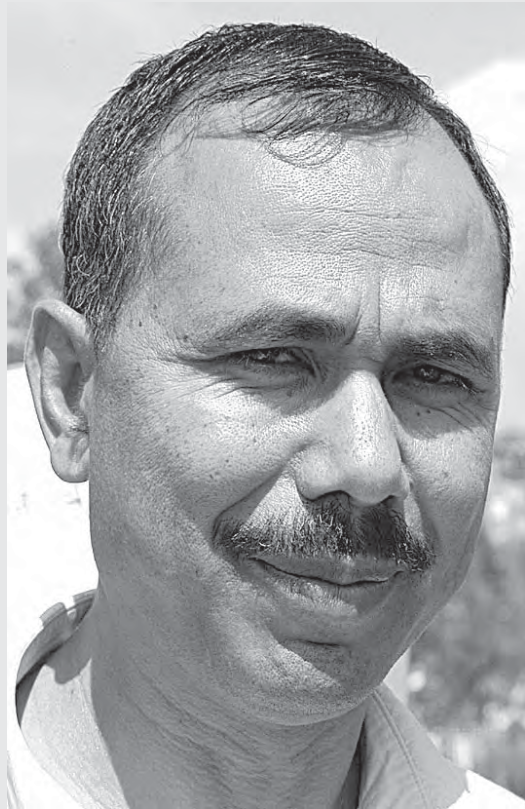
Organisation Development Centre (ODC)

Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur, GPO 8975 EPC 443,
Kathmandu, Nepal
Phone: (977-01)-5551979, 5524540
E-mail: hrd@odcincorp.com
URL: www.odcincorp.com



SNV/Nepal gives special consideration to female candidates and candidates from marginalised and disadvantaged groups

Democratise parties first



MIN BAJRACHARYA

Op-ed by Shyam Shrestha in *Kantipur*, 20 March

कान्तिपुर

February First was no surprise. It was the political party leadership that had an important role in bringing it about. At a time when elections weren't possible, Sher Bahadur Deuba dissolved parliament. Even though he could have extended the mandate of local councils by one year, Deuba didn't and left the villages and districts without people's representatives. None other than Girija Prasad Koirala ruled the country for eight out of the 12 years, yet he did nothing to strengthen democracy, take it to the grassroots and make it more inclusive. He refused to bring the royal massacre to parliament to discuss it. Then there was Madhab Kumar Nepal who jumped ship at a time when the street agitation against the October Fourth move was gathering momentum and declared that regression had been corrected and joined a royal appointed government just because his party got a few powerless seats in the cabinet.

Someone once said, "I'm not afraid of my enemies, I know them: save me from my friends." Nepal's democracy needs to be saved from its adherents, not from its enemies. Driven by a lust for power, they have hacked off the branches, trunk and roots of democracy until there is only a stump left.

Even so, there is no alternative to multiparty democracy. If democratic leaders make mistakes,

the right to punish them is with the sovereign people and the rank of file of their own parties. Democracy shouldn't be punished for the mistakes of the political leadership. The alternative to democracy is better, more genuine, democracy. But just the opposite happened here. The leaders made blunders and we penalised the system. It's like setting fire to a bus because the driver made a mistake.

This is our democratic dilemma: democracy can't function without political parties, but the leadership of these parties aren't capable of steering the engine. Restructuring the leadership of the parties, electing new leaders and reforming the parties is the main challenge. There is no point complaining about feudalism in the country if the party runs along feudal lines. If there is no internal democracy within the parties how can they fight for democracy in the country? Democratisation of the parties must begin with:

- 1 No leader should remain in the same position for more than two terms, or 8-10 years
- 2 Party leadership should be inclusive of all viewpoints
- 3 There should be a free marketplace of ideas inside the party but a unity of purpose in implementation
- 4 A referendum should be an instrument of reform not just for the country but also for party members to have their say
- 5 an independent ombudsman should monitor decisions and activities.

If they want democracy to move forward, leaders like Girija Prasad Koirala, Madhab Kumar Nepal, Sher Bahadur Deuba, Mohan Bikram Singh and Narayan Man Bijukche should humbly step down. If they don't voluntarily step down, the party cadre should force them to do so.

After that the parties need an agenda. The king's agenda is clear but is the parties' agenda clear? It can't be something vague like 'genuine democracy', it must chart out a path for pluralism and a resolution to the conflict. It could be a constituent assembly election and an all-party conference to take us to the goal of an inclusive, non-dictatorial multiparty democracy.

We must end this excruciating cycle of struggling for democracy and having it taken away. In 1950, we got a sort of democracy, in 1953, it was taken away. In 1959, democracy was restored and in 1960, it was abolished. In 1990 we reinstated democracy and within 10 years, it has gone again. Does every generation have to fight for democracy all over again? We must find a way to make democracy sustainable so no one can ever take it away. It must be the kind of democracy that makes the people completely sovereign, only that will remove the excuse some people have to take up arms.



BATSAYAN IN KANTIPUR

Rights abuses

Rajdhani, 21 March

राजधानी

In the last three months of 2004, a total of 1,298 cases of human rights violations were recorded. These cases directly affected 4,421 people while 504 people lost their lives at the hands of the government forces and the Maoists. According to INSEC from 1 October to 31 December, government forces killed 299 people while the insurgents killed 205. Most human rights violations took place in the mid-western region, where the government was responsible for 535 cases of human rights abuses and the Maoists for 511 cases while other parties were responsible for 251 violations. All over the country at least 2,700 people were directly affected by the human rights violations from the Maoists while 535 cases involving the government affected 1,100 people. During this period, abductions rose significantly. Out of the total 256 abduction cases, the Maoists were responsible for 242 abductions. INSEC said five persons were killed in government custody during this period while 67 were disappeared, 503 faced torture in government custody while the Maoists assaulted and injured 151 people. Other criminal gangs are known to be responsible for 13 abduction cases.

something he never imagined he could do in Nepal.

Thank goodness the SAFMA delegation didn't get to meet Information Minister Tanka Dhakal. He might have lectured the South Asian journalists about how much press freedom there is in the country, since the tv is broadcasting his face, Radio Nepal repeats his speeches. "How much more freedom do you need," he may have said.

The Nepali press has been behaving like a dog with its tail between its legs since February First. The king met senior editors of the dailies and put his viewpoints clearly but these are not being followed. You can tell how much the editors of the dailies are terrorised by reading their editorials. The media means creativity and freedom, without it democracy can't survive.

The SAFMA delegation met Tulsi Giri, Kirtinidhi Bista, and army spokesman Deepak Gurung. After five days here, the members couldn't figure out how Nepal could move forward. Since they didn't go outside the Valley, it may have been difficult for them to imagine what was behind the king's move. In private conversations they were worried that the move would embolden the terrorists and weaken democracy. "Democracy and free press are essentials of governance in the modern world," they said, "without it there is no chance of a civilised society." They felt the palace and the parties must come together sooner or later.

Worried about us

Column by Sambhu Shrestha
Drishti, 22 March

दृष्टि

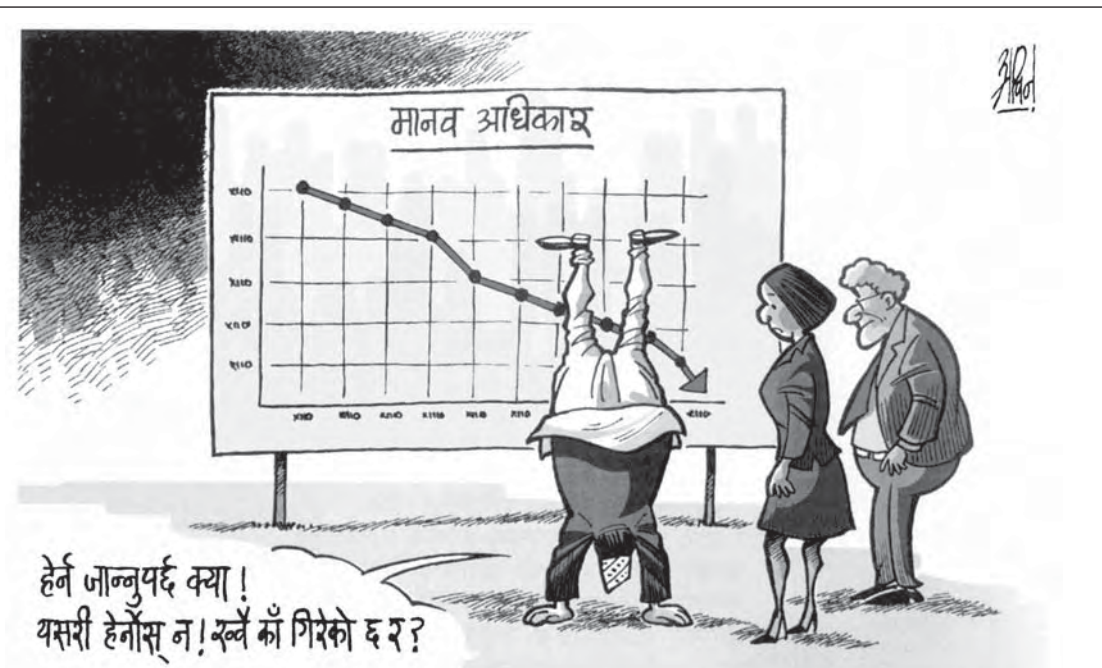
Just because the army is no longer in the newsroom, there are some who think censorship has ended. There are those who emerged after February First who see their faces on television and think there is press freedom in Nepal. A new tradition of summoning editors to the police stations has started and this shows the state of press control in Nepal. Indian journalist KK Katyal of the SAFMA delegation who was staying in room number 503 at the Yak & Yeti in town pressed all the buttons on his remote but couldn't get any Indian news channel and only found out that they have been blocked when he was asked a question by a Nepal One reporter just before his departure. In room 515 was Nasir Malli from Pakistan, he found to his delight he could tune into PTV,

Border inspection

Annapurna Post, 21 March

अन्नपूर्ण पोस्ट

BANBASA—According to the Nepal-India joint border survey team, the inspection of border pillars is in its final stage. The survey team that started work from the banks of the Narayani River in Nawalparasi district arrived at Brahmadeb of Kanchanpur district on 20 March. According to Bhogendra Labh, coordinator of the Nepali surveyors, the team has inspected around 400 border pillars since it started work three months ago. As per the new mapping, the pillar near the Narayani River is the 497th border pillar and the one in Kanchanpur is the 813th. Labh said that most border pillars are not in proper condition and some have caved in while 36 have been lost. The team also studied the encroachment on no man's land.



हेर्ने जान्नुपर्द क्या!
यसरी हेर्ने न! र्ब्वे काँ गिरेको दर?

Graph: Human Rights

You need to know how to look at it. See it this way, it's not worse at all!

समया Samaya, 24 March

QUOTES OF THE WEEK



"They invite the great democrat king of Bhutan to participate in the Republic Day celebrations as chief guest and refuse to shake Nepal's hand."

Dr Tulsi Giri, First Vice-chairman speaking about India "double standards" at a press conference at the Ministry of Information on 18 March.



Journey from the land of Maoism to the land of Mao

Great leap sideways

SHIVA GAUNLE
in BEIJING

Five goose-stepping guards emerge into Tiananmen Square every morning, raise the Chinese flag and salute it crisply. The huge banner flutters all day at Beijing's historic heart, as it has ever since Mao Zedong raised it first on 1 October 1949. "A new China is born with the sunrise," Mao said in his speech that day proclaiming the communist victory as the flag was raised.

Nearly 60 years later, the flag is still there, so is a giant portrait of Mao that gets a face-lift every now and then. Mao's mausoleum has become more of a tourist destination than a pilgrimage site. Mao's legacy in the land of his revolution today is a Mickey Mouse world of Mao kitsch: alarm clocks with little arm-waving Maos, Mao key chains, Mao T-shirts and restaurants that have trendy Red Guard themes. 'Maorabilia' is everywhere but there is hardly a trace of Maoism in the land of Mao Zedong.

"The only thing still remaining of Mao is that flag on Tiananmen Square," admits a Chinese colleague who is not too curious about the resurrection of their prophet in Nepal. There is a reluctance among officials here to talk about revolutionaries

taking their name from China's liberator just as they don't want to talk about the excesses of the Great Cultural Revolution of 1966-76.

Most of the journalists and ordinary citizens we met either didn't know about the rise of Maoism in their neighbouring country or if they did, they tended to dismiss it. Narendra Raj Pandey was a royal palace employee before he was appointed the Nepali ambassador in Beijing two years ago. He says, "The Chinese government's view is that Nepali Maoists have misused the name of their leader."

We asked several other government officials about the Chinese attitude and they said they didn't really know about the Maoists in Nepal. Zheng Jingxiang, deputy chief editor of *Beijing Daily* summed up this attitude, "I was a baby when Mao was alive, and I know even less about Maoists in Nepal."

China is dashing headlong into the future, no one has much time to dwell on an awkward past. The process of

modernisation has accelerated with breakneck preparations for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Mao-era bicycle lanes along Beijing's main boulevards have given way to streets widened to accommodate Beijing's 2.6 million cars, a new airport is under construction, superhighways and levitation trains are snaking across the countryside.

In Shanghai, the talk is no more about "overtaking Hong Kong", it is about having the biggest, the highest, the widest and the first of everything. Suburbs that were paddy fields till 12 years ago have turned into an urban jungle of skyscrapers. With names like the World Business Centre and the Oriental Pearl Tower, these soaring structures symbolise not just China's achievements but also its confidence in the future.

But China is still a one-party state and freedoms are curtailed. It may be called 'socialist market economy' but a more laissez faire capitalist economic system would be hard to find anywhere. Still, organised politics is not allowed and officials tell us that this is still



necessary to ensure the discipline and single-mindedness needed for economic growth.

Even here, there are signs of loosening up. As long as it helps create jobs and spurs growth, the government is willing to take on non-communists. Compared to a decade ago, there is much more freedom to bring out environmental issues to address the ecological damage caused by a headlong rush to expand the economy. "Till recently, we could only say and do what the government told us to, today people are free to bring up demands," says an environmental journalist.

Ironically, 30 years after Mao's death, his communist party is still engaged in winning the hearts and minds of the

peasantry. The government is trying to address the concerns of farmers and workers in the hinterland who have been left out by the growth zone along the eastern seaboard with subsidised housing, cash benefits and health care. Social discontent is a concern because many have been left behind by uneven growth and the issue was addressed during this month's Chinese People's Congress.

"There is hardly any policy left over from the Mao era," journalist Li Bingxin told us, "Maoism is now a part of China's history."

Comrade Mao is a great historical leader and we respect him."

That seems to be the official line. ●



Make peace, not love

Something has gone very, very wrong with the Charitraheen Chelis' libidos. They don't want to lift a finger for men. For them, this qualifies as a state of emergency as they are supposed to be women of bad character.

To perk up, they decided to come out with a list of sexy people. They've done this before and it whetted their appetites for life. Readers know that *Kantipur* editor Narayan Wagle (who looked extremely fetching when he showed up for government interrogation recently) was named No 1 in their evaluation of the 10 sexiest journalists in Nepal. The editor of the present publication came in at No 3, not bad for a 50-year-old, is it? (See: 'Media hunks, #171')

Then they named the 10 sexiest politicians, which was frankly a taxing exercise, as politicians tend to overlook the finer points of style and grooming. But they are fearless Chelis, they placed Badal at the top of that list, hoping he might give up the underground life and come into open politics, if only to meet us at cabin restaurants. Peace would then prevail.

CHELIS
Rosy Chhetri



So, recently, they decided: why not come up with a list of the 10 Sexiest Cabinet Members? But they ran into problems, immediately.

First, they couldn't find out whether it was legal to discuss the sex appeal of the First Vice-chairman. And if it is legal, is it permissible to speak one's mind on the topic without censorship? Or is it only permissible to say that the First Vice-chairman is the sexiest cabinet member? Which of course he is.

Then they turned their attention to the rest of the cabinet but got stuck on this question: how young must one be to be sexy? Of course, it is possible to find 60-year-olds attractive or even 70 or 80-

The Chelis take one look at the cabinet, despair and boycott lovemaking

year-olds—if one is oneself 60, 70 or 80. The Chelis are themselves not spring chicken (though some of them behave as though they were). But 50 should be the cut-off age. Generally, sagging flesh, wrinkled skin, thinning hair, stiff joints, varicose

veins, chicken necks, age spots, questionable virility: these are major obstacles to sexiness. Also, short men leave the Chelis cold. Being egalitarian, they don't like to talk down at men.

Therefore, Durga Shrestha was the list topper this time. Ms Shrestha has a roundly pleasant face and a roundly pleasant demeanor. In her first public statement, she said she would like to make the Nepali people laugh. Nepalis have come to want standup routines and jokes from our government. She was therefore awarded the Charitraheen Cheli Sexy No 1 Plaque (Valid Through Emergency, Conditions Apply).

Second to 10 on the list of sexy cabinet members, however, are kitchen cabinets, cupboards, filing cabinets, closets, dressers, bathroom cabinets, breakfronts, sideboards, side tables and even headboards. As for Ramesh Nath Pandey, Radha Krishna Mainali, Krishna Lal Thakali, Buddhi Raj Bajracharya, Tanka Dhakal, Dan Bahadur Shahi, Khadag Bahadur GC, Ram Narayan Singh and Madhukar Sumsher Rana, they qualified for consolation prize, the consolation being that they are way, way sexier now than they will be in a decade. Tulsi Giri and Kirtinidhi Bista were awarded magnifying beauty mirrors for showing up in our lives again.

This whole exercise has depressed the Chelis' libidos and driven them to despair. Were there no young, sexy people in this country? They plummeted from despair to depression. They snuck under the bedcovers and lay there in a deep gloom.

And they decided to call it quits.

Yes, the Chelis are boycotting lovemaking. Not a wink, not a smile, not even a flirtatious look will emanate from them. Not forever, of course. Just till their 40-point demands (See: 'Women declare independence', #186) are met. And till a ceasefire is declared, peace talks are held and a new constitution is drafted via a constituent assembly. The fact is that the objective conditions are not right for lovemaking in Nepal. So: nothing, nothing, nothing. Okay, maybe they will flirt a little with people who—

on a personal, individual basis—meet our demands and otherwise agree with our vision. And they may throw a lola or two at the boys this holi. But there will be no lovemaking.

Make peace, not love. And make it now. ●



KIRAN PANDY



MIN BAJRACHARYA

Happy Holi week

Let's boycott harassment and save what's good of Holi

AARTI BASNYAT

Spring is in the air and you are walking with the sun on your back, a song in your heart and... splat! What was that? Sure sign that Holi is here again: that dreaded festival when lolas start raining down on unsuspecting lasses.

It's this year's coincidence that the Holy Week coincides with our own Holi week. Both probably originated in pre-Christian or proto-Vedic equinox festivals but at least our Holi has degenerated into a free-for-all excuse for society's misogynists to batter women.

As legend goes, Hiranyakasyap was an atheist king who believed himself to be superior to God. His son Prahlad, however, was an ardent devotee of Bishnu. Unable to tolerate his son worshipping someone else, Hiranyakasyap planned to assassinate him. After several failed attempts, he turned to his sister Holika for help. Holika, as it happens, was blessed with immunity to fire. She sat on a burning pyre with her nephew on her lap and (too late) found out that her boon could only be used for good deeds. Her nephew escaped unscathed from the ashes of his aunt. The moral: Good triumphs over evil.

Pretty inspiring stuff. But how did we get from there to aiming lolas filled with filthy Bagmati water at female pedestrians? Or are lola-hitters pretending to be Hiranyakasyap incarnates, waiting to assassinate someone on the sly with water balloons?

In Northern India, Holi fires are lit on the eve of the festival. In Nepal, the *chirpole* was put up in Basantapur Darbar Square a week before Holi to be burnt symbolically. The other legend about Holi concerns the amorous God, Krishna who was famous for the pranks he played on the fair maidens of his village.

One particular day, he snuck up on the Gopinis who were

bathing in the Jamuna and hid their clothes. He refused to return them until the Gopinis stood up and performed the Surya namaskar. This is not as inspiring or noble as the first legend, but perhaps better explains the female harassment angle that was handed down to posterity.

Holi has traditionally been the only time girls and boys were allowed to flirt blatantly, douse each other in water and colours, symbolising passion. Our version of the rites of spring. That is perhaps why extremists have turned the water festival into a war of the sexes. Over the years the harmless fun of Nepali Holi has been invaded by the sinister north Indian variety with its license to flirt stretched to sexual harassment. People hardly play

Holi with family and friends anymore, they gang up instead to bombard female passers-by, giggling at their own cowardly audacity.

On the official Holi day, which this year falls on Friday, 25 March, the streets are crawling with *bhang*-stoned neon coloured goons. Worse, some fill lolas with engine oil, paint and dirty water. How and why did this abominable trend seep into our culture? Why do we import the worst forms of behaviour from abroad?

Let's boycott harassment and save what remains good of the festival. Play Holi with your family and friends, not unwilling strangers. Let it be a celebration of spring and a joyful occasion. ●



MIN BAJRACHARYA

Life's a golf game

Only time and practice will tell

The last few weeks saw lots of tips and guidelines. Intense though they were, I hope they kept you busy on the driving range and helped you on the course. So, while you're diligently practicing, let's turn to a very different perspective.

If most golfers were reasonably consistent with their game, this sport would be more fascinating. Look back over your performance and ask yourself if you've ever maintained some semblance of consistency over a period of time. If the answer is never, which it most probably is, read on.

Even at the highest levels of golfing, consistency is one of the most elusive aspects of the sport. It is something everyone strives for by working and practicing hard. Often I compare golf with life: some days are so cheerful, some so bland, others miserable. Even then, there are plenty of similar happy moments, which is the essence of everyday living.

Golf mirrors this. One day you play 5 under your handicap and you are happy. The next morning, you start off with a perfect drive on the first tee then mess up from the next hole onwards. Some days you play good, some days passably and often you play terribly.

TEE BREAK
Deepak Acharya



Often I compare golf with life: some days are so cheerful, some so bland, others miserable. Even then, there are plenty of similar happy moments, which is the essence of everyday living.



How many times have we sworn enough is enough and thrown our clubs into the cupboard muttering, "This is crazy, I quit"? But we can't really bring ourselves to do so. After all, we are human and have the curious capacity to keep trying though we fail. Anyway, live with the frustrations of today and the hopes of a better tomorrow, it keeps you alive.

On the PGA tour back in 1996, during one of the biggest golfing events, the Augusta Masters, the world's no 1 golfer then, Greg Norman, shot a 9 under par 63 on the first day. Going into the final round on the fourth day, Norman was leading by six shots. He ended up shooting 78 (15 strokes worse than his first round) and lost the tournament. Talk about inconsistency!

I often hear from club golfers on how the day before they played so well, yet the next day they totally lost their touch. Trust me, this is all part and parcel of the game.

It does not imply that bad games are inevitable but you must always practice and try to improve. It's like life, you keep working harder and sooner or later, you'll find it's not so tough after all.

You might be wondering if there is a lesson in all this rambling. But here's my pearl of wisdom: to perform consistently, you need to be confident and confidence comes with a lot of practice. They are directly proportional. Trust me, I've been playing golf for over two decades and have found that life is like a golf game. ●

Deepak Acharya is a golf instructor and Golf Director at Gokarna Forest Golf Resort & Spa, Kathmandu.
prodeepak@hotmail.com



KIRAN PANDAY

Sports clubs are the rage in Kathmandu to serve as all-in-one workout stations

AARTI BASNYAT

The place is grand, equipped with indoor tennis courts, outdoor swimming pools, an indoor heated swimming pool, squash courts, a bowling alley, pool and billiard tables, a gym, Jacuzzi, sauna and more. A sports mall guaranteed to make you sweat out all those calories you ingested yesterday munching away on your couch watching cricket on tv.

Shahanshah International Sports Centre (SIC) is easily one of the biggest sports clubs not just in Nepal but also the region, boasts Senon D Lama (right), its proprietor. An avid tennis player, Lama came up with the idea for indoor tennis courts after seeing them in Europe.

Back in Nepal, he also saw that there was no place where people could go for a complete sports experience. Increase in health consciousness and expansion of club culture meant it was high time something was done about it. So, in 1996, he began the construction of an exclusive sports complex. As the idea developed, so did the wide variety of activities in Shahanshah.

When it opened on the Ring Road in Dhapasi in 1999, Shahanshah was Nepal's first all-weather sports centre. This meant a lot, specially for tennis aficionados in the monsoon and for swimming enthusiasts

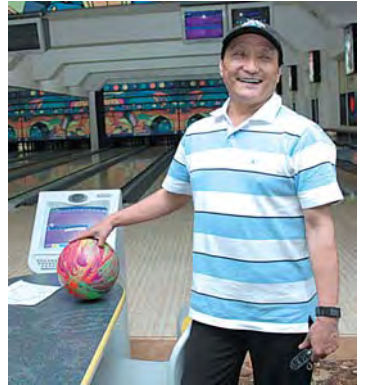
in the winter.

The indoor tennis courts became hugely popular and the covered hall has also been used for various sports activities such as badminton and karate.

Schools and other clubs often organise tournaments here and this, SIC considers a major asset.

Lama finds the Kathmandu public's response to SIC "very encouraging". The club has a capacity for 600 members and it already has 400 and growing. Asked if being located in Dhapasi, far from the city is a disadvantage, Lama says, "It is a bit of a problem especially for people in Lalitpur but we are very accessible through the Ring Road."

SIC is a complete sports club.



Membership rates are reasonably priced at Rs 26,000 for a year's single membership and family membership is Rs 58,000 for parents and two children under 16. SIC also has a scheme offering one day of swimming, steam and sauna Rs 495 for adults and Rs 300 for children and for just swimming, Rs 300 for adults and Rs 200 for children. ●

Hotel Shahanshah International Dhapasi
4355484, 4355487
shansha@mos.com.np

Where to work on it

HARDIC FITNESS CENTRE, Pulchok, 5522068
Membership rates vary from Rs 2,500 to Rs 30,000.

CLUB TARA, HOTEL GOODWILL, Patan, 5544520
Various membership schemes are available with different arrangements for singles, couples and families.

ESHANI CLUB, Kalankasthan, 4274890
Yearly membership rates vary from Rs 12,500 for singles to Rs 30,000 for families.

GOLD'S GYM, Manbhawan, Patan, 5543517
Yearly membership rates are Rs 3,100 for admission, Rs 250 payable every month and Rs 100 for single visits.

KUNDALINI HEALTH RESORT, Chandol, 4410721
Membership charge is Rs 15,000 a year for an individual and Rs 35,000 for a family.

CITY GYM, Lajimpat
The membership rates are Rs 2,000 as admission and Rs 400 per month.

BANU'S TOTAL FITNESS, Kamal Pokhari, 4434024

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China's second coming

Belief in the inevitability of conflict can become one of its main causes

China announced a 12.6 percent increase in its defence spending; America's CIA Director Porter Goss testified about a worsening military balance in the Taiwan Strait; and President George W Bush pleaded with Europeans not to lift their embargo on

COMMENT
Joseph S Nye



arms sales to China.

Yet Chinese leaders have spoken of China's 'peaceful rise' or, more recently, its 'peaceful development'.

Analysts such as John Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago who have flatly proclaimed that China cannot rise peacefully predict "the United States and China are likely to engage in an intense security competition with considerable potential for war." Optimists point out that China has engaged in good neighbour policies since the 1990s, settled border disputes, played a greater role in international institutions and recognised the benefits of using soft power. But sceptics reply that China is merely waiting for its economy to lay the basis for future hegemony.

Who is right? Only time will tell but debaters should recall Thucydides' warning more than two millennia ago that belief in the inevitability of conflict can become one of its main causes. Each side, believing it will end up at war with the other, makes reasonable military preparations read by the other side as confirmation of its worst fears.

In fact, the 'rise of China' is a misnomer. 'Re-emergence' would be more accurate, since by size and history, the Middle Kingdom has long been a major power in East Asia. Technically and economically, China was the world's leader from 500 to 1500. Only in the last half-millennium was it overtaken by



Europe and America.

Asia includes Japan, India, Korea and others but China will eventually play the largest role. Its high annual growth rates of 8-9 percent led to a tripling of its GNP in the last two decades of the 20th century.

Nonetheless, China still has a long way to go and faces many obstacles. The US economy is about twice the size of China's; if it grows by only two percent annually and China's economy grows by six percent, they could reach parity sometime after 2025. Even so, they would not be equal in composition or sophistication. China would still have a vast, underdeveloped countryside and

would not equal the US in per capita income until sometime after 2075. China is a long way from posing the kind of challenge to American preponderance that Kaiser's Germany posed when it surpassed Britain in the years leading up to World War I.

Moreover, simple projections of economic growth trends can mislead. Countries tend to pick the low-hanging fruit as they benefit from imported technologies in the early stages of economic take-off and growth rates generally slow as economies reach higher levels of development.

As long as China's economy does grow, its military power will likely

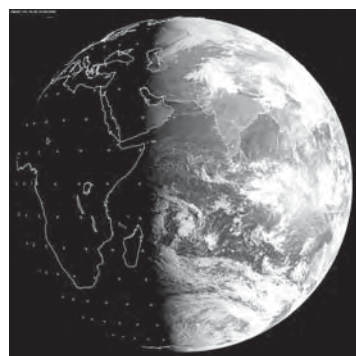
increase, making it appear more dangerous to its neighbours and complicating America's commitments in Asia. A RAND study projects that by 2015, China's military expenditure will be more than six times higher than Japan's and its accumulated military capital stock will be roughly five times higher.

Whatever the accuracy of such assessments, the outcome will also depend on what the US and other countries do. The key to military power in the information age depends on the ability to collect, process, disseminate and integrate complex systems of space-based surveillance, high speed computers and 'smart' weapons. China and others will develop some of these capabilities but, according to many military analysts, China is not likely to close the gap with the US soon.

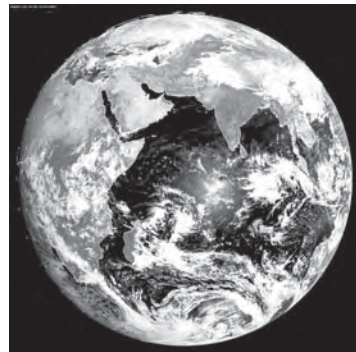
This does not mean it cannot challenge the US in East Asia or that war over Taiwan is impossible. Weaker countries sometimes attack when they feel backed into a corner, such as Japan did at Pearl Harbour or China did when it entered the Korean War in 1950. If Taiwan were to declare independence, China would probably intervene with armed force. But it would be unlikely to win and prudent policy on both sides can prevent such a war.

There is no need for the US and China to go to war. Not every rising power leads to war—witness America's overtaking of Britain at the end of the 19th century. If China's rise remains peaceful, it promises great benefits to its own people and to its neighbours—and to Americans. It will be important not to mistake analysts' theories for reality. ● *Project Syndicate*

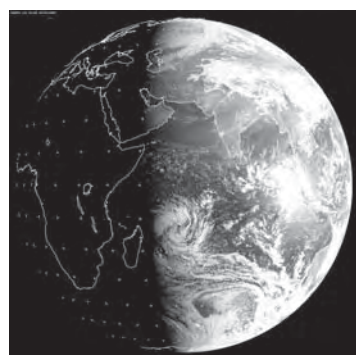
Joseph S Nye, a former US Assistant Secretary of Defence, is Distinguished Service Professor at Harvard and author of *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*.



03:00 GMT 21/03/2005



07:00 GMT 21/03/2005



03:00 GMT 22/03/2005

Compartmentalisation of grief

On 18-19 March, a weather front moving east from Iran dumped a lot of rain on the Afghan desert. The cloudburst brought death and all-around misery in the south and western regions of a country that was already reeling from excessive winter snow.

Two hundred died in the raging waters last week in the normally arid terrain. Mud houses were

SOUTHASIA BEAT
Kanak Mani Dixit



easily washed away and thousands were left homeless. But this latest Afghan tragedy did not make an impact in the collective Southasian psyche. Newspaper readers and television viewers from Colombo to Amritsar did not feel for those whose lives were devastated in the far northwest.

A combination of media globalisation and national centralisation is what keeps us from empathising with individuals and communities in other parts of our region. While western media multinationals package news designed for viewers in another hemisphere, the development of capital-centric national media in our countries promote an

insular audience.

Sure, distances are vast in the subcontinent. But if economic history had evolved differently, the fact of the drowning of 200 Afghan children, women and men would have been treated as real news. Restrictions on cross-border travel (and the evolution of bubble economies that can only interact with each other through the good offices of smugglers) has left us with empathy only for one's own citizenry.

This separation of national turfs and solidification of boundaries has led to compartmentalised grief. We are to mourn only for those who are ours. When a ferry capsizes on the Padma in Bangladesh downriver on the Ganga, the tragedy is Bangladesh. Column inches in the Calcutta press will be marginally more than in the New Delhi papers.

Bangladeshi ferries 'always' capsize in storms that whip up in the delta and Afghanistan is in any case a basket case of tragedies. The 'value' of death even for Southasian editors and newscasters is enhanced when bus passengers are targeted in Tel Aviv or people perish to mudslides in California and earthquakes in Japan.

The most awesome display of media myopia was during the 'shock and awe' American campaign in Iraq, when we Southasians watched the display of US military pyrotechnics. Dazzled by the rain of smart bombs, the flying tracers and the massive incendiary explosions in downtown Baghdad, we were made to forget the innocents left dying in the rubble.

On 21 March, CNN and BBC beamed down blanket coverage of a school shooting which killed nine in Minnesota. The same day: 36 were killed by tornadoes in northern Bangladesh; in Balochistan 12 people died in a flash-flood and 10 in an accident in Hyderabad, Sindh; and nine people died in the Nepal insurgency.

The hemispheric bias is built into the system of the BBCs and CNNs of the world but it also equally applies to the news editors of television channels in all-powerful New Delhi who forget that the satellite footprint encompasses the rest of the region beyond Bharat. And so, all satellite channel viewers from Imphal to Quetta are made to suffer through New Delhi's filters which hover around events inside the Ring Road and political news from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar

Pradesh, Kashmir and related Pakistan news obviously deemed important. The rest of India is not invisible in the newscasts either.

Petitions to imperious forces in the media capitals will hardly change things. The ultimate redress will only come through decentralised media networks: through a vibrant vernacular press, local FM radio and television. When there is adequate coverage of local events locally, the inadequacy of international coverage will automatically be moot.

While waiting for decentralised media to develop, we must at least try to create sensitivity within Southasia to affairs in each other's countries. One way to begin would simply be for satellite television viewers to pay more attention to regional weather reports. When, for example, there is a nasty cloud front approaching Afghanistan in mid-winter, let's use our imagination to feel the deep freeze in the high desert. In the upcoming monsoon, when the weather map shows heavy rains in the central Himalaya, think landslides. Once we begin to empathise with the weather in a different part of Southasia, we can take the editors and newscasters along with us. ●

"Lata ko desh ma gaando tanderi." (In a land of fools, even a man with a bad goatee can be a hero.) - as translated by UNACOOTs, the United Nation's Assn. of Cartoonists



The Do's and Don'ts of Starting a New Business in Nepal

1) Do exactly as the Shutter next door.	1) Don't count on Tourism in any way
2) Do post Anil Singh on Thapathali billboard	2) Don't misspell Restorant or Ample Pi.
3) Do sell smokes/booze as it's a 20 billion nrs industry (and growing).	3) Don't forget to use the words: FIRST TIME, NOW IN NEPAL, etc.

Hey, why do we listen to these murkha khaires anyway? ???

KE GARNE? WHATEVER.

But be a heroji, and use your judgement.

"Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up."

Thomas Edison, inventor of the lightbulb.

For serious consulting on how to run your business or your life, contact HeroJig care of this paper.

#61 2061 by jigme gaton - read. love. write.

ABOUT TOWN

- #### FESTIVAL AND EXHIBITIONS
- Holi Festival of colours on 25 March.
 - Festive Images Paintings by Pradip K Bajracharya at Buddha Gallery, Thamel. Until 27 March. 4441689
 - Reflections from Tibet Photos by Kevin Bubriski at Indigo Gallery, Naxal. Until 31 March. 4413580
 - Tsunami Close up Photos by Tom Van Cakenberghe at Via Via Café, until 31 March. 4700184
 - Celebrating Line Exhibition of drawings from Nepal at Siddhartha Art Gallery, until 13 April. 4218048
 - Magic Pencil Artworks by Britain's best children's illustrators at the British Council, Lainchor. Until 6 May. 4410798
 - Coloured Expressions Paintings by Chirag Bangdel at the Art Shop, Darbar Marg. Until 4 April. 4470193

- #### EVENTS
- KICC Good Friday Service on 25 March at The Norwegian School, Jawalakhel, 6.30 PM. 5525176
 - The Kite Celebrating World Theatre Day at Pumpkin Hall, Saipal Academy, New Baneshwor on 26 March at 2.45 PM. www.nepaltheatre.com
 - KICC Easter Sunday Service on 27 March at The Church of the Assumption, Dhobighat, 11AM. 5525176
 - 1905 Sundays Garage sale, pet practices, stalls, food and more.
 - Jat Sodhnu Jogi Ko Theatre at Gurukul, Setopool. Till 10 April. 4466956
 - Fun in the Sun at Hotel Shangri-la, Lajimpat. 4412999
 - Art workshop for kids at Buddha Gallery. 4441689
 - Rugby Practice Every Saturday. 4435939, citygymktm@hotmail.com
 - Sanibaar Mela Saturdays at the Dharahara Bakery Café, 12AM-5PM.
 - The God Dance of Kathmandu Valley Tuesdays at Hotel Vajra. 4271545



- #### MUSIC
- 1974 AD Live at La'soon Restaurant & Vinotheque with buffet and snacks, 1 April, 7PM onwards, tickets Rs 999. 5537166
 - Live with Prism at Red Onion Bar, 7.30 PM onwards. 4416071
 - Live Jazz by JCS trio and Peter McTwister, Thursdays at Full Moon Bar, Mondays at New Orleans Café, Thamel. 4700736
 - Live with Abhaya and the Steam Injuns at Dwarika's Hotel. 4479488
 - Fusion Time Mondays at Jalan Jalan Restaurant, Lajimpat, 7PM. 4410438
 - Good Time Blues Band at Rum Doodle, Fridays, 7PM. 4701208
 - Classical music, 7PM onwards, Fridays at Hotel Vajra. 4271545
 - Jatra Saturday nights with Looza, 6.30 PM onwards. 4256622
 - Jukebox experience Wednesday, Friday and Saturday at Rox Bar. 4491234
 - Jazz at Upstairs, Lajimpat. Every Wednesday and Saturday, 7.45 PM.

- #### FOOD
- Persian BBQ on 25 March, 7PM with live music at Dwarika's. 479488
 - As much as you can eat Saturdays at Club Himalaya, Nagarkot. 6680080
 - Sekuwa & Momo Revolution Saturdays at Tea House Inn. 6680048
 - LQ Cauldron Six days a week except Friday at Latin Quarter Salsa Bar, Baber Mahal Revisited. Rs 1,500 per pot, order in advance. 4254260
 - Arniko Special Lunch at Hotel de l'Annapurna, Darbar Marg. 4221711
 - Barbecue Dinner Every Friday at the Summit Hotel. 5521810
 - Exotic Seafood at Rox Restaurant, Hyatt Regency. 4491234
 - Delicacies Pastas and snacks at Roadhouse Café, Jawalakhel. 5521755
 - Sizzling Weekend Treat at Garden Terrace, Soaltee Crowne Plaza. 4273999
 - Farm House Café Delicious meals at Park Village Hotel. 4375280
 - Café Bahal Newari cuisine at Kathmandu Guest House, Thamel. 4700632
 - Barbecue-Ban Bhoj at Godavari Village Resort. 5560675
 - Vegetarian Creations at Stupa View Restaurant. 4480262
 - Dwarika's Thali Lunch at the Heritage courtyard. 4479488
 - The Tharu Kitchen at Jungle Base Camp. Junglebasecamp@yahoo.com

- #### GETAWAYS
- Celebrate Spring Holiday Packages with Tiger Mountain. 4361500
 - Shivapuri Cottage Nature, peace and bird watching at 6,000ft. 4354331
 - Chiso Chiso Hawama Special packages at Club Himalaya. 4411706
 - Jungle Base Camp Lodge, Bardia, special package and prices. junglebasecamp@yahoo.com
 - Malaysia Dream Holidays Packages starting from Rs 45,500 per person. 4247215 extn 013-14, malaysiaaholidays_marco@polo.com.np
 - Getaway package Night's stay at Godavari Village Resort. 5560675
 - AAA Organic Farm and Guesthouse Rs 950 with three meals. 6631734
 - Temple Tiger Special Easter Bonus for expats. 4263480
 - Ker & Downey Resorts Luxury lodging in the Annapurnas. 061-523701
 - Machan Wildlife Jungle Resort special packages available. 4225001
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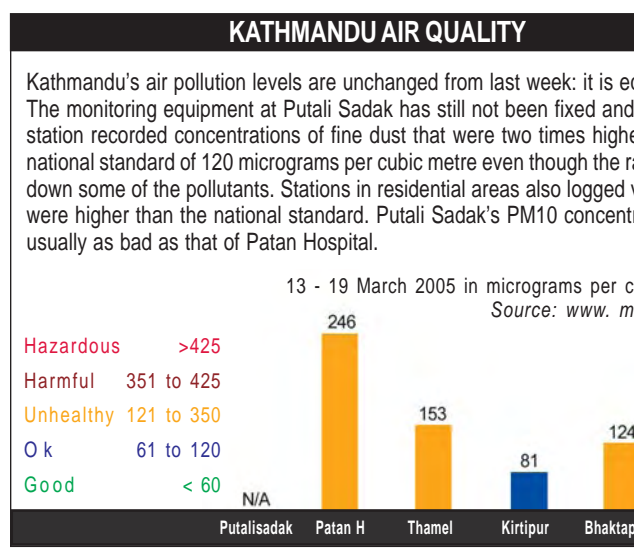
In a small town in Goa steeped in azure seas and sultry secrets, the chief of local police station, Siddharth (Emran Hashmi), finds himself caught in the eye of a storm and about to be blown away. Siddharth is in the process of divorcing his wife, Sonia (Shamita Shetty) whom he still loves but he is also involved with another married woman, Anna (Udita Goswami). Things get even more complicated when Siddharth realises that Anna's husband beats her and that she is dying of cancer. In heat of the moment, he decides to give Anna the money he recovered in a drug raid for her medication. Anna dies in a bomb blast that very night and Siddharth now races to uncover a murky trail of drugs, money, murder and deceit. But all the evidence points to him.

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NEPALI WEATHER

by MAUSAM BEED

March is the fourth consecutive month to have above-normal rainfall (already 44 mm against 32 mm monthly average for the Valley). The mountains trapped the moisture rich westerlies and converted them into large storm cells. One particular system on Friday afternoon covered the entire central Nepal. This satellite picture taken on Thursday morning shows the cloud band now moving off into eastern Nepal and Bhutan. There is still some lingering moisture which will bring rain with gusty winds and hail into the weekend along the midhills. Snow will come down to 3,500 m in the higher valleys.

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MIN BAJRACHARYA

STANDING TALL: A billboard put up by the new management committee of Dharara Park in support of King Gyanendra's February First move.



KIRAN PANDAY

ASMLING FRONT: Vice-chairmen of the council of ministers, Tulsī Giri and Kirtinidhi Bista prepare to take reporter's questions at a press conference last Thursday.



KIRAN PANDAY

TEA TIME: Tea being served to constitutional elders and the press at GP Koirala's house arrest residence on Friday. The visitors weren't allowed inside.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

WAIT AND WATCH APPROACH: An egret waits patiently, and optimistically, to snap up a fish in the Bagmati on Monday. Despite the pollution, there is still life in the waters.



KIRAN PANDAY

NEW SPORT IN TOWN: Kristjan B Edward demonstrating Go-Karting for the press at the newly built Go-karting course in Manamaiju on Tuesday.

She is 12-years-old, works as a domestic help in Patan and writes poetry. Many of the poems that Pabitra has penned since coming to Kathmandu six months ago from Myagdi, are about friendship like this one remembering her friend and classmate Shanti back in Beni:

*I go to pick a flower and get pierced by a thorn
I long to meet you my friend, but the mountains block my way...*

Pabitra had a chance to share her feelings recently with a new friend on the other side of the world. She sent the poem to journalist Pat Orvis in New York during an hour-long on-line chat. "I love your poem!" Pat wrote right back, "I wish I had been the friend for whom you wrote it!" Pabitra quickly responded: "You can be that friend...I can write poems for you too!"

The online chat between Pat and Pabitra was part of UNICEF's initiative to channel voices of young girls to the Beijing+10 forum in New York. Pabitra dictated her messages through an interpreter and told Pat about her chores as a child domestic worker, her hopes and dreams in life.

It was very difficult for Pat to understand how Pabitra coped with all the work: baby sitting the five-year old daughter of her employer, washing clothes and dishes, wiping floors and also taking the family dog for a walk. "Yes this is a lot of work," Pabitra replied matter-of-factly adding that the three hours of classes every day were the most-fun part of her day.

Pabitra and Pat



Pabitra was sent to work and study in Kathmandu by her parents "because of poverty and the Maoists" while her two brothers remained at home. Pat wanted to know why the boys were getting special treatment. Pabitra agreed but quickly defended her parents saying, "At home, there wasn't much discrimination. They used to love me a lot!"

The chat then moved on to girls being as capable as boys. Pat suggested to Pabitra, "If you are 12 and can work and take care of yourself, it sounds as if you could take

care of your folks every bit as well as your brothers can!" Pabitra agreed and said she wanted to become a teacher to educate working children like herself.

Talk of home saddens Pabitra, and she tells Pat she misses her family very much and was looking forward to going home and meeting them soon.

Before signing off, Pat asked Pabitra about her thoughts on making life better for Nepali girls. Pabitra's reply: "Children must go to school, and once girls are educated they have the opportunity to become great." ●

नेपाल-भारत सहयोग

श्री ५ को सरकार-भारत सरकारको आयोडिनको कमीबाट हुने विकृति निवारण योजना

आयोडिनको कमीले हुने विकृतिहरू :

- गर्भ तुहिनै, मृत शिशु जन्मिने, अङ्गभङ्ग भएको शिशु जन्मिने, जन्मेको शिशु चाँडे मन सक्ने ।
- बच्चाहरू बहिरा, लाटा लठ्ठेउरा, बामपुङ्के, डेढो, आदि हुने ।
- पढाईमा कमजोर भई पटक पटक फेल हुनुको साथै खेलकुदमा समेत पछाडि पर्नसक्ने ।
- यसबाट विशेष गरी केटाकेटीहरूमा घाँटीको क्यान्सर हुने सम्भावना बढी हुने ।
- गलगाँउ आउने, सुस्तमनस्थिति हुने ।
- आयोडिनको कमीले I.Q. Level कम हुने ।
- आयोडिनको कमी भएमा मानिसहरूमा आलस्यपन आउने, काम गर्ने क्षमतामा कमी आउने ।
- नाभिकिय विकिरणबाट बढी प्रभावित हुनसक्ने खतरा ।
- आयोडिनको कमीबाट गाईवस्तुले दूध कम दिने ।

आयोडिनयुक्त नून घाम र पानीले असर नपार्ने सुरक्षा ठाउँमा, बिको बन्द भएको बटुमा राख्नु पर्दछ ।

आयोडिनको कमीबाट हुने विकृति हटाउन दुई बालबालिका विन्ड अकित प्याकेटको नून मात्र प्रयोग गरौं ।

आयोडिन जीवनभर एक चम्चा भए पुग्ने तर एकैपटक नभै प्रत्येक दिन थोरै थोरै खानुपर्ने ।

साल्ट ट्रेडिङ कर्पोरेशन लिमिटेड

Yes sir, yes sir three bags full

In this editorial today we will be making some very important, timely and relevant points, if we may say so ourselves. So it is advisable that all readers stay tuned and give us their undivided attention. Thank you.

It pains us to say this but it has come to our notice that some readers ignore leaders. Some of you have been observed skipping entire paragraphs while perusing these editorials in the

past two months. Others have even been seen

surreptitiously turning the page to the sports section to take a peek at pictures of Maria Sharapova in action. And some of you have actually dozed off while reading the edits. HEY, WAKE UP! Go to the blackboard and write 25 times 'I will try my best to stay awake while reading the official mouth organ.'

What does it take to get some respect around here? Don't you know it is impolite to fall asleep while your government is talking to you? We take a great deal of effort to fill these pages with the viewpoint of higher up authorities, omitting no detail however slight and we don't want people dropping down unconscious all over the place.

At a time when the country is steaming ahead to a bright and prosperous future, it is mandatory for all citizens to be alert and to exercise their freedom to read what the editor has to say even if, like today, he may have nothing earth-shattering to say. So the least you can do is show us some courtesy and pretend to read this make-believe editorial and pretend to

like it. Let's do a word count here, 240. Drat. Another 300 to go.

As the Secondary Vice - chairman aptly pointed out the other day, and we quote: "There is complete freedom of press in this country, you just can't say anything you like." We couldn't have put it better ourselves, the Vice - chairman hit the nail on the head, especially the nail that was sticking out. "After all journalists today must be objective," he continued, "which is to say they must have the same objective as us."

In other words, it all boils down to how we as a pariah state internalise the totality of the changing paradigm. Are we just paying lip-service here to end-degree refinement or are we empowering constituencies and enabling communities in the long-term? Am I making myself perfectly clear? Do you see what I am driving at? No? Let me put it this way: we in the media have to ask ourselves whether we are going to communicate by word of mouth, by mouth-to-mouth or is it going to be foot-in-mouth?

And we may well ask: how are we going to institutionalise the monitoring mechanisms? Journalism is, beyond any shade of doubt, a dignified profession that requires a greater degree of fairness, objectivity and impartiality. That is why we have to rise above partisan and personal bias to toe the party line with a holistic bottom-up approach in order to make ends meet with the overall aim to galvanise all sectors of society so that the present policy-polity dichotomy can be overcome sooner rather than later. As members of the Fourth Estate it is therefore our duty to fill these pages one way or another because this is all you're going to get. ●

UNDER MY HAT
Kunda Dixit



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