



Courage & Conviction

newsfront

Kathmandu | 19-25 Nov, 2007 | # 41 | Price Rs. 25



People in Biratnagar celebrating 'Chhath', an important festival in the Terai. The celebrations concluded on Saturday morning.

Inside

Martin locks horn with PM

page 2

UML comrades up in arms against Secy Gen Nepal

page 3

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Restoring relationship

Delhi might invite Gen Katawal

■ nf correspondent

In what might be a clear indicator of revival of traditional relationship between the Indian and Nepal army after nearly 34 months of 'chill', government of India is considering inviting Chief of Army Staff, Gen Rukmangad Katawal to Delhi very soon.

According to information available from Delhi, Gen Katawal would be invited for the platinum jubilee celebration of the National Defense Academy (NDA) at Dehradun next month. The government of India is however, yet to decide on holding investiture ceremony to confer the honorary title of the General of the Indian army to COAS Katawal. The practice of the two countries army chiefs being conferred the title of honorary general on reciprocal basis was suspended after the royal takeover on February 1, 2005.

Gen Katawal's visit will follow that of his Indian counterpart to Kathmandu in which he will be conferred the title of the honorary general of Nepal Army. Indian authorities were said to be divided on whether to invite Gen Katawal only for the NDA celebrations or also for the investiture. But Nepali side is said to be insisting for both.

The army headquarters in Kathmandu refused to say anything

more on the subject except for the comment, "an army chief's visit if and when it takes place will be a matter of public knowledge."

"Yes, we are hoping that the suspended tradition and the age-old ties of the two armies will be restored," a senior official in the Prime Minister's office in Kathmandu said.

There are no official words available yet on Gen Katawal from Delhi, but the government of India is under pressure from its army to restore traditional relationship with the Nepal Army in the wake of its repeated commitment to democracy and rule of law. Delhi had suspended supply of all arms and ammunitions to Nepal army it had been supplying throughout, following the royal takeover.

Despite Nepal Army's silence on the matter, there are clear indications that it values its traditional ties with the Indian Army a lot. Sources in the Defense Ministry say there are some invitations already extended to the army chief from other friendly countries of the Asian region including China; but the army headquarters believe that, "India as the first country for the chief's visit will be ideal." However, PM Koirala as well as the defense establishment is also keen that the investiture ceremony should resume soon. ■

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Tussle

Martin locks horn with PM

■ nf correspondent

In what appears like a simmering tussle coming to the fore, United Mission to Nepal (UNMIN) chief, Ian Martin has asserted his right to interact with various ethnic groups and Terai leaders including some who have been indulging in violence and killing of civilians.

Martin's latest public statement came on November 16 with a new interpretation of the mandate he had received from the government and the Maoists, soliciting UN assistance in the peace process implying it does not have to be literally confined to the management of arms and armies of the Maoists and the government, besides observing the polls to the Constituent Assembly. Meeting with the Janajati and Terai leaders, he asserted, was done in that spirit.

However, there are clear indications that the government does not buy Martin's assertions, and there are fears that in the worst case, any further embitterment in the relation between UNMIN chief and the government, might have a negative impact on the mission's future.

Martin's assertion comes clearly in the wake of Prime Minister GP Koirala objecting to his meeting with the Janajati and Terai leaders as well as his flatly turning down any role for the UNMIN in Security Sector Reforms (SSR) immediately, 'to create a proper atmosphere

for polls to the CA.' The government also turned down the UNMIN's request for enlargement of its role beyond the mandate given by the two sides earlier. "The government is simply going to extend the tenure of the UNMIN but in no way will it enlarge the scope of its operation," a senior official in the Foreign Affairs Ministry said, adding, "our permanent mission in the United Nations has been instructed accordingly."

"UNMIN cannot go or act beyond the mandate we have given," asserted Ramesh Lekhak, Minister of State for Labour and Transport. "Of course, the government of Nepal has to address the grievances of the Janajatis and Terai groups and we are doing that. But it is not at all connected with the UNMIN mandate and the PM has clearly asked Martin to keep away from these issues," a senior minister from the Congress party told newsfront. "Moreover, there are many experts in Nepal who are capable of deciding what reforms the security sector in Nepal are needed," he added.

Martin's mission that hopes to conclude the verification of combatants in cantonments also believes that the unity among the seven parties is crucial for the success of the peace process. But a positive review of the CPA as well as enlargement of the UNMIN's jurisdiction was equally necessary as far as Martin was concerned.



"Of course, the Secretary-General and Member States which have made a major investment by mandating UNMIN out of their concern to see sustained peace in Nepal want to make sure that UNMIN is as effective as possible in supporting the peace process. This

is why I have been frank in my meetings and in my public statements, when I say that I believe that UNMIN is able to offer further support to some key aspects of the peace process without in any way compromising the Nepali ownership of the process," Martin said.

Prachanda's demands

Maoists wish to move from back seat to driving seat

■ nf correspondent

It is clearly an added headache for PM Koirala's since the Communist party of Nepal -Maoists (CPN-M) categorically demanded his ouster as leader, if he failed to fulfill all their demands 'now'. The demands, put forward by Maoist Chief Prachanda, barely 72 hours before the session was to begin on November 18, included declaration Nepal as a republic state, adoption of proportional representation system of election, review of implementation of the comprehensive peace accord and re-allocation of major portfolios to different coalition groups.

The price fixed by the Maoists for non-compliance is not too difficult to guess. A peaceful protest from the streets with the help of civil society is aimed to push for the formation of a new interim government and parliament with an enlarged share to the Maoists. That also means Maoists are no longer keen to extend support to Koirala's leadership.

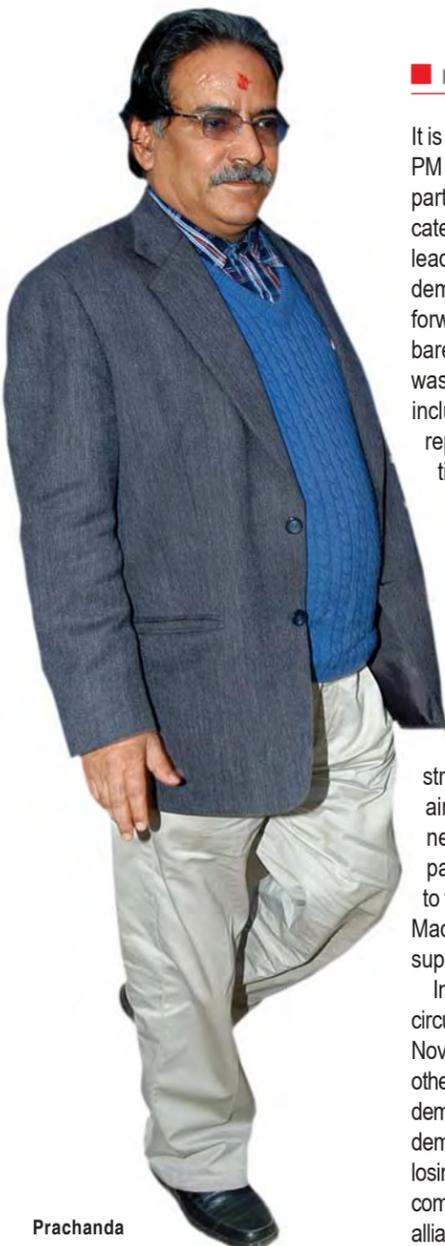
In a concept paper that Prachanda circulated on behalf of his party on November 15 among leaders of the other political parties, he categorically demanded that Koirala must fulfill these demands immediately or face the risk of losing their party's support. The threat comes in the wake of a new built alliance between the Maoists and the

CPN-UML parties that together will have 167 members against 135 odd members of the Congress which heads the ruling coalition.

Prachanda's concept paper also demands initiation of the Security Sector Reforms (SSR) process immediately so that the Maoist guerrillas could be introduced in the National Army, something that the latter has been resisting firmly.

Maoists are clear that the election in itself without their demands fulfilled would be meaningless and they would not be part of it. They were clearly opposed to the Congress party cornering major portfolios and would now want a larger share in the government if they are to join it. The message was clear - from a position of back-seat driving, they would now want to occupy the driving seat using the UML strength to dislodge the Congress leadership.

Maoists are also preparing to create a ruckus in the House asking the chair to issue directives to the government to go for PR system and republican on the basis of passage of two resolutions of public importance by the House during the special session earlier this month. "But that would be a mockery of parliamentary practices and rules as the simple majority for passing resolutions of public importance cannot be used to go for a constitutional amendment," said Kumar Regmi, President of the Constitutional Lawyers Forum (CLAF).



Prachanda

Maoists involved

Journalist Thakuri abduction case



The Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) was involved in the abduction of journalist Prakash Singh Thakuri, a human rights group claimed. Journalist Thakuri was abducted by the Maoists on July 5 from his residence at Mahendra Nagar in western Nepal by a group of Maoists, led by their leader, Powlal Sharma.

Although the Maoist central leadership has been denying its hand in the incident, it chose to reward Sharma after the kidnapping of the journalist. Sharma is a member of the Mahendra Nagar municipal development committee as a nominee of the Maoist party.

The Human Rights Treaty Monitoring Committee (HRTMCC) which sent an investigation team to Kanchanpur recently made its findings public on Saturday

confirming that the abduction was carried out by the Maoists. Thakuri's whereabouts are still unknown but going by the pattern in such cases, there are fears that he might have been killed by the abductors during captivity.

HRTMCC also demanded that the government form a high level judicial commission to go into the circumstances of Thakuri's kidnapping and find his whereabouts.

The Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) which has intensified its campaign for tracing Thakuri in the wake of confirmation of Journalist Birendra Saha's case has also asked the government to act firmly and punish the guilty in Thakuri's case. Journalist Thakuri had been kidnapped by the Maoists, allegedly for supporting the royal regime.

Newsbrief

Minister Moriarty

In what appears like a clear indication that the Bush administration is going to give continuity to its Nepal policy, James F Moriarty, former ambassador to Nepal, is being tipped as Deputy Assistant Secretary in charge of Nepal affairs.

Moriarty who left Nepal in July on completion of his tenure was to go to Dhaka as its ambassador, but a last minute change saw him catapulted to a Deputy Assistant Secretary in charge of some South Asian countries including Nepal. This only indicates no US policy shift on Nepal as well as regarding the Maoists.

There have been no official words yet on Moriarty's new assignment but reports indicate a new replacement will be found for Dhaka. Moriarty was the most hated diplomat as far as Maoists are concerned in Nepal, since he consistently raised the issue of atrocities and unlawful activities carried out by them in violation of the code of conduct.

US visa for comrades

In what came as a surprising flexibility in its earlier approach, the US embassy in Kathmandu has granted visa to three Maoist parliamentarians to visit the US as part of the Nepal delegates in the United Nations general assembly.

Parliamentarian, Nandkrishna Prasai is already in New York while Prabhakar Sharma aka Janardan Sharma, party's deputy leader in parliament, and another parliamentarian Suresh Ale Magar have also been granted visa for the same purpose. Suresh Ale Magar had been denied visa to the US just two months ago by the embassy here. However, Rishi Adhikary, ambassador designate for Malaysia against the Maoist quota was denied visa by the US embassy here.

The communist party of Nepal Maoists and its top leaders are on the US terrorist list, and that was cited as the reason for their earlier being refused the visa. But there are no words if the relative generosity in granting visa this time around to the Maoists is any indication that the US is hopeful that Maoists will change.

Prachanda, Bhattarai keen to visit US

Top Maoist leaders, Prachanda and Baburam Bhattarai are very keen to visit the US. That they longed for a trip to the country they hate the most became obvious when they accepted an invitation from the World Bank to attend a programme in their headquarters in Washington DC.

Bhattarai who spoke on behalf of the party as well as its chief Prachanda about the Maoist party's vision of economy in new Nepal so captivated the top World Bank (WB) officials that the duo were extended an invitation to its headquarters. "We will love to be there if the US government gives us visa," Bhattarai is said to have told a senior WB official. Now that there is an assurance from the WB to do their best to facilitate their trip to the US, the comrades' visit there in near future appears almost certain.

To the utter disbelief of the WB officials, Bhattarai told a top level meeting of the WB recently here that Maoists believed in creating job opportunities and expanding infra-structures in the country for which they would expect a role for the WB. Bhattarai also promised that his party would not put any hindrance to the WB activities and projects in Nepal.

The WB has promised to give 16 billion dollar assistance to Nepal provided all stake holders including the Maoists agreed to a labour sector reform which, among other things means, sweeping rights to the management to hire and fire labourers. That also means a reduced role for trade unions, something that the Maoists and other political parties may not be agreeable to.

No agreemo

Despite their joining the political mainstream, the world community still seems reluctant to accept Maoist nominees as Nepal's ambassador in some countries. None of the four Maoist ambassador designates has received the agreemo, a formal acceptance of their appointment by the countries concerned.

Bijay Karna (Denmark) and Pampha Bhushal (France) are among the prominent Maoist nominees for ambassadors. Along with four Maoist nominees, Shailaja Acharya, ambassador designate for Delhi is also waiting for the agreemo.

New KUKL Chief

Janak Raj Shah has been appointed as the chairman of the Kathmandu Upatyaka Khanepani Limited (KUKL) with immediate effect. Shah replaces Birendra Man Shrestha. The decision to appoint Shah was taken by the steering committee of the KUKL on November 18.

The meeting also appointed Mr. Dhruva Bahadur Shrestha as the coordinator for a committee that will oversee the transition management of the company including the transition management. Those in the board of directors of the KUKL include Suresh Basnet, Indra Man Singh Suwal, Rudra Prasad Gautam, Sashin Joshi, Kamlesh Kumar Agrawal, Dhruva Bahadur Shrestha besides the chairman. Himeshananda Vaidya will be secretary of the company.

In the dock

Party comrades up in arms against UML Secy Gen

■ nf correspondent

Madhav Kumar Nepal, Gen Secretary of the Communist Party of Nepal - United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), has come in for sharp criticism of his senior party colleagues for his inconsistent political line and shifting stance in the current politics.

Nepal has been asked to behave like a leader by his own comrades including KP Sharma Oli and Pradeep Nepal; and accused of shifting political standing and equation too often. Some leaders have even asked for his resignation from the leadership as his 'inconsistent stance' has cost the party its image.

The UML leadership has not only been accused of embarrassing the party on crucial political issues, it has also been charged by some of having committed diplomatic impropriety by leaking certain informal advice he got from a friendly country to another. "We have taken a very serious note of what our leadership did. Our leader should not be seen as breaching the trust of any friendly country," a senior UML leader who did not want to be quoted told newsfront, refusing to divulge details at this



stage.

Oli told Nepal on his face that he had no right to build equations with the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M) with a view to replace GP Koirala as the prime minister without the matter being discussed in the party forum. Oli was also critical of the way the party voted along with the Maoists in parliament seeking immediate declaration of republic and adoption of the proportional representation system of election.

In an angry outburst in the party, Oli chastised both Madhav Nepal and the Speaker for having sought government directives to implement these two demands on the basis of the passage of two resolutions of public interest in the parliament.

"These are issues which warrant constitutional amendment through due parliamentary process and any short cut to that will be illegal and unacceptable," Oli said. Known for his straight-forward nature, Minister for Education, Pradeep Nepal also endorsed Oli's line accusing that what the UML did in the parliament only amounted to surrender to the Maoists.

Disorder

Security chiefs raise hands

■ nf correspondent

Security Chiefs have admitted that the law and order situation in the country is in a very bad shape; but blamed the political parties, their 'interference' in functioning of the security agencies besides various criminal groups using Indian territory as the base, as the key reasons for the situation.

The chiefs of Nepal Police, Armed Police Force (APF) and the National Investigation Department (NID) gave vent to their frustration and anger before the cabinet on November 15 where they had been called to give their assessment of the law and order situation in the country in general and Terai in particular.

The meeting was called in the wake of Bandh calls given by fresh

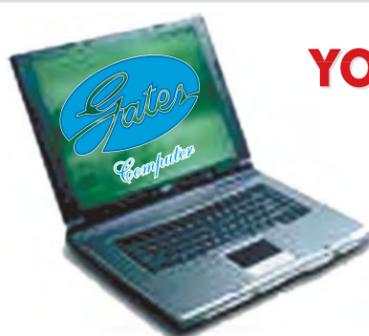
agitation plans by certain Terai groups in those areas from this week. Moreover, the Madheshi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) leader, Upendra Yadav has set a fresh deadline for the government to implement provisions of the accord signed between him and the government earlier.

The security chiefs were instructed to deal with the law and order situation firmly with the warning from the PM that they will be made fully accountable for any further deterioration. "You are free to deal with the situation, but there will be no excuse for any lapses" the PM told the chiefs. PM Koirala also asked the security chiefs not to spare anyone from the Maoist party including the Young Communist League (YCL) if found indulging in crimes. Koirala's response came

after the cabinet meeting was informed about the increasing number of cases of land grabbing by Maoists as well as by some Terai groups in various parts of the country.

"While we have to deal with the situation firmly on our own, the government has agreed to take up the matter with Indian authorities, a senior official of the Home Ministry said. He also quoted PM as having said that he had already taken up the matter with India at the highest level."

Security chiefs also advised the members of the council of ministers that absence of any political activities in Terai areas had demoralised the government apparatus, and in the same proportion it was also encouraging the criminal groups to carry on their activities without any fear.



YOUR GATE TO IT WORLD



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Editor & Publisher : Yubaraj Ghimire
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 Design : Sunil Khadgi, Kishor Raj Panta & Ramkrishna Rana
 Address : PO Box: 8830, Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Nepal
 Tel : 4443888, Fax : 4421147 (Edt.), 4411912 (Mkt.)
 Email: newsfront@bhrikuti.com, marketing@bhrikuti.com (Mkt.)
 Printed by: Express Color Press, Buddhanagar, Tel.: 4781810, Distribution: Kasthamandap, Tel.: 2010821

Point to Ponder

Dare to be honest and fear no labour.

- Robert Burns

Criminal, who?

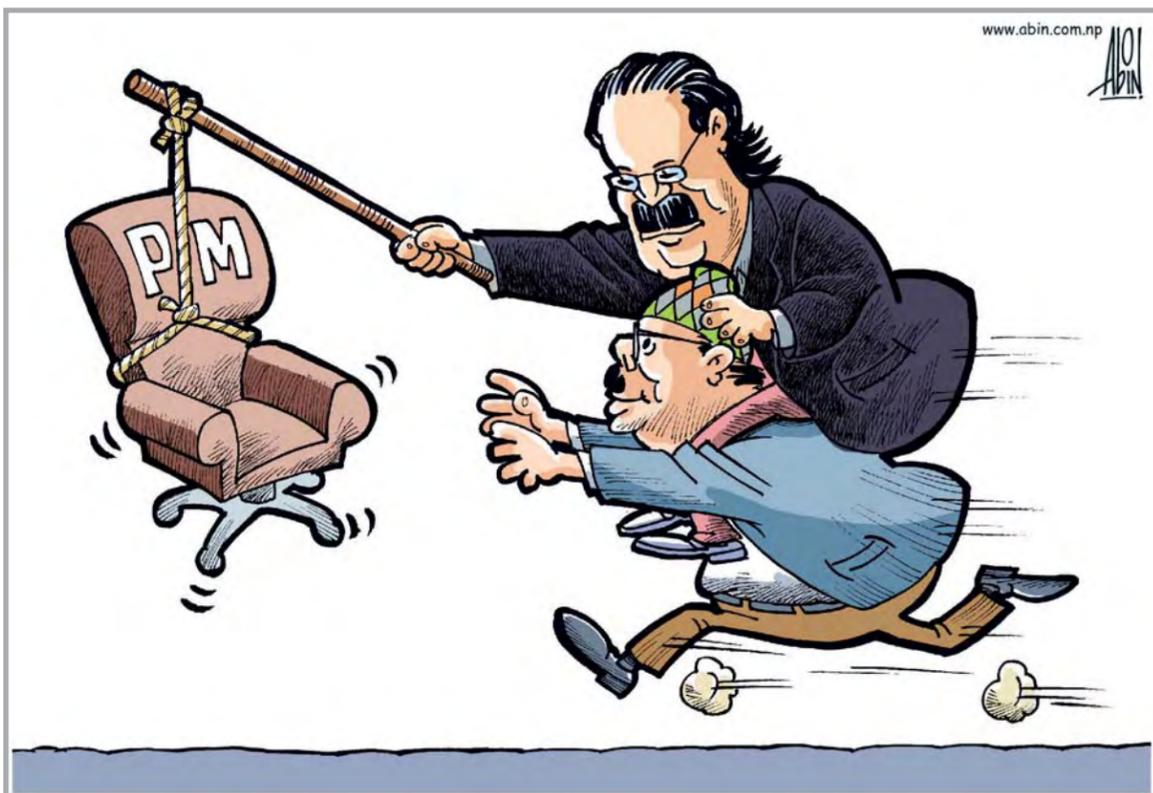
The worst that was feared has happened. Journalist Birendra Saha's death in the hands of the Maoists has been confirmed. But that has neither made the Maoist leadership remorseful nor less arrogant. The crime was committed in the most gruesome manner by the top functionaries of what the Maoists call, 'people's government' of Bara. Saha was first invited by the local representatives of the 'people's government' for a news coverage, detained illegally, murdered and buried. This was a brazen example of committing crime and enjoying immunity by a political party that is part of the ruling coalition for the past 18 months.

Saha's murder comes in the wake of kidnapping of another journalist, Prakash Singh Thakuri by the Young Communist League cadres from western Nepal months ago. His whereabouts are still not known and the worst is being feared. In both cases, the state has miserably failed to act against the guilty.

Prachanda, chief of the Communist party of Nepal-Maoists who is also in direct command of the YCL needs to be made personally answerable. He failed to fulfill his commitment made in presence of Saha's wife and representatives of the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) that his whereabouts would be made known within four days. This was sometimes in the third week of October. Now circumstances prove that Prachanda was in the know of the fate of Saha. This attitude on the part Prachanda is reprehensible.

In fact, some journalist groups in different parts of the country have now decided that no journalist should visit Maoist leaders, at the national or local level, if called for press coverage, since Saha episode has proved that they cannot be trusted. This loss of credibility will have much wider ramifications in the approach that the international community might adopt vis a vis Maoists. Already, countries like Denmark, France, Australia and Malaysia despite their having welcomed the peace process, have not yet accepted nominations of the Maoists as Nepal ambassadors to their countries. This only means that not only the United States, but many other countries in the world are yet to be convinced about Maoist sincerity in democracy and peace process.

Maoists' involvement in the kidnapping of Thakuri and Saha, and latter's murder on one hand and Maoist leadership's refusal to apologise for this will only harden the attitude of the media as well as the world community against the Maoists. By not apologising and still protecting those involved in the Saha murder case, the Maoist leadership is further encouraging their cadres at the local level to carry on the crime of annihilation of the class enemy, in the name of politics and without fear of any action. Prachanda, on behalf of his party, must apologise and handover criminals to the government, as a proof that his party's leadership was not involved in the two cases.



Letters

Great artist

I and my friends have been following up on Sanchita Sinha Roy's works of art and her eloquent write ups published in newsfront right from the very beginning. Your paper deserves all the credit for highlighting her amazing works of art that transcends all boundaries and barriers.

Her paintings have a soulful quality in them that is rarely seen these days. And the way she writes speaks out aloud her struggle, sorrows and joys so starkly and honestly. We really admire her creative outpourings that are really divine gifts.

We sincerely wish her all the success, recognition that an artist of her caliber truly deserves; and well in time. I personally find it tragic that great artists are only discovered after they are no longer around. We need to learn from history and start recognising works of new masters while they are still alive to bask in their well earned, highly deserved glory.



■ **Tim Ricard**
 Frankfurt, Germany

Managing flesh trade

It is good that YCL are trying to stop the flesh trade going on around Bir Hospital. I agree with Rajib Tamrakar's views that we should take this seriously and think about alternate ways to address this issue.

Bangkok has been capitalising on flesh trade since decades but strictly under laws and medical supervision. It earns more than 20 percent of national income through this business.

Thousands of Nepali women are sold in other countries yearly, and many of them are sent back, once they get HIV/

AIDS. This too is another picture of the flesh trade that takes place in our country.

It is indeed high time that the government take a positive step to give a green signal to open a red light area in Nepal, before it goes out of control.

■ **Rajendra Gurbacharya**
 Naya Baneshwor

Disappointing leaders

The cover story in Newsfront # 40 has reflected the present situation of Nepali politics. The seven party coalition has been divided in such a way that there isn't any possibility of consensus. The people are highly disappointed watching their leaders behaving so foolishly and not moving forward with the elections. For the past

year and half, the leaders have been engrossed with their own self interests that proved that their coalition and consensus was only a facade.

What do Nepali people want now? Conflict among parties, unrest and selfish leaders? The answer is a big no. Nepali people want the politics of consensus and a favourable environment for CA polls. They want long term peace in the country. If politics in Nepal keeps regressing in this manner, it may lead our country again to feudalism, autocracy and civil war.

■ **Krishna Chandra Dahal**
 Kathmandu

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

newsfront@bhrikuti.com

Spiritual Corner

My creed is love

Muhammad Ibn 'Arabi was a mystic, philosopher, poet and a spiritual teacher. Known as Muhyiddin (the revivifier of religion) and the Shaykh al-Akbar (the great master), he was born in 1165 AD into the Moorish culture of Andalusian Spain, the center of an extraordinary flourishing and cross-fertilisation of Jewish, Christian and Islamic thought, through which the major scientific and philosophical works of antiquity were transmitted to Northern Europe.

Ibn Arabi's spiritual attainments were evident from an early age, and he was renowned for his great visionary capacity and for being a superlative teacher. He travelled extensively in the Islamic world and died in Damascus in 1240 AD.

He wrote over 350 works including the

Fusûs al-Hikam, an exposition of the inner meaning of the wisdom of the prophets in the Judaic/ Christian/ Islamic line, and the Futûhât al-Makkiyya, a vast encyclopaedia of spiritual knowledge which unites and distinguishes the three strands of tradition, reason and mystical insight. In his Diwân and Tarjumân al-Ashwâq he also wrote some of the finest poetry in Arabic language.

Ibn Arabi showed how man, in perfection, is the complete image of this reality and how those who truly know their essential self, know



god. He believed in the unity of all religions and taught different prophets all came with the same essential truth.

Ibn Arabi's poems:

Wonder

Wonder,
 A garden among the flames!
 My heart can take on any form:

A meadow for gazelles,
 A cloister for monks,

For the idols, sacred ground,
 Ka'ba for the circling pilgrim,
 The tables of the Torah,
 The scrolls of the Quran.

My creed is love;
 Wherever its caravan turns along the way,
 That is my belief,
 My faith.

Turmoil in your hearts

Were it not for
 the excess of your talking
 and the turmoil in your hearts,
 you would see what I see
 and hear what I hear!

When my beloved appears

When my beloved appears,
 With what eye do I see him?
 With his eye, not with mine,
 For none sees him except himself.

The Left threat

Like radical Islam, communism is a dogmatic ideology that supersedes geographical boundaries.



■ Siddhartha Thapa

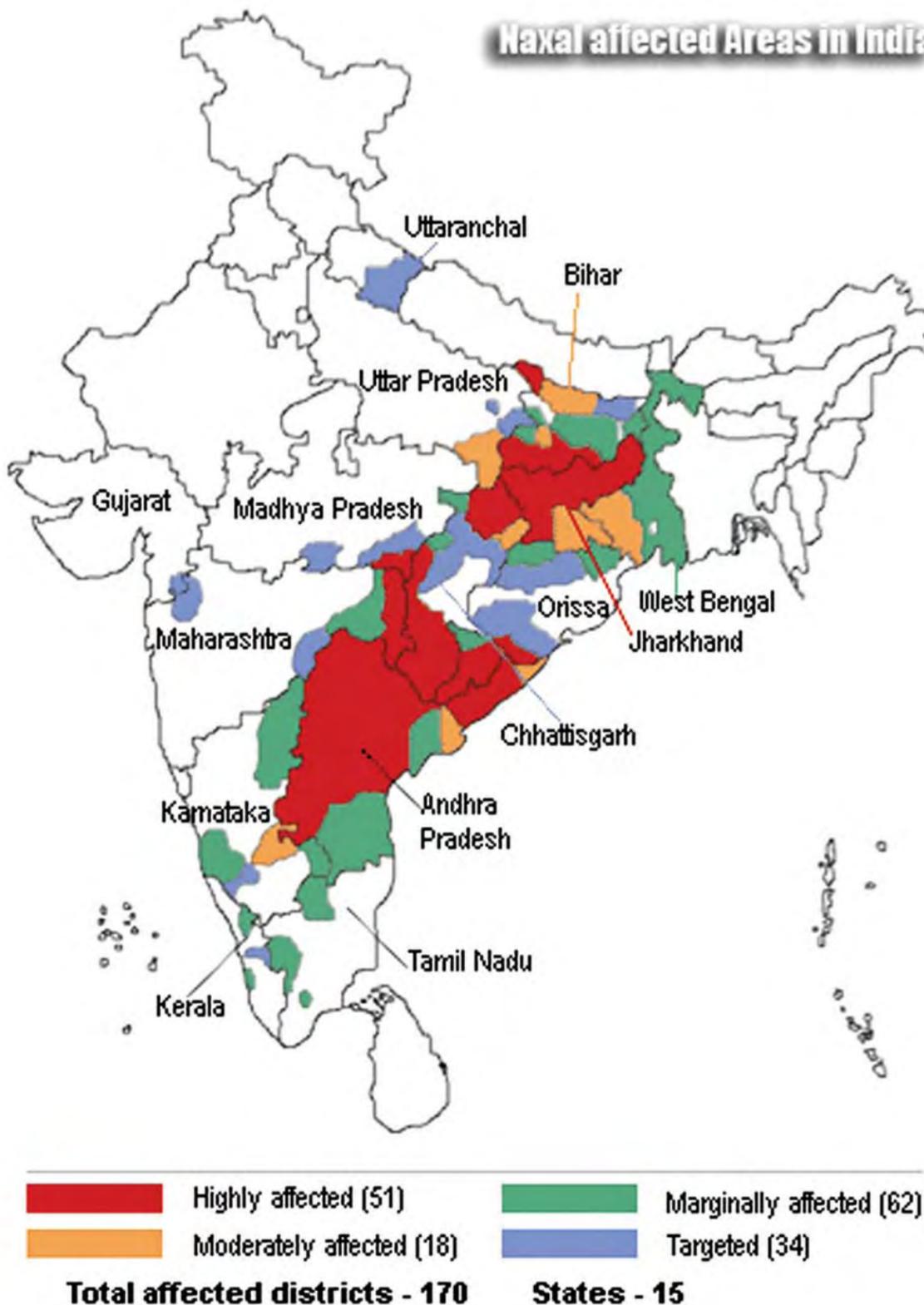
Nearing his fourth year in office, there are very little achievements that the Indian prime minister can boast about. The recent fiasco surrounding the civilian nuclear agreement with America is an elaborate example of the failure of the Congress led UPA government to impact political changes in a progressive direction. Clearly, the alliance with the Left parties has yielded in diminished returns for the Congress at both, the domestic and the international stage. But if the Congress wishes to move ahead in a progressive direction, it must like Indira Gandhi; sever its ties with the communists. It is imperative that the Congress ceases cooperation with the Left, so that; it enables Congress to chart independent economic and foreign policies that aims to take India to the forefront of global politics.

CPI-M, have been maintaining that India should import gas from Central Asia as an alternative to the 123 Agreement with the United States. However; the trade route for the central Asian gas project cannot materialise without political stability prevailing in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. The latest edition of the Newsweek described Pakistan as the world's most dangerous nation. It further reports that the ISI continues to maintain clandestine relations with Taliban and other Islamist fugitives in the hope of using them to wage Jihad in Kashmir in the future.

Bhutto now under the threat of Islamists and the Taliban, was a pivotal figure in aiding the Taliban storm to power in Kabul. Bhutto had envisioned a secure neighbour under the Taliban so that she could use southern Afghanistan as a strategic trade route to build pipelines to import gas from central Asia to help the ailing economy of Pakistan. Unfortunately, Bhutto's strategy backfired who was heavily influenced by the ISI. But more significantly, both New Delhi and Islamabad have failed to take the peace talks forward. Therefore, how the establishment in New Delhi envisions importing oil from Central Asia that has to pass through Afghanistan and Pakistan still remains a matter of speculation.

Another component vital to India's national security and industrialisation of the Gangetic plains is the urgency to restore political normalcy in Nepal. Nehru, India's first prime minister once stated, "our border lies up until the northern Himalaya's". Following Nehru's statement, Kathmandu debated the context of Nehru's speech at length. But the Nepali political circle tacitly approved this remark by identifying the common threats that endangered both Nepal's and India's national security.

However, the latest Indian policy to aide a former rebel outfit like the



Maoists under the influence of the CPI-M suggests India has perhaps deviated from the liberal Nehruvian doctrine that helped shaped Indian foreign policy. Like radical Islam, communism is a dogmatic ideology that supersedes geographical boundaries. The continued failure of the Indian government to understand the nefarious schemes of their Left coalition partners to help the Maoist rise to power continues to remain ignored. The net result of this lackluster policy vis-à-vis Nepal will only complicate security issues and undermine economic development in northern India.

Although largely ignored in India, the Maoist movement in Nepal should be viewed as a symbolic political movement in South Asia. Today

radical communist parties operate not just in Nepal, but in India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and even in Bhutan. As identified by Indian PM Man Mohan Singh, the Naxalite movement in India remains the largest security menace to the Indian establishment. The compact political corridor that the Naxal's and the Maoists want to erect is gaining momentum due to the lack of policy in New Delhi.

Even though Maoists Chairman

Prachanda might have wept in Delhi declaring the Nepali Maoists have no nexus with the Naxal's and COMPOSA, recent intelligence reports indicate otherwise. In a report submitted to COMPOSA by the Maoist Chief Prachanda, he reaffirms his party's commitment in preserving and further bolstering their ties with regional communist parties.

In a candid revelation the report submitted to COMPOSA by Prachanda this summer declares: "

On several occasions we have brought out our assessment that the domestic situation in Nepal is favorable and ripe to capture central state power in the near future but as all the genuine communist

parties engaged in revolutionary practice know that the international situation is quite unfavorable to accomplish new democratic revolution to sustain it."

However, Prachanda's conclusion in his report to COMPOSA is the most important part of his report, a close read will magnify the eventual plan and aim of the Maoist movement in Nepal – "The enemy who is attacking our party especially its youth wing "YCL", with whatever they find in their hands, has generated mass resentment against the enemies. And our mass line, discipline of our PLA and political line has gathered momentum to prepare the ground for the final insurrection. We are utilising this transitional phase to spread our base and consolidate it, to get rid of our own short comings and bring disintegration in the enemy's camp (Nepali Congress, RJP, RPP, MJF, Nepal Army and the monarchy) so that we can give a final blow and usher into the country a new democracy."

India's stature in global politics will be defined by its ability to democratise its neighborhood and in conjunction with development of its economy. However, there are serious hurdles on both fronts to the Indian government. Nicolas Burns, the US under Secretary of State for political affairs, in his article, 'America's Strategic Opportunity with India', in the latest edition of the journal Foreign Affairs has identified India as one America's most important strategic partners in global affairs. To live up to such expectations, first, India has to curtail and confront the growth of communism and radical Islam in India and in its neighboring countries.

As the leftist's continue to espouse sentiments of self determination, the likelihood of further ethnic confrontation and possible disenfranchisement with the center evolving into secession movements cannot be ruled out. Already, Nagaland, Mizoram, Andhra Pradesh (Telganga) and more evidently Punjab in the past have all posed threats to India's national unity and integrity. Therefore, should Nepal fall into the hands of the communist, Nepal will serve as a core state for further communists movements in South Asia directly threatening India's national security.

As India strives to make gargantuan economic leaps, it is crucial that India generates necessary energy fuel to meet the demands of its growing industries. The 123 Agreement can therefore provide India with a strategic advantage in Asia. However, as the Left continue to question the rationale of this deal; its feasibility and eventual implementation of the 123 Agreement remains questionable.

However; India will have to seek other alternatives to meet the soaring demands of its economy for more energy. Some of these alternatives can be found in the rivers of Nepal. However, for the development of any realistic hydro power projects in Nepal, it is essential that peace and the democratic forces prevail in Nepal's political uncertainty. For this, it is sacrosanct that the Maoists in Nepal and other members of COMPOSA are confronted and viewed at a similar level of policy analysis by all agencies that help shape India's strategic policy at home and abroad. ■



Source: www.naxalwatch.blogspot.com

MY BELOVED KATHMANDU

It can be considered as the epitome of contrasts as well as a citadel of learning.



Then a noble soul from Tanahu, the great poet Bhanu Bhakta Acharya, was mesmerised by the splendour of Kantipur. He was also appalled by the delays that occurred in acting on a simple matter by the then government agency under the Rana regime. Being a famous poet of the time, who was also clever with his words, he could express his feelings so brilliantly that it touched the hearts of many people including the rulers and got his work done. Coming from a village, he imagined the beauty of Kantipur, the place as well as the people, to be equal to heaven. His love for Kantipur was profound and sincere.

The Kantipur of yesteryears has taken the name of Kathmandu today. Having been born and brought up in this city, my love for it has not waned despite everyday confusion and disruption of public life on one pretext or the other. There are several reasons why one loves this city. It can be considered as the epitome of contrasts as well as a citadel of learning.

For early risers, the study can start from a well-disciplined queue of vehicles and motor-bikes, which



■ Binod P. Bista

seem to be waiting in eternity for petrol. This is no small matter considering the fact that the petrol shortage has been continuing for several months now without any foreseeable respite. Many vehicle owners return empty handed after lining up for many hours and without tending to the call of nature. Yet, except for one-day protest organised by the taxi drivers recently, the people have remained extremely patient and accommodating.

One cannot help but appreciate Nepalis' commitment to law and order and their enormous faith in their government; a government that is virtually non-existent. One can also see scores of people taking their morning walk or jogging. Children and teenagers going to schools appear quite energetic and happy.

This certainly reflects that the Nepalis, especially the young, are fully

prepared to face the present day challenges by pursuing education and maintaining good health for future progress and prosperity. Others are committed to the rule of law and believe that they will enjoy their full rights one day. First lesson learned: keep healthy and pursue your duties, and do not lose hope no matter what.

Come office time, the streets of Kathmandu depict a totally different picture, that of arrogance and impatience. Most streets are choked with vehicles of all sorts making it almost impossible to estimate the time required to keep an appointment. Frequently, one witnesses flashing motorbikes, speeding micro/mini buses that can come from any angle on narrow two lane streets. If not careful, an average pedestrian is bound to get hurt if not land at a nearby hospital with broken bones, if not life lost.

One small accident anywhere on the road can deprive you of a day's work as that spot could attract a well-organised demonstration blocking the entire street in no time. The police force of Kathmandu is as helpless as it has to wait for instructions from above for taking any action against

the illegal blockade by the protestors, who might be directly or indirectly linked to the powerful parties ruling the country today. There is no dearth of protestors as most are unemployed or under employed. Nevertheless, at the end of the day an average person manages to get to work and comes home safely for dinner.

The second lesson of the day: Today's world, especially poor developing countries, is a dangerous place to live in but one must engage in daily productive life.

Late afternoon, suddenly a strike is called at a slightest provocation, causing serious problems to public commuters. Instead of restraining such activities that are bound to deprive the common man of his right to honest work, the civil societies keep on encouraging the protestors and even join such protests as they have all the time in the world. I receive the third lesson of the day: sacrifice your present for future, which in the Nepali context remains as dark as ever.

Evening time in Kathmandu appears beautiful with some streets well lit and busy with moneyed people frequenting restaurants, pubs and hotels of the city. With the day's work successfully

executed, even the average protestors find solace in local brew and edibles made available by the organisers (and perhaps paid by INGOs).

After nine, most places go to sleep, the cycle for the day completed. Most families are happy that they are still safe, have something to eat and can sleep in peace. Tomorrow is as uncertain as can be. Lesson learned - uncertainty is the name of the game.

Where else on earth does one get such a complete education every single day? The city of gods and goddesses, accepts the disruptive behaviors of its inhabitants as gracefully as meaningful actions of others. Residents of Kathmandu are flexible, accommodating and committed, as reflected during the yoga lessons imparted by the Indian Swami Ramdev recently.

Despite being pockmarked with potholes, smelling of garbage, marred by ugly structures, Kathmandu charms its inhabitants as much as it does the tourists. Despite it being grossly neglected by its caretakers at different times, the city seems forgiving and keeps smiling mysteriously like the famous Monalisa. ■

■ Manish Gautam

While the world leaders prepare for the next United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conference to determine the international response to climate change in Bali, Indonesia, beginning of December 2007, the prominent climate change advocate Dr. R.K Pachauri - Chairman of this year Noble Prize winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Director General and the Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) - has said that without immediate action, global warming is set to reverse decades of social and economic progress across Asia, home to over 60 percent of the world's population.

"Asia is at a critical juncture as the home to the majority of humanity. It has made real advances in reducing poverty but lies on the frontline of impacts from climate change," he said, addressing the regional workshop with media in the Asia Pacific Region on Climate Change jointly organised by UNDP and Swiss Development Cooperation in New Delhi, India. He added that Asia has already witnessed the impacts of climate change and we would further see its effects which will pose a threat to human development.

According to a very recent study report, 'Up in Smoke: Asia and the Pacific' - Asia is home to 87 per cent of the world's known 400 million small farms, all especially vulnerable to climate change as they rely on regular and reliable rainfall. To address the impacts of climate change, Dr. Pachauri suggests integrating the adaptation to climate change with development policies into practices. He said, "Climate change affects the human development of this earth but poorest section of the society will suffer



Time to act now

more."

For over a decade, scientists from around the world working with the IPCC have reached the conclusion that world's climate is changing and human beings are largely responsible for it. The expected repercussions of climate change, including droughts and floods, snow retreating in the Himalayas, crop failures, extinction of species and emerging or re-emerging of infectious diseases will affect every nation of the earth. The most vulnerable people are in general the poorest, since they have less capacity to adapt and their livelihoods often depend on resources that are linked to climate.

Asia is set to warm during this century, and that this will be accompanied by less predictable



Dr. R.K Pachauri

and more extreme patterns of rainfall while monsoons around which farming systems are designed, are expected to become more unpredictable in their strength and time of onset.

The 28 million people of South Asia affected by flooding have direct relation to climate change.

Drought in north China has increased ruining the livelihoods of the region's farmers; and around 8 out of 10 glaciers in western China are reportedly in retreat due to climate change.

Nepal is no exception to the impacts of climate change. Nepal is home to the Himalayas, where due to climate change snow is retreating; and international organisations like UNEP and ICIMOD have already warned the

outbursts of glacier lakes which eventually will make impacts on mountainous human life and their livelihoods. Similarly, it has now been proven that the flash floods and erratic weather patterns that Nepal is experiencing are the consequences of climate change.

According to Dr. Pachauri social implication of climate changes varies from context to context and he strongly points on social science research on climate change to bring out the human dimension. "We are likely to witness heat waves, floods, droughts and so many other repercussions and climate change adds one more layer to this problem," he said. He added, "bottom line is that poor will become even poorer. So we need to develop institutional network and occupational innovation which can provide a safety net for these people."

Historically, developed countries have released the vast amount of green-house gases, but they are also the best positioned financially to reduce those emissions. Developing and countries in transition will bear the burnt of any change in climate patterns and these are the people who will suffer the most. In an effort to address the threats posed by climate change, 178 nations including Nepal came together at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 to adopt the UNFCCC.

Rich countries, both historically and today, are disproportionately responsible for the emissions that have caused and still fuel climate change. As such, they need to meet and exceed their targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions set under the Kyoto Protocol. Countries like USA, Australia and some of other industrialised countries which are the biggest polluters have not ratified the Kyoto Protocol yet. ■

Symbols of MIND



Thangkas are the expressions of enlightened minds...



Vijay Sarga Maharjan, 34, is an avid Phaumba/Thangka painter. Newsfront talked with him recently about his passion which he says has changed his life.

What attracted you to Thangkas?

I was always interested in painting. I started painting when I was 14. I used to paint birds in which I specialised for three years. Then I moved on to Thangka. I learned Thangka from my Tamang gurus at Swoyambhu; and Prem Man Chitrakar and K.K. Karmacharya. Although monetary return was the motivating factor behind my decision to become a Thangka painter, now I can interpret it in a different way. I think I was attracted to the mind aspect of it. I don't think there is any other art that expresses the functions of mind so vividly.

What difference do you see

through deities such as Hevajra, Vajrasattva, Chakrasambhava, Samantabhadra and many others. Carl Jung also held Thangkas and especially Mandalas in high esteem. He said it was the best technique to free mind of its neurosis.

Samantabhadra has a special significance with its two forms in unity. The blue male figure depicts emptiness and the white female symbolises clarity. An enlightened mind is basically a unity of emptiness and clarity.

Tell us about your favorite pieces of work.

Picture no. 1, the Phauba was done by me and by other students around 15 years ago. It depicts Aryavaloketeswara – the deity of compassion. In picture 2, the Buddha is depicted as radiating compassion; and lastly, the Kumari which I painted around five years ago. It is painted on plywood with water colours.

Unfortunately, due to lack of education, interest and exposure, Nepalis have not learned to appreciate our own traditional unique art forms. I'm sorry to say but modern art by popular names are held in high esteem by the so called intellectual circles here; but they have missed out on or completely ignore our precious heritage.

Your recent painting of the Buddha shows your style has changed now. What caused the change?

It looks different but the essence remains the same. With full awareness of what a particular deity represents, I just play around with how it is expressed. I do not impose other irrelevant elements on it. That would be stupid. I only try and simplify the qualities of a deity and express its core meaning.

Your working hours?

When I have time I work 12 hours a day at home and teach once a week. Apart from that I work three days a week at the office of the artist, Karsang Lama at Swoyambhu. My job is to add final touches to Thangkas.

How has spending so much time with deities changed you?

Apart from increased, sharpened concentration, my perspectives have opened up. It has added new dimensions to my way of thinking and that has made it easier for me to survive in this world. I'd like to add that I owe a lot of my spiritual guru, Sridhar Rana Rinpoche who taught me how to look and go deep down inside and to channelise my potential. The art form that I'm doing now, where I translate Buddhist philosophy into art form was inspired by him.

How can this art form be preserved in Nepal?

To preserve, we have to create awareness. We have to know the value of our art and publicise it. I think that through Thangkas, we can develop wisdom inside us and that helps everybody. It would also be a good source of employment and income generation.

We need to find ways to encourage more young people to take up this form of art that has so much demand worldwide. Personally, I think by investing in creating more Thangka artists in our country, we'd be creating a pool of precious resource that the world would look up to. Being a Thangka artist is a matter of great honour, and creates a lot of self respect in yourself.

Final word?

I owe a lot to my wife and child for being so undemanding. That has made my life a lot easier.

(Artist phone: 2312769, email: vijay_sarga7@hotmail.com)



between Thangkas and other forms of painting?

I'd like to cite examples of Dali's works. Dali's works are mostly based on Freudian analysis that expressed the knots, neurosis of the mind; but in Thangkas, the different manifestations of mind are presented. Freudian analysed only the 'sick' people, so in his own words, he could not find a completely healthy person. Modern arts depicting negative aspects of mind do not give you a good feeling. I personally would not want a painting, however famous or expensive, that depicts a confused or tortured mind hung on my walls! But Thangkas definitely generate a positive feeling no matter how ferocious the deity may look.

Why is it so?

Thangkas are the expressions of enlightened minds that could see the pictures of the deep layers of sub-consciousness. These pictures help cleanse, purify sub-consciousness and it assists in opening up your super consciousness. The enlightened forms of mind are depicted

Do you think Thangkas are appreciated as much in Nepal as it is abroad?

No, we don't understand the depth of Thangkas. Art critics here do not value it so much. They call it copy art. But there are people from other countries who really hold it in high esteem. I recall reading about a Nobel Prize winner in Chemistry, who was here and was reported to have said that he spent all his money buying Thangkas. It has a huge market abroad and vast quantities are exported worldwide every year.

Unfortunately, due to lack of education, interest and exposure, Nepalis have not learned to appreciate our own traditional unique art forms.



Lacking democratic leadership

Leadership has to be flexible and understand the context.



■ Ram Thapaliya

In Nepal the context for leadership has changed many times but the style of leaders and reaction of people and constituents to it is not changing. In Nepal, there is a long history of feudalism. The very complicated geography in Nepal made it very difficult, until modern times with improved communication, to govern the territories of the country under a single ruler.

Over hundreds of years Nepal was governed by many small rulers of principalities, landlords who owed allegiance to the kings and Hindu religious leaders, who maintained their power mostly by staying in favor of kings or other leaders they served. This describes a context repeated many times in Nepal's history where the power of leaders is gained and maintained according to the leaders' position and not due to their qualities and qualifications for the position.

The right to leadership authority in Nepali history came to the leaders and was passed on to other leaders by inheriting positions. The right to stay in leadership position came from the ability of the leader to keep allegiance to a higher leader and authority. The caste system and feudalism made people believe and

rely on fate instead of personal will and capabilities.

Nepali Congress party won the majority in the general elections in 1991 with the so called popular mandate for the democracy; but the new leaders did not have the vision how to translate their vision into reality. Leaders were mostly focused on leading own party and did not communicate with the people to get their support for the new system.

Besides the lack of experience in democratic leadership, one biggest problem and challenge for leaders in a new democratic context was the lack of governance inside their own party. Party leaders were recognised leaders because they had many years of experience leading the party, but only very few of them had any type of formal education and diverse skills to qualify them for leadership in a different environment. The leaders did not have the vision, strategies and the experience for leading the new type of system. They were using knowledge and experience from the feudal and traditional system that depended on relying on leaders.

From my study of the Nepali Congress party and its struggles I can find some lessons learned about the leadership: Leadership that does

not practice its vision cannot convince people to follow its vision. Leaders have to encourage new thinking, perspectives and even take on the challenges to leadership as one way possible to test their own vision. There can be no substitute for transparency and accountability in leadership.

Leadership is earned and maintained by dedication. It cannot be just awarded, inherited or appointed on a whim. In this way, vision cannot be well translated and transferred. Only power and power benefits can be transferred. Leadership has to be flexible and understand the context. Leaders have to do some homework in the advance so they can have more than one vision and strategy.

The main complication in the dealing with political leadership is that unlike in a business situation everyone in political party sees themselves as potential leaders. For political leadership development, there needs to be new research on Nepal political leadership and the type of qualities in leaders that are best suited to leading the party and the nation.

(Writer is PhD, Crisis Management, a visiting professor at Tufts University, and TU, Conflict Peace and Development in Global Context)

Disturbing picture for a nascent democracy

The number of orphans and widows across Nepal increases with every passing day.



■ Chandrakishore Jha

There were lots of expectations from the Nepali people when democracy ultimately came in Nepal in April 2006. In addition to the disappointments Nepalis experienced on the political front, the months that followed have been disappointing on many other counts as well. Many people have died even after the conflict ended. Hence the number of orphans and widows across Nepal increases with every passing day. In the name of people's welfare, political parties are indulging in all kinds of destructive activities. Most disappointingly, people in power are in their insensitive best towards peoples' grievances.

One striking example of this attitude from people in power was seen by all through the case of Umravati Saha, who recently had to cry in front of two most powerful men in Nepal, just to know the whereabouts of her husband who was kidnapped. This was on October 30, 2007, 25 days after late Birendra Sah was kidnapped. That heart rendering image of Umravati and her two little kids crying in front of Girija Prasad Koirala and Maoists Chairman Prachanda, shown on various television channels and print media is still fresh in our memory. The picture was disturbing to say the least, because it looked more like a helpless bonded laborer paraded before a feudal lord, rather than an audience granted to an aggrieved individual by people's leaders.

This was one example of many dashed hopes that Nepalis go through presently. Though both PM Koirala and Maoist Chairman Prachanda were fully aware of Saha's kidnapping, the duo preferred to prioritise celebration of Dashain ahead of ascertaining the where-

abouts of the journalist. They both woke up only when the helpless wife along with her two little kids was paraded in front of them by the FNJ. Worse still, it took the poor lady and the persistent media, 35 long days to ascertain the ultimate fate of the journalist; the shocking revelation coming in the form of Maoists declaring that he was killed.

For Umravati, there can't be a bigger tragedy in her life than this one. But she is not an exception. This is a reality that confronts many other women in Nepal even after the conflict had seemingly ended. Across regions in Nepal, there are many Umravatis, whose husbands are killed, missing, disabled or maimed. Umravati was at least a shade fortunate that her late husband was a journalist. This enabled her to reach the corridors of power to knock on doors for help, though unsuccessfully. There are host of others whose husbands are petty government officials, village level political workers, labourers, ordinary villagers and so on whose cries the authorities conveniently ignore and go unheard.

It was a shame for the government as well as the Maoists to have necessitated the tour that Umravati undertook to Kathmandu. All these years, the Maoists have been shouting at the top of their voices vouching for what they called the right brand of democracy, which include respect for lives of citizens and adherence to all aspects of human rights. In neglecting an incident as serious as killing of a person, and for so long, the Maoists have only demonstrated that the avowed promise to ensure their brand of democracy was only loose talks spoken from a high morale ground. It is time the government and the Maoists realise that the more Umravatis shed their tears, the faster the public would dump them into dust bins. ■

(Chandrakishore Jha is a Birgunj based journalist)

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Bangladesh cyclone toll nears 1,900

Grieving survivors and rescuers picked through the rubble left in the wake of a super cyclone that battered Bangladesh as the death toll neared 1,900 on Sunday and a government official declared the disaster "a national calamity". Military ships and helicopters were trying to reach thousands of people believed stranded on islands in the Bay of Bengal and in coastal areas still cut off by the devastating storm.

Officials expected the death toll to rise further as the search for hundreds of people missing after Thursday night's storm intensified. The disaster ministry in Dhaka had recorded 1,861 deaths by Sunday noon, but local media put the figure at more than 3,000.

A much improved disaster preparedness plan has been credited with saving scores of lives. "It will take several days to complete the search and know the actual casualty figure and extent of damage to property," said food and disaster ministry official Ayub Miah.

A huge effort was underway to get food, drinking water and shelter to

tens of thousands affected by the storm, the worst to hit disaster-prone Bangladesh since 1991 when nearly 143,000 people died. Cyclone Sidr smashed into the country's southern coastline late on Thursday night with 250 kph (155 mph) winds that whipped up a five metre tidal surge. Most of the deaths came from the surge washing away homes and strong winds blowing down dwellings. Many others drowned or were lost at sea.

In Barisal, one of the worst hit districts, authorities used elephants to clear uprooted trees blocking highways. Helicopters flew sorties to devastated areas, dropping food, drinking water and medicine for the survivors.

"There are not many places where we can land," said one pilot, as large areas were still under water.

Several fishermen picked by a trawler from sea said they saw dozens of bodies floating in the waters near the Sundarban mangrove forest, a world heritage site and home to the endangered Royal Bengal tiger.



They also saw scores of dead deer and other wildlife floating in the Pashur river, near the forest.

Navy ships scoured coastal areas and sought to clear river channels clogged with sunken vessels. Red

Crescent officials said some 1,000 fishermen and about 150 boats were still unaccounted for in the Bay of Bengal.

Tapan Chowdhury, a government adviser for food and disaster

management, described the cyclone as a "national calamity" and urged all to come forward to help the victims.

"Everybody, including all political parties, should join the relief efforts," he said, adding that "aid pledges from the international community have so far been good".

Relief operators on the ground said supplies were still inadequate and that the government should make an immediate plea for more international aid to avert a "human disaster."

In many areas there is still no electricity, and officials have warned it could take weeks to restore.

Aid officials said damage from the storm was very severe.

"Our relief teams have started emergency distribution, with an initial coverage of 100,000 people," Vince Edwards, national director of World Vision Bangladesh.

In many areas, 95 percent of rice crops due to be harvested in a few weeks have been badly damaged, officials said. Hundreds of shrimp farms have also been washed away. ■

Emergency to stay, US told



■ By Ihtasham ul Haque

President Gen Pervez Musharraf told US Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte on Saturday that emergency rule was needed for a peaceful conduct of elections, refusing to set a date for lifting it.

Informed sources said that during a one-hour meeting with the visiting US official, the president also said no political party would be barred from contesting elections and that a level playing field would be provided to everyone.

The president assured Mr Negroponte that free, fair and transparent elections would be held in the first week of January.

The president's spokesman, Maj-Gen (ret) Rashid Qureshi, told Dawn after the meeting that Mr Negroponte had come to Pakistan to understand the fast developing political situation and the president briefed him particularly about the elections, war on terror and the circumstances in which he was 'constrained' to promulgate emergency on Nov 3.

"The president told the visiting US

official that the third phase of transition to complete civilian set-up will be achieved by holding free and fair elections," he said.

The sources said Gen Musharraf told Mr Negroponte that former prime minister Benazir Bhutto was 'too confrontationalist' and ruled out any further discussions with her over a proposed 'power-sharing agreement'. It is not known that what was the response of the US official on this comment.

There were speculations that Mr Negroponte would meet Ms Bhutto on Saturday. However, she left Lahore for Karachi in the evening instead of coming to Islamabad.

The president told him that the proclamation of emergency had become 'necessary' to fight effectively against terrorists and religious extremists in the country.

The sources said Mr Negroponte sought a date for the lifting of emergency, but the president refused to do so.

President Musharraf insisted that emergency would ensure a smooth political atmosphere, leading to

orderly elections.

He said the step was also aimed at arresting the deteriorating law and order situation as well as containing the influence of terrorists who were now heading towards the settled areas of Pakistan.

One of the major objectives of imposing the emergency was to avoid violence and bombings during general elections, he said.

During the meeting, he said, Pakistan-US relations also came up for discussion and that both have similarities of views on various national and international issues.

The president also told the US deputy secretary of state that Pakistan government has decided to raise additional 125 platoons of Frontier Constabulary, 7,000 levies and 1,500 policemen to further strengthen war on terror in the NWFP.

He said that Pakistan's security forces were fully capable of carrying out operation in the troubled region. Pakistan, he said, did not need any foreign military support in this behalf.

In the context of fight against terrorism, President Musharraf termed unfair and untrue the allegation that political developments had distracted government in its counter-terrorism efforts. He said Pakistan was fully committed to the war on terror.

The president also briefed his guest about the current situation in tribal areas and Swat.

Mr Negroponte lauded the role of President Musharraf in the war against terror and said that the United States would continue its support to Pakistan in this behalf. He appreciated the announcement of the president about the holding of elections in January. Senior US and Pakistani officials were present in the meeting.

(Dawn)

Asean leaders ready to sign landmark charter

Leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations gathered in Singapore on Sunday ready to sign a landmark charter giving legal status to the 40-year-old body and making strides in human rights.

With Burmese Prime Minister Thein Sein and Foreign Minister U Nyan Win attending and the delegates from the 10-member bodies staying in 11 different hotels, police designated "protected areas" giving authorities greater leeway to deal with possible security threats, demonstrations or other incidents.

Among the affected venues and a 500-metre perimeter around each are The Shangri-La Hotel where the 40th anniversary summit is taking place, The Raffles City Convention Centre site of a gala dinner and the Asian Civilizations Museum where a reception will be held.

Nearly 1,000 delegates from 43 countries are attending.

While the charter, a blueprint for an Asean economic community by 2015, and a document on climate change and the environment are highlights, diplomats said Burma is overshadowing the other issues after its bloody crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in September.

Asean countries have made many commitments over the years, but have only implemented a third of them, said Professor Tommy Koh, Singapore's representative on the task force which drafted the charter.

"This is not an acceptable record," Koh said. "A key feature in the charter is the

emphasis on developing a culture of taking our obligations seriously," he added.

The secretary-general will be empowered to monitor compliance with Asean agreements and report breaches to the summit, he said.

Referring to critics who maintain that Asean is little more than a "talk shop," Koh said the charter will enable the grouping to play a bigger role in regional and global affairs.

Asean includes Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Burma.

The UN Secretary General's special Adviser Ibrahim Gambari is scheduled to brief the East Asia Summit which includes the Asean countries in addition to China, India, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

Police have warned against staging any outdoor protests after learning of plans by foreign students to do so on Monday.

A petition was released however calling on the UN Security Council to bring "tangible results" in the national reconciliation and political reform process.

The document was signed by 3,626 people or 10 per cent of the Burmese nationals in Singapore.

A group calling themselves the "Overseas Burma Patriots" said they want Singapore to give the petition to the council.

Public demonstrations against the Burmese junta have flared elsewhere, but police said Singapore's prohibition against outdoor gatherings of more than four people without official approval is in full force.

(Bangkok post)

Altered states of mind

Einstein said that whenever he came up with a new theory, he used to go into a dream like state.

■ Mahayogi Acharya Sridhar Rana Rinpoche

Similarly at 82% trance, recall of lost memories is easily accessible which is so useful to psychotherapy. This is called hyper amnesia while above 84% regression into childhood or past life is possible. These properties are not available to the common waking mind no matter how sharp or intelligent the person is. At around 80% the mind can control organic body functions like heart-beat, blood pressure, digestion etc. In all these are various levels of altered states of

Marshland Flowers

mind, many things are accessible which are not accessible to the mind in its humdrum waking state. When we go off in a tangent into a day-dream we are again going into another altered state of mind.

As we said earlier, there are many types of altered states of mind which are different from each other. For example, when we go off into sleep, we go through various levels of altered state. The first stage of sleep onslaught called the hypnagogic state is an altered state of mind which is different from the waking state. Actually the waking state itself is one state of the mind and is itself an altered state. It is not

scientifically correct to say that the waking state is the normal state and all other states of mind are the altered states. Calling the waking state as normal and measuring all other states of the mind against it as altered state is based on conditioned ideas of what is normal and is thus scientifically unwarranted.

In another neuro-scientific language what is called waking state (what most people consider as the normal state) the brain emits beta waves. Beta waves are rays ranging from 13 hertz upwards.

The normal waking state ranges from 13 hertz to 25 hertz. This is the waking state of normal alertness. Once the hertz increases towards 25 hertz and above, states of anxiety and stress begin. The higher the hertz go the more stressed out and anxiety laden the mind becomes. It becomes more distraught, tensed up and is unable to focus.

From 8 hertz to 12.9 hertz is the alpha wave range. When the mind is calmly focused and relaxed, it begins to dip between 8 and 13 hertz. This is a relaxed but alert state. The state when the brain is emitting alpha waves is also called the super learning state because the mind is in a state where it can absorb vast amounts of information



easily and quickly. Memory capacity is heightened. This is also the first stage of meditation and also the first stage of sleep onslaught.

Most meditators are normally at the lower levels of this frequency which

means from 8 to 10 hertz. When a person is in this level of altered state, the mind is relaxed. This is a very good altered state for lowering blood pressure and relaxing the mind, making it free from all tension, anxiety

etc. In this state, the mind tends to be positive and all negative thinking disappears.

Below 7.9 hertz to 4 hertz is theta wave state. This is a state of deep relaxation, deep meditation, increased memory and focus. This is a dream like state. When we are seeing dreams, the brain emits theta waves. This is also the state where creativity occurs. Einstein said that whenever he came up with a new theory, he used to go into a dream like state. Thomas Alva Edison also realised that he had in hand a new invention, just after waking up from a deep sleep. This is the theta state. Transformation or change can take place easily in the theta state. This is also the state of deep hypnosis when suggestions given by the hypnotherapist are easily absorbed into the subconscious and thus changes in mental attitudes and behaviour are brought about.

Creative visualisation as used in Vajrayana produce theta wave states quickly with a little amount of practice provided there is concentration. It is in such a state that the mind is receptive to creative intuition and insights and to transformation. The elaborate Mandala meditation of Vajrayana is based on this principle. (To be continued)

(Sridhar Rinpoche is a Vajrayana Master)

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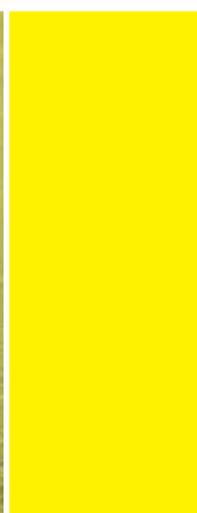
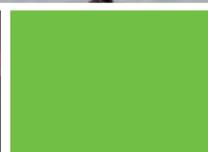
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INT	International News
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BIZ	Business News
ENT	Entertainment News
NEWS HELP	Help

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Type INT & send to 2722



In the Himalayas

Walt Whitman would have had a hard time here.

■ Yuyutsu RD Sharma

*I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me
as good belongs to you*
—Walt Whitman, Song of Myself



Who propounded the idea of self as a defining principle in arts and literature and even modern medicine. No wonder shamanism, trance, and

initiation have come as great news in the western medicine in the new century.

The very essence of creative writing is an enlargement of the self. That's what matters in the new world of the new millennium. In a nation where radical insurgencies are flourishing in profusion, where the ethnic conflicts and communal strife grow like ferns in the himalayan wilderness, a writer's myths of his self might appear deceitful and subversive.

In Nepali literature, self had its full sway in the essays of Laxmi Prasad Devkota and Shankar Lamechani. You see it finding its actual force in the love poems of Gopal Prasad Rimal. His enlargement of the self to encompass the history of Nepalese polity is unparalleled.

But sadly enough, with the rise of mass media, the self still remains on the edge. It is not in demand as it refuses to glorify senseless chauvinism and tribalism. It has no axes to grind as it celebrates a self that can, to quote Whitman, contain multitudes. Nepali journalism too has failed to paint self's myriad colors and dimensions. Much of the contemporary journalism refuses to rise above the rigors of objectivity and mundane realism.

(writer@yuyutsu.de)

FOR LOVE OF NATURE



Springscape



■ Sanchita Sinha Roy

interpretation on paper or canvas gives me that unparalleled deep sense of joy.

I draw warmth, healing power from the sun. Jungle vibrates with that sense of wild abandon, an unbridled sense of freedom and profound mystery. I can lose myself in it and be the way I want to be. Spring-scape signifies life's



Autumn leaves



jungle

Sun, jungle, spring-scape and autumn leaves are my abstract creations where I've used rubber cement solution in place of wax to get that contemporary Batik effect. I am greatly attracted to the natural elements that no man made things can ever come close to. Attempting to give it my own

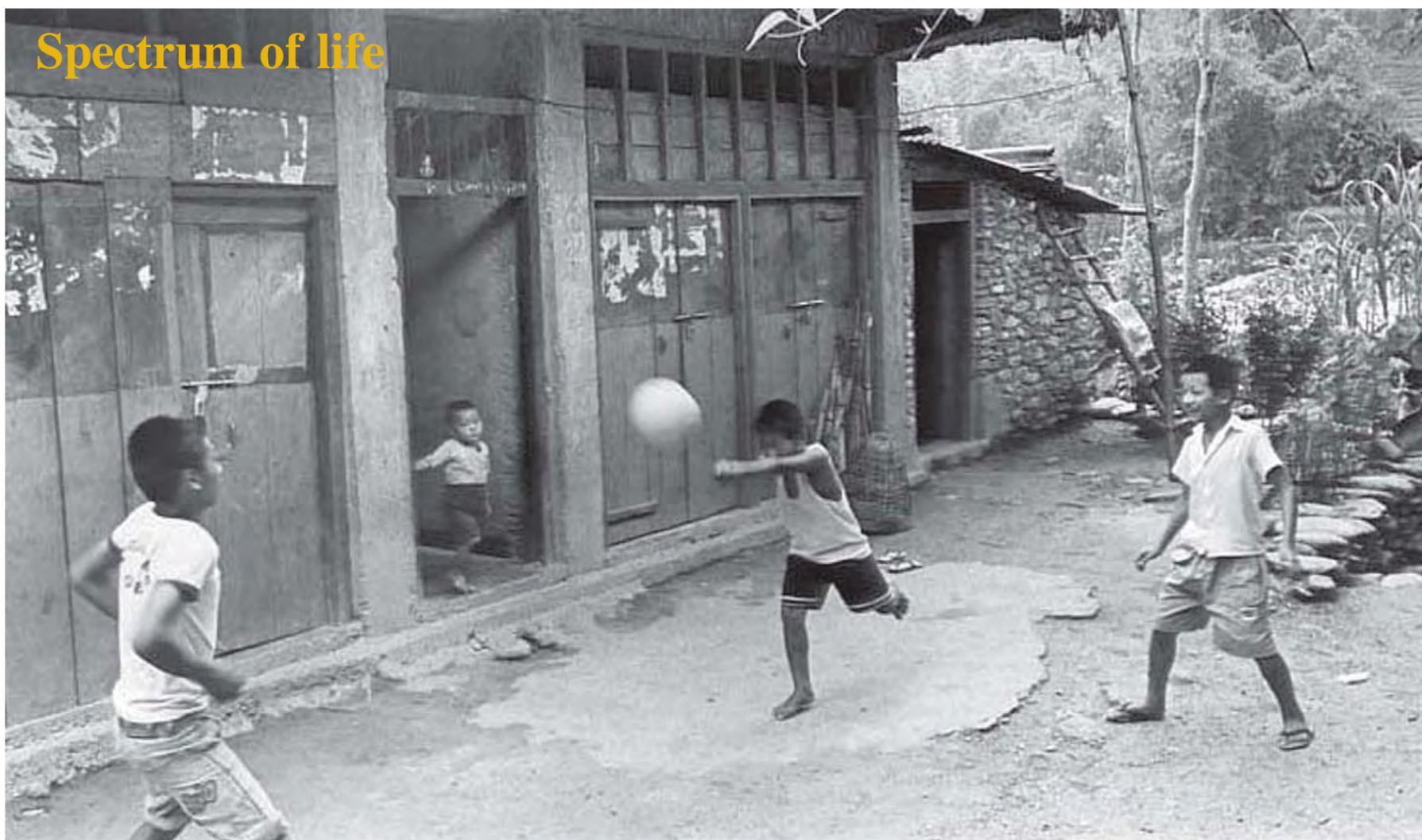


sun

beginning with its green young leaves, full of potential. Autumn leaves represent life's transitory nature. The vibrant colours of the leaves delight and soon wither away to be one with the soil, just like we all do. Nature is us, we are nature.

(Sanchita's paintings are on sale.
For details, contact the artist at:
Phone: 00-91-9818803916 and
sanchitasroy@gmail.com)

Spectrum of life



Children at play, Ilam, Nepal.

■ By Sushma Amatya

If you're having a birthday bash or a holiday party, make sure to invite Nicole Kidman. The Australian actress, as it happens, gives the most spot-on gifts imaginable.

Jennifer Jason Leigh, who plays Kidman's sparring sister in "Margot at the Wedding," admired a pair of jeans in a magazine, and presto, one day the precise pair was in her hotel room. Her husband (and the film's director), Noah Baumbach, got a "great" silver pen he uses all the time,

Margot, and she snorts with laughter. "I would hope not. For me, it was actually quite difficult. She's an intellectual New Yorker. I didn't have a reference for her," she says. "I don't have a temper. I didn't grow up in a family where that was prevalent, that sort of loudness. My feelings get hurt. I probably tend more to crying and being hurt. The grief is easier than the anger."

In person, Kidman is every bit as tall and willowy as you might imagine, with



It's a good life, though, and I'm really blessed in terms of the road that it has taken."

This winter, Kidman has two potential hits on the horizon. After "Margot" comes "The Golden Compass," Weitz's lavish adaptation of the first book in Philip Pullman's "His Dark Materials" trilogy, starring Kidman as the mesmerizing scientist Mrs. Coulter.

Her year-old marriage to country singer Keith Urban has brought out her lighter side, and Kidman, giggling, breaks into a Southern drawl whenever she talks about her husband.

Kidman inhales her roles deeply

and "a great bottle of wine." And Chris Weitz, who directed Kidman's Dec. 7 fantasy saga "The Golden Compass," scored "lovely Frette sheets and, let me see, caviar. She gave me some very nice things, to me and my wife."

No wonder Leigh admires Kidman's "tremendous memory" and calls her "really generous. She's really thoughtful. Very sweet in that way." Especially given her turn in "Margot," which opened yesterday, as Leigh's controlling, domineering and manipulative sister. Kidman's Margot arrives from New York to attend her pregnant sister's country wedding - and promptly casts aspersions on the nuptials. Ask Kidman, 40, if she's anything like the mercurial and mean

porcelain skin so light and flawless, it's almost translucent. She's ravenous, so Kidman, in contrast to her dainty and delicate image, digs right into a turkey sandwich, ripping off chunks and stuffing them in her mouth.

What comes as even more of a surprise, though, is her wit and warmth. Her year-old marriage to country singer Keith Urban has brought out her lighter side, and Kidman, giggling, breaks into a Southern drawl whenever she talks about her husband. She preens with pride when discussing his Grammy-winning career. The two are in Manhattan for only a few days before they must fly back to Oz, where Kidman is shooting the epic "Australia" for Baz Luhrmann, who directed

her to an Oscar nomination in 2001's "Moulin Rouge".

"I was up at 2 o'clock in the morning. Brutal. I've been roaming around the hotel room. I'm just a mess right now - I'm a little ragged,"

says Kidman, who's still operating on Down Under time but looks perfectly neat in a snug, dark blue and green patterned frock. "I'm a boring interview now, an old married woman! Not a lot of controversy here.

Kidman, Weitz says, "is very clever and intelligent, as Mrs. Coulter is. She has an allure, a power over people. But Mrs. Coulter, in our movie, is at heart a very damaged and borderline evil person, and that's not true of Nicole. She's very thoughtful and probably the most committed actress I've met."

That commitment hasn't always translated into big-screen success. She has had a series of misses since winning an Oscar as Virginia Woolf in 2002's "The Hours". Asked about her rather offbeat choices, Kidman breaks into rueful laughter. Despite starring in such flops as this summer's "The Invasion" and 2004's "Birth," Kidman says she doesn't dwell on her decisions or agonize over films that didn't work. ■

देशको तात्कालीन
कार्यदिशाका बारेमा तपाईं
के सोच्दै हुनुहुन्छ ?



अनि राजनेताहरु के सोच्दै होलान् ?



शुभशंकर कँडेलको साथमा विशिष्ट व्यक्तित्वको दृष्टिकोण
कार्यक्रम

OUTLOOK

मा

हरेक शनिवार साँझ ८:१५ बजे
मात्र सगरमाथा टेलिभिजनमा



सगरमाथा

समाचारको शिखर नेपालको गौरव