

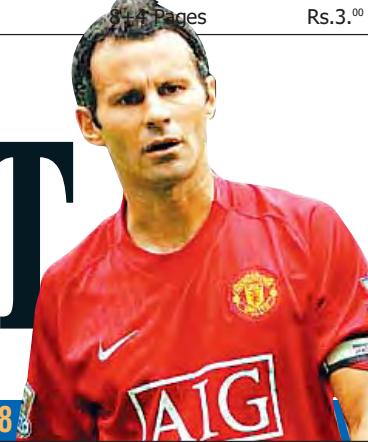


Busy V-Day for Katrina & Salman City III



THE KATHMANDU POST

Printed simultaneously in Kathmandu, Biratnagar and Bharatpur



Giggs fires United back to summit Pg 8

PM's personal secretary shot at

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, FEB. 9

An unidentified group on Monday evening shot at Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal's personal secretary Shakti Bahadur Basnet at Koteshwor.



PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal's personal secretary undergoing treatment at B & B hospital on Monday.
POST PHOTO: BHIM GHIMIRE



BAPTISM OF FIRE: Devotees roll on the banks of Hanumanghat stream in Bhaktapur on Monday, as part of rituals marking the end of the month-long Swosthani festival.

POST PHOTO: LAXMI PRASAD NGAKHUSI

Bird flu threat no more: Govt

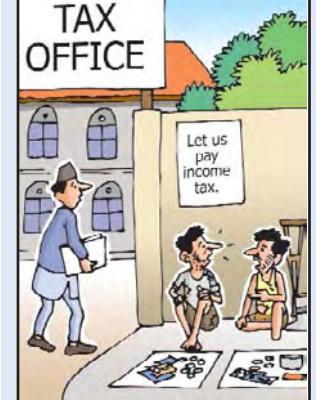
POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, FEB. 9

Basnet, who is also a politburo member of Unified CPN (Maoist), was shot on his right thigh when he was returning to his apartment from office. The incident took place at around 6.45 P.M. Police said an unidentified masked man, who was believed to be hiding outside Basnet's residence, shot him.

Basnet was rushed to B & B Hospital. Doctors removed the bullet from his thigh. Basnet's condition is stable, said doctors involved in his treatment. Till Monday evening, no one had taken responsibility for the incident. Police have arrested over a dozen suspects. No one has admitted the crime.

O Tempora ! O Mores !!

by Sarab



And what about you?
Have you paid up 10 percent
of your income?

D.R. PANT
DADELDHURA, FEB. 9

Before the crack of dawn, Laxman Bhatta packs his schoolbag with lunchbox tucked into the side pocket of the bag already bulging with books. Still drowsy and cold, he journeys out to school, which is a four-hour walk from his house.

By the time Bhatta reaches home after school, it's already 9 p.m. He barely gets time to do his homework as he is tired and hungry. He needs to get some sleep. Another long journey to school awaits him the next day.

It's been four years since Bhatta -- a ninth-grader at Gauri Shankar Secondary School located on the border of Doti and Dadeldhura districts -- has been following this life pattern just to be able to reach

Domestic air fares slashed

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, FEB. 9

The Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation said on Monday that fares for domestic flights had been cut by between Rs. 150 and 700 after fuel surcharge came down due to reduced aviation fuel price.

A decision to this effect was taken after the cost of aviation fuel was lowered to Rs. 80 per litre from Rs. 100 on Feb. 4.

Mountain Flight fare from Kathmandu has come down by Rs. 700. Similarly, air fares have gone down by: Rs. 180 for Kathmandu-

Bharatpur, Rs. 260 for Kathmandu-Pokhara, Rs. 370 for Kathmandu-Biratnagar, Rs. 230 for Kathmandu-

"Domestic air fares cut by up to Rs 700 after fuel surcharge came down."

Janakpur, Rs. 150 for Kathmandu-Simara and Rs. 320 for Kathmandu-Bhairahawa routes.

The Kathmandu-Dhangadi fare

has been slashed by Rs. 680, Kathmandu-Nepalganj fare by Rs. 500, Kathmandu-Bhadrapur fare by Rs. 460, Kathmandu-Lukla fare by Rs. 280, Kathmandu-Surkhet fare by Rs. 640, Kathmandu-Bhojpur fare by Rs. 290, Kathmandu-Rumjatar by Rs. 210, Kathmandu-Chaurjhari fare by Rs. 580 and Kathmandu-Tumlingtar fare by Rs. 320.

"Airlines have already implemented this decision," said spokesman of the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation Laxman Bhattarai.

18 parties urge PM to summon House Ordinances draw fire

■ BISHNU BUDHATHOKI
KATHMANDU, FEB. 9

Accusing the ruling United CPN (Maoist) of not being serious about its commitment to democratic ideals, 18 political parties on Monday urged Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal to summon the fifth session of the Legislature-Parliament immediately and table the recently promulgated ordinances for discussion.

At an all-party meeting called by Nepali Congress (NC) to discuss current political affairs and government ordinances, political leaders univocally flayed the government decision saying its "style" and "tendency" to govern through ordinances would weaken democracy.

"This meeting urges the prime minister to summon the Legislature-Parliament session promptly and move the issues proposed by the government in the form of ordinances as Bills in accordance with the existing constitutional provision and parliamentary rules of procedures," a joint communiqué issued after the meeting said.

However, the parties are silent on whether the prime minister should summon regular or special session of parliament.

Though the NC had invited all 24 political parties in the parliament to attend the meeting, leaders from six parties including the ruling Maoist and Madheshi Janadhikar Forum were absent.

Sadbhavana Party Chairman and Minister for Commerce and Supplies Rajendra Mahato also admitted it was wrong to govern through ordinances. "But an ordinance promulgated to ensure pro-

portional and inclusive representation in public service should be enforced in due process."

NC Vice-President Ram Chandra Poudel said that as UML leaders were busy with their upcoming party general convention, the meeting has simply suggested that the government withdraw its ordinances and present them in parliament.

If the government ignores our suggestion we will be compelled to take another strong step against it," Poudel said.

"We have not taken any strong step now, but requested the prime minister to play a proactive and decisive role by summoning the session," UML leader Raghbir Pant said. "If the prime minister ignores our request, our party will take necessary decision immediately after its eighth convention."

They have also reiterated that all political parties move ahead with political understanding, collaboration and unity in order to rejuvenate the constitutional process maintain rule of law, and enhance social harmony by ending the rampant culture of impunity, anarchy, and insecurity.

Speaking at the meeting, NC President and former Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala expressed serious concern over ongoing Maoist activities, deteriorating law and order and the rampant culture of impunity that weaken parliamentary democracy.

"If all political parties fail to reach national consensus and move ahead with unity, the situation will go beyond our control," a leader quoted Koirala.

Dinanath sees plot to topple govt

Meanwhile, Maoist Spokesperson Dinanath Sharma on Monday dubbed the move as a ploy to topple the Maoist-led government.

Talking to the Post, Sharma said political parties were engaged in forming and toppling governments instead of focusing on the constitution drafting process to address people's aspirations.

Asked whether Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal would heed their call, Sharma called it meaningless.

"Neither have parties objected to the contents of the ordinances nor have they opposed on principle," Sharma said.

He also claimed political parties were making such a decision due to fear of Maoists' popularity.

He informed that his party had remained absent from the 18-party meeting as it did not receive a formal invitation.

Arduous journey to school

After 8-hr walk, homework takes backseat



school on time from his home at Gaira village in Dadeldhura. But, he

a.m. every day and walk for hours to school.

Principal of Gauri Shankar Secondary School, Dilliraj Bhatta, says some of the children walk up to 16 km every day to reach school as they do not have secondary-level school in their villages.

"There are no other secondary schools closer than this one. And, as most villagers cannot afford to educate their children in boarding schools outside their villages, their children are compelled to walk a long way for education," he said.

Most of the children in these remote villages, including Baajh, Jharkhanda, Banta of Dadeldhura district; and Jorayal, Killad and Sungurkhal villages of Dadeldhura district study till the fifth grade at

the village-based or nearby primary schools. After that they either quit or the daily ordeal of over four hours of walk to attend Gauri Shankar Secondary School begins.

"As nearly 60 percent of our students come from faraway villages, we start our school a bit late than other schools," said Principal Bhatta.

The school can only sympathise with more than half of its students. It cannot help them since it is itself going through serious financial difficulties. So far, the school has been operating with donation provided by villagers and the government is unaware of the school's situation.

"We do want to set up a hostel in our school but it is a far-fetched idea for now. The government should think about the problems of this school and its students," says the principal.

is not the only one who walks at least eight hours every day to and from school.

More than 150 children from far-flung villages of Doti and Dadeldhura districts wake up at 4

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Ordinances under Dr Yadav's scrutiny

POST REPORT

KATHMANDU, FEB. 9

President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav Monday started studying the three ordinances introduced on Feb. 5 to see whether they are in accordance with the laws and the provisions of the Interim Constitution. The ordinances will not come into effect until he signs them.

Despite heavy criticism from almost all political parties, including CPN-UML, the Cabinet announced three Ordinances — Ordinance on Maintaining Inclusiveness in Public Sector, Ordinance on the Enforced

nances minutely," said the president's press advisor Rajendra Dahal. "Since he is occupied with the ordinances, he has slightly cut down on social meetings."

Dahal said although the time frame has not been fixed, it will take some time to study the ordinances thoroughly and decide whether or not to approve them.

On Jan. 28, the Cabinet had agreed in principle to introduce the Investment Board Ordinance, Ordinance to Declare Special Economic Zone, and the Public Service Ordinance. These ordi-

Veep to study it

POST REPORT

POKHARA, FEB. 9

Vice-President Paramananda Jha said on Monday that the ordinances promulgated by the government should dispense favours to the people. Talking to journalists at Pokhara airport, Jha said ordinances that only serve parties and not the public are no good.

"However, I can't assert



LINE OF FAITH: A religious procession being taken out at Prastoka VDC of Bara district on Monday. More than 1,000 participated in the rally organised for the welfare of the world.

POST PHOTO: PABAN YADAV

Speaker: Implement wisely

POKHARA: Constituent Assembly (CA) Chair Subash Nembang said here on Monday that the government should make use of the ordinances wisely as political parties had accused the former king of "misusing" the same during the latter's regime in the past.

Talking to local journalists here on Tuesday, Nembang said the government would otherwise be no different from former king Gyanendra's regime.

"Then, the political parties spearheaded the agitation against the royal regime, chiefly objecting to the ordinances," he said, adding, "So that's why they must be implemented sensibly." The CA chair added that protests against the ordinances would not deter the constitution drafting.

(PR)

Disappearances and Ordinance on Collection of Voters' List. The government submitted these ordinances to the President's office on Sunday.

"A team of legal experts and administrators in the president's office are helping him study the ordi-

nances were not submitted to the President's office.

The introduction of two sets of ordinances have drawn heavy criticism from all political parties as the latter were neither consulted prior to their introduction, nor were they tabled in parliament.

whether the recently introduced ordinances favour the public and the country without thorough study," he said.

The Vice-President said the government can promulgate ordinances to make laws when there is no parliament session.

He also said dispute over the ordinances would have no effect in the constitution drafting process as it had already begun as scheduled.

Dr. Bhattarai said Nepal and Japan had stronger cultural and historic relations and that his visit a long time after the new political scenario in Nepal, was aimed

Invest, Japanese urged

RSS

KATHMANDU, FEB. 9

Finance Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai has said that there were abundant opportunities for Japanese people to invest in Nepal's development.

At a discussion programme organised by the Nepal-Japan Society in Tokyo, Japan, on Sunday evening, in connection with his visit to Japan, he said there were enough potentials for Japanese investment in Nepal's infrastructure, water resources and tourism.

Dr. Bhattarai said Nepal and Japan had stronger cultural and historic relations and that his visit a long time after the new political scenario in Nepal, was aimed

at making it stronger in the government-to-government, private-to-private and people-to-people level.

Dr. Bhattarai had arrived in Japan on Thursday.

He, in the third day of his visit, visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial and Peace Museum in Hiroshima.

After the observation visit, Dr. Bhattarai said the bombing of Japan in 1945 was an inhuman act by the imperialists against humanity and should not be repeated at any excuse.

On the occasion, Minister Dr. Bhattarai was welcomed by Japan-Nepal Society chairman and former ambassador to Nepal Chui Chi Ito.

MJF chairman: Congress, UML against inclusiveness

POST REPORT

KATHMANDU, FEB. 9

Chairman of Madheshi Janadikhar Forum (MJF) Upendra Yadav on Monday said the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML are trying to stop the Ordinance on Maintaining Inclusiveness in the Public Sector, as they are against inclusiveness in the country.

"Despite hindrances from the Congress and UML, the government is

moving in the direction of maintaining inclusiveness," said Yadav who is also the Foreign Minister. "The ordinance must be enforced as it ensures inclusiveness of Madheshis and other communities in the state mechanisms."

The ordinance, introduced by the government on Thursday, ensures 45 percent reservation for women, indigenous groups, Madheshis, Dalits and other disad-

Govt: Staff transfer transparent

POST REPORT

KATHMANDU, FEB. 9

Refuting allegations that bureaucrats had been haphazardly transferred by the Maoist-led government, the Ministry of General Administration said on Monday that 932 civil servants had been transferred since Jan. 14 as part of its annual programme.

Spokesperson for the ministry Chandra Ghimire said 36 under-secretaries, 83 section officers, 153 senior non-gazetted officers, 196 junior officers, 50 typists,

20 computer operators and 392 office assistants had been transferred last month.

Five trade unions of bureaucrats are protesting transfer orders calling them politically motivated and biased.

"Every year government officials are transferred in Magh (Jan. 14 - Feb. 11)," said Ghimire. "The uproar over transfers is unfounded."

He also said the government had not effected annual transfers last year due to Constituent Assembly elections.

Melamchi cops using impounded vehicles

POST REPORT

SINDHUPALCHOWK, FEB. 9

Trampling the law of the land, police personnel of Area Police Post in Melamchi have been using a seized Bolero jeep that does not have registration number.

The law has it that police must impound stolen vehicles and hand them over to traffic police

for legal proceedings. Local businessmen had reportedly bought the vehicle from the Maoist People's Liberation Army (PLA) camp in Chitwan.

Sources claimed that police seized the vehicle from the businessmen after the latter allegedly did not cough up the hefty amount that police had demanded some 10 days ago.

"We had bought the jeep from the PLA camp in Chitwan," said one of the businessmen, requesting anonymity. "But police impounded it after we refused to give them the Rs. 100,000 they demanded."

According to him, they were using the vehicle in Helambu.

A policeman claimed that many local-level

Maoist leaders had been using many motorcycles though they did not have documents to prove that the bikes belonged to them.

Inspector at the police post, Purushottam Raut, however, said they were using the seized vehicles for the time being as their own vehicles had broken down.

Deputy Superintendent

of Police, Pramod Kharal said they had directed the concerned police post to immediately undertake legal proceedings.

He expressed ignorance over the alleged bid to extract money from vehicle buyers.

"We will hand over the vehicle if the businessmen have papers to prove that they own it," he said.

NEWSLINE

Russian tourist dies

KATHMANDU: A Russian tourist died on Sunday night after he fell unconscious in a restaurant in the capital. The deceased has been identified as Dr. George Bade, who suddenly collapsed when he was having dinner at Kanti Cafe, Thamel. Bade breathed his last while being taken to hospital for treatment. For necessary investigation, police arrested at least seven persons, including the cafe owner. According to police, he was living at Annapurna Guest House, Thamel.

Japan Gen coming

KATHMANDU: Chief of Staff of the Japanese Ground Self-Defence Force General Ryoichi Oriki will visit Nepal from Tuesday (Feb. 10) to Friday, the Embassy of Japan said in a press statement. During his visit, Gen. Oriki will inspect the activities of Japanese arms monitors working under the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), familiarise himself with UNMIN activities, and pay a courtesy call on Gen. Rookmangud Katawal, Chief of Army Staff of Nepal Army.

Chicken renders 7 ill

KANCHANPUR: Seven persons have fallen sick in Chandeu of Dekhatbhuli-3 of Kanchanpur district when they ate meat of the chickens brought from the poultry farm in the village for the daughter's wedding party. Those falling ill have symptoms like headache, diarrhoea, getting unconscious, unable to speak, fever and vomiting. Those with the symptoms Chedu Rana, Kader Rana's daughter in law and grand son, Balaram Rana, Shankar Rana, Ram

Awatar Rana and Ram Rana of Chandeu were admitted at the Belauri Primary Treatment Centre. Six of them returned after treatment whereas Chedu Rana was serious and was sent to Khatima of India on Monday, said Naren Rana of Dajhi who had reached Chandeu as a guest. Life here was panicked after they fell ill at a time when bird flu rumours are widespread. The place is 8 KM far from Indian border.

Three thieves nabbed

KATHMANDU: Local youths, forming a club, have begun patrolling Saraswotinagar area at Boudha after the area saw spurt in the cases of theft. Their effort has yield result as they caught three thieves yesterday red-handed and handed over to the police. "We started patrolling perturbed by ever-increasing cases of thefts taking advantage of load shedding time", said Subash Joshi, treasurer of Saraswotinagar Youth Club. A bundle of iron rod, three water pumps and telephone wire were seized from the thieves, said Deputy Superintendent of Police Om Bahadur Rana. Joshi said that they, formed a group of 10-12 youths and taking turns, patrol the area whole night.

43 bombs defused

DIKTEL: At least 43 bombs planted in and around the area of District Police Office, Khotang during the armed conflict were disposed on Monday, said the District police Office. A mine disposal special force of Nepal Army defused the bombs. Bombs were made dysfunctional in the terrain of local Deviyan. (PR/RSS)

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4 Editorial



Wrong touch

III thought-out government decision has brought about service centre fiasco

On Jan. 11, the cabinet took the decision to establish 52 Integrated Service Centres (ISCs) across 48 districts to bring essential services closer to the homes of people living far from district headquarters. The centres would facilitate service delivery in the areas of district administration, district development, land revenue, land survey and land development, among other important sectors. But not everyone was happy with the decision. Protests erupted in Bara, Sarlahi, Mahottari and Rautahat districts, both for and against the proposed new centres, at Bardibas, Hariaun, Chandranigahapur and Nijgadh. Notably, people of hill origin are in a majority in all the four places which are considered hotbeds of the pro-hill Chure Bhawar Ekata Samaj. The proposed establishment of ISCs in places with a Madhesi majority has been far less controversial.

This is indicative of the government's failure to convince people of the concerned areas that the ISCs were being established with their best interests in mind. As a result of the ill-crafted move and the government's subsequent decision to shelve the ISC plan, protests have taken an ethnic colour. The need for ISCs for people living in places far removed from district headquarters cannot be over-emphasised. It is unfair to them to have to travel for hours on end for even the most minor services like paying land tax and electricity bills. But the government's handling of the matter has been clumsy, to say the least. Understandably, people feel deeply insecure in these volatile times and are likely to view any unplanned surprise with suspicion. After the decade-long civil war and the turbulent two years since the success of Jana Andolan II, people want a semblance of stability in their lives, which, sadly, is not forthcoming; and not with some of the ISCs which the Madhesi people felt were being imposed upon them.

Meanwhile, it is the common people who continue to suffer as those in favour of the ISCs protest against the government's shelving of the plan. Thousands of passengers were left stranded on Feb. 8 as the disgruntled masses staged protests along the 80-km Bardibas-Nijgadh section of the East-West Highway. Political parties have also not failed to exploit the opportunity to serve their own petty interests.

The government, for its part, has failed to handle the issue with the sensitivity it deserves. It cannot be oblivious to the likely repercussions of decisions which are seen as being imposed from above, especially by the ruling hill elite upon the heretofore discriminated Madhesis. Now that the plan has been deferred, we hope saner heads prevail and the government consults broadly with aggrieved populations and get their feedback before deciding where to establish the ISCs.

Lovesickness

BIBEK RAJ ADHIKARI

Lifestyle experts have repeatedly emphasised that fatty foods, obesity, lack of exercise, etc. can all lead to heart disorder. Now, however, cardiologists and researchers are also confirming that the concept of lovesickness might be more than just a poetic notion, that it can burden the afflicted with mental trauma which, in more serious cases, can also lead to heart attacks with fatal consequences - thereby supporting the wisdom of poets and philosophers.

Doctors have named the affliction "broken heart syndrome" resulting from emotional stress caused by heartbreaks, the death of a loved one or even separation, depending on how one takes it and tries to get over it. Researchers seem to agree that fatal consequences follow in cases where one's heart is already at some risk.

Falling in and out of love spurs changes in the body. When a person is in love, the heart speeds up and the pupils of the eye dilate. When a couple breaks up, the immune system slows down and the individuals concerned become prone to illness. Answering a question if a person could die of a heartbreak, Dr Bhagban Koirala, international cardiologist at the Shahid Gangal hospital in Kathmandu said,

Lovesickness might be more than just a poetic notion

"There is no doubt about it. Break-up and bereavements can cause death." From personal observations and anecdotal evidence, he says that several people who had suffered heart attack had been

through an emotional upheaval. "The first month after a break-up or the death of a spouse is crucial."

Dr Koirala elaborates that the loss of an emotional anchor tends to drive some to find solace in alcohol while some fall into depression, become careless and are more likely to get into accidents. "They do not care what happened to their life any more." He further said that sudden emotional bursts create a demand for more blood supply, sometimes causing stress that the heart cannot handle. The heart develops an arrhythmia, marked by irregular heartbeats, because of which the individual can die.

At other times, emotional stress causes individuals to develop new block in their arteries or to develop blocks over the existing ones.

The concept of lovesickness might be more than just a poetic notion as it can burden the afflicted with genuine mental trauma. For many centuries, the manias, depression and obsessions associated with romantic love were considered a genuine state of mind rather than an affliction, said Dr Frank Tallis, clinical aetiologist and the author of this study.

He added that in the past two centuries, however, lovesickness had fallen out of favor as a proper diagnosis.

In the modern era, "The average clinical psychologist will not receive referred letters from general practitioners and psychiatrist mentioning lovesickness. However, careful examination of the sanitized language will reveal that lovesickness may be the underlying problem," Dr Tallis noted.

With the 10 year old Maoist insurgency raging, Gyanendra had his best well-wisher in Girija, the man the king spared no effort in humiliating. In spite of the fact that Gyanendra's security force directed their water-canons and lathi-charges against the physically feeble octogenarian and later kept him confined to a room, Girija went out of his way to reform the king.

STATE OF FLUX



ADITYA ADHIKARI

From the mid-twentieth century onwards, political regimes in Nepal have tried to change the character of the state in accordance with international standards of democracy and legitimacy. For the two centuries after its inception the state was purely extractive; it existed solely for the appropriation of surplus from the nation's inhabitants for the use of the state elite. As the citizens became increasingly aware of the state's injustice, they demanded greater democracy. King Mahendra's Panchayat regime was unwilling to grant this, but it understood well that it could remain legitimate only if the state could show that it existed for the benefit of the citizenry and bring about economic growth, modernization and demonstrable improvements in living conditions.

The Panchayat's claim that its goal was bikas (development) and all its policies were oriented towards this goal has to be regarded, at least initially, as genuine. But the state was unused to such a goal; it lacked the capacity to expand its strength across the nation and institutionalize modern forms of governance. The following years revealed the state's inability to encompass most of its citizens, let alone improve their lives. With this awareness, those at the helm of the state had to improvise new modes of retaining legitimacy. The emphasis shifted from enlightened governance of all of the country's citizens to placating elite interest groups that could pose a threat to the regime.

The attempted developmentalist state thus became a state that existed to dispense patronage. The sections of society that received benefits from the state -- which previously had included only the aristocracy -- expanded to include sections of the upper-caste, urban classes. But most of the country's

population was still excluded from any benefits the state could provide. And as there was little economic growth, it seemed there was little difference between the Panchayat and the Rana regime that preceded it. It seemed the state still existed to extract surplus from across the country and distribute it to a narrow segment of the elite.

By the 1980s grievances had accumulated against the Panchayat regime. This enabled the Nepali Congress and the various communist parties, which had spent the past three decades in the political wilderness, to attract a critical mass of popular support that enabled them to overthrow the regime in 1990. In the initial heady years of democracy they again pledged to reform the character of the state to ensure widespread participation and, again, to use the

state to encompass a greater proportion of Nepal's population than that which benefited from the Panchayat regime. But, again, most of the population was excluded, and disillusionment with the new regime rose, leading to accusations that it was as extractive and exclusionary as previous ones.

This disillusionment helped the Maoists to gain popular support and win the Constituent Assembly (CA) elections. They were able to project themselves as the party that represented the interests of those who have historically been marginalized from the state structure. But given their actions since they entered government, there is a real danger that they will lose legitimacy for similar reasons as previous regimes.



state as an instrument for the social and economic uplift of the people.

But, like the Panchayat, the new political leaders quickly realized the limitations and weaknesses of the Nepali state, the difficulty of the task of governance and of the patient long-term planning needed to create conditions for widespread social and economic uplift. They decided -- again like the Panchayat -- to take the easy route of maintaining legitimacy by distributing patronage to socially powerful groups. The groups that received bene-

The Maoist-led government has ignored the task of creating conditions for good governance. There have been no efforts to institutionalize the rule of law, improve security conditions, and create transparent and effective rules that have to lie at the foundation of any long-term effort at economic growth and social reform. Rather, the party is focused on using state resources to increase the power of the party. This is justified on revolutionary grounds: It is only the Maoists, they state, that represent the true

interests of the sarvahara classes. But, this narrative goes, they are not immediately in a position to enact long-term policies in the people's interest as the revolution is still incomplete and they continue to be constrained by parliamentary parties that are "reactionary" and "status quoist". As such, all efforts have to be concentrated on strengthening their party and weakening their opponents. It is on this basis that the use of the state towards partisan ends is justified.

The Maoists also have a justification for deliberately ignoring the tasks of governance and increasing state capacity. In a recent article in *Nayapatrika*, Maoist leader and Finance Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai advocated a deliberate creation of instability that the party could use towards its benefit. "Stability will arise from instability," he asserted, "through the midst of turmoil, the revolution will arise."

The extent of the Maoist party's distribution of patronage, and the strategic calculation that has gone into it, has perhaps never been surpassed in Nepal's history. The recipients of this patronage also encompass large sections of society that hitherto remained outside the reach of the state. But, notwithstanding their revolutionary claims of establishing an entirely new order, these efforts of the Maoist party can be seen as the most recent development in a historical trend that started over half a century ago: the abdication of the responsibility for governance and the gradual democratization of patronage to include ever increasing numbers of people.

But no matter how much the party in power distributes, there will always be more people that lie outside the web of distribution than those that lie within it. Besides, there are limits to the process of distribution. Without concomitant efforts at the strengthening of governance and institutions, patronage is like pouring water into sand: it consists of wasteful expenditure that doesn't contribute to growth or the uplift of the marginalised. It is thus almost inevitable that resentment will rise towards any party based on the politics of patronage and lead to the erosion of its legitimacy.

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Girija on Gyanendra

Would Gyanendra still be on the throne if he had obeyed Girija's advice?



DR RAMESH KHATRI

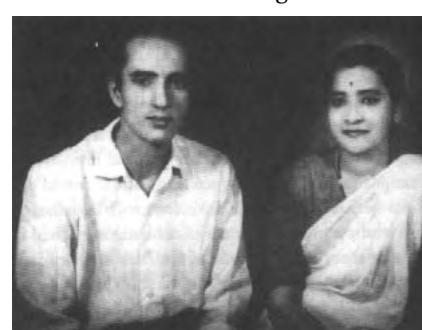
Till the successful April uprising in 2006, two Gs -- Gyanendra and Girija -- dominated Nepali politics. The slim book, *Simple Convictions: My Struggle for Peace and Democracy*, consists of speeches and interviews Girija Prasad Koirala gave after King Gyanendra dismissed the "incompetent" Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on Oct. 4, 2002. With the elected executive out of the way, Gyanendra began hand-picking prime ministers. After Feb. 1, 2005, he began to rule absolutely as the chairman with two deputies.

Simple Convictions (which has an introduction by Kanak Mani Dixit) offers insight into the mind of the octogenarian who doggedly stood for democracy when parties like the CPN-UML and Nepali Congress-Democratic (NC-D) compromised and joined Gyanendra's government. (It also has a rare picture of the young Girija with his wife Sushma, who tragically died in a kitchen-accident.) Above all, it invites the question we began with.

With the 10 year old Maoist insurgency raging, Gyanendra had his best well-wisher in Girija, the man the king spared no effort in humiliating. In spite of the fact that Gyanendra's security force directed their water-canons and lathi-charges against the physically feeble octogenarian and later kept him confined to a room, Girija went out of his way to reform the king.

After the Narayanhit massacre,

Girija highlighted that Gyanendra sat on the throne solely on the basis of the tragedy that occurred on that grisly Friday night. On Jan. 2, 2003 in Sarlahi, Girija proclaimed to the gathered crowd, "The palace massacre of 28 Jesta 2058 has ended the family line of late Prithvi Narayan Shah and with it the traditional system of monarchy has ended. The culture of seeing the king as an incarnation of Lord Bishnu ended from that very day. I see the present king as the weakest in the history of Nepal's monarchy." Gyanendra would have done well to recognise that his



legitimacy depended merely on the mercy of the people, who don't regard him as a deity. He was indeed "weak".

However, Gyanendra didn't heed Girija's warning. Instead, he followed in the footsteps of his father Mahendra, who went directly to people to seek popularity. The king's cronies, like the Home Minister Kamal Thapa and members of the State Council (Raj Parishad), organised felicitation programmes throughout the country. Girija notes rather sarcastically that for such a programme in Biratnagar, Gyanendra's men had heavily decorated the statue of King Mahendra, but not that of Birendra.

Felicitations led to more megalomania. Gyanendra sent his son, the

crown prince Paras, on visits to ministries in Singha Darbar. Gyanendra's hand-picked prime minister functioned as a mere figurehead. Like Mahendra, Gyanendra tried to split the parties. He had already succeeded in splitting the NC, which had two factions, one under Girija and the other under Sher Bahadur Deuba. Gyanendra attempted to break up the UML too by calling Madhav Nepal and KP Oli separately for talks in the palace. While Madhavji was in Sri Lanka, Gyanendra played with Oli, who evidently warmed up to the king's carrot. Though the UML didn't split, Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) became three factions under Pushpati Shamsher, Surya Bahadur Thapa, and, later, Kamal Thapa.

Gyanendra didn't make a sincere effort to solve the Maoist problem. However, he used it to legitimise his autocratic aim. Thus, when the Maoists silenced their guns on the night of Jan. 29, 2003, Girija is suspicious, "The ceasefire was announced last night...I am wary that the monarchists and the Maoists may have joined hands. Since 1996, Maoist acts have weakened democracy and instigated the King to be more active. At present, the King and the Maoists seem to be singing the same tune."

The alliance between Gyanendra and the Maoists went further. Both wanted to impose totalitarianism, but in their own way. Girija suspected that the Maoists demanded a Constituent Assembly (CA) election really to get rid of the 1990 constitution and to manipulate the new one to their liking. In the meantime, Gyanendra offered to lock up leaders from the NC and other democratic parties and rule with the help of the Maoists. Prachanda rejected that

temptation only because he had his own plans for authoritarian, communist rule. As is known, the Maoists then cleverly advocated republicanism.

Still, at one time the Maoists seemed to have agreed to constitutional monarchy. If so, the 1990 constitution, with a few amendments, could have served the nation well. Thus, Girija saw conspiracy in both the monarchists and the Maoists agreeing to a CA election.

Against the king and the Maoists, Girija repeatedly (at least in three speeches) stuck to his five democratic demands: (1) no agreement that undermines the achievements of the 1990 Popular Movement and weakens people's rights, (2) no negotiation on the parliamentary system of government, multiparty democracy, the rule of law, civil rights and people's sovereignty, (3) the guarantee of parliamentary supremacy, (4) with

The Army under the Parliament, and (5) a fully constitutional monarchy which allows the "Majesty" title only for the king, the queen and the crown prince, which places the Prime Minister fourth in the hierarchy, and which abolishes the State Council (Raj Parishad).

After the April 2006 uprising restored the parliament, Girija alienated the public by speaking of the "ceremonial king", the "baby king", and the "constitutional monarch". He wanted to save the monarchy at all costs, but the elected CA swept it away. History has given a slap to both the Gs: Gyanendra couldn't retain his throne; Girija couldn't become the first president. However, as an unflinching, though not flawless, democrat, Girija has our sympathy. And, the answer to our initial question is, "Probably!"

Opinion**The small screen**

There are difficult days ahead for Nepal Television

SHEKHAR PARAJULEE

The number of television stations in Nepal is increasing these days. Altogether, 21 television channels have received operating licences, and 10 are currently on air. Most of them are based in Kathmandu. State-controlled Nepal Television was established in 1985. But even before that, Nepalese viewers used to watch the Indian national channel Doordarshan. Television sets entered Nepal towards the end of the 1970s. They were primarily used for watching videos. Showing videos became a new business option in those days. People used to show English and Hindi movies in their homes and charge the viewers money.

In the beginning of the 1980s, Nepalese fans were able to watch sports, the news and Hindi movies on Doordarshan. In 1982, India organised the ninth Asian Games, which was broadcast live by Doordarshan. It further heightened the popularity of television in Nepal.

The 1980s Royal Press Commission initially recommended carrying out a study to find out



whether television transmission would be viable in Nepal. Similarly, the sixth five-year plan also included a feasibility study of television. The Nepal Television Project commenced on Jan. 30, 1985, which became the foundation for television transmission in Nepal. During the project period, test transmissions were initiated. Later, on Dec. 27, 1985, the project was converted into Nepal Television Corporation. Nepal Television's official transmission began on Dec. 29, 1985.

Although Nepal Television was eventually established in 1985, people were initially sceptical about its feasibility. They argued that television was too expensive for the common people, and that the government should not invest in it. Despite the doubts, television became a reality; and the Nepalese people enjoyed it.

There were two basic reasons for establishing Nepal Television. People living near the Indian border were already watching Indian TV. As the number of viewers began increasing in the Tarai region, it was thought that Indian influence would threaten Nepalese identity. In this context, promoting a Nepalese national television channel was felt to be an important task. On the other hand, our neighbouring countries already had their national television channels. For

instance, India had a national television channel since 1959, China since 1958 and Pakistan since 1964. Such reasons led to the establishment of Nepal Television.

The government already possessed a national radio network and print media. It used them as propaganda tools in favour of the *panchayat* system. The newly-established Nepal Television became another instrument for the government. Even after the restoration of democracy in 1990, the practice remained the same. The Minister of Information and Communication and the ruling party members, regardless of the party in power, used the media for the promotion of their personal and partisan agenda. The norms and values of news broadcasting were also broken. For instance, during the by-election in Kathmandu constituency number 1 in 1992, the then Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala released a statement against party rivals Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Ganesh Man Singh. This 18-minute-long tirade was broadcast in full by Nepal Television. It is said that this was one of reasons for Bhattarai's defeat in the polls.

The misuse of Nepal Television increased immensely during the royal regime, mainly after Feb. 1, 2005. Nepal Television broadcast 22-minute-long news reports of the regional visit of the then King Gyandendra. Similarly, Nepal Television broadcast one of his interviews 22 times.

Such practices are still taking place even in the new political context brought about by the people's movement in April 2006.

However, the scenario of television transmission has changed with the arrival of new channels. The private sector is investing money in this industry. This has ended the monopoly of Nepal Television and provided choices to Nepalese viewers. There is tough competition among these television channels to generate revenue. So they have to produce programmes which are rich in quality.

Nepal Television does not get any financial support from the government to cover its running costs. It has increased Nepal Television's dependency on the market. It seems that it has now fallen into a trap of the government, the market and the viewers which sometimes have opposing interests. Moreover, being a state-owned enterprise, Nepal Television has to play the role of a public service channel fulfilling the aspirations of various groups and communities. So the days to come will not be easy for Nepal Television. It seems that this has not been realised yet.

(The author is the editor of the newly-published book *Nepali Television: Abhyas, Anubhuti ra Bisleshan*.)

Conflicting interests

This refers to "Revisiting strategic intent" (Feb. 7, Page 4) by Prakash Chandra Lohani. Lohani writes that the Maoists are caught between the contradictory interests of the state and the party. But he seems to have misunderstood the country's interests. In a society polarized by class interests, it is not possible to generalize the country's interests. For all their weaknesses, the Maoist party represents our nation's underclass. Similarly, there are parties to represent the bourgeois section of Nepali society. It is true



that the Maoists are caught in a new form of conflict, but the conflict is not between national and party interests; it is between

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bourgeois, feudal and proletarian interests. Amidst this conflict, the Maoists are trying to protect the interests of the proletariat.

Jagadeesh Bista
B. P. Koirala Inst. of Health Science, Dharan

End impunity

Senior CPM-UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal said that attacks on press freedom have been rising as impunity goes unchecked in the country ("End impunity", Feb. 8, Page 2). But impunity is not limited to attacks on press freedom. The security units and local administration across the country are not doing their job properly due to intervention by political parties. To reduce violence, the political parties should disband the paramilitary structure of their youth wings. Also, it was the political parties that earlier provided shelter to criminal

groups in the Tarai. It is imperative that no political party interferes with the local administration and police in order to maintain law and order in the country

Sudhir Thapa
Laxmipur, Jhapa

Service centres

The government has made a good decision to establish integrated service centres in the Tarai districts ("Tarai folks press demand", Feb. 8, Page 3). But Bardibas, Hariaun, Nijgadh and Chandranigahpur are not appropriate places to set up these centres. The huge demand for immediate establishment of service centres in these places is not meaningful. The integrated service centres of Mahottari, Sarlahi, Bara and Rautahat should be established in Manrakatti, Nawalpur, Simraungadh and Shivanagar respectively. These areas are suitable from

demographic, geographical and economic points of view.

Roshan Kumar Jha
Rautahat (now Kathmandu School of Law)

Many groups seem for and against the government's decision to establish integrated service centres in the Tarai. And the continuous bandas have severely affected people's lives. The East-West highway has been obstructed for almost a week by people demanding implementation of the decision which the government had withdrawn due to protests against it some days ago. Thousands of passengers remain stranded and desperate. But the government seems unconcerned. Instead, it has decided to upgrade the ministers' facilities. The first responsibility of the government is to provide security to its people. If the so-called democratic government cannot ensure security, then people will lose faith in it. If this

situation continues longer, people will definitely opt for a military rule.

P. K. Lingden
Kathmandu

Federalism

G P Koirala has suggested that state restructuring should be based on geography ("GP Koirala for carving out Nepali model of federalism", Feb. 5, Page 2). None of the major political parties has so far been able to come up with a clear, viable federal structure for New Nepal. The leaders, even within the same party, have their own definitions and understanding of federalism. Federalism should not be a means to split the nation by caste, region and ethnicity. It should be a system for ensuring equitable distribution of resources and opportunities to the population. Can't we just take the previous five development regions as the basis for federal units? Based on their available resources and their population, these could be further divided into more units. Carving out federal units based on ethnicity may jeopardize social harmony.

Rai Biren Bangdel
Maharajgunj, Kathmandu

VLADIMIR RADYUHIN

Nuclear arms cuts look set to top the agenda of Russian-American relations, as the new U.S. administration has vowed to improve relations with Russia.

Speaking at a security conference in Munich on Saturday, Vice-President Joseph Biden offered an olive branch to Moscow. "The last few years have seen a dangerous drift in relations between Russia and our NATO alliance," he said. "To paraphrase President Barack Obama, it's time to press the reset button and to revisit the many areas where we can and should be working together with Russia."

Mr. Biden said the U.S. and Russia should "renew the verification procedures in the START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) and then go beyond the existing treaties to negotiate deeper cuts in both our arsenals." This marks a major reversal of the policy of George W. Bush, who rejected Russia's persistent efforts at negotiating a replacement for the 1991 START, which expires at the end of 2009.

No real reduction

Under the pact, the U.S. and Russia halved their nuclear stockpiles from the previous total of 10,000 warheads to 5,000 warheads each. In May 2002, the two sides signed the Moscow Treaty, which committed them to further reducing the number of operationally deployed nuclear warheads, on each side, to no more than 1,700-2,200 warheads by 2012. However, the agreement did not lead to any real reduction in nuclear arms, as the provision for "operationally deployed warheads" inserted in the text by U.S. negotiators, despite Russian objections, allowed the sides to stockpile dismantled warheads instead of destroying them. In another major departure from START, the Moscow Treaty did not envisage any verification procedure.



The Obama administration has leaked plans to push for an 80-per cent cut in nuclear arsenals compared with the START level. Washington is yet to send formal proposals to Moscow, but the former Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, is reported to have visited Russia in December on a secret mission to try and win President Dmitry Medvedev's support for Mr. Obama's proposal for the U.S. and Russia to cut their nuclear arsenals to 1,000 warheads on each side.

Moscow welcomed the U.S. initiative. "We are ready to go for further reductions and limitations, provided of course Russia's national security interests are taken care of," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said. Mr. Lavrov's reference to national security interests is not accidental. The U.S. offer of slashing the nuclear arsenals will only be acceptable to Moscow if Washington agrees to reverse its plans to build a global missile shield.

In 2002, the U.S. walked out of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty with the Soviet Union. The pact banned the sides from deploying national missile defence systems. The treaty guaranteed that neither side would be tempted to launch a nuclear attack against the other under the cover of a missile shield. The withdrawal from the

ABM Treaty opened the way for the U.S. to build a global anti-missile system that has been declared a top defence priority.

For Russia to agree to radical cuts in its nuclear arsenals while the U.S. still pursues its missile shield would amount to unilateral disarmament.

"The 1,000-warhead limit proposed by Mr. Obama would be too low for Russia to maintain nuclear deterrence," said Dr. Alexander Khramchikhin of the Moscow Institute of Political and Military Analysis.

In the event of a military conflict, the U.S. need not even use its nuclear weapons to wipe out the Russian missiles, he said. "The U.S. would be capable of destroying Russian land-based missiles, which constitute the bulk of Russia's nuclear arsenals, with the help of high-precision non-nuclear strikes. Any remaining missiles Russia may launch in retaliation would be knocked out by the U.S. missile defence system."

A Russian arms negotiator said any further cut in nuclear arsenals would hinge on the U.S. willingness to return to curbs on missile defences. "We must discuss not only reductions in strategic nuclear weapons but also problems of demilitarization of outer space and a return to a modified version of the ABM Treaty," the Interfax news agency quoted the Russian official as saying.

However, Mr. Biden said in Munich that the U.S. would "continue to develop missile defences to counter a growing Iranian capability." Washington has cited the perceived Iranian threat as justification for its plans to build a missile shield in Eastern Europe. Moscow has vehemently objected to the plan, saying it is part of the U.S. global missile defences targeting Russian strategic arsenals.

If Washington refuses to scrap the missile shield plan, there is little chance that Moscow will agree to radical nuclear cuts.

The Hindu

The other Iran

ROGER COHEN

At one of the embassies offering islands of peace from the gridlocked, grinding Iranian capital, a Western diplomat said this of United States and allied policy toward Iran: "You could argue that our policy has not yet failed."

That would be the most charitable view. But it is failing. Where Iran had a handful of centrifuges enriching uranium four years ago, it now has at least 5,000. With its enemies in Iraq and Afghanistan removed by American military force, it has extended its regional influence.

This city, whose real-estate boom has rivaled Manhattan's in recent years, is still awash in cash from the giddy oil price season. Those billions, even ebbing, equal confidence. The Iranian Revolution, at its 30th anniversary, has recharged its batteries on a global wave of Bush-inspired, Gaza-cemented, anti-Western sentiment.

It's time to think again, not merely to recalibrate old formulas, in order to end the three-decade impasse in U.S.-Iranian ties, a breakdown of huge cost and menace. A non-relationship has locked itself in stereotypes as American threats ("the military option must be kept on the table") and demands (stop the centrifuges) meet a wall of Iranian pride.

One place to begin that reflection might be in southern Tehran, where I

was the other day on the anniversary of Ayatollah Khomeini's triumphant return from France. I'd been at an airport ceremony, featuring a kitschy reproduction of the Air France jumbo jet that brought him home, and found myself surrounded by graves near the Khomeini shrine.

The graves, many adorned with wrenching photos of 16-year-olds, stretch away, hundreds of thousands of them, mostly for victims of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, which followed the 1978-79 revolutionary violence. Iran bled for a decade.

The psychological impact is still palpable. Iranians don't want to bleed again; they want to get ahead. In this, they resemble the post-Cultural Revolution Chinese.

For all the inflammatory official rhetoric, pragmatism reigns. Money, education and opportunity drive people. Years of mayhem in neighboring Iraq and Afghanistan have concentrated Iranian minds: who needs that?

"Overthrowing regimes is no longer on the agenda," Mohammad Arianfar, the former editor of a reformist magazine shut down by the government, told me. "Reform, yes, upheaval, no."

Young people -- and well over half the population is under 30 -- may want a freer press or free dress. But cellphones, widespread Internet access and satellite TV (government restrictions are as easily circumvented as

Western sanctions) sap confrontationnal adrenaline. The Islamic Revolution has proved resilient in part through flexibility.

In this land of competing currents, the U.S. has focused on one: Iran as an expansionist, would-be nuclear power. Iran's political constellation includes those who have given past support to terrorist organizations. But axis-of-evil myopia has led U.S. policy makers to underestimate the social, psychological and political forces for pragmatism, compromise and stability. Iran has not waged a war of aggression for a very long time.

Tehran shares many American interests, including a democratic Iraq, because that will be a Shiite-governed Iraq and a unified Iraq stable enough to ensure access to holy cities like Najaf. It opposes Taliban redux in Afghanistan and Al Qaeda's Sunni fanaticism. Its democracy is flawed but Middle East standards vibrant. Both words in its self-description -- Islamic Republic -- count.

These common interests and the long misreading of Iranian priorities demand that President Obama innovate. The radical Bush presidency produced a radical Iranian response. While modern Iraq was sketched on a 20th-century map, Persia is a millennial thing. Its pride requires treatment as an equal.

To suggest, as a recent report from

the Bipartisan Policy Center in Washington did, that Obama must "begin augmenting the military lever" to complement intensified diplomacy is to recommend burrowing deeper into failure.

Blinking is never pleasant but can be shrewd. America and its allies should drop their insistence that enrichment at Natanz cease before talks begin (Iran could always restart enrichment anyway). Obama should also say the military threat has moved under the table in the name of restoring dialogue. These steps would place the onus on Iran.

Can revolutionary Iran live without "Death to America?" Powerful hard-line Iranian factions think not, but I'm with the majority of Iranians who believe their Islamic Republic can coexist with a functioning U.S. relationship.

Obama should do five other things: Address his opening to the supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, because he decides. State that America is not in the Iranian regime-change game. Act soon rather than wait for the June Iranian presidential elections; Khamenei will still be around after them. Start with small steps that build trust. Treat the nuclear issue within the whole range of U.S.-Iranian relations rather than as its distorting focus.

The New York Times

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6 International

Pak dominates India polls drive

■ AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB. 9
India's election campaign has effectively kicked off, with hawkish comments on Pakistan and demands a Hindu temple be built over a former mosque charging the political atmosphere.

India's election commission is still discussing the final election dates, although the polls must be held by May.

That has not stopped India's most powerful politicians from joining the fray in rallies that could set the tone of the campaign between the Congress-led government and the opposition Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The elections come as Prime Minister Manmohan Singh battles a combination of an economic slowdown, higher consumer prices and jittery security after the militant attacks in India's financial hub in November that killed 179 people.

The head of ruling Congress party has upped the rhetoric against Pakistan in the past week as part of a campaign to show a tough stance on terrorism. India blames the Mumbai attacks on militants linked

Call for more Mumbai proof

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan says it wants to prosecute suspects in the Mumbai attacks but that it needs more evidence from India.

A Cabinet meeting Monday decided that the attacks should be registered with police as a crime, a formal step needed to open court proceedings against any suspects.

Pakistani officials speaking anonymously have said previously that at least two suspects in the attacks have been arrested.

A government statement says the meeting also noted that it would be "exceedingly difficult" to proceed with any case without more evidence from India. (AP)

to Pakistan's spy agency. "Those who are aiding and abetting terrorism from across the border will get a fitting reply," Sonia Gandhi, India's most powerful politician, told a party meeting at the weekend.

Hundreds of BJP lead-

ers met in the western city of Nagpur at the weekend, making headlines after senior leader Rajnath Singh said the party would push for the construction of a temple that has been a flashpoint of tension between Hindus and Muslims.

The BJP had sought the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya on the site of a 16th century mosque torn down by mobs in 1992. They were forced to abandon plans during their last 1999-2004 government after opposition from secular allies.

Hindu hardliners say the mosque was built by Muslim invaders after destroying a Ram temple on the site of the Hindu god's birth. About 3,000 people were killed after Hindu mobs destroyed the mosque in some of India's worst Hindu-Muslim riots.

Rajnath Singh's speech was later plied down by BJP's prime ministerial candidate L.K. Advani, but the message highlighted what may become more common in the campaign -- the playing of the Hindu religious card by the party to win voters and energize its grassroots supporters.



Palestinian women chant slogans as they hold pictures of prisoners jailed in Israel during a protest calling for their release in International Red Cross building in Gaza City on Monday. AP/RS PHOTO

Korean rider for talks with North

■ AP

SEOUL, FEB. 9
South Korean President Lee Myung-bak said Monday that he is ready for dialogue with North Korea, though he vowed not to veer from the hard-line principles that have angered the communist state and strained ties over the past year.

Tension between the divided Koreas has intensified in recent weeks, with Pyongyang announcing it would scrap peace agreements with Seoul, warning of a war on the peninsula and reportedly preparing to test a missile capable of reaching the western United States.

"I am well aware of the fact there are some people who are uneasy about North Korea's recent series of threats," Lee said in a regular radio speech. "However, my fellow citizens, we don't have to worry about that too much."

Lee reiterated that his government is ready to sit down "anytime" with North Korea for talks to reduce tension, though added he will stick to his basic policy and not be too hasty to achieve results.

"I believe what is particularly important in South-North ties is unwavering, unequivocal principles," said Lee, who has periodically called for dialogue, including in his inauguration speech last year when he said he was willing to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Il.

NEWSLINE

Thai monarchy insult

BANGKOK: A prominent academic facing 15 years in prison for allegedly insulting Thailand's monarchy fled to England, saying Monday he does not believe he will receive a fair trial. Ji Ungpakorn, a political scientist at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University, was charged last month under the so-called less majestic law over a book about Thailand's 2006 military coup. His case is the latest in a spate of prosecutions and increased censorship of Web sites allegedly critical of the royal family.

Chinese gets life

BELING: A Chinese court sentenced a junk dealer to death Monday for murdering eight people, among them a widow who jilted him and her 2-year-old grandson slain with an ax, state media reported. The Intermediate People's Court in the central city of Suizhou ordered Xiong Zhenlin be put to death after a half-day trial, the Xinhua News Agency reported.

Gitmo inmates shifted

BAGHDAD: A senior Iraqi security official says that four prisoners have been transferred from the U.S. military detention center in Guantanamo Bay to Iraqi custody. The security official says the men, Iraqi who were arrested in Afghanistan, have been interrogated by Iraqi authorities. The official, who spoke Monday on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media, added that one Iraqi remained in a Guantanamo. (Agencies)



British Prime Minister Gordon Brown laughs as he talks to children at a day care centre during a visit to Bow community centre in London on Monday. AP/RS PHOTO

Suicide attack in Lanka 20 soldiers, eight civilians killed

■ AP
COLOMBO, FEB. 9

A suspected rebel suicide bomber killed 20 soldiers and eight civilians when she blew herself up Monday at a facility where government forces were processing Sri Lankans fleeing the northern war zone, the military said.

The bombing was the first major suicide attack in Sri Lanka in more than a month and led to fears the Tamil Tiger separatists - boxed in by the military and on the verge of defeat - will increasingly turn to guerrilla warfare in their battle against government forces.

On Monday morning, more than 800 civilians had crossed the front lines and

were being searched by soldiers before being sent to camps farther south, military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said.

When the attacker was frisked, she set off the bomb she was wearing, killing 28 people, he said. The blast also wounded 24 troops and 40 civilians, he said.

Footage run on state television showed a child in a purple checked dress lying lifeless on the ground. Other civilians lay dead nearby. Plastic chairs they were apparently sitting in as they waited to be processed were overturned, and blood stained the ground.

Man watches TV 72 hrs

STOCKHOLM: Suresh Joachim has broken his own Guinness world record for nonstop broadcast-TV watching, clocking 72 hours in the Swedish capital.

"I feel fine, I drank between 25 and 30 cups of coffee," Joachim said Sunday. His previous record was 69 hours, 48 minutes, set in 2005.

Joachim, a Sri Lanka native who lives in Toronto, watched three seasons of the drama series "24" featuring Kiefer Sutherland, said Swedish TV4 spokeswoman Janina Witkowski. (AP)

30 mummies found in tomb

■ AP
CAIRO, FEB. 9

A storehouse of 30 Egyptian mummies has been unearthed inside a 2,600-year-old tomb, in a new round of excavations at the vast necropolis of Saqqara outside Cairo, archeologists said Monday.

The tomb was located at the bottom of a 11-meter deep shaft, announced Egypt's top archaeologist Zahi Hawass and eight of the mummies were in sarcophagi, while the rest had been placed in niches along the wall.

Hawass described the discovery as a "storeroom for mummies," dating to 640 B.C. and the 26th Dynasty, which was Egypt's last independent kingdom before it was overthrown by a succession of foreign conquerors beginning with the Persians. The tomb was discovered at an even more ancient site, dating back to 4,300-year-old 6th Dynasty. Most of the mummies are poorly preserved and archeologists have yet to determine their identity or why so many are in a single room.

Bid to broker long-term Gaza truce

■ AP
GAZA CITY, FEB. 9

A Palestinian fighter died in a clash with Israeli troops and Israeli aircraft attacked two targets in Gaza on Monday as mediators tried to broker a long-term cease-fire a day before Israel holds national elections.

The militant group Islamic Jihad said in a statement that one of its fighters was killed overnight in an Israeli airstrike. The Israeli military

said troops spotted an armed militant trying to cross the Gaza-Israel border late Sunday and opened fire, after which a bomb belt he was wearing detonated.

Israeli aircraft struck two militant positions in the territory early Monday, in what the military said was retaliation for rocket fire from Gaza on Sunday. No injuries were reported in the aerial attacks.

Riad Malki, foreign minister in the moderate Palestinian government based in the West Bank, charged Monday that Hamas was trying to influence the outcome of Tuesday's Israeli elections by continuing to fire rockets into southern Israel. The moderate Palestinian government is headed by President Mahmoud Abbas, a rival of Gaza's Hamas rulers.

Fires, floods pressure Australia on climate

■ AGENCIES

CANBERRA, FEB. 9
Australia's deadliest wild-fires increased pressure on the national government to take firm action on climate change on Monday as scientists said global warming likely contributed to conditions that fueled the disaster.

At least 130 people were killed in wildfires, set off by a record heatwave in southern Victoria state over the past week days, while large areas of Queensland state remain flooded by tropical downpours.

Scientists said Australia needed to prepare for more extreme weather events due to global warming, while the

Greens and environmentalists said the fires and floods proved the government needed to toughen its targets to curb greenhouse emissions.

"It's very clear, both globally and in Australia, there has been a warming trend since about 1950," leading Australian climate scientist Kevin Hennessy told Agencies.

"In a nutshell we can say the heatwaves and the fires we've seen in Victoria recently maybe partly due to climate change through the contribution of increased temperature."

"Going forward, we anticipate there will be con-

tinued increases in greenhouse gases and that locks in a certain amount of warming, and in the case of southern Australia further drying, and this will increase the fire weather risk."

Australia is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change because of its hot, dry climate, with the nation's south in prolonged drought and temperatures tipped to rise by 3 degrees Celsius by 2050 across the tropical north and desert interiors.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has set a target to cut overall greenhouse gas emissions by 5 percent by 2020, and will only cut further, to

about 15 percent, if there is widespread international agreement on tougher action.

But Green groups want Australia, which creates about 1.5 percent of global emissions, to cut emissions by at least 25 percent by 2020 as an example to the developing world, particularly India and China, about the need to take firm action.

Greens climate spokeswoman Christine Milne said all Australians had been deeply touched by the fire tragedy and the increased risk of fires from global warming.

"As the community comes together to heal, we also will need to grapple

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राहदानी हरायो

२०६५ कि १४५ गाने मालदुड्दीदोली वारम्लुङ्गवारा राहदानी हरायो जाति निम्न व्यवहाराको राहदानी हरायो अपाएको हुन्दू पात्र तु दुने महानमावले नाइकको प्रहरी चाकी वा निम्न ठाँगामा सम्पर्क गरी दिनु हुन अनुरोध गर्न्दू। डोमाः सुरुज झुंझुरी डेगाना : राहदानी-१, याम्बुङ्ग शहदानी ल. : २७५१९०८८९

राहदानी हरायो

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The Kathmandu Post
Tuesday, February 10, 2009

7

Business

MARKET

GOLD	Kathmandu Hallmark (per 10 gms) Rs 23235.00	23105.00	904.00
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NEPSE INDEX			

EXCHANGE RATES OF MAJOR CURRENCIES

CURRENCY	UNIT	BUYING (in Rs)	SELLING (in Rs)
Indian Rupee (Rs)	100	160.00	160.15
US Dollar (\$)	1	77.50	78.10
Euro (€)	1	99.94	100.72
Pound Sterling (£)	1	114.13	115.02
Japanese Yen (¥)	10	8.50	8.57

Exchange rates fixed by Nepal Rastra Bank



Secretary of the Ministry of Finance Rameshwor Khanal and ADB Country Director Barry J. Hitchcock talking to the media after they signed an agreement on Information Highway Project at the Ministry on Monday.

POST PHOTO/BHIM GHIMIRE

ADB provides assistance

POST REPORT

KATHMANDU, FEB. 9

The government of Nepal and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) today signed an agreement under which ADB will provide a grant assistance of US\$ 9 million to implement the South Asian Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Information Highway Project.

The objective of the project is to improve information and communica-

tion technology (ICT) connectivity among SASEC countries and provide modern, affordable and reliable broadband information, communication and knowledge services within and across borders. It will focus on providing services to universities and businesses and expanding ICT accessibility in remote areas.

Officials said the expected outcomes of the agreement were an

enhanced SASEC regional networks and the establishment of SASEC village networks for SASEC regional village communities and SASEC research and training network.

Rameshwor Prasad Khanal, secretary of the Ministry of Finance, and Barry Hitchcock, country director of ADB, signed the agreement on behalf of the Nepal government and ADB respectively.

Earlier, the government had decided to waive the loans up to Rs. 30,000 taken from Agriculture Development Bank Limited (ADB) during the decade long conflict.

Acknowledging the need to address the problems of many borrowers who could not pay loans due to conflict and natural calamities over the last 13 years, the Ministry of Finance on Jan 18 decided to form the committee to look into their problems.

The eight-member committee represented

by bankers, borrowers and government officials has been asked to make recommendations on four areas within two months.

According to the terms of reference (TOR) given to the committee, it will find out the number of borrowers who could not repay loans due to conflict and the total amount of such loans, suggest alternative ways to revive the existing enterprises and other ways to enable to borrower to repay loans.

The committee will also clarify the roles of the government, financial institutions and borrowers in order to implement its suggestions and the fix timeline for implementation.

According to chairman Acharya, the committee will look into problems of borrowers who took loans from Nepal Bank Limited (NBL), Rastraya Baniya Bank (RBB), Agriculture Development Bank Limited (ADB), and Small Farmers

Cooperatives.

Although the ToR is not clear about whether the committee is entitled to recommend on waiver of the loans as well, Acharya said that the committee could do that as well.

"More specification on ToR will be worked out after Finance Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai comes back from a visit to Japan," he added.

Bimal Wagle, joint secretary at the ministry said that the committee was formed specifically to find out the status of small sick industries and size of the loans taken by them.

He also made it clear that the government had not made any decision regarding the waiver of the loans above Rs. 30,000.

Earlier, a network of borrowers called National Financial Problems Solution Joint Committee representing those who failed to repay loans had asked the government to address their problems.

Nepal ranks middle in open budget index

POST REPORT

KATHMANDU, FEB. 9

Nepal ranks 43 among 85 countries in an index of countries that provides the public with some information on the central government's budget and financial activities during the course of the budget year.

The report also said that it is difficult to assess budget performance in Nepal once the budget year is over because the year-end report is incomplete preventing comparisons between what was budgeted and what was actually spent and collected.

Nepal makes the audit report public but the government does not provide

a general, albeit incomplete, picture of the government's plans for taxing and spending for the upcoming year.

Nepal scored 43 percentage points in a maximum of 100 in the Open Budget Index and was labeled as a country which provided 'some' information to the public on its budget.

Top of the index was United Kingdom with 88 points and Sri Lanka ranked 14 and India 20. The United States was ranked fifth.

नेपाल

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संवाद : कविता भट्टराई

“शेरवाहर देउवामा विचारार्थी निर्मान जाने इच्छागतिको कमी छ। रामचन्द्र पौडेल संस्कृत। अरु कामेप्रजानमा विचार हाताएको छ, आताकारोका संख्या बढेको छ।”

गलपासोमा गौडा

के गदैखण पूर्वाजा ?

रामो बन्ने रहर

सोबै पूरा गर्न व्युटीवाल्यार



RASTRIYA BANIJA BANK LIMITED

SINGHDURBAR PLAZA, KATHMANDU
UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS (QUARTERLY)

AS AT 2ND QUARTER OF FISCAL YEAR 2008-09

Rs. In '000

S.N.	Particulars	THIS QUARTER	PREVIOUS QUARTER	PREVIOUS YEAR CORRESPONDING QUARTER
1.	Total Capital and Liabilities (1.1 to 1.7)	74,295,364	70,559,035	60,082,102
1.1	Paid Up Capital	1,172,300	1,172,300	1,172,300
1.2	Reserve and Surplus	(15,661,887)	(16,304,311)	(18,003,434)
1.3	Debenture and bond	-	-	-
1.4	Borrowings	2,669,248	2,638,760	2,412,984
1.5	Deposits(a+b)	62,264,993	56,747,143	54,330,281
a.	Domestic Currency	60,723,622	56,450,881	53,523,463
b.	Foreign Currency	1,541,371	296,262	806,819
1.6	Income Tax Liabilities	-	-	-
1.7	Other Liabilities	23,850,710	26,305,143	20,169,971
2.	Total Assets (2.1 to 2.7)	74,295,364	70,559,035	60,082,102
2.1	Cash and Bank Balance	16,615,320	8,748,837	6,613,821
2.2	Money at Call and Short Notice	90,000	2,130,000	200,000
2.3	Investment	15,870,886	17,179,841	14,660,573
2.4	Loan and Advances	28,204,955	26,758,536	25,297,231
2.5	Fixed Assets	775,291	759,178	738,339
2.6	Non Banking Assets	299,263	303,303	301,729
2.7	Other Assets	12,439,650	14,679,342	12,270,409
3.	Profit and Loss Account	UP TO THIS QUARTER	UP TO PREVIOUS QUARTER	UP TO PREVIOUS YEAR CORRESPONDING QUARTER
3.1	Interest Income	1,479,139	606,661	1,080,208
3.2	Interest Expense	509,548	223,037	511,362
A.	Net Interest Income (3.1-3.2)	969,591	383,625	568,846
3.3	Fees, Commission and Discount	97,099	85,914	158,002
3.4	Other Operating Income	56,436	25,609	83,709
3.5	Foreign Exchange Gain/Loss (Net)	60,061	87,450	(26,028)
B.	Total Operating Income (A.+3.3+3.4+3.5)	1,183,187	582,599	784,529
3.6	Staff Expenses	406,236	247,220	406,722
3.7	Other Operating Expenses	128,324	66,872	135,907
C.	Operating Profit Before Provision (B.-3.6-3.7)	648,627	268,506	241,899
3.8	Provision for Possible Losses	114,004	66,843	-
D.	Operating Profit (C.-3.8)	534,622	201,664	241,899
3.9	Non Operating Income/Expenses (Net)	5,377	4,040	8,302
3.10	Write Back Provision for Possible Loss	541,680	101,895	105,716
E.	Profit from Regular Activities (D+3.9+3.10)	1,081,679	307,599	355,917
3.11	Extraordinary Income/ Expenses (Net)	118,853	66,733	25,624
F.	Profit before Bonus and Taxes (E.+3.11)	1,200,532	374,332	381,541
3.1	Provision for Staff Bonus	88,928	-	-
G.	Net Profit/Loss (F.-3.12-3.13)	1,111,604	374,332	381,541
4.	Ratios	THIS QUARTER	PREVIOUS QUARTER	PREVIOUS YEAR CORRESPONDING QUARTER
4.1	Capital Fund to RWA	-23.00%	-25.20%	-37.60%
4.2	Non Performing Loan (NPL) To Total Loan	18.97%	21.58%	26.85%
4.3	Total Loan Loss Provision to Total NPL	117.08%	113.87%	114.22%

Sports



Tony Adams stands down at Portsmouth

LONDON: Manager Tony Adams has left Portsmouth after the club took just two points from its last nine Premier League matches, the club said in a statement Monday. "Portsmouth Football Club can confirm that Tony Adams and John Metgod have left their positions as manager and first team coach with immediate effect," the statement said. Portsmouth's 3-2 home defeat to Liverpool on Saturday spelled the end of Adams' short reign at the club, who are hovering one point above the relegation zone. Adams, a former England captain, won just four of his 22 matches in charge after being promoted from assistant manager in October. (AFP)

Nepal fail to cash in on penalty

Go down to Amity 8-7, crash out of the tournament

■ AYUSH KHADKA

ORISSA, FEB. 9
A resilient ANFA Academy U-19 team went down fighting, eventually losing 8-7 in penalties against a robust Amity United Haryana in the semifinals of the All India Kalinga Knock-out Football Tournament, at OSAP Ground, on Monday.

throughout the game, could have put the game to bed easily in the first half itself but some missed opportunities by skipper Nirajan Malla, who was later adjudged the player of the match, saw them go down in penalties for the second consecutive time in the last two weeks. They had crashed out of the recently held

Shrestha. Sabindra Shretha's free kick from 30-yards out自由踢得30碼外，擊中橫樑之上。
Hariyana almost punished ANFA for their missed chances through Jaswant Sharma in the 30th minute but his shot flew inches above the bar.

After a series of misses, Ganesh Khadka gave ANFA

brave defending by Naresh Pokhrel and Ravi Thapa.

Naresh Pokhrel cleared a shot from the goalmouth in the 57th minute when keeper Dinesh Thapa was beaten; Jaswant Sharma missed a clear header from close range. Ravi Thapa was denied a similar opportunity towards the end of the game.

Just when victory was within the touching distance of ANFA, Amity United equalised from a goalmouth melee through Vikram Saini in the injury time (90+3) to spell doom for ANFA, who have not been able to break their jinx of losing in penalties since the last couple of years.

ANFA boss Kishor K.C. cursed the team's bad luck in crashing out in penalties for the second time in two weeks. "We went down despite giving a tough fight," said K.C. "On both the occasions, we had the lead but could not defend it. And the referee was also not up to the mark."



Players of ANFA Academy of Nepal and Amity United of Haryana in action during their match in the All India Kalinga Knock-out Football Tournament on Monday.

POST PHOTO: AYUSH KHADKA

Ganesh Khadka headed ANFA in front in the first half. His strike was neutralised by Vikram Saini in the last minute of the injury time, taking the game into a tiebreaker. It was a mixed day for Khadka as he was denied by the upright in the shootout after Sandeep Malik, the first penalty taker of the opposing team was thwarted by goalkeeper Dinesh Thapa.

ANFA, clearly the better side

Aaha Gold Cup in Pokhara going down to top flight Nabil Three Star Club 5-4 in penalties.

Nirjan Malla had a chance to make a mark in the game as early as the sixth minute when Ganesh Khadka fed him a free header inside the penalty box. But Malla was unable to give his header a proper direction.

Minutes later, Malla again missed a simple tap-in from close range supplied by Sujal

something to cheer about in the 31st minute, planting his header in the topcorner from Sujal Shrestha's cross.

Amity United, who could seldom threaten ANFA except in the wee hours of the game, opted for a physical play but the referee was reluctant to give them any warning.

ANFA had a lackluster second half and could have gone down had it not been for some

brave defending by Naresh Pokhrel and Ravi Thapa.

Naresh Pokhrel cleared a shot from the goalmouth in the 57th minute when keeper Dinesh Thapa was beaten; Jaswant Sharma missed a clear header from close range. Ravi Thapa was denied a similar opportunity towards the end of the game.

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United's defensive excellence in recent weeks has reached record-breaking levels and they chalked up another milestone en route to a 13th consecutive clean sheet and an eighth successive win. Ferguson's back-four needed to be at their best again as West Ham made a tigerish start.

Giggs fires United back to summit

■ AFP
LONDON, FEB. 9

Manchester United hammered out a statement of intent to their title rivals as the champions returned to the top of the Premier League with a 1-0 win at West Ham on Sunday.

Sir Alex Ferguson's side had arrived in east London in second place after Liverpool's late 3-2 fightback at Portsmouth 24 hours earlier.

But United showed they have no intention of relinquishing their crown as Ryan Giggs' second half goal sent them two points clear of Rafael Benitez's second placed side.

By the time Liverpool are next in action that lead will have extended to five points if United win their game in hand against Fulham on Feb. 18. For decades Ferguson has prided himself on producing teams who dazzle with their flair, but this crop of United stars are just as happy to grind out a 1-0 victory as they are to put on a show.

Carlton Cole had a golden chance early on to show why England coach Fabio Capello had called the West Ham forward into his squad for Wednesday's friendly against Spain.

Cole had only van der Sar to beat as he surged onto David Di Michele's pass and held off Rio Ferdinand, but his attempted chip was easily stopped by the United keeper.

Edwin van der Sar into action for the first time with a low strike.

Three Star, which exerted

Nabil Three Star enter quarters

■ POST REPORT
DHARAN, FEB. 9

Captain Surendra Tamang struck two goals to guide his team to the quarterfinal of the 11th International Invitational Buda Subba Tuborg Gold Cup, on Monday. Nabil Three Star defeated Inter Sports Club of Butwal 2-0 at the Dharan Stadium. Tamang struck the first goal in the 30th minute. His second goal came in the 40th minute off Santos Gurung's pass.

Three Star, which exerted pressure right from the kick off, missed the chance to open their account in the 22nd minute when Sanjiv Budhatokhi's header could not care less the net. Likewise, Yugal Kishor Ria failed to angle his shot into the post.

Inter Sports was reduced to ten men when Sulav Jung Rana was sent off in the 60th minute for a foul against Anil Ojha.

Nepal to face UAE challenge today

■ PRATICHYA DULAL
KATHMANDU, FEB. 9

Coach Roy Dias, set on a mission to bag the ACC U-17 Elite Cup, the only age group trophy that has eluded him,

something to cheer about in the 31st minute, planting his header in the topcorner from Sujal Shrestha's cross.

ACC U-17 Elite Cup, the only age group trophy that has eluded him,

something to cheer about in the 31st minute, planting his header in the topcorner from Sujal Shrestha's cross.

Something to cheer about in the 31st minute, planting his header in the topcorner from Sujal Shrestha's cross.

of the batsmen to convert their starts was evident in the last group match against Singapore when they lost six wickets chasing 140 runs.

According to Dias, both the teams are evenly balanced and he expects better performance from his batsmen in the semi-final at the TU Ground. "UAE is a good side. It's going to be a tough match," Dias said. "I am happy with the effort of our bowlers, however, I expect the boys to bat with more sense than they have

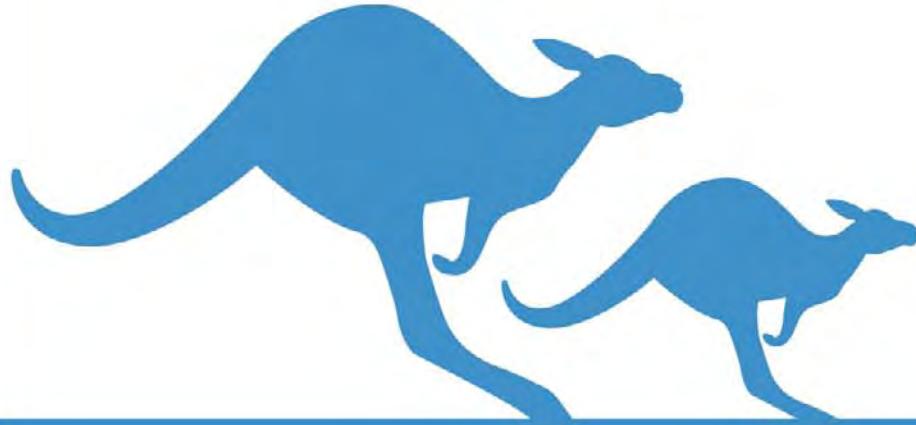
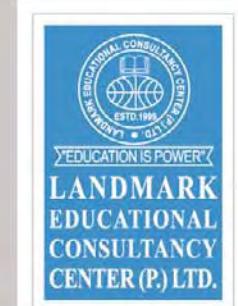
shown in the last two matches." He also expressed concern about some of the newcomers not being up to the mark in the field. "They could hinder our cause," Dias said.

UAE coach Shah Hussain, on a high after a resounding 100-run win over Kuwait in last group match, said he was confident his team would reach the final. "Apart from the match against Malaysia which we were unfortunate to lose by a wicket, we have performed well. I expect the boys to continue their good work," Hussain added,

"Like Nepal our bowlers are our assets but we have the edge as at least four of our batsmen are good enough to see off their seam and spin attack." Both the coaches said they would be comfortable defending anything between 180 to 200 runs.

Today's Matches

- Nepal Vs. UAE
TU Ground
- Malaysia Vs. Qatar
Engineering Ground



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Great escape pg IV

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BAFTA honours pg III



PHOTOS: BHIM GHIMIRE



They waited, large bundles of what they called their income source close by. Indeed, their lifeblood, for the big bundles take care of their daily needs and provide for their families.

"I have three children. My husband is a drunkard. Selling these wares is my only alternative," said Maiya Basnet, a former street vendor who is now forced to ply her trade from Khulla Manch. "Besides this business, I have no alternative means of livelihood. I don't know of any other way to survive and frankly, at this point, I don't want to look for one either."

This is a common story of those who stand with their bundles inside the Khulla Manch for 3 pm to arrive so that they can start unpacking for their work.

Street hawking has been illegal in Nepal for 16 years, yet the number of street vendors is only growing. "Every unemployed person opts for this profession. In fact, this profession has become a part time job for most. They earn their living working at other places and take to the streets for a few extra bucks," said Min Thapa, the controller of the mid-region of the One-way-street at Bhadrakali. "The government has issued strict orders to keep the vendors off the streets. The law has always been there. The difference is that now, it is enforced strictly," he said.

It was nearly a year ago that the government started its crackdown on street vendors. Anyone caught in the act was captured and his possessions confiscated. The issue had generated quite a furore back then. Eventually, the special committee of the street vendors that led the protests for their rights struck an agreement with the government, allowing them to work at certain places at the given time.

Says Madan Kafle, a shoe-seller at Khulla Manch, "We are allowed to work only after 5 pm. That doesn't give us more than two hours of non-stop work, hardly enough to make a

decent profit."

Giving a lie to government employee Min Thapa's assertion that the street business is a part-time job for those involved in it, the vendors have a different tale to tell: one of hardship and countless struggles.

"I am a resident of Teku. I come here at Khulla Manch every morning to sell oranges. This new regulation has created a lot of problems in my life. My business had fallen by 75 percent. Few people enter Khulla Manch, and even fewer buy something," said Yashodha Mali. "Only God and I know how I manage to feed my four children who are without their father.



Off the frying pan into the fire

Sometimes, I cry myself hoarse calling out prospective buyers at New Road, sometimes I am doing my business on overhead bridges. But soon as I see a cop, I have to make a run."

Once the metropolitan police confiscate their goods, says Yashodha, it is very difficult to get them back. "Moreover, they don't return half of what they take. They took away all the clothes of one of my friends, but didn't return any. It's unfair. But what can we do?"

"Nothing like that happens," says Min Thapa. "There are certain rules which all of us have to abide by. It's not that the street vendors don't get it. We know they have

lots of problems. Rest assured, we don't take any punitive action against them unless they break the law."

When a person is caught selling things ahead of the allocated time or doing business in restricted areas, their possessions are taken away either to Bagikhana, Putalisadak or the Metropolitan City Office, Sundhara. The fines depend on the kind and amount of things captured. "For instance, if we capture 25 shirts, we charge their owners 30 percent of the value. And while we capture the goods, we give the vendors time to check the condition of the stuff being taken away."

It has to be acknowledged that while they were out on the road, street vendors were creating many

hassles for pedestrians and obstructing vehicular movement while also producing a considerable amount of garbage. Says Meera Mahara, a Safa tempo driver, "Parking was a big problem. Especially during the festival time, with street vendors occupying half the road, there was just no space for us to park. Hence I would say that keeping them off the roads was among the erstwhile government's best moves."

Sanju Das, the owner of Birendra Pan Shop, concurs. "I run this pan shop paying Rs. 6,000 in rents every month, but the street vendors plied their trade just beneath my shop, absolutely free of cost. I kept telling them to keep off. Not only did they disturb my work but also hampered my sales. Their only answer when I asked them to leave was 'You don't own the street'. I didn't but neither did they. Thankfully, they are now off the streets."

The street vendors are aware that their work, which brings anywhere in range of Rs 200-300 into their kitty every day, is not looked upon favourably. But what is the alternative? they ask. "In a country where even those who are educated have to fly abroad, we don't stand a chance. There are hardly any job opportunities. If we do find one, it will be washing dishes at restaurants or other menial jobs that don't pay well. It is difficult to survive in the expensive capital," said Gyan Bahadur Basnet. "People need to understand our plight."

"Street vendors are everywhere, even in some of world's most developed countries. The problem is that selective justice has become the norm in Nepal. If they have laws for street-walkers, they should have one for us too. But our plight isn't even considered. The government should at least arrange a place for us so that we don't have to roam around."

■ PALLABI SINHA



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Robert Plant And Alison Krauss Win Grammy Album Of The Year

"I'm bewildered," Robert Plant said onstage as he accepted the Grammy Album of the Year award with Alison Krauss on Sunday night. "In the old days we would have called this selling out, but it's a good way to spend a Sunday."

He was probably one of the few who were surprised, because *Raising Sand*, which won five trophies at Sunday night's show, is in many ways the perfect Grammy album. It features two respected veterans, a critically lauded producer, some sandpaper-and-velvet vocals and a baker's dozen of time-tested standards.

You're probably familiar with Robert Plant from his Led Zeppelin days, and you might be aware of producer T-Bone Burnett's work on the "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" soundtrack (it won the Grammy for Album of the Year in 2002). And if you don't know who Alison Krauss is, she possesses a haunting set of

pipes and is one of the meanest fiddle players in the world. Oh, and she's won 21 Grammys, more than any other female artist and the seventh-most in history.

Really, she's the key to *Sand*'s success, and not just because of her voice (or her fiddle playing). She and Plant first met in 2004, at a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame tribute to legendary bluesman Leadbelly, and the former Zeppelin man was amazed by her knowledge of American Roots music - so



much so that they began kicking around the idea of recording an album together. Three years later, *Sand* was released.

And while Plant possesses the more famous voice, the album's finest moments radiate from Krauss. Whether she's getting bluesy on Little Milton's "Let Your Loss Be Your Lesson" or entwining with Plant's husky voice on songs like "Please Read the Letter" and Roly Salley's winsome "Killing the Blues," she more than carries her end of the bargain.

And perhaps that's also due to producer Burnett, who hand-picked the 13 songs the duo cover on *Sand*. His arrangements are sparse - giving the two voices ample room to breathe - yet dense, warm and crackling at the same time. It's a testament to his work that he's often given just as much billing as Plant and Krauss on the project ... and it's certainly justified.



To date, *Sand* has sold more than 1 million copies, heaped tons of acclaim and actually earned a Grammy last year. "Gone Gone Gone (Done Moved On)" took home the award for Best Pop Collaboration With Vocals.

One expert was surprised not by the album's success, but by the fact that it's actually quite a good album.

"At first, the album seemed like a vanity project ... Two names, clearly a one-off record, didn't have to be any good, you know?" *New York Times* music critic Jon Caramanica said. "Led Zeppelin fans would buy it because of Robert Plant, Alison Krauss would get a check. But it actually turned out to be a really thoughtful, really good record. So when you combine all that with the fact that the Grammys love to lionize one of their own, I could really see it taking home some awards." (Agencies)

GRAMMY AWARD WINNERS

- Record Of The Year- Please Read The Letter (Robert Plant & Alison Krauss)
- Album of The Year- Raising Sand (Robert Plant & Alison Krauss)
- Song Of The Year- Viva La Vida (Coldplay)
- Best New Artist- Adele
- Best Female Pop Vocal Performance- Chasing Pavements (Adele)
- Best Male Pop Vocal Performance- Say (John Mayer)
- Best Pop Performance By A Duo Or Group With Vocals- Viva La Vida (Coldplay)
- Best Female Country Vocal Performance- Last Name (Carrie Underwood)
- Best Male Country Vocal Performance- Letter To Me (Brad Paisley)
- Best Country Performance By A Duo Or Group With Vocals- Stay (Sugarland)
- Best Urban/Alternative Performance- Be OK (Christie Michele Featuring will.i.am)
- Best Rap Album- Tha Carter III (Lil Wayne)
- Best Rap Song- Lollipop (Lil Wayne Featuring Static Major)
- Best Rap Solo Performance- A Milli (Lil Wayne)
- Best Rap/Sung Collaboration- American Boy (Estelle Featuring Kanye West)
- Best R&B Song- Miss Independent
- Best Female R&B Vocal Performance- Superwoman (Alicia Keys)
- Best Male R&B Vocal Performance- Miss Independent (Ne-Yo)
- Best R&B Performance By A Duo Or Group With Vocals- Stay With Me (By The Sea) Al Green Featuring John Legend
- Best R&B Album- Jennifer Hudson (Jennifer Hudson)
- Best Urban/Alternative Performance- Be OK (Christie Michele Featuring will.i.am)

Busy V-Day for Katrina and Salman

Katrina Kaif and Salman Khan won't be together this Valentine's Day, unless one of them decides to surprise the other.

The love birds will be thousands of miles from each other on February 14. Katrina would be shooting Rajkumar Santoshi's film *Ajab Prem Ki Ghazab Kahani* with Ranbir Kapoor in Turkey, while Salman would be filming *Veer* in North India.

Apparently, the two lovers have decided to give their work precedence over their hearts this V-Day.

And though Katrina's being with Ranbir and

Rahman bags BAFTA

Indian music composer A R Rahman won the BAFTA award in the Best Music Score category for *Slumdog Millionaire* on Sunday evening in



London.

Rahman's winning streak continues. After scooping the Golden Globe in January, the music wizard has now bagged the award which is considered the British Oscars.

Besides Rahman, India's Resul Pookutty received the prize for the best sound for the same film along with Glenn Freemantle, Richard Pryke, Tom Sayers and Ian Tapp.

Directed by Danny Boyle, '*Slumdog Millionaire*' had 11 Bafta nominations and it won prizes for best film, best director, original screenplay, music, cinematography, editing and sound.

However, the film's 18-year-old star Dev Patel lost to Mickey Rourke (*The Wrestler*) in the best actor category.

Rahman, has three Oscar nominations - one for Best Score and two for his songs 'O Saya' and 'Jai Ho'. (Agencies)

BORN TODAY



American singer, Roberta Flack is 72.

- Canadian pop singer, Natasha St-Pier is 28.
- American actress, Laura Elizabeth Dern is 42.
- French singer, Maxime Le Forestier is 60.
- American film and television actor, Robert John Wagner is 79.

Saif and Kareena kiss on screen!

The jodi of Saif and Kareena will be seen locking lips in their forthcoming film by Karan Johar's Dharma Productions.

The movie is the first where Saif Ali Khan is romantically paired with Kareena Kapoor. Directed by Rensil D'Silva who shot to fame with Rang De Basanti (as writer), the movie is based on terrorism.

According to sources, the kissing scene between Saif and Bebo was shot last week and is part of a song. During the shoot, however, the couple was a bit apprehensive, but the director had a talk with



Saif convinced him. Later, Bebo, too, agreed to give the onscreen liplock with beau a shot.

Kareena, who is riding

high on being a youth icon, doing big flicks and bagging bountiful of endorsements, has kissed many of her co-stars on screen. She

(Agencies)

Bafta Film Awards 2009: The winners

It may be time for us all to stop thinking of Britain's Baftas primarily as a healthy alternative to America's Oscars. Sunday night's ceremony at London's Royal Opera House proved that the Baftas are currently by far the more interesting awards.

In a display of good taste and independent judgement, Bafta's 6,000 voters - industry professionals every one - delivered some intriguing, heartening results.

Most eye-catching and gladdening of all was the award for outstanding British film to James Marsh's brilliant documentary *Man on Wire*. It was the perfect winner: thoughtful, impeccably assembled -- and funded in Britain by the UK Film Council.

Now, thanks to being exposed to millions of people watching the BAFTAs on TV, *Man on Wire* has a real chance of being widely seen, on DVD.

Equally encouraging was artist Steve McQueen, making his big-screen debut, winning the Carl Foreman special achievement award for his uncompromising film *Hunger*, about IRA hunger strikers in the Maze prison.

And you have to love the fact that the British public voted Noel Clarke as this year's Orange rising star. He may be best known as Doctor Who's Mickey Smith, but he is also an accomplished screenwriter and director (*Adulthood*, *Kidulthood*) who deserves this public boost.

There was also a thoughtful touch in giving one award to the costume drama *The Duchess* - appropriately for costume design. That felt well judged.

As for the 'major' awards, it was a relief that Kate Winslet has now put her acceptance speech problems behind her and remains the lead actress to beat at any awards ceremony.

Of her two performances in film this year, The Bafta voters opted for the right one: her work in *The Reader* has clearly burned itself on our collective memories in a manner *Revolutionary Road* has not. Winslet can now look forward to the Oscars with justified optimism.

1. Best film- Slumdog Millionaire

2. Best British film- Man on Wire

3. Leading actor- Mickey Rourke (*The Wrestler*)

4. Leading actress- Kate Winslet (*The Reader*)

5. Supporting actor- Heath Ledger (*The Dark Knight*)

6. Supporting actress- Penelope Cruz (Vicky Cristina Barcelona)

7. Director- Danny Boyle (*Slumdog Millionaire*)

8. Original screenplay- In Bruges

9. Film not in the English language- I've Loved You So Long

10. Animated film - Wall-E

11. Music- Slumdog Millionaire (A.R Rahman)

12. Cinematography- Slumdog Millionaire (Anthony Dod Mantle)

13. The Orange Rising Star Award (voted for by the public) - Noel Clarke

to the limelight of director Danny Boyle, who never stopped making well-crafted films, but without this degree of commercial success.

Elsewhere, the BAFTA voters resisted the siren call of Hollywood studio spin doctors. The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, heavily nominated, only won three awards, all in technical categories. Fair enough. And clearly, though *Frost/Nixon* and *Doubt* look like awards bait, no-one likes them quite enough to make them more than worthy nominees.

The same is true of Milk - though it's baffling that Sean Penn's stunning lead performance in the film was nudged



The night's big winner, *Slumdog Millionaire*, which aside by Mickey Rourke's big performance in *The Wrestler*.

One final pleasing aspect to the BAFTAs: here is a ceremony that can be edited down to two hours of TV time, and not a minute more. Thank goodness for that. The sprawling, interminable Oscars have much to learn.

(Agencies)

साप्ताहिक

सर्वाधिक विक्री तुले

Roberta Flack is 72.

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