



# THE KATHMANDU POST

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Pietersen steps down as England captain Pg 8

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Bruce Lee's HK home to get facelift City III

16-hr-day power cut to greet nation soon

**PRAGATI SHAH**

KATHMANDU, JAN. 7  
Citing significant differences in the demand and supply of power, Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) is planning to increase the load shedding hours to 16 hours a day in a couple of days, much earlier than projected.

Earlier, NEA authorities had predicted this increase in early February after the water volume in rivers started to recede significantly. Now, electricity consumers in the country are facing daily load shedding up to 12 hours.

According to an official at NEA System Operations Department of NEA, the load shedding hours are likely to jump further after power generation from Kali Gandaki 'A', decreased by more than 60 percent. "The 144-MW Kali Gandaki 'A' is generating only 60 MW now a days and power generation is expected to decrease to 50-MW in the coming days," a source added. Likewise, the 60-MW Khimti Hydro Electric Project is only generating 18-MW.

Meanwhile, the water level at Kulekhani Reservoir is at its lowest ever.

"NEA is doing homework to increase load shedding to 16 hours a day in a couple of days, though the official announcement date has not yet been decided," according to the source. Officials at the Systems Operation Department said they had started to increase the power outage to 16 hours a day from Thursday as the deficit of units is too high to handle.

According to NEA, the daily demand of power is 500-MW in the day time and 800-MW in evening. However, the supply is only 320-MW including the power imported from India.

On Tuesday, the water level went down by 30-35 centimetres in Kulekhani Reservoir while the level of water to be used from the Reservoir should be only 10 centimetres to generate electricity from Kulekhani till April.

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## PM revokes Pashupati appointments

**POST B. BASNET**  
KATHMANDU, JAN. 7

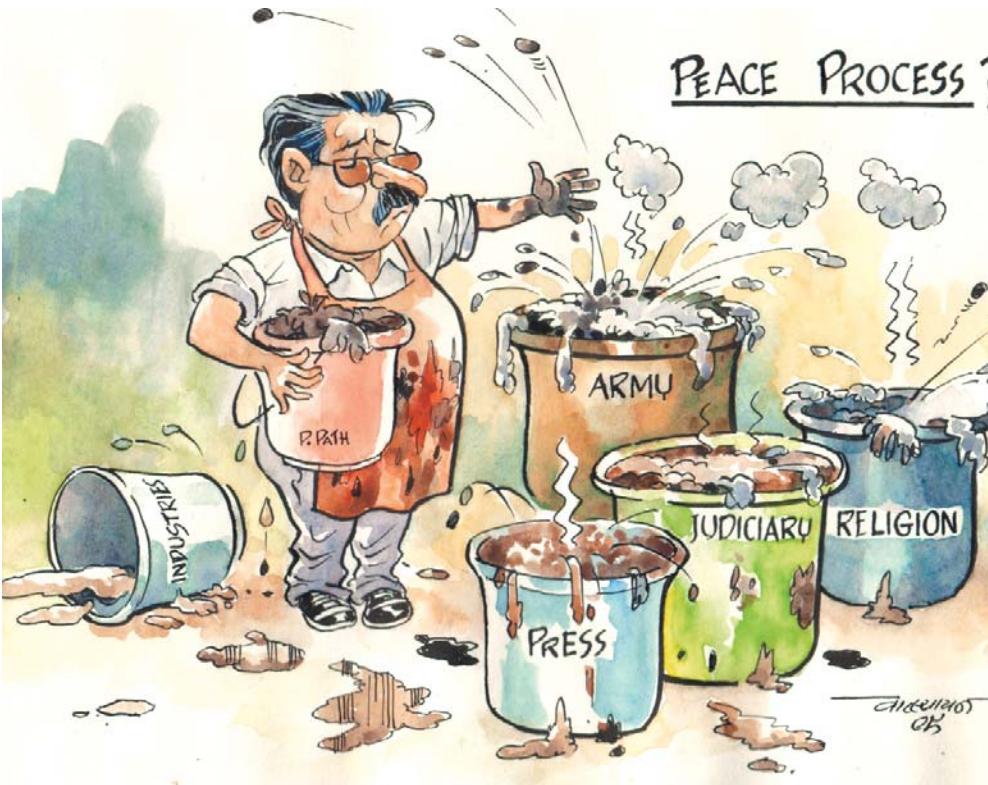
In a twist to the ongoing controversy surrounding the appointment of Nepali priests at Pashupatinath temple, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal on Wednesday scrapped all the decisions, including the appointment of new priests, taken by the Pashupatinath Area Development Trust (PADT).

**"I have directed PADT to recommend name list of priests for appointment. Appointment of new priests will be transparent."**

"In my capacity as prime minister and PADT patron, I have decided to approve the resignation tendered by old priests (Indian priests) and revoked the appointment of new ones (Nepali priests)," Dahal said while addressing the Legislature-Parliament on Wednesday.

"I honour the Supreme Court order and have directed the PADT to manage normal worship at the temple by the same Indian priests for the time being," Dahal said. The SC on last Thursday had issued an interim order to the government asking the latter to assign the same Indian priests the task of performing daily worship at the temple.

Stating that the appointment of Nepali priests has sent shockwaves even in India, Dahal said he has directed PADT to recommend a name list of priests to him for appointment. He said new priests at the temple will be



**BIMAL GAUTAM**  
KATHMANDU, JAN. 7

The Supreme Court (SC) on Monday ordered the government to return all lands and properties seized by Maoists to the rightful owners in three months.

The apex court has directed the government to form district level mechanisms comprising parties' representatives, victims and legal experts to identify lands and properties under Maoist occupation and make arrangements for their restitution accordingly.

Lands and properties seized by Maoists has time and again

been a major issue among political parties since the beginning of the peace process.

The joint bench of Justices Min Bahadur Rayamajhi and Kalyan Shrestha issued the fiat to the government following a writ petition at the apex court by 44 families of Dang, Bardia and Salyan districts claiming that over 160 hectares of their land was still under Maoist occupation.

Although cases of confiscation of private lands and properties by Maoist cadres are widespread, the government has so far failed to prepare the exact record of seized assets.

The government's repeated pledge to return Maoist-seized lands and properties also seem hollow thus far.

Opposition Nepali Congress (NC) and coalition partner CPN-UML, who have been pressing the government and the Maoist leadership to return seized lands and properties, have welcomed the SC's order.

"The SC directive has now exerted legal pressure on the Maoist-led government, which has been renegeing on past commitment to return seized lands and properties," said Arjun Narsingh KC, NC spokesman.

CPN (Maoist) Spokesman Dinanath Sharma said the SC's order and the government's commitment to return seized lands and properties in three months have come as anticipated and coincidentally on the same day.

"The apex court directive will help the government implement the task of returning seized lands and properties," he said.

Later on Wednesday, speaking at the Constituent Assembly, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal said the seized properties would be returned in three months.

Govt pledge to address Congress demands

**POST REPORT**  
KATHMANDU, JAN. 7

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal on Wednesday reiterated that the government would implement the agreements reached with the Nepali Congress, amend the scholarship bill, and maintain law and order.

Expressing concern over disruption of the Legislature-Parliament by political parties, he said the main issue — making of the new constitution — has been overshadowed by other issues. He appealed to political parties to seek other means instead of disrupting the House to solve problems. After three weeks of disruption — first by Nepali Congress, and then fringe political parties — the House resumed on Wednesday.

The prime minister expressed commitment to implement the nine-point agreement reached with Nepali Congress, the main opposition in parliament.

The NC had disrupted parliament and withdrawn its protest after the prime minister agreed to address the parliament making a commitment to meet NC's demands and establish a mechanism to monitor whether the government was sincerely implementing its commitments.

Nepali Congress demands included returning Maoist-seized properties within three months and disbanding the paramilitary structure of the Maoist youth wing — Young Communist League.

The prime minister said the government has already initiated the process of returning seized properties captured by the sister organisations of various political parties to the rightful owners.

(Contd on Pg 3)

## PM to head army integration panel

**POST REPORT**  
KATHMANDU, JAN. 7

The cabinet meeting on Wednesday decided that Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal will head the eight-member Army Integration Special Committee. The Committee will have two members each from CPN (Maoist), Nepali Congress, CPN-UML and Madhesi Janadhikar Forum.

The Nepali Congress had refused to join the earlier committee headed by Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Bam Dev Gautam saying it wanted equal representation as the Maoists. The Maoists had two members in the committee and the three other parties one member each.

A decision on the appointment of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) governor could not be made as Maoists and UML could not agree on a name. Sources said UML wanted its candidate to either be (NRB) governor or

vice-chairman of National Planning Commission.

Three names had been proposed for the post of governor by a three-member committee headed by

**"The army integration committee will have two members each from CPN (Maoist), NC, UML and MJF."**

Finance Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai. The names proposed were Dipendra Bahadur Chettri, Shreeram Poudel and Bir Bikram Rayamajhi. Chettri was considered the front-runner for the post.

"The Prime Minister will hold discussions with UML to agree on a name," said Minister of Commerce and Supplies Rajendra Mahato after

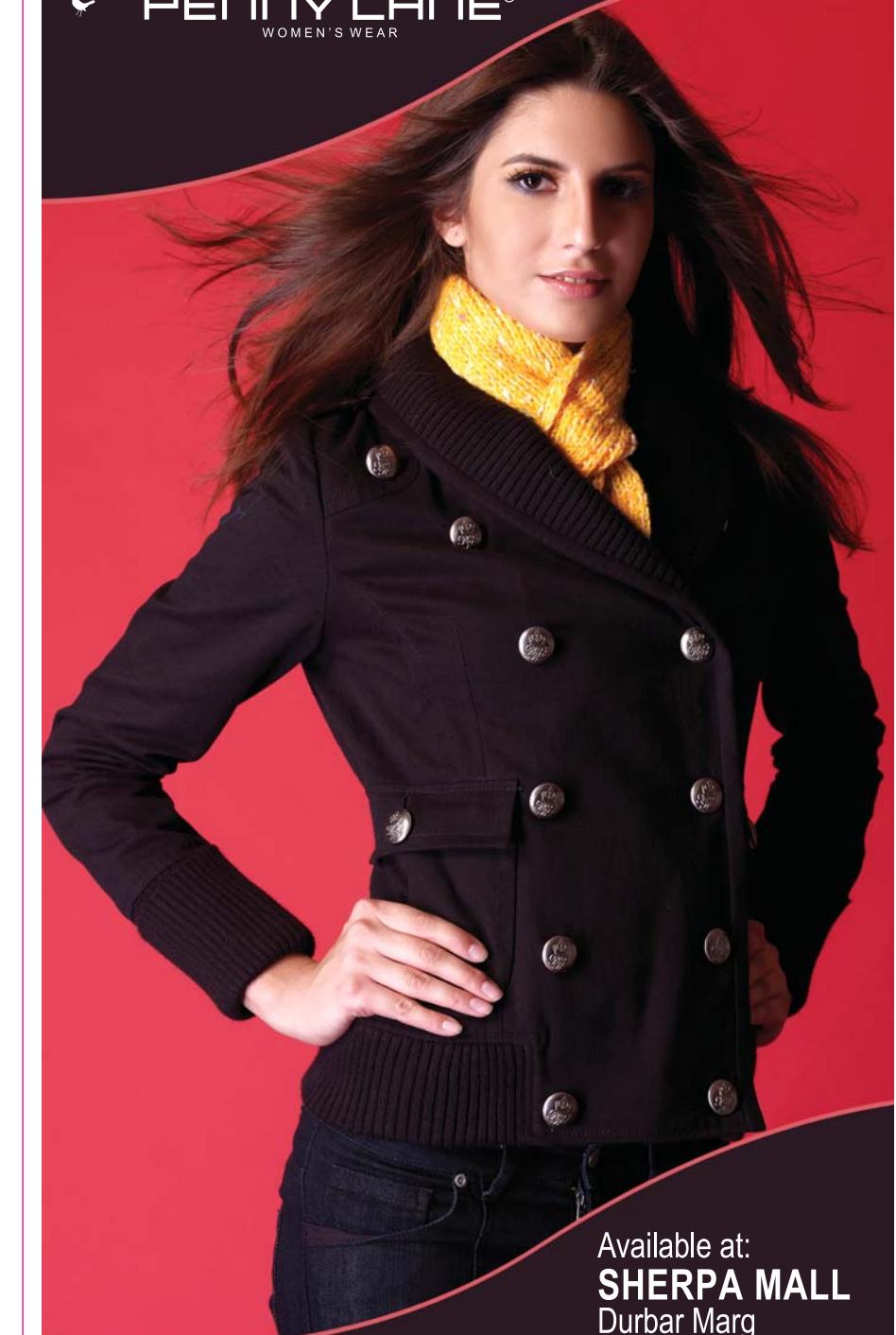
the meeting held late Wednesday.

The government has also formed a commission under the convenorship of the minister of land reforms to address issues related to freed kamaiyas. Prime Minister Dahal has been looking after the land reforms portfolio since the resignation of Matrika Yadav as minister for land reforms and management a few months back.

As per the demands of the Badi community, the cabinet also decided to declare the community free of sexual exploitation and to introduce a bill in the legislature parliament to address agreements reached with the community.

The cabinet discussed declaring schools zones of peace but did not make a decision. Likewise, the decision to make factories and highways zones of peace to free them of strikes and obstructions will be taken in the next cabinet meeting, according to sources.

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## Midwives paid half at daughters' birth

**BECHU GAUD**

NAVALPARASI, JAN. 7

Sixty-five-year-old Champa Harijan returned home haplessly on Sunday. She was neither in an agony of her own nor misbehaved by any others.

A baby girl was born on the very day in her neighbourhood and therefore she had reason to be sad and gloomy.

"A daughter was born. And I was paid half of my normal wage," said Champa, a midwife involved in the delivery, with a sigh.

It has been the standard rate to pay 100 rupees to the midwife

involved if the expecting mother gives birth to a baby boy. However, the midwife is paid only half the wage to midwives when the newborn child is a girl.

"We have to work equally hard whether it is a son or a daughter. Why is there discrimination in the wages?" she fumed.

According to Champa, who has been working as a midwife for the past 40 years, one and all becomes happy if the mother is fortunate enough to give birth to a baby boy. "They get angry with the midwife and the mother in the case of a baby girl," she added.

It has been the standard rate to pay 100 rupees to the midwife

Gore Kami of Ramgram Municipality-isaid that it has been the law in the area to pay only half the wage to midwives when daughters are born.

"The news of a daughter's birth makes us anxious as the burden of dowry crosses our minds," said Gore. He also paid Rs 50 to the midwife four months ago when his wife gave birth to a daughter. He, however, reminisced that he had paid Rs 100 to the midwife and hosted a feast as well when he became the father of a son three years back.

"We are provided in cash, clothes and valuables when the

expecting mothers give birth to sons," said another midwife Murati Harjjan.

She further claimed that the new born baby, postnatal mother and midwife were all ill-treated whenever birth of daughters happen.

"My hubby and mother-in-law did not provide me enough food even during the postnatal period simply because I gave birth to a girl child," said a woman from Rampur. She claimed that the deeply rooted dowry system in Madhesh is mainly to blame for such kind of discriminations being prevalent.

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**NOT ALL FUN AND GAMES:** Carrying loads of firewood, children of Khalle heading to Diktel bazaar, Khotang, on Wednesday. Foraging wood and selling it in market is a way to earn money for many students here. POST PHOTO: DAMBAR SINGH RAI

## SSB camp in Nepali territory

POST REPORT

ILAM, JAN. 7

Seema Suraksha Bal (SSB), India's paramilitary force deployed along Nepal-India border, has set up camp encroaching Nepali territory at Antu VDC-8 in Ilam district.

SSB has reportedly occupied about one hectare Nepali territory at Chhabbise area of Antu VDC. The SSB fenced the area to construct a permanent camp there after Sukiya Range Post of India provided them the land.

A Nepali team, including representatives of the local administration, security agency, political parties among others, visited the border area for field inspection on Tuesday.

Political parties also drew the government's attention to the issue.

Assistant Chief District Officer Rebatiraman Pokhrel urged the SSB in-charge J.S. Serawat to halt construction of the camp immediately.

Serawat, the chief of 29th SSB Post, said the range post measured the land though they were well informed about this. "We informed them that it was no man's land and Nepali territory. But the range post told us to set up camp claiming it was Indian territory," he added.

## Koshi flood victims turn down govt aid

■ SHANKAR KHAREL

SUNSARI, JAN. 7

Koshi victims have turned down the government proposed 480-million-rupee rehabilitation package saying that the sum was too paltry.

The government had recently decided to provide a lump sum of Rs. 50,000 each to displaced families willing to return home. But the Koshi Flood Victims Struggle Committee has said it will not accept the government proposed "sum."

"The money is not enough to rehabilitate around 6,000 flood displaced families," said Pancha Narayan Mandal, coordinator of the committee. He said the government must provide at least Rs. 200,000 to each displaced family for rehabilitation and also release separate compensation package to cover the loss incurred in the Aug. 18 flood.

Flood displaced families are currently taking shelter inside various government managed camps in Sunsari and Saptari. Among the displaced, around 15,000 are said to be Indian citizens. With the aim of

returning Indian flood displaced back home, the government has decided to provide Rs. 4,500 and food to last each family for a month.

### Embankments repair hit again

Reconstruction and repair works of flood damaged embankments at the Koshi have halted after the contractor company failed to pay five million rupees that it owes to the company that had been providing construction equipment on lease. Hundreds of labourers working at the Koshi reconstruction site have started to return home after the shutdown. Sunsari CDO Durga Bhandari said efforts are on to resolve the row. Indian contractor Vasistha and Vasistha is supposed to complete repair works by Jan. 28.

### Operators, passengers clash

Seven persons were hurt in a clash between ferry operators and passengers in Sunsari, Wednesday. The scuffle ensued after ferry operators reportedly demanded excessive fare from passengers. Police held 16 involved in the clash.

# NC: Share local body pie

## POST REPORT

KATHMANDU, JAN. 7

The main opposition party in the Legislature-Parliament Nepali Congress (NC) has suggested to the government that seats at local bodies be shared among 25 political parties on the basis of percentage of votes they secured in the Constituent Assembly (CA) elections under the proportional representation (PR) electoral system.

NC's suggestion comes at a time when major coalition partners — the CPN

(Maoist) and CPN-UML — have intensified internal homework to fill local bodies — 75 District Development Committees, 58 municipalities and around 4,000 VDCs — that remained vacant for over six years.

According to NC leader Dr. Prakash Sharad Mahat, while holding a meeting with the Minister for Local Development Ram Chandra Jha on Wednesday, NC leaders said it would be appropriate to share seats at the local bodies on the basis of the seats that political parties had secured in the CA election under the first-past-the-post electoral system or

that political parties had bagged under the PR system in the CA.

"Minister Jha is positive toward our suggestions as his party the UML has a similar view in this regard," Mahat said.

Meanwhile, a source

informed that Maoists have

been insisting with other

political parties to accept its

proposal to share seats at the

local bodies on the basis of

the seats that political par-

ties had secured in the CA

election under the first-pas-

the-post electoral system or

the party should be given 49 district coordinators.

It may be recalled that Maoists had secured 120 seats out of 240 seats allocated under direct election and around 29 percent votes under the PR system, while the NC and UML had secured 22 and 21 percent votes respectively under the PR electoral system.

The Maoist and UML had formed a four-member panel to work out appointment of representatives at the local bodies by mid-January.

## NEWSLINE

### Indian assistance

KATHMANDU: India has provided a grant assistance of NRS. 24.07 million to build a new school building of Shree Saraswati Higher Secondary School and Rs. 29.91 million for rural electrification project in 12 VDCs in Sindhupalchok. These are part of more than 300 large and small projects currently being implemented under the India-Nepal Economic Cooperation Programme, according to a statement of the Embassy of India issued on Wednesday. The statement said that Indian aid has focused on education, health, community development and infrastructure covering all districts of Nepal with an outlay of over NRS. 24 billions.

### Four rapists released

RAUTAHAT: Four accused, who had been serving jail terms on rape charges, were recently freed under the terms of amnesty. Domi Raya Yadav of Dipahi-8, Jadolal Paswan of Karuniya-5, Pramod Hobhi and Ramnath Sah of Karmaiya-3 had been released three weeks ago as per the verdict of District Court. They were held on the charge of gang rape after the victim lodged a complaint against them. The government on Oct. 27 had directed the court to withdraw all cases filed till Nov. 21, 2006.

### Two children rescued

NEPALGUNJ: The District Child Welfare Board (DCWB) of Banke rescued two minors on Wednesday who were working as domestic help under appalling conditions. The board rescued Sarmila, 11, and Manisha, 9, respectively from the houses of Ratan Rawal and Mausham KC at Surkhetroad. The DCWB has recently cracked down against those still keeping children as domestic help. Banke was declared a child labour free district last year.

### JTMM-R talks team

LAHAN: Janatantrik Tarai Mukti Morcha of Rajan Mukti faction, an underground armed outfit, made public its three-member talks team here in Siraha on Wednesday. Rajiv Jha has been named as the coordinator while other JTMM leaders — Manoj Jha and Ramshovit Yadav — are the other two members of the team. "It (dialogue) is just another form of struggle but our fight hasn't ceased," said Jha. He also threatened that they would return to violence if the talks failed. Of the various armed outfits, Rajan Mukti's JTMM faction has been lately violent against businessmen and civil servants.

### Heist suspect nabbed

PARS: Police on Wednesday arrested Om Bahadur Karki in connection with the Rastrya Banjya Bank (RBB) heist and murder that occurred Sunday night. Karki had served at the Sindhuli district branch of RBB until a month ago, and is now serving as a guard at the RBB Sripur branch in Birgunj. Taking advantage of load shedding hours, a gang of armed looters murdered Ganesh Shrestha, a guard at RBB's district branch, and made off with Rs. 4 million. (PR)

## Pokhara hotels stay shut

### POST REPORT

POKHARA, JAN. 7

Hotel and restaurant workers have stopped work for an indefinite period in Pokhara from Wednesday demanding that tourism entrepreneurs give workers the minimum wage of Rs. 4,600.

Most hotels and restaurants in Lakeside area were closed, leaving hundreds of tourists stranded. Tourists were seen roaming in search of bakeries looking for something to eat.

"The restaurants were found closed when we went there for meal," said a tourist, adding that their visit to Pokhara had been quite difficult due to the restaurant closure.

The hotel and restaurant entrepreneurs said that the protest might convey a negative message for the tourism sector of the country.

"Banda never solves problems. The demands of the protestors can be solved through peaceful," said Bachchu Tiwari,

chairman of Pokhara Tourism Council. He, however, said that the minimum wage could not be implemented immediately as hotels and restaurants are unable to run their businesses well due to the prevailing power cuts.

Chairman of All Nepal Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union, Rajendra Timilsina, said that the workers spontaneously halted their work since the entrepreneurs refused to implement the minimum wage announcement.

## UML yet to find friend in Maoist

### POST REPORT

KATHMANDU, JAN. 7

Leaders of the CPN-UML on Wednesday criticised CPN (Maoist)'s recent activities and stressed the need to review the collaboration with the Maoist party.

Some leaders also said the UML should not refer to the Maoist party as a 'friend'. Commenting on the political report of General Secretary Jhala Nath Khanal, some 10 central committee members said the report was too 'soft' towards the Maoist.

Central leaders Prakash Jwala, Shankher Pokhrel, Beduram Bhusal, Pushpa Kandel, Guru Baral, Devraj Ghimire, Hemraj Rai, Bishnu Rimal, Surendra Pandey and Urbaddatta Pant deliberated on the political report.

All leaders, who spoke on Wednesday, lambasted the Maoist party. They said that UML should make it clear whether it wants to continue collaboration with it," said UML standing committee member Pradip Nepal.

Suggestions given by CC members will be incorporated in the final political report, which will be presented at the UML's eighth national convention scheduled for Feb. 16.

## VACANCY

Rural Economic Development Association (REDA), a nongovernmental organization is operating a Regional Renewable Energy Service Centre (RRESC), in Palpa, of Alternative Energy Promotion Center/Energy Sector Assistance Programme (AEPC/ESAP). The Center provides facilitation supports to ESAP supported activities in Palpa, Argakhanchi, Gulmi, Syangja districts. Applications are invited from the qualified candidate for the following position to work for micro/mini-hydropower activities.

### Engineer

Interested candidates should have:

- Engineering degree in relevant field with some experience in micro/mini-hydropower.
- Should have sound health and willingness to undertake extensive site works/visits.
- Ability to write reports in English and use computer.

**Terms of Employment:** The term of employment shall be initially for a three month period as probation with possibility of extension depending upon the performance and funding availability. Other terms and conditions shall be as per the REDA's rules and regulations.

Please send a complete CV and a passport size photo with contact email/telephone number not later than January 23, 2009. Only those who are short listed shall be invited for an interview. The result of the selection shall be done at the same day of interview and the selected candidate needs to participate in the orientation programme from the next day.

Women, Dalit and qualified candidates from the local area are strongly encouraged to apply.

**Executive Director**  
Rural Economic Development Association (REDA)  
Tansen-4, Bishalbazar, Palpa  
Phone No. 075-521610/520365  
Email: reda\_plp@ntc.net.np

## Request for Expression of Interest

### (CONSULTANT SERVICES)

**Country:** Nepal  
**Project:** Financial Sector Technical Assistance Project (FSTAP)  
**Financing:** World Bank (DFID Grant)  
**Abstract:** Management Consulting Services- The CEO for Nepal Bank Limited  
**Credit/Grant No.:** Cr.3727-NEP & DFID Grant TF 050593  
**Project ID No.:** P071291  
**Expression of Interest No.:** NCB/NRB-01/2009

1. The Government of Nepal has received a credit of an amount equivalent to USD 16 million and a DFID grant of an amount equivalent to USD 10 million towards the cost of the Financial Sector Technical Assistance Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consultant services. The services include the management services for the continuation of restructuring of Nepal Bank Limited.  
2. Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), Banks and Financial Institution Regulation Department, Financial Sector Technical Assistance Project (FSTAP) hereby invites eligible Nepalese consultants to submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) for the post of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for providing the management services to Nepal Bank Limited (NBL) as described in the Terms of Reference (TOR) available at Nepal Rastra Bank's website [www.nrb.org.np](http://www.nrb.org.np).  
3. Interested Nepalese consultants having desired qualifications, experiences and adherence to the "Terms and Conditions" (available at NRB website) are requested to submit Expression of Interest (EOI) along with a curriculum vitae and self-declaration documents/statements stating that they are interested and qualified to perform the services.  
4. The consultant will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's "Guidelines for Selection and Employment of consultants by the World Bank Borrowers, Revised October 2006". The copy can be obtained from the Nepal Rastra Bank.  
5. Interested consultants may obtain further information at the address below during office hours: 10:00 to 16:00 hours.  
6. Expression of Interest with qualifications and experiences must be delivered to the address below by **January 20, 2009**.  
7. Nepal Rastra Bank reserves the right to accept or reject the expression of interest submitted in this regard.

**Contact:**  
Nepal Rastra Bank, Central Office  
Attn: Narayan Prasad Paudel, Director  
Bank and Financial Institution Regulation Department  
Financial Sector Technical Assistance Project  
Nepal Rastra Bank, Baluwatar, Kathmandu  
Telephone: 977-01-4439925  
Facsimile: 977-01-4414552  
E-mail: [nppaudel@nrb.org.np](mailto:nppaudel@nrb.org.np)  
Web site: [www.nrb.org.np](http://www.nrb.org.np)

## TENDER NOTICE

Date of first Publication : 5th January, 2009

Sealed tenders are invited from Government VAT holding Manufacturer/Dealer/Suppliers/Cloth Merchant and VAT holding General Suppliers & Traders for the supply of clothing materials of following tenders of Caritas Nepal, Sub-Officer Damak-11, Jhapa, Nepal

- |                                 |               |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Tender I (White Shirtting)   | 40,000 Meters |
| 2. Tender II (Navy Blue Suring) | 36,000 Meters |

Both tenders shall be sold from the following offices from 5th January to 20th January 2009 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm excluding Saturday and Sunday. The cost of Tender I is Rs. 2,000 (Rupees Two Thousand only) and Tender II is Rs. 3,000 (Rupees Three Thousand) which is non-refundable.

### Selling Point of Tenders

- Caritas Nepal, Dhoibighat, Lalitpur (Phone No. 01-5538172)
  - Caritas Nepal, Sub-Office Damak, Jhapa, Nepal (Phone No. 023-580219, 583608)
- The tender forms shall be sold only to the related Manufacturer/Dealers/Suppliers as stated above and the following two documents must be produced in original or the copies attested by the gazetted officer of Government of Nepal/Notary Public at the time of purchase of tender form.
- Supplier's/Manufacturer's valid Government Registration Licence Certificate.
  - Vat Registered PAN Certificate.

Any further information can be obtained from the CARITAS Nepal Sub-Office Damak-11, Jhapa, Nepal.

Contact : Phone No : 023-580219/ 583608

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**News****Blast suspects in police net**

KATHMANDU: The police said on Wednesday they have held three persons for their involvement in the recent blasts in the capital.

At a press meet here, Metropolitan Police Range Hanumandhoka Chief Navaraj Silwal said the three were held with arms from separate places.

"They were found to be involved in a series of blasts, kidnapping, extortion and criminal activities," said Silwal.

Among the held are Bikash Kumar Tiwari, personal assistant of former Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies Shyam Sunder Gupta, leader of Nepal Sadbhawana Party, Bikash Shrestha and Anil Khadka.

Police had arrested Tiwari from Mahadevsthan-15 in Kathmandu with a revolver, Shrestha from Mhepi-16, Kathmandu, with a pistol, six bullets and motorbike, and Khada from Bhimsengal-6, with one pistol and four bullets. According to Silwal, they have initiated investigation under the Arms and Ammunition Act-1963. (PR)

**Govt asks India to repair Koshi-ravaged towers****POST REPORT**  
KATHMANDU, JAN. 7

Nepal government has requested the Indian government to repair the transmission lines destroyed during the Koshi floods in August 2008, and facilitate the re-import of 60-MW power through that transmission line at the earliest.

Minister for Water Resources (MoWR), Bishnu Prasad Poudel has, in his letter requested India's Power Minister Sushil Kumar Sindhe to repair the destroyed transmission line on the border side joining Farbisgunj to Duhabi.

Nepal used to import 60 MW through the 132 KV transmission lines joining Duhabi to Farbisgunj before the Koshi floods.

Poudel has stated that Nepal will complete the re-construction

of destroyed towers in Sunsari district by the end of February in his letter.

"Nepal has already started reconstruction of the destroyed transmission towers and has urged the Indian government to reconstruct the destroyed transmission towers falling on their side."

The minister, in his letter opines that re-construction of destroyed transmission towers on the Indian side to facilitate the import of 60-MW will be a great relief to the country.

Without reconstruction of transmission towers on the Indian side, there is no possibility of importing the 60 MW from India, Minister Poudel said in his letter.

According to a source at Ministry of Finance, the minister requested

the Indian government after the latter did not take initiative to repair the destroyed transmission towers on their side.

Meanwhile, the Indian government has asked not to reconstruct transmission towers destroyed during the Koshi floods until the Koshi waters are diverted to the original course, the source added.

Nepal government has taken urgent steps to reconstruct the destroyed transmission towers joining Duhabi to Farbisgunj as it is the only 132 KV transmission line in the Nepal-India border.

Through the Koshi-Kattaiya line, Nepal government is planning to import additional 40 MW beside 60 MW from India soon. Nepal is importing 20-MW from Tanakpur, India from January 1, 2009.

**Call to end TU strike****POST REPORT**  
KATHMANDU, JAN. 7

Indefinite strike in Tribhuvan University (TU) continued for the sixth consecutive day, called by university officials demanding security to the staff and initiative by the government to address the demands of the locals.

Speaking to the Post, coordinator of TU Victims' Struggle Committee (TUVSC), Dev Maharjan urged university officials to solve the problem through dialogue and call off the strike as early as possible.

TU officials had called for an indefinite strike beginning Friday, after Kirtipur locals intensified their protests under the banner of TU Victims' Struggle Committee (TUVSC), as their meeting with TU officials ended inconclusively.

The locals have been demanding a 60 percent discount in healthcare bills for medical treatment in hospitals affiliated with TU, scholarship for at least five locals in each TU faculty, 60 percent employment opportunities in each department of TU, compensation as per the agreement made in 1956,

when the government acquired the land to establish TU.

Speaking to the Post, Vice-Chancellor Madhav Sharma, said, "we are ready to call off the strike as soon as possible." Adding that the TU is unable to address the demands made by the locals, he said that the government must take necessary steps to end the ongoing stand off.

According to Sharma, the government should be made accountable for the problem arising at the moment because because the present university administration has little knowledge about the agreement made with the locals 52 years ago.

However, the secretary at the Ministry of Education (MoE) Deependra Bikram Thapa said that since TU is an autonomous body the government cannot interfere in its internal matters.

Meanwhile, speaking in the Constituent Assembly, PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal said that the government's attention has been drawn by the protests launched by Kirtipur locals and the government shall take necessary steps soon to end the stir.

**Govt told to end Kamlari practice****Hope for refugees****SKorea dispels employment buzz****POST REPORT**

KATHMANDU, JAN. 7

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Wednesday appealed to the government to end Kamali, a practice prevalent in the mid and far western districts of Nepal.

Issuing a press release, the human rights body said Kamalaries are deprived of education and often subjected to sexual abuse and servitude.

According to the NHRC, the Kamali practice exists in Dang, Banke, Kailali, Bardia and Kanchanpur districts.

Minor girls from Tharu community are sent to work as domestic helpers where they risk domestic and sexual violation.

Young, and often underage girls are often indentured during the time the Maghi Festival of the Tharu

community is observed in mid-January.

NHRC also said the Kamali practice is against the provisions of Child Labour Act 2056.

The commission also recommended that the government forbid the practice and rehabilitate victims.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights-Nepal on Wednesday expressed concern that no concrete steps had been taken to end the practice of Kamali.

In a statement, head of the Nepal office of OHCHR Richard Bennett said, "I urge the government to take concrete steps to prohibit this practice, search for missing Kamalaries, and provide rehabilitation to those who have been victims of this practice."

**Govt pledge to address Congress demands****Contd from Pg 1**

He said the government has also initiated the process of disbanding the paramilitary structure of the YCL.

The government has also initiated the process of evaluating seized properties not returned by Dec. 15 in order to compensate for them, he said.

The prime minister also said the government is committed to take action against members of any organisation including YCL and Youth Force if they violate the rule of law.

He also said the government would hold talks with other political parties to amend the procedures to form peace committees at local levels and disband the already formed committees. It will be monitored by the financial and labor committees in the House, he said.

**Agreement on Scholarship Bill**

The prime minister said he had reached agreement with fringe political parties on the Scholarship Bill. He said that some amendments will be made not to reduce quota for Dalits. Fringe political parties had been disrupting the House demanding withdrawal of the scholarship bill as it reduces the number of scholarship quota for Dalits from 15 to nine.

**POST REPORT**

KATHMANDU, JAN. 7

The Korean embassy in Kathmandu said on Wednesday that there has been no change in the policies regarding issuance of employment permits for contracts with foreign workers including Nepali workers.

The clarification comes at a time when there have been reports that the Korean government has decided to halt issuing employment permits to Nepali workers because of the global recession.

In a statement, the Embassy of the Republic of Korea said, "Usually the annual quota (from March to February of the following year) set by the Korean

government for foreign workers is exhausted around the year-end, leaving no additional room for new contracts in the remaining period i.e. in January and February."

The annual quota of 72,000 foreign workers has been exhausted and the 4,000 Nepali workers whose names are already in the job roster for working in Korea will be able to go there from March 2009 onwards, the statement said.

The Embassy added that those who have already received their labour contracts from their Korean employers will not be affected by the exhaustion of the quota and thus still can proceed to Korea.

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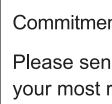
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**Call to end TU strike****POST REPORT**

KATHMANDU, JAN. 7

Indefinite strike in Tribhuvan University (TU) continued for the sixth consecutive day, called by university officials demanding security to the staff and initiative by the government to address the demands of the locals.

Speaking to the Post, coordinator of TU Victims' Struggle Committee (TUVSC), Dev Maharjan urged university officials to solve the problem through dialogue and call off the strike as early as possible.

TU officials had called for an indefinite strike beginning Friday, after Kirtipur locals intensified their protests under the banner of TU Victims' Struggle Committee (TUVSC), as their meeting with TU officials ended inconclusively.

The locals have been demanding a 60 percent discount in healthcare bills for medical treatment in hospitals affiliated with TU, scholarship for at least five locals in each TU faculty, 60 percent employment opportunities in each department of TU, compensation as per the agreement made in 1956,

when the government acquired the land to establish TU.

Speaking to the Post, Vice-Chancellor Madhav Sharma, said, "we are ready to call off the strike as soon as possible." Adding that the TU is unable to address the demands made by the locals, he said that the government must take necessary steps to end the ongoing stand off.

According to Sharma, the government should be made accountable for the problem arising at the moment because because the present university administration has little knowledge about the agreement made with the locals 52 years ago.

However, the secretary at the Ministry of Education (MoE) Deependra Bikram Thapa said that since TU is an autonomous body the government cannot interfere in its internal matters.

Meanwhile, speaking in the Constituent Assembly, PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal said that the government's attention has been drawn by the protests launched by Kirtipur locals and the government shall take necessary steps soon to end the stir.

**Hetauda Municipality  
Urban and Environmental Improvement Project  
Project Implementation Unit  
Hetauda, Makawanpur****INVITATION FOR BIDS**

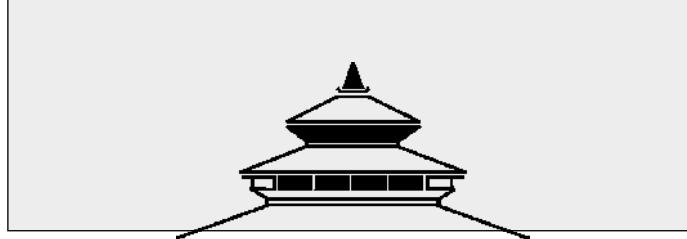
(First date of publication: 8 January, 2009)

Date : 8 January, 2009.  
Loan No. and Title : 1966-NEP (SF) / Urban and Environmental Improvement Project

Contract No. and Title : HE-NCB-C-12; Construction of Vegetable shops

Deadline for Bids submission : 12.00 noon, 8 February, 2009

- The Government of Nepal has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of the Urban and Environmental Improvement Project; Part of this loan will be used for payments under the contract named above. Bidding is open to bidders from eligible source countries of the ADB.**
- The Project Implementation Unit (PIU) of Hetauda Municipality invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the construction and completion of Vegetable Shops as described below: (More details and specifications are provided in the Bidding Document)**
- National competitive bidding will be conducted in accordance with ADB's Single Stage: One-Envelope bidding procedure.**
- Only eligible bidders with the key qualifications listed below should participate in this bidding:**
- To obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents, bidders should contact:**  
Project Manager  
Urban and Environmental Improvement Project (UEIP)  
Project Implementation Unit (PIU), Hetauda Municipality  
Hetauda, Makawanpur  
Tel. No. 977 -57-522876 ; Fax No. 977 -57-522876  
E-mail address: ueip\_hetauda@ntc.net.np
- To purchase the bidding documents in English, eligible bidders should:**
  - Write to address above requesting the bidding documents on or before **6 February, 2009** during office hours.
  - Pay a non-refundable fee of NRs 3000.00 by bank draft or cash deposit in favor of "Urban and Environmental Improvement Project (UEIP), Project Implementation Unit (PIU) Hetauda Municipality" for each set.
- A pre bid meeting will be organized in which bidders may seek further clarification and/or advice on the works. The meeting will be held at **11.00 hrs of 25 January, 2009** at the PIU office.**
- The bidder may bid for any or all of the contracts invited in this notice.**
- Deliver your bid :**
  - to the address above
  - on or before the deadline **12.00 noon, 8 February, 2009**
- Together with a Bid Security of listed below.**
- Bids will be opened on 8 February, 2009 at 14.00 hrs. in the presence of bidder's representatives who choose to attend.**
<li



## Thinking local

**Local bodies are essential to restore law and order and ensure service delivery**

The absence of elected local bodies in the districts has, for the past few years, been a major cause of the prevailing anarchy and lawlessness. Without elected political representatives, the task of governance has been left to VDC secretaries and other bureaucrats. They have faced severe pressure from various political and criminal groups, and have, therefore, been unable to discharge their responsibilities properly. Further, in this context, it is difficult for the central government to implement its development projects in the districts, as there are no proper channels through which to funnel funds and make decisions that have the support of the people.

The government's decision to form local bodies soon, therefore, is a welcome one. Major coalition partners the CPN (Maoist) and the CPN (UML) have formed a taskforce to prepare the groundwork to form local bodies by Jan. 13. Earlier, there was disagreement between the two parties on how to proceed. As elections to the local bodies are not possible in the immediate future, the CPN (Maoist) was demanding that positions at the local level be shared between political parties according to the proportion of their representation in the Constituent Assembly (CA) -- where the Maoists have almost two-thirds of the seats. The UML, on the other hand, had been demanding that the positions be divided according to the results of the last local level elections held in 1999, in which the UML had performed remarkably well. These parties have now come to a compromise, and while deciding to use the results of the CA elections as a basis, have also agreed to take the Interim Constitution and other political agreements signed during the peace process into account, and to move forward only with consensus.

While this is praiseworthy, it is unfortunate that the discussions so far have excluded the Nepali Congress (NC), the Madhesi Janaadikar Forum (MJF) and all of the small parties. The taskforce plans to discuss the draft of its decisions with other parties on Jan. 9. The Maoists and the UML hope that since the decision they reach is to be based on political documents that have across-the-board legitimacy, the other parties will largely agree to it, and that only small changes will be necessary. We do hope that this will be the case, even though precedent indicates otherwise. The NC has not in the past been very accommodative of political agreements reached that did not involve it from the very inception. The small parties in the CA are also currently protesting, as they think that they will be excluded from the local bodies.

We think that as the Maoists are the largest party in the CA, they have every right to have the most representation of all parties in the reconstituted local bodies. However, in this fragile transition period, it is necessary for them to be accommodating and seek the input of other political parties before they make any decisions. After all, it is only in an atmosphere of broad political consensus that the local bodies can firmly and efficiently discharge their responsibilities.

## Virtually social

**SUMATI MAHARAJAN**

I had just opened my Facebook account when I was stormed with dozens of friends' requests and an inbox full of messages. This is not so surprising though; we are in an era of digital communication and internet networking. What is unforeseen, however, is the toll it has taken on our society and social life. Once I start facebooking, I spend hours on it without realizing at all how the time has passed. I, like many others, would definitely like to thank those who developed social networking sites and came up with such a magnificent idea of virtual society.

Even during this past Dashain, I thought of putting up a get-together party with my friends from high school and since it was impossible as most of them are abroad, I did just what was its alternative.....conference chatting. Few days after I got to see their pictures uploaded in the facebook, that of them celebrating Dashain abroad. This has certainly helped us to communicate easily. It was less time-consuming and accessible from anywhere. But would it be anything like real a face-to-face interaction? Using webcams could help me a little better...but life is more than just living a life through a mere camera, isn't it?

More and more people have been making social networks through internet.

Social networking sites like facebook, hi5, MySpace, Orkut, etc. have evolved to provide services beyond just frivolous interaction and entertainment. People have started to become more involved in these online sites than in real life socialising, through cables and wires and few other technological devices. From making friends, uploading pictures and videos to intellectual meetings, campus issues, discussing events, causes, campaigns, these sites, like Orkut and Facebook or even Blog sites, are now helping a lot with one's career as well.

Today I cannot imagine being social without these social networking sites, especially at a time when all my friends are studying abroad and the remaining ones are also in the process of leaving. It is more than just chatting. It's about staying updated on each other's interests, activities, studies, love life and so on. These sites matter to us more than real life social events such as parties, get-togethers and reunions that do not guarantee bringing all your friends together as these sites do. Hence it is not surprising to see the young generation glued to their PCs and laptops in a small corner instead of going out for social events. Would it be surprising if the new generation stopped coming out of their rooms and remained stuck to their computer for both entertainment and socialising?

**DOMINIK VON BOHLEN**

Ten-year-old Raju Giri is one of the dozens of children who arrive alone in Kathmandu every week having run away from home. Raju, who is now sitting shyly in the Child Helpline Nepal office, arrived three days earlier at the city's new bus park from a village near Hetauda. On arrival, he had planned to live with his uncle, but with no address or contact number for his relative he began roaming the nearby streets, alone and helpless. The police soon found him and gave him the toll free 1098 number of Child Helpline Nepal. He called the helpline, and later the same day was admitted to the Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN) helpline clinic near Basantapur. When asked why he left home, Raju becomes taciturn. After some gentle prompting by Bharat Adhikari, the Programme Officer at CWIN, he says that his stepmother mistreats him but won't explain in what way she does this. Adhikari signals to the boy that the questions are over, at which he jumps off his chair and runs out onto the roof to join his new friends, the other children staying at the clinic. With a childlike sense for distraction, the problems which had made him clam up moments earlier fade into the background, at least for the moment. Adhikari explains that Raju is going to return home. "Since he has agreed, the plan is to reunite him with his family. We will organize counseling visits to his family and his school. It will take time."

In the first nine months of 2008, the Kathmandu call centre received 5,874 phone calls. The majority of calls received at the call center are from children in situations similar to Raju's. Niva Shakya, a volunteer with Child Helpline Nepal, which began in 1998, said "Most of the children just turn up on a bus and have no money or place to live. A lot of them want to stay, but when appropriate we try to return them to their families." Many of these migrant children are sucked into Kathmandu's shady child labour market in which they are forced to work unreasonably long hours in carpet and clothing factories, as hotel employees, transport workers or domestic workers for negligible wages. The less fortunate are forced into the sex industry. Child Helpline Nepal, run by CWIN, is a service which aims to protect the rights of these vulnerable underage children whose plight is so often silent and invisible.

Sumnina Tuladhar, CWIN's executive coordinator, explains that the service is also frequently used by

Kathmandu's schoolchildren. Many of the 40+ daily phone calls the call centre receives between 8am and 8pm come after the end of the school day. School children will report cases of bullying, corporal punishment and sexual abuse at school. One such phone call, fielded earlier this year, led directly to a high court ruling banning the use of corporal punishment in schools, and to the enforcement of a 20,000 NRP fine for guilty schools, and a 5000 NRP fine for guilty teachers. "The government has no system in place for inspecting and monitoring the conduct of teachers in schools," states Tuladhar, who goes on

compensation.

As well as the Kathmandu helpline, headed by Adhikari, CWIN runs four other helplines in Hetauda, Nepalgunj, Pokhara and Biratnagar. The aim of all five helplines, which now share the same 1098 number, is to protect vulnerable children. This often involves providing medical care, and in many cases also psychosocial and legal counseling; between January and September 2008, 557 children received psychosocial counseling. In order to ensure that the 1098 number is well known, and that it is easily accessible for those who might need it, awareness

lasting a minimum of two years. In one example, a court case was filed in 1996 against the employer of a domestic child worker who was kept in chains. A complicated case in which the plaintiff's family had been bribed to remain silent, eight years past before the defendant was finally sentenced. During these eight years, it was CWIN's responsibility to look after the child, cover transportation and living costs and to provide emotional support and counseling. In sensitive cases involving sexual abuse, there is often the added element of security involved, especially if those facing indictment hail from powerful positions within society. Adhikari, with his background in law, takes an active role in all legal proceedings, and for this has been threatened on numerous occasions. In other cases, such as one in which a girl eloped with a Dalit boy in order to escape a child marriage in Ramechhap district, whole communities need to be engaged in dialogue in order to address firmly entrenched attitudes towards child rights, caste discrimination and other issues. Only after seven months of dialogue with the girl's family and community was she finally accepted again.

In 2007, after vigorous lobbying, a cabinet decision pushed forward by the Ministry for Women, Children and Social Welfare, in collaboration with Nepal Telecom, granted toll free status to the 1098 number. This decision also indicated the government's mainstream acceptance of the helpline service. But despite this, and the helpline's many success stories, the future of Child Helpline Nepal remains uncertain. Currently CWIN's donor agencies have not expressed much interest in providing funding for the continued growth and development of the service, preferring to support specific issues which offer more concrete and short-term outcomes. "I would like to see the government facilitate the set up of helplines in all major regions of Nepal, or better still, to participate in creating an international helpline," states Tuladhar, "but I'm not yet confident this will happen. Their priorities still lie in other areas, not with children."

With the incidences of child sexual abuse and cases of corporal punishment in schools increasing nationally, as reported by CWIN for the first half of 2008, it is now more important than ever to build an infrastructure which will safeguard the rights of children effectively. It seems that, for the time being at least, the aim of creating an international South Asian Child Helpline, with a single internationally recognized number, which would require proactive government involvement, is still some way off.



to say that some of the worst offenders are well known and reputable private schools. One schoolchild's phone call this year led to the dismissal of a principal of a government school near New Road, who for years had been subjecting her pupils to public humiliation amounting, in Tuladhar's words, "to mental torture". Mistreated domestic child workers are another serious concern of Child Helpline Nepal. Here too the programme has had significant success in helping to protect those at risk, and in bringing child rights offenders to book. "In many abusive situations domestic child workers will not have access to telephones," says Tuladhar. "In a number of cases it has been neighbors, or the employer's family members, who have called us." In one recent case, a daughter-in-law called to report the sexual abuse of a domestic child worker by her father-in-law, a brave action which, in Tuladhar's mind, "proves that if you give people the means to report abuse then they will, disproving what the cynics might say." The man was sentenced to six years imprisonment and ordered to pay 75,000 NRP in

campaigns are launched regularly across the country. These include television programmes, weekly programmes on community radio as well as attention grabbing radio jingles and promotional materials such as posters, hoardings and stickers in areas where people frequent to play or watch football. Appropriately, since many children, like Raju, arrive in Kathmandu by bus, the helpline number is also printed on the back of bus tickets. Regular campaigning in schools is also a part of CWIN's public awareness strategy. The aim here, in keeping with CWIN's credo of "working for children with children", is to initiate discussion in the classroom on child rights, empowerment and activism issues, as well as simply to increase awareness of the 1098 number.

Of course Child Helpline Nepal is much more than a phone line. It is an emergency service that provides ongoing support for children in difficulty, while advocating for social justice for children. The prosecution and eventual conviction of serious child rights abusers is often a lengthy, expensive and labour intensive process, usually

## Neighbourhood watch

**'Non-state actors' have been playing a big part in jeopardizing Indo-Pak relations**



**TARA JOSHI**

In the words of Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, "non-state actors" have been playing a big part in jeopardizing Indo-Pak relations. The xenophobic media of the two countries precipitate situations rather than help to normalize them. An escalation of tensions between India and Pakistan not only impinges upon the rest of South Asia, but also hinders U.S. interests in the region and Afghanistan. One of the main objectives of the perpetrators of the Mumbai attacks was to push India and Pakistan into full-fledged war. The ramifications of such a war, no doubt, favour their intents.

First, a fierce confrontation between India and Pakistan would polarize fundamentalists on religious grounds not only in India and Pakistan but also beyond. If such a split could be created, the terrorists believe that they will get overt support from Islamic fundamentalists making it easier for them to commit more such dastardly crimes. At the same time, it would make the regimes in the region, especially in Pakistan, more unstable.

Elected governments in Pakistan,

regardless of their leverage over the army and the bureaucratic apparatus, are supposed to be more challenging for Islamic extremists than governments that come to power through unconstitutional ways. The primary aim of the terrorists could be ousting the present government and placing a stooge as president. Or it may be instigating the army to take over. This can be done by destabilizing the government, and the best way to do it is triggering a war between India and Pakistan.

Secondly, if India and Pakistan do go to war, the extremists will not miss the opportunity to benefit from the resulting confusion by expanding their organizational clout throughout the region. More importantly, if India and Pakistan can be forced into war, they will be compelled to deploy their armed forces along their common border. It obviously means that Pakistan will have to pull back its considerable forces, estimated to consist of 100,000 troops, massed on the Afghan border. This large number of Pakistani soldiers were deployed at the behest of the U.S. to cordon off the Taliban. Without them, the 32,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan would be a small force. Despite the deployment of Pakistani troops, it was very difficult to stop the Taliban and other terrorist outfits from passing through the porous border, and voices have been raised by different quarters implying that the Pakistani army has been ineffective and indifferent.

As the two nuclear powers of South Asia seem to be in a mood for confrontation, regional peace and stability is at stake. The stakeholders in the peace process may squabble over the new role seeker which might lead us

into instability. The lingering tensions between India and Pakistan favour no country, but the blame game has started. India insists on extraditing some of the terrorists, but Pakistan argues that it will try them in its own court of law. India has amply tried to portray Pakistan to the international community as a country which supports terrorism institutionally, whereas Pakistan claims that India has threatened it with a military attack.

Moreover, the media in both countries has played a negative part. They can't do anything but help harbour a grudge among the people. They only broadcast excerpts of speeches of the government top brass of different countries which they think will benefit them. The Indian media aired the news of the lone surviving terrorist in the Mumbai attack who allegedly appealed to the Pakistani high commissioner for legal assistance. So the U.S. will try to prevent Pakistan from rekindling its differences with India.

On the other hand, the U.S. wants India and Pakistan to have equal powers that could check and balance each other. Presently, the U.S. is trying to get them to calm down because it knows that protracted tensions between the two countries might result in a third country interfering in the matter, which the Americans want to avoid.

As the two nuclear powers of South Asia seem to be in a mood for confrontation, regional peace and stability is at stake. The stakeholders in the peace process may squabble over the new role seeker which might lead us

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The author is a research scholar at the Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India.)

**Opinion**

# The fare fiasco

**BISWAS BARAL**

**E**very time I hire a cab for my daily commute between Ratnpur and Tripureshwor, I pay a different fare for the same route, anywhere between Rs.110 to Rs. 140. When I ask taxi drivers to account for the vast difference in fares, the reply is always non-committal: some cabs are yet to recalibrate their metres in line with the new rates, a few tamper with theirs (nope, not me!), or my favourite, it is me who is lying about the non-existent disparities to save a few bucks. Similar is my experience with microbuses plying the route. By producing the same identity card I am offered discounts anywhere between Rs. 3-5, and sometimes, none at all. Those particular days, my ID is "invalid".

To put my predicament into context, the Transport Entrepreneurs Association has announced nationwide strikes beginning Jan. 12 if their charter of

**Nothing is more galling than the inconsistency in fares resulting from the failure of transport entrepreneurs to enforce a clear set of rules regarding them**

demands -- that the government come up with a scientific fare mechanism, provide security to transport workers and vehicles, check misuse of student ID cards and declare highways peace zones -- are not met by the deadline.

Earlier on Dec. 20, Minister for Labour and Transport Management Lekh Raj Bhatta had threatened to cancel the operating licences of transport entrepreneurs who continue to defy the government's directive to slash public transport fares, issued in light of the declining price of petro-products.

From one time high of nearly \$150 a barrel, the international market price of petroleum products has plummeted to under \$40 a barrel. In response, Nepal Oil Corporation has already revised the fuel prices twice. But the transporters are adamant about sticking with the current level of fares to bridge the revenue gap created by the rise in import taxes on vehicular parts.

I digress. Personally, nothing is more galling than the inconsistency in fares resulting from the failure of transport entrepreneurs to enforce a clear set of rules regarding them, to determine the exact amount of discounts and to lay out clear criteria of what a "valid" ID is. For the government's part, could it please appoint

**ONLY IN NEPAL**

biswasbaral@hotmail.com

enough personnel at the Bureau of Standards and Metrology to enforce the price mechanism rigorously?

And what with student discounts? In recent days, there have been more than a few fistfights between transport workers and students regarding discounts. Student unions have been involved, roads blocked, vehicles vandalised. They do have a point. As the government has already cut transport fares, they reason, it is not unreasonable to expect the transporters to obey the government dictat; either raise the amount of discounts, or better, lower the fares themselves.

But wait! Why blame only the poor wage earners? At the end of the day, isn't the faulty fare mechanism just another manifestation of the state of anarchy in the country? What's their daily bickering compared to the shameful horse trading going on inside the Constituent Assembly everyday?

How can we expect the "people's representatives" to put things in order when their own House is anything but orderly? Who bothers about solving petty hassles of the hoi polloi when their own chairs are shaky?

The blame game aside, the disruptions resulting from fuel-fare disparity is by no means unique to Nepal. On Jan. 6, the National Transport Commission of Sri Lanka, the official controller for the country's public transport, cancelled route permits of the buses that didn't reduce the fares as mandated by the government. But the Lankan Private Bus Owners' Association has pooh-poohed the government directive, insisting on the current level of fares "as other expenses remain unchanged and the reduction in the price of diesel is not enough to reduce fares".

In South Africa, one of the country's leading bus companies, Remant Alton, upped its fares by 10 percent even as the government decided to cut the price of petroleum products by as much as 20 percent. Remant Alton's justification: "It needed to increase its fares to cover all their operational costs". Despite the precipitous drop in oil prices, economic hardships have forced public transport operators in Ireland and parts of Britain to increase their fares.

The abovementioned countries are by no means isolated examples and the phenomena hardly unique to Nepal. These things happen.

The need of the hour is for the all sides to see this as a 'solvable issue', an empirical problem that can arise any place, any time. Any attempt at politicising it, or using the hard times to score brownie points against political opponents, will only prolong the impasse. And who will be the victims? The common people.

But much more important at this crucial juncture in the country's history is for Nepalis to refrain from seeing this problem, or any other minor obstacle, as yet another indication of everything that's wrong with New Nepal. We have just started out on the road. Hurdles there will be. Let us learn to tackle them as one. We are in this together.

biswasbaral@hotmail.com

**Don't lose hope**

I could not help being moved by Smriti Neupane's heartfelt piece "Hope against hope" (Jan. 6, Page 8). The saddest part was where she expresses her desire to migrate abroad out of a sense of hopelessness. As a fellow student, I completely sympathize with her. The current situation of the country is very frustrating but if concerned people like us work together and take on these challenges as sources of motivation, then the future may be ours. For this we don't have to join politics. We just need to work harder in our respective fields. Strong minds like hers should be determined to bring change. Let us not desert the country. Our duty is to steer it to a better tomorrow.

**Bibek Shrestha**

Kathmandu University, Dhulikhel

**Be fair**

Most people in Kathmandu, including the political parties, did not expect the Maoists to

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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win the CA election and lead the government. They are now using every means to knock them down. For instance, Nepali people had long been demanding that the government control the Pashupatinath temple, but when the government took steps in that direction, the anti-Maoist forces turned it into propaganda, even calling on Indian leaders to formally oppose the government ("Advanis distressed at Pashupati row", Jan. 7, Page 1). Next, the Nepal Army is now recruiting people in its "vacant posts" in violation of the CPA agreement. Can the anti-Maoist forces accept it if the PLA starts recruiting people in its "vacant posts"? Obviously they are supporting the expansion of the Nepal Army so that they can use it against the Maoist-led government. These forces have not consid-

ered the dangerous consequences of such moves. And are Maoists alone to blame for the load-shedding problem? The current energy crisis is a culmination of the mistakes made by previous governments and corrupt bureaucrats. And when the government suggests a plan to address this problem, that too gets criticized from all quarters. Here it has become fashionable to scold the government for every little thing. If we really want to build our country, we must not waste so much energy vilifying the government. If the government takes a wrong step, let's take a stand against it. But if it tries to make things right, let's lend our support to it. This is the duty of responsible citizens.

**Subas Sharma**  
TU, Kirtipur

worse than death" which I think is inappropriate. It is common for girls in the countryside to do such works regularly. My elder sister also used to grind maize when we were in the village and now she is an educated woman. Pounding grains, cutting grass, etc. are some of the chores assigned to daughters in village households. Most of them do these works happily and dutifully. How could their fate be "worse than death"? Whether it's driving a car or grinding maize, every work has its own dignity. It is not good to demean work. Perhaps their fate would be worse than death if they were forced to do the work and if they are judged by the standards of privileged city children. Otherwise it is normal and acceptable for village children to share the household responsibilities. I hope you will avoid using such extreme words to describe the task that millions of Nepali daughters do everyday.

**Samundra Khanal**  
Pokhara

# Turkish apology

**Regardless of the terms they employ, this next generation of Turks is better positioned to face the darkest aspect of their national history**

**ESRA OZYUREK**

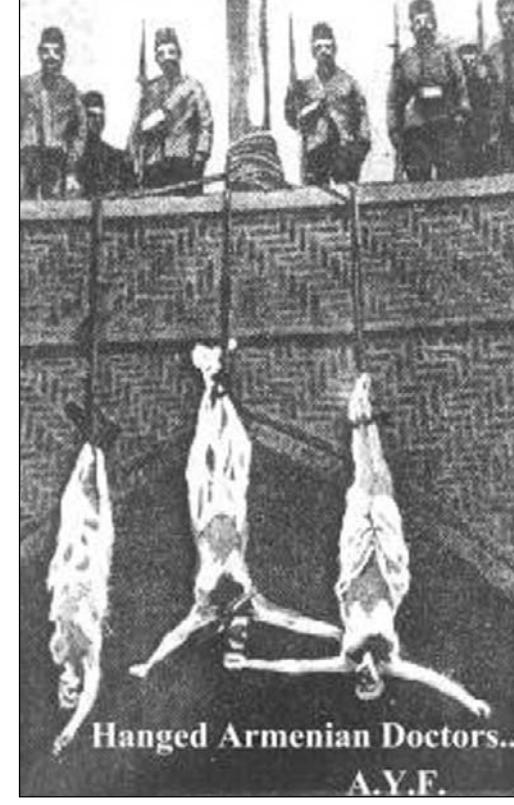
**T**wo hundred Turkish intellectuals last month launched an Internet signature campaign for an apology to Armenians for the 1915 massacres. "My conscience does not accept the insensitivity showed to and the denial of the Great Catastrophe that the Armenians were subjected to in 1915," the brief statement reads. "I reject this injustice and for my share, I empathize with the feelings and pain of my Armenian brothers and sisters. I apologize to them."

Within a month, more than 26,000 people signed on, a significant number in a country where the fate of the Armenians at the end of the Ottoman Empire has been largely unmentionable for decades. To those long frustrated by Turkey's intractability on the issue, this campaign may appear an inadequate gesture. But it has immense value, educating many Turks about the violence done to Armenians for the first time and enabling those who are ready to come to terms with it.

The official Turkish position on 1915 has shifted over time. It was a fight between local Turkish and Armenian bands. Or it was a forced resettlement -- a march on which hundreds of thousands of Armenians were sent to Syria, but most never arrived.

Historians and politicians also have argued that it was actually Armenians who massacred Turks and that talk of an Armenian genocide was an international conspiracy. In contemporary Turkey, novelists, journalists, historians or other intellectuals who call the events a genocide or even mass murder can face trial under the infamous Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which outlaws insulting Turkey, its government or its people.

Organizers of the "I apologize" campaign notably shied away from the word "genocide," opting instead for "the Great Catastrophe," a phrase initially used by Armenians. Still, Turkish nationalists were quick to condemn the project and launch multiple counter we-want-an-apology campaigns. Turkey's Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, quickly dismissed the apology movement. "These Turkish intellectuals must have committed the genocide," he said mockingly,



"since they are the ones who are apologizing."

Opposition parties in the parliament, other than the Kurdish-inclined Democratic Turkey Party, have all condemned the campaign as well. The Nationalist Action Party, for example, issued a statement that said, in part, "There is no single page in the honorable history of the Turkish nation for which we should be embarrassed, and no crime for which we should apologize. No one has the right to smear our ancestors by deviating from history, declaring them guilty, and ask them to apologize."

Granted, 26,000 signatories to the campaign means Turks interested in apologizing remain few and far between in a nation of 70 million. Still, this is a very significant development in Turkey.

In the last 10 years, several Turkish scholars began studying the Armenian massacres outside the official Turkish framework, and some of them, such as Taner Akcam, have openly acknowledged those events were genocide.

Turkish and Armenian scholars organized joint workshops to discuss what happened to Armenians at the end of the Ottoman Empire. When Hrant Dink, a prominent journalist of Armenian background, was assassinated by a nationalist thug in Istanbul two years ago, 200,000 Turks marched in the streets carrying banners that said, "We are all Armenian."

Critics will certainly reply that these modest activities do not compensate for the original crime or the suffering caused by its denial for almost a century. They will complain that the current signature campaign does not use the word "genocide." Yet the significance of this campaign cannot be understated.

I grew up in Turkey in a politically engaged, educated and reasonably liberal family in the 1970s and the 1980s, and I had only a vague idea about the animosity between Turks and Armenians. It wasn't until I enrolled in graduate school at the University of Michigan, one of the most important centers of Ottoman and Armenian studies in the United States that I learned about the unacceptably sad end of the Armenian subjects of the Ottoman Empire.

Turks growing up today surely are better informed about the history of the land they inhabit. Even those who accept the nationalist line have to be aware of the sudden end of the centuries-long Armenian presence in Anatolia.

Regardless of the terms they employ or the specific amount of responsibility they willingly shoulder, this next generation of Turks is already in a much better position to face the darkest aspect of their national history and develop a more responsible relationship to it.

It may appear a small gesture now, but the initiators of the "I apologize" campaign have introduced a ray of hope for reconciliation between Armenians and Turks before the 100th anniversary of the catastrophe comes around.

(*Ozyurek is an associate professor of anthropology at the University of California, San Diego, and author of "Nostalgia for the Modern: State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey" and "Politics of Public Memory in Turkey."*)

LA TIMES-WASHINGTON POST

# Dad, when are we going to die?

**JAWAD HARB**

**M**y child just started crying -- she just heard on the news that Israel will start bombing our neighbourhood, because there are allegedly insurgents living here. She has been having nightmares that our house will be totally destroyed, and our family will die under it. She has seen the photos of other destroyed homes on TV.

She said to me, "Dad, if they bomb us, where are we going to go? What do we do? All the houses are targeted. We can't even run."

I didn't have an answer. My brain is totally paralyzed. I have a masters degree in psychology, but I have no idea how to counsel my own family.

For 10 days, the bombs have been falling. The nearest one destroyed a home 300 metres from where we live. My 12-year-old son is becoming an expert at pinpointing the distance of the bombs: "That one was 500 metres away, to the north," he says to me. He is always right. But this is not the kind of expertise I want my child to have.

I can't really describe what my children are feeling. They burst out crying when it is dark and cold, at

night when we listen to the bombs like thunder.

We live in Rafah, about 500 metres from the border with Egypt. There are tunnels to Egypt nearby, which people use to smuggle food and supplies. So the bombing has been heavy here. Israel is trying to destroy the tunnels.

**We fear everything. Every day, every sound. The children in my neighbourhood -- and my kids -- are not hoping to live. They don't think they will live. Instead, they are waiting to die, waiting for the bomb to fall. And they are asking me when it will happen**

We don't have any bread. No fruit, no vegetables, no milk. The last time I ate meat was nine days ago, bought in the market. The market is closed now. There is no more food coming through the tunnels. We have just rice and macaroni for the children. We have no stocks. No biscuits for my children, like they used to eat. We survive, just.

an emergency.

The water is almost gone. We hope we will get more tomorrow. Without electricity, the water pump doesn't work. I have a generator that we use a couple of hours a day, to watch the news, charge our mobile phones, and try to work. But the generator is not strong enough to run the water pump. I bought 10 days' worth

of fuel, and it is almost gone.

We ran out of drinking water last night, so my nephew and I went out to the desalination station one kilometre away. We know there are bombs falling, but we can't live without water. We had to carry the 20-litre containers on our shoulders, because there is no transport. On our way home, a bomb fell nearby and we dropped the containers to take shelter -- but we couldn't leave the water behind. But it is hard to run with a 20-litre container.

We fear everything. Every day, every sound. The children in my neighbourhood -- and my kids -- are not hoping to live. They don't think they will live. Instead, they are waiting to die, waiting for the bomb to fall. And they are asking me when it will happen.

(*Jawad Harb is a Palestinian living in Rafah, Gaza, with his wife and six children. Harb has worked with the humanitarian organisation CARE since 2002, managing a program supporting women's centres in Gaza. Since the Israeli attacks began Dec. 27, Harb's program has stopped operating because of the constant bombing.*)

## Not so severe



On your Jan. 4 issue, on Page 2, there was a picture of a little girl grinding maize on a grinding stone. Its caption read "A fate

## 6 International

# Pak ISI chief rules out war with India

■ AGENCIES

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 7

The chief of Pakistan's powerful Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency has said there will not be a war with India over November's militant attacks on the Indian city of Mumbai, Der Spiegel reported. Lieutenant-General Ahmed Shuja Pasha told the German magazine in an interview terrorism, not India, was Pakistan's enemy, and he said he took orders from the civilian president.

"There will not be a war," Pasha said. "We are distancing ourselves from conflict with India, both now and in general."

India blames Pakistan militants for the attack on Mumbai by 10 gunmen who killed 179 people. It has revived tension between the nuclear-armed neighbors who have fought three wars since 1947.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh stepped up a war of words Tuesday, saying for the first time the assault "must have had the support of some official agencies in Pakistan."

Pakistan has denied any

involvement by state agencies and rejected Singh's accusation, saying India was ratcheting up tension and risked destroying all prospects of a serious and objective investigation.

Pasha said that soon after the Mumbai attack, Pakistan had anticipated an India military response.

"At first we thought there would be a military reaction. The Indians, after the attacks, were deeply offended and furious, but they are also clever," he said. "We may be crazy in Pakistan, but not completely out of our minds. We know full well that terror is our enemy, not India."

The Pakistani government had initially offered to send Pasha to India to help with the investigation but withdrew the offer, apparently after objections from the top brass.

Pasha told Der Spiegel he had been willing to go to India. "Many people here are simply not ready," he said in the interview, published on Spiegel Online.

India sent evidence Monday to Pakistan that it said linked

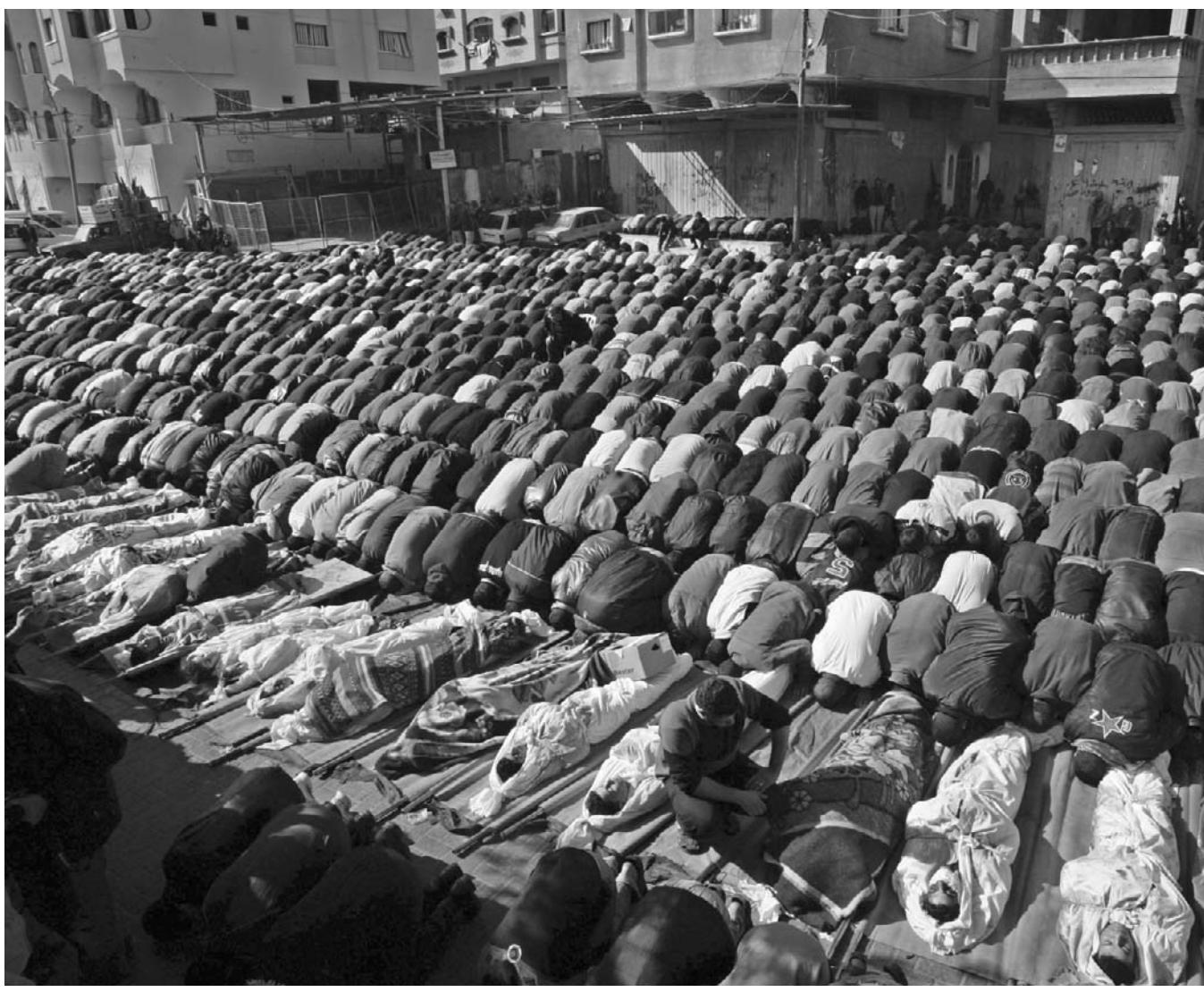
Pakistani militants to the attacks, including data from satellite phones and what it describes as the confession of a surviving attacker.

Pakistan said it had got a dossier and was examining it.

Pasha, a former chief of military operations, was appointed director-general of the military's main security agency in September, two months after the government that came to power after February elections tried to bring it under the ambit of the Interior Ministry.

The government dropped the attempt in the face of objections from the military.

But Pasha said he and the military fully supported the government, led by the party of assassinated former prime minister Benazir Bhutto. Her widower, Asif Ali Zardari, replaced former army chief Pervez Musharraf as president in September. "It is completely clear to the army chief and I that this government must succeed. Otherwise we will have a lot of problems in this country," Pasha said.



Palestinians pray over the bodies of nineteen people killed near a United Nations school on Tuesday, during their funeral in the Jebaliya refugee camp, in the northern Gaza Strip on Wednesday.

AP/RS PHOTO

## Israel welcomes ceasefire proposal

AP

GAZA CITY, JAN. 7

Israel said Wednesday that it "welcomes" an Egyptian-French ceasefire proposal for Gaza as long as such a deal guarantees a halt to militant rockets and weapons smuggling, in a possible sign that a bloody 12-day offensive could be winding down.

the proposal only if it halts "hostile fire" from Hamas in Gaza and includes measures to prevent the militant group from rearming, said government spokesman Mark Regev.

Hamas said Israel does not seem to be serious about reaching a cease-fire.

Israel is still widening and escalating its aggression and is

## Venezuela expels Israeli envoy

CARACAS: Venezuela ordered Israel's ambassador expelled from the country on Tuesday in protest over the Israeli military offensive in the Gaza Strip.

The decision by President Hugo Chavez to kick out the diplomat appeared to be the strongest reaction yet to the Gaza offensive by any country with ties to Israel.

The Venezuelan Foreign Ministry announced the move in a statement, saying it "has decided to expel the Israeli ambassador and part of the Israeli Embassy's personnel."

The Israeli offensive in Gaza has killed nearly 600 Palestinians in ground and air strikes. Israel launched the attacks Dec. 27 to stop Palestinian militants from firing rockets into southern Israel.

"How far will this barbarism go?" Chavez asked on state television before the ambassador's expulsion was announced.

(AP)

French President Nicolas Sarkozy said in Paris that both Israel and the moderate Palestinian leadership in charge of the West Bank had accepted the truce proposal, but Israeli officials did not confirm that. Hamas, for its part, said it would only support a deal if it included an opening of Gaza's borders.

In Turkey, meanwhile, a diplomat said that country will be given the task of constructing an international force for Gaza.

Both Israel and Hamas appeared to seek guarantees about the details of a cease-fire, before agreeing to halt the fighting. Israel said it would support

not giving any positive signals in response to these efforts," Ghazi Hammam said.

The precise details of the Egyptian-French proposal remain unclear.

Israel's military scaled back attacks in Gaza for three hours Wednesday to allow food and fuel to reach besieged Palestinians.

With criticism rising of the operation's spiraling civilian death toll and Gazans increasingly suffering the effects of nonstop airstrikes and shelling, Israel's military said it would open "humanitarian corridors" to allow aid supplies to reach Palestinians.

Over a billion people are expected to join in Internet voting that will nominate 77 semifinalists for the top natural wonders, which will share in the glory already enjoyed by the seven man-made wonders chosen 18 months ago.

AP

GENEVA, JAN. 7

The Grand Canyon, Mount Everest and Loch Ness will vie with more than 200 other spectacular places in the next phase of the global competition for the New 7 Wonders of Nature, organisers said on Wednesday.

The 261 nominees from 222 countries include some of the most famous mountain peaks, lakes, and other attractions, such as the Great Barrier Reef and Niagara Falls.

The foundation then chose the top vote-getter from each country, making a list of 222 sites. The overall list rose to 261 with the inclusion of sites shared by two or more countries — such as Niagara Falls and Lake Superior between Canada and the United States, and the Matterhorn, between Switzerland and Italy.

"We are calling on people all

since 1981.

Bush and Obama also will meet privately for roughly 30 minutes in the Oval Office before the lunch. That one-on-one meeting, coming just 13 days before Obama's inauguration, is more likely to zero in on grim current events, with war in the Gaza Strip and the economy in a recession.

Considering the bond they hold in history, U.S. presidents get together infrequently, particularly at the White House. And when they are in the same room, it is usually for a milestone or somber moment — a funeral of a world leader, an opening of a presidential library, a commemoration of history.

The White House says

Obama suggested the idea of a presidential gathering when he met Bush in the Oval Office in November. And Bush went for it.

"It's going to be an interesting lunch," Bush told an interviewer recently. When asked what the five men would talk about, Bush said: "I don't know. I'm sure (Obama's) going to ask us all questions, I would guess. If not, we'll just share war stories."

They have plenty of those, political and otherwise. Their paths to power have long been entwined.

Carter lost the presidency to Ronald Reagan, whose running mate was George H.W. Bush. Bush later won election but lost after one term to

Clinton. Then Bush's son, the current president, defeated Clinton's vice president, Al Gore. And this year Obama won after long linking his opponent, John McCain, to Bush.

Those campaign rivalries tend to soften over time as presidents leave the White House and try to adopt the role of statesmen — although Carter, even as an ex-president, has had some critical public words for the current president's foreign policy.

All five men were to pose for a group photo in the Rose Garden — the media's only glimpse of them — before having lunch in a private dining room off the Oval Office. No one else was expected to join them. "All of us would love to

be flies on the wall and listening to that conversation," White House press secretary Dana Perino said.

She added, "I'm sure their conversation will range from everything from personal experiences here — I'm sure they'll talk a little bit about raising children in the White House, raising children when you're a public figure and how to protect them."

It was also quite possible, given the heavyweights in the room, that the topics could be far weightier. Both Bush presidents, Clinton and Carter have had extensive experience coping with Middle East strife; Obama is about to inherit a bloody conflict between Israel and Hamas.

## Mt Everest in global competition

AP

GENEVA, JAN. 7

The Grand Canyon, Mount Everest and Loch Ness will vie with more than 200 other spectacular places in the next phase of the global competition for the New 7 Wonders of Nature, organisers said on Wednesday.

The Swiss-based nonprofit foundation collected 441 nominations over the Internet since it opened the selection process in 2007.

The foundation then chose the top vote-getter from each country, making a list of 222 sites. The overall list rose to 261 with the inclusion of sites shared by two or more countries — such as Niagara Falls and Lake Superior between Canada and the United States, and the Matterhorn, between Switzerland and Italy.

Votes can be cast until July 7. Registration on the Web site aims to prevent people from voting twice.

The quarterfinalists include some lesser known sites, such as Yasur Volcano on the south Pacific island of Vanuatu or Nigeria's Zuma Rock, a giant monolith in the middle of the African country.

A panel of experts in nature, chaired by Federico Mayor, former chief of UNESCO, the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, will reduce the list to 21 finalists in July.

The seven winners will then be chosen in another round of public voting lasting until 2011, this time by Internet, telephone and text messages.

Around 100 million people voted in the selection of the seven man-made wonders. The winners were the Pyramids of Giza, Egypt; the Colosseum, Italy; the Great Wall of China; the Taj Mahal, India; Petra; Jordan; Christ the Redeemer Statue, Brazil; Machu Picchu, Peru; and the Pyramid at Chichen Itza, Mexico.

## Cambodia celebrates Khmer fall

AP

PHNOM PENH, JAN. 7

Thousands of Cambodians celebrated Wednesday the fall of the murderous Khmer Rouge regime 30 years ago as a UN-backed tribunal prepared to finally try some of its key leaders for crimes against humanity.

More than 40,000 people packed Phnom Penh's Olympic Stadium for speeches and a parade to mark the day Vietnamese forces entered the capital to oust the ultra-communists from power.

Despite the deaths of 1.7 million or more Cambodians during the Khmer Rouge's 1975-79 rule, none of the surviving leaders have yet faced justice.

One of the accused — Kaing Guek Eav, better known as Duch, who headed the Khmer Rouge's largest torture center — is expected to take the stand in March, said co-prosecutor Robert Petit, adding that the trial is expected to take three to four months.

But the other four, all of them aging and ailing, probably won't be tried until 2010 or later.

Tribunal spokeswoman Helen Jarvis said Tuesday that they would hold a procedural meeting next week.

Although this year's celebration was the largest ever, keynote speaker and Senate President Chea Sim made no mention of the tribunal.

## NEWSLINE

### 32 militants killed

KABUL: Coalition soldiers killed 32 insurgents in an operation against a Taliban cell near Kabul, the US military said Wednesday, as officials announced eight women had died in a rocket blast. The toll from Tuesday's battle in the Alishing district of Laghman province, 100 kms east of Kabul, was one of the heaviest announced in recent weeks for insurgents battling the US-backed government.

### New NKorean cabinet

SEOUL: North Korea said Wednesday it would finally elect new members to its rubber stamp legislature — a move delayed for several months amid speculation about leader Kim Jong Il's health.

The regime also appeared to be shaking up its Cabinet, naming at least five new ministers to economic posts in what analysts say is an attempt to revive the nation's economy after losing South Korean aid amid frayed ties.

### 20 hostages released

PARIS: Pirates freed 20 hostages aboard a Turkish freighter commandeered off the Somali coast, as nine captives on a French boat were released off southern Nigeria, the boat owners said Wednesday. The Yasa Holding Co. said pirates freed the Yasa Nesihi freighter Tuesday after paying a ransom. The Turkish ship was seized Oct. 29 in the Gulf of Aden, which connects the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean near Somalia. Piracy has soared off Somalia with more than 100 vessels attacked around the Gulf of Aden in 2008.

(Agencies)

### राहदानी हरायो

मिति २०६५/०८/१५ गते जारी प्रकाशित गरिएका राहदानीहरायोले पाउँनु ठुले मानवालाभ विकासको लाई कार्यालय दिएको थाएकालाई संबोधित गरिएको थाएको अनुरोध गर्दछु।

नाम: युवराज सापेक्षा

राहदानी नं: ३०९५५९१

ठेगाना: गोडाकोट -६, नवलपाटा

### राहदानी हरायो

मिति २०६५/१२/१५ गते जारी प्रकाशित गरिएका राहदानीहरायोले पाउँनु ठुले मानवालाभ विकासको लाई कार्यालय दिएको थाएकालाई संबोधित गरिएको थाएको अनुरोध गर्दछु।

नाम: दिव्येश राजा आचार्य

राहदानी नं: ३०९५५९१६

ठेगाना: काठमाडौं-५, बेलडार-५, उदयपुर

सम्पर्क: ९८०३०५१२३८, ०९-८८९०९१२८

### राहदानी हरायो

मिति २०६५/१२/१५ गते जारी प्रकाशित गरिएका राहदानीहरायोले पाउँनु ठुले मानवालाभ विकासको लाई कार्यालय दिएको थाएकालाई संबोधित गरिएको थाएको अनुरोध गर्दछु।

नाम: हरिश्चान्त्र श्रेष्ठ

राहदानी नं: ३०९५५९१

ठेगाना: बेलडार-५, उदयपुर

सम्पर्क: ९८०४५१८५४२

### सर्टिफिकेट हरायो

मिति २०६५/१२/१५ गते जारी बोलकोट्टैरेख राहदानीहरायोले पाउँनु ठुले मानवालाभ विकासको लाई कार्यालय दिएको थाएकालाई संबोधित गरिएको थाएको अनुरोध गर्दछु।

नाम: युवराज सिंहलाली

राहदानी नं: ३०९५५९१

ठेगाना: बेलडार-५, उदयपुर

The Kathmandu Post  
Thursday, January 8, 2009

# Business

## Foreign Employment Fund remains unutilized

■ DINESH REGMI

KATHMANDU, JAN. 7

The Foreign Employment Fund is not being utilized even as requests for financial assistance are pouring in from families of workers who have gone abroad.

The fund was set up with contributions of Rs. 500 each from migrant workers, and at present it has accumulated Rs. 110 million. The fund began collecting money in February last year. About 600 migrant workers depart for foreign employment destinations daily, and they contribute at least Rs. 30,000 each day. The fund, according to the act which governs it, is meant to be used to help those in trouble and families of workers who have died abroad. It also promotes foreign employment.

The Foreign Employment Regulation says that up to Rs. 100,000 can be paid to families of those who die while working on contract. Since September, there have been 19 applications for monetary assistance out of which 18 are from families of workers who have died abroad. One is for bringing back the body of a dead worker from Saudi Arabia.

"They told us to file an application, but we haven't heard anything so far," said Laxmi Lama of Hetauda whose brother-in-law died in Saudi Arabia. "Getting the insurance money (amounting to Rs. 500,000) was easier

than this." Bindu Dhungana of Nuwakot has not received any assistance. Her brother died in Saudi Arabia five months ago. In the past year, 500 Nepali migrant workers have died in Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, 60 percent of whom suffered a heart attack.

According to Thaneswor Devkota, executive director of the Foreign Employment Promotion Board, no relief has been provided to aid applicants because the related regulations are yet to be approved by the cabinet.

"It will probably take a month for the regulations to be completed," he said. As the fund remains frozen, a number of jobseekers who have been duped by employment agencies are stuck in the Gulf for lack of travel money.

About a dozen persons have been stranded at the Nepalese embassy in Riyadh, the Saudi Arabian capital. With the fund in Nepal still to become operational, it is also difficult to get financial help to workers who have been injured. "We are thinking of setting up a welfare fund here too," said Khadga Dahal, first secretary at the embassy.

The Nepal mission in Abu Dhabi is also facing a cash crunch to fly the bodies of workers who have died back to Nepal and help those who have been cheated to return home.

### Fund frozen in Qatar too

Meanwhile, the Post correspondent in Doha reports that the non-government welfare fund has not been operational because of legal problems.

"We are expecting help

from the embassy here to operate the bank account," said Kamal Mani Guragain, chairman of the Qatar chapter of the Non-Resident Nepalese Association. Qatar government rules have certain provisions for the operation of bank accounts of private organizations which have not been fulfilled. The fund has deposits equivalent to Rs. 4 million there.

Nepalese Ambassador to Qatar Suryanath Mishra, however, said the Nepal government could not be involved in financial transactions with private organizations as per Nepal's laws. "Therefore, we are unable to help," he said. As the fund remains frozen, a number of jobseekers who have been duped by employment agencies are stuck in the Gulf for lack of travel money.

About a dozen persons have been stranded at the Nepalese embassy in Riyadh, the Saudi Arabian capital. With the fund in Nepal still to become operational, it is also difficult to get financial help to workers who have been injured. "We are thinking of setting up a welfare fund here too," said Khadga Dahal, first secretary at the embassy.

The Nepal mission in Abu Dhabi is also facing a cash crunch to fly the bodies of workers who have died back to Nepal and help those who have been cheated to return home.

### POST REPORT

KATHMANDU, JAN. 7

The inflation for the month of Mangsir (mid-November to mid-December 2008) was 14.1 percent a sharp increase compared to last Mangsir when it was 5.7 percent, Nepal Rastra Bank

### MARKET



Kathmandu Hallmark Worked Hongkong (per ounce) Rs N/A

21,435.00 21,305.00



Kathmandu (per 10 gms) Rs 303.00

682.29

NEPSE INDEX

### EXCHANGE RATES OF MAJOR CURRENCIES

CURRENCY	UNIT	BUYING (in Rs)	SELLING (in Rs)
Indian Rs (Rs)	100	160.00	160.15
US Dollar (\$)	1	77.95	78.55
Euro (€)	1	105.87	106.69
Pound Sterling (£)	1	116.28	117.17
Japanese Yen (¥)	10	8.34	8.40

Exchange rates fixed by Nepal Rastra Bank

said in a statement on Wednesday.

The inflation among food and beverages was 17.2 percent during this period as against 7.1 percent in the corresponding month last year. The highest inflation among foodstuff was in

sugar and sugar-based foods which was 35.9 percent. This figure stood at 17 percent last year.

Similarly inflation of ghee and edible oils was 26.2 percent as against 12.5 percent last year. Likewise, inflation of rice and rice-based foodstuff was

21.8 percent compared to 12.5 percent last year.

Inflation of non-food items and services (including transport, communication, household goods, tobacco) stood at 10.8 percent compared to 4.1 percent in the same month last year. Region-wise inflation was highest in Kathmandu where it stood at 16.2 percent, and in 13.6 percent and 13.1 percent in the hilly and the Terai respectively. These figures stood at 4.9, 5.3 and 6.2 percent during the same period last year.

### SHARES

#### Nepal Stock Exchange

Singhadurbar Plaza, Kathmandu

Jan. 07, 2009

S.N.	Company	Trading Information			Trading Price	
		Max	Min	Closing	No. Shares	
1	Annapurna Bikash Bank Limited	510	497	505	3,180	
2	Ace Development Bank Limited	845	840	845	250	
3	Alliance Insurance Company Limited	181	178	178	33	
4	Bank of Kathmandu	1,340	1,324	1,324	311	
5	Chhini Vikash Bank Ltd.	289	284	289	500	
6	Cosmic Micro-Bank & Fin.	355	355	355	1,080	
7	Civil Merchant Bitiya Sanstha	706	693	700	350	
8	Development Credit Bank Ltd.	649	625	630	1,018	
9	Everest Bank Ltd.	1,901	1,900	1,901	132	
10	Gurkha Development Bank	710	700	710	1,090	
11	ICFC Bitiya Sanstha Ltd.	580	547	547	540	
12	Infrastructure Development Bank Ltd.	1,525	1,490	1,525	1,340	
13	Joint Venture Banking & Fin. Co.	520	500	500	6,74	
14	Kumari Bank Ltd.	760	745	760	3,028	
15	Kathmandu Finance Limited.	466	460	460	188	
16	Kuber Merchant Bitiya Sanstha Ltd.	880	805	821	370	
17	Lord Buddha Financial Institutional Ltd.	517	517	517	10	
18	Laxmi Bank Limited	920	900	920	5,467	
19	Lumbini General Insurance	265	260	265	320	
20	Lumbini Bank Ltd.	470	450	470	606	
21	Machhapuchhre Bank Ltd	538	515	515	874	
22	Malika Bikash Bank Limited	1,233	1,209	1,220	360	
23	Malika Development Bank Ltd., promoter Share	472	472	472	9,000	
24	Nepal Awas Bikas Beeta Co. Ltd.	471	470	470	210	
25	Nabil Bank Ltd.	3,440	3,420	3,440	213	
26	Nepal Bangladeshi Bank Ltd.	310	300	320	15,260	
27	Nepal Credit & Coop. Bank	336	330	330	460	
28	Nepal Development Bank	247	247	247	40	
29	Nepal Development & Employment Protection Bank Ltd.	680	681	677	9,559	
30	National Hydro Power Co.	129	129	129	2,000	
31	Nepal Investment Bank Ltd.	1,190	1,175	1,180	1,829	
32	Nepal Industrial & Co. Bank	820	795	800	2,725	
33	Nepal Life Insurance Co. Ltd.	1,150	1,127	1,127	424	
34	NMB Bank Ltd.	645	605	605	1,200	
35	Nepal Share Markets Ltd.	1,080	1,080	1,080	260	
36	Nepal Doosanchar Company Limited	575	560	560	4,500	
37	Patan Finance Ltd.	392	383	383	400	
38	Prabhu Finance Company Limited	882	860	865	1,380	
39	Royal Micro Bank & Fin.	570	561	561	270	
40	Sacred Vibhuti Bank Ltd.	1,170	1,155	1,155	1,196	
41	Siddhartha Bank Limited	870	850	860	623	
42	Standard Chartered Bank Ltd.	4,790	4,700	4,775	1,281	
43	Sagarmatha Merchant Banking & Finance Ltd.	780	712	759	690	
44	United Finance Ltd.	970	884	884	875	
45	Uniliver Nepal Ltd.	4,284	4,200	4,284	1,000	

Total Traded Amount Rs.: 57,569,590  
Total Traded Shares: 84,317  
Total Transactions: 845  
Market Capitalization: 374,253.98 Millions

Nepse Index: 682.29 (-5.34), Base: 30 Magh, 2050 (12th Feb, 1994)=100

## संविधानसभा समितिको अनुरोध

आफ्ना लागि आफैले संविधान निर्माण गर्ने नेपाली जनताको चाहना पुरा गर्ने क्रममा संविधानसभा कार्यरत रहेको सर्वविदृति छ। संविधानसभा नियमावली, २०६५ बमेजिम गठित यस संविधानिक समितिको मिति २०६५/९/१७ मा बसेको बैठकले भावी संविधानमा रहने देखायका विषयहरूमा आफूले अवधारणा पत्र तयार गर्नुपर्ने ठहर गरेको परिप्रेक्षयमा ती विषयहरूमा समेतिनु पर्ने अवधारणा र विषयवस्तुको बारेमा आफूलाई लागेको सुझाव वा सल्लाह यस समितिलाई उपलब्ध गराई संविधान निर्माण प्रक्रियामा सहभागी भई दिनु हुन संविधानिक समिति स्वदेश तथा विदेशमा रहेका समस्त नेपाली नागरिक, राजनीतिक दल, नागरिक समाज तथा संघरस्थाहसँग हार्दिक अनुरोध गर्दछ। साथै यस सम्बन्धी कूनै सामग्री, अन्तर्रकिया वा गोष्ठिवाट निस्केका निष्कर्षहरू वा कुनै प्रकाशन भए सो समेत समितिलाई उपलब्ध गराई समितिको कार्यमा सहयोग गरिदिन सादर अनुरोध गरिन्छ।

### संविधानिक समितिले अवधारणापत्र तयार गर्ने विषयहरू

- प्रस्तावना
- संविधानको पहिलो भागमा रहने विषयवस्तुहरू
- संविधान संशोधन प्रक्रिया
- राजनीतिक दल सम्बन्धी संविधानिक व्यवस्था
- संकटकालिन अवधारणाको घोषणा
- संविधानमा बाधा अड्काउने अधिकार सम्बन्धी व्यवस्था
- विविध भागमा रहने



**LEONA LEWIS**

Author of a sordid autobiography at 23 pg III

# City Post

**MUSIC FULL-CIRCLE**

Neipaal: Back to the school pg IV



## Think you know them?

Celebrities, by rule, are widely admired and followed. People like to dress like them, imitate their mannerism, even replicate their rather embarrassing tics. *City Post* believes you can never learn enough about your favourite celebs. In this spirit, it brings to you some likes, dislikes and a few other things you ought to know about a few of your favourite singers from around the world.

**Deepak Bajracharya**

Deepak Bajracharya started performing on-stage all the way back in 1988 at the City Hall, Kathmandu. He has since gone on to sing nearly 300 songs and taken part in as many musical programmes around the world.

What does the Piscean like? He just loves the flamenco French outfit Gypsy Kings and is a sucker for Michael Bolton's soothing numbers.

**Avril Lavigne**

Avril fans, come close. She prefers it hush-hush. Secretive and brooding, this Canadian rocker is one hard woman to grasp.

A part-time actress and fashion designer, Avril is intense and passionate, both in loving and hating. She hates superficiality and likes people who are passionate and committed to a cause. On the other hand, she loves to be involved with any kind of club, organisation or community activities.

**Preeti Kaur**

Preeti Kaur, the young and energetic singer and performer, loves anything and everything to do with Mariah Carey. She recently made a mea culpa: She is obsessed about herself.

**Beyonce Knowles**

This R&B goddess has spread her tentacles far and wide. Besides being a successful singer, both as a solo artiste and as a member of the Destiny's Child, Beyonce Knowles is also an accomplished songwriter, record producer and a versatile actress.

Beyonce loves food, any kind of food. She had a really tough time cutting down those extra calories for her role in the movie Dreamgirls. Beyonce had to cut down on all her favourite food on her way to losing 20 pounds for the role.

Soon as the shooting for the Dreamgirls ended, Beyonce rushed to, you guessed it, the nearest cafeteria to put all those lost pounds back. This Texas damsel just loves fatty food. Wow, that's some admission!



Preeti despises those who don't respect others' feelings. Her ideal man? One who can be trusted, is dedicated to his work and (just when you thought it didn't matter) good looking!

**Jon Bon Jovi**

New Jersey born and bred American hard rocker Jon Bon Jovi must have a million things he likes and quite a few he would not touch with a barge pole.

But who would have thought JBJ, himself a popular actor, hates Hollywood. He often describes his life in the tinsel town as "a rotten existence" and is seriously mulling giving up acting altogether to concentrate on his music career.

And did you know that he absolutely abhors bandmate and guitarist Richie Sambora's girlfriend Denise Richards whom he is thinking of banning from their future tours!

**Alisha Chinai**

The Made in India pop siren is known as Indian Madonna, and not for nothing. Like her American counterpart, Chinai sizzles, in front of the camera, and behind. But wait, can you believe that the Bombay bombshell has had enough of the American Sex goddess?

Yes, Alisha has now shifted her loyalties to Celine Dion and says she would love to sing for movies like Titanic.

What else does the lover girl fancy?

Not pubbing and partying, both of which she detests. On the other hand, she loves to eat, eat and eat! Her idea of a perfect day is a romantic movie at her own sweet home. And yes, dancing.

**Sheryl Crow**

Nine-time Grammy winner Sheryl Crow is as famous for her beautiful voice as she is for her unique blend of music which combines rock, country, pop, folk and blues.

You might know dozens of stuff about her (no need for us to go Crowing!), but do you know what helps the part-time political activist produce such a rich oeuvre, year in year out? A glass of milk every morning!

Yes, this well-toned crooner maintains healthy weight by regularly drinking milk and is one of the leading advocates for the milk industry in America.

**Lucky Ali**

Son of famous comedian Mehmood, Lucky Ali has had his share of success as a singer and

composer as well as an accomplished actor.

This ballad-style singer loves open spaces, and is inspired by the splendour of nature. Like his favourite animal, horse, Lucky is known for his easy-going attitude.

But, believe it or not, Lucky's lost. He now says he doesn't know what he is doing. Surprisingly, Lucky hopes neither acting nor singing turns out to be his niche. So what does he want to do? Move on, of course.

**Axl Rose**

Perhaps we don't need to introduce Axl Rose, the Guns N' Roses frontman (oops!). What about this bit, though? He loathes interviews as they are "nightmare". There are also rumours that he suffers from anthropophobia, or fear of people.

(PR)



# Bruce Lee's HK home to get facelift



This picture shows the gate of the former home of late actor Bruce Lee in Hong Kong on Jan. 07. The current owner agreed to restore and turn the property into a tourist destination to commemorate the late Kung Fu legend.

AP/RS PHOTO

A philanthropic bid by a Hong Kong tycoon to preserve the one-time residence of kung fu legend Bruce Lee and transform it into a major tourist attraction honoring the film icon was approved on Tuesday.

The green light comes after a long-running struggle by fans to save the 5,700-square-foot, two-storey town house from an inglorious fate as a seedy love motel in a leafy Kowloon suburb.

The fate of Lee's last home had hung in the balance for years, until its owner, real estate and hotel tycoon Yu Pang-lin, made a surprise decision last year to donate it to the city where the martial arts mas-

ter first shot to fame.

"Both sides have now reached a consensus to go ahead and essentially proceed with this good plan," Yu told reporters after a meeting with government officials.

"I'm 88 years old now and hope that while I'm still alive I'll be able to see this Bruce Lee museum completed," he added.

Hong Kong's Commerce and Economic Development Bureau said it agreed to preserve the "original outlook of the building and its features" with an aim to revitalize it for long-term sustainable operation as a tourism attraction.

Parts of the home will be recreated, including Lee's study and training hall stacked with

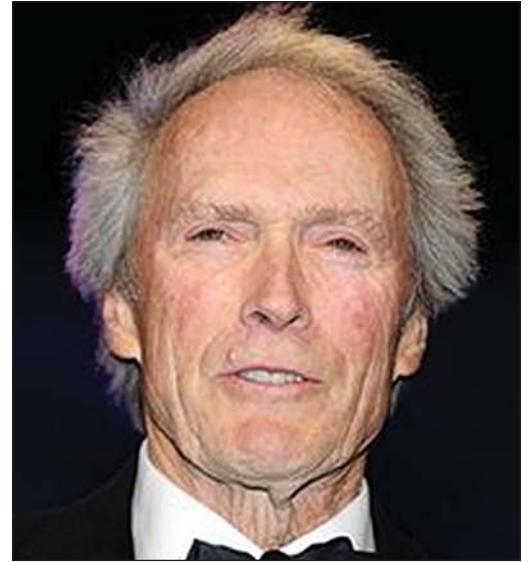
martial arts weaponry and other paraphernalia of his discipline.

While further details have yet to be hammered out, Yu wants the site, which has served as a love motel with rooms rented out by the hour - to include a library, martial arts center and a movie theater to fully commemorate Lee's life and philosophy.

A government spokeswoman gave no timeframe but hoped to get the project up and running as soon as possible. Lee, who died under mysterious circumstances in 1973 aged 32, starred in such kung fu classics as "Fist of Fury," "Game of Death" and "Enter the Dragon."

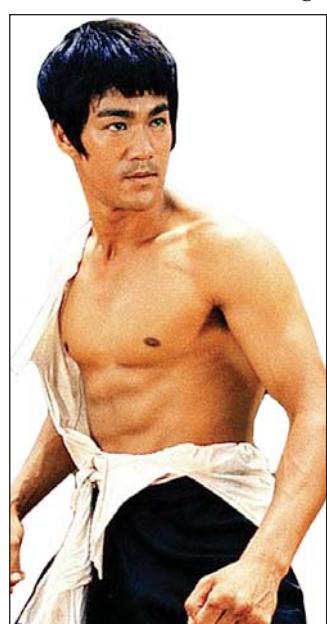
Revered both by martial arts

# DiCaprio, Eastwood get Palm Springs honours



adherents and movie buffs the world over for popularizing the kung fu cinematic genre, Lee also helped usher in a golden age of Hong Kong film in the 1960s.

Before Yu's charitable gesture however, the government seemed reluctant to invest public money in a major site to commemorate the legacy of one of Hong Kong's most famous names. While born in San Francisco, the brash though



sinewy fighter was raised and made his name in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong's Bruce Lee fan club welcomed the breakthrough, and expressed hopes the residence could prove as big a draw as other global memorial sites such as the Beatles Story in Liverpool and Elvis Presley's Graceland mansion in Tennessee.

(AP)

The world economy is in dire straits, but you sure wouldn't know it from the red carpet at the 20th-annual Palm Springs International Film Festival Awards Gala. The actresses were dripping with jewels, actors donned high fashion, and logos of jeweler Cartier and automaker Mercedes-Benz loomed large behind all as they posed for photographers.

"I'm just doing what I know how to do, and that's make movies and hopefully get people to go see them so I can continue to make more movies," said actor Leonardo DiCaprio, when asked if he felt uncomfortable in this setting, given widespread financial woes.

DiCaprio was on hand Tuesday night to accept the fest's Ensemble Performance Award for the drama "Revolutionary Road," for which he's a nominee at Sunday's Golden Globes.

This year's other Palm Springs honorees included

many who are widely considered strong Oscar contenders, including "The Changeling" director and "Gran Torino" star and director Clint Eastwood, who showed up to take home the Career Achievement Award.

"Milk" actor Sean Penn and "Rachel Getting Married" actor Anne Hathaway each came to pick up a Desert Palm Achievement Award. Is Hathaway ready for eight more weeks of awards-show mania, ending with the Oscars on Feb. 22?

"I've decided to keep a journal about it, and write down my reflections every night. Because I know that if I don't do that now, when I look back, I won't be able to remember things so clearly," Hathaway said. "So I think that's what I'm going to do."

The Oscar-winning Penn summed up the red-carpet experience in two words - "It's loud!" - and Eastwood had only a few more. "Once in a while it's fine," he said. "But, after a

while, you go blind by the time they hit you with about 400 flashbulbs."

Awards Gala presenters included "Frost/Nixon" star Frank Langella, there to give the film's director Ron Howard the Director's Lifetime Achievement Award, and actor Ben Stiller to hand his "Meet the Fockers" co-star Dustin Hoffman the Chairman's Awards. "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" composer Alexandre Desplat received his statuette from "Button" actor Taraji P. Hanson - herself an awards-show veteran, thanks to her role in the acclaimed "Hustle and Flow."

The red carpet is a lot of work and I really would like to find out who said it was all glamorous and I'd like to kick them in their shins because it's not so glamorous," Hanson noted. "You have to be on, you have to be personality, you know, even if you don't feel like it."

(AP)

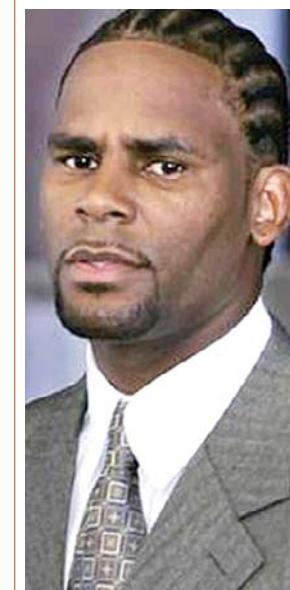
## Eminem, 50 Cent songs hit radio, web

**T**here are still no solidified release dates for upcoming albums from Eminem and 50 Cent, but new music from both rappers has emerged in the past 24 hours.

Eminem's "Crack a Bottle," which features 50 Cent as well



### BORN TODAY



American singer R. Kelly is 42

- Welsh singer Dame Shirley Bassey is 72
- English musician David Bowie is 62
- American actress Michelle Forbes is 44
- American actress and musician Jenny Lewis is 33
- Canadian actress Sarah Polley is 30

expected this spring via Interscope Records.

Meanwhile, a new 50 Cent song, "I Get It In," debuted Monday on New York radio station Hot 97. Its parent album, "Before I Self Destruct," was originally due December 9 but

was delayed while the rapper continued recording. An Interscope spokesperson was unable to confirm a rumored February 3 release date.

"It wasn't close to finished, and it even has me doing guide vocals for Dre as a suggestion of how he could lay his verses down," he told Billboard at the time. His first album in more than four years, "Relapse," is

(Agencies)

## Aerosmith All hands to the pump



Aerosmith is ready to return to work on its next studio album, according to drummer Joey Kramer.

"Today is the first day (bassist) Tom (Hamilton) and I are getting back together," he wrote Monday on the group's Web site (<http://www.aero-forceone.com>). "We just rehearsed for two hours and it feels so good! We can't wait to get back into the studio and get back out on the road to do what we do best."

Work has already begun on the band's first album of original material since 2001's "Just Push Play." Aerosmith pressed pause on the project last year while band members recovered from a variety of medical issues, such as singer Steven Tyler's rehab stint and lead guitarist Joe

Perry's knee surgery.

"Like a lot of other things in life, you don't get to call the shots on these things, do you?" guitarist Brad Whitford told Billboard.com last fall. "We're just ... getting older." There's no date

for the new album, but it's expected to be out sometime this year via Columbia. Aerosmith also has one live show lined up on February 1 at Estadio Olimpico in Caracas, Venezuela.

(Agencies)

## Brolin gets a reprieve

**I**t's not exactly a presidential pardon, but prosecutors have agreed to drop charges filed against "W." actors Josh Brolin and Jeffrey Wright after an incident at a Los Angeles bar last year.

Brolin, Wright and five crew members of the Oliver Stone film "W." were arrested on misdemeanor charges at the Stray Cat Club on July 12. Brolin and Wright were charged with interfering with police officers after a disturbance involving a crew member.

Los Angeles attorney Blair Berk, who represented the actors and five others, said prosecutors in Shreveport have agreed to drop all charges against the group within 60 days. She declined to comment further.

A prosecutor didn't return a phone message seeking comment Tuesday.

Video posted on the celebrity gossip site TMZ showed Brolin and Wright hugging each other before being placed in handcuffs. Brolin rubs his eyes after apparently being pepper sprayed. He then kneels on a sidewalk as other officers forcibly cuff Wright, who is lying in the street nearby.

Brolin, who played President George W. Bush in Stone's film, wasn't required to attend a court hearing scheduled for Tuesday. Wright portrayed former Secretary of State Colin Powell.

(AP)

## Lewis autobiography on cards



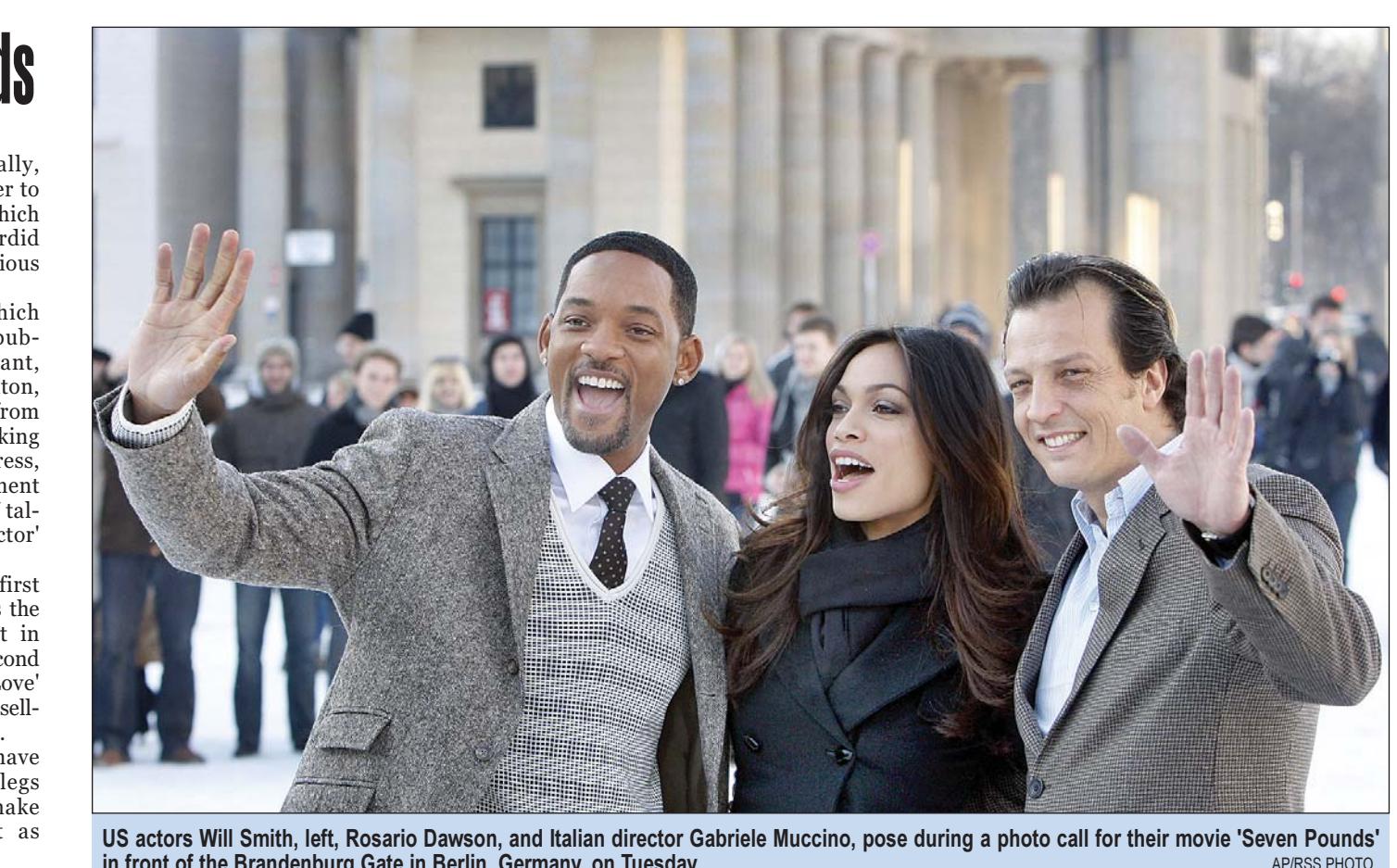
maker, has literally just put pen to paper to sign a book deal, which will reveal the sordid details of her illustrious rise to fame.

The book, which looks set to be published by book giant Hodder and Stoughton, will chart her life from her dark days working as a Pizza Hut waitress, to the glorious moment that she won UK TV talent show "The X Factor" in 2006.

The singer's first album - Spirit - was the fastest-selling debut in the UK ever, her second single 'Bleeding Love' was 2008's biggest-selling single worldwide.

Leona Lewis - Britain's brightest star - has decided to release an autobiography. Despite only being 23 years old.

The Bleeding Love hit



US actors Will Smith, left, Rosario Dawson, and Italian director Gabriele Muccino, pose during a photo call for their movie 'Seven Pounds' in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, Germany, on Tuesday.

AP/RS PHOTO

## TODAY'S HOROSCOPE



## Aries (March 21-April 19) ☺☺

Arguments are flying around the workplace today and you're mixed up in quite a few of them. It may not be the best time for you to try to push forward with anything too out there, but you can't resist.



## Taurus (April 20-May 20) ☺☺☺

You need to be extra-skeptical of anything that seems remotely sketchy today -- but don't just dismiss it out of hand! You have to ask probing questions and look for new evidence instead.



## Gemini (May 21-June 21) ☺☺☺

Your social behavior is incredibly attractive today and you might play flirty games with almost everyone you encounter -- but you don't have to worry about keeping it appropriate this time!



## Cancer (June 22-July 22) ☺☺☺

You've got to scope out the details of your latest project, whether it's a huge spreadsheet at work or a basement hobby. If you don't hammer them out now, they'll get you in the end.



## Leo (July 23-August 22) ☺☺☺

Fall back on your people today when things start to look dire -- they've got more resources at their disposal than you may realize. It's a good time to strengthen your bonds together.



## Virgo (August 23-Sept 22) ☺☺

You usually don't mind checking and re-checking details, but today you might feel tempted to skip over them for some reason. Don't do it! You've got to take things extra-slowly for now.



## Libra (Sept 23-Oct 22) ☺☺

Any intellectual challenge you meet today should fall pretty quickly -- you can see flaws and strengths much more easily than usual. See if you can get your people to follow your lead.



## Scorpio (Oct 23-Nov 21) ☺☺

You need to make sure that you're not just accepting everything you see today at face value. Read the fine print, ask big questions or get advice from someone who's been there before.



## Sagittarius (Nov 22-Dec 21) ☺☺☺

Try to be a little more careful in your dealings with the people you work with the most closely -- it may be easier than usual to accidentally offend them or just to ask them the wrong question at the wrong time.



## Capricorn (Dec 22-Jan 19) ☺☺

You're feeling much less serious than usual today and that's just right for most people and their energy. Have fun and play around with the folks around you -- then get back to work tomorrow.



## Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb 18) ☺☺☺

You've got your own way of doing things and sometimes you need to just stick with it, no matter what. If anyone accuses you of being inflexible, just raise an eyebrow and keep moving.



## Pisces (Feb 19-March 20) ☺☺

You're stuck between two competing points of view -- and you might hold them both yourself! That makes it easier for you to reconcile them, but it might take some effort to convince your peers you're right.



## MUSIC FULL-CIRCLE

PHOTO: SUNITA DANGOL

about."

Lakpa reigned supreme in the "Best Vocal Performance in a Group" category at the recent Image Awards for their hit song "Maile Bolne Yo Bolima". Released over a year ago, the album which takes after the band's name, Neipaal, has folk, rock, love and patriotic songs, which have all been received well by the people.

"We had not expected to win as we were competing with the likes of The Karma Band and Vedh, but now that we've won the award, we feel we deserved it," says Lakpa Sherpa, the frontman of Neipaal.

Even with the album doing very well in the market, says Lakpa, "We're still promoting it. For that, we are bringing out a new music video of another song in the album." The soon to be released video is "Sayama Dayama" which incorporates pure Thakali melody.

He says, "It was while trekking at Jonson that I met a man who was singing this song, I learned the words and caught the melody but he couldn't tell me exactly what the song was

After coming back from trekking Lakpa along with his bandmates spent considerable amount of time working on the song. "We decided to extract two words Sayama and Dayama but pen the rest of lyrics ourselves. The song's melody resembles the traditional version. We only changed the words as we wanted people to understand it."

Ever since the album came out, Neipaal has been organising fund-raising concerts at regular intervals in order to support education of poor and needy children of Lukla Primary School, Lukla, in Solukhumbu district. Being a part-time trekking guide himself, Lakpa concedes that there are a lot of chil-

dren who can't afford to go to school in the mountain region. "We thought these children could get an education if we could contribute



something."

"I'm also from the same region. I know what it is like to grow up in a place without even basic amenities. I too was sponsored by a foreigner to study in Kathmandu. I understand the value of education," says Lakpa with a reflective glint in his eyes.

Besides doing music, Lakpa is also involved with Ashraya Foundation Nepal (AFN) in the capacity of president. "My efforts at getting children to study have been facilitated by my involvement with the foundation; AFN's main objective is to support needy and underprivileged children of remote areas."

Neipaal is involved in concerts round the year raising funds. As the year comes to a close, they visit Lukla Primary School and buy a whole year's supply of stationeries, bags and uniforms, among other things.

"The other reason we go there every year is to entertain students. We play our music and engage the children in different extracurricular activities."

Ask him how students find their music and he promptly replies, "Folk tunes are very close to their hearts. Neipaal being a folk-rock band, I guess they identify with our songs."

Burden Education Foundation is another organisation that provides scholarships to 550 students in the mountain region. Currently, the band is involved with two schools in Solukhumbu region. The concerts Neipaal have organised to collect funds include ones at Gurukul, Nepal Academy Hall, Rashtriya Sabha Griha and Kopan Gumba.

Right now, the band is working on their second album scheduled for end of the year

release. "We are also thinking of a few more fund-collection gigs."

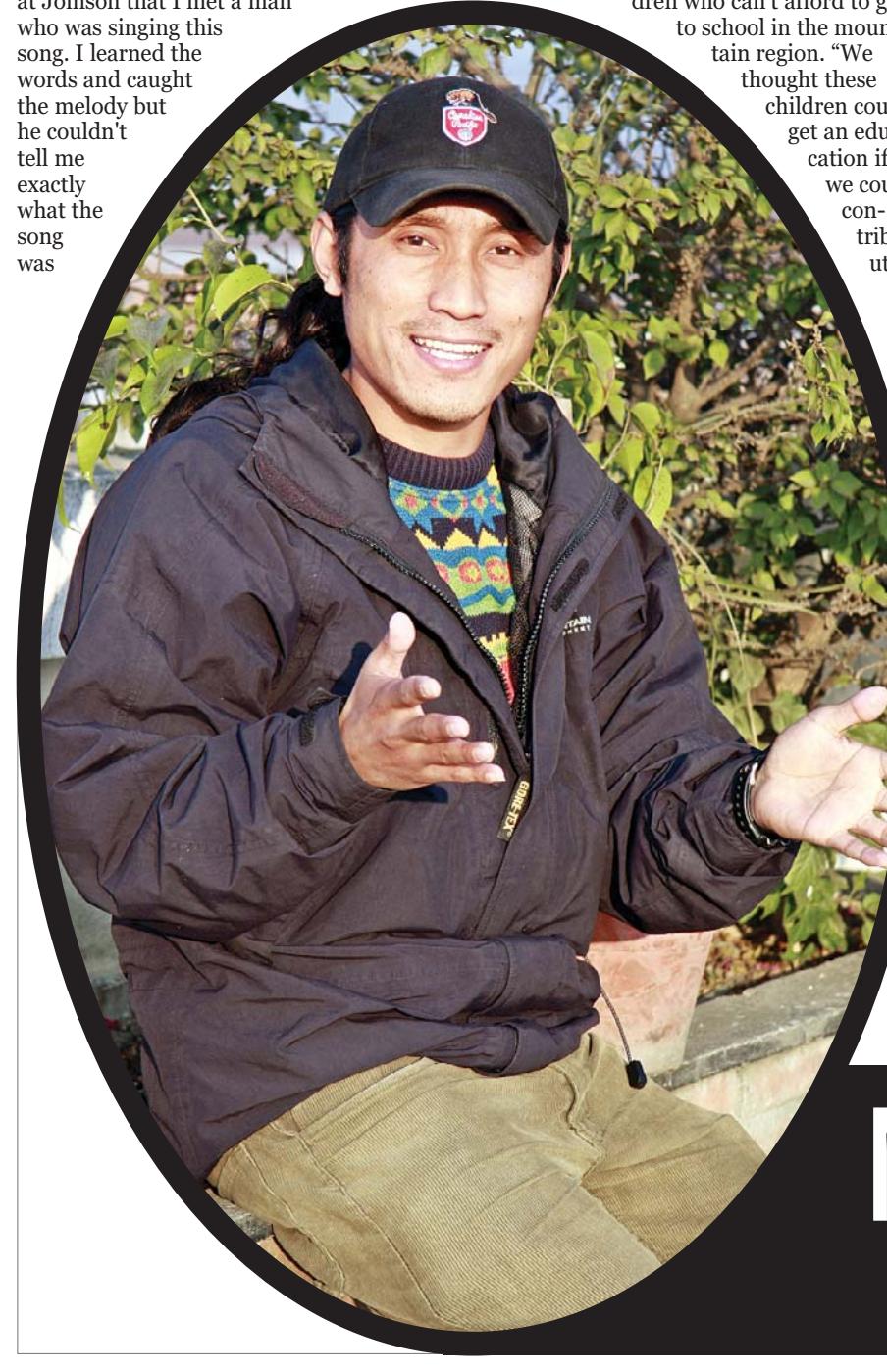
Their second album will be similar to their first but "with more folk songs" collected during tours to different parts of the country. Recently, they had gone for a trekking to Langtang where they found many traditional songs. "Nepal is truly a melting pot of music and songs," says Lakpa.

"We are working on a couple of songs we brought back from Langtang. We'd also visited Ghandruk and Naamche and have brought home some typical songs which you will be able to listen to in our upcoming album. As always, we will give top priority to folk tunes and melodies but there will also be rock songs. We've also added love and patriotic songs."

The band's current line-up consists of Lakpa Sherpa on vocals, Kishor Lama on lead guitar, Norbu Sherpa on drums, Mingma Sherpa on percussions, Wongchu Sherpa on keyboards and Shakti Poudyal on bass. "The members change constantly because everyone is doing their own thing but Neipaal will always be in the music scene and continue giving good songs to the people."

Meanwhile, band members are busy penning lyrics and composing songs for their upcoming album. Lakpa, speaking on behalf of his band, signs off in style, "Music has tremendous power to bring change. But it is also important to preserve our own folk tunes and songs to keep it going. Neipaal will continue to do what it can to help underprivileged students get education."

■ AMRITA GURUNG



## Neipaal: Back to the school

This week's music maker

## CITYPOST STRIPS

## Archie



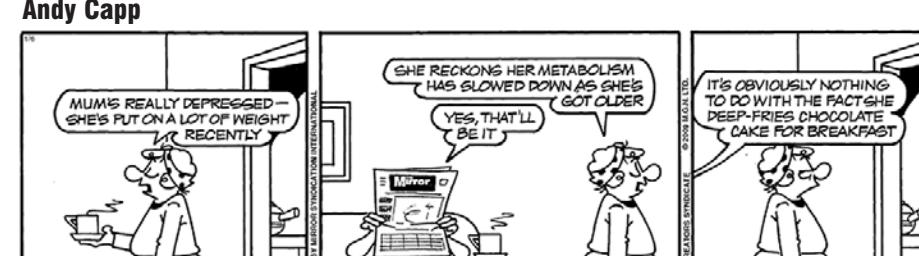
## Peanuts



## F Minus



## Andy Capp



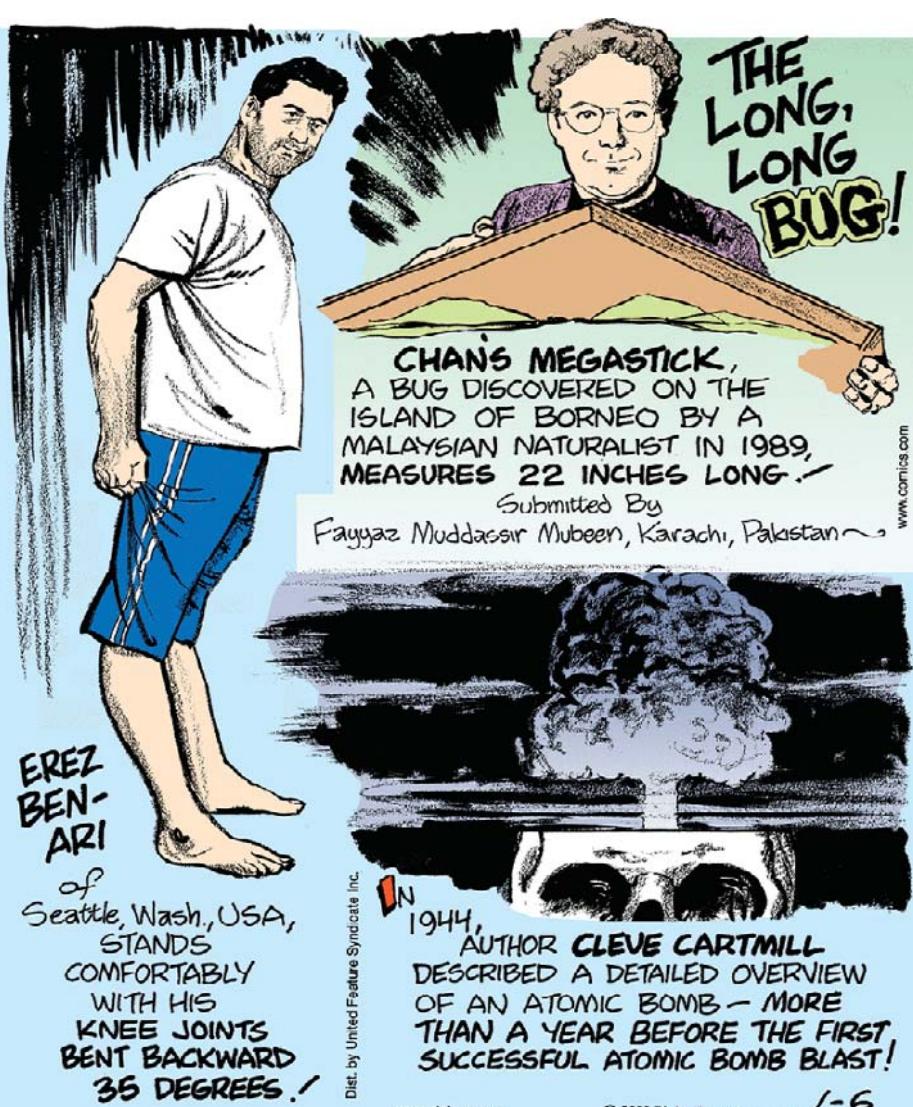
## Garfield



## Pickles



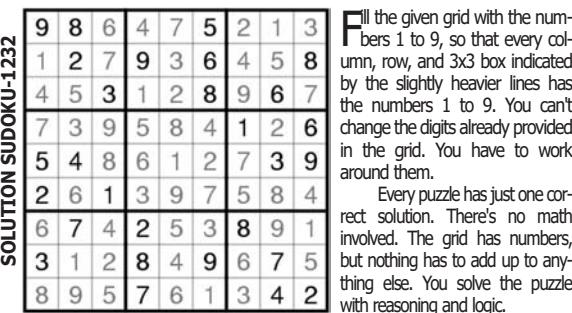
## Ripley's Believe it or not



## Su Doku No. 1233x



Solution in the next issue  
Difficulty: Very Hard



SOLUTION SUDOKU-1232

Fill the given grid with the numbers 1 to 9, so that every column, row, and 3x3 box indicated by the slightly heavier lines has the numbers 1 to 9. You can't change the digits already provided in the grid. You have to work around them.

Every puzzle has just one correct solution. There's no math involved. The grid has numbers, but nothing has to add up to anything else. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

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