

The Nepal Digest

The First Nepali e-Magazine

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About The Nepal Digest

The Nepal Digest (TND) is a publication of TND Foundation, global not-for-profit information and resource center (registered in New York, USA) committed to promoting issues concerning Nepal. All members of TheNepalDigest.org will get copy of [The Nepal Digest \(TND\)](http://TheNepalDigest.org). Membership is free of charge and is open to all.

The Nepal Digest is the first Nepali electronic e-magazine in the Internet. The Nepal Digest hopes to create a free and democratic electronic platform -- free of all political views, free of cultural biasness, against prejudices and unjustness of all kinds.

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You can submit your articles, views and news at its website <http://theNepalDigest.org/submit.htm> or via email contact@theNepalDigest.org. The TND team appreciates your support.

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Editorial: Happy Thanksgiving

Dear Readers:

Today, on the eve of Thanksgiving, I would like to express my sincere APPRECIATION and would like to THANK all those who have been writing for TND, reading regularly, supporting frequently, sharing their comments, or simply being part of it directly or indirectly.

I feel really privileged to present this issue of TND with Nepalese Ambassador to the U.S.A., H.E. Kedar Bhakta Shrestha's interview, along with phethora of articles by very talented authors. I would like to sincerely thank all the authors/writers/contributors who have been so diligently contributing to TND since its rejuvanation 2 years ago.

December is also month to pay TND's major annual dues specially the web hosting, domains renewal, and PO Box fees. So I would be opening the TND PO Box more often with hopes and expectations to find more of your contributions. As always, I would appreciate your any generous donations to keep TND alive and kicking. You can do it [online](#) on TND site or use the mailing address:

TND Foundation
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Thank you and wish you all a very Happy Thanksgiving.

Ujjwal Bhattarai

Editor/Co-ordinator

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Letter to Editor: 12 Nepalis in Iraq and President Bush

By Teeka Bhattarai

Dear Editor:

Its late but not too late to review the connection between slained 12 Nepalis in Iraq and US President Bush. I am not a regular visitor to this forum and matter I am going to talk might well have been discussed amongst you. I wanted to appeal you all who are hurt by such incidences as Nepalis ever since I learnt that you were engaged in raising funds for those Nepalis killed in Iraq: it would have been a bigger contribution to campaign against Bush rather than spending your energy to raise funds. Of course, I appreciate it as a kind gesture of solidarity and compassion.

I am neither a communist nor a muslim. When stone were thrown in the mosques of Kathmandu on the 1st September, I felt that the point was diverted. Bush led, oil driven US war in Iraq is the main reason for the killing of our fellow countrymen. Obviously not the muslims of Iraq. We all know who and what makes them extremists. Its the price Nepalis paid for the war that Bush provoked. Bush is trying to put the cost of the war in the heads of the people of the world as its becoming too expensive for US to continue it. I take that Nepalis were the culprits for anti-US Iraqis to warn the rest of the world not to work for Americans as cheap laborers. With the third world cheap laborers US can continue to assualt Iraqis or whichever country is not coming in terms with.

I don't know, how much the world would have changed with Kerry as US president. Removal of Bush from white house would have been logical and spiritual thing to have those 12 souls to rest in peace.

Let this be my homage to the killed fellows and those who still risk the same fate. I would welcome counter arguments - for my knowledge.

Teeka Bhattarai

Kathmandu

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Immigration Questions and Answers By Ramesh K. Shrestha, Attorney at Law

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He will answer TND reader's immigration related questions. Questions can be asked by visiting our submit page or simply by emailing at contact@thenepaldigest.org. TND sincerely thanks and appreciates Mr. Shrestha's contribution. - Editor)

There are 2 questions and answers in this issue.

Question #1

Jaya from the USA asked:

Namastee, Ramesh Ji:

I came here in K-1 visa. I didn't get married. It's been almost two years my visa has been expired. If I get married to a citizen, what are the procedures and how long does it take for me to receive travelling visa, work permit and a green card. OR is there any option besides getting married. I would like to apply for the DV lottery but I don't know which is the trustworthy site. I have met a couple of lawyers down here but when I saw a Nepali lawyer on the website for the first time, I am very eager to hear from you. Thanks

Sincerely,
Jaya

Answer:

Unfortunately, a person who came with a K-1 visa cannot change status or adjust status (obtain a green card) based on grounds other than marriage to the person who filed K-1 petition. Good luck.

...

Question #2

Robin from Nepal asked:

My sister is a US citizen and she is planning to apply for permanent residency for my mother, while she will visit US on B1/B2 visa. Can she get permanent residency within 6 months of application?

Answer:

Robin jee:

Your sister can file a relative petition for your mother while she is in the United States. Due to the backlog in processing applications at the USCIS and the clearance requirements, it is highly unlikely that

your mother will be able to obtain her resident status within 6 months.

Ramesh K. Shrestha, Attorney-At-Law

(Disclaimer Notice: Legal answer provided must not be construed as a legal advice rather it is an answer general in nature. One must seek legal advice from an immigration attorney for his or her particular legal matter.)

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Interview: An Exclusive Interview with H.E. Ambassador Mr. Kedar Bhakta Shrestha

By TND Team

His Excellency Mr. Kedar Bhakta Shrestha was born in Kathmandu on 18th January 1938. He is married to Shanta Shrestha and has a son and two daughters. He holds M.A. in Political Science and International Affairs from the University of Bombay 1959.

Nepalese Ambassador to the United States of America H.E. Mr. Kedar Bhakta Shrestha granted TND (The Nepal Digest) an exclusive interview. H.E. Mr. Shrestha answered all the questions put forward by Kamala Sarup and Ujjwal Bhattarai on behalf of TND (The Nepal Digest).

1. Please share your brief background from Nepal with TND readers.

I began my career as a civil servant in Nepal in 1964. And in February 1997, after 34 years of service, I retired as the Foreign Secretary of His Majesty's Government of Nepal. I was then appointed as Ambassador to the European Union in Brussels and also to the Benelux countries in 1997. I served in that capacity until 2002. As a career diplomat, I had had the opportunity to serve at our Embassies in Bonn, Washington as well as in our Permanent Mission in New York. I also served as Director in the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu from 1987 to 1992.

Role of an Ambassador:

2. What are your major role as an Ambassador of Nepal in Washington DC. What are your priorities?

As an Ambassador stationed in Washington DC, my work includes maintaining a regular dialogue and communication with the US government and various other US agencies to promote Nepal's national interests. I am glad to say that at present Nepal-US relations are in an excellent state. The volume of US assistance is increasing and Nepal is getting moral and material support for institutionalizing democracy, peace and stability in the country. Besides this, I see immense prospects for promoting tourism as well as developing trade and investment links between our two countries. People to People relations are equally important in promoting mutual understanding and goodwill between our two countries. Cultural exchanges are vital in this regard. I will try my best to encourage and promote all these activities for our mutual benefits.

3. Our peaceful country Nepal is going through rounds of violence. What could be some of the steps that you could take from DC to stop violence and restore peace?

It is most unfortunate that Nepal's image as a peaceful and peace loving country is being tarnished by the Maoist violence that has ravaged the country for the last nine years. In the name of people's war, the so-called Maoists have waged an absolutely unjust and unwarranted war against the people and against democracy. Multiparty parliamentary system of governance is the order of the day and it has worked well in places where freedom and individual liberty are upheld and respected. So it should be in Nepal too. I would like to urge all the Nepalese in this country to look at the problem in a constructive way and assist the government in its efforts to bring peace in the country in whatever way they can.

Nepalese in the USA

4. Now that you have had some chance to mingle with Nepalese community here in the USA, in Virginia and New Jersey among other places, how have you perceived the Nepalese living in US?

I have had some opportunity to meet and interact with members of the Nepalese Diaspora in various parts of the USA since I came to Washington DC in August this year. I am greatly encouraged by their love and affection towards their motherland. The ongoing spate of violence in the country equally troubles them. And they all want this to stop for good. I appreciate their concerns from the bottom of my heart. And I look forward to having more interactions with the Nepalese communities and the NRNs in coming days. There is an increasing realization in Nepal that non-resident Nepalese can play a significant role in the development of the country. I would like to call upon all non-resident Nepalese to see how and in what ways they can support Nepal in her development efforts. Meanwhile, I would like to assure them all that peace, stability and progress are the overriding concerns for all of us in Nepal and the present government is making sincere efforts to get the Maoist problem resolved as soon as possible.

5. To some extent it could be said that the relationship of Nepalese living in US and the Nepalese Embassy is limited to renewing passport. Are you planning for any actions that would help Nepalese Diaspora and the embassy to come together more often and share resources constructively for the betterment of Nepalese?

It is true that consular services constitute one of the important works of the Embassy. With the number of Nepalese growing every year, the volume of our consular work has also increased significantly. But we still don't have a reliable figure of the total number of Nepalese in the USA and Canada. We only have estimated figures, and these estimates vary depending on where they come from. So we want to begin in a very modest way. I would like to call upon all the Nepalese associations and organizations in the USA and Canada to share with the Embassy whatever list of Nepalese they have with them so that a more realistic figure could be worked out. We also need to know how many Nepalese students are currently undertaking higher studies in various US universities. We welcome information on these matters from the Nepalese communities so that the Embassy could have a more reliable database in hand. Once we have this basic information, we can work together in many ways for the benefit of our country and community.

6. In a conflict situation like we have in Nepal, what do you suggest Nepalese living abroad to implement various educational, charitable programs effectively for the people of Nepal.

We all know that a conflict situation is an exceptional situation. The ongoing conflict has created unnecessary hardship for the common people of Nepal. Even the development activities in the rural areas are badly affected. So, any educational and/or charitable programs meant to ease the common people's hardships in the remote parts of the country will be welcome.

US-Nepal Relationship

7. Under the light that the USA providing direct military and assistance to Nepal, how do you look at this new relationship and what could be its future implications.

The United States of America has remained a very important development partner of Nepal for almost six decades now. Their assistance has been very valuable in areas such as education, infrastructure building, health and family planning, agriculture, transportation, communications etc. In view of the ongoing Maoist insurgency and the widespread damage and destruction of public property caused by them, the US military assistance is meant to better equip and train the Royal Nepalese Army. Democratic peace, stability and development are our major concerns and as soon as the Maoists come to the national political mainstream under a multi-party parliamentary system, normalcy will return to Nepal.

Nepal's present situation

8. How do you summarize present political situation in Nepal to an average American?

Nepal has a coalition government consisting of representatives from major political parties that were present in the dissolved parliament. The government is trying to restore peace in the country through talks with the Maoists, and hold parliamentary elections to form a representative government as early as possible. But the Maoists have yet to respond positively. And, this has been a continuing source of political instability in the country. As for the average Americans, I would like to tell them that Nepal continues to be an attractive tourist destination and the American tourists are most welcome in the country.

9. Do you think the Maoist insurgents of Nepal might pose threat to other countries in the region?

In an increasingly interdependent and globalized world of today, insurgency in one part of the globe can have ramifications in terms of population dislocation, instability, economic disruption, insecurity etc. for the rest of the world as well. Naturally, therefore, the effects of the ongoing Maoist insurgency in Nepal can quite easily cross over to other countries in the region as well. However, as for specific threats to other countries in the region, it is for each one of them to assess the level of threats by themselves.

10. How do you look at the proposal of Kofi Annan, the UN secretary general to help Nepal?

His Majesty's Government appreciates the good wishes from all our well-wishers including the United Nations to see the early restoration of peace in Nepal. And, His Majesty's Government believes that the Maoist problem can be resolved internally through a peace process involving the two sides.

Final words:

11. Our best wishes for your very successful tenure. Would you like to pass on any message to Nepalese in the USA through TND?

Thank you for your best wishes, and for this interview through which I am reaching out to the Nepalese communities in the USA and elsewhere. I have been impressed by the way the Nepalese are organizing themselves in various parts of the USA. I am even more impressed by the deep affection and love they continue to hold for Nepal. I deeply admire them, and I would like to encourage them to lend their creative support in whatever ways they can to facilitate the peace efforts of the government.



Politics: 'Pro-People Education' or 'Pro-Violence Education'?

By Dr. Shabnam Koirala

Those of us with the ability to look at Nepali culture and society critically would agree that a movement such as the one led by the Maoists was bound to emerge sooner or later. A country that still practices centuries of social hierarchies based on class, caste, gender and ethnicity would inevitably face a movement reflecting the struggles of the oppressed to gain some attention and rights in the mainstream. The democratic movement which initially showed promise of a more equal Nepal, for the most part simply perpetuated some of these deep social inequalities while re-distributing power amongst the elite few. The result has been a "democracy" controlled by those involved in partisan politics and the government. The ordinary people, for the most part, remain forgotten.

Unfortunately, what started as a plea for attention by the oppressed has turned into yet another struggle for power. I think we have all had our fill of depressing and disheartening news of constant attacks and strife between Maoists, the army and innocent Nepalis. As members of the Nepali Diaspora we continue to keep ourselves informed of the situation while feeling helpless and concerned for the state of our country and people. The main question in everyone's minds being "when will this end?"

However, we also strive to keep hope alive. Perhaps the only way for our society to change is through these types of upheavals that force people to rethink the way in which we have functioned for centuries. Perhaps this is simply a wake-up call for Nepalis to create a Nepal that is more just and which serves the best interest of the ordinary people living under grave circumstances. Our thoughts and actions need to change with changing times and part of the problem on all sides is this inability to think and act in ways that meet the needs of our society. The army, the government and the Maoists continue to choose methods of problem-solving that have proven over and over again to be unproductive and inefficient.

So, while all parties involved are busy aggravating each other to the point of no return, the country continues to face social, cultural, economic deterioration. Children continue to stay home from school more days than they attend school. While at home, they spend hours watching mindless television in the form of soap operas, music videos and movies which are not only far removed from the realities of their socio-political environment but do little to motivate these minds. Minds on which we are desperately relying for a better future. And while the superficial nationalistic slogan 'bholi ka karnadhar' (tomorrow's trailblazers) continues to blast us from every angle, these karnadhars are seen wasting their time in unproductive activities within a system that could care less about their education or their future.

Maoist rebels and other political parties alike continue to use college campuses and schools as their primary recruitment grounds. Instead of fostering a quiet, peaceful environment of learning, loud speakers spewing government propaganda infiltrate classrooms day after day. The youth who should be developing critical and creative thinking, innovative ideas for change, and their own social, behavioral, moral character, are often forced to blindly follow the ideals and agenda of a political party. Ideals that are not only unproductive but completely irrelevant for a nation unable to directly deal with its realities. We not only lose more young people to an existing unproductive system but also continue to perpetuate it while completely avoiding the realities of civil strife.

The cease fire during Dassain/Tihar has been a relief to us all. In a time when political forces have done nothing but divide the country into various factions, all Nepalis deserve to celebrate this unifying

festival in peace. It has been wonderful to be able to hear of family members and friends visiting each other and enjoying the beauties of our culture without the fear of disturbances. I myself have been keeping a close watch through internet and email exchanges. Afterall, regardless of where we are we all care deeply for our country and its people. Ongoing talks about dialogue between contending parties, peaceful action initiated by the government and the continuation of the cease-fire have all worked in keeping hope alive.

Unfortunately, just as the possibilities of a peaceful and productive society were beginning to uplift my spirits, I read an article in Nepalnews today that shattered these positive feelings. As an educator my biggest concern has been the effects of this political chaos on Nepali children. Their development as children of a new age, as citizens equipped with tools to make changes in the best interest of the people, as moral beings disconnected from the ethical disintegration that marks Nepali politics, and as individuals with the ability to critique and change existing systems has been deeply affected by the chaos created by a small percentage of power-hungry people. In looking into the future, I worry about the next generation's ability to bring about changes, because at a time when they should be learning from an education system that believes in their abilities they are stuck at home, terrified of their surroundings, learning from the profanities that TV has to offer.

What is worse now is that the Maoists have created their own schools and curriculum for the education of children. According to a November 2nd article in Nepalnews.com, Maoists have now started an educational campaign to include "pro-people education" curricula for grades 4 and 5. "Pro-people education" in and of itself is not a bad thing. After all, many developing societies continue to incorporate such curricula that include learning about civic participation, democratic participation, human rights, etc. Unfortunately, the Maoists seem to have grossly misunderstood the purpose of "pro-people education." Instead what they have included in their curricula is "military science." The topic itself is enough to cause chills down my back. But it gets worse. "Military Science includes topics dealing with extremist communist ideologies." The article further elaborates that,

Grade 4 students have to study "identification of explosives and exchange of information", "pictorial presentation of weapons, home-made guns and their utilities", "introduction of war", "introduction of sentry and its importance" and "role call system." Students of Grade five have to study a few more topics under the same subject. Those topics include "introduction to booby-trap, grenade and precautions", "precautions for sentries and route guides", "kinds of warfare: just and unjust" and "coordination with the (people's) army in exchange of information."

At a time when our war-torn world needs peace education, we seem to be moving in the opposite direction. What kind of message are we giving to our children? We tell them that they are our future, we show them nothing but chaos and strife, we fill their ears with lectures on the importance of education, then we pull them out of schools, and when we finally put them back into classrooms we teach them about how best to destroy their own lives and others'. It is time for these gross contradictions to stop. The Maoists have taken it too far this time. As if it wasn't enough to just promote their outdated Maoist philosophies at the cost of thousands of innocent lives, they are now inculcating these ideologies into the fresh minds of children who have so much potential to be peace makers.

As a citizen of Nepal and as an educator, I am deeply saddened by this news and hope that key stakeholders in those communities and in the education system will stand up to this type of overt brain-washing. We all want a peaceful state that is able to develop and thrive with changing times, not one that retreats into a dangerous military state. I hope that the government (although it has proven to be weak and useless many times) will really show its strength in this issue by supporting educators, school systems, and districts in resisting this abhorrently misinterpreted version of "pro-people education."



Politics: Preparation for authoritarian rule

By Kalyan Dev Bhattarai

The recent interview of Minister Dr. Mossin clearly indicates that all the political machination for the King's authoritarian rule is almost completed and in near future this will be implemented, with the help of Army and few of his puppets like Mr. Deupa, Mr. Mandal, Mr. Pasupati and Mr. Nepal, the leaders of the present coalition government. The formal discussion on the Mossin's interview in the cabinet and its positive conclusion suggests that the present coalition groups are also the integral part of this machination for the implementation of the authoritarian rule in the country.

In this juncture it is the duty of the civic society and other independent organization like bar association, save the democracy movement, Journalist association and etc to safe guard the hard earned democracy. It is very painful for the independent people like us who participated actively during the 1990 people's movement to find the same political parties as the contributors in murdering the democracy and strengthening the power of monarchy, whom we trusted and respected as a god. The lust for power and various corruptions of the political parties along with the looting of the government's treasury on various pretext, while ruling the country for last 14 years was the main cause for our failure to strengthen democracy, and are mainly responsible for the development of the present day situation, where all such machination and successful implementation of the authoritarian rule by king seems possible in reality.

To be honest, even though the 4th October act of king was undemocratic, and unconstitutional, I consider the political leaders more responsible than the king himself for the present day political atmosphere in the country. For me all the activities of the present king are as natural as the cow eating green vegetables placed in front of it, and I consider the present day protest of the political parties as nothing more than fooling the country and its people, to camouflage themselves as so called political leaders and good wishers of the nation. It is known to every body that the political parties themselves provided all the authority to the king in a golden platter.

From the King's statement of the constitutional day along with other interviews, and opinion of Dr. Mossain, it is clear that the palace has already hijacked the hard earned people's sovereignty. So democracy is already the past history of yesterday, which cannot be restored now. From the king's statement, one can conclude that the future of Nepal lies in the "constructive monarchy", example of which we have already noticed since 4th October 2002. In this context, to expect a free and fair election is nothing but intellectual bankruptcy. The way foreign dignitaries are currently supporting the king's rule and providing the arms and ammunition to suppress the Maoist's insurgency and harboring the notion that present day problem can be solved militarily, forces one to doubt the honesty of foreign countries to restore the democracy in the country.

King proved to be smart enough to hit hard when the iron was hot enough due to the wrong doings of the political parties, who lost all their credibility as well as respect and support from the people, making the situation very favorable for the authoritarian rule. To day people find no sense to be in the street supporting the proven, camouflaged dacoits of the country, who did nothing other than looting the government treasury for last 14 years. With this background, I consider it is the duty and responsibility of the civic society and other independent societies to come forward to safeguard the democracy, as people no longer supports and trust the political parties.

The reelection of Mr. Bush as the president of USA is sure to make the Nepal the next Falluja and the arrested, innocent Nepalese people receiving similar humiliation, torture and treatment as noticed in Iraq's prison of Garib Aduiba. In this context I find the constitutional assembly as the only solution to solve the present day political problems and all civic society and democracy loving people must come forward with one and only demand of constitutional assembly. Here I request four agitating political parties also to restart their agitation with only and one demand of constitutional assembly. Any deviation from this demand at this moment will be to support the impending and inevitable authoritarian rule.

Here we all must understand clearly that for the political parties and its leaders the political equation do change, as the power is more important than ideology, morality and integrity to them. However for us, the people, the democracy and all-round development of the country is the only most important factor to consider more seriously than any other aspects of political gimmicks. Today even though we differ seriously with the Maoist's violent modus operandi, we cannot and should not support the authoritarian rule of the king, as we have already experienced such rule for 30 years of Panchayati period, which was the root cause for the failure of our country.

Let us safeguard the hard earned democracy first, which was achieved by the sacrifices of many martyrs and is the precious property of the future generation which we cannot handover to the king simply because the present day leaders are corrupt and nefarious and were unable to strengthen democracy. Today Nepal need new leaders and People' active participation for the protection of the democracy. This is the time to remember what President Kennedy said "Ask not what the country has done to you, ask what you have done for the country." There is no guarantee that the constitutional assembly will bring the system of single party ruling in the country, with which we strongly disagree. Further as the Maoists have already expressed their commitment for the competitive multiparty political system, not to believe that statement of Maoist in the present situation will be to support the authoritarian rule of the king and army indirectly.

Today king also knows well that he cannot rule in an authoritarian way, without the full support and direct involvement of the army, unlike the Panchayati period. The experiences of the power without any responsibility of the army since 4th October 2002 was natural to lure them towards absolute power, and this forces the king to compromise in many issues with the army, which will make the life of the general people no better than hell. Dr. Mossain in his interview has clearly spelled out that the future of the country under the authoritarian rule of the king will be unbearable and beyond your and mine imagination.

In this situation we, the democracy loving people of Nepal are left with only one choice either to accept the authoritarian rule of King with full support and direct involvement of army, betraying the martyrs or to go for the bottom line demand of the Maoists for the constitutional assembly strengthening the democracy and keeping the king in its shape and size with provision for the referendum of monarchy in every 5 years.

However, here we must understand that to accept the constitutional assembly will not be an unconditional support for the Maoist but should be considered as the acceptance of the most democratic means to solve the country's political and socioeconomic problems, so that the all round development of the country could be initiated. I request all intellectuals of the country to consider the present complexity of the situation and make your own decision without any fear and pressure and honestly come to conclusion, so that the coming generation will not be able to blame us as a bunch of cowards and fools who are totally misdirected by the nefarious leaders.

(Writer can be reached at kalypr@wlink.com.np -Ed)



Conflict: Economic Development Can Continue Even in Conflict

By Kamala Sarup



Speaking about the economic development in Nepal amidst the nine year old violence, Dr. Ambika Adhikari said "Although peace is much better for economic upliftment, many developmental works are being carried out and can be accomplished in Nepal even in the midst of conflict". He added, "In Ireland, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Philippines and India impressive economic growth has continued in spite of violence in many parts of these countries. Even in present day Nepal, many businessmen just pay extra "taxes" for security, and go on with their trade. They consider it an additional expenditure to do the business. The violence has affected the private sector, but has not cut the development rate drastically. Nepal's GDP growth is still reasonable, partly because our economy is still mostly agriculture based."

Adhikari thinks that action oriented people are not necessarily deterred by the difficult phase countries go through. He adds, "I do not find it impossible to work in Nepal in most fields. The current environment is not the most desirable, but no place is ideal for everything. In this context, I am impressed by the Non Resident Nepalis (NRN) International Coordination Committees (ICC) President Dr. Upendra Mahato who has made major investments in Nepal, and states that work should go on. He is an action oriented person, who has shined in Russia, and believes that the conflict in Nepal should not stop development activities. The vote of confidence by prominent Diaspora should help Nepal in these difficult times".

Dr. Adhikari told me that many Nepali entrepreneurs have also preserved their positive attitude in Nepal. He opined, "There are many people in Nepal, who will not stop their efforts with the political impediments. They accomplish great results in any environment. Examples are Karna Shakya who continues to pioneer the tourism industry, Sanjib Rajbhandari the Bill Gates of Nepal, Shyam Kachhpati, the restaurateur extraordinaire, and other many more young people such as the dozen young pioneers recently featured in the Nepal Magazine, all of whom have continued to excel in their fields. In journalism, literature, films, radio and TV, so many individuals are making exceptional contribution, and are raising the standards of their profession. Life has to go on for people. To defeat the perpetrators of violence, when possible, the mentality of "gloom and doom" should be replaced by "can do" attitude in spite of the problems."

Adhikari expressed to me that the Nepali civil society and the government are now trying hard for peace. He states, "It is encouraging to note that a large civil society based "Peace Forum" has been recently established in Nepal that includes prominent individuals from the various walks of the Nepali society." Talking about the participation of the people, he says "When people are engaged in the system to get things done, they will eventually prevail. Let academics, musicians, doctors, poets, housewives all unite against the violence and protest regularly. Such pressure by the general public brought down even the mighty Panchayat system in 1990".

Dr. Adhikari thinks that, the Maoist tactics of violence should be completely rejected by the Nepali people. He says, "Political parties, NGO's and general public should hold rallies decrying killings, and assertively rebuff the violent methods used by the Maoists. If numerous Nepalis can be so passionate after the killing of 12 innocent Nepalis in Iraq, they should also forcefully condemn the killings of the thousands of Nepalis in their own backyard." He believes that the Maoists might have had some good social agendas in the beginning, but now their means have degenerated into violence, and people no longer support this. Dr. Adhikari opined that if the Maoists had love for the country and their fellow citizens, they should immediately stop the violence, and make their case through peaceful means, protests, writings, speeches and social movements. For its part, the government should also use force judiciously. "Nepal is the birth place of Buddha, and it is the next door neighbor to India, which produced Mahatma Gandhi. Buddha and Gandhi are the epitomes of non-violence. Where did we get such violent culture from?", wonders Adhikari and adds it is completely non-Nepali.

About the future of the Maoist conflicts, Adhikari states "The Maoist should realize that continuous destruction of Nepal and its societal fabric will not leave anything for anyone to build upon. Nepal has only limited infrastructure, if this is destroyed now – the development prospects will regress. So many people have been displaced, and so many have left the country. Nepal is losing its most precious resource – people. The mindless cycle of destruction should be immediately stopped. The Nepali people are so tolerant and forgiving that they are willing to give them a chance of dialogue even after so many deaths and collective pain, but such forgiveness and largesse does not last forever. The Maoist should utilize this window of opportunity, and come to the table, and find a solution that will

bring the country towards a constructive phase. We can all live together in Nepal, enjoy individual rights, and prosper collectively. China and India have become global examples of rapid development, and Nepal should utilize this tide of progress."

Adhikari is heartened that many leaders of the political parties are now publicly apologizing for the mistakes made during the twelve years of democracy. He says "Democracy was good for Nepal, except that the leadership often failed the people. The political parties should come clean and start with humility. At the end the parties are the true representatives of the people, and they should value the precious public trust". Dr. Ambika Prasad Adhikari is currently a City Planner in Phoenix, and an adjunct faculty at the Arizona State University. He holds a Ph. D. in Urban Planning from Harvard University, and was earlier the Country Representative of IUCN-The World Conservation Union in Nepal. He was also Reader at Tribhuvan University, and worked in Nepal in various professional capacities.

He further added "Another important factor in today Nepal is the issue of the King's role. King can have a useful role in the multi-ethnic Nepal, but that is possible only if he remains a constitutional monarch. Everyone including the members of the present government should assert that only a pure constitutional monarchy and nothing more, is acceptable to the Nepali people. Such arrangement is best for everyone including the king, as he will enjoy respect, and ensure continuity of the monarchy."

Recalling a personal experience regarding a popular monarch, Dr. Adhikari remembered, "A few months ago when I was in Thailand, a taxi driver told me that he will even give his life if the king asks him. He likened the Thai king as his second father, and if his biological father died, the king would be his only father. He told me that most Thais share this sentiment, and could not believe that monarchy in Nepal has become controversial. I heard similar statement from a Cambodian too." He concluded, "That is the kind of respect a monarch receives, if he remains above the petty politics and loves his people unconditionally."

(Kamala Sarup is "Senior Columnist" on TND and writes regularly on conflict management issues. - Ed.)



Analysis: Bhutan-Nepal: Terror and Refuge

By P.G. Rajamohan

With the Maoist terror extending across virtually the whole of Nepal, other issues plaguing the country have tended to be brushed under the carpet. Under the shadow of this neglect, at least some of these have been compounded by the enveloping troubles, and the problem of the refugees from Bhutan is one among these.

During his three-country visit in October 2004, covering Bhutan, India and Nepal, the US Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Migration and Refugees, Arthur E. Gene Dewey had expressed Washington's increasing concern over the deteriorating situation in the refugee camps in Nepal's eastern District of Jhapa. Quoting reports, Dewey said, "Nepali Maoists have infiltrated in camps," and further urged India to play a more pro-active role in resolving the refugee question before it turns into an intractable security issue.

Earlier, on June 2, 2004, Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) forces had conducted a cordon-and-search operation in a Bhutanese refugee camp, Beldangi-I, on a tip-off that suspected Maoists were holed up in the camp, and subsequently arrested six refugees for their connections with the Maoists. Security forces had also seized some arms from the camp, and also found many refugees missing from their designated camps. These missing refugees were suspected to have joined the Nepali Maoists' People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Over 105, 000 Bhutanese Refugees reside in seven camps in the eastern Districts of Nepal since the ethnic exodus that followed implementation in Bhutan of the Citizenship Act of 1985 and the subsequent nation-wide Census of 1988. Protesting against the results of the Census, which had identified a large 'non-national' population believed to be illegal Nepali immigrants living in the southern part of Bhutan, and thought to be quantitatively 'diluting' the Bhutanese population in that region, some of the 'illegal immigrants' were involved in an unprecedented spate of attacks on human and institutional targets in late 1989 and early 1990. These incidents were followed by the forceful eviction or distress migration of a majority of the Nepali population from the southern Bhutan region, eventually confining them to designated camps in Nepal.

Since then, the refugee issue has been one of great contention between the Governments of Nepal and Bhutan. Though a process for their repatriation commenced in 1993, there has been little forward movement over the intervening 14 years. After 15 rounds of Ministerial Joint Committee (MJC) meetings, the Joint Verification Committee (JVC) had categorized some 12,000 refugees. However, this process was also stalled when the refugees attacked the Bhutanese verification officials at the Kudunabari camp in Jhapa on December 22, 2003, reportedly for the 'provocative and derogatory conditions' being imposed for repatriation, and after refugees demanded that their properties be restored to them in their homeland in Bhutan.

With world powers and the international organizations expressing renewed interest in refugee repatriation process, the potential threat they constitute to the host state has also come into focus. Analysts suggest that such a threat has three dimensions: social security, economic security, and political security, and point to the following circumstances:

The inherent tensions among the various refugee groups or refugees and the local populations - competition for scarce economic resources - have security implications for the host country. Refugees' involvement in organized criminal activities increase law and order problems.

Refugees' assertion and growing influence over local politics, and competition between political parties to win over their support could add to existing irritants. The refugees' pursuit of their 'armed struggle' against their home state (Bhutan) will affect the relations between the host country and the country of origin. These threats are, at present and at worst, incipient. However, the threat of an armed struggle by the refugees against their home state is growing visibly. The emergence of a Maoist party in Bhutan - the Bhutan Communist Party - Marxist-Leninist-Maoist (BCP-MLM) - which distributed a pamphlet announcing its birth on April 22, 2003, and urged all the 'victimised' citizens of Bhutan to join a 'people's war' to overthrow the Bhutanese monarchy and establish a people's republic sent alarm bells ringing across Bhutan. The pamphlet was signed under an alias, 'Vikalpa' ['Alternative'], on the 'authority' of the Central Organizing Committee of the BCP-MLM, and propounded the traditional strategy of 'protracted war' as their party's programme to take over villages and encircle the towns in Bhutan. In a Press Release on June 30, 2004, BCP-MLM Central Organizing Committee 'incharge', Vikalpa, indicted the Bhutan King and his Government for their

'insincerity' in the repatriation programme and asserted that "the communal policy of the ruling elite has brought forward the maximum chances of clash between various Nationalities." Further, the Release called on 'all the freedom lovers' to join the 'New Democratic Revolution'. The BCP-MLM has also criticized the 'Sikkimization' of Bhutan and charged their Government of 'selling out' to India on vital issues. There is evidence that the BCP-MLM was set up with the active support and collaboration of the Communist Party of Nepal - Maoist, as well as Indian Maoist groups, and the language and content of their various declarations closely reflects the perspectives of their mentors.

Aware that the large number of frustrated youth in the Refugee Camps in Nepal could constitute a strong recruitment pool, the BCP-MLM has been insistently raising the issue of their repatriation to their home state. Bhutan authorities firmly believe that Nepalese Maoists are behind efforts to extend the network of Left Wing extremist terror into neighbouring states, particularly Bhutan. The Speaker of the Bhutan Assembly, Ugen Dorje, had claimed in July 2004 that 2,000 refugees had joined the 'Maoists Army'. The numbers may well be exaggerated number - and observers in the region put the realistic number at under 200 - but, given the recent trajectory of Maoist movements in the region, these developments are a matter for serious concern for a small and peaceful country like Bhutan.

The seven refugee camps of Nepalis from Bhutan, moreover, are located in the eastern region of Nepal, where the Nepali Maoists have constructed a strong base, and their power had been demonstrated in a major attack in the mid-eastern regional district Bhojpur during March 2003. The cumulative successes of the Nepal Maoists will certainly act as a magnet to a proportion of the refugees in the area, and this constitutes a potential threat to both the host and the home countries.

On the repatriation front, after the long process of discussions and meetings, both Bhutan and Nepal have agreed to categorize these refugees in the camps under four heads:

1. Bhutanese forcibly evicted,
2. Bhutanese voluntarily migrated,
3. Non-Bhutanese and
4. Bhutanese with anti-national and criminal records.

The Bhutan Government has tended to resist all repatriation because most of the refugees are of Nepali origin, and this is seen as creating a 'demographic imbalance' in areas of the thinly populated country, as well as a threat to the Monarchy. While growing international pressure has forced Bhutan to accept the idea of repatriation of some refugees, non-Bhutanese and Bhutanese with anti-national and criminal records will certainly be excluded, accounting for a sizeable and potentially volatile chunk of the refugee population. Bhutan also fears that the repatriated groups may be 'infected' by the Nepalese Maoists, and that they would include a significant representation of radical sympathizers who would bring the 'peoples' war' to Bhutan. On the other hand, Nepal, among the poorest and currently deeply disturbed, countries in the world argues that it cannot be expected to bear the burden of this additional population.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the major supporter of the refugee camps, is gradually cutting off its assistance, drastically affecting the support programmes, especially education projects. Growing unemployment and scarcity of resources in the refugee camps has led to tensions, even clashes, with the local population in the recent past.

Significant strategic threats also emerge from the current situation, compounding the many strong anti-establishment insurgent movements that plague the whole region - Nepal, Bhutan and India's Northeast. After Bhutan's military operation against the bases of Indian insurgent groups - ULFA, the Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO) and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) - in the dense forest areas in South Bhutan, the country has just begun to return to a state of normalcy. Any significant population movement at this time has the potential to destabilize and endanger all three countries. Intelligence reports suggest that several youth from the refugee camps had been trained by the ULFA, and the KLO is believed to have been instrumental in formation of the BCP-MLM, and had mediated its contacts with the Nepali Maoists. There is a complex and unstable mix here, and, while humanitarian considerations demand continuous relief to the refugees in Nepal, the relocation of 100,000 persons in a region deeply afflicted by multiple insurgencies, at this point of time, cannot be expected to have a positive impact on the potential for peace.

(Author is Research Associate, in Institute for Conflict Management and this article was originally published in South Asia Intelligence Review. Volume 3, No. 19, November 22, 2004. -Ed)



Opinion: Waiting for Goddot

By Nav Raj Pokharel

We all are now waiting for Goddot, as the two tramps- Estragon and Vladimir - did in the story "Waiting for Goddot" by Samuel Beckett, the modern dramatist of twentieth century.

As the two tramps dissipate their lives each day, anticipating the Goddot would come some day, meet them and their dream come true, which, in fact, never happened. This story seems the reflection of true story based in the context of Nepal and the poor tramps-like Nepali.

From the beginning, Nepali has been dreaming for better state of affairs in Nepal. In the name of bequeathing their dream, the then king adopted Panchayati political system in the country. Drums were repeatedly beaten with the slogan of "Return to Village", "let us break the spout of Development", "Asian Standard by the year 2000" were few of them. It never materialized when we reached to the time set for to achieve the target. After 30 years, Nepali tramps realized that they were disillusioned. The target that was set was only to pacify peoples' desire of all round progress in the country. This experiment to procrastinate the work worked for this generation. In addition, the same model of assurances, promises and fancy dreams with different words and syntax started coming in.

From the beginning to the end, if we analyze, we will find it. Promise was made, duration of reigning by the people in power was extended, and at the end, people will be left where they were or even below than the point they were in social and economic standard. What the system has been extending to the people is more and more promises for the future.

Now, new political multiparty system has been adopted. The new system has further clad the poor tramps with newer daydreams. Once again, the past experience has been reproduced with different slogans- "Freedom for All", Kathmandu the second Singapore', 'Melamchi to Wash Kathmandu' were again a few, besides many more reiterations of commitments in-between.

The multiparty political system some how has been dragging itself for more than a decade now. The stark challenge of social, political and economic situations in this country is gradually breaking down everyday.

Attempts to feed yet some more daydreams are still coming on its way with accession to power by new prime minister appoint. "Peaceful solution to Maoist problems", "All party government for peace and prosperity", "Elections by the end of this year", "sovereignty lies onto the people" are some new slogans. History is repeating its itinerary. The fully clad leaders are sucking up the people saying they serve the people because they are servant of the people. Nepalese deserve pity.

If you can really see what the political parties do not do when in power and do when not in power, you see what you need to see. Again, if you can see the aberration by his Majesty's government, as usual, to administer the right action in order to solve many more problems on different front facing the country, you see what you really need to see. Yet, poor Nepali tramps are waiting for Goddot in every new day. Nepalese seem to forget that good and deserving people for this region like Gautam Buddha, B.P. Koirala and Puspahal are dead long ago from this part of the world. Moreover, new Mehisa is yet to born.

The country again needs another 046 to disillusion the poor Nepali tramps, once again from the ignorant leaders of Nepal!

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Education: Irony of the World Power: Education System in the U.S.A.

By Bindu Chaudhary

According to the American Universities Admission Program (AUAP), American education system costs more than the European or Asian universities, and in spite, America is still the number one destination for international students with the record of 586,323 students enrolled in U.S. universities in 2002/2003. The Open Door 2003 annual report on international education gives a record of 74,603 Indian students coming to study in the United States in the year 2002-2003, overtaking China (64,757) which had been topping the list for the past several years. Indians now constitute 13% of the total international students in U.S.A., with 74% being graduate students, 21% undergraduate students and four percent on non-degree programs. Other leading countries following India and China in the number of students coming to US include Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Canada, Mexico, Turkey, Indonesia, and Thailand.

Needless to stress- the statistics itself reveals that higher education in America is recognized globally. It is also a fact that not everybody who invests in their studies in U.S. are from the higher strata of the society. Not all Nepalese who come to America for their college and university degrees are economically well off (according to AUAP, 2,618 Nepalese students went to America for studies in 2000/2001), nor are every Indians who arrive here for the same purpose. In fact, many students don't mind betting on all their resources or dripping themselves and their family in loans to come to this 'land of plenty' for education - hoping for a brighter future; brighter not only in terms of financial returns by gaining better job opportunities and becoming a 'preferred' candidate in the job market, but also in stepping up their status quo. For them, investing in higher education is a pathway to personal and family success and contribution to the society. Open Door 2003 reports that international students contribute nearly \$12 billion to the US economy, and nearly 75% of all international students fund comes from personal and family sources or other sources outside of United States. Higher education is believed to be the country's fifth largest service sector export, according to the Department of Commerce.

Ignorance is Bliss!

American higher education may be world recognized, but to my utter dismay and surprise however, most (if not all) of our non-American friends here expressed 'apathy' over the education system in U.S., particularly the schooling (which is supposed to be the foundation of education) - instead of sounding optimistic about their children going to the American schools! They in fact found the U.S. school curriculum very generic, basic and non-competitive- as compared to the Indian education system. They expressed that their children had very little, if any, to learn in their classes after they had joined in from India, since they had already finished most or all of the proportions in their lower classes back in their country!

In the same connection, while I was browsing about the education system in America and abroad, I came across studies and articles that supported the lower ranking of U.S. education, in comparison to the international level. I am glad I stumbled across a wonderful interactive website by Michael Hodges called the Grandfather Economic Report, and under its section Grandfather Education Report, I could read for myself about how the foreign and the native students and teachers felt about the education system in America, including where the U.S. education stood amidst the other countries. The Paris-based international Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) survey conducted in 1994 concluded that "the effectiveness of the primary and secondary education system can broadly be characterized as mediocre at best.... the nation's top high school students rank far behind much less elite samples of students in other countries."

This is the excerpt of how an Indian student (Ankit D.) expressed his experience studying in the U.S., mentioned in the Grandfather Education Report:

"My opinion on studying in America as a current 12th grader: I came from India in 1989. They put me in 4th grade because I was too young (9 years old) to be in 5th, even though I had completed 4th in India. In my math class we were learning things that I had learned in the 1st grade in India. I never opened my math book until I was in the 9th grade and took Geometry. I was shocked to learn that I was being taught what I learned in 3rd and 4th grade, in 8th grade here. It is like this in every class. I first opened my math and science book in the 9th grade, five years after I came here. I also skipped the 5th grade because I already knew the 5th grade material. I also could have skipped 6th, but once again I was too young to be in 7th. Right now, I am taking all Advanced Placement courses and notice that a majority of the students are foreigners, mainly Asians. I also know that teachers are going too slow in the AP classes because it takes the teachers two to three weeks to teach 1 chapter. We used

to learn 1 chapter per week in India. Also, I notice too many people who do not know how to spell. How can that be? To me it is no wonder, why America is doing so poorly compared to other nations... I also notice that my cousin who is in the second grade is spending her day in school drawing and painting. This is the second grade. Also, people think that they don't have to know math because a calculator is readily available. Isn't a calculator simply a tool?"

I would not believe my friends in the beginning who shared out of their own experience that many Americans generally had little or no idea about what was going on around the world, and had very limited knowledge about things beyond their own lives. They shared being asked such stupid questions like: "Are there schools in India?", "The mode of transportation in India is elephants, isn't it?", "What? You have Air Conditioner in your country?", and so on, and believe me, these "questions" came very much from the educated adults.

How could public be so ignorant, so insulated from the rest of the world? My search then gave me answers when I read and browsed various resources which too supported that the American media and general population tended to be ethnocentric, giving them limited understanding of and sensitivity towards other countries and cultures. According to the People Going Global website, a U.S. based communications consulting firm, "The American Continent is large and isolated, be prepared for your hosts to have little knowledge of world affairs and fairly outdated views of your homeland. There is little world news on television and radio, the public simply don't have much access to international news and it is not regarded as important."

According to the Associated Press, the basic knowledge of American history is non-existent among college seniors- "Nearly 80% of seniors at 55 top colleges and universities- including Harvard and Princeton- received a D or F on a 34-question, high-school level American history test that contained historical references." Moreover, according to the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut, more than a third of the students didn't know the Constitution established the division of power in American government.

Forget about history, I was surprised also to learn that the U.S. ranks last internationally in percentage undergraduate degrees in math, science, and engineering and computer science. Top industrial nations have graduation rates 300% higher than that of U.S., according to the 1995 Digest of Education Statistics. Worst still, the graduating rates of U.S. citizens may even be lower, since the U.S. figures also counted the students from other nations graduating from U.S. universities, who, may return to their homelands after completing their graduation. The U.S. 8th graders ranked below students in 27 other nations, and 12th graders came in near last on math and science.

In the Third International Math and Science Survey (TIMSS) of 21 nations: Netherlands, Sweden, Iceland, Norway, Swiss, Denmark, Canada, New Zealand, Austria, Australia, Slovenia, France, Germany, Czech Rep, Hungary, Russia Fed, Italy, Lithuania, USA, Cyprus and South Africa, U.S. ranked the third last, followed by Cyprus and South Africa, in the order mentioned above. And the most interesting of all, the reason the Asian students were not included in the third International Test Series (they had participated in the prior test series) is because had they participated, "they would have scored at the top of the total heap," making the charts look even worse for the U.S., opined Michael Hodges.

A teacher, Sheila K., posted her opinion in the Grandfather Education Report as follows: "I have heard that many White high school students avoid applying to certain colleges such as UCLA and UC Berkeley because those schools have student populations that are largely Asian. White students have been heard to remark that they don't want to go to such schools because they know that the Asian students put in more effort, and they don't want to, so they don't want to compete with these students."

Concerning the foreign students in graduate school math and science, Bob similarly posted his opinion as follows: "In my Physical Chemistry for Biochemistry class at University of Tennessee Knoxville in 1988, I was the ONLY American in a class of 25." In some way or the other, education has direct or indirect impact on the job market and economy of a country. Today Americans are much worried about the potential job losses due to foreign competition in service sectors. The technical brain drain in U.S. continues, and so does outsourcing of jobs. Whatever the reason be for the same- either due to cheap labor abroad, or because of higher competition from foreigners in the fields of math, science, engineering and computer science, the issue is sensitive and is at the very heart of most Americans; and they are angry and they are anxious about their jobs being 'taken away'.

I simply was at loss of words when I read about the responses from many teachers in the Grandfather Education Report confirming that the teachers were actually "expected" to pass the students, even the non-deserving ones, and that it was a standard practice for public elementary and high schools:

"We are told we must adapt for our students so that they can all pass. It is a school district mandate. The teachers know it is wrong. We are chastised if we have students with failing grades on report cards..."

"I teach first grade in a very large school district in Texas. I am not allowed to fail a student for any reason! It doesn't matter if the student can not read, can not count, or even do basic kindergarten skills!...The argument against retention goes something like this: "Studies have shown that students who are retained in school are less likely to graduate than students who are not retained." -- Therefore, retention puts a student at risk for not graduating (even at the elementary school level) so we should pass them on and graduate them anyway. (???)"

"If a kid isn't making it, then the teacher is the problem. The result of this kind of thinking is to force teachers to be "successful" in passing kids by hook or crook. What the teacher CAN'T justify as passing, the principal often does, even over the objections of the teacher."

"Amen. While there are exceptions to any generalization, I believe there are few teachers who would disagree with the above statements."

"As a high school English teacher, I see standards and performance lowering every year. We are trying to combat the lower expectations." I don't understand why the schools should project that all one's geese are swans when they are not; it is nothing but playing with children's future because the children would not know what success is or what failure is, or what a competition is for that matter. They might be on velvet only as long as do not face any competition with foreign students who study much harder to pass the exam, afraid to lose a year if they happen to fail.

Survival of the fittest!

Let aside the school-going children, but many parents are now choosing home schooling as an alternative to sending their children to schools- and home schooling requires no attendance records, teachers don't have to be certified, there is no mandatory testing, and there are no report cards! In a system where grades are awarded by parents, there is obvious no competition, and there is no failure! About 1.5 million U.S. children are being taught at home, which is about 2% of all U.S. school-aged children, and the trend is gaining popularity by 10 to 20 percent a year. Moreover, each state recognizes the parental right to home school, and all the 50 States have legislation or case law governing academic standards. Texas, for instance, only requires courses in reading, spelling, grammar, math and good citizenship!

This is no fun anyway, when you know the reason why parents are consciously choosing home schooling as an alternative - it is surprising, but true that it is mostly because the parents consider schools "no longer safe"; and home schooling seems to be a way out for parents to safeguard their children against the anti-social behaviors at schools such as bullying and shootouts. The following statistics should make you drop your hamburger:

- According to Bully Police U.S.A., each month over 250,000 students report being physically attacked. Three out of four students report they have been bullied. Sixty nine percent of students believe schools respond poorly to reports of bullying.

- Researches have shown that bullying can lead to absenteeism (according to the National Association of School Psychologists cited in Partners Against Hate, the fear of being bullied may keep as many as 160,000 students out of school on any given day), underachievement at school, clinical depression and suicide for the victims. Kids who are bullied are five times more likely to be depressed; bullied boys are four times more likely to be suicidal; and bullied girls are eight times more likely to be suicidal than their peers who have not been bullied.

- Victims of repeated bullying can explode in ways that threaten not only themselves, and the bullies, but others as well. For example, a Secret Service study of school shootings found that "almost three-quarters of the attackers felt persecuted, bullied, threatened, attacked or injured by others prior to the incident." Statistics prove that children who have been bullied have a higher propensity for using guns. According to Love our Children USA,

SANTEE, CA., and March 2001 - A 15-year-old boy took a .22-caliber revolver from his father's collection of weapons. He brought as many as 40 rounds of ammunition to his high school in his backpack, and fired 30 of them during the shooting rampage. He killed two schoolmates and injured 13 others.

ST PAUL, MN, February 2001 - Two 5-year-old girls were suspended from an elementary school in St. Paul after one of them brought a loaded gun to school in a small handbag. Police say the gun

belonged to the girl's grandfather, who stored it in a purse at the home they share. Prosecutors are considering charges against the student's grandfather.

WEST PHILADELPHIA, PA, March 2001 - An 8-year-old student at an elementary school in West Philadelphia was taken into custody by police after he brought a handgun to school and later threatened a 9-year-old girl. Police found an unloaded, 9mm semi-automatic pistol and a loaded clip for the weapon in the boy's book bag. The gun had been reported stolen in January 1999. Police later charged the 24 year old uncle of the boy with reckless endangerment.

LITTLETON, CO, April 1999 - Two boys, 17 and 18 years old entered their school, walking through the cafeteria, shooting as they walked. The massacre continued throughout the school. An hour and a half later, 15 were dead, including the two boys who killed themselves. Police confirmed that the two boys had arsenals in their bedrooms."

The Columbine High School Massacre at Littleton, considered to be the worst school shootings in U.S. History (and one of a dozen shootings in schools during an 18-month period) was like a last straw for many parents to turn their tails away from public schooling to home schooling. The concern and fear about school safety is so much that even after a year of the Columbine incident, a Wall Street Journal-NBC News poll found that 70 percent of Americans believed such a shooting could occur in a school in their own community.

According to ABC News/ Good Morning America Poll that questioned high school students on school violence (2001), the results were disheartening. A third (33%) of high school students said they could think of a classmate who was troubled enough to stage a violent attack. More than a third (35%) also said that they had heard a classmate threaten to kill someone. One in eight (13%) students said they knew a student personally who carried gun to school, and one in ten (9%) even said they have heard of a plan by one or more students in their school to shoot or kill classmates.

It must be difficult for the innocent children to carry with them the baggage of fear while going to school- the fear of being harassed once again, fear of being punched off again, fear of getting threats and fear of losing their life or of their colleagues.

It is difficult to imagine why America's children and youth are growing rednecks. According to Campus Law Enforcement Agencies (1995), twenty three percent of college campuses with 2,500 enrolled students had a special "hate crime" program or unit operated by campus law enforcement agencies.

According to Hate Crime Statistics 2002, there were 9,222 victims associated with 8,832 hate crime offences in 2002. A study of victim data for single-bias hate crime revealed the motivation of hate crime being racial bias 49.7 percent; religious bias 18.0 percent; sexual- orientation bias 16.4 percent; ethnicity or national origin bias 15.3 percent; and disability bias 0.5 percent. The more disturbing fact is that an alarming percentage of both victims of hate violence and the perpetrators are young people under 18 years of age. Thirty three percent of all known hate crime offenders are under 18; thirty one percent of all violent crime offenders and 46% of the property offenders are under 18; thirty percent of all victims of bias-motivated aggravated assaults and 34% of the victims of simple assault are under age

18.

Last, but not the least!

It would be false to presume that there is no racial or ethnic bias in America. In Nepal and India, there are discriminations based on caste system and the so-called lower castes are considered 'untouchables'-a sheer slap on human worth and dignity. In America, similar prejudice gives way to aggressive expression against another person or group or persons simply because of who they are or what they are, such as prejudice based on the color of skin, religion, their sexual orientation and so on. I have a utopia of a world without discrimination and injustice, and any kind of biases whether it is based on caste or class, race or ethnicity, or nationality or religion, should be condemned.

For the American citizens and for the NRIs and NRNs, their children may find an easy-going and 'cool' life as far as competition at schools is concerned. However, for those who are in U.S. temporarily, their children might have to put much extra effort in studies once they are back, thanks to competitive environment which expects one to 'put an extra' in studying, in getting the world view, and in breaking through their individual cocoons to face tougher challenges in the world (not the world which Americans refer to - for them, the world seems to be like America! I used to get confused in the beginning when I heard announcements of "World Championships" between "two states" in America or the best places to go around the World and all are from America, or the beautiful ladies gathered from around the world and they are all from America!).



Diaspora: Linking Nepal & Oregon

By Daya R. Shakya

The number of Nepalese-Americans is not as high as other hyphenated Americans in Oregon. However, the historical fact indicates that contribution of Nepalese people in building up their own community is very interesting to know. On the other hand, the Oregonians' contribution on development of Nepal is also highly praiseworthy. This short article aims to explore some of the facts that how the Nepalese community was established in the State of Oregon.

Historically, Nepal became successful in establishing the democratic form of government and became free from 104 years of family based Rana autocratic regime on Feb 22nd, 1950. After that Nepal was known to the world in various ways. The very first step of making the country known to the world was its membership to the United Nations Organization (UNO) in 1953. In the same year, Sir Edmund Hillary and his Nepali assistant Tenzing Norgay Sherpa conquered the Mount Everest. During this period the diplomatic tie between Nepal and United States of America was also established. Since then the US paid special attention in development of the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal. The then University of Oregon Professor of Education Dr. Hugh Wood was appointed as the advisor to the newly formed Ministry of Education in Nepal. Under his guidance various educational projects were introduced. One of the most important events that took place in between Nepal and Oregon is visit of eight Nepali Students, Mr. Trailokya Natha. Uprety, Mr. Krishan Raj Aryal, Mr. Narendra Bahadur Basnet, Mr. Shyam Raj Dhoj, Mr. Bhuvan Lal Joshi, Mr. Dirgha Man Shreshta, Mr. Ram Sunar Shreshta, Mr. Rama Prashad Tandukar, to Eugene for teacher training education at the University of Oregon in June 1955. In addition, the royal visit of late King Mahendra and Queen Mother Ratna at the University and decoration with award of "Distinguished Service Citation" on May 6th 1960, were remarkable events in the history of Nepal and Oregon relationship.

Dr. Wood lived in Nepal for several years and guided extensively to build a college of Education and to establish the Tribhuvan University in 1959. The building of the site was planned and designed by the Oregon Architect Mr. James Tuley. Since the first batch of Nepali students was returned to homeland with the Masters degree from the U of O and with high quality of experience and knowledge of teacher training, the Nepalese Education System took a different approach in providing a qualitative education to Nepali people. After returning to Eugene, Dr. Wood established the American-Nepal Education Foundation, ANEF) that consists of educators Chales D Byrne, Federick Hunter Paul Ackerman, Wallace McCrea and Mrs.H.B.Ferrin, as directors, to help Nepali people by providing opportunity to study in the American institutions. The foundation was run by Dr. Wood until he took his last breathe in 1997. Since then a flow of Nepali students were continuously took place in various educational institutions in the state of Oregon including University of Oregon, Oregon State University, Portland State University, Willamette University, Concordia University, Western Oregon University, Oregon Institute of Technology, Linfield College, Lane Community College, Portland Community College, Reed College and so on.

In lieu of the dedication to Nepalese Educational development Dr. Hugh Wood was honored with the high ranking "Birendra Prajnaalankar" award by the late King Birendra in 1993. This is certainly an extraordinary contribution from the Oregonians in the educational development of Nepal. Until Today several research works have been already completed through Oregon institutions on various topics of Nepal. Currently, the geography department at the Portland State University (PSU) publishes the Himalayan Research Bulletin (HRB) that focuses research on Nepal and Himalayan region under the Association for Study of Nepal and Himalayas (ASNH). In addition, the International Nepal Bhasha Seva Samiti (INBSS) publishes 'Newah Vijnana' the Journal of Newar Studies since 1997. The teaching of Nepalese languages to Oregonians was started in 1992 through various institutions in Eugene and Portland.

Turning the subject to different area, the Oregonians have contributed not only in educational development but also in other fields of volunteer activities. In 1975, the then mayor of Eugene Mr. Anderson took an official visit to Kathmandu and in return he proposed to establish a sister city relation with the people of Kathmandu. It was the second sister city to Eugene. The first one was established with Chinju, South Korea in 1970. Currently there are four sister cities linked with Eugene including Kakegawa, Japan and Irkutsh, Russia. Since the beginning of Sister City relationship Eugene people created lots of projects for Nepal. One of the successful projects was scholarship to less privileged 22 girls of Siddhi Pokhari High school in Pokhari Village of Eastern Nepal. The project was started in 1990 and gave scholarships to pay their tuition and supplies for 5 years until they finish

their high school education. It was terminated in 1996 due to recognition of free public education to girls until high school.

In 1992, the first Sister city delegation of 10 volunteers was led by the then chairperson of Eugene city council Dr. Shawn Boles and the committee president Mr. Daya Shakya. In return, sister city committee invited three people's delegation including Deputy Mayor of Kathmandu Mr. Nabindra Raj Joshi, Kathmandu chapter President Bhikkhu Maitri and an environmentalist Dr. Shree Shaha in 1993. The result of this delegation exchange brought a concept of launching the Safa Tempo Project (STP) which helps to keep control of air quality of Kathmandu City from excessive exhaust of carbon mono-oxide from three wheel vehicles. Currently there are hundreds of electrical vehicles running in the streets of Kathmandu and the Government banned on importing non electrified three wheels. This project was successfully completed under the supervision of Global Resources Institute (GRI) established by Dr. Peter Moulton and Marylyn Cohen in Eugene. In addition the solar electrification project of Gompas Monasteries located in remote villages of Nepal was initiated by Dennis Ramsey in Eugene and partially funded through the sister city committee. The second delegation was taken place in memory of 25th anniversary relationship between Kathmandu and Eugene in 2000. A symbol of friendship between two cities is depicted by installation of the Nepali style Dhara 'water fountain' in vicinity of Metery Bagaicha 'Friendship Garden' in the premises of city office of Eugene.

Due to large number of flow of Nepali people in the state of Oregon they have realized to form a formal organization to foster Nepali Cultural heritage and social bondage to help each other. Currently over two hundreds of Nepali people have been living in Portland, Salem, Eugene, Corvallis, Bend, and Ashland. The Nepali Association of Oregon (NAO) was formed with nine executive members under the leadership of Mr. Raju Mali as the first President on April 13, 2001. Since its formation NAO successfully organized the public shows and participated in Asian heritage activities in Eugene and Portland. It also publishes the 'Namaste' newsletter twice a year and establishes a web site www.nepaloregon.org to update the association's activities in regular basis. The NAO organizes community gathering three times a year for New Year celebration, summer picnic and Dashain festival. The Asian Reporter local newspaper has recognized NAO members as the exemplary volunteers among the other Asian communities. Beside all these, a link with Nepal can not be completed without examining the business entrepreneurs that focus on promotion of hand made beautiful Nepalese crafts. The Nepalese artists are well received around the world and they produce high quality of fine art pieces in metal, wood, papers products and paintings. Gifts from Afar, Kathmandu to you, Himalayan Gifts, Shakti Blues in Portland, Potala House, Greater Goods in Eugene, Kathmandu Gift Shop in Salem, promote Nepalese arts and crafts in Oregon.

Another area of linking Nepal and Oregon can be viewed under Nepali people's contribution in building up the Taekwondo Martial art in the state of Oregon. The Founder of Nepal Taekwondo field Grandmaster Mr. JK Shin was moved to Oregon and established the US West Coast Taekwondo Association in 1988 and invited few players from Nepal and resume Taekwondo Training Schools in Portland. The current trend of International Championship was first initiated in 2000 by Master Diwakar Maharjan in Kathmandu, Nepal as a result of success and popularity gained through the training center located at the Hollywood district. The contribution made by this school is highly credible. It has been realized by Portlanders that the Taekwondo is not only a game but also a part of life that fits for all ages. Its seven moral characters are the guiding principles for the success of life. The participants and players certainly appreciate your understanding of true meaning of Taekwondo and its technique of keeping healthy, moral and peaceful society. Apart from the Taekwondo, Nepalese people also have formed the Nepal Sports Club of Oregon (NESCO) to promote sports activities in the community.

(Author is the President of Nepali Association of Oregon (NAO) -Ed.)



Social: What "Coming Out" Really Means to a Gay Person

By Ulash Rana

"Coming out" is one of the biggest challenges in a gay person's life, and it can carry a profound significance to his/her self-acceptance. But this profound significance always comes with an even greater profound realization of a harsh reality.

That harsh reality is nothing but our own so called "normal" society. What's normal and what isn't is very hard to define as I'm a part of a society, and I consider myself to be normal!

It's a natural human tendency to become cautious and conceiving anything "unnatural", as defined by the society, as a threat. This can result into an extreme aversion and hence, the development of "hate crimes". Who can forget the most appalling human act upon another human, as was in the case Matthew Shepherd, an openly gay man from Wyoming U.S.A. Such was the intensity of inhuman brutality against him and his foundation of beliefs in that he chose to live a different lifestyle, considering the very fact that "being gay" is not a choice and hence certain lifestyle can't be labeled as "choice"; the whole world was in shock, and never more so than gay people who carry the horrific memories deeply etched in their minds.

So it is only natural for a gay person to hide in his/her closet with both shame and fear, because he/she is socially and legally "unnatural".

Human mind is so vulnerable. It has the capacity to be brainwashed to the limit of religious fanaticism and baseless wars. So I don't really blame most parts of our society for not accepting gay people as they are.

After all society is made up of people like me. People who grew up knowing one day to become a good man with a good job, a good marriage, and well, at least a handful of grandchildren for their parents! It's the right thing to do. I'd never thought otherwise. Obligations have always bounded me to this altruistic, traditional and highly conservative society.

But what's right and what I've been taught to become by the society cannot bring me true happiness. And knowing what I am being "unnatural" only curdles my soul, and the basic foundation of my life to becoming a good human being is totally shaken and permanently crippled. I feel awkward and an outcast. After all, I'm a social creature, and I'm naturally inclined to please others, to conform to the society and do everything deemed "natural" in order to survive. Hence, it's obvious what it's like for me to come out!

So, I understand if my fellow straight friends do not understand me for what I am. It's my job to make them understand me, accept me for what I am and break the stereotype.

As profound as it sounds, but in the real world, everything doesn't go as planned, as was evident by my gay friend's experience. He had a notion that if his best friend were really a good friend, he would accept him for what he really was. The result was a bomber! The close friendship all of a sudden spiraled down to mere acquaintanceship.

However, I don't blame the straight friend. He was merely a victim of social conditioning, a conformist to a traditional society with inflexible views on different ways of living.

So, what should have been done? Shouldn't he have told his best friend that he was gay? Not being true to yourself and not being able to express your real feelings can be very suffocating as well as self-destructive. A life based on false pretense and lies about trying to be something you're not can never bring true happiness.

What will happen if I come out to my friends, my parents, my brother, my sister? Can I risk myself at being disowned by my loved ones? Will they accept me for what I am, or will they make false assumptions and look at me with premature stereotyped views like the society in general does? But first and foremost, will they even understand what being gay means?

These are the questions that continuously haunt a gay person. Hence, "coming out" is a very significant and yet one of the biggest hurdles gay people have to overcome in their life as it will have a tremendous impact both on themselves as well as their loved ones, in which only they will suffer. So, if you can understand what "coming out" really means to a gay person, you will definitely bestow him/her with a standing ovation.

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Crime: Tackling Cybercrime in Nepal

By *Bashu Dev Phulara*

NEED OF THE HOUR: TACKLING CYBER CRIME IN NEPAL AND ELSEWHERE

Abstract

The internet boom has been a boon for all. But in addition to the advantageous, the internet has also proved to be heaven for all kinds of abuses-some so sleek that even authorities in the US and Japan are struggling to crack down on all wrong- doers. Just a couple of months ago, Nepal used to be safe heaven for cyber criminals. As a result, web-site hackings and other online trespassing were a common malpractice in the country. With the recent enactment of the cyber law, however, the perpetrators of online crime can no longer ignore legal repercussions with chutzpa. An assessment of such crimes on the net and our own Cyber Law.

STARTING POINTS

"For a warrior, nothing is higher than a war against evil. The warrior confronted with such a war should be pleased, Arjuna, for it comes as an open gate to heaven. But if you do not participate in this battle against evil, you will incur sin, violating your Dharma and your honor". - Excerpt from Bhagavad-Gita.

INFORMATION Technology (IT) is on a new high now. The word cyber and its relative dot.com are probably the most commonly used words. The internet has opened new opportunities for communication, education, commerce, and entertainment. Like any new medium, it comes with its share of problems. A rapid development of global Information Technology (IT) has become one of the factors for organized transnational crimes known as cyber crimes.

INTERNET ACCESS VIS- A- VIS CYBER CRIMES

Although the magic of internet is rapidly increasing by the day, not many Nepalese have access to it. Everyone talks about the explosive growth of IT in Nepal, over the past five years or so. The need of the hour is to enforce a stern Cyber Law to deal with the problems that arise from using the Internet.

The Internet is only an alternative means of communication and information. This is a network of networks. It also includes the group of people that use these information networks and the information therein. The internet is analogous to the high seas. Also known as the Web, the World Wide Web is a set of multimedia information servers connected and accessible on the Internet, thanks to the use of hypertext.

In addition to the advantages, we find in using the Internet, there are disadvantages and abuse. Among the identified Internet abuses are among others, pedophilia, contraband, money laundering, prohibited games and substances. As said, the wide use of information technologies in technological process resulted in the emergence of cyber crime characterized by the intervention into the work of computers, computer systems and networks, unauthorized modification of computer data to disorganizing the work of the national critical infrastructure, threaten people with death, inflict material damage and so on.

Cyber crimes have virtually no boundaries. Most cyber crimes, however, do not involve violence but rather greed, pride, or play on some character weakness of the victims. It is difficult to identify the culprit, as the net can be a vicious web of deceit and can be accessed from any part of the globe. For these reasons, cyber crimes are considered as "white-collar crimes".

Cyber crime is the most acute problem for countries with highly developed IT-structure. Though cyber crimes threaten many states, the USA, Japan and the EU countries are the major targets for cyber cheaters because of their total computerization. The failure of computer networks could paralyze their economy. In addition, the number of hackers will rapidly increase in the near future.

Law enforcement in cyberspace has thus become an international affair. It is difficult to locate and prosecute computer hackers, cyber-terrorists, virus writers, network packet sniffers, IP spoofing, password attackers, distributors of sensitive internal information to external sources, fraudsters like online investors of newsletters and bulletin boards , e-mail scammers, credit card cheaters, modifiers and destructors of digital information, pornographers, infringers of confidential and national security matters and other attackers.

Increasingly, the USA, Japan, European nations and many more have undertaken a variety of critical infrastructure protection (CIP) and cyber-security initiatives at both the national and international levels. Even so, the majority of nations lack computer crime laws. For instance, on May 1, 2000, the native hacker-a student of Philippines who wrote the "Love Bug virus" that damaged 45 million computer networks worldwide by sending the "I love you" to e-mail addresses: spydsuper.net.ph and mailmesuper.net.ph, including those in the Pentagon and British Parliament. That has become the most active and serious computer virus ever fixed or existed. According to the American Computer Economic Group, it caused a damage of \$6.7 billion in the first five days of its existence.

Nevertheless, the law enforcement officials in the Philippines could not prosecute him because it had no laws against writing malicious computer viruses. The FBI with the help of Philippine's NBI detected and arrested him later on. This special case led the Philippines to enact a number of the cyber laws that cover the particular activities of the "Love Bug" virus perpetrator.

From the above, it is obvious that both developing and developed countries with inadequate laws or without stern cyber law will become increasingly unable to compete in the Internet-based economy.

For the past several years, a survey says, Nepal directly or indirectly has examined various internet crimes in international and national level as well, although no domestic law or regulation about internet abuses has been enforced. Nepal had hardly ever attempted to implement any law relating to cyber crime, which could perhaps, has been a far reaching impact on access to fight against the numerous problems/evils caused by the internet. This is vital-considering the growth of trade activities on the internet.

CHEER UP-A NEW ERA BEGINS IN NEPAL WITH CYBER ORDINANCE -2061

After two years of continuous efforts and a series of discussions, the Nepalese government finally has endorsed the much-awaited Electronic Transaction and Digital Signature Act-Ordinance (ETDSA)-2061 also known as cyber law. The law, issued through ordinance on September 15, 2004, is seen as a landmark in the development of information technology in the country. The cyber law came into effect after it received the royal assent as an ordinance from His Majesty the King. It does mean that after completing a long distance, the legal vacuum comes to an end and a new era begins with the new law to regulate the transaction carried out over the internet. Information Technology (IT) experts believe that it is a first and foremost legislation for the development of IT industry in the country.

The Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) had drafted the bill, which had remained frozen in the dissolved House of Representatives. The previous cabinet too had endorsed the bill related to the ETDSA Act, but it could not materialize after the government was dissolved. IT professionals, entrepreneurs, policy makers and Legal Eagles had been demanding for the enactment of the act for quite a long time saying the ICT development could not take place as expected in the absence of the cyber law.

Endorsement of Information Technology Ordinance - 2004 by the government has provided a new thrust to the Information Technology (IT) sector in the country. Computer gigs and IT professional are hopeful that the approval of the new ordinance would create a favorable environment for conducting business using IT. With the introduction of the IT Ordinance, digital signature and electronic transactions have received legitimacy at par with traditional manual transactions, paving the way for the development of ICT in the country. The ordinance has filled the void in the cyber industry. The act would bring about changes in the markets of software and hardware industries.

The law has a number of positive provisions. The Act has strong provision of punishment against cyber crimes. As per the nature of crime, wrongdoers involved in hacking, deleting information, stealing document and software, pasting wrong information and improper and illegal materials would be brought under the judicial scrutiny.

After introducing this law, the government can punish cyber criminals- both an individual or institution with up to five years of imprisonment and a fine of up to Rs.50, 000 or both- based on the severity of their crime. Likewise, people have to pay Rs. 100,000 or face a year's imprisonment or both for pasting wrong information in the websites. So far, the government has been dealing the cyber offenders under the Public Offence Act. It was a wrong perception that public offences, software piracy and cyber crimes are all the same. In reality, they are very different types of crimes.

In the mean time, the Act has a provision for the office of controller that issues license of certification to IT industries. It also monitors the implementation of the law and regulates the ICT activities. The Act also gives legal status to information posted on the web site of government offices, government

run corporations, and local bodies. The information posted on web site or correspondence done via electronic devices can get legal status. The cyber law has also given legal status for various banking transactions through electronic media, which will be instrumental in boosting economic activities throughout the world via Internet.

The law has also made provision of an Appellate Judicial body to listen to complaints, cases and cyber related crime. Earlier, police were dealing the cyber crime but they were not aware about the technical aspect of the cyber crime and the actions were not effective. As stated above, the act has granted legal status to digital signature sent through the electronic media, which would be an important provision to introduce e-banking, e-shopping etc.

The Act also paves way to provide legal status to online news portals in the country, which are providing instant and reliable news and information to hundreds of thousands of people within the country and abroad. For these *raison d'être*s, the Act would not only catalyze the ICT but also would have a drastic impact on the economy of the country as a whole. With the enactment of the law, the e-commerce sector would definitely benefit from the new ordinance. One could do business by remaining in any corner of the world. One need not go to Hong Kong or Japan to file tender or bid contracts. These can be carried out by living in Nepal as the Act has provided legal recognition to electric documents, records and signatures. Furthermore, Government tenders can be submitted and retrieved by using computers and internet. With the introduction of the new IT ordinance, the government has a little bit attempted to remove the red tapes.

Above all, the Act will help materialize the concept of e-Nepal. The ordinance will play a crucial role in preventing cyber crimes, too. It will also equate illegal transfer of data through internet to stealing of data manually. The ordinance has fulfilled the various demands of the ICT entrepreneurs, including the severe penalties, which they had been eagerly looking forward for a long time. In totality, it has been seen as a major achievement and victory of the IT entrepreneurs. The newly endorsed ordinance, therefore, would boost a number of areas of IT sector in Nepal.

Besides, the introduction of the IT policy 2002, establishment of IT Park and formation of High Level Information Technology Commission are other positive and considerable steps taken by the government to gear up the IT Industry. The government had introduced IT Policy in 2000 that aims at putting Nepal in the global ICT map within five years. It has given priority to the IT industry as the key instrument for fighting poverty, generating employment and revenues.

There is no doubt that getting Royal assent on the first ever cyber law in the country is a positive step to develop the IT industry but still many things remain to be done in the near future, like: drafting of regulations and by-laws under the new Act and establishment of strong implementing mechanism as directed in the Act. Although the government introduced the cyber law, it will not come into operation until the regulations come into force.

According to the ministry of S & T, it is working out to bring the cyber regulations in near future. The IT Ordinance 2004 could work effectively once the government approves the IT Regulation. The draft of IT regulation has already been submitted to the ministry of science and technology and one could expect it to be endorsed very soon.

LOOPHOLES OF THE NEW ORDINANCE

Though the incorporation of cyber law in the ETA is a good beginning and cyber crimes would be considerably reduced in the country, many believe this is a preliminary Act, as many provisions on IT related security are missing.

According to the Information security experts, the law is not adequate enough for the holistic depiction of cyber related crimes and is not tough to act as a deterrent for online perpetrators. The imprisonment and or fines as determined under the Act are not high enough when compared to other countries.

Despite the positive efforts, the Electronic Transaction and Digital Signature Act-2004, has failed to address the problems of online media. A couple of major online news portals, including the nepaldigest.org, nepalnews.com and kantipuronline.com, and one dozen e-magazines are being published from Nepal and abroad at the moment. Nevertheless, the government has not provided any facilities to online publications and journalists associated with them. Since there is no clear provision to regulate online media under the cyber law, the government should incorporate the issue of online journalism in the new ordinance.

For the same reason, the act has made it legal to purchase and sell through internet. However, IT infrastructure plays a crucial role in promoting e-commerce. It still needs authority to verify digital signature, which is yet to be formed. Subjects related to payment gateways are also not included in the new ordinance. In this context, the Nepal Rastra Bank-the only regulating autonomous agency-can initiate to promote e-commerce in Nepal.

There is still need for e-procurement laws. This ordinance has covered aspects related to e-documentation but we still need internet laws and others laws covering the aspects of intellectual property rights. This is the first step and one can expect other laws in the coming days. The endorsement of IT ordinance has certainly given birth to a new industry, which still needs a lot of homework, if Nepal is to expect a boom in IT sector.

Above all, the effective implementation of cyber law will be a necessity. If it is not properly implemented in all governmental and nongovernmental organizations, the cyber law will no longer remain. Regulating the Internet further needs the cooperation of all the countries since the use of the Internet has no borders.

In view of that, Nepal will not be able to regulate the internet without taking the international legal context into account. The creations of effective IPRS laws are also required in order to be able to effectively fight piracy. Since the computing field is a dynamic one, policies and laws related to this area need to be revised periodically to reflect the changing trend, both local as well as global.

Equally important, information and awareness campaigns on the advantages and disadvantages of using the Internet should be carried out. Moreover, educating Internet users and providers should be made a priority.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The problems Nepal will have to face in the future, in terms of the internet disputes will be those related to the application of laws regarding time and space and appointment of the competent judges to resolve the conflicts. In the case of violations committed over the Internet, judges will have to consider the well-defined principles of free competition, civil and criminal responsibility, consumer protection and contracts, since this legal arsenal could give specific and individual responses to possible conflicts regarding the Internet. Let's not forget that when public transmissions of information are made over the Internet, one must not overlook that the punishment imposed by law is not virtual, but very real.

(The author is a legal consultant, teacher and trainer on WTO issues and can be reached at bphulara@hotmail.com -Ed.)



Philosophy: Mind Shore

By Ruchi Ahuja

For some of us, spirituality is considered a religion, and for some it is not. For some spiritualists, we still see them dealing with their spiritual belief and see them stuck between two worlds. One world is the "new belief system" based on our personal growth, soul growth and our evolution, and their second world is also attached to one, or some part of, religion that makes it a hard time to let go regardless of the reason, but still wants to move beyond that belief system. That will create a conflict that when we decide we want to grow sometimes we are not allowed to bring the old system with us. That will slow us down. Think about it!!!

What do I mean by a "new belief system"? For many belonging to spiritualist temples, or even centers, the "new belief system" plays a big part and is proof of the existence of a Soul after its departure from this plane. That is very good and an important thing to do or prove. I believe that by doing this we are emphasizing an important factor, but at the same time somehow disregarding an even more important part, which is our (in this lifetime) Soul existence and why we are here in the first place.

A person called a spiritualist is a person that outgrew all the issues of hate, anger or frustration of traditions that are attached to a specific set of morals or values. That spiritualist's concern is for his or her own evolution first and then for the love and compassion that he or she can bring to the world by respecting another human Soul instead.

How do I define spirituality or being spiritual? In reality, it is very simple and defies all the laws that our society has dictated to us for many years.

Spirituality is not a belief system, not based on morals and values but more on understanding and consciousness of our existence and people should try to distinguish the differences.

Being spiritual is simply a way of living. That's all! What do I mean by this? Being spiritual is being free and basically living by your own values, which assists in the growth of your own Soul and at the same time helps us to respect a human being as a human being. You can belong to any religion while still being spiritual.

Spirituality is not a threat to anyone in reality but is the next step up for the growth of the Soul. Just think about it from that angle!!! So we are here to grow and be in our spiritual path of understanding.

Being associated with another Soul on your spiritual path does not really mean you have karma to deal with that person, but in effect you are receiving a gentle push, or being provided with a little help, to go forward in your own personal growth.

Life is simple so let's not complicate it further regardless what our lessons and experiences are in this lifetime.

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Peace: Resettlement of displaced Sri Lankan Tamils

By Dr. I. Arul Aram

(Dr. I. Arul Aram, Ph.D., is Chief Sub-Editor with 'The Hindu', India's one of the most credible and standard English newspaper. He is a visiting faculty at the University of Madras and the Indira Gandhi National Open University, writer/creator of numerous books/media, and moderates a vibrant e-group the Indian Online Media Forum. He was a participant in the Summer Peacebuilding Institute in Eastern Mennonite University, U.S., in 2004. He is associated with the World Citizenship Institute, Knoxville, as a faculty in its online programme on peacebuilding).

In this article he shares his experience/observations from his visit of Sri Lanka at the invitation of the Sri Lanka Press Association from May 18 to 25, 2002. This article is presented here in the hope that it will give some perspective in Nepali context where so many are displaced by Maoist movement. This article is published with Dr. Aram's permission. -Ed.)

Recently I visited Sri Lanka at the invitation of the Sri Lanka Press Association. I took the opportunity to travel the country extensively particularly its war-torn areas to understand the peace process under way between the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The LTTE has been fighting a war in the last two decades against the Sri Lankan Government to protect the Tamils from the Sinhalese oppression. The guerrilla organisation believes that the 3.5 million Tamils can only prosper independently of the Sinhalese, who comprise 14.5 million of the country's 19 million people. My visit to Tamil-dominant areas such as Trincomalle, Vavuniya, Mannar, Kilinochchi and Jaffna revealed that the peace process under way could bear fruits only if the focus is on resettlement and rehabilitation of the displaced Tamils. Although the Sri Lankan Government talks much about resettlement, not much has been done on the ground. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) help rehabilitate people in the resettled areas but they do not come forward to help in the process of resettlement.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the total number of persons affected by displacement in the country is up to 8,00,000. UNHCR's operations in Sri Lanka focus on this internally-displaced persons (IDPs). A good number of them are accommodated in welfare camps.

UNCHR provides displaced persons with relief items such as plastic sheeting, shelter material, domestic items and sanitary items. There are also 1,10,000 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees and asylum seekers in India (Tamil Nadu), of which 66,000 are accommodated in 235 refugee camps. Most refugees and IDPs are Hindu Tamils, though thousands of Muslims (whose mother tongue too is Tamil) and some Buddhist Sinhalese have also been displaced.

Despite the current peace process, the situation is still too fragile for any large-scale repatriation of refugees. The UN is not yet prepared to promote the return to Sri Lanka of up to 110,000 Sri Lankan Tamils now in India. Even within Sri Lanka, though there are a few initiatives by the Government to give relocation alternatives for IDPs other than in government welfare centres, it is likely that a significant number of persons will have to remain at the centres before these initiatives are implemented. An estimated 1.3 million Sri Lankans are currently displaced within and outside the country. Of this, an estimated 800,000 people are displaced internally, while another 500,000 are living as refugees in India, Europe, Canada, Australia and the United States.

For those remaining in Sri Lanka as displaced persons, life cannot get any worse. The 348 government-run welfare centres currently provide shelter and daily rations to 176,000 persons – 24 per cent of the total displaced population. More than 500,000 displaced people have opted to live with their extended families or friends. Not surprising that the majority opt to live outside the welfare centres. The overcrowded facilities, communal living and poor sanitation have bred disease and made life in many a welfare centre miserable. Temporary shelters are formed in schools, churches, community halls, paddy marketing stores and bus depots as well. The resettlement of displaced people is also being carried out in an ad hoc manner, with people from various villages being settled as one community in a new village. Extended families are separated, as most often household heads draw lots to decide on where they are resettled.

M. Kandaswamy, camp officer, Allasgarden welfare camp for IDPs in Trincomalle, says refugees face several problems returning to their homes. (i) the military might have occupied their houses; (ii) the area might have been declared a security zone; (iii) forest growth in the residential areas need to be cleared, as no one had lived there for 10 to 20 years; (iv) cattle and vegetation which formed the basis

of livelihood had to be raised from the scratch; (v) civic amenities such as roads, wells, schools, ration shop, provisions shops, market, etc., have to be in place; (vi) at times, Singhalese would have colonised with the help of the military even the areas vacated by Tamils or might have moved into the nearby areas posing a threat; (vii) several houses have been destroyed in mortar shelling by the military or razed to ground by the military using bulldozers and (viii) above all, landmines have to be cleared.

Let us consider Pankulam, 20 km from Trincomalee. It is a fertile area falling under a river basin. The demographic map has changed in the past 20 years. With the help of the military, extensive Singhalese colonisation has taken place. Travel to this Tamil area is through Singhalese-dominant areas, which presents a threat to the safety of Tamils. The Tamils of Pankulam have been in refugee camps in India between 1990 and 1995. But even after returning to Sri Lanka with a fond hope of resettlement, they could not move into their homes because of Singhalese colonies that have cropped up around their place and high vegetation growth.

In fact, before 1953, Singhalese hardly owned property in Trincomalee and its surroundings. The population ratio among various ethnic groups has altered over time in Trincomalee itself. In Trincomalee, now Tamils constitute 40 per cent and Singhalese 30 per cent of its 3.5 lakh population. Fish trade in the town is now controlled by Singhalese. Fish catch by Tamils have to be necessarily routed through Singhalese. So Tamils do not get enough profit from their produce.

In several places, state security apparatus had been used to settle Singhalese in Tamils-dominant areas. This colonisation had been done in vacant lands, or in places vacated by Tamils during ethnic conflict, or by chasing away Tamils. Such a colonisation is even followed by changing the names of towns/villages. Of course, a few Singhalese who have traditionally lived in Tamil areas too were affected and displaced during the ethnic conflict, whom the LTTE is now prepared to welcome back.

Talking about resettlement, P. Nithyanandam, a Deputy Government Representative (equivalent to Deputy Collector), stationed in an LTTE-controlled division, says about 3,500 people have resettled under his division. The people have built thatched huts. Help from the Government is minimal. The Government dole for a family of four is Rs. 1,060 a month (Sri Lankan rupees) to buy dry ration. But even this amount have to be cut short to Rs. 630 as the total number of resettlers outnumber the figure agreed upon by the Government. (Rs. 1,000 Sri Lankan rupees is roughly equivalent to Rs. 500 Indian rupees.)

People do not wish to live as refugees. Now they totally depend on the daily handouts of dry ration and the occasional bag of foodstuff from NGOs. If the atmosphere were conducive, they would like to return to their villages and lead a life of dignity. Sri Lanka – known as an emerald island because of its dense vegetation – offers much scope for livelihood in terms of agriculture and animal husbandry. Fishing too is a major occupation in the north and east (traditional Tamil homeland) as it has one-third of the country's coastline. Travel restrictions in the north and east prevented many displaced persons from reaching work sites to earn a living, attend schools, or seek urgent medical care.

Terms agreed upon in the peace agreement have not been followed in toto. The military's continuing refusal to implement conditions of the indefinite truce is posing a major hurdle for peace. Still the military has not vacated from schools, temples and public buildings in the Government-controlled Tamil areas such as Trincomalee and Jaffna. Ninety days have passed by in the last week of May after the signing of the peace agreement on February 23, 2002 with Scandinavians as mediators. The ceasefire violations include the military firing at fishermen in Batticaloa in which two fishermen died, and the military destroying fishing nets in Mullaitivu. But with the ceasefire completing 90 days without a return to conflict, it is hoped that the remaining hurdles standing in the way of peace talks to arrive at a permanent settlement would be sorted out soon. On completion of the 90 days of truce, the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission (SLMM) – led by Scandinavian monitors – said in a report that ceasefire violations had not jeopardised the agreement.

The removal of military camps from the educational institutions within 60 days, and the removal of fishing ban within 90 days as per the terms of the agreement have not taken place. Educational institutions in Tamil areas recently went on a strike protesting against the continued military occupation of schools and colleges which hamper studies. Checkpoints in residential areas are yet to go. Fulfillment of these is not only needed to induce faith among the people but also to enable easy rehabilitation. For instance, if checkpoints continue to be there in residential areas and schools are not functioning, people would not be too willing to move into such areas. The Government should come forward for effective implementation of the provisions of the peace deal.

A. Vaidhyathan, member of the SLMM of the Jaffna region, says the fact that ceasefire has held for more than three months means that both the Government and the LTTE are keen on peace. Ceasefire would definitely continue for a long time, but permanent peace would take some time. The Government is under pressure from Sinhalese organisations and opposition politicians. On the other hand, Sinhalese, Tamils as well as Muslims look forward to permanent peace.

The A1 highway leading to the northern regions consisting of Jaffna, Chavakachcheri, Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu has been reopened after the peace agreement. Now travel to the northern regions including Jaffna via road is relatively easy unlike in the conflict days when one has to take circuitous sea or land routes. Of course, the highway is in a battered condition at several places but the repair work is on. Through checking of passengers while crossing the LTTE-controlled areas is likely to continue both at the military and the LTTE checkpoints till a permanent peace is arrived at. The northern areas still do not have electricity supply except by local generators at certain pockets. The rail link between Vavuniya and Jaffna is no more existent. The LTTE has removed the rails at times of economic embargo against it, to build bunkers and to serve as beams in the buildings destroyed in the military operations. Although the Government-controlled Jaffna is linked with Colombo by air, only a few could afford air travel.

The Kilinochchi Hindu Higher Secondary School which too has suffered heavily in mortar shelling is functioning now despite its ceiling giving way to the shelling at several spots. Of the required teachers' strength of 75, only 19 teachers are working. A good number of teachers who had been displaced have not returned and no replacement made. But the school has 675 students. The Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation is one of the NGOs which runs orphanages for children who lost their parents in war. In one such orphanage in Kilinochchi stays a girl who lost both her parents a couple of years ago in the military bombing of St. Peter's Church in Navali which killed more than 130 persons – mostly women and children – seeking shelter. The irony was that the Government of Sri Lanka had told people to take shelter in churches and schools before the attack. The orphan girl still could not come in terms with the fact that her parents are dead and she believes that they are alive and are "missing".

In Jaffna which is in the northern tip, the prices of commodities continue to be high compared to those of the national capital Colombo. For instance, the price of petrol is Rs. 84 (Sri Lankan rupees) whereas it is Rs. 54 in Colombo. Before the peace agreement, the petrol was scarce and vehicles had to be run on kerosene, particularly in the LTTE-controlled areas. Jaffna residents survive on the money order income. Every other household has a relative working abroad who sends money. But the question is how long this would continue. Unlike the other Tamil areas which depended on agriculture, animal husbandry and business, the natives of Jaffna mainly depended on government jobs. Jaffna had been a place with good English education and the people here outsmarted Sinhalese in civil services. De-reserving government jobs and admission to educational institutions for Tamils was a main cause of the Tamil uprising.

In most Tamil regions, with a good number of marriageable young men having moved out of the country in search of jobs or died in fighting, young women find it difficult to get husbands. Several married women have become widows or manage their households themselves with their husbands working abroad. Single women and female-headed households are in large numbers. In the patriarchal Tamil society, women had traditionally played limited role outside their homes. NGOs have now come forward to teach these women vocational skills. The women are encouraged to join support groups and are given an opportunity to share their trauma with other widows and single women.

Landmines pose a mind-boggling problem. Civilian casualty rates from landmines in Sri Lanka's war-torn areas are among the world's highest. Till such time the last landmine is cleared or becomes ineffective over the years, losing one's limbs is a possibility. There are cases wherein housewives have lost a limb while sweeping the front yard of their house after resettlement. Even amidst limited resources in the LTTE-controlled regions, artificial limbs fixing is a medical specialty. There were times when the LTTE even used aluminium vessels as a raw material for artificial limbs. Now NGOs have stepped in and fibreglass material too is available for artificial limbs.

In the LTTE-held Wannu region (which includes Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu) alone, 12 lakh landmines out of 1,75,000 landmines planted in the region had been cleared. Landmines are cleared with local equipment which is essentially a three-forked small iron rod. This work is hazardous and has cost a few legs. In other regions, mine clearance work is yet to take off in right earnest. The Government says that it has no funds to set apart for clearing mines. To revive agriculture in the war-torn areas,

the World Bank has planned to fund U.N. mine clearance efforts. But the project is yet to gain momentum.

Tamils and Singhalese distrust each other but they pretend to respect each other. They do not even bother to learn each other's language. They live as two distinct ethnic groups. But now they have come to understand that solution cannot be found through war. The ceasefire has brought cheer even to the residents of Colombo, relieving them of the numerous military checkpoints and the fear of LTTE attacks. Twenty years of ethnic conflict has left the country's economy in a shambles, and the people as a whole are desperate for an economic recovery. Tamils have lost lives and property and not many of them are ready to believe in a temporary peace agreement, particularly when the military does not adhere to certain provisions of the agreement. Everyone looks forward to a permanent solution. Above all, how can the displaced, impoverished Tamils resettle when enough help does not come their way?



Help Nepal: Fast for Nepal

By Suvayu Pant

(By the time this news is published it is known that Suvayu has raised more than \$1000 and still raising. He is going to school in Pasig, Philippines and now has admirers all around the world. -Ed.)

Several high school students around the world, led by a 17 year old Nepali in the Philippines will embark next week on a 2-day long fast to help raise funds for a health post in a remote district of Mugu in Nepal.

The health post was built in part by the Help Nepal Network (HeNN) [www.helpnepal.net], a global charity of Nepalis living in different parts of the world, and came into operation last July. Unfortunately, the health post desperately lacks the necessary resources to keep it running.

Following an international call for help by HeNN, Suvayu Pant studying in Grade 12 at the International School of Manila took the lead and campaigned in association with the South Asian Cultural Club of the school to hold the charity event.

What started as a school-local project, evolved into an international fund raising event.

Along with Suvayu, Ayat Ali (Philippines), Daniel Johnson (Canada), Mark De Sousa (South Africa), Venessa Yung (Hong Kong) and Cassie Vergel (China) will also be taking part in the fast. Venessa Yung and Daniel Johnson are key supporters of the endeavor. They have taken the initiative to start fund raising activities in their respective countries.

If you would like to make a donation, or read more about the event, please log on to www.helpnepal.net/suvayu.html or email Suvayu at suvayu_pant@hotmail.com.

Diaspora: Support to Slain Journalist Thapa Family

पत्रकार थापाको परिवारलाई सहयोग

काठमाडौं/रास- विद्रोही नेपाल कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी (माओवादी)द्वारा दैलेखमा मारिएका रेडियो नेपालका पत्रकार डेकेन्द्रराज थापाकी श्रीमती लक्ष्मी थापालाई राजधानी दैनिकमा जम्मा हुन आएको २५ हजार रुपैयाँ अध्यक्ष तथा प्रबन्ध सञ्चालक महेन्द्र शेरचनले शुक्रवार हस्तान्तरण गर्नुभयो ।

अमेरिकामा सकृय संस्था मदरल्यान्ड अफ नेपालका तर्फबाट अध्यक्ष अनील पाण्डेले पठाउनुभएको सो रकम राजधानीसँग सुरक्षित रहेको थियो । अध्यक्ष पाण्डेका अनुसार अमेरिकामा रहेर विभिन्न पेसामा संलग्न संवेदनशील नेपालीहरूले प्रदान गरेको पाँच/दस डलरबाट कोष जम्मा गरी स्वदेशका द्वन्द्वपीडितहरूलाई सहायता गर्ने गरिन्छ ।

लेखक तथा पत्रकारसमेत रहेका पाण्डेकै सकृयतामा यसअघि स्वर्गीय पत्रकार ज्ञानेन्द्र खड्काको परिवारलाई पनि आर्थिक सहायता प्रदान गरिएको थियो । माओवादीले आइजिनो ज्यादतीविरुद्ध समाचार प्रसारण गर्ने थापालाई गत साउनमा हत्या गरेको हो । स्व. थापाका दुई छोरी र एक छोरा छन् ।

NRN Update: Non Resident Nepalese Association Update

By Dr. Shyam Karki

Dear Friends,

As we get ready for the Thanksgiving Holidays after the Vijaya Dasami and Laxmipooja, I would like to update you at what's happening in the Non Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) and some other areas of my interest.

NRNA Day was observed in Kathmandu on October 11 with a series of meetings between the International Coordination Council (ICC) members and the cabinet members including PM Deuba. The emphasis was on getting the NRNA Ordinance enacted. There was full support for the ordinance, however it has yet to materialize.

Declaring October 11 as the NRN day by the HMG of Nepal was a symbolic gesture of acknowledgement of the contribution of the NRN to the economy and the vast untapped potential for future economic development in Nepal.

Next ICC meeting will be held in Doha in conjunction with the Regional (Middle East) meeting from Jan 21 to Jan 23. NRNA Vice President Dr. Dongol and his team are working very hard to make it a great memorable event. Famous Nepali singer Udit Narayan Jha and Bollywood actress Manisha Koirala are scheduled to participate in the cultural program. So please mark your calendar and plan to be there. Visa rules in Qatar are very strict. Citizens from USA/Canada and European countries can obtain visas at the airport while others have to get it before entering. Those who carry Nepali passports are requested to fax copy of their passports to Dr Dongol at 974-443-2268.

One very good news to share. FNCCI has informed that one bigha of land has been donated for building the Briddhashram. Up to now, we have about \$25,000 in bank and we are working very hard to get it to \$50,000. Sur Sudha concerts were a great success and were sponsored by the NAC and many Nepali community organizations. We had wonderful time listening to their unique music and exposing them to the US audience. However fund raising wise, we were just able to break even. Air fare from and to Nepal takes a lot of money. Please donate what you can. It's for a good cause. There is provision for dedicating a room in memory of your loved ones by donating \$2,500. Eight rooms have been dedicated so far. Please write a check to NAC and specify "For Briddhashram". We are discussing with famous Nepali architect Shankar Rimal for drawing plans for a nominal fee. If you know of someone in Nepal who will volunteer his services, please let me know. Our plans are to build a 50- 100-bed unit this year and have it inaugurated at the next year's NRN convention. We need all the help we can get.

Another project I have been working on is the Nepali American Public Affairs Council (NAPAC). Its main objective is to bring Nepali Americans in the main stream and make them involved in public affairs. Since we are here for good, what happens here impacts our lives and we need to be proactive in the public area. Voter registration drive, active participation in public forum (school board, social organizations), lobbying public officials are some of its programs. For detailed information, please visit its website NAPAC-US.org. Please help in this effort by joining the NAPAC and working together with other colleagues to promote the community interest.

Another activity I would like to work with interested colleagues is to start an organization dedicated to help victims of domestic violence. I was active in Saathi of Rochester and would like to initiate similar organization for Nepalis. I have received pledges of support from many Nepali attorneys.

Since the start of the Nepali Educational Cultural center four years ago, we have not been able to move forward. I feel it is very important that the Nepali community in the Greater Washington area have its community center. Its time that all the Nepali community organizations in the area come together and brainstorm on how to make it happen. May be one of the local organizations in the area will take lead in this direction.

Please contact me via email or by phone at 410-459-8070.

Wishing you very Happy Thanksgiving Holidays

Shyam Karki
Vice President,
International Coordination Council,
Non Resident Nepali Association

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Activities: New Yorkers meet Madhav K. Nepal

By Anand Bist

There were arrivals of some distinguished personalities from Nepal in New York past week such as Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal, General Secretary CPN (UML), Mr. Mohan Bahadur Basnet, former state minister (Nepali Congress Democrat) and Dr. Narayan Khadka, CWC member of Nepali Congress Democrat. were in New York City for a very brief period.

Given the short time frame, The Nepalese Democratic Youth Council in USA felt that, it would be the right opportunity to organize an interaction programme with the above-mentioned dignitaries, where all the community members would have the opportunity to share their views and ideas, and to hear from the leaders their agendas on the solution to the ongoing crisis in the country.

The programme was organized on 12 November in Queens, New York. There were more than 60 Nepali people of different background along with some prominent Nepali personalities of USA, were present in this impromptu gathering.

Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal mentioned that, the present government and his party CPN(UML) are taking necessary steps to solve the existing Maoist problem concretely for good. He added that, we don't need peace without freedom that will be dead peace, and all the major political parties and Maoist has to come with good intention and good faith for the people and the Nation, He highly appreciated the support of NDYCUSA, and those of the Nepali Community in the support of the democratic movement in Nepal. He also urged the Nepali people living abroad to deeply support the positive step to be initiated by the government.

Mr. Mohan Bahadur Basnet stated that the constitutional crisis has to be resolved, as soon as possible, and that, after 1990 political parties and leaders have not been successful in fulfilling the wish of the people. He said that the time has come to forget the past and to move ahead in rebuilding the Nation, parallelly with democracy.

Dr. Narayan Khadka stated that the ongoing Maoist problem has to be resolved, and the only way out is a peaceful dialogue, his party, which is leading the government is very much concerned on the existing crisis in the country, and he also urged all the political party to co-operate the present government to solve the Maoist problem and in organizing a free election.

Mr. Anand Bist, President of the youth council expressed his views on the present problem in the country. He urged the all the political parties for national unity for the restoration of democracy and to solve the Maoist problem with peaceful negotiation. He added that Nepali people living abroad are very much concerned about the existing problems in the country, and what they want is a transparent government who would shed all their differences with other political parties and look into the best interest of the nation by resolving the major problems. The foremost problem existing is the Maoist problem, he stated.

All the participants in the programme were very open in their opinion, with positive thoughts, and showed their concern on the existing problems in the country and urged the leaders to come to a solution as such that all Nepali people can live in peace. The Nepali community living thousands of miles from their homeland are definitely looking for a peaceful NEPAL, which was highly evident during the programme.

(Anand Bist is the President of Nepalese Democratic Youth Council in USA which organized the event. -Ed.)

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Activities: Nepal Sambat Celebrated

By T. Tuladhar

Newah Organization of America (NOA) organized the Nepal Sambat Day celebration here in the Metropolitan Washington to highlight the significance of the indigenous Era of Nepal. Cross-section of the local Nepalese community was present at this event. Newly appointed ambassador of Nepal to the United States H.E. Kedar Bhakta Shrestha as well as other heads of various Nepalese Organizations took part in the important event.

Welcoming the participants Mr. Beda Pradhan, President of Newah Organization of Nepal (NOA) said that Nepal Sambat should actually be considered the Sambat of all Nepalese people which so far has been mistakenly called “Newar Sambat. He said that there is nothing like a “Newar Sambat” in the history of Nepal , and the media people must help in clarifying this mis-information. He said that the correct understanding of the “Nepal Sambat must be presented in all forum available to us and Nepal Sambat be recognized as the Rastriya Sambat as the founder Sankhadhar Sakhwaa has already been recognized as a “Rastriya Bibhuti” of Nepal. Hopes, he said, is high that in the nearest future it will be adopted as the nation’s official calendar. He conveyed heartfelt Bhintuna on the occasion of Nhu Dan Nepal Sambat 1125 to all Nepalese around the world.

Greeting the audience on the occasion of new year Nepal Sambat 1125 the royal Nepalese ambassador H.E. Kedar B. Shrestha said that the process of adopting the Nepal Sambat as a National Era is proceeding well and is being rightfully popularized and recognized amongst the entire populace.

Mr. Krishna Niraola, president of ANA greeted the participant with new Years greetings of Nepal Sambat 1125 and wished prosperity and happiness for the coming year.

He called for participation of the community for helping to finish the work of building the Nepalese Cultural Center here in the US.

Mr. Prem Sangraula, the newly elected president of America Nepal Society (ANS) the oldest Nepalese organization in the US, reiterated that everybody should accept the historical fact that Nepal Sambat is true indigenous era of Nepal and be recognized fully as the Rastriya Sambat. He said that he agrees with the notion that it can be made the official calendar of Nepal, and if there be any practical or other obstacles in its way, they be amicably ironed out for the benefit of all people of Nepal.

Mr. Ganesh Kayastha, the first vice president of NOA greeted and thanked all participants and contributors who came to the event to make it a grand success. All the preparation that goes into making such an event is tremendous and specially the women folks who helped out with the extensive “Samay bajee”. He thanked them all even though he could not do so in person.

Special emphasis was made by Mr. Tribhuvan Tuladhar in presenting the goals of Nepal Bhasa Academy in completing the Newah cultural center in Kirtipur. He related to the audience the progress of the project and provided background about Nepal Bhasa Academy itself as many are not very familiar with it. He said that contribution to this cause of the cultural center was being generated slowly as people were getting to know the scope and importance of the Center. Contribution was collected on the occasion and each and every participant was asked by Mr. Ratna K. Shakya and Mr. Ishwar Lall Rajbhandari who are part of the fund-raising effort. NOA realizes that the contribution is made from dedication and respect to Nepal Bhasa Academy and asked the audience not be felt pressurized in this regard, but, Mr. Tuladhar insisted, that contribute they must, and he asked all newah people around US to make a concerted effort to come forward with their help and support for this premier organization in Nepal.

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Reflections from a decade back: Sanskrit Language and Rendition of Slokas

("Reflections from a decade back" is a regular feature of rejuvenated TND. Pramod Pandey compiles this section from materials published approximately 10 years ago. - Ed)

Compiled by: **Pramod Pandey**

Originally from: **Helen Abadzi**

Date: 09 Nov 1994

Source:

Subject: **Sanskrit language and rendition of slokas**

In the November 9 posting, someone someone had the very good idea to post some slokas, which to Hindus and to foreigners convey a lot about the Sanatana Dharma. However, the language used by the slokas is not learned systematically in school, and people don't understand exactly what the slokas say or what they really look like. The results are rather strange. For example: satya mewa jayate; I don't know the sloka but I think it should be: satyam eva jayati. Eva is always, but mewa (at least in Hindi) is dried fruit. (The writer got confused because sandhi fuses the two words in one, satyamewa.) Jayati is the active voice, jayate is middle or passive voice. Does truth win or is it won? Does truth win you dried fruit? Iswara sarvabhootaanaam hrudde Arjuna tisthati With my limited Sanskrit, I think hrudde should be hrudesu, although I don't remember what the sandhi with the a of Arjuna would make the u.

I know Sanskrit is seen as a boring and useless subject, which has a very low priority compared to the science Nepalis should know. But due to the religion, Sanskrit is still around, and if students don't learn very much, they can't figure out exactly what the hymns and the slokas say. Also, Nepali is a derivative language of Sanskrit and gets much of its vocabulary directly from it. Therefore, Sanskrit knowledge has some clear use for Nepalis today.

We have had the same lengthy debate in my native Greece over ancient Greek. We all used to study 6 years of ancient Greek in secondary school and get enough knowledge to understand biblical passages, prayers, and ancient Greek adages as adults. But around 1984, ancient Greek was reduced to three years and for some tracks to nothing. The subsequent drop in the level of modern Greek knowledge among the students was quite astounding, and last year they re-installed ancient Greek in secondary schools.

Knowing what I know about ancient Greek and Sanskrit, I have advised Indian and Nepalese educators to strengthen the Sanskrit curriculum for all students so that they can figure out the meaning of passages and remember the grammar they need to decode passages when they become adults. Sanskrit knowledge in Nepal should not continue to be seen as the antithesis of scientific knowledge and relegated to the lower grades, the Sanskrit high schools, and a university that only caters to male Brahmins.

I would like to know the readers' views and experiences with Sanskrit.

Regards,

Helen Abadzi

Education Specialist

World Bank

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Fiction: Gender Equality and Male Chauvinism

By Lava Gaunle

When someone's wife admires or updated herself making argument on religious philosophy or the works of Priest, Hermit, Prophet, and Palmist. Or they feel happy to welcome hang around Baba (commonly known as 'Sadhu') in their residents without hesitation is a sign of full stop in relationship between husband and wife, collapse of a family or a homely institution.

The incidents that have had happened in the country for last few decades that indicates those outspoken female were found spiritually null but sexually lewd.

The Babas (mostly unmarried group worn orange or yellow color gown, dirty long hair, and smelly goatee bear) are the wants of 'Gujarati' (a well developed physis and seductive organs, the inhabitant of Gujarat, a dry state in India) women. This means that those female are found not offensive in a published record and also exactly not nymphomaniacs but libidinous due to their surrounding climate. Most of them found rapturous and needed smite thrust of an untiring hard tip and massive shaft into their abysmal downtown.

This category comprises the females of elite, aristocrat, or affluent family or family of high-ranking civil, police or regiment official, businessmen, and the highbinder but panegyric politicians of Nepal.

Once in a year in Kathmandu, Babas from throughout the Kingdom and 'Naga Babas' (fully naked) from neighboring country India as well have an opportunity of joy with puff of hashish, and the odor of women including tourists from different parts of the world. Such gathering can be observed in a fare called 'Shiva Ratri' (worshipping to the lord Shiva), and 'Shiva Linga' (phallus).

Shiva (a macho semi nude God of Hindus) who is believed to govern this 'Brhamanda' (universe) in Hindu mythology has linked a story of undressed body, user of excessive cannabis, and fond of women. It is legend of hundreds of thousands years ago. However, the Babas who pretended them as follower of the Lord Shiva are imitators and liars.

According to the Hindu myth, the day becomes cloudy even rainy in this ceremony.

Most of the years, Mr. Khakurel had faced the same. Therefore, the day is murk from 'Chillum' (a'y'shaped stuff made of mud to smoke hashish) and excessive wooden fire called 'Shiva Dhuni'. The day becomes the great feast to them around 'Pashupatinath Temple' (a Hindu holy temple) and adjacent areas.

Usually they sit around the premises rubbing ash in naked body consuming heavy amount of hashish until the conditions of hallucination. Mostly they look naked, some worn dark glass hanging tag up to cheeks and some of them have worn a ring on their fully erected sexual organs. The view is incredible to the tourists (it probably would credible if a female worn a ring on her clitoris), so they hastily zoom in the lenses of camera into very sensitive and lure part of body. Some guests might instantly be aroused and enthusiastic to have a puff of marijuana and relaxes with Babas.

Some Baba, whose tremendous activity and extraordinary practice of something new overwhelmingly draws the attention of the hordes. Mr. Khakurel recalls an event that had been witness mostly by female tourists just a year before. A Baba, whose weight is under average compare to his age, presents a show, which rarely can be accomplished.

Mr. Khakurel suddenly bites his tongue when he saw Baba is being raised a piece of ten kilos stone by his erected penis from ground with the aid of rope. The tourists, they took deep gulp of air and forget to blink their eyes. They not only shocked by this terrific display but also thrilled, Mr. Khakurel thought.

There are different kinds of Babas availables in Kathmandu valley, among them 'Aghori Baba' (having terrible appearance), 'Khade Baba' (always stands never sits) & 'Ghante Baba' (who's so called spiritual activity is based on a bell) are mostly popular.

Both inadequate knowledge and skills on premonition there have been inseparable impressions in society for such activities performed by these so-called Babas instead consulting the medical specialists in markets. These deluded beliefs for panacea gradually bringing mysterious results in the society.

Ghante Baba's work for making son (the slogan of gender equality fastedly running in the nation, and echos in the sky, however country still is male chauvinism) informally popular among those married

groups whose spermatozoa had examined relatively as unproductive and unable to give birth and one who only succeeds to produce female baby were reportedly visit the Baba's 'Ashram' (residence).

Mr. Khakurel again recalls a latest tragic event of a newly married medium echelons couple. The couple went to meet the Baba believing that they could have male child after visit him. Ghante Baba smiles towards them it was simply because of blood stirring sexual appealing of woman. He heartily welcomes them.

Mr. Khakurel is confident that the Babas are ever thrust full and have ability of providing maximum sexual satisfaction. They are physically strong being a vegetarian, nonalcoholic, and consuming plenty of fruits, juice, ghee, and wheat breads.

In the main yard there was a big bell hanging closely with a small temple made by Baba for not suspecting to his business. The Baba usually orders male for ringing the bell continuously in course of treatment (there was a thread and small ring to make easy for non-stop ring) until he finishes. The gentleman headed towards bell, Baba looks the watch and order rings the bell.

The woman nearly tranced for obeying all of Baba's orders as a child upto a small but gleam room inside after crossing a short tunnel. She is unexpectedly ordered for undressed and has shower of cold water. At the same time, He locked the door.

There were no any options of protection left to her. It was completely useless of shouting and crying because the sound could not reach to her husband who is obediently ringing the bell without stopping in expectation of a son outside.

Nepal-based Babas are generally seemed a bull in a china shop compare to India. Around a hundred years of long and tough experience gained from the British ruler, India has succeeded a lot in English and Briton systems. Thus, they people easily can convince people of world. Ghante Baba is the same in this concern and from India.

The following consecutive year she was able to become a mother of son (it might be coincidence or God knows the reason). Her husband suspects the work of Baba as he advised by his victimized peer and she was forced to take divorce. In such cases, generally no evidence should be produced and no law should provide justice for the victims in Nepal.

[Based on Author's unpublished fiction entitled 'An Unwanted Sound' -Ed.]



Poem : Whistle! Blow

By Bishnu Simkhada

Whistle! Blow
You are an adult of late 30s'
Have role to play of early 16s'
The adult mind might alarms you "Oh! No! I can't perform this role!"
But what can you do? You have no choice,

Your ambition forced you to be an actress,
Perhaps, sometimes you may ask yourself,
"Why did I have all these ambitions?"
May be you ask yourself to what extent can you sustain?
You may think "what did you expect in your life and what are you getting now"?
But what can you do? You have no choice,

You know! You are stranded due to your ambition,
But don't worry, "Ambition is good, it rejuvenates life,
It empowers to face the challenge ahead.
Since you are already in the stage,
Don't embarrassed yourself; perform whatever role you need to play,
Act it with your fullest extent,
Because it is what you need to do,

This earth is a great theatre
May be still many other roles you need to perform, you never know,
Though you really don't want to involve in drama,
You need to survive,
So you have to accept the role you are offered,
There are no other options,
Though you don't like it, you need to accept.
Because it is what you need to do,

You can't escape yourself because remote control is not in your hand,
So though you don't like it, you should say you like it,
Otherwise, how will you survive?
There is struggle for existence, everywhere in the universe,
Don't be tired performing the role that you are offered to do,
I know there will be many observers in the theatre to WHISTLE you,
They will be amused by your role,
Will blow whistle very loudly,
But who knows what pressure you will have in your mind and ear,
Because of the role you are playing and the whistle they are blowing.
But all you have to bear because at the moment there is no choice for you.

(Mr. Simkhada can be reached at bdhading@hotmail.com. -Ed.)

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Poem: Chirping Cuckoo Carves Cemetery

By Arun Budhathoki

Chirp, chirp, chirping cuckoo chirps
O lovely moon,
You died so soon,
Leaving me alone,
Mother is dead,
I'm lying on human's bed,

Born again; live forever,
Who's your mother?
I'm a child of nature,
Dying alone once more,

Last time I died on dream,
I died on mother's lap,
Aside a fresh stream,
Last time I'm dying without a nap,
I'm killed.

O sad moon,
Never come near,
You will die very soon,
Without a nap; without mother's lap,
You are killed.

O crying moon,
I remember your last smile,
You laughed like an angel,
Cuckoos chirped from thousands mile,
We listened with true heart,
Harmful heart captured your beauty with
greedy heart,

Last time you died on dream,
Aside loving earth,
Ere crying rays,
Last time you are dying without a ray,
You are killed.

I am killed.
You are killed.
This place is for blind hearts.
Who were killed a long century ago?
Still they are killing themselves,
Killing the divine path,

God knows the bitter truth
why is human killed?
Everyone is killed.
Everyone is dead.

(Mr. Budhathoki can be reached at aichroic@hotmail.com -Ed.)

Spare Time: Spam Messages for Bill Gates

TND Research

Are you bothered by spams you receive every day? Compare that to Bill Gates for a change.

2.9 million is the number of spam messages Gates gets every day.

2,778 is the number of emails Gates gets every minute.

2,033 the number of spams Gates gets every minute.

10,000 - Gates is the recipient of more than one out of every 10,000 emails sent by anybody anywhere in the world.

34 days is how long it would take Bill to download a day's worth of spam to Outlook, if it (generously) took just one second per message.

22 weeks is how long it would take Bill, working solidly without breaks, to manually delete one day's spam.

458 is the number of people, working 8-hour shifts, Bill would need to hire to delete that spam manually each day.

1.2 terabytes is the disk space needed to store a month of Bill's spam.

460 gigabytes is the disk space needed to store all of Bill's non-spam email, given the company's alleged 30-day email retention policy.

(Source: Computer Business Review Online, 19 Nov 2004)

http://www.cbronline.com/article_news.asp?guid=F63EE56D-E787-41C0-8044-B4623357B9D0
