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<div><b>Website:</b> Are you looking for a website? We can develop one for you, and also host your website at a reasonable price. For free estimate please call at (774) 249-2647 or write to email: <a href="mailto:websales@teeznar.com">websales@teeznar.com</a></div> <div><b>National News</b></div> <div><div><b>Prime Minister Inaugurated Mid-Marsyangdi Hydropower Plant</b></div><div>By KTM Metro Reporter in Kathmandu</div><div>On December 14, 2008, Prime Minister Prachanda inaugurated the Mid-Marsyangdi 70 MW hydropower plant in Lamjung coinciding with the 50th anniversary of Nepal-German Friendship Treaty. The power plant is the second largest in Nepal. So, it would help to ease the ongoing load shedding to some extent. However, only 35 MW would be generated immediately.</div><div>Cost overrun and time overrun have been the case in this project. The project cost escalated to Rs. 27 billion from the initially estimated cost of Rs. 13 billion. Time overrun run has also been double the estimated time. The project was scheduled for completion in 2004 but it competed only in 2008.</div><div>German KFW Development Bank has made available funding for this project.</div></div> <div><div><b>Girija Prasad Koirala Sick or Uncooperative?</b></div><div>By KTM Metro Reporter in Kathmandu</div><div>On December 16, 2008, the meeting of the Constitutional Council (CC) was to be held at the official residence of the Prime Minister. It is for making appointments to the vacant positions at the Constitutional Bodies such as Public Service Commission and Commission on Investigation into Abuse of Authority. The CC can make decisions only in presence of all its members following the provision made in the constitution. Former Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala did not show up at the meeting giving the health reason.</div><div>The question is whether the former Prime Minister Koirala was really sick or uncooperative to</div></div>	<div><b>Political Vendetta</b></div> <div>By Siddhi B. Ranjitkar</div> <div>“You might fall in a hole you dig for others” - Russian Proverb</div> <div>Some political leaders have been attempting to tear down the current coalition government of six political parties for personal reasons rather than for the national benefits. These political leaders have not learned the lessons from the past failures they have had due to their negative attitude to the political reality in Nepal. They continue to behave in the same manner causing their own downfall.</div> <div>On December 18, 2008, Finance Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai said in public that the current government would stay on for three solid years following the Interim Constitution of Nepal of 2007: two and a half years for crafting a new constitution and then a half year for holding a general election. The Interim constitution has the provision for two years for crafting a new constitution and then extension of another six months if an extra-ordinary situation would prevail in the country causing the CA unable to craft a new constitution during the stipulated period.</div> <div>Former General Secretary of Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist and Leninist (CPN-UML) Madhav Kumar Nepal had said nothing positive of any other leaders in public in the past causing his own ruin. He criticized Nepali Congress (NC) President Girija Prasad Koirala but never said about his good deeds he had done; similarly he had criticized current Prime Minister Prachanda and his party but never showed positive attitude to them. So, he lost the election for the Constituent Assembly (CA) on April 10, 2008 in both the constituencies he had contested. He rightly said that Nepalese voters rejected him. So, he resigned from the General Secretary of CPN-UML. It was a great loss for any politician.</div> <div>However, Mr. Nepal has not learned a lesson from the past mistakes and has not attempted to improve his performances despite the opportunity given by his party and colleagues. For example, he flatly rejected to be the Chief of the six-governing-party coordination committee saying such a committee would not be able to perform well without the presence of Prime Minister on it. This committee was set up to steer the government to the right direction. So, how could the Prime Minister be the member of this committee? The Prime Minister and his fellow cabinet members needed directions and guidance from this committee to run the administration effectively. However Mr. Nepal did not take this opportunity of guiding the coalition government because of his negative attitude toward it.</div> <div>Mr. Nepal has been telling the Nepalese public that the CPN-UML has made a mistake in joining the current six-party coalition government, and needs to pull out its ministers of it and form a new coalition government headed by the CPN-UML. One thing Mr. Nepal forgets is his party has only the third largest number of members in the CA after the CPN-Maoist and the NC. In this situation, will the CPN-Maoist and the NC leaders agree on a coalition government headed by the CPN-UML? Probably, NC leaders would agree on forming a coalition government without the CPN-Maoist but not headed by the CPN-UML leader. So, what Mr. Nepal has been saying is almost impracticable.</div> <div>His colleague and current General Secretary of the CPN-UML Jhalanath Khanal has been more practicable than Mr. Nepal. He has been telling Nepalis in public that his party will stay on in the coalition government until the completion of crating a new constitution, bringing the peace process to an end, and the restructuring of the State. He also had been saying in public in the past that a coalition government without the CPN-Maoist would not be practicable. So, he ruled out the formation of a three-party coalition government of NC, CPN-UML and Madheshi People’s Rights Forum (MPRF) in the past, and joined the current six-party coalition government. Mr. Khanal foresaw that a coalition government without the CPN-Maoist would not be practicable.</div> <div>Another CPN-UML leader that has been attempting to dig a hole for the current government is former Deputy Prime Minister K.P. Oli. He has been a great critic of the current government and wants to tear down the government at any cost. However, his power has been limited to the public speaking. In the past also, he had done a lot of anti-people deeds. He has no agenda for doing anything good for the Nepalese people. So, voters also rejected him in the election for the CA.</div> <div>On December 13, 2008, Minister for Physical Planning and Works and</div>	<div><b>Talk of the Nation</b></div> <div><div><b>Peace Award for Prachanda</b></div><div>By KTM Metro Reporter in Kathmandu</div><div>On Thursday, December 18, 2008, at a function held to celebrate the 96th birth anniversary of late Dilli Raman Regmi in Kathmandu, Academy of Dilli Raman Regmi Foundation conferred the National Peace Award of 2006 to Nepalese Prime Minister Prachanda for his contribution to formation of Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal and Constituent Assembly, and for peace in Nepal and International Peace Award of 2006 to former US President Jimmy Carter for his contribution to the peace process in Nepal and elsewhere in the world. Country representative of Carter Center in Nepal, Darren Nance received the award for former US President Jimmy Carter.</div><div>Speaking at the function, Prime Minister Prachanda said that he was committed to complete the peace process for a lasting peace in Nepal and to meet the people's aspirations for change.</div></div> <div><div><b>Constitution-crafting process begins</b></div><div>By KTM Metro Reporter in Kathmandu</div><div>The Constituent Assembly elected on April 10, 2008 was supposed to initiate the crafting of a new constitution immediately but it has officially initiated only on Tuesday, December 16, 2008, more than eight months after the election. It set up 14 committees. One main committee is called constitutional committee of 61 members, on which Prime Minister and political leaders such as former Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, General Secretary of CPN-UML, Chairman of Madheshi Peoples’ Rights Forum, and others sit on this committee. Other ten committees are subject matter committees, and three committees are procedural committees.</div><div>Chairman of the Constituent Assembly Subas Nembang said that the committees would expedite the constitution-crafting process following the Clause 64 of the Constituent Assembly Procedures for crafting a new constitution.</div><div>Following the calendar of operation of crafting a new constitution the Constituent Assembly has met the deadline</div></div>



the current government. In the past he gave the health reasons for not attending any meeting he did not like to attend. Not attending the meeting he has been blocking the appointments to the vacant positions of the constitutional bodies hindering the smooth running of the state administration.

Prime Minister heads the CC, and its members are Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, Chief Justice, leader of the main opposition party, Minister for Law, and two members nominated by the Prime Minister.

Central Committee Member of the CPN-UML Bharat Mohan Adhikari said Girija Babu had a great desire for becoming the first president of Nepal but he was denied the position; so, he started playing an unsupportive role in the state affairs and also became too negative sometimes.

### Changing responsibilities of Maoist Leaders

By KTM Metro Reporter in Kathmandu

On December 15, 2008, the Maoist leadership has changed the responsibilities of central committee members following the policy on “one person, one position” recently adopted by the CPN-Maoist but not applicable to the Prime Minister, as he continues to hold two positions: one of the government another of the party.

Maoist leader Dinanath Sharma received the portfolio of a spokesperson for the party taking it from Information and Communications Minister Krishna Bahadur Mahara, who had been the spokesperson for both the government and the party.

### Maoists call for republican alliance

By KTM Metro Reporter in Kathmandu

On Monday, December 15, 2008, the Central Committee of CPN-Maoist announced that it would set up a broader republican alliance with republican and nationalist forces for the effective implementation of the government’s plans and policies and to counter the democratic alliance former Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala called for.

The Maoists claim that the alliance encompasses all people from Nepali Congress, CPN-UML or individuals working against the status-quo mindset and fighting against the increasing foreign interferences in the Nepalese affairs.

### Three new diplomatic missions to be opened

By KTM Metro Reporter in Kathmandu

parliamentary leader of Madheshi People’s Rights Forum (MPRF) Bijaya Kumar Gacchadar said that the demand for ‘One Madhesh One Province’ has been irrelevant in the current context. Later on, he explained to the public that he was saying what he saw in the eight-point agreement the United Democratic Madheshi Front (UDMF) reached with the then Government of Nepal on February 28, 2008 that missed ‘One Madhesh, One Pradesh’ for an autonomous Madhesh province and in the 22-point agreement the UDMF signed with the then Peace and Reconstruction Minister Ram Chandra Poudel totally missed it. Other Madheshi leaders acknowledged that they missed the wording of ‘One Madhesh One Province’ in the eight-point agreement instead they agreed on autonomous Madhesh Province.

Responding to Minister Gacchadar’s statement, the Morang District Committee of MPRF demanded the MPRF Central Committee recall him from the government. Some of the MPRF parliamentarians also expressed their concern about the statement of Gacchadar. Some cadres of MPRF have engaged in burning Minister Gacchadar in effigies and shouting slogans against his statement.

Minister Gacchadar in turn charged Coordinator of MPRF Upendra Yadav for instigating cadres and others to engage in the protest against his statement. He even went on saying that Coordinator Yadav has set the MPRF party cadres against him; in addition, his party MPRF had publicly condemned him without even consulting him. He said that he was for national integrity.

On December 18, 2008, MPRF coordinator and Minister for Foreign Affairs Upendra Yadav said that his party had not abandoned the demand for ‘One Madhesh One province’, and so many lives had been sacrificed for it. He said that ‘One Madhesh One Province’ was the ideal of his party as ‘People’s Democracy’ of the Maoists and ‘democratic socialism’ of the Nepali Congress.

Some other political parties including the CPN-UML have been deadly against ‘One Madhesh One Province’. General Secretary of the CPN-UML Jhalanath Khanal has been saying in public that his party will never accept the demand for ‘One Madhesh One Province’.

Immediately after the formation of the current six-party coalition government, NC leaders have launched a campaign against it putting forward seven-point demand. First, they launched verbal attacks on it, and then they stalled the session of the CA and then launched the campaign of awareness of the authoritarian rule of the CPN-Maoist.

The first verbal assault on the government was that the NC leaders were deadly against the integration of the Maoists combatants with the Nepali Army. They refused to stay on the Army Integration Special Committee (AISC) set up by the government to integrate the Maoists’ combatants with the Nepali Army demanding equal representation of the NC on it. On October 28, 2008, the government had set up AISC with two representatives of the CPN-Maoist and one each of the CPN-UML, MPRF and NC on it. On December 18, 2008, leaders of CPN-Maoist and CPN-UML agreed on the equal representation of all political parties on it.

Maoists and some other leaders particularly General Secretary of CPN-UML Jhalanath Khanal have been saying that the integration of the Maoist combatants into the Nepali Army needed to be done following the 12-point understanding the then-seven-party alliance had reached with the Maoists leaders on November 22, 2005, and then the comprehensive peace agreement the then government headed by NC President Girija Prasad Koirala had reached with the CPN-Maoist and the Interim Constitution of Nepal of 2007.

Prime Minister Prachanda said that any attempt to obstruct the integration of Maoists’ combatants with the Nepali Army would be only illusion. He said that he would integrate the Maoists’ combatants with the army and take the peace process to a logical end, no matter what some opposing leaders said.

The Prime Minister also said that the NC President did not reciprocate his overture but engaged in a blame game. The NC president has blamed the Maoists for breaking up the deal on the politics of consensus. The Maoists in turn blamed the NC for not following up the agreements they had reached in the past.

On December 19, 2008, addressing the Sixth Annual General Meeting of the Confederation of Nepalese Industries, Prime Minister Prachanda said that political leaders running the State administration for 15-20 years in the past have been responsible for the current crisis in the power sector in Nepal; they also emptied the national coffer; so, the government would soon bring out a white paper mentioning the responsible leaders for the current crisis in supplying electric power to consumers; the government would also soon declare a state of emergency in the power sector and expedite building diesel power plants to reduce the power cuts.

Obstructing the discussion of the budget submitted by the Finance Minister, the NC members of the CA stalled the session of the CA demanding the properties taken over by the Maoists return to the owners. Then, in order to remedy the obstruction of the CA session and pass the budget, addressing the CA session, Prime Minister Prachanda assured the CA members of returning the properties to the rightful

for setting up the committees but not for electing their chairs. The Chairman of the Constituent Assembly has extended the deadline for electing the chairs of the committees by fifteen days to December 30, 2008.

### Taking Up Arms or Not

By KTM Metro Reporter in Kathmandu

Referring to the statement made by Prime Minister Prachanda that he would need to go to the people for revolution if the opposition parties would not allow his government function as required for meeting the promises made to the people, many political leaders and institutions such as Human Rights Organization of Nepal have expressed their strong concern over the Prime Minister’s statement.

On Sunday, December 14, 2008, while addressing a mass meeting held by his party in Bhotewodar, Lamjung Prime Minister Prachanda responded to the strong criticism of his statement and told the audience that he simply told the people to be ready to take up arms for defending the national interest as the feudal elements have been working against the national interest. He said that it did not mean that we needed to take up arms immediately; it would be needed only in case the peace process, army integration and constitution-drafting process were obstructed.

He also said that if we would take a look at the history of Nepal: the Nepali Congress took up arms in 1950 and in 1962 and the CPN-UML leaders took up arms in 1971 in the name of Jhapa Revolution.

On December 07, 2008, speaking at a program in Chitwan, Prime Minister Prachanda said his party would quit the government by mid-January 2009 and launch a revolution if coalition partners and opposition parties would not cooperation on all aspects of the state affairs.

On December 12, 2008, Prime Minister Prachanda had warned of the people resorting to violence again if attempts were made to grab the rights Nepalis have gained sacrificing so many lives.

### Economy

#### India inflation at nine-month low

Source BBC News

Inflation in India has fallen sharply, mainly due to declining fuel prices, official figures show.

The wholesale price index dropped to a nine-month low of 6.84% in early December - down from a high of almost 13% in August.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs has initiated actions for setting up three new Nepalese diplomatic missions abroad.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs has forwarded the proposals for opening up embassies in Canada, Kuwait and South Africa to Ministry of Finance and Ministry of General Administration for their approval. Foreign Minister Upendra Yadav has already approved the proposal before forwarding it to other ministries.

The Foreign Ministry has felt the need for opening diplomatic missions in Canada and Kuwait, as they have been the popular destinations for Nepalis in the recent years whereas the diplomatic mission in South Africa is for serving the countries with which Nepal has not set up any direct link so far

**is Gacchadar  
Rebelling Against  
His Own Party?**

By KTM Metro Reporter in Kathmandu

On Saturday, December 13, 208, Leader of Madheshi People's Rights Forum and Minister for Physical Planning and Works Bijaya Kumar Gacchadar recently said in public that 'One Madhesh On Province' has lost relevancy in the present context of the state affairs.

So, on Monday, December 15, 2008, the Morang district committee of Madheshi People's Rights Forum demanded that the Madheshi People's Rights Forum recalled Minister for Physical Planning and Works and party's parliamentary party leader Bijaya Kumar Gacchadar from the government for his provocative statement against the demand of the Madheshi ethnic people.

**Celebrating Demise  
of Democracy in  
Nepal**

By KTM Metro Reporter in Kathmandu

On December 16, 2008, a group of people celebrated the anniversary of killing the democracy by the then-king Mahendra in 1960 decorating the statue of king Mahendra with the Nepalese national flags and offering flowers to it on the square near Sanskrit school in Kathmandu. Mahendra had dissolved the elected parliament and the government and banned political parties, then introduced no-party political system called Panchayat and run the state administration as he liked in 1960s.

The government should immediately make celebrating the anniversary of death of democracy illegal and punish the people for such illegal activities and demolish the statue of King Mahendra immediately, as it has been the symbol of death of democracy in Nepal. It would be a prophylactic measure for

owners by mid December 2008; and if it could not be done so by that time, then the government would provide them with compensation for the lost properties. Then, the Prime Minister signed the nine-point deal on this matter with the NC leaders. On December 18, 2008, NC members again boycotted the CA session demanding Prime Minister Prachanda enforce the nine-point deal reached with the NC.

Some NC leaders particularly Arjun Narshing KC came out against the government providing the compensation for the properties seized by the Maoists. He said that the government should not use the taxpayers' money for paying the compensation for the properties taken over by the Maoists.

The Maoist leaders have been saying in public that they did not seize properties but landless farmers and peasants had grabbed the land from owners; and most of the properties taken over by the Maoists during the conflict with the State had been returned; however, some properties of the doubtful ownership had not been returned and the government needed to resolve the dispute of ownership by launching a revolutionary land reform program. Maoist leader CP Gajurel has been saying in public that such lands would not be returned.

General Secretary of NC Bimalendra Nidhi said that the Maoists had encouraged the landless people to grab the properties during the conflict and then the Maoists had been finding it difficult to return the properties to the owners.

The properties taken over by the Maoists during the conflict included the properties of CPN-UML leader Amrit Bohara, NC leader Sher Bahadur Deuba, and leader of Rastriya Prjatantra Party Lokendra Bahadur Chanda.

In addition, Maoists had forced thousands of people considered their enemies to flee from their homes and taken over their property during the conflict started in 1996. They were the victims of the Maoists and they set up an association called Maoist Victims' Association (MVA). They have been demanding immediate return of their property and have been staging protest sit-ins and rallies at the concerned District Administration Offices, at various government offices and at the office of the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal in Kathmandu.

Responding to the recent remarks of NC President Girija Prasad Koirala that his party would float its own constitution if Maoists were unwilling to craft a new constitution, Prime Minister Prachanda said that a constitution was not a scrap of paper that anybody could just take out of his/her pocket and proclaimed it a constitution; if it was so, why Nepalis had fought for a constitution so long.

In one of his public addresses, NC President Girija Prasad Koirala said that he was going to send Maoists back to jungles and to India. Responding to this statement, Maoist leader CP Gajurel said that the Maoists would stay on rather would send the NC leaders to jungles.

Then, NC leader Girija Prasad Koirala launched a campaign of creating awareness of the Maoists' authoritarian rule starting in Birgunj. He told the public that the NC had launched the campaign against the despotic Rana rulers in early 1950s; and, he was launching the campaign against the authoritarian rule of the Maoists from the same spot in the twenty first century. Then, he went to Nepalgunj to address the public meeting held by the NC for creating awareness of the Maoists' authoritarian rule, and finally he went to Kanchanpur, far western Nepal to address the public meeting but he came back sickened.

The history of Koirala brothers is that they exploited everybody in the NC including the Supreme Leader of the People's Movement of 1990 Ganesh Man Singh for their personal gains. If you read the biography of Ganesh Man Singh you will understand that the then-leader of NC BP Koirala had exploited Ganesh Man Singh to the extent possible for his supremacy in the NC. Similarly, Girija Prasad Koirala exploited the sincerity of Ganesh Man Singh in 1990s for his supremacy in the NC. Koirala continued to be the self-declared leader of the NC.

If the NC cadres want to save the NC from extinction, they need to take drastic measures and follow the norms of democracy for electing their leaders. Leaders such as Prakash Man Sing and Narahari Acharya won the lection for the CA because of their republican stand. Currently, they have the majority in their parliamentary party. So, they need to remove the dictatorial Girija Prasad Koirala and take the leadership in their hands rather than let him pass on the torch of power to his family members and relatives.

In December 2008, at one of the interaction programs, Youth leader Chakra Prasad Bastola sarcastically said, "It is the truth, NC does not have democracy; but you do not say so." He also said, "I am called a youth leader but I am already 60 year old. So, these are the realities in the domain of the NC. "

Recently, former Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala has become aggressively uncooperative to the State affairs. On December 16, 2008, he did not show up in the meeting of the Constitutional Council called by the Prime Minister for making key-position appointments to the constitutional bodies such as Public Service Commission and Commission on Investigation into Abuse of Authority (CIAA). He gave the health reasons for not showing up in the meeting. It has been his

Analysts say the lack of demand for commodities such as steel and coal may also have had an effect.

The Indian government has announced a series of measures in recent weeks to boost flagging economic growth. These include \$4bn of extra spending to stimulate the economy.

The rapid decline in inflation reinforces the impression that the Indian economy is slowing sharply after the economic boom in recent years. Some economists are predicting that the growth rate will be cut in half in 2009.

Interest rates are also expected to be cut further to stimulate growth.

**Iceland recovering  
well, says IMF**

Source BBC News

Iceland has taken the first important steps towards restoring financial stability according to an International Monetary Fund mission to the country.

Poul Thomsen, heading the mission, said the key objective of stabilizing the country's currency was being met. He added that he was "very confident" that the \$2.1bn (£1.37bn) loan from the IMF in November would be sufficient to revive the economy.

In October, Iceland's government was forced to take control of three banks. "Iceland's IMF-supported program is advancing well," Mr Thomsen said. He added that "judicious monetary policy" had helped to stabilize the country's currency, the krona, and that focus would soon turn to lifting capital controls and reducing interest rates.

The worst was behind the country, he told a press conference. "This is obviously a very, very serious crisis," he said. "But the impact on Iceland is going to be very limited because you were hit with full force upfront." Progress has also been made on restructuring the financial sector after the government was forced to take over three of the country's biggest commercial banks.

"A framework has been put in place to engage creditors of the old banks, an asset recovery strategy has been put in place and the groundwork has been laid for a valuation of new and old bank assets," Mr Thomsen said.

Work to value assets should start now as a prelude to recapitalising the banks by the end of first quarter, he added. Another IMF mission will visit Iceland in February next year to conduct a formal review of the economic support program

**Financial Fraud**

Metro Repoeter (Shirish Ranjit)



anybody venturing to kill democracy in future, too.

## International News

### New Thai Prime Minister

By KTM Metro Reporter in Kathmandu

On Monday, December 15, 2008, the leader of the opposition Democrat Party, Abhisit Vejjajiva won the election for the Thailand’s next Prime Minister. It was the victory of the yellow shirts against the red shirts. However, red shirts immediately appeared at the parliament building for protesting his election. How long the Prime Minister supported by the yellow shirts on the streets and in the airport would last remain to be seen. He has won the election, as some of the parliamentarians belonging to the People Power Party supported him for fear of the political instability in Thailand. How long they would continue their support for the Prime Minister remains to be seen.

The Thai Court has ruled to dissolve the People Power Party alleging it has violated the election laws. The court has decided so after the protests by the yellow shirts. Yellow is the color of the Thai king.

Mobs of yellow shirts had been blocking the Thai parliamentary building for months and then seized the Thai International airport for almost a week causing billions of dollars worth of business and causing immense inconvenience to the international travelers.

### Pakistan: Breeding Ground for Terrorists?

By KTM Metro Reporter in Kathmandu

On Sunday, December 14, 2008 British Prime Minister Gordon Brown confronted Pakistan on its record of exporting terrorism disclosing that three quarters of serious plots investigated in the UK were connected to the country; the British Prime Minister announced that the British police wanted to interview the surviving suspect in the Mumbai terror attacks as part of broader inquiries into the extremist group blamed for the atrocity Lashkar-e-Taiba according to Guardian.co.uk. He also said that the terrorists should not make Pakistan a safe haven.

British Prime Minister also met with Indian Prime Minister and Afghan President. Both of them complained to the British Prime Minister that terrorists have been infiltrating into their respective territories via Pakistan.

regular practice of giving such reasons for not attending the meetings he did not like to attend. Public Service Commission has not been able to function properly due to non-availability of its members, and then adversely affecting the normal functioning of the state administration, as it could not fill up the vacant positions in the State administration.

NC President Girija Prasad Koirala and former General Secretary of CPN-UML Madhav Kumar Nepal have had grudge against the Maoist leaders for not supporting their candidacy for the first president of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. Both of them had an intense desire for the position of the first president of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. The Maoist leaders have publicly and flatly rejected their candidacy and said that they would accept the candidacy of any other person including the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Nepal other than those two political leaders. Both of them are working for their personal gains rather than for the nation even at the risk of returning Nepal back to the political instability of late 1990s.

Most of the Nepalis wish to see NC President Girija Prasad Koirala to be the Nelson Mandela of Nepal but his deeds have been that of Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. Madhav Kumar Nepal has no international standing.

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## Culture and Tradition

### Lo-sar: the New Year Festival

Siddhi B. Ranjitkar

Nepaese Tamangs, Sherpas, and Gurungs mostly belonging to the Buddhist faith celebrate a New Year festival called Lo-sar. Lo means year and Sar means new. Thus, Lo-sar means a New Year. They have three kinds of Lo-sar. They are “Tola”, “Sonam” and “Gyalpo” Lo-sars. People in Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan, Sikkim and northeastern part of India called Ladak celebrate one of these three Lo-sars following their tradition and custom. Relatives and friends living abroad and far away return home for celebrating Lo-sar.

In Nepal, we celebrate “Tola” Lo-sar some time in December. Some people think that we celebrate “Tola” Lo-sar in preparation for celebrating the main Lo-sar following the lunar calendar. However, it is not so because we Nepalis living in the mountain areas of Nepal widely use both lunar and solar calendars. We celebrate Lo-sar on the day when the sun begins moving toward north according to the lunar calendar. Hence, it falls some time in December. Some people think that it is a mock New Year celebration because the name “Tola” denotes mock.

The second Lo-sar we have is “Sonam” Lo-sar. The name Sonam is derived from “Sonampa” means farmers. Farmers celebrate Lo-sar before the agricultural season sets in. Hence, it is called “Sonam” Lo-sar or farmers’ New Year. Farmers celebrate it some time in January about one and a half months earlier than “Gyalpo” Lo-sar.

The third Lo-sar called “Gyalpo” means royal or king. Hence, kings and royalties celebrate “Gyalpo” Lo-sar some time in February or March following the lunar calendar.

The Sherpa community in Nepal celebrates “Gyalpo” Lo-sar. Some people believe that scholars set the tradition of celebrating “Gyalpo” Lo-sar in commemoration of the miracles Lord Shrawosti Buddha performed for fifteen days to convert religious pilgrims to Buddhism. Therefore, the celebration of “Gyalpo” Lo-sar coincides with these religious festivals.

Now, let us see how we celebrate Lo-sar in Nepal. In preparation for celebrating Lo-sar, we renovate, paint and decorate our houses. We draw figures of mountain, sun, moon and Shastric swastikas on the walls of our houses and rooms. We buy new clothes for all our family members. We discard old things and we bring new utensils, vessels and other household appliances into use in the New Year. We believe that the old things that were not much in use in the year won’t bring good luck to us in the New Year. We also think that it is inauspicious to throw away old things during the New Year festival. Hence, we discard and throw out many old things before the Lo-sar festival sets in. We collect all worn-out clothes, broken items and other non-usable materials, and take them to the intersection of seven lanes; there, we burn them down. We believe that by doing so, the misfortunes that struck us in the year, might not repeat in the New Year.

We read scriptures, and recite important passages of religious books throughout the day of the New Year eve, so that the New Year sets in with peace, happiness and good health for all.

We eat a special feast dish called “Gyathuk” in the New Year eve. It is a special kind of “Thukpa”. It is a noodle soup prepared from nine

The news of bankruptcies of companies, financial write offs by companies and bail outs by government are common lately. One type of news that has not been common yet is of financial fraud.

Current financial condition has exposed some fraudulent scheme that were operating under the name of hedge fund investing. The latest big name on a large scale financial scam in Wall Street is Bernard Madoff.

Once respected former chairman of NASDAQ, Madoff has defrauded not millions but billions of dollars. It is still not known all the parties that have lost money with his scheme.

How a single person can avoid all the checks and balance in most sophisticated financial system in the world is a question that everybody is asking.

By design, hedge funds work in shroud of secrecy to protect their trade secret. The same design is also allowing some fraudulent schemes to exist without being detected by regulators. On the other than Madoff has such a reputation and connections that he was able to exploit to stay under the radar.

Still if one can defraud billions of dollars in worlds most advanced economy and law and order, then what is happening in less sophisticated economies where law is who you know.

## Exchange Rates

As of December 21, 2008

Currency	Unit	Buying Rs.	Selling Rs.
Indian Rupee	100	160	160.15
U.S. Dollar	1	75.1	75.7
Euro	1	107.15	108
Pound Sterling	1	113.39	114.29
Swiss Franc	1	69.65	70.21
Australian Dollar	1	51.95	52.36
Canadian Dollar	1	61.46	61.95
Singapore Dollar	1	52.06	52.48
Japanese Yen	1	8.44	8.51
China Yuan	1	10.98	11.07
Saudi Arabian riyal	1	20.02	20.18
Qatari riyal	1	20.62	20.79
Thai baht	1	2.18	2.19
UAE Dirham	1	20.44	20.61
Malaysian ringgit	1	21.71	21.88

Only Buying rates		
Currency	Unit	Rates/Rs.
Swedish Kroner	1	9.76
Danish Kroner	1	14.38
Hong Kong Dollar	1	9.69

Note: Under the present system the open market exchange rates quoted by different banks may differ.

Kathmandu MarketAs of December 15, 2008	
Bullion	Rs/10 gm
Hallmark Gold	Rs 20,660.00
Worked Gold	Rs 20,530.00
Silver	Rs 291.50

**Disclaimer:** The data is for general information only and shall not to be used as a primary data source. Kathmandu Metro is not liable for any errors or delays caused in the content.



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Science

A Giant Breach in Earth's Magnetic Field

Source NASA

NASA's five THEMIS spacecraft have discovered a breach in Earth's magnetic field ten times larger than anything previously thought to exist. Solar wind can flow in through the opening to "load up" the magnetosphere for powerful geomagnetic storms. But the breach itself is not the biggest surprise. Researchers are even more amazed at the strange and unexpected way it forms, overturning long-held ideas of space physics.

"At first I didn't believe it," says THEMIS project scientist David Sibeck of the Goddard Space Flight Center. "This finding fundamentally alters our understanding of the solar wind-magnetosphere interaction."

The magnetosphere is a bubble of magnetism that surrounds Earth and protects us from solar wind. Exploring the bubble is a key goal of the THEMIS mission, launched in February 2007. The big discovery came on June 3, 2007, when the five probes serendipitously flew through the breach just as it was opening. Onboard sensors recorded a torrent of solar wind particles streaming into the magnetosphere, signaling an event of unexpected size and importance.

"The opening was huge—four times wider than Earth itself," says Wenhui Li, a space physicist at the University of New Hampshire who has been analyzing the data. Li's colleague Jimmy Raeder, also of New Hampshire, says "1027 particles per second were flowing into the magnetosphere—that's a 1 followed by 27 zeros. This kind of influx is an order of magnitude greater than what we thought was possible."

The event began with little warning when a gentle gust of solar wind delivered a bundle of magnetic fields from the Sun to Earth. Like an octopus wrapping its tentacles around a big clam, solar magnetic fields draped themselves around the magnetosphere and cracked it open. The cracking was accomplished by means of a process called "magnetic reconnection." High above Earth's poles, solar and terrestrial magnetic fields linked up (reconnected) to form conduits

different items. We serve ‘Gyathuk’ to family members with a dumpling. Each dumpling contains a piece of paper that has written an item such as chili, butter, coal and so on that describe the personality traits of the receiver. The person receiving a dumpling with a paper in it with a word “butter” is considered to be a lucky person for that year, and the person receiving a dumpling with a paper in it with a word “coal” is considered to be an unlucky person. We have nine different characteristics we use in dumplings for prophesizing the luck of our family members in the New Year eve. Our tradition is to feast on nine bowls of “Gyathuk” to ensure a lucky start of the New Year.

We make a dough figurine called “Luu” and place it in a separate bowl. This effigy serves as an evil spirit carrier. At the end of the “Gyathuk” meal, every member of a family pours the leftover soup in the bowl with the figurine. Thereafter, every one of us transfers the so-called evil spirit that may be dwelling in us to the effigy.

For transferring the evil spirit dwelling in us, we chipped off a piece of the dough effigy, and then rub it on our body, and return it back to the effigy. After this ritual, one of us takes the bowl with the evil spirit possessed dough figurine to a crossroads, and leaves it there. Then s/he comes home not looking back because if s/he looks over the shoulder, evil spirits might find the way back home.

We rise early in the morning on the New Year day, and go to collect holy water from the Water Gods. At the water source before collecting holy water, we worship three Water Gods. We believe that whoever takes water first will receive “Amrit” (elixir or nectar) from Water Gods as blessings. Then, we bring holy water home and offer it to our ancestral deity. Thereafter, we offer “Khapsay”: fried bread especially made for this occasion, and “Nai Baidya” means nuts, sweets and fruits together to the deity. Thus, we begin a New Year with auspicious offerings to the deity.

After completion of the offerings to the deity, we eat breakfast comprising soup called “Chang-go”. We prepared it boiling ‘chhang’ (homebrew beer) with sugar, butter and dried cheese. Then, we eat a second course called “Deysel”. It is a sweet rice dish cooked with dried fruits and nuts. We consume a number of “Khapsay” along with these dishes. We also drink butter tea endlessly.

After the morning meal, we visit monasteries to perform offerings to Lord Buddha, to read holy books, and to receive New Year blessings from Lamas.

We do not do businesses that involve monetary transactions on this day believing that it might bring unfavorable business in the New Year.

From the second day on, we visit relatives, friends and neighbors to exchange best wishes. We greet each other saying “Tashi - Delek” means happy New Year. Every household welcomes guests with delicious dishes and “chhang”.

On the third day, we gather at a public place to celebrate Lo-sar jointly. First, we offer “Khada”: ceremonial silk scarves, sweets, fruits and so on to Lamas and senior respectable people of the society, and receive blessings from them. Then, we share delicious food among us.

After eating the meal, we take ‘Dor-chhod’: religious flags to the top of hills, there, we unfurl them on flagpoles. We also offer incense and sweets to deities there. We chant “Lha-Gyal Lo, Dud Famshow” in one voice. This means glory to the deities and death to the devils. Then, we distribute “chhang” and “chemar”: a mixture of cooked barley flour, butter and sugar as blessings from deities.

Then, our men and women holding hands of each other sing and dance spontaneously, thus, displaying happiness in the celebration of Lo-sar festival. This dance is called “Sya-pu”. It does not need music.

Thereafter, each household holds a feast for relatives every day, in turn, until all related households has done it. Thus, the New Year feast lasts several days.

“Khapsay” is fried bread. It is a special cuisine of this festival. Some of us decorate our religious room with the different color and size of “khapsay”. Therefore, we put our efforts on and skills in preparing a variety of “khapsay” on the occasion of “Lo-sar”. We cook this kind of bread only once a year during the “Lo-sar” festival. Our people demonstrate their craftsmanship and ingenuity in preparing such artistic and unique bread not only for consumption during the festival but for decoration and for sending it as a present to friends and relatives. We have a tradition of sending a basketful of “khapsay” to friends and relatives.

References:

- 1. Bhichhu Wong Wosere Lama Sherpa: Lo-sar: The Festival of Nepalis Living in the Himalayan Region, February 19, 1994 (Gorkhapatra in Nepali).
- 2. Jamyong Lodoe and Susan Roe: Happy Tibetan New Year, February 16, 1994 (The Independent)

Note: This year “Tola Lo-sar” is on December 28, 2008; “Sonam” is on

Book Review

Mahabharat: A Story about Love and Revenge



Author: Siddhi B. Ranjitkar  
Publisher: Srilaxmi Ranjitkar  
Date of Publication: Jan. 2002  
Pages 575  
Price:  
Rs 300 in Nepal and India  
\$15 in US,and \$20 elsewhere

Contact  
[Siddhi@SiddhiRanjitkar.com](mailto:Siddhi@SiddhiRanjitkar.com) for ordering this book.

Mahabharat is the story about the good and bad governance, corruption and misdeeds of royalties of that time. It is also the story about the sufferings of five brothers called Pandavas, about the dedication and bravery of some characters and about the love affairs outside the marriage. It has some lessons for politicians or monarchs, for those people who want to take revenge, for those people who are proud of their strength in other words for the egoists, and for the women in general and royal women in particular. It also tells us that a war is a loosing game for all parties involved. No one can win a war but everyone loses many things in a war.

Content of Back Page of Mahabharat Gist of Gita

Whatever happened  
Had happened rightly.  
Whatever is happening  
Is happening rightly too.  
Whatever happens  
Will happen rightly too.  
What have you lost  
That has made you unhappy?  
Did you come with anything to  
this world  
That you get so worried to lose it?  
Whatever you have amassed  
You did it in this world.  
Whatever you hold today  
It was of someone yesterday  
It will be of someone else  
tomorrow.  
Nothing is permanent in this  
world.  
Be Human and perform your duty.  
- Bhagwat Gita  
- ISBN: 9993-696-0-8



for solar wind. Conduits over the Arctic and Antarctic quickly expanded; within minutes they overlapped over Earth's equator to create the biggest magnetic breach ever recorded by Earth-orbiting spacecraft.

Above: A computer model of solar wind flowing around Earth's magnetic field on June 3, 2007. Background colors represent solar wind density; red is high density, blue is low. Solid black lines trace the outer boundaries of Earth's magnetic field. Note the layer of relatively dense material beneath the tips of the white arrows; that is solar wind entering Earth's magnetic field through the breach. Credit: Jimmy Raeder/UNH. [larger image]

The size of the breach took researchers by surprise. "We've seen things like this before," says Raeder, "but never on such a large scale. The entire day-side of the magnetosphere was open to the solar wind."

The circumstances were even more surprising. Space physicists have long believed that holes in Earth's magnetosphere open only in response to solar magnetic fields that point south. The great breach of June 2007, however, opened in response to a solar magnetic field that pointed north.

"To the lay person, this may sound like a quibble, but to a space physicist, it is almost seismic," says Sibeck. "When I tell my colleagues, most react with skepticism, as if I'm trying to convince them that the sun rises in the west."

Here is why they can't believe their ears: The solar wind presses against Earth's magnetosphere almost directly above the equator where our planet's magnetic field points north. Suppose a bundle of solar magnetism comes along, and it points north, too. The two fields should reinforce one another, strengthening Earth's magnetic defenses and slamming the door shut on the solar wind. In the language of space physics, a north-pointing solar magnetic field is called a "northern IMF" and it is synonymous with shields up!

"So, you can imagine our surprise when a northern IMF came along and shields went down instead," says Sibeck. "This completely overturns our understanding of things."

Northern IMF events don't actually trigger geomagnetic storms, notes Raeder, but they do set the stage for storms by loading the magnetosphere with plasma. A loaded magnetosphere is primed for auroras, power outages, and other disturbances that can result when, say, a CME (coronal mass ejection) hits.

The years ahead could be especially lively. Raeder explains: "We're entering Solar Cycle 24. For reasons not fully understood, CMEs in even-numbered solar

January 27, 2009; "Gyalpo" is on February 26, 2009 according to the Nepalese calendar.

Addendum:

Following is "The Story of Losar" contributed by Venerable Salden of Namgyal Monastery (Personal Monastery of His Holiness the Dalai Lama) to Tibet Center, Chicago, and posted on the website Phayul.com, Tuesday, February 05, 2008

Happy Losar (Tibetan New Year)!

It is time again for Tibetans around the world to celebrate their Losar: this time, the Year of the Earth Mouse 2135.

Tibetans and a section of Buddhists around the world will celebrate Losar on Thursday, February 7, 2008. The celebration normally lasts for three days, and it all means time for greetings, togetherness and abundant festivities, and time for prayers as well.

The word Losar is a Tibetan word for New Year. LO means year and SAR means new.

The celebration of Losar can be traced back to the pre-Buddhist period in Tibet. During the period when Tibetans practiced the Bon religion, every winter a spiritual ceremony was held, in which people offered large quantities of incense to appease the local spirits, deities and protectors. This religious festival later evolved into an annual Buddhist festival, which is believed to have originated during the reign of Pude Gungyal, the ninth King of Tibet.

The festival is said to have begun when an old woman named Belma introduced the measurement of time based on the phases of the moon. This festival took place during the flowering of the apricot trees of the Lhokha Yarla Shampo region in autumn, and it may have been the first celebration of what has become the traditional farmers' festival. It was during this period that the arts of cultivation, irrigation, refining iron from ore and building bridges were first introduced in Tibet. The ceremonies, which were instituted to celebrate these new capabilities, can be recognized as precursors of the Losar festival.

Later when the rudiments of the science of astrology, based on the five elements, were introduced in Tibet, this farmer's festival became what we now call the Losar or New Year's festival.

The calendar is made up of twelve lunar months and Losar begins on the first day of the first month. In the monasteries, the celebrations for the Losar begin on the twenty-ninth day of the twelfth month. That is the day before the Tibetan New Year's Eve. On that day the monasteries do a protector deities' puja (a special kind of ritual) and begin preparations for the Losar celebrations.

The custom that day is to make special noodle called guthuk. It is made of nine different ingredients including dried cheese and various grains. Also, dough balls are given out with various ingredients hidden in them such as chilies, salt, wool, rice and coal. The ingredients one finds hidden in one's dough ball are supposed to be a lighthearted comment on one's character. If a person finds chilies in their dough, it means they are talkative. If white-colored ingredients like salt, wool or rice are inside the dough it is considered a good sign. If a person finds coal in the dough it has much the same meaning as finding coal in one's Christmas stocking; it means you have a "black heart".

The last day of the year is a time to clean and prepare for the approaching New Year. In the monasteries it is a day of preparations. The finest decorations are put up and elaborate offerings are made of called "Lama Losar". In the early dawn of this day, the monks of Namgyal Monastery offer a sacrificial cake (Tse- tor) on top of the main temple (Potala in Tibet) to the supreme hierarchy of Dharma protectors, the glorious goddess Palden Lhamo. Led by the Dalai Lama, the abbots of three great monasteries, lamas, reincarnated monks, government officials and dignitaries join the ceremony and offer their contemplative prayers, while the monks of Namgyal Monastery recite the invocation of Palden Lhamo. After the completion of this ceremony, all assemble in the hall called Excellence of Samsara and Nirvana for a formal greeting ceremony. Seated on his or her respective cushions, everyone exchanges the traditional greeting, "Tashi delek".

In order to wish the His Holiness the Dalai Lama good luck for the coming year, consecrated long-life pills (tse-ril) made out of roasted barley dough are offered to him by the representatives of the three great monasteries, the two Tantric Colleges, etc. Then entertainers (garma) perform a dance of good wishes. And two senior monks stage a debate on Buddhist philosophy, and conclude their debate with an auspicious recitation composed especially for the event, in which the whole spectrum of Buddhist teaching is first briefly reviewed. A request is made to His Holiness and to all holders of the doctrine to remain for a long time amongst beings in samsara in order to serve them through their enlightened activities. The official ceremony of the day then concludes with a ceremonial farewell to the His Holiness, who then retires to his palace.

The second day of Losar is known as King's Losar (gyal-po lo-sar) because officially the day is reserved for a secular gathering in the hall

**Serious security flaw found in IE**

Source BBC News

Users of Microsoft's Internet Explorer are being urged by experts to switch to a rival until a serious security flaw has been fixed. The flaw in Microsoft's Internet Explorer could allow criminals to take control of people's computers and steal their passwords, internet experts say. Microsoft urged people to be vigilant while it investigated and prepared an emergency patch to resolve it. Internet Explorer is used by the vast majority of the world's computer users.

"Microsoft is continuing its investigation of public reports of attacks against a new vulnerability in Internet Explorer," said the firm in a security advisory alert about the flaw. Microsoft says it has detected attacks against IE 7.0 but said the "underlying vulnerability" was present in all versions of the browser. Other browsers, such as Firefox, Opera, Chrome, Safari, are not vulnerable to the flaw Microsoft has identified.

"In this case, hackers found the hole before Microsoft did," said Rick Ferguson, senior security advisor at Trend Micro. "This is never a good thing." As many as 10,000 websites have been compromised since the vulnerability was discovered, he said. "What we've seen from the exploit so far is it stealing game passwords, but it's inevitable that it will be adapted by criminals," he said. "It's just a question of modifying the payload the trojan installs."

Said Mr Ferguson: "If users can find an alternative browser, then that's good mitigation against the threat." But Microsoft counselled against taking such action. "I cannot recommend people switch due to this one flaw," said John Curran, head of Microsoft UK's Windows group. He added: "We're trying to get this resolved as soon as possible.

"At present, this exploit only seems to affect 0.02% of internet sites," said Mr Curran. "In terms of vulnerability, it only seems to be affecting IE7 users at the moment, but could well encompass other versions in time."

Richard Cox, chief information officer of anti-spam body The Spamhaus Project and an expert on privacy and cyber security, echoed Trend Micro's warning.

"It won't be long before someone reverse engineers this exploit for more fraudulent purposes. Trend Mico's advice [of switching to an alternative web browser] is very sensible," he said.

PC Pro magazine's security editor, Darien Graham-Smith, said that there was a virtual arms race going on, with hackers always on the look out for new vulnerabilities.

cycles (like 24) tend to hit Earth with a leading edge that is magnetized north. Such a CME should open a breach and load the magnetosphere with plasma just before the storm gets underway. It's the perfect sequence for a really big event."

Sibeck agrees. "This could result in stronger geomagnetic storms than we have seen in many years."

A video version of this story may be found here. For more information about the THEMIS mission, visit <http://nasa.gov/themis>

of Excellence of Samsara and Nirvana. His Holiness and his government exchange greetings with both monastic and lay dignitaries, such as representatives of China, India, Bhutan, Nepal, Mongolia and other foreign visitors.

Then from the third day onwards, the people and monks begin to celebrate and enjoy the festive season. In Tibet before the Chinese came, Losar had been celebrated for fifteen days or more. In India today we celebrate for three days, and in America we have minimized it to one day. In this way the three days of the New Year celebration officially concludes.

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"The message needs to get out that this malicious code can be planted on any web site, so simple careful browsing isn't enough."

"It's a shame Microsoft have not been able to fix this more quickly, but letting people know about this flaw was the right thing to do. If you keep flaws like this quiet, people are put at risk without knowing it."

"Every browser is susceptible to vulnerabilities from time to time. It's fine to say 'don't use Internet Explorer' for now, but other browsers may well find themselves in a similar situation," he added.

## Su-doku Instruction

Fill in the 9x9 grid so that every row, every column, and 6 - 3x3 boxes contain only numbers 1 through 9 without duplication.

Su-doku for the week

4							2	
				2				
			1					
						9		
2								4
				7	2			
		9					5	

Answer to the last week’s Sudoku.

3	1	6	7	4	8	9	5	2
9	5	7	2	6	1	4	8	3
2	8	4	5	9	3	6	1	7
8	4	1	3	7	6	2	9	5
5	6	9	4	1	2	7	3	8
7	2	3	8	5	9	1	6	4
1	3	8	9	2	7	5	4	6
6	7	5	1	3	4	8	2	9
4	9	2	6	8	5	3	7	1

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